

The Surprising Flight of Noah's Raven

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<http://EzekielMasterKey.com/>

After the flood, sometime before he let everybody disembark from the ark, Noah successively released a raven and, sometime later, a dove (Gen 8:7-12). In a single sentence of eleven Hebrew words, the Bible covers the part played by the raven:

- Gen 8:7 Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro¹ until the waters had dried up from the earth. NKJV

We are not told why he sent it, or where it went. Nevertheless, in spite of the lack of detail I will show that it is still possible to fill the gap and understand what Noah had in mind.

Many commentators believe that sending the raven was a mistake and the bird did not provide any useful information to Noah. They should have more faith in the 600 year-old patriarch and recognize that he had enough wisdom to properly select the first creature to leave the ark and explore the new world. The raven was not sent too early and it didn't behave unexpectedly; the lack of information about its role does not reflect any form of contempt from Noah. Once properly understood, one can only accept that the raven's mission was as successful as the dove's.

What was the role of the raven? To answer this question with an explanation that make sense I need first to expand on Noah's choice of bird.



Two contrasting animals

Doesn't it strike you as odd that out of the hundreds of birds living in the ark, Noah chose one (the raven) so very black and a second (the dove) so very white? The difference between the two birds does not stop with their appearance; other contrasting elements related to their behavior or the perception we have of them, are also worth acknowledging.

The raven is a bird of prey that can eat almost anything including seeds, grain, living animals and dead carcasses. This bird is clever and can follow others animals to discover their nest and attack their young's. The raven's sound is a gurgling croak disagreeable to the ear.

¹ Which went forth to and fro-literally, went forth going and returning;
(from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

The Bible describes it as detestable and unclean:

- Lev 11:13-15 These are the birds you are to detest and not eat because they are detestable: ... any kind of raven, NIV
- Deut 14:11-14 You may eat any clean bird. But these you may not eat: ... any kind of raven, NIV

The dove however is a quiet and frail bird that feeds exclusively on plants or seeds. The bible uses its characteristics in analogies:

It has a sweet voice

- Song 2:14 My dove ... let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, NIV

but it is a weak bird

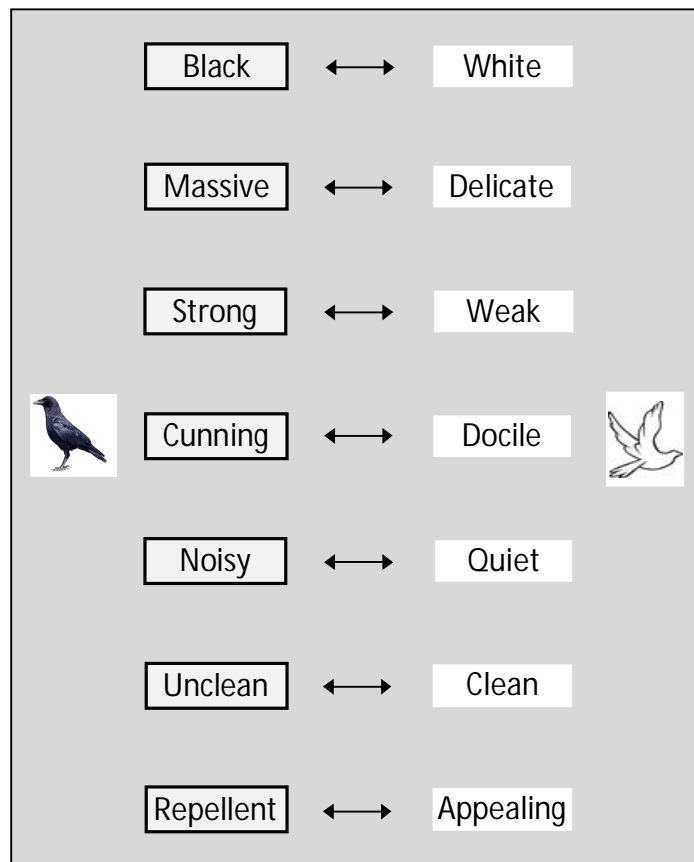
- Nah 2:7 Its slave girls moan like doves NIV
- Isa 59:11 we moan mournfully like doves. NIV

who is neither very intelligent or brave

- Ps 74:19 Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts; do not forget the lives of your afflicted people forever. NIV
- Hos 7:11 "Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless- NIV
- Hos 11:11 They will come trembling like birds from Egypt, like doves from Assyria.

Here are seven specifics differences between the raven and the dove:

Disparities between animals of different species are to be expected but Noah could hardly have chosen accidentally two birds with so many sharply contrasting features. We have here a strong hint that the choice of birds was motivated by a hidden agenda. In the absence of any explanation from the Bible, we have to relate to our own logic and make the appropriate deductions to find out why he chose them especially and what he learned from their flight.



God recreated the world

First, it is important to understand the environment in which the two birds operated. The flood was not a random cataclysm that happened without justification. At that time, the whole world had become so very corrupted that God had no choice but to wipe out everything from the face of the earth.

Destruction of all flesh

- Gen 6:7 So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." NKJV

Violence everywhere (Gen 6:13).

- Gen 6:13 And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. NKJV

However, the flood was not exclusively an act of destruction; it was also an act of creation². In each of the following eight points, the language used to describe the creation of the world (Gen 1) is strongly echoed in the language used to describe the flood (Gen 8).

| Creation of the Original world | | | Creation of the New world (Flood) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Gen 1:2 | and the Spirit [RUWACH] of God was hovering over the waters | 1 | God sent a wind [RUWACH] over the earth [water]. |
| Gen 1:6 | to separate water from water | 2 | Springs of the deep and water of Heaven are separated. |
| Gen 1:9 | Water and land are separated | 3 | On the first day of the tenth month tops of the mountains became visible. |
| Gen 1:11 | Land produces vegetation | 4 | Dove came back with a leaf (vegetation is appearing). |
| Gen 1:14 | Day and night, season | 5 | Summer, winter, day and night |
| Gen 1:20 | Creatures of the sea and winged bird | 6 | Noah sent the raven and the dove. (Creatures of the sea never disappeared.) |
| Gen 1:24 | Land animals are created | 7 | Animals disembark from the Ark. |
| Gen 1:28 | God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." | 8 | so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it." |

² Pointed out by Rabbi David Fohrman

God put man in charge

When Noah³ opened the door of the Ark he was about to discover the physical transformation of the land and learn some fundamental new rules.

The earth had been reshaped during the flood:

- Ps 104:6-9 Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment; The waters were standing above the mountains. At Thy rebuke they fled; At the sound of Thy thunder they hurried away. The mountains rose; the valleys sank down To the place which Thou didst establish for them. Thou didst set a boundary that they may not pass over; That they may not return to cover the earth.

The man's diet included animals:

- Gen 9:2-3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. NKJV

Man would judge man; God would not totally annihilating life on earth again:

- Gen 9:6 Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. NKJV
- Gen 9:9-11 And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." NKJV

Noah's first action in the new world; a hidden connection to the old one.

In the antediluvian world, the first two sons of Adam and Eve, **Cain and Abel**, were characterized by their differences.

- Cain, the firstborn, worked hard to make the earth productive (the ground had been cursed under Adam), while his younger brother Abel, as a shepherd, had a more passive⁴ and restful life. Note that Abel's passivity is reflected in the text:
"Cain was a **tiller** of the ground while Abel was a **keeper** of sheep (Gen 4.2)."
- Cain initiated a sacrifice while Abel followed in his steps (Gen 4:2-3).
- Cain manifested the deficiency of his character by becoming the first man to shed blood on earth. Abel provided for a flock, so he was likely caring and gentle; he became the first human to be killed in an aggression. Abel died as a martyr.
- One brother (Cain) was an opportunist and offered products of inferior quality to God, while the other (Abel) unselfishly gave the best (Gen 4:4) among his flocks.

³ In Gen 7:17 God shut the door of the Ark but in Gen 8:18 Noah seems to have opened the door himself. This distinction could symbolize a new era where men would have a more active role.

