

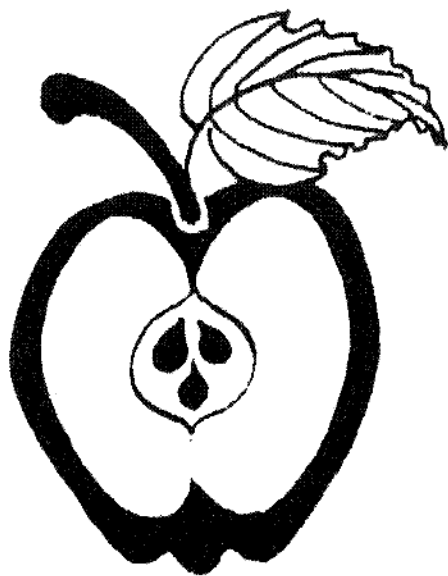
THE SEED & ITS FRUIT

Daniel Botkin

Ancient Israel was an agrarian nation. The annual feasts given to Israel were based on the agricultural seasons and cycles. Agricultural concepts were the basis for many of Yeshua's parables. These parables were spoken to people who lived in an agrarian society and were familiar with agrarian concepts. Not all of Yeshua's listeners were farmers. Some were fishermen, carpenters, weavers, stone masons, merchants, or metal smiths. Yet even these people were familiar with farming, because they lived in an agrarian society. They understood that the fruit of a harvest has to start with the seed, and that the seed determines the kind of fruit.

People living in modern cities today also know this. However, city people who get all their food from grocery stores and restaurants are not as aware of the importance of the seed as are people who live in agrarian cultures. Therefore let's consider some things about the seed.

Plant life and seeds appeared on the third day of creation. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, and the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And



the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day" (Gen. 1:11-13).

On the *peshat* level (the simple, literal interpretation), this tells us about the origin of plant life. But the early chapters of Genesis are filled with patterns of spiritual truths that emerge later in the Biblical narrative. Yes, the creation story is literal. But it also contains hints of subsequent future revelation, hints that can be seen by observing patterns and reflections and types and templates in the text.

Scientists categorize various forms of plant life in certain ways. I took a semester of Botany 101 in college, and I should be able to remember the fancy Latin labels

that botanists use to designate different plant species. But that was in 1967, and I've forgotten most of what I learned about botany. So I cannot tell you the details of how scientists categorize plant life. However, the important thing here is not how plants are categorized by human scientists; the important thing for us is how plants are categorized by the Divine Creator.

The Creator categorizes plant life into three groups: 1) grass, 2) herb yielding seed, and 3) the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself.

One thing I see in this three-fold categorizing of plant life is a foreshadowing of the three-fold nature of man, which is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Yeshua Messiah."

Tripartite man was not created until the sixth day, but man's tripartite nature, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, is reflected in God's three-fold categorizing of plant life on the third day. Grass corresponds to the body; the herb yielding seed corresponds to the soul; the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind whose seed is in itself corresponds to the spirit.

Am I just speculating and making stuff up, or is there biblical support for this notion? Let me share with you the Biblical support I see for this, and decide for yourself.

Why do I say that the body corresponds to grass? Because of the

words of Isaiah: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field... surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40:6-8).

We see here (and in Yeshua's remarks about the grass of the field in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:28-30) that grass, because of its brief lifespan, is likened to man's body, which has a brief lifespan compared to eternity.

Why do I say that the soul corresponds to the herb yielding seed, i.e., to seed-bearing herbs that do not have the ability to produce fruit whose seed is in itself, like fruit trees do? Because of what the Bible says about man's soul. In Genesis 2:7, after man had been brought forth from the earth, God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and "man became a living soul [*nephesh chayah*]." Before this, when God made the land animals, He said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature [*nephesh chayah*] after his kind" (Gen. 1:24).

Man's soul/*nephesh*, like the soul/*nephesh* of animals, is able to reproduce after his kind, just like the herb yielding seed is able to reproduce after his kind. Grains of wheat can reproduce grains of wheat; cows can reproduce cows; humans can reproduce humans and bring new souls into the world.

Souls can reproduce living souls, but souls cannot produce living spirits, just as the herb yielding

seed cannot produce fruit whose living seed is in itself, like fruit trees do. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). Flesh begets flesh, and souls beget souls. But human souls cannot beget living spirits. Only the Spirit of God can quicken man's spirit, because the unregenerated man is spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). This is the reason man's spirit corresponds to the fruit tree yielding fruit whose seed is in itself.

