

## GENESIS 3:16; 4:1, AND 4:7: A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITIES? By David Klingler

### Abstract

The desire of the woman in Genesis 3:16 is not for the man “with her” (i.e., Adam, cf. Gen 3:6) but in the “man” that will come forth from her (i.e., a son/seed/man that will be born to her). Her desire (along with all of the same language) is voiced by her in 4:1. As the narrative makes clear very quickly, Cain is not the seed/son/man who will restore Eve and all who share in her desire, but instead is led astray to share in the serpent’s desire revealed in 4:7. Thus, Cain (now the seed of the serpent) kills Abel (the son who shares in the woman’s desire). Seth (a reference back Genesis 3:15) is a replacement seed (also from Genesis 3:15) for Abel whom Cain killed. Thus, the rising action in the narrative of enmity and sorrow which began in Genesis 3 and 4 will continue throughout the biblical narrative until the Promised Seed restores all who share in Eve’s desire.

### Introduction

Genesis 3:16; 4:1, and 4:7 are three verses that are notoriously difficult to interpret. It is not surprising then that the history of interpretation of these three verses, especially in modern times, has presented several competing interpretations.

The main reason for the confusion is easily explained. Simply stated, the conclusions of modern critical scholarship have informed us that many of the books of the Old Testament are not a unity – especially the book of Genesis. As Lucien Ouellette states:

“A point on which everybody is agreed to-day (sic) is that the *real meaning* (emphasis mine) of Genesis is to be sought, not so much in the literary form of the whole book, as in the literary form of the parts which compose the book. Whether we speak of documents, fragments, or supplements, of sources, oral or written, of secretaries and redactors, inspired or not, one thing remains certain: Genesis is a composite work. No one literary type is sufficient to account for all its peculiarities of style and content.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, at least for the critical scholar of decades past, there is no unity in Genesis. Such a view has a long history as Skinner explained almost 100 years ago:

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<sup>1</sup> Ouellette, Lucien. "Woman's Doom in Genesis 3:16." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (October 1, 1950), pp 389-99. (Here on page 389).

“That the Book of Genesis is a composite work is now so generally recognised that it would be hard to name a writer of importance who denies it. The current theories of its composition are indeed endlessly varied; but, from Naville with his cuneiform tablets at one extreme to Eerdmans with his polytheistic and monotheistic editions at the other, they all admit some kind of diversity in the structure of the book. There is only one theory, however, which has been slowly built up by the labours of successive generations of scholars, which can claim for its main outlines anything like a consensus of opinion at the present time. In its recent forms it is usually known as the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis of the composition of the Pentateuch...”<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, since a disunified composition cannot produce a unified message, it is only logical for the critical scholar to conclude that there is no real unified meaning to be sought in the book of Genesis as a whole.

It is no surprise then that since the advent of higher critical methods in biblical scholarship, each new generation of scholars brings with them new critical approaches to the biblical text in their efforts to offer reasonable explanations for the text’s present disunified form. Moreover, their goal and motivation is not simply to explain the present form of the biblical text, but also the “real meaning” of the individual parts which, consistent with their approach and conclusions, can only be found in the *Sitz em Leben* that produced the individual parts. In other words, for the critical scholar, the Bible’s “real meaning” is *not* to be found, in fact *cannot* be found, in the plain reading of the text itself – being disunified as it is. Instead, it can only be understood via the hypothetically reconstructed historical, textual, or oral backgrounds which allegedly served as the impetus for the composition of individual portions (or texts, *plural*) of the biblical books.

Critical scholarship of today then views biblical texts such as the book of Genesis as merely *a part* of the literary evidence that must be carefully examined, dissected, and reoriented in light of the rest of the historical, literary, and archaeological data in order to “discover” the historical milieu through which a “real meaning” can be determined and out of which the biblical texts were derived.<sup>3</sup> This critical approach to the texts of the Bible creates an uncrossable divide for those who still believe that any “real meaning” can be discovered within the biblical text itself.

A second reason for the multitude of interpretations of the verses under consideration is directly derived from the first. Since it is presupposed that there is no unified message in the Book of Genesis, each “text” is then examined and interpreted individually without regard for the preceding or following passages. With this fragmented beginning point, Hermann Gunkel’s commentary on Genesis explained that many of the early chapters of Genesis are to be regarded as etiological in purpose. Gunkel explains:

A series of myths can be understood in terms of a natural event often or regularly

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<sup>2</sup> John Skinner 1851-1925, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Scribner, 1910), xlii.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to point out at this juncture that the results of such an approach to any unified text would render said text unable to speak. Instead, the only thing that is able to speak is the critical scholar’s hypothesized situation or history which produced the parts of the text.

occurring in the real world which provided the palette for an account of such an event in the primordium. Thus, the creation of the world is portrayed a grand spring, and the frequently observed appearance of the rainbow after the rain gave occasion for the account of the rainbow's origin after the Flood. Many myths respond to questions and thus want to teach. This is also true of the primal legends of Genesis. The creation narrative asks, "What are the origins of the heaven and earth?" and "Why is the sabbath holy?" The Paradise account asks, "What is the origin of human reason and mortality?" as well as "What is the origin of the human body and spirit? The origin of human language? The origin of sexual love (2:4)? How is it that the woman has so much pain in childbirth, that the man must cultivate the resistant field, that the serpent crawls on its belly? Etc." The response to these questions comprises the proper content of the legends in the cases mentioned. The Flood legend differs. It seems to reflect a historical event. But an "etiological" basis establishing element stands at the end: "Why will such a flood not recur (8:21f.; 9:8ff.)? What does the rainbow mean (9:12ff.)?" The natural conclusion of such an account is a clause with "therefore." Therefore, man leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife" (2:24; etc.). All of these questions, however – characteristically for these myths in contrast to legends – do not concern Israelite matters but those pertaining to the whole world.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, different proposed etiological purposes produce different interpretations. For example, if the presupposed etiological purpose was to explain why women typically try to domineer their husband (i.e., usurp his authority), or why women typically have a sexual desire for their husband, or why women typically share in their husband's desire, then the "historical" and "textual" facts that may support such an assertion are cited as "proof" of the interpretation (ironically there is little ANE or biblical support for any such interpretation). However, those textual details that do not support such a conclusion are disregarded. Or again, if the presupposed etiological purpose of the passage is to explain why women have pain during the childbearing process then those conclusions are imposed upon the text leading to the disregarding of the actual words being used in the text to the extent that such conclusions are presumed in the translations. The dislike of snakes, the presence of rainbows, the reason for death, the reason why things are named as they are... the proposed examples seem almost endless.

The potential problems with accepting the "assured conclusions" of critical scholarship and thus approaching the early chapters of Genesis as merely etiological are simple to identify. First, prematurely imposing a presupposed etiological purpose onto a text is a form of eisegesis and can produce a meaning that was not intended. The result of any eisegesis is that the means by which an interpretation is validated lies *outside* of the text itself. In other words, the interpretation of the supposed etiological passage can only be validated by some *external means* via other documents, archaeological finds, or some presumed historical background or situation. The second, and intimately related problem, is that once the proposed etiological purpose(s) is (are) "determined" (i.e., to explain the crawling of snakes, man's dislike of snakes, "pain" in childbirth, male and female relations, female desire, death, etc.), then the "irrelevant" details of

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<sup>4</sup> Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), xiii-xiv.



## 3. LXX

καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ εἶπεν Πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὰς λύπας σου καὶ τὸν στεναγμὸν σου, ἐν λύπαις τέξῃ τέκνα, καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα σου ἢ ἀποστροφή σου, καὶ αὐτός σου κυριεύσει.

4. Conclusion – As Ouellette explains, “Our verse is substantially the same in all codices and ancient versions. The conjunction ‘waw’ is probably to be added at the beginning before the preposition ‘el’ with the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions. Instead of ‘child-bearing’ the Greek has ‘groan.’ The Hebrew word has possibly been misread *hegyoneh* instead of *heryoneh*, only one letter being changed when we follow the spelling of the Samaritan Codex, two if we keep the Masoretic. But a more probable explanation seems to be that the Septuagint alter the text for theological reasons, either because children were considered as a benediction by the Jews, or because the text seemed to contradict Gen. 1:28, ‘be fruitful and multiply.’ Be that as it may, the Masoretic text is to be retained for two reasons: It carries the more difficult reading and very few authors rejected. One last word is more open to controversy. It is *teshukathek* “longing”. Greek, Syriac and Latin versions have read *teshubathek*, “return”. But here again, no cogent reason exists to forsake the Massoretic. *Teshukah* is a rare word to be sure. It is used only three times in the Bible, but for this very reason it is impossible to do away with it.”<sup>8</sup>

## b. Genesis 4:1

## 1. BHS

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Ⓜ Pentateuchi textus Hebraeo-Samaritanus secundum A. von Gall, Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner 1914–1918

Ⓜ versio LXX interpretum Graeca (secundum Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Gottingensis editum 1931 sqq, vel, ubi haec editio deest, secundum Septuaginta. Edidit A. Rahlfs 1935). Nullo signo adiecto, omnes vel gravissimi codices

Ⓜ versio Syriaca consensu testium Ⓜ<sup>A</sup> et Ⓜ<sup>W</sup> constituta

Ⓜ versio Latina vulgata (secundum Biblia Sacra iuxta Latinam Vulgatam versionem ad codicum fidem cura et studio monachorum Abbatiae Pont. S. Hieronymi in Urbe O.S.B. edita 1926 sqq, vel, ubi haec editio deest, secundum M. Hezenauer, Biblia Sacra Vulgatae editionis 1922)

frt fortasse

l lege(ndum) etc

c cum

Ⓜ Pentateuchi textus Hebraeo-Samaritanus secundum A. von Gall, Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner 1914–1918

Ⓜ versio LXX interpretum Graeca (secundum Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Gottingensis editum 1931 sqq, vel, ubi haec editio deest, secundum Septuaginta. Edidit A. Rahlfs 1935). Nullo signo adiecto, omnes vel gravissimi codices

Ⓜ Pentateuchi textus Hebraeo-Samaritanus secundum A. von Gall, Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner 1914–1918

cf confer(endum) etc

<sup>8</sup> Ouellette, 391.

וְהָאֱדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי  
אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה:

2. BHS Apparatus  
Cp 4, 1<sup>a-a</sup> ⚭ διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ
  3. LXX  
Ἀδὰμ δὲ ἔγνω Εὐαν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ συλλαβοῦσα ἔτεκεν τὸν Καὶν καὶ εἶπεν Ἐκτεσάμην ἄνθρωπον διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ.
  4. Conclusion – There is no substantial textual variant of note in Genesis 4:1. The LXX reading “through the God” is interpretive.
- c. Genesis 4:7
1. BHS  
הָלֹא אִם־תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב לִפְתַּח חַטָּאת רַבָּץ וְאֵלֶיךָ  
תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשַׁל־בּוֹ:
  2. BHS Apparatus  
7<sup>a-a</sup> ⚭ διέλης, ἡμαρτες; ἡσύχασον = רַבָּץ חַטָּאת רַבָּץ || <sup>b-b</sup> orig prb וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשַׁל־בּוֹ  
תַּמְשְׁלִי בוֹ, gl ad 3,16
  3. LXX  
7 οὐκ, ἐὰν ὀρθῶς προσενέγκῃς, ὀρθῶς δὲ μὴ διέλης, ἡμαρτες; ἡσύχασον, πρὸς σὲ ἢ ἀποστροφή αὐτοῦ, καὶ σὺ ἄρξεις αὐτοῦ.
  4. Conclusion – again, no substantial textual variant is to be noted here. As with Genesis 3:16, the Greek reads “return,” but the text should not be amended.
- II. Textual observations – Next, a quick look at the textual relationship that will be drawn throughout this paper might be helpful.

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⚭ versio LXX interpretum Graeca (secundum Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Gottingensis editum 1931 sqq, vel, ubi haec editio deest, secundum Septuaginta. Edidit A. Rahlfs 1935). Nullo signo adiecto, omnes vel gravissimi codices

⚭ versio LXX interpretum Graeca (secundum Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Gottingensis editum 1931 sqq, vel, ubi haec editio deest, secundum Septuaginta. Edidit A. Rahlfs 1935). Nullo signo adiecto, omnes vel gravissimi codices

orig originalis, -e etc; originaliter

prb probabiliter

gl glossa(tum) etc

ad addit, -unt etc

a. Genesis 3:15

וַאִיבָהּ | אֲשִׁית בֵּינֶךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זְרַעֲךָ וּבֵין זְרַעָהּ הוּא יִשׁוּפֶךָ  
 רָאשׁ וְאַתָּה תִּשׁוּפְנֵנוּ עֵקֶב:

b. Genesis 3:16

אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר הַרְבֵּה אַרְבֵּה עֲצֻבוֹנְךָ וְהָרַגְךָ בְּעֵצֶב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים וְאֶל־אִשְׁךָ  
 תִּשְׁוֹקְתֶךָ וְהוּא יִמְשַׁלְּבֶךָ:

c. Genesis 4:1

וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־קַיִן וְהִיא אִשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה:

d. Genesis 4:7

הֲלוֹא אִם־תִּיטִיב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תִיטִיב לִפְתַּח חַטָּאת רַבָּץ וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁוֹקְתוּ  
 וְאַתָּה תִּמְשַׁלְּבוּ:

III. Interpretive Issues, Summary, and Translation,— Third, a thorough investigation of the interpretive issues contained in each of these three verses, a brief summary for each verse, and a proposed translation for Genesis 3:16; 4:1, and 4:7 is necessary.

A. Genesis 3:16

1. Interpretive Issues

a. הַרְבֵּה אַרְבֵּה “I will greatly multiply...”

- i. Many have argued that the language “I will greatly increase” must refer to something that already existed in the garden. If we approach this text of Genesis as a unified story, then the reality of multiplied conception is easily explained. In Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18, 20, 24, the reader understands that man was created to “be fruitful and multiply”. Thus, it must be recognized that the intention of the Lord was always for Adam to multiply and that woman would bring forth children.
- ii. The added significance of the enmity or struggle between the “woman” and the “serpent” that began in the garden will only be magnified via the enmity between the “seed of the woman” and the “seed of the serpent.” Moreover, this struggle will produce increased sorrow as the story unfolds.

b. עֲצֻבוֹנְךָ “your sorrow”

- i. The word that is translated here in 3:16 as “pain” almost never refers to physical pain. Instead, its use referring to “sorrow” or “grief” is consistent throughout the Genesis narrative. In fact, in the thirty-four uses of the root word in the Old Testament (Gen. 3:16, 17; 5:29; 6:6; 34:7; 45:5; 1 Sam 20:3, 34; 2 Sam 19:3; 1 Kgs 1:6; Isa 14:3; 50:11; 54:6; 58:3; 63:10; Psa 16:4; 56:6; 78:40; 127:2; 139:24; 147:3; Job 9:28; Prov 5:10; 10:10, 22; 14:23; 15:1, 13; Ecc 10:9; Neh 8:10, 11; and 1 Chr 4:9, 10), only Ecclesiastes 10:9 be argued to be referring to physical pain.
- ii. As is common in all stories, the exact meaning of the “sorrow” can only be understood as the narrative unfolds. The “enmity” between the “seed of the woman” and the “seed of the serpent” only begins to be understood in the following chapters. In chapter 4, Cain becomes the “seed of the

serpent” and kills Abel (who aligns himself with the promise of the LORD given to the woman). As the narrative makes explicit, Seth (a name that comes from 3:15) was appointed to replace Abel as “seed” because Cain killed Abel. Enmity, sorrow, and death await all of the sons that will be born in the narrative of Genesis. In addition, the contrasting genealogies set up the next two scenes (the flood and the tower). However, the hope of the narrative is tracking the Promised Seed through chapters 5, 10, and 11 who would come and restore what was lost at the fall.

- iii. One interesting passage that has direct relevance to the current discussion of the use of “sorrow” is Isaiah 14. Isaiah 14:3 reads וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַנִּיחַ יְהוָה לֵךְ מֵעֵצְבֶךָ וּמִרְגִּיזֶךָ וּמִזֵּבְדֶךָ אֲשֶׁר עָבַדְתָּ:
- iv. As will be explained below, seeking the restoration of “rest” (2:15, 5:29, Deut 28:65) through the Promised Seed who would remove the “עֵצָב” arising from their labor (both of the ground, Genesis 3:17 and 5:29, and also from the nations that the LORD has raised up to judge Israel (Deut 28:65) is the primary focus of the developing plot.
- c. וְהָרְנָךְ “and your conception”
  - i. While some argue for a different root than “הָרָה” (to conceive), the literary evidence in support of “הָרָה” is overwhelming. The root is used 62 times in 60 verses in the Old Testament and 25 times in Genesis alone (Gen 3:16; 4:1, 17; 16:4, 5, 11; 19:36; 21:2; 25:21; 29:32, 33, 34, 35; 30:5, 7, 17, 19, 23; 38:3, 4, 18, 24, 25; 49:26; Exo 2:2; 21:22; Num 11:12; Jdg 13:3, 5, 7; 1 Sam 1:20; 2:21; 4:19; 2 Sam 11:5; 2 Kgs 4:17; 8:12; 15:16; Isa 7:14; 8:3; 26:17, 18; 33:11; 59:4, 13; Jer 20:17; 31:8; Hos 1:3, 6, 8; 2:7; 9:11; 14:1; Amos 1:13; Psa 7:15; Job 3:3; 15:35; Ruth 4:13; Song 3:4; 1 Chr 4:17; 7:23).
  - ii. Moreover, when consideration is given to the fact that the use of “הָרָה” along with “יָלַד” and “בָּן” is consistent throughout the Old Testament narrative and found in key Messianic passages like Isaiah 7:14, the evidence is even more convincing. (Cf. Gen. 4:1, 4:17; 16:11; 21:2; 29:32, 33, 34, 45; 30:5, 7, 17, 19, 23; 38:3, 4; Exo 2:2; Jdg 13:3, 5, 7; 1 Sam 1:20, 21; 2 Kgs 4:17; Isa 7:14; Hos 1:3, 8; Ruth 4:13; 1 Chr 7:23).
- d. עֵצְבוֹנְךָ וְהָרְנָךְ “your sorrow and your conception”
  - i. While many wish to see this phrase as a “hendiadys,” no clear evidence exists in Hebrew Bible of such a category or usage. Instead, it takes special pleading and an etiological presupposition that what is in view in the narrative is “pain in childbirth” rather than increased sorrow and conception.
  - ii. Instead of “pain in childbirth” (assuming the presence of a hendiadys), and given the use of these two words in later passages that seem to be referring to this passage, it is better to translate this phrase “your sorrow and your conception.”
- e. בְּעֵצָב תִּלְדִּי בָנִים “in sorrow you will bring forth sons”

