



Shabbat Table Talk Page



Overview

- **Parashah: Bereshit** (בְּרֵאשִׁית, “in the beginning”)
- **Chapters: Gen. 1:1-6:8**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסּוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה

– Torah Study Blessing –

Synopsis

Preface: In Jewish tradition, the word “Bereshit” can refer to *either* the first Torah *portion* of the Bible (i.e., Gen. 1:1-6:8) or to the first *book* of the Torah itself. When it is used to refer to the Torah *portion*, it is called “parashat Bereshit,” and the text covers the creation of the universe, including Adam and Eve, the subsequent transgression of Adam and Eve, the murder of Abel by humanity’s firstborn son Cain, and the increasing depravity of the generations until the time of the calling of Noah. When it is used to refer to the *book*, however, it is called “sefer Bereshit,” or the “Book of Bereshit,” and the text covers everything from the creation of the universe to the descent of Jacob’s son Joseph into Egypt in anticipation of the great Exodus. Note that the ancient Greek translation of the Bible (i.e., the Septuagint) called this book “Genesis,” (Γένεσις: “birth”, “origin”), a name that was carried over in subsequent Latin and English translations.

The Torah portion opens with this succinct statement about the creative activity of God: “In the beginning (i.e., “bereshit”) God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and the earth.” Note immediately that the Scriptures therefore begin - not from the first person perspective of some man’s understanding of God - but from an omniscient third person perspective, a Voice that reveals the Glorious Power that created the entire cosmos by means of His Word. The very first verse of the Bible, then, alludes to the triune nature of God, as further indicated by the use of the plural form of the name *Elohim* with the singular verb *bara* (he created). Indeed, the word *bereshit* itself includes the root idea of “head” (i.e., rosh), which suggests the “head of all things,” that is, to the Messiah, the Creative Word of God who is the “head of all beginning and authority” and through Whom and for Whom all things were created (Col. 1:16; 2:10).

After this breathtaking opening line, shrouded as it is in mystery, the Torah describes how God created the universe *yesh me’ayin* - out of nothing (Heb. 1:3) over a six “day” period. On the first day God created darkness and light; on the second day He created the atmosphere, dividing the “upper” from the “lower” waters. On the third day He set the boundaries of land and sea and seeded the earth with trees and vegetation. On the fourth day He fixed the position of the sun, moon and stars as timekeepers and illuminators of the earth. Fish, birds and reptiles were created on the fifth day; and land animals, and finally the human being, on the sixth. God ceased from His creative work on the seventh day, and sanctified it as a day of rest: the very first Shabbat...



In addition to this general, “day by day” account of the creation of the universe by God, the Torah provides a more focused account about how God formed Adam’s body from the dust of the earth and blew into his nostrils the “breath of life” so that he became a “living soul.” Notice that the more detailed account includes reference to the *LORD* God, the first time the name YHVH is used in the Scriptures. Interestingly, in this second account the earth is described as a sort of “desert.” The earth was barren of vegetation, no rain had yet fallen upon the earth, and the LORD formed the man from the “dust from the ground.” After breathing into him so that he became a living soul, God planted a garden in Eden, “in the east,” and there caused every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food to spring up from the ground. In the very midst of this orchard were two special trees: the “Tree of Life” and the “Tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” God then instructed the man to take care of the orchard and to eat from whatever tree he so desired, though he was warned not to eat from the tree of knowledge, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

After all this, God decided that “it was not good that man be alone,” and therefore decided to make a helper suitable for him (*ezer kenegdo*). Before doing so, however, God first paraded each of the animals he had made before the man, and whatever the man called the creature, so was its name. However, after the parade was over and Adam understood there was not a helper “suitable for him,” God put the man in a deep sleep and took one of his ribs to “build” him a helper, which he then brought before the man. A delighted Adam then described her as “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” and called her “woman” (*ishah*), because out of man (*me’ish*) she was formed. Since God originally created man as a singular person, after his “deep sleep” he was no longer regarded as such until he became rejoined to his wife to become “one flesh.”

Immediately after this, the woman encountered a serpent (*nachash*) in the orchard who sought to confuse her by questioning the meaning and scope of God’s commandment. “Did God say *you shall not* eat of *any* tree in the garden,” he hissed. “No,” the woman answered, we *may* eat of any tree except of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, “neither shall we touch it,” lest we die. This additional restriction gave the serpent his opportunity, since God never told Adam that he could not touch the tree, and therefore the serpent lied in like measure, “you shall not die.” The serpent then appealed to the woman’s curiosity, and suggested that God was withholding a secret good from her by his restriction. “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 to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” Because of their sin, God *first* cursed the serpent and announced the first prophecy of salvation that would be given through the coming seed of the woman, the “serpent slayer” to come. After this, God decreed his punishment upon Adam and Eve but immediately made tunics of skin and clothed them, illustrating being “robed in righteousness” imparted by an innocent sacrifice. Nevertheless, God decreed that because of his sin, Adam (and his descendants) would experience death, returning to the ground from which he was formed, and that his allotted time on this earth would be marked by struggle and hardship. Moreover, he was banished from the orchard and would live in exile until the day when God would restore all things according to his promise of salvation.

When Eve later gave birth to her first son, it is likely she believed he was none other than the promised seed himself, as evidenced by her exclamation: “I have gotten a man – the LORD!” though her expectations were surely dashed when it was later learned Cain was a murderer. Eventually a third son was born, named Seth, whose tenth-generation descendant, Noah, would be the only righteous man left standing in an entirely corrupt world.



