



The
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Study Bible

INSIGHTS FOR JEWS & CHRISTIANS

*Illuminating the Jewishness
of God's Word*





INTRODUCTION TO *B'resheet* (GENESIS)

Genesis is a Greek word that means “source,” “origin,” or “beginning,” taken from the opening phrase, “In the beginning” (*B'resheet* in Hebrew). *Genesis* is indeed the book of beginnings, from the creation of the universe through the patriarchal era of Avraham (Abraham), Yitz'chak (Isaac), and Ya'akov (Jacob) and his sons. *Genesis* also is the first book of the *Torah* (the Law), which includes the first five books of the Bible. The Talmud and New Testament Scriptures (Matt. 19:8; Mark 12:26; Luke 16:31; John 5:46–47) support the claim that Moshe (Moses) wrote the *Torah*.

The early chapters of *Genesis* (1–11) were possibly written in cuneiform upon clay tablets and passed on through Noach (Noah) to the early patriarchs. Since several passages in *Genesis* serve as teaching against Kena'anim (Canaanite) practices, the book may have been written when Isra'el was about to enter the Promised Land (around 1445 and 1406 B.C.E.). Chapters 1–3 describe the creation and fall of man, and 4–11 describe the spread of sin, the judgment of the Flood, and the development of the nations. Chapter 12 reveals God's election of one Nation from among all the nations for his purpose of blessing humanity; and chapters 12–50 trace the call, blessing, and preservation of the early Hebrew people.

Genesis reveals the divine origin and election of Isra'el, and the Hebrew word *toldot* (translated as “genealogy” in Gen. 5:1; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12; 36:1, 9; and as “history” in 2:4; 6:9; 25:19; 37:2) provides a simple and consistent structural outline.

OUTLINE

- I. Creation of Humanity
 - A. God creates the universe and the people who populate it..... 1:1–2:25
 - B. Evil begins and spreads..... 3:1–6:8
 - C. The earth is judged, flooded, and renewed..... 6:9–11:32
- II. Creation of a Nation
 - A. Family lines of Avraham, Yitz'chak, and Yishma'el..... 12:1–25:18
 - B. Family lines of Yitz'chak, Ya'akov, and 'Esav..... 25:19–36:43
 - C. The sons of Ya'akov (Isra'el)..... 37:1–50:26
 - 1. Yosef is sold into slavery..... 37:2–36
 - 2. Y'hudah sins..... 38:1–30
 - 3. Yosef serves in Egypt..... 39:1–41:57
 - 4. Yosef's brothers in Egypt..... 42:1–45:28
 - 5. Ya'akov settles his family in Egypt..... 46:1–50:26

B'resheet

(GENESIS)

PARASHAH 1: B'RESHEET (IN THE BEGINNING) 1:1–6:8

1 ¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was unformed and void, darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. So there was evening, and there was morning, one day.

⁶ God said, “Let there be a dome in the middle of the water; let it divide the water from the water.” ⁷ God made the dome and divided the water under the dome from the water above the dome; that is how it was, ⁸ and God called the dome Sky. So there was evening, and there was morning, a second day.

⁹ God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let dry land appear,” and that is how it was. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, the gathering together of the water he called Seas, and God saw that it was good.

¹¹ God said, “Let the earth put forth grass, seed-producing plants, and fruit trees, each yielding its own kind of seed-bearing fruit, on the earth”; and that is how it was. ¹² The earth brought forth grass, plants each yielding its own kind of seed, and trees each producing its own kind of seed-bearing fruit; and God saw that it was good. ¹³ So there was evening, and there was morning, a third day.

(A: ii) ¹⁴ God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the dome of the sky to give light to the earth”; and that is how it was. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights — the larger light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night — and the stars. ¹⁷ God put them in the dome of the sky to give light to the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ So there was evening, and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰ God said, “Let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open dome of the sky.” ²¹ God created the great sea creatures and every living thing that creeps, so that the water swarmed with all kinds of them, and there was every kind of winged bird; and God saw that it was good. ²² Then God blessed them, saying, “Be

1:1 In the beginning God. Before time began, God created space for heaven and earth. God speaks and it happens. Genesis 1:1 foreshadows the language of John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word.”

1:14 “Signs, seasons.” The two purposes for the heavenly bodies are described as *otot* and *mo'adim* (signs and seasons).

fruitful, multiply and fill the water of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”²³ So there was evening, and there was morning, a fifth day.