- i. Again, the translations here are not literal and assume that the purpose of the story is “childbearing” more generally and not the bringing forth of “sons” specifically.
  - ii. The reason for a desire to bring forth a 3ms “seed” should seem obvious given the previous verse (Gen. 3:15). The sorrow is that while her desire is to bring forth the promised “seed/man,” she will only bring forth sorrow. This understanding is reflected throughout the prophets (cf. Isa 26:17-27:1, a passage where Israel will rise from the dust (Gen 3:17), experience salvation, and “Leviathan the serpent” (לְיִיתָן נָחָשׁ) will be killed by the LORD.
- f. וְאֶל-אִישׁךָ “and for your man” – This phrase is the crux of this argument. Two issues must be addressed: the function of the disjunctive clause and the identity of the “man.”
- i. The function of a disjunctive clause must be determined from the context. The likely possibilities are circumstantial, parenthetical, or contrastive.<sup>9</sup> While most English translations leave both disjunctive waw (as well as the disjunctive clause immediately following this one) untranslated (e.g., NIV, ESV) and others simply translate it with “and” (e.g., KJV), the contrastive nature translated as “yet” or “but” seems most appropriate and accounts for the grammatical construction of the verse as will be made clear below (e.g., NASB).
  - ii. Every interpretation of 3:16 assumes that the identity of the “אִישׁ” is Adam. However, is Adam the only possibility?
    - a) Textual usages of “אִישׁ” in Genesis 2-4: The word “אִישׁ” is used twice in Genesis 2, twice in Genesis 3, twice in Genesis 4. All other instances of “man” in these chapters is translating “אָדָם.”
      - 1) In Genesis 2:23 the referent of “אִישׁ” is clearly Adam. וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עַצְם מִמֶּעֶצְמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזָאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לְקָחָהּ זָאת:
      - 2) However, in Genesis 2:24, the referent of “אִישׁ” is the son that is born from the father and mother. This one will be joined to his wife (“אִשָּׁה”). וְהָיוּ עַל-כֵּן יִעֲזֹב אִישׁ אֶת-אָבִיו וְאֶת-אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד:
      - 3) In Genesis 3:6 the referent of “אִישׁ” is clearly Adam again. וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמֵאֲכָל וְכִי תֹאמֶה-הוּא לְעֵינַיִם וְנָחַמְדָּהּ עָלָהּ לְהַשְׂכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיָו וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם-לְאִשָּׁה עִמָּהּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ:
      - 4) In Genesis 3:16 it has always been assumed that the referent is Adam again. However, once a closer look is taken, that assumption is highly questionable. אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר הָרְבָה אֲרַבְּהָ עֲצָבוֹנָךְ וְהָרַגְתְּ בְּעֵצָב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים וְאֶל-אִישְׁךָ תִּשְׁוָקְתֶּךָ וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל-בְּךָ:

<sup>9</sup> An initial disjunctive clause (i.e., one that introduces a new scene in a narrative) can be ruled out.

- 5) In Genesis 4:1, the “אִישׁ” is clearly a son and not Adam. All of the language of 3:16 appears here.
- 6) In Genesis 4:23, the “אִישׁ” is clearly not Adam again. Instead, the “אִישׁ” is in parallel with a boy “יָלֵד” Again, this language aligns with the usage in 3:15-16. In other words, it appears that just as Cain killed Abel, so also Lamech has killed an “אִישׁ” for “wounding” him, a “יָלֵד” for “striking” him.
- Finally, in 4:25 the words “יָלֵד” “בֶּן” and “זָרַע” show up again in reference to Seth who serves as a replacement seed for Abel who Cain killed. This scene comes to a close with Cain not being the Promised One, but becoming the seed of the serpent (i.e., shares in the “crouching one’s” desires). Cain kills Abel, thus beginning the enmity between the believer (seed of the woman) and the unbeliever (seed of the serpent). Seth (שֵׁת whose name is the next appearance in the narrative from the verb אָשִׁית from Genesis 3:15) is the replacement “בֶּן” and “זָרַע” for Abel. The “זָרַע” genealogy continues through Seth.
- b) There are several interpretive issues that must be considered when determining who is the referent in 3:16
- 1) Interpretive Issue #1: However, one interprets Genesis 3:15 (as the proto-evangelium or not), a few things can be stated with certainty.
    - a. First, the serpent is opposed to God since his words directly contradict those stated in Genesis 2:16-17.
    - b. Second, the serpent is opposed to the woman as is made clear by both his actions of deceiving her and the ensuing proclamation of enmity between the two by the LORD.
    - c. Third, the seed of the serpent is opposed to the seed of the woman as is made clear by the proclamation of enmity between the two by the LORD
    - d. Thus, there are only two possibilities here. Either there are two “teams” in this story (God/woman vs. the serpent) or there are three (God, the woman, and the serpent). If there are only two sides, then the woman is on God’s side and both are in opposition to the serpent. Or, the woman, God, and the serpent are all on opposing teams. This second option can be eliminated by the ensuing scenes in the story.
  - 2) Interpretive Issue #2: A second question ought to be raised. If the one who will strike the serpent will come forth from the woman (זָרַע/הוּא), then why wouldn’t the woman’s desire be for that one to appear and restore what she has lost? It seems that given the preceding proclamation of coming conflict (enmity between the serpent and the woman as well as enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman) and the resolution to that conflict that plays out in the rest of the biblical narrative through

the seed of the woman, and given that the exact language of 3:16 reappears in the narrative just nine verses later and then repeatedly in following passages either directly leading to or related to Christ, consideration ought to be given to the possibility that the “אִישׁ” that she desires is not Adam who is “with her” but the “אִישׁ” that will come forth from her.<sup>10</sup>

- c) Understanding the “man” (אִישׁ) as referring to the “ben” (בֶּן), “seed” (זָרַע) has several advantages.
  - 1) First, it makes the desire of the woman clear.
  - 2) Second, it aligns with the actual language of the following passages.
  - 3) Third, it helps make clear sense of 4:1 and 4:7.
  - 4) Fourth, it aligns with the developing plot of the Genesis and biblical narrative.
  - 5) Fifth, there is no need to emend the Hebrew text or read in an etiological explanation.
- d) Conclusion: In conclusion, there are at least two options for the identity of the “ish” in Genesis 3:16: Adam and the anticipated “son/ish/seed.” While the “ish” in 3:16 has been almost universally understood as referring to Adam, it seems in light of the developing plot, Eve’s words in 4:1, and the developing plot in the narrative (to be explained below), consideration of the identity of the “אִישׁ” as a son that will come forth from Eve and not the man/Adam who that is with her is worthy of examination.<sup>11</sup>
- g. תְּשׁוּקָתָךְ “your desire”
  - i. תְּשׁוּקָה “desire” just means desire. The subject, object, and nature of the “desire” word must be understood from its contextual usage. Thus, the other two usages of תְּשׁוּקָה in the Bible (Genesis 4:7 and Song of Solomon 7:11) must be understood in their context.
  - ii. It is clear that the author desires Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 to be considered together since they are almost identical in the grammatical construction of their usage. The question is why. The problem up to this point has been twofold.

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<sup>10</sup> Passages of particular interest are Jdg 8-9 (especially 8:22 and 9:2); Isa 28 (especially 28:14-16); Jer 22:30; 2 Chr 7 (especially 7:18); Rev 12 (especially 12:13 and its relation to ἄρσηγ and its usage throughout the Scriptures).

<sup>11</sup> Didymus the Blind, using an allegorical approach, being a notable exception. In Genesis 3:16; Didymus is seeking to connect what Paul is saying Ephesians 5:32 sees the woman as the forerunner to the church and states, “Her yearning will be for her husband, Christ, mastered as she is by him, in order that the offspring of virtue given birth by her according to his advice will achieve maturity in him; Paul says, “I joined you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.” Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on Genesis* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press), 101.

