

## Expansions upon the Book of Genesis

### Introductory Remarks

Some years ago I had made a verse-by-verse outline of Genesis—not every verse but those I deemed important—with a specific view in mind. While information about Genesis or any biblical book can be fascinating and informative, it remains secondary to the intent of this document which aimed at assisting the reader to expand his or her understanding and experience of *lectio divina*. That is to say, a person is encouraged to read a biblical verse or two (usually no more than that) and then lay aside the Bible itself while keeping it at hand in case one needs to return to the text. The need usually arises from the presence of distractions, of thinking of things other than the sacred text. This gesture of putting down the Bible is significant...not so much to allow for reflection, important as that is, but as a sign that one is disposed to resting in God's presence. More specifically, after reading a short verse one feels a deep peace welling up, so at this point one no longer feels the need to use his or her mind to ponder the text. This happens at the prompting of divine grace—a person doesn't ask for it, it simply happens—provided that one is obedient to the text. And so we come to the purpose not only of these reflections but of other biblically related documents on this home page: to assist the reader in the act of *lectio divina*.

To assist in this process, the document at hand presents a fleshing out of the Book of Genesis from what could be taken as a mythic point of view. That accounts for the word “expansions” in the title instead of “reflections,” a term I started out with after several months into the sacred text. That word doesn't imply the insertion of material which has been falsified deliberately or by offering some naive, unexamined observations. Rather, it is done with the purpose of presenting the reader with many familiar incidents which perhaps have not been expanded from the point of view of *lectio divina* while not straying far a-field from the narrative itself. One inspiration that prompted me to adopt this point of view was the intense seriousness and heaviness, both spiritual and exegetical (important as they are) that has been brought to bear upon Scripture for so many centuries. Here a more fluid approach is adopted while at the same time sticking close to the original Hebrew text. To describe this approach is difficult, really, and become wordy. Hence there's no need to continue further. Hopefully it will become evident as the reader goes through the text. No doubt about it: these expansions are done in a somewhat haphazard manner and somewhat terse side as well as lacking the skill a polished writer would bring to bear upon the text. While that is true, the sole purpose of this document is to approach Genesis from the point of *lectio divina* whose goal is to assist the reader enter the spirit of contemplative prayer.

With this view in mind, only enough necessary information is presented...enough to expand upon the text and use it as a platform, if you will, for hopefully ushering in the presence of God. Not that *lectio* forces God to our level but is an invitation to reveal himself. Covering ground or gaining information has nothing to do with *lectio*. Thus what we have here is not a commentary nor a source of information on the subject, both of which are obtainable from reputable sources. The text at hand wishes to focus upon key transliterated Hebrew words which allows the reader to mull them over, thereby expanding his or her practice of *lectio divina*. Insertion of these Hebrew words have the added value of allowing us to see their use elsewhere within the Book of Genesis. The Hebrew language is noted for its relative paucity of words, but that is deceptive. However, when you consider that the verbal root is essential to an understanding of both nouns and verbs, the possible interpretations and shades of meaning end up by being close to endless. Such is the joy of reading the Hebrew scriptures as *lectio divina*.

In a number of places the Psalter contains the Hebrew word *selah*. While *selah* originally was intended as a liturgical pause, it can be employed as a pause where the reader reflects on what had been read but more importantly as a time...a *kairos*...however brief, for resting in God's presence. In his **Commentary on the Inscriptions of the Psalms** posted on the Gregory of Nyssa Home Page which is linked with this home page, Gregory of Nyssa defines *selah* (he uses the Greek equivalent *diapsalma* as "a sudden pause in the midst of psalmody for introducing an inspiration as a hidden teaching of the Spirit given to the soul; the frequent interruptions in the psalms' chanting makes us attentive to his instruction." Because *selah* represents the importance of that pause as a rest or contemplation in between reading one or two biblical verses effected by the text, it is added after each paragraph in italics. This applies for the first five chapters. As a note at the beginning of Chapter Six, this practice is suspended yet continued in spirit for the remainder of the document. This insertion of *selah* after each paragraph may seem excessive but is a way of stressing the desire to assist our being in the divine presence and the pause or suspension of our mental faculties that follows. Inserting *selah* also is a personal reminder that I can not swerve from the goal of approaching Genesis from the vantage point of *lectio divina*.

The Revised Standard Edition (**The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha**, 1973) is used throughout for the English text. This older version pre-dates translations which are sensitive to gender-inclusive issues; while they have a place, often they differ from the original meaning.

## Chapter One

The first two verses don't have God himself speaking but form a statement that he had started his creative process. It is as though some unknown person were present and recorded what we were unable to witness: "When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep" [Prov 8.27]. Tradition ascribes authorship of Genesis to Moses though no specific name is given; neither does it intimate that Genesis had an author. This ancient tradition is not far off the mark, however, given Moses' friendship with God and the revelation bestowed to him on top of Mt. Sinai. While Moses was there we have considerable detail as to the covenant, much more so than with the elements comprising the days of creation. Thus it should come as no surprise that Moses could be with God six days. After all, he was with God for a much longer time, forty days, on Mount Sinai. Because Moses had been entrusted with both writing down the Genesis account as well as having received the Torah, it would be natural for people to seek him out in order to acquire this knowledge. Without a doubt, the Torah is more complex and loaded with spiritual meaning than creation itself. That's why upon his death God himself buried him, to tuck him away out of sight for good. "No man knows the place of his burial to this day" [Dt 34.6].

### *Selah*

Instead of the familiar concept of creativity, the Hebrew verb *bara'* is more along the lines of cutting or carving out an object that already exists. As it stands in and by itself, that object lacks form and is void, *tohu wabohu*. *Tohu* means a waste and can apply to vanity as a type of waste: "Their molten images are empty wind" [Is 41.29]. *Bohu* is similar in meaning, and there are just two other uses of it, Jer 4.23 and Is 34.11, the former being a paraphrase of the Genesis verse. While God may exercise his "carving" action on the earth (no mention of this is given with respect to the heavens), we have the action of the Spirit hovering over the "face of the deep." Apparently this is another divine being present with God charged with a different task as discussed two paragraphs below.

### *Selan*

God began his activity specifically "in the beginning" or *re'shyth* which suggests the first of any kind as well as the first fruits as in Dt 18.4, "The first fruits of your grain, your wine and oil and the first of the fleece of your sheep." The corresponding New Testament term is *aparche* as in 1Cor 15.20: "But in

fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Thus we could say with some validity that the author of Genesis had in mind *re’shyth* as a type of sacrifice. That would tie in with Moses as being the author of Genesis since the Torah had proscribed for him the details of sacrifices due to God. *Re’shyth* has the preposition “in” (*b-*) prefaced to it; *in* this beginning God did his *bara’* of heaven and earth...prepared it, if you will, as an ongoing sacrificial victim. However, something else seems to have crept in here, almost unnoticed. The Hebrew text has the particle *’eth* after the verb *bara’*, essentially untranslatable, which signifies the object of action by the verb. This word—composed of the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet (*aleph* and *tahv*)—represents the beginning and completion of creation even at God’s first creative act. It is as though before anything came into being, all six days of creation were present to God immediately prior to his *bara’*. All that remained was to recount them, a task left up to Moses. Compare the word *’eth* with: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” [Rev 1.8].

*Selah*

As for understanding *re’shyth* as beginning, God was certainly “in” it when he did his *bara’* or chiseling. At first glance one would think that the act of chiseling intimates the existence of matter already present. However, *re’shyth* can be taken as a covering of sorts, a place of concealment not unlike a tent where God did his *bara’*, his chiseling, which also involved bringing it into existence, a pre-figure of Mt. Sinai which was covered by thick darkness. The earth remained *tohu wabohu*, “without form and void” which means that *bara’* produces formlessness.

*Selah*

While God was beginning his creative act we have another divine entity engaged in a parallel activity but with a different emphasis. That is to say, the Spirit or *Ruach* “moving over the face of the waters.” Nothing specific is given as to whether this is God’s *Ruach* or another divine being along with him. Nevertheless, his presence (‘her’ is more appropriate, the noun being feminine) is an enigma of sorts, and has as her focus of attention, not the earth (that belonged to God), but the waters. Perhaps Moses was familiar with *Ruach* while composing Genesis and wanted to keep his...her...full identity for later revelation. Surely this intimate acquaintance was established on Mt. Sinai when Moses was in the darkness. Not only did Moses learn how to create (*bara’*) as God, i.e., the Torah, he learned *rachaph* or how to hover tenderly over Israel, this being in imitation of the *Ruach* over the face of the waters. As for the waters, at first one gets the idea that they would be considered *tohu wabohu* due to their relative formlessness compared with the more solid earth. While *Ruach* was hovering (as opposed to creating, *bara’*), we see the presence of darkness upon the face of the waters. The word for “hovering is *rachaph* which more aptly applies to a bird hovering over...cherishing...its young in the nest. Instead of speaking as we see with God, the Spirit hovers. This takes place not upon the deep (i.e., ‘waters’) itself but upon the *face* of these waters, not unlike skimming just above the surface with a space, however slight, between it and *Ruach*. After this introduction of *Ruach* no longer do we see it as an independent agent.

*Selah*

The Spirit was engaged in *rachaph* while “darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Darkness appears to be the favored environment of *Ruach*, for with the appearance of light we don’t hear of it...her...again. Darkness doesn’t disappear but finds itself measured or balanced off by the creation of light. Thus we could say that nighttime is best to detect the presence of *Ruach*, more specifically, the twilight of evening and morning when the transition between the two is being made. This darkness favored by *Ruach* is made more definitive by the separation (*badal*) God posited between light and darkness. For another used of *badal*, cf. Ex 26.33, “And the veil (of the tabernacle) shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy.” In a sense, *badal* is a forerunner for the verb *qadash* (the root for ‘holy’) which means to set apart.

*Selah*

It is only after mention of *Ruach* that we have the very first words uttered by God himself, “Let there be light.” The Hebrew reads *yehy ’or*, words quite easy to get out of one’s mouth, not unlike the first words of a baby. The text adds “and there was light” as if to confirm the words of this divine utterance. Actually the verse consists of six Hebrew words where the first letter of the alphabet (*aleph*) dominates. We find words similar to this willing into being of light (‘And it was so’) repeated for five days of creation except for that of man in 1.26. In that instance no confirmation was required except through the presence of the newly created man. Only he among all created beings, inanimate and animate, could respond to God properly. What those words were we don’t know. Then again, perhaps he required no words, just his newly minted presence. Keep in mind, however, that the “man” here is a being before God created male and female (cf. vs. 27). If God had brought those two into existence instead of the singular man, we would have confusion of response—an inarticulate mode of speech—which could not be adequate to words as direct and simple as “and it was so.”

*Selah*

As for the creation of light, God gave it another name, day (*yom*); he does the same with darkness (night), although darkness was around before all this (‘and darkness was upon the face of the deep’). Light is that which was first to come into existence even though one could argue for the existence of “waters” of vs. 2 over which *Ruach* hovered. However, *rachaph* as hovering differs from *bara’*, to create. The former is done only once or when something is brought into existence. Nothing is said about God creating these waters. Because they were a kind of orphan compared with the six days of creation, no small wonder *Ruach* took pity and bestowed upon them its *rachaph* which is lacking for the creative acts of God. With regard to *rachaph*, it is precisely the darkness the Spirit wishes to dispel by *rachaph* and so retain darkness for the Spirit’s proper dwelling place. For darkness to “be on the face” not only of the deep but of anything else in creation, is extremely oppressive. One could call this a “darkness to be felt” [Ex 10.21] which, as with the Egyptians, lacked any sense of *rachaph*. The Hebrews, by contrast, “had light where they dwelt” [vs. 23].

*Selah*

The creation of light, so essential to see what is going on, was, as one would expect, the first thing to be created or at the head of five more days when creation assumed more recognizable form. God himself is transcendent from light or darkness, so this created thing must have taken some thought and consideration. Actually the light at hand is not from the sun; no information is given that it comes from God’s nature, just that he created it. The primary function of light is boundedness by the pre-existing darkness. There was plenty of that around, so God wanted to bring into existence something opposite to it which set in motion the whole creative process. Some might argue that the creation of man is God’s greatest glory. True in many respects, but this primal, pre-temporal light is the most essential of them all.

*Selah*

The first day of creation, plus the others, is better rendered as “Day One” (the same applies to the succeeding days). To place the noun *yom* first followed by the modifying numerical adjective highlights the importance of Day. It’s clear that any one of these days does not consist of twenty-four hours but is a period of time in which a given creative act was effected. In Day One we have evening first and then morning...this before the creation of the sun which, surprisingly, takes place on Day Four. That means Day Two and Day Three witness creation of the firmament of heaven and dry land, respectively. Since evening is associated with the onset of darkness (‘darkness was on the face of the waters’), we could surmise that God wanted to make sure darkness would not dominate creation. He must have had in mind *Ruach* still there in the background hovering to keep this darkness at bay which, if allowed, would reduce everything to the chaos of *tohu wabohu*. Thus the darkness, evening and morning of Day One differ considerably from the sun and moon of Day Four which serve to mark the passage of time. In other words, Day One deals with pre-temporal realities.

*Selah*

Next we have Day Two, the only one of the entire sequence which God does not call “good” (*tov*). To create a day after the very first one is in a sense a greater accomplishment since it is a replication of what had been brought into existence for the very first time. And so Day Two is a kind of copy, the first of its kind. At this juncture, God may or may not be pleased with this copy, hence the hesitation to call it *tov*.

*Selah*

As for the contents of Day Two, we have a “firmament in the midst of the waters.” *Raqyah* is the word, from the verbal root *raqah*, to strike with the feet, spread out, tread, overlay. *Raqah* gives the impression of something being trampled out as in a winepress. It bears some kinship with the Greek *kosmos* (fundamentally a decoration) which is spread out above the earth. During the daylight hours only the sun dominates the blue sky. However, at night *raqyah* reveals itself as spread out in magnificent *kosmos* fashion, if you will. Note the firmament’s location, “in the midst of the waters,” *betok* being indicative of its central location. That means *raqyah* as something spread out is done in all directions from this center within the waters. After all, it is on the face of these waters that the Spirit is hovering or cherishing, *rachaph*. As with the other days of creation, God speaks, followed by a description of what he had uttered, a double-speak of sorts but only to confirm or ratify what he had uttered. Then again, the words of confirmation may be something Moses had inserted as he was alongside God observing his creative process.

*Selah*

The purpose of the firmament created on Day Two is to separate (*badal*) “the waters from the waters.” This is the second time *badal* is used, the first being in vs. 4 to separate the light from darkness. As for the verse at hand, we have water above and below the firmament. At least light is present for God to see what he is doing. The Spirit’s *raqyah* functions as a crucial balance with regard to the primal waters. It grows within their center (*betok*), appearing suddenly until both sides are far enough apart to transform one of them into heaven, *shamym*, similar to the firmament insofar as both suggest something spread out. As for this *betok*, one wouldn’t think it existed, given the chaotic, uncircumscribed nature of the waters. However, the Spirit had the capacity to create a locus for creation through *raqyah*.

*Selah*

As for the firmament, it became the abode of God and other spiritual beings. Above this firmament the waters occupy an unspecified dimension in which the primal waters of 1.2 were situated. As for *shamym*, it is not unlike a sphere inserted within the firmament whose chief function is to distinguish it from the earth. *Shamym* thus allows for introduction of that most basic feature of the created world, gravity, and does so by positing an up as opposed to a down. Now for the very first time there can be a true evening and a true day or an alternation of two halves of a twenty-four hour cycle.

*Selah*

Day Three opens with the waters under the heavens (*shamym*) as opposed to *raqyah* or firmament which was created in Day Two. That gives a double protection, if you will, from the waters above both the heavens and the firmament. “Let the waters...be gathered” (*qawah*): they do this on their own, neither from an external impulse nor from God compared with what had transpired during the first two days. *Qawah* also means to expect or wait, as if in the case at hand there was a delay...a waiting...between God’s utterance and the waters gathering themselves. This may be taken as a sign of growing autonomy from the direct intervention of God, not bad in itself, but signifies increased responsibility which reaches fulfilment with the creation of man. *Maqom* is the word for “place” (usually an inhabited place), the first instance of a specific spot which materializes into dry land as this same verse recounts. Thus *maqom* as earth is set over against the waters.

*Selah*

As for “earth,” the word is *yabashah* or that which has been dried up: “And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on

their left” [Ex 14.22]. Compare this term with the common one (‘*erets*’) which is used in 1.1. ‘*Erets*, is at the very beginning of the text more as an introduction relative to the divine act of creation or *bara’*, a formation of something from that which already exists which was noted above. The simple words “and let the dry land appear” are crucial, for they signify the transition from that which had become dried (*yabashah*) to earth as we know it, ‘*erets*’.

*Selah*

Upon this transition from *yabashah* to ‘*erets*, the waters that remained from the primal ones of 1.2, their name (*maym*) remains the same since both share the same essence. And so when you look out over any body of water, especially an ocean, you see the same primal waters present as had been the case before emergence of the earth. Thus you are looking back in history or more accurately, looking back to pre-history. Important as the waters are, they remain a threat that could break loose at any moment as in the case of Noah. Nevertheless, God affirms these waters by calling them good as he does with other elements of his creation.

*Selah*

Further on within Day Three we have the emergence of vegetation or *deshe’* which applies to the first sprouts such as grass. *Deshe’* serves to cover the bare earth, a kind of mantle not entirely unlike *shamym* (the heavens) covering *raqyah* (the firmament). In other words, the more layers between what grows upon the earth and the waters, the more protection you have from the primal waters. Thus *deshe’*, while offering nourishment for beasts, is much more than a decoration.

*Selah*

Day Four presents us with the creation of the sun and moon prior to which was the light (‘*or*’), first brought into existence in 1.3. ‘*Or* is light in general, so it doesn’t conflict with the appearance of evening and morning on Day One and other succeeding days. This ‘*or* pervades yet transcends the circadian rhythm and is something proper to God as John later says, “The light shines in the darkness” [Jn 1.5]. As for the lights of vs. 14, a variation of ‘*or* is used (*ma’or*) and connotes cheerfulness: “The light of the eyes rejoices the heart” [Prov 15.30]. Note the situation of these specific lights which partake of the ‘*or* just noted, “in the firmament of the heavens.” With the distinction between these two in mind, *ma’or* are inserted within both. In other words, the backside of each faces the primal firmament whereas the front sticks out through the heavens and look down upon earth. Such *m’or* are both in that place before God created anything and where the Spirit hovered (*rachaph*) and in the place (heavens) where God and other divine beings reside. No small wonder, then, that ancients tended to divinize the heavenly luminaries.

