

A Common Heritage: Lessons Using Chinese Characters

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1. View God & Creation

1.1 Ancient Chinese 夏尚周(Xià shàng zhōu), 2500BC

a. Names of God: (cf Confucius 孔子: 诗经, 中庸)

1. 上帝 (shàngdì): יְיָ "Shaddai" (500BC translated as "the god of heaven" to Greek)
2. 神 (shén): 禘 proclaim/manifest/reveal (often used in relation to God); offer 申:report
3. 天 (tiān):

b. Chief of Censors (166BC):

"I venture to say that nothing is more foolish than this new figment of the spirits Shangdi, of which he says that there are five. It is indeed certain, that from the most ancient times, all who have been wise, and deemed masters of the nation, on account of their reputation for distinguished wisdom, have known but **one** Shangdi, eminent over all, on whom all things depend, from whom is to be sought whatever is for the advantage of the empire, and to whom it is the duty and custom of the emperors to sacrifice."

c. Creation Story (from Border Rituals, twice yearly by emperors):

"Of old in the beginning, there was the great chaos, without form and dark. The five elements [planets] had not begun to revolve, nor the sun and moon to shine. You, O Spiritual Sovereign, first divided the grosser parts from the purer. You made heaven. You made earth. You made man. All things with their reproducing power got their being."

"When 帝 [ShangDi], the Lord, had so decreed, He called into existence [originated] heaven, earth, and man. Between heaven and earth He separately placed in order men and things, all overspread by the heavens" (ref: <https://answersingenesis.org/genesis/the-original-unknown-god-of-china>)

"Thou hast vouchsafed O 帝, to hear us, for Thou regards us as a Father..."

1.2 Christian belief of God (cf Chinese character of 2500BC, Moses ~ 2000BC)

a. Beginning

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a shapeless, chaotic mass, with the Spirit (靈) of God brooding over the dark vapors. Then God said..."

b. Concentration on Earth

1. period: Light & Darkness
2. period: Atmosphere
3. period:
 - i. Dry land appears (water in oceans)
 - ii. Plants created
4. period: Sun & Moon
5. period: Sea animals
 - i. Fish
 - ii. Birds
6. period: Animals (not contradicted by fossil record)

c. At the end of period Six...

“Then God said, ‘Let us make (造 = 辶 walking, 告 speak/announce) men in our image, someone like ourselves, to be the master of all life upon the earth and in the skies and in the seas.’ So God made man like his Maker. Like God did God make man; Man and woman did he make them. And God blessed them and told them, "Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; you are masters of the fish and birds and all the animals. And look! I have given you the seed-bearing plants throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I've given all the grass and plants to the animals and birds for their food." Then God looked over all that he had made, and it was excellent in every way. This ended the sixth period of time.”

Now at last the heavens and earth were successfully completed, with all that they contained. So in the seventh period, having finished his task, God ceased from this work he had been doing, and God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he ceased this work of creation.

1.3 漢字(Hànzì, Kanji)

- a. Hebrew: אָדָם (Adam=Earth/soil=土地(tǔdì) = 土(earth) + 也 identity) is first (先) man
- b. Location?
 1. To China's West=西(xī) = 匚(enclosure) + 一(1) + 儿(man): one man in enclosed garden
 2. Hebrew: אֵדֶן (Eden=Happiness=福(fú)= 礻 + 畝 = 一(1) + 口(Kǒu, mouth) + 田(tián, field/garden): in the garden of happiness there was 1 mouth and God originally
- c. Everything 好(hǎo) good = female + boy
- d. Ancient Chinese had a 7 day week (Ref: Couperie). Why?

2. The Problem of Evil 人之初性本善 (Rén zhī chū xìng běnshàn)

From last week we saw that God created good. But looking around us we see there is much that is not good in man in general and ourselves in particular... (Ref: Gen 2:8-10; 15-17; Gen 3)

We will now look at the setting for the introduction of evil in Genesis (Beginnings) 2 and then look at the 3rd chapter which discusses the entrance of evil and its implications. Note that the Author organizes account like a microscope. First view with the eyes--creation of universe; then he zooms in to focus in on one small part: the earth and things on the earth; then finally he uses a high power microscope to focus on man!

Last chapter we looked a little at the creation of the universe; and a little on the creation of the earth. Now lets jump into the middle of the story of the early "人之初性本善" man.

2.1 The Setting

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.....

Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. He told him, "You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day."

What is setting? What is the first man's job? What 2 special trees are in the garden? What is the one thing man is forbidden to do? (禁(jīn) forbid/restrict = 林 trees and 示 God)

2.2 The Decision

Lets look at the entrance of evil

Now the serpent was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The serpent asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?"

"We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden," the woman answered, "except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die."

The serpent replied, "That's not true; you will not die. God said that because he knows that when you eat it, you will be like God and know what is good and what is bad."