1. First, while it is clear that the subject doing the “desiring” is the woman Eve, the object of that desire has always been assumed to be Adam. Thus, the exact nature of the “desire” has been at the center of the debate.<sup>12</sup> If, however, the object of Eve’s desire is not Adam, but instead her anticipated seed, then the discussion concerning the nature of her desire is dramatically changed and the verse comes into alignment with the preceding statement of the LORD in Genesis 3:15. This paper is arguing that the identity of the woman’s desire is not her husband (Adam) but the anticipated “seed/son/man” what will come forth to strike the serpent and restore her lost co-regency. Thus, she is looking for a replacement for Adam who will do what he failed to do in the garden. This understanding fits the context of the developing literary narrative. In this “conflict” section of the narrative, the introduction of the One who will bring about the anticipated resolution is introduced. Thus, it is the woman’s desire to bring forth this One. As is common in narrative literature, the full import and impact of the verse are yet to be realized. Her desire will be voiced in 4:1 (explained below), but the sorrow in bringing forth sons will begin to be realized in Genesis 4 as well. She will be the mother of both “seeds” in the story. Some will share in her desire (i.e., Abel) others will share in the serpent’s desire (i.e., Cain). The relationship between these two “seeds” will be enmity. This reality will set up the contrasting genealogies and the narrative scenes to follow (i.e., the contrast between the two Enochs, walking with God vs building a city, and the two Lamechs, desiring the coming One who will bring “rest” vs. multiplying wives and killing an “איש,” will set up the flood and tower scenes).
2. The second interpretive problem is directly related to the discussion above. In Genesis 4:7, the identity of the subject of the desire has been interpreted to be “sin” (i.e., its desire is for you). However, חטאה, being a singular feminine noun, cannot grammatically be the subject of the desire since the pronominal suffix is a 3ms (תשוקתו). As will be explained below, the 3ms referent of the pronominal suffix is the masculine “crouching one” who should be contextually understood as the serpent / adversary of God. His desire is for Cain. Thus, there are two anticipated “sides” in the story (the woman and the serpent), there are two anticipated “seeds” in the story (the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent), and there are two desires in the story (the desire

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<sup>12</sup> The proposed “desire” of the woman in all of the various interpretations of Genesis 3:16 assume Adam is the referent. However, if it can be demonstrated that this assumption is wrong and Adam is not the referent, then reviewing the various views of the nature of the woman’s desire toward Adam is rendered useless. For this reason, the various views about the nature of Eve’s desire toward Adam will not be addressed in this paper.

of the woman and the desire of the serpent. This understanding makes explicit the enmity between the woman and the serpent. The woman's desire is to bear the son who will strike the serpent and restore her rule. The serpent's desire is to turn her sons in order to rule on his behalf and carry out his desires (i.e., to kill both the seed of the woman (singular) as well as those who share in her desire (seed plural) for the Promised One to appear and restore the rule and blessing of God throughout creation.

3. The role of this understanding in the developing biblical narrative is straightforward. In Genesis 3:15, two "teams" are established: the serpent and the woman. They will be enemies. Moreover, their "seed" will be enemies as well. Throughout the Bible, the "brood of vipers" or "seeds of serpents" are those who have been deceived by the serpent, Satan, and thus desire to kill the Promised Seed and all of those who desire His appearing. This is the shared desire of the serpent and his "seed." It was argued above that the identity of the "man" in 3:16 is not "Adam," but the "seed/son/man" that would come from her who would strike the serpent and restore her rule with Him. Thus, the "desire of the woman," stated here in 3:16, will stand in direct contrast to the desire of the serpent stated in 4:7. Moreover, the developing narrative tracks the promise concerning the woman's seed throughout the genealogies of 5 and 11 to Abram and Sarai. God will make Abram a great nation through which all of the families of the earth/nations will be blessed. The narrative is looking for the same Promised Seed. The rising action of the narrative tracks the Promised Seed from an individual woman (Eve) to a nation (Israel). Israel is now the "woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" who will bear the "son, a male" who is to "shepherd all nations with a rod of iron." (Revelation 12:1-5)

#### h. וְהוּא

- i. The role of two back-to-back disjunctive clauses needs to be addressed. While most English translations simply ignore the first disjunctive clause (וְאֶל-אִישׁךָ תְּשׁוּקָתְךָ) and translate it "and for your man/husband will be your desire" and either ignore again this second disjunctive clause (and again simply translate it with "...and...") or translate it as a contrastive disjunctive clause (thus a translation of "but" or "yet"), the relationship of these two clauses back-to-back must be determined. The simplest explanation would be to understand the first as a contrastive disjunctive clause (i.e., "...but...") and the second as a circumstantial or causal disjunctive clause ("...because..."). Thus, "I will greatly increase your sorrow and your conception, in sorrow you will bring forth sons, yet your desire will be for your אִישׁ because he will rule with you."
- j. The adjoining pronoun to the disjunctive waw should be noted. The referent is clearly "אִישׁךָ" but the identity of that אִישׁ is being evaluated. If

the identity of the **איש** in 3:16 is the anticipated **זרע** in 3:15, then the 3ms prounoun **הוא** in both 3:15 and 3:16 is referring to the same **זרע/איש/בן**.

- k. **יִמְשֵׁל** “he will rule”
- i. The question concerning “**משל**” in Hebrew (which is a distinctive usage in relation to other Semetic languages) is a question of whether there is one root word for “**משל**” or two.<sup>13</sup>
  - ii. In all other Semetic languages, the root “**משל**” means “to be like” or “to become equal to.” The Bible appears to use the word this way in reference to a “proverb.” However, Hebrew (and in a few texts in Northwest Semitic) **משל** is used in the context of “ruling.”<sup>14</sup> Since it seems difficult to explain the connection with the usage that seems to denote “ruling,” most have argued for two separate root words in the Biblical text. However, if the contextual use of **משל**, to be like or equal to, is considered in light of the developing plot (i.e., man created as an image bearer of God vs. man representing the desires of the serpent) then a logical case can be made to explain the origin of **משל** as “to rule.”
  - iii. Moreover, another need for further study is the exact relation between **משל**, **רדה**, and **מלך**.
    1. While **מלך** is consistently translated into the LXX with a form of **βασιλευω**, the translations of **משל** and **רדה** are very inconsistent and only twice are translated with a form of **βασιλευω**.<sup>15</sup>
    2. After a preliminary consideration, it appears that **משל** and **רדה** are used in conjunction with the preposition **ב** (in, with, among, by) and not **על** (over), while **מלך** is used with the preposition **על** (over). Moreover, it appears that almost all of the uses where **ב** is translated in English translations as “over” are in conjunction with **משל** and **רדה**. However, as will be explained in more detail below, the LXX very rarely translates this construction as “over.”
    3. Further, it appears that “**מלך**” + “**על**” often carries the connotation of subjugation but “**משל**” + “**ב**” and “**רדה**” + “**ב**” communicate more of bringing blessing “in the midst of” meaning rather than “over” (i.e., a care for or bless vs. a subjugation of).
  - iv. In the Genesis creation narrative, God creates man to be an “image bearer” who will carry out man’s created purpose of ruling over creation

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<sup>13</sup> For a full discussion, see Beyse’s (Vol IX, pp. 65-67) and Gross’s (Vol IX, pp. 68-71) explanations of **משל** in TDOT.

<sup>14</sup> See Jean and Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire des inscriptions semitiques de l’ouest* (Leiden, 1965), p. 171.

<sup>15</sup> Of the 102 occurrences of **משל**, only two are translated into the LXX with a form of **βασιλευω** (Pro 29:12 and 2 Chr 8:6). Of the 23 occurrences of **רדה**, none are translated into the LXX with a form of **βασιλευω**. Of the over 3,300 occurrences of **מלך**, almost all are translated with a form of **βασιλευω**.

according to what is “good” in the eyes of the LORD. Adam fails to fulfill his created purpose and the story begins the search for the one who would restore this rule of man on behalf of God. In other words, this One will “be like” (משל) God and He will “rule” (רדה) on behalf of God (as Adam was created to do).