(A: iii)²⁴ God said, “Let the earth bring forth each kind of living creature — each kind of livestock, crawling animal and wild beast”; and that is how it was.²⁵ God made each kind of wild beast, each kind of livestock and every kind of animal that crawls along the ground; and God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, in the likeness of ourselves; and let them rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the animals, and over all the earth, and over every crawling creature that crawls on the earth.”



THE NAMES OF GOD

Elohim

Genesis 1:1 In Hebrew thought, a name was not just a way of identifying a person; it was a way of revealing his or her very identity and essence. It is the same with the names of God—only in Scripture, God’s identity is expressed not just in one name but in many. Each name of God is like a curtain on a window. When the curtain is drawn back, the name becomes more fully known and glimpses of God can be seen. An example of this can be found in Exodus 3:13–22 when Moshe (Moses) asks God what his name is. Was he just asking what he should call God? No, he was asking, “Who are you? Describe yourself.” God doesn’t just say “I’m God.” He explains that he is eternal, the God of the Jewish people, a God of compassion who has taken notice of Isra’el’s captivity and who will free them. Moshe asked for a name. He was given an expression of God’s compassion and his desire to free his people (Juster, *His Names Are Wonderful*).

Like other Hebrew proper names, the name of God is more than a mere distinguishing title. It represents the Hebrew conception of the divine nature or character of God, as well as the relation of God to his people. It represents the Deity as he is known to his worshippers. It stands for all those attributes that he bears in relation to them and that he reveals to them through his activity on their behalf. *Elohim* is the most common of the names of God, used thirty-two times in the first chapter of Genesis alone, and twenty-five hundred times in the *Tanakh*. It is plural in form, though it is commonly construed

with a singular verb or adjective. Most probably, this is explained as the plural of majesty or excellence, expressing high dignity or greatness. This ancient name for God conveys the idea of his creative power, authority, and sovereignty. The singular *Eloah* is relatively rare, occurring only in poetry and late prose (forty-one times in the book of Job). The singular is used in six places for heathen deities (e.g., 2 Chron. 32:15; Dan. 11:37–38), and the plural also a few times either for gods or images (e.g., Exod. 9:1; 12:12; 20:3) or for one god (e.g., Exod. 32: 1; Gen. 31:30, 32). In the majority of cases, both are used as names of the one God of Isra’el.

The root meaning of the word is unknown. The most probable theory is that it may be connected with the old Arabic verb *alih* (“to be perplexed, afraid”; “to seek refuge because of fear”). *Eloah*, *Elohim*, would therefore translate as “he who is the object of fear or reverence,” or “he with whom one who is afraid takes refuge” (cf. the name “the one whom Yitz’chak fears” in Gen. 31:42, 53; see also Isa. 8:13; Ps. 76:12). The predominance of this name in the later writings, as compared with the more distinctively Hebrew national name *YHVH*, may have been due to the broadening idea of God as the transcendent and universal Lord. *YHVH Elohim* is a common expression in the *Tanakh*, meaning “the LORD God.”

For more on “The Names of God,” see reading at Genesis 14:18–20.

²⁷ So God created humankind in his own image; in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them: God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and every living creature that crawls on the earth.” ²⁹ Then God said, “Here! Throughout the whole earth I am giving you as food every seed-bearing plant and every tree with seed-bearing fruit. ³⁰ And to every wild animal, bird in the air and creature crawling on the earth, in which there is a living soul, I am giving as food every kind of green plant.” And that is how it was. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good. So there was evening, and there was morning, a sixth day.



MESSIANIC PROPHECY

“In the Beginning”

Genesis 1:26–27 “Because of his omniscience, God alone can foreknow and foretell the future. He chose to confine his foretelling to the pages of his prophetic Word,” writes Herbert Lockyer. “God has the ability to foresee the future and he does so most pointedly regarding the coming of his Messiah, his special anointed one, revealed by Isra’el’s prophets” (Lockyer 9). Yeshua’s words show that he himself believed in messianic prophecy:

He said to them, “Foolish people! So unwilling to put your trust in everything the prophets spoke! Didn’t the Messiah have to die like this before entering his glory?” Then, starting with Moshe and the prophets, he explained to them the things that can be found throughout the *Tanakh* concerning himself. (Luke 24:25–27)