*Selah*

The purpose of the *ma’or*? “To separate (*badal* again) the day from the night.” In vs. 4 *badal* was used to separate light from darkness and even mentioned light as day and darkness as night. Thus it seems we have two creations of the two basic elements comprising a twenty-four hour cycle or one full day. The first, however, lacks the presence of heavenly luminaries essential to mark the passage of time. It is as though the two general divisions of light (day) and darkness (night) were intended to set the stage for the most basic type of division with which we are familiar and allowing us to function according to a fixed, natural rhythm. As virtually every culture acknowledges, darkness is symbolic of evil and light symbolic of good. That moral picture is developed into a workable method of distinguishing “signs, seasons and for days and years” in Day Four. Now we’re getting into divisions of times meaningful for us to mark events, all of which are in accord with a religious world view. The first, sign or ‘*oth* can refer to a portent, of something in the future. The second, seasons or *mohed*, usually applies to feasts and sacrifices to the Lord; also it means a place in which an assembly is held. Thus *mohed* connote a gathering for a solemn occasion. The third, days (*yom*) refer to normal, daily time (*chronos*, if you will) just as with the fourth, years or *shannah*, the passage of the four seasons and celebrations appropriate for those times.

*Selah*

“Let them be lights in the firmament...to give light upon the earth.” This sentence appears in reference to the just noted four divisions of times. Their transition into physical entities which can be inserted in the *raqyah* (and that means first through *shamym*, the heavens) indicates their stability and permanence in a realm well beyond the reach of mortals who may wish to tinker with them as we see in the building of the tower of Babel. “Come, let us build...a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves” [11.4]. While all four divisions of time partake of *raqyah* to one degree or another, they are set against the innate tendency of man to manipulate them for divining the future or honoring them as gods.

*Selah*

The lights which God made on Day Four (vs. 14) appear to be the stars but are not because they have been made separately. If we keep in mind the four divisions of marking time noted in the last paragraph, we could take the lights as the illumination coming from them as essential for making sense of the passage of time. Such lights can include the sun, moon and stars, all necessary for the timing and performance of religious rituals. As for the sun and moon, God likewise sets them in the firmament of heavens just as with the lights of vs. 14. All in all, the creation of the more specific lights is complex. However, the main theme is of vital importance, the ability to determine sacred festivals as well as lesser feasts along with the important times of planting and harvesting crops.

*Selah*

Day Five witnesses the emergence of “swarms of living creatures” which includes a wide variety ranging from birds to sea monsters and other aquatic creatures. Vs. 20 has the verb *sharats* which means to crawl or teem, usually relative to small (aquatic) animals and reptiles. *Sharats* occurs in 9.7, “Be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it.” This verse bears a resemblance to 1.28, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.” However, the verse pertaining to Noah is associated with the flood and hence rain, whereas 1.28 has no intimation of water. It seems that Noah, his family and the paired animals within the ark would know the meaning of *sharats* after their experience of the flood. The earth was still soaking wet when they left the ark and for a while could not help but feel they were moving about *sharats*-like.

*Selah*

As for the birds, they “fly across the firmament of the heavens.” They fly exceedingly high or in that domed border separating the flood waters above the dome and the earth below. Or to be more precise, the birds fly in between the firmament and heaven, recalling that the latter is inserted within the frame of the former. That gives the birds a very small room in which to operate. As for the sea monsters or *tanyim*, originally they could have referred to crocodiles in Egypt. Actually the list of animals in this verse is the only one God blesses (*barak*) until the creation of man (cf. vs. 28).

*Selah*

There is no explicit mention of Day Six though we can assume it begins with vs. 24. On that day God creates “living creatures according to their kinds” among which are domestic animals. Implied is that someone was around to have domesticated them, but since God is involved directly by his creative act, they receive their domestication from him alone. The word “kind” (*myn*) is mentioned five times and refers to species.

*Selah*

Day Six (the creation of man and the last days of divine creative action) begins with vs. 26 and brings us to the conclusion of Chapter One. All the previous days God brought into existence beginning with the word “Let” which in Hebrew is part of the verb at hand, not free-standing as in English. Only on Day Six does God say “Let us.” Instead of taking this as some kind of multiplicity of gods or lesser divine beings, “let us make” can arise from a singular person. Often when we express delight at something new and unexpected or when we see the possibility of bringing it into existence for the very first time we use the first person plural, “Let us” instead of “Let me.” It is as though what we experience is done not alone but in the company of other persons. Then again, we do include them

even if they may not be present physically.

*Selah*

God creates man in two parts, image and likeness (*tselem* and *demoth*). The former intimates a shadow, an unsubstantial entity which reflects something else. Light is required for a shadow as well as slavish imitation of the object's movements and shape. For a shadow to differ from its master would be unheard of. *Tselem* appears to echo the Hebraic view of death as a kind of shadow existence. For example, an alternate of this word is found in Ps 44.19, "and covered us with deep darkness." Except for the Genesis usage, *tselem* has a negative use as referring to idols. The preposition "in" (*b-*) is prefaced to *tselem*, "in our image." As for *tselem*-as-shadow, it requires light cast around an object to give it shape. Since there is no record of light independent from God, he must have been its source as in vs. 3. Because the light necessary for the creation of *tselem* comes from God, *tselem* itself is much more than a shadow. Use of this term seems to be a way of saying that God created an image in his own shadow or a duplicate of himself.

*Selah*

*Tselem* in and by itself could not have existence but requires something else which is *demoth*, likeness. This word means appearance, model and similitude, respectively and derives from the verbal root *damah*, to be silent, rest, make an end of (and hence to destroy). With the fundamental idea of becoming silent in mind, *demoth* is a kind of astonishment in the presence of *tselem*. When engaged in the act of imitation, you're paying such close attention that everything else is secondary; better, you are focused and not strained mentally. All distractions are eliminated. In other words, you fall silent before the object of imitation in a desire to absorb its reality. A further distinction between *tselem* and *demoth*: the former has the preposition *b-* prefaced to it ('in our image') whereas *demoth* has the demonstrative pronoun *k-* prefaced to it. Thus we can render *demoth* as "according to our likeness."

*Selah*

So the creation of man (*'adam*, connotes humanity as opposed to man vs. woman) is "in our image" and "according to our likeness." The Septuagint—important because many Church Fathers who wrote in Greek were familiar with this translation—has the preposition *kata* (according to) before both image and likeness (*eikon* and *homoiosis*). The Septuagint reads thus: "according to our image and according to our likeness." Without going into the matter here, two documents on this homepage deal extensively with the subject, *The Importance of Kata and Some Reflections upon Chalcedon*. In brief, *kata* allows for greater flexibility of interpretation and more importantly, for spiritual practice. It implies being made according to a series of elements which constitute human nature relative to God. In contrast, the preposition "in" allows only for being either in or out...either you're in the divine image and likeness or out of it. *Kata*, on the other hand, transcends this rather stark choice. For example, *kata* is used "According to the Gospel of St. Mark." There *kata* sets the framework for the telling of a story, of moving from one episode to another.

*Selah*

"Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea" (etc.). Note the plural "them" which refers to the singular *'adam* and before the creation of man and woman in vs. 27. So instead of these two persons, we could take "them" as the divine image and likeness working together. *Radah* is the verb for "have dominion" which means literally to tread as in a winepress and suggests the exercise of power in terms of bringing those ruled under one's foot...literally. But if we apply the plural "them" to the divine image and likeness, that would mean the living beings as object of *radah* are to come under their beneficent influence. The three divisions of the inhabited world are mentioned: air, sea and land. Taking this image a bit further, the *radah* action involved is akin to transforming the object of rule into a new substance as is the case with grapes being *radah* or trodden into wine.

*Selah*

Vs. 27 is a reflection of sorts of the first account of creation just mentioned only here the spontaneous "let us" is omitted. It says the same thing twice, "man in his own image" and "in the image of God he

created him.” It is almost a confirmation of what God had just accomplished, ‘*adam*’ being radically different from his other creative endeavors. However, vs. 27 continues further with creating this singular ‘*adam*’ into male and female. This sexual distinction is not mentioned with reference to other creatures, just human beings. The plural man and woman can refer to humans as commonly understood and the singular man as transcending that distinction, and endowment other created beings do not have.

*Selah*

Like the creatures of vs. 21, God blesses the man and woman; the same applies with “be fruitful and multiply” [vs. 28]. The first suggests the bearing of offspring and the second, the increase of this offspring. As for subduing the earth, the verb is *kavash*, fundamentally “to beget” and hence differs from *radah* of vs. 26. In other words, *kavash* seems to be an expansion of “be fruitful and multiply.”

*Selah*

Despite the divine command to *radah* and *kavash* relative to all living beings, God specifically appoints food for the man and woman as plants and trees with seeds. The idea seems to be that the man and woman have no need to kill animals for food, let alone clothing (cf. 3.21, but that came from God, not man). Something similar applies to the animals God had created, “every green plant for food.” Thus violence was lacking among all elements of creation. As for animals, this is paradoxical for even their physical composition suggests they are intended for food.

*Selah*

Only Day Six, the creation of ‘*adam*’ (and by extension, man and woman), God deemed as “very good.” The adverb *me’od* intimates strength in an almost excessive manner, “excessively good” might be a way of putting it. Such an expression of abundance comes only after God had seen all that he had made, not before or as in other days when God expressed his pleasure. Although the other days of creation close with such words as “there was evening and there was morning,” those applied to Day Six have a certain finality..not that they come at the conclusion of Chapter One but at the conclusion of the divine creative process. The seeing of all that God had made serves as a prelude to Chapter Two when he rests on Day Seven, for it takes an entire day to behold these things. Still, these six days of creation pale in comparison to the forty days Moses spent on Sinai for the creation of the Torah.

## Chapter Two

As for God resting, we can assume that Moses, the author of Genesis who was present with God at the beginning (cf. Prov 8.27 quoted at the beginning of Chapter One which helps substantiate this role), is continuing his account in Chapter Two as he does throughout the rest of this book. One could almost visualize Moses being stunned at the sight of God resting after only six days of work; furthermore, his work consisted in speaking things into existence, a relatively easy thing to do. By contrast, Moses was on Mt. Sinai forty days and forty nights a time when Moses received Torah which is more complex and wonderful than speaking into existence six days of creation. In other words, Moses exerted himself much more than God yet never complained about having a need to rest. With regard to being witness at creation and the giving of Torah, Moses was “daily beside him like a master workman,” to continue the Proverbs theme, 8.30. ‘*Amon*’ is the word for “master workman” which derives from ‘*aman*’, to be faithful. Another use is Sg 7.1 which shows the poetic side of this word and the insight it embodies: “Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a master hand.” This “master hand” belonged to Moses relative to Torah. It is not applied to God’s creative action.

*Selah*

And so in Chapter Two we find that God rests on Day Seven from *bara’*, that is to say, “the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them.” This brings to completion the opening words of Genesis and infers the intervening days of creation. In addition to heavens and earth, the first verse mentions “hosts” (*tsava’*), a term with military connotations as to what is displayed in the

firmament....the stars are arrayed in a kind of battle formation. Then again, *tsava'* may refer to the angels whose creation had not been mentioned. Note that vs. 1 says "the *tsava'* of them," that is, of the heavens and earth. Easily we can see *tsava'* displayed above at night, but what about the *tsava'* of earth? Who or what are they? We tend to consider angelic beings as dwelling on high, but early in the biblical narrative such a distinction between heaven and earth was not as sharp as it has come to be. Therefore these beings may be said to dwell on earth, *'erets*, and continue to live among us. Moses must have been conscious of this just as well when on Mount Sinai, a natural magnet for these transcendent beings.

*Selah*

As for finishing creation, *kalah* is the verb which implies not just coming to an end/completion but a cessation, of finally putting things in the past. That is to say, God puts in the past his *bara'* or creative energy which, as noted above, suggests carving or chiseling out an object that already has existence. So if we think of God creating...chiseling...over the course of six days, that's a lot of carving which makes him deserve a rest. Then again, this chiseling was done by God's word whose "word is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword" [Heb 4.12]. *Kalah* with respect to *bara'* brings up an interesting point. Does the Spirit rest from its...her...*rachaph* or hovering as we saw regarding 1.2? Probably not since always the Spirit must keep the waters at bay. So we can intimate *Ruach* engaged in this holding action off in the background.

*Selah*

Vs. 2 repeats some of what was just said, namely, that "God finished (*kalah*) his work which he had done." In vs. 1 *kalah* is passive ('were finished') whereas here it is active, attributed directly to God. Moses' report is given twice in varied form to emphasize what it means for God to take rest after six days, that is, on the seventh day. Just as with *re'shyth* (beginning) to which is prefaced the preposition *b-* (in), so it is with regard to Day Seven, *beyom*, "in day." So we can infer that in Day Seven the divine rest permeated the day through and through. As for that day, we have no mention of evening nor of morning which intimates that Day Seven is radically different from the other days of creation, that it is not subject to measurement nor duration.

*Selah*

The number seven (seventh) is *shivhah* and considered holy, possibly because the verbal root is *shavah*,

to swear an oath or allegiance, an action taken very seriously by the ancients. So Day Seven has this added dimension, being a type of pledge at the end of God's creative work. The verb for "rest" is *shavath*, literally, to sit down or be seated and has the added connotation of dwelling as opposed to moving about. While the notion of rest (and hence Sabbath rest) may be applied to *shavth*, the other associations are more appropriate to what is going on here. It is better to say that God sat down on Day Seven...sat down in order to survey the earlier six days and ponder what he would do when Day Seven was over. Certainly God had a lot of pondering to do with regard to what his word had wrought. As for day Seven, no mention is given as to if/when it is finished, so we can assume that God surveyed creation from his place of sitting down and does so right down to the present moment. "God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne" [Ps 47.8]. And so the creation of man which apparently takes place on Day Seven intimates that God wishes mankind to *shavath* with him, an indirect way of saying that he wants mankind to partake of Sabbath.

*Selah*

The six days which constitute what we know as our universe and as well as the place where we abide have continued to the present day without interruption. At the same time, the existence of Day Seven is stated in a mater-of-fact manner, as being just out there ('on the seventh day'), without any word as to its existence. Not only did God bless Day Seven as he did earlier but elevated it to a new level: he hallowed that day of rest, *qadash* being the verb. Beside the common use of being sacred, the fundamental sense of *qadash* is to separate or keep apart. Indeed Day Seven is such, being set aside

for God himself.

*Selah*

We have a brief statement (vs. 4) which seems out of place, that is, about the generations of the heavens and the earth at their creation. *Toldoth* is the word for “generations” which applies to history in the human sense as opposed to other uses. In the case at hand, *toldoth* seem to apply to the succession of created beings, their propagation and generations that succeed earlier ones. Thus *toldoth* is a busy sort of concept, of always begetting and being begotten, so it stands in contrast to Day Seven when God rested (*shavath*) or more accurately, sat down. It is as though *toldoth* caps off divine creativity in light of the Sabbath.

*Selah*

“In that day” is a simple statement with regard to the creation of the earth and heavens. “That day” isn’t specified, yet it seems to be under the aegis of Day Seven when God rested from his creation. The Hebrew lacks “that” but reads literally “in day (*beyom*) as noted above. And as we saw with regard to the six days of creation, “day” (*yom*) can refer to the period of time—not the twenty-four hour cycle—when each specific element of creation occurred. Then again, the Hebrew concept of day began at sunset, continued throughout the night and into the next day until that day’s sunset. Such is the measurement of Hebrew holy days and especially Sabbath, a term derived from the *shavath* of vs. 3.

*Selah*

As for “in day” (taking the literal Hebrew noted in the last paragraph), vs. 5 says that the earth had no plant, herb nor rain and concludes with “no man to till the ground.” The two elements of plant and herb are connected with the act of tilling which is a human activity, a way of saying that the earth had not been readied for this. “No man to till the ground:” the Hebrew has *’adam* for “man” and *’adamah* for “ground,” implying that man comes from the ground and anticipating vs. 7 when God takes *’adam* from *’adamah*. Not only that, this verse anticipates 3.23, the banishment of *’adam* from the garden to till the ground.

*Selah*

Plants and herbs require moisture to live and grow. Instead of mentioning water—perhaps the threat of water representative of chaos as in vs. 2 was still to vivid—we have the word *’ed*, a vapor which is a fine type of mist, the only other biblical reference being Job 36.37: “For he draws up the drops of water, he distills his mist in rain.” Thus *’ed* has a refreshing, gentle quality, standing in sharp contrast to waters over which the Spirit hovered. It comes up from the firm, dry earth—again, not the chaotic waters—another confirmation of the gentleness of *’ed*. Next, *’ed* falls upon “the face of the ground,” reminiscent of Jdg 6.37 when the dew of night moistened Gideon’s wool.

*Selah*

Only when this gentle fall of *’ed* comes into being does God “form man of dust from the ground.” Surely he couldn’t have done it while the waters of chaos were still around but had to wait patiently for *’ed* to make its appearance. Actually, there is no direct association of God’s creative action regarding *’ed*. One could say it came of its own accord from that hovering or cherishing (*rachaph*) of the Spirit over the waters, *’ed* and waters being essentially the same. Indeed, *’ed* is a fine product of *rachaph*.

*Selah*

*Yatsar* is the verb for “form,” the first time it is used, and stands in contrast to the chiseling of *bara’* (to create) which we had seen earlier. As for *yatsar*, there comes to mind the fashioning of an object as a potter does with clay, artist-like. So instead of the removal action associated with chiseling (and therefore *bara’*), here we have a true formation, the first time in Genesis when a form is brought into existence, and that implies plasticity. “Dust” or *haphar* is the main ingredient at hand for the form, a fine powdery substance composed of *’adamah*. Thus *haphah* has a reddish hue from the color of *’adamah*. To get the proper consistency for clay, you don’t add water all at once—that would be too

much like the waters of 1.2—but in a measured fashion. Thus *'ed* is a kind of sprinkling which fits the description here to keep the *haphar* from being neither too dry nor too wet but just right. For some things, more *'ed* is added and for others, less; so with man, God adds just the correct amount of *'ed*.

*Selah*

Once man is brought into being from dust, he stands there like a statue, lifeless, not the case with the *bara'* which is responsible for the six days of creation. The beings created then were “chiseled” into life immediately. It was otherwise with man which involved a two-fold process, the first when he was made into something statue-like not yet endowed with life. The second step consisted of breathing the breath of life into this statue. The verb here is *naphach* which implies exhalation (as opposed to inhalation) and scattering. There had to be a place of entry for *naphach* into the newly created man, standing there lifeless. At first our modern mouth-to-mouth method of resuscitation makes us think this would be the way to transmit...inhale...breath. However, God chose the nostrils (*'aph*), the primary means by which we breathe. And so God makes man exhale in the same way he does which is taken as a sign that truly he is alive.

*Selah*

*Neshmah* is the term for “breath of life” and comes from the verbal root *nasham*, to pant. It is associated with a woman in labor as Is 42.14 shows: “Now I will cry out like a woman in travail, I will gasp and pant.” Note that the Genesis verse does not have *neshmah* alone but identifies it with life itself. Since this word implies intense and quick deep inhalations, the picture of man that emerges is one endowed with liveliness and quickness, not simply standing there, quite different than when he was a lifeless statue as noted in the last paragraph. The result? “Man became a living being.” That is to say, *'adam*, or the one composed of *haphah*, the dust from the red earth (*'adamah*), did not turn into something else but “became” (the verb to be is used here) a *nephesh* or soul which was alive.

*Nephesh* is not derived from the same verbal root as *neshmah* (‘breath of life’) but from one meaning to take breath. In short, we have a being comprised of red earth and breath. Surely the other living beings of the days of creation were similar but not identified as such.