⁴ Abel was likely a quiet and peaceful man, passive and embracing the environment as it was, with no special incentive to impose his will and skill on the earth, but accepting it as a given. He left the condition of the soil largely untouched, drawing from it only what it yielded on its own. Jewish Bible Quarterly written by **JOEL LITKE**

In the postdiluvian world, the first two living beings (characterized, as we saw earlier, by their sharp contrasting features) to leave the ark were the biblically ‘unclean’ raven, followed some days later by the biblically ‘clean’ dove.

These two fundamentally opposite birds reflected the character and behavior of **Cain** and **Abel**. (In a symbolical way the **black** color of the raven matched the evil nature of **Cain** and the **white** color of the dove portrayed **Abel**’s virtuous inclination.)



The following points emphasize the connections **Cain/raven** and **Abel/dove**.

Being the first

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| <p>Cain was the first human to be born in the <u>antediluvian</u> world of God. (Gen 4:1)</p> | <p>The raven was the first animal released from the Ark to explore the new re-created world after the flood. (Gen 8:6)</p> |
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Unobtrusive being

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| <p>It is generally accepted that Abel’s name (Hebrew: <i>hevel</i>) means ‘empty of substance’.</p> | <p>Noah portrayed him with a dove, which we characterized earlier as weak, docile and quiet.</p> |
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A seeking being

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| <p>Abel took care of his sheep, when one was lost he would seek it until it was found.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt 18:12 If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? NKJV | <p>Why did the dove come back so late the second time. Gen 8:11 Then the dove came to him in the evening, NKJV</p> <p>No doubts it had been seeking the whole day to find a leaf.</p> |
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A sense of direction

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| <p>Cain was a tiller of the ground therefore one can say that he operated on a <u>vertical</u> axis.</p> | | <p>The raven (<u>vertical</u> motion) likes to soar and perch high up, swooping down to feed.</p> |
| <p>Abel spent his time leading his flock in the fields; he operated on a <u>horizontal</u> axis.</p> | | <p>The dove (<u>horizontal</u> motion) is a low-flying animal that can travel long distances.</p> |

Expectation

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| <p>Cain gave an offering to God but it was rejected.</p> | <p>The raven never brought anything to Noah.</p> |
| <p>Abel offered God the best animal from the firstlings of his flock and God was pleased: <i>God paid heed to Abel and his offering</i> (Gen. 4:4).</p> | <p>The dove brought back to Noah a piece of new vegetation: <i>and there in its beak was a plucked-off olive leaf!</i> (Gen. 8:11). We can presume that Noah was delighted to receive proof that the earth was producing plants again.</p> |

Unfulfilling journey

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| <p>Cain assessed his own situation after murdering his brother by saying, <i>I will be a restless wanderer on the earth</i> (Gen 4:14).</p> | <p>This is paralleled by the flight of the raven which went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth, see Gen 8:7.</p> |
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No return

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| <p>The unexpected killing of Abel is presented as a disappearance “<i>Where is your brother Abel?</i>” and he said, “<i>I do not know</i>” (Gen 4:9).</p> | <p>The dove unexpectedly ended its mission by disappearing, <i>and it did not return to him anymore</i> (Gen 8:12).</p> |
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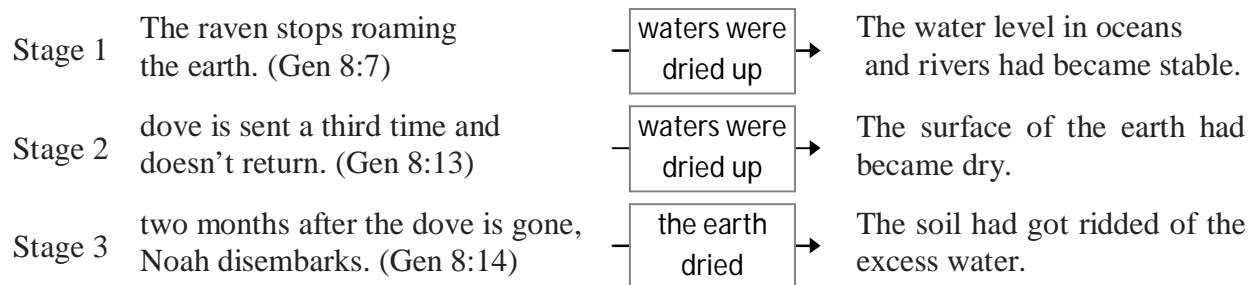
Why did Noah pick an unclean animal to fly first over the new world?

From an intuitive approach we would say that the first bird to leave the ark should have been the biblically ‘clean’ dove. After all, God had just totally cleansed the whole world with the flood water. By sending the unclean raven first, Noah seems, at least in appearance, to have defeated the purpose. There is also another important fact to consider: if Noah only wanted to know if the vegetation had started to grow, he didn’t need to send the raven at all as the dove demonstrated later on that it was fully able to provide this information all by itself. Could Noah have known beforehand that the dove would bring back a piece of vegetation? It was in the nature of the dove (Genesis 8 would be quite incomprehensible if Noah had used the two birds without any knowledge of their behavior) to seek material outside the ark and bring it back to build a nest.

Needless to say, if Noah had sent out the dove first, instead of the raven, no doubt it would have undertaken more fruitless trips but that wouldn't have compromised its ultimate success.

With these considerations in mind, we can rightly deduce that whatever had been the expected contribution of the raven it did not involve bringing something back to the ark. This explains in part the puzzling silence of the Bible on this matter: there was nothing to report.

According to Gen 8:7, the raven stopped its activities as soon as the water had dried up. What does that mean exactly? The term 'dried up' is used in Gen 8:7, Gen 8:13 and Gen 8:14 yet these verses describe three different points in time after the grounding of the ark. Obviously, the three instances of 'drying up' must coincide with three different stages of recovery after a flooding event. I propose the following interpretation:



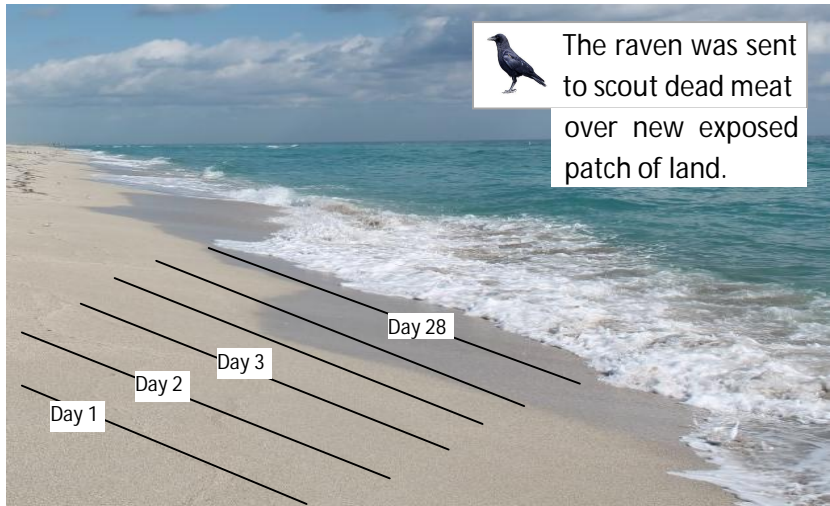
Now that we know the raven went to and fro "until" the water level had stabilized (stage 1), we can deduce that his roaming must have lasted a while. (28 days according my own chronology) The Hebrew expression "it kept flying back and forth" means that the raven flew back and forth repeatedly. There is no reason to think that the raven willingly gave up flying when the water level stopped receding. Knowing when the raven stopped flying doesn't explain why it stopped doing it. In the absence of any other explanation, we must conclude that Noah himself ended the raven's mission. If it is the case we can draw the following three deductions:

1. The raven was regularly coming back to the ark, otherwise Noah couldn't have got hold of the bird to terminate the mission at the exact time the level of water became stable. (By deduction we know that Noah release the Dove exactly one week later.)
2. The raven was useful to Noah as long as the water level was going down.
3. At any time, Noah, from his vantage point at the ark window, was well aware of the level of the flood water; he didn't depend on the raven to assess the situation.

