



B'NAI CHAYIM

CHILDREN OF LIFE

29 Tishri, 5781 (17/10/20) **Beresheet: Strengthening Our Grasp of First Things** J. M. Terrett

Today marks our study of the first portion of our annual Torah Reading Cycle for the year 5781. I want to combine my sermon time with my Torah Meditation because, the first 11 chapters of Genesis are the oldest piece of writing that the human race possesses. So much which is accepted as authentic human history is based on evolutionary ideas that falsely claim to have both overthrown the biblical account and to have proven it is just a legendary account with no basis in fact.

As Messianic believers who accept the authority and the truth of the Scriptures, we need to be well versed in what the Scriptures actually teach, so that we do not get sucked into not standing firm on what the Bible actually teaches. Some liberal Christians and liberal Jews accept the supposed authority of modern science and teach that these stories at the beginning of Genesis are just attempts by primitive people to provide simple answers to complex questions which our modern world is just beginning to have answers for. They feel that these chapters of Genesis teach good values, but are not actually accounts of how the world came into being.

It is thought by our secular society and their liberal allies that since all religions have myths about creation and the origin of life on our fair planet, the account of Genesis is nothing more than another myth which does not describe any events which actually occurred in time and space. They even go on to say that it is good literature which doesn't really give an historical account about either the origin of the universe or how life came into existence on earth.

Many believers are threatened by their sophisticated scientific babble which contains an endless series of: "we think that", "it may be" "the current theory about this is". They are really just building a house of cards where they use theories as proof for other theories and have no real objective truth or evidence to base their modern legends on.

Having said that, I am not afraid to accept that all even the chapters at the beginning of Genesis are in fact poetic accounts of what actually happened. However, I also believe that a poem can speak the truth just as effectively as a detailed scientific document. Literary language can speak the truth just as firmly as literal language. The first two chapters of Genesis contain extensive literary language about how G-d created the universe and how He created life to populate the planet we call earth.

So buckle up, open your Bibles to follow along. I may bounce around a little, because I prepared these notes from memory because I did not take my Bible with me when I was testifying in court on Thursday. They were a good two hours later than they said they would be. So, like a good

little boy, I took out my subpoena letters and on the back of these documents, I outlined the observations I wanted to make about my favorite portions of Scripture.

You all know that as well as being a trained English teacher, I am also fascinated by ancient mythologies. All of them contain themes which can be used for sharing our faith. Paul did that when he addressed the crowd on Mars Hill in ancient Athens. Wycliffe Bible translators are convinced that G-d built preemptive analogies into all religions and that these could be used to make the Gospel meaningful for people who have never heard it. What we have in the Bible is the only true and accurate account of what really happened and we are going to study a portion of it this morning.

The Genesis account is unique in many ways, especially since it mentions only one G-d creating and not a committee of gods each taking a specific task for the part of the universe they supposedly ruled over. Another surprise is that the Genesis account is the only account where the true G-d preceded chaos and did not crawl out of some cosmic slime. In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth and at first, the earth was shapeless and empty and G-d fashioned it according to His predetermined plan.

In the Bible then, chaos was only a temporary condition which no longer exists. The universe is a finished work in which complete cosmic order now prevails. There is nowhere in the universe where the discovered laws of physics do not prevail. It is fine tuned machine in perpetual motion and this is what Genesis One describes. As the account goes through various aspects of what was created, we see that all of it is under the control of laws and limits which G-d established and which cannot be violated.

There is however no mention of when the angels were created or when they fell to become demons. However, being a selective account does not diminish its credibility. The account was not given to satisfy our curiosity, but was given to show us that this wonderful universe we live in is totally under G-d's control and when no details are given about something we want to know, it is really none of our business.

In fact, a seven day creation is really a symbolic reference to the fact that G-d built time into the fabric of the cosmos. He is also the Lord of time as well as the King of Creation. The seven days are a symbolic reference to the absolute and complete sovereignty of G-d over all of creation, as well as over the limits He placed on creation. We did not evolve, we are not now going to start evolving and it is not in the cards for us in the future.