- v. Unfortunately, that “rule” was lost. As becomes clear throughout the rest of the biblical narrative, the adversary is ruling over creation through his earthly representatives who share in his desires. Cain will be the first. However, the narrative is looking for the One (man, seed, son) who will represent the LORD (משל) and restore rule (רדה radah) in the midst of His enemies (same root as Gen 3:15), (Psalm 110:2 [3]).
- l. בך “in/with/among/by you” vs. “over you” (with משל)
  - i. While the English translations most commonly translate “משל” + “ב” as “rule over,” the LXX translations of this construction (“משל” + “ב”) either leaves the “ב” untranslated, or translates it with εν. While several passages are relevant to this discussion, one passage of particular interest is 2 Chronicles 7:12-22. The relevant verse to this discussion is 7:18 which reads, “and I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man (שׂא), a ruler (מוֹשֵׁל) in Israel (בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל).’” The LXX reads, “καὶ ἀναστήσω τὸν θρόνον τῆς βασιλείας σου, ὡς διεθέμην Δαυιδ τῷ πατρὶ σου λέγων Οὐκ ἐξαρθήσεται σοι ἀνὴρ ἡγούμενος ἐν Ἰσραηλ.” As stated above, of the 77 times that משל is used in the OT, only twice (Pro 29:12 and 2 Chr 8:6) is it translated in the LXX with a form of βασιλευω. This seems to be an intentional avoidance of the way that the root מלך (used over some 3,316 times) is almost exclusively translated (as a form of βασιλευω with very few exceptions).<sup>16</sup>
  - ii. In contrast to the translation of the “משל” + “ב” construction in the LXX, the “מלך” + “לע” construction is almost always translated with επι (the examples here are too numerous to list but here is a sampling: Gen 37:8; Jdg 9:8, 10, 12, 14, 15; 1 Sam 8:7, 9, 11; 12:1, 12, 14; 16:1; 23:17; 2 Sam 2:10; 1 Kgs 15:25; 22:41; Dan 9:1; 1 Chr 29:26; 2 Chr 1:11, 13; 10:17) Additionally, the “מלך” + “ב” construction is translated in the LXX as εν (again, this is a sampling: Gen 36:31-32; Josh 13:10, 12; Jdg 4:2, 1 Kgs 11:37; 15:10; 22:42; 2 Kgs 8:17; 12:2; 14:2; 15:2, 13; 33; 16:2; 18:2; 21:1, 19; 22:1, 31, 36; 24:8, 18, 25:1; 1 Chr 3:4; 2 Chr 12:13; 13:2; 20:31; 21:20; 22:2; 24:1; 25:1; 26:23; 27:12; 28:1; 29:1; 33:1; 34:1; 36:2; 36:11).
  - iii. 2 Chronicles 7:18 is the same language as Genesis 3:16 with one difference. The promise to the singular woman (אֵבֶר) Eve is now a promise to the plural woman Israel (בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל). This is the development of the plot

<sup>16</sup> Exceptions are either when the LXX transliterates a name or in Deut 17:14, 15 (2x), 18, 20; 29:36; 33:5; Josh 10:2; Isa 10:8, 10, 12; 19:2; Ezek 29:14, 15; 37:22, 24; 43:7, 9; Job 15:24; and Pro 31:4.

from Genesis 3 to Genesis 12. The anticipated “singular seed” is being traced throughout the genealogies. The LORD promised Abram that He will make Abram into a great nation and “in you” (בְּךָ) all the families of the earth will be blessed. Now the singular seed promised to the singular woman Eve will come out of the plural national woman Israel.

- iv. The root רדה is used 23 times in the OT. רדה is used without a preposition or in conjunction with ב. It is never used in conjunction with על. In fact, specific instruction is given to Israel NOT to רדה in a way that subjugates others.<sup>17</sup> However, if they reject the LORD then they will be ruled by their enemies – and that rule is harsh. Finally, it appears that “in the midst of” may be the emphasis of “ב+רדה” construction as is made explicit in Psalm 110:2.
  - v. In the use of three common root words for “rule,” it appears that there are two types of “rule” at work in the biblical narrative. The first relates to the manner in which man was created to “rule” and to be a blessing to others. Man was to represent God (image bearer). So, this type of rule seems to be most reflected in the ideal of משל and רדה and thus the utilization of the preposition ב (in, with, among, by). Conversely, the rule of adversary is one of subjugation and domination and thus coincides with the verbal form of מלך and accompanied by the preposition על.
2. Summary – If Genesis 3:16 is understood contextually and literarily rather than etiologically, then the word usage and meaning are both consistent with the developing plot of the narrative. There will be enmity between the serpent and the woman and between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Even though her “seed” will strike the serpent and be struck by the serpent, her hope (and thus her desire) is for her man that will come forth from her to restore the rule that was lost by Adam. Thus, her hope and desire is not in the man “with her” (from 3:6), but in the man that will come from her (thus her statement in 4:1). Therefore, the 3:15 seed is promised to restore her rule.
  3. Proposed Translation – “And to the woman he said, ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception, in sorrow you will bring forth sons; yet your desire will be for your man because he will rule with you.’”

## B. Genesis 4:1

### 1. Interpretive Issues

- a. וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוְּהָ אִשְׁתּוֹ “Now Adam knew Eve, his wife...”
  - i. A disjunctive introduces a new scene in the developing narrative. “Now Adam knew...”
  - ii. As is usually understood, the verb ידה is a euphemism for having sexual relations.

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<sup>17</sup> See Leviticus 25:43, 46, 53.

- iii. אֶת־חַוָּה is functioning as a direct object marker followed by the name Eve. Thus, “Now Adam knew Eve...”
- iv. The words אִשְׁתּוֹ are added to draw the contrast or irony in what is about to happen. The woman, Eve, came forth from the אִישׁ Adam. Now, an אִישׁ will come forth from the woman Eve. In other words, the hope of the woman’s return to co-regency is not in the אִישׁ from whom she came, but in the אִישׁ that will come from her.<sup>18</sup>
- b. וַתֵּלֶד וַתִּהְיֶה “...And she conceived...”
  - i. This is the first usage of הָרָה and יָלַד since 3:16. הָרָה combined with יָלַד and בֵּן will be used repeatedly throughout the Genesis narrative and beyond.
- c. אֶת־קַיִן “...Cain...”
  - i. “et” as direct object marker followed by the name Cain.
- d. וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ “...And she said, ‘I have acquired a man...’”
- e. אֶת־יְהוָה “...The LORD”
  - i. The construction and exact meaning of the phrase אֶת־יְהוָה has been the subject of much debate. The common translation “with the help of the LORD” is somewhat tenuous since no other occurrence of this construction in Hebrew Bible is translated “with the help of the LORD,” “with the LORD,” or “of the LORD.”
  - ii. In light of the near grammatical constructions and developing context, it seems that she is either naming or calling upon the name of the LORD. In Genesis 4:25-26, it is clear that both the language of the narrator and the language of Eve are referencing Genesis 3:15-16 (יָלַד, בֵּן, שָׂת, זָרַע) as Seth is an “appointed” replacement “seed” for Abel who Cain killed (referring to the enmity). Moreover, Seth (the replacement seed for Abel who shared in the woman’s desire) has a son and calls his name Enosh (arguably from the same root as אִישׁ). Genesis 4:26b reads, אָז הוּחַל לְקַרְא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה (“...then to call upon the name of the LORD was begun” or “...then it was begun to call upon the name of the LORD.”) It is notable that both Eve (in 4:25) and Adam (in 5:3) name Seth.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. Summary

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<sup>18</sup> This appears to be what Paul is referencing in 1 Corinthians 11:11-12. The et-ishah construction in 4:25 should also be noted. Cain will be led astray by the “crouching one” to share in his desires to kill Abel who aligns with the desire of the woman. Thus, Seth is a replacement seed for Abel who Cain killed.

<sup>19</sup> Many have made an issue of the fact that the woman is naming her sons in 4:1 and 4:25 and thus is a sign of usurping her husband’s authority. However, it should be noted that faithful women throughout the story name their sons (e.g., Gen 29:32, 33; 30:8, 11, 13, 18, 20, 24; 38:4, 5; Jdg 13:24; and most notably Hannah in 1 Sam 1:20; and the prophesied mother in Isaiah 7:14). Moreover, in Genesis 5:3 Adam also calls the name of his son Seth. So, Adam and Eve are in agreement in regards to the name of their son and his relation to 3:15. Further notable fathers naming their sons are Lamech in 5:29 and Moses in Exodus 2:22. Therefore, the naming of a son in relation to the outworking of God’s redemptive plan seems to be the point.

- a. The Genesis 4 story is about more than explaining the origin of family struggles. Instead, it is the development of the plot. The enmity between the woman and the serpent, as well as the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, is beginning to take shape. The woman's desire for the anticipated seed (man) to come from her are restore her rule, stated in Genesis 3:16 and voiced here in 4:1, takes an ironic turn. Instead, this son is enticed and led astray by the "crouching one" (3ms) and becomes the seed of the serpent. In other words, Cain does not align with the desire of the woman but with the desire of the serpent and in so doing kills his brother, Abel, the believer.

### 3. Proposed Translation

- a. So, Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and brought forth Cain. And she said, "I have acquired a man, the LORD."