*Selah*

So while we witness this transformation from *'adamah* to one endowed with *nephesh*, God’s next task is finding a suitable place for him to live. He had to act quickly, for *'adam* was couldn’t just stand around statue-like but was alive and required a place as soon as possible. What was going through the mind of this first man while he was awaiting this place, and where was he located, if such a spacial term could be used? As of yet the man had no experience of belonging to a given place but realized something was going to happen to him shortly. As for his location, apparently it was on the earth upon which that mist or *'ed* had fallen and provided the moisture for his fashioning. Chances are that during this crucial process Moses, the author of Genesis and witness to creation, decided to keep *'adam* company, to reassure him that all will be well.

*Selah*

On Day Six God created man whereas on Day Seven, the day when God rested, we have an apparent second account of his creation of man. The difference between the two? The first obviously was effected during a day of creation as was the case with the preceding ones. Mention of being made in the divine image and likeness is its distinguishing feature. The second account happened on Day Seven or Sabbath when supposedly God was taking his rest from creating or as noted above, was sitting down (*shavath*). Here the actual bringing into existence of the first female is crucial to that day. It does not speak about the divine image and likeness because there’s no need for this. They are not required on Day Seven because it is Sabbath, for you don’t have to bother imitating nor reflecting God while he is at rest. On the other hand, Day Six requires some distinguishing marks to set apart man from other living beings. If not, easily he would have gotten lost among them. That’s why he was given dominion over creation, to preserve his image and likeness, not for any other reason.

*Selah*

As for the first six days, they belong to the domain of divine *bara'* or chiseling which opened the creative drama. The second belongs to the impartation of breath...*naphach*...which is an easier task requiring a simple inhalation. Regardless of which you chose, chiseling or inhaling, you get a different view of man or better, two aspects of his nature. The former has God creating man followed by the sexual distinction into male and female. Next comes God imparting rule over creation which is lacking in the second account. This second one has him inhaling man without this sexual distinction (that comes later, 2.22). More importantly, the second creation is effected on Day Seven or Sabbath, implying that the garden which God is about to plant (i.e., not create, vs. 8) is the place in which the man and shortly the male and female persons will share in this Sabbath. And so while God was planting the garden and the man was waiting to be placed in it, he was considering the meaning of Sabbath and how he would comport himself in this day of rest which knows no temporal bounds.

*Selah*

Vs. 8 has God engaged in a type of work quite unlike the one characteristic of his six days of creation: "The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east." Planting is much more arduous than speaking things into existence though that form of work can be pleasant. The verb is *natah* which suggests fixing a tent or fastening a nail. In short, the sense is of pinning something down, of putting it in a given location so it won't get up and move. The garden's location is two-fold: first the direction of east followed by the place of Eden within that direction. Eden is a more generic place compared with the more specific garden; furthermore, it suggests a pleasant land. As for the east (or for any cardinal direction), it is relative to some central spot which remains unmentioned. Always the garden in the East retains an unspoken relationship with the west, north and south or with those invisible points of reference. The garden is in a pleasant place (i.e., Eden) which is in the land of the sunrise as opposed to the west, land of the sunset and symbolic of death. So to appreciate the garden/Eden, you have to appreciate the dawn and hours before noontime when the sun dominates the eastern sky; besides, that time is still relatively cool and refreshing. As for the sun's direction, always it approaches the garden/Eden as it with a typical sunrise, not the other way around.

*Selah*

So when God had planted the garden, he reached over to grab the man who now was an animate being, lifted him up and plunked him down within it. Actually the verb is *sum*, to set or place, which may or may not involve a lifting up and putting down. Regardless, *sum* is not unlike *natah* (to plant, as the garden) in that both infer stability, of not moving here nor there. As for the words "there he put the man," we have a play on words: *sum* (put) and *sham* (there). It indicates the simultaneity between the act of putting and the place into which man was put. Prior to being in his new home, the man had to be somewhere though no location is given. After all, this occurs on Sabbath or Day Seven when God took his rest, his *shavath*. Being newly placed in the garden/Eden, man received a preference for being oriented toward the east, toward sunrise, not the sunset and the other two cardinal points of the compass. So if we were to go seeking after him, we'd be drawn to the easterly direction. Preference for this direction remained after his banishment from the garden and found its way into various religious manifestations: burial, position of churches, etc.

*Selah*

After having planted the garden and having placed the man in it, "out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree" (etc., vs. 9). At first you'd think God would prepare the garden with trees before placing the man in it. However, the newly formed man required time to adapt to his new surroundings; not in an open, unspecified place as *'erets* (the earth), but within the relative confinement of a garden. Furthermore, God wanted him to be witness to this growing (*tsamach*) or more accurately, sprouting forth of the trees, which follows their planting. God focused his attention upon trees; no mention is made of bushes, shrubs and plants for man's nourishment, let alone birds or animals. However, God had a purpose for this. Each tree came from the ground...from *'adamah*...which the man or *'adam* would recognize instantly due to his connaturality with it. Without

such connaturality from *'adamah*, *'adam* may not have felt at home in the garden. Now other plants and shrubs could abound as they would.

*Selah*

A distinction relative to the trees: "pleasant to the sight" and "good for food." The order here is reminiscent of Ps 34.8, "Taste (first) and (then) see that the Lord is good." What we are bidden to taste is not specified. The disobedience of the man and woman which happens later is a distortion of this verse with respect to the tree they were forbidden to taste. In that instance seeing came first followed by tasting. That's why after having tasted the tree's fruit their eyes were opened (cf. 3.7). As for the verse at hand, the tree is pleasant or *chamad*, that which is to be desired. *Chamad* appears in 3.6 relative to the tree in the midst of the garden: "the tree was to be desired to make one wise." These trees are *chamad* and are distinguished from the "tree of life" which, as just noted, the woman found to be desirable. Furthermore, this tree along with the others, was planted in the "midst of the garden." *Tawek* is "midst" often with the preposition *b-* (in) prefaced to it which results in *betok*. Usually this word refers to the center of a place though it can have a more general sense as among or within. Thus the tree of life can be situated in among the rest of trees, not necessarily at the garden's center. That would make it more difficult to pick out, yet the woman had no problem finding it; only the serpent knew it and wished to make its place known to the woman. A distinction is made between the "tree of life" and the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." As for the tree itself, we have a distinction, one for life and the other for knowledge (*dahath*) pertaining to good and evil (*tov* and *rah*). Once the two trees came into being, the stage is set for the creation of woman which has a kind of foreboding as to what will happen both to her as well as the man.

*Selah*

Vs. 6 spoke of that mist which watered the "whole face of the ground." A mist is gentle by nature yet enough water had accumulated to form a river which flowed from Eden "to water the garden" after which it "divided and became four rivers" [vs. 10]. As for "rivers," the Hebrew is *ro'sh* or head which in the next verse assumes names compared with this primal, unnamed river which partook of the mist or *'ed*. "Head" designates these rivers as sources for others as well as for watering their respective lands. For the primal river to flow from Eden, it must have consisted (as most rivers do) of rivulets which came together at one point to form one identifiable course of flowing water. The water, it is to be remembered, came from above (*'ed*) and not from springs in the earth. As for the point of dividing into four rivers...*ro'sh* (heads)...it is not mentioned. Chances are they were located just outside Eden but then again, Eden has no boundaries except its position "in the east" [vs. 8], toward the rising sun. So if Eden were in the east, the four "heads" flowed north, south and west; the east and therefore Eden had no such river because it was the primal source of all the "heads." In other words, Eden received its watering from above, the mist or *'ed*. As for the named four rivers in vss. 11-14, no cardinal points are given except place names, the first such mentioned in the Bible. Thus we have three directions and four place names, all distinct from Eden "in the east."

*Selah*

Pishon is the name of the first river which is mentioned in one other place, Sir 24.25: "It (Mosaic Law) fills men with wisdom like the Pishon, and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits." This river flows around Havilah (mentioned several times in the Old Testament as with the other three rivers), a place containing gold and therefore a place of mines. Then as now, water is used for intense washing away of soil to obtain gold, so the Pishon must have been suitable for this purpose. Bdelium and onyx stone are also mentioned, the former being an aromatic gum like myrrh which comes from trees; onyx is quartz which is not only white in color but can contain others colors. The second river is the Gihon which surrounds Cush; nothing is said as to that land's wealth. The third river is the Tigris with the fourth being the Euphrates, again with no mention as to innate wealth. In brief, these four rivers (*ro'sh*, head) are crucial for watering places where civilization took root. Thus Eden could lay claim to being the source of these civilizations without it being one proper. Again, that claim would

derive from it as being the exclusive source of water...mist...from the heavens, *'ed*.

*Selah*

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” [vs. 15]. This is a repetition of sorts of vs. 8: “and there he put the man whom he had formed.” The first is connected with the *'ed* or mist which was essential to his formation. The second is when the trees had been planted. Note the difference between vss. 8 and 15 as far as God’s relationship with man: the former has “there he put the man” whereas the latter has “took the man and put him in the garden.” The first has a simple putting (*sum*) whereas the second, a taking (*laqach*) and then a putting (*nuach*). *Sum* was commented upon above with respect to *sham* (there), a play on words, pretty much to emphasize the intended permanence of man’s new dwelling. On the other hand, *nuach* means to rest, to be quiet, though it involves the act of putting such as setting down. “And the spirit rested upon them” [Num 11.26]. The act of taking in vs. 15 implies that God reaches over somewhere—that place isn’t specified—and grabs the man. Perhaps man had been positioned on the earth of vs. 8, an undefinable place though not bounded, as with the garden. God wanted man to be limited physically but not so otherwise which is why the dimensions of Eden are irrelevant. The creation of boundaries is not meant to imprison man, for he had no sense of them nor was concerned with being in the garden as opposed to outside it. Furthermore, being outside on the *'erets* of vs. 8 lacked “every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food” as well as not having the “tree of life.” God must have foreseen that the man would desire these trees, hence his taking (*laqach*) and then putting...resting, *nuach*. The latter verb suggests that the man will be content in the garden and will imitate the divine *shavath* or rest which, as we’ve seen, can apply to a sitting down as opposed to laying down.

*Selah*

As far as this connection between divine *shavath* and human *nuach* is concerned, vs. 15 has the verbs *havad* and *shamar* right after *nuach* which serve to distinguish it from God’s resting. *Havad* is the simple verb to work and *shamar* means to keep, a sense used frequently in connection with the keeping of Torah. “My soul has kept your testimonies” [Ps 119.167]. With this sense of *shamar* in mind, it is easy to see how the man instinctively kept the garden as one would keep Torah. On the other hand, God simply rested...sat down (*shavath*). Yet that didn’t prevent him from creative work on Day Seven, i.e., forming man.

*Selah*

Before the man could till and keep the garden, God commanded him in vss. 16-17 to eat of every tree except the one of knowledge relative to good and evil. The verb is used with the preposition *hal* (upon), as though the command by God rested upon him. The command doesn’t seem to apply to the tilling or keeping of all trees, including the tree of knowledge...a kind of look-but-don’t-touch. For this tree to be so distinguished, it must have stood out from the others. No special characteristics are given except later as to the apparently special beauty its fruit offered, although vs. 9 said that all the trees were pleasant to the sight and good for food. The man seemed to have been unaware of that, only the woman. The unique tree was one of knowledge or *dahath*, derived from the verb *yadah* which often is used for close relationships, even sexual intercourse. “Adam knew his wife” [4.1]. Because the tree of *dahath* was so beautiful, the temptation “to know” it must have been with the same strength and vigor as the sexual impulse. Again, that lies in the future with the creation of woman. God says to the man that he will die upon eating the fruit of this tree. However, death had not yet entered creation, let alone the garden, so perhaps the man had no idea of what God was talking about. However, note the connection between death and “in the day you eat of it.” “Day” suggests time but also can be those days pertaining to creation (Day One, etc.). “That” is a specific day unrelated to the seven days of Chapter One and suggests the potential awareness of time’s passage which is a sign of awareness of death. First this awareness comes which leads to the finality of death. Furthermore, “that day” is unlike the seven where the noun precedes the adjective inferring that it is strictly temporal in duration and devoid of spiritual implication.

### Selah

"It is not good that the man should be alone." *Lavad* is the word for "alone" and is comprised of the preposition *l-* (to, toward) prefaced to *bad*, separation. This preposition serves to intensify the sense of aloneness as well as exclusiveness and is used only with regard to the man. Presumably this being alone didn't apply to all which had been created earlier and were content to go along their merry way. It seems that the man, who has not yet spoken but was the subject of divine action, did not communicate that he was alone. Somehow God perceived it which is why he placed him in the garden, away from created beings and from among all the trees, that he may feel this aloneness or separation more intensely. God's idea to make a "helper" or *hezer* suggests not making an equal to man but to assist with the tilling and keeping of the garden. That might be fine but does not suit the desire for union with the woman which takes place not in the garden but outside it (cf. 4.1). And so *hezer* is presented as such, neither as male nor female, but that will be resolved shortly. This *hezer* is "fit" for the man, that is, *neged*. *Neged* is not an adjective to describe *hezer* but a preposition meaning "before, in front of, over against." In other words, *neged* evokes a being similar to man who will be before him, always in his presence. As for God planning all this, he doesn't disclose his intent to the man but is talking aloud or better, sharing his thoughts with Moses who was beside him. God may have gotten the idea of *hezer* from Moses insofar as Moses was *neged*...before...God as both shared the same drama.

### Selah

In order to get the creation of a helper just right, God brings a multitude of creatures to man to see what he would call them (cf. Vs. 19). Such creatures had been accounted for in earlier days of creation, so this group appears to be of a wholly different order: "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast (etc.)." *Hezer* as helper could apply to some of the animals, especially the four-footed ones, for they would be valuable in tilling the ground and hauling stuff around. The man would have not lost sight of that. God's good intention is twofold: first, he formed them "out of the ground." That is to say, he *yatsar* these creatures (beasts of the field and birds of the air), a verb not used as to their coming into existence but to man alone as in vs. 7: "God formed man of dust from the ground." As we have seen, *yatsar* involves fashioning an object much like a potter compared with creation as *bara'* or to chisel. So instead of *bara'* these creatures, God *yatsar* them as he had done with man. Secondly, God made them from the ground or *'adamah*, the same matrix from which man (*'adam*) had been fashioned. A good attempt by God when he presents them to the man...like-to-like...but the man remains unsatisfied (cf. vs. 20). God must have been testing the man, presenting one species (animal) to another (man) to see what would happen. To his relief, God found that the man rejected them. Then we have Moses watching all this, perhaps in amazement and even more fearful than God that the man might pick an animal for his *hezer*. We shouldn't be surprised that Moses was wiser than God, having keener insight into man's need for a woman to complement him, simply not to be a helper. God must have gotten the drift of what Moses thought just by seeing the disapproval on his face.

### Selah

God was extremely curious to see what the man would call the creatures, for that would give good insight into how he would comport himself in the garden as well as demonstrate whether or not his new creation was successful. First, God had to gather the animals (NB: there are two sets of creatures: those made outside the garden (*bara'* being the verb) and those he brings to the man inside the garden or those which he formed, *yatsar* being the verb). Though the two types of creation may appear identical, in truth they are different by reason not only of their coming into existence but because God brings the second group to man for naming them. On the other hand, the others—despite their priority in time—have a shadowy type of existence, one neither here nor there. Not only did God want to see what would happen but Moses did as well. Before this would come to pass, however, God had to go around the garden to gather the animals. Second comes their presentation to

the man “to see what he would call them.” This calling is different from bestowing a name, for that is a permanent gesture insofar it identifies a person, place or thing for future generations. The calling (*qara*) is more often applied to summoning a group of people together. Important as the animals may be, they do not share the same nature as the man. Hence God’s curiosity to see what the man would call...*qara*...them. We don’t have any list nor mention of them between this point and the expulsion from the garden, let alone God’s response. What’s crucial is the use of *nephesh* for “creature” which suggests breathing and applies to the human soul as well as the animating principle of living creatures. When the man was giving names to each animal—and that must have taken a very long time—surely he had in mind his being made by God who “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” [vs. 7]. All the animals must have been disappointed as they passed by and were rejected at not being chosen as a *hezer*. The four-footed ones must have tried putting on a more impressive show since they knew they would be useful in the garden. The brothers of David must have felt quite similar when Samuel examined them as candidates for king of Israel. Each of the eleven passed by Samuel who, at God’s prompting, rejected them all (cf. 1Sam 16.6-13).

*Selah*

As we had seen, the divine breathing which brought the man to life is different, and the man didn’t want to confuse the two, hence the word *nephesh*. Despite the delightful image of God bringing animals to the man, there’s an intimation that something isn’t quite right. “But for the man there was not found a helper fit for him.” Here is a clear disappointment for God for which Moses must have rebuked him. After all, what was God up to? Crossing species in an attempt to come up with some weird cross-breed? Then again, *hezer* necessarily doesn’t apply to a marriage partner but someone to help out in the garden, a slave or a hireling. God seems to get the idea that a *hezer* isn’t what the man wants but keeps it quiet from him. I.e., one could say that both God and the man were clueless at this point. Now God decides to create something unique but with a precedent. As the other days of creation reveal, the animals had to have been created as male and female and paired off as such, so God followed that model. He recalled having made not just the man, an image of the human race, but two persons distinct in sex (cf. 1.27). That case was different, however, Day Six of creation. Both the man and woman were not put inside the garden; the mention of such a place at this juncture was unknown, let alone Eden. That means both dwelt on *‘erets*, the earth, as opposed to the welcoming confines of the garden. There they could eat animals (cf. 1.30) as opposed to fruit from trees alone. There’s no mention of the man and woman having to do work; that was assumed on Day Six whereas on Day Seven (Sabbath), the garden is to be tilled and kept (cf. 2.15). Such activity on Sabbath is not prohibited, for nothing can be considered as toil on Day Seven.

*Selah*

In order to solve the dilemma of the man not having a helpmate, God comes up with a novel idea. He puts the man to sleep and fashions a woman from one of his ribs. This is a radical departure from previous acts of creation, even having made the singular man in 1.26 followed by the division into male and female, novel in itself. In that instance their coming into existence, along with other beings on the various days of creation, were effected with ease. All God had to do was to speak and behold, there they were. Of course, Moses was present watching all this and wanted to see if God, who by now was in the habit of making something from nothing, could make something from something. To humans that sounds easy but for God, so used to speaking things into existence, did not yet have the challenge of making something from something. That says something about God; he was humble enough to take a human approach though it must have been fraught with risks (which it turned out to be, unfortunately). However, eventually he corrected it with the Incarnation of his Son. God didn’t want to stray too far away from the creative challenge offered by Moses, so he stuck with something safe yet at the same time satisfying for the man. Hence the reason for the physical similarity between man and woman. This newly created being was far from being a helper. As for God, we don’t have man’s response to him for the woman; he was too taken-aback at what was before him. Because the woman

is one step removed from God and the object of man's attention, perhaps God was jealous, hence he brought it about that the serpent would seduce her and in turn, the man. Better to get someone indirectly than directly which God had done, stealthily employing both the serpent and the woman. So if tradition considers the serpent as symbolic of deviousness, it pales in comparison with God's.