Parashah Questions



1. What is the first *letter* of the Bible? (Gen. 1:1) ¹
2. What does the word *bereshit* (בְּרֵאשִׁית) mean? (Gen. 1:1) ²
3. Why doesn't the Torah begin with God's Name, i.e., "God created in the beginning"? ³
4. What existed *before* God created the heavens and the earth? ⁴
5. How was the earth described just after its creation? (Gen. 1:2) ⁵
6. What was the Spirit of God doing over "the face of the waters"? (Gen. 1:2) ⁶
7. What was the first thing God *said* (Gen. 1:3)? ⁷
8. Why did God *separate* the light from the darkness? (Gen. 1:4) ⁸

¹ The first letter of Torah is the Bet (ב) that begins the word *bereshit* (בְּרֵאשִׁית), a letter that is composed of three Vavs, which add up to 18, the same value for chai (חַי), or life. The house of creation is then the life of the universe.

² Bereshit comes from *reishit* (רֵאשִׁית), meaning first or best (Psalm 111:10). Note that this does not necessarily mean "the beginning" in a temporal sense (הַתְּחִלָּה), but rather primacy or rulership over all that exists. Indeed, the word *bereshit* (בְּרֵאשִׁית) includes the root idea of "head" (רֵאשׁ), which suggests the "head of all things," that is, to the Messiah, the Creative Word of God who is the "head of all beginning and authority" and through Whom and for Whom all things were created (Col. 1:16; 2:10).

³ This is to teach us not to pronounce God's Name in vain. Alternatively, it is a token of God's humility. Gentile kings wish to place their names before everything else; the LORD places His Name in the middle of things, so to speak.

⁴ We do not know and we are advised not to probe too deeply into such mysteries. We take it on faith that God created the universe at the precise instant he desired, and for reasons of his own inscrutable will. There is some debate, however, as to whether God created everything in an instant and the description of the other "days" were revelations of things already performed on the original day, or whether we should read the text as literally a six day period of creation. There is also debate on whether creation began in Nisan or in Tishri, relative to Jerusalem.

⁵ Tohu va'vohu (תְּהוֹ וָבוֹהוּ), "confusion and emptiness." Notice that this is mentioned to state that everything, without exception, was created in the six days (i.e., there was no preexistent matter since God created the heavens and the earth, yet the earth was "without form and void"). The structure of the world was imposed by God through the imposition of His word, and if the world reverts to original chaos, it is because God removes His sustaining presence. Later judgments alluded to "tohu va'vohu" (e.g., Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23), though this usage should not be "read into" the meaning implied here.

⁶ The Hebrew verb is thought to mean "hovering" (as a bird over her young: Deut. 32:11), brooding over the waters in preparation for the creative acts that follow. Note that the "Spirit of God" (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) is assuredly God Himself.

⁷ *Yehi Ohr* (יְהִי אוֹר), "Let there be light." Note that this light should not be understood as the light of the sun or the stars, which were established in their locations (relative to earth) on the 4th day. The Divine Light was extremely brilliant, that could "see to the ends of the world," that is thousands of times brighter than the light of the sun. The idea that God spoke and something was created indicates creation ex nihilo, or *yesh me'ayin* (Psalm 33:6, 9).

⁸ God *separated* (vayavdel) the light from the darkness, calling light "good" (טוֹב). The same verb is used later regarding the law of holiness: You are to distinguish (וַיִּבְדֹּל) between the holy and the common (Lev. 10:10) and is the basis for the closing Sabbath ritual called *havdalah*.



9. What did God create on the *first* day (Gen. 1:1-5)?⁹
10. What does the Hebrew word *yom* (יֹמִי) mean? (Gen. 1:5)¹⁰
11. When does a day (*yom*) begin?¹¹
12. Should we understand each “day” mentioned in the creation account to be a literal, 24-hour day, or perhaps some sort of “eon” or period of time?¹²
13. Why is the modern idea that the days of creation are really geologic ages *inimical* to the overall teaching of the Scriptures?¹³
14. Did Yeshua believe Adam and Eve were created beings?¹⁴
15. Did God create the darkness? (Gen. 1:5)¹⁵

⁹ Heaven, earth, light, darkness, chaos, void, water, day, night, wind, and perhaps angels. According to some sages, the very first thing God created was the Throne of His Glory, followed by the angels, the heavens, the earth, etc.

¹⁰ In general, *yom* can refer to the period of light as contrasted with the period of darkness, and therefore is relational to the measurement of the extent of sunlight and its relative position (i.e., daylight). The word can also refer to a 24 hour solar day that includes both evening and morning (Gen. 1:5). An hour (*sha'ah*) is calculated by taking the total time of daylight (from sunrise until sunset) of a particular day and dividing it into 12 equal parts. This is called *sha'ah zemanit*, or a "proportional hour." Since the duration of daylight varies according to seasons of the year, a proportionate hour will therefore vary by season. For example, if the sun rises at 4:30 a.m. and sets at 7:30 p.m., the total time of daylight is 15 hours. 15 hours * 60 minutes is 900, which divided by 12 yields a proportional hour of 75 minutes. The "sixth hour of the day" therefore begins 450 minutes after sunrise, or about 11:30 in the morning.

¹¹ The Torah repeats the formula, “it was evening, and it was morning, one day,” therefore day follows night, and hence we start the Sabbath and festivals at sunset of the night *before*. The fact that light was created (and separated) out of darkness implies that day follows the night, not the other way around.

¹² The Hebrew word *yom* (יֹמִי) appears over 2,000 times in Scripture, and whenever it is used in connection with a specific number, it *always* indicates a 24-hour period. Likewise, whenever it occurs with the terms “evening” (*erev*) and “morning” (*boker*), it always refers to a 24-hour period. The idea of a literal six days of creation is the foundation for the weekly Sabbath and was written by God Himself in the Ten Commandments: “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Exod. 20:11). Note that the idea of the seventh day is connected with the idea of holiness (Gen. 2:2-3). Likewise the Sabbath is called an “eternal sign” between God and the people of Israel because “in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed” (Exod. 31:17). The grammar of Genesis chapter one undeniably uses the word “day” to mean a 24 hour period of time.

¹³ First the idea that “evolutionary theory” provided the mechanism for creation undermines the message of the gospel since it puts death, disease, thorns, and suffering *before* the transgression of Adam and Eve. Second, Yeshua believed in the literal creation of Adam and Eve and therefore held to a “young earth” theory, since the dating of their origin was not thought to have been more than 5,000 years before the advent of the Messiah.