In *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, Walter C. Kaiser proposes that two criteria in interpreting prophecies are necessary: (1) the meaning of the *Tanakh* references to Messiah must reflect the author’s own times and historical circumstances, and (2) the meaning must be reflected in the grammar and syntax of the *Tanakh* text. Using these two foundational requisites, Kaiser suggests four approaches in interpreting messianic prophecy to obtain God’s meaning:

1. Understand the historical conditions in which the original word was given.

2. Know that the words the authors of Scripture use mean what they ordinarily meant in their spoken sense in similar contexts of that day.
3. Consider corporate solidarity, that the one who represents the group and the many represented are equally a part of the same single meaning intended by the author. For example, “servant of the Lord” and “firstborn” refer to both Isra’el and the Messiah.
4. See the unity of the plan of God, that the Bible is to be read with an appreciation for its wholeness, unity, and concept of a divine plan that is being enacted in immediate fulfillments and in a final, climactic fulfillment in the last days.

Kaiser suggests three types of prophecies: (1) direct or predictive prophecy; (2) typical prophecies—patterns, models, previews, or pictures of something that was to come in the days of Messiah; and (3) applications of prophecy to certain situations.

Although there are literally hundreds of texts from the *Tanakh* that point to the Messiah, the articles on messianic prophecy presented in this Bible will focus on the messianic prophecies that provide the foundation of God’s program to bring blessing to his world through the Messiah.

For more on “Messianic Prophecy,” see reading at Genesis 3:15.

2 ¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them. ² On the seventh day God was finished with his work which he had made, so he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. ³ God blessed the seventh day and separated it as holy; because on that day God rested from all his work which he had created, so that it itself could produce.

(**A: iv, S: ii**) ⁴ Here is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created. On the day when *ADONAI*, God, made earth and heaven, ⁵ there was as yet no wild bush on the earth, and no wild plant had as yet sprung up; for *ADONAI*, God, had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no one to cultivate the ground. ⁶ Rather, a mist went up from the earth which watered the entire surface of the ground.

⁷ Then *ADONAI*, God, formed a person (Heb. *adam*) from the dust of the ground (Heb. *adamah*) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living being. ⁸ *ADONAI*, God, planted a garden toward the east, in 'Eden, and there he put the person whom he had formed. ⁹ Out of the ground *ADONAI*, God, caused to grow every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river went out of 'Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided into four streams. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it winds throughout the land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gichon; it winds throughout the land of Kush. ¹⁴ The

SABBATH (SHABBAT)

The Sabbath (*Shabbat*)

Genesis 2:1–3 *Shabbat* means “rest,” which is the central theme of this important observance. From ancient to modern times, humans tend to become obsessed with work and “getting ahead.” There is always more to do. Yet without proper rest and refreshment, human strength and creativity fail. In his infinite wisdom, God told the children of Isra’el to recharge themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually. He demonstrated this principle when he created the universe. For six days he formed the world and everything in it, but on the seventh day he rested. Consequently, the seventh day, *Shabbat*, is to be a perpetual reminder of God the Creator and our need to find rest in him (Exod. 31:16–17).

Based on the creation account in Genesis, *Shabbat* lasts from sundown Friday evening to sundown Saturday, as it is written, “There was evening, and there was morning.” Hence, on the Hebrew calendar each new day starts at sunset. Most Christians consider Sunday as their Sabbath Day, which is because Sunday—the first day of the week (*Yom Rishon*)—is considered

the day Yeshua rose from the dead. Pertaining to the memorializing of this day, Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin (*To Be a Jew* 65) writes:

What does the *Torah* teach us when it says that “God rested”? Is He human that He tires and needs physical rest? It is to teach us that just as God stopped creating physical things on the seventh day, so is man to stop creating on this day. Man is to stop making things, to stop manipulating nature. . . . By desisting from all such labors, we not only acknowledge the existence of a Creator, but also emulate the Divine example.

Since all biblical holidays are days of rest, the Bible begins by establishing the importance of *Shabbat*, unfolding throughout the Scriptures the vital and valuable lessons associated with each holy day.

For more on “Sabbath (Shabbat),” see reading at *Exodus 20:8–11*.

name of the third river is Tigris; it is the one that flows toward the east of Ashur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ *ADONAI*, God, took the person and put him in the garden of 'Eden to cultivate and care for it. ¹⁶ *ADONAI*, God, gave the person this order: "You may freely eat from every tree in the garden ¹⁷ except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You are not to eat from it, because on the day that you eat from it, it will become certain that you will die."