The role of the raven

Answering the next question will clarify the role of the raven. Once **outside the ark**, after months of inactivity and isolation, why did the raven keep coming back to Noah (it went to and fro) each day instead of 'permanently' flying away as would be expected of a bird that was able to eat seeds, grain, live flesh and carrion? The only explanation has to be the following: the raven **did not find any food** anywhere outside the ark. As pointed out before, the raven is a very intelligent and resourceful bird; therefore, going back to the ark to receive food was a matter of survival. This is exactly what Noah had been expecting the raven would be forced to do. By

regularly coming back to the ark, i.e. ‘going to and fro’, while the floodwater was receding, the raven’s behavior was communicating to Noah **the most important information** about the new world. I.E. **No** trace of **corruption** (carrion) had materialized on the patch of land newly exposed by the constantly receding water between each successive flight of the raven. Noah had one preoccupation: to make sure that the biblically ‘clean’ dove, once released, would not be exposed to any decomposing flesh that could be lying bare in the wilderness. Fortunately, that hazard disappeared as soon as the level of water stabilized. (This also explains why the raven was motivated to scout



The raven was sent to scout dead meat over new exposed patch of land.

around daily: as long as the water was going down, it had a new strip of exposed land to explore, otherwise it could have been inclined to idly perch on the ark all day long).

The raven’s mission was successful because it brought Noah the assurance that the ‘clean’ dove wouldn’t be exposed to an unclean world during its very first flight. Keep in mind that God used the flood to remove a world that had become too corrupted to salvage.

By carefully selecting the appropriate birds and sending them before any other animals, Noah took the opportunity to symbolically re-enact and reverse the legacy left by Cain and Abel, the most emblematic figures of the antediluvian world’s moral.

The two brothers versus the two birds

Let us compare the introduction of the two brothers in Genesis with the handling of the two birds. Notice the reversal of situation on the bird’s side.

| Cain | Raven |
|---|--|
| <p>Eve <u>expressed her pride</u> after the delivery of her first son Cain (whose meaning is ‘acquire’), believing the child to have been the result of a joint collaboration with God. <i>“I have gained a male child with the help of Hashem.”</i> (Gen 4:1).</p> | <p>Noah released the raven from the window of the ark and he ‘textually’ <u>never directly interacted with it</u> afterwards.</p> |
| Abel | Dove |
| <p>However, she had <u>nothing to say</u> about Abel, her second born (whose name means ‘futility, empty of substance’) as if he was much less important than his older brother.</p> | <p>However, the dove, which was released some time later, was <u>treated with cordiality and care</u>. <i>(So putting out his hand, he took it into the ark with him.</i> (Gen 8:9).</p> |

Cain was a menace for Abel, however the raven was instrumental to preserve the cleanness of the dove.

Cain

As Cain cared only for himself “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” (Gen 4:9) and killed his brother, the first occurrence of that **ultimate expression of violence**.

Raven

The raven was sent to make sure the new world didn’t show any trace of death. This allowed the dove, its ‘symbolic brother’, to stay ‘clean’ and bring back an olive branch, the first **peace offering performed in the new world**.

Cain brought death in the world; the raven validated its absence in the new world.

Cain

Cain, the firstborn of the pre-diluvian world, brought murder into it; God ended that world by killing all air-breathing creatures.

Raven

The raven was the first to explore the post-diluvian world. He sought death (carrion) but found none; there is hope that God will end the present age by destroying death itself. See Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2-3.

The raven: a link between Cain and Elijah

Noah’s raven was flying to and fro between the shore and the ark, expecting to be fed, while the level of water was receding. All these actions are echoed in another biblical story involving ravens going back and forth to feed someone near water.

At the time of Ahab, king of Israel, there was a severe drought and God told Elijah the Tishbite to settle temporarily beside a brook. Then God ordered ravens to feed Elijah twice a day until the water of the brook had dried up (‘receded’).

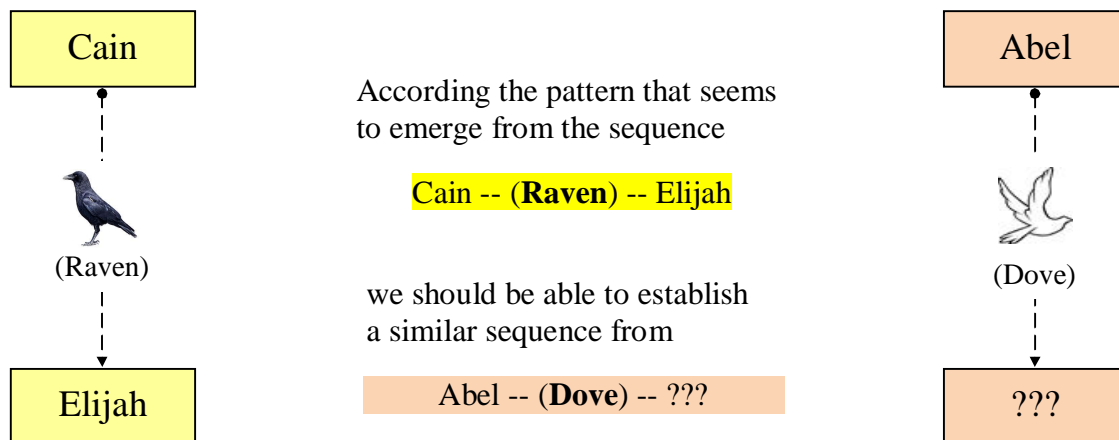
- 1 Kings 17:3-4 "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." NKJV

Here are some parallels between the raven of the flood and the ravens of the brook

| Raven of the flood | Ravens of the brook |
|--|--|
| Sent by God to board the Ark. Gen 6:20 | Sent by God to feed Elijah. 1 King 17:4 |
| Sen by Noah after heaven had been shut Gen 8:7 | Sent after heaven had been shut. 1 King 17:1 |
| On a mission: Seek trace of food but couldn’t find any. | On a mission: Bring food to someone that couldn’t find any. 1 King 17:4 |
| Sent from a boat Gen 8:6 | Sent to a water brook 1 King 17:4 |
| Went to and fro Gen 8:7 | The ravens went in the morning and returned at night 1 King 17:6 |
| Discarded after water had receded Gen 8:7 | discarded after brook dried up 1 King 17:6 |
| Replaced by a Dove Gen 8:8 | Replaced by a widow 1 King 17:9 |

The raven of the flood is associated with Cain. The ravens of the brook are associated with Elijah. It seems that the Bible, by using the same type of bird, is making some kind of bridge between Cain and Elijah. Here are several points that confirm this connection:

| <u>Cain</u> | <u>Elijah</u> |
|--|--|
| brought Abel to a field and killed him (NW no witnesses) (Gen 4:8) | brought a boy to the upper room of his lodging and resurrected him (NW) (1 Kings 17:21) |
| God talked to Cain (Gen 4:9) | God talked to <u>Elijah</u> (1 Kings 17:2) |
| God, the ruler of the world, confronted Cain (Gen 4:10) | <u>Elijah</u> confronted Ahab, the ruler of the land. (1 Kings 18:18) |
| Cain cared only for himself (Gen 4:9) | <u>Elijah</u> cared for others (1 Kings 17:20) |
| Cain would become hidden from God's presence (Gen 4:14) | <u>Elijah</u> had to hide his face in his mantle to survive from God's presence. (1 Kings 19:13) |
| Cain went to the land of Nod (Hebrew word 'nad,' meaning 'wandering'). | <u>Elijah</u> 's life was a succession of flights and wandering |
| Cain was driven out from the face of the earth and was afraid that anyone who found him would try to kill him (Gen 4:14) | King Ahab sent someone to every nation to find <u>Elijah</u> (1 Kings 18:10) while his wife, Jezebel, was killing all the Lord's prophets (1 Kings 18:4) |
| Cain was protected by God (Gen 4:15) | <u>Elijah</u> was protected by God (1 Kings 17:4) |
| Cain is forever associated with his younger brother Abel. (Abel gave a fat portion of his flock, Gen 4:4) | <u>Elijah</u> 's ministry is forever associated with his close assistant Elisha. (Elisha received a double portion of his mentor's spirit, 2 Kings 2:9. |



Before investigating how the dove provided a link between Abel and another individual, I would like to open a parenthesis and propose the fascinating possibility that some events in Elijah's story provided a strong indication on the nature of the mark on Cain.