¹⁴ Yes, He plainly stated that “from the beginning of creation God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6) and this implies a relatively recent span of human history. Yeshua clearly believed in a special act of creation for Adam and Eve (Matt. 19:4), not that they were evolved creatures that arose from past eons of time.

¹⁵ Yes, God formed the light out of the darkness, and therefore “night” (the time after sunset until sunrise) is part of the concept of “day.” This explains why we say “this Sabbath day” after sundown on Friday.



16. When were the angels created? ¹⁶
17. What is the firmament (רַקִּיעַ) in the midst of the waters? (Gen. 1:6-8) ¹⁷
18. What day of the week was *not* called good (טוֹב)? ¹⁸
19. On what day was all the world a ball of mud? (Gen. 1:9) ¹⁹
20. What blessing is traditionally recited upon seeing a marvel of the natural world? ²⁰
21. What did God create on the *third* day? (Gen. 1:11-12) ²¹
22. Why did God create the lights in the firmament (Gen. 1:14-19) ²²
23. Why did God create the sun, moon, and stars on the *fourth* day? (Gen. 1:14-19) ²³
24. What did God create on the *fifth* day? (Gen. 1:20-21) ²⁴

¹⁶ First it must be stressed that angels *are* created beings (Col. 1:16) and therefore they did not preexist the creation in any way as “super intelligences” or “ideas” or as part of some “great chain of being.” Second, the Book of Job has God interrogating Job, asking him if he were present when the “sons of God” shouted in praise when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:4-7). This could refer to day one of creation or day 3, the establishment of the earth.

¹⁷ This refers to some sort of division of water – part on top, part on the bottom, with an expanse in the middle. Perhaps the expanse refers to air pressure that separated the surface of the sea from the atmosphere and clouds. The “rakia,” or expanse, is later called the sky (i.e., sha-mayim, or the place of the waters). Although heaven was created on the first day, the firmament was created on the second day (i.e., Monday). There is various midrashim on the nature and number of these firmaments, from two to seven....

¹⁸ The Torah does not use the expression “it was good” on the *second* day (i.e., Monday), perhaps because it was primarily a day of separating the waters to create an atmosphere, or perhaps because at this time some of the angels had rebelled against God’s plan to create mankind and therefore God created hell on this day.

¹⁹ On the third day, God separated the water from the earth to create dry ground, and this implies the world was a ball of mud before God did this... Some of the sages say that the word for earth, eretz (אֶרֶץ), comes from the word rutz (רִצָּה), meaning to run off, as water ran off to form the earth.

²⁰ Ma’aseh Vereshit: “Blessed art you, LORD our God, King of the Universe, Maker of the work of Creation.”

²¹ After creating the land, God created grass, seed bearing plants, and fruit trees, each of which would propagate after its own “kind” by means of seeds.

²² God created the lights (me’orot) to illuminate and divide the day from the night, and to function as signs (otot) for the appointed times and seasons (mo’edim) of the year. The “greater light” (i.e., the sun) would rule the day, whereas the “smaller light” (i.e., moon) would rule the night. At this time the stars began to appear in the night sky from the vantage point of the earth as well. According to some of the sages, the original light (divine light) functioned for the first three days until a portion of it was separated off to create the light of the sun, moon, stars, etc. This idea is supported by the grammar: yehi me’orot, lit. “let it be lights,” the “it” here referring to the divine light...

²³ God created the sun, moon, and stars on the 4th day to demonstrate that all the universe was created through His Word. If they had been created before everything else (big bang), it could have been said that the world was without beginning, and the earth produces life through the influences of astronomical bodies. The Torah states that plants were created *before* the sun to indicate that nothing can exist apart from His sovereign will.

²⁴ God caused “swarms of swarms” of fish to swim the seas and birds to fly upon the skies. God also created the great “sea serpents” (הַתַּנִּינִים הַיָּם), thought to be whales or even dragons (perhaps alluding to the devil himself).



25. When did God first bless his creation? (Gen. 1:22) ²⁵
26. What did God create on the *sixth* day? (Gen. 1:24-26) ²⁶
27. What does the image (צֶלֶם) of God mean? (Gen. 1:26) ²⁷
28. Why does the Torah say God created the man (הָאָדָם) in his image, and then states that God created them male and female? (Gen. 1:27) ²⁸
29. Briefly summarize what was created during the six days of creation. ²⁹
30. Why was man created on the sixth day? ³⁰
31. What commandments did God give the man and woman? (Gen. 1:28) ³¹
32. Did God create Adam and Eve to be vegetarians? (Gen. 1:29-30) ³²

²⁵ God first blessed the fish and the birds by saying “be fruitful (פָּרוּ) and multiply (רָבוּ).”

²⁶ Various living creatures after their kinds (נִפְשׁ הַיָּה לְמִינֶיהָ), namely, livestock, creeping things, and beasts of the earth (note that these are general categories of living creatures, not specific species). The culmination of the creation of living creatures was of course man, who was created in the “image [tzelem] and likeness [demut]” of God.

²⁷ Most of the commentators understand the image of God to refer to intellectual apprehension, the use of language, the ability to discover logical connections, and so on. Minimally it means there is some sort of analogical relationship between God and human beings. Note that the plural, “let *us* make man in our image...” is thought to refer to God’s speech to the angels, or as a “plural of majesty,” since the very next verse says, “And God created (וַיִּבְרָא) (singular) man in his own image...” (1:27).

²⁸ Either because the image of God has nothing to do with secondary sexual characteristics, or because both male and females share in the image of God. It should be noted here that this verse provides only the barest outline of the creation of man which will be developed further in Genesis 2:4-ff. Regarding the image of God, however, the sages discuss the 248 bones of the body, thought to correspond to the commandments, and the 365 negative commandments (thought to refer to the days of the solar year). In addition, the existence of the soul in the womb is discussed, who is bathed in the perfect light of Torah and then given the choice whether to become a righteous soul or a wicked one...

