

PART I

OLD COVENANT FOUNDATIONS

UNIT 1

THE BEGINNING

Covering the first 3 chapters of Genesis

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Beginning with God

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1-5)

The very first thing we learn from the Bible, if we read it from the very beginning, is about God. What better place is there to begin?

The trouble with us today is, we want to go straight to the point. What does all of this have to do with me? we ask. Where do I come in?

The Creator -- In this paradigm we're in, -- this "Christian thing", or this "God thing", or whatever you want to call it -- we have to go into it with the understanding that before there was us, there was God. We must begin with God before we can understand us, because, in the end, that's what defines us. As the very first line in the Bible says, He made us. In the last half of the first chapter it says He made us in His image. We are, therefore, a reflection of Him, so what it all boils down to is this: if you want to understand the copy, you must first understand the original -- or, if you want to understand the *object d'art*, first, get to know the artist.

So, what can we learn about God from the opening lines of the Bible?

First, as we just noted, He did create us. The fact that He made some of us artists, and that many of our favourite subjects are objects and scenes that He already created, shows that He's quite an artist Himself. The fact that some of us, His creatures are scientists, and after thousands of years, we still haven't fathomed the intricacy of His creation, shows that He has a profoundly scientific mind. I'm sure we could go on.

The Names of God

But let's look at some basic truths we can learn from the names used for God in the opening two chapters.

One, and Yet, a Plurality

The language originally used to write most of the Old Covenant, as well as bits of the New, was Hebrew.

The Hebrew word used in Genesis chapter one for God, is *Elohim*, which is a generic word meaning "god". In Hebrew, any word ending in *-im* or *-ot*, is in the plural form. Therefore, the word *Elohim* seems to mean literally "Gods". However, we have to be careful how we develop our conclusion. As the twelfth century rabbi, Rashi, in his commentary on Genesis says, it doesn't refer to many Gods, because the verb that accompanies the plural noun is in the singular (verbs in Hebrew can also denote singular or plural, sort of like the verb "is" does in English, as in "he/she/it is -- they are"). Rashi was, of course, arguing against the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. However, rather than disprove it, his comment helps to clarify it.

Believing in the Trinity means we believe in one God, not three. The word "Trinity" is an English noun from Latin roots, not found in the Bible, based on the adjective, "tri-une". "Tri" means "three" and "une" means "one". It means, "One God manifesting Himself in three persons."

Being one God, He acts as one, just as the verb that accompanies the noun suggests.

Probably the reason for Rashi's comment, as well as numerous accusations from other sources (mostly Jewish and Islamic) that Christianity is polytheistic; is our tendency to emphasises His Threeness over His Oneness. Listening to us sometimes, one gets the impression that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were three friends who got together one day and said, "Let's join forces and become God!"

That impression is unfortunate, is far from the truth, and reflects our tendency to be careless in the way we throw words around without thinking of how they may be understood by people of different backgrounds. In some cases, it reveals our own lack of accurate understanding of the Godhead.

The greatest commandment, according to our Messiah, Yeshua, is found in a passage in Deuteronomy 6:4,5, called the Shema, which begins, "Hear oh Israel (*Shema Yisrael*) The Lord our God, the Lord is One (*Adonai echad*)". This is considered one of the most sacred proclamations in Judaism, and as I just mentioned, Yeshua acknowledged it as part of the most important commandment, which continues, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.*

However, the word, "one", used here, *Echad*, doesn't always mean an absolute oneness. For example, chapter two of Genesis, which we'll get to later, says that Adam and Eve became one (*echad*) flesh. They were still two people, but one flesh. That's another important concept that will come later.

As we noted, the accompanying verb is singular. God acts as one. He is one, so much so that He never has to discuss anything to decide what to do before acting on it (the only exception being when Yeshua was born as a human and lived on earth -- we'll get to that much later). Above all else, He is One. Yet, within that oneness, there is a plurality.

This truth can be gleaned from both the New Covenant Scriptures, as well as from various Old Covenant passages such as what we've looked at. It is not, however, in agreement with Rabbinical Judaism for the most part. However we do find traces of it in the Cabbala, particularly in the third book of the Zohar. As that is a rather obscure source I'll spare you here, and save it for the [appendix](#)

The closest example from human experience, that I can think of, of how there can be a plurality within the oneness of God, is the sun. In our solar system, there is only one sun. The sun is so intensely hot that we could never get close to it without burning up, nor even look directly at it without destroying our eyesight -- a type of God. Yet, the sun gently warms us and gives us much needed energy. How? Through its rays.

We could say that the rays are the sun. When we lie at the beach to tan ourselves, we say we're "bathing in the sun". Yet, the rays of the sun, and the central globe of the sun are separate. On the other hand, the rays could never exist without the central globe, nor could the central globe of the sun exist without there also being rays.

Which came first? The central globe, of course, but as quickly as the speed of light, there followed the rays. That's why the Gospel of John describes Yeshua in one place as the Word (spoken by the Father), and in another, the Begotten of the Father.

As the "Word of God", Yeshua revealed Him to us in much the same way as the rays of the sun do the sun.

Another way of putting it is the word *Shechinah*, in Jewish terminology, meaning the "dwelling" of God among us. The rabbis speak of the *Shechinah* of God being present

among His congregation, or among the two who gather to study Torah, or three who sit to judge, *etc.* Yeshua identified Himself as that *Shechinah* when He said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst."

We believe God spoke His Word, which emanated to earth in same way as the rays of the sun, and became *Shechinah*, in the form of a person, Yeshua.

As a part of the Godhead, Yeshua is inseparable from that oneness. Just as the rays of the sun can't suddenly decide to move to a different part of the universe, and have no more to do with the actual sun -- they would then cease to be rays, or anything for that matter -- so the Word of God could never be thought of in isolation of God Himself. At the same time, the sun, by its nature, must have rays, or it would become a black hole. Therefore, the sun and its rays are one. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God, and the Word is His *Shechinah*, or radiance.

But how can they be separate persons and still be one? That is the riddle that haunts every philosopher and theologian. In spite of the analogies I've given, it's not something that lends itself to the human thought process. However' the bottom line is, God can be whatever He wants.

The rabbis say that God creates angels, complete with personalities, simply by giving a command, and the angel formed by that command exists for as long as it takes to fulfil that command, and then returns and merges again with the substance of God. That's not to say Yeshua is no more than one of many angels created by a command of God. As the Word of God, He is permanent in the same way as the rays that eternally emanate from the sun are permanently part of the sun.

Being One God isn't so much about His person-hood, whether one or many, but being One God.