The fruit tree that corresponds to man's spirit is the last category of plant life mentioned in Genesis 1:11, but it is the first in importance, because the body and soul without the spirit give us an awareness only of ourselves and of the world around us. Our body, by means of its five senses, gives us an awareness of the world around us, a world that we perceive by seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. Our soul, with its intellect and emotions, gives us an awareness of ourselves as conscious, rational, thinking creatures.

Animals likewise are soul/*nephesh*, and they too have the ability to perceive themselves and the world around them. Man, however, by means of his human spirit, can commune with God, unlike the animals -- or at least in a way that is different from animals.

I believe it is possible that animals might have an awareness of their Creator, because Ecclesiastes 3:21 mentions the "spirit [*ruach*] of the beast." However, it says that the spirit of the beast "goeth

downward," in contrast to "the spirit of man that goeth upward." If animals are in fact equipped with an awareness of their Creator in their spirits, man's spirit still gives him a great advantage over the animal kingdom. You do not see animals building altars and temples and Bible schools, or preaching sermons and writing theological books and discussing the deep things of God.

Just as the fruit tree yielding fruit whose seed is in itself is in a category separate from the grass and the herb yielding seed, so the spirit of man is in a category different from the body and soul, and different from the spirit of the beast. "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Prov. 20:27). Man's spirit, when quickened and enlightened by God's Spirit, uses the Divine light to search the inward parts of his own soul, his *nephesh*, his *psuche*, his self. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11).

It takes an act of God to quicken and enlighten man's spirit, because without God, man's spirit is dead. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). Until God quickens man's spirit, man's spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). When we are joined to the Lord, our spirit receives God's Spirit

and we become one spirit with the Lord, just like a man and woman become one flesh when the woman receives the man. "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:16f).

This union of the Holy Spirit with our spirit corresponds to the fruit whose seed is in itself. It is the seed that will determine what sort of fruit we produce. We are called to bear the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22f). This fruit of the Spirit cannot be produced through mere human effort and determination. It is called the fruit of the *Spirit* for a reason. The more clearly you see this truth -- that it is the seed that determines the kind of fruit -- the more you will cease "trying to bear" the fruit of the Spirit, and will simply begin bearing the fruit of the Spirit by the life of the Spirit in you.

An apple tree does not say to itself: "Okay, I've got to focus on producing *apples*, not walnuts! Or even worse, *thorns*, God forbid! I've got to concentrate on producing *apples*, not some other kind of fruit. No thorns! No walnuts! Just apples, apples, apples!"

No! It is *the seed in itself*, the seed from which it derived its existence, that causes the apple tree to produce apples! Circumstances and environment can affect the amount and the quality of the fruit,

but circumstances and environment cannot affect *which kind* of fruit is produced, as it is written, "the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself."

This truth -- that the seed determines the kind of fruit -- is as true of humans as it is for trees. How do we know this? Because of what 1 John 3:6 says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

For both humans and trees, it is the seed that determines which kind of fruit is produced. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," Yeshua said. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16). Of course not! A fig seed will produce figs, not thistles; a grape seed will produce grapes, not thorns. The Holy Spirit in you will produce the fruit of the Spirit, not the works of the flesh.

"But Daniel, I have not been absolutely sinless since the day I first received the Lord. John says that someone born of God cannot sin. Does that mean I'm *not* really born of God?"

John's statement has to be understood in the context of the entire epistle. In the same epistle, John acknowledges that it is possible for a true believer to commit a sin: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that

we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:8ff).

John is not giving believers a license or an excuse to sin, because in the very next verse he writes:

"My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Yeshua Messiah the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

When John writes that whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, he simply means that a born-again believer will not live a sinful life. If (not "when") he sins, it is an aberration. It is not his normal behavior. It is a rare, temporary stumble from which he will recover. It is not a fall that will keep him bound to some sinful habit. Though he might occasionally stumble through the weakness of the flesh, he will not manifest the works of the flesh; he will bear the fruit of the Spirit, because "his seed remaineth in him." That seed is the Messiah.

The Messiah is first called "seed" in Genesis 3:15: "And I [God] will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it [or 'he'] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Genesis 3:15 is generally regarded as the first Messianic prophecy, the first direct statement to predict a Messiah, a Redeemer who would someday come and undo the damage that the serpent did in Paradise.

Genesis 3:15 is just one single

verse, but it reveals quite a few details about the coming Messiah.

First, it tells us that the Messiah will be an individual, not a group of people, because the singular, not the plural form, is used.

Second, it tells us that the Messiah will be a man, not a woman, because the male gender is used.

Third, it tells us that the Messiah will be born of a woman and therefore human, not some extra-terrestrial being who wings his way to earth like a pagan god.

