

The Morphing of Messiah

Human understanding has evolved but the Messiah is the same forever

What began as a divine seed promise in Paradise took a lot of working out in the minds of people to arrive at what we understand about Messiah today.

The Hebrews who presented the idea of a shrewdly deceptive serpent-like influencer of the human mind and heart also brought forward a future solution to the problem of evil and suffering. Just how the solution would come about was left unspoken. It had to be worked out by experience in the hearts and minds of people.

This process surfaced in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve decided to follow their own mind instead of God's instructions. When that went awry, God promised Eve her Seed would crush the serpent's head, while the serpent's seed would only manage to bruise the heel of Eve's Seed. God's solution came to be known as the Messiah—but that formal title is not used in Genesis, nor in most of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). What God's Seed Promise meant was certainly not clear at the very Beginning.

What Beginning?

Before diving in, it's helpful to understand a little about the book of Genesis, which in Hebrew is called *Bereshit*, the "Beginning." Jews who bequeathed Genesis to the world have always insisted the Torah was written to address themes of divine origin and human responsibility, especially Israel's ultimate role as a light to the nations. It was not written as a scientific account, although many scientists have said the Biblical narrative has inspired their work. By the time we get to the end of the Christian Bible, the story has morphed to include divine promises not only for Israel but for all people who accept Eve's Seed as the remedy for their lives. For that to happen, Jesus taught that people need to be born again "from above."

Etymological studies hint at a progressive unfolding of God's solution. The word "beginning" in Hebrew can be rendered "In *a* beginning," or even "in the beginnings," plural. The latter suggests we're about to hear a procession of beginnings in which there's more than meets the eye. Linguistic insights from proto-Hebrew further suggest *bereshit* may refer to a "set of things in a person's head,"¹ reinforcing the idea that it's a book about formation of divinely informed human consciousness. This idea is expanded in the New Testament Gospel of John, which calls Jesus the *Logos*, or "Word." That name packs into a single term the unfathomable capability that set the world in motion, puts it in order and continually sustains it, including all life as we know it. I'll come back to this later. Below, let's unpack the Genesis Creation narrative a little further.

¹ About multiple beginnings, see [hebrew – "In A Beginning" vs. "In THE beginning"? Different implications? – Biblical Hermeneutics Stack Exchange](#). Regarding *bereshit* referring to a set of things, see "The Mayim of Creation," by G.L. Bartholomew, <https://ancient-hebrew.org/studies-interpretation/files/the-mayim-of-creation.pdf>, which unpacks alternate meanings of key words and phrases in the Creation narrative.

Dualities in Creation

Like all great stories, Genesis is rich in layered meanings and narrative tension that reflects the drama of human existence. But Genesis is not merely a dramatic myth. As an origin story it offers a depiction of ultimate reality and remains profoundly relevant today. The book opens with a single Creator named *Elohim* in Hebrew. Elohim is the Source of everything, including a chaotic realm of “waters” (possibly in modern terms, fluid energy and matter in flux). Whatever’s flowing teams with potential over which God’s Creative Spirit hovers in the Beginnings. When God “speaks,” light appears, along with darkness (definable also as “obscurity”), the first duality and source of dramatic tension to appear in the Bible.² At this point we realize God speaking does not sound like ordinary human words, as eerie sci-fi music tries to depict.

Nor is the light created by God in Genesis 1:2 the daylight we see with our eyes. Earth was not yet formed. The stars, sun and moon were not made until the fourth day of creation. The light of Day One is some form of energy expressed in frequencies and wavelengths beyond the range of the naked eye. This unique expression of energy sets a dynamic process of beginnings in motion that reveal the existence of a primal Creator outside of time.³ When the stars, sun and moon do appear on Day Four, space-time as we know it becomes real. Only then does life on earth begin to appear in broad daylight, so to speak.

The energy released by Elohim throughout Genesis 1 establishes a procession of dualities that emerge as creation unfolds. On the second day, the waters are divided into those “above” (in heaven, meaning another realm of reality, not simply the sky above planet earth), and those “below.” On the third day, Elohim speaks and dry earth is separated from the waters below. On days three, four and five, life begins to teem on earth, which I’ll talk more about in *Messiah Brief 20 - Back to the Beginnings*.

On the Sixth Day Elohim makes male and female, a process clarified in Genesis 2, where God suddenly manifests as *Yahweh-Elohim*, translated in English Bibles as the LORD-God as if the two are joined at the hip. Really, they’re two manifestations of one Living God: Yahweh the Relatable, and Elohim the remote Prime Mover. The LORD-God is shown intimately forming Adam from the dust of the ground, breathing life into Adam, and communicating directly to delegate the task of naming the animals. That’s when we realize Adam is not just another animal. He’s different, acting as a divine surrogate given authority to impart identity to the animals. Adam the Animal Namer is like a shepherd who gets to know his flock well enough to name each one. Much later, Jesus will describe Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, whose sheep know His voice (John 10).

