

The Story of Adam and Eve

An essay by Lynn Andrew

In the beginning, when no rain fell upon the earth (only the dew of the starry night watered the lonely land), when neither edible plant nor fruit-bearing tree had yet begun to grow, the Lord God planted a garden eastward, in Eden.

A stream came out of Eden to water the garden. It divided itself into four rivers: the Pishon, flowing through the land of Havilah where there is gold, bdellium and onyx; the Gihon, which flows around the land of Cush; the Tigris, east of Assyria; and the river Euphrates.

The trees in the garden bore every kind of fruit. They were made for the special creature whom the Lord God had in mind to live there. From the elements of the earth—the dust of the ground—he formed the body of a man; he breathed into him the spirit of life, and he became a living creature. The Lord God placed the man in the garden and showed him how to work it and keep it. The man was young and had much to learn.

In the middle of the garden grew a tree called Life and next to it one called Knowledge of Good and Evil. And the Lord God gave the man this command:

"You may eat of any of the trees in the garden except that one: do not eat of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

The man understood the command very well, and it opened to him a new vista: he had been introduced to the moral landscape, the shape of his Maker's will. Though he was yet but a lad he pondered this and saw in it the delight of having a definite point of obedience in which to honor his Maker.

"It is not good that he should be alone," said the Lord God. The creature was spending too much time thinking about the command (which he had begun to call a Law) and was on the verge of developing a theology. "It is time to let him see a little of what is in store for him."

His Maker had already designed all manner of beasts and birds to be formed from the dust of the ground—as he had done when he made the man. So he made a pair representing each kind and brought them, male and female, to the garden for the man to name and befriend. The Lord was testing him. So far he was very pleased with the young fellow. But should it turn out that this man-creature was satisfied with beasts and birds for friends and companions while he did his chores about the garden (and in the evenings when they sat and watched as he thought about the universe), he would not be of much use in the overall scheme of things.

When the young man saw the monkeys he discovered laughter, for he saw a parody of himself in the hairy apes. (He knew the look of his own smooth face by the reflections he saw in pools of quiet water.) He spent some time deliberating on what he would call these hilarious creatures. If there were a word for "funny" in the language, he would have named them that. But there was no word that came near to describing these creatures, so he made up "monkey" and that became his word for "funny."

Whatever unique characteristic the man saw in each of the animals and birds, that became its name.

The pair of owls were the first feathered creatures he saw. The Lord brought them to him, one on each arm, and after showing them their future master told them to demonstrate flight for an earthbound creature. They swept open their wings, causing a rush of air that lifted the hair on the young man's head before he realized what they were doing. He was amazed at the great beating pinions that propelled them higher and higher above the ground. He ran after them, flailing his arms in imitation as they circled round and round. After the owls had climbed to a height well above the treetops, they stopped their furious flapping and held their wings wide and motionless, gliding and peering down at the man with their big round eyes.

In slow, majestic circles they descended. The young man never took his eyes off those wings; he observed how

the feathers were set and how a slight change made the banking turns tighter. Their legs and feet were nowhere to be seen, and he realized that the Lord God had provided many special arrangements in order to equip the owl for flight. He looked down at his own naked body, and the obvious fact that he would never be able to fly produced in him a strange feeling. It was the first time he was tempted to doubt the perfection of the Maker's designs. Immediately the man identified and admitted the temptation to himself, and he rejected it almost without thinking; it was an automatic reaction. Still he was compelled to ask the Lord about it.

"Does it seem good to you that I will never fly?" he asked.

"When you think about it a little more you will understand better what the owl had to give up in order to fly," replied the Lord. "And you will know why you would never choose to be a bird. But there will come a day when what seems impossible turns out to be possible after all."

Day by day the Lord God brought more creatures for the man to name, and he became more and more skilled at inventing clever and significant monikers for them. It was glorious work. The young man delighted in the creatures that had faces with eyes that looked forward like his own—and noses, be they long or short, wide or narrow, that his imagination could put on his own face to make himself

like one of them. The more intelligent ones even seemed to understand and smile when he spoke to them.

The creativity of the Lord God made each new day more delightful than the last, and the man's new friends began to fill the garden. While there were two of each kind, there were four sheep. The man remarked about that, but the Lord God was silent about it.

In spite of all the diversity, in none of them—neither the most intelligent nor the most loyal nor the ones who loved him the most—did the man find satisfying companionship. Though they were entertaining, eager to show their special talents, and always ready for frolicking games, they were of different kinds of flesh from his, and their spirits were opaque and unresponsive to his own. Each one had a mate, another one of its kind, and the man observed that the two were never far apart. They listened when he sang to them, which was gratifying for awhile. Reluctantly he had to admit that he was lonely, which, according to his theology, would amount to something for which he had no word. "Beastly" was as near as he could come to it, for the dishonor he would be showing his Maker by that admission would make him a thoughtless beast. Shockingly the Lord God was pleased with the man's confession because he had much more in mind than his being merely a zoologist. The man's intelligence and versatility might have led him to be content with the com-

panionship of the animals. It was a delicate balance, and the man chose well by admitting loneliness as soon as he realized it himself. It was then that the Lord God began to call him Adam¹ instead of "the man."

"I will make a creature fit for him," the Lord God said, and he told Adam what he planned to do: his body would lose a little of its glory and descend a bit into the animal world, which must be done in order to make him fit for a mate. The compensation would be this new creature, which, compared to any of the animals Adam had named, would be as much more a delight to him as heaven is above the earth. Adam trusted the Lord as he always did; he smiled and said, "Thy will be done." So the Lord God caused an anesthetic sleep to come over Adam.

As he slept Adam dreamed he was asking his Lord to make him a mate whose beauty far outshone his own and who would never lose her glory and would love him even if he came through the operation having lost an arm and a leg.

The Lord God merely removed a rib near Adam's heart and closed up the flesh. The rib contained all that was needed to fashion a mate for Adam. The Lord God made her according to Adam's request and breathed into her the breath of his own life.

When the Lord God stepped back and looked at what

¹ *Adam* is *man* in the original language.

he had created, he hesitated and almost regretted having made her to Adam's specification, for he looked ahead and saw in her offspring daughters of beauty who would tempt angels. But there she was, and it was too late to make changes. He brought her to Adam to see what he would say.

Adam was speechless and stared for a moment. It did not seem possible that she had come from him.

"Is this bone of *my* bone and flesh of *my* flesh?" he asked the Lord God.

"Yes, she is that and none other," the Lord answered.

"Is she for me?"

"She is for you—a helper made for you. What will you call her?"

"She shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man,"² declared Adam.

Adam showed his mate around the garden, introducing her to as many birds and animals as he could find and explaining the virtues of trees and giving her samples of fruit. When they came to the tree of Life and the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they paused.

"These are special trees," Adam said. "We must never eat of the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil though as you can see its fruit is ripe and pretty. The fruit on the tree

² The words here are *ishshah* for "woman" and *ish* for "man."

of Life is green, and I don't think it's ready to be eaten. I haven't tried it.

Then Adam emphasized the command and told her it was a Law. They decided to call it "The Law to Avoid the Knowledge of Good and Evil." And she memorized it. She asked him the meaning of *good* and *evil*. He told her it was enough to know that they were not to eat the fruit of that tree, and she agreed. He had not yet developed his theology to the point where the meaning of *good* and *evil* were explained. But he had confidence that in time he would work it out. He would share it with her later.

Adam and his wife often walked with the Lord God in those days. God delighted in them, and they in him. They were alert and perceptive; they took in many wonders of the creation. What made it most delightful was revering their Maker who was allowing them to know him more and more. The better they knew him the more they loved him and enjoyed being his creatures.

But there came a day when the Lord God was absent, and Adam wondered why. The Lord had gone to reconfirm an awful plan—a plan to banish evil from the universe, for there was trouble outside the garden and even in heaven. The anguish, the pain, and the glory of it was before his eyes; he embraced the Father and the Holy Ghost, and they wept.³ The close fellowship of the newly made man

³ This aside is not meant to be literal but to emphasize that the eternal, timeless perspective

and woman must be set aside for a while. But the time would come when it would be restored a million fold and more, and the joy laid before him surpassed the agony. The time had come, and it must be done.

Among the creatures that the Lord God had brought to life, the four-legged serpent was the most subtle. He admired Adam's wife, for she was the crown of creation, and he followed her around. She thought the serpent had great potential for being a pet. He was both attractive and repulsive, which made him sometimes comical, but it also endeared him to her. There was no doubt that he was very intelligent. His plump body that was supported by four stubby red legs and his long, fat tail that dragged on the ground were covered with a scaly skin which shimmered and shone and dazzled her eyes even when the light was dim. She called him "Redlegs" and taught him to utter in his raspy voice a few words of the beautiful language she and Adam spoke.

On the day after the Lord left, while Adam was away adding a layer of stones on top of the wall he had built to keep the deer out of her flower beds, she met the serpent near the middle of the garden to teach him a new word.

"Did your maker say you must never eat of any particular tree?" Redlegs inquired.

