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GENESIS

INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION, AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE

As the foundation for a rising biblical structure, Genesis began to be quoted and discussed even before the Old Testament as a whole had been completed; and it remains to this day one of the most intensively cultivated books of the Bible. Volumes have been written about single chapters, and monographs about individual verses and clauses. Any comprehensive treatment of Genesis must, therefore, be highly selective, if it is to be at all suitable for the layman while not ignoring the scholar's needs. Accordingly, the present work devotes only as much space to matters that have already been covered elsewhere as is necessary for clarity and continuity; a minimal bibliography of the excellent works that are available is provided in the section on Genesis Exegesis (pp. LX f.). By the same token, greater emphasis has been placed on questions about which there is as yet no definite consensus, and on points that remain to be adduced.

The introductory essay deals with critical approaches to the Bible, the nature of the biblical process, the contents of Genesis, and the general problem of Bible translations. The body of the work has been divided into sections that follow the exact order of the original, but do not necessarily coincide with the customary division into chapters. Each section contains a translation of the text, some textual notes, more extensive annotations, and an appended commentary. The NOTES are addressed to specific verses, whereas the COMMENT is directed to the given section as a whole and is concerned with literary treatment, cultural and historical background, and problems of authorship. The study follows in the main the moderate school of documentary criticism, and the presumed sources have been indicated at the head of each section. But the sequence of the original remains undisturbed, so that any reader may ignore, if he so chooses, both the markers and the reasons behind them.

The transliteration of Hebrew terms has had to be simplified for typographic reasons. With personal and place names, the traditional

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1. OPENING ACCOUNT OF CREATION
(i 1–ii 4a: P)

I 1 When God set about to create heaven and earth—2 the world being then a formless waste, with darkness over the seas and only an awesome wind sweeping over the water—3 God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. 4 God was pleased with the light that he saw, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and he called the darkness Night. Thus evening came, and morning—first day.

6 God said, “Let there be an expanse in the middle of the water to form a division between the waters.” 7 And it was so. 7 God made the expanse, and it divided the water below it from the water above it.^b 8 God called the expanse Sky. Thus evening came, and morning—second day.

9 God said, “Let the water beneath the sky be gathered into a single area, that the dry land may be visible.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and he called the gathered waters Seas. God was pleased with what he saw, 11 and he said, “Let the earth burst forth with growth: plants that bear seed, and^c every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it.” And it was so. 12 The earth produced growth: various kinds of seed-bearing plants, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with seed in it. And God was pleased with what he saw. 13 Thus evening came, and morning—third day.

14 God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky, to distinguish between day and night; let them mark the fixed

^a So LXX; transposed in MT to the end of vs. 7.

^b Heb. “expanse” (twice).

^c So several manuscripts and most ancient versions; omitted in MT.

times, the days and the years, ¹⁵ and serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth. And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the great lights, the greater one to dominate the day and the lesser one to dominate the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, ¹⁸ to dominate the day and the night, and to distinguish between light and darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw. ¹⁹ Thus evening came, and morning—fourth day.

²⁰ God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹ And it was so. ²² God created the great sea monsters, every kind of crawling creature with which the waters teem, and all kinds of winged birds. And God was pleased with what he saw. ²³ Thus evening came, and morning—fifth day.

²⁴ God said, "Let the earth bring forth various kinds of living creatures: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of every kind." And it was so. ²⁵ God made various kinds of wild animals, cattle of every kind, and all the creeping things of the earth, whatever their kind. And God was pleased with what he saw.

²⁶ Then God said, "I^e will make man in my image, after my likeness; let him subject the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, the cattle and all the wild [animals],^f and all the creatures that creep on earth."

27 And God Created man in his image;
In the divine image created he him,
Male and female created he them.

²⁸ God blessed them, saying to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and subdue it; subject the fishes of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that move on earth."
²⁹ God further said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on earth and every tree in which is the seed-bearing fruit of the tree;

^{d-d} Restored from LXX.

^e See NOTE.

^f See NOTE.

³⁰ And to all the animals on land, all the birds of the sky, and all the living creatures that crawl on earth [I give] all the green plants as their food." And it was so. ³¹ God looked at everything that he had made and found it very pleasing. Thus evening came, and morning—sixth day.

II ¹ Now the heaven and the earth were completed, and all their company. ² On the seventh^o day God brought to a close the work that he had been doing, and he ceased on the seventh day from all the work that he had undertaken. ³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he ceased from all the work which he had undertaken.

⁴ Such is the story of heaven and earth as they were created.

NOTES

i 1. On the introductory phrase see COMMENT.

2. The parenthetic character of this verse is confirmed by the syntax of Heb. A normal consecutive statement would have begun with *watt^hhā'āreš*, not *w^hā'āreš hāy^{tā}*.

a formless waste. The Heb. pair *tōhū wā-bōhū* is an excellent example of hendiadys, that is, two terms connected by "and" and forming a unit in which one member is used to qualify the other; cf., for example, vs. 14, iii 16, xlv 6. Here "unformed-and-void" is used to describe "a formless waste."

an awesome wind. Heb. *ru^h* means primarily "wind, breeze," secondarily "breath," and thus ultimately "spirit." But the last connotation is more concrete than abstract; in the present context, moreover, it appears to be out of place—see H. M. Orlinsky, JQR 47 (1957), 174–82. The appended *'lōhīm* can be either possessive ("of/from God"), or adjectival ("divine, supernatural, awesome"; but not simply "mighty"); cf. xxx 8.

sweeping. The same stem is used in Deut xxxii 11 of eagles in relation to their young. The Ugaritic cognate describes a form of motion as opposed to a state of suspension or rest.

4. *was pleased with [what] he saw*. This phrase, which serves as a formal refrain, means literally "saw that it was good," or rather "saw how good it was" (cf. W. F. Albright, *Mélanges Robert*, 1956, pp. 22–26); but Heb. "good" has a broader range than its English equivalent.

5. *came*. Literally "was, came to be"; Heb. repeats the verb with "morning." The evening marks the first half of the full day.