Animal species were created as a closed gene pool with no possibility of, or need for evolution. Animals may adapt and develop any number of amazing subspecies, but there is no such thing as cross species reproduction. No species which G-d created was drowned in the Flood. Noah took two representatives of each species into the Ark and once the animals were set free, they scattered and diversified into the amazing number of subspecies we see all around our planet today.

In the account, we also see that humanity alone possesses the moral image of G-d and as such, we differ from members of the animal kingdom who do not possess this unique characteristic. In this account we see that mankind was created male and female, in the next account in chapter two, the mystery of gender is introduced.

The first creation account actually ends in Chapter Two and there is a not too subtle reason for this. Those who first divided the Bible up into chapter and verse wrongly placed the seventh day as part of chapter two in order to diminish the special status which the Sabbath possesses as the only divinely mandated day of Rest. G-d never changed it, nor did the Messiah or His apostles and Sabbath observance is the fourth of Ten changeless commandments which people violate at their peril. Let me take it one step further and say that Sunday worship is a form of temporal antisemitism. We should never try and change the Bible. Our job should always be to let the Bible change us.

Lets move on to the second creation account where it appears that the order of Creation is almost completely reversed. The only thing which changed was the writing purpose.

They are not two separate accounts, written at different times by different people. You see, a Hebraic storytelling mode means that accounts are not always chronological and are arranged so that the most important point is given at the end of each account. Chapter one is a hymn to creation. Chapter two is a hymn to gender, which is the second greatest mystery in the universe, next to the trinity of the plural singularity we worship as the only true G-d.

In the second account, man is formed from the mud and becomes a living being when G-d breathed into his nostrils. Rain had not yet fallen, so none of the plants had germinated, but it was to be man's job to cultivate G-d's garden. The boundaries of the garden are given and they approximate the empire of Solomon. So the Holy Land is the site of the original garden of Eden. When once the earth was a single continent, the Garden of Eden would have been dead center and in the Gospel of our Messiah, G-d is calling all the scattered children of Adam and Eve to come back to the Garden. G-d wants to be the center of all of our lives.

Since G-d did not think it was good for man to be alone, He formed all the beasts of the fields and the birds of the sky to see if a companion for man could be found among the beasts and birds. Man is not an animal, but a being who alone possesses the moral image of G-d and though pets make excellent companions, they can never be our equal help mates. When G-d formed a woman from one of Adam's ribs, He brought about the second greatest mystery in the universe – gender. Equality does not mean that we are the same are easy to understand.

The word used for a man and a woman becoming one flesh is "echad" and it means that we are equal partners where the one is not superior or inferior to the other and they both are equally the image of G-d. It has been demonstrated that the various categories of intelligence and giftedness are not gender geared, nor are the various kinds of personality.

There are two main differences that relate both to how men and woman store information and to the strength of our different immune systems. Woman store information by emotional connection, while men store information by categories, which is why men sometimes have trouble understanding women and vise versa. Next, men have stronger muscles because of testosterone and feel less pain on the outside, but we have the weaker immune system and feel more pain on the inside. Women have weaker muscles, but possess a stronger immune system that feels less pain on the inside. A lot of strange perceptions have grown up to understand the differences between men and women, but bad things happen when one gender tries to oppress or mistreat the other. Gender equality is what the Bible teaches.

We were created to be gardening companions who were to have regular intimate contact with G-d. We discover in chapter three that our time in the garden was a trial period to see the level

of our spiritual reliability. Chapter three is a mournful song or poem which deals with our first ancestors' moral failure when they disobeyed G-d and listened to the lies of the enemy. The same liar and his henchmen are still around today and, sadly people are still listening to them.

