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## NEWS

### FROM THE GC ANNUAL COUNCIL

The Adventist Review' report on the Annual Council has published a vote taken by the General Conference. According to this report the Israel Field will not be attached to the Trans-European Division from January 1, 2012 but directly attached to the General Conference, and an Israel Field Oversight Committee has been elected to play the role of a Division committee. Mike Ryan will be the Chairman of this committee.

### MIRACLE IN BUENOS AIRES

Everyone who is familiar with the Jewish tradition knows that one of the commandments to fulfill during the feast of Succoth is to pronounce some blessings with the four species which are the Lulav and Etrog. But David Barzola did not get any lulav and etrog. How to mark the feast in this condition? Here is the rest of the story: "Every year we request in advance the *Arba minim* (4 species of Leviticus 23:40) for the celebration of Succoth (Feast of Tabernacles). This year, the seller did not record our request. An hour before the meeting of our community, Mathias and I went through the streets of the orthodox neighborhood to look the lulav and etrog. We asked in several places without success and after walking a while we decided that the next place will be the last one. The last place was a yeshiva (rabbinical academy studies), it was closed, but there was a sign on the door with a phone number. After a call, we went to the place, it was the home of an important Orthodox rabbi, professor of Gemara (Talmud) of the yeshiva.

After talking with him and his wife, he invited us to his sukkah (tabernacle). After a while the rabbi asked us what community we belonged to. We told him that we belong to a Jewish Adventist community. He was pleasantly surprised to know

that not only we keep the Shabbat, but we also care about having Arba Minim to celebrate Succoth.

He said that he would like to see us again and he gave us his contact information. Without having planned it we came as "guests" to the sukkah of the rabbi. As we were leaving he told us that surely G-d had produced this meeting, we were also sure of this. The miracle is that the Rabbi prepared carefully the four species for us and in the same time explained to us some detailed about their preparation.

Later in the meeting in our Jewish Adventist sukkah, we said to the congregation that these four species had a special story.

Succoth is an universal feast. In the biblical time, when the Temple was still in Jerusalem the Jewish people offered 70 sacrifices during the feast of Succoth, one of each nation of the earth. That is why Succoth is a holiday that should help for dialogue among all peoples, and especially between Jews and Adventists. We were happy to welcome in our celebration eight non-Adventists.

### SUCCOTH IN FLORIDA



Jeff sent us this news: "30 people, mostly from the Beth-El Shalom congregations, gathered at Pine Lake Retreat in Florida from Wed to Friday for the first 3 days of Succoth before returning to and rejoining the rest of their fellow congregants at St. Petersburg and New Port Richey for the Sabbath Succoth services.

# OVERVIEW

## BERESHEIT

### Genesis 1:1-6:8

Parasha

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Newsletter

In the beginning, G-d creates the entire universe, including time itself, out of nothingness. This process of creation continues for six days.

On the seventh day, G-d rests, bringing into existence the spiritual universe of Shabbat, which returns to us every seven days.

Adam and Chava - the Human pair - are placed in the Garden of Eden.

Chava is enticed by the serpent to eat from the forbidden fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," and in turn gives the fruit to Adam.

By absorbing "sin," Adam and Chava render themselves incapable of remaining in the spiritual paradise of Eden and are banished.

Death and hard work (both physical and spiritual) now enter the world, together with pain in childbirth.

Now begins the plan of salvation G-d established to save humanity from sins, salvation will come from an offspring of the women, known later as the Mashiach. This salvation will be the main subject of world history.

Cain and Hevel, the first two children of Adam and Chava, bring offerings to G-d. Hevel gives the finest of his flock, and his offering is accepted, but Cain gives vegetable produce and his offering is rejected since it does not fill G-d's requirement.

In the ensuing quarrel, Cain kills Hevel and is condemned to wander the earth.

The Torah traces the genealogy of the other children of Adam and Chava, and the descendants of Cain until the birth of Noach.

After the death of Seth, Mankind descends into evil, and G-d decides that He will blot out Man in a flood which will deluge the world. However, one man, Noach, finds favor with G-d.

### CREATION BY THE WORD OF G-D

The Mishnah (Avot 5:1) teaches that G-d created the world with 10 utterances. However, Jews have made the count and find only nine. Then do we have ten or only

nine? What was the tenth utterance?

Gen. 1:3 And G-d said, "Let there be..."

Gen. 1:6 And G-d said, "Let there be..."

Gen. 1:9 And G-d said, "Let the water..."

Gen. 1:11 Then G-d said, "Let the land..."

Gen. 1:14 And G-d said, "Let there be ..."

Gen. 1:20 And G-d said, "Let the water..."

Gen. 1:24 And G-d said, "Let the land..."

Gen. 1:26 Then G-d said, "Let us make man..."

Gen. 1:29 Then G-d said, "I give you..."

I suggest that the tenth utterance is in the second chapter describing the creation of Chava (Eve).

Gen. 2:18 The L-rd G-d said, "I will make..."