The Torah says humanity is created in God's image. I think we could safely say we are a very simplified and abbreviated image of God. But we know there is a plurality about the human being as well. The second verse of the Shema, the proclamation that tells us emphatically that God is One, tells us that we must love God with our heart, our soul and our strength. That's the three parts of the human being. Is that a hint as to the plurality within the oneness (*echad*) of God in the preceding verse?

But with humanity, that's as far as it goes. We aren't three persons, only three parts of one person. As a human, one is at ones healthiest when one is "one" with oneself. Some people are diagnosed with multiple personalities, but such people cannot be described as being "one". Being abbreviated and simplified, that's all humanity was designed for. humans are limited, but God is infinite. Just as the sun is composed of pure energy and too hot and radiant for human beings to approach any closer than the circle of earth's orbit, so are God's ways far above our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts -- so much so that His thoughts could be animated with personalities if He chose. As many of such thoughts God would choose to have, they would all agree, as God is infinitely "one", far exceeding man's attempts at being "one".

God's "One" is a perfect oneness, just like God's love is a perfect love, far exceeding anything the human mind can comprehend, let alone emulate.

Love -- In fact, the phrase, "God is One", in Deuteronomy 6:5 is synonymous with the phrase in I John 4:8, "God is Love". Love is the force behind God's oneness. We get a glimpse of this in John 17:20-23, which says *I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as*

You have loved Me.

That's not to perpetuate the error we noted earlier, that the three persons decided to become one at some point in time. It can better be compared to a planet, such as earth.

Earth is one. It was one from its beginning. It wasn't assembled from material from all over the universe, but it nevertheless exists in many parts that naturally remain together as one. How? By means of gravity, and magnetic force. All the components that make up earth are attached by means of gravity. Gravity is most notable when an object (a part of the earth) is removed some distance away. When it is released, it wastes no time in returning.

In the same way, love is more readily noticeable when a person is away from the one he or she feels at one with. It's the force that draws the two people back together.

Love, in its purest form, also means total agreement. There has never been any thought among the three Persons of the Trinity to act independently, or to cease to be one, just as the rays of the sun (in our other analogy) have never felt inclined to act independently of the sun. They agree to the same course of action. They agree that they belong together and are compelled to only act in accordance with one another.

Even when God, the Father, released God the Son to be born on the earth as a part of their creation, that oneness, reflected by that love and agreement kept them working closely together. Yeshua never did anything unless He saw the Father doing it. We could compare Him to a part of the earth that has been propelled away from the surface, and yet, maintains a orbital pattern around the earth, held in that pattern by central force and gravity, or love for mother earth, and therefore, in total agreement that this is where it belongs.

So, *God is love*, therefore, *the Lord our God, the Lord is One*. Therefore, the only hope we have of ever attaining any oneness in ourselves at all is to love God unanimously with all three parts of our being -- *with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength*. Because we were created in God's image, as three part beings, the same force that defines God's oneness is also the key to our mental health.

Justice and mercy

There is a lot that can be learned about God from the names for Him used in the Bible. In the first two chapters' we're introduced to two names: *Elohim*, which as we noted above, is a generic word meaning "god", and in the second chapter, a name that is often referred to as "*the Tetragramation*" (meaning "name with four letters"). The latter is spelled with four Hebrew consonants equivalent to the Latin letters *Y-H-V-H*, and is treated like His proper Name, and is therefore sacred. For that reason, Jewish people refrain from uttering it, saying instead, *Adonai* (meaning "Lord"), or *Ha Shem* ("The Name") when referring to God, or when reading scripture passages that include it. Given that it is spelled with four consonants and no vowels, and that it is so rarely pronounced in Jewish religious circles (only the high priest is supposed to pronounce it during Temple ceremonies) the exact pronunciation is unsure. Some English Bibles use the word "Jehovah", but most use "the LORD" (in a "small caps" font). The pronunciation, "Jehovah" is the result of some Hebrew texts inserting the vowels from "Adonai" into the Tetragramation so the reader won't accidentally pronounce the Divine Name correctly. Out of respect for Jewish sensitivities, and in a common spirit with those in the Jewish community who choose to follow their Messiah in a Torah observant way, we will, from now on use "Ha Shem", "The LORD", or "The Tetragramation" when referring to the Divine Name.

So what can we learn from the two Names of God in the first two chapters?

In rabbinical tradition, the name *Elohim*, is associated with God's attribute of justice,

and the Tetragramation, with His attribute of mercy. This is actually derived from Cabbala, but it is readily evident as you read through Genesis and take note of the contexts in which the Names of God are used.

We will never really know God unless we know Him in both His attributes of justice and mercy. Indeed, the entire Bible is a complete explanation of how these two attributes work together in God's plan for humanity.

So, what does justice and mercy teach us about God?

In the whole of the first chapter, we find only the Name, Elohim. *In the beginning ELOHIM created Heaven and Earth* Here, we see the creation of the universe in all its intricate parts, and we realise the minutely detailed order of it all as it runs like clockwork. At the same time we see how delicate it is. Just to maintain an environment in which water can be found in a liquid state -- necessary for all life as we know it -- the earth's distance from the sun must be exact. Science tells us that if the earth were only a few inches closer to the sun, all water would eventually vaporise, and a few inches farther, it would freeze. Another reflection of God's justice is the ecological cycle, in which all the life processes are interdependent, so much so that humankind, in our ambition to add more comforts to our lifestyle and further increase our efficiency, often violate this process. We not only destroy what we directly consume, but also those life processes that were dependant on what we destroyed, and in turn, this can lead to the destruction of the basic environment that we depend on.

In the same way, when we violate God's moral justice, we affect not only ourselves but others as well. When humanity first disobeyed, that caused the whole universe to fall from its perfect state and released the law of entropy.

According to God's system of justice, as we see in the first chapter, humanity was created to govern the whole of creation. What humanity does therefore has an impact far greater than we realise. This can be both positive and negative. We will study this more later in this unit.

In chapter two of Genesis, in the retelling of the creation of humanity, we are introduced to the Tetragramation. However, we don't find it standing alone: *On the day the LORD God made heaven and earth....* That's as if to say that at the creation of humanity, God mixed His attributes of justice and mercy.

Humanity, as we will go into much more detail later, is the crown of God's creation. We are made in His image, and are creatures endowed with the power of choice.

And what if humanity should make the wrong choice?

It's all very well to say that the universe runs perfectly according to God's standard of justice, but is humanity up to living in a universe like that, let alone governing it? What if humanity makes a mistake (as in fact we did)?

So, at the creation of humanity, we see God's attribute of mercy included.

But is mercy by itself sufficient?

If there were only mercy and no justice, all the world would be in chaos. There would be no standard of order, and sin would know no bounds. Thus, as the rabbis say, at the creation of humanity, God mixed both His attributes of justice and mercy.

