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The person of Adam has occupied the attention of Christian theologians and biblical exegetes for nearly two millennia. The Apostle Paul, of course, develops his soteriological (Romans 5) and eschatological (1 Corinthians 15) claims based, in part, on the role Adam plays in the canonical storyline. The church fathers, from Irenaeus to Augustine and beyond, all pay particular attention to the role that Adam plays in shaping the plan of redemption. In particular, the Augustinian notion of original sin, wherein sin is passed from Adam to all human beings, has massively shaped western Christianity’s notions of the atonement, the incarnation, salvation, and eschatology. It is difficult to overstate the importance of Adam in the Christian theological tradition.

Yet the advent of Darwin, and the subsequent consensus regarding common descent that has emerged in the scientific community since Darwin, has called into question the place of Adam in the Christian theological tradition. What, if anything, are the consequences for Christian theology if Adam was not, historically and literally, the progenitor of the human race? What are the consequences for Christian theology if Adam never existed at all, after all?

The essays contained in this volume of the *Bulletin* tackle the difficult question of the “historical Adam.” The answers provided here are provisional. As with earlier editions of the *Bulletin*, this volume contains papers that originated from the Center for Pastor Theologians’ three annual Fellowship symposia. The 2016-2017 symposia were generously funded by the John Templeton Foundation.

In this issue, volume 5.2, Mickey Klink invites us to reflect on the role Adam plays in the gospel of John. Klink challenges the idea that “Second Adam” Christology can only be found in Paul, and, in an insightful reading of the whole gospel, shows the many ways that John presents Jesus as the Second Adam. Matt Ward’s essay explores the role that Adam has played in the Christian liturgical tradition. Ward survey a broad sweep of the Christian tradition, demonstrating that the Augustinian account of Adam, and its corresponding account of original sin, is woven intricately throughout the liturgical tradition. Joel Willitts, in his essay, offers Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a model for how to think about Adam in a post-Darwinian world. For Willitts, following Bonhoeffer, the question of Adam’s historicity
(however important) must not distract us from the theological importance of Adam as presented by Scripture. John Yates’ essay offers us a close reading of 1 Corinthians 15, and argues that Paul assumes Adam’s fall, focusing on Adam as an image of sin and death contra Christ, who is the image of life. And finally, my essay explores what resources Irenaeus, contrasted with Augustine, may offer Christian theologians who are sympathetic to evolutionary accounts of human origins. The essay examines Irenaeus’ theme of maturation and growth, as well as Irenaeus’ view of the incarnation. Both aspects of Irenaeus’ thought, while not erasing the tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science, offer fresh ways of thinking about Adam, the fall, and original sin.

The question of Adam’s historicity, and his appropriate role in Christian theology, is an important question for Christian theologians. May what is offered here serve the church as she continues to explore what it means to be faithful to God and his Word in light of the cultural and scientific challenges and opportunities of the late modern world.

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ALL THE GENERATIONS FROM ADAM TO THIS DAY: THE PLACE OF ADAM IN THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

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In postmodern times, one dominant question concerning the biblical character of Adam is whether or not he was an historical person. This is usually a question brought about due to the so-called division or disagreement between the Bible and science. With the view among many, including Christians, that evolution is the process through which life on earth came about, the question of whether one original pair of human beings, Adam and Eve, could actually be the parents of the entire human race is often in doubt. To the early Patristic writers, this question would have been much less familiar. In many ways, for us to ask them to answer this question is anachronistic, for the question of our day is often informed by related modern scientific inquiries. While the question of the historicity of Adam from a scientific perspective would be an unfair burden to put upon the early Patristic writers given their context and its differences from our own, we may find clues to assist us as we consider the matter, through a study of how Adam is addressed in their writings.

What can be asked of any period within church history, as one looks at its source documents, is whether Adam was understood to be, within the context of those self-same writings, an historical person. Though this question may arise out of a particular question from another time period (i.e., the modern theologian may ask this because within his or her own period, there is a debate about the actual existence of Adam), as long as the historian does not import the debate of his own time period into anachronistic interpretations of the source material, it is a fair line of inquiry to pursue.

For any period, and for the one considered in this paper specifically, this line of inquiry can help the church of the 21st century in understanding its own interpretation of biblical characters, and biblical texts in general. Specifically, this paper will address how the biblical character Adam is addressed in the Apostolic Fathers, and a thesis regarding how he is treated within those writings will be given. Following this short summary, conclusions will be drawn from this thesis, with a focus toward the church. Given the focal point of the sources used, the time period assessed will be the first two hundred years of Christianity.

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The question of how our Christian forebears understood and used biblical characters in their writings is important to the church. While we may not always agree with their conclusions, we seek to stand alongside the church down through the ages in our own interpretation of Scripture, and to particularly benefit from those who have gone before. The inquiry of “Adam” alongside any other question that the modern church asks is one that can be aided by a survey of other historical periods and their prospective attempts at the issue.

Many modern scholars will address the question of the historicity of Adam from within church history, and even the patristic era. However, within that era there is often a focus on the latter period versus the Ante-Nicene writers (unless perhaps Theophilos is considered). Much can be gathered regarding the patristic period and the biblical view of creation in general. VanDoodewaard writes, “During the patristic era, the mainstream of the church viewed the Genesis 1 and 2 accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve as a literal account of human origins.” If the patristic era was divided into segments, within those segments less might be known, but still some information could be ascertained. For instance, within the earliest centuries, Christian writers were prone to allegorical interpretations of certain parts of the canonical text, and yet there is evidence of a literal interpretation among them regarding the creation accounts (e.g., 1 Clement, Justin Martyr). Following a survey of the early patristic period and the related dealings with Adam particularly from within the corpus known as the Apostolic Fathers a discussion of the implications that can be fairly drawn from this study will be given. It will be the thesis of this paper that while it is anachronistic to pose modern day scientific questions regarding the historicity of Adam to the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, a fair survey of the writings will result in the view that these writers held that Adam was indeed an historical being.