## C. Genesis 4:7

### 1. Interpretive Issues

- a. הֲלוֹא אִם-תֵּיטִיב "If you do good cause good..."
  - i. An interrogative הֲ introduces this verse that presents two opposite responses that can be undertaken by Cain. The first is to do in accordance with what has been revealed as "טוֹב" from the previous scene. The result of following the first option would be "שֵׂאת."
  - ii. The good and acceptable offering was contrasted with the two "coverings" that were presented in chapter 3. Good is defined by the LORD and His example in Gen 3.
- b. שֵׂאת "...rank? (as in firstborn status)..."
  - i. The result of Cain's choosing good would be "שֵׂאת." The same usage appears in Genesis 49:3, translated "rank" or "prominence," and makes good sense of what is being stated given the context in both of these passages as well as the story revealed in between these two scenes. The response to Genesis 3:15 either establishes or forfeits one's firstborn status.
  - ii. The issue of "firstborn" is being introduced into this passage as well as "appeasement offerings" and "fat portions." All three of these issues relate to the Promise that will come through the firstborn unless they disqualify themselves. That point is made continuously throughout the Genesis narrative.
- c. וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב "...but if you do not do good..."
  - i. The second possible response of Cain, introduced in this verse by the contrastive disjunctive וְאִם לֹא and is best translated "but if you do not do good..." is to reject what the LORD has revealed as "טוֹב" and be enticed by the same serpent that led Adam and Eve into sin.
  - ii. The result of choosing this response is explained in the rest of the verse.
- d. לִפְתָּח חֲטָאת רִבֵּץ "...sin is a crouching one at the door..."
  - i. The Hebrew term translated "crouching" (רִבֵּץ, *rovets*) is an masculine singular active participle. Thus, as the NET Bible notes points out, "sin is portrayed with animal imagery here as a beast crouching and ready to

pounce (a figure of speech known as zoomorphism). An Akkadian cognate refers to a type of demon; in this case perhaps one could translate, ‘Sin is the demon at the door.’” (see E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* [AB], 29, 32–33).<sup>20</sup>

- ii. It should be noted at this point that “הטאה” is a feminine singular noun.
  - e. וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ “...his desire is for you...”
    - i. Several things are worthy of note here. First, the disjunctive clause must be explained. Since what follows ... is an explanation of the result of not doing good, this clause should be understood as a circumstantial or causal disjunctive clause and thus translated, “but if you do not do good, sin is a crouching one at the door because his desire is for you...”
    - ii. Second, the pronominal suffix on the word “desire” is masculine singular while “sin” is a feminine singular noun. Thus, the suffix is not referring to “sin” but must grammatically refer to the 3ms “crouching one.”
  - f. וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ “...because you will rule with him.”
    - i. This third disjunctive phrase in a row thus making the translation difficult. Following the clearly contrastive clause (וְאַם לֹא תֵיטִיב) and proposed circumstantial or causal clause (וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ) is וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ. This phrase and construction appears to be directly related to Genesis 3:16. Thus, both are giving the explanation for the desire of the woman (in 3:16) and the serpent (here in 4:7).
    - ii. If this line of argumentation is followed, then the second half of 4:7 would then be translated, “...but if you do not do good, sin is a crouching one at your door because his desire is for you so that (or ‘because’) you will rule with him.”
2. Summary – It seems clear that Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 are to be considered together given 1) their near context and almost identical constructions at the end of each verse, 2) the developing rising action in the literary narrative stated in Genesis 3:15 (i.e., the enmity between the woman and the serpent, and between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent), and 3) the competing desires between the woman and the serpent that seem to focus on Eve’s son Cain, Genesis 4:7 is best translated accordingly.
  3. Proposed Translation – “If you do good, rank (as in preeminence as the first born). But if you do not do good, sin is a crouching one at the door because his desire is for you so that (or, “because”) you will rule with him.”

#### IV. Textual Support for 3:16; 4:1, and 4:7

- a. Corresponding Word Usage in OT – Gen 4:1; 17; 16:11; 19:36; 21:2; 25:21-24; 29:32, 33, 34, 35; 30:5, 7, 17, 19, 23; 38:3, 4, 25-27; Exo 2:2; Jdg 13:3, 5, 7; 1 Sam 1:20; 2 Kgs 4:17; Isa 7:14; 8:3; 14:3-23; 26:17-27:3; Jer 31:8; Hos 1:3, 6, 8; Micah 5:2; Ruth 4:13; 1 Chr 7:23; 2 Chr 7:18.
- b. Corresponding Word Usage in NT – Matt 23:29-39; Eph 5:25-33; 1 Tim 2:13-15; Rev 12.

AB Anchor Bible (a commentary series)

<sup>20</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 4:6–7.

- V. Summary – Genesis 3:16, 4:1, and 4:7 are three verses that have been greatly debated throughout church history. What has been argued above is that the key to unlocking the meaning of these three verses are three cases of mistaken identity. In 3:16, it was argued that the “man” upon whom Eve has set her desire is one coming from her and not the man with her. Second, Eve’s statement in 4:1 voices her desire which was stated in 3:16. However, her identification of Cain as the anticipated “Man/Seed” is wrong. Ironically, Cain succumbs to the desire of the “crouching one” and becomes the serpent’s representative. Thus, Cain kills Abel (who shares in the woman’s desire) thus beginning both the sorrow and enmity that will exist throughout the biblical narrative. Finally, the identity of the “crouching one” who is “desiring” Cain in 4:7 should be understood to be the serpent of Genesis 3. Therefore, in throughout the biblical narrative there are two sides (God/woman vs. the serpent), there are two seeds (seed of the woman vs. the seed of the serpent) and there are two desires (the desire of the woman vs. the desire of the serpent).
- VI. Appendix: Illustration of Textual Support in Genesis 5:29 in Relation to Genesis 3:15 and the Developing Narrative.

Following the protoevangelium (Gen 3:15), the Bible begins tracking the promise of the Coming One who will restore God’s created order of Genesis 1:26-28. In an effort to demonstrate this, consider Lamech’s words in Genesis 5:29:

MT Gen. 5:29 אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ שְׁמוֹ נֹחַ לְאָמֹר יְהוָה יִנְחַמְנוּ מִמַּעַשְׁנוֹ וּמִעֲצָבוֹן יְרִינֵנוּ מִן־הַאֲדָמָה  
אֲשֶׁר אָרְרָה יְהוָה

LXX - Gen. 5:29 καὶ ἐπωνόμασεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Νωε λέγων Οὗτος διαναπαύσει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων ἡμῶν καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν λυπῶν τῶν χειρῶν ἡμῶν καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, ἧς κατηράσατο κύριος ὁ θεός.

### Textual Issues

This verse has one key textual issue and several interpretive questions that must be worked through. As seen above, the LXX reads διαναπαύσει for יִנְחַמְנוּ, suggesting that both the name and the explanation of it come from the same root נח, “rest.” However, as the text stands in the MT the name “Noah” does not match the explanation of the name (from the verb נחם, “to comfort”). For this reason, some have been persuaded that the MT should be emended. Yet, there are three ways to emend the text of this verse. First, the name נח is correct but the verb יִנְחַמְנוּ should be יְנַחֵמוּ (this view finds the textual support shown above in the LXX). Second, the verb יִנְחַמְנוּ is correct but the name נח is incorrect and should instead be from the root נחם. However, there is no textual evidence for such a conclusion. Third, the MT is correct as it stands.

In an effort to adjudicate the situation several factors must be considered. First, some reasonable explanation of the name of Lamech's son, whether נֹחַ or from the root נָחַ, must be explained. E. G. Kraeling begins his discussion of this issue at the point where Old Testament scholarship had taken him in his day:

Within the Priestly genealogy of the Sethites in Gen. 5, verse 29 appears as a precious nugget from an older source. The author, doubtless the Jahwist, presents us with an interesting explanation of the name Noah. According to the MT it combined with the root *nih(h)am'* comfort. 'Ancient Rabbis like Johanan and Simeon b. Lakish already objected to this etymology and claimed that 'Noah' ought to be derived from *nuah*, or that the name ought to be Nahman instead of Noah. (Goldziher, "Zur Geschichte der Etymologie des Namens Noah," Zeitschr. d. Deutschen Morgenland. Ges., 1870, 207f. Cp. *Bereshith Rabbba*, Sec. 25.) We may note, too, that the etymology cited in Enoch 106<sup>18</sup> is also operates with the Hiphil of *nuah*, in the secondary meaning 'to be left over.' An emendation of the text to *jenihenu'* he will cause us to rest 'is indeed necessary, for it seems incredible that the Jahwist should have gone out of his way to avoid the verb *nuah*. Furthermore, the *διαναπαύσει* of the LXX indicates that the form *jenahemenu* did not come into our MT until the late Jewish period. In our opinion this change occurred in the interest of Messianic prophecy. We need only remind the reader of the importance of the idea of 'comfort' of Israel from the time of Deutero-Isaiah on. 'This one will comfort us' immediately suggested the Messiah. (E. G. Kraeling, "The Interpretation of the Name Noah in Gen. 5:29," JBL 48, Vol.3, 138-43).

