

TORAHSCOPE
V O L U M E I I I

TORAHSCOPE

V O L U M E I I I

Life Examined and Understood
Through the Grid of the Torah

William Mark Huey



TORAHSCOPE

VOLUME III

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edited by J.K. McKee

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Abbreviation Chart and Special Terms

Special terms unique to this publication that may be used have been provided in this chart:

Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	LXX: Septuagint
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott)
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	m. Mishnah
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	NEB: New English Bible (1970)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)	NIV: New International Version (1984)
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)	NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>	NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
Grk: Greek	RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)	t. Tosefta
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)	Tanakh: the Old Testament
Heb: Hebrew	TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)
KJV: King James Version	TWOT: <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
	YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

Annual Torah Reading Schedule

These are the weekly Torah and Haftarah portions, as employed in both the traditional Synagogue and today's Messianic Jewish congregations

KEY:

A: Ashkenazic S: Sephardic*

[] denote differences between traditional Jewish and Christian verse order

GENESIS

Bereisheet "In the beginning"

Genesis 1:1-6:8

Isaiah 42:5-43:10 (A); 42:5-21 (S)

Lekh-Lekha "Get yourself out"

Genesis 12:1-17:27

Isaiah 40:27-41:16

Chayei Sarah "Sarah's life"

Genesis 23:1-25:18

1 Kings 1:1-31

V'yetzei "He went out"

Genesis 28:10-32:2

Hosea 12:12-14:10 (A); 11:7-12:12 (S)

V'yishev "He continued living"

Genesis 37:1-40:23

Amos 2:6-3:8

V'yigash "He approached"

Genesis 44:18-47:27

Ezekiel 37:15-28

Noach "Noah"

Genesis 6:9-11:32

Isaiah 54:1-55:5 (A); 54:1-10 (S)

V'yeira "He appeared"

Genesis 18:1-22:24

2 Kings 4:1-37 (A); 4:1-23 (S)

Toldot "History"

Genesis 25:19-28:9

Malachi 1:1-2:7

V'yishlach "He sent"

Genesis 32:3-36:43

Hosea 11:7-12:12 (A); Obadiah 1:1-21 (S)

Mikkeitz "At the end"

Genesis 41:1-44:17

1 Kings 3:15-4:1

V'yechi "He lived"

Genesis 47:28-50:26

1 Kings 2:1-12

EXODUS

Shemot "Names"

Exodus 1:1-6:1

Isaiah 27:6-28:13; 29:22-23 (A);

Jeremiah 1:2-3 (S)

Bo "Go"

Exodus 10:1-13:16

Jeremiah 46:13-28

Yitro "Jethro"

Exodus 18:1-20:23[26]

Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6[6-7] (A); 6:1-13 (S)

V'eira "I appeared"

Exodus 6:2-9:35

Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

B'shalach "After he had let go"

Exodus 13:17-17:16

Judges 4:4-5:31 (A); 5:1-31 (S)

Mishpatim "Rulings"

Exodus 21:1-24:18

Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26

* Ashkenazic Jews are largely those from Eastern and Northern Europe, and Sephardic Jews are largely those from Spain and Muslim lands.

Terumah “Contribution”

Exodus 25:1-27:19

1 Kings 5:26-6:13

Ki Tisa “When you take”

Exodus 30:11-34:35

1 Kings 18:1-39 (A); 18:20-39 (S)

Pequdei “Accounts”

Exodus 38:21-40:38

1 Kings 7:51-8:21 (A); 7:40-50 (S)

Tetzaveh “You shall command”

Exodus 27:20-30:10

Ezekiel 43:10-27

V'yak'heil “He assembled”

Exodus 35:1-38:20

1 Kings 7:40-50 (A); 7:13-26 (S)

LEVITICUS**Vayikra** “He called”

Leviticus 1:1-5:26[6:7]

Isaiah 43:21-44:23

Shemini “Eighth”

Leviticus 9:1-11:47

2 Samuel 6:1-7:17 (A); 6:1-19 (S)

Metzora “Leper”

Leviticus 14:1-15:33

2 Kings 7:3-20

Kedoshim “Holy Ones”

Leviticus 19:1-20:27

Amos 9:7-15 (A); Ezekiel 20:2-20 (S)

B'har “On Mount”

Leviticus 25:1-26:2

Jeremiah 32:6-27

Tzav “Give an order”

Leviticus 6:1[8]-8:36

Jeremiah 7:21-8:3; 9:22-23

Tazria “She conceives”