So, what do we learn about God from His Names in the first two chapters of the Bible? We were created to know God in both His attributes of justice and mercy -- or we could reword it, both the holiness and the love of God; or the kindness and the severity of God.

Too often, we get one-sided and act like God were some sort of cosmic sugar-daddy, or Santa Clause, to whom we can come on our own terms.

To be sure, He is a God of love with a Father's heart for His creation deeper than we could ever fathom. That is also one of the themes of this foundational series. However,

that is only half of the picture. We will never gain any depth in our experience with God unless we know both the kindness and the severity of God. In fact we won't even know His love in a deep way if we don't also know Him as a consuming fire, nor His mercy, if we don't understand His justice. In fact, the whole Bible, from beginning to end is the story of How God's attributes of justice and mercy work together to complete God's plan for humanity.

Perhaps, as an exercise, it would be good to go through the book of Genesis and observe the occurrence of the two Names, and note how the context of each occurrence expresses the need for either justice or mercy in each instance. That would be too big a project to try to include in this foundational series, but it would be more of a learning experience if you did it on your own anyway.

The Word and the Spirit

In the narrative of the creation process, we see descriptions of the the three persons in the plurality of God. The second verse says the *Wind*, or *Breath*, or *Spirit* of God hovered, or brooded over the face of the waters covering the earth. All three words are possible translations of the Hebrew word, *ruach*. The simplest way to think of the Holy Spirit is, He is the Breath of God. In the New Covenant book of Acts, His coming is accompanied by a loud wind.

One of His roles is the giving of life. The action in the second verse is, He is brooding over the void, as though getting ready to give birth. In the second chapter, we see in the creation of the first human, God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being* (verse 7). Again, it's the Breath of God, or the Holy Spirit who gives life, and the man becomes animated with the life of God Himself.

In the New Covenant, we find the verse. *...The same Spirit who raised Messiah from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies...* (Romans 8:11).

Another description we find is that of "the Word". The New Covenant gospel of John has many parallels to the book of Genesis. In fact, the Gospel of John was apparently written as a midrash^[footnote] of Geneses The most obvious parallel between the two is the first verse of each book; *In the beginning...* John's gospel goes on, *...was the Word*. Genesis doesn't say "the Word" as such, but the account goes on to describe how God spoke every thing into existence so that, according to John, *without Him* (the Word), *there was nothing made that was made*. So, we see that Messiah, in His pre-incarnate role, was the energy force that communicated the exact blueprint for everything as it was being created.

We already looked in depth at what this means within the plurality of the One God. We could also note that the Holy Spirit is the life giving aspect of God, while the Word is the communicative aspect. King Solomon describes Him as Wisdom (Proverbs 8). However, His being Messiah involved more than that, as *Moshiach* literally means "anointed one", which means that as a human, He was not only the Word, communicating the heart of God, but He was empowered with the Holy Spirit. He was anointed to give life.

Other Aspects of Creation

Seven Days

There is a lot of heated opinion over the question of whether creation took six literal days or possibly longer. We won't dwell on the question except to say that God is the creator of time, and is not bound by it. To Him, a thousand years are as one day, a few billion year could be as seven. I don't doubt that God could have done all of creation in

what would seem to us like one millisecond. However, I also believe there's room for the opinion that the days described in Genesis 1 are not literal days, especially since the sun and moon, which we use to measure literal days, didn't appear until the fourth day of creation. Also, chapter two launches into a retelling of the creation, but in a different order.

Literal and chronological or not, there's always a reason for the order in which things are recorded in scripture. In the context of the seven day account, two truths that can be gleaned are the important role man plays in the world God made (which we'll get to in the next subheading), and the concept of Sabbath rest. One rendering of the first few verses of chapter two, describing the seventh day says, *God rested from all His work which he had created, so that it itself could produce* (Genesis 2:3 *Complete Jewish Bible*). When things are in the order God intended, things happen spontaneously. What we plant, grows; actions planned with wisdom produce results; and we are at rest. This is how the kingdom of God works, as we'll see briefly later in this unit. However, we will go more in depth regarding Sabbath rest in a later unit

Another truth we can glean from the first account of creation is, at the end of each day, God saw what He had made and it was good. Things hadn't been affected by sin yet.

Eastern religion, Gnosticism and New Age all teach that the physical world is evil, and that the roll of religion is to help us to escape this material world. That isn't what the Bible teaches. Because the founders of the various religions never knew the world in a perfect state, they simply couldn't fathom how the physical world could possibly a part of a righteous God's ultimate plan. But, as we will see, humanity was created to be a spiritual being who reigns over the physical world. God's idea of completeness is the spiritual and physical together.

The Creation of Humanity

Genesis 24-31 & 2:4-9 *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea...And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground.*

Here, we begin to see some fundamental differences between humanity and the rest of God's creation:

A work of art -- The first human was not simply created with "let there be..." as the rest of creation. In chapter one, He says, "Let us make humanity..." as though God has chosen a different method rather than speaking the Word, "Let there be humanity". We nevertheless see the Divine plurality referred to in the pronouns "us" and "our", but again, the verb is singular. In chapter two, we note that God formed the human out of the earth - as though taking extra care to man's form, as an artist would a work of art.

In God's image -- Humanity was made in God's own image and likeness. In forming the prototype, it's as though God were expressing Himself - revealing His own being through the new creation. Again, note that while "our" and "us" are plural, "image" is singular, which tells us that it's the One God, within the plurality of completeness exists, whose image became the model for the first human. He was patterned after the one image of the One God, not three images, lest anyone take the notion that humans are candidates to become a fourth person of the Trinity. The human being having three parts, heart, soul and body, is a reflection of the composite Divine Image

The life of God -- Having formed the prototype, God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life* (2:7). Humanity was made alive with God's breath - with the very life of God, His "Breath", or as we saw earlier, the Holy Spirit. When God breathed into man's

nostrils, His own Spirit went into him. Humanity is therefore a much higher life form than the rest of creation.

Authority -- Man was given rulership over the world and everything God made. He was given authority and responsibility. Later, we will see that once God gives a mandate or a position of authority, He never recalls it. *God's gifts and calling are irrevocable* (Romans 11:29)

High level of life -- From the points we've looked already, we can observe that humanity was created to be the same order of being as God himself - to be God's close friend, drawing his very life from God, and exercising God's authority over the world in partnership with Him.

The Midrash says man was of superior intelligence even than the angels, who served him, bringing him fruit and roasting meat (of a spiritual type) for him. The Psalms of David confirm this, saying, *he was made a little lower than God* (Psalm 8).

However it is very important that we remember that even with our high level of existence, that humanity isn't God. There are several distinct differences, and if we know clearly where the line is drawn, we won't be in danger of falling into the error of making human beings equal to God. Humanity differs from God in the following ways:

1 No human is to be worshipped as God. God, alone in all the universe is to be worshipped. The first commandment makes this clear.