Elijah brings light to the mysterious mark of Cain.

What was the 'mark' received by Cain? The Bible doesn't tell us but there is no shortage of speculation about what it could have been. The pertinent facts, in the order they were given in Genesis, are: a **killing**, a **punishment**, a **curse**, a **mark**.

- ❖ Cain **killed** his brother.
 - Gen 4:8 and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. NKJV
- ❖ After the killing, Cain received a **punishment** from God:
 - Gen 4:12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." NKJV

In other words, Cain wouldn't be allowed to till the earth as he had done all his life, nor would he be allowed to own any piece of land. Cain, a farmer, was literally stripped of his way of life. This punishment was so harsh that Cain expressed his despair by saying,

- Gen 4:13 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!"

Then Cain, becoming aware of the kind of life that would be his, said to God

- Gen 4:14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me." NKJV

- ❖ God was sensitive to Cain's distress and He issued a divine **curse** against anybody who might attack Cain, saying that a sevenfold vengeance would be carried out.
 - Gen 4:15 And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." NKJV
- ❖ And Cain received a **mark**.
 - Gen 4:15 And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

The mark was not part of the punishment

Here is an important consideration: the mark was given after the punishment had been stated; it was never meant to be part of it.

Some people believe that the mark was some kind of defensive artifact like a tool or a weapon. This is most unlikely given that Cain could still be killed no matter that he had the mark. Others believe that because of the mark, Cain's appearance was altered in some way. It has been suggested that the color of his skin was modified, that he suffered leprosy or the trembling of his entire body for the remainder of his life, that he received some kind of branding or a tattoo, or even that a horn grew out of his head. There are no grounds for any of these beliefs. Let us not forget that God had already severely punished Cain prior to giving him the mark. There was no reason to turn him into an object of repulsion to those around him.

Elijah had his own mark and many people were aware of it.

The Bible tells us that Elijah used King Ahaziah's messengers (see 2 Kings 1:3-4) to warn the king (of Israel) that he would soon die. After hearing the message, the king wanted to know who made that threat against him. *"What sort of man was it," he asked them, "who came toward you and said these things to you?"* (2 Kings 1:7). Notice in the following answer, given by his own messengers, the total absence of details about Elijah's physical stature or appearance. *"A hairy man," they replied, "with a leather belt tied around his waist."* (2 Kings 1:8). Isn't it interesting that the king, upon hearing how the man was clothed, had enough information to instantly recognize, without a doubt, that they were talking about Elijah. *"That's Eliyahu the Tishbite!" he said.* (2 Kings 1:8).

King Ahaziah used Elijah distinctive attire (garment of hair, belt of leather) as a 'MARK' to properly identify the prophet. Obadiah also, in a different circumstance, used Elijah attire to recognize the prophet when he met him for the first time. (see 1 Kings 18:7)

Given the strong connection made by the raven between Cain and Elijah, wouldn't it make sense that the distinctive 'mark' God putted on Cain was similar, if not identical, to the one associated with Elijah, i.e. **a 'special' garment of hair and a belt of leather**? I say 'yes' to that, all the more since we can clearly differentiate between the role of the mark and the role of the curse.

- **The purpose of the mark** (a distinctive attire) was to allow people, those who had never met Cain before, to easily identify him.
- **The purpose of the curse** (sevenfold vengeance from Heaven) was to dissuade everybody from harming Cain.

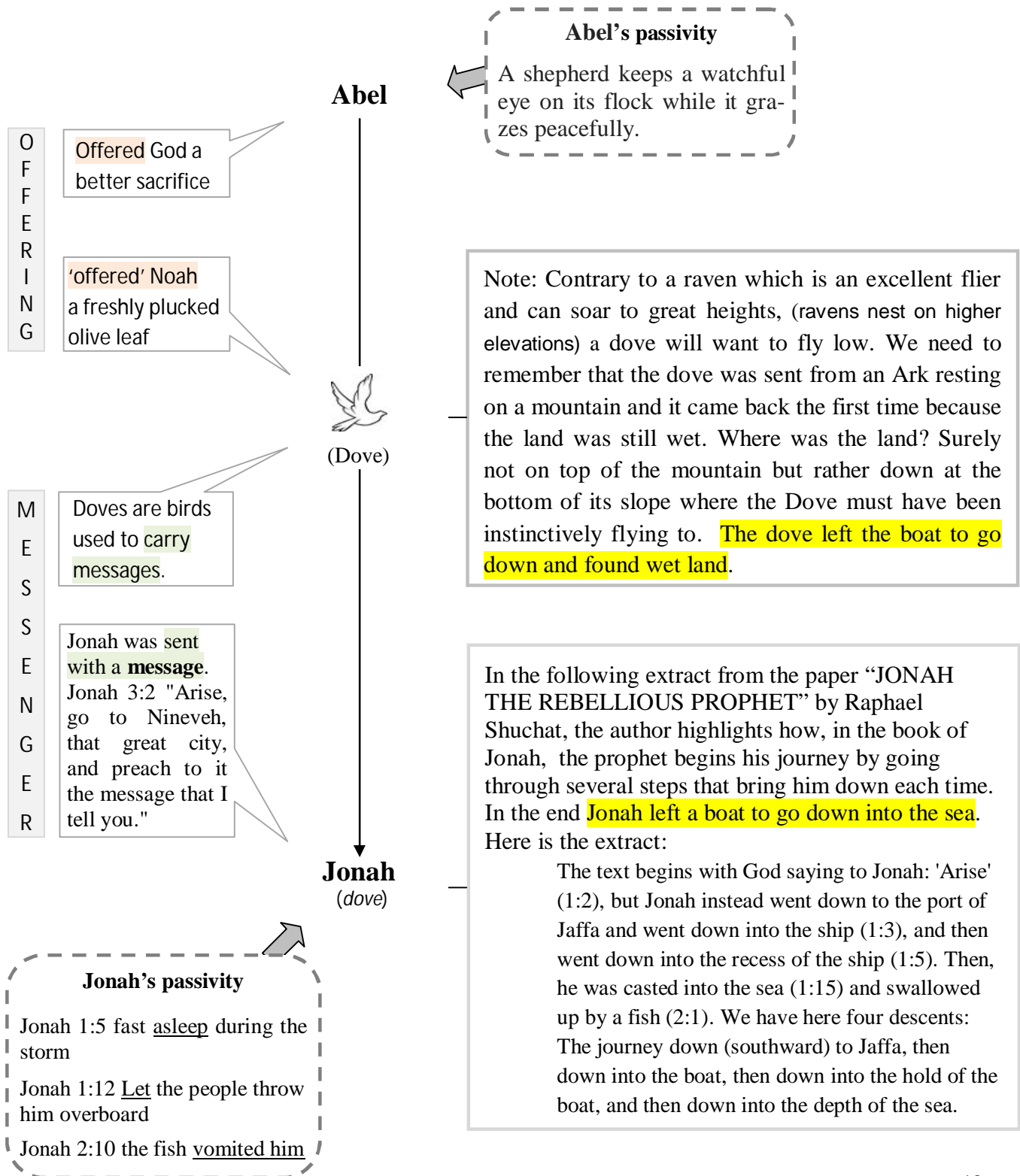
Note: a review of the similarities between the fall of Adam and the fall of Cain strengthen the previous conclusion on the nature of the Mark

- In each case God told beforehand the **consequences** of doing the wrong choice (Gen 2:7/ 4:7)
- **Premeditation** was part of each story Gen 3:2/ 4:8
- God **searched** the scene (Gen 3:8 Where are you / Gen 4:9 where is your brother)
- God gave a **curse** (Gen 3:14 cursed are you... / Gen 4:11 now you are under a curse..)
- **Hardship** associated with the land (Gen 3:18 soil will produce thorns and thistles / Gen 4:12 when you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you)
- **Banishment** from the land (Gen 3:23 / Gen 4:14)
- God gave them something to **wear**. Adam and Eve received pieces of clothing under the form of garments of skin Gen 3:21). Cain received a 'mark' (Gen 4:15).