Leviticus 12:1-13:59

2 Kings 4:42-5:19

Acharei Mot “After the death”

Leviticus 16:1-18:30

Ezekiel 22:1-19 (A); 22:1-16 (S)

Emor “Speak”

Leviticus 21:1-24:23

Ezekiel 44:15-31

B'chuqotai “By My regulations”

Leviticus 26:3-27:34

Jeremiah 16:19-17:24

NUMBERS**Bamidbar** “In the wilderness”

Numbers 1:1-4:20

Hosea 2:1-22

Beha'alot'kha “When you set up”

Numbers 8:1-12:16

Zechariah 2:14-4:7

Korach “Korah”

Numbers 16:1-18:32

1 Samuel 11:14-12:22

Balak “Balak”

Numbers 22:2-25:9

Micah 5:6-6:8

Naso “Take”

Numbers 4:21-7:89

Judges 13:2-25

Shelakh-Lekha “Send on your behalf”

Numbers 13:1-15:41

Joshua 2:1-24

Chukat “Regulation”

Numbers 19:1-22:1

Judges 11:1-33

Pinchas “Phinehas”

Numbers 25:10-30:1[29:40]

1 Kings 18:46-19:21

Mattot “Tribes”
Numbers 30:2[1]-32:42
Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

Mas’ei “Stages”
Numbers 33:1-36:13
Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4 (A);
2:4-28; 4:1-2 (S)

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim “Words”
Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22
Isaiah 1:1-27

V’et’chanan “And I besought”
Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11
Isaiah 40:1-26

Ekev “Because”
Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25
Isaiah 49:14-51:3

Re’eih “See”
Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17
Isaiah 54:11-55:5

Shoftim “Judges”
Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9
Isaiah 51:12-52:12 (or finish at 53:12)

Ki-Teitzei “When you go out”
Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19
Isaiah 54:1-10 (or finish at 52:13)

Ki-Tavo “When you come”
Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8
Isaiah 60:1-22

Nitzavim “Standing”
Deuteronomy 29:9[10]-30:20
Isaiah 61:10-63:9

V’yeilekh “He went”
Deuteronomy 31:1-30
Hosea 14:2-10; Micah 7:18-20; Joel 2:15-27

Ha’azinu “Hear”
Deuteronomy 32:1–52
2 Samuel 22:1–22:51

V’zot Ha’berakhah “This is the blessing”
Deuteronomy 33:1–34:12
Joshua 1:1–18 (A); 1:1-9 (S)

The current Torah and Haftarah reading dates, are available online
via the Outreach Israel Ministries website: www.outreachisrael.net

INTRODUCTION

“Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

The walk of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through heartfelt saving belief in the atoning blood of Yeshua the Messiah—is definitely a pursuit for truth that sets people free from the constraints of the sin nature each has inherited in Adam (Romans 5:12). Thankfully, the Creator God, the Holy One of Israel, has revealed Himself to humanity by choosing different vessels to receive, record, and persevere down through the ages—the written words that communicate not only who He is, but how He wants His people to interact with Him. However, because the Lord God is the Eternal One, who chose in eternity past to create the cosmos and everything that exists, He ultimately formed human beings in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27), with the necessity that every individual make a choice to secure the justification He requires for intimate communion with Him. This was widely epitomized by the Patriarch Abraham, often regarded to be the father of the faith (Romans 4:11-16), who believed wholeheartedly in the Almighty, and was regarded as one of His own. The followers of Abraham’s God must exhibit faith in Him alone, and the many promises found in the entire counsel of God from Genesis to Revelation—as key components of being regarded as His own, and receiving His redemption. It is with this premise, **of how critical faith was and is to those who believe**, that this edition in the TorahScope series has been compiled. As is noted by the author of Hebrews, “without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). If one is truly seeking communion with God, it must be done by faith, *without any reservations...*

My personal walk of faith began in the Fall of 1978, when I finally understood that I was a bankrupt sinner with a desperate need for a Savior. Gratefully, I was led to a Bible Church which systematically taught the Word of God, and through His providence, was able to hear three consecutive sermons on the life of Samson found in Judges 14-16. Because I could identify with some of Samson’s personal problems, I was able to confess the folly of my ways, admit that I was a sinful person, cry out to the Lord Jesus for His grace, and wholeheartedly believe that His blood sacrifice at Calvary atoned for my transgressions. With great joy that I was forgiven for my sins and made a new creation in the Messiah, my pursuit to know Him began with zealous earnestness and profound thankfulness. Needless to say, with an “all or nothing” personality, my walk became almost a sprint—which over time modulated to a trot, that has finally settled down to a recommended walk, in order to hear His voice more clearly.