Genesis 1 says male and female are made in God’s own image and likeness, but leaves it to Genesis 2 to explain more fully how that works. There, God declares it’s not good for Adam to be alone, so God divides the single Adam (representing all humanity) into two genders to form the duality, male and female. God calls the female Adam’s “suitable helper.” In Hebrew she’s his *ezer*

² Isaiah 45:7 says God “created” darkness, suggesting it is something more than simply the absence of light. James 1:17 says there is no “shadow of turning” in God, emphasizing God exists outside of time and implying light and dark are somehow both held together in the Divine. They’re both timebound, a mystery that has challenged and inspired mystics for centuries.

³ “The Mayim of Creation.” Op. Cit., pp 21 ff, offers an exposition of the role of light and water in the language of the creation account in Genesis 1. That matter and energy have a “fluid” relationship was epitomized by Einstein’s famous formula, $E=mc^2$.

kenegdo, a term used only once in the Bible. A famous Jewish sage once noted the unusual phrase can be literally interpreted “like-opposite,” meaning that if the male is worthy, the female will be for him, but if he’s unworthy, she will be opposed to him.⁴ When they function as self-centered polar opposites in the male-female duality, there will be mutual opposition, even conflict! When they function as compatible and mutually honoring partners, they are designed to form a creative duo to represent the image of God on earth in a divine dance to the rhythms of heaven.

In the New Testament, Jesus will explain that for this to happen—to represent God’s image and likeness on earth—men and women need to be born again from above and mutually submitted (Ephesians 5:21).

The Wiley Serpent and Eve’s Seed

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve are seen in the verdant garden of Paradise distinguished by the presence of two trees—one life giving, the other deadly. As everyone knows, God told them not to eat from the deadly tree, but they did anyway. With the arrival of the wily serpent, they chose to follow its suggestion and their own desires rather than God’s instruction. Evil, toil and pain soon appeared in Paradise. Now there’s a new duality, between evil and the goodness of creation. Adam and Eve are suddenly self-aware and afraid. They try to hide from God. When God asks where they are, they say they’re afraid because they’re naked. They realized their innermost thoughts were exposed to the One who made them. To top it off, neither of them takes responsibility for their actions. The man blames the woman, and the woman blames the serpent.

But God had a plan to turn things around. It began with the mystery of Eve’s seed. Why does the Bible talk about the woman’s seed when we know it takes a man’s seed to inseminate a woman? Eve’s seed has to do with spiritual matters, not biology. Recalling Jesus’s words that humans must be born again, we recognize that children of God are not born of a man’s seed but of the Spirit of God (John 1:5-6). No human father is capable of conceiving a solution to the existence of evil that comes from ignoring God’s instructions. Eve’s Seed refers to a future Seed (singular), who will eventually enter the world to remedy Adam and Eve’s self-willed blunder. However, we only know this in hindsight, after the Messiah promised to Eve arrives in a manger.

The Messiah doesn’t come overnight, far from it. Eve’s first son, Cain, ends up killing her second son, Abel, in a fit of rage after Yahweh rejects Cain’s offering. The story is found in Genesis 4, where Cain became jealous because his brother’s sacrifice of the firstborn of his flock was accepted by Yahweh, but Cain’s offering of “fruit of the soil” was not. Think about this a moment. This primal picture of human conflict was triggered by a difference in how Eve’s sons worshiped, what they each prioritized before God. Abel offered the best of his flock. Cain seems to have just brought fruits and vegetables.⁵

⁴ Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, aka Rashi, *Yevamot* 63a, 11th century. His interpretation has been rendered in modern terms this way: “I (God) will configure humanity such that individuals might find help in another that suits them, that meets them where they are... stands in opposition to them on equal footing to rein each other in...teach...question...and care for each other that they might not lose themselves in their own delusions and imaginations, nor face themselves alone.” See <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/333823?lang=bi>.

⁵ There’s no mention of Cain tilling the ground. He seems most likely to have collected his offering from God’s provision of wild vegetation. This undermines speculation that the story is an origin story about emergence of tillers vs. hunter gatherers. The story is about trusting God enough to make serving and worshiping God a continual part of our lives. See Mark 12:30-31.

People have been fighting ever since over what they prioritize and worship! As we have seen, that's at the heart of the Messiah Wars and the ongoing Messianic melee.

The Dust Saga in Genesis

The story of Eve's Seed represents the original good news of the Bible. It appears when God curses the wiley serpent for having deceived Adam and Eve. God said to the serpent "you are cursed above every wild animal, condemned above every creature of the field! You will slither on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life!" [6]⁶ (See Text Box below.)

From Dust to Dust

English Bibles have a way of glossing over seemingly insignificant details that hold profound meaning in the original Hebrew. Consider the Genesis dust narrative. In Genesis 1:24, God says: "Let the *earth* (Heb. *eretz*) bring forth living creatures."