It is quite fitting that the mark on Cain was related to his attire.

The dove: a link between Abel and Jonah

Does the dove's flight link Abel to someone else? Yes, and we could hardly miss it. The dove connects to another dove in the person of Jonah the prophet. In Hebrew the word for 'dove' is יונה, the same as the name given to the prophet known as Jonah. (Ref 'The Sign of Jonah the Prophet' by Author Noel Rude)



Dove

The dove's mission was given following the most important storm to ever strike the earth.

Noah sent the Dove out of the boat (Ark) to an uninhabited world.

Noah provided shelter to the dove:

- Gen 8:9 So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. NKJV

The dove was **sent three times** by Noah.

After its mission the dove never returned to Noah.

Jonah

Jonah completed the mission after a violent storm had threatened to break up the boat on which he was sailing.

Jonah had a similar experience when the crew threw him off the boat and he ended up in the belly of a fish where nobody could be expected to live.

- Jonah 1:15 So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, NKJV
- Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. NKJV

God provided shelter to Jonah:

- Jonah 1:17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. NKJV
- Jonah 4:6 And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. NKJV

It took Jonah **three journeys** to complete his mission:

1. A journey on a boat (in the opposite direction)
2. A journey in the fish
3. A journey to Nineveh

Other uses of number 3 in Jonah's story:

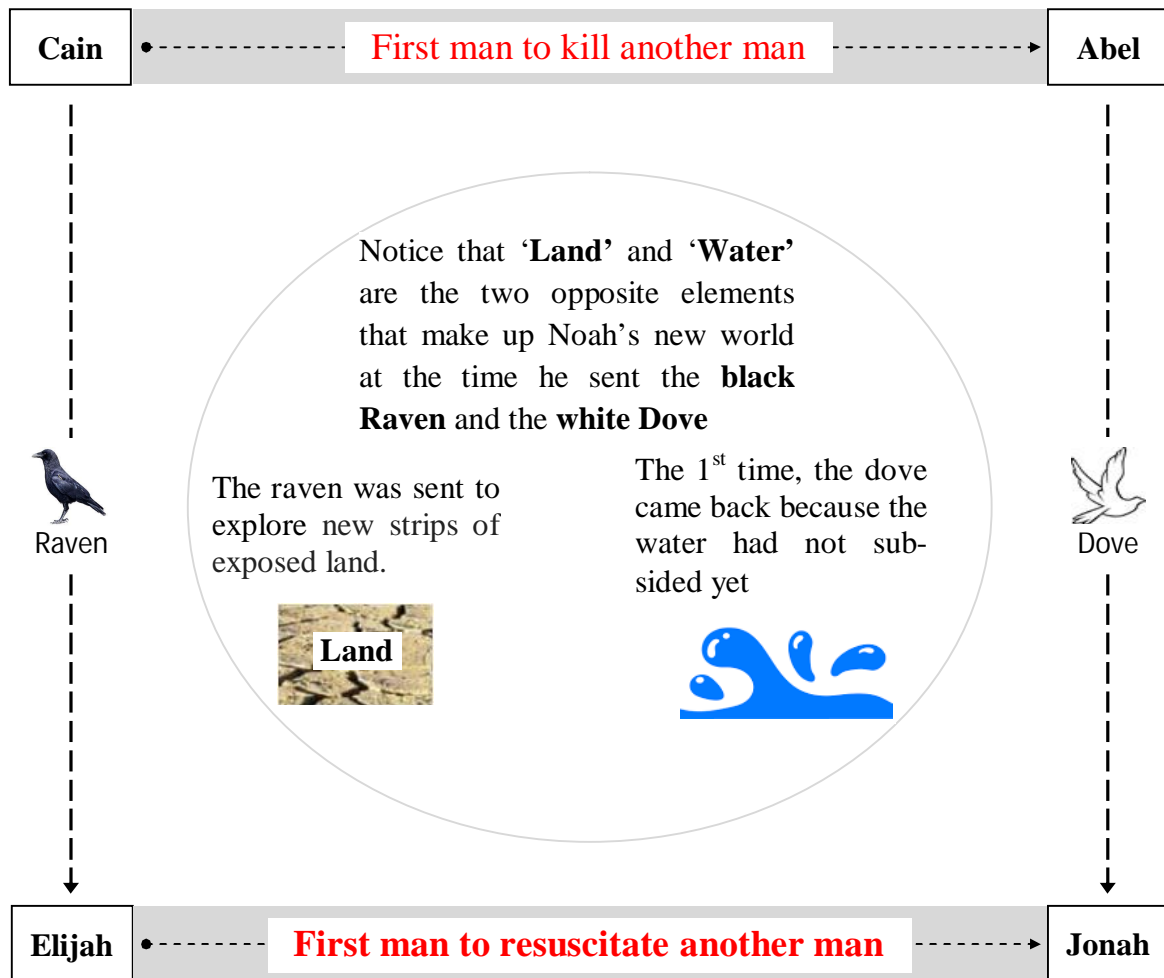
- Jonah 1:17 And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. NKJV
- Jonah 3:3 Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey NKJV

In the context of the story, Jonah was sent to Nineveh and never returned.

There is a strong connection between Cain and Abel. They were brothers and we all know that Cain killed Abel. At first glance an equivalent connection is missing between Elijah and Jonah because we are under the impression that they lived at different times. But according to some Jewish sage this perception is wrong and there is a real tie between Elijah and Jonah. Jonah⁵ is believed to be the son of the widow at Zarephath. This would mean that Jonah was the boy resuscitated by Elijah.

- 1 Kings 17:19-21 "Give me your son," Elijah replied ... Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!" NIV

If this interpretation is valid we have a perfect symmetry between CAIN-ABEL and Elijah-Jonah.



⁵ In Jonah 1:1 Jonah is called the son of Amittai. (Amittai = true and therefore it could be said that Jonah was the **Son of the true**).

Now, after her son was resurrected the widow of Zarephath exclaimed to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth." (ref 1King 17:24) thus associating Elijah with the true. This prompted the Jewish sage to believe that Jonah ben amittai (Jonah son of the true) was the spiritual son of Elijah (man of true).

Elijah and Jonah can be linked to two others names

The two sequences initiated by Cain and Abel don't stop with Elijah and Jonah. The Bible gives us enough clues to extend each sequence with two more individuals. They are John the Baptist and Yeshua. This time, instead of the contrasting **black** raven and **white** dove, we are going to use **Land & Water** (solid state versus liquid state) to establish the connection with these two new people.

At the start of his calling Elijah predicted a **dryness**:

- 1 Kings 17:1 there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years NIV

Elijah live near a brook that **dried up**

- 1 Kings 17:7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. NIV

Later in life Elijah had to run away and hide in the **desert**:

- 1 Kings 19:3-4 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. NIV

The hand of the Lord came upon him.
1 Kings 18:46

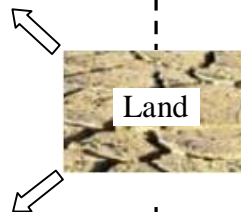
Elijah

Elijah confronted king Ahab

1 Kings 18:18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals. NKJV

Jezebel, king Ahab's wife, plotted to kill Elijah.