She was astonished. It was a complete sentence! What

of heaven touched earth's history uniquely at this juncture.

had this creature become? She had helped him learn a little of the language, and apparently that was enough for him to pick up much more on his own.

"How crafty a serpent you are today, Redlegs!" she replied. "I am glad you asked that question because there is a Law you must know about if you are to go around talking like a human being! We are allowed to eat the fruit of any tree except that one right there—lest we die. If I were you, I wouldn't even brush against the thing!"

"I'll share a secret with you," hissed the crafty one. "God said he fashioned you in his likeness, and that much is true. But he withheld his wisdom from you. You noticed he's staying away today, waiting for you to discover that when you seize a sample of the fruit of this tree, you simply shall not die; you shall only die to your ignorance. In fact, you shall become like him and a goddess in your own right. You will have separate thoughts; you will possess the greatest wisdom, which is the knowledge of good and evil."⁴

"So many strange words you use, Redlegs! Who taught you *ignorance*? I do not like the sound of that word. And *goddess*! I'm sure that is not a word in our language."

"*Ignorance* surely is a dreadful word," agreed the serpent. "But to not know it is to be under its domination. I

⁴ The reader will understand that this section owes much to the temptation scene in C. S. Lewis' *Perelandra*.

have been given this speech to help you overcome ignorance so that you will escape its tyranny and never again have to dread that word."

"You must be making up those words," said the woman. "We know nothing of *dread* and *tyranny*. You are a monkey serpent today!"

"Ah, you know nothing of them now, but you shall," insisted the serpent. "This tree has been planted to equip you to meet dread and hardship when they come to you."

"There you go again!" exclaimed the woman. "Hardship is not a word. You are so monkey, my dear Redlegs."

"No, I am not being monkey today. Do you think I learned to talk on my own? I know you helped me get started, but you were surprised when I began talking great things and not simply repeating words."

"What you call great things is but many words strung together to say little. Perhaps it would be wise of you to go back to the few words I taught you and forget about making grand speech."

"You do not seem to recognize what is very plain: that I am speaking to you as one who has had experience that goes back before you were created, even before this garden was created. This is the true meaning of wisdom, and I believe you know a little of that word. But the wisdom of the ages is what I have been given, which is so far above the wisdom you have learned in Eden that there is no word

for it. Now if you would become wise in things that matter the most, you will listen to what I have to say."

The woman could not help being impressed by this boast. That the beast had become something new she could not doubt. In fact, she had never doubted anything, for there had never been reason to doubt anything. And there had never been anything new that had not led to increasing happiness.

She looked at the tree. It was a delight to her eyes. Surely its fruit was for eating. And if it would make her wise to understand the wisdom of the ages—why abstain from this adventure? She picked an apple and took a bite.

The fruit was bitter.

The woman had never tasted bitterness before; it was an entirely new sensation. The fruit was attractive on the outside, but it was not what it appeared to be. Never had she conceived of something being two things at once, contradicting one another. The fruit and the serpent had conspired to tell her a lie: it was not a pleasant fruit. But what was it? She had no words for sweetness and bitterness. She had no words for truth and falsehood. It was a complete novelty. She must take it to Adam. He would know what it was.

But no! She had broken the Law! What would her husband think of that? Presenting the fruit to him would not be a pleasant occasion. It was the evidence of what she

had done—the worst thing she could have done, disobeying the Lord God. Thoughts such as these had never passed through her mind before; they were dark and heavy; they made her weak, and she sank to her knees.

The serpent sat back on his fat tail, glowering at her, its thin tongue lashing out in little snipping sounds and its front legs folded like arms resting on its stomach. She felt something she had never felt before: she hated the beast and wanted to harm it. But she knew her bare foot would not be felt through the thick, scaly skin. The monster grinned and bared its needle-like teeth. It had been good. It had become evil.

Fear of the evil thing overcame her initial reluctance to seek help. The woman staggered to her feet and ran to find her husband. He was on his way to find her because the sky had suddenly darkened, and his wife's favorite plants had withered at the same moment. He knew something terrible had happened, and he suspected what it was, but he refused to name it.

Adam recognized the fruit as soon as he saw it in his wife's hand. He did not need to ask her where she had gotten it. He stared at the crimson skin where it was broken by his wife's teeth, exposing the white, moist flesh. Then he looked into her eyes, and what he saw shocked him. Adam was still immune to grief, and he had never known fear, but the look of terror in his wife's eyes—for that is

what it was—made him cry out for the Lord God to come quickly.

Adam knew the word *death*, but all he had cared about death was that it was something outside of the will of his Master; that made it unthinkable. He had been told that once it came to any creature it never departed, but that was a fact that had meant little to him before this—since death was clearly outside of what would ever occur in this world, a perfect world that the Lord God had made for him to rule over. The Law he called *Avoiding the Knowledge of Good and Evil* had stood like a golden wall, as he described it in his theology. To him it was beautiful in its form and function; its existence was his delight, for it gave him an opportunity to please his Master in a way that would not be possible otherwise. Whatever death was, it was evil, and that wall excluded the knowledge of evil from entering the garden.

It shook his confidence not only in the strength of the wall but also in all creation when he saw in his wife's eyes what he thought must be the look of death. The Law said that one who ate the fruit would surely die: she had done what was not to be done, and death was her reward. It was impossible that this beautiful creature would break the law. His theology did not allow such an event.

Never before had the Lord tarried when he called.

It was unthinkable that this would happen, and it was

unbearable that she had become an outcast. One bite of the forbidden fruit had wrought a change in her; that was plain to see. Adam had never experienced anything that was not good, and the concept was difficult for him. For the first time ever in his experience he was looking at something that was very far from being good. And it was his dear, glorious wife.

The Lord would know what to do when he came.

Why was he not coming? Could it be that he did not want to see the woman as she was now? That would be it. He loved her too; it would pain him to see what she had become. When he did come, he too would be shocked at what he saw. What was he to do? Who could save her?

"The Lord has abandoned us," said Adam.

"You can save me, Adam," replied the woman.

Adam knew a little of what it was to be lonely, to be surrounded by the company of creatures that were friendly but different from himself. Now he understood that his wife would forever be lonely because of her death—while her husband still had the obedient life the Lord had given him. This cleaving of her from him was not what marriage was made for. It too was intolerable. At that moment it seemed more intolerable. Whatever death meant, he would not let her suffer it alone. He took the fruit from her hand and tasted it for himself.

Adam's eyes were opened, and like his wife he under-

stood the bitterness of disobedience. Like her he was ashamed. Like her he felt potential enmity with the creatures, for one of them had deceived his wife. Even the plants of the garden seemed capable of doing harm. They both felt naked and vulnerable. Evil lurked everywhere, it seemed, because they had knowledge of evil and had learned to hate and fear it. Adam now understood what he had seen in his wife's eyes. He told her they needed to do everything they could to repair the broken Law. They would start by covering their nakedness.

The tree from which they had often picked figs was one they felt they could trust. Though it saddened them to be severing its leaves, the leaves had to be sacrificed. Because the leaves were large they would not use many in making loincloths for themselves, plaiting and sewing them together. But it took time, and there were many mistakes, and leaves were wasted. Fortunately the fig tree had not withered as some of the others had.

Later on, in the cool of that day, they heard the sound of the Lord walking in the garden. They were afraid of him now, for their shame overwhelmed sound reason, and they hid themselves among the trees. The Lord called out:

"Where are you, Adam?"

"I'm hiding because I'm naked," he replied. It was almost true as far as it went, for some of his fig leaves had fallen off. But it was not the full reason; it was a lie.

"Who told you you're naked? Have you eaten of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?" asked the Lord.

"The woman you made for me—she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate it," Adam replied, and instantly he hated himself for blaming his disobedience on her, and it distressed him to experience himself divided against himself.

"What is this that you've done?" the Lord said to the woman.

"The serpent deceived me," she replied.

"Where is that serpent? Go get him right now," commanded the Lord.

Adam grabbed his wife's hand, and they ran to the middle of the garden. They found the serpent asleep on the ground under the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam kicked the beast, and it opened its eyes.

"Follow us," he said. Redlegs blinked and stood up on his stubby legs, but he did not seem to understand the command.

"Heel!" said the woman. It was one of the words she had taught him, and he waddled toward her. He did not seem evil as before.

They went back to the place where they had met the Lord with Redlegs in tow. He could not keep up if they walked quickly; it was terribly tedious business, but the serpent waddled as fast as he could in response to the

woman's constant cries:

"Heel! Heel!"

"Serpent," said the Lord as soon as they got back to him, "because you have done this, you shall crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. The woman shall be forever your enemy: your seed shall be the enemy of her seed; you shall bruise his heel, but he shall bruise your head."

Adam and his wife stood before the Lord, trembling. Could it be that all the penalty would be placed on the serpent? The woman knew that could not possibly be the end of it, for in her heart she knew she was entirely to blame.

"Woman, I will multiply your pain in childbearing; your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you."

The woman looked at the Lord in astonishment. She knew she deserved a much greater sentence. But before she could say anything, the Lord spoke again.