Eventually, through a number of life trials, the Lord finally reconnected me with Margaret, the love of my life. In 1994, after six months of marriage, He allowed us to take a special tour to Israel with Zola Levitt Ministries. It was on this trek that the Holy Spirit

appropriately spoke to both of our hearts, that we were to seriously consider celebrating the feasts of the Lord found in Leviticus 23, because in previous years, both of us had independently been privy to these commemorations, albeit in different circumstances. Following this, with Spirit-led footsteps, we joined a Messianic Jewish congregation in 1995, and since then our life as one in Yeshua has been an amazing journey!

Appropriately, while becoming fully engaged in the Messianic lifestyle, we were introduced to the systematic study of the Torah on an annual cycle. It was a great delight for two voracious Bible students and history buffs, to finally spend considerable time reading, studying, and meditating upon the first five books of the Bible—where the foundational building blocks of our faith system are located. In order to make sure that I was properly prepared for the weekly teachings that were illuminating so many truths further elaborated upon by the Prophets and Apostles—I began to take intense notes that eventually progressed to writing reflective commentaries, which helped me grow in my understanding of the whole counsel of God. However, as I researched week after week the existing Torah commentaries for more insight on Moses' Teaching, I discovered that there were a great number of resources from the Jewish Sages and more contemporary Jewish scholars—but there was a relative dearth of resources from Messianic voices which acknowledged Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel. So, I began writing and posting commentaries on the Internet in 1998, and more formally when Outreach Israel Ministries started in 2002. The TorahScope series of books, which have developed, are named for the concept of viewing physical and spiritual life both *telescopically* and *microscopically*—through ancient, contemporary, and future times. It is my profound belief that without more fully appreciating the foundational building blocks of our faith, it is logically predictable that the theological structures built without understanding the faith walks of the Patriarchs, or for that matter without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will be skewed, if not ready to collapse.

Since studying the Torah from 1995 to the present, and compiling various commentaries that also include specific emphasis on the corresponding Haftarah selections or appropriate selections from the Apostolic Scriptures—I have now been led to focus upon the profound concept of *faith* in *TorahScope, Volume III*. Since I know that we have each been given a measure of faith (Romans 12:3), but are further instructed to ask for more wisdom by faith so that we will not be double minded (James 1:5-6)—it is my prayer that through some of the spiritual principles found in this volume of weekly commentaries, this will inspire readers to understand more and more about their personal relationship with the Holy One of Israel. At His Last Supper Passover meal with His Disciples, Yeshua Himself communicated how the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit provides His followers with the ability to comprehend what the will of the Father truly is:

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you’...Yeshua answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. **But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**”

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:15-17, 23-27).

Yeshua required that those who love Him obey His commandments—something truly imperative if one is to have the abiding presence of the Helper or Holy Spirit. A serious challenge, for far too many modern-day followers of the Messiah, is the fact that **not enough know what the commandments of Yeshua truly entail**. Without this knowledge and understanding about what commands apply to whom, when in Biblical history they were originally given, and the geographic circumstances of where they were first delivered—the basic rules for engaging our carnal inclinations, or the world system, or the wiles of the Devil, have had disastrous consequences. If you are a Christian simply wanting to learn more about the Hebraic perspective found in the Torah, or for that matter are a Messianic Believer who desires to enhance his or her measure of faith through the wisdom contained in the Torah—reading and reflecting upon these commentaries will be beneficial for your spiritual walk!

My sincere hope is that through whatever the Lord seeks to accomplish by you reading *TorahScope, Volume III*—that He will be glorified. I pray that each individual will be prompted to complete the call that is upon his or her life to be all things in the Messiah Yeshua. May this truly advance God’s Kingdom on Earth, until the Messianic restoration of all things...

William Mark Huey
Director, Outreach Israel Ministries

COMMENTARY ON GENESIS

Bereisheet בְּרֵאשִׁית

In the Beginning "Torah and Faith"

Genesis 1:1-6:8
Isaiah 42:5-43:10 (A); 42:5-21 (S)

One of the many blessings bestowed upon people, within the Messianic community of faith, is the annual opportunity to return to a study of, and reflection upon, the many profound truths embodied in the weekly Torah readings. It is here within the *Chumash* or Pentateuch, that Messiah followers can consider the foundation of our faith, as we each seek to be faithful to the God of Creation, pondering His ways and acts for humankind. It is in these first five books of the Holy Writ, that God communicates, without reservation, not only His faithfulness to a chosen people—but most assuredly, the absolute need for His people to faithfully seek Him with all of their hearts and souls (Deuteronomy 4:29).