### G-D'S WORD AND THE MASHIACH

Yochanan, talmid of Yeshua confirmed that the creation was by the Word of G-d "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with G-d, and the Word was G-d. He was with G-d in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:1-3). The Word is personified in this text and when we read the following verses we discover that the Word is the Mashiach who is in heaven with G-d, who had an active part to the creation. The Mashiach in heaven is not a new idea because in the Book Daniel we see the Mashiach coming from heaven: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Dan. 7:13-14). The Talmud applies this text to the Mashiach saying "it is written, And behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven . . . if they are meritorious, [he will come] with the clouds of heaven (Sanhedrin 98a)

### THE JOY OF A NEW GARMENT

After Adam and Chava ate from the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked (Genesis 3:7). After G-d meted out their

punishments and curses for eating from the forbidden fruit, He made garments of leather for them to wear. Why did G-d specifically make them out of leather? For the Jewish tradition one of the reasons is for Adam and Eve not to pronounce the blessing “shehecheyanu” that has to be pronounced when we get a new garment, except in leather. Rabbi Ozer Alport says: “the prevalent custom (Orach Chaim 223:6) is not to say this blessing on garments made from animals. Therefore, G-d specifically made the clothing out of leather so that the naked Adam and Chava would be exempt from reciting the blessing.”

It seems to me that there is another reason. Eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve wanted to be independent from G-d the Creator. In **Genesis 3:7** “they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” demonstrates this independence. They did not need G-d. However, their sin turned them away from G-d. Their destiny would have been eternal perdition. However G-d made a plan of salvation. How to forgive them? Repentance and sacrifices of animals were the ingredient of this plan of salvation. Repentance, because there is no forgiveness if we don’t stop our sins, if we don’t confess them and don’t ask forgiveness for them. And sacrifices of animals because the plan of salvation of G-d was based on these sacrifices. Abel offered sacrifices (**Gen 4:4**). When Noah got out from the ark he offered a sacrifice (**Gen. 8:20**). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob offered sacrifices, the services in the Temple were full of sacrifices, the feasts of Israel were punctuated by sacrifices. All these sacrifices were to teach Israel about the sacrifice of the Messiah for his people. “**But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.**” (**Is 53:5**). The fact that Abel offered a burnt offering and was accepted and the offering of vegetable of Cain was refused means that they knew the will of God, Abel was faithful to the commandments while Cain was not faithful to the commandments.

The commandment of animal sacrifice was given by God when he made garment for them. “**The L-RD God made garments of skin [leather] for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**” (**Gen 3:21**). God made the garments, that means God Himself sacrificed the

first animal, doing this he taught Adam and Eve, how to make sacrifice and how to please him. That is why it gave to Adam and Eve great joy: Joy of salvation and forgiveness for their sin.

## THEY ARE ALWAYS FOR OUR GOOD

**A**ll the creation was good, but G-d said that it was not good for man to be alone (**Gen. 2:18**). Then He decided to give him someone who will be a helper. According to the Jewish tradition Initially G-d created man as a creature with the male and female aspects combined in a single corporate entity. The story in Genesis 2 is the description of the separation of Adam’s male and female aspects into two separate beings capable of facing one another.

Rabbi Noson Weisz asks the question, what does the Torah mean by describing the female as a helper? And he answers, the question is deliberately put in terms of female in the abstract rather than in human terms; it isn’t only the woman who is described as a helper; when Adam named the life forms brought before him by G-d, the Torah remarks; but as for man he did not find a helper corresponding to him. (2,20)

Helpers are not individuals of secondary importance, as the surface impression of the description would imply. G-d Himself is described as a helper. In the Amida (Jewish daily prayer) Jews sing the praises of G-d by declaring that G-d is a Helper, a Savior, and a Shield. Without help, man is totally unable to actualize his plans and designs in the real world. Moses who has written the book of Genesis helped the Jewish people to understand that G-d is the true helper “**And this he said about Judah: “Hear, O L-rd, the cry of Judah; bring him to his people. With his own hands he defends his cause. Oh, be his help against his foes!”**” (**Deut 33:7**). G-d gave a helper to Adam, however the only true helper is G-d.

**Sources:** These comments of the parasha are based on comments published by Rabbi Zalmen Pakouz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Rabbi Ozer Alport, Rabbi Ari Kahn, Rabbi Noson Weisz, and Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek, from Aish HaTorah (Aish.com).

## EATING OR SPEAKING

**R**abbi Ozer Alport gives this story: A man who was stricken with cancer was presented by his doctor with a painful and heart-wrenching decision. In order to treat his illness, the doctor would need to perform surgery, and in order to access the affected region, he would need to cut through either the man's esophagus or his vocal cords. As a result, the man would permanently lose either the ability to eat (requiring a feeding tube) or the ability to speak. From a medical perspective, the two options were equal, so the doctor gave the man the choice of how the surgery should be performed. Although most people would approach this tragic decision by weighing which of the two faculties is more important to them, this patient was an observant Jew who understood that his decision would have important ramifications for his ability to perform mitzvot. If he gave up his ability to eat naturally, he would no longer be able to perform the biblical commands of eating matzah on Passover, a meal prior to Yom Kippur, and eating in the sukkah. On the other hand, if he lost his faculty of speech, he would be unable to say the Shema and the Grace After Meals. Unsure of the proper course of action, he approached a rabbi for guidance. However, rather than focus on weighing the mitzvot to be preserved and lost, the rabbi surprised the man by citing the translation of Onkelos (second century C.E.) on the verse in **Genesis 2:7**. The Torah records that **G-d formed man from the dust of the ground and blew into him the soul of life, at which point man became a living being**. Onkelos renders the phrase "and man became a living being" as a reference to the fact that he acquired the ability to speak.