^o See NOTE.

first day. In Semitic (notably in Akkadian, cf. Gilg., Tablet XI, lines 215 ff.) the normal ordinal series is "one, second, third," etc., not "first, second, third," etc.; cf. also ii 11.

6. *expanse.* Traditionally "firmament," one of the Bible's indirect contributions to Western lexicons. It goes back to the Vulg. *firmamentum* "something made solid," which is based in turn on the LXX rendering of Heb. *rāqīa'* "beaten out, stamped" (as of metal), suggesting a thin sheet stretched out to form the vault of the sky (cf. Dr.).

And it was so. This clause is correctly reproduced here by LXX but misplaced in Heb. at the end of vs. 7. The present account employs it normally after each of God's statements; cf. vss. 9, 11, 15, 24, 30, and textual note ^{d-d}.

9. *area.* Literally "place," Heb. cons. *māqm*, for which LXX reads *māqh* "gathering," the same as in vs. 10, perhaps rightly (cf. D. N. Freedman, *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64 [1953], 190 f.).

14. *let them mark the fixed times.* Heb. literally "let them be for signs and for seasons (and for days and for years)," which has been reproduced mechanically in most translations (most recently RSV). Some of the moderns (e.g., von Rad, SB), realizing that signs do not belong in this list, take the first connective particle as explicative: they shall serve as signs, that is, for seasons, and days, and years; but the sun and the moon cannot be said to determine the seasons proper; moreover, the order would then be unbalanced (one would expect: days, seasons, years). The problem solves itself once we take the first pair as a hendiadys (cf. vs. 2): they shall serve a sign for the fixed time periods, or in other words, they shall mark the fixed times, that is, the days and the years. The use of the particle (Heb. *w^e/ū*) in each of these functions (hendiadys, explicative, connective) is amply attested elsewhere.

15. *lights.* Heb. *m^eōrōt*, differentiated from *m^eōrōt* in vs. 14, literally "sources of light, luminaries."

20. The creation of the fifth day was deemed to comprise creatures (Heb. *nepeš*) that might appear in swarms (*šereš*) in the water, on the ground, or in the air. But their ultimate breeding place was traced to the waters, since land creatures come under the sixth day. The process is described indirectly: let the waters teem with . . . (stem *šrš*, with cognate accusative).

21. The same Heb. stem (*rmš*) is used for "crawl" (as in this instance) and "creep" (as in 24 ff.). The underlying sense, however (which is shared by the Akk. cognate *namāšu*), is "to have locomotion"; cf. vs. 28, vii 21, ix 2. And just as Heb. *remeš* is contrasted here with

larger animals in 24 ff., so, too, in Gilg. (Tablet I, column ii, lines 40 ff.) the small creatures of the steppe (Akk. *namāšū*) are juxtaposed to the larger beasts.

24. Heb. *b^hēmā* "cattle" covers here the domestic animals in general, or animals due to be domesticated.

26. For the singulars "my image, my likeness" Heb. employs here plural possessives, which most translations reproduce. Yet no other divine being has been mentioned; and the very next verse uses the singular throughout; cf. also ii 7. The point at issue, therefore, is one of grammar alone, without a direct bearing on the meaning. It so happens that the common Heb. term for "God," namely, Elohim (*'lōhīm*) is plural in form and is so construed at times (e.g., xx 13, xxxv 7, etc.). Here God refers to himself, which may account for the more formal construction in the plural.

wild [animals]. Reading [*hyt*] *h'rš* as in vs. 25.

28. *move.* Same Heb. verb as for "creep"; see NOTE on vs. 21.

30. [*I give*]. In Heb. the predicate may carry over from 29; but the translation has to repeat it for clarity.

ii 1. The relatively recent division into chapters, which dates from medieval times, disturbs in this case the inner unity of the account. In vs. 4, below, the much older division into verses proves to be equally misleading.

company. Heb. *šābā'* generally stands for "army, host," but this is by no means the original meaning of the term; the basic sense of the stem is "to be engaged in group service" (cf. Exod xxxviii 8; I Sam ii 22; Isa xxix 7, 8). The cognate Akk. noun *šābu* denotes not only "soldier," but also "member of a work gang, laborer." The Heb. term is collective; in the present context it designates the total made up of the various component parts in the planned design of creation; hence array, ranks, company.

2. Since the task of creation was finished on the sixth day, the text can hardly go on to say that God concluded it on the seventh day. It follows therefore that (a) the numeral is an error for "sixth," as assumed by LXX, Sam., and other ancient versions; (b) the pertinent verb is to be interpreted as a pluperfect: God had finished on the sixth day and rested on the seventh; or (c) the verb carries some more particular shade of meaning. The present translation inclines to the last choice. Under circumstances that are similar in kind if not in degree, Akk. employs the verb *šutešbū* in the sense of "inspect and approve"; this is applied to the work of craftsmen (masons in the Code of Hammurabi 233) and even to the birth of Marduk (ANET, p. 62, line 91). In this account, God inspects the results of each successive act and finds them

pleasing. The end result could well be described as work "brought to a (gratifying) close." A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, p. 127, proposes "declared finished," which appears to point in the same direction.

4. *story*. Heb. *tōl' dōt*, traditionally "generations" in the etymological sense of "begettings," that is, "genealogy, line" in modern usage (cf. NOTE on vs. 1); hence the derived meaning "history," or more simply "story," as in the present context.

COMMENT

This opening statement about the creation of the world is assigned by nearly all critics to the *P*(riestly) source. There is a marked difference between the present section and the accounts that follow, accounts which most scholars regard as typical of the *J* source. Although the subject matter is roughly parallel in both instances, there is scarcely any similarity in general treatment or specific emphasis. No less noteworthy is the stylistic contrast between the respective sections, which cannot be ignored even in translation, as the subsequent chapters will show. The version before us displays, aside from *P*'s characteristic vocabulary, a style that is impersonal, formulaic, and measured to the point of austerity. What we have here is not primarily a description of events or a reflection of a unique experience. Rather, we are given the barest statement of a sequence of facts resulting from the fiat of the supreme and absolute master of the universe. Yet the account has a grandeur and a dramatic impact all its own.