The serpent symbolism poetically describes a series of actual events. The enemy exploited our free will and maimed humanity, but was not allowed to destroy it. There were two special trees in the garden which our first ancestors were told were off limits and not to be eaten. The first was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was not a known fruit, but our ancestors crossed a boundary and the eating of the forbidden fruit permanently impacted later generations of humanity, both genetically and spiritually. The proposed order of eating from the two trees was intentional on the enemy's part.

If we had eaten of the tree of life, we would have lived forever in our innocence and that is not something which the enemy wanted. He wanted us to first eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then of the tree of life. If it had happened, our ancestors would have been eternally fallen, with no chance for redemption. If you cannot die, you cannot resurrect. In order to protect us, G-d drove us from the garden and blocked access to the tree of life. Our Torah is a tree of life and the Messiah died on a tree to give us life, but at this point, the L-rd acted to prevent us from being permanently spiritually crippled.

Part of the punishment was to remove the woman as the principle leader of the couple – her desire for her man would be greater than his desire for her and her pain in child birth would be increased. It is evident from this punishment that the first couple had not yet begun to reproduce and there were no sinless descendants of Adam and Eve running around the garden. The woman would be saved from the stigma of being the death bringer by becoming the life giver through childbirth.

As well, in the punishment of the serpent, one day the seed of woman (a baby born without the help of a man) would crush the serpent, who would only be able to bite his heel before being demolished by him. The final victory will belong to our Messiah.

Man was also told that from this point on, that outside the garden he would have to gain his food by the painful sweat of his brow instead of experiencing the bounty of the garden.

Once outside the garden, Adam and his wife gave birth to two boys who grew up following two different paths. Abel, the youngest became a shepherd, while Cain, the oldest became a gardener. They both offered sacrifices to G-d and even though Cain knew better, he wrongly offered a vegetable offering to G-d. This disagreement is the first case of lethal sibling rivalry in the Bible. When Cain murdered his brother, it was the second test which humanity failed by not resisting the influence of sinfulness.

After the murder of his brother, Cain was banished to the land of Nod, which means wandering in Hebrew and does not specifically refer to Afghanistan. Cain probably waited for his sisters or nieces to grow up and then kidnapped one or more of them to become his wives. His death and his age at death is not given. His descendants are given a brief genealogy which produced some amazing people who were mortally deficient and who stood in opposition to the descendants of Seth and the others who make up the ten pre-flood patriarchs who walked with G-d.

We understand that the evil influence of the descendants of Cain, called the daughters of men, gradually influenced the sons of G-d to abandon their faith and adopt the violence of Cain's children. The world gradually filled up with sinfulness and violence until only a small number of people avoided sin and served G-d. Does this sound familiar? This same shift is occurring around the globe as the righteous core of G-d seekers shrinks and the darkness of evolutionary humanism is increasing exponentially.

In chapter five, only the names and ages of clan leaders are given as the world sank into a satanic darkness which filled our planet with violence which even negatively impacted the animal kingdom. We have to be careful about saying that this was the origin of the dinosaurs because great size and big teeth does not always mean that an animal is evil. It took Noah 120 years to build the ark and it was the greatest sermon illustration in history.

He announced the coming judgment, but the evil people did not listen and the evil people of our modern world are not listening either. Noah stood his ground as he watched his world fill with darkness and we should do the same. Even though the Gospel is making great strides worldwide, our world is sinking back into the great darkness of the days of Noah and the final judgment of G-d is coming.

Too many are making false predictions about the timing of this judgment, but, like Noah we should keep on sharing about its arrival, even if the patience of G-d delays its inevitable arrival. We need to stand on the Word and have faith in the purposes of G-d. In 5781 we may see many things that trouble us and others which make us glad. It is our job to be keepers of the Word and to shine as salty light no matter what else is going on in our world. These initial chapters speak of the ultimate control of G-d over the affairs of mankind.

As long as we give Him ultimate control over our own lives and do not sink into the growing global darkness, 5781 will be a good year under His peaceful protection and provision. We should settle for nothing less.

Shabbat Shalom.