1 Kings 19:2 then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." NKJV



John the Baptist spent his whole life in the **wilderness**

- Luke 1:80 and he lived in the **desert** until he appeared publicly to Israel. NIV
- Matt 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the **Desert** of Judea NIV

Isaiah had said about the Baptist :

- Isa 40:3 A voice of one calling: "In the **desert** prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. NIV

John the Baptist

The hand of the Lord was with him Luke 1:66

John the Baptist confronted King Herod

Mark 6:18 For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Herodias, king Herod's wife, plotted (and succeeded) to have John the Baptist executed.

Mark 6:19 So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. NIV

| Elijah | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Special clothing | Sent and hunted | | Theophany |
| 2 Kings 1:8 "He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist." | 1 Kings 18:36-37 let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things <u>at Your word.</u> | 1 Kings 18:10 there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to <u>hunt</u> for you; NKJV | 1 Kings 19:11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." |

John the Baptist was the Elijah to come.

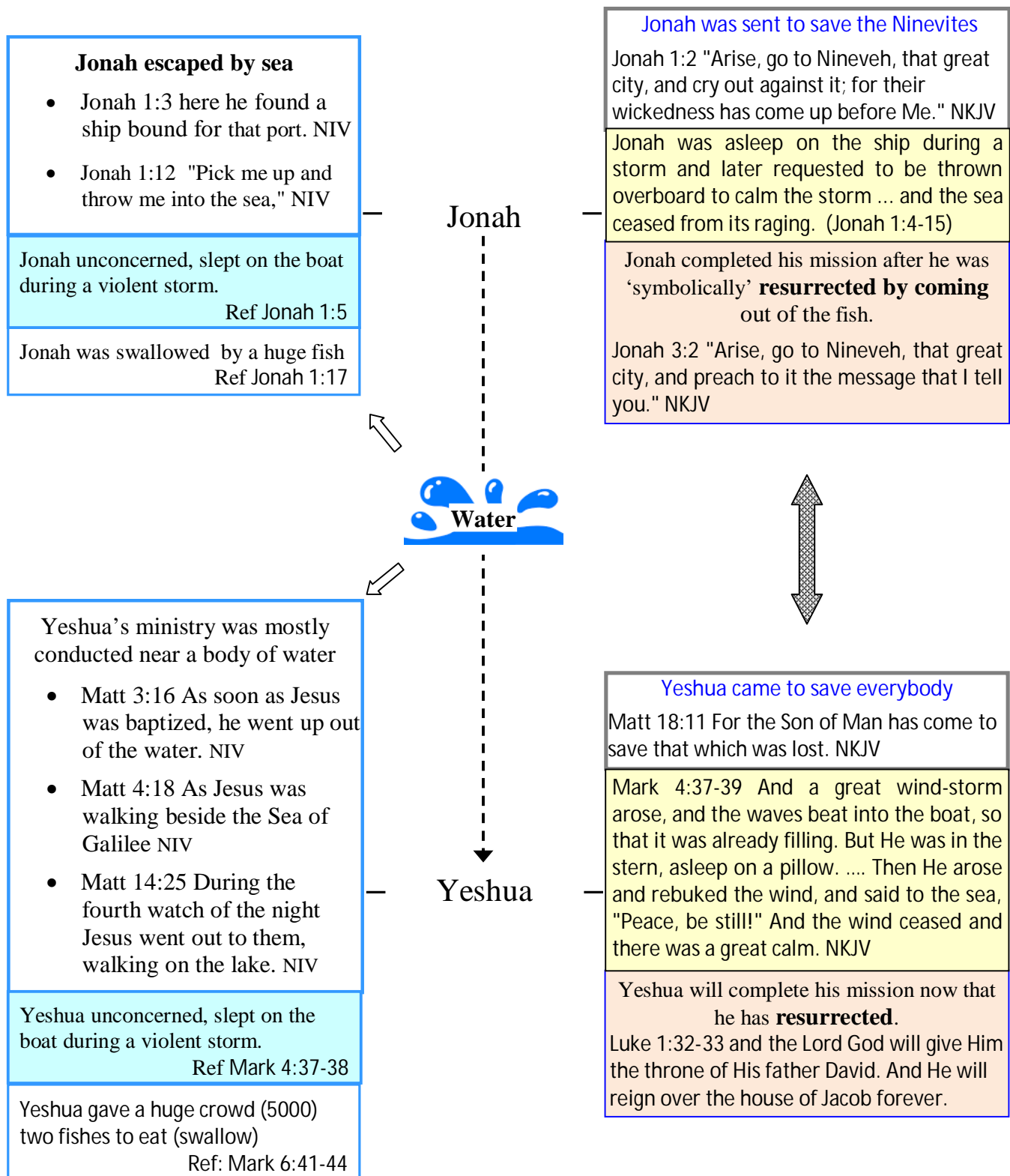
Luke 1:17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous-to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Mal 4:5 "See, I will send you the prophet **Elijah** before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes



Matt 17:12-13 But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. ... Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about **John the Baptist**.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Mark 1:6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, | Mal 3:1 I will send my messenger [John Baptist], <u>who will prepare</u> the way before me. | Matt 3:5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan <u>went out</u> to him NKJV | Matt 3:16 At that moment heaven was opened, and he [John the Baptist] saw the Spirit of God |
| Special clothing | Sent & Look for | | Theophany |
| John the Baptist | | | |



Yeshua was the messianic figure who had been typified by Jonah.

- Luke 11:30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. NIV

| Jonah | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| An innocent man | Coming out of the water | Calming the storm | He accepted to die to make other people perish |
| Jonah 1:14 Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased." | And the LORD commanded the fish , and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. Jonah 2:10 | "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. Jonah 1:12 | Jonah 1:10-12 ... (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) ... "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you." |

The 3 day link

But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was **three days and three nights in the belly** of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be **three days and three nights in the heart** of the earth. (Matt 12:39-41)

The '40' link

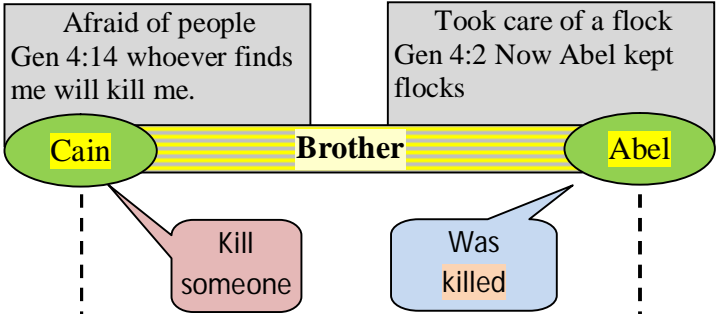
The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, **and now one greater than Jonah is here**. (Matt 12:41)

Jonah told (ref Jonah 3:4) the Ninevites that they had **40 days**. They repented and were saved. Yeshua was sent to tell the people about the kingdom of God, they didn't listen and killed him. Jerusalem was destroyed **40 years** later.

| Matt 27:4 "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." Matt 27:19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, | As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water [to the dry land]. Matt 3:16 | He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Mark 4:39 | Matt 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." |
|--|--|--|--|
| An innocent man | Coming out of the water | Calming the storm | He accepted to die to save other people |
| Yeshua | | | |