The stark simplicity of this introductory section is thus by no means a mark of meager writing ability. It is the result of special cultivation, a process in which each detail was refined through endless probing and each word subjected to minutest scrutiny. By the same token, the end product cannot have been the work of an individual, but must be attributed to a school with a continuous tradition behind it. The ultimate objective was to set forth, in a manner that must not presume in any way to edit the achievement of the Creator—by the slightest injection of sentiment or personality—not a theory but a credo, a credo untinged by the least hint of speculation.

In these circumstances, the question that immediately arises—one that is necessarily more acute here than in nearly any other

context—is the basic question that has to be raised about any statement in a given source; and this is not whether the statement is true or false, but what it means (R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 1946, p. 260). In other words, the point here is not whether this account of creation conforms to the scientific data of today, but what it meant to, and how it was arrived at by, the writer concerned. It is on this score, among many others, that the results of recent discovery and research afford us the means for an improved perspective.

Genesis i–xi in general, and the first section in particular, are a broad introduction to the history which commences with Abraham. The practice of tracing history back to antediluvian times is at least as old as the Sumerian king list (see above, p. LVII). Biblical tradition had ample reason to be familiar with Mesopotamian cultural norms. Indeed, the Primeval History is largely Mesopotamian in substance, implicitly for the most part, but also explicitly in such instances as the Garden of Eden or the Tower of Babel. Thus biblical authors were indebted to Mesopotamian models for these early chapters not only in matters of arrangement but also in some of the subject matter.

Is the treatment of creation in Genesis a case of such indebtedness? We have two separate accounts of this theme, the present section which stems from *P*, and the one following which goes back to *J*, as was indicated above. Yet neither source could have borrowed directly from the other, since each dwells on different details. Accordingly, both must derive from a body of antecedent traditions. It follows that the present version of *P* should have connections with old Mesopotamian material. This premise is borne out of actual facts.

Mesopotamia's canonical version of cosmic origins is found in the so-called Babylonian Creation Epic, or *Enūma eliš* "When on High" (ANET, pp. 60–72). The numerous points of contact between it and the opening section of Genesis have long been noted. There is not only a striking correspondence in various details, but—what is even more significant—the order of events is the same, which is enough to preclude any likelihood of coincidence. The relationship is duly recognized by all informed students, no matter how orthodox their personal beliefs may be. I cite as an example the tabulation given by Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, p. 129:

<i>Enūma elish</i>	<i>Genesis</i>
Divine spirit and cosmic matter are coexistent and coeternal	Divine spirit creates cosmic matter and exists independently of it
Primeval chaos; Ti'amat enveloped in darkness	The earth a desolate waste, with darkness covering the deep (<i>tēhōm</i>)
Light emanating from the gods	Light created
The creation of the firmament	The creation of the firmament
The creation of dry land	The creation of dry land
The creation of luminaries	The creation of luminaries
The creation of man	The creation of man
The gods rest and celebrate	God rests and sanctifies the seventh day

Except for incidental differences of opinion in regard to the exact meaning of the first entry in each column (see below, and cf. NOTE on vs. 2), the validity of this listing is not open to question. What, then, are the conclusions that may be drawn from these and other relevant data?

It is clear that the biblical approach to creation as reflected in *P* is closely related to traditional Mesopotamian beliefs. It may be safely posited, moreover, that the Babylonians did not take over these views from the Hebrews, since the cuneiform accounts—among which *Enūma eliš* is but one, and a relatively stereotyped, formulation—antedate in substance the biblical statements on the subject. Nor is there the slightest basis in fact for assuming some unidentified ultimate source from which both the Mesopotamians and the Hebrews could have derived their views about creation. It would thus appear that *P*'s opening account goes back to Babylonian prototypes, and it is immaterial whether the transmission was accomplished directly or through some intermediate channel; in any case, *J* cannot have served as a link in this particular instance.

The date of the take-over cannot be determined within any practical limits. Although much in *P* is demonstrably late, there is also early material in that same source. The Primeval History in particular was bound to make use of old data. At the same time, however, a distinction must be made between basic subject matter and its final form in the collective version. The creation account could have en-

tered the stream of biblical tradition sometime in the latter half of the second millennium, without taking final shape until a number of centuries later. In the present connection, however, the question of date is a relatively minor one. Of far greater importance are (1) the established borrowing of the general version of creation, and (2) the ultimate setting into which biblical tradition incorporated the received account.

Derivation from Mesopotamia in this instance means no more and no less than that on the subject of creation biblical tradition aligned itself with the traditional tenets of Babylonian "science." The reasons should not be far to seek. For one thing, Mesopotamia's achievements in that field were highly advanced, respected, and influential. And for another, the patriarchs constituted a direct link between early Hebrews and Mesopotamia, and the cultural effects of that start persisted long thereafter.

In ancient times, however, science often blended into religion; and the two could not be separated in such issues as cosmogony and the origin of man. To that extent, therefore, "scientific" conclusions were bound to be guided by underlying religious beliefs. And since the religion of the Hebrews diverged sharply from Mesopotamian norms, we should expect a corresponding departure in regard to beliefs about creation. This expectation is fully borne out. While we have before us incontestable similarities in detail, the difference in over-all approach is no less prominent. The Babylonian creation story features a succession of various rival deities. The biblical version, on the other hand, is dominated by the monotheistic concept in the absolute sense of the term. Thus the two are both genetically related and yet poles apart. In common with other portions of the Primeval History, the biblical account of creation displays at one and the same time a recognition of pertinent Babylonian sources as well as a critical position toward them.

Such in brief is the present application of the precept that when faced with a statement in a significant source—and especially a statement about such matters as creation—we ask first what the statement means, before we consider whether it is true or false from the vantage point of another age.

It remains to discuss, in passing, the structure of the introductory verses of this section, since their syntax determines the meaning, and the precise meaning of this passage happens to be of far-reach-

ing significance. The problem could not be fully elucidated in the NOTES, which is why it is being considered here.

The first word of Genesis, and hence the first word in the Hebrew Bible as a unit, is vocalized as *b^erē'šit*. Grammatically, this is evidently in the construct state, that is, the first of two connected forms which jointly yield a possessive compound. Thus the sense of this particular initial term is, or should be, "At the beginning of . . .," or "When," and not "In/At the beginning"; the absolute form with adverbial connotation would be *bārē'šit*. As the text is now vocalized, therefore, the Hebrew Bible starts out with a dependent clause.

