

Farming: Blessing and Curse and the Third Way
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Genesis 3:17

And to Adam He said: 'Because you listened to the voice of your wife, and you ate of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying: do not eat of it; cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles will it bring forth for you; and you will eat the herb of the field.

Genesis 5:28-29

(כח) וַיְחִי לִמֶּכֶד שְׁתַּיִם וּשְׁמֹנִים שָׁנָה וַיֵּצֵא אֶת נֹחַ וַיְהִי בֶן: (כט) וַיִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמוֹ נֹחַ לֵאמֹר זֶה יַנְחֵמֵנוּ מִכָּל עֲשָׂוֵנוּ וּמִכָּל עֲבֹדַת הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אָרְרָה יְקֹוֹם:

When Lamech had lived 182 years, he begot a son. And he named him Noah, saying, 'This one will provide us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands, out of the very soil which the Lord placed under a curse.'

Midrash Tanhuma (Warsaw) Bereshit: 11

Immediately after Noah was born and circumcised Lamech knew and said surely "This one will provide us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands..." (Gen. 5:29) And what is the meaning of 'from our work and from the toil of our hands?' Before Noah was born, what was harvested was not what had been sewn. Rather, when wheat was sewn, thorns and thistles were harvested. When Noah was born the earth/world returned to orderly growth/to its composure. People harvested that which they sewed. They sewed wheat and harvested wheat, [sewed] barley and harvested barley.

And what is even more—before Noah was born people worked [the soil] with their [bare] hands, as implied by the words, "and from the toil of our hands." (Gen. 5:29) But after Noah was born, he invented for them, the plow, the scythe, the hoe, and all manner of tools [for working the ground].

Dvarim/Deuteronomy 11:10-12

לא--לְרִשְׁתָּהּ שָׂמָה-בָּא אֶתְּהָ אֲשֶׁר, הָאָרֶץ כִּי י תִּזְרַע אֲשֶׁר: מִשֵּׁם יֵצְאָתָם אֲשֶׁר, הוּא מִצְרַיִם בְּאָרֶץ הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּגְוֹן רִגְלֶיךָ וְהִשְׁקִיָּתָ, זֶרְעָה-אֶת

10 For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou didst sow thy seed, and didst water it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs;

אָרֶץ--לְרִשְׁתָּהּ שָׂמָה רִיבְעָבָ אֶתְּהָ אֲשֶׁר, וְהָאָרֶץ יֵא מַיִם-תִּשְׁתָּהּ, הַשָּׁמַיִם לְמַטֵּר; וּבִקְעֻת, הַרִיבִים

11 but the land, whither ye go over to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water as the rain of heaven cometh down;

עֵינֵי, תְּמִיד: אֶתְּהָ דִרְשׁ אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַיְהוָה-אֲשֶׁר, אָרֶץ יֵב אֶתְּרִית וְעַד, הַשָּׁנָה מִרְשִׁית--בְּהָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַיְהוָה שָׁנָה. {ס}

12 a land which the LORD thy God careth for; the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. {S}