Fourth, it tells us that the Messiah will be conceived without male sperm, because He is called "her seed," not "man's seed." The Greek Septuagint translates "her seed" as her *sperma*. Women do not produce sperm (seed), yet the Messiah is called her *sperma*, her seed. The fact that the Messiah will be conceived without male sperm from a human father tells us that He will come into the world through a supernatural conception.

Fifth, it tells us that the Messiah will totally destroy the serpent by crushing its head, because once a serpent's head is crushed, it is doomed.

Sixth, it tells us that the Messiah's redemptive work will involve suffering on His part, because the serpent will bruise His heel.

Seventh, it tells us that the Messiah's suffering will neither defeat nor destroy Him, because a person can recover from a bruised heel. A crushed head is fatal, but a crushed heel is not fatal.

So Genesis 3:15 gives us a

seven-point outline that prophesies the gospel of Yeshua. It gives us a picture of one very special Man, born of a woman, but without any biological earthly father, crushing a serpent's head with His foot. He kills the serpent, but He gets bitten on the foot in the process, yet He recovers (through the Resurrection, we later learn), and thereby destroys the devil.

All these details are embedded in Genesis 3:15. This verse is the seed from which all later Messianic prophecies spring forth. All the necessary elements to bring forth the Messiah are embedded in this verse. And if the promised Seed lives in your heart, all the necessary elements to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit are embedded in you.

When we think of the Messiah as the Divine Seed, we should think of Him not only as the Seed who brought us eternal life by paying the penalty for our sins, but also as the Seed that did not want to abide alone, the Seed that wanted to reproduce Himself in His disciples. To do that, the Seed had to die and be resurrected, just like a grain of wheat has to be planted in the earth to reproduce itself. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

The single corn of wheat, the promised Seed, descended to the earth, died, and was planted in the ground. He rose from the dead like a stalk of wheat emerging from the

earth, and He started reproducing Himself in the lives of His disciples. There has been "some fruit" over the twenty centuries since the Resurrection, but I believe that the Husbandman is still waiting for the "much fruit" of which Yeshua spoke. I believe this because the final harvest has not yet happened.

"Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5:7).

From our perspective, God's purpose and plan for man takes a very long time to unfold, and it unfolds gradually, in stages, just as a plant develops gradually in stages. Consider this parable of Yeshua:

"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:26-29).

We sleep and rise night and day, and we do not really know exactly how a seed springs up and grows. Scientists can tell us some technical things about how plants grow, but they cannot explain how a tiny apple seed knows how to become a tree that will produce only apples. There is no adequate scientific explanation for that; there is only the theological explanation,

which says that the Creator programs every apple seed to reproduce after its kind.

Just as a plant develops slowly and gradually in stages, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," so God's purpose and plan for man develops slowly and gradually in stages. One stage of God's purpose and plan for man was the stage that involved animal sacrifices in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. That stage has passed. But what does this have to do with seeds and fruit? Please read on.

When I was in Chatham, Ontario last spring, I was having a discussion with Brother Ron Buhler, a long-time reader of GOE and a fellow pilgrim and scribe of the kingdom. Ron shared some thoughts about the Old Testament sacrificial system that I had never considered. I thought it was very insightful. I later asked Ron if he had ever written anything on this topic. He had not, but he wrote the basic content of what he had shared in our discussion, and sent it to me in a letter, which I am sharing here with his permission:

"The understanding/perspective which I added to our discussion in Chatham was based on the Messiah's parable of the sower who went out to sow (Luke 8), and His statements that this parable was a revelation of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Elohim (v.10) and that the seed was the Word /Torah of Elohim.

"Although there is an obvious

surface level literal application of this parable with reference to individuals and how they receive and respond to teaching regarding living and worshipping contained in the Word/Torah of Elohim, I believe there is an equally valid but hidden/concealed application of the parable with reference to the progressive revelation or manifestation of the Kingdom of Elohim in the Nation of Israel. All seeds go through stages in the manifestation of their potential; for example, first the stalk/branches/leaves, then the flowers, and finally the fruit/grain. My contention is that the seed of the Word/Torah functions in exactly the same way as it manifests the Kingdom of Elohim in the Nation of Israel. I believe the tabernacle/ temple/animal sacrifice stage of Kingdom manifestation corresponds to the flower stage of literal seed manifestation – something beautiful, instructive, and attractive to look at, and something beautiful and attractive to smell (like perfume around the literal flower, and incense around the tabernacle/ temple services), but in neither case producing anything that actually sustains life. That objective was realized when physical seed manifested physical fruit (with more seed in the fruit!) and when the seed of the Word/Torah manifested itself in the form of the Word made flesh (John 1:14) which became a spiritual firstfruits (I Corinthians 15:20+) along with those who believed in Him (James 1:18), who, as they followed the Messiah's

instruction, would have seed of the Word/Torah within themselves (Matthew 5:17-19, 28:18-20) and would become like a fruitful garden with ever-flowing springs of living water/mayim hayim (Isaiah 58:11, John 7:37-39) that would actually sustain life!

