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| ✥ |  | *Genesis 1-3—* |
| *Creation* |
| *and Fall* |
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Scripture quotations, except quotations from others, are from

the New Revised Standard Version, unless indicated otherwise.

# Notes on Passages

## Genesis 1-2:4a

1. **1:1**
   1. “The world did not always exist. Only God has always been: he is *eternal*.” (Hauret 184)
   2. “The heavens and earth, that is, all things that exist, were created by God. The Almighty commanded and all was made: God is the *Creator*.” (Hauret 184)
2. **1:2**
   1. 1:2 describes a dark and watery chaos. God limits the dark in 1:3-5, and he limits the water in 1:6-8. See Isa 45:18. (Achtemeiers 28)
      1. Isa 45:18, “For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the Lord, and there is no other.”
3. **1:3-5**
   1. God brought about order in the chaos “by limiting the chaos and holding it in check. . . . The darkness was separated from the light and given the boundaries of night . . .” (Achtemeiers 28)
4. **1:6-8**
   1. In the chaos of 1:2, God brought about order “by limiting the chaos and holding it in check. The chaotic deep or waters were bounded by being held above the firmament and below the earth (Gen 1:6-7; cf. Job 38:8-11; Ps 104:9; Prov 8:29).” (Achtemeiers 28)
   2. “And yet, God did not eliminate the forces of chaos. They can still threaten [as in Gen 6-8.] . . . As Job says, Leviathan, which is another name for the chaotic waters, can be roused (Job 3:8). . . . Only because God has set a guard over Leviathan (Job 7:12) is the structure of man’s world preserved. . . . If God [28] withdraws . . ., the earth will again become waste and void (Jer 4:23) . . . (Ps. 46:1-3).” (Achtemeiers 28-29)
5. **1:26-27**
   1. “God is Lord and Master of all things. We belong to him body and soul.” (Hauret 184)
   2. “The first thing that is evident in Genesis 1-2 is the fact that man . . . is a finite creature . . . [not] naturally divine or immortal. [235] . . . Man and woman are *like* God—but they are *not* God.” (Livingston 236)
   3. “. . . human life . . . is not for that reason worthless or evil.” (Livingston 235)
   4. “. . . the priestly writer of this ancient passage had in mind man’s physical and bodily similarity to the inhabitants of the divine realm. The reading in the ancient Hebrew is not “the image of God,” but “the image of the ‘*elohim*,” the latter being the inhabitants of the heavenly court. And the words for “image” and “likeness” throughout the Old Testament consistently refer to material representations and physical forms. . . . [In] this first creation story, God is not to be thought of anthropomorphically, [but] man is to be thought of theomorphically . . .” (Achtemeiers 24)
   5. “For the ancient Hebrew, there is no sharp dualism between the body and the soul . . .” (Livingston 235)
   6. “Therefore when Ezekiel (ch. 1) or Isaiah (ch. 6) or Daniel (7:9) are granted their prophetic visions of God, the deity is revealed to them as having something like a human form, not because they create God in man’s image, but because man has been created in God’s. Man’s physical nature shares in some way in the glory and perfection of the Lord’s being.” (Achtemeiers 25)
   7. “Man is given the image in order that he may exercise dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:26, 28). Just as God is Lord over all creation, so man is made lord over all life on earth . . .” (Achtemeiers 25)
   8. “The image of God is mentioned in only two other places in the Old Testament. In Gen. 5:3, Adam passes the image on to his son Seth, and in Gen. 9:6, the image is still present in man at the time of Noah. The image has not been lost in the fall of man . . .” (Achtemeiers 25)
6. **1:28**
   1. “. . . humankind is given a unique place in God’s creation. . . . all creation is placed under human dominion . . .” (Livingston 235)

## Genesis 2:4b-25

1. **2:4b**
   1. *on the day that*
      1. J “clearly begins with a temporal clause like *Enuma elish* and asks no questions about the antecedent [period].” (Vawter 65)
      2. Gen 1 (P) spends 10 verses on the creation of earth; Gen 2 (J) spends one subordinate clause. J’s interest is the earth after creation. (Maly 12) “No longer is there an interest in cosmogony and the creation of the world as a whole.” (Achtemeiers 26)
   2. *the Lord God*
      1. “Yahweh Elohim” is due to the final editor. (Maly 12) Probably “we owe this combination to the Redactor. . .” (Vawter 66)
      2. Only 2:4b-3:24 and Exod 9:30 say “Yahweh Elohim” in the Pentateuch. (Davidson 30) In Exod 9:30, “the reading is uncertain . . .” (Vawter 66)
      3. “It may reflect different traditions upon which the writer has drawn . . .” (Davidson 30)
      4. “. . . or it may be the way in which the final editors of Genesis draw our attention to the fact that the God of Gen. 1 is the same as the Lord of Gen 2:5ff.” (Davidson 30) Probably the redactor “has used it to tie the Priestly and Yahwistic creation stories together . . .” (Vawter 66)
2. **2:5**
   1. Gen 1 (P) = chaos of water replaced by cosmos; Gen 2 (J) = chaos of desert replaced by garden. (Maly 12)
   2. Gen 2:5-6 embody “ancient memories going back to the time when Israel wandered in the desert . . .” (Hauret 168) Eden is like “an oasis in the Eastern desert . . .” (Hauret 169, quoting R. de Vaux without citation)
   3. “a bare land badly in need of rain [is] perhaps more in keeping with a Palestinian origin . . .” (Vawter 65)
   4. Not necessarily a “parched landmass”: “It is simply a desolate, uninhabited, uncultivated land.” (Vawter 66) Not “a moistureless earth” (see *mist* in 6), but “rain alone can guarantee the vegetation which digs its roots deep into the land.” (Vawter 66) “both rain and cultivation are required both for *field shrub* and *grass of the field*.” (Vawter 65) “The surface of the ground is not whence the plants draw their existence, but it is the source of the clay from which man is next to be formed. . . . [The *mist*] makes possible a cohesion of soil on the surface of the land to allow for the clay . . . This is what J is really interested in, not the greening of the earth . . .” (Vawter 66)
   5. Man as tiller shows agricultural, not hunting, culture as author’s background. (Maly 12)
3. **2:6**
   1. 6 does not contradict 5, since 5 says, not “waterless,” but only “no rain yet.” (Vawter 66)
   2. *mist*
      1. Heb ,*ed*,only here and Job 36:27. “it is probably best, following Akkadian usage, to take the word to refer to the subterranean waters which welled up from under the earth before there was any rain moisture.” (Davidson 30)
      2. Only ground water was available. (Maly 12)
      3. The mist “was useless, since there was no one to channel it into fertilizing courses. So the world was desolate and barren . . .” (Maher 35)
      4. NAB’s “stream” is the best trans.: Heb *ed* “corresponds with the ‘*edu* or *id* of Mesopotamian texts which designate the underground source of the springs of the earth . . .” (Vawter 66)
4. **2:7**
   1. *formed*
      1. An unselfconscious anthropomorphism. Others are breathing into nostrils, planting a garden, and walking in the cool evening air. (Vawter 68)
      2. *Formed* “most frequently describes the activity of a potter in the Old Testament. There is an Egyptian parallel where the god Khnum fashions mankind on a potter’s wheel.” (Davidson 30)
      3. “. . . “formed” is almost, though not quite, as much a word reserved to God in the Hebrew Old Testament as “created” . . .” (Vawter 66)
   2. *man*
      1. “all mankind, men and women together . . .” (Vawter 90)
      2. Pun: “man” = ‘*adam*,collective noun, formed of dust (‘*afar*) from the “ground” = ‘*adamah* as his to use (2:5b) and from whence he came (3:19). (Maly 12) “a pleasant play on words that points to an intimate bond between humans and the earth.” (Maher 35) “. . . the first man . . . does not bear a proper name. The Hebrew word *Adam* was never used by the Israelites as a word suitable for a personal name. In this chapter *Adam* means “the man” in the most general sense.” (Wright 84)
      3. “The oneness of man with the rest of creation is being stressed. According to Gen. 2:19 wild animals and birds are also formed out of the ground (‘*ad\_m\_h*) and in Gen. 7:22 *the breath of life* belongs to all living creatures . . .” (Davidson 31)
   3. *dust*
      1. Heb ‘*afar*,NAB “clay,” RSV “dust [‘*afar*] from the ground [,*adamah*].” (Vawter 66) ‘*Afar* “ordinarily means “dust,” the discrete bits of soil . . ., hardly the material to be shaped into any plastic form. It is true, it can sometimes indicate something more cohesive, as in Leviticus 14:42 (“mortar”) or Genesis 26:15 (“dirt”) or Isaiah 34:7.9 (“earth”).” Probably J [66] intended an allusion to humans becoming “dust” (Job 10:9, “thou hast made me of clay [‘*homer*,usu. OT word for “clay”]; and wilt thou turn me to dust [‘*afar*] again?”—cf. Ps 22:16, 30; Job 17:16; Eccl 12:7). J here emphasizes man’s mortality (in contrast to “P’s preoccupation with him as containing a spark of the divine”). (Vawter 66-67)
      2. Adam bore within himself “the forces of dissolution . . . because of his physical makeup (2:7a).” (Hauret 148) (But “As long as he dwelt near the tree of life [mentioned 2 verses later], Adam, by a special privilege, had escaped the forces of dissolution . . .” B 148)
      3. “the image is evidently of a potter . . .” (Vawter 66) “Like a potter working with a lump of clay, he takes some of the dust of the ground and mixes it with water, and then he shapes man in his hands, until man has a form (cf. Job 10:8-11; Ps. 139:13-15).” (Achtemeiers 27)
      4. “We find the motif of people being created from clay in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian mythologies, and the Yahwist takes up this traditional imagery to express the fragile condition of human beings and their dependence on God. . . . the clay bespeaks mortality.” (Maher 35)
   4. *breathed into his nostrils*
      1. “What is special is not the action itself but the solemnity of the formula, contrasting with the simple “formed out of the ground” that is predicated of the other animals in vs. 19.”
      2. “The intensely personal way, however, in which God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life* is J’s way of indicating that peculiar relationship between God and man which the creation hymn described in terms of ‘image’ and ‘likeness’.” (Davidson 31)
   5. *breath of life*
      1. “His life is not inherent within his physical body. He does not exist in his own right, but solely as acreature, sustained by the grace of his Creator. If God hold his breath, man will return to dead physical matter (Ps. 104:29; Job 34:14-15). Man is completely dependent . . .” (Achtemeiers 28)
      2. “Hebrew *nepesh* does not mean soul in the sense of the spiritual part of man; rather it means life, vitality, the total living personality. In Gen. 1:24, 30 the same phrase refers to the living creature(s) of the animal world.” (Davidson 31)
      3. A special kind of life not given other creatures. (Maly 12) J “is not only saying that adam enjoys life as a gift from God, but is also suggesting that human beings enjoy a share in God’s own life.” (Maher 35) Not so different from P’s 1:26-27. (Maher 35-36)
      4. But “in Gen. 7:22 *the breath of life* belongs to all living creatures . . .” (Davidson 31) See also Eccl 3:19-20, “the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same . . . They all have the same breath . . . all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.” “Breath, like blood, in the elementary physiology of ancient man was the sign of life and therefore equated with life itself: to have breath was to be “a living being.”” (Vawter 67)
5. **2:8**
   1. *garden*
      1. “We now hear of the *garden* . . .” (Vawter 68)
      2. “In Sumerian, a *gan* [garden] is a fertile, well-watered, luxuriant spot enclosed by walls.”
      3. Heb *gan* > LXX *paradeisos*,which connotes “abundance and pleasure.” (Maher 36)
      4. Symbol of divine blessings. (Maly 12) “a symbol of God’s generosity in providing for the first human beings whom he had made.” (Maher 36) “. . . God takes infinite pains to satisfy his [Adam’s] every necessity. The original waterless waste of the world is turned into an oasis . . .” Later efforts by God to satisfy Adam’s needs are: giving him every pleasant tree; giving him dominion over animals; giving him a wife. (Achtemeiers 26)
   2. *Eden*
      1. “Only in verses 8 and 10-14 [four rivers] is Eden definitely a geographical term. . . . in Ezek. 28, . . . Eden [is] a mythological and religious idea . . . Eden, the garden of God, is located on the holy mountain of God (Ezek. 28:14, 16), and in this garden there is a king. We seem to have echoes here of a theme found in Mesopotamian mythology of the king as primordial man placed in a divine garden as the guardian of the tree of life.” (Davidson 33) But Ezek 28 locates the mountain in the far north, not the east; cf. Isa 14:13, Ps 48:2. (Vawter 69) In Ezek 28:12-19, “The Tyrian king is here symbolically identified with archetypal man, accoutered as a king, filled with wisdom and altogether beautiful. [But] he became lawless and was . . . cast down to earth from the mountain of the gods (where, in this story, Eden was located). . . . there is no mention of a serpent or a woman or of a temptation to grasp the fruit of knowledge (since man here was already filled with wisdom). His sin was the use of his wisdom to grasp at divine power. [Ezek 28:17, “for the sake of your splendor” (RSV); “to increase your dignity” (NEB). (Scott 100 55)] Here the picture resembles another mythological picture in Isaiah 14:12-15, where the morning star sought to set his throne above the stars and make himself the equal of the Highest God, only to be cast down to Sheol.” (Scott 100)
      2. “. . . *El*,the supreme god of the Canaanite pantheon, had his dwelling place at the source of two rivers.” (Davidson 33) “we should resist the temptation to find here an echo of the Canaanite myth which placed the residence of God at the source of all the waters of the earth.” (Vawter 69)
      3. In Sumerian, *Eden* or *Edin* “was applied to regions of great richness. . . . [Eden] evoked the idea of a privileged place, an abode of pleasure . . .” (Hauret 94)
      4. *Eden* is an Akkadian loanword = “steppe.” Allusion with Hebrew ‘*eden*, “pleasure.” (Maly 12) “*Eden* means “pleasure” in Hebrew . . .” (Maher 36) *Garden of Eden* “need mean no more than ‘the garden of delight’, that garden of paradise where once all was harmony.” (Davidson 33)
      5. See Isa 51:3; Ezek 28:11-19, 31:9, 36:35; Joel 2:3. (Vawter 68)
   3. *east*
      1. “*east* could only mean to the Palestinian . . . Mesopotamia.” (Maher 36) “East” is from the point of view of Palestine; it is therefore “Mesopotamia, where the rest of the Yahwist’s history is played out till the time of Abraham.” (Vawter 68) Mesopotamia. (Maly 12)
      2. “The geographical notation . . . is part of the author’s “historicizing” of the myths with which he works.” (Vawter 68)
6. **2:9**
   1. *pleasant*
      1. “our first parents were to enjoy whatever was useful and pleasing to them . . .” (Hauret 105)
   2. *tree of life* (2:9, 17)
      1. McKenzie, John L., SJ. *Myths and Realities*. 1963. 164-70. (Cited in Scott 98 n. 50)
      2. “Above all there [are] ‘the tree of life’ (2:9; 3:22) and ‘the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ (2:9, 17). Elsewhere there are references to ‘the tree’ [3:3a, 6].” (Davidson 29)
      3. “. . . anomalies in the biblical text point . . . to an importation from outside. The tree of life is introduced by a badly constructed, “limping” phrase (2:9b) to appear again only at the end of the account in what appears to be a doublet (cf. 3:22-24).” (Hauret 108)
      4. “a common ancient symbol of immortality . . .” (Maly 12) “. . . tree of life (immortality) . . .” (Maly 13) “The “tree of life,” that is, a tree whose fruit confers idyllic life or immortality . . .” (Vawter 68) “. . . the tree of life (or, of immortality) . . .” (Scott 98)
      5. in ancient Near-Eastern mythology
         1. “. . . the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, symbolic names obviously borne by no species of historical tree!” (Wright 84)
      6. “. . . the tree of life formed a part of Sumero-Akkadian folklore.” (Hauret 107)
         1. “In the Epic of Gilgamesh . . . the hero is given a plant whose name is ‘man becomes young in old age’ . . .” (Davidson 29) The epic calls it a “plant of renown, with the help of which man wins his breath of life.” (Hauret 105) Utanapishtim, the Babylonian Noah, had told Gilgamesh that it was at the bottom of the ocean. Gilgamesh retrieved it, but it was stolen away by a serpent. (Vawter 68-69)
            1. A summary of the *Gilgamesh Epic*:

Gilgamesh and his friend perform heroic exploits, but the friend kills the bull of heaven and so is killed by the gods. (Wright 85)

Gilgamesh seeks eternal life. A boatman ferries him across the River Death. In a paradise he meets the Babylonian equivalent of Noah. Noah tells how mankind was disturbing the sleep of Enlil (king of the gods, storm god), so Enlil decreed a flood. Another god has Noah build an ark for himself, his family, and two of every creature. His reward is eternal life, but Noah cannot give it to anyone else. Noah’s wife tells Gilgamesh, however, of a plant at the bottom of the River of Death that rejuvenates. (Wright 85)

Gilgamesh gets the plant. While crossing a desert, Gilgamesh bathes at an oasis, and a snake smells and takes the plant down his hole. Therefore man must die, but snakes never do: they just slough their skins. (Wright 86)

* + - 1. “In the Babylonian myth of Ea and Adapa we have instead a “water of life” and a “bread of life.” Because of false counsel Adapa refuses these foods” and thus forfeited immortality. (Vawter 69)
    1. “Egypt has its own memory of a plant which distilled an elixir of immortality . . .” (Hauret 105)
    2. “In Greek mythology, the gods of Olympus slaked their thirst with life-giving ambrosia.” (Hauret 106)
    3. “the Iranian . . . *Haoma* granted . . . long life, and well deserved its name of “the tree that keeps death at a distance.”” (Hauret 106)
    4. the tree of life for J
       1. “In the mind of the author, . . . [man] carries death within himself, for he is dust. By way of privilege, however, he could be exempt from death. . . . the tree of life was only a symbol of the bodily immortality promised conditionally [108] to our first parents (cf. Ap. 2:7, 22:19). . . . The very moment they left it [paradise] they would be exposed to death.” (Hauret 108-9)
       2. “As long as he dwelt near the tree of life, Adam, by a special privilege, had escaped the forces of dissolution which he bore within himself because of his physical makeup (2:7a).” (Hauret 148)
  1. *in the midst*: “It does not mean the geometric center, but . . . is meant to underline the exceptional importance of this tree.” (Hauret 109)
  2. *tree of knowledge*
     1. The tree of knowledge “originally had nothing to do with the garden . . .” (Vawter 68)
     2. “This tree of knowledge belongs primarily to the narrative in chapter 3, and the tree of life (or, of immortality) to the preceding chapter. Two distinct myths have been drawn upon . . .” (Scott 98)
     3. *tree*
        1. “Historians ordinarily point to the “tree of truth” spoken of in the Sumerian inscriptions of Gudea, to the “talking trees” of Dodona, and to the “laurel tree of Delos” with its prophetic rustling, but these are farfetched connections.” (Hauret 109)
        2. “The common opinion throughout the Christian centuries has been that it was [an] ordinary (non-miraculous) tree, [forbidden] solely for the purpose of testing their obedience.” [32] But the punishment would be too severe for an act good in itself: “the effect of eating was to open their eyes (3:7).” (Hartman 32-33)
        3. “. . . “you must not touch the fruit” . . . means, “You must not commit sin. You must not disobey.”” (Hauret 187)
     4. *knowledge*
        1. Just as the “tree of life” confers life, so the “tree of knowledge” is “one whose “fruit” conveys the knowledge of good and bad.” (Vawter 70)
        2. At first sight, “knowledge of good and evil . . . means here sexual consciousness . . . This may indeed have been the point of the more ancient myth . . . [“Cf. the Sumerian myth of Enki, the gardener, and Ninhursag, the mother goddess. Enki brings on himself a curse for eating certain plants that apparently had been forbidden him. See *ANET*,p. 40 . . . also S. N. Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (1961), p. 101.” (Scott 98 n. 52)] . . . this theme survives in the present passage [as] a polemic against the lascivious rites of the Canaanite cults. But this is not the only possible meaning. The verse just quoted precludes it, because biblical religion simply [98] has no place for sex differentiation in its concept of deity.” (Scott 98-99)
        3. “In most Old Testament contexts the phrase *good and evil* has no moral connotation; it usually means “good and/or bad,” that is, (as a hendiadys) “everything,” or, when negative, “nothing.” [See Gen 31:24, 29; 2 Sam 13:22; 19:35; Zeph 1:12. (Scott 99 n. 53)] In Deuteronomy 1:39 and Isaiah 7:15-16 the words refer to the inexperience of infants. Only in 1 Kings 3:9 (Solomon’s prayer) do the words certainly have the moral connotation “right” and “wrong.” It is, therefore, at least possible that the meaning in Genesis 3 is that the definition of what is right and what is wrong belongs to God alone. Certainly this question lies at the heart of Job’s agonized dilemma, “Dost thou see as man sees?” (10:3-4). Is what man understands by justice not what this means to God? The other interpretation also is possible from the standpoint of translation, namely, that what man gained by eating the fruit was knowledge of everything, like the knowledge of a god. But this hardly fits the moral profundities of Genesis 3, or the subsequnt history of man as the Bible tells it.” (Scott 99)
        4. “. . . why did the author call it “the tree of the knowlege of good and evil”? Hardly because the effect of eating of its fruit was that of giving the sinners an experimental knowledge of what moral evil really is. Where would the accompanying “knowledge of good” then come in? Or why would . . . this knowledge [make] Adam and Eve resemble God in some way [3:22]? God has no “experimental” knowledge of evil.” (Hartman 33)
        5. Semitic “know” = to experience in any way. “Good” and “evil” are terms of polarity and can signify totality (cf. Nm 24:13), hence a total experience, not necessarily in a moral sense. (Maly 12)
        6. ““knowledge” in this context has its Semitic rather than its “Greek” . . . connotation, namely of experience rather than of merely intellectual awareness.” (Vawter 71)
        7. By *knowledge of good and evil*,J means what the wisdom literature calls “wisdom” [72], i.e., “prudent . . . reflection on the lessons of experience . . .” [73] There is a good wisdom: “man is exhorted over and over to acquire wisdom . . .” [72] But wisdom alone cannot explain man to himself or explain his relation to God. God alone may “know the ultimate rationale of things”: Job and Ecclesiastes were written to protest this (cf. Job 15:7-9, 40:1-7; cf. Prov 30:1-4, 1 Cor 1:20-21). [73] (Vawter 72-73)
     5. *good and evil*
        1. “The phrase *good and evil* has no moral overtones, and it seems to refer to the totality of knowledge (*cf*.,31:24, 29: 2 Sam 13:22; etc.). What is meant then in the exclusion of the tree of knowledge from human control seems to be that man and woman cannot acquire universal knowledge. Such knowledge would give a mastery over their own existence, and would place them in a position of self-sufficiency and autonomy with regard to God. In seeking such knowledge and autonomy man and woman would overstep the limits decreed for them by God, and the punishment for such arrogance is expressed in terms of death.” (Maher 38)
        2. “. . . “good and bad” is not a disjunctive but a collective, as in Numbers 24:13 or Deuteronomy 1:39: it means the whole area of what is encompassed by “good and bad,” the good as well as the bad.” (Vawter 71)
        3. “knowledge of good and bad does not necessarily entail some kind of immorality . . . “Good and bad” can run the gamut of literally everything.” E.g., in Zeph 1:12, “The thoughtless inhabitants of Jerusalem who say in their hearts, “Neither good nor evil can the Lord do” [affirm] that God will do nothing at all. . . . “the knowledge of good and bad” may signify nothing more or less than “knowledge” full stop.” (Vawter 71)
        4. “while God quite properly can forbid man to do wht is bad, he could not—not in the biblical perspective of the freedom and relative autonomy which are bestowed on man—forbid him the option of choosing between good and bad, if that were what this knowledge was all about.” (Vawter 72)
        5. “Some exegetes would explain the name of the tree to mean that man, by eating of this fruit, wished to assume the right of deciding for himself what is good and what is evil in the moral order (cf. Is 5,20; Am 5,14f). [But], just as with the tree of life, so also with this tree: it gets its name from its *effects*. . . . presumption to decide for themselves . . . would be the *cause* . . .” (Hartman 33)
     6. The tree is not mentioned in the OT outside Gen 2:4b-3:24. (Maher 38)
  3. both trees
     1. “Objective or not, these trees stand for historical realities, the condition of our first parents before the Fall, their happiness, and their trial.” (Hauret 179)