With a new Torah cycle now upon us, it is my intention to focus the attention of each of us on the critical element of **faith** (Heb. *emunah*, אֱמוּנָה; Grk. *pistis*, πίστις), as first thematically witnessed within the weekly portions—and then obviously present in various important places throughout the remainder of Scripture. According to the author of Hebrews, who in Hebrews ch. 11 focuses on many of the faithful predecessors of our common belief, **“without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him”** (Hebrews 11:6). This year’s Torah teachings will attempt to help the modern-day, Messianic follower of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who believes in the Messiah Yeshua and has been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, to increase his or her “measure of faith” (Romans 12:3) in the Lord in order to please Him. Hopefully, this enhancement in faith will result in promoting a greater usefulness for advancing His Kingdom, so that you will find yourself rewarded by Him via your trust and obedience.

For all people who trust in the God of Israel, the study of His Torah is something foundational to understanding the totality of the Holy Scriptures. Most assuredly, the basis for the remainder of the Scriptures comes from the certainty in the human heart, that **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”** (Genesis 1:1).¹ This opening word to the Bible, speaks to not only a certain starting point in past history for the origin of the universe, but the undeniable fact that there is an Omniscient, Omnipotent

¹ Heb. *b'reisheet bara Elohim et ha'shamayim v'et ha'erezt* (בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ).

God, who has made all things according to His intelligent design. Without affirming this conviction, based on faith in the supernatural act of Creation—much of which is beyond human intellect and comprehension—the balance of Holy Scripture would be nothing more than a collection of interesting stories and philosophical speculations, written and compiled from a variety of merely human authors.

Genuine belief in the Creator God and His revealed Word is essential to being a man or woman of faith! Without a steadfast confidence in the God of the Bible, belief in Him, and His plan for each of us and the world at large, is highly unlikely. Possessing faith in the LORD God, and in the Messiah He has sent, is imperative if we want to understand our destiny as human beings.

The Concept of Faith

It is critical for us to take a brief look at the concept of faith, and what it entails for us as the people of God. In order to do this, there might not be a better place in the Bible than the previously referenced Hebrews ch. 11, to see where a succinct definition of faith is articulated:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:1-3).

Here, it is stated how “faith means that we have full confidence in the things we hope for, it means being certain of things we cannot see” (Phillips New Testament). Followers of God from antiquity past gained His approval by possessing faith in Him—but such “faith” is not a visible, tangible entity. Faith, rather, is intended to be an intense trust or belief implanted into the heart and mind, rooted within a hope that looks beyond the seen world, directed toward an unseen God who created the world. This is something that goes beyond the natural revelation of God in the Creation (cf. Romans 1:19-20), as it is something that each person is to possess as the trials and tribulations of life force us to mature in our relationship with Him, and in our reckoning of His ways and instruction. Faith in God includes an intrinsic desire to know Him as the loving Creator, who has wondrously fashioned everything that exists. In the view of the Apostle Paul, God has allotted to each of us a measure of faith:

“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith” (Romans 12:3).

Hopefully, by considering the great examples of faith—or faithlessness—through our course of Torah study this year, God will mercifully increase the measure of faith that each of us has. In so doing, may true seekers of God learn more about Him, and be strengthened in order to more fully walk in His ways! May we also have some answers to the questions we have been asking of our Heavenly Father, in terms of how we are to serve Him and what we are to do, during our time here on Earth.

Adam, Eve, Belief, and the Fall

Without a doubt, it requires a certain amount of faith in God, to believe in the Creation account of Genesis chs. 1-2. God took six distinct periods or *yamim* (יָמִים),² in order to form our universe, including: the cosmos, our solar system, Planet Earth, its vegetation, sea and land creatures, and ultimately humanity. People today, who declare faith in the God of the Bible, give Him absolute credit for bringing into existence all that is seen on this planet, and in what lies beyond—and also what they cannot see in terms of microscopic objects *and* other dimensions. The pinnacle of God's Creation is undoubtedly **the man and woman** (Psalm 8), who were made by God in His image (*tzelem*, תְּלֵמ) to rule over the Earth:

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, **‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’**...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day” (Genesis 1:27-28, 31).