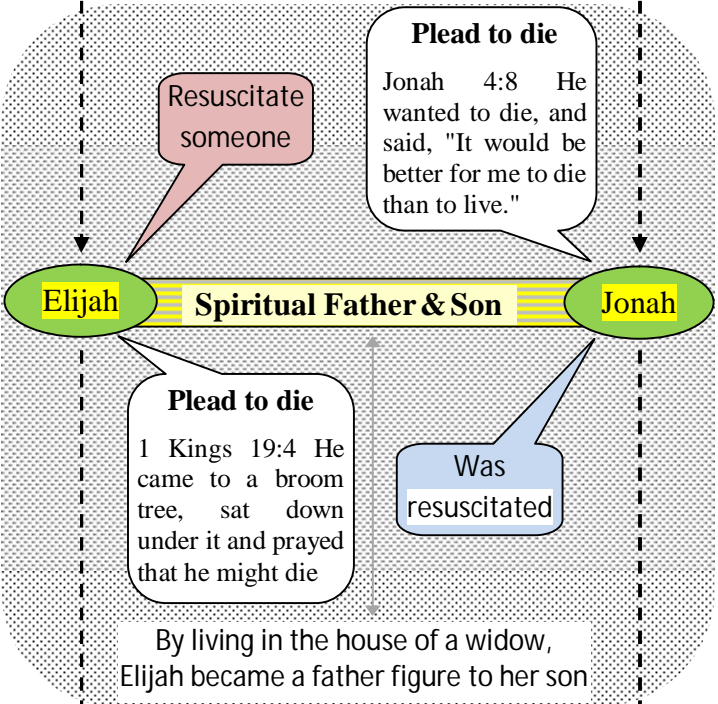
An extraordinary group of people

his mark ?
 Gen 4:15 And the LORD set a mark on Cain:
 Most likely a garment of hair and a leather belt?
his feeding
 Gen 4:12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you.



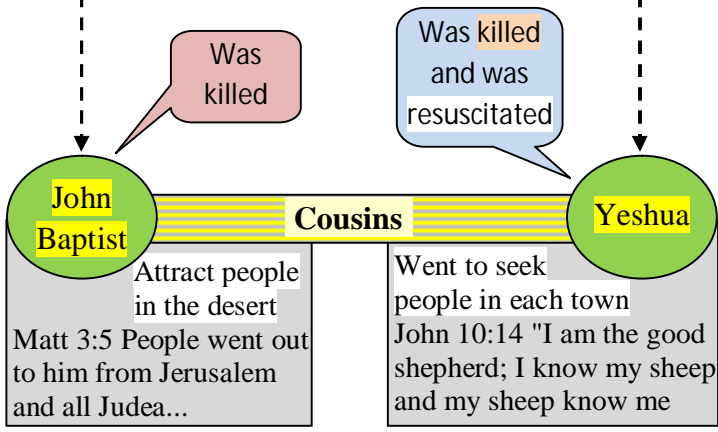
mouth
 The ground opened its mouth to receive Abel's blood
 Gen 4:12
characteristic
 He became the first man to experience death

his mark
 2 Kings 1:8 "He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist."
his feeding
 1 Kings 17:4 and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." NKJV



mouth
 A great fish opened its mouth and swallowed Jonah:
 ... So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.
 Jonah 1:17,2:10
characteristic
 He experienced a form of death:
 Matt 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish. NIV

his mark
 Mark 1:6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist,
his feeding
 Mark 1:6 and he ate locusts and wild honey. NKJV



mouth
 He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; ... So He opened not His mouth. Acts 8:32
characteristic
 He gave the sign of Jonah to a weakened generation:
 Matt 12:40 so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

We have found six prominent individuals and we have represented them in a table of two columns. These individuals share many interesting characteristics but, so far, grouping them together doesn't give us a sense of purpose.

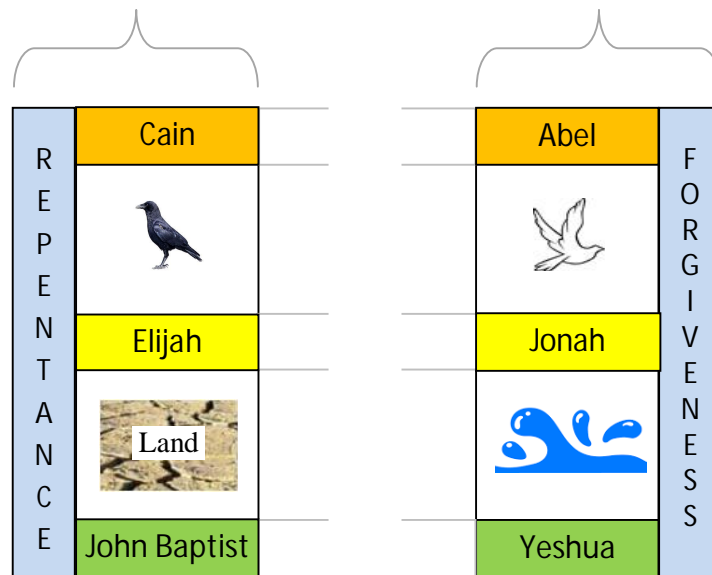
In the next few pages an additional layer of information will be exposed. It will be seen that each column of the previous table depicts an independent 'theme'.

The left column is associated with

REPENTANCE

The right column is associated with

FORGIVENESS



The six biblical figures have an important role to play after all. Each one personifies one of the three successive stages

Lack

Little

Plenty

of the two themes **REPENTANCE** and **FORGIVENESS** that are associated with the columns. Let's see how it is done...

L
a
c
k

He is characterised by his unrepentant attitude.

Cain

repentance



Cain felt the anguish of **being alienated [separated]** from God and the land

- Gen 4:13-14 And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; NKJV

L
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His life was an unsuccessful quest to make the people repent for their sin and turn toward the one and true God of Israel.

- 1 Kings 19:4 "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.NIV
- 1 Kings 19:14 "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

Elijah

repentance



Land

The 'unborn' John Baptist' rejoiced at **being close** to the son of God.

- Luke 1:44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. NKJV

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John the Baptist calling was to exhort people to repentance.

- Matt 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance.
- Luke 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

**John
the
Baptist**

repentance

Abel was the first human to be murdered. His blood was crying for justice and vengeance.

Note: Cain was afraid that anybody who found him would try to kill him (anticipating the people's **absence** of **forgiveness**).

- Gen 4:14 and whoever finds me will kill me. NIV

Abel

L
a
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k

forgiveness

Abel's **blood spilled on the ground**. (crying for vengeance)

- Gen 4:10 Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.



While Jonah is characterized by his love for Israel he stubbornly resisted delivering God's message fearing that the people of Ninerveh would repent and obtain forgiveness.

- Jonah 4:1-2 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

Jonah

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forgiveness



One of the main teachings of his ministry was about forgiveness. He even gave his life so that every sinner would be forgiven.

- Matt 9:6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins
- Matt 26:28 this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.
- Acts 10:43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Yeshua