*Selah*

Once all the animals had paraded by the man and went their way not unlike disappointed suitors and the rejected brothers of David, God decided enough was enough. Instead of speaking the woman into existence he decided to form her, that is, from the man's rib (That's keeping in line with creating something from something). First, however, God had to perform a physical operation on the man, so he "caused a deep sleep to fall upon (him)." The verb *naphal* (to fall) is hiphael or causative: God doesn't make the fall happen directly to man but brings it on indirectly, a kind of action-at-a-distance. This intimates a certain distance between God and man, God knowing that in a short while the man will be infatuated totally with the woman. As for the "deep sleep," the noun is *tardemah* derived from the verbal root *radam*, to sleep heavily. Not only that, *radam* means to snore, a sure sign that the man is out cold. The noun can be taken negatively as in Is 20:10: "For the Lord has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep and has closed your eyes, the prophets and covered your heads, the seers."

*Tardemah* is intensified by use of the preposition *hal* (on, upon), as though this sleep hit the man like a ton of bricks.

*Selah*

*Tardemah* is followed by "while he (the man) slept," the verb being the common *yashan*. The former certainly is much deeper—not your common night's rest—but the equivalent of being out cold from too much to drink; having been anaesthetized is another example. While in the condition of absolute oblivion, God removed a rib from which he fashioned the woman. The verb here is *banah* (to build), the first time it's used in the Bible, so it brings a new slant to God's grand creative enterprise we've witnessed thus far. So with *banah* God takes an approach different from the already mentioned speaking things into existence, even different even from the breathing or *naphach* of vs. 7 (actually the two aren't that different). Now to build something is unique for God because this is his first attempt. As always, Moses was there to offer advice: on Mt. Sinai he had received the plan to build the ark to carry the Lord and so forth, so God may have gotten the idea of *banah* from him. To build something requires a plan, and that plan was man laying there in *tardemah*. His being out cold had the added benefit of allowing God to thoroughly examine him inside and out, and so obtain insight as how to proceed. Yes, God didn't stray far off his plan or first venture of making something from something. However, he revealed a brilliant though arguably controversial addition to creation, human sexuality.

*Selah*

Upon completing this new person, the very first woman, God brought her to the man just as he had brought the animals to him in vs. 19. In the first instance God had to wait until every last one passed by the man to see the results. Here it was a different story. The man recognized the woman instantly by blurting out—there's no better way to put it—the words, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." It is better to read, "bone from my bone and flesh from my flesh" or not from any created being apart from me whether animate or inanimate. The words "at last" are in Hebrew *paham* which means a step, or the striking an anvil. The idea seems to be that *paham* connotes that which hits or has been hit and had been done suddenly as is the case with the man who called her "woman" (*'ishah*) "because she was taken from man (*'ish*)." Not a very creative name, but what else could you expect upon awaking from the profound sleep of *tardemah*? If there was anything that would awake him fully from the deepest of all sleeps, it was the sight of the very first woman who was like the man in all respects except sexually. The phrase *zo'th hapaham* (includes the just mentioned *paham*) sums up the man's astonishment and can be rendered as "this the strike." *'ishah* as representing that which has been taken out of man forever will remind him of that *tardemah* from which he had just awoke. One wonders what God must have been thinking at this moment. Surely

he was proud of his first attempt to create something from something. On the other hand, he must have had a tinge of regret that the woman will come between him and the man, an unwanted melange-a-trois. As for the woman, no record is given as to how she responded to seeing the man. Perhaps she looked at God for a brief wistful moment before noticing the man which conveyed to God what she was thinking both about him and the man. She knew that as the second human being in the garden she was a threat to God's attention. Not only must the woman must vie for affection with the man but with God.

*Selah*

The suddenness conveyed by *zo'th paham* in vs. 23 is spelled out, as it were, with vs. 24: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." Here's yet another insult to God, for the man directs his entire attention to the woman. As for leaving father and mother, obviously they didn't exist yet. Moses was responsible for these words which reflect how God felt after the man abandoned him with the same suddenness for newly created person. By mentioning father and mother, Moses had in mind a good number of generations where the strong, direct attraction between man and woman has played itself out. The verb *hazav* is "leaves" which is more an abandoning—even a forsaking—which keeps in line with *zo'th paham*. As for the historical context of a father and mother, *hazav* of them occurs with Cain and Abel, brothers and first human offspring, who claim the man and woman as their parents. As a side note, we have no mention of the first humanly begotten woman. However, it is mentioned in 4.17, "Cain knew his wife," but that's all.

*Selah*

*Hazav* or abandonment of one's parents is intensified by the cleaving of the man to his wife, that is to say, his *davaq*, a word which intimates being glued. So to unglue this *hazav* is the most difficult thing in the world. Actually, the *davaq*, an action between two physical bodies, makes the man and woman one flesh. The Hebrew way of stating "one flesh" is not unlike stating the seven days just recounted, that is to say, the man and the woman became "Flesh One." The man is described as having abandoned his parents though in reality he had none; nothing of the like is said pertaining to the woman. However, having been fashioned from the man's rib, her attraction to the man was greater. She had been taken from him and wants to go back into him which is her way of realizing *davaq*. Both man and woman were *harum* (naked), from a verbal root with the alternate meaning to be crafty, cunning. In fact, a slightly different alteration of this adjective is used to describe the serpent in 3.1: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made." Perhaps the shared quality of nakedness between the woman and the serpent is what did him in a bit later. And so, Chapter Two concludes on the positive note that the man and women were not ashamed of being naked. That can signify that arousal and manifestation of their sexual organs was done right out there in the garden. God, along with his companion Moses were witnessing this, yet we don't see even the slightest hint of shame or disgrace.

### Chapter Three

This chapter opens immediately with the introduction of the serpent or *nachash* whose verbal root means to whisper or hiss; also it means to practice divinization or sorcery. The idea is that a sorcerer hisses or whispers quietly while performing an incantation so that other people may not be privy to what's going on. Despite the serpent's deceit—that will be revealed shortly—it was used later as a sign of healing: "So Moses made a bronze *nachash* and set it on a pole; and if a *nachash* bit any man, he would look at the bronze *nachash* and live" [Num 21.9]. To be sure, Moses was present with God as he was recording all that was transpiring and got this idea to undo the evil the serpent had done in the garden. Why not put him on a pole for everyone to see? That would go contrary to his nature of slithering on the ground where he prefers to remain as invisible as possible. The serpent is described as being subtle or *harum*; another way of putting this is that the serpent is crafty. *Harum* is derived

from a verb which at first glance you wouldn't expect to be its root, *haram* or to make naked, uncover. That is to say, often craftiness is associated with the opposite, covering up in order to conceal cunning activity. On the other hand, the adjective *harum* which is applied to the serpent can mean prudence: "The simple believes everything, but the prudent looks where he is going" [Prov 14.15]. In the case of the serpent, he did exercise a certain prudence by approaching the newly created woman instead of the man.

*Selah*

"Did God say 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" Here we have a display of the serpent's *harum* or craftiness, echoing 2.16 when God forbade the man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent is crafty insofar as it decided to address the woman who had not heard those words because she has not yet been created. The woman is one step removed from the divine prohibition. However, she fires back by saying that she and the man may eat of the fruit and even not eat, let alone touch, the tree in the midst of the garden. The man received the prohibition directly whereas the woman got it indirectly, so she was in a position to make excuses more readily than the man. She received the information second-hand and was not as responsible (so she assumed) as the man. Note the woman's quote of what God had said "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden (etc.);" not exactly in line with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in 2.9. As observed earlier, *betok* for "midst" can refer to that which is among other things or within a certain place as opposed to the center. Thus the woman does not mention the tree of knowledge, just the one in the midst which could be any one of them. Perhaps she detected something not quite right in the way the serpent was addressing her and may have tried to wiggle out of it. The other prohibition the woman used was "neither shall you touch it." The Hebrew is more vivid, "shall not touch in it." A demonstration of how the woman, newly created from man, did not get it quite right, for God said nothing to the man about touching the fruit, that is, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Indeed, touching comes close to eating and in most instances, precedes it. Then again, one may look and touch the fruit without actually eating it.

*Selah*

Vs. 4 has the serpent say confidently to the woman, "You will not die." This is the second mention of death, the first being in 2.17: "for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." As noted there, the man hadn't the slightest notion of death and was oblivious to God was attempting to communicate. We have no response from the woman about death who, like the man, hadn't a clue as to what the serpent meant. However, she must have pondered those words and perhaps even discussed them with the man. After all, the garden was in the east, the land of perpetual dawn which symbolizes eternal life, the furthest point away from death. As for their relationship, a marital one is implied on the basis of the word "husband" in vs. 6.

*Selah*

The serpent or *nachash* continues his *nachash* or whispering after the manner of a sorcerer, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened." The serpent was privy to what God knew which implies that he must have been slithering around God, listening in on what he and Moses were discussing about the man and woman. He is a kind of antithesis to the disciples on the mount of Transfiguration where Jesus was talking with Moses and Elijah...only the serpent knew fully what the two were discussing compared with the disciples who were ignorant. After having listened in on the conversation, the serpent slithered away to the garden eager to put this knowledge to the test. Like many people who are privy to secrets, the serpent couldn't restrain himself and so blurted it out to the woman whom he knew would pass it on to the man. In this way he'd take down two for the price of one. Although the woman could see physically, she could not see when it came to perceiving the difference between good and evil. For her it didn't exist. The serpent's invitation "to know good and evil" must have been exceptionally enticing because it was a capacity to possess that which was beyond her and naturally roused her curiosity. Indeed that knowledge would be God-like, so we shouldn't be

surprised at the woman succumbing to the *nachash* by the *nachash* or succumbing to the whispering from the serpent. And like a blind person, the woman's sense of hearing must have been highly sensitive, so she was more susceptible for that *nachash* or whispering-as-sorcery by the serpent. The English text of vs. 6 begins with the simple word "so" and is aptly chosen. Here it takes the place of the Hebrew "and" which thus far has begun virtually every verse. It serves to highlight continuous flow of events as well as being an aide to recite the text from memory. The seeing of the tree was not done physically but was of keener type on the moral level. We don't have a record of what the woman must have felt with this new capacity, only that she went directly for the tree and its fruit.

*Selah*

Right away the woman makes three observations about the tree, all related to her newly discovered capacity for moral vision: 1) "that the tree was good (*tov*) for food" which can apply to the tree itself, limbs, bark and all. No surprise here because trees are the only living things growing in the garden as noted in 2.9. Seeing this tree as good for food doesn't involve seeing in the moral sense. 2) "That it was a delight to the eyes," delight being *ta'awah*. "Lord, all my longing is known to you" [Ps 38.9]. Finally, 3) the "fruit was to be desired to make one wise." *Chamad* is the verbal root for "desired" as in Sg 2.3: "I desired to sit down in his shadow." As for "wise," the verb is *sakal* which means to behold, turn the mind to, be successful. Thus to become *sakal* means having the capacity to behold or to take in something at a single glance as opposed to just looking at it. The woman must have taken this *sakal* as a way to open her eyes, so no small wonder that she was entranced by the serpent's offer. Who wouldn't? Vs. 6 concludes with the woman giving some of the tree's fruit to her husband who ate it. Very simple words without indicating his response. It is so fascinating to visualize the two at this juncture where human existence is about to change forever. Because the woman offered the fruit to the man, we can assume that he was nearby though nothing is said about his response to the serpent's offer to her. Perhaps he wasn't as susceptible to *nachash*—that whispering from the serpent—because he sprang directly from God.

*Selah*

"Then the eyes of both were opened." As soon as this occurred, the man and woman knew something was different but couldn't quite put it into words. At this point we hear nothing about the serpent. His role of *nachash*, of whispering, is fulfilled so he can pass off the scene until later when Moses lifts him up in the desert as a sign for healing...and in Christian tradition that prefigures Jesus being lifted upon the cross. The first thing the man and woman realized was their nakedness, a far cry from the serpent's claim that "they would be like God." Surely here is the first and cruelest of all paradoxes which entered their minds instantly, wishing they could undo what they had done. As for the word "naked," the verbal root is *haram* from which comes the adjective to describe the serpent as *harum*, subtle. It's almost as though by following the serpent's advice first the woman and then the man became as the serpent, *harum*. This tendency toward deception is revealed by their sewing fig leaves to make garments or as the RSV has it, aprons. *Chagorah* is the word here, something like a loincloth to cover their genitalia. Prior to this both the man and woman had no need for practical knowledge such as sewing but quickly found themselves able to stitch together fig leaves. As for the verbal root of *chagorah*, it's *chagar*, to gird. Often it is used with making sackcloth, a sign of repentance: "Gird yourself with sackcloth" [Jer 6.26]. Thus the *chagorah* made by the man and woman reveal a sense of shame which previously they had lacked and wished to use it as a sign of repentance.

*Selah*

Immediately after this incident the man and woman "heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden." This happened "in the cool of the day" or evening, so the time when both had their eyes opened was shortly before sunset. The serpent heard God walking and withdrew as quickly as possible, perhaps not far off so as to see what God would do. For him, this was the sweetest vengeance of them all, turning God against the newly formed man and woman as well as watching them come up with an excuse for their misbehavior. Furthermore, we have the tacit presence of

Moses who watched all this unfold with a view toward leading Israel from the bondage of Israel. And we shouldn't forget that Moses was responsible from writing all this down as an eyewitness.

*Selah*

The word for "sound" is *qol* which is used often as voice and implies that God was talking most likely with Moses. One gets the impression that both didn't know what had occurred when out for their daily walk to enjoy the garden at evening time. Since the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was off limits to the man and woman, perhaps God wanted to see if they had eaten of it. He must have had this in mind from the beginning and thought by keeping an eye on them in the evening during his regular check would take care of matters much like a watchman making his rounds. As for the *qol*, what did it consist of? What were God and Moses discussing? As both approached the tree, they could have seen the serpent slither past them in a hurry, a sure sign that something was wrong. Their pace must have quickened and knew instantly this evening would not turn out like the others. As for the time of day, *ruach* is used for "cool" which more precisely means spirit or wind. It is reminiscent of Gen 24.63 when Isaac saw the approach of his future bride, Rebekah: "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there were camels coming."

*Selah*

Vs. 8 continues with: "And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." Did they hide from his voice, rather, God and Moses talking, or did they hide from the *ruach* which was blowing at evening, a signal of their approach? Both *qol* and *ruach* go together, for *ruach* signaled that someone was near, not unlike the rustling of leaves. Surely the rustling created by God and Moses, along with the *ruach* of evening, must have created a fairly loud noise. Of course, this is the first instance when the man and woman showed fear towards God, something they had not experienced before. No question it was disconcerting, this sudden fright swelling from within and lacking rational explanation. The first sign of their fear was their making of "aprons" and the second was hiding among the trees. *Betok* is the word for "among" which, as noted earlier, can apply to "the midst of." The man and woman wanted to put as much distance as possible between them and the tree from which they had eaten, another sign of fear and trying to protect themselves. As for God, this is the first time we have him localized though no description is given except that *qol* or sound (voice) coupled with "cool" or *ruach*. Both words don't pertain to sight but to sound...listening...and that is how the man and woman recognized him and continue to do so down to the present day.

*Selah*

"The Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'" Note that God calls (the simple word *qara'*) man alone, not the woman. This summons differs from previous evening strolls when God had met the man and woman, greeted them and passed on. This evening he got no response, hence his calling out. To that instance of God saying "Where are you?," the only response was that *ruach* ('cool') heard rustling among the trees. Awareness of that sound at evening as is the case at hand was more disconcerting than at other times. The rustling is more than a simple noise, for it highlights the absence of response and gives a foreboding sense that something is wrong. After what for God must have seen a terribly long interval came the response (it isn't recorded but is intimated), "I heard the sound of you...and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself." We must give the man credit for responding quickly compared to the woman of which nothing is reported. The words "I heard the sound of you" is telling. Emphasis is upon hearing as opposed to seeing God which is not the case here. The text presents God only as *qol* and *ruach*, voice and cool, which call out to the man.

*Selah*

Immediately God gets the drift of the man's response which, as the last paragraph noted, was courageous of him. However, this quickly shifts to a blame game when he pins responsibility on the woman. The words "the woman whom you gave to be with me" are the nub of that insult which must

have angered God; it was almost as insulting as the serpent or *nachash* speaking as a sorcerer (*nachash*) and mimicking God. Up to this point God was ready to let the man off with a reprimand and send him away. While God was considering this, we don't hear a word from the serpent, too busy slithering away to a safe distance to continue listening in on this conversation from a safe distance. So what about Moses who was walking with God? He was right there and just as indignant. However, we can attribute more control over the situation to Moses than God because he resolved to use the serpent as a means of healing which happened later in the desert. It was a revenge just as sweet as God's promise to the woman about her bruising the serpent's heel (cf. vs. 15...though serpents lack heels as well as any other protruding body parts). As for the woman who was present with the man, God asks what she had done. Again, an effort to pass off the blame: "The serpent beguiled me." The verb is *nasa'* which means to go astray, deceive. Avoiding the temptation to consider this in visual terms, it's best to realize that the woman, as was the case regarding the man, is not addressing God as a person standing in front of her. Rather, she was addressing the *qol* (voice) which was enhanced by the *ruach*, cool (of the evening).

*Selah*

After the woman attempted to pass the blame onto the serpent, God speaks to it. Although we can assume the serpent slithered away to a relatively safe distance, he was close enough and must have been surprised when God spoke directly to it. The first words out of God's mouth (let's call it his *qol* or voice as described above) is "cursed" or *'arar* which is placed in the context of cattle and wild animals (literally, animals of the field). The first type of animal is *behemah* or more generally beasts of burden, among the most common though important animals. However, as of this point there was no need for their service in the garden. They, along with the "animals of the field," are superior to the serpent who must crawl upon the ground as opposed to standing on its feet. Thus it's easy to visualize God as *qol* or voice speaking down to the serpent while both the man and woman watch on, again, their eyes fixed downward to the serpent. As for the curse itself, *'arar* is used with the preposition *min* (from) prefaced to "cattle" and "wild animals" reading literally "cursed *from* all cattle and *from* all wild animals." Thus *min* serves to make the curse all the more powerful by means of separation.

*Selah*

God's curse upon the serpent is twofold: it goes...slithers...upon its belly or *gachon*, the only other biblical reference being Lev 11.42: "Whatever goes on its belly and whatever goes on all fours or whatever has many feet, all the swarming things that swarm upon the earth you shall not eat, for they are an abomination." There the category is broadened to include "swarming things that swarm," the verb being *sharats* which was noted in 1.20 as meaning to creep or crawl: "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures." During that day of creation such creatures were deemed good and not deserving of a curse. However, one unattractive image conjured up by *sharats* pertains to frogs, especially their invasion of private spaces: "The Nile shall swarm with frogs which shall come up into your house and into your bed chamber and on your bed" [Ex 8.3/7.28]. Because the serpent and other animals like it live close to the ground, they do not eat grass but dust or *haphar* which is readily available. We encountered that word in 2.7 where it had a positive connotation: "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground." While this was going on, the man, more so than the woman who was fashioned from his rib, must have listened breathlessly because he was taken from the same *haphar* or dust. He must have thought to himself, will I be like the serpent and crawl on the ground eating the same *haphar* from which I had been taken? Not a happy prospect. God's curse to the serpent was re-enforced by the words "all the days of your life." That is to say, an intimation of mortality for the serpent which soon would apply to the man and woman.