²⁹ On the first day, God created the heavens (his throne of Glory with the holy angels) and the earth, which was in a state of watery chaos. God then created light and separated it from darkness. On the 2nd day, God separated the waters to create the atmosphere; on the 3rd day, God separated the earth from the waters and created seeds. On the 4th day, the cycle was renewed: God first created the celestial lights (sun, moon, stars) to mark the seasons and time. On the 5th day, He brought forth fish from the waters and birds from the atmosphere, and on the 6th day, He brought forth living creatures from the earth, culminating in the creation of mankind in his image and likeness. Of Adam, it is written, “whose father was God” (Luke 3:38), since he bore the divine seed through creation.

³⁰ Man was created on erev shabbat so that all would be ready for him to enjoy the Sabbath with God immediately after he was first created. All the other animals – including the lowly gnat – were created before man to teach that man’s only advantage over other life forms lies in his divine soul.

³¹ Be fruitful (pe’ru), multiply (re’vu), fill the earth (*milu et ha’aretz*); and subdue it, that is, harness the potential of the world for your benefit. This concerns the commandment to marry, have children, and observe family purity. In Jewish tradition, men should marry by age 18 in order to avoid any “vain emission” of semen, which is a form of tumah (uncleanness) that is similar to the uncleanness of a corpse itself.

³² Yes, they were to eat grain grasses and the fruit of the trees.



33. Why did the sages said that God did not explicitly state that “it was good” after he created man on the sixth day? (Gen. 1:26-30)³³
34. After God was done creating the universe on the sixth day, what did He say regarding everything that he had made? (Gen. 1:31)³⁴
35. What is the “yetzer hara”?³⁵
36. How could God say creation was “very good (טוֹב מְאֹד),” while God allowed the serpent into the garden to attempt to seduce man and make him sin?³⁶
37. According to Jewish tradition, did God create the universe during the night?³⁷
38. What portion of Scripture do we recite during Friday Night Kiddush?³⁸
39. Why did God create the world in six days, rather than all at once?³⁹
40. What does the Torah liken to the finished creation of God? (Gen. 2:1)⁴⁰
41. How could God “finish working” on the 7th day and still rest? (Gen. 2:1-2)⁴¹

³³ Since man has free will, it is not fitting to call him “good” before he has chosen to live a good life. Indeed, if man were born perfect, he would be like an animal that lives by instinct. But God designed it so that man was born without intelligence, and as he grows, is therefore responsible for developing his mind and qualities of character...

³⁴ God saw all that He had made and declared it as *tov me'od*, “very good.” Perhaps God said this because mankind was the epitome of creation, and everything else was created for the sake of man’s life on earth. Note that the Hebrew word for “very” is *me'od* (מְאֹד), which can be rearranged to spell Adam (אָדָם).

³⁵ The evil urge, which is actually considered to be good since it leads to the fear of death and to repentance. God created humanity with free will, and therefore potentially with both yetzer hatov (good urge) and yetzer hara. It is unclear, however, whether the evil urge was at work when Adam and Eve were tested in the orchard by the serpent.

³⁶ The temptation by the serpent was a test. God allowed man to be tempted so that the choice between good and evil would be meaningful, real, significant, etc. Since Adam and Eve had avoided the question for awhile, apparently God allowed the nachash to “force the issue” by putting them under a test.

³⁷ No, everything made during the six days was created during the daytime, and nothing was created at night, which implies that God created the universe and all that is in it in 72 hours.

³⁸ The father of the house stands and reads Genesis 1:31-2:3 as a “legal testimony” that bears witness that God created the world and everything in it.

³⁹ Surely God could have created the world in a single instant, but he chose to create it in six days both to teach mankind about Shabbat and also to serve as a prophecy that this age was destined to last for six thousand years. Each of the six days alludes to what would happen in a particular millennium, with the world to come beginning on the seventh day. Note also that the Hebrew word for “week” (*shavuah*) can also mean “oath,” and therefore creation itself is a promise of the Reality of God and His salvation for us.

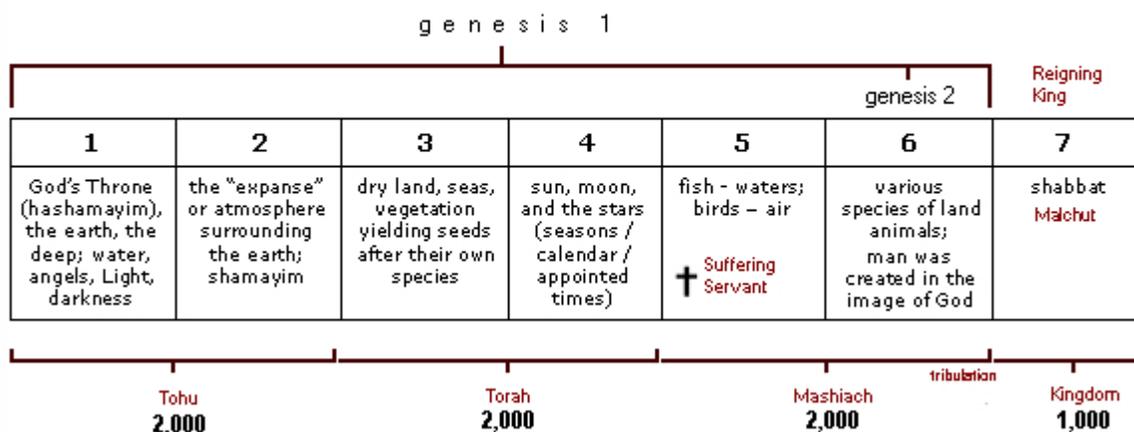
⁴⁰ Creation is likened to a bride. When God said the heaven and the earth were “finished,” the word is *kalah* (כָּלָה) from which the word “bride” (כַּלָּה) comes. Heaven and earth were adorned like a beautiful bride after God created it, and therefore God said it was *tov me'od*... very good.