2 God is omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (is everywhere), and omniscient (all knowing). With God, there are no limits. Humanity has limitations in all areas.

3 Humanity will never find fulfilment nor successfully sustain himself apart from God as unconditional Lord of one's life. However, when totally submitted to God in obedience and total reliance, and dead to one's own ambitions and ego, humanity can begin to partake of God's limitlessness.

Many passages in the Bible warn us not to apply the title "God" to anyone but God the creator: Ex 20:3; Deut 6:4,5; Isa 43:10-13; 45:18-24 (As we saw earlier, Yeshua, God's Son, the Word made flesh (John 1:1-4) being both with God, is God himself, and is now also a human, is therefore the exception. Worshipping Him is the same as worshipping God).

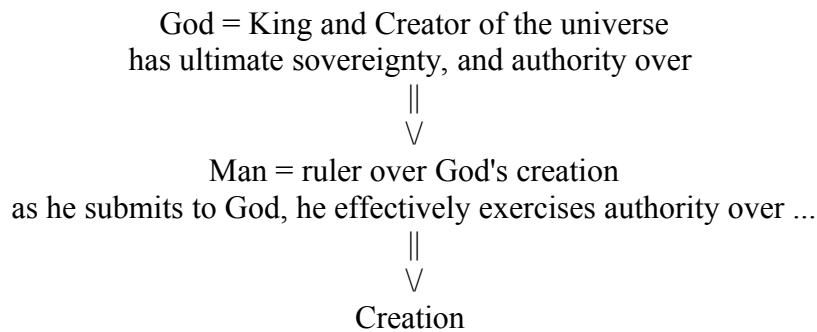
Free choice is another aspect of being in God's image. The fact that there was one tree in the garden that the human couple were strictly forbidden to eat from, yet it wasn't put out of their reach, so that obedience to God was the only thing keeping them from it; shows us that humanity was given freedom of choice. God's will is never forced on us. We choose whether or not to obey God. The only things that are forced on us are the consequences of not having obeyed.

Humanity's capacity of free choice is a necessary part of being in the image of God. It's the basis of relationship with Him, just as it's the basis of any relationship. In entering into a relationship with another, one accepts that the other party has the capacity to choose contrary to one's own wishes. Otherwise it isn't a relationship, but a system of control. God's intention was not to have a "robot" that He could control, but a friend He could relate to.

God knew the possible complications that could result from humanity's free choice - in fact He knew the future. However, He knew that to have a creature in His own image that could relate to Him as a personal friend, He must also accept the potential bad as well as the good. That's why God combined His attribute of mercy at the creation of humanity.

The kingdom of God -- As long as humanity was in willing obedience to God and totally reliant on Him, we could exercise the authority God had given us and all creation was submitted to us. This is the pattern God intended from the beginning. For the

purpose of this foundational series, we can call this the Kingdom of God. This can be defined by the following diagram:



This concept was understood by the Roman military officer who had asked Yeshua to heal his slave. When acknowledging Yeshua's authority over the elements, he said, "I, too, am a man under authority, and I say to this man "Go!" and he goes...etc." (Luke 7:8). He recognised that Yeshua's authority over sickness and demons was derived from the fact that He was under His Father's authority.

Intellectual capacity -- Though he isn't called "Adam" until the end of the three chapters we're currently studying, and even though *Adam* is really a generic word meaning *person*, or, *red*, or *soil*, we'll refer to him by that name (the word for *person* was derived from the earth from which the first person was made, which was also reddish in colour).

Adam's naming of the animals shows that he must have had a great mental capacity. Today, even top scientists don't have names for all the animals. Nor can any one person name, from memory, all species of animals known to science.

According to rabbinical sources, Adam had intuition into the character of each animal, and named them accordingly, giving them names containing sounds that carried the appropriate value and power (another reference to Cabbala).

Socially -- 2:18 *It is not good that man should be alone...*

In the account of the creation of the first woman, we see that humanity was made for relationship

Adam already had a relationship with God, but to be complete, God knew he needed a fellow human to be a friend on an equal level. None of the animals would do. Even though, as we know today, some animals, such as a dog or cat or horse make great companions and respond to love, humanity needs to relate to an equal. For that reason, God created the woman, whom Adam named Eve.

This is not necessarily about marriage. God didn't create a wife for Adam. He created another person to be a companion. Adam made the choice himself to take her as a wife. One can be unmarried and yet fully functional in one's relationships. Looking at it another way, creating a woman for Adam didn't solve the problem of being alone simply by making sure he got married, but rather, their union produced yet more people so that there could be human society. Thus, humanity could be complete in every way.

The two greatest commandments, Deut. 6:5, *love the Lord your God with all your heart...* and Lev. 19:18, *love your neighbour as yourself* further illustrate this principal. A person is not fulfilled if he or she is not in relationship with both God and fellow man.

In creating humanity with free choice, as we discussed above, God also laid the foundation for inter-human relationships. The basis of relationship is mutual free choice, and mutual honour. The possible complications exist for man just as they did for

God. True relationship involves risk. God understood the risk in creating humanity with a free will, just as Adam ran the risk of becoming involved in relationship with the woman. We could say it was Adam's relationship with his wife that exposed him to the risk of falling into sin, just as creating man with free will so as to enjoying true relationship, exposed God to the risk of losing man to sin. That is why we also must show both mercy and justice in our relationships.

Complete -- So, we see the first people were fulfilled in every way: they had a unique relationship with God for which they were created; they now had human companionship; nature and the universe operated perfectly so that their environment was perfect; and they had insight into the mysteries of the universe.

The one thing they didn't have -- Despite all the knowledge and wisdom they possessed, the "knowledge of good and evil" was absent. Their self-consciousness was at a low level, perhaps like that of a child. The world, for them, was not measured in terms of "good" and "evil". Nothing was thought of as being better or inferior to something else, so there was never any reason to compare what someone else had with ones own.

Today, we are quite entrenched in the two words, so much so that we can't fathom how one could get along without them. -- well, "evil", we could understand, because there was nothing evil in the garden, but "good"? But, think again. If nothing is evil, why do we need the word "good"? Either word only has meaning when compared to the other. Just saying something is "good" assumes the possibility of it being evil, or the existence of an evil or inferior counterpart. Because the first people didn't see things in that light, there was no comparing of oneself with another. Therefore, there was no reason to even look at oneself. Thus, the man and woman were naked and not self conscious about it, because neither thought of their own body as "bad" or something to be ashamed of, because the concept of "bad" didn't exist -- nor even good, so there was no one saying, "You're more beautiful than I am".