*Selah*

In vs. 15 God continues to address the serpent by saying that he will put "enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed." The word for "enmity" is *'evah* which has just three

other biblical references which can translate readily as hatred. *'Evah* is similar sound to *'ishah* or "woman," the one who obeyed the serpent which must have registered in her mind quite strongly, more so than the man who was standing nearby listening in horror to all this. Furthermore, the Hebrew "I will bring" (*'eyvah*) is similar to the two words just mentioned which enhance the drama: *'evah*, *'ishah* and *'eyvah*. The enmity God is doling out is between the serpent and woman as well as future generations; nothing is said of the man though that is implied by the word "seed."

*Selah*

Finally God intimates future trouble between the woman and serpent: "he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel." The verb for "bruise" is *shuph* which has just two other occurrences, Job 9.17 and Ps 139.11, and means to attack, fall upon. That would account for the second biblical reference: "Let only darkness cover me (i.e., fall upon) and the light about me be night." Some of what that Psalm verse says can apply to the Genesis situation insofar as despite the dreadful situation, it can and will be reversed later with Jesus Christ: even if night falls upon (*shuph*) one and the light become dark, it will not matter. As for the woman, the serpent will *shuph* her head which means he must leap up a considerable distance from the ground. As for the serpent, he is more vulnerable though has the attribute of a heel which is not possible physically speaking. So instead of a literal heel sticking out from the sleek, slender body of the serpent (if it had this heel, there would be specific mention in Moses' image of it on the pole), we may take "heel" in the verbal sense of supplanting, of coming from behind in stealthy fashion. The classic example is the birth of Jacob and Esau who were at odds directly from their birth. "Is he not rightly named Jacob (i.e., supplanter)" [27.36]? Thus we can view the relationship between the woman and serpent as not unlike the troubled one between Jacob and Esau.

*Selah*

In vs. 16 God turns from addressing the serpent to the woman and tells her that the pain in childbirth will be multiplied significantly. Often when expressing the superlative two Hebrew verbs are used as here; even the sound of it has a formidable ring: *harbah* *'arbeh*. As for childbirth, neither the woman nor the man had an inkling of what this was about, not to mention the pain involved. We don't hear of any sexual relations until 4.1. Furthermore, no children have been born within the garden. The word "pain" (*hetsev*) is used twice which applies generally to heavy, toilsome labor: "It is in vain that you rise early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil, for he gives to his beloved sleep" [Ps 127.2]. Despite this promise of suffering for the woman, "your desire shall be for your husband." And so we have a classical expression of desire which begets suffering and continues indefinitely into the future. *Teshuqah* is the noun for desire with two other biblical references, Gen 4.7 and Sg 7.10, cited respectfully: "Its (sin) desire is for you, but you must master it" and "I am my beloved's and his desire is for me." The root of this noun is *shoq*, to run after, long for. In fact, the noun "leg" is derived from it (*shuq*) which shows the dynamic nature of the verbal root. As for this *teshuqah*, already we saw intimations of it in 2.23, that is, the man for the woman: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

*Selah*

The other words of vs. 16 ('and he shall rule you') form a warning for the woman; despite the strength and attraction of *teshuqah*, the man will dominate her (*mashal*). This is the same verb found in 1.18, "to rule over the day and over the night and to separate the light from the darkness." *Mashal* pertains more to the exercise of governing power compared with *radah* of 1.26 and *kavash* of 1.28. As noted several times above, the man is silent while God is addressing first the serpent and secondly the woman. That doesn't mean these momentous words didn't apply to him. One can only imagine how the man must have felt; a rather bleak prospect for the future seems to lay in store with regard to relations concerning his wife. Both must have discussed this matter every day of their lives. Shortly when Cain and Abel were born, both must have gotten wind of this conversation repeated in one way or another. The way each brother received it influenced his behavior as will be seen later on.

### *Selah*

Now it is time for God to address the man who for the first time is named Adam. Perhaps God wanted to strengthen him with this the first proper name ever bestowed, a name indicative of his origin (*'adam*: first noted in 1.26 as 'man') as protector of his wife before he is banished from the garden. As for the woman, it's easy to picture her, having been roundly chastised by God, as she nervously awaited what God might have in store for her, especially through the authority the man was about to have over her. Note the way God addresses the man: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife." Not only did the man recall how he was tricked by the woman, but he must have remembered that other voice or *qol* noted in vs. 8: "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden." For it was at that *qol* both the man and woman hid from God.

### *Selah*

Now God says some pretty harsh words: "cursed is the ground because of you:" especially hard for the man because *'adamah* is the word for "ground," akin to his name, *'adam* ('man'). This is tantamount to cursing the very source from which he had sprung. One can never get away from the ground since it's the foundation on which man stands, a constant reminder that it is cursed because of him. That's why later on the worldwide flood had to come. *'Arar* is the word for "cursed" God applied to the serpent in vs. 14 which must have terrified the man for being put by his maker on the same level as the serpent. As for that *'adamah* from which *'adam* was taken, despite the curse, he is to eat from it but eat its produce in toil, *hetsev*. This same word applied twice to the woman in vs. 16 as to childbearing. While the woman may experience *hetsev* giving birth, the man experiences *hetsev* in a way parallel to hers, that is, the earth (*'adamah*) being a womb from which not only is produce taken but his very existence.

### *Selah*

Vs. 18 continues with the *'adamah* having been cursed, that is, begetting thorn and thistles, the verb being *tsamach* which normally applies to the sprouting of grass as opposed to noxious plants. "And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" [2.9]. Automatically the man must have recalled these words which were uttered shortly after his creation in vs. 7. There's a slight consolation, indeed one necessity for survival, which God adds: "and you shall eat the plants of the field." The plants, of course, sprang up with the thorns and thistles, and singling them out from the trees is a time consuming task. *Hesav* is the word which technically applies to green herbs as noted in 1.11.

### *Selah*

All the food mentioned thus far was found ready to eat without preparation. Now we have bread which requires not only planting and growing wheat and other grains but their transformation into flour. That, in turn, requires the technique of baking. So while God is throwing all these things at the woman and man, the man hadn't the slightest clue as to what baking involved. That was something he had to figure out on his own...in the "sweat of (your) face." God says that the man must engage in such toilsome work until he "returns to the ground." That's an intimation of death yet at the same time comforting because this is the same *'adamah* from which he the *'adam* was taken. God himself acknowledges this comfort: "for out of it you were taken." Although the constitution of *'adam* was *'adamah*, God says that he is dust or *haphar* to which he will return. That word appeared in 2.7 ('then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground'), a very fine powdery substance derived from *'adamah* and thus having a reddish hue.

### *Selah*

After these words of both curse and indirect comfort God suddenly stops speaking. Enough, surely, for the man and woman to absorb because they knew this wasn't the end of the story, that more awaited them. The words about begetting children in pain and tilling the ground with difficulty were just a hair's breath away from implementation but not yet put into force. Now for the first time the man bestows a name upon his wife (the second time this term is used; cf. 2.25), Eve or *Chawah* which

resembles the word for living, *chay*. An interesting name (basically, Life), a kind of wish to stave off the finality of death which God just imposed. As for the newly named woman, not yet has she become mother of all the living, her assigned destiny. The “all” in “all living” applies naturally enough to humanity. One may wonder if it includes non-human beings as well such as cattle and birds.

*Selah*

After God’s exchange of words beginning with the serpent followed by first the woman and then the man and just after the man named his wife Eve, God is moved to pity for their nakedness. After all, while he had been admonishing them, both had no clothing which must have made them feel quite disgraceful. God seemed to know that the man and his wife had to cover themselves in some way, so he “made garments of skins.” This isn’t the first time the two were clothed. They made “aprons” for themselves in vs. 7, more or less haphazardly thrown together. Since God made both the man and woman, he knew their constitutions very well so he could make in expert fashion the appropriate garments. The type of clothing? Garments or *kutoneth*, basically tunics or clothing worn next to the skin with sleeves coming down to the knees; used by both men and women. “Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves” [1Sam 13.18]. At this point to make such a garment was well beyond the skill of the man and woman; only God could make a comfortable piece of clothing for both with a perfect fit. As for the material, the text reads “skins” which implies the hides of slaughtered animals. No record is given about this, but the slaughter of animals must have taken place. Since this would become commonplace outside the garden, God must have shown the man and woman how to do it. Not only does God make these fine garments, he clothes the man and woman. That means they had to raise their arms and have them move their legs to fit them just right. While all this was transpiring, no description is given about God, only the fact that he clothes them. Going back to vs. 8, we can assume that it was the divine *qol* or voice first making the garments and then clothing the man and woman. If it’s difficult to conceive of a voice making garments, what about later in history when a Word (*Logos*) becomes a human being?

*Selah*

“Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil.” These words were uttered once God had fitted the man and woman with *kutoneth* and are like any words uttered upon completion of a project where you stand back and take in what you just accomplished. There’s a distinct possibility that God was talking with Moses; he refers only to the man, not the woman, though the woman was responsible for listening to the serpent and deceiving the man. “Like one of us” in Hebrew runs *ke’achad mimenu*—“as one from us”—suggests that the man had an existence sharing to some degree the same plane as God (‘from us’). In fact, such was his original creation as the divine image and likeness, so God shouldn’t have been so surprised as how the man and woman had developed up to this point. The words “lest he put forth his hand” intimate impudence, the first assault by man upon the divinity, which God must stop at once. However, it did not detract from the fact that now the man knew good and evil, something he never had an inkling of before. That sets the stage for the rest of the Bible, really, the drama between good and evil as both are worked out. An impression one gets here early on in Genesis is that after the first steps of alienation had been taken, they accelerated with a frightening velocity. That’s why the story of Cain and Abel, that of the first murder, took place so quickly after the expulsion of the man and woman from the garden.

*Selah*

Vs. 23 records the actual expulsion of the man from the garden. Note that it was the man who was expelled; nothing is said of the woman whom we presume remained inside. The verb *shalach* is the common verb for sending and is not as harsh as we might think. However, the next verse is quite different. The man’s *shalach* is from the garden in Eden which is “in the east” [2.8] gives no specific direction the man went. Chances are he wandered around outside to get his bearing before deciding on a direction to go. As for that direction, we have a general idea in the next verse which says that the man was sent with a specific purpose, “to till the ground from which he was taken.” At first this

doesn't sound all that bad; after all, 2.15 had the man "in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." There as in vs. 23 the verb is *havad* which means to work, not especially to cultivate land, and also refers to the work done by slaves. So once the man heard that he had to *havad* the land outside Eden, no problem...yet. He seems to go accordingly without any mention of the woman he leaves behind. Because she remained in Eden, the man thought he would see her again shortly, either in Eden or outside it. Furthermore, the land which he was bidden to *havad* was the same '*adamah*' as in Eden, the '*adamah*' which formed his composition. After all, '*adamah*' is '*adamah*' in Eden or outside it.

*Selah*

Vs. 24 is quite another story as far as man's departure from Eden goes. Here God "drove out the man," the verb being *garash* which applies to some type of offense or expulsion of people from their native land. The words of vs. 24 are simple and form one sentence for effect. Perhaps this *garash* took place not long after the man was sent (*shalach*) from the garden. His departure started off smoothly enough, but the further away from Eden he got, the more he knew his *shalach* was devolving into a *garash*. You don't have time to till the land when you're being driven from it. Also the man's longing for his wife grew stronger. We can picture her at the threshold of Eden gazing outside it. She too may have thought his *shalach* was temporary and was horrified when it devolved into a *garash*. To make certain the man would not return to the garden, God "placed the cherubim and a flaming sword" there. These had a specific location, "at the east of the garden of Eden." Since Eden is placed in the eastern land of perpetual sunrise, being driven from its east end has some consolation about it. The man was driven from that direction; although he may choose west, north or south, he ends up departing from the east. Looking back upon Eden means looking in an eastward direction toward sunrise which assumed greater meaning for the man as time went on. After all, the man's wife Eve was there, and he wanted to be reunited with her.

*Selah*

Vs. 24 has the first mention of the cherubim, beings of a heavenly nature compounded of a man, ox, lion and eagle. We have no information as to their creation nor their number; presumably just a few were created for specific work as the one at hand. A cherub has a block-like face with each face directed toward the cardinal directions of north, south, east and west. Refer to the first chapter of Ezekiel, the throne-chariot vision which is not stationary but mobile, on wheels. This vision prefigures the traditional representations of the four evangelists: Matthew as human, Mark as a lion, Luke as an ox and John as an eagle. Although no real description of the cherubim is given at the east of the garden of Eden, they could move at once to protect anyone from entering or exiting the garden unlawfully. There's no gate at Eden, just the cardinal direction of east. That jibes with vs. 23 when God sent (*shalach*) the man ('*adam*') from the garden to till the ground ('*adamah*') or to till his own human nature. This tilling isn't marked by the man's awareness of being either in or outside Eden. However, the *shalach* mentioned there is intended as a consolation prior to the next verse when *shalach* is transformed into a *garash*, a driving out and going into exile.

*Selah*

In addition to the unspecified number of cherubim, block-like with four faces, there's a "flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life." That presumes knowledge of getting to that tree from the outside. The man is the only one capable at this juncture; his sons haven't been born yet. As for the woman, she is inside the garden, and nothing is said about her being banished. The sword isn't a weapon as such but one which is *lahat*, burning to the point of becoming a solid flame. Furthermore, the sword turns in every conceivable way, *haphak* being the verb. An image of this may be found in Job 37.12 with respect to clouds: "They turn round and round by his guidance to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the inhabitable world." This image of the sword's extreme flexibility keeps in line with that of the cherubim depicted in Ezekiel mentioned in the last paragraph, especially 1.13: "In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like torches...and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning." The whole purpose of both

cherubim and the flaming sword was to protect access not so much to the garden in Eden but to the tree of life. The verb for “protect” is *shamar* first encountered in 2.15: “and put him in the garden of Eden to till and keep it.” In a sense, *shamar* in both contexts are agricultural, akin to cultivating with a view towards fostering growth. Surely the flaming sword must have been visible from some distance as the man moved further away. As to where he went, we have no record; the first mention of a specific place outside Eden is Nod, “east of Eden” [4.17] which is in a westerly direction. Now Genesis moves from an account of creation and man’s banishment from the garden to one which could be termed historical with the birth of the first children and their descendants.

## Chapter Four

Chapters One through Three dealt with events that don’t fall under what are called historical events. However, with the man banished from the garden of Eden, we have the beginning of history yet in an unflattering manner with the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. But before this happened, the two brothers had to be born which means that Adam and Eve engaged in sexual intercourse. Unlike Eve whom God fashioned from the man’s rib, the creation of another person and so on down the line wouldn’t come into existence through God’s direct intervention. This makes you wonder how the human race would have increased within the garden; perhaps God would have taken a rib from the woman, her offspring and everyone else. However, that would turn out to be an improper and clumsy intervention by God into human affairs. With the man having been expelled, the man and woman had to unite with each to propagate the human race. So before the story of Cain and Able, Chapter Four begins with the words, “Now Adam knew Eve his wife.” The verb is *yadah*, to know in the intimate sense as having sexual relations. Earlier it was noted that there is no explicit mention of Eve being banished from the garden; presumably she remained there at the edge not far from the cherubim and revolving, flaming sword. In that newly established border area she and the man experienced *yadah* for the first time. However, *yadah* was used earlier in 3.5 when the serpent said that “you will be like God knowing good and evil.” That knowledge was just as intimate as sexual intercourse and had dire ramifications.

### *Selah*

Nine months later (though it’s part of the first verse of this chapter) Eve “conceived and bore Cain.” Perhaps the cherubim assisted Eve in her birth which took place at the edge of the garden. We do know, however, that the Lord helped Eve in her birth because she names her son, the first human ever to be born, Cain whose proper name derives from the verb *qanah*, to acquire. This reflects the novelty of the situation, for to date God had created both man and woman. It was only natural for Eve to express the birth of her son as that which she had acquired as opposed to having given birth. As for the text at hand, it reads literally “I have acquired a man Lord” with the particle *’eth* in between “man” and “Lord.” The words “with the help of” are missing. Such acquiring Eve attributes to God which reveals his tender side when, for example, he furnished the man with garments of skin. As for this the first human to be born, he turns out to be the first murderer. Cain should have been proud of being called the Acquired One, symbolic of being the first human to come into existence from a mother and a father. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Cain from growing up with resentment toward his brother which resulted in eventual murder. Not only did Cain have trouble living with this resentment, he must have extended it to his parents as well. Perhaps Cain misunderstood his name as Acquired One, the very first name given by a parent, as not a good choice. He could have taken it as a sign of being an oddity, even a freak. This is natural because Cain is the first person born the natural way. As for Eve, we can excuse her because she was first to bestow a name to another person and hence was new at it. She may have gotten hints as how to bestow names from her husband who named all the animals (cf. 2.20). If he could do that, why couldn’t Eve? It seemed simple enough. He told her all about recognizing their chief characteristics and coming up with a name suitable for each

animal. Such is the origin of Cain or the Acquired One. On the positive side, this name attributes direct help from God though the text is silent as to the exact nature of this divine help. Adam is reduced to the role of onlooker here yet he is the one with whom Cain and then Abel live, not Eve, still in the garden.

*Selah*

Vs. 2 follows immediately with the birth of Abel. No assistance from God is recorded, perhaps because when he became an adult, his sacrifice was accepted and did not require divine help. No derivation of his name is given as with Cain ('acquired'). However, Abel comes from the verbal root *haval*, to breathe from which is derived the noun *hevel*, vanity or emptiness. "Vanity of vanities, says the preacher, all is vanity" [Eccl 1.1]. If Abel's name were more positive such as being related to *ruach* (wind, spirit), it would have been easier to live with. Despite this, Abel turned out to be the favored brother even though he had been born second. Favoring of the second born over the first born is unheard of within society of the time, a theme taken up by Jesus Christ later on. Without missing a beat after the birth of these two brothers, the text speaks of them as adults; nothing is said about their childhood which must have been trying for the first man and woman. Babies growing into adulthood was unique to them who had been formed whole and complete without childhood or adolescence. Perhaps the childhood of Cain and Abel was not unlike that of Jacob and Esau who were at each other even in Rebekah's womb (cf. 25.22). Since Eve remained within the garden and Adam was without, the two children spent most of their time crossing from one to the other. A modern image may be a divorced father returning to his former wife the children he had for the weekend. The atmosphere of Eden had a positive effect on Abel whereas the land outside the garden affected Cain in a negative way. Besides, Cain must have been more affected by his father who could not get out of his mind the fact that he had been banished from paradise. He must have shared it with both sons who picked up from their father two different versions, one of peace and one of resentment, according to their dispositions.

*Selah*

Abel was "keeper of sheep" and Cain was a "tiller of the ground." It is not unusual that sheep are the first animals mentioned outside Eden because they were essential to the economy of the culture in which Genesis had been composed. Furthermore, 2.19 says that God formed "every beast of the field" and brought them to the man for naming. They differ from those which were already in the garden, so the former were familiar to Abel who got his skill on his own because his father was ignorant of such matters, having been charged by God to till the garden (cf. 2.15). The word for "keeper" is *roheh* which applies to a shepherd. As for Cain, his job was to till the ground just like his father. As we saw with Adam, *'adamah* is the word for "ground" which he had to till as well, *havad* (cf. 2.15). No preference is shown for either son though given Cain's occupation, Adam must have preferred him. While Cain was serving (*havad*) the *'adamah* from which his father came, Adam must have made his rounds of inspection, so they plenty to talk about. At the same time, keeping sheep was alien to Adam, so he tended to shy away from Abel. Preference for Cain by reason of their common recognition of their earthly source may have contributed early on to the animosity between the two brothers. Refer again to the struggle between Jacob and Esau in 25.28 where Isaac prefers the latter.