⁴¹ The sages reconcile this by saying that the time of *twilight* before Shabbat begins can be thought of as part of Shabbat itself, and therefore God can be said to have “finished working” even though it was the seventh day of rest. Note that twilight (*bein ha-shamashot*) is defined as about 18 minutes before sundown.



- 42. What does it mean that God “blessed” the seventh day? (Gen. 2:3)⁴²
- 43. How do we understand the unusual expression that “God rested from all his work ‘that God created to make’ (אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת)”? (Gen. 2:3)⁴³
- 44. Why does the Torah not conclude the section of creation by saying, “And it was evening and it was morning, the seventh day”? Why is the seventh day different from the other days of creation?⁴⁴

Six Days of Creation



[The following pertains to Genesis 2:4-3:1]

- 45. Why does the Torah give a *second* account of creation (Gen. 2:4-25)?⁴⁵

⁴² According to Jewish tradition, the blessing of the Sabbath includes: 1) miraculous provision to supply for the needs of that day, despite refraining from work and making money; 2) a miraculous “spice” added to food cooked for the Sabbath that makes it taste better than on weekdays; 3) the impartation of *neshamah yeterah* (נֶשְׁמָה יְתֵרָה), the “Sabbath Soul,” that makes Shabbat a delight and a spiritual wonder.

⁴³ The phrase “asher bara Elohim la'asot” is thought to indicate that there are two orders of reality – one that is natural and follows the laws of nature (it is created "to do" or "to make"), and the other is spiritual and is under the reign of Spirit. When God ceased from creating, He did so only with regard to the natural; but with regard to things of the spirit, God never ceased working. Therefore we see Yeshua healing on the Sabbath day and justifying the miracle by saying, "My Father is working until now, and I am working" (John 5:17).

⁴⁴ Prophetically Sabbath is a counterpoint of the World to Come, which is filled with radiance and light, and therefore the idea of “evening” and darkness do not apply to it.

⁴⁵ This first account was general and cosmological; the second concerns the “toldot” (תּוֹלְדוֹת) of Adam and Eve in relation to the creation. Note that the word toldot used in this verse (“generations” or “history”) is spelled with an additional letter Vav (ו), the only occurrence of this spelling in the Torah. The word translated “when they were created” (בְּהִבְרָאם) is written with a smaller letter Hey (ה), suggesting that God created the world as easily as breathing out an “h” sound. Note that this word can also be rearranged to spell the name Abraham (אַבְרָהָם), which led some of the sages to say that the universe was created for the sake of Abraham and his descendants (Rom. 4:13).



46. What additional revelation about God is found in Genesis 2:4? ⁴⁶
47. Why does the Torah state that God did not bring rain upon the earth since there was no one to work the ground? (Gen. 2:5) ⁴⁷
48. Where does the Bible teach that Yeshua is the actual Creator? ⁴⁸
49. What is unique about the creation of man (Gen. 2:7) ⁴⁹
50. When do the sages think is the anniversary of creation? ⁵⁰
51. Were Adam and created with “belly buttons”? ⁵¹

⁴⁶ In Genesis 2:4, the phrase, “on the day that the LORD God made the earth and heavens” includes the first reference to the name YHVH (יהוה) in the Bible (before this, only the Name Elohim (אלהים), connoting God’s power, is found). Note that the Name YHVH connotes ideas about everlasting life (i.e., I AM that I AM; *ehyeh asher ehyeh*: אֶשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה אֶהְיֶה, Exod. 3:14) and God’s attributes of Mercy (Exod. 34:6-7). Notice further that while Gen. 1:1 says, “in the beginning God (Elohim) created the heaven and the earth,” heaven is mentioned before earth, but in Gen. 2:4 the creation of earth is mentioned before heaven. The Name YHVH connotes God’s compassionate closeness to man, the One who breathes into mankind the breath of life. YHVH is another Name for God as our Savior, which is therefore a Name that foreshadows Yeshua...

⁴⁷ The trees and plants did not emerge completely on the third day, but remained in the ground until the sixth day. Rain is regarded as a blessing, the “fluid of life for the world,” but it is interesting that God withheld rain until man was ready to receive the blessing of vegetative growth, etc. The midrash states that God did not cause the plants to grow until Adam prayed and asked Him for rain... The prayer for rain is a major part of the Jewish prayer service after Sukkot since withheld rain is a form of judgment against the people: “grant dew and rain as a blessing.” God blesses mankind by making them *needy* – by requiring them to be dependent on the amount of rainfall, etc.

⁴⁸ It is mentioned in various places and implied on every page of Scripture. Yeshua is called the very Creator Himself (Col. 1:16-19, John 1:1,14, Heb. 1:3, 3:3-4) who sits upon the throne of God Himself (Psalm 45:6-7; Heb. 1:8). He is both the Judge and the Savior of the world (Matt. 16:27, Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 John 4:14, Acts 4:12). As the Supreme Lawgiver Himself, “the Voice of the Living God speaking from the midst of the fire,” Yeshua is both the “LORD of the Sabbath” and the LORD of the Torah of Moses... He is the “Son of Man,” a Messianic Title that denotes the promised King of the World (Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 12:8, 16:27; Mark 8:38, 13:26; Luke 22:69, etc.). Simply put, Moses stands in relation to Yeshua as the creature stands before the Creator and is accountable to Him (Heb. 3:3; Matt. 17:1-3). The Name of Yeshua is the only name given for salvation (Isa. 45:21, Acts 4:12). Every knee shall bow to Him. Yeshua = YHVH (compare Isa. 45:21-23, Rom. 14:10-11, Phil. 2:9-11).

