

The Biblical Heritage Center's
DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

Searching for what the words of our Bibles meant to their ancient authors & following their journeys through the centuries to us.

2010 • NUMBER 1

New Home, Jobs & Life: Just for taking a bite!

By Jim Myers

The serpent won the first round by luring the humans with the promise that it knew how they could become like ELOHIYM; but the audience already knew that this was impossible. Humans were made in the image of ELOHIYM, but they also shared appetites, longings and desires in common with the animals of the earth. Humans could never be completely like ELOHIYM. They were unique creatures that inherited the creative power from ELOHIYM and could produce acts of TOV like him or deadly acts like a wild animal, but far beyond any animal's capabilities.

In the first chapter readers learned that ELOHIYM used his creative power to do acts that enhance and preserve the quality of life, as well as life itself. Life is the standard established by ELOHIYM. It is the standard that will be used throughout the entire Hebrew Scriptures to evaluate the actions of every person. Readers learn how what they do affected life. It is the universal standard that everyone, from kings to the common man, is expected to follow. Keep this in mind as you follow the events that took place in the garden.

Readers have the advantage of knowing that there was only one act that would affect life in the garden – the man eating the forbidden fruit. They also knew exactly what the man was told by YAHWEH and that what the woman said was not what YAHWEH had said. She either she lied when she told the serpent that "they would die if they ate the fruit or touched it." YAHWEH did not say anything about anything happening to her if she ate the fruit, and he said nothing about touching the tree. Regardless of why she said it, readers know that the man was standing right beside her the whole time and didn't do anything to correct or protect her.

I think the man and woman became aware of the fact that not only had their lives been completely changed forever, when their eyes were opened. They knew that their relationship to each other, the animals, and most importantly with YAHWEH had been changed forever.

And they heard the voice of YAWHEH *the* ELOHIYM walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man hid and his woman, from the face of YAHWEH *the* ELOHIYM among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8)

Notice that the author wrote that "the man hid," not "they hid." Your translation may not say that, but it is what the Hebrew text states. When the man heard YAHWEH approaching, his immediate reaction was to find a place to hide; the woman simply followed. YAHWEH said that the man would die "in the day the fruit was eaten," and now it was in the "cool of the day," which meant that the end of the day was rapidly approaching. Did YAHWEH know that he had eaten the forbidden fruit? Was he coming to kill him? Since he hadn't died when he ate the fruit, doesn't it seem like this might have crossed his mind? What would you have thought and done if you had been in his shoes?

What would you have done if you had been in her shoes? Was she now aware of how the man hadn't been entirely honest with her? Did she understand that he had stood by her side knowing the truth and had not said anything or done anything to protect her? The range of emotions she could have been experiencing would not only include shame, guilt and fear; but also disappointment and anger. Just imagine their anxiety and stress, as YAWHEH came closer to their hiding place.

And YAHWEH *the* ELOHIYM called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you (masculine singular)?" (Genesis 3:9)

Notice that YAHWEH was only calling out to the man. He had to know that his moment of reckoning had come.

And he said, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Genesis 3:10)

The author uses an interesting word play in this scene. The Hebrew word for "clever" is ARUM, but by simply changing one letter the word becomes AROM, which means "naked." Clearly the serpent had proven to be the most ARUM; so the man is now described himself as being AROM. He had been exposed by the cleverness of a wild animal. Obviously, the man had been nude the whole time. The point the author was making wasn't that the man was now aware that his genitals could be seen; something else had been exposed for all to see. Interestingly, the man didn't say anything about the woman or the serpent being naked. They were just as naked as him. The author wants his audience to understand that a number of things have been exposed about both, as a result of their actions.

And he said, "Who told you (ms) that you (ms) were naked . . ." (Genesis 3:11a)

Notice that YAHWEH continues to direct his words just to the man and doesn't wait for him to answer before immediately addressing the heart of the matter.

From the tree that I commanded you (ms) not to eat from it, have you (ms) eaten?" (Genesis 3:11b)

The man's response will affect the lives of millions of women and girls. Pay very close attention to the following discourse.