"Man, because you listened to the voice of your wife and disobeyed my commandment, the very ground shall be cursed; it shall bring forth thorns and thistles, and you will find it difficult to get your food. It will seem that whenever there is a chance for something going wrong it will go wrong. By the sweat of your brow you will feed yourself until you return to the ground; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The woman could scarcely believe her ears. The great burden of the penalty fell on her husband. He was the strong one, of course, but he was paying heavily for her crime. It made her sentence seem less frightening though she did not understand everything the words meant. She liked the part of her desire being for her husband, for it always had been. That he would rule over her was not a pleasant edict, but she wished that he had ruled over her more strictly and told her to leave that serpent alone (as she knew he had wanted to do).

Then Adam looked at his wife, and he saw her differently. He named her Eve,⁵ because she would be the mother of his children.

The Lord took them to a place in the garden where a rapidly flowing stream ran over rocks, and he selected a white, translucent stone, one that was long and narrow like a knife, and another rock of similar material which he threw down against a boulder, breaking it into two pieces with sharp corners at the fracture. Using the broken stone, he showed Adam how to carefully chip away on the knife-like stone, making a sharp edge on it. Adam understood that this was solemn business, and he did not inquire about the purpose of the knife. Eve watched at a little distance, and her heart was heavier than she could bear almost, for she was now familiar with sorrow, and she

⁵ Eve sounds like *life-giver* in the original language.

could feel it in the air.

"Eve, please go gather small branches with twigs and brown leaves on them that are dry and lifeless from trees that have died," said the Lord.

Eve hated those words *lifeless* and *died* for she immediately connected them with what she had done. But her heart leaped when he said "Please." She thought she knew him, but she did not expect him to be so forgiving. What did he have in mind with all this effort of chipping stones? She had never seen Adam work so hard. These were her thoughts as she went on her way to find withered branches and dead leaves.

While Adam was completing the knife, the Lord waded into the stream and picked up a large rock and carried it to the center of the nearby grassy glade. There he laid it down and went back for another. Adam saw this and wanted to help, so he ended his work on the knife a bit before it was finished and joined the Lord in hauling rocks as large as he could carry from the stream to the middle of the clearing. After many trips between the stream and the glade, they had built up a platform of stones, which the Lord called an "altar." After that was completed, he told Adam to go to the stream and find a palm-sized stone with a hollow on one side while he finished the knife.

Eve came back with an armload of branches. She had found some that were brittle and easily broken away from

the dead trees. They all had twigs and brown leaves hanging on them.

The Lord selected the thickest piece. It forked into two smaller branches, which he broke off, leaving the thick part with a "Y" of jagged stubs at one end. Using the point of the knife, he carved a hole partway through near the midpoint of the piece; then he laid it on the ground near the altar with the hole facing up. Next he selected a branch that was relatively stout and straight and broke off the end, leaving a stick a cubit in length. He gave the stick and the knife to Adam and told him to strip it bare and carve a point on one end and round the other end off. He needed another stick, a longer one than any that could be gotten out of what Eve had brought back, so he took her with him, and they found one that was suitable with a slight bend in it.

"One other thing, my dear Eve: we need a piece of a vine. But first we'll take this back and see if Adam is finished with his point."

Again, Eve was thrilled by these gracious words. She thought she had ruined the Lord's plan, yet he still loved her! According to her perspective of good and evil this did not seem possible! She was sure it had no place in her husband's theology.

The Lord took the knife from Adam and went with Eve back into the woods, and Adam followed them. They came

to a place near the stream where a vine was growing. The Lord selected a branch of it that was strong and supple, and he cut it away from the stem of the plant. Then after they had returned to the altar he cut away the leaves, leaving a cord that easily bent double without breaking. He took the longer, bowed stick that he and Eve had found, and he made notches near the ends of it and secured the vine to it at both ends, leaving it quite slack in the middle.

The four sheep were grazing in the glade. The Lord selected one and had Adam place his hand on its head while he drew the knife quickly across the throat of the animal. The innocent sheep fell down, bleeding, on the ground. Adam was sorry for the sheep but fascinated by the blood. Eve was horrified. They knew better than to question what the Lord had done, and neither of them wanted to.

"This is death," said the Lord to Adam. "We will make of it a covering for your nakedness."

Then he had Eve come over and she laid a trembling hand on another of the sheep. The Lord cut the throat of that one too, and it fell at bleeding at Eve's feet.

"This is death," said the Lord to Eve. "We will make of it a covering for your nakedness."

It was then that Eve shed Earth's first tears.

The Lord showed Adam how to open the hide and cut it away from the flesh and how to scrape the fat away

from the inside. After that was completed, they took it to the stream and washed it, scraping it again; and finally they laid it out on the grass to dry. Then he watched as Adam did the same with the other sheep and made it into the covering for his wife.

After both hides were spread out and drying, the Lord said:

"I will show you fire. You will need to know how to make fire; but do not become discouraged if it does not work for you right away after I am gone."

Those words "after I am gone" frightened Eve as much as her fall had, and she thought her heart had turned to ice. Then her thoughts rushed to her husband. She was thankful that Adam would be with her. What if he had been unwilling to share her plight? The horror of that was not to be entertained.

The Lord wound a bight of the vine around the pointed stick, which took the slackness out of it. Adam was quick to comprehend the operation of the device as soon as the simple formula "friction-heat-fire" was mentioned, and he took the bow in his right hand and the cupped stone in his left and knelt down beside the base. He inserted the point into the hole in the base, caught the rounded top of the stick against the stone, and began eagerly spinning the pointed stick while pressing it down firmly, making rapid strokes with the bow.

Meanwhile, the Lord showed Eve how to lay the dead leaves and twigs on the altar with progressively larger sticks on top until they had used all that she had brought. Presently there was a smell that was new to her. She looked down at Adam's work and saw a thin curl of gray smoke rising from the base where the point of the vertical stick turning, first one way and then the other.

"Keep going, Adam," said the Lord. "Keep going until you see a light rising with the gray. The light is fire, and it will injure you if you touch it. The gray is called smoke, and it tells you that fire is not far away." He bent down and held a pair of dry leaves near the spot where the smoke was creeping out. "Watch me carefully, Eve, so you can help your husband at this point because he will need to keep making the fire until you have succeeded in transferring it to the altar.

Adam shouted when he saw the first bit of flame. The Lord touched the leaves to it; the flame jumped to the leaves, and he cupped his hand around them as he raised them up to the altar top and carefully poked them under the pile of twigs and branches.

"You can rest now, Adam," the Lord said.

The flames quickly spread to the twigs, and the smaller sticks began to crackle and pop. Soon the fire began to settle and burn hotter, and the Lord told Adam to bring some of the fat from the sheep and lay it on top. Immediately

the fat sizzled, and angry flames shot up. In almost no time, heat like Adam had never experienced came pouring from it, and he marveled at how this all started from a little bit of yellow light.

After the fire had burned down a little, the Lord had Adam toss the entrails and the remaining fat from his sheep on top, which caused the flames to leap higher and burn hotter than ever. Then he showed Adam how to cut the carcass into quarters, and Adam worked at that until the fat was mostly consumed and the fire had become very hot. Then he took the pieces and laid them one by one on the altar.

"The smell is good," said Adam.

"This is your sacrifice," said the Lord. "I had nothing against the sheep; he was unable to disobey me. But I do have something against you because you disobeyed my command. As long as you remember your debt to me, take a lamb and sacrifice it on an altar like this. You will be reminded that disobedience brings death, and I will be reminded by that savory smell that you have not forgotten my kindness to you in allowing the blood of these animals to be shed instead of yours until I come back myself to pay for your sin by my own blood. And make sure that Eve and all your children participate; teach it to each generation, for the knowledge of good and evil is permanent, and each man will find out for himself that obeying me by carrying

out the sacrifice is difficult. You once knew joy in obeying the Law, and it was easy; now you will find it costly: all manner of things will go wrong and stand in the way of your sacrifice. Nevertheless, if your heart is right you will still find joy in it. At this time I lay no other command on you. Remember that the sacrifice must be by fire, and it must be one of your unblemished lambs. If you want to make a thanksgiving offering to me, sacrifice the firstborn of your flock, and I will know that you put me first and have not forgotten that I am not obligated to prosper you."

Adam decided it would be a good time to ask the Lord to clarify about the Fall since it had no place in his theology. What he learned from the Lord's answer was that he and Eve had lost only a little goodness while they became much wiser, just as the serpent had promised. Their new knowledge of good and evil would bring them a thousand subtle temptations to choose evil every day. Unfortunately, the exciting potentials of their wisdom would overshadow their desire to simply choose for good. Thus their fall would continue, and if the Lord were to withdraw his support (which would happen if they neglected him), they would be in danger of falling rapidly into unspeakable depravity.

"Is there any way we can give up the wisdom and go back to the way we were without it?" asked Adam.

"You know the answer to that," said the Lord. "I will

be watching over you, but I will have to make your life hard because small evils grow quickly into large ones when life becomes easy. Force yourself to remember this, for it is not the kind of wisdom you have learned."