The second word in Hebrew, and hence the end-form of the indicated possessive compound, appears as *bārā'*, literally "he created." The normal way of saying "at the beginning of creation (by God)" would be *b^erē'šit b^erō' ('ēlōhīm)*, with the infinitive in the second position; and this is indeed the precise construction (though not the wording) of the corresponding phrase in ii 4b. Nevertheless, Hebrew usage permits a finite verb in this position; cf. Hos i 2. It is worth noting that the majority of medieval Hebrew commentators and grammarians, not to mention many moderns, could see no objection to viewing Gen i 1 as a dependent clause.

Nevertheless, vocalization alone should not be the decisive factor in this instance. For it could be (and has been) argued that the vocalized text is relatively late and should not therefore be unduly binding. A more valid argument, however, is furnished by the syntax of the entire first paragraph. A closer examination reveals that vs. 2 is a parenthetic clause: "the earth being then a formless waste . . .," with the main clause coming in vs. 3. The structure of the whole sentence is thus schematically as follows: "(¹)When . . . (²)—at which time . . . —(³)then . . ." Significantly enough, the analogous account (by *J*) in ii 4b-7 shows the identical construction, with vss. 5-6 constituting a circumstantial description. Perhaps more important still, the related, and probably normative, arrangement at the beginning of *Enūma eliš* exhibits exactly the same kind of structure: dependant temporal clause (lines 1-2); parenthetic clauses (3-8); main clause (9). Thus grammar, context, and parallels point uniformly in one and the same direction.

There is more to this question, of course, than mere linguistic niceties. If the first sentence states that "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," what ensued was chaos (vs. 2) which needed immediate attention. In other words, the Creator would be

charged with an inadequate initial performance, unless one takes the whole of vs. 1 as a general title, contrary to established biblical practice. To be sure, the present interpretation precludes the view that the creation accounts in Genesis say nothing about coexistent matter. The question, however, is not the ultimate truth about cosmogony, but only the exact meaning of the Genesis passages which deal with the subject. On this score, at least, the biblical writers repeat the Babylonian formulation, perhaps without full awareness of the theological and philosophical implications. At all events, the text should be allowed to speak for itself.

2. THE STORY OF EDEN

(ii 4b-24: J)

II 4b At the time when God Yahweh made earth and heaven—
5 no shrub of the field being yet in the earth and no grains of the
field having sprouted, for God Yahweh had not sent rain upon
the earth and no man was there to till the soil; 6 instead, a flow
would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of
the soil—7 God Yahweh formed man^a from clods in the soil^b
and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus man became a
living being.

8 God Yahweh planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and
placed there the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the
ground God Yahweh caused to grow various trees that were a
delight to the eye and good for eating, with the tree of life in
the middle of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and
bad.

10 A river rises in Eden to water the garden; outside, it forms
four separate branch streams. 11 The name of the first is Pishon;
it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah,
where there is gold. 12 The gold of that land is choice; there is
bdellium there, and lapis lazuli. 13 The name of the second
river is Gihon; it is the one that winds through all the land of
Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris; it is the one that
flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 God Yahweh took the man and settled him in the garden
of Eden, to till and tend it. 16 And God Yahweh commanded
the man, saying, "You are free to eat of any tree of the garden,

^a MT 'ādām.

^b Heb. 'ādāmā, in assonance with 'ādām.

17 except only the tree of knowledge of good and bad, of which
you are not to eat. For the moment you eat of it, you shall be
doomed to death."

18 God Yahweh said, "It is not right that man should be
alone. I will make him an aid fit for him." 19 So God Yahweh
formed out of the soil various wild beasts and birds of the sky
and brought them to the man to see what he called them; what-
ever the man would call a living creature, that was to be its
name. 20 The man gave names to all cattle, all^c birds of the sky,
and all wild beasts; yet none proved to be the aid that would be
fit for man.^d

21 Then God Yahweh cast a deep sleep upon the man and,
when he was asleep, he took one of his ribs and closed up the
flesh at that spot. 22 And God Yahweh fashioned into a woman
the rib that he had removed from the man, and he brought her
to the man. 23 Said the man,

This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.
She shall be called Woman,^e for she was taken from Man.^f

24 Thus it is that man leaves his father and mother and clings to
his wife, and they become one flesh.

^c So several manuscripts and ancient versions; MT omits.

^d MT "Adam."

^e Heb. 'iššā.

^f Heb. iš, in assonance with 'iššā.

NOTES

ii 4b. *At the time when*. Literally "on the day when"; Heb. *b'yōm*, cog-
nate with Akk. *enūma*, the opening word of the Babylonian Genesis
(*Enūma eliš*).

God Yahweh. Although this combination is the rule in ii 4b-iii 24, it
is found only once in the rest of the Pentateuch (Exod ix 30). Critical
opinion inclines to the assumption that the original version used
"Yahweh" throughout, in conformance with J's normal practice, the
other component being added later under the influence of the opening
account (by P). One cannot, however, discount the possibility that these

personal name of a deity with a determinative for "god," except that such a qualifier would follow the name in Hebrew rather than precede it.

The personal name itself has come down in the consonantal text (*K^othib*) as YHWH. The vocalized text (*Q^ore*) has equipped this form with the vowels *‘-ō-ā*, thus calling for the reading *‘adōnāy* "Lord" (the difference between the initial vowels is secondary). The reluctance to pronounce the personal name, which is not yet reflected in the consonantal sources but is already attested in LXX, is directly traceable to the Third Commandment (Exod xx 7; Deut v 11), which says actually, "You shall not swear falsely by the name of Yahweh your God," but has been misinterpreted to mean "You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain." Lev xxiv 16 deals with an entirely different issue (specifically, an insult to Yahweh)

5. In *‘adām* "man" and *‘adāmā* "soil, ground" there is an obvious play on words, a practice which the Bible shares with other ancient literatures. This should not, however, be mistaken for mere punning. Names were regarded not only as labels but also as symbols, magical keys as it were to the nature and essence of the given being or thing (cf. vs. 19). The writer or speaker who resorted to "popular etymologies" was not interested in derivation as such. The closest approach in English to the juxtaposition of the Hebrew nouns before us might be "earthling: earth."