Interestingly the primary source of Kraeling's rejection of reading "comfort" for both the name and the explanation is not the lack of textual evidence, but his presupposition that Messianic expectation is late (i.e., the use of "comfort" from the time of Deutero-Isaiah) and is to thus be rejected. After Kraeling rejects via his presuppositions even the possibility that "comfort" is indeed the correct verb, he then states, "since the flood story is clearly of Babylonian origin the name of the hero of the flood ought to be Babylonian." (Kraeling, 139) He continues, "but when we turn to the Babylonian sources we find that the flood-hero bore the old Sumerian name Zi-u(d)-sud-ra." (Kraeling, 139) Then, after launching into a discussion of Babylonian and Hellenistic flood stories and the Sumerian and Akkadian languages, he poses the question, "what is the relation of the name Noah to Ziusudra?" His response: "We saw that the latter originated in the story concerning the attainment of immortality on the part of the flood hero. May not the same thing apply to the name Noah?" Thus, Kraeling concludes:

At all events, if we identify the infant Noah with the infant sun god, as is suggested by Enoch, the whole matter is plain, for as Norden has shown the birth of the god of light is associated with the winter solstice. [Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, 1924, 14f] The Canaanitic or early Hebrew farmer could regard the solstice as ushering in his season of rest after the toil of spring, summer, and

autumn. Mythically speaking it was the birth of the solar babe that brought him relief. (Kraeling, 142-43).

Kraeling never tries to explain why the story of Noah is in Genesis. Because of his source critical presuppositions, he sees no need to even try. Instead, his goal seems only to explain the origin of the text behind the text and its connection to the Hebrew farmer living in the land. Yet, if the notion that some kind of unity of the text is actually possible then one must ask why Lamech's statement concerning the birth of his son is included in Genesis 5:29. It must have some purpose or function in the text of Genesis.

One valid point that Kraeling makes in his article that is worth pointing out is that the OT never makes any connection between the effects of wine and "rest" for humanity (Heb. root נָוַח).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Hamilton correctly points out, "The suggestion to emend MT and make it conform to the LXX is ruled out by the fact that nowhere else in the OT do we find a direct object after the causative form of *nuah*. Instead, we would need a preposition following the verb." (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 258).

This introduces the second possible reading of the text. The more common approach is to accept the verb "comfort" and follow the line of argumentation first explained by Budde, which holds that Noah brought "comfort" not "rest" to humanity via his introduction of viticulture to humanity. If one believes that the name and the explanation should match, then this view would require changing the name to some form of the root. However, given the lack of textual witness this is a difficult argument to make. Therefore, one option remains: to leave the text as it reads in the MT. However, if this view is taken then Westermann rightly states, "the name has not been explained." (Westermann, 360). The goal of this paper then is to 1) argue that the text of the MT is correct, 2) give an explanation of the name "Noah," and 3) explain Genesis 5:29 more fully within the context of Genesis 1-9 and the Bible as a whole.

### **The Source of Lamech's Expectation of Comfort and Noah's Name**

Now that the textual issues have been laid out above, the focus must turn to the issue of understanding exactly what Genesis 5:29 is saying. Upon consulting the various commentators, a few points seem unanimous. First, everyone acknowledges that Lamech was expecting some sort of relief from his son. Second, the relief that Lamech sought had some relation to the curse of Genesis 3:17.<sup>22</sup> For example, Ross states, "The name Noah is also the basis for the motif of resting, in the next (toledot) section of the book. Life under the curse was very painful for these early bearers of the curse, and so Lamech hoped for relief and comfort through this man Noah." (Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 176). Likewise, Keil and Delitzsch explain:

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<sup>21</sup> In Numbers 15:7 and 11 "wine" (יַיִן) is offered as a "soothing aroma" (רִיחַ-נִיחֹה) to the LORD.

<sup>22</sup> This is most easily demonstrated by the fact that the form עֲצֹבוֹן is used only three times in the Bible (3:16, 17, and 5:29). Moreover, Lamech directly references the ground which the LORD had cursed.

Noah, נֹחַ from נָחַ to rest and הִנֵּי־הוּא to bring rest, is explained by ... to comfort, in the sense of helpful remedial consolation. Lamech not only felt the burden of his work upon the ground which God had cursed, but looked forward with a prophetic presentiment to the time when the existing misery and corruption would terminate and a change for the better, a redemption from the curse, would come. This presentiment assumed the form of hope when his son was born; he therefore gave expression to it in his name. But his hope was not realized, at least not in the way that he desired.” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, 126-7).

However, the source of Lamech’s expectation or the reason that the name given does not match the explanation provided. Hamilton explains the dilemma:

Lamech is the only father in this chapter who provides an explanation of his son’s name...The problem here is that the explanation does not fit the name...Nor does the name correspond to the explanation...Nor is it helpful to avoid the explanation completely and simply take Noah to mean ‘pleasant (or pleasing) man.’...Perhaps the relief that is found here, if any, is the renewed gift of the vine (9:20) and the introduction of viticulture, indicating a lifting of God’s curse on the ground. Does Lamech already see the possibilities that his son will be a second Adam? Or should we understand Lamech’s words not as insight into the future but as a desperate call and hope for some kind of relief from the life of misery and servitude? In other words, is he speaking indicatively or subjunctively? (Hamilton, 258-59).

Likewise, speaking on Genesis 5:29 Waltke states, “whereas the Cainite Lamech sought to redress wrong through revenge (see 4:24), the Sethite Lamech looks for deliverance from the curse. Noah fulfills the prophecy by beginning viticulture and viniculture (see 9:20).” (Waltke, *Genesis*, 115).

It appears that in centuries past it was more in vogue to see Lamech’s words as voicing his Messianic expectation. For example, Chandlish explains:

...the name (Noah) signifies ‘comfort ’or ‘consolation; ’and certainly at the time the righteous family needed consolation. The delay of salvation and the wide prevalence of evil tried their patience, and embittered all their toil. Nevertheless against hope they continued to believe in hope; and remembering the promise about the seed of the woman, they hailed this new heir of it as the harbinger of better days. In their expectations, they probably dwelt upon the time, when the curse being taken away, the face of the earth would be renewed (Ps. civ. 30); for they said of Noah, interpreting his name as prophetic, ‘This same shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed ’(ver. 28,29). (Chandlish, *Commentary on Genesis*, 116).

However, not all held such a view as John Calvin makes clear in his statement, “some suppose him [Lamech, concerning his expectation of deliverance from the curse of 3:17] to have

been deceived, inasmuch as he believed that Noah was the Christ; but they adduce no rational conjecture in support of the opinion.” (Calvin, Genesis, 234). Calvin’s point is well taken. While some have argued that Lamech is expressing a Messianic expectation, they give little reason for such a conclusion. Moreover, they fail to explain how it is that Noah brought any rest at all.

Genesis 2:15 may give us a clue as to why Lamech named Noah as he did. Ross explains, “The vocabulary in verses 15-17 strikingly points to the spiritual nature of the man’s responsibility. First, the word translated ‘placed’ is actually from the word ‘rest’ (*nuah*). It means, ‘placed’ in the passage, but the choice of a word with overtones of ‘rest’ is important (cf. *sim*, ‘put,’ in 2:8). The word is cognate to ‘rest’ (*m<sup>e</sup>nuha*), which is used in Psalm 95:11 to refer to rest in the Promised Land. Genesis 2:15 thus must have some connection with the biblical teaching of Sabbath rest in the Bible (see vv. 1-3 and Heb. 3:7-4:11).” (Ross, 124)<sup>23</sup> Also commenting on 2:15-17 Keil and Delitzsch state, “after the preparation of the garden in Eden God placed the man there, to dress it and to keep it. וַיִּיָּחֲדֵהוּ not merely expresses removal thither, but the fact that the man was placed there to lead a life of repose, not indeed in inactivity, but in fulfillment of the course assigned him, which was very different from the trouble and restlessness of the weary toil into which he was plunged by sin.” (Keil and Delitzsch, 84)

While it is true that Genesis 2:15 is stating the same basic point as 2:8, there are two noticeable differences. First, different verbs are used. Second, Genesis 2:15 spells out what the responsibilities of the man will be after he has been ‘placed’ or ‘rested’ in the garden. The additional information provided in the second half of 2:15 stands in contrast to the עֲבֻצוֹן of the curse. Thus, Lamech desired to have the cursed conditions of 3:17 removed and the restful conditions of 2:15 restored. Unfortunately, Lamech’s desire was not fulfilled through his son Noah. Instead, a great irony is presented in Genesis 6-9. This raises the last issue to be considered in this brief explanation of Genesis 5:29: what was the exact identity of the “comfort” or “rest” that Noah brought to humanity, if any?