And the man said, "The woman whom you gave *to be* with me, she gave to me from the tree, and I ate." (Genesis 3:12)

The correct answer should have simply been "yes;" but instead he blamed both the woman and YAHWEH for what he did. Follow his logic: "If the woman hadn't been there I wouldn't have eaten the forbidden fruit. She gave it to me. If YAHWEH hadn't given her to me, she would not have been there to hand it to me."

According to his excuse, it was ultimately YAHWEH's fault that he ate the forbidden fruit! His future home life would have probably been much better if he had blamed YAHWEH for making the serpent or planting the forbidden tree, instead of giving her to him. But, a little truth seems to always sound better when one gets caught doing something that he shouldn't have been doing. After all, no one could deny that she was the one that handed it to him.

Did you notice how the roles of the man and woman are reversed? Now she is the one standing by listening to the conversation and not saying anything. But, she had to be wrestling with multiple emotions because of the way the man had used her and failed to protect her. What do you think she thought and felt when she now heard him blame her for everything? The ancient audience, by this point, probably thought that he should be much more worried about her killing him than what YAHWEH might do. However, everything that she was thinking or feeling probably came to a sudden halt when YAHWEH turned his full attention to her:

And YAHWEH *the* ELOHIYM said to the woman, "What is this you (fs) have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:13)

Her answer is very interesting and revealing. Unlike the man, she admitted that she was deceived by the serpent, and that she had eaten the forbidden fruit. But, she didn't say anything about the man's role, or that she had given him the fruit. After hearing her answer YAHWEH continued to follow the evidence and turned his attention to the serpent:

And YAHWEH *the* ELOHIYM said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field. On your belly shall you walk, and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put hatred between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall crush your head, and you shall crush him on the heel." (Genesis 3:14-15)

YAHWEH didn't ask the serpent why he did it. Would you ask a lion or tiger why they attacked someone? It was simply his nature to do what he did. But, just like in any other case where a wild animal harms a human, it also suffers consequences for its actions. In this case, they extend beyond what humans are able to do:

- (1) Cursed above other animals.
- (2) Walk on his belly from now on.
- (3) Eat dirt for rest of his life.
- (4) Hatred between him and the woman.
- (5) Hatred between their descendants.
- (6) Her descendant will crush your head.
- (7) Your descendant will crush his heel.

IMPORTANT! It was a serpent that was cursed -- not Satan! It was a wild animal that YAHWEH cursed; not a fallen angel that was at war with YAHWEH. Make sure you are understanding the ancient author's story and not someone else's.

YAHWEH's actions reflect an ancient standard of justice that appears in the Bible. It is summed up, in many cases, by the phrase "an eye for an eye."

In the early period of all systems of law the redress of wrongs takes precedence over the enforcement of contract rights, and a rough sense of justice demands the infliction of the same loss and pain on the aggressor as he has inflicted on his victim. Hence the prominence of the "lex talionis" in ancient law . . . "measure for measure."

WOMEN: PLAY VERY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEXT VERSE.

It has influenced the lives of over a billion females and determined the courses of their lives in cultures around the world. Below are two popular English translations of this verse. Pay close attention to the underlined words.

Douay-Rheims Version Roman Catholic Translation	King James Version Protestant Translation
To the woman also he said: I will multiply thy <u>sorrows</u> , and thy <u>conceptions</u> : <u>in sorrow</u> shalt thou bring forth children, and <u>thou shalt be under thy husband's power</u> , and <u>he shall have dominion over thee</u> .	Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy <u>sorrow</u> and thy <u>conception</u> ; <u>in sorrow</u> thou shalt bring forth children; and <u>thy desire shall be to thy husband</u> , and <u>he shall rule over thee</u> .

Now compare them to the literal translation of the Hebrew text below:

To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your toil and your pregnancy. With toil you shall bring forth sons; and your desire shall be to your man and he shall rule with you." (Gen. 3:16)

The Hebrew word '**ETZEV**', is translated "toil" above and "sorrows" or "pain" in other versions. It will be used again when YAHWEH addresses the man in the next verse – "by toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life." For some reason translators translated it as "sorrow" or "pain" when it refers to the woman, but as "toil" when it refers to the man. I have heard many sermons in which the audience was reminded that women would not experience pain during childbirth if it hadn't been for the sin of a woman. Preachers pointed out that it was also her fault that men have to spend their lives doing hard work. All of this pain and suffering is because of a female. You could always see men glancing at the women as the preacher spoke. Clearly, the preachers had bought into the man's excuse. If you want to read an extreme example, check out Tertullian's sermons about women.