*Selah*

Within Eden there was no need to offer animal sacrifice because God was fond of walking in the cool of the evening, the time most often associated with sacrifices in Jewish tradition. As for sacrifice proper, vss. 3 and 4 records the first one offered by Cain. No precepts were laid down as how to do it; his father Adam must have instructed him, having discovered sacrifice as a means to remain in contact with God outside the garden. Then again, Adam sprang directly from God so memory of this birth must have informed his decision and actions outside the garden. Sacrifice was a brilliant idea, really, and must have been favorable to God immediately. Though we have no record of Adam performing a sacrifice, we have one of his son Cain. After all, he and his father Adam were from

*'adamah*, sacrifice being a way Cain could return his human nature to God, the *'adamah* from which he had been formed. As for Abel, he made a sacrifice as well, having learned the procedure from his brother Cain. Abel's offering was of "the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions." Now that sounds like a real sacrifice involving violence compared with Cain's sacrifice of "the fruit of the ground." Despite this, it was Cain who murdered Abel.

*Selah*

"And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering." The verb here is *shahah* (to look, look around), a verb which intimates concern. "They have no regard for their altars" [Is 17.8]. As for this *shahah*, it takes place in a way different from how God must have done his looking within the garden. *Shahah*—and from now on this will apply to virtually all verbs pertinent to God's concern and dealings with humans—suggests an up-down mentality. That, in turn, intimates an absence of God compared with Eden where he had been present all the time. Never do we hear of Adam nor his immediate offspring attempting to re-enter the garden, to sneak past the cherubim and revolving sword; all are resigned to make sacrificial offerings of one kind or another and take it from there. That says something about them, of how the memory of Eden faded rapidly even when Adam was still alive. In the verse at hand, *shahah* has two objects: first Abel and then his offering or *minchah*, gift, tribute. Usually *minchah* applies to a sacrifice without blood compared with a *zevach*. "When anyone brings a cereal offering to the Lord" [Lev 2.1]. In the situation at hand, you'd think Abel would bring a *zevach* because he is a "keeper of sheep," implying that he did not eat them but used their wool for clothing, most likely modeled upon the garments of skin which God made for his parents (cf. 3.21).

*Selah*

The same verb (*shahah*) is applied first to Cain and second to his offering; *minchah* is used here as well. *Shahah* means a concerned looking with regard to the object of one's regard. As the last paragraph had intimated, it moves from above (heaven) to below (earth), a direction completely in line with how the Lord looked at what was transpiring within Eden. Cain and Abel were born one step removed from that environment and from their father certainly got wind of what life was like in the garden. Should we stick with the fact that Eve is still in there as in accord with 4.1, her sons and husband must have been frequent visitors to that border area which delineated two starkly different realities. It is reminiscent of visiting someone in prison only here the prisoner is free and the visitors are not. The lack of *shahah* from God isn't attributable to Cain and his offering for any defective reason, at least outwardly. However, it reveals the economic importance of sheep and other four-footed animals for the societies in which the Book of Genesis was composed. At the same time that culture relied heavily upon produce from the soil of which Cain is the first representative. Farming is a stable way of providing for oneself, family and larger society, so you'd think it would fall in line with divine favor stemming from the fact that Adam had cultivated trees within the garden. Perhaps Cain, in his fixed location, first admired the freedom of his brother roaming about and wanted a part of it. This desire reveals a negative ramification of his name (Acquired) where the original use of the term is perverted to one of uncontrolled desire for acquiring possessions. And so Cain is a kind of prototype of Esau and Abel, that of Jacob as we will see later on.

*Selah*

Vs. 5 continues with "So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell." Such is the first recorded instance of anger, *charah* being the verb which means to burn in the sense of being kindled. That, in turn, calls to mind not a full-fledged fire but one which begins small and grows to something much larger. "The earth trembled and quaked because he was angry" [Ps 18.7]. As for his countenance, the common word for "face" is used which "fell" or revealed Cain's inner disposition at having not been regarded...*shahar*...with favor by God. The next verse has God questioning Cain as to his anger and fallen countenance. It would be easy to take this as a further rejection, even bordering upon insult, as we pay attention to Cain absorbing God's words. Still, this incident shows that God continued to speak with humans just as freely as in the garden. For now, the only distinction is introduction of a

perceived awareness of space and time from God which expands as time goes on. The second question posed by God is “If you do well, will you not be accepted?” This answer from God seems as good as any favorable *shahah* because it shows divine concern. Anyone today would be thrilled to be in such a position. But Cain is in an understandable quandary. Here he was, a tiller of the soil who brought produce from that same soil to God yet experienced rejection. He hasn’t been able to get out of his system that resentment for Abel wandering around all sorts of exotic places while he was stuck on one plot of land. To make matters worse, Abel was exploring the hitherto unexplored land outside the garden and bringing back reports as to its wonders.

*Selah*

The other warning Cain was privileged to receive from God (at least that’s how we would perceive it if we were in that situation) was that if he doesn’t do well, “sin is couching at the door.” *Chata’th* is the word for “sin” which is akin to the more familiar *chatach* yet differs in that it suggests the state of being sinful as opposed to the act itself. “Righteousness guards him whose way is upright, but sin overthrows the wicked” [Prov 13.6]. Here is the first introduction of a concept unheard of in the garden, so different that Cain must have had difficulty coping with its reality. In other words, *chata’th* is equivalent with murder which Cain is about to commit. This *chata’th* is crouching or *ravats*, literally lying down as a quadruped animal does when gathering its feet under its body. It also pertains to a beast of prey lying in wait, an image more appropriate to the case at hand. “The leopard shall lie down with the kid” [1s 11.6]. Such, too, must have been the case with the serpent in the garden when speaking with the woman. It may not have struck her physically but did so with words which lead to the man’s expulsion from the garden. With this in mind, Cain could have gone directly to his mother at the border between the garden and consulted her as what to do. Apparently he didn’t. However, Cain did not pay attention to the words God addressed to her which could have prevented him from murdering Abel: “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” [3.15]. Mindfulness of those words would have put the human race on a very different course, but that was not to be. As for sin crouching and ready to attack, God says it is “at the door” or opening, *petach*. Cain could have closed the “door” but failed to do so. Use of the noun *teshuqah* adds considerable drama helped along by the preposition *l* (to, toward) prefaced to “door” which would read literally “crouching to the door” thereby suggesting readiness to lurch at a moment’s notice. For the incredible strength and power in *teshuqah*, refer 3.16, “yet your desire shall be for your husband.” Only one other reference to this word occurs, fittingly the Song of Songs, 7.10: “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me.” Thus God is giving wise counsel to Cain that he may avoid this type of *teshuqah*. God concludes his words by urging Cain to master this *teshuqah*, that is, *mashal*. As with *teshuqah*, *mashal* is found also in 3.16 just quoted, “and he shall rule over you.” So instead of heading direct words from God and not consulting his parents, especially his mother to whom the words of 3.16 had been addressed, Cain walks away from them both.

*Selah*

The RSV of “Let us go out to the field” reads in Hebrew “Let us be in the field.” The latter suggests more a presence...a lingering...within the field, a place Cain must have known well; perhaps it was the location of his tilling. Abel too may have known that field because it was where he pastured his sheep: in other words, one field for two different purposes. Presumably Cain and Abel had to leave a place dense with trees or shrubs to one which was out in the open. They may have gone from their sheltered home or more likely tent, though no record is given as to where else they may have lived; to date they and their parents were the only humans around. Cain is the one who initiated that he and his brother “be in the field.” If Adam had been around, he would have thought nothing of the two going off on their own. After all, the field was an open area, easy to keep an eye on them both. As for Eve at the entrance to the garden, she was further away and didn’t have such a good view of her two sons.

*Selah*

Once alone, Cain “rose up and killed his brother Abel.” What is this rising up, *qum*? It precedes the murder, coming as it does in the blink of an eye. *Qum* signifies putting into action that sin which God warned Cain about as it was “crouching at the door.” In other words, *qum* signifies the immediate presence of *ravats*, that ready-to-spring attitude. Once *qum* has been set in motion, there’s no way to intervene between it and its effect. The text provides no hint of a murder weapon, though most likely it was a tree limb or a stone. Nothing more is said except the bald fact of this first murder in history. Not only was it a murder but the first experience of death for the three persons around: Eve, Adam and Cain. Immediately God comes on the scene by asking “Where is Abel your brother?” The addition of “your brother” intimates that God knew well what had happened, for Abel was the only brother in existence. By now God was used to asking such questions, the first being very much like it: “Where are you” [3.9]? At this moment Cain may have recalled his mother telling of her own painful experience and knew he was facing the same fate about to come crashing down upon him. Furthermore, Cain and Abel were in a wide open field, a place easy for God to see what was transpiring. At least Cain’s parents had the option of hiding in the trees. As to the response of Cain to God, it smacks of arrogance, not unlike his father’s response to God when asked about the fruit he had just eaten: “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” This sounds pretty much like telling God to get lost, worse than Adam trying to pass the blame onto his wife. God could have accepted the first statement by Cain, “I do not know.” At least it was an honest response which could have been dealt with appropriately. However, the real insult came when he said “Am I my brother’s keeper?” *Shomer* is the Hebrew for “keeper” derived from *shamar* first noted with respect to 2.15 (‘to till the ground and keep it’).

*Selah*

To Cain’s insulting response God presented another question, “What have you done?” Instead of elaborating upon this, God reveals to Cain that he was fully cognizant of what had happened by referring to Abel’s blood crying out from the land. This crying out implies that blood continued to have a life of its own as it seeps into the ground or *‘adamah*. After all, Cain brought to the Lord “an offering of the fruit of the *‘adamah*” [vs. 3]. The blood of Abel is in this *‘adamah* (also the ground from which the father of the two brother had been taken) and now remains there permanently or at least until the flood. One can only guess the repulsion Adam had felt. As for the voice of Abel’s blood, we have no record of what it cried out nor how long it continued but did so not to Cain but to God. That’s why shortly he became a wanderer, too preoccupied roaming about, a way of attempting to ignore it.

*Selah*

Chapter Three (vss. 16-19) has God speaking with the man and woman about their recent transgression and the expulsion of the man from Eden. Now God has to begin all over again with regard to Cain, so it must have been distressful for him, let alone his parents being reminded of their own expulsion. They had lost one of their two sons and are now left with Cain; however, Cain doesn’t hang around but becomes “a wanderer on the earth” [vs. 14]. That leaves Adam and Eve where they had been when expelled from the garden, childless. “Now you are cursed from the ground” says God in vs. 11. The verb *‘arar* for “cursed” with respect to the ground (*‘adamah*) is familiar to Adam which Cain must have heard while growing up: “cursed is the ground because of you” [3.17]. Such strong words stay with you a long time, and you are bound to transmit them to your offspring; if not verbally then in the way you comport yourself. The words of *‘arar* addressed to Adam and now to Cain double the alienation of the incipient human race from God. Besides, the blood of Abel had sunken deep into the *‘adamah* and cries out to the Lord, presumably agreeing with the *‘arar* he imparts to his brother. That means every place Cain is about to tread will reverberate with the curse not only from God but echoed by his murdered brother. So instead of insulting God with “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Cain turns out to be “kept” by the blood of Abel but kept in a way he would not prefer. The words “(*‘adamah*) which has opened its mouth “to receive your brother’s blood from your hand” are

especially hard for Cain to take. This mouth is not at the particular place of the murder but everywhere. That's why Cain turns out to becoming a wanderer; if he stays in one place long enough, this mouth will find him and swallow him up. As for the verb "opened," the Hebrew is *patsah* which connotes a snatching away. "Who rescued David your servant" [Ps 144.10]. However, the situation at hand is reminiscent of a use of *patsah* keeping in line with the current theme: "And the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down into Sheol alive" [Num 16.30].

*Selah*

To make matters even worse (it's hard to see how this could be but is true), God continues to speak about the all-important *'adamah* which Cain tills by saying that "no longer it shall yield to you its strength." So despite the hard work of *havah* (tilling) which Cain's father had to do as well though with apparent ease in the garden, here just outside the garden it lacks strength or *koach*. Now that *'adamah* has opened its mouth to receive the blood of Abel, Cain finds it virtually impossible to stay on this *'adamah* so he has to get moving as quickly as possible. God calls Cain a fugitive and wanderer, *nah* and *nad*, two similar sounding words. As for the former, it derives from *nuah*, to wave, shake, scatter. "They roam about for food and growl if they do not get their fill" [Ps 59.15]. Such words can apply to Cain and his newly aware condition of a *nad* or wanderer, the verbal root *nud* meaning to flee, agitate. "Like a sparrow in its flitting...a curse that is causeless does not alight" [Prov 26.2]. So Cain gets hit with a double whammy: he is to *nah* or shake about in his wandering and *nad* (i.e., *nud*) or to be agitated in this wandering. No small wonder Cain said to the Lord with the same importunity as "Am I my brother's keeper?" that his punishment is "greater than I can bear." *Haon* is the word for "punishment" which implies perversity and guilt from sin. Unlike his parents prior to and after their similar confrontation with God for having eaten the forbidden fruit (there's no record, actually), we have an account of Cain's admission of guilt.

*Selah*

Vs. 14 continues with Cain's lament to the Lord, "Behold, you have driven me this day away from the ground." This conforms to the above mentioned *nad-nud* or fugitive-wanderer, that two-fold banishment intensified by the verb *garash*, "have driven away." The word "behold" (*hen*) is equivalent to Cain saying to God, "Look...You have treated me thus and I must bear the consequences against my own will." Cain's father had experienced this just as painfully, if not more, when he suffered *garash* from the garden of Eden, 3.24. However, Adam uttered no recrimination against God. Chances are that he scolded Cain just as much as God for being condemned to his personal *garash* and handed it down to future generations. It snowballed with a rapidity that grew in proportion to the distance these generations put between themselves and their source, God. For Cain, *garash* is particularly painful since it is "from the ground" or from the *'adamah* from which his father had been fashioned and which he was fond of tilling (cf. vs. 3). Cain better get a move-on because this same *'adamah* had opened its mouth to receive Abel's blood, and Cain risks the fate of Korah in Num 16.30 which, in turn, is echoed in Ps 106.17: "The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan."

*Selah*

It's one thing to suffer that *garash* noted in the last paragraph yet another to undergo banishment from God's face: "and from your face I shall be hidden." *Satar* is the verb at hand and often applies to hiding from someone: "Let me go that I may hide myself in the field" [1Sam 20.5]. Until now Cain, his father and his just-murdered brother had more or less free converse with God, even if they had been banished from Eden. The first murder (of Abel) intensified Adam's sense of banishment from Eden. We have no reaction from Adam as to this banishment, but Cain expresses a universal estrangement from God: "I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me." These words from Cain's mouth echo those of God noted two paragraphs above. Cain adds to them by saying he risks the danger of being slain which implies that other persons are in existence beside his parents. In addition to this continuous peril, the ground (*'adamah*) has its mouth open as it cries

out to God over Abel's spilt blood.

*Selah*

God sees that Cain has a conscience and wishes to protect him in his double banishment, so this implies other people do exist outside the garden of Eden, a fact that goes unrecorded. Perhaps these other children of Adam and Eve lived fairly normal lives and were not considered as being singled out for special treatment, hence an absence of their names. "If anyone slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." The word "vengeance" strictly speaking is lacking in the Hebrew text and is implied by "sevenfold," a symbolic number related to fulness or completion. No one seems to have been around to hear these words; they were imparted to other people not so much by physical propagation but by memory of Abel's murder which, in turn, evoked memory of the banishment from Eden. As protection against this sevenfold vengeance, God puts "a mark on Cain." The noun here is *'oth* or sign, and we lack a clue as to its specific meaning. *'Oth* suggests a picture or symbol in the form of a tattoo as opposed to a letter or word. It had to be clearly visible to ward off any would-be slayers. As for those who would want to kill Cain, the verb is *nakah* or to smite into pieces. It differs from the verb *harag* ('whoever finds me will slay me') in that this verb applies to the killing of enemies in war. Thus *nakah* is more forceful and indicative that the visible sign on Cain is potent enough to keep people at bay. Let's say that the sign is a mirror reflecting the image of the person wanting to slay Cain which serves to reveal his own anger. If this anger were acted out, the intended killer would be just as wicked, if not worse, than Cain. No justice would be served either way.

*Selah*

This incident of the first murder and the way God handled it ends with Cain who "went away from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden." Such going away is not movement from one place to another (All this was transpiring in the open area of the field, vs. 8) but a loss of familiarity Cain still enjoyed with God despite his living outside Eden. As for Adam, we can assume he continued in "the presence of the Lord" and was grieved deeply at his son's fate. Cain's new dwelling place was Nod which translates as "wandering" and is derived from the same verb as in vs. 12, *nud*. This isn't a place where Cain could settle down for good. The location of Nod as east of Eden means that it has the advantage of watching the sunrise over that blessed spot with Cain's mother, Eve, at the gate as she maintained a look-out for her banished son. The verse at hand is the only mention of this place name and represents the earth in its entirety east of Eden where its inhabitants long to re-enter. The words "dwelt" and "Nod" are themselves paradoxical; the former applies to a settling down whereas the latter, as noted earlier, a wandering. Thus Cain settles in his wandering, in a perpetual state of movement, to avoid being swallowed up by the earth crying out to the Lord over Abel's spilled blood.

*Selah*

Vs. 17 reads "Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch." As noted above, we have no specific mention of this wife, her name nor where she came from. She could have belonged to the offspring of Adam and Eve who committed no crime as Cain had done and had no harmful direct effect in the development of human history whose beginning is presented in an unflattering manner. Be that as it may, Cain knew (*yadah*) his wife, the same verb and context as Adam knowing his wife in vs. 1. Surely Cain and his anonymous wife held their collective breath when Enoch was born because he might turn out to be like his father...or worse. At least Enoch was an only child, so he had no brother as Cain with whom to contend. That reduces dramatically the chances for future mischief. Actually, Enoch turned out well, for he symbolizes the longing to return to Eden when later on he was taken by God (cf. 5.24), an implication that he did not see physical death. In the same verse (17) when Cain knew his wife, we have Enoch who "built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch." A city involves sophisticated organization, a far-cry from the pastoral nature of Eden. It implies a certain collective alienation, if you will, where people organize themselves for reasons other than glorifying God. However, the city which Cain builds retains a trace of Eden insofar

as it is named after his son, Enoch, who was assumed by God. If Abel had not been murdered, his nomadic status would have precluded founding a city. As a final note of irony in all this, Cain was the city's founder, the one who was destined to be a wander the rest of his life. You'd think this would belong to someone like Abel, but no.