1. **2:10-14**
   1. purpose
      1. “to suggest that the garden enjoyed an abundance of water.” (Maher 37)
      2. “to localize Eden.” (Maher 37)
      3. To associate paradise with territory within the rivers. (Maly 12)
   2. “Four rivers well up from the deep of the underworld and spread towards the four points of the compass. . . . Eden is fully watered in all its parts.” (Hauret 98)
   3. The four rivers are probably (W to E) Euphrates, Tigris, Kerka, and Wadi Karum. (Hauret 99)
   4. Pishon and Gihon “must be lesser rivers in Mesopotamia.” (Maher 37)
   5. But “we do not know whether the writer had in his mind anything remotely resembling the now known geography of the Middle East.” (Davidson 33)
   6. “this is a primitive geography done by someone who was not personally familiar with any of it. We may be one hundred and eighty degrees wrong in our replotting of it just as he may have been one hundred and eighty degrees wrong in plotting it in the first place.” (Vawter 70)
2. **2:10**
   1. *river flowed*
      1. “The text does not say that the garden produced a river that watered the whole earth, as some commentators have seemed to think.” (Vawter 69)
      2. The river = the Persian Gulf, “which in ancient times was called the Salt River.” (Hauret 99)
      3. According to Mesopotamians, “The [Salt] *River* came up from the south [and] divided itself into four “heads” . . .” (Hauret 99) “Since modern usage speaks of tributaries flowing into the main stream and here the main stream flows into its tributaries, we find the expression strange.” (Hauret 95)
      4. “Especially in the Near East fertility is largely a matter of irrigation (cf. Gn. 2:5; 13:10). . . . In lower Mesopotamia a complicated network of irrigation canals furrowed the entire region. [95] . . . Each canal had three parts: the “mouth” or “head” . . ., then the canal itself, and finally the “tail,” which was the lake or pool . . . held in reserve for times of drought.” (Hauret 95, 98)
   2. *Eden*
      1. Eden “as yet has not been identified with the garden but it is simply where the garden is . . .” (Vawter 69)
      2. “the confluence of the *Tigris* and *Euphrates* before they empty into the Persian Gulf, seems to have been the region the author had in mind. . . . it is munificent in trees, since a major part of the world’s dates come from the area.” (Vawter 69)
3. **2:11**
   1. *Pishon*: unknown. (Maly 12)
   2. Phison = “the leaper.” (Hauret 98)
   3. Prob. = modern Kerka River. In 3000-2000 BC, the Gulf extended farther inland, so the Kerka then flowed directly into the Persian Gulf. (Hauret 99)
4. **2:12**
   1. *Havilah*
      1. Gen 10:7,29 puts it in S Arabia, Gen 25:18 puts it in N Arabia. (Vawter 69) North Arabia? (Hauret 98)
      2. “elsewhere in the Old Testament Havilah and Cush [v 13] appear as place names associated with the region of Upper Egypt and Ethiopia [Gen 10:6-7, “The sons of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush, Seba, Havilah . . .” Cf. Ezek 29:10.] . . . this has led to *Pishon* and *Gihon* being identified with the two branches of the Nile.” (Davidson 33)
   2. *bdellium and onyx stone*
      1. “Both words should probably be translated, following the Septuagint, as precious stones, *bdellium* and *cornelians*,although the Hebrew word translated *bdellium* can also refer to a type of gum resin . . .” (Davidson 32)
      2. The Kerka River (= Pishon?) and Wadi Karum (= Gihon?) flow “eastward down from the Zagros mountains whose substratum abounds in precious metals (gold, onyx?).” (Hauret 99)
5. **2:13**
   1. *Cush*
      1. Nubia? (Hauret 98) Upper Egypt/Ethiopia? (Davidson 33)
      2. “Cush normally means Nubia, the ancient Ethiopia, the southern part of Egypt, but in this case it might refer to the land of the Cassites who inhabited northern or central Babylonia.” (Vawter 70)
   2. *Gihon*
      1. Unknown. (Maly 12)
      2. Gihon = “the gusher.” (Hauret 98)
      3. Prob. Wadi Karum. In 3000-2000 BC, the Gulf extended farther inland, so the Wadi Karum then flowed directly into the Persian Gulf. (Hauret 99)
6. **2:14**
   1. Tigris and Euphrates: puts garden in northern Mesopotamia (as does 2:8, *in the east*). (Maly 12)
   2. But in 3000-2000 BC “the gulf extended farther inland so that the Tigris and Euphrates, which today flow as one into the Persian Gulf, at that time emptied separately into the Salt River.”
7. **2:15**
   1. Picks up from 2:8. (Maly 12)
   2. “After creating man, God . . . by a free gift transferred him from the earth and . . . “placed him in the Garden of Eden” (Gn. 2:15).” (Hauret 148)
   3. “The Creator wished our first parents to be perfectly happy, which is the true meaning of the description of the garden.” (Hauret 176)
   4. *till and keep*
      1. Work is not yet evil, as in 3:17b-18. (Maly 12) Work “was originally a pleasant duty . . .” (Maher 45)
      2. “from the very beginning work [37] was an essential part of the human condition.” (Maher 37-38)
      3. “The commission given to Adam to till and keep [37] . . . [means] we must indeed develop the world, . . . [but] we must avoid exploitation and waste . . .” (Maher 37-38)
   5. ““Do not eat the fruit” means “Do not commit sin.”” (Hauret 188)
8. **2:16**
   1. “it is never said in Genesis, despite what an uncritical construction of vs. 16 might lead him to believe, that prior to his “fall” man had been created immortal by God.” (Vawter 68)
9. **2:17**
   1. *you shall die*
      1. Not literally, since they eat of the fruit and do not die immediately. NAB is better: “the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die.” “This is the declaration . . . of a capital offense; but capital punishment is not actually inflicted.” (Vawter 73)
10. **2:18**
    1. 18 resumes v 9: 9 = plants, 18 = animals. (Vawter 74)
    2. “a charmingly suspenseful little narrative . . .” (Vawter 74)
    3. *helper*: masc. in Heb. NAB = “suitable partner.” (Vawter 74)
    4. “God in his kindness . . . was interested in his well-being . . .” (Maher 39)
    5. “Woman complements man, a social being by nature . . .” (Maly 12)
    6. “Man is by nature a social being who needs interpersonal relationships if he is to develop his human potential.” (Maher 39)
11. **2:19**
    1. Failure of animals to satisfy man emphasizes the true role of woman. (Maly 12)
    2. “The story of the creation of the animals is told not so much for its own sake as to emphasize, by contrast, the dignity and the role of woman.” (Maher 39)
    3. domination of nature
       1. To name is to have under one’s control (cf. 1:28, “trample” the animals). (Maly 12)
       2. Naming the animals “is the equivalent of the Priestly author’s proclamation of man’s dominance over the rest of creation.” In the names “are contained their identities . . .” (Vawter 74)
    4. “. . . an indirect polemic against bestiality?” (Maly 12)
12. **2:20**
    1. *adam*
       1. “Imperceptibly we have begun to move, though the Hebrew word (*adam*) has not changed, from the conception of man the species to man the male who will be complemented by the woman.” (Vawter 74)
13. **2:21**
    1. 21 “is highly anthropomorphic, and may be inspired by an ancient Sumerian tale.” (Maher 40)
    2. *deep sleep*
       1. = Heb *tardemah*. Not so much anesthesia; rather “the word is almost invariably used in the Hebrew Bible to describe a sleep induced by God for his own purposes (1 Samuel 26:12; Isaiah 29:10) during which he often does marvelous things (Genesis 15:12; Job 4:13, 33:15).” (Vawter 74)
       2. Suggests the mystery and importance of the divine act (cf. Gen 15:12). (Maly 12)
       3. “may suggest the mysterious nature of God’s creative activity (*cf*.,Ps 139:13-15; 2 Macc 7:22).” (Maher 40)
14. **2:22**
    1. *rib*
    2. Heb uncertain. Related to Sumerian word for “rib” and “life”? (Maly 12)
       1. “That it should have been a “rib” . . . is perhaps due to a wordplay that has been lost in Hebrew . . . but which existed in an assumed Sumerian prototype of this story. (In Sumerian the same cuneiform symbol represents both “life” and “rib.”)” (Vawter 75)
       2. “in the fact that the woman is taken from man . . . the Hebrew sees the basis of the physical attraction of [26] the sexes.” (Achtemeiers 26-27)
    3. *made into*: NAB = “built up into”; this “seems to reflect another idea . . .” The Heb says “built” a woman—a motif that J “probably borrowed . . . from creational motifs common in the mythologies . . .” (Vawter 74) The creator god is a “builder” of creatures in both Mesopotamian and Canaanite texts. (Vawter 75)
15. **2:23**
    1. “Man’s reaction [was] enthusiasm and joy, and he voiced his feelings in what are the first lines of poetry in the Bible . . .” (Maher 40) “semi-poetic . . .” (Vawter 75) Adam “is ecstatic” in v. 23. (Achtemeiers 27)
    2. *this one*
       1. *zo*,*t*,repeated 3 times in the MT of v 23. (Maly 12)
       2. *zo*,*t* is feminine. (Vawter 75)
    3. *bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*
       1. “a frequent figure of speech . . .” (Vawter 75) E.g., Gen 29:13-14, “When Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister’s son, he ran to meet him [and] said, ‘Surely you are my bone and my flesh!’”
    4. *woman*
       1. “she shall be called Woman”: “the name-giving to which man proceeds serves as before to assert dominance, such being the realistic appraisal which the Yahwist gives to the social order within which he moved . . .” (Vawter 75)
       2. Heb pun: ,*issah* (woman) and ,*is* (man)
          1. Only in 2:23-24 does ,*is* = “man”; in 3:6,16 ,*is* = “husband.” (Hartman 30)
          2. “the Septuagint and other ancient sources . . . make the apparent etymology more precise: she is . . . from *her* man (*ishah*), i.e., from her husband . . .” (Vawter 75)
          3. “(in Old English, *wife* [=female]-*man* [the human species).” (Vawter 75)
          4. “The etymology is actually more factual in English than it is in the Hebrew.” (Vawter 75)
       3. “These assertions made more or less by indirection are confirmed by the Yahwist’s own comment in vs. 24.” (Vawter 75)
    5. *man*: “here the male of the species.” (Vawter 75)
    6. Rib; bone of bone; flesh of flesh; ,*issah* and ,*is*: all emphasize unity of nature (Maly 12) and equality (Vawter 75). “there is no real etymological basis for the association of . . . *ishshah* . . . and *ish* . . . [but J] uses the similarity in the sound of the words . . .” (Maher 40)
    7. “. . . psychologically and in the social order, [she] is dependent on man.” (Maly 12)
16. **2:24**
    1. “. . . 2,24 is an extraneous *mashal* concerning later men who had fathers and mothers.” (Hartman 35) 24 is “the Yahwist’s own comment . . .” (Vawter 75)
    2. *That is why*
       1. “*That is why*,namely, because of the natural affinity and complementarity of man and woman . . .” (Vawter 75) “In ancient Hebrew thought a man could not be whole without a wife.” (Achtemeiers 26)
    3. *man*
       1. “*ish* again this time, rather than *adam*,to leave no doubt that it is about man the male he is speaking . . .” (Vawter 75)
    4. *become one flesh*
       1. The man leaves his family of origin to form his own family. (Vawter 75)
       2. “becoming one flesh must not, of course, be understood in the narrow sense of sexual union, but must be taken to refer to that full union of persons that enables two individuals to find fulfillment in each other.” (Maher 40)
       3. Not just sexual union: “Biblical Hebrew actually has no separate word for “body”: “flesh” is used instead. But the flesh of man is his very being itself, his identity, his heart and soul. . . . “My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God” (Psalm 84:3). . . . marriage, therefore, . . . is a union of persons who together make up a new person.” (Vawter 75)
       4. But Paul takes *flesh* as sexual union: 1 Cor 6:16, “Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two shall become one flesh.”” (Hahn)
       5. Does *one flesh* imply monogamy?
          1. Creation of man and woman (2:4b-24) show that God wills monogamy. (Maly 12)
          2. “it is unlikely that the author of this verse, who wrote in the polygamous environment of Israel in the tenth century B.C., intended to teach the doctrine of monogamous marriage or to exclude divorce. . . . it was not until Jesus interpreted Gen 2:24 that the ideal of the indissoluble union of husband and wife was seen as strictly binding (*cf*.,Mark 10:2-12).” (Maher 40)
          3. “It is not possible, again given the social background against which trhe Yahwist wrote, to insist positively that he was thinking of monogamous marriage as the ideal.” (Vawter 76)
             1. “The kind of interpersonal relationship of which he was speaking was also conceivable within the institution of polygamy (cf. 1 Samuel 1:1-8).” (Vawter 76)
             2. “We must be chary of reading back into any ancient author ideas whose time had not yet come. Nevertheless, there was a respectable strand of tradition even in polygamous Israel which always prized monogamy . . .” (Vawter 76)

“. . . Proverbs and the “wisdom” literature in general seem to regard it [monogamy] as having been the rule rather than the exception in the society for which they were written . . .” (Vawter 76)

“it is likely enough that the Yahwist was of a similar mind despite his matter-of-fact acceptance in the patriarchal history of the facts as they had been.” (Vawter 76)

1. **2:25**
   1. Transition. Introduction to fall story. (Maly 12)
   2. *naked*
      1. Pun: “naked” = `*arummim*, *cunning* (3:1) = `*arum*. (Vawter 76)
   3. *man*: once again *adam*. (Vawter 76)
   4. *were not ashamed*
      1. Not so much lack of sexual awareness or of sexual disorder as presence of mutual trust and respect. (Maly 12, MM 41)
      2. “as yet, . . . they are without “knowledge,” whether licitly or illicitly gained . . .” (Vawter 76)
      3. Therefore “they react . . . like children who find nudity, man’s original state, to be quite natural and therefore sense no shame about it.” (Vawter 76)
      4. Shame is not “necessarily a mark or consequence of personal sin; it is likewise an indication of a sense of responsibility and of adulthood.” (Vawter 76)
      5. Not “were not ashamed” but “did not consider themselves to be disgraced.” (Hartman 34)
      6. “nakedness is seldom mentioned in the OT as a cause of sexual feelings [only 2 Sam 11:2, David and Bathsheba; cf. Dan 13:7 (Susanna and the elders), Job 31:1, Sir 9:7-8, 25:20, 42:12. H 34 n. 17].” (Hartman 34)
      7. “On the contrary, nakedness was merely considered a “shame” in the sense of a “disgrace.”” (Hartman 34)
   5. Nudity “was particularly abhorrent to adult Israelite mores in distinction to the ways of other peoples.” (Vawter 76) (But Vawter takes 25 to refer to “shame,” not “disgrace.”)
   6. “. . . women guilty of adultery or murder were stripped naked and exposed in the pillory [Jer 13:26, Ezek 16:37-38, 23:10,29,45; Hos 2:5; Nah 3:5] . . . Prisoners of war were stripped [Isa 20:4, 47:3] . . . men seen naked in public were [disgraced: 1 Sam 19:24, 2 Sam 6:20; 10:4-5; Gen 9:21, Exod 20:26, 28:42-43] . . .” (Hartman 34)
      1. Easiness with nudity “underscores the idyllic character” of Eden. (Vawter 76)
      2. They become ashamed (or disgraced) in 3:7 (cf. 3:10).
   7. Adam’s situation at the end of ch. 2: “Life in all its facets is affirmed . . .. He is to till the good soil which God has given him, surrounded by God’s gifts of wife and children . . . As in Gen 1:31, . . . the creation of God is very good . . .” (Achtemeiers 27)