6. *flow*. Heb. *‘ēd*, apparently Akk. *edû* (Sum loanword), cf. my note in BASOR 140 (1955), 9 ff.; for a slightly different view see W. F. Albright, JBL 58 (1939), 102 f. The sense would be that of an underground swell, a common motif in Akkadian literary compositions. The only other occurrence of the term, Job xxxvi 27, "mist" or the like, need signify no more than the eventual literary application of this rare word.

7. *clods*. The traditional "dust" is hard to part with, yet it is inappropriate. Heb. *‘āpār* stands for "lumps of earth, soil, dirt" as well as the resulting particles of "dust." For the former, cf., for example, xxvi 15; note also vs. 19, where the animals are said to have been formed "out of the soil." On the other hand, "dust" is preferable in iii 19.

8. *Eden*. Heb. *‘ēden*, Akk. *edīnu*, based on Sum. *eden* "plain, steppe." The term is used here clearly as a geographical designation, which came to be associated, naturally enough, with the homonymous but unrelated Heb. noun for "enjoyment."

in the east. Not "from"; the preposition (Heb. *min*) is not only partitive but also locative.

9. See iii 5.

10-14. On the general question of the Rivers of Eden see COMMENT.

10. *rises in*. Not the traditional "went out of" (wrong tense), nor

even "comes out of, issues from," since the garden itself is in Eden. Hence, too,

outside. Heb. literally "from there," in the sense of "beyond it," for which cf. I Sam x 3. What this means is that, before reaching Eden, the river consists of four separate branches. Accordingly,

branch streams. In Heb. the mouth of the river is called "end" (Josh xv 5, xviii 19); hence the plural of *rō‘š* "head" must refer here to the upper course (Ehrl.). This latter usage is well attested for the Akk. cognate *rēšu*.

11. *winds through*. The customary "compasses, encircles" yields a needlessly artificial picture. The pertinent Heb. stem *sbb* means not only "to circle" but also "to pursue a roundabout course, to twist and turn" (cf. II Kings iii 9), and this is surely an apt description of a meandering stream.

Havilah. There was evidently more than one place, as well as tribe, by that name (Dr., pp. 119, 131).

12. *lapis lazuli*. For this tentative identification of Heb. *‘eben haššoham*, cf. my discussion "The Rivers of Paradise" in *Festschrift Johannes Friedrich*, 1959, pp. 480 f.

14. *Tigris*. This modern form is based on the Greek approximation to the native name, which appears as (*I*) *digna* in Sumerian, *Idiqlat* in Akkadian, *Ḥiddeqel* in Hebrew, *Deqlat* in Aramaic, and *Dijlat* in Arabic.

Ashur. Elsewhere in Heb., either the land of Assyria or its eponymous capital. Here evidently the latter; the Tigris flows east of the city of Ashur, but it never constituted the entire eastern border between Assyria and Babylonia (Cush).

16. *you are free to eat*. Or "you may eat freely." Heb. employs here the so-called "infinitive absolute" construction, in which the pertinent Heb. form is preceded by its infinitive. The resulting phrase is a flexible utterance capable of conveying various shades of meaning; cf. next vs.

17. *the moment*. Heb. literally "on the day"; cf. 4b.

you shall be doomed to death. Another infinitive absolute in Hebrew. The phrase need not be translated "you shall surely die," as it invariably is. Death did not result in this instance. The point of the whole narrative is apparently man's ultimate punishment rather than instantaneous death.

18. *an aid fit for him*. The traditional "help meet for him" is adequate, but subject to confusion, as may be seen from our "helpmate," which is based on this very passage. The Heb. complement means literally "alongside him," i.e., "corresponding to him."

19. *a living creature*. In this position this phrase does violence to Heb. syntax, it could well be a later gloss.

20. *proved to be*. Traditionally "was found to be." In this construction, however, the Heb. stem *mṣ'* usually means "to suffice, reach, be adequate" (Ehrl.), as is true also of its cognates in Akkadian and Aramaic.

21. *at that spot*. Heb. literally "underneath it," or "instead of it," with the idiomatic sense of "then and there."

22. *to the man*. In Heb. the defined form *hā'ādām* is "man," the undefined *'ādām*, "Adam," since a personal name cannot take the definite article. With prepositions like *l'*- "to," the article is elided and only the vowel marks the difference between "to Adam" (*l'ādām*) and "to the man" (*lā'ādām*), so that the consonantal text is bound to be ambiguous (*l'ām* in either case). Since the form without preposition appears invariably as *hā'ādām* in ii-iii (the undefined form occurs first in iv 25), and is not mentioned until the naming of Adam v 2, the vocalized "to Adam" (also vs. 20, iii 17) is an anachronism. In iii, LXX favors "Adam" even in the presence of the consonantal article.

23. The assonance of Heb. *'iš* and *'iššā* has no etymological basis. It is another instance of symbolic play on words, except that the phonetic similarity this time is closer than usual. By an interesting coincidence, Eng. "woman" (derived from "wife of man") would offer a better linguistic foil than the Heb. noun.

COMMENT

The brief Eden interlude (ii 4b-iii 24) has been the subject of an enormous literature so far, with no end in sight. One study alone takes up over 600 pages (cf. the comment by J. L. McKenzie, "The Literary Characteristics of Genesis 2-3," *Theological Studies* 15 [1954], 541-72). Here there is room for only a few paragraphs.

The account before us deals with the origin of life on earth, as contrasted with the preceding statement about the origin of the universe as a whole. The contrast is immediately apparent from the respective initial sentences. The first account starts out with the creation of "heaven and earth" (i 1). The present narrative begins with the making of "earth and heaven" (ii 4b). The difference is by no means accidental. In the other instance the center of the stage was heaven, and man was but an item in a cosmic sequence of majestic acts. Here the earth is paramount and man the center of interest; indeed, an earthy and vividly personal approach is one of the out-

standing characteristics of the whole account. This far-reaching divergence in basic philosophy would alone be sufficient to warn the reader that two separate sources appear to be involved, one heaven-centered and the other earth-centered. The dichotomy is further supported by differences in phraseology (e.g., "create" : "make") and in references to the Deity ("God" : "God Yahweh"); and the contrast is sustained in further pertinent passages. In short, there are ample grounds for recognizing the hand of *P* in the preceding statement, as against that of *J* in the present narrative.