¹⁸ *ADONAI*, God, said, "It isn't good that the person should be alone. I will make for him a companion suitable for helping him." ¹⁹ So from the ground *ADONAI*, God, formed every wild animal and every bird that flies in the air, and he brought them to the person to see what he would call them. Whatever the person would call each living creature, that was to be its name. **(S: iii)** ²⁰ So the person gave names to all the livestock, to the birds in the air and to every wild animal. But for Adam there was not found a companion suitable for helping him.

²¹ Then God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the person; and while he was sleeping, he took one of his ribs and closed up the place from which he took it with flesh. ²² The rib which *ADONAI*, God, had taken from the person, he made a woman-person; and he brought her to the man-person. ²³ The man-person said, "At last! This is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. She is to be called Woman (Heb. *Ishah*), because she was taken out of Man (Heb. *Ish*)." ²⁴ This is why a man is to leave his father and mother and stick with his wife, and they are to be one flesh.

²⁵ They were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.

3 ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any wild animal which *ADONAI*, God, had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You are not to eat from any tree in



SALVATION AND ATONEMENT

Garments in the Garden

Genesis 3:6–11 From the beginning of creation, God's plan has always been to be in communion with humanity. Humans, both male and female, are "image-bearers" of *ADONAI* and, being made in the likeness of God, are called to find both identity and purpose in him. Yet, despite the perfection of their union with *ADONAI* in the Garden, Adam and Havah (Eve) were tempted and rejected the Lord's commands. They chose instead the path of rebellion and sin. With sin came shame, and "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked" (Gen. 3:7). As a result, humanity is marred with sin. Yet God has provided a covering for our nakedness, for our sin.

Genesis 3:21 states: "*ADONAI*, God, made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them." The sages don't offer any explanation as to what these skins were. Nevertheless, the skins *ADONAI* provided to cover Adam and Havah superseded the loincloths they had made to cover their shame. *ADONAI*'s covering (*kapparah*) was a symbol that through the sacrifices to come—and in the coming Messiah—humanity would be freed from its brokenness, sin, and shame.

For more on "Salvation and Atonement," see reading at Genesis 22:1–19.

2:15 To cultivate and care for it. The Hebrew word for "work," *avodah*, is the same for "manual labor" and "worshipping God." The picture we see here of the human's work is that it was also a form of worship.

3:1 More crafty. Onkelos in his Targum on Gen. 3 translates "crafty" as either shrewd or naked. In Judaism, the serpent of Gen. 3 symbolizes the embodiment of evil. The deceit of the serpent is revealed in v. 4, where a midrash has the serpent saying, "Just as you did not die from touching it, so you will not die from eating it."

the garden?”² The woman answered the serpent, “We may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden,³ but about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, ‘You are neither to eat from it nor touch it, or you will die.’”⁴ The serpent said to the woman, “It is not true that you will surely die;⁵ because God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it had a pleasing appearance and that the tree was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her; and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loincloths.

⁸They heard the voice of *ADONAI*, God, walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, so the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of *ADONAI*, God, among the trees in the garden.⁹ *ADONAI*, God, called to the man, “Where are you?”¹⁰ He answered, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself.”¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I ordered you not to eat?”¹² The man replied, “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.”¹³ *ADONAI*, God, said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman answered, “The serpent tricked me, so I ate.”

¹⁴*ADONAI*, God, said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all livestock and wild animals. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust as long as you live.¹⁵ I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pain in childbirth. You will bring forth children in pain. Your desire will be toward your husband, but he will rule over you.”

¹⁷To Adam he said, “Because you listened to what your wife said and ate from the tree about which I gave you the order, ‘You are not to eat from it,’ the ground is cursed on your account; you will work hard to eat from it as long as you live.¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat field plants.¹⁹ You will eat bread by the sweat of your forehead till you return to the ground — for you were taken out of it: you are dust, and you will return to dust.”



THE TABERNACLE (*MISHKAN*)

The Tabernacle in the Garden

Genesis 3:8 Throughout Scripture, the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) is a symbol of *ADONAI*'s perpetual desire to dwell with his people. As theologian Anthony A. Hoekema says, “Human beings reflect God, who exists not as a solitary being but as a being in fellowship” (14). While one might assume that fellowship between humanity and God began in the Tabernacle following Isra’el’s exodus from Egypt and the Tent of Meeting in the wilderness, God first “dwelt” with Adam and Havah (Eve) in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8). The canopy of trees, under which their relationship

grew, provided an intimate place for them and was a precursor to future dwelling places in which God and humanity could have fellowship. Adam was placed in the garden by God (Gen. 2:5) to cultivate it. “To cultivate” relates to *shomer*, the Hebrew word meaning “to guard.” As their loving and protective Father, *ADONAI* is therefore with Adam and Havah, reminding them that communion can exist only in relationship with him.