Compare that to how we are now. We are constantly saying, "How am I doing?" "Am I measuring up?" "Am I improving?" *etc.* What's more, we're taught that it's good to think like that. We can't fathom how one can be a good person without those thoughts constantly going through ones mind (there's that word "good" again!). It's the sin nature that came with the forbidden knowledge.

But it doesn't stop there: "I wish I had his good looks." "If I had his money, I'd burn mine." "Why do *they* get all the good favours?"

We can readily see how knowledge of good and evil thus leads to every sin there is. We see something as better than what we have, we desire the better, and we stoop to evil to obtain the good. Then, suddenly, a whole new realm of evil is opened up.

But because Adam and Eve's eyes hadn't been open to good and evil yet, desire for anything, whether good or evil wasn't there. So no laws were necessary, outside of the one commandment, "Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Can you imagine living without any rules? But think again. Why are there rules about some things?

Let's answer that question with another question: Why are there no laws against eating rocks and soil? After all, doing so would be quite harmful to the body!

The answer is, of course, because no one wants to eat rocks! Laws only exist for things humans have the tendency to do, but shouldn't.

Because man, in his original state, had no knowledge of good and evil, and thus no reason to do evil, no laws were necessary

One thing we can glean from the text is, knowledge of good and evil belonged to God (Genesis 3:5,22) ... *you will be like God, knowing good and evil ... the man has become*

like one of Us, to know good and evil ... God knew where evil did in fact exist. Therefore, God could see His own creation as "good" (Gen 1:4,10 etc.)

The Temptation

Genesis 3:1-7 *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made ...*

Now, we come to the tragedy.

The serpent --

Before we go much further, we had probably better stop and check our sources as to exactly who the serpent was.

Christian tradition says emphatically that the one who tempted Eve in the garden was, in fact, the satan either possessing a snake's body, or appearing in the form of a snake like creature. A portion of Jewish tradition also holds this view.

Now, before gunshots begin firing from the far right, let me quickly state that I don't deny that that's so. It's just that we don't have enough firm Biblical evidence to pin down with certainty, who the serpent was, nor, for that matter, who exactly the satan is. The term, "satan" is a generic Hebrew word meaning, the "opponent", or "enemy" (it's not a proper noun, so we won't use a capital "S").

There's not a lot in the Bible about the satan, and even less about his identity. However, the following scriptures give us a good idea:

The starting point, of course, is the passage under discussion, which only talks about a snake, leaving us to guess that it was, in fact, the satan. What we do learn, however, is about how he goes about deceiving, which we'll do in a bit.

Next, we have the book of Job, and I Kings 22:11-19, among the few places in the Old Covenant referring to him as "the satan". However, if we were to base our understanding only on these passages, we would be left to assume that the satan is one of God's angels responsible for bringing about the negative aspects, or the dark side of God's will, as though God were to be reduced to a cosmic force with a light side and a dark side. That's the view of a portion of rabbinical tradition.

Perhaps more specific than the above passages are Isaiah 14:12-21, addressing the king of Babylon as "Lucifer", or "Son of Morning"; Ezekiel 28:11-19, referring to the King of Tyre as a cherub [\[footnote\]](#) ; and Daniel 10:13, as the Prince of Persia. Even there, the identity of the subject as actually being the satan, is only by inference by the fact that it couldn't possibly be talking about a human, but rather, an angel or spirit being. The passage in Ezekiel refers to him as a cherub, thus the Christian understanding that he is a fallen angel. The wording of the Isaiah passage is the only hint we have from the Bible supporting the popular belief that the satan's proper name is "Lucifer".

Moving on to the New Covenant, Luke 11:14-28 is a foundational passage for the New Covenant understanding of the satan's power as a definite kingdom in outright opposition to God's agenda.

The book of Revelation comes the closest to tying up all the passages regarding the identity of the satan, highlighting also the fact that he will be ultimately defeated as the present age comes to a climax.

But even with that, there is no one scripture passage identifying the subjects of all the passages referred to above as being one and the same individual. However, it's as good a guess as any. Whether there is a single individual answering to the names of Lucifer and Beelzebub, who is also a cherub and claiming soul title of "the satan", or whether there

are many such, united by their opposition to the Holy One; I'm not sure that it really matters. Judging by Yeshua's experience in the gospels, and by passages like Ephesians 6:12 and II Corinthians 10:4-5, there are many spiritual beings of many levels, be they fallen angels, cherubim, familiar spirits, unclean spirits, or poltergeists. Evidently, there is a hierarchy, the ones near the top controlling entire nations, as in the case of the "Prince of Persia" of Daniel, the "King of Babylon" of Isaiah and the "King of Tyre" of Ezekiel (the same passages usually regarded as being about the satan). Being that pride is their downfall, along with greed, jealousy and ambition, there would necessarily be room for only one at the top, and I think it would be safe to identify that one as the satan. At least Yeshua referred to him as Beelzebub, which means "lord of the flies", not a particularly flattering designation, but appropriate.

The Old Covenant scriptures by themselves, don't give us enough detail to make all the above observations; thus the variance from the rabbinical view. This is a striking fact, especially when we consider that the Old Covenant is the foundation of the New, and that there are very few New Covenant truths, if any, that can't be traced to the Old.

So, why does the Old Covenant say so little about the satan? Probably for two reasons:

1. Because that's all the attention he deserves. Perhaps it's us who make too big a thing about him - especially when even the New Covenant doesn't give us all that much information about him - only that he's God's enemy.

2. Apart from where it speaks of things to come, the Old Covenant describes the world prior to the coming of the kingdom of God. Only in the New Covenant do we begin to see the kingdom of God as a present reality in contrast to the kingdom of the satan. It's in this context that the satan is shown up as the enemy of God. It's a direct confrontation on a level we don't see in the Old Covenant.

But here, we must be very specific. While we talk here, and throughout this foundational series about two kingdoms, it isn't about *Ha Shem* representing ultimate good versus the satan as representing ultimate evil.

The concept, or the tendency to rebel against God is the ultimate evil. Really, there's only one "ultimate", and that's God. If it were up to only him, as we discussed earlier, there would be no need for the terms "good" and "evil". Only when there is even so much as a thought to go one's own way in opposition to God's, is there a use for the term "evil". The father or the discoverer of evil (I suppose "patron saint" isn't the right word) is the being we have been referring to as "the satan", which is exactly what the word means -- "enemy", or "opposer" -- as the opponent of anything that's of God. Even the satan isn't the ultimate evil, as much as he tries to be. Man is quite capable of evil without his help, but the satan uses man's tendency towards evil as an entry point for control. As expert as the satan is on evil, God is infinitely more capable of turning that evil around for good. Thus, in practical terms the satan is hardly more than a tool in the hands of God (that's not to be misunderstood as saying God initiates all the evil that satan does). Man's carnal nature is the far greater challenge.

