

The story of Genesis before Avraham is a story of the degeneration and loss of human relationship with the land, with other animals, and with God, culminating in the flood. The first covenant with all life and the land takes the place of those lost relationships. The climax of the Torah covenant in the Shmitah year echoes the Genesis story in ways that suggest that it is meant to restore those relationships. A longer version of these texts, including more verses and commentary, can be downloaded at neohasid.org/torah/genesis-shmitah – letters correspond to paragraphs in that version.

I. Creation and Eden, Gen 1:31-2:3

A. And *Elohim* created the *adam* in his image... male and female he created them. And *Elohim* blessed them and *Elohim* said to them: Bear fruit and increase and **fill the land and occupy her** *umil'u et ha'aretz v'kivshuha* and prevail *ur'du...over every animal kol hachayah* crawling on the land.

And *Elohim* said: Here, I give to you-all every plant seeding seed which is on the face of all the land and every tree which has in it tree-fruit seeding seed; for you it will be for eating; and for every animal of the land *chayat ha'aretz...in which there is a living soul / nefesh chayah*, every green plant for eating. Gen 1:26-30

B. And *Elohim* saw all that he made, and here: very good *v'hineh tov m'od...* And *Elohim* blessed **the seventh day** and made him holy, for in him **he stopped** from all his work...

II. Eden, Gen. 2:5-17

C. Every growth of the field would yet be in the land and every plant of the field would yet grow, for YHVH *Elohim* had not caused rain on the land, and **an adam to serve the land** was not... YHVH *Elohim* form-ed *vayyitzer* the human *ha'adam*, **dirt from the ground/soil** *'afar min ha'adamah* and blew in his nostrils a living breath *nishmat chayyim*, and the *adam* became a living soul *nefesh chayah*.

YHVH *Elohim* planted a garden *gan* in *Eden* eastward and ... YHVH *Elohim* took the *adam* and placed/rested him in *gan Eden* **to work her / to serve her and to watch over her** *l'avdah ul'shomrah*.

And YHVH *Elohim* commanded over the *adam*, saying: **From every tree in the garden eating you will eat**; and from the tree of knowing good and bad, **you will not eat** from him, for in the day of your eating from him dying you will die.

D. YHVH *Elohim* said: No good is the *adam* being by himself – I will make for him a help opposite him. And YHVH *Elohim* formed every animal of the field *chayat hasadeh* and every bird of the skies and brought unto the *adam* to see what he would call to him...and the *adam* called names to every beast *b'heimah...* and every animal of the field *kol chayot hasadeh*, and for *Adam* no help opposite/corresponding to him was found... Gen 2:18-22

II. The Fall, Gen 3:6-24

E. And the woman saw, that the tree was **good to eat** and he was desire for the eyes, and the tree was pleasurable for enlightening *nechmad l'haskil*, and **she took from his fruit and ate and gave to her man with her, and he ate...** (F.) YHVH *Elohim* called unto the *adam* and said to him: Where are you? *Ayekah!*...

And to *Adam* he said: Because you listened to your woman's voice and ate from the tree..., **cursed is the ground/soil for your sake** *arurah ha'adamah ba'avurkha*, in pain *b'itzavon* you will eat all the days of your life; and thorn and thistle will grow for you and **you will eat the grass** *'esev of the field...*

until you **return to the ground**, because from her were you taken, for you are dirt and will turn back to dirt...

YHVH *Elohim* sent him / threw him out of *gan Eden* **to work / to serve** *la'avod the ground from where he had been taken* *ha'adamah asher lukach misham*.

III. Exile from the Earth, Gen 4:8-14

G. Kayin rose up to Hevel his brother and killed him...And YHVH said unto Kayin: Where is Hevel your brother?...The voice of **your brother's bloods**, they **scream unto me from the ground**.

Now you are cursed from the ground *arur atah min ha'adamah*, which split open her mouth to take your brother's bloods from your hand. Because you will **work/serve** *ta'avod the ground*, she will not add giving her strength.

Shaken off and outcast *na' v'nad you will be in the land*.

And Kayin said to YHVH: Great is my sin, beyond carrying. Here you have driven me *hen geirashta oti* today **away from the face of the ground** *mip'nei ha'adamah* and from your face I will be hid, and I will be shaken off and outcast *na' v'nad in the land...*

IV. The Flood and the Human-Land Connection, Gen 6:3-13

H. YHVH saw, that **the human's evil** *ra'at ha'adam in the land* was tremendous... And YHVH drew-in *vayinachem*, for he made **the adam within the land**, and he was pained unto his heart.

And YHVH said: I will blot out **the adam** I created **from off of the face of the land**, from human to beast to crawler to bird of the skies, for I am withdrawn-against *nichamti* my making them...

And **the land was ruined** before the *Elohim* and **the land was filled** up with violence. And *Elohim* saw **the land and here, her ruin**, for all flesh ruined his way **on the land**. And *Elohim* said to Noah: The end of all flesh comes before me, for **the land is filled** with violence from before them. Here am I going to **ruin them with the land**.