⁴⁹ The LORD God formed (יָצַר) the man from the dust using his own “hands,” whereas everything else was created through God’s spoken word (Yehi.. Vaihi). Moreover, the LORD breathed into the man *nishmat chayim* (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים), the “breath [or soul] of life,” so that (vaihi) man became *nefesh chayah* (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה), a “living soul.” God shaped you within your mother's womb (Ps 139:13-14) and delivered into the world with the breath of a “kiss” from his mouth.

⁵⁰ There are two main opinions, dating from the time of Hillel II. The first is that God created the world on Elul 25, 3761 BC, six days before Rosh Hashanah (the day God created man). The second is that the world was created on Nisan 1, 3760 BC, with man created on Nisan 6. There are some debates about the exact year, however, due to questions concerning genealogies and whether years of the exiles of the Jewish people were included into the yearly count.

⁵¹ No, though rabbinical tradition states that Adam was created during the sunrise of the 6th day circumcised... Both Adam and Eve were created as young people, around age 20, and were exceptionally beautiful. Eve was regarded as so beautiful that Adam could not even approach her... Adam was extremely handsome, and his face likewise shone with the Divine Light that was greater than the glory Moses radiated after he received the Second Set of Tablets.



- 52. What relationship is there between the body and the soul? ⁵²
- 53. What difference does it make that each soul has been directly created by God? How does this effect your self-image? Your view of others? ⁵³
- 54. *Where* was Adam created? (Gen. 2:8) ⁵⁴
- 55. What special trees were located in the midst (בְּתוֹךְ) of the garden? (Gen. 2:9) ⁵⁵
- 56. What went out of Eden as a source of life? (Gen. 2:10) ⁵⁶
- 57. Where does the Tree of Life reappear in Scripture? (Rev. 22:2) ⁵⁷
- 58. What was the primary commandment given to Adam in the garden? (Gen. 2:15-16) ⁵⁸



⁵² In Eccl. 3:19 it says, “Man’s advantage over the animal is nothing, for all is vanity,” other than the soul which is destined to present itself for judgment before the Throne of Glory. When a person sins, he injures his soul. For example, if he gazes at another man’s wife, the eyes of his soul become blinded; if he sins with his mouth, the mouth of his soul is struck dumb, and so on. The natural can function as an analogy of the spiritual...

⁵³ Each of us were created from utter nothingness and were brought into being solely on account of God's loving will... The soul's cry to God should always be, "If not for You, I would not be here today; if not for You, I would be dead..." We owe everything to God our Savior.

⁵⁴ He was created using the dust of Moriah, in what would later be called Jerusalem, though he was “placed” by God in the Garden of Eden (גַּן־עֵדֶן), an orchard of delight located in the east (i.e., kedem), to work it and watch it (2:15).

⁵⁵ The garden was an orchard of various beautiful trees that were to be used for food. In the midst of the garden, however, in the very center (i.e., the “holy of holies”) stood the Tree of Life (עֵץ הַחַיִּים) and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil (עֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע). Some sages speculate these two trees shared the same trunk, while others say the Tree of Life stood in the midst while the Tree of Knowledge spread its branches over it.

⁵⁶ A river went out of Eden to water the garden, and indeed the entire region. This is similar to the river of the water of life that flows from before the throne of God and the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem to come.

⁵⁷ The Bible begins and ends with the Tree of Life -- first in the orchard of Eden, and then in the midst of the paradise of heaven. "The Tree of Life (etz ha-chayim) was in the midst of the garden.." (Gen. 2:9). "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the Tree of Life (etz ha-chayim) with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month..." (Rev. 22:1-2). Notice that the "twelve fruits" from the Tree of Life (Rev. 22:2) are directly linked to the "twelve months" of the Jewish year (i.e., "each month rendering its fruit"). Twelve months; twelve fruits.... The sequence of the holidays (mo'edim) were always intended to teach us great revelation about God. That is why God created the Sun and the Moon for signs and for "appointed times" (Gen. 1:14). As it is also written: "He made the moon to mark the appointed times (mo'edim); the sun knows its time for setting" (Psalm 104:19). Note further that the Majority Text of Revelation 22:14 reads: "Blessed are those who do His commandments so that they may have access the Tree of Life..." Faith and obedience are two sides of the same coin.

⁵⁸ Adam was instructed to “serve” (עֲבֹדָה) and to “watch” (שָׁמַר) the garden on God’s behalf. He could eat from any tree in the garden except from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and was warned that if he did eat from it, he would definitely die.



59. What was so unusual about God’s warning to Adam about disobedience (Gen. 2:17) ⁵⁹
60. When did God first say something was *lo tov*, “not good”? (Gen. 2:18-19) ⁶⁰
61. What does “ezer kenegdo” (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) mean? (Gen. 2:18) ⁶¹
62. What evidence is there of Adam’s great intelligence? (Gen. 2:19-20) ⁶²
63. How was Eve created? (Gen. 2:21-22) ⁶³
64. Why didn’t God create man and woman simultaneously? ⁶⁴
65. What was Adam’s *first* name for the woman? (Gen. 2:23) ⁶⁵
66. What is the Hebrew word for “the serpent”? (Gen. 3:1) ⁶⁶
67. What attribute was ascribed to this serpent? (Gen. 3:1) ⁶⁷
68. Why did the serpent go after the woman? (Gen. 3:1) ⁶⁸

⁵⁹ When God told Adam that he would “surely die,” a double negative is used: *mot tamut* (מוֹת תָּמוּת), which can be literally translated as “die you will die,” implying that not only Adam would die, but so would all his descendants – including every living creature on earth. This is the principle of the “federal headship” of Adam, that he was humanity’s “firstborn son” and representative before God for the entire human race...

⁶⁰ God first said *lo tov* (לֹא טוֹב) regarding Adam’s state of being alone, without a “helper fit for him” (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ).

⁶¹ It means a helper “opposite” (נֶגֶד) to him. Adam’s wife would be his counterpart, a sort of mirror. If Adam walked in righteousness, Eve would encourage him to continue; if he disobeyed, she would likewise encourage him to continue.

