

A History of the Jewish People in Antiquity
Readings for Session 8 from Genesis in the JPS Tanakh Jewish Bible 1985

Genesis Chapter 3 | Parsha: [Bere'shit](#)

¹Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?” ²The woman replied to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. ³It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: ‘You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴And the serpent said to the woman, “You are not going to die, ⁵but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know good and bad.” ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths.

⁸They heard the sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹The Lord God called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He replied, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.” ¹¹Then He asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³And the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done!” The woman replied, “The serpent duped me, and I ate.” ¹⁴Then the Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you did this,
More cursed shall you be
Than all cattle
And all the wild beasts:
On your belly shall you crawl
And dirt shall you eat
All the days of your life.

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

¹⁶And to the woman He said,
“I will make most severe
Your pangs in childbearing;
In pain shall you bear children.
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷To Adam He said, “Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’
Cursed be the ground because of you;
By toil shall you eat of it
All the days of your life:

¹⁸Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you.
But your food shall be the grasses of the field;

¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
Shall you get bread to eat,
Until you return to the ground—
For from it you were taken.
For dust you are,
And to dust you shall return.”

²⁰The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. ²¹And the Lord God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

²²And the Lord God said, “Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!” ²³So the Lord God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis Chapter 4 | Parsha: [Bere'shit](#)

¹Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gained a male child with the help of the Lord.” ²She then bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil. ³In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the soil; ⁴and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord paid heed to Abel and his offering, ⁵but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed. Cain was much distressed and his face fell. ⁶And the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you distressed, And why is your face fallen?”

⁷Surely, if you do right,
There is uplift.
But if you do not do right
Sin couches at the door;
Its urge is toward you,
Yet you can be its master.”

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel ... and when they were in the field, Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹The Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” ¹⁰Then He said, “What have you done? Hark, your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground! ¹¹Therefore, you shall be more cursed than the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹²If you till the soil, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You shall become a ceaseless wanderer on earth.”

¹³Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is too great to bear! ¹⁴Since You have banished me this day from the soil, and I must avoid Your presence and become a restless wanderer on earth— anyone who meets me may kill me!” ¹⁵The Lord said to him, “I promise, if anyone kills Cain, sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on him.” And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest anyone who met him should kill him. ¹⁶Cain left the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.