## Genesis 3:1-24

1. **Gen 3 in general**
   1. Gen 3 “has certain wisdom features. The story can be read as a parable of human alienation from God and from the world as God intended it to be, through man’s rebellion against his Creator and the laws of his own being. It also illustrates graphically the subtle process of temptation and the self-justification which accompanies it. But the tale also probes the profound problems of the nature and limitations of human knowledge and of the relation of knowledge to morality. These elements presuppose a highly developed type of wisdom thinking as their background.” (Scott 97)
   2. parable: “the parabolic aim [in Gen 3] is so obvious that for a parallel one might turn to the parables of Jesus.” (Wright 83)
2. **3:1-5**: the dialogue
   1. “With delicate psychology the author follows the progress of the temptation in the heart of the woman.” (Hauret 129)
   2. “This little passage [1-7] with its fast-moving dialogue is recognized as one of the masterpieces of Old Testament literature.” (Maher 41)
   3. 1-5 show “a psychology of temptation” as 3:8-13 (their confession) will show “a psychology of self-justification . . .” (Vawter 81)
   4. The temptation has two stages: the snake suggesting (1b-5), and the woman deciding (6). (Vawter 78)
3. **3**:**1a**
   1. *serpent*
      1. ≠ the devil (at least for J)
         1. “. . . the talking snake . . . is, of course, not the Devil of later theological speculation . . .” (Scott 97)
         2. A beast of the field (2:20), so a creature of God. (Maly 12) The snake “is merely another of God’s creatures . . . and is not, therefore, an immediately obvious candidate to represent a rival deity . . .” (Vawter 72)
         3. J clearly thinks serpents are nonrational (Gen 2:20, no animals are fit companions). (Hauret 127)
         4. “In the Yahwist’s mind the serepnt is not the embodiment of the demonic or of evil that it was to become in later Jewish and Christian tradition . . ., for [41] he categorizes it as one of *the wild creatures that God had made*,and he distinguishes it from the other animals only by its uncanny cleverness.” (Maher 41-42) For later tradition, see Wis 2:24, John 8:44, Rom 5:12, 2 Cor 11:3, Rev 12:9, 20:2. (Maher 41, 46)
         5. “Such a dualism of supernatural agents is foreign to the Yahwist . . .” (Vawter 77)
         6. The snake is not so much “a force of evil as mischief . . . he is a trickster, or, in the biblical phrase, “cunning.”” (Vawter 77)
      2. = the devil (even for J)
         1. “. . . the text does not say, “The serpent was more cunning than the *other* animals.” As it stands it might be properly interpreted thus: “The serpent, (that is, the devil) was more cunning than any animal in creation.” He certainly shows himself more cunning than man.” (Hauret 129)
         2. His role shows him to be a rival of Yahweh and an enemy of man disguised as a good counselor. “Later tradition, helped by the progress of revelation, will identify the tempter with . . . Satan . . .” See Wis 2:24, Rev 12:9. (Hauret 126)
            1. Perhaps the devil “dwelt in the serpent and used it as an instrument . . .” (Hauret 127)
            2. Perhaps the devil “borrowed a reptilian form . . .” (Hauret 127)
         3. “. . . the power that seduces is not a fiction, a pure symbol, but a reality. The fiction and symbol are . . . a traditional mask borrowed from the folklore of the ancient Near East.” (Hauret 128) “The serpent serves as the symbolic mask for the power of evil . . .” (Hauret 169)
      3. snake as natural symbol
         1. “The serpent was regarded [77] with some amazement as a creature of craft and cunning who could apparently move effortlessly with no means of locomotion (cf. Proverbs 30:19) and whose habit of changing his skin credited him with the secret of immortality (and thus made him a fertility symbol).” (Vawter 77-78)
         2. “the serpent represents the devil because he crawls in the grass and hides and strikes without warning.” (Hauret 191)
         3. “The loathsome serpent that endangers human life (*cf*.,49:17; Isa 14:29; Job 20:16) and whose treacherous sublety [*sic*] was proverbial (*cf*.,Prov 30:19; Matt 10:16), was quite a natural choice . . .” (Maher 42)
      4. snake in ancient Near Eastern religion
         1. “the serpent was frequently associated with the pagan gods whom the Scriptures speak of as “devils” . . .” (Hauret 191)
         2. J chose the snake because it was used in Canaan’s fertility cults. (Maly 12)
         3. “In Syro-Palestine the serpent was the emblem or attribute of certain gods or goddesses of vegetation and of fertility, whose cult was often accompanied by licentious practices. Several deities in the Babylonian pantheon were represented in the form of a serpent: Ningizzida, the “serpent-god, lord of the earth”; Kadi, the “resplendent serpent-god, lord of life”; and Ea, “the god of the nether world,” who was sometimes represented with the head of a snake. . . . More particularly, the Chanaanite Baal . . . was [127] sometimes represented in human form, sometimes as a bull, and in still other cases as a serpent. Baal was the competitor of Yahweh and was the permanent tempter of the Chosen People.” (Hauret 127-28)
         4. The snake had an “association with idolatrous fertility rites in which sexual promiscuity was an important feature. . . . [So J] was engaging in a subtle polemic against these rites. It is probable, however, that we need not look for such a recondite meaning in the text.” MM opts for natural symbol. (Maher 42)
   2. *subtle*
      1. “The adjective ‘\_*r*\_*m* means “intelligent,” [97] and in a bad sense “crafty.” (Scott 97-98)
      2. “Cf. “wise as serpents” in Matt. 10:16, and the puzzle of their means of locomotion, Prov. 30:19.” (Scott 98 n. 49)
      3. “That this word is found elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Proverbs and Job hints at wisdom influence.” (Scott 98)
4. **3:1b**
   1. A talking snake is “part of the unearthly attributes that are ascribed to the earthly paradise . . .” (Vawter 78)
   2. “The astute serpent approached the woman in a gingerly fashion, and asked her an apparently innocuous question . . .” (Maher 42)
   3. The serpent already knows about Yahweh’s prohibition. (Hauret 126)
   4. The snake’s question distorts God’s command: “Did God say you couldn’t eat *any* fruit?” (Maly 12) “a deliberte caricature of the divine prohibition . . .” (Vawter 78) “almost a total reversal of what God actually had said in 2:16 . . .” (Vawter 78)
   5. “The tempter hinted at disobedience and offered the woman a chance to weigh arguments for and against it.” (Hauret 132)
5. **3:2**
   1. “The woman firmly corrected the serpent’s misrepresentation of God’s command, but did not completely silence the serpent.” (Maher 42)
   2. *God*: *elohim*; *Yahweh* does not occur in the snake/woman conversation. (Vawter 78)
6. **3:3**
   1. *neither shall you touch*
      1. Not part of God’s command (2:17); she too is distorting. “Sin begins with some distortion of the truth.” (Maly 12)
      2. “Is there . . . a touch of resentment lurking in the refinement she adds . . .?” (Vawter 78)
   2. “there is something of womanly exaggeration about her statement.” (Hauret 109)
   3. *in the midst of the garden*
      1. The tree of knowledge “has now been moved to the middle of the garden, displacing the “tree of life” temporarily (3:3, cf. 2:9).” (Vawter 77)
      2. The tree of knowledge “is never again explicitly called that in chapter 3 . . .” (Vawter 77)
7. **3:4**
   1. The snake suggests that God lied. (Maly 12-13) “but, then, he is a liar (cf. Jn. 8:44).” (Hauret 110)
   2. “*You certainly will not die*! is typical of a trickster’s language [because it is ambiguous]: the words can also be read in Hebrew: “You will not die certainly,” i.e., “It is not certain that you will die.” (Vawter 78)
8. **3:5**
   1. The snake “insinuated that God jealously wished to retain the gift of immortality for himself, and implied that the Creator had imposed an unwarranted restriction on humankind. All this struck at the roots of the first couple’s trusting relationship with God . . .” (Maher 42) Eve in Gen 3 “is led to step outside this relationship of dependency and to evaluate and discuss God’s motives. She becomes aware of the fact that she may judge God to be wrong. . . . Eve’s temptation is to rely on herself rather than on God.” (Achtemeiers 29)
   2. *knowing good and evil*
      1. Quasi-immortality through (intercourse and) offspring? Right to decide for oneself? Reliance on self rather than God (*hybris*)? These assume the statement is true (3:22 confirms it). But it may mean, know good (before fall) and evil (after fall). (Maly 13)
      2. “If she eats . . ., she will know all mysteries . . . She reaches out to grasp this power which belongs to God alone . . .” (Achtemeiers 29)
      3. “there is an insinuation of the vulgar theme familiar from the mythologies, that the gods guarded jealously their special prerogatives, usually knowledge and immortality, that alone separated them from moral men.” (Vawter 78)
      4. Still, “there is that element of truth that makes the temptation effective.” (Vawter 78)
   3. “the lying serpent attributed to God . . . a privilege . . . of not being bound by moral laws made for human beings alone. [115] . . . how false it is to suggest that the Lord acts well or ill according to his whim.” (Hauret 115-16)
   4. *be like God*
      1. The snake closes with a falsehood: “You will be like Elohim” (Hauret 110), as if likeness to God will result.
      2. ““Becoming like God” and “knowing good and evil” have much the same meaning, for the both imply . . . striving after an autonomy that belongs to God alone . . . [a] knowledge of complete mastery over one’s own destiny . . .” (Maher 42)
9. **3:6**
   1. *fruit*
      1. “According to a Jewish tradition, the “fruit” was either *grapes*, *olives*,or *wheat*.” (Hauret 174)
      2. “The Greeks thought it was a *fig* . . .” (Hauret 174)
      3. The Romans thought it was an *apple*. “the Latin word for apple is the same as that for evil, *malum*.” (Hauret 174)
      4. If the fruit is symbolic and not historical, perhaps it represents “some sort of restriction on food,” esp. if “the thing symbolized must fall in the same general area as its symbol” (Hauret 116). But the symbol would recall “a historical event, even if the thing forbidden were not a kind of food.” (Hauret 117)
      5. “None of these traditions is conclusive, none important.’ (Hauret 174) We must simply admit that we do not know how the sin of pride was manifested.” (Hauret 117) It simply says “fruit.” (Hauret 116)
   2. *saw* . . . *delight* . . . *desired*
      1. “Behind the story may lie a conviction about woman’s curiosity . . .; it does not concern the basic truths of the account.” (Maly 13)
      2. The snake presented the fruit “as alluringly as possible . . .” (Hauret 132) But the snake doesn’t describe the fruit. (Maly 13)
      3. See 1 John 2:16.
         1. 1 John 2:16, “for all that is in the world-- the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.”
   3. *she also gave*: the woman as seductress.
   4. *with her*
      1. Heb `*immah*. (Hartman 35)
      2. Was he with her during the conversation with the snake, or only when she gave him the fruit? (Hahn)
10. **3:7**
    1. *the eyes of both were opened*
       1. The snake’s promise is fulfilled: they know more; but they do not share God’s knowledge. (Vawter 79)
       2. “They had been told that their eyes would be opened, and that they would see God. But when their eyes were opened after their transgression they became conscious only of a shameful nakedness.” (Maher 43)
    2. *naked*
       1. pun: “naked” = `*erummim*, “cunning” (3:1) = `*arum*. (Maly 13)
       2. “shame . . . was the expression of guilt. Ill at ease in each other’s presence the couple realized that their sin which had shattered their relationship with God had also put an end to their own mutual relationship of trust and harmony.” (Maher 43)
       3. “They have matured: even illicit experience can bring this gift.” (Vawter 79)
    3. *they sewed fig leaves*
       1. “The first making of clothing . . . the Yahwist doubtless saw as the beginning of one of the marks of civilized man as he knew him . . .” (Vawter 79)
11. **3:8-21**
    1. “Now comes retribution, which proceeds in an orderly fashion . . .” (Vawter 80)
    2. “contestation of guilt” (Vawter 80): 3:11
    3. “confession and verification” (Vawter 80): 3:12-13
    4. “meting out of punishment” (Vawter 80): 3:14-21
12. **3:8-13**
    1. This shows “a psychology of self-justification,” as 3:1-5 showed “a psychology of temptation . . .” (Vawter 81)
13. **3:8**
    1. *sound*: “making his way through the lush undergrowth . . .” (Vawter 81)
    2. *walking*: “presumably his daily stroll in the coolness of the evening breeze.” (Vawter 81)
    3. *hid*
       1. “they show at one and the same time their old familiarity with his habits and their new feeling of embarrassment at his presence.” (Vawter 81)
       2. There is a “semi-comical aspect [to] the human pair skulking about . . .” (Vawter 81)
          1. Actually, it’s dramatic irony: we and God know, but they don’t. (Hahn)
    4. “The Lord did not abandon his world . . . [but] even sought out the couple who had ignored his decree. [44] . . . the omniscient God called out, “Where are you?”” (Maher 44-45)
       1. Not omniscient to J (Hahn)
14. **3:9**
    1. “As head of the family, man is the responsible member and hence is questioned first; this is the order of creation.” (Maly 13)
15. **3:10**
    1. *afraid*, *because I was naked*: They are motivated by “shame and fear . . .” (Vawter 81)
       1. The pair confess “by what they do rather than by what they say . . . [the man’s] answer is a grudging confession of guilt, since his conduct can sustain only one explanation . . .” (Vawter 81)
16. **3:11**
17. **3:12**
    1. “His response [is] an implicit accusation of God (“the woman you gave me”) . . .” (Maly 13)
    2. Instead of admitting guilt, he gives “mingled self-justification and evasion of responsibility with a reluctant confession of disobedience . . .” (Maher 45)
18. **3:13**
    1. “The woman in her turn . . . found a scapegoat . . .” (Maher 45)
    2. “The woman’s response . . . [is] somewhat more straightforward,” but she too implicitly accuses God: “is not the serpent one of [your] creatures . . .?” (Vawter 81)
19. **3:14-19**
    1. God sentences the snake, the woman, and the man, in “the order in which the three were involved in the process of sinning.” (Maher 45)
    2. God directly curses the snake, but for the woman and man he only states consequences. (3:17 says, “cursed is the ground because of you . . .”) (Vawter 84-85)
    3. Nevertheless, “The goodness of life which God had given to man in creation is here totally disrupted.” (Achtemeiers 31)
    4. many etiologies
       1. “isolation of the serpent” (banned by other species, 3:14, and by humans, 3:15)
       2. snake’s lack of limbs (3:14)
       3. humans’ “instinctive revulsion” toward snakes (3:15)
       4. why childbirth is painful (3:16)
       5. why men must toil (3:17)
20. **3:14-15**
    1. 14-15 are a quotation: the narrator quotes God addressing the snake in an aside, with Adam and Eve present. (Hauret 152)
    2. “the serpent is not interrogated . . . no explanation is given why the serpent chose to interfere in the . . . good relations between God and man. . . . [J ascribes to him no] halting plea of half-guilt . . . this story does not seek to expose the origins and causes of wrongdoing in general, but only to record how quickly mankind was and has been disposed to wrongdoing when given the chance. . . . despite his keen appreciation for etymologies, the etymology of evil . . . is not one of his concerns.” (Vawter 81)
21. **3:14**
    1. *cursed are you above all cattle*
       1. NAB = “you shall be banned from all the animals . . .” This “correctly renders the sense . . .”
    2. *upon your belly you shall go*
       1. “even in our modern languages [this] marks his abasement . . .” (Hauret 150)
       2. This is “a biting irony,” for “the serpent [is] always represented in Near Eastern art upright or twined around a vertical support . . .” (Hauret 150)
       3. Don’t “ask whether the author thought the serpent had once walked on legs or flew with wings. He only wants to account for a present state of things . . .” (Vawter 82)
    3. *dust you shall eat*
       1. “the Tell el-Amarna letters: “May our enemies bite dust” (cf. Is. 49:23; 65:25; Mi. 7:17).” (Hauret 150)
       2. “In the Babylonian hell, “dust is the fare and clay the food” . . .” (Hauret 150)
       3. “The serpent “eats the dust” either because [of] his darting tongue or because . . . it was actually thought to live on dust.” (Hauret 150) The punishment is etiological: snakes “seem to eat dust (*cf*.,Isa 65:25; Mic 7:17) . . .” (Maher 45)
       4. Perhaps legends told of a dragon, herbivorous and with feet, that was “degraded to the level of a serpent . . . it is impossible to prove the existence of these popular legends . . .” (Hauret 151)
22. **3:15**
    1. *enmity* between snake and woman
       1. An Egyptian source says, “The centipede was struck by the householder and the householder struck by the centipede.” (Hauret 151)
       2. “Some critics discern nothing more here than the expression of woman’s natural instinctive repugnance towards snakes.” (Hauret 151)
       3. “Before the Fall men and animals lived together familiarly . . . conflict between men and animals is the result of the divine curse.” (Hauret 151)
       4. “God himself carries on the struggle. It is he who foments the opposition: “*I* will put enmity . . .”” (Hauret 151) The enmity is “*put* there by an angered Deity to make total the ban” on the snake (already banned by other species in v 14). (Vawter 82)
       5. “At the very moment that Yahweh launches the penalty against the serpent, battle is joined. The tense of the Hebrew verb often rendered by a future (I will put) can, as all scholars agree, be equivalent to a present progressive (I am putting).
       6. Enmity is the relation between man and evil. (Maly 13) “. . . “enmity” in the Bible always [151] signifies hostile relations between beings with reason (Nm. 35:21-22; Ez. 25:15, 35:5).” (Hauret 151-52)
    2. *the woman*
       1. “In the verses immediately preceding and following, “the woman” consistently designates Eve . . .” (Hauret 152)
       2. Verse 15 “is constructed in the same way as the following . . . chastisement[s] of the woman and the man. According to the recurring pattern . . ., the guilty are punished both by Yahweh and by their victims. The woman’s punishment, for example, comes from God and from her husband. So we should normally expect Eve to participate in the punishment of the serpent . . .” (Hauret 153)
       3. “But in the perspective of the Yahwist narrator, Eve is . . . the source of life for mankind (cf. Gn. 3:20) . . . [and] war will not cease with the disappearance of the woman . . .” (Hauret 153)
       4. “. . . once Eve was reconciled to God she did become the enemy of Satan. There is indeed another note of hope. . . . the Yahwist gives great importance in his history to the Messianic role of woman.” (Hauret 162)
       5. “Thus what strictly speaking could be no more than hyperbole in Eve’s regard [3:15] becomes in Mary’s person a strict reality, for the Virgin was joined with her son . . . in his victory.” (Hauret 163)
       6. Heb has “*he* shall bruise your head.” (Hauret 156) But “St. Ephrem and Prudentius are without doubt the first to apply the last phrase of the prophecy to the Blessed Virgin, and they bear witness to a tradition which would soon, in the fourth century, be asserted in the Vulgate’s “IPSA *conteret caput*” [“*she* shall crush his head”].” (Hauret 163) Hence the statue of Mary holding her seed and crushing the serpent’s head.
       7. immaculate conception: “That Mary’s enmity be as complete . . . as her Son’s, the enmity of the mother must imply not only exemption from actual sin, but also from original sin from the first moment of her existence.” (Hauret 165)
       8. assumption: Sin and death are “powers inseparably allied according to St. Paul’s constant teaching (Rom. 5:6; 1 Cor. 15:21-26, 54-57) . . .” (Hauret 166) See Wis 2:24, “through the devil’s envy death entered the world . . .” Therefore, “Pius XII declares in the Bull *Munificentissimus Deus* [that] Genesis 3:15 furnishes a scriptural basis for the Church’s faith in Mary’s Assumption.” (Hauret 165)
    3. *your seed and her seed*
       1. “Hostilities are to spread out and extend to two enemy camps . . .” (Hauret 154)
       2. “the posterity of the serpent . . . has a moral and collective meaning.” (Hauret 154)
    4. *seed*: singular or plural?
       1. translation history of “he shall bruise your head” (15b)
          1. MT
             1. Heb has the masculine demonstrative pronoun. (Hauret 156) “The Hebrew is ambiguous, since “offspring” is a masculine . . . rather than a neuter as it is in Greek and Latin.” (Vawter 83)
             2. “The pronoun clearly refers to the seed (in the Hebrew both noun and pronoun are masculine) and governs the following verb, which is in the singular.” (Hauret 156)
             3. “According to Hebrew syntax, after a collective noun such as “seed,” both the pronoun and its verb may be in either the singular or the plural.” (Hauret 156)
             4. “He” in 15b “is allowed, but not demanded by the Hebrew . . .” (Maher 46)
          2. LXX
             1. “we would normally expect to read “it,” *auto* . . .,” since *offspring* is a neuter noun in Greek (and Latin). (Vawter 83)
             2. LXX “preserved . . . the singular here,” but as α\_τ\_ς (masc. pronoun = “he”). (Hauret 156)
             3. The LXX “personalizes the “seed” . . .” (Maher 46)
          3. OL
             1. LXX’s α\_τ\_ς “has been faithfully carried over (as *ipse*) in the Old Latin version (a translation of the Septuagint) in which the Old Testament was read in the early Western church.” (Vawter 83)
             2. “the singular here . . . is preserved [also] in the old Latin versions.” (Hauret 156)
          4. Vg
             1. “He” becomes “she” (*ipsa conteret caput*, “*she* shall crush his head”). (Hauret 163)
             2. Mariological interpretation caused *ipsa*:

Ephrem and Prudentius were the first to read 3:15 mariologically, and their “tradition would . . . be asserted in the Vulgate’s “IPSA . . .” (Hauret 163)

* + - * 1. *Ipsa* caused mariological interpretation:

“the later Latin Vulgate reading of “she” . . . led to a mariological as well as a messianic interpretation . . .” (Vawter 83)

* + 1. singular
       1. In 4:25 Eve puns at the birth of Seth, “God has appointed for me [*sath*] another child [seed] . . .” In 21:13 God calls Ishmael Abraham’s seed (RSV “offspring”). (Hauret 154)
       2. Also, “The decisive act of crushing the head of the serpent is hardly to be conceived other than as the work of one person. The serpent aiming at the heel of a collectivity is an implausible picture.” (Hauret 156)
       3. “The descendant who rises on the horizon, in the last line, was somehow included in the human collectivity in the preceding line . . .” (Hauret 156)
       4. “We know with certainty that one born of a woman (Gal. 4:4) won a decisive victory over the devil . . . “the son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8). . . . “Now,” said the Savior on the eve of his death, “now will the prince of the world be cast out” (Jn. 12:31).” (Hauret 158)
       5. Church Fathers
          1. The first to take Gen 3:15 as a prophecy of Christ’s victory over Satan was Irenaeus, c. AD 200. (Maher 45)
          2. “some of the Fathers (for example, Justin, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Epiphanius, and Leo the Great) interpreted the prophecy of Genesis in a Christological [158] sense.” (158-59)
       6. “we hold it most probable that the last words of the oracle bear literally, immediately, and directly, on the person of the Redeemer.” (Hauret 159)
    2. plural
       1. But “seed” “generally names a collectivity. As a matter of fact, we prefer the collective meaning here because of the parallelism . . . the conflict is [first] between two persons. The hostilities then spread [to] the human race [and] the brood of the serpent.” (Hauret 154)
       2. “*offspring*, that is, . . . the serpent species . . . and the human . . . Yahweh is made to say to the serpent: *He*, the human race, *will strike at your*, you serpents’, *head* . . .” (Vawter 82)
       3. The LXX and OT translations (“he”) are justified, since they merely seek “to enter into the spirit of the figure involved by personifying the offspring of the woman as the human race, mankind . . . that is all that the Septuagint had intended by its rendering.” (Vawter 83)
       4. “the “she” translation . . . came into the Vulgate through Ambrose of Milan . . ., who was following the thought of his Jewish mentor Philo . . . Philo argued that the rules of parallelism made it more appropriate that the pronoun refer back to the woman of the woman-serpent opposition rather than to her offspring; on his side he had mathematical precision if nothing else (you: the woman; your offspring: her offspring; she and your head; you and her heel). Neither Ambrose nor, obviously, Philo attached any messianic or mariological significance to the passage.” (Vawter 83)
       5. The individual snake that tempted Eve nevertheless shows up again at the end: “he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” The devil is an “enduring puppet master of his allies” throughout history. (Hauret 155)
  1. preview of victory (3:15 as *protevangelium*)
     1. against
        1. “There is no suggestion that one party in the struggle will emerge victorious. To say that victory for humankind is implied in the fact that a human being will crush the head of the serpent while the latter will only wound the heel of the other, seems to be going beyond the meaning of the text. . . . the biblical words simply oppose humankind’s crushing of the serpent’s head to the latter’s deadly sting.” (Maher 46) The verb is the same in both clauses: “bruise,” “bruise,” or “strike at,” “strike at.” (Maher 46)
        2. 3:15 “predicts a protracted hostility, even a protracted battle, but not a victory of one side or the other . . . The offspring of the woman, despite the “he” of its personification, is a collective body, not an individual, not David any more than it is Christ. And the serpent and its offspring are precisely those, neither the personification of Baal nor of Apophis, the Egyptian serpent of darkness.” (Vawter 84)
        3. “From early Jewish times, . . . the serpent of this piece was already viewed as a surrogate of the principle of evil. It was only a small step, one might think, for interpretation to proceed to the conclusion that this principle in its satanic personification would ultimately be crushed through some representative of the human [82] race acting with the power of God. . . . however, it was apparently never taken in Jewish times either before or after the coming of Christianity. Jewish tradition knows of no “messianic” exegesis of Genesis 3:15.” (Vawter 82-83)
        4. The messianic interpretation of 3:15 is also unknown to NT writers. “we owe [it] to the allegorizing of early Christian writers . . . Irenaeus of Lyons (about A.D. 130-200), it seems, was the first to see in this passage a prophecy of the victory of Christ . . .” This view led to the later term “*Protoevangelium* (“beginning of the gospel”) . . .” (Vawter 83)
        5. “Less than half of those who are accounted “fathers” of the church imitated Irenaeus’ [messianic] exegesis, and the majority of those who did not includes the chief doctors of both the Eastern (Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom . . .) and the Western church (Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great . . .). And rightly so . . . Thus far and no farther runs the literal sense of vs. 15, the only sense with which we have to do in this book.” (Vawter 84)
        6. “in its official pronouncements the church has never claimed that its reading was more than allegorical . . .” (Vawter 84)
     2. in favor
        1. But the LXX translated the pronoun after “seed” as “he,” which personalizes the seed. (Maher 46) “This translation . . . is allowed, but not demanded by the Hebrew . . .” (Maher 46)
        2. Man will ultimately win (heel on head)-an instance of J’s pervasive optimism (cf. 3:21, 4:7c). (Maly 13)
        3. “In a few words, the Bible reveals to us a profound conception of human destiny, counseling neither a naïve optimism nor a resigned pessimism, but a war without truce against a fierce enemy.” (Hauret 154)
        4. “one who aims at another’s head hopes to crush it, whereas one who lies in wait for another’s heel can do no more than wound it. . . . the Vulgate quite properly translated the same Hebrew word once as ‘crush’ and in the next phrase ‘lie in wait,’ that is, to set up an ambush.” (Hauret 155)
        5. See Wis 2:24, Rom 5:12, John 8:44, etc. (Maher 46)

1. **3:16**
   1. 3 punishments: labor; hard-to-control sexual desire despite its result (labor and domination); domination by husband. (Maly 13)
   2. The “consequences of her transgression . . . affect her in her natural role of mother and wife.” (Vawter 84)
   3. labor
      1. “Childbirth itself was accounted a blessing, a sharing in the mystery of creation . . . that such a blessing should be accompanied by excruciating *pain* . . . must be due to no initial intention of a beneficent God . . .” (Vawter 84)
   4. *desire*
      1. “this “urge” (*teshuqah*) is the desire to possess [cf. Gen 4:7, Sgs 7:11] [84] . . . In the woman’s case, however, she is destined not to possess but to be possessed by man: *he shall be your master*.” (Vawter 84-85)
   5. Though part of the natural order (2:21-23), the man’s domination “is intensified by sin beyond the divinely willed measure.” (Maly 13) “The Yahwist recognized, and doubtless cheerfully acquiesced in, the social order of his people . . . But he was sensitive enough to regard this order, too, as a dis-order that derived from human mismanagement . . .” (Vawter 85) God intended a *helper* (2:18), i.e., a “suitable partner” (= NAB), “his . . . “peer.” (Vawter 85)
2. **3:17-19**
   1. 3:17c + 19ab = farmer, 18 + 19c = seminomad? Emphasis in present conflation is on farmer. (Maly 13)
   2. 3:17-19 = “ancient poem adopted by the author . . .” (Maly 13) In the poem, death was man’s natural lot (19bc); in J’s editing (2:17b), it results from sin. (Maly 13)
   3. 19bc (from an “ancient poem adopted by the author . . .”): death is man’s natural lot. J says (2:17b) it results from sin. (Maly 13)
   4. 19bc (“you are dust”) implies that “death is not a natural event but rather the consequence of sin. This idea is not fully reconcilable with the statement that humankind is made of clay (2:7) and therefore by nature destined to corruption. The Old Testament in general regarded death as the natural destiny of all humans (*cf*.,2 Sam 14:14), and Sir 25:24 is the earliest text to state explicitly that death is the result of sin. This idea is developed at some length by St. Paul in Rom 5:12-20; cf. 1 Cor 15:22.” (Maher 47)
3. **3:17**
4. *cursed is the ground because of you*
   1. Man is not directly cursed, but indirectly, through the earth. (Maly 13)
   2. “Nature’s involvement in salvation history, a constant biblical theme [cf. Ps 28; Is 11:6-9; etc.], is a religious, not a scientific, concept.” (Maly 13)
   3. “That is to say, man is set at variance with his natural environment.” (Vawter 85)
   4. *toil*
      1. The toil “corresponds with the “pain” of woman’s childbearing (the two words are closely related in Hebrew, and in the Samaritan Pentateuch they are the same).” (Vawter 85)
      2. J does not mean that work is a punishment; 2:15 says man is to till and keep the garden. “What now occurs is that enmity is put between man and the soil, just as” with the serpent. (Vawter 85)
      3. No proportion between labor and result. Cf. 2:15, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.” (Maly 13)
      4. J may have been thinking “of the rocky, inhospitable soil of the Palestinian countryside, but the geography is totally irrelevant. . . . The Yahwist, whatever his own social standing may have been, sympathized with . . . peasant . . .” (Vawter 85)
   5. *all the days of your life*
      1. Corresponds to 3:14, “[dust you shall eat] all the days of your life.” (Vawter 85)
5. **3:18**
6. **3:19**
   1. *You are dust* is “God’s verdict on man and woman . . .” (Maher 47)
   2. “Death . . . is not specifically mentioned . . .” (Vawter 85)
   3. “Death . . . is not itself viewed as part of man’s punishment: . . . natural immortality . . . did not belong to the Yahwist’s myth. Death is simply the termination of man’s life of toil. [*You are dust*] refers to historical, sinful man, the only man that the biblical author knew.” J could have said v 19 “had the condition of man not changed one whit . . .” (Vawter 85)
7. **3:20-21**
   1. 20-21 interrupt the context of punishment (Maly 13): 14-19 = future punishments, 22-24 = present punishment (expulsion). (Davidson 46)
   2. But J put 20 here:
      1. It connects with woman’s subjection (3:17), since “naming is . . . the prerogative of one in dominance.” (Vawter 86)
8. **3:20**
   1. *Eve*
      1. translation history
         1. Heb *ishshah*. (Davidson 47)
            1. From Heb *hay*, “life?” (Thus Davidson 47, Vawter 86)
            2. From Heb related to Aram *h\_wy\_*? Thus “the earliest Jewish commentators . . .” (Vawter 87; also Davidson 47)
            3. Davidson 47 says Aram *h\_wy\_* means “snake mother.” (Davidson 47)
            4. If *h\_ww\_h* was originally from *h\_wy\_*/”snake mother,” then J “deliberately altered the tradition so that the name *h\_ww\_h* becomes a symbol of hope.” (Davidson 47) But:
   2. V 87 says Aram *h\_wy\_* means “serpent.” (Vawter 87)
      1. If in J’s day Heb *h\_ww\_h* meant “serpent-mother=mother goddess,” and J changed the meaning to “mother of the living,” he may have done so to create a pun.
         1. The pun relates the woman (*h\_ww\_h*) and the snake (Heb related to Aram *h\_wy\_*).
         2. This would be similar to the pun that previously related the couple and the snake (2:25, [*arummim* = “naked”; 3:1, = [*arum* = “cunning”). (Vawter 87)
   3. LXX ζω\_.
      1. English *Eve*, “our traditional English approximation of *hawwah* . . .” (Vawter 86)
      2. The man has not yet been named (,*\_d\_m* in 17 [and 21], though without the article, simply means “man”). (Vawter 86)
      3. “all the living” = “human posterity.” (Maly 13)
      4. “Mother of all the living” is the narrator’s etymology. (Davidson 47) But no birth will occur until 4:1. (Vawter 86)
9. **3:21**
   1. *garments of skin*
      1. Not just etiological (why we wear clothes). (Davidson 47)
      2. 3:21 contradicts 3:7 (“they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons”). (Maly 13) It “seems to duplicate unnecessarily vs. 7 [since] they were already clothed . . .” (Vawter 87)
      3. God making garments is “anthropomorphism and anachronism . . .” (Hauret 148)
      4. Strangely, J uses “the solemn word “made” which the Yahwist otherwise reserves for the great creations of God . . .” (Vawter 87)
      5. “Obviously, the Yahwist had no knowledge of the Priestly author’s prohibition at this time of the exploitation of the animal kingdom.” (Vawter 87) See Gen 1:29-30 (God gives plants as food to men [29] and beasts [30]) and 9:3 (Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything”).
      6. God “set their first steps on the path to the arts.” (Hauret 148)
      7. Making garments “violates the otherwise inflexible rule of J to attribute to men . . . the successive developments in human progress . . .” (Vawter 87)
      8. “. . . a note of hope: God still provides for fallen man.” (Maly 13)
      9. “Even when on the point of banishing the man and woman from his presence in the garden, God manifests his care . . .” (Vawter 87)
      10. God “allows these exiles to glimpse, in the distance of the ages, the first faint gleams of a new time, an age of restoration. The resolution of the drama is not final. While the trial in the garden ends with the victory of the serpent and the frustration of the divine plan, the struggles of earth will end finally in the victory of the man and . . . the Creator.” (Hauret 148)
   2. *Adam*
      1. RSV and NEB: proper name. Heb is “man” and not “the man,” “but the same holds true in 2:20 [RSV and NEB, “the man”], and 3:17” (NEB “the man,” RSV “Adam”). (Davidson 47)
10. **3:22**
    1. *man*: once more a collective, as in 2:7-9, 15-17.
       1. *become like one of us*
          1. “The theme of man’s search for elusive immortality re-enters the story only when the problem and the tragedy of man have been analysed in other terms.” (Davidson 47)
          2. irony
             1. “. . . Yahweh declares [v 22ab] somewhat ironically in the presence of the “god” who failed . . .” (Hauret 113)
             2. By having God say v 22, “the author is saying with a certain note of irony that the first couple had, in a sense, become like God, in that they had refused to accept their status as creatures, and rejected obedience in order to live autonomously.” (Maher 48)
             3. We have no “reason to take as ironic or sarcastic Yahweh’s agreement with the serpent’s contention in 3:5 . . . In the Gilgamesh epic, the legend of Ea and Adapa, and other mythological [87] sources, knowledge and immortality were the prerogatives which the gods jealously guarded . . . Knowledge man has acquired, illicitly and through his own devices. . . . for this reason he [Yahweh] *banished him* . . .” (Vawter 87-88)
          3. “*like one of us* obviously presupposes a plurality of *elohim* that cannot be explained away as we did the plural employed by P in 1:26 . . . [J] has hardly assimilated [22] with his monotheism.” (Vawter 87)
    2. *tree of life*
       1. First reference since brief mention in 2:9. (Davidson 47)
       2. “In vs. 22 a bridge has been built to connect the tree of knowledge again with *the tree of life*.” (Vawter 87)
       3. “possessing all knowledge, man will naturally know the location of the mysterious *tree of life* . . .” (Davidson 47)
11. **3:23**
    1. Expulsion is related twice, 3:23 and 24: two sources? (Maly 13) 24 is “partly a doublet of vs 23 . . .” (Vawter 88)
    2. *sent him forth*: same Heb as *put forth* (*his hand*) in v 22: “Lest man ‘reaches’ out his hand to grasp the fruit of the tree of life, Eden has to be put ‘out of reach’.” (Davidson 48)
    3. *therefore the Lord God sent him forth*
       1. In Gilgamesh and Ea and Adapa, “knowledge and immortality were the prerogatives which the gods jealously guarded . . .” *Therefore* God banishes man. (Vawter 88)
       2. “his change of dwelling bears witness to the change in his status.” (Hauret 148)
    4. “the man driven from the garden . . . is all mankind, men and women together . . .” (Vawter 90)
12. **3:24**
    1. On the cherubim and flaming sword: “To put it in other words, man has trodden a way which he himself cannot retrace. The guards are there, and there is nothing man can do to get rid of them.” (Achtemeiers 31)
    2. *cherubim*
       1. The “little winged angels” of Renaissance paintings “were borrowed from a very different mythology.” (Vawter 88)
       2. Cherubim were “winged lions with human heads.” (Davidson 48) “winged bulls or lions, whose function was to guard access to sanctuaries and to the sacred person of the king.” (Scott 100 n. 54)
          1. “stone colossi standing guard at palace doors in Babylon.” (Hauret 147; M 13)
          2. “Royal thrones were sometimes flanked on either side” by them. (Davidson 48)
          3. Israelites borrowed them to express their belief in ministers of Yahweh. (Maly 13)
             1. From Babylonian *kerubim*. (Maly 13)
             2. “in Akkadian sources *karibu* (cherubim) [are] minor deities . . .” (Davidson 48)
             3. They are also Canaanite. (Maher 48)
             4. “similar creatures stand before temples and palaces throughout Southeast Asia.” (Vawter 88, quoting Theodor Gaster [without reference])
       3. In the OT, they are
          1. God’s attendants, servants (Ps 18:10, “He rode on a cherub”) (Davidson 48);
          2. guardians of sacred objects (Davidson 48);
             1. Exod 25:18-20, “make two cherubim . . . on the two ends of the mercy seat.” (Davidson 48) (Cf. 37:7-9—V 88)
             2. 1 Kings 8:6-7, “The the priests brought the ark of the covenant . . . to its place . . . the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark . . .” (Davidson 48) See also 1 Kings 6:23-28. (Scott 100 n. 54)
          3. “and [guardians] of sacred and therefore forbidden places, as here (so also Ezekiel 28:14.16).” (Vawter 88)
    3. *flaming sword*
       1. The sword is “personified . . .” (Vawter 88)
       2. “The sword of God’s wrath is . . . a mythical motif found elsewhere . . . (cf. Isaiah 27:1, 34:5, etc.).” (Vawter 88)
       3. “The flaming sword, . . . probably seen here as a flash of lighting zigzagging back and forth, symbolizes divine anger.” (Maly 13)
       4. “Metal thunderbolts . . . among the Assyrians, were the symbol for anathema and interdict. Tiglath Pileser I, for example, caused a bronze thunderbolt to be erected on the ruins of Hunusa to forbid the rebuilding of the city . . .” (Hauret 147)
       5. A typical divine “weapon . . . of war” in the ancient Near East. (Davidson 48)