The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it.

a. **Questions? What happened?**

b. 漢字(Hànzi, Kanji)

1. 魔鬼(Móguǐ)

i. 鬼(guǐ) devil = 田(tián,field/garden) + 儿(er,man) + 厶(sī,private/secret)

ii. 魔(Mó) tempter= devil + 林(lín,2 trees) + covered(by serpent & trees)

2. 婪(lán) covet/desire = 林(lín, 2 trees) + 女(woman)

3. 始(shǐ) beginning (of sin)= 女(woman) + 厶(private/secret) + 口(mouth/eating)

2.3 The Consequences

As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves. That evening they heard the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from him among the trees.

But the LORD God called out to the man, "Where are you?"

He answered, "I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked."

"Who told you that you were naked?" God asked. "Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?"

The man answered, "The woman you put here with me gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

The LORD God asked the woman, "Why did you do this?"

She replied, "The snake tricked me into eating it."

Then the LORD God said to the serpent, "You will be punished for this; you alone of all the animals must bear this curse: From now on you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dust as long as you live. I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring's heel."

And he said to the woman, "I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him."

And he said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you. It will produce weeds and thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants. You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again." Adam named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all human beings.

And the LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them.

Then the LORD God said, "Now these human beings have become like one of us and have knowledge of what is good and what is bad. They must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever." So the LORD God sent them out of the Garden of Eden and made them cultivate the soil from which

they had been formed. Then at the east side of the garden he put living creatures and a flaming sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep anyone from coming near the tree that gives life.

a. Part 1

1. felt naked/ashamed in each other's presence
2. relationship with God broken

b. Part 2

1. relationship man w/ woman broken: "She made me do it"
2. relationship of woman with animals broken: "He made me do it."

c. Other punishment: death for all!

1. for serpent:
2. for woman:
3. for man:

d. 漢字(Hànzì, Kanji)

1. 苦楚(kǔchǔ) suffering/misery/pain
 - i. 苦(kǔ) suffering = 艹(/plants/weeds) + 古(ancient = 10(perfect) + mouth)
 - ii. 楚(chǔ) = 林 (2 trees) + 疋 a piece (body+right+left arm)
 - iii. man's sorrow + woman's sorrow ten+mouth->ancient+plants/weeds : trees + a piece (body+right+left arm)
2. 刑(xíng) serious punishment = 开 starting + 冫 sword
3. 荆棘(jīngjī) thistles and thorns
 - i. 荆(jīng) = 艹 (weeds) + 刑(punishment)
 - ii. 棘(jī) = 2 木(trees) + 冫 (fence=no access)
4. 衤(yī) clothing: similar to 示(shì,spirit) : God provided the clothing

clothing radical --> God provided the covering...

So, many serious consequences of the 'disobedience'; choice of rebellion

Although man was "人之初性本善(Rén zhī chū xìng běnshàn) " when God created him; he "CHOSE" to know evil and death.

3. Sacrifices for Sin: Descent into Evil

So far: Creation good. Good man & woman placed in beautiful garden. In center are 2 special trees. Choice: one way to disobey -- tree. Result must leave garden, Evil enters the world.

Lets look at the first family

Then Adam had intercourse with his wife, and she became pregnant. She bore a son and said, "By the LORD's help I have gotten a son." So she named him Cain. Later she gave birth to another son, Abel. Abel became a shepherd, but Cain was a farmer.

After some time Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD. Then Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, but he rejected Cain and his offering.

Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why that scowl on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling; but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it." Then Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out in the fields." When they were out in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him.

The LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I don't know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?" Then the LORD said, "Why have you done this terrible thing? Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground, like a voice calling for revenge. You are placed under a curse and can no longer farm the soil. It has soaked up your brother's blood as if it had opened its mouth to receive it when you killed him. If you try to grow crops, the soil will not produce anything; you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth." And Cain said to the LORD, "This punishment is too hard for me to bear. You are driving me off the land and away from your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me."

But the LORD answered, "No. If anyone kills you, seven lives will be taken in revenge." So the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who met him not to kill him. And Cain went away from the LORD's presence and lived in a land called "Wandering," which is east of Eden..

a. Meaning, ideas

b. 漢字(Hànzi, Kanji)

1. 義(yì): righteousness/right relationship with God 羊(lamb) over 我(me)

i. me includes hand + 戈(sword/spear):

ii. the sacrifice for sin was a lamb killed by my own hand: hand+spear=me + lamb = gives righteousness (not a fruit but a killed animal)

c. 兄(xiōng) elder brother = man + mouth --> spokesman for family

d. 兇(xiōng) terrible/vicious. similar to older brother. it is a broken mouth. The older brother is no longer the family spokesman due to his vicious acts.

e. 羊(yang) sheep/goat

1. 美(měi) beautiful

2. 善(shàn) good, virtuous, charitable, kind

3. 盖(gài) cover, hide

4. 美(gāo) beautiful

Murder is one of the evils that the first family gets to "know".