In other words, as advanced as man may be, virtually everything can be duplicated by other living creatures. Onkelos is teaching us that what makes man uniquely human and elevated above all other species is the ability to speak. In light of this insight into the special status of the power of speech, the rabbi advised the man to preserve his vocal cords and forego the ability to eat naturally."

## SHABBAT AND BUSINESS

**P**icture the Jewish immigrant who arrives in America and becomes convinced that his business can only succeed if he abandons Sabbath observance. In his mind he knows that observing the Sabbath is the right thing to do, and that Jewish law demands that he observe the Sabbath laws even if the consequence of such observance is bankruptcy and failure. In his heart he desperately wants to succeed in the new world and finally escape the abject poverty from which he fled. His heart is totally inflexible. He cannot control the desire to succeed and become financially independent, nor can he escape the conclusion that attaining success depends on dropping Sabbath observance. He has one of three choices to make: 1. He can give up his dream of success. 2. He can drop Sabbath observance while still believing that he is committing a great sin each time he goes to work on the Sabbath. 3. He can change his mind about the moral necessity of keeping Sabbath and go to work with a clear conscience. What he absolutely cannot do is bring himself to desire to keep Sabbath under such circumstances. Is it any wonder that almost three million Jews who immigrated to America between the 19th century and World War Two stopped observing the Sabbath?

## HAFTARA

### Isaiah 42:5 - 43:10

**T**his text of Isaiah is read in parallel with the Text of Bereshit to remind G-d's people why the earth and heavens have been created and

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why G-d has created his people. Everybody on the earth is part of the creation of G-d, everyone received the breath of G-d and his spirit. **Thus says G-d, the L-rd, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: (Isaiah 42:5).**

His people has been given a special covenant, a great privilege, but also a commission to be a **LIGHT TO THE NATION, I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations...** (Isaiah 42:6).

All the nations are going to sing to the L-rd and to praise him for his goodness. **Sing to the L-rd a new song, his praise from the end of the earth!** (Isaiah 42:10).

The L-rd will forgive his people and will call them again his witnesses, **"Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. You are my witnesses, says the L-rd, and my servant whom I have chosen, "** (Isaiah 43:8-10).

Because he redeemed them and loved them, **But now thus says the L-rd, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; ... For I am the L-rd your G-d, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior... you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, ... Do not fear, for I am with you; ... everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."** (Isaiah 43:1-7).

## BRIT HACHADASHA

### Hebrews 11-1-6

**T**he text of Hebrew is about faith. Without faith it is impossible to believe what the text of Genesis says to us about creation. We live in a world where creation of G-d is denied and without a strong faith it is easy to believe more in evolution than in creation. Hebrews 11 gives the definition of the word "faith". **"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."** (11:1). Our hope is the coming of the Mashiach and the establishment of the Kingdom of G-d *"Malchout Hashamaim"*. Faith is to be sure about this hope. To be sure that Mashiach is coming, to be sure that one day we will live with G-d in his kingdom. Of course if we listen to scientists, they will say that it is impossible. Without spacecraft, nobody can go to the space and live there without any oxygen supply. But we have faith, we believe that one

day Mashiach will come from space down to earth. It will happen, exactly as we believe in the first week of creation as it is written in the book of Genesis.

We know that the book of Genesis is not a scientific book, it is a religious book about the origins, but the teaching of the book is true. G-d has created everything. G-d loves humanity and made him the crown of the creation, last among all the created beings. Everything on the earth was created for the happiness of humanity. G-d wanted that humanity celebrate him as the creator remembering the first week of the creation by a celebration on Shabbat.

Every Friday evening during the kiddush we read **"G-d blessed the seventh day and made it holy."** (Gen 2:3). Holy means "to put aside for a special purpose", the Shabbat was put aside by G-d to celebrate him as the creator. To celebrate the Shabbat we need to have faith in the G-d of creation. Today most of the people do not believe anymore in creation. That explains why Shabbat has no meaning for them. Why celebrating something we do not believe? **"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at G-d's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."** (Heb 11:3) For the author of Hebrews, the characters of Bereshit were real **"By faith Abel offered G-d a better sacrifice than Cain did. . . . By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death"** (Heb 11:4-5). The first quality of believers is faith, the text continues saying **"And without faith it is impossible to please G-d, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"** (Heb 11:6). How can we believe in the resurrection of the death if we don't believe in creation? It is not surprising that most of the people today do not believe in the resurrection of death, but in the "immortality of the soul" which is in opposition with the teachings of the Bible