# Themes in Gen 1-3

## Sources

1. **introduction**
   1. “We must content ourselves . . . with studying the text as it lies before us, since we cannot perfectly separate the elements out of which the Yahwist fashioned his story.” (Vawter 86)
   2. Various strands are discernible; they were probably combined before J, but cannot now be reconstructed. (Maly 12)
      1. See 2:9c (tree of life is in midst) vs. 3:3a (tree of knowledge is in midst). (Maly 12)
      2. “There seem to be”: (Davidson 29)
         1. “two accounts of the placing of man in Eden [2:8b vs. 2:15],
         2. “two accounts of the clothing of man [3:7 (fig leaves) vs. 3:21 (garments of skin)].”
      3. “The priestly author who wrote the first chapter of Genesis was following a religious end and proposed to foster respect for the Sabbath; consequently he chose the liturgical week as the framework of creation.” (Hauret 199)
      4. “The portrayal of man in the second chapter of Genesis is no less noble [than in Gen 1:27-28], despite the fact that this Creation story is now focused upon the intimate associations of man’s life. No longer is there an interest in cosmogony . . .” (Achtemeiers 26)
   3. “There has, however, been little agreement as to how the narrative ought to be divided. In terms of literary style, psychological insight and religious teaching the narrative as it lies before us has to be read as a unity. At most the writer seems to have drawn on different mythological traditions and woven them together . . .” (Davidson 29)
   4. “. . . texts which give the impression of being doublets are, perhaps quite simply, nothing more than the mark of popular narrative style.” (Hauret 169)
   5. “. . . there is not in them [Gen 2-3] a composite of J with some other independent source. The J story . . . was meant to be taken as a whole in its present form and was so known to the Redactor of Genesis and doubtless to P as well.” (Vawter 64)
2. **2**:**10-14** (**4 rivers**)
   1. 2:10-14 are a later addition.
   2. Colorless style. (Davidson 33)
   3. “The four rivers do not feature in the unfolding of the narrative . . .” (Maher 37)
   4. “verses 10-14 may be a learned antiquarian addition to the story . . .” (Davidson 33)
   5. “. . . the Yahwist doubtless valued [the addition] for its “demythologizing” effect.” (Vawter 64-65) J wanted 10-14 to bring paradise “literally “down to earth.”” (Vawter 69)
3. **2**:**15-17**
   * 1. The garden “story is a secondary addition . . .” (Vawter 70)
     2. “. . . vs. 15 is a doublet of vs. 8.” (Vawter 70)
        1. Gen 2:8, “And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”
        2. Gen 2:15, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”
     3. In 2:15, “The *it* (which twice occurs in the Hebrew) which man was set *to cultivate and care for* is an objective feminine pronoun which goes very well with an original “earth” or “land,” both of which are feminine nouns in Hebrew, but not at all with “garden,” which is a masculine.” (Vawter 70)
     4. 2:16 is unaware of the “tree of life”: 16 says “you may freely eat of every tree . . .” (Vawter 70)
     5. Originally *adam* in 2:17 “incorporatred both male and female, in the same fashion [as] the Priestly author . . .” Proof: God prohibited the tree of knowledge in 2:17 to *adam* (mankind, male and female), and that is why the woman knows of the prohibition already in 3:2; her creation in between (2:21-25) is a later addition. (Vawter 77)
   1. 2:21-25 (woman from rib)
      1. “a later elaboration of the Yahwist,” since God prohibited the tree of knowledge in 2:17, before the woman’s creation in 21-25, yet she knows of the prohibition in 3:2. (Vawter 77)
   2. 3:1-5
      1. “It is likely that the story of the serpent once dealt with a tree of death that was deceitfully passed off as a tree of life, in a variation on the Ea and Adapa story.” See also the snake stealing the plant of life from Gilgamesh. “As the story now stands, in any case, the tree in question is one of “knowledge,” and the rest of the narrative has been shaped to accomodate the theme.” (Vawter 77)
   3. 3:20-21
      1. 20-21 interrupt the context of punishment (Maly 13): 14-19 = future punishments, 22-24 = present punishment (expulsion). (Davidson 46)
   4. 3:22
      1. “In vs. 22 a bridge has been built to connect the tree of knowledge again with *the tree of life*. We note *the man* has once more become a collective, referring to the human species of both men and women, as it originally did in 2:7-9.15-17 [*sic*] before the motif of the separate creation of woman was brought in through the insertion of 2:18-25. The present verse is perhaps the most “primitive” of all those in the Yahwist’s account. . . . the Yahwist has incorporated into his story a myth which he has barely or hardly assimilated with his monotheism.” (Vawter 87)
      2. Vawter prefers Herbert Haag’s source analysis of Gen 2-3. (On p. 90 Vawter refers to Haag’s *Is Original Sin in Scripture*? [New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969].) “According to this hypothesis there is a basic story which we will designate A. It is the story of creation and fall that dominates the entire chapters, and it is only mildly mythical. It proceeds in these stages:
         1. First, the world is described in its wild, uncultivated state prior to the creation of man (Genesis 2:4b-5).
         2. Man is created as the living being who will till the soil (vs. 7).
         3. Vegetation appears, including “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad” . . . (vs. 9).
         4. Man is given free rein over the vegetation of the earth except for the tree of knowledge which he is forbidden to eat under penalty of death (vss. 16-17).
         5. The animals are created to be subject to man (vs. 19).
         6. One of the animals, the serpent, precipitates the temptation . . . (chapter 3 *passim*).
      3. “Woven into this story is a secondary one, probably not complete in itself, and much more akin to the mythologies surrounding the origins of man. We may call this story of the garden story B.” (Vawter 64)
         1. God plants a garden in which he places man, and in the midst of which is “the tree of life” (vss. 8-9).
         2. “After man’s settlement in the garden (vss. 15) something [64] now undisclosed in the total story occurs that leads eventually (3) to God’s banishment of man . . . (Genesis 3:22-24). Behind the remnants of this story . . ., it is easy to discern the theme of man’s missed opportunity at immortality, a motif that pervades ancient Near Eastern myth. [“the “missed opportunity” at immortality [is] a motif that haunts the mythologies of antiquity.” V 64-65]
         3. “Both story A and story B have been expanded on by the Yahwist . . . The most important addition is in A, . . . a special creation of woman . . . In B . . . 2:10-14 has been added . . .” (Vawter 65)

## Essential Truths

1. **introduction**
   1. “. . . the Scriptures teach the essential superiority of man and woman over animals, that ideal happiness was offered to our first parents, and the universal fall caused by sin. . . . these [are] unchangeable.” (Hauret 17)
   2. “. . . God breathes his breath into man’s nostrils. Our soul is immaterial and imperishable and it comes from God.” (Hauret 186)
   3. “Two essential ideas about woman come forth . . .: man and woman are of the same nature. Eve is Adam’s helpmate. The two are destined to live together in marriage so as to form one heart and soul.” (Hauret 186)
   4. On 2:8-9 (man put in Eden, the two trees): “there are two main truths to keep in mind: 1. When God created our first parents he wished man to be perfectly happy in soul and body. 2. Our first parents could keep this happiness on one condition, that of not committing sin, of not disobeying. A single sin and all was lost.” (Hauret 188) ““Do not eat the fruit” means “Do not commit sin.”” (Hauret 188) “She wanted the forbidden fruit, that is, sin.” (Hauret 190)
   5. “The historical reality [of] “the fundamental truths presupposed for the economy of salvation” [Pontifical Biblical Commission, “Letter to Cardinal Suhard,” 1948], are these . . .” (Hauret 124)
      1. “By the divine favor, our first parents were created in a state of perfect happiness. They lived in a state of grace. All of this is signified by the garden of pleasure, the well-watered and fertile park.” (Hauret 124)
      2. “According to the divine plan, and by way of privilege, our first parents could not die. This is the meaning of the “tree of life” in the midst of the garden.” (Hauret 124)
         1. “Adam and Eve could not die. Such was their privilege that a day would come when, without undergoing the pangs of death, they would enter the heavenly paradise to see and love God forever.” (Hauret 187)
      3. “They enjoyed, moreover, an internal balance so that, although naked, they felt no shame. According to St. Thomas this immunity from concupiscence was due to original justice [124] and a perfect harmony of nature by which the body was subjected to the soul, the sense faculties to the mind and will, and all of these to God, in a kind of pre-established harmony. In general, leaving out the good influences exerted by the Redemption, this subjection was easier then than it is now in the state of sin. It is also certain that the *fomes* (the “tinder” of sin), that spontaneous irritability of the sense appetites, was not radically extinguished, but only restricted in its exercise.” (Hauret 124-125)
      4. “This perfect happiness, with its . . . immunity from death, was linked with dwelling in paradise and familiarity with God there. The sojourn itself was conditioned on obedience to the divine command symbolized by “the tree of knowledge.”” (Hauret 125)
   6. “Yahweh was pure goodness, and everything that He made was good (Gn 1). Yet on the other hand, there were the hard facts of so much moral and physical evil . . . Israel correctly drew the conclusion that . . . man must have ruined the original happiness intended for him by God . . . the ancient Israelite view of history is that the characteristics of any social group, such as a tribe or people, were inherited from the eponymous ancestor of this group. Thus the Ismaelites were known to be fighting nomads; therefore their ancestor Ismael was a fighting nomad (Gn 16,12; 21,20f; 25,18). Now, Israel knew that the evils which afflicted men were universal to all mankind . . . Therefore, they must also have been characteristic of the first parents of all mankind, who brought them on themselves through their own fault. And that is really the whole point of the story which is told in Gn 2-3.” (Hartman 30)
   7. “The following outline is an attempt to distinguish the “imagery” from the historical reality:” (Hauret 182)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| THE IMAGERY | ESSENTIAL TEACHING |
|  |  |
| Yahweh fashions a clay figure (2:7a). | The body of the man, which is material, was created in a special manner by God. |
| Yahweh breathes his own breath into man’s nostrils (2:7b). | The man’s soul, which is spiritual and immortal, is produced directly by God. |
| Yahweh takes one of man’s ribs and builds of it a woman (2:21-22). | Eve is of the same nature as Adam; husband and wife form one being, and the woman depends on the man. |
| Yahweh forms a man and builds a woman (2:7, 22). | Unity of the human race; primitive monogamy. |
| Yahweh places the man in the Garden of Eden (2:15). | God elevates man to a state above his nature. |
| The Bible describes the garden as an ideal one situated in an ideal region (2:8-14). | Our first parents enjoyed perfect happiness. |
| There Adam reviews the animals and gives them names befitting their natures (2:19-20). | By his understanding and power, man is master over the animal world. |
| Man converses familiarly with his Creator (3:8 ff). | He is admitted to friendship with God. |
| There grows the tree of knowledge, a forbidden tree (3:30). | This original happiness is dependent on obedience. |
| The serpent (3:1) enters into conversation with the woman (3:1-3). | The devil tempts the woman. |
| Deceived by the serpent, the woman takes the forbidden fruit and eats of it (3:6). | The woman, led astray by the devil, yields to temptation and commits sin. |
| Yahweh drives our first parents from paradise (3:23). | Intimacy with God and the privileges of holiness and original justice are lost. |
| The Cherubim and the flaming sword guard the entrance to the Garden of Eden (3:24). | This happy state is definitively lost to the human race. |
| But the “seed of the woman” will crush the head of the serpent (3:15). | But a Savior, the son of the woman, will take revenge on the devil. |

* 1. “These parallels clearly show that chapters two and three of Genesis “relate in simple and figurative language, adapted to the understanding of a less developed people, the fundamental truths presupposed for the economy of salvation.”” (Quotation from: Pontifical Biblical Commission. “Letter to Cardinal Suhard.” 16 Jan. 1948. In *Rome and the Study of Scripture*: *A Collection of Papal Enactments on the Study of Holy Scripture Together with Decisions of the Biblical Commission*. St. Meinrad IN: Grail, 1962. 152.) (Hauret 182)

## Historicity

1. **introduction**
   1. “*Our* first question [83] is: Did it happen? He is uninterested in such a question, perhaps because this is something which everyone amongst his people more or less took for granted.” (Wright 84)
   2. Gen 3 is “not so much the history of the origin of sin, as an interpretation of the fact of sin.” (Wright 84)
   3. “At the end of the nineteenth century, the . . . historical character of the first chapters of Genesis was defended with tooth and claw. . . . [But today,] the historical reality of the material circumstances of Genesis 2-3 has generally come to be looked upon as an open one. The Church has never thought it necessary to settle the question by her authority.” (Qtd. from Laurent, Yves. “Le caractère historique de Genèse II-III, dans l’exégèse au tournant du XIXe siècle.” *ETL* 23 (1947) 54-55, 64-65.) (Hauret 122)
   4. Pontifical Biblical Commission (“Letter to Cardinal Suhard.” 16 Jan. 1948. In *Rome and the Study of Scripture*: *A Collection of Papal Enactments on the Study of Holy Scripture Together with Decisions of the Biblical Commission*. St. Meinrad IN: Grail, 1962. 152): the literary forms of Gen 2-3 “correspond to none of our classical categories and cannot be judged in the light of Graeco-Latin or modern literary styles. One can, therefore, neither deny nor affirm their historicity taken as a whole, without unduly attributing to them the canons of a literary style within which it is impossible to classify them.” (Qtd. in Hauret 123)
2. **some contradictions in Gen 1-11**

The Bible contains both internal and external contradictions. (An internal contradiction occurs when the Bible contradicts in one place what it says in another. An external contradiction occurs when the Bible contradicts what science and history have established.) Contradictions make historicity less likely. Here are some salient contradictions in Gen 1-11 (see, e.g., Rowley 16-23).