For more on “The Tabernacle (Mishkan),” see reading at Exodus 33:15.

²⁰The man called his wife Havah (Eve, “life”), because she was the mother of all living.

²¹ADONAI, God, made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

(A: v, S: iv) ²²ADONAI, God, said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, to prevent his putting out his hand and taking also from the tree of life, eating, and living forever — ” ²³therefore ADONAI, God, sent him out of the garden of ‘Eden to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So he drove the man out, and he placed at the east of the garden of ‘Eden the *k’ruvim* and a flaming sword which turned in every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

4 ¹The man had sexual relations with Havah his wife; she conceived, gave birth to Kayin (Cain, “acquisition”) and said, “I have acquired a man from ADONAI.” ²In addition she gave birth to his brother Hevel (Abel). Hevel kept sheep, while Kayin worked the soil. ³In the course of time Kayin brought an offering to ADONAI from the produce of the soil; ⁴and Hevel too brought from the firstborn of his sheep, including their fat. ADONAI accepted Hevel and his offering ⁵but did not accept Kayin and his offering. Kayin was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶ADONAI said to Kayin, “Why are you angry? Why so downcast? ⁷If you are doing what is good, shouldn’t you hold your head high? And if you don’t do what is good, sin is crouching at the door — it wants you, but you can rule over it.” ⁸Kayin had words with Hevel his brother; then one time, when they were in the field, Kayin turned on Hevel his brother and killed him.



MESSIANIC PROPHECY

The Seed

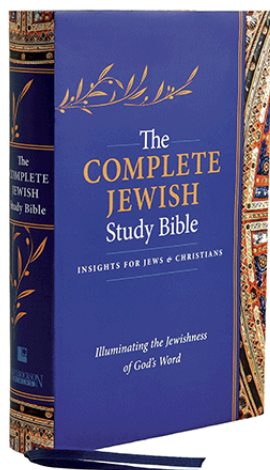
Genesis 3:15 Genesis 3:15 provides a glimpse of God’s restoration plan of the world. Some see this prophecy as the seed of all future prophecies. It also describes the battle between the force of good (the Messiah) and the force of evil (Satan), God’s adversary.

The “serpent” mentioned in this prophecy is not a mere reptile, since he is described as an individual with intelligence, speech, and awareness of God. The name is probably a title, describing its nature, not a statement of its shape. This is the serpent in the final conflict between God and his adversary, who will be crushed by the seed mentioned in the text. The “descendant” of the woman here is a generic term for all humanity and the “descendant” of the serpent, of all evil. Yet there is a clear sense that one specific male descendant of the woman will ultimately crush the head of the serpent. In Genesis 3:15, the suffix on the word *heel* is singular. Even though humanity will conquer the serpent, it will be through the work of the singular “descendant of the woman,” who will crush his head, that evil will ultimately be defeated. Rabbinic

sources also see this as a messianic prophecy: “At his request, God showed Satan the Messiah; and when he saw him, he trembled, fell on his face and cried: ‘Truly this is the Messiah, who will bruise me!’” (*Pesiqta Rabbati* 3:6).

Romans 16:20 identifies the serpent of Genesis 3:15 as Satan: “God, the source of *shalom*, will soon crush the Adversary under your feet.” In 2 Corinthians, Sha’ul warns: “Havah was deceived by the serpent and his craftiness... for the Adversary himself masquerades as an angel of light” (11:3, 14). Revelation 12:9 makes it even clearer: “The great dragon was thrown out, that ancient serpent, also known as the Devil and Satan [the Adversary], the deceiver of the whole world.” Although Genesis 3:15 does not specify a name for the descendant of the woman, the New Testament clearly connects this first messianic prophecy to the Messiah, Yeshua.

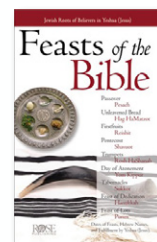
For more on “Messianic Prophecy,” see reading at Genesis 49:10.



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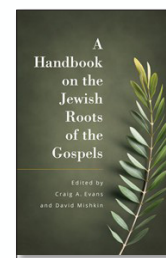
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