Please note that the ruling YAHWEH handed out is for one specific woman, the one in the garden, not a universal curse placed upon all women forever.

Take another close look at the above verse and you will see that the word curse is not in it. The woman was not cursed; her punishment is "measure for measure" and reflects the injury that she caused. It also provides a unique insight into the way YAHWEH understood it. Apparently, he viewed the humans as though they were his children. Her punishment defines her relationship to her children. Her pregnancies and the raising of the resulting children will require toil by her.

YAHWEH's words did more than simply decree punishment; they also adhered to the ELOHIYM standard for life from chapter one. Human life will now be extended through their offspring. They will ultimately die, but many generations will live after them. The woman may have been the one that handed the man the forbidden fruit, but she will also be the one through whom future life will come.

The final part of YAHWEH's decree concerns the relationship of the man to the woman. ELOHIYM declared that the male and female should rule together over the animals and all of the earth, in chapter one. In the garden they acted independently, not together in harmony, and allowed an animal to rule over them. The encounter with the serpent exposed this weakness. YAHWEH's decree corrected this situation. However, translators and religious doctrines have made it impossible for generations of readers to recognize it.

The lives of over a billion females have been directly influenced by how one Hebrew letter was translated. It is in the Hebrew word transliterated as **BAKe**, which is constructed by combining a prepositional prefix **B** with a feminine suffix **K** (her). The usual translations for the **B** prefix are: 1) in; 2) among; 3) with; and, 4) by.

I am sure you noticed that "over" wasn't one of the options. What would have happened if generations of Bible readers had read "he shall rule with you;" instead of "he shall rule over you?" What if they had been taught that it was God's will for males and females to be equals and co-rulers? If they had been aware of the standard established by ELOHIYM in the first chapter, the glaring mistranslation of a simple prefix would have been apparent. Their roles would not have been determined by what was under their fig leaves.

Instead, the determination of which path generations of believers would be able to follow was determined the moment the announcement was made at birth – "It's a boy;" or "It's a girl." Many of the choices about what that baby would be able to do or not do in its life were determined at that moment. Its place in society and the options that would be made available for it depended on its gender. Just think of the disadvantage that being unable to vote placed on American women in modern society. It wasn't until the beginning of the twentieth century, when President Woodrow Wilson urged Congress to pass what became the Nineteenth Amendment (ratified in 1920), that they became equal with males and could vote.

YAHWEH's decree also revealed that things would have been very different if her desire had been for the man instead of the serpent, and that she had been a co-ruler with the man. But, YAHWEH wasn't placing all of the blame on her.

And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your woman, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you. By work you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken. For you are dirt and to dirt you shall return." (Genesis 3:17-19)

YAHWEH did not curse the man; he cursed the ground. The man's sin began with the way he acquired the forbidden fruit, and his penalty changed the way he would acquire his future food. He would now have to "toil" to get his food, and every hour he labored would be a reminder of what took place in the garden. He will encounter painful obstacles as he works to provide food for himself and his family. His decisions in the future will be made with the woman as a co-ruler who must toil to raise their children. Both will remember the garden and their lives there.

YAHWEH's decrees addressed the causes of their failures and provided a way that would preserve human life. However, the one thing that had to still be on everyone's mind was death. Had YAHWEH changed his mind? The picture, in the mind of many modern readers, is that they should have simply fallen over dead when they ate the fruit. Since that didn't happen, there is confusion and a number of questions have been raised.