⁶² Adam named all the animals. Obviously he did not just randomly shout out names here, since this would not have been made a point of in the text of the Torah. Adam was able to give a reason for each name he chose... Note that the point of the “parade of animals” was to show Adam his need for a suitable partner in life.

⁶³ While still at Moriah, God put Adam into a trance and then took out one of his ribs (צִלְעָה) to “build” Eve. Note that the sages say we can learn from this that a man should act as though he were asleep when he is at home, not losing his temper with his wife, etc. After God created Eve, he brought her to Adam and recited the Sheva berachot (wedding blessings) over them (as implied in Gen. 1:28 where it is said, “God blessed them...”)

⁶⁴ If God created man and woman simultaneously, it might have been thought that their purpose in life was to simply procreate just like all the other animals. God created Adam alone to teach that he was first of all created to serve God.

⁶⁵ Since Eve was “bone of Adam’s bone” and “flesh of Adam’s flesh,” he called her *Ishah* (אִשָּׁה), from the word *ish* (אִישׁ) with a “directional ending.” Note that the Hebrew text here implies that Adam said “this time (זֹאת הַפְּעַם) it is bone of my bones,” meaning that this was the *only* time woman would be so created; after this, the situation was reversed, with man being created inside the womb. First woman was taken out of man; then man was taken out of the woman.

⁶⁶ The Hebrew word for the serpent is *ha-nachash* (הַנָּחָשׁ).

⁶⁷ The serpent was described as more “crafty” or shrewd (עָרוּם) than any other beast of the field. Note this implies that the *nachash* was originally a *mammal* rather than a reptile.

⁶⁸ He wanted to *seduce* her, which some of the commentators say means that he lusted after her (sexually) and wanted to kill Adam in order to have her for himself.



69. What did the serpent first say to the woman? (Gen. 3:1-2) ⁶⁹
70. Why did Eve add to God’s commandment by saying that she was forbidden to even *touch* the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden? (Gen. 3:3) ⁷⁰
71. Why did the serpent tell Eve she would *not* die after she explained God’s commandment to him? (Gen. 3:4) ⁷¹
72. What was the serpent’s appeal to Eve (Gen. 3:5) ⁷²
73. According to midrash, why did Eve take of the fruit and eat? ⁷³
74. Why did Adam eat the forbidden fruit offered by the woman? ⁷⁴
75. What was the *immediate* consequence of their disobedience (Gen. 3:7-8) ⁷⁵
76. What did God first say to the man? (Gen. 3:9) ⁷⁶
77. What was Adam’s response to God? (Gen. 3:10-12) ⁷⁷

⁶⁹ He asked her whether it was true whether God forbade her from eating from any tree in the garden. Of course this was a deliberately misleading statement to which Eve felt compelled to “correct.” A midrash states that the serpent enticed Eve with piety: since you should not eat of the Tree of knowledge, you should abstain from all the trees...

⁷⁰ Eve was apparently quoting her husband’s words. In this connection Adam misquoted God and “put a fence around” God’s Torah by adding this restriction, and the satan was going to use this to his advantage... Note also there is some question as to Eve’s understanding of the consequences for disobedience in this case, “lest you die” is not the same wording as “die, you shall surely die...” Why were there communication problems even in paradise?

⁷¹ For the reason cited above. Satan knew Adam had corrupted God’s message and therefore sought to exploit this by showing Eve that his words were not to be trusted...

⁷² His appeal was that her eyes would be opened and that she would be “like God” (פְּאֵלֵהִים), knowing good and evil.

⁷³ During his seduction of Eve, the serpent pushed her into the tree and Eve touched its forbidden fruit. Satan then said, “Just as there is no death for touching it, so there is no death for eating it.” The serpent used this as “proof” that his words were true, and when Eve saw that she could handle the fruit without being harmed, she believed the words of the serpent. She then saw that it was good for food, that it was a delight to the eyes, and so on.

⁷⁴ There is a lot of speculation about this. Some say Adam realized she was going to die and therefore wanted to share her fate; others said that Eve demanded that Adam should eat it, and Adam, still untouched by sin, was made more vulnerable to her as a seductress. Eve argued that Adam had been dishonest with her about touching the fruit, and therefore that it was unfair that he should escape her fate.

⁷⁵ Their eyes were “opened,” they realized they were naked, and they became ashamed. They then sewed fig leaves together to make loincloths. According to midrash, they sewed the fig leaves together using a thorn. Why fig leaves? Because these were the leaves of the forbidden fruit itself (i.e., the fig tree). When they heard the “voice of the LORD walking” in the garden, they ran and hid themselves among the trees, presumably hoping God wouldn’t notice.

⁷⁶ The LORD called out and asked, “Where (אַיִךָ) are you?” (the same name as the word used for the Book of Lamentations). This is the voice of a loving Father in search of his son...

⁷⁷ Adam essentially blamed God: “The woman *whom You gave me*, she gave me from the tree and I ate.” Adam did not take responsibility and blamed the fiasco on the woman.



78. What did God say to the woman, and what did she respond? (Gen. 3:13) ⁷⁸
79. Why didn't God interrogate the serpent but instead immediately pronounced judgment upon this creature? (Gen. 3:14) ⁷⁹
80. What were some of the curses pronounced upon the serpent? (Gen. 3:14-15) ⁸⁰
81. What is the “proto-euangelion”? (Gen. 3:15) ⁸¹
82. Why are we “saved by faith” in God’s promise of the Seed to come? ⁸²
83. What were some of the curses pronounced upon the woman? (Gen. 3:16) ⁸³
84. What were some of the curses pronounced upon the man? (Gen. 3:17) ⁸⁴
85. If God said that “on the day” that Adam ate from the tree of knowledge that he would surely die, how come he lived to be 930 years old? (Gen. 2:17; 5:5) ⁸⁵

⁷⁸ *Mah zot asit* (מַה זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ) – “what is this you have done?” From this we learn that we should always ask a suspect for their own account of the matter, in order to present testimony that might help in their defense. The woman responded by saying that the serpent had deceived her into disobeying God.