*Selah*

Verses 18-22 speaks of the four sons or descendants of Enoch who lived in the city. After Cain went away from the Lord's presence, he "dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden," in other words, the City of Enoch had in view the garden of Eden. It was especially lovely when the sun rose, for the city faced that direction. Thus all the inhabitants had continuous reminder of where they had come. As for the four descendants, each was engaged in occupations proper to a city compared with nomadic existence. Skipping to vs. 23, Lamech (he took two wives, vs. 19) was the fourth and final descendant of Enoch of whom we have a record. Apparently his was the second recorded instance of homicide after Cain though nothing of the sort is inserted in between Cain and him. Lamech addresses his wives in a two verse song, the first verse being, "I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me." We don't have this slain man's identity, obviously an inhabitant of the City of Enoch. The verb for "slain" is *harag*, first used in vs. 14 with regard to Cain. This anonymous man both wounds and strikes Lamech, the nature of the afflictions not being mentioned. The second verse shows that the memory of Cain several generations ago is very much alive among within the City of Enoch: "If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold." The verb here is *naqam* which primarily suggests heavy breathing, of being aroused to anger. *Naqam* applies to Cain sevenfold whereas to Lamech, it's multiplied indefinitely. Jesus uses the same figure but with a positive spin: "I do not say to you seven times (to forgive a brother) but seventy times seven" [Mt 18.22]. Such forgiveness was inconceivable in the City of Enoch.

*Selah*

Vs. 25 is a welcome change to the vengeful words just recorded: "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth." Adam conferred with Eve by visiting her at the entrance to the garden of Eden, resulting in both having decided to "know" each other (*yadah* again as in vs. 1) with a view toward correcting the situation so blatantly celebrated by Lamech in vss. 23-4. Both decided upon giving birth to a third child, this after several generations stemming from Cain who had founded the City of Enoch. Adam may have decided to stay away from that city, following a nomadic life after the murder of his son Abel while watching the city continue to rise generation after generation. That makes Adam quite old and wise with accumulated experience and observation of his first born son's progeny. The same applies to Eve in her unique position and whose death is not recorded.

*Selah*

The third child born to Adam and Eve is Seth for "God has appointed for me another child." This proper name derives from the verbal root *shyth*, "to set, place, appoint." Vs. 25 continues with what appears as resentment toward Cain, "another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him." We have no insight as to the character of Seth except a record of his descendants which continues in Chapter Five, his son being named Enosh. However, the Book of Sirach praises Seth: "Shem and Seth were honored among men, and Adam above every living being in the creation" [49.16]. Chapter Four and beyond continue in rapid fashion enumerating further generations with a view toward getting ready for the flood in Chapter Six. Thus we have the explosive growth of humankind parallel with an equally explosive growth in wickedness. However, the present chapter closes on a positive note: "At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord." Chances are this assumed some form of communal worship. While such calling is a welcome note, it is a far cry from the intimacy enjoyed by Adam and Eve, even their murderous son, Cain, who spoke directly with God. Introduction of the word "name" suggests this distance, for it differs from the Lord himself. And that name as recorded in Genesis is the sacred name of YHWH. However, the true nature of YHWH awaits further revelation with Moses

and his encounter with God in the burning bush. One can't help but feel that Moses, who earlier was present with God at creation and the subsequent events, inserted the sacred name beforehand within the recorded text.

## Chapter Five

Chapter Five deals with the generations from Adam's descendants to Noah at the threshold of the flood and begins with the words "This is the book of the generations of Adam." It implies a source different from the one at hand, one other from that of Moses who was present with God from creation onward up until his appearance in the Book of Exodus. In 4.17 we see that "Cain knew his wife," a woman who wasn't fashioned in Eden. Chances are she belonged to those persons mentioned elsewhere and whose record is lost. The rest of vs. 1 spills into the next verse and recaps the creation of man in 1.26-8. However, note the shift: "and named them man (*'adam*) when they were created." The earlier account (as well as that of 2.7) neither has God calling nor naming the man nor the woman. Perhaps in this different account God wished to show that both the man and woman (she was taken from the man's side) is derived from the same *'adamah* or earth and shares the same nature. While evident from the start, it may not have been that evident to Cain's descendants in the City of Enoch who quickly degenerated into all sorts of deviant behavior.

*Selah*

Vs. 3 shows that Adam "became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." This comes several generations after Cain begot Enoch and the subsequent inhabitants of the City of Enoch and prior to the rest of Chapter Five's list of generations to the birth of Noah. The author ("This is the book," etc.), independent from Moses' account, wishes to maintain the divine origin of mankind yet quickly succumbs to the human account, Adam giving birth to his third son. Why, then, did Adam wait 130 years in between Cain and Seth, the time when the City of Enoch was flourishing in Nod, east of Eden (cf. 4.16)? Prior to his banishment, Adam did not experience temporal decay and old age. The same applies to subsequent generations whose life spans ran into the hundreds of years, an after-effect from Adam having been in Eden. His descendants must have crowded around him, asking all about life in Eden and his relationship with Eve whose death isn't recorded. That's to be expected, for she remains at the threshold of the garden and was not recorded as having been banished with her husband. Perhaps these children of Adam visited Eve, for they weren't terribly far off from her in the land of Nod.

*Selah*

Vs. 4 states that Adam "had other sons and daughters," again, presumably with Eve when they "knew" (*yadah*) each other as in 4.1. All in all, Adam lived 930 years "and he died." These last words ('and he died') are quite poignant, having fulfilled the words of 3.19 when he returned to the dust. Adam must have welcomed this return because it is there that the blood of his second born son, Abel, cried out to the Lord. And so the father was returning to his son. As to his burial place, nothing is mentioned. Abel's blood, which still cried out to the Lord, must have swallowed up his father, thereby whisking him away before the flood comes in Chapter Six. That flood had the benefit of silencing once and for all Abel's continuous cry and did away with the land of Nod, that place of wandering, even if it had an illustrious founded in the person of Enoch.

*Selah*

Now from vs. 6 through vs. 31 we have the generations stemming from Seth, some of whom are mentioned in Luke's genealogy of Jesus Christ. A prelude to this is the genealogical list in the First Book of Chronicles. All who are recorded in Genesis lived close to a thousand years due to their relative proximity to their parents, a gift just as meaningful as the tunics the Lord has woven for them prior to their banishment from the garden. However, like garments, their lives weren't destined to last forever. The person who stands out among all these otherwise obscure descendants is Enoch: "Enoch

walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” [vs. 24]. His life was short compared with the others: “all the days of Enoch were 365 years” [vs. 23], but that was nothing when taking into consideration the divine favor bestowed upon him. Why was Enoch singled out? The only information we have goes back to 4.17, the first-born son of Cain and founder of the first city. It should be noted that Enoch didn’t name the city, his father did, in an attempt to distance himself from that continuous cry of his murdered brother’s blood ascending to the Lord. That was reason enough to break a terrible curse and allow the human race to flourish, even if it descended rapidly into moral disorder.

### *Selah*

Note that vs. 24 says Enoch “walked with God.” It is the same verb (*halak*) in 3.8 applied to the Lord: “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” In Eden, the man and woman hid “among the trees of the garden” to avoid God, rather, the sound of his walking, *qol* being used as well for “voice.” Although squarely outside Eden, Enoch never hid from the *qol* of God walking about. Though he had inherited the guilt of his parents (being the son of Cain, he was just one step removed from them), Enoch stood his ground, if you will, and did not flinch from God’s presence. For this reason we could say that he encouraged the citizens of his city with the words, “At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord” [4.26]. The mysterious words “and he was not” (*‘eynenu*) indicate that Enoch was obliterated—taken away from existence—and how it was done is not recorded. However, *‘eynenu* follows upon the fact that Enoch did walk with God. “For God took him.” Again, no straight-forward description is given, let alone where God may have taken Enoch. As for the notion of heaven, it had not developed as a dwelling place of God. Enoch was just a few generations ahead of Noah, so he is a precursor of that man who saved the human race for propagation after the worldwide flood. The *qol* of God which Enoch heard walking not in Eden but in the city named after him in many ways was more difficult to perceive amid the clamor associated with a city, let alone the allurements it offered. Prior to his *‘eynenu*, Enoch left the city for a mountaintop not unlike Jesus leaving Jerusalem just prior to his ascension into heaven. He knew something was up but was unable to put his finger on exactly what it would be. Would he be returning to Eden? Then again, perhaps Enoch had a premonition of the impending flood, for the next generations are short: Methuselah, Lamech and then Noah. As for Enoch’s *‘eynenu*, it is a foreshadowing of Elijah’s ascent recounted in 2 Kg 2.11-12. There Elijah was taken up in a chariot, specifically to heaven, whereas with Enoch we’re left to guess. At that early stage of human history, memory of Eden and its physical immortality was the only reference point available. It took not only the worldwide flood but many generations for that notion of immortality to grow to the time of Elijah and later, to Jesus Christ.

### *Selah*

Lamech, the last generation before Noah and the flood, put a positive spin on the impending universal devastation by water, and gives the reason for naming his son: “Out of the ground which the Lord has cursed this one (Noah) shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands” [vs. 29]. This verse is spelling out the meaning of the proper name “Noah,” that is, derived from the verbal root *nuach*, to rest, set down. Clearly Lamech was aware of the curse of Abel’s blood having been shed. There must have been many murders and other forms of violence since then, yet all trace their origins to Cain having slain his brother. Lamech says that Noah will bring relief or *nacham* and thus implies his name is derived from that verbal root, but it seems *nuach* is the proper one. As for *nacham*, it means to pant, groan, to comfort oneself, take vengeance. Lamech intimates that such *nacham* will come from work and toil which harkens back to 3.17: “Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.” In both instances we have the verb *‘arar* relative to *‘adamah* or “ground.” And so Lamech is fully aware of the origins of human sin and identifies its removal in terms of working the land. Ordinarily that would be no problem but for the blood of Abel which had stained it permanently and was in need of a thorough washing which soon it would receive. Chapter Five ends with Noah giving birth to three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

## Chapter Six

*Chapters One through Five has the Hebrew word selah inserted after each paragraph. The reason for its insertion was given in the Introduction, that is, originally a liturgical pause, which Gregory of Nyssa uses akin to the purpose of this document, namely, a pause which arises naturally after reflecting upon a passage of Scripture. Selah thus is a time not only for reflection but for resting in God's presence beyond words, one assisted, if you will, by lectio divina. A person is invited to reflect up a given verse of Genesis and its comments for as long as inclined before moving on. The first five chapters dealt with creation, man being made in the divine image, as well as humanity's surprisingly rapid fall from divine grace. Now with the post-flood era we begin a new phase in human history. For this reason selah is no longer inserted though the pause for reflection and resting in God's word remains just as important.*

Vs. 1: "When men began to multiply on the face of the ground and daughters were born to them." The noun for "ground" is the familiar *'adamah* from which Adam was taken and from which the blood of Abel cried out to God unceasingly. Such multiplication of the human race couldn't have taken place in Eden nor was it desired because there God was fully present to the man and woman; he satisfied every need for any company they might desire. All humanity was contained within them, a pre-figuration of Christ as the Second Adam: "The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit" [1Cor 15.45]. As for the verb "multiply" (*ravav*), it suggests that there were few inhabitants until now, that even the City of Enoch (cf. 4.17) wasn't populous. Furthermore, "city" implies abandonment of living in tents which had been the case until now. *Ravav*, applies to an increase in numbers compared with *ravah* as in 1.22 ('Be fruitful and multiply'), the latter pertaining more to growth, not just increase in numbers. In all its simplicity and straight-forwardness this verse has a certain ominous tone, that things will turn out very differently from God's original intent and do so in the near future. Vs. 2 continues as one sentence from vs. 1, making a distinction between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" who were fair (*tov*: literally, good). Supposedly the former were divine beings and the latter were human beings, that is, those who lost their memory of the garden of Eden and hence their connection with it. Perhaps they were children of Abel prior to his murder...those who were nomads and not fixed to cultivation of the soil, including attachment to the inhabitants to the City of Enoch. And so we have an intermarriage between the descendants of Cain and those of Abel which gave rise to the same enmity as between those two brothers, an enmity which increased until God saw the need to destroy the earth.

Apparently while this *ravav* or physical multiplication of the human race was going on, God was not absent, for they enjoyed a certain divine relationship even after banishment from Eden. However, God said "My spirit shall not abide in man forever," that is to say, God's spirit had been with mankind to date but will depart shortly. Between Adam's banishment and the birth of Noah we have no specific mention of God's spirit (*ruach*) inhabiting any person. Perhaps what's meant by *ruach* is the same divine being moving over the face of deep in 1.2 (In the verse under consideration the RSV has lower case 'r' compared with the upper case in 1.2). Regardless, *ruach* intimates that moving not so much over the face of the waters but moving over each person. The verb for this moving is *rachaph* which is more along the lines of a hovering and cherishing as in 1.2. However, this interior *rachaph* assumes the form of abiding, *dun* being the only use of this verb. Apparently *dun* has the connotation of striving or contending and thus intimates an opposition of God toward mankind. *Dun* reveals that God was getting tired of the human race, and he was about to do something drastic. The first step in this direction was a radical reduction in human life span, down to "a hundred and twenty years." Even that didn't stop people from disobeying God. Although we have no record of how people responded,

we do know they became increasingly rebellious because “the thoughts of his (man’s) heart was only evil continually” [vs. 5]. And so the nurturing and charming image of a bird hovering over its young denoted by *rachaph* turns into one of contention.

Vs. 4 speaks of the Nephilim who “were on the earth in those days,” persons of large stature and endowed with super-human powers. When Moses sent out spies to reconnoiter the land, they encountered the Nephilim: “And there we saw the Nephilim...and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them” [Num 13.33]. These giants were the original inhabitants of the Promised Land with whom their distant ancestors had intermarried. Thus the encounter of Moses’ spies was not so much a reunion among long-lost relatives but a discovery of their genealogical roots, a relationship so distant that it was beyond reconciliation. The verse at hand has the simple words “in those days” which are countered by “and also afterward.” Perhaps “and also afterward” refers to an unspecified period of time after God uttered his words of rejection (‘my spirit shall not abide in man’). That may have opened the door for the Nephilim to take over and dominate the descendants of Enoch, the inhabitants of that city named after him. According to vs. 4, male Nephilim married the female members of the human race, not the other way around, nor was there a mixture of some with others and so forth. The verse concludes with “These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown.” The words “of old” suggest that the Nephilim were distinct from the descendants of Adam, perhaps Cain’s wife (cf. 4.17) being from among them. Furthermore, they were renowned or literally “men of name (*shem*).” Being such could apply to their own race as well as that of Adam.

“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.” Such begins vs. 5 which takes the drama of human perversity a step closer to eventual resolution. Prior to this, did God see human wickedness (*rah*)? The answer is traceable to 2.9, the “tree of knowledge of good and *rah*” (2.9), as well as the serpent’s words to the woman, “you will be like God, knowing good and *rah*” (3.5). No small wonder that God’s *ruach* couldn’t abide in man, a life-and-death struggle not unlike that between Cain and Abel and later between Jacob and Esau. Note that *rah* is “in (*b-*) the earth,” fully present in it, permeating it as Abel’s blood which, by the way, we can presume with certainty was still crying aloud to God. As for God seeing, we have no place from which he did this. The traditional location is from above...heaven...but not necessarily. So if God’s *ruach* could not longer abide in man, his seeing must be elsewhere and certainly different from his presence within the garden when he walked in the cool of the evening. We don’t have a localized place from which God sees, just the fact that he does. The idea of heaven located above the earth had not yet sunken into religious consciousness of mankind. People were still close to the tradition that God is best perceived as walking with mankind.

The last encounter between God and humans was quite some time ago, just after Cain had murdered his brother Abel. There God speaks with Cain with no indication of from where it’s done, perhaps because this wasn’t terribly long after Adam was banished from Eden and recollection of a one-on-one interchange was still fresh, albeit in weakened form. Then we move up a number of generations with mankind sinking more and more into the bottomless pit of evil (*rah*). Because these generations extended a long time between Cain and the verse under consideration, let alone introduction of the Nephilim, no small wonder that God “saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.” As for this seeing by God, it is perceived by an awareness of an ever increasing distance between him and the current generation, the one about to be destroyed in the worldwide flood.

The second half of vs. 5, while representing the last straw before the flood, needs some breaking down: “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” The word for “imagination” is *yetser* which fundamentally applies to a frame or formation. “For I know the purposes which they

are already forming before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give" [Dt 31.21]. *Yetser* also can apply to an idol: "For the workman trusts in his own creation when he makes dumb idols" [Hab 2.18]. Thus in light of these two verses, *yetser* has a less than desirable connotation. In the text at hand, *yetser* is used with *machshavah* (purpose, plan, counsel) and so literally can read "thought of purpose." "On that day thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme" [Ezk 38.10]. The verbal root for *machshavah* is *chashav*, to think, to be an artificer, and applies to planning and scheming, usually in the negative sense. "Thought of purpose" is situated within man's heart (*lev*) which is the center of his being and comes from there. The additional phrase "only evil continually" heightens both the implied idolatry of *yeter* and the evil scheming of *machshavah*. "All the day" is the way "continually" is expressed; coupled with "only," we get a sense of genuine disgust from God as he does this seeing into the heart of men. The evil isn't specified, being general in nature, but is a spin-off from Cain's murder of Abel. Furthermore, *rah* (evil) is one of the two properties of that tree in the garden of Eden from which the first man and woman had eaten. Its taste remained not only in their mouths but in the mouths of all their descendants. What's so amazing is the rapidity with which such *rah* had spread, forcing God's hand to bring about the worldwide flood. To see the power of this tasting from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, consider it in the positive sense, Ps 34.8: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Such taste precedes seeing and is the opposite of what happened to the man and women: "then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" [3.7].

Vs. 6 serves as a counter-balance to the previous verse, as it were: "And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth" (first half of the verse). *Nacham* is the verb here which, like so many Hebrew verbs, has multiply meanings; it applies to grieving as well as to comfort plus taking vengeance. *Nacham* appears in 5.29 with a very different meaning as used in vs. 6: "this one (Noah) shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands." A double-edged sword, if you will. Noah did bring relief in that he saved the human race and the animal kingdom but on the other hand, was a witness to divine vengeance which wiped out both humans, animals and plant life. Compare the phrase "on the earth" (literally, 'in the earth'), *'erets* being the term, neither *'adamah* nor the soil from which man had been fashioned. And so, "it grieved him to his heart." A touching comment since this grief reached to God's very heart (*lev*). That's why this part of vs. 6 counters the heart of man of vs. 5, "only evil continually." The verb for "grieved" is *hatsav*, to labor, afflict. "All day long they seek to injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil" [Ps 56.5]. And like the verbal root for *yetser* in vs. 5 (imagination), *hatsav* is the root for "idol:" "They served their idols which became a snare to them" [Ps 106.36].

Vs. 7 begins with "So the Lord said" but remains silent to whom he is speaking. Instead of this, he was speaking aloud, perhaps loud enough for people to hear and get wind of what he was about to say. This time the decision was made, no escape: "I will blot out man." These words come immediately and without warning. *Machah* is the verb which alternately translates as to wipe off or away, a thorough annihilation which humanity in its infancy had not been experienced, so thorough that it was hard to believe. The verb appears again in 7.23: "He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground." The completeness of what was about to transpire is emphasized by "man whom I have created from the face of the ground." Here *'adamah* is used for "ground" which makes this *machah* all the more fearful, for *'adamah* is that which had formed the first *'adam* and subsequent descendants. The Lord continues by adding beasts, creeping things and birds...every living being except fish (in other words, they weren't mentioned and would be in their native environment of water). He concludes these unfortunate words which echo vs. 6 uttered with a heavy heart, "I am sorry that I have made them."