Always in Hebrew-Christian thinking a sacrifice needed for going before God. For some things this was a lamb, for others it was a bullock that the leader offered. Chinese at Temple of Heaven(天坛(Tiāntán)), emperor has twice yearly offered this sacrifice from ancient times. Confucius commented on this and said it was important but commented that he did not know why this was done or where this tradition came from....

4. The Flood (the first rain)

Much later, world has become populated; thousands of years later. Remember science that the woman we trace back to is older than man.

When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time, he was sorry that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. He was so filled with regret that he said, "I will wipe out these people I have created, and also the animals and the birds, because I am sorry that I made any of them." But the LORD was pleased with Noah.

This is the story of Noah. He had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Noah had no faults and was the only good man of his time. He lived in fellowship with God, but everyone else was evil in God's sight, and violence had spread everywhere. God looked at the world and saw that it was evil, for the people were all living evil lives. God said to Noah, "I have decided to put an end to all people. I will destroy them completely, because the world is full of their violent deeds. Build a boat for yourself out of good timber; make rooms in it

and cover it with tar inside and out. Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Make a roof for the boat and leave a space of 18 inches between the roof and the sides. Build it with three decks and put a door in the side.

I am going to send a flood on the earth to destroy every living being. Everything on the earth will die, but I will make a covenant with you.... Go into the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives. Take into the boat with you a male and a female of every kind of animal and of every kind of bird, in order to keep them alive. Take along all kinds of food for you and for them."

Noah did everything that God commanded.

The LORD said to Noah, "Go into the boat with your whole family; I have found that you are the only one in all the world who does what is right...."

When Noah was six hundred years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month all the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open, all the floodgates of the sky were opened, and rain fell on the earth for forty days and nights. On that same day Noah and his wife went into the boat with their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives....

The flood continued for forty days, and the water became deep enough for the boat to float. The water became deeper, and the boat drifted on the surface. It became so deep that it covered the highest mountains; it went on rising until it was about twenty-five feet above the tops of the mountains. ...The LORD destroyed all living beings on the earth--human beings, animals, and birds. The only ones left were Noah and those who were with him in the boat.

The water did not start going down for a hundred and fifty days.

...By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry. God said to Noah, "Go out of the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives. Take all the birds and animals out with you, so that they may reproduce and spread over all the earth." So Noah went out of the boat with his wife, his sons, and their wives. All the animals and birds went out of the boat in groups of their own kind. Noah built an altar to the LORD; he took one of each kind of ritually clean animal and bird, and burned them whole as a sacrifice on the altar.

a. **Questions**

b. **漢字(Hànzi, Kanji)**

1. 船(chuán) boat / vessel / ship = 舟(zhōu, boat, ship) + 八(8) + 口 (mouths/people) : Western Zhou (Bronze 1045BC)
2. 共(gòng) together = hands joined + (一) earth + 八 (8)
3. 洪(hóng) flood = 水(water) + 共(together)
4. 祭(jì/zhài) sacrifice/worship = 月 (meat) + 又 (hand) + 示 (altar, ceremony)

God is patient but will not always tolerate sin. When he gets angry... well we saw what happened to Jesus.

5. The Great Scattering

At that time all mankind spoke a single language. As the population grew and spread eastward, a plain was discovered in the land of Babylon and was soon thickly populated. The people who lived there began to talk about building a great city, with a temple-tower reaching to the skies--a proud, eternal monument to themselves.

"This will weld us together," they said, "and keep us from scattering all over the world." So they made great piles of hardburned brick, and collected bitumen to use as mortar.

But when God came down to see the city and the tower mankind was making, he said, "Look! If they are able to accomplish all this when they have just [begun] to exploit their linguistic and political unity, just think of what they will do later! Nothing will be unattainable for them!

Come, let us go down and give them different languages, so that they won't understand each other's words!" So, in that way, God scattered them all over the earth; and that ended the building of the city. That is why the city was called Babel (meaning "confusion"), because it was there that Jehovah confused them by giving them many languages, thus widely scattering them across the face of the earth.

a. Questions

b. 漢字(Hànzi, Kanji)

1. 塔/塔(tǎ) tower = 土(earth) + 草(cǎo,grass) + 合(hé,together)
 - i. 合 = 人(people) + 一(1) + 口(mouth-->language)
 - ii. 合+草 = undertake
 - iii. 500BC is when China first start to build towers. 中国人没建塔到 500BC Why does Chinese have this ancient character from before they built towers?
 2. 譴(qiǎn) censure/reprimand = 言(speak) + 辵(walk) + 中(center)
 - i. 大+巳jie2+四+walking(???)
 3. 迁(qiān, gān) relocate/migrate = 辵(walk) + 千(qiān,1000)
- c. true god fearers...