"This is why I believe that efforts to rebuild a physical temple and restart the animal sacrificial system are misguided, a distraction from present truth, and an exercise in futility exactly like picking up dried flowers from the ground under a fruit bearing tree and gluing them back on the tree. I don't doubt that a temple will be built and animals will be sacrificed, but I believe that entire operation will only serve to provide a venue for the adversary/antichrist, and to give credibility to his Messianic claims. Meanwhile, the Messiah will complete the rebuilding of the only temple He's ever really been interested in, consisting of True Worshipers/living stones (Ephesians 2:19-22; Isaiah 66:1,2), and the final battle in the war between good and evil will be on!" (Ron Buhler, www.truthdepot.net)

Along with his letter, Ron sent me copies of some footnotes from the Stone Chumash ArtScroll Series that strongly support this understanding of the purpose of the sacrificial system, even though, as Ron points out, these observations come from Torah scholars who did not understand the redemptive work of Yeshua and therefore did not understand that when the Spirit

was given on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), Yeshua's disciples became temples for the indwelling of the Spirit. Here are three quotes from the Stone Chumash:

1. "Even the account of the Golden Calf is not unrelated to the Tabernacle for, according to *Sforno* (20:21, 25:9, 31:18), the very construction of the Tabernacle was made necessary only because of Israel's lapse into virtual idolatry. He maintains that ideally no 'Temple' should have been needed after the Revelation at Sinai, because the entire nation achieved the level of prophecy and every Jew was worthy for the *Shechinah* [Divine Presence] to rest upon him, as it later did on the Tabernacle and the Temple. Only after Israel toppled from that high level of spirituality, as a result of the worship of the Golden Calf, did it become necessary for it to have a 'central' Sanctuary" (p. 444).

2. "In God's original plan there would have been no need for a Tabernacle, for every Jew was to have the status of a Kohen, would have been worthy of building his own altar, and being a resting place for the Divine Presence. If so, why did this potential not come to fruition? Why was God's intent replaced by the preceding chapters about a central Tabernacle and why was it necessary to designate a priestly family? The Torah will now explain that Israel fell from its spiritual pinnacle because of the Golden Calf. No longer could it be a nation of individual priests

and tabernacles. From that point onward, Israel needed a central Tabernacle toward which it would direct its aspirations, and a holy, priestly family that would be dedicated to God's sacrificial service" (p. 492).

3. "On this verse [Vayikra/Leviticus 6:9, dealing with the elevation/burnt offering], the Midrash comments that if a person repents, it is regarded as if he had gone up to Jerusalem, rebuilt the Temple and the Altar, and brought on it all the offerings of the Torah (*Vayikra Rabbah* 7:2). Every Jew should be a human temple. If he is holy, his personal temple is holy; if he sins, he contaminates it. When someone repents, therefore, it is as if he rebuilds himself and recreates a temple within himself" (p. 569).

Ron correctly points out that "what they have written clearly demonstrates a better grasp of basic Torah principles and awareness of the heart of Elohim than that possessed by many Messianic and Christian scholars and teachers who are eagerly anticipating the construction of another physical temple in Jerusalem and the renewal of the animal sacrificial system."

I agree with Ron. The old sacrificial system served its purpose and then faded away like a fruit blossom after the fruit of Messiah appeared. "Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away," the writer of Hebrews said (Heb. 8:13). Soon after this was written, the Temple

was destroyed and the old system of animal sacrifices vanished.

It is good to study about the old covenant sacrifices in Leviticus, because they all pointed forward to the promised Messiah. However, for us as Messianic disciples, it is important that we remember that this sacrificial system was not an end in itself. It was only a temporary system to cover the sins of the people until the sacrifice of the promised Seed would take away sins. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4).

The owner of an orchard might appreciate and remember with fondness the fragrant, flowery blossoms that were on his apple trees for a season. But he realizes that the blossoms were just a temporary stage. Their real value lay in their role as announcers. They were announcing that a harvest of fruit was coming. The fruit blossoms are not an end in themselves; the fruit itself is the end goal. "For Messiah is the end [i.e., the goal] of the law" (Rom. 10:4).

We have the fruit in the Person of Yeshua, the promised Seed. The old sacrificial system was intended to last only until the Seed should come. We can appreciate and remember the blossoms of the past, but our primary focus should be on that promised Seed that is presently in us, because that Seed will produce the fruit of the Spirit. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples" (John 15:8). □