One would think that living in the Garden of Eden, where God walked with the first man and woman (Genesis 3:8), and with the creatures and vegetation subject to their dominion—would have been sufficient reason for them to exhibit significant confidence in the goodness and provision of Him as Creator. The instruction given by God, to not eat of the Tree of Good and Evil, seems pretty straightforward and simple enough to follow (cf. Genesis 2:15-25). Yet as is known to each of us, the fact that there was a rule to follow, which forbade its fruit from being eaten, allowed the serpent to enter in and tempt Eve, who had been formed after Adam, and had fewer encounters with God than he did (1 Timothy 2:13).³ When encountering the serpent, Eve reported how God has forbidden the tree's fruit from being eaten, but she was taken in by the serpent's crafty words—not having been informed enough by her husband as to the consequences of what eating the fruit will bring:

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, “You shall not eat from any tree of the garden”? The woman said to the serpent, ‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.”’ **The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened,

² Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp 398-401; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 1:399-401.

³ Editor's note: Be aware of how the verb appearing in 1 Timothy 2:13, *plassō* (πλάσσω), can mean “to mould and form by education, training” (H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 643), and that various Bibles do properly translate 1 Timothy 2:13 with “formed” (KJV, RSV, NIV, NRSV, ESV, CJB, TLV). If “created” (NASU) were intended in 1 Timothy 2:13, then the verb *ktizō* (κτίζω) could have been used instead.

and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings” (Genesis 3:1-7).

When Adam and Eve both ate the forbidden fruit, they did not “drop dead.” Once they knew the intimate presence of God coming to them in the cool of the evening (cf. Genesis 3:8), but after eating the forbidden fruit, they found themselves “naked,” and they knew something had been *spiritually altered*. It was at this point that the first human couple’s belief, trust, faith, or confidence in God’s order was challenged. With the intimacy of knowing God in an incredibly personal way—what was going to happen now that God has been disobeyed?

As a result of disobedience, Adam and Eve had their eyes opened to the knowledge of good and evil. They were cast out of the Garden of Eden, and by being expelled from Paradise they were going to have to contend with new challenges that were not a part of their previous, privileged time. *Curses were issued upon them*. There would be pain in childbirth, and a battle of the sexes would erupt with a woman possessing an “urge” (NJPS)⁴ for her husband, who would in turn dominate her. There would be difficulty in having to see vegetation grow, as outside of the Garden of Eden would be thorns and thistles. Most importantly, physical death would come, and the body would return to the physical elements from which it was hewn:

“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.’ Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat from it”; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face You will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:16-19).

Rather than experiencing physical death immediately, Adam and Eve were instead expelled from God’s most intimate presence, in which they could receive eternal life and never-ending communion with Him. Cherubim and a flaming sword were stationed outside of the entrance to the Garden of Eden, preventing Adam and Eve from reentering (Genesis 3:21-24).

In reading through Genesis chs. 1-3, and with what happened with Adam and Eve after they both ate the forbidden fruit, one can certainly think that all hope was lost. Did not the first two human beings flagrantly oppose God, by disobeying God’s clear instruction? If people have a free will, could this not be taken as an indication that when God’s instruction is known, people will most always *break it* (cf. Romans 5:13)? To think that all hope was lost would be a bad conclusion to draw, because as God punished the serpent, there is a promise of a seed (Heb. *zera*, זֵרָא) to come who would crush the serpent’s head:

“The LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; **and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel**” (Genesis 3:14-15).

⁴ Heb. *teshuqah* (תִּשְׁוָקָה); cf. Genesis 4:7.

For a review, consult the article “Addressing the Frequently Avoided Issues Messianics Encounter in the Torah” by J.K. McKee, under the sub-section “Development and Advances of Gender Relations.”

Elsewhere in Scripture, we see that this Seed is none other than Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ), in whom final redemption is found (cf. Galatians 3:16, 19). In fact, given the likely association of the figure of Eve with the false teaching that plagued many women in First Century Ephesus, is it any wonder why Paul would direct Timothy's attention, saying how women "shall be saved through the child-bearing" (1 Timothy 2:16, YLT)? When the definite article in *dia tēs teknogonias* (διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας) is translated, then a definite reference to the Incarnation of Yeshua—the One who is **the Child-Bearing**—can be detected, referring back to the Genesis 3:15 promise.⁵