However, we in Christian circles have the unfortunate tendency to view the satan as the negative pole on a cosmic bipolar scale of good and evil. It's because of this tendency that some rabbis have labelled the Christian point of view as 'Dualism', meaning that we believe, not in one God in control of the universe, but rather, two opposing gods, *Ha Shem* as representing good, and the satan representing evil. Just listening to the way we go on and on about the satan's power and activity, one could easily arrive at that conclusion.

The method --

We will operate on the assumption that the satan and the serpent were one and the same. By examining the narrative we can observe the method by which the satan repeatedly attempts to destroy God's plans:

Looking for the weakest point -- the serpent ... said to the woman - By singling out Eve for deception, the satan used an obvious tactic any military strategist would use. Adam had been around longer and knew better. Before Eve was created Adam had already named all the animals, a tremendous task as we observed. We also saw that Adam had knowledge into the mysteries of the universe. Other than that, we don't have any way of gauging how long the man and woman were in the garden, nor when Eve was created. But we can be sure the serpent couldn't hope to deceive Adam as he could Eve, who was more recently created. Paul notes this factor in I Tim 2:13,14.

In his dialogue with Eve, we see some of the methods the satan uses to tempt and deceive:

Casts doubt on God's Word -- Has God indeed said...? (vs 1) "Did He really say that? Maybe you misunderstood Him! He *couldn't* have meant *that!* etc.

Casts doubt on God's intentions - *You will not surely die. For God knows ...* (vs 4,5) The satan made it sound to Eve like, just maybe, God was withholding something that could be a potential advantage to her and Adam, in this case, special knowledge leading to god-status.

Appeals to self - *... your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God* (vs 5) At the very root of any temptation is the thought of what one can get for oneself. A test of whether a desire arises from true love, or if it's lust, is to examine the question. Lust will always ask, "What's in it for *me*? What will make *me* happy? What do *I* get?" Love that comes up naturally from deep inside, will ask, "How can I make him/her happier? What more can I give?" This one, provided it's not forced or manipulated, has its origin in the nature God breathed into us. The satan is a selfish brute, who has long forgotten what true sacrificial love is.

Half truths - A 100% lie rarely convinces anyone. No one can convince another, except perhaps a blind man, that black is white. However, grey, a mixture of black and white can pass for either. In either case, one is partially correct, whether one says, "This is black," or, "This is white." What's more, one stands a good chance of being believed, that is until something that is truly pitch black or clear white is shown

In Eve's case, the satan mixed a little bit of truth: "the fruit brings knowledge that belongs only to God," with the lies: "God's motives for forbidding the fruit are impure and selfish" and "you won't die."

As a human, Eve was already created in God's image, and had everything going for her. What limitations God had set were all for the good of humanity, but when she responded to the satan's deception, it was natural to forget the positive aspects of God's rule, and to dwell on the negative.

"Become God!" -- Also notice an element common to many false religions and sects of our day, the notion that humanity can become God, or realise ones inherent divinity. As we noted earlier, it is important to know where the line is drawn between humanity and divinity, so we don't fall for this common ruse.

Manipulative control - (vs 6, 7) *She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate ...* Adam was not deceived, but was drawn in by his desire for Eve - or fear of losing her. This demonstrates another means by which the satan influences humanity, through manipulative control.

Adam ultimately bore the responsibility for having allowed himself to be manipulated by his wife, as God said later, "because you listened to your wife..." This passage doesn't tell us what Eve said to influence Adam. It could have been by any of the

persuasive techniques people use today to seduce others, or draw them into things they shouldn't. Whatever the case, Adam had the knowledge and the authority to deal with the situation, but he didn't. (This not to say one must never accept one's wife's suggestions, but rather, one must not follow suggestions that go contrary to God's command, as Eve's advise did.)

When this kind of test comes, one is faced with the decision to choose between God's way, and something or someone one has grown to love. It can be an ambition, a strong desire, possessions, or as in Adam's case, a relationship. All these things may not be bad in themselves -- as we saw earlier, relationship was God's idea -- but when one's love or desire for that person or thing becomes greater than one's love for God, or grows to the point where one finds one can no longer follow unreservedly after God's ways, one becomes double-minded. Double-minded individuals are especially easy for the satan to manipulate.

Whose fault? -- So far, we've shot down two popular sayings regarding the temptation:

"Adam should never have listened to his wife and neither should we." In reality, there are some very wise women about, whose husbands would do well to listen to. My wife is one. On the other hand, evil manipulation could just as easily come through a man.

"Adam was doing just fine until the woman came along!" The woman was God's idea. It's just another example of how something intended for God's highest glory, such as relationship, can become a trap when one gets ones eyes off God.

Here's one more: "It was the woman's fault!" Think again: Eve was deceived into thinking she was doing the right thing. Adam wasn't, but he did it anyway! So, who's sin was greater? (I Tim 2:13,14) Given Adam's knowledge and authority, and the position he had, and what resulted from the act, it was tantamount to high treason.

Finally, here's one made famous by the comedian, Flip Wilson: "The devil made me do it!" That was Eve's excuse, nevertheless, God held both Adam and Eve responsible for the choice they made. The devil can never "make" us do anything we haven't chosen to do ourselves. Moreover, in the New Covenant, we find the satan is only one of three negative forces we have to deal with: "The world, the flesh and the devil". Depending on how we guard ourselves in regard to the other two, he's usually the least challenging of the three.

The result (3:8-24)

Now, the unthinkable has happened -- a tragedy of cosmic proportions, (literally). The special creation, the work of art, whom the Holy One has formed in His own image, animated with His own life force, and invested His own authority; has committed high treason.

Let's look at all the consequences that followed:

Death began to become a stark reality. The *Complete Jewish Bible* translates God's warning of Genesis 2:17 as, *on the day that you eat from it, it will become certain that you will die*. Other translations indicate that whoever ate of the fruit would surely die the same day. So, which translation is correct? The original writer of those words was separated from us by language, culture and over 3000 years of time. There's no easy answer. The *Complete Jewish Bible* was translated in light of an understanding of Jewish culture and religion as well as language.

But we will leave room for the possibility that the standard translations are correct.

Did Adam and Eve die on the same day they ate the forbidden fruit? They obviously didn't die physically.

According to Romans 5:12ff., Ephesians 2:1-6, and others, mankind has been

spiritually dead since Adam's act of disobedience. That means that the human spirit was severed from its life source from that "day" on. Being that humanity was created for mobility in both the spirit world and the physical, we have been severely limited since that day, or as the New Covenant defines it, *spiritually* dead.

We could also say that from that day on, Adam and Eve *began* to die. The ageing process began to take effect. Disease began to have access to the human body.