After Adam's sacrifice was all but consumed, he laid the fat from the second animal on the altar. As the flames shot heavenward, he went about cutting the remainder of the carcass into pieces; and when it was safe to approach, Adam laid the pieces of Eve's sheep on the fire.

The sky had become dark, but the circle of light and the heat from the altar delayed Eve's realization that the night had grown chilly. Never before had the air in the garden been uncomfortable.

"Go ahead and put on your coverings," said the Lord.

Adam picked up his skin. He had been turning them so that both sides could dry. He had cut it away at the neck and the legs and made an incision for removing the genitals and the entrails. He turned it inside out so the wool would be next to his skin. That exposed the raw side, which was oily and unpleasant with bits of fat still clinging to it. He lifted it up and dropped it over his head and got his arms out through the leg holes. The sheep's tail still hung out in back. Eve laughed. She couldn't help herself. She decided that she did not need a covering; she would stay near the fire for the night, and then the day would bring back the warmth she was used to.

It was as if Adam could read her thoughts. He picked up her sheepskin, for he had noticed that the Lord said "put on your coverings," meaning both of them. Eve looked at Adam in his sheepskin. He looked so ridiculous. But when she looked into his eyes, her heart melted, and she felt shame. Adam was turning her sheepskin inside out for her.

"Cover your nakedness," said Adam, and he lifted the heavy hide up and helped her find the arm holes. The wool was warm, but it was rough and a little damp. Suddenly she became very tired and lay down on the grass.

"Watch the fire until it goes out, Adam," said the Lord. "You know the meaning of danger now. Always remember that fire is dangerous. I will meet you here in the morning."

When Eve woke, she found Adam still sleeping. He had stayed awake until the last embers of the fire went out. She got up, intending to bring him some fruit for breakfast, but the Lord appeared and stopped her.

"Wake up your husband," he told her. "You must leave the garden today."

She rocked Adam's shoulder where it protruded from the sheepskin.

"We have to go somewhere else," she said as soon as he sat up.

"Take the knife and the fire maker," said the Lord. I

will show you the way out. He turned to the remaining two sheep and called them; they stood up and trotted over to him. Adam took the knife and the base and the pointed stick from the fire machine. Eve took the bow with the vine that she had helped the Lord find in one hand and the palm-sized stone in the other.

"Follow me," said the Lord. He turned and went into the woods, following a trail they had not seen before. The sheep followed close behind the Lord; then came Eve in her sheepskin and finally Adam in his. Eve was glad for her covering. The air was cold that day.

After walking all the rest of the morning and well into the afternoon, they came to a wide river with a rapid current. The Lord halted at the bank and held up his hand.

"Stop," he said, and the upstream flow on their left immediately stopped as if it had frozen solid while from that point on downstream the water continued to flow, and the level fell until they could walk across scarcely wetting their feet.

"This will be your home now," the Lord said to Adam. "You will find edible fruit on some of the bushes, and most of the roots of the smaller green plants can be eaten. Taste them first. If they are bitter, do not eat them. Here, I have carried this gourd for you. Inside you will find little seeds. They are good to eat, but if you plant them in the ground, they will sprout and grow into stalks, each one bearing

many more seeds. You will need tools for working the ground, and you will invent those yourself. Do you see the opening in the face of the rock up there? That is a cave. You will live inside it with your wife. It will shelter you when the cold wind blows, and it will be your refuge during dust storms. When the heat of the midday sun is severe it will remain cool inside. Beware of the animals. They will not be friendly out here as they were in the garden. You know them well; you saw the potential wildness in their natures. Guard your sheep. I'm sure you and Eve will learn to live comfortably out here, Adam. Soon Eden will be a distant memory. Remember the sacrifices. Care for these sheep, and they will give you many more."

After saying this, the Lord went back across the river, leaving Adam and Eve by themselves. As soon as he reached the other side, the water rushed with furious force, nearly overflowing its banks before finally settling down to its level.

As he walked back to the center of the garden, the Lord said:

"Man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; but like our enemy he has learned it the wrong way, so he must die. Now lest his race reach out and attain the knowledge of Life and live forever, we must secure the approach to the Tree of Life."

Thus the Lord assigned many-eyed cherubim to watch

every approach to the knowledge of Life and to frustrate with a flaming sword every effort to obtain the knowledge that would enable man to live forever.

After the Lord disappeared into the forest, Adam and Eve stood in silence, their eyes glued on the spot where the trail went in among the trees, hoping that by some turn of events he would come back to them. Eve cried again. Though they were tired from walking most of the day, they waited a long time.

"Let us explore the cave," said Adam finally.

The entrance was at ground level not far from the river, up a gentle slope. They had to duck down to enter. After their eyes became accustomed to the darkness they found it had a level, sandy floor, which was not large, and a roof that allowed them to stand upright. They laid the parts of their fire-making drill, the knife, and the gourd of seeds on a shelf-like feature of the rock that ran along the right side of the cave.

"I will find some berries for us to eat," said Adam.

"I will go with you," said Eve.⁶

In the seemingly bright light after reemerging from the cave, they paused to get a better look at the country of their origin from the higher vantage point. Something ter-

6 Rather than ask an anthropologist, who cannot explain the miracle of life, whether the biblical story of origins is fact or fiction, be your own scientist: see how well it explains what you know of the uniqueness of man and woman. Let the professionals tell each other their tales of fragmented skeletons and silent fossils.

rible had happened to it while they were inside. The trees across the river had become very few. They could see far into what had been their garden, but it was now a relatively barren, dry land with animals walking about, apparently as perplexed as they were. The Garden of Eden was no more.

On their side of the river the land was similar—as much of it as they could see with the rock outcropping at their backs. Their two sheep were not far from the place where they had crossed the river, having found a spot with a little grass. There was an abundance of scrubby growth along the riverbank, and there they went looking for edible fruit. Adam insisted that he take the first taste to make sure it was not bitter. The first one he selected was a red berry with a wrinkled skin that grew there abundantly, but he rejected it and spit out the exploratory nibble. A small purple berry grew on a bush among long, sharp thorns; it was uninviting, but Adam picked one and felt the sting of a thorn. He tasted the fruit, and he thought it was sweet compared to the other. Eve saw a drop of blood on the back Adam's hand where the thorn had pierced his skin.

"Oh! Blood!" she cried.

Adam examined the crimson bead and knew she was right. The only other blood they had seen was from the sheep, and the connection became very clear to him in that moment: it was their blood that had been spilled on that

grassy glade in the garden—because the Lord had said he was allowing the blood of those animals to be shed in place of theirs. It was hard to believe that he would accept the death of animals to fulfill the penalty of the Law on their behalf. But he had made it very clear in every way that the sacrifice was for that reason—"Until I come back myself to pay for your sin by my own blood," he had said. Whatever that meant, Adam took it also as a promise that he would see his Lord and Maker again.

Eve reached out her hand and picked one of the purple berries, expecting a thorn prick, and she was not disappointed in that, but Adam had not warned her about the sting, and she let out a sharp little cry of surprise. *Ouch!* had been invented. She was happy to see that her drop of blood looked exactly like Adam's, and she wondered why there was only one drop, but the sting did not invite further investigation. In due time Eve would be seeing more of her own blood.

"It will make our life bearable," said Adam.

"The berry makes it bearable. I love it!" said Eve, for she had an ear for puns.

"No, no. It was the end of a thought that had come to me," said Adam. "The Lord promised he would come back to us and make an end of the sacrifices by his own blood. ... Do you know what, Eve? He has completely forgiven us. Can you believe that? I was too stupefied to thank him

for it when he said it."

"There were some things he said to you that I didn't hear. It seemed to be theology talk. It was only yesterday, but I was younger then, and I wasn't sure I wanted to think that hard. He may have forgiven you, but I don't think he could ever forgive me for ruining the Garden of Eden. I mean, I thought he did but I don't see how he could."

Adam did not answer this because he knew she could not conceive of the the sheep's token blood being compensation for the loss of paradise. He was partly correct. She would also need to understand more about love. Adam and Eve were still young; they had not had parents of their own kind, and while the love of the Lord was at the heart of Eden, Eve needed to learn the forgiving love of a parent. The day would come when she would forgive her son Cain and herself.

They gingerly picked and ate those purple berries until the edge of their hunger was gone, ignoring the inevitable thorn pricks. Then Eve said her stomach was hurting, and Adam understood because his did not feel well either. So they went back up to the cave and lay down on the sandy floor. Eve moaned a little, but whether it was for the pain in her stomach, the stinging thorn pricks on her hands and arms, or the absence of her Lord, she could not tell. Her thoughts quickly flew to her husband: she knew he would

work things out.

Adam was thinking. He reasoned that the berries were not poisonous, for the Lord had said any that were not bitter were good to eat, and the ones they had eaten definitely were not bitter. But they were slightly sour; he had to admit that. He decided that the only thing to do was dilute what they had swallowed. So Adam rose to his feet and picked up the gourd that contained the precious seeds. He shook it. It sounded as though it were not quite full. There was a stubby stem on its top, and he pulled on it hard, holding the gourd under his left arm and pulling on the stem with his right hand. The lid popped off suddenly, scattering some of the seeds in the sand. It would make a container for water if he could find another place for the remaining seeds. The rocky ledge had places in it where things could lodge, and he found one that was not too deep and that he was able to scrape out with the knife, making it somewhat clean. He poured the seeds into it, hurried down to the river, and brought back water for Eve. She drank as much as she could, and it was enough for them both.