Yet despite the difference in approach, emphasis, and hence also in authorship, the fact remains that the subject matter is ultimately the same in both versions. We have seen that the *P* version, for its part, derived much of its detail from Mesopotamian traditions about the beginnings of the world. The account by *J* points in the same direction, as is immediately apparent from the following comparison of opening lines:

"At the time when God Yahweh made earth and heaven—" (ii 4b)

"When God set about to create heaven and earth—" (i 1)

"When on high heaven had not been named,

Firm ground below had not been called by name—" (ANET, pp. 61 f., I, lines 1 f.).

In each case the temporal clause leads up to a parenthetical description, and is then resumed with the proper sequel. Thus, however much *J*, *P*, and their Mesopotamian sources may differ ultimately from one another, they are also tied to common traditions.

That *J* incorporated Mesopotamian data in his treatment of the origin of man—most of which, incidentally, are missing in *P*—is shown by much more compelling evidence than the mere agreement of initial clauses. To begin with, the narrative before us features two telltale loanwords. One is the word for "flow" (vs. 6), Akk. *edū*, from Sum. *a.dé.a* (see NOTE *ad loc.*). The other is the geographical term "Eden" (cf. NOTE on vs. 8), Akk. *edinu*, Sum. *eden*, which is especially significant in that this word is rare in Akk. but exceedingly common in Sum., thus certifying the ultimate source as very ancient indeed. The traditions involved must go back, therefore, to the oldest cultural stratum of Mesopotamia.

Next comes the evidence from the location of Eden which is furnished by the notices about the rivers of that region. Recent data on the subject demonstrate that the physical background of the tale

is authentic (see the writer's "The Rivers of Paradise," *Festschrift Johannes Friedrich*, pp. 473-85). All four streams once converged, or were believed to have done so, near the head of the Persian Gulf, to create a rich garden land to which local religion and literature alike looked back as the land of the blessed. And while the Pishon and the Gihon stand for lesser streams, which have been Hebraized into something like "the Gusher" and "the Bubbler" respectively, the Tigris and the Euphrates leave no doubt in any case as to the assumed locale of the Garden of Eden. The chaotic geography of ancient and modern exponents of this biblical text can be traced largely to two factors. One is the mistaken identification of the land of Cush in vs. 13 (and in x 8) with the homonymous biblical term for Ethiopia, rather than with the country of the Kassites; note the spelling *Kuššū* in the Nuzi documents, and the classical Gr. form *Kossaios*. The other adverse factor is linked with specialized Heb. usage. In vs. 10 (see NOTES) the term "heads" can have nothing to do with streams into which the river breaks up after it leaves Eden, but designates instead four separate branches which have merged within Eden. There is thus no basis for detouring the Gihon to Ethiopia, not to mention the search for the Pishon in various remote regions of the world.

There is, finally, the motif of the tree of knowledge which likewise betrays certain Mesopotamian links. The discussion, however, may best be combined with the COMMENT on iii 5. For the present, it need only be remarked in passing that the Heb. for "the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and bad" is extremely awkward syntactically, especially in a writer who is otherwise a matchless stylist. Moreover, vs. 17 has nothing to say about the tree of life, and speaks only of the tree of knowledge. There is thus much in favor of the critical conjecture that the original text had only "and in the midst of the garden the tree of knowledge."

Would so much dependence on Mesopotamian concepts be strange in an author of *J*'s originality and caliber? Not at all. For it should be borne in mind that the Primeval History is but a general preface to a much larger work, a preface about a remote age which comes to life in Mesopotamia and for which that land alone furnishes the necessary historical and cultural records. In these early chapters, *J* reflects, in common with *P*, distant traditions that had gained currency through the ages.

3. THE FALL OF MAN

(ii 25-iii 24: *J*)

II 25 The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame.

III 1 Now the serpent was the sliest of all the wild creatures that God Yahweh had made. Said he to the woman, "Even though God told you not to eat of any tree in the garden . . ."

2 The woman interrupted the serpent, "But we may eat of the trees in the garden! 3 It is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God did say, 'Do not eat of it or so much as touch it, lest you die!'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You are not going to die. 5 No, God well knows that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be the same as God in telling good from bad."

6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eye, and that the tree was attractive as a means to wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some to her husband and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened and they discovered that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

8 They heard the sound of God Yahweh as he was walking in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from God Yahweh among the trees of the garden.

9 God Yahweh called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He answered, "I heard the sound of you in the garden; but I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." 11 He asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you, then, taste of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?" 12 The man replied, "The woman whom you put by my side—it was she who gave me of that tree, and I ate." 13 God Yahweh said to the

woman, "How could you do such a thing?" The woman replied, "The serpent tricked me, so I ate."

¹⁴ God Yahweh said to the serpent:

"Because you did this,
Banned shall you be from all cattle
And all wild creatures!
On your belly shall you crawl
And on dirt shall you feed
All the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will plant enmity between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and hers;
They shall strike at your head,
And you shall strike at their heel."

¹⁶ To the woman he said:

"I will make intense
Your pangs in childbearing.
In pain shall you bear children;
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
And he shall be your master."

¹⁷ To the man^a he said: "Because you listened to your wife
and ate of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat,

Condemned be the soil on your account!
In anguish shall you eat of it
All the days of your life.

¹⁸ Thorns and thistles
Shall it bring forth for you,
As you feed on the grasses of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
Shall you earn your bread,
Until you return to the ground,
For from it you were taken:
For dust you are
And to dust you shall return!"

^a MT, LXX "Adam."

²⁰ The man named his wife Eve,^b because she was the mother of all the living.^c ²¹ And God Yahweh made shirts of skins for the man and his wife, and clothed them.