It may help if we consider the literal translation of YAHWEH's words – "dieing you will die." It clearly indicates that death will be the outcome, but it also seems to reveal that death will be a process. When the man ate the fruit the process of death began. It would affect their lives, as well as the lives of their descendants. Some may remember that there is still one way left to overcome death. YAHWEH hasn't forgotten it either. We will have to address it in the next issue. **BHC**

If you understand the importance of this article, please share it with as many people as possible – especially women. Make copies or let people know it is FREE online in the *Discovering the Bible* section of our website. *If you consider this important* – please help BHC by sending a tax-deductible donation now. Check the website for information about how to donate. *With your help we will enhance the lives of many others. Thank you!*

January Memorials

In Loving Memory

**MURLIN
BENTLEY**

May 24, 1929
January 20, 1996

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Loving Memory

**GLADYS
GERALDINE
MYERS**

October 1, 1916
January 29, 2009

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*



SHALOM
*Totality, Wholeness &
Peace.*

In Their Remembrance

*May their memories inspire us to
seek those qualities of mind and
heart which they shared when we
walked life's journey together.*

*May we help to bring closer to
fulfillment their highest ideals and
noblest strivings.*

*May their memories deepen our
loyalty to those things which we
valued and shared --
faith, love, peace and devotion
and our biblical heritage.*

*As long as we live, they too will
live; for they are now a part of us,
as we remember them.*

(Inspired from prayers found in Yitzhor
Reflections - The New Mahzor - The
Prayer Book Press)

Remembering those who came before
us is a very important part of the
Biblical Heritage Center's mission. It
is our privilege to honor them by the
BHC Memorials printed in this
newsletter. Also, please visit the
Memorial Garden is on the website at
<http://www.biblicalheritage.org> .

If you would like to add your loved
one to this section, send their
information to us. There is no charge,
but donations are accepted.
Remember those who have meant so
much to you with a BHC Memorial.

In Loving Memory

**JULIE FALLIN
KELSOE**

January 12, 1960
January 19, 1990

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Loving Memory

**HOMER
MELTON
(DOC) PITNER**

October 7, 1914
January 10, 1971

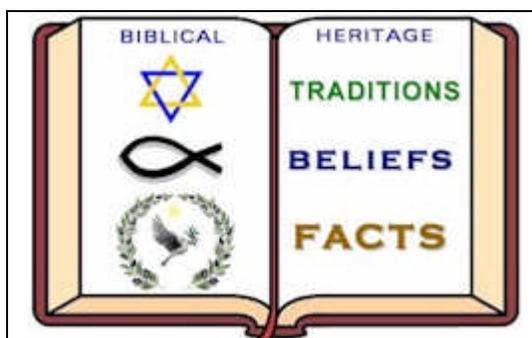
*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

In Loving Memory

**JOHNNIE
VERA
BOND**

February 21, 1893
November 30, 1985

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*



BHC's Primary Mission

Enhance the quality of life and protect life by raising the awareness of the origins and historical transmissions of the beliefs created by the many heritages which base their reason for existence upon a Bible.

Thank you for reading this newsletter.

Matters of belief & faith play important roles in the quality of lives we lead; especially because of their effects on the political and social environments in which we are immersed. One of our primary missions is to provide you with solid factual information about our Bibles and the many heritages associated with them.

If this newsletter was given to you and you would like to know more about the Biblical Heritage Center, please visit our website at: <http://www.biblicalheritage.org>

Join the BHC Google Group (link is on the BHC Home Page) so you will receive future newsletters – FREE. We are happy to be able to share them with as many people as possible, regardless of their economic capacities. Please share our newsletters with as many people as you like – forward emails, make copies, etc. *All we ask is that you include this page with the newsletters.*

It takes funds to do our work and the Biblical Heritage Center is completely funded by financial gifts sent by individuals who benefit from its work. If you are able to help and feel that you have benefited from our work, please participate in our work by contributing. *Your generosity will be greatly appreciated and it will make a big difference!* For information about how to make an online donation go to -- <http://www.biblicalheritage.org/BHC/donate.htm> or mail it to:

**Biblical Heritage Center, Inc.
P. O. Box 79
Cleburne, TX 76033-0079**

The Biblical Heritage Center, Inc. is not a religious organization and therefore does not promote any doctrinal system or statement of faith. BHC is an educational and research organization that searches for factual information from a wide variety of sources. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Consult your tax advisor or accountant for information.