Finally, it could be said that death was averted in the immediate context by the sacrifice of two animals, which were killed so as to provide Adam and Eve with clothing. Thus, immediate physical death was transferred to innocent animals through a practice we will see later, became a foundation for God's further dealings with humanity, that of live animal sacrifice.

The concept of animal sacrifice is that a creature that doesn't deserve death, dies in place of the one who does, thereby covering their sin. The word for this in English is *atonement*. For Adam and Eve, this was applied in a literal practical way. The hides of the innocent animals also provided a covering for the shame of nakedness, the first obvious effect of the knowledge of good and evil.

Shame -- The knowledge the snake had assured them would make them like God did virtually the opposite. Far from feeling like God, they were suddenly aware of things that made them feel very uncomfortable -- things about themselves they didn't want anyone else to see.

And that was only the beginning. Soon, "good", "evil", "better", "worse", "nice", "ugly", *etc.* became the standard by which they measured everything.

They had become conscious of themselves, and now, this new boy on the block, "self", was the one who had to be pleased with good things. This desire for the good, of course, drove them to doing bad things. .

Now that the world was seen in terms of good and evil, that became the standard to gauge all actions. Therefore, it was necessary for God to reveal his Law as part of His interaction with humanity.

Changes in nature -- As if to confirm the new standard of good and evil, nature began to take on a few evil traits. God told Adam that as part of his punishment, it would now require hard work to produce food from the ground. What's more, nature would throw a few obstacles in his way, such as thorns and weeds. I think, in retrospect, we could add bad weather, wild animals, mosquitos, disease *etc.*

Authority -- And what happened to the authority God invested in humanity?

God, in His attribute of Justice, will not retract a mandate or a responsibility He has already vested. *God's gifts and calling are irrevocable* (Romans 11:29).

However, the fact that humanity was out of favour with God complicated the exercise of that authority. Because Adam had left his position of submission to God's Kingship, God's kingdom order was disrupted, and Adam's authority lost its effectiveness.

Everything outside of God's kingdom, ultimately lies within the satan's grasp. In the beginning, there was very little that was outside God's kingdom, but now, Adam had opened the door to the satan's interference in everything that was under human jurisdiction - namely, all of creation. Being that the satan used to occupy a position next to God Himself (Isa 14:12-21; Ez 28:11-19), he is naturally very strong and can easily overpower anyone who isn't operating in God's authority. Thus, everything, including mankind, eventually came under the satan's control through the following process:

1. Through knowledge of good and evil, humanity became vulnerable to temptation to do evil, thus complicating things even further. As a result, things in human everyday life further lost their order of priorities. The doors were further open for the satan and his minions to interfere, which he did, and still does each time he has the chance.

2. Through the medium of idols and witchcraft, people even began worshipping the satan as god, thus giving him that much more power over their lives. One of the saddest aspects of this is the fact that humanity, as we were originally created, were above all angels, spirits and even the satan himself in God's hierarchy; but now we have been reduced to worshipping and fearing the satan and demon spirits as though they were greater.

The satan is often referred to as the "god of this world": Luke 4:5-7; John 14:30; John 12:31; II Cor 4:4. Where did he receive the position and authority spoken of in these verses? From Adam, and the rest of us, his descendants. We reinforce his control, not only by pagan religious practices, but often by the way we live our daily lives.

So, who's ultimately in control?

At this point we need to step back and remind ourselves, of certain things, because otherwise, we'll run the danger of presenting a dualistic view of the universe.

To understand why the satan seems to have so much leeway, or why the situation looks, to us, like two opposing powers controlling the universe, we need to realise that God is infinite, not only in power, but also in wisdom. God is so great and infinite He can allow us to make our own choices and still be in control. The other side is, as we saw, by manipulating Adam through Eve, the satan enmeshed himself so thoroughly into God's creation with the notion that it would be impossible for God to judge and destroy him without also judging and destroying all of creation, including humanity. Of course, if God used only His power, He could easily and utterly destroy the satan with a flick of a finger, but that would also destroy humanity, and everything else that's under the control of the kingdom of darkness. God simply won't do it that way, at least for now, because He is a Father who sees His children with a good eye.

It seemed to the satan, therefore, and to everyone else, that through Adam's fall, he had God in checkmate, but he didn't. It's as though God knew all along that it's a three-dimensional chess game, where all the satan saw was a flat two dimensional chess board. God is not only infinite in power, but also in wisdom. He knows loopholes for everything, and knows of physical and spiritual laws the satan never knew existed - and, He doesn't even have to scratch His head to think of them!

Nor is God in any way hampered by His attribute of justice. It's not a limitation, but rather His nature. He is holy and just, and He will not violate this principal.

Along the same line, Hebrews 6:18 presents what may appear as a limitation: *...it is impossible for God to lie...*

However, think again: Has God ever *wanted* to lie? Has God ever tried to lie and found He couldn't? Has God ever wished He could lie? The answer to all of these is, "NO". It's not a limitation, but a strength. After all, who could ever conceive of being able to say truthfully, "Once I've chosen this way, it's impossible that it will ever be otherwise." God's justice is not a handicap to God's mercy so that He would wish it out of the way. On the contrary, God's infinite wisdom has found the way for God uncompromised attribute of justice, and His full attribute of mercy to find their full expression in God's plan for mankind.

This brings us to the promise.

The promise -- Lest the satan prematurely begin to revel in victory, God said something that probably gave him sleepless nights for the next 4000 years.

Speaking of the one who would one day be born to womankind, He said, *He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel*. Even as early as that, before pronouncing the curse on Adam and Eve, God's plan began to go into action. He promised humanity a deliverer, through whom justice and mercy would both be

completely fulfilled.

Justice and mercy ultimately fulfilled in Yeshua -- Skipping ahead, let's look at the New Covenant scripture passage of Romans 5:12-19, which shows us how God's mercy, working through His attribute of justice restores humanity to our original state that we had before our father Adam sinned.

The passage explains how Adam's disobedience affected all his descendants, that we became spiritually dead' and received the inclination towards evil

Because of the blotch of sin, we were eternally separated from God and had no final place for their souls but in Hell.

In reference to this passage, Yeshua is often called the "second Adam", in that He was tested, just as Adam was, and His response had repercussions on the whole human race. He was humanity's second chance.

In fact He is the "seed of the woman." It was necessary for him to be born of a virgin so that he would not inherit Adam's sin.

Just like Adam was at the beginning, He was pure, without sin. But where Adam failed, Yeshua was victorious (Heb 4:15). It was by his death and resurrection, that Yeshua "crushed Satan's head", as God promised in Gen 3.

Because Yeshua satisfied the demands of justice by dying on our behalf, he also fulfilled God's mercy by making salvation available to all.