### The Identity of the Rest/Comfort that Noah Provided

As stated above, the notion that Noah’s discovery of wine being the ‘comfort’ in view in Genesis 5:29 goes back to Budde’s connection between Genesis 9:20 (“Noah, a man of the ground, began and he planted a vineyard.”) and Jeremiah 16:7 (“They will not break bread in mourning for them, to comfort anyone over the dead, nor will they give a cup of consolation to drink for anyone’s father or mother.”).<sup>24</sup> Commenting on Genesis 5:29 Westermann states, “...the relief that Noah brought cannot be anything else than the beginning of viticulture, inasmuch as it

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<sup>23</sup> To Ross’ comment I would add that Isaiah 14:1-3 also connects the root נוח with the root עֲבֻצ. Isaiah 14: וְהָיָה בְיוֹם הַגִּיחַ יְהוָה לְךָ מֵעֲצָבֶיךָ וּמִרְגִזֶּיךָ וּמִן־הָעֲבֹדָה הַקָּשָׁה אֲשֶׁר עֲבַדְתָּךְ

<sup>24</sup> Budde, *Biblische Urgeschichte*, 1883, 306f.

is so closely connected with the cursing of the ground and the burden of work which is its consequence.” (Westerman, 360). While Westermann also states, “the name [of Noah] cannot be explained...” (Westerman, 360), he continues by concluding:

one can presume then an older form lay behind 5:29: ‘Who will bring us comfort in (from) our work. ’This recollection of Gen 3:17, ‘and from the toil of our hands from the earth that Yahweh has cursed. ’The elaboration sounds awkward; it seems to be the work of someone in the tradition who wanted to establish a connection with Gen 3:17. The explanation of the name then must be understood without the elaboration. It is to be seen in the context in which the Old Testament speaks of wine in other places: ‘Wine to gladden the heart of man ’Ps 104:15 (likewise 9:13); cf. Sir 35:27f.; especially Prov 31:6f...H. Gunkel refers to the custom of offering a cup of consolation to a mourner when someone has died, Jer 16:7. What is in mind here is the rhythm of work and celebration; and the discovery of the vine has provided hard-working people with a bringer of joy. This explanation is supported further by the addition that refers to Gen 3:17: it is the earth cursed by God that makes daily work a burden. But this same earth by producing the vine provides for relaxation, relief and refreshment.” (Westerman, 360).

However, the connection of Noah to viticulture comes via 9:20. Yet, are we really to consult the “context in which the Old Testament speaks of wine in other places” and ignore the next four verses that follow Genesis 9:20? The wine which Noah drinks does not leave him relaxed, relieved, and refreshed. Instead, it leaves him drunk, naked, and in need of covering. Does that not sound eerily familiar to Adam’s fallen state of affairs (naked, ashamed, and in need of covering)? Moreover, just as the result of Adam’s failure leads to cursing, Noah’s drunkenness leads to the cursing of his son Ham. In short, drunkenness, nakedness, and cursing is hardly a recipe for bringing comfort to humanity.

Even though Kraeling is persuaded that the original text does not read “comfort,” he correctly argues, “...even if ‘he will comfort us ’were original we must consider that interpretation far fetched.” (Kraeling, 139) While Budde argues that the verse refers to the “cup of consolation” in Jeremiah 16:7, Kraeling states:

...the cup of consolation gets its name, not from the effect of the wine, but rather from the fact that it is offered to the mourner by those striving to console him. As Prov. 31:6-7 shows, wine can help a man forget his troubles, and this clearly is the purpose of the ‘cup of consolation ’...It seems unnatural to suppose that the disgraceful occasion related in Gen. 9:20f should have suggested the ‘cup of comfort ’or that the author should have uttered the pious words of 5:29 with that particular anecdote prominently in mind. (Kraeling, 139).

In other words, getting drunk to forget one’s toil is hardly a solution nor is it condoned anywhere in the Bible.

Coming to a different conclusion about the identity of Noah’s comfort, Leupold states:

the name Noah was to remind of the comfort this man would bring. By the spirit of prophecy Lamech, like other godly patriarchs, sensed that in an unusual way this one would bring comfort to the troubled race. In reality Noah did this by preserving the small godly remnant in the ark. This unusual form of the comfort Lamech may never have dreamed of. Yet his prophecy is a valid one. No doubt, in expressing it he had hoped for much more. His prophecy, however, may meet its highest fulfillment in the removal of the curse from the earth, which removal came after the flood, 8:21f. (Leupold, 245-46).

However, after reading Leupold's explanation one is left wondering how it was that the curse was removed via the flood.

### Proposed Solution

It was the expectation of Lamech that his son would be the Promised One through whom the curse of 3:17 would be removed. If the text is read as it stands then the only textual reason for such an expectation looks back to Genesis 3:15. Moreover, if Lamech desired that the Genesis 3:17 curse be removed, then he hoped for the situation that existed before the fall. If this is the case then Genesis 2:15, better than any other verse before chapter three, explains Adam's life in the Garden of Eden before the fall. Thus, it seems reasonable that Lamech looked forward to the removal of the Genesis 3:17 curse and the restoration of the rest described in Genesis 2:15. To be sure, Adam's assignment had not changed. He was still to "serve" or "cultivate" that land (cf. 2:15 and 3:23).<sup>25</sup> However, the curse had devastating effects of the effort required. Thus, his desire for the conditions in the garden to be restored most naturally find their expression in the name "Noah." It was for this reason then that Lamech makes the statement that he does in 5:29 concerning his son.

(Gen. 2:15) וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיִּנְתְּנוּהוּ בְּגֵן-עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ

(Gen. 3:17) וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי-שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ וְתֹאכַל מִן-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר

לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרָךְ בְּעִצְבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה כָּל יְמֵי תְּיִיךָ

(Gen. 5:29) וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ גֵּחַ לְאָמַר זֶה יִנְחַמְנוּ מִכַּזְעֵשְׁנוּ וּמִעֲצָבוֹן יִדְיֵנוּ מִן-הָאָדָמָה  
אֲשֶׁר אָרְרָה יְהוָה

<sup>25</sup> One note of interest by way of observation is that in 2:15 Adam was "placed/rested" in the garden of Eden to "serve" and "keep/guard" it. However, in 3:23 Adam is sent out from the garden to "serve" the ground. In 3:24, the cherubim and flaming sword are "caused to dwell" east of the garden to "guard" the way back to the tree of life. In other words, it appears that man's job was to guard the garden. After his failure to do so, those duties were removed from him.

Ironically, Lamech's expectation for comfort from the curse does not come to humanity through Noah. Instead, his words in 5:29 are turned on their head in Genesis 6:6. Commenting on Genesis 5:29, Ross states, "Lamech had no idea how God would turn these words around and fulfill the wish in His own way (cf. comments on 6:5-8)." (Ross, Genesis in BKC, 36)

וַיִּנְחָם יְהוָה כִּי־עָשָׂה אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּאָרֶץ וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֱלֹהֵי־לֵבָו (Gen. 6:6)

In 5:29 Lamech calls the name of his son Noah (נוח, from 2:15) saying, "This one will give us comfort (*piel* of נחם) from our work (from עשה) and from the toil (עצבון) of our hands from the ground (הארמה) which the LORD cursed (ארר)." In 6:6 we read that the LORD was sorry (*niphil* of נחם) because he made (עשה) man (האדם) and was grieved (עצב) in his heart (לבו).

In the end, Noah did not bring comfort to humanity. However, Noah did bring comfort to the heart of the LORD through the 'soothing aroma' of his sacrifice. After the flood waters recede, Noah, in 8:21 offers a sacrifice to the LORD. In 1913 Procksch recognized the connection between Noah's name and the sacrifice that Noah makes to the LORD. (Procksch, *Die Genesis, 1913, 56.*) What began with the LORD being grieved in His heart (אֱלֹהֵי־לֵבָו) leading to His determination to wipe out man from the earth ends with a resolve in His heart (אֱלֹהֵי־לֵבָו) to never again wipe out man from the earth. Note that it was the soothing aroma (ריח־הניחח, from נוה) offered by Noah that causes a response from the LORD. Namely, the LORD said to his heart (לבו) that he would not curse (קלל instead of ארר) again the earth (הארמה) and all the living things that the LORD had made (עשה) again because of man (האדם).

וַיִּבַח יְהוָה אֶת־רִיחַ הַנִּיחָח וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־לֵבָו לֹא־אֶסְףּ לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת־הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוֹר הָאָדָם כִּי יֵצֵר לֵב הָאָדָם רָע מִנְעוּרָיו וְלֹא־אֶסְףּ עוֹד לְהַכּוֹת אֶת־כָּל־חַי בְּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי

## Conclusion

The job of the *reader* of Genesis is to *read Genesis*. If the book is not read as it stands, but is instead deconstructed via source criticism, recontextualized via importing every myth of the ANE into the book to arrive at the "real" historical context and meaning, and then marginalized as not being the revelation of God but just another mere work of men, then how can *any text*, when treated in such a manner, possibly have a chance to speak for itself? Instead, it will only be allowed to say what the last critical method applied to it determines that it can say. Surely other ANE texts are valuable in helping us understand how words were and could be used. However, even this is only possible if those texts are read! If there is a "historical context" available to us, it is because there was first a literary context provided to us to read. I am

convinced that when the book of Genesis is allowed to be read as if it has something to say then it will indeed speak. And, out from the testimony of the Old Testament will walk Jesus of Nazareth, son of David, son of Abraham, the Promised One that Lamech anticipated who will indeed bring rest to humanity and all creation.