²² God Yahweh said, "Now that the man has become like one of us in discerning good from bad, what if he should put out his hand and taste also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" ²³ So God Yahweh banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. ²⁴ Having expelled the man, he stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

^b Heb. *ḥawwā*.

^c Heb. *ḥay*.

NOTES

iii 1. *Even though*. The interrogative sense which is generally assumed for Heb. 'ap *kī* in this single passage would be without parallel; some critics emend accordingly to *ḥa'ap kī*. But the corresponding *gam kī* is used for "although," cf. Ps xxiii 4, and the meaning suits the context admirably (Ehrl.). The serpent is not asking a question; he is deliberately distorting a fact.

not to eat. Heb. literally "you shall not eat," since the language has no simple way to express indirect discourse.

2. *interrupted*. Literally "said"; the Heb. stem 'mr is capable of describing varying types of utterance.

3. *touch it*. In her eagerness to make her point, the woman enlarges on the actual injunction; cf. ii 17.

5. *No*. For this use of *kī* (as opposed to the normal conjunctive force), cf. xxxi 16; Deut xiii 10; Job xxii 2; Ruth i 10 etc.; see KB, p. 431, No. 7.

God. Since Heb. 'elōhīm is grammatically a plural, and may be used not only for "God," but also for "gods, divine beings," the context is sometimes ambiguous; nor is a modifying plural form, such as the participle "who know" in the present instance, necessarily conclusive. In vs. 22 "one of us" would seem to imply a celestial retinue, but there the speaker is God himself. The serpent might aim at a different effect. In these circumstances no clear-cut decision is possible; "celestials, immortals," or the like would be just as appropriate.

6. *a means to wisdom*. Literally "(to be coveted) in order to become (not 'to make') wise." The so-called causative conjugation of

Heb. is often intransitive (see JCS 6 [1952], 81 ff.); cf. vi 19 f., xxxv 17, xlix 4.

8. *walking*. A good example of the special durative conjugation in Heb.; cf. vs. 24, v 22, 24, and see JAOS 75 (1955), 117 ff.

at the breezy time of day. The Heb. preposition *lā-* may be used of time (cf. viii 11), but not temperature; hence the memorable "in the cool of the day" lacks linguistic support. The time involved is toward sundown, when fresh breezes bring welcome relief from the heat.

9. *Where are you?* The question is obviously rhetorical.

11. *then*. Suggested by the inversion in Heb. for added emphasis.

13. *How could you . . . ?* Cf. xii 18.

14. *Banned*. The Heb. stem 'rr is regularly translated as "to curse," but this sense is seldom appropriate on closer examination. With the preposition *mi(n)*, here and in vs. 17, such a meaning is altogether out of place: "cursed from the ground" (*ibid.*) only serves to misdirect, and "cursed above all cattle and all the beasts of the field" (present instance) would imply that the animal world shared the serpent's guilt. The basic meaning of 'rr is "to restrain (by magic), bind (by a spell)"; see JAOS 80 (1960), 198 ff. With *mi(n)* the sense is "to hold off, ban" (by similar means). In vs. 17 the required nuance is "condemned."

15. *offspring*. Heb. literally "seed," used normally in the collective sense of progeny. The passage does not justify eschatological connotations. As Dr. put it, "We must not read into the words more than they contain."

16. *pangs in childbearing*. A parade example of hendiadys in Heb. (cf. i 2 and see above, p. LXX). The literal rendering would read "your pangs and your childbearing," but the idiomatic significance is "your pangs that result from your pregnancy."

17. *man*. Cf. NOTE on ii 20.

Condemned. See above, vs. 14.

on your account. LXX translates "as you till it," reflecting *b'bdk*, whereas Heb. reads *R/D*; the two letters are easily confused.

19. *earn your bread*. Literally "eat your bread"; but the effort described is in the producing of grain to be eaten (Ehrl.), not in the eating of it.

22. *Now that*. Heb. *hēn . . . w'attā* introduce the protasis and the apodosis, so that the two clauses cannot be interpreted as independent.

one of us. A reference to the heavenly company which remains obscure.

24. *cherubim*. Cf. Akk. *kāribu* and *kuribu* which designate figures of minor interceding deities (cf. S. Langdon, *Epic of Creation*, 1923, p. 190, n. 3).

fiery revolving sword. Although the description pertains to an act of

Yahweh, the detail appears to be derived from Mesopotamian traditions. Most of the gods of that land had distinctive weapons of their own, such as the dagger of Ashur or the toothed sword of Shamash. Another illustration may be found in the concluding lines of *Enūma eliš I* (ANET, pp. 63, 160 f.); there the rebel gods are said "to make the fire subside" and "to humble the Power-Weapon." The fire would seem to characterize the weapon, a metaphorical description apparently of the bolt-like or glinting blade. The magic weapon was all that stood between the insurgent gods and their goal.—The Heb. for "revolving" (or "constantly turning") is another instance of the special durative conjugation; cf. NOTE on vs. 8.

COMMENT

Now that the stage has been set, the author can hit his full stride. There is action here and suspense, psychological insight and subtle irony, light and shadow—all achieved in two dozen verses. The characterization is swift and sure, and all the more effective for its indirectness.

Everything is transposed into human terms. The serpent is endowed with man's faculties, and even God is pictured in subjective and anthropomorphic fashion. When Adam has been caught in his transparent attempt at evasion, Yahweh speaks to him as a father would to his child: "Where are you?" In this context, it is the same thing as, "And what have you been up to just now?" This simple phrase—a single word in the original—does the work of volumes. For what *J* has thus evoked is the childhood of mankind itself.

Yet the purpose of the author is much more than just to tell a story. *J* built his work around a central theme, which is the record of a great spiritual experience of a whole nation. But a nation is made up of individuals, who in turn have their ancestors all the way back in time. When such a composite experience is superbly retraced and recorded, the result is also great literature.

Behind the present episode lay many traditions which provided the author with his raw material. In the end product, however, the component parts have been blended beyond much hope of successful recovery. Speculation on the subject has been going on for thousands of years and takes up many tomes. The following comment will confine itself to one or two of the more prominent details.