The passage goes on in verse 17 to say that by believing, we receive His righteousness, and we can "reign in life" just like our father Adam did.

In the next lesson, we will look at how God began to lay the groundwork to make all of that possible by making a covenant with humanity.

If you want to study this subject further, you may download this and the next few study outlines in this series [here](http://www.scribd.com/doc/130033486/Tishbyte-Bible-Study-Series-Old-Testament-Studies) (www.scribd.com/doc/130033486/Tishbyte-Bible-Study-Series-Old-Testament-Studies). So far, this is the only study in the *Tishbyte* series that exists in long form. The rest are outlines.

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Footnotes and Appendices

an appendix is like a footnote, but much longer

APPENDIX 1

Quotes from the Zohar in Support of the Trinity, Followed by Comments on the Cabbala

The following two quotations are provided courtesy of:

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The file, *Apologia* which includes the following quotations can be downloaded from his website: <http://tshuvah.weebly.com/>

ZOHAR [TO DEUT.6:4]: Hear O Israel, Y-H-V-H our God Y-H-V-H is One. Why is there a need of mentioning the Name of G*d three times in this verse? The First HaShem is the Father above. The Second is the Stem of Jesse, the Messiah Who is to come from the family of Jesse through David. And the Third One is the Way which is below (meaning the Holy Spirit Who shows us the way) and These Three are One.

[Zohar vol.III]: The Ancient and Holy One is revealed and described as being Three; it is because the Other Lights are Two complete Ones, yet is the Ancient and Holy One described and complete as One, & He is One, positively One; thus are the Other Lights united and glorified in One, because They are One...[Rabbi Simeon further states]...Thus are the Three Lights united in One. The Spirit which is downward, Who is called the Holy Spirit, the Spirit which is the Middle Pillar, Who is called the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, also called the Spirit below. The Upper Spirit is hidden in secret; in Him are existing all the Holy Spirits (the Holy Spirit and the Spirit that is the middle pillar), and all that is light."

Author's notes regarding Cabbala, of which the above quotations form a part: Basically, it's a set of Jewish practices followed by rabbis and mystics; a means of delving for deeper meaning from the Torah than can be rendered from the plain meaning; and a system of finding out the secrets of nature and of the universe. Often dismissed as entirely occult, in actuality it can be classed under four headings:

1. *The literal Cabbala*, which deals with the numerical value of Hebrew letters and hidden words. The reference in the book of Revelation to the 'mark of the Beast', or the number of the name of the antichrist being 666, would be classified as Cabbala under this heading. The popular book, *The Bible Code* by Michael Drosnin which brought out hidden words and dates in the Bible that allegedly predicted various recent events, would also fall under this category. The fact that if one counts forty letters following the first occurrence of the letter Yod in each of the first five books of the Bible, and forty letters again, and so on, one will find the four letters spelling the Divine Name. The book of Esther, though it never mentions G-d, has the Name encoded at various turning points in the narrative. All that would fall under the category of 'literal Cabbala, not occult, but simply another way to look for meaning in the Bible.

2. *The dogmatic Cabbala* That is a body of knowledge and thought that has been recorded in various volumes and compendiums, such as the Zohar and others, resulting from deep study of Cabbala under the other three headings by various sages. The above passage describing three lights in one, is from the Zohar vol.III.(vs.77 ff) For the most part though, most people may find it too deep, speculative and mind cluttering for practical use. I, for one, don't intend to study it any deeper than I have already (personally, I find ideas such as determining the origin of God and dissecting Him into numerous parts, a bit unsettling). Even the rabbis say one should not study the Zohar unless one has married, has reached the age of 40 and is thoroughly well versed in the Torah and the Talmud. Otherwise, it could drive one crazy. Masons, Wiccans and other kinds of magicians aren't so cautious.

3. *The practical Cabbala*, which deals with talismans and ceremonial magic, and is

therefore occult.

4. The unwritten Cabbala, which is so secret that those who have been initiated into it aren't even allowed to tell you whether they're in it or not (I can tell you -- I'm not). Being that it's so secret, I suppose it would be reasonable to assume it's occult as well, but don't quote me.

Warning note: While some passages from the Zohar and other forms of the Cabbala may confirm certain aspects of Messianic Trinitarian belief, I would strongly advise against using Cabalistic sources in Jewish evangelism -- unless you, yourself are Jewish, *and* you have already made a thorough study of Cabbala as part of your Torah studies (I also don't suggest studying Cabbala if you haven't already -- apart from Literal Cabbala). There are two reasons for this.

1. Being an authority in Cabbala wouldn't necessarily gain you the respect of the Jewish community, for the same reason given above under "Dogmatic Cabbala". Not all modern rabbis accept Cabbala as having any weight or validity. As noted above, Free Masons and Wiccans also study Cabbala. There are even groups that study it to supplement their anti-Semitic agendas. There is one ancient rabbinical tradition that states that Yeshua was a Cabbalist who thus became very powerful though unbalanced. According to one story, He once inscribed the Divine Name into his thigh, and so empowered, flew over the Holy Temple. A prominent rabbi of that day reverted to a similar method so as to fly up after him and pull him back down to earth.

2. The second reason would also apply to other branches of Jewish tradition, such as the Talmud and other rabbinical sources. It just isn't good form to argue your point by basing it on the other's field of expertise. No matter how unlearned the other person is, never act like you know more about the other's religion than he or she does. For instance, I would never argue from the Qur'an to a Moslem, nor from the *Tripitaka* to a Buddhist, any more than I would try to teach nuclear physics to a nuclear physicist. Your knowledge of the other's field should enable you to state your case in a way they would understand it clearly, but to go beyond that would be counterproductive. The humiliation of being shown up by an outsider would outweigh the value of the knowledge gained.

Footnote 1 --- A midrash is an ancient style of teaching that makes heavy use of illustration in the form of parables, storytelling or liberally expanding on the original narrative. In the case of John's gospel, events from Yeshua's life were lined up in the order of the events they illustrated in Genesis. Note the first verse of each book. Then, note, "let there be light," and "in Him was light". Skipping further along, note the story of Eve's role in Adam's first sin, and Mary's role in Yeshua's first miracle, and so on. There's not enough room here to list all the parallels, but it would probably be more fun, as well as a good devotional experience to find them on your own anyway.

Footnote 2 --- **cherub** (*plural: cherubim*) pronounced "*khe-roob*" -- Not a naked baby angel (which is really just the mediaeval version of a Roman Cupid, a pagan god) a cherub is an angelic being described in Ezekiel chapter one and other passages, with four faces, each resembling that of a different animal, and two sets of wings; usually given charge of the throne of the Most High. If you were expecting a naked baby with wings you'd be in for a shock!