* 1. Water exists (Gen 1:2) before anything else exists (Gen 1:3-31).
  2. Light exists (Gen 1:3-5) before stars exist (Gen 1:16).
  3. Day and night, and morning and evening, exist (Gen 1:4-5) before the sun, moon, and stars exist (Gen 1:14-16).
  4. The sky is a dome (Gen 1:6-8), but in reality there is no dome.
  5. Vegetation appears (Gen 1:9-13) before the sun appears (Gen 1:16).
  6. God creates plants and later creates humans (Gen 1:11, 26-27). *Or*: God creates a human and only later creates plants (Gen 2:4-9).
  7. God creates birds (Gen 1:20-23), then land animals. But birds evolved from reptiles.
  8. God rests on the seventh day (Gen 2:2). But God, being omnipotent, has no need to rest.
  9. God creates animals and later creates humans (Gen 1:24-25, 26-27). *Or*: God creates a human and only later creates animals (Gen 2:4-7, 18-20).
  10. God creates male and female humans simultaneously (Gen 1:26-27). *Or*: God creates the man and only later creates the woman (Gen 2:7, 21-22).
  11. Creation took 7 days (Gen 1:1-2:4a). *Or*: creation took 1 day (Gen 2:4b).
  12. Creation took one week (Gen 1:1-2:4a). But in fact it took approximately 13.7 billion years for humans to appear.
  13. The Bible says that the Universe is about 6000 years old. (Using biblical data, Archbishop James Usscher in 1650 determined that creation began on 23 Oct. 4004 bc [of the Julian calendar: 21 Sept. of the present Gregorian calendar]; the Hebrew calendar, based on biblical data, reckons the year ad 2020 as the year 5780.]) But science has established that the Universe is about 13.7 billion years old.
  14. The Bible says that humans are about 6000 years old. But science says that humans are about 300,000 years old.
  15. The third and fourth humans are Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-2). Yet in Cain’s lifetime the world is sufficiently populous that Cain can build a city (Gen 4:17).
  16. God tells Noah to take one pair of each kind of animal (Gen 6:19-20). *Or*: he tells Noah to take seven pairs of each clean animal and one pair of each unclean animal (7:2-3). (Noah takes one pair of each kind of animal, Gen 7:7-9.)
  17. The flood lasted 40 days (Gen 7:4, 12). *Or*: the flood lasted 150 days (Gen 7:11, 24; 8:2).
  18. The waters recede below the mountaintops (8:5). *Or*: later they are still above the mountaintops (8:9).

1. **genres in Genesis 3**
   1. The historian distinguishes actual occurrence from myth, legend, and saga. (Livingston 28)
      1. myth: “A narrative about gods or heroes . . . that may . . . refer to actual temporal events . . . it serves to explain how the world, creatures, and customs came to be . . .” (Livingston 383)
      2. legend: a “story about the past . . . that does have some historical basis but includes elements of the fictitious . . .” (Livingston 382)
      3. saga: “A heroic narrative about either a historical or legendary figure . . .” (Livingston 385)
      4. parable: “the parabolic aim [in Gen 3] is so obvious that for a parallel one might turn to the parables of Jesus.” (Wright 83)
   2. “Myth, in its most acceptable definition, is simply a society’s attempt to dramatize its faith in its own identity and its institutions . . .” (Vawter 64)
   3. “Myth in one of its purest forms is encountered in the P creation story . . . whether they deal with out-and-out mythical characters such as those of 6:1-4, or the putatively historical race of man in 11:1-9, or typical or eponymous characters of chapter 4, myth readily melds into *the etiological story* . . .” (Vawter 64) “Genesis 1-11 “raise the question of the nature and function of myth. They discuss what is, in terms of how it came to be.” (Scott 97)
   4. The author “related historical events of a religious nature—dogmatic facts as they are called—using [elements] from . . . profane culture, from folklore . . .” (Hauret 123) “there remains the question of how to give a name to so original a literary form. It is indeed difficult to categorize an account which describes real events with the help of fictitious, symbolic, and metaphorical elements. . . . a kind of historical parable.” Though an oxymoron, “parable” refers to the figurative presentation, “historical” to the real events. (Hauret 170)
   5. “. . . exegetes will differ on the extent to which the imagery overflows into history. For some it is enough to retain only a broad and general objective connection between the figurative setting and the historical reality described in it. Others give some details a value going beyond the image and representing reality. Each case must be examined in itself . . .” (Hauret 124)
   6. Some are dismayed: ““Religious truth is changing.” . . . they do not take into account the difference between what is essential and what is accidental in the accounts in Genesis and do not note that the differences in interpretation have a bearing only on the accidental.” (Hauret 172)

## The Nature of the First Sin

1. **introduction**
   1. Gen 2-3 do not describe “a fall in the sense that man after has become anything else than man was before. . . . it is man’s nature to be prone to wrongdoing (cf. Genesis 8:21, J). . . . no explanation is given for this undoubted fact of life, either by the Yahwist or by the Priestly author. The biblical sources merely confirm . . . that man was created defectible.” (Vawter 79)
   2. J does not use the word “sin” until 4:7. (Hauret 132)
2. **Adam as child**
   1. “according to some, . . . “to know good and evil” was “. . . to distinguish one from another.”‘ (Hauret 111)
   2. Theophilus of Antioch: “Adam, as yet only a child in years, was not fit to receive knowledge. . . . God wished him to continue simple and sincere by remaining a child.” (*Ad Autolycum* 2:23) (Hauret 111)
   3. Irenaeus (“evidently depending upon Theophilus . . .”): “He was yet a child who had to grow naturally to reach his perfection. . . . He did not have the perfect use of his faculties and so was easily deceived by the tempter.” (*Adversus haereses* 4:38) (Hauret 112)
   4. Clement of Alexandria: “The first man played in Paradise as freely as a child. . . . he was led astray by lusts and came to manhood, by disobedience.” (*Exhortation to the Greeks* 11) (Hauret 111)
   5. objections
      1. “The relative ignorance of the child does not necessarily imply a lack of moral discernment. Nor were our first parents children, except in the sense that both of them enjoyed an integral and innocent nature . . .” (Hauret 112)
      2. J sees the couple as “capable of contemplating transgressions even on their own. The tempter has made the suggestion [3:1-5], but the woman has made the decision, based on [78] her own judgment—”this thing is good to have.” [3:6]” (Vawter 78-79)
      3. “the severe penalties . . . imply a serious culpability . . . and accordingly a knowledge of good and evil.” (Hauret 113) See Sir 17:1, 7: “The Lord created man out of earth . . . He filled them with knowledge and understanding, and showed them good and evil.”
3. **intellectual pride**
   1. “other exegetes [suppose] our first parents . . . aspire[d] to a knowledge above their intellectual capacity, as, for example, a knowledge which would grasp the profound reason for the distinction . . . between the goodness and malice in things. By . . . excessive desire of knowledge, Adam and Eve . . . enter into rivalry with the supreme lawgiver.” (Hauret 113)
   2. “. . . man claimed to decide for himself that what he wants is good, his good, and what he does not want is bad.” (Scott 99)
   3. “Knowledge is power, the power . . . which seeks to impose man’s will on other living things, and to remake creation in his own image . . . In his *hubris* he acts as if he were God, answerable to none.” (Scott 99)
   4. “God has indeed reserved to himself this particular knowledge to which man can aspire only by attempting to transcend his creaturehood . . .” (Vawter 78) The snake persuades man to seek “what he can only experience [as] an unrequited lust.” (Vawter 78)
   5. “made the sin consist, first of all, in an act of deliberate disobedience against God’s command and in an act of disbelief in God’s word. . . . The sin is moreover an act of *hybris*, . . . [to] put him on a par with God.” (Hartman 32)
   6. On 3:1-6 (Satan-Eve conversation): “Pride was the sin that overcame them.” (Hauret 190)
   7. proofs
      1. 3:5, the snake’s understanding: “you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
      2. 3:22, God’s understanding: “the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil.”
      3. “the habitual cast of . . . Hebrew thought [was] anti-intellectual . . .” (Hauret 114)
4. **knowledge** **=** **amorality**
   1. “. . . in the Bible contraries are often opposed to convey the idea of totality. Examples are not lacking in Genesis (cf. 24:50; 31:24). To know good and evil, then, meant . . . “knowing everything.”” (Hauret 114) Hebrew “know” usu. = experiential knowledge. (Hauret 114)
   2. “. . . the knowledge [was both] experimental and of the moral order [3:7, “the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked”] . . . Such knowledge [was] an “experience” . . .” (Hauret 114)
   3. They “now feel within their own bodies a lack of balance . . . This feeling . . . arouses complex feelings hitherto unknown: shame, fear, distrust, the impression that they are contemptible.” See 3:10, “naked,” “hid.” (Hauret 114)
   4. “To know good and evil, therefore, would be to allow oneself *every sort of experience*. There is no question, then, of “either a knowledge of discernment or an exhaustive knowledge, but of a knowledge . . . in which good and evil were mingled” . . .” (Hauret 114-15, quoting J. Coppens, *La Connaissance du bien et du mal et le péché du Paradis* 17)
   5. “By forbidding the tree of good and evil, God forbade man to “try everything once,” and obliged him to use his freedom only within the limits of divine law. But our first parents . . . committed a sin of pride.” (Hauret 116)
   6. objection
      1. “Some exegetes would explain the name of the tree to mean that man, by eating of this fruit, wished to assume the right of deciding for himself what is good and what is evil in the moral order (cf. Is 5,20; Am 5,14f). [But], just as with the tree of life, so also with this tree: it gets its name from its *effects*. . . . presumption to decide for themselves . . . would be the *cause* . . .” (Hartman 33)
5. “**a projection into the past of the common experience of mankind**” (Hauret 130)
   1. “The story of the “fall” is a paradigm of human conduct in the face of temptation . . .” (Vawter 90)
   2. proofs
      1. A.M. Dubarle (*Les Sages d*’*Israel*. Paris: Cerf, 1946. 13): “Nothing that can constitute, accompany, or follow sin is lacking.” (Qtd. in Hauret 132)
      2. Heb. ´*adam* simply means *man*.
         1. “This is the story of ‘Everyman’. [28] . . . the self-will of man who . . . loses his own true life [is], for the narrator, . . . not ancient story but an ever present reality.” (Davidson 28, 48)
         2. ““The man” and “the woman” of the story represent “Everyman” and “Everywoman” and in their experience of temptation, sin, regret, punishment, and new hope, we see a reflection of our own lives and experiences.” (Maher 48)
         3. “The man and the woman of Genesis 2-3 are intended to represent everyman, but an everyman no different from that of the Yahwist’s time and our own.” (Vawter 89)
      3. “Thus interpreted, these pages of Genesis . . . deserve a favored place in an anthology of existentialist literature.” (Hauret 130)
      4. In 3:6 (the actual fall), both woman and man eat, and the woman does not persuade the man. So, “The “fall” as J depicts it is collective, a social act.” (Vawter 79)
   3. objections
      1. “While the sacred author may have projected the painful story of daily life back to the beginnings, at the same time he proposed to explain the unhappy lot of human beings. . . . [Man] feels himself contemptible—an evidence of his moral fall (Gn. 3:7). . . . he feels ill at ease in God’s presence—a sign of his religious fall (3:8-10).” (Hauret 131)
      2. “The present situation of mankind does not result from the powerlessness, the arbitrary will, the jealousy, nor the craftiness of God. Nor is it the result of the error or imprudence, or bad luck of man.” Such were the interpretations of the Babylonian poets. But J linked humanity’s fallenness “with a sin freely and deliberately committed . . .” (Hauret 131-32)
6. “**a projection into the past** . . . **of puberty**” (Hauret 130)
   1. “. . . the author may have wished to stylize man’s development at one of its decisive stages, the crisis of puberty . . .” (Hauret 130)
   2. proofs
      1. “Yesterday there was play, today work. Yesterday, enjoyment of life without bitterness, today, the thought of imminent death poisons his existence. Yesterday his senses were at peace, now he knows struggle within himself.” (Hauret 130)
7. **the sin was sexual**
   1. proofs
      1. *Gilgamesh* parallels
         1. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* tells of “Enkidu, a strange creature kneaded from the clay by the goddess Aruru. . . . Covered with hair like a wild beast, he shared the life and food of animals . . . He defended . . . the wild beasts, from . . . the hunter, filling up the pits with earth and stealing the nets . . . [A] hunter . . . lure[d] the savage into the city by the seductions of a harlot. . . . So Enkidu . . . was no longer satisfied with grass and water . . . “You are like a god,” the harlot assured him. . . . a single verse has drawn most attention: “But he [Enkidu] now has wisdom, broader understanding.”” (Hauret 120) “You are like a god”: “that is, by exercising generative power . . .” (Vawter 72)
         2. objection: *Gilgamesh* is different.
            1. “Enkidu is not the first man . . .” (Hauret 121)
            2. “animals do not satisfy Adam . . .” (Hauret 121)
            3. Enkidu “is a winner by his experience, whereas Adam forfeits . . .” (Hauret 121)
            4. “it is impossible to liken [Eve] to the harlot . . .” (Hauret 121)
      2. “the strange “sexual milieu” . . . strikes even the casual reader . . .” (Hartman 33) Details with sexual import:
         1. 3:1: Snake as phallic symbol.
         2. 3:5: The snake uses “an equivocal word [“know”] meaning both intellectual knowledge and marital relations.” (Hauret 118) See, e.g., Gen 4:1, “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain . . .” and 4:17, “Cain knew his wife, and she bore . . . Enoch . . .”
         3. 3:6: “the fruit of the tree could have been figured as [71] one of those that bestow sexual potency (as in Genesis 30:14) . . .” (Vawter 71-72)
         4. 3:6: “It was Eve who led man on to evil . . .” (Hauret 118)
            1. the woman as seductress

proofs

The author “portrays her as guilty of using her womanhood to seduce her husband, by her feminine wiles, into committing sin . . .” (Hartman 34) But 3:6bc only says, “she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.”