Adam woke up hungry. He had not intended to sleep at all. He crept out of the cave and stood up at its mouth. He realized by the position of the sun that the afternoon was well spent. The sheep were lying together on the bank close to where he had seen them last. He ducked back into

the cave and saw that Eve was sitting up, trying to shift her sheepskin covering to find a more comfortable position for it.

"How is your stomach?" he asked her.

"Better."

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes."

"I will take the gourd and go looking for another kind of berry before the sun goes down."

"What about roots?"

"I will take the knife too and dig some roots."

"I will go with you."

"Adam explored the underground side of three kinds of plants that grew along the river. He cut the larger part of the root away and washed it, then nibbled a little. None was bitter. One was fibrous, definitely not for eating. One was hard and woody. The third was softer and seemed to be edible, but it had no taste. He harvested a little pile of these. Meanwhile, Eve had found a fruit that was sweet. It was small and had a hard pit inside which one had to spit out. She picked enough to fill a quarter of the gourd. The sun had set by then, and a chilly wind had come up, so they took what they had collected back to the cave. It was almost dark inside even after their eyes adjusted to it. They ate some of the roots and decided they would leave the remainder for later. It was hard to get much nourish-

ment from the fruit, though the taste was delightful. The contrast made the roots almost intolerable. Eve emptied the gourd onto the rock ledge and Adam took it down to the river and brought back water. Eve shivered.

"We should have gathered some branches and leaves to make a fire," she said.

"I think they need to be dead and dry," said Adam. "I didn't see any like that. I will look for some tomorrow."

Eve went to the corner of the cave where the draft seemed to be the least and lay down, pulling the sheepskin about her as tightly as she could, which required that she lie on the lump made by the tuck, for the hide was stiff. It covered her legs only partway to her knees. Adam lay down next to her, trying to shield her a little from the drafts, with his bare leg close to hers to add a little warmth.

Eve had trouble going to sleep. She remembered every word of the Lord's prophecy that an offspring of hers would bruise the serpent's head. It was an odd thing. The serpent was a dumb beast at the time he said it, so he must have been referring to the evil being who had tempted her through the serpent. How could the head of an invisible evil being be crushed by a child of hers? She had brought up the subject while they were gathering food. Adam did not know the answer to that one either. The Lord had said those words for a purpose; there would be a

definite meaning in them. The voice that had spoken to her out of the serpent's mouth said it was old; evidently it was an enemy of the Lord's. That her offspring would rid the world of the Lord's enemy was a marvelous thing. And it was a sure thing, for so he had said it. She would be the mother of the world's deliverer. If not mother then grandmother. And the great deed of that man would make her failure in the garden shrink into insignificance. She would be careful to pass this story on to her children. One of them would defeat an evil that was older than Eden. Could that be why the garden was made? Was it necessary to lose Eden before the deliverer could come? Adam had said the Lord himself would come back to put an end to sacrifices by his own blood. Could there be a connection? She knew that when the Lord walked with them in the garden it was not his natural form. He was not human in the same way that they were, though he appeared to be nearly so. It made no sense that he would sacrifice himself; it would be impossible to kill God. But her offspring could die, if need be. It would be a horrible thing, but she could see the justice in it. Suppose the Lord had a son who became a real man by being born from the seed of a woman?⁷ It would be her offspring and his too, and that

7 That it was spoken of as her "seed" has from ancient times been taken as a veiled reference to the virgin birth (seed of a woman). However, the same Hebrew word is used elsewhere (see Gen 24:60) to speak of the natural offspring of a woman.

man could crush the head of the evil one *and* be the last sacrifice *and* still not die. That must be the answer; it put her mind to rest, and she went to sleep. Only a long time later did she tell Adam about this because she had worked it out for herself, and he considered himself to be the theologian in the family.

Next morning they were both cold and hungry. They chewed some roots and drank some water and then went outside, each with a handful of the small, sweet fruits. The sheep were not in sight! Adam ran down to the riverbank where they had been.

"Where are they?" said Eve as she came down behind him.

Adam was scanning the land as far as he could see from the riverbank, but he saw nothing that looked like his sheep.

"I'm going up to the top of the hill," he said and began running; then he slowed and walked briskly up the incline to the right of the cave.

Eve followed not far behind. She thought Adam must be weak from lack of food.

When they reached the top of the little hill they saw for the first time the lay of the land where the Lord had placed them. Except for the greenery along the riverbank, it was indeed a relatively barren, rocky country compared to the Garden in Eden. A short distance downriver to the left the

bank became low and the green extended a greater distance from the river's edge. The sheep had found grass there and were grazing. It would be an area to explore for food for themselves as well.

After many trials and some successes in the days that followed, Adam gathered enough food to keep them alive but never really satisfied. He never forgot about the grain, and he worked out in his mind how he would make a tool to cut branches from trees—a larger version of the knife—and with larger pieces of wood he could shape implements for working the rocky soil. But he was eager to try growing some of the grain on a small scale. He could loosen the soil with the knife and water them with the gourd.

One day Eve was going down to the river to wash when she met a serpent wriggling its way up the bank. She turned and ran to find Adam who was pulling thistles that had sprouted up overnight in the soil he had prepared for planting some of the seeds.

"The serpent has come after us!" she shouted. "I'm sure it's Redlegs."

Adam followed her back to the spot. The serpent had already crawled up to level ground, undulating its body like a fat snake. Adam saw that it was of the same type, its former legs being shriveled and hanging useless.

"It might not be the same one," said Adam. He was remembering the Lord's prophecy and interpreted it that

the enmity between women and serpents could go on for generations.

"Are you Redlegs?" shouted Eve, keeping a good distance back.

The serpent's stringy tongue shot out. "Heel," it rasped in its thin voice.

"It is! It *is* Redlegs!" cried Eve.

Adam picked up a large rock, and walking over to the luckless snake, threw it down, smashing the creature's head. Then he took the dead thing by the tail, dragged it down to the water's edge, and swung it out over the river. It hit the water with a slap and a great splash and began to sink slowly as it was carried out of sight in the current.

"I had a feeling it wasn't his fault," said Eve. "Some evil mind had taken over and was speaking through poor Redlegs."

"Well, it won't happen again," said Adam.

The next morning Adam found that he had four sheep. Two tiny lambs stood under their mother. Eve was beside herself with delight. She wanted to cradle one in her own arms, but satisfied herself with studying how their mother took care of them.

Eve became the shepherdess; she wanted to make sure nothing harmed her lambs. She shuddered to think of what might have happened if she had not discovered Redlegs. She did not know whether other creatures might threaten

them, but she remembered that the Lord had warned Adam to guard the sheep. The little ones grew quickly. Fortunately, the grassy area by the low riverbank extended a long way both along the river and away from it. It occurred to her that they would not have been able to live there if it were not so. In the evenings she would bring the sheep back close to the cave.

One evening, as Adam and Eve were lying down for the night in the cave, there was a scream outside. Adam rushed out into the dim light and found a wolf with one of the lambs in its mouth. He picked up a stone and approached the animal. The wolf backed slowly away, growling with the neck of the struggling lamb between its jaws. Adam walked a little closer, and the wolf dropped the lamb, which fell limp on the ground, and turned to run as Adam let fly the rock. It struck the wolf's head, knocking it down. He picked up a larger rock, went closer, and threw it down hard, smashing the wolf's head. Eve screamed when she saw what had happened. She insisted that the other lamb come into the cave and sleep with them. In the end, both sheep and the lamb joined them in the cave.

The next day Adam built an altar down by the river like the one the Lord had shown him in Eden only smaller. Eve was blaming herself for the wolf: they had not yet offered a sacrifice to the Lord, and she was so attached to

the little lambs that if it had occurred to her that one of them should be sacrificed, she would not have borne the thought. Adam did remember that they had for the first time the ability to make a sacrifice, but he could not bring himself to mention it to Eve.

After finishing the altar, Adam cut the skin away from the carcass of the dead lamb. It was soft and large enough, he thought, to make a pillow for Eve. Eve had gone to find dry firewood. She knew of some dead trees in the grazing area, those trees apparently having gotten too much water from the river at one time and died. She broke off an arm-load of small branches and brought them back. Adam did not have to tell her what he was doing. She knew, and she understood about obedience. She brought the fuel to the altar.

While Adam was dividing the lamb into pieces, Eve carefully laid the fire and then went up to the cave and brought down the components of the fire-making drill. She had not found any dry leaves, so Adam shaved some feathery strips of wood and put a bit of bark in the charred hole in the base of the machine. Soon the smoke was curling up, and Eve held a shaving as she had seen the Lord do with the dry leaves. A little yellow flame appeared and went out. She put another shaving together with it and got the flame to last a little longer. Sweat was streaming down Adam's cheek, and the vine was wearing thin and

would not last much longer. She tried again, cradling the shavings with her other hand, and the yellow flame flared up. She managed to get it to the altar without it going out, but it burned her finger and it went out before she got it to ignite the twigs she had laid for it. She remembered the Lord's warning that it might be more difficult when they tried to make a fire on their own.