I. METHODOLOGY

The paper will begin with a survey of the Apostolic Fathers, noting each instance that the person of Adam, or related references, is mentioned. This will unfold in a source-by-source method giving a survey and brief commentary of said instances. Following this, a series of conclusions are made from the survey of the relevant literature.

To my knowledge, there has not been a survey looking into this particular question that has been summarized together across the extant literature. Rather than a commentary on each source as a whole, the research requires taking one theme (i.e., that of the biblical character of Adam) and looking into how it is treated across the various sources. The basic approach then will

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4 VanDoodewaard, *The Quest for the Historical Adam*, 24-25.
be to scan each source within the Apostolic Fathers corpus for any related references in order to cull them together in order to make observations.

Within this paper, the references to Adam will be undertaken with a goal of understanding original authorial intent, with consideration of the various genre of literature utilized within the Apostolic Fathers corpus. For instance, a reference to Adam will be assessed by what the author meant or implied to his original readers. Following this, the research question will be answered, avoiding anachronistic interpretations, regarding the biblical person of Adam (or in some cases, Eve). This hermeneutical approach is the best approach at ascertaining how the original authors understood the biblical character of Adam.

II. A SURVEY OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The term “Apostolic Fathers” is the common name traditionally given to “the earliest extant Christian writings outside the New Testament.” This term seems to have originated with French scholar J. B. Cotelier’s 1672 collection. This collection is a necessary read given its primary status in the early patristic period. From this collection of writings, much can be gleaned regarding the early church’s theological development, not least early Christianity’s understanding of the creation narrative and the persons of Adam and Eve. The narrative of the early part of the book of Genesis appears multiple times in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and offers some clues as to how Genesis, and particularly the Creation narrative, was treated within the period. To these early Christian writings we now turn.

III. 1 CLEMENT

1 Clement, among the entire Apostolic Fathers corpus, is the source with the most references to the biblical character of Adam. It is a source of great importance to the study of early Christianity, and any inquiry into the period should consider this work. Lindemann considers this letter to likely be the oldest surviving Christian text we have outside the New Testament. Kannengiesser considers Clement of Rome to be the author. Written as a letter from one church to another involved in controversy, 1 Clement provides several references to the early Genesis characters and narrative. The letter focuses on conflict within the church in Corinth, and

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7 By primary status, I am not suggesting that the Apostolic Fathers is equal to or superior to the canonical texts. No such claim is made even within the historical period (not to mention this writer’s view that the closed canon is a theological matter). Rather, these sources have historically been observed as the main, non-canonical, sources defining Christianity within the time period.
9 Charles Kannengiesser, Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity (Brill, 2006), 409.
this conflict relates to the office of presbyter and the theme of jealousy. As an example description of jealousy, the following is given:

For thus it is written: “And it came to pass after certain days that Cain offered from the fruits of the earth a sacrifice to God, and Abel also offered a sacrifice from the firstborn of the sheep and from their fat. And God looked with favor upon Abel and upon his gifts, but to Cain and his sacrifices he gave no heed. And Cain was greatly distressed and his face was downcast. And God said to Cain, ‘Why are you so distressed, and why is your face downcast? If you offered correctly but did not divide correctly, did you not sin? Be quiet; he shall turn to you, and you shall rule over him.’ And Cain said to Abel his brother, ‘Let us go out to the field.’ And it came to pass, while they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.” You see, brothers, jealousy and envy brought about a brother’s murder (1 Clement 4.1-7).10

Given as a biblical example, Cain and Abel, the children of Adam and Eve, provide the context for the larger point of the letter. In fact, 1 Clement 4-15 is really a walk-through of biblical characters given to bolster the subject of the letter. Nowhere is the question of the historical existence of these characters mentioned. They are simply given to make a point. Adam is among the list of the characters used to underscore the lesson that the writer is trying to get his audience to understand. Later, the view of God as Creator,11 with the mention of Adam will occur. Sometimes, this will occur simply in the quoting of biblical passages, but in other places, the person of Adam is used as a referent, such as in the following references:

Jealousy has estranged wives from their husbands and annulled the saying of our father Adam, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” (1 Clement 6.3).12

For thus it is written: “When the Most High divided the nations, when he dispersed the sons of Adam, he fixed the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God. His people, Jacob, became the Lord’s portion, and Israel his inherited allotment,” (1 Clement 29.2).13

All the generations from Adam to this day have passed away, but those who by God’s grace were perfected in love have a place among

10 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 50-51.
11 For instance, 1 Clement 33.6-7 mentions the Genesis 1 narrative of the creation of man and woman, and 1 Clement 60.1 speaks to the Lord as Creator. This furthers underscores the idea that these were understood facts for these early Christians.
12 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 53.
13 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 84-85.
the godly, who will be revealed when the kingdom of Christ visits us,” (1 Clement 50.3).  

These instances appear to be given at face value. Regarding 1 Clement, Vandoodewaard writes, “…1 Clement (c. 90-11) provides a short exposition of aspects of Genesis 1 and 2, giving no indication of treating as allegory its description of God’s work of creation, including the creation of man…”15 There are others who argue the same, pointing to a literal usage by Clement of the Old Testament.  

In fact, even if some of the references given here were assuming an allegorical interpretation for Adam, the reference from 1 Clement 50.3 seems to require a literal existence of Adam, given that he is assumed to be one of the many generations that have “passed away.” In this context, Adam is an historical marker and seems to be the beginning of a number of generations, which have