V. Leaving the Ark and Eating Animals, Gen 8:1, 8:15-9:7

I. *Elohim* remembered Noah and all the animals *kol hachayah* and beasts which were with him in the ark...

And *Elohim* spoke to Noah saying: Go out from the ark...every animal *chayah* which is with you..., going out with you, and they will **swarm in the land** and bear fruit and increase **in the land...**

...and YHVH said unto his heart: **I will not add to cursing anymore the ground for the sake of humanity** *ba'avur ha'adam...*, and I will not add anymore to striking down all life as I did. **Throughout all the land's days**, sowing and reaping and cold and hot and summer and winter and day and night **will not stop/rest** *lo yishbotu*.

Elohim...said to them: Bear fruit and increase and **fill the land**.

And a fearing of you and terror of you will be over every animal of the land *chayat ha'aretz*... into your hands they are given. **All that crawls which lives, for you it will be for eating**. Like the green plant, all have I given to you. Just **the flesh with his soul nafsho, his blood, you will not eat**...

And you, bear fruit and increase, **swarm through the land** and increase in her.

VI. The Rainbow Covenant, Gen 9:8-17

I(2). *Elohim* said unto Noah and unto his sons with him, saying: And I, here I am erecting my covenant with you-all and your seed after you and with the soul of every animal / every soul alive *kol nefesh hachayah* that is with you...and with every animal of the land *kol chayot ha'aretz* with you, from all leaving the ark, for every animal *kol chayot* of the land...

And I will uphold my covenant with you and all flesh will not be cut-off anymore from the flood waters, and there will be **no more flood to destroy the land**.

And *Elohim* said: This is this covenant-sign which I am placing between me and between you and between every living soul *kol nefesh chayah* that is with you, for generations eternally: my bow I have set in the cloud, and it will be **a covenant sign between me and the land**... and the bow will be seen and I will remember my covenant between me and between you and every living soul *kol nefesh chayah*... and I will see her to remember the covenant eternally... This is the covenant-sign between me and all flesh on the land

VI. Shmitah Year of Release, Exodus 23:10-11

L. **Six years you will sow your land** and gather your produce. And **the seventh you will release** *tish'm'tenah* and forswear, and the poor of your people will eat and their remainder the animal of the field *chayat hasadeh* will eat...

Six days you will do your works and in **the seventh day** you will stop, for the sake of your ox and your donkey resting *l'ma'an yanuach* and your female servant's child and the stranger re-souling *vayinafeish*.

VII. The Sinai-Shmitah Covenant, Leviticus 25:1-24

M. YHVH spoke to Moshe in Mount Sinai saying: Speak to Yisrael's children and say unto them: For **you will come to the land** that I give you and **the land will rest/stop** *shavtah*, YHVH's Sabbath-rest *shabbat* ...In **the seventh year the Sabbath's sabbath** *shabbat shabbaton* **will it be for the land**, a Sabbath for YHVH. **Don't sow your field** and don't prune your vineyard...

And the *shabbat* of the land will be **for you for eating**: for you and for your male servant and for your female servant and for your hired-worker and for your settler living-as-a-stranger with you; and for your beast and for the animal which is in your land *chayah asher*

b'artzekha, all of her produce will be to eat...

You will do **my statutes**, and you will watch over my judgments...and settle on the land securely *lavetach*. And **the land will give her fruit** and **you will eat to be satisfied** and you will settle securely on her...

The land you may not sell permanently *latz'mitut*, for **the land is mine** *ki li ha'aretz*, for you are strangers and settlers by/with me *ki gerim v'toshavim atem imadi*. So in all the land of your tribe-possession you will **give redemption** *g'ulah* to the land.

VIII. Covenant of Peace, Leviticus 26:3-13

N(1). If you will walk in **my statutes** and watch over my commandments and do them, then I will give your rains in their season and **the land will give her produce** *y'vulah* and the tree of the field his fruit...and **you will dwell securely** *lavetach* in your land...

And I will set **peace in the land** and I will **uphold my covenant** with you...and I will make myself walk in the midst of you and I will become *Elohim* for you and you will become my people...

IX. Eating and Exile, Leviticus 26:14-43

N(2). If you will not listen...and if you will despise **my statutes**...to **undo my covenant**, even so will I do this to you... 1) I will appoint over you terror and disease and fever, and **you will sow your seed** for emptiness and **your enemies will eat it**...

And I will set my face against you...and if up to these you will not listen, then I will add to chastising you... 2) and I will **make...your land like brass**... 3) and **your land** will not give **her produce** and the tree of the land will not give **his fruit**...

If you will walk in opposition with me (still)...I will add upon you seven-fold according to your sins... 4) I will send out against you the animal of the field *chayat hasadeh* and she will make you childless and cut off your animals... 5) and I will **break the staff of bread for you** and **you will eat and not be satisfied**...

If with these you will not listen to me...I will walk with you in a fury of opposition... 6) and **you will eat the flesh of your sons and your daughter's flesh you will eat**...

And I will **desolate the land**...then **the land will enjoy/desire** *tirtzeh* her **Sabbaths**... All the days of her desolation she will rest what she didn't rest in your Sabbaths when you were dwelling on her... 7) and you will be lost in the nations and **the land of your enemies will eat you**...

And those of you who are left...their uncircumcised hearts will be bent-to-shape...and I will remember my covenant with Yaakov, and even my covenant with Yitzchak and my covenant with Avraham will I remember, and **I will remember the land**...

X. Sinai = Shmitah, Leviticus 26:46

These are the statutes and judgments and *Torot* which YHVH set between him and between Yisrael's children in Mount Sinai by Moshe's hand.