Sir 25:24, “From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die.”

objections

“Genesis does not share in the motif common in ancient mythologies according to which a woman was the cause of the miseries of a disordered world (“Pandora’s box” is one familiar example).” (Vawter 79)

“It is not said that the woman actually enticed her husband to eat . . .” (Maher 43)

Therefore, Sir 25:24 “does not fully correspond to the Yahwist’s presentation of the case.” (Maher 43) Sir 25:24 is a “misogynistic interpretation . . .” (Vawter 79)

The conversation was between the snake and the woman.

because it has in view the sentence in 3:14-15 “which sets up enmity between their separate offsprings” (Vawter 79), and

because “Ancient literary conventions dictated that there be dialogue between two persons only “on stage” at one time.” (Vawter 79) (But 3:1-2 do not say the man is not present; and in 3:14-15 God sentences the snake with both the man and woman present. Hahn)

conclusion

“Behind the story may lie a conviction about woman’s . . . ability to lure man; it does not concern the basic truths of the account.” (Maly 13)

* + - * 1. tree = symbol of woman’s nature

“‘the tree of knowledge of good and evil . . . represents woman’s nature, as this is the cause of sin in man . . .” (Hauret 117, quoting Jean Guitton, *Développement des idées dans l*’*Ancient Testament* [Aix-en-Provence: Aubier, 1947] 102-3)

objections

“It is certainly an exaggeration to claim that the tree of knowledge was a symbol of feminine nature in the ancient Near East,” despite Sgs 2:3 (“As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men”—note, the tree is the *male*). (Hauret 119)

When the prohibition of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge is introduced in 2:17, woman does not exist yet; the prohibition cannot pertain to relations with her. (Vawter 71)

“The text, on the contrary, insists . . . she was created to complete man, in view of the propagation of the race (Gn. 2:24).” (Hauret 119)

* + - 1. 3:7: Disobedience “made Adam and Eve aware [118] of their nakedness.” (Hauret 118-19)
         1. “. . . the sense of nakedness which they felt in each other’s presence after [34] the fall would indeed seem to imply that their eating of the forbidden fruit had in some way brought about a change in their relations to each other as man and woman.” (Hartman 34-35)
         2. “Its fruit aroused libidinous feelings in the man and woman for the first time . . .” (Hartman 36)
         3. “. . . why should the mere sense of guilt arising from any other sin have caused the guilty pair to feel the need of covering their genitals? . . . the sense of nakedness which they felt in each other’s presence after [34] the fall would indeed seem to imply that their eating of the forbidden fruit had in some way brought about a change in their relations to each other as man and woman.” (Hartman 34-35)
         4. objection

“Their disobedience upset the balance of their nature and the disorder found its echo in their bodies. Before their sin our first parents knew sex without being embarrassed by it. . . . The sacred author immediately drew attention to [their sense of nakedness], not necessarily to inform us on the nature of the transgression, but because the unruliness of the senses was the first outward sign of the fall.” (Hauret 119)

* + - 1. 3:16: The woman’s punishment is labor pains and sexual longing for man. (Hartman 33-34)
         1. “in one instance at least the penalty for having eaten the forbidden fruit has sexual overtones (3:16); thus according to the Hebraic principle *midda keneged midda* (loosely translated, “let the punishment fit the crime”), the offense might have been sexual as well.” (Vawter 71)
      2. 3:19: The principal punishment is death; sex has to do with the transmission of life. (Hartman 33)
         1. “This view appealed to . . . Clement of Alexandria [and] Ambrose. St. Augustine [said,] “it is ridiculous.”” (Hauret 118)
         2. “The ancient author thus [shows] how highly God values self-mastery . . . in this sphere, even in what is licit . . .’” (Hauret 117, quoting Jean Guitton, *Développement des Idées dans l*’*AT*,102-3)
         3. objections

“the “man” of this story . . . is everyman . . .” (Vawter 72)

“the use of sex [cannot be] the moral issue . . . It is inconceivable that an Israelite author would portray sexual experience as something morally reprehensible.” (Vawter 71) “the sexual life of man and wife is considered a gift of God (cf. Ps. 127:3-5; 128:3-4).” (Achtemeiers 27)

“the knowledge of good and bad which is prohibited to man is also—and not by the tempter’s “exegesis” alone (3:5) but by God’s as well (3:22)—a prerogative of the Deity. It can therefore hardly stand for a moral failing.” (Vawter 72)

1. **polemic against fertility cults**
   1. “it has been thought that the Yahwist could have used his story to wage a polemics against the fertility cult of Canaan . . . the serpent . . . would stand for the fertility god Baal (who often enough was in fact associated with the serpent as fertility symbol) . . .” (Vawter 71)
   2. Joseph Coppens “has proposed an original variant on this sexual interpretation. . . . [Gen 3 is] a polemic against the Chanaanite worship of fertility gods and goddesses.” (Hauret 121)
   3. “The serpent symbolized these vegetation gods.” (Hauret 121)
      1. The snake had an “association with idolatrous fertility rites in which sexual promiscuity was an important feature. . . . [J, therefore,] was engaging in a subtle polemic against these rites.” (Maher 42)
      2. Objection: the snake “is merely another of God’s creatures . . . and is not, therefore, an immediately obvious candidate to represent a rival deity . . .” (Vawter 72)
   4. ““By showing us Eve talking to the serpent . . . he depicts her forgetting her Creator and being tempted to put her . . . conjugal life, under the . . . blessing of licentious pagan worship.” [Quote from Coppens, *Connaissance* 25-26, 45] . . . The sin of pride . . . was, then, accompanied [121] by a sin against the sanctity or consecration of marriage. Later on, . . . Eve will confess her thenceforth unshakeable faith in the creative power of Yahweh . . .” I.e., Gen 4:1, “I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.” (Hauret 121-22)

## MonOgenism

1. **introduction**
   1. Monogenism “views all mankind as the descent from a single pair of original ancestors.” (Vawter 89)
   2. Rom 5:12, “sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned . . .”
      1. “Stanislas Lyonnet has shown [that] the “inasmuch as all sinned” of Romans 5:12 was interpreted by all of the early church fathers aside from John Chrysostom . . . to refer to the personal sins of universal humanity, not to a single sin that had been committed by their “father” Adam.” (Vawter 90; no citation given)
   3. 2 Esdras 7:118, “O Adam, . . . though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants.” (Vawter 89-90)
   4. “The universal fall from grace seems to be attributed by the sacred author to . . . the fall of a single person. It, accordingly, may be asked whether the Bible teaches monogenism, in the strict sense of a single couple at the origin of the human species.” (Hauret 133)
2. **polygenism**
   1. Mesopotamian texts seem to teach polygenism.
      1. “. . . Sumerian and Akkadian documents . . . express themselves so vaguely. These texts speak to us of the creation of *man*,of *mankind*,of the *seed of mankind*,of *men*,of *people*,of the *black heads*,that is to say, human beings without distinction of sex. In the present state of research it is impossible to prove that monogenism belonged in the category of commonly accepted truths.” (Hauret 135)
      2. “These ancient accounts seem rather to suggest a plurality of couples. . . . According to the . . . Babylonian *Poem of Creation*,Marduk created four human beings . . . After the flood, the goddess Mami constituted mankind anew . . . by dividing clay into fourteen parts, of which seven became men and seven women . . .” (Hauret 135)
      3. The Yahwist (J), then, “shows his originality when he portrays the human stock as consisting of a single couple, but this may have been with him still only a literary figure.” (Hauret 136)
   2. Adam as eponym
      1. J. Chaine (*Le Livre de la Genèse* 54): “In Genesis a whole people is frequently made to descend from a single ancestor (Ammon, Moab, Edom, even Israel), and certain characteristics of the people thought to have come from him are attributed to the ancestors.” (Qtd. in Hauret 136)
      2. Similarly, “The father of the race, one single man, sums up in his person the tribe . . . the sorrowful and toilsome life of the sons of men is, as it were, gathered up and lived in advance by the man, Adam.” (Hauret 137)
      3. Still, “the Fall clearly suggests that Adam’s disobedience had real repercussions in the lives of all men. We find an analogous case in Genesis 9:25-27, where we see a curse visited on an ethnic group as the result of the fall of an ancestor (cf. Ex. 20:5).” (Hauret 137)
   3. etymology of ´*adam*
      1. ´*adam* as “humanity”
         1. “The characters in this story do not have personal names. As N.E.B. has rightly seen, Heb. ´*ādām*,traditionally rendered Adam, should be translated simply *man* or *the man*.” (Davidson 28)
         2. In Gen 2-3, ´*adam* is “a common noun and, as such, has the definite article.” (Hauret 138)
         3. “In 3:22 Adam designates both the man and the woman.” (Hauret 138)
         4. Following Gen 5:1-5, we call him “Adam,” but his only name in Gen 2-3 is *ha-*´*adam* (“Man,” not “the man”). (Hartman 30)
         5. “The Greek Septuagint and Jewish tradition may have turned this common noun into a proper name . . .” (Hauret 138)
         6. similar instances
            1. The “adversary” (Job 1:6, Zech 3:1-2) becomes “Satan” (1 Chr 21:1. (Hauret 138)
            2. “Qoheleth” becomes a proper name “by the familiar usage of modern exegetes.” (Hauret 138)
         7. The author of the Table of Nations (Gen 10) “has substituted relationships of proximity, culture, trade, or political alliance for blood relationship. This fact is absolutely certain and inescapably raises the question of whether the author of Genesis may not have . . . group[ed] the sons of men under a common ancestor, the man. . . . [He] would have affirmed the moral unity of humanity, but not necessarily the strict unity of the human stock. Based as it is on analogy, this argument cannot end in certainty . . .” (Hauret 139)
      2. ´*adam* as “Adam”
         1. In 2:25 (“the man and his wife were both naked”) “the common noun is applied to . . . one of the “two.”” (Hauret 138)
         2. Wis 10:1, “Wisdom protected the first-formed father of the world, when he alone had been created; she delivered him from his transgression, and gave him strength to rule all things.” But “These words should not be considered as a proof of monogenism . . .” (Hauret 140)
         3. Rom 5:12-21
            1. “The purpose of the Apostle is less to teach us about the origin of the human race or even to furnish us a complete explanation of sin in the world than to exalt the omnipotence of redemptive grace.” (Hauret 140)
            2. St. Paul’s “point of view is monogenistic, [140] . . . but the question remains whether St. Paul had the intention of affirming that conviction here.” (Hauret 141)
            3. “a comparison retains its value even if its starting point had no real existence. The moral lesson drawn by the Epistle of St. James (5:11) from the patience of Job does not stand or fall with the historicity of that patriarch.” (Hauret 141)
            4. “The Apostle had no reason to forsake the unique genealogical presentation in Genesis and had good reasons for keeping it, but in Romans 5 neither his intention nor attention are focused on this strict unity of origin. Whatever his personal views on the subject, they are not expressed and so not guaranteed by biblical inerrancy.” (Hauret 142)
      3. Council of Trent (1545-63)
         1. Trent said “Adam was a man, “the first man,” *primum hominem*—therefore a concrete and individual person. This first man committed one sin, “*peccatum quod origine unum est*.” This single fall harmed not only its author, “*non sibi soli*,” but was transmitted by way of generation to the posterity of the first man, that is, to the whole human race, “*omne genus humanum*” (Sess. 5:1, 2, 3).” (Hauret 142)
      4. Pius XII
         1. encyclical *Humani Generis* (1950): “original sin . . . proceeds from a sin actually committed by an individual Adam and which through generation is passed on to all and is in every one as his own.”” (Hauret 145)
         2. Pius XII in *Humani generis* said evolution was an open question but monogenism was a closed question. “The pope’s argument [assumed] that original sin is transmitted by human generation from parent to child in an unbroken succession going back to “Adam,” the first man.” (Vawter 89)
   4. objections to polygenism
      1. “. . . Rome has felt obliged to speak with disfavor of the theory of polygenism.” (Hauret 133)
      2. Problems reconciling original sin and polygenism
         1. “Either the first men came into being in a single place, or they appeared in diverse regions . . .” (Hauret 143)
            1. “In the first hypothesis . . . they *all* fell before having begotten children . . . The universal Fall proclaimed by the Council of Trent would be thus safeguarded, but the Council’s statement that the sin of the human stock was a single one would be slighted.” (Hauret 143)
            2. In the second hypothesis, “In . . . the various branches of mankind . . ., at one time or other, sin made its appearance. [144] . . . each man . . . could arrive at a first sinner . . . [But] In this hypothesis, some men . . . escaped the Fall. They were then exempt from concupiscence and were immortal. This bizarre hypothesis would tempt us to minimize or even to suppress the preternatural gifts.” (Hauret 144-45)
   5. conclusions
      1. “Our author certainly shared the scientific opinions of the men of his day, and his message is refracted through these [133] opinions. This does not oblige us to accept his theory of special creation, nor his geocentric theory of the universe, nor his theories about light and the heavenly ocean. He had no interest in passing judgment on these matters and did not commit himself. As a result, the authority of God is not committed either. [Monogenism may be] no more than current opinion of the times (like other pseudoscientific notions in the text), admitted by all and so a part of the cultural heritage of the sacred author.” (Hauret 133-34)
      2. Jean Guitton (*Le Developpement des Idées dans l*’*Ancient Testament* 127): “the biblical author, like the majority of philosophical and religious thinkers before the twentieth century . . ., did not raise the question of the unity or plurality of primitive couples. He held straightway for one couple, as did those around him, as we ourselves would certainly do, had not palaeontology and prehistoric anthropology raised serious doubts about the matter in our [134] minds. We have, therefore, to determine whether this concept of unity at our beginnings is essential to his position . . . At the present time the answer to this question is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to give.” (Qtd. in Hauret 134-35)
      3. “Among the reasons that prompted the Yahwist to introduce a woman into his story, to inculcate monogenism was not one. He may very well have thought that the human race originated in such a fashion, but if so he simply took it for granted and did not make it part of his message.” (Vawter 90)

## Original Sin

1. The doctrine of original sin “is, basically, a repudiation of the Pelagian heresy,” which held that man can achieve salvation without grace. (Vawter 88)
2. “The doctrine affirms that man is born into a sinful world and into a sinful race, and that from both of these he stands in need of redemption. This is quite plainly the sense of biblical religion, [88] . . . and with it there can be no quarrel.” (Vawter 88-89)

## Preternatural Gifts

1. “According to the story, however, immortality was not a gift that he forfeited but rather one that he failed to obtain.” (Vawter 89)
2. J “presupposed that mankind was capable of transgression from the beginning, even without outside help. There was . . . no “fall” in the sense that men and women became something other than what they had been created. . . . The man and the woman of Genesis 2-3 are intended to represent . . . an everyman no different from that of the Yahwist’s time and our own.” (Vawter 89)

“According to St. Jerome, no Jew was allowed to study them [Gen 1-11] before reaching the age of thirty.” (Hauret 16)

The closest parallel in the OT to Gen 2-3 is Ezek 28:11-19. (Vawter 68)

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