Adam stopped and cut more shavings. He stuffed some of them in with the kindling at the base of the sticks on the altar. Then he started sawing again. Eve captured the flame in the shavings just as the vine broke. This time she got it to ignite the shavings under the twigs. There was a lot of smoke; it stung her eyes, and she stepped back. It looked as though the fire had gone out, but Adam was blowing on it, and each time he puffed the little embers glowed brightly. How did he know to do that? she wondered. Presently a flame sprang up, and the twigs began to crackle. Adam laid the fat of the lamb on the fire, and soon there was a real blaze. He had thrown the entrails and head into the river, leaving only the two halves of the little carcass to be placed on top.

Adam and Eve stood and watched as their lamb went up in flames and smoke. Eve told the Lord she was sorry for not thinking of it. She was going to say "thinking of it sooner" but it could no longer qualify as a sacrifice. She said she hoped he liked the smell anyway. She talked to

the Lord all the time; she did not know whether he always heard her, but she had decided she would talk to him anyway in case he was listening.

Adam was concerned about the broken vine. He had not noticed any vines in this country. And he was thinking too about the wolf. He would make a covering for Eve of the wolf skin to spread over her legs at night. The sheep and the lamb were up near the entrance to the cave. She asked Adam what she should do if she saw a wolf when she was out grazing them alone. He told her to yell as loud as she could and throw rocks at it. He would hear her and come running. He was thinking he needed to find her a staff to fight off a wolf if it came to that. He wondered how tough the wolf skin would be to cut. That would be his next task. There might be other parts of the animal he could use too. Some of the bones would be useful for something. Even bits of the hide could find various uses. Why hadn't he thought of it before? A long strip of hide would make a perfect replacement for the broken vine!

That evening Eve came back with the sheep. She had eaten some berries during the day, but she was still hungry. She was worried about Adam. His bony legs and arms stuck out of his sheepskin, which was now far too big for him. He had visited the grazing area where she sat with the sheep three times during the day, taking back firewood to store in the cave.

Adam had gathered more of the same roots. They were accustomed to the bland taste and ate them without thinking, trying to maintain nutritional intake. Eve had an idea and was eager to try it. She took the gourd, and talking quietly to the ewe, she managed to get some milk into the bowl. She put it to her lips to see if it was bitter; then she drank it all. She reasoned that the sheep would be making more milk than one lamb could use, so she filled the gourd half full and brought it to Adam, explaining to him what she had done. He drank it all and thanked the Lord for the sheep and his wife. Then he told her he had a present for her and showed her the soft fur of the wolf skin and the little lambskin pillow he had sewn together with strips of hide and stuffed with leaves and moss.

Adam had worked hard on the wolf, washing and saving every bone and anything else that looked like it might be useful before throwing the remainder out into the river. He had brought some of the bones up to the cave. For weeks he had wanted to make something to help Eve with her hair, for she was obviously unhappy with it. They both had long hair with no way to cut it, and it had become matted. Eve wrapped hers in knots to keep it away from her face and arms. She knew of nothing else to do with it. Adam had gotten an idea from the little bones he had saved from the feet of the wolf. If he could bind them together like an artificial claw with many thin fingers, he

pictured her using it to comb tangles out of her hair. He had put a prototype together using a stick that he split to hold the bones in line, wrapped with sinew from the wolf to hold it tightly together. He showed her the crude comb, and she wanted to try it right away. She spent the rest of the daylight hours combing her hair, and she kept at it far into the night.

Though the things Adam and Eve made at first were not easy to use, little by little they learned to make improvements. Eve discovered clay and brought some of it up from the riverbank to fill in a crack in the rock shelf. Adam kept a fire going near the entrance to the cave because they had discovered that the roots tasted much better if they were cooked in the fire. Using sharpened bones as skewers they had been roasting them over coals. Eve discovered that clay became quite hard if baked in the coals. She began to make rough little pots and boxes out of the clay and found that she could bake roots in a clay container without needing skewers. Adam filled one of her larger clay boxes with embers from a dying fire and found that the fire kept overnight, which saved him from having to get up and add fuel during the night or having the fire go out, which it often did. Eve made a flat, loose-fitting lid for the fire box, which made the coals last even longer.

Adam had brought some long, stringy roots up to the cave. He wanted to see what they would be like after they

had dried. One evening Eve tied three of them together and braided them into a rope. Adam was excited about that. He had no use for a rope at present; it just seemed to be a good thing to have around. He took three of her braids and braided them together, making a rope that was thick and strong.

Three more lambs were born, and they decided to sacrifice one of them. It brought back the time with the Lord in the glade in the garden. Even though it had seemed a sad time then, in retrospect they remembered him and his gentle way with them, and they were glad for the memories.

Adam foresaw that they would need an enclosure for the sheep to keep the wolves from getting at them, for there would soon be too many for the cave. He fit stones together and built up three walls, using the rock face next to the cave opening for the fourth. The entrance was next to the cave entrance so that a fire could guard both. He was thinking ahead. He did not like Eve being gone all day with the sheep. He would love to have another helper in the family. The Lord had promised them children, but Eve had not been interested in anything but lambs—until recently. Now she wanted to have him, not a lamb, next to her when she slept. She suggested that they try taking off their coverings at night, turning the fleece side out to make a soft bed and using the wolf hide for a furry blanket.

Eve conceived, and in due time she bore a daughter.

This was the world's first human baby. Eve had seen many generations of new lambs, but she was astonished at the sight of this miniature of herself. She wrapped her in a lamb skin, and Adam added lamb-hide straps to it that allowed her to carry her securely on her hip, leaving one arm free. Eve named her baby girl Awan. Adam had to admit that he was a little disappointed because he wanted a son who could help him in the field as well as help Eve with the sheep. Eve said she would ask the Lord for a son.

Again Eve conceived and this time bore a son. "I have gotten a man for you by the help of the Lord," she said. She named him Cain, saying, "Came Cain by the help of the Lord," for she loved puns.⁸ All of you punsters can thank Eve for your primitive sense of humor. While Eve was nursing Cain, Adam took Awan with him every day as he cared for the sheep. She made friends of the lambs and fancied herself a little shepherdess, walking with an arm around a lamb before she could well walk on her own. She talked to them constantly, and the lambs understood her even though her father did not.

Again Eve conceived and bore Abel, a brother for Cain. While Eve was nursing Abel, Adam took Cain and his sister when he took the sheep to pasture. Awan took care of Cain, and they became fast friends. But Cain missed

⁸ *Cain* sounds like *gotten* in the original language: "I have gotten a man from the Lord." It became a common practice to devise names from peripheral words in this manner.

his mother, who was now entirely absorbed with Abel. Eve stayed in the cave most of the time.

Eve was able to abandon the original sheepskin covering that had been her only clothing for many years. It was worn through in places, and though she had washed it in the river many times it always smelled bad and was dingy looking. They had enough lambskins now, and she made herself undergarments to go with a wolf-skin tunic.

The day came when Eve was ready to resume her duties as shepherdess, and she took Abel and Awan with her. Cain had to leave the sheep and go with his father to work the farm where they were hoping to get a harvest of grain plentiful enough to supplement their diet of roots and berries. The rainy season⁹ was upon them, and Adam was ready to sow his first real crop. He had been experimenting with small plantings and developing tools and clearing the field of rocks and weeds and increasing his seed store year by year, and now had enough to plant. A herd of wild oxen had passed through the area, and Adam had captured two of them with ropes. Farming was hard work

9 There are various ideas about the earth's atmosphere prior to the Flood, one of them being that a thick, uniform "canopy" of cloud all over the globe prevented weather variations and never condensed into rain until "the windows of heaven" opened and it supplied much of the Flood waters. The physics of this do not work out to allow nearly as much of a deluge as the canopy theorists once supposed, so there is less reason to presume that no rain fell before the Flood. The Bible does not say definitely that there was no rain during this period. "Cain was a worker of the ground," it says, so there must have been rain or a lot of dew, and for there to be dew there would have to be nights clear of clouds. We can suppose that it rained only at night, leaving the first rainbow for after the Flood.

compared to the shepherding, and Cain did not like it at first. But he worked beside his father and became proficient. He made an improved hoe and helped his father develop a plow that they harnessed to an ox. When Cain and his father came home after a hard day's work, they always found that the sheep were back in the fold, and Awan and Abel had built up the fire.

One day Eve decided that they had put it off long enough, and they needed to sacrifice a lamb in the presence of the children. She told Adam to come home early, and they would do it that afternoon after explaining the process to them.

When Cain and his father got home, Eve announced that they would be having a ceremony. Abel had put on his best lambskin tunic, which looked almost new, while Cain's sheepskin was dirty from working in the field. It was no use changing into his spare one because it looked worse. Abel had short hours and easy work compared to Cain, which Cain did not hold against him because he did not consider Abel to be very manly. What he resented about Abel was that he got to spend all day with his sister. Cain remembered the days when he and Awan tended the sheep together and were close friends. Now she seemed like a stranger almost. She was helping Abel lay the fire on the altar. No one had given Cain anything to do.