Even though vs. 7 has the Lord uttering his intent out loud, no one heard except Noah. And so this section of Chapter Six ends with a simple, straight-forward sentence, "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." When God finished uttering his intention aloud, purposely aloud that people would hear him, tragically we get no response except that Noah was the object of divine *chen* or good-will, not the other way around. The verb *matsa'* (to find) shows that the Lord was casting his eyes all about in a desperate attempt to find some people he wouldn't blot out, *machah*. Vs. 8 is upbeat, a single ray of light in an otherwise dark world. A hint that this would come took place in 5.29 when the essence of Noah's name is spelled out: "This one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands."

Although vs. 9 opens with "These are the generations of Noah" (i.e., a full sentence), his line of descent is insignificant: three sons named Shem, Ham and Japheth. While coming first in vs. 9, they are inserted more or less in an obligatory sense, subordinate to the second sentence in this same verse which gets to the heart of the matter: "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God." That's a rather stark appraisal of the human race, only one man singled out as righteous, *tsadyq*. Thus Noah is a precursor of Abram: "And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness" [15.6]. And: "Noah, a herald of righteousness" [2Pt 2.5]. As for the three sons just mentioned, presumably they shared Noah being *tsadyq* but to a lesser degree. Note the words "in his generation" meaning the present generation, not the earlier ones. That is of secondary importance given the fact that the drama of this chapter increasingly moves toward a resolution. Apparently being *tsadyq* is another way of "walking with God." The only other person thus far recorded with this distinction was Enoch in 5.24, in other words, God "took him." God could have destroyed the human race after Enoch was taken but didn't, so he was a precursor for what would follow in the person of Noah. Even though Noah was destined to live 950 years (cf. 9.29), it is insignificant with Enoch's blessed fate. As for Noah, it must have been difficult walking with God, for that means he was alone without t. His three sons weren't on the same level as their father; they may have had an inkling of what was going on, nothing more. Putting it bluntly, their task was to propagate the human race, that's all. Surely Noah realized that he was walking with God and looked forward to the flood though never could he have expressed this aloud. Because he was the only *tsadyq* of his generation, he was left undisturbed by his fellows and so enjoyed communion with God even in the thick of their unrighteous activities.

Vs. 11 takes up the now well known theme of corrupt humanity traceable all the way back to the murder of Abel: "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence." Reference is to *'erets* (twice) which is broader in meaning than *'adamah*, the stuff from which the first man had been fashioned. *'Erets* is the physical land itself and can apply to a given country, here the city Cain named after his son Enoch back in 4.17. At this juncture of history, *'adamah* is quasi-sacred not only because Adam came from there but because of Abel's blood crying out from it. And so we see a shift from these early generations, those immediately after Adam and onward, from treating *'adamah* as *'erets* which later developed into the idea of nationhood, quite different from the pre-historical garden of Eden. As for the verb "to corrupt," *shachath* alternately means to destroy, act wickedly. "They are corrupt, doing abominable deeds" [Ps 14.1]. As seen in "God's sight," *shachath* means that he cannot tolerate such action, that it is incompatible with his nature yet reveals divine long-suffering which quickly is coming to a close. Apparently only Noah was immune to *shachath* along with his predecessor, Enoch. Since Noah knew that Enoch "walked with God; and he was not, for God took him," was he aware that he was similar, that he too "walked with God?" Thus divine sight as trained upon humanity made Noah stand out as a beacon, one whom unfortunately no one seemed to have noticed. Such disregard intimates that no other person bothered to reflect upon his or her tendency to do evil, that it was taken for granted and was part of daily life.

Vs. 11 continues with the earth or *'erets* "filled with violence," *chamas* being a verb suggestive of maltreatment extended toward fellow human beings. It also involves oppression such as reducing free persons to slavery and imprisonment. "For I can see nothing but violence and strife in the city" [Ps 55.9], a verse quite applicable to the City of Enoch. And so *'erets* is full of both *shachath* and *chamas*, bursting at the seams and ready to explode. It is as though the earth which all along had been crying out to God, swallowed up so much blood beginning with Abel's, that its stomach couldn't take it any longer. This must have made Noah's walking with God a difficult and treacherous path to tread even in divine company. It was especially troublesome at night when things were quiet and the chorus of groans, led by Abel's blood, seeped up to the surface imploring God to send rain upon the earth and silence their cries.

Vs. 12 spells out the theme of corruption or *shachath* a bit more, really bringing home the fact of mankind's wickedness. First we have "And God saw the earth, and behold." Compare it with the previous verse where the earth "was corrupt in God's sight." That verse was passive using the preposition *liphney*, "before." That makes the earth a bit distant, necessarily so, from God or "before God, if you will. Next we have God actively seeing the earth with the exclamation, "behold" (the common *hineh*) which signifies a kind of astonishment, that God first saw followed immediately with the horrible situation into which mankind got itself. *Hineh* serves as a transition between God seeing and becoming aware of the earth's corruption. It was a second take on God's part insofar as he wished he hadn't beheld what was right in front of him, that it was an illusion or mistake. Then again, God may have wanted awareness of this corruption to sink into the consciousness of earth's inhabitants who were deaf to Abel's blood crying from the earth. Thus mankind was sandwiched in between the earth and God in heaven, no place to go, really.

Note that blame is placed squarely upon humanity in vs. 12: "for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth." *Basar* as "flesh" primarily means people but can apply to other living beings who were affected by human behavior. Here the verb *shachath* is used once more in reference not so much to *basar* but to their "way," *derek*. That word applies to a road as well as a journey, the journey starting with Adam's expulsion from Eden to the land of Nod, east of the garden (cf. 4.16) all the way to the streets of the City of Enoch. *Derek*, of course, is upon the earth and just as corrupt; perhaps this *derek* was intended to cover over the corruption and silence the cry of Abel's blood. The more earth covered, the quieter it becomes, far from providing a genuine solution. That's why *derek* is "upon (*hal*) the earth," on the earth as a blanket deliberately intended as a muffler. And so, *derek* became just as corrupt and full of violence as those treading upon it and those whose blood had seeped into the earth.

Finally...at long last...God speaks to Noah in vs. 13. Such speaking is in the context of Noah's walking with God, so it may have been while the two were out for a stroll. Walking has become associated with God in the "cool of the day" as in Eden (cf. 3.8); while out and about both almost certainly treaded lightly so as not to disturb the blood of Abel and those like him beneath. At least toward sunset both were alone, for all other inhabitants of the City of Enoch were at home engaged in indecent and violent behavior. Surely echos of it reached God and Noah as they were out in the field, an indirect though decisive way for God to teach Noah about humanity's true situation. Noah, unlike Abraham later on, did not intercede for his fellow citizens but went ahead with plans for the ark. The sooner he was out of there the better; this was understandable, even commendable, but not on the same level as Abraham's compassion manifested in his interceding with God for Sodom and Gomorrah. Chances are that Abraham did recall his ancestor's lack of intercession with God, that he had missed a great opportunity to save the entire human race. Thus Abraham was determined that the two cities

of, Sodom and Gomorrah (for they were just as bad if not worse than the City of Enoch) would not suffer the same calamity.

God does share his inmost thoughts with Noah...not that he was obliged to but blurted them out in the hope that anyone listening would hear and repent. Even if a handful of people nearby caught God's intent, Noah would have put them on the ark he was about to construct. "I have determined to make an end of all flesh." *Boa' lephanay* is the way "determined" is rendered which reads literally as "has come to my face." That which has come to God's face is the "end" (*qets*) which usually applies to destruction. "The end has come upon the four corners of the land" [Ezk 7.2]. And so the words under consideration run as "the end has come to my face." Next God utters the obvious which had been recorded earlier in this chapter: "for all the earth is filled with violence through them."

Interesting words in that God distinguishes between earth (*erets*) and the source of violence (*chamas*: cf. vs. 11) which is put as "through them" or through the inhabitants of the earth. Literally put, "through them" is "(violence) from their faces." Note the two instances of "face:" first the "end" which is literally "to" or *l-* prefaced to "face" and then the violence which emanates from the faces of people, from both their expressions and mouths which utter terrible things. Because of this two-fold use of face as a way to show the horror unfolding, God says "behold." That is to say, stop and listen. After he gets Noah's attention and anyone who happens to be about him—although they did hear God but paid no heed—God says "I will destroy them with the earth." *Shachath* is the verb at hand which implies laying waste a country, region or field and as in the case at hand, being spoiled, marred. "I took the waistcloth from the place where I had hidden it. And behold, the waistcloth was spoiled" [Jer 13.7]. The uncleanness implied with *shachath* suggests that God has to clean away that which had become marred or soiled, hence the need for the flood waters to do the job. He had to allow this cleansing not simply to wipe away living beings but to root out all the blood that had seeped into the earth starting with the blood of Abel. No other choice is possible.

The previous verse was the start of a fairly lengthy list of things to do when God confronted Noah and continues through vs. 22. Nothing is recorded about how Noah received this formidable challenge except that he did what he was commanded. It didn't preclude him from having thoughts which disturbed him considerably. Such was the price of walking with God (cf. vs. 9); Enoch paid a similar price though it goes unrecorded. The advantage Enoch had over Noah was that he witnessed no divine wrath. Now here in vs. 14 God gets specific, telling Noah to "make yourself an ark of gopher wood." Apart from the story at hand, *tevah* (ark) has two other biblical references, both of which pertain to Moses as a baby or when his mother placed him in "a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch" [Ex 2.3]. The anonymous mother of Moses made an "ark" just as elaborate as Noah's for her son whom Pharaoh sought to kill. The only difference was that it was much smaller. She must have recalled that incident in Hebrew history and was inspired to do the same. Her *tevah*, like Noah's, floated over the waters until it reached a safe haven. Although the Christ child had no connection with water, the manger in which he was placed was not unlike this *tevah* belonging to both Noah and Moses, a vessel destined to save the world. God is specific as to the word to be used for Noah's *tevah*, gopher (same transliteration in Hebrew) which is a resinous tree such as pine, fir and cypress favored for the building of ships. This is the only biblical reference though several from a derivative noun meaning "pitch" (*gaphryth*) exists, one of which is in 19.24: "Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." An interesting verse of how the Lord is presented in two ways, a fact to be examined later. In sum, the *tevah* Noah is about to construct is made of wood containing a lot of pitch and subject to catching on fire. That's why God decided to destroy the world with water instead of fire as with Sodom and Gomorrah.

"Make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch." Now God gets more detailed about the *tevah* which must have made Noah wonder what all this was about. *Qen* is "room" which

alternately means a nest or abode on a high rock, not unlike an eagle's nest. "The swallow has a nest for herself where she may lay her young at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my king and my God" [Ps 84.3]. One gets the idea that Noah's *tevah* can be described as a of "house with many rooms" [Jn 14.2]. Moses' *tevah* didn't have these rooms but it was just as painstakingly fabricated. After all, it was bearing the author of the Pentateuch, a most precious cargo with an endless list of rooms. God commanded Noah to cover the *tevah* with pitch (*kopher*). This noun is derived from the verbal root *kaphar* (to cover) which is used here in vs. 14. The literally reading is "in *kopher*" suggesting that this resinous material permeated the gopher wood through and through whose odor must have been overpowering, especially from the animals in the confined *qen* or rooms. For that reason ventilation was vital, hence the need for windows. In its final phase, the ark was black...if not totally then pretty close to it, and presented an ominous sight sitting out there on the dry ground.

Vs. 15 begins with "This is how you are to make it" and gives the ark's dimensions after which further details are set forth in the next verse. They are 450 x 75 x 45 feet, no small task for Noah whose sizable construction project must have gotten considerable attention from his neighbors. Then again, Noah could have disguised the ark making it appear as a large house or farm so he could continue in peace and not be subject to ridicule. As for the gopher wood Noah was covering with pitch, it would have added to the disguise. Noah had resigned himself as to warning people, so why bother now? He realized full well what Jesus Christ would say later on, "They ate, drank, married, were given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark" [Lk 17.27]. Vs. 16 includes a vital element to this ark, a *tsohar* or window which would have ventilated the pitch-smell from the bottom to top decks in addition to providing light. Actually, *tsohar* implies a window but more specifically means light, the light of midday or noon when the sun is directly overhead. That makes perfect sense for the *tsohar* which must have extended close to the 450 feet of the ark's length. "You make your flock to rest at noon" [Sg 1.7].

The Lord bids Noah to make a door on the side of ark; just one is required without mention of any others, not unlike what we'd call portholes. The *tsohar* running the entire length of the ark would compensate for this easily. Finally, Noah is to make a "lower, second and third deck." As for the lower deck, that means it is directly under the *tsohar* for those animals requiring the most amount of light. Most likely Noah and his family resided in a separate section on this deck. The lowest or third deck is for nocturnal creatures. And so, the ark with its *tsohar* is completely flat not unlike an aircraft carrier minus its island.

Vs. 17 is the first time God confides in Noah the manner by which he will destroy the earth although he made known his intent prior to the ark's construction (cf. vs. 13): "For behold, I will bring a flood (*mabul*) of waters upon the earth." Here "behold" (*hineh*) serves as a way of getting Noah's attention, that God is going to communicate an important message. As for this *mabul*, it can refer to the waters above the heavens, the logical place from which rain to fall: "The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits as king forever" [Ps 29.10]. This is the only reference to *mabul* apart from those occurrences pertaining to the Noah story. Thus *mabul* is different from yet derivative from primal waters at the beginning of Genesis. Until now they had been held at bay successfully yet remained a constant threat. The purpose of *mabul*? "To destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven." Here we have yet another use of *shachath* as "to destroy" only it's specified by water. The words "breath of life" add to the poignancy of the impending worldwide disaster; at the same time, fish are exception since they don't breathe air. "Under the heaven" means that *mabul* will come from above, neither from springs nor oceans below, so it will be an unceasing torrential downpour. The result is that "everything that is on the earth shall die," *gawah* meaning to breathe out one's life. "When you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust" [Ps 104.29]. Such words lifted

from the Psalter reflects the memory of that distant yet still vivid tragedy.

Vs. 18 strikes a positive note with regard to Noah, not the earth and its inhabitants about to be destroyed: "But I will establish my covenant with you." This is the first mention of a covenant and for Noah, a novelty; next mention of a *beryth* is in 9.9, in the form of a rainbow, which is the one God had in mind. When we think of a covenant, it's in terms of a sacrifice or a pledge. Nothing of the sort is involved due to Noah's unfamiliarity with this concept, so God puts it off for an indefinite period of time. *Beryth* derives from a verbal root meaning to cut and even to destroy. That means a *beryth* is cut into a tablet, a bodily member (circumcision) or the sacrifice (i.e., cutting) of animals. Since Noah had close acquaintance with God by their walking together, God informed him beforehand of this *beryth*, that it was the first ever to be established followed by many others, extending into New Testament times. The notion that something had to be cut (*karath* being the verbal root) must have frightened Noah. With the implications of dissecting a victim for sacrifice, his fear increased all the more. However, that would have to wait for later because more pressing issues were at hand. In the meanwhile their presence upon the flood waters would be a pre-covenant or a preparation for the one of a rainbow, all alone upon that trackless expanse for an extended and as yet unknown period of time. Noah would use that time floating upon the water—aimlessly as far as he was concerned, for God said nothing of its duration, let alone a destination—to reflect upon himself, his family and animals as to what they would find once (and if...at this stage) the waters recede. Those persons and animals within the ark upon the flood waters represent being cut off...*karath*...from the earth and its perverse inhabitants along with the promise of a new beginning. Not only would Noah be afraid of drifting aimlessly, his family would have shared in this terrible prospect. They saw Noah putting together this huge vessel which lacked any means of propulsion, that is, no rudder, sails nor oars. Anyone boarding such a thing on dry, desert land would have grave thoughts as to its purpose.

Now the Lord proceeds to detail his plans for Noah, his sons, wife and sons' wives, a total of eight persons entering the ark. Presumably no children are involved, that is, from Noah's three sons. Noah alone was commanded to construct the large ark, not unlike asking someone to build single-handedly an ocean-going freighter. His sons and wives had nothing to do with the project, perhaps thinking Noah crazy. That was okay, for Noah didn't require help since he built the ark at God's command which made the task easy. Next vs. 19 begins with "every living thing of all flesh" which applies to all animals and birds; nothing is said of fish which would do well in the flood waters nor of insects, many of which could survive in a watery environment. "You shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female." This pairing of the two sexes for each type of living thing assures propagation after the flood, a fact clear to Noah yet must have scared his family. Just seeing all these pairs of animals gave them a strong hint as to what was about to happen. They went along with Noah berthing the animals in suitable rooms on the three decks of vs. 16, that is, each in accord with the amount of light required which entered through the *tsohar* or window (cf. vs. 16). Not only was the ark crammed, but various types of food was required which means Noah and his family had to be acquainted with the animals' feeding habits (see vs. 21). As for the carnivores, no problem: the ark became a type of Eden where all living beings were at peace for the first time since Adam was expelled. It had to be this way or chaos would result. This sight of a new Eden floating upon the waters all by itself must have been an outstanding sight. Surely Isaiah got inspiration from it when he prophesied of the messianic king "The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" [Is 11.7, etc.].

Vs. 20 has the Lord specifying two types of animals Noah is to take on board: birds and "every creeping thing of the ground." They seem to be different from "every living thing of all flesh" of the previous verse, an inclusion of those animals more difficult to capture as well as being less desirable.

Birds would next to impossible to ensnare unless God helped out; then there's the undesirable task of capturing "creeping things," this phrase, even in English, is scary enough. Jumping ahead to vs. 22, we have the words, "Noah did all this." Surely one of the greatest understatements of all times. Try to imagine Noah and his family capturing two pairs of all these animals...not just that it was difficult but in some instances extremely dangerous. That's where Noah's walking with God became a valuable asset (vs. 9), for it was akin to the familiarity the first man enjoyed with God in the garden of Eden. This familiarity mitigated the daunting practice of capturing all those beasts, many of which were elusive. Noah uses his charm over these animals to subdue them sufficiently that they may enter the ark. "Have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" [1.28]. Not only that but the Lord imparted this calming ability to his three sons and their wives for the purpose of helping out. Getting the animals into the ark is one half of the story; the other half is keeping them fed and quiet for an unknown duration of time.

Once this gigantic task of gathering animals, birds and creeping things is done, Noah and his family had to get "every sort of food that is eaten and then store it up." Surely this thought must have crossed their minds even before God had uttered the command. Since each pair of animals had their own type of food, that required considerable knowledge of their habits. Then they had to store it, an especially difficult problem with flesh-eating animals as lions and tigers. Yet in actuality this problem was surmountable because all animals, from the most docile to the most ravenous, were came under that submission readily available with the garden of Eden. The second half of vs. 22 which concludes this drama reads "he did all that God commanded him." Everything was now in place for the flood.