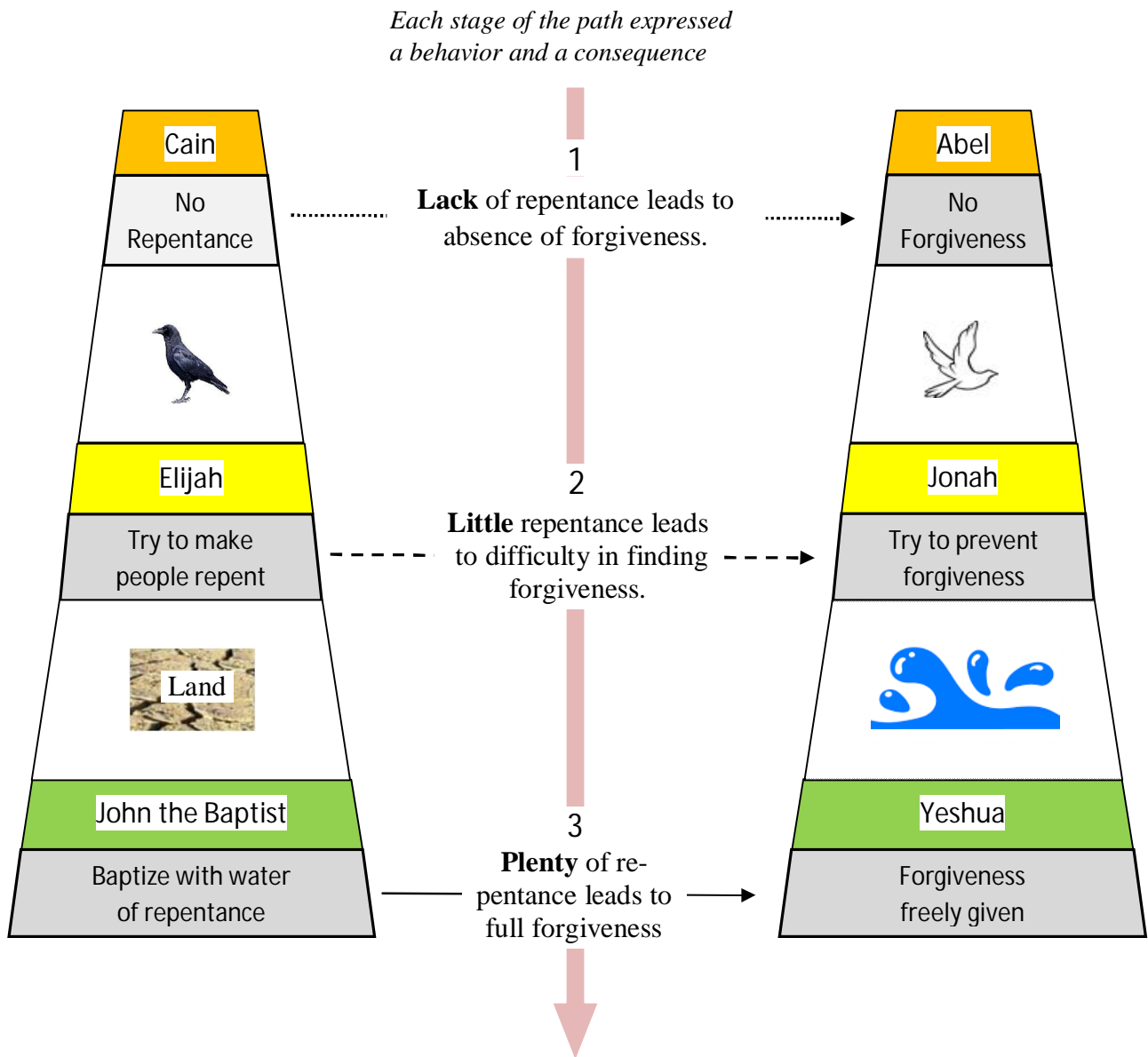
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forgiveness

Yeshua's **blood was received in heaven**

- Heb 9:12 but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood,

With the next transformation of the table of six biblical figures, we are going to highlight a path. The boundaries of the path show the three stages progression of the double motifs: Repentance and Forgiveness. At the origin of the path the double motifs is completely negated but it become totally dominant at the end.



How should we call a path whose origin highlights a lack of Repentance and forgiveness but is characterized by an abundance⁶ of each at its end? Could it be called a **road to redemption**?

⁶ Luke 24:46-49 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. NIV

Notice that the story of Cain and Abel, the first individuals in the construction of the path, is told immediately after the expulsion from Eden.

Unfortunately the expulsion from Eden is also characterized by several losses for humanity:

Lost of proximity with God. It was replaced by Temple's sacrifice and high priest

- Gen 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, NKJV

Lost of freedom. Men would have to endure the bondage of the law.

- Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. NKJV

Lost of eternal life.

- Gen 3:22-23 And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden NKJV

Notice that the death of Yeshua, the last individual in the construction of the path, is viewed as a ransom, requested to pay the debt contracted in Eden.

- Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." NKJV
- 1 Tim 2:5-6 the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, NKJV

By paying the ransom Yeshua obtained for us

A better intermediary between us and God.

- Heb 8:1-3 **We have such a High Priest**, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. NKJV

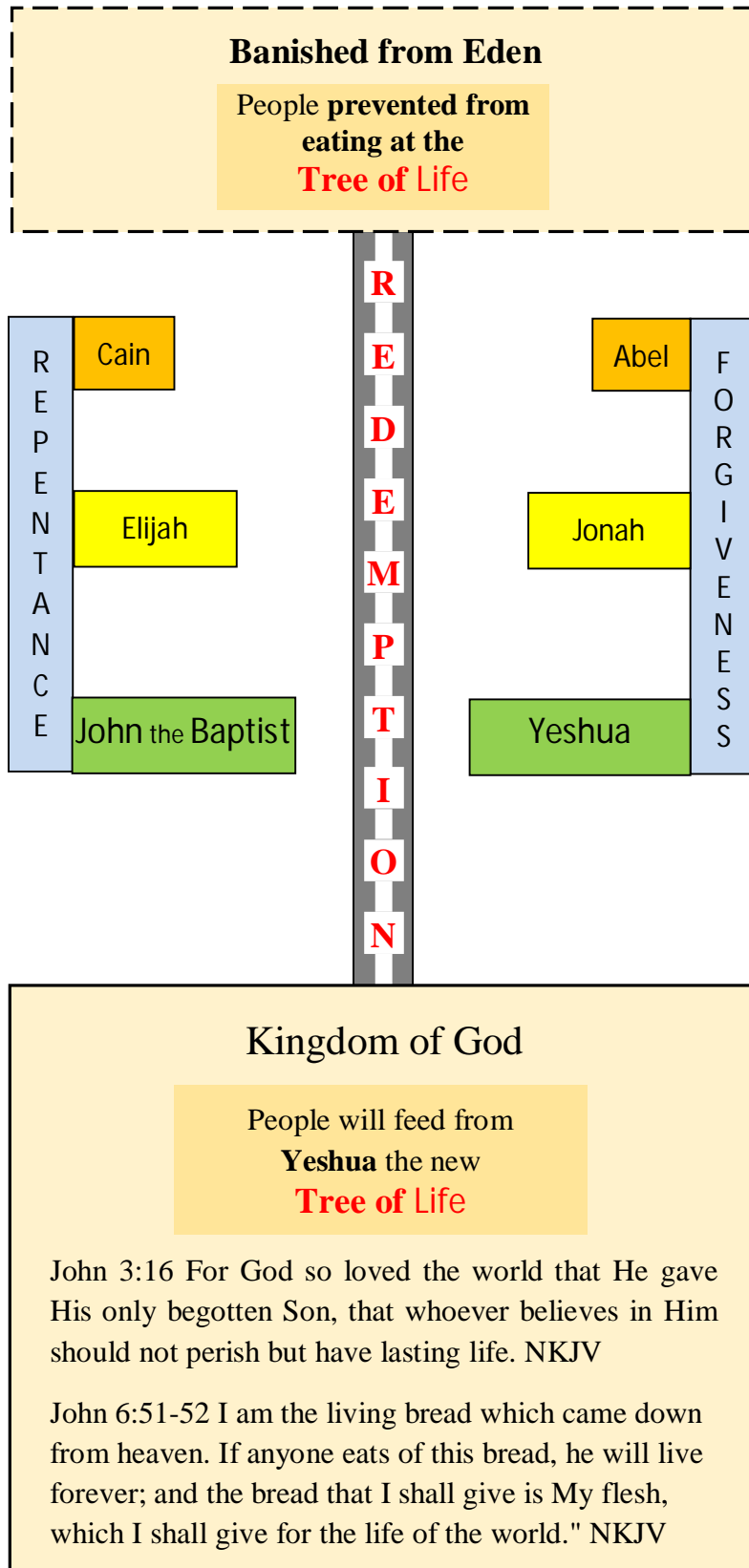
The freedom to worship in any place

- John 4:20-22 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, **the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.** NKJV

Eternal life

- John 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me **has everlasting life**, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. NKJV

The path to mankind spiritual 'redemption' shows that 'Repentance' and 'Forgiveness' are the only way for each individual to enter the **Kingdom of God** and obtain **eternal life**.



Ps 119:35 Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.

Prov 12:28 In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.

Dedicated to the
Jewish martyrs of Bolechow
Who like a flock of doves
Were led to their death
By the ravens of this world

The First Action - October 28-29, 1941

Yves Peloquin