⁷⁹ God already knew that the serpent was the “satan in disguise” and therefore there was no need for his testimony.

⁸⁰ The serpent was cursed with ten curses. Here are a few. First the angels descended to cut off his hands and feet. Second, he was required to eat “the dust of the earth,” perhaps a symbol of the dust of death itself. Third, he was demoted to be reptilian, despised from all the other beasts of the field. Fourth, the serpent would have to shed its skin. Fifth, the serpent would suffer everlasting enmity from the coming Seed of the woman who would one day deliver it a final death blow by crushing its head (this is prophetic of Messiah, the Serpent Slayer, who would come to crush the head of the serpent even if he was bitten in the heel during the battle). Note that the phrase “dust you shall eat all the days of your life” refers to the Messianic Age, where the serpent will still be an enemy of God’s people of faith.

⁸¹ This is the “Gospel in the Garden,” the promise of the coming "seed of the woman" who would vanquish the serpent (nachash) that had originally tempted and deceived Eve. Just as Eve opened herself up to the corruption of human nature by heeding the voice of the tempter, so she would be opened up by God Himself for the deliverance of mankind through the advent of the Redeemer. That God's promise was first directed to Satan is surely by design, since he "left his first estate" by becoming the "monster in the garden" and was therefore primarily responsible for the transgression of Adam and Eve in the first place (Ezek. 28:13-15,19). The promise delivered to Satan was therefore one of coming retribution and divine judgment: Evil would not have the last word in the matter of mankind, and therefore Satan's schemes would be avenged by God in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4-5). In a sense this promise forms the "womb" for the whole course of God's redemptive plan for the human race. The first prophecy of Torah clearly anticipated the coming of the Savior of mankind and a cosmic battle between good and evil.

⁸² Just as Eve caused the curse to descend because of her lapse of faith, so we are healed by trusting in God.

⁸³ Pain in childbearing (including the pain and loss of the monthly cycle); the difficulty of raising children; the subjugation of the woman to the man, and ultimately, the curse of death itself.

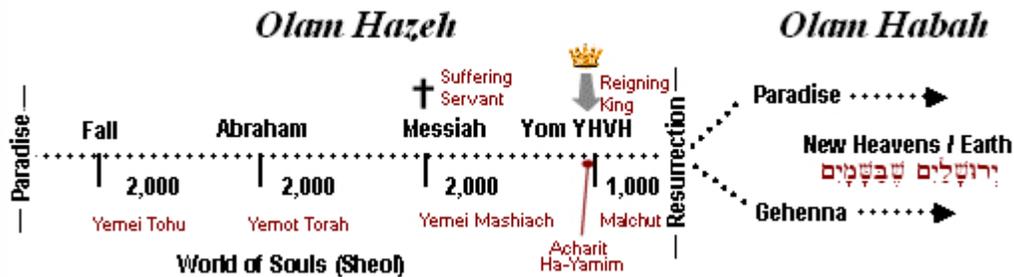
⁸⁴ Because Adam listened to his wife’s seductive speech, the ground would be cursed, and Adam would eat of it in pain (עֲנִיב) all the days of his life. Thorns and thistles will be brought forth to vex the land, and Adam would have to sweat to make a living. Ultimately Adam was cursed with banishment from the garden and death itself.

⁸⁵ The term “yom” in this case is grammatically not qualified by number or in relation to other parts of the calendar, and therefore is a general term that can mean “a period of time.” Since Adam died before he reached age 1,000, however, and since a “day is as a thousand years” to the LORD (Psalm 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8), Adam died “on that day.”



- 86. What does the word “Eve” (חַוְוָה) mean? (Gen. 3:20) ⁸⁶
- 87. God replaced the fig leaf costumes of Adam and Eve with something better. With what did God clothe them with after he spoke judgment upon them? (Gen. 3:21) ⁸⁷
- 88. Why did God banish Adam and Eve from the garden? (Gen. 3:22-23) ⁸⁸
- 89. What did God place at the east of the garden of Eden? (Gen. 3:24) ⁸⁹
- 90. What was so unusual about the birth of Adam and Eve’s first son, Cain? (Gen. 4:1) ⁹⁰

[Note that due to time constraints, the parashah study for Bereshit ends here...]



For Next Week:

- Read parashat **Noach** (i.e., Genesis 6:9-11:32)
- Read the Haftarah (Isaiah 54:1-55:5)
- Read the New Testament (Matt. 24:36-46; 1 Pet. 3:18-22)

⁸⁶ Most translations say Chavvah means “living,” from chai (חַי), “life.” However, some of the sages say her name alludes to the Aramaic word for *serpent* (chavya), suggesting that Adam saw great troubles that came through Eve’s speech. Instead of “ishah,” then, Adam called her *Chavvah*, which comes from chavvah (חַוְוָה) meaning “to speak.” Understood in this way, Adam was saying she was the mother of all talkers, not the mother of all life!

⁸⁷ God clothed them with “garments of skin,” surely an allusion to the Lamb of God who was coming to clothe fallen humanity with his own righteousness...

⁸⁸ To prevent him from eating the Tree of Life (עֵץ הַחַיִּים) before the time of his atonement was secured through Yeshua. If Adam had eaten of the Tree of Life before his purification, his fallen condition would have become a permanent condition, without possibility of remedy in this age.

⁸⁹ God placed the cherubim (הַכְרֻבִּים) and the flaming sword (הַטַּהַר הַחַרְבֵּן) that turned every way to prevent access to the Tree of Life.

⁹⁰ When Eve said, “I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD,” the word *et* (אֶת) was interpreted to be “with” (rather than an direct object marker) and the idea of “help” was *added* to the text. The verse literally says, “I have gotten a man – *et* the LORD!” Perhaps Eve thought that the man born to her was the promised seed to come, the “serpent slayer” who would save the world...