Eventually in future history, the curses brought down upon humanity would be nailed to the cross of Yeshua (cf. Colossians 2:14), and the subsequent guilt of sin would be remitted for those who acknowledge and have faith in Him as Savior. Romans 5:12 still reminds each of us, though, how "just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin...in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (TNIV). Those who do not receive Yeshua the Messiah into their lives, placing faith in His atoning action for us, still have to reckon with the problems introduced to humanity by the actions committed by Adam and Eve. For, Adam and Eve quantitatively demonstrated **a lack of faith** in what the Creator had explicitly told them to not do. Lamentably, for all of us as the subsequent offspring of Adam and Eve—an inclination to not place our faith or trust in what the Lord has told us, has been inherited. *All people have sinned in Adam.*

Cain, Abel, Disbelief, and Fratricide

While life was certainly more difficult outside the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve, they had plenty of time to consider their transgression and how their communion with God was disrupted, but not necessarily destroyed. In reading through the first Torah portion, we find that in spite of the disruption that had been introduced, the Lord continued to commune with them. Adam and Eve had to begin to populate Planet Earth, because even though life would be difficult, God had not rescinded His decree that humanity should subdue the world. So, Adam and Eve went about the tasks before them, and among their children, they had two sons named Cain and Abel:

"Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, 'I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD.*' Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (Genesis 4:1-2).

As these two sons grew up, Cain became a tiller of the soil, while Abel tended to flocks. Both of these sons presented offerings from their hard work to the Lord. We see that Abel's offering of the first of his flock was accepted by God, but Cain's offering was disregarded:

"So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. **And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard.** So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell" (Genesis 4:3-5).

⁵ Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible With the Apocrypha*, RSV (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp 1441-1442 note for us how,

"This much debated verse has also been translated (1) 'she will be saved through the birth of the Child' [referring to Jesus Christ], or (b) 'she will be brought safely through childbirth.'"

Many Christian readers think that the reason Abel's offering from the flocks was accepted before the Lord, but Cain's offering from the fruit of the ground was not accepted, has to do with how a blood sacrifice is necessary to cover sin, and it is obvious that plants cannot do this. Yet as we encounter later in the Torah, various grain and cereal offerings, as well as those of oil and wine, become an important part of the Levitical institution and in the Ancient Israelites demonstrating their thanks to God for His provision. The Lord would not have rejected an offering of plants simply because they were plants.

What might be more notable is how Abel presented "the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions" (Genesis 4:4), and Cain only "brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground" (Genesis 4:3). This would mean that Abel gave God the finest of his flocks, and Cain may have given God some rather standard or even sub-standard produce.⁶ Resultant from the Lord's rejection of Cain's offering before Him, Cain got rather angry, and He was warned against the urge of sin that he must see mastered and put down:

"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, **sin is crouching at the door; and its desire** [*teshuqah*; urge, NJPS] **is for you, but you must master it**'" (Genesis 4:6-7).

Cain was not able to heed God's warning to him, and because of this, we see the first recorded murder—a fratricide—in Holy Scripture:

"...And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him" (Genesis 4:7).

While Cain had gone through some of the motions of offering up some of the fruits of his gardening efforts, he had clearly lacked some faith and confidence in the Lord to whom it was offered. On the other hand, when Abel brought a sacrifice from the firstlings of his flock, the Lord looked upon it with favor. *Cain's offering was not the best he could have offered.* In the First Century C.E., the author of Hebrews observed how the faith exhibited by Abel to make a sacrifice to God, was considered an act of righteousness—and it was something that had a resonating effect down through the ages:

"By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks" (Hebrews 11:4).

While there is likely to be discussion and debate over the difference of sacrifice offered by both Cain and Abel, the faithlessness of Cain and the faith of Abel were definitely contrasted in the reaction of Cain in murdering his brother. In a new world where their parents Adam and Eve had been cast out of the Garden of Eden, and where there were many unknowns with this family existing as the only human beings—the reasons of Cain for murdering his brother Abel are difficult to fathom. *With relatively few people on the planet*, it is hard to imagine a brother killing another brother. But such was the wickedness and lack of faith in the heart of Cain, which he succumbed to, as he let sin take control of his actions. While the judgment issued upon Cain was tough to bear (Genesis 4:8-16), the murderous precedent he set, for people murdering other people, has unfortunately not changed.

For those studying the Torah, reflecting on these two brothers—with one possessing faith in God, and another demonstrating extreme faithlessness—is critical for assessing exactly where our hearts are today, when it comes to us demonstrating our trust in the

⁶ Cf. Nahum M. Sarna, "Genesis," in David L. Lieber, ed., *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary* (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 2001), 25.