In Genesis 2:7 we have this added detail: the Lord God formed "the Adam" (*haAdam*, humanity) from the dust of the ground and breathed life into "him." Dust of the ground in Hebrew is "*aphar* of the *adamah*"—not simply "earth." *Adamah* is soil (from which Adam gets his name) that has nutrients and potential to support life. *Aphar* can depict either the minutest constituents of soil or desiccated dirt that has scattered and lost the potential to support human life.

When God breathed into Adam's *adamah*, it became animated and humanity came to life. God breathed into Adam but not animals. For the scientifically inclined, we might say that the primal elements that comprise our body were metamorphosed by divine breath-Spirit that enables humans to resonate with frequencies of heaven and partake of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). For this process to reach its full potential, Jesus said we must consciously agree to receive the Spirit from above. We must want to be born again by God's Spirit. Our will has to be freely involved.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, God cursed the serpent who deceived them, saying it will creep on the ground and eat dust (depleted *aphar*) forever. Contrary to popular belief God never curses Adam or Eve, but gives them consequences. God says to Adam, "*cursed is the ground (adamah) because of you.*" The once fertile ground will henceforth manifest barrenness that makes work hard, toilsome, and in the end painful.

To extend the *aphar* symbolism further, I mentioned that enriched soil holds together, while earth without nutrients breaks down into barren dust. The Bible builds on this idea by comparing human life to something fragile, easily broken down unless it receives enriched nutrients and animating energy only the Creator can supply.

Jesus's parable of the sower informs us that when His word [*Logos*] falls on good soil in the human soul and is watered by God's Spirit, it produces a good harvest. His words are literally spirit and life (John 6:63). This juxtaposition—dust and divine Spirit—forms a core tension of our existence. God knows this. "**For He knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust**" (Psalm 103:14).

⁶ Genesis 3:14-15 has this insightful footnote in *The Passion Translation*: "Adam was made from dust, and now the snake was cursed to feed on dust.... Whatever we withhold from God becomes food" for the Serpent and his demonic offspring."

On one hand, we are lowly earthen vessels. On the other hand, we are capable of carrying within us divine treasure. We are not gods. We are dust transformed by God. Infused with His Spirit, we are capable of sacrificial love, purpose, and entering consciously into the eternal life of heaven.

For more about dust, see <https://eitan.bar/articles/why-dust-a-reflection-on-genesis-319/> and also [WORD STUDY – DUST – נָגָף – Chaim Bentorah](#), both of which are adapted in my text above.

Eve's Singular Seed

After cursing the serpent, God promises Eve her Seed will crush the serpent's head, but the serpent's seed will only manage to bruise the heel of Eve's Seed. The saga of dust is now replaced by the Singular Seed Saga of the entire Christian Bible. Messiah Jesus will one day spring from Eve's Seed only to be condemned to die by men under the influence of the serpent's seed. But the Messiah's "heel" will only be bruised. He will rise again from the grave and leave the serpent and his seed behind in the dust.

The New Testament further testifies that those who receive the Spirit of Christ have been "**born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God**" (1 Peter 1:23). The creative Word of God alive in us seeds newness of life and we are born again into the eternal family of God (Ephesians 2:19, 1 Timothy 3:15). If we choose to make earthly matters the primary focus of our attention as Cain did, we open our hearts to negative impulses that overwhelm our natural affection for God.

Charles Kraft, a modern pioneer in Christian inner healing and deliverance, once said demons eat garbage (paraphrasing, Kraft could have said "dust"). If you take away the garbage, i.e., the unproductive dirt, grime and dust of your inner life, demons won't find anything to eat and they leave. Kraft's approach to deliverance was not noisy and dramatic like popular images of exorcisms, but quiet and gentle, imbued with Holy Spirit wisdom and compassion. James 3:17 reminds us God's wisdom from above is peaceable and gentle. When people begin to more fully understand God's love, grace, compassion and forgiveness, demonic entities find no resting place in our souls, and cannot stay.

God told Cain before he murdered his brother that sin was crouching at his door and he must master it. God meant that Cain—by extension all people—are capable of mastering sin so long as we make serving and worshiping God our top priority. Messiah Jesus would later explain "**God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship Him in spirit and in truth**" (John 4:23-24).

The way to master sin is to recognize our dependence on the Divine Source of our life and allow God's Holy Spirit to transform us, just like when God breathed into Adam-Eve. The New Testament says the more we do this the more we "are being transformed into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Bible mentions God breathing into people only twice, first in Eden, and second, when Jesus breathes on His disciples and says "receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). Their hearts and minds were good soil prepared by Jesus's words and actions to be born again from above.

As we'll see in the next Messiah Brief, it took quite a while to work out God's methods and a more complete understanding of the Messiah.