Adam explained that the ceremony would consist of sacrificing a lamb to the Lord. The purpose was to remind them that God was allowing the blood of the lamb to stand temporarily as a substitute for their father's blood and their mother's blood. He was sorry to say that they had disobeyed the Lord long ago before the children were born, and if the Lord had not been gracious to them they would not be here now.

"Now if you children were all perfect, you would not need to participate in this," said Adam. "The Lord's standards are very high. If you envy or resent one of your sibling even for a moment it is proof that sin lurks within your heart. It is a condition that we all find ourselves in, and we cannot always overcome it no matter how hard we try."

Adam then had Abel pick out a perfect lamb and bring it to the altar.

"You children do not have to watch this. I'm going to put my hand on the head of the lamb as representative of this family, and then I will kill it very quickly, and the blood will flow out."

Cain watched as his father put one hand on the lamb's head and grasped the knife with an iron grip. He drew the knife forcefully across the lamb's throat, almost cutting off the head. The innocent animal fell at his feet, bleeding.

Abel had helped his father skin sheep that the wolf had

killed, but he had never seen a killing. It was a man's job that he was glad to have his father do, and he looked the other way as the knife did its work. Awan had spread her hands over her face. Eve stood silent, remembering the first sacrifice.

Adam and Abel then began cutting the skin away from the flesh. Awan was a little more interested in this. It would take a sharp knife to do it well, which they did not have, so it took strong arms and fingernails too. Abel was not wholehearted about it; he was obviously squeamish at certain points. Cain wondered why his father had not asked him to do it. It looked simple enough. Only one had to be careful to cut the flesh away from the skin while pulling the two apart with just the right tension in order to avoid damaging the hide. Abel may have had some experience, but he was not up to that kind of work, Cain thought.

As the fat came off, Adam had Abel lay it on the fire. It made an impressive blaze. Adam cut the little body into two sections and had Abel pile the pieces on, one after the other, and they watched as the fire devoured the sacrifice.

Cain was thinking about the meaning of *sacrifice*. It did not seem right to him to be sacrificing a lamb. The lamb had come to them by no effort of their own. If it were to be a sacrifice, it should be something that cost them something. It was explained that the blood was important,

but why was not his own life's blood worth something? After the lamb was burned up and the embers were still quite hot, Cain went up to the cave and came back with a bag of his grain and dumped it on the altar.

"This is *my* sacrifice," he said.

There was no doubt that Cain's offering was a true sacrifice. It was a tenth of the seed that he and his father had saved for the planting.

The grain smoked and smoldered, and then it burst into a sullen flame. The burnt smell was repulsive, and everyone fled from the vicinity of the altar. Before she left, his mother said, "the Lord likes the savory smell of lamb."

Cain went away that night. He did not sleep in the cave. He was angry about this whole episode and became morose. He took the knife and went out to his field and slept under the stars. That night he heard the Lord speaking to him:

"Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you are faithful to what you have been taught, you will be accepted. But if you do not listen to instruction, it means that sin like a beast is crouching at your door waiting to devour you. You must overrule your urge to listen to him."

But the spirit of the crafty one spoke to Cain that night, and he implanted an idea in Cain's mind: he *could* do one better than the Lord had required; he could present the blood of his brother. If they wanted blood, they would

get blood, and it would be a real sacrifice.

Cain knew this was an evil thought, for he had that knowledge of good and evil passed on from his mother and father; he knew the meaning of the bitter taste; he knew it would be a wicked deed.¹⁰ But his mood made revenge seem sweet, and he vowed to carry out the devil's work.

The next day Eve could not find the knife, and she sent Abel out to look for Cain. When Cain saw his brother approaching he hid the knife behind his back.

"Cain, are you a wild man? Did you sleep out here last night?" Abel taunted.

"Yeah. What's that to you? Have you ever slept out under the stars? Or are you afraid to be away from women at night?"

"Mother is looking for the knife," said Abel, ignoring Cain's attempt to insult him. "You don't happen to know where it is, do you?" he asked, walking up to his brother.

"Maybe I do. Maybe I need it," said Cain.

"What are you so upset about?" asked Abel.

"I'm not upset. I'm the only one in the family who knows what a proper sacrifice is, and the duty falls upon me to make sure everyone gets it right. I'll tell you right now it isn't a pleasant duty."

"You should not have poured that stinking grain on the

¹⁰ "Why did [Cain] murder his brother? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous." 1st John 3:12.

altar," said Abel. "How can you call that a proper sacrifice?"

Cain whipped out the knife from behind his back and held the point under Abel's chin.

"This is what I call a proper sacrifice," said Cain through his clenched teeth.

Abel turned to run, stumbled, and fell face down on the ground. Cain straddled him, holding the knife in both hands pointed down at his brother, waiting for him to turn over. Abel rolled over suddenly and kicked Cain's leg, causing him to drop the knife as his hands flew back to break his fall. Abel grabbed the knife, leaped up, and backed away panting as Cain rose to his feet.

"Be reasonable, Cain. The sacrifice was taught to our parents by God himself," pleaded Abel.

"That was only for that garden where they played as children," said Cain. "Out here in the real world things are different," he said, repeating an argument he had heard from the evil one. "A sacrifice is something you work for and give up. That's perfectly obvious to anyone who thinks about it. What is a little lamb? You get a lamb by doing nothing. Do you know how many hours went into collecting that bag of grain? You talk about blood. That was my life's blood!"

"Didn't you hear what father said?" Abel argued. "The sacrifice is to show that we remember God's kindness in

allowing the blood of the innocent lamb to take the place of our blood."

Cain bent down and picked up a rock as Abel said that.

"Remembering! Is that all you think it's about?" said Cain as he straightened up. "A sacrifice is a sacrifice of real blood. There is no substitute for our blood. Human blood for human blood. Simple logic tells you that. I happen to know what a sacrifice is!"

At that, Cain threw the rock. It hit his brother on the temple and Abel fell to the ground. Cain went to him and picked up the knife. He couldn't tell if Abel was dead or alive, but he didn't want to pass up the opportunity to make a real sacrifice, and he slashed the knife across his brother's throat. Then he dragged the body down to the river and towed it out as far as he could wade and let it go floating away with the current. He left a bloody trail in the dirt from the spot of the murder to the edge of the river.

The Lord appeared and spoke to Cain:

"Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," the murderer said, for lying was easy now. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

"What have you done?" demanded the Lord. "Look there: the blood of your brother cries out from the ground. Even the ground will curse you now; it will no longer yield its strength. Not only that, you will have to leave your home."

"My punishment is more than I can bear," Cain moaned. "I'll be a fugitive, hiding from your face, and as long as I live whoever finds me will try to kill me."

"Not so!" the Lord declared. "If anyone kills Cain, seven-fold vengeance shall be upon him." Then he drew a sign of warning on Cain's forehead: an image of seven red knives, like a tattoo.

Adam was late getting started that morning. He was waiting for Abel to return with the knife.

"What is that floating in the river?" said Awan.

Adam looked out at the river. It was Abel's sheepskin, and it appeared that Abel was in it lying face down in the water. Adam hurried off immediately and found Cain in the field sitting on a rock with the knife beside him. When Cain looked up, his father saw the seven knife images on his forehead.

Cain said he did not know where Abel was, but that the Lord had told him he would have to leave the area. Adam had not crossed the bloody trail, but Cain had not anticipated that the body of Abel might have been seen. By the sign on Cain's forehead, Adam knew that the Lord had dealt with him for murder, and that he had a plan for Cain. Cain refused to go back to see his mother and sister, so Adam took the knife and went back to report the incredible event to his wife. Awan could not believe what she was overhearing, and she ran out to find Cain.

"It was an accident," Cain told his sister. "Abel picked up the knife and was threatening me with it. I threw a rock at him, not intending to hurt him, but it hit him on the head. I couldn't bear to see my dead brother lying on the ground, so I buried him in the river. Then the Lord came. He was actually here, Awan. I saw him with my own eyes. He said I have to leave and go wandering about the earth. He said he would make sure nobody ever tries to kill me for having accidentally killed our brother. These marks on my forehead are the sign of that."

Awan knew Cain well. She had felt sympathy for him at the sacrifice when he tried to make his contribution and was rejected by everyone. She loved him dearly and admired his ingenuity. She believed that Cain could meet any challenge, but how could he live alone? Until there were more people in the world, Cain would suffer unbearable isolation. As his older sister she had a certain responsibility for him. She would go with him.

Cain took his sister, half the sheep, half the grain, and both oxen, and he left his father and mother. Eve watched as her only children went away, driving the sheep south along the river, until she lost sight of them beyond the bend. She wept the whole time.

Adam and Eve were alone again. Eve was inconsolable. It was the worst thing that could have happened. She had failed as a mother, adding to her failure in the garden.

Three children the Lord had given her, and she had none.