The focal point of the narrative is the tree of knowledge. It is the tree "in the middle of the garden" (vs. 3), and its fruit imparts to the eater the faculty of "knowing good and bad" (vs. 5; cf. vs. 22). In the last two passages, the objective phrase "knowing/to know good and bad" is faultless in terms of Heb. syntax. But the longer possessive construction "the tree of knowledge of good and bad" (ii 9, 17) is otherwise without analogy in biblical Hebrew and may well be secondary.

More important, however, than those stylistic niceties is the problem of connotation. The Heb. stem *yd'* signifies not only "to know," but more especially "to experience, to come to know" (cf. COMMENT on Sec. 4); in other words, the verb describes both the process and the result. In the present phrase the actual sense is "to distinguish between good and bad"; cf. II Sam xix 36, where "between" is spelled out; see also I Kings iii 9. The traditional "good and evil" would restrict the idiom to moral matters. But while such an emphasis is apparent in I Kings iii 9 and Isa vii 15, 16, and might suit Deut i 39, it would be out of place in II Sam xix 36. In that context, the subject (Barzilai) shows very plainly that he is a keen judge of right and wrong. At the age of eighty, however, his capacity for physical and aesthetic pleasures is no longer what it used to be: he has lost the ability to appreciate "good and bad." The same delicate reference to physical aspects of life is implied in our passage, which leads up to the mystery of sex (cf. Ehrl., and see McKenzie, *Theological Studies* 15 [1954], 562 f.). For so long as the man and his wife abstain from the forbidden fruit, they are not conscious of their nakedness (ii 25); later they cover themselves with leaves (iii 7). The broad sense, then, of the idiom under discussion is to be in full possession of mental and physical powers. And it is this extended range of meaning that the serpent shrewdly brings into play in iii 5.

Such motifs as sexual awareness, wisdom, and nature's paradise are of course familiar from various ancient sources. It is noteworthy, however, that all of them are found jointly in a single passage of the Gilgamesh Epic. There (Tablet I, column iv, lines 16 ff., ANET, p. 75), Enkidu was effectively tempted by the courtesan, only to be repudiated by the world of nature; "but he now had wisdom, broader understanding" (20). Indeed, the temptress goes on to tell him, "You are wise Enkidu, you are like a god" (34); and she marks his new status by improvising some clothing for him (column

ii, lines 27 f., ANET p. 77). It would be rash to dismiss so much detailed correspondence as mere coincidence.

This is not to imply that *J* had direct access to the Gilgamesh Epic, even though *J*'s account of the Flood reflects a still closer tie with the same Akkadian work (Tablet XI, see comment *ad loc.*). Such affinities, however, lend added support to the assumption that in his treatment of Primeval History *J* made use of traditions that had originated in Mesopotamia. Now derivative material of this kind is sometimes taken more literally than the original sources intended it to be; note, for example, the narrative about the Tower of Babel. It is thus conceivable that the poetic "You are wise Enkidu, you are like a god" (see above) might give rise to the belief that in analogous circumstances man could become a threat to the celestials. And if the concept reached ancient Hebrew tradition, in common with patriarchal material, *J* would in such an instance be no more than a dutiful reporter. He could only articulate the transmitted motifs.

The concluding verses of the present section appear to be a case in point. On the evidence of vs. 22, the serpent was right in saying that God meant to withhold from man the benefits of the tree of knowledge (vs. 5); the same purpose is now attributed to Yahweh. Yet all that this need mean is literal application of a motif that Hebrew tradition took over from Mesopotamia centuries earlier. In any event, the specific source and the precise channel of transmission would remain uncertain; nor have we any way of knowing how the author himself interpreted these notions.

We are on slightly firmer ground when it comes to the subject of God's resolve to keep the tree of life out of man's reach. In later narratives, starting with Abraham, the point is never brought up, since man knows by then his place in the scheme of things, and Yahweh's omnipotence precludes any fear of competition from whatever quarter. In other words, here is again a motif from the Primeval Age based on foreign beliefs. And once again, the center of dissemination is Mesopotamia, which provides us this time with at least two suggestive analogues: the tale of Adapa (ANET, pp. 101 ff.) and, once more, the Epic of Gilgamesh with its central emphasis on man's quest for immortality. Inevitably, both attempts end in failure. To be sure, an exception was made in the case of Utnapishtim, the local hero of the Flood, but that special dispensation was not to be repeated: "Now who will call the gods for you to Assembly, / That you may find the life you are seeking?" (Gilg.,

Tablet XI, lines 197 f.). In the end, Gilgamesh is favored with a concession: he is permitted to take back with him a magic plant which offers the sop of rejuvenation (Tablet XI, line 282), if not the boon of immortality. But he is soon to be robbed of it—by a serpent.

As a whole, then, our narrative is synthetic and stratified. Thanks, however, to the genius of the author, it was to become an unforgettable contribution to the literature of the world.

4. CAIN AND ABEL (iv 1–16: J)

IV ¹The man had experience of his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, as she said, “I have added^a a life^b with the help of Yahweh.” ²Next she bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of flocks, and Cain became a tiller of the soil. ³In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to Yahweh of fruit of the soil. ⁴For his part, Abel brought the finest of the firstlings of his flock. Yahweh showed regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵but for Cain and his offering he showed no regard. Cain resented this greatly and his countenance fell. ⁶Yahweh said to Cain, “Why are you resentful, and why has your countenance fallen? ⁷Surely, if you act right, it should mean exaltation. But if you do not, sin is the demon at the door, whose urge is toward you; yet you can be his master.”

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, [“Let us go outside.”].^c And when they were outside, Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹Then Yahweh asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” He replied, “I don’t know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” ¹⁰And he said, “What have you done! Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the soil. ¹¹Hence you are banned from the soil which forced open its mouth to take your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹²When you till the soil, it shall not again give up its strength to you. A restless wanderer shall you be on earth!”

¹³Cain replied to Yahweh, “My punishment is too much to bear. ¹⁴Now that you have banished me this day from the soil,

^a Heb. *qānīā*, literally “I acquired,” in assonance with “Cain.”

^b Literally “man, individual.”

^c So with Sam., LXX, and other ancient versions; MT omits.