Many years went by. Things went well with Adam's farm, thanks to his persistence. The grazing lands along the river were able to support their growing flock. Adam captured and pressed into service more oxen, breeding the docile ones. Eve made clothing and developed new ways of cooking. They had plenty of grain, which she roasted; they ate it with sheep's milk. Adam worked on the wheel. It was a concept he developed while thinking about how an ox could pull a load across the ground more easily if it had legs. Artificial legs could be made by arranging a number of them in a circle that would turn and meet the ground at one point without dragging as the ox pulled it along. He made a small clay model that worked.

It appeared that Eve was barren now. She and Adam were 129 years old. She had gradually become more and more downhearted about that too: the third great failure in her life. There was nothing left to fail at. She spent most of her days in the cave, only occasionally going out to help with the flock. That meant Adam had to leave the flock alone much of the time, which meant losing some to wolves; but there were so many now that it did not matter.

One day as Adam was working in the field, something caught his eye coming toward him along the river, a sight he had never seen before. It was a pair of oxen drawing a cart *on four wheels!* He ran toward it as it approached. It

was a marvelous thing: the driver was sitting on the cart, not walking beside it. There were two of them—two young men.

"Grandfather Adam!" cried the driver. "We are your grandsons. I am Enoch, and this is my brother Enosh. We have come with presents from our father Cain."

Adam climbed up onto the cart and rode with the men until they came to the riverbank below the cave. He kept looking at the wheels the whole way.

"Eve! Eve! Come out and see your grandsons!" Adam shouted.

Adam and Eve listened to their story. Call it news if you want to though it was many years old: Cain and Awan had settled in a land they called Nod, farther to the east, where Cain built a city called Enoch and raised sons and daughters. They had made many improvements in the woodworking tools that Cain started with, and they had brought some of their latest and best for Adam. Also in the wagon were skins of soft fur for Eve, tanned leather, shapely clay jars that were lightweight, and the parts of a potter's wheel that they would set up and show her how to use. They had jars of herbs and dyes and seeds for growing fruit trees. There were dried figs and dates and nuts.

Enoch and Enosh stayed three months and helped Adam build a house of stone and mud bricks. They made the roof of poles covered over with skins, leaving an open-

ing in the middle for smoke to escape so Eve could have her fire inside on cool days. It was larger than the cave, and enough light came in through the opening in the roof to make it a cheerful place.

Before her grandsons left, they announced to Eve that they had a message from her son, Cain. He wanted them to tell her that the hardest part of being away was that he missed her. He understood better the anguish he had caused her after his own experiences of having children. He wanted to come and visit her if she would have him—and to please send her answer back with her grandsons.

The next year Eve gave birth to Seth. She chose his name as a pun on the word meaning "he appointed,"¹¹ for she said, "God has appointed me another son to replace Abel." Cain was there in time to help celebrate the birth of his new brother.

They often had visitors from Cain's offspring—so many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on that no one could remember the names of them all. But they all knew the story of Adam and Eve, their first parents, and they held them in high esteem.

As the years went by, Eve gave birth to more sons and daughters, and with the influx from the east their homestead by the river grew to be a prosperous village.

The world was developing much faster in other places.

¹¹ Seth sounds like the Hebrew word for *he appointed*.

Adam and Eve were constantly receiving new visitors who brought presents of things they had never seen before. Tubal-Cain had become famous for his works in iron and bronze; he sent knives, axes, buckles, harness rings, plows, lightweight iron-rimmed wheels, and a shiny bronze comb for Eve. Imported musical lyres and sweet-sounding pipes of the Jubal brand were heard around the village in the evenings.

But there was unpleasant news. Cain's family was plagued by feuds and murders. Human sacrifice and demon worship had become rampant. But the most incredible news was that brutish giants were being born to women from whom beautiful children would have been expected.

One day it was announced to Adam that a man who said he was from Eden was there to see him. Adam went to the receiving room, and there stood the Lord.

"Your son, Cain, insisted that I come. He has been in a terrible worry about his mother, pleading with me night and day to post cherubim here in your house to protect her. You see, in the city of Enoch where Cain lives there have been dreadful events caused by wicked angels who have cohabited with women. I knew after I created Eve that she and her kind would tempt angels, and although some of her offspring are beautiful, none is as beautiful as your wife, even at her age. So Cain's concern is not without

basis. I am here in answer to your son's prayers; but I assure you, you do not want cherubim in this house. It would be like living in an active volcano or under a roaring waterfall. So with your permission, I will take her home with me. I have prepared a place for her, and she will be perfectly safe there. It will not be many years before you will come to join her. During that time you have a mission right here in your village."

Adam's heart sank at these words. The world had been getting steadily worse, he knew that, but little of it had touched his enclave on the Tigris River. This was a shocking assault on his bubble of security. He knew the Lord was right, and it would be best to let Eve go where she would begin to enjoy her reward, which would be far better than anything he could provide for her on earth.

"Thy will be done," said Adam.

He wanted to say goodbye to Eve, but he did not know what he could possibly say. He heard a clatter in the bedroom, and when he got there he found only her comb on the floor. She must have been combing her hair before going to greet the visitor. The first crude comb he had made for her was there on the table where she always kept it, and the bronze comb she always used was on the floor where she never would have left it. Adam knew that the Lord had taken her.

Adam was a famous man, and a constant stream of vis-

itors came to see the oldest man in the world. It was rumored that God had made him with his own hands. Most of the people who came to view him had adopted other theories about the origin of the human race and considered the Adam-and-Eve story a quaint myth. They would sometimes ask him outright whether he really had no parents and had been made directly by the hand of God. On some of those occasions he would invite the self-assured questioner to step inside the house with him. Then Adam would take off his shirt and show the skeptic that he had no navel. For the rest of his life, Adam wondered what that mission was that the Lord had spoken of. He never found out.

Adam died a few years later. They embalmed his body and put the casket in the cave where he and Eve had first lived; then they sealed up the entrance and wrote an inscription over it, which read as follows.

HERE LIES THE FIRST MAN, ADAM
BEGAN LIFE IN EDEN IN YEAR OF ADAM 1
DIED NEAR THIS SPOT IN YEAR OF ADAM 930
HIS WIFE, EVE, IS NOT HERE AND NEVER SHALL DIE

Every person in the world mourned Adam's death, for all were his sons and daughters.

†

Questions for Discussion

What does the detail about the rivers at the beginning of the story tell you?

How do you picture Adam, physically? Cave man? Movie star material? Tall? Squat? Light? Dark? How would he look with a nice haircut in a coat and tie?

How old do you think Adam and Eve were in terms of physical maturity when they left the garden?

Do you think Adam and Eve were as intelligent as average modern people?

What would be an explanation for God apparently thinking the animals might satisfy Adam?

What is the symbolism of Adam's rib?

Is there significance in Adam's rib other than the symbolism?

Do you think the forbidden fruit was literal?

Would it be possible for a serpent to speak?

Do you think Eve was as easily persuaded as the brevity of the biblical text suggests? If not, what do you think the serpent's main talking points were?

What is your opinion about the reason Adam followed Eve into sin?

Do you think it was in the character of Adam to blame Eve?

Can you think of anything the Lord left out when he predicted the results of the fall insofar as Adam and Eve's life was concerned? Does it have a wider significance?

What is your opinion of the Tree of Life?—what was (or is) it there for, and why did the Lord assign cherubim (extremely powerful angelic beings) to it.

Was the cave a necessity for their survival?

Would it have been possible for Adam and Eve to survive without the sheep?

Does it seem to you that the Lord set it up for Cain and Abel by giving Adam grain and sheep?

How was it that Cain and Abel had separate occupations so soon?

Why did Cain kill Abel?

How was the grace of the Lord exhibited when least expected?

What were Cain's family issues?

What were Cain's religious issues?

How did Cain's sin nature manifest itself?

What were Abel's family issues?

What were Abel's religious issues?

How did Abel's sin nature manifest itself?

Why did the Lord protect Cain?

How could vengeance for killing Cain be seven fold?

It has often been suggested that Cain was fathered by the devil, not Adam. Do you think whoever originated that fable should have chosen a different occupation?

Did the Lord ever reprimand Cain?

Why did Cain not understand God's grace?

How many killings since Cain have been at the hands of those who hated the doctrine of grace?

The answer to the question "Why did Cain kill Abel" that this story offers has it that Adam left the sacrifice of the lamb to Eve's discretion—at least the timing of it. If Adam had not neglected his responsibility in this, perhaps it would have been arranged differently and Cain would not have been so deadly jealous of Abel.

The family dysfunction that led to Cain's rebellion was partly due to his mother's poor judgment, but ultimately the responsibility was Adam's. Similarly the fall was due to Eve's poor judgment in tasting the forbidden fruit. But did Adam shirk his responsibility to God when he willingly followed her? If he had trusted God to work it out rather than taking it into his own hands, things might have been different. Someone says, "but what about the overarching plan of God?" What do we really know about that or what he could have done? Another example of this type of thing—where the wife influences the husband, leading to a lot of trouble—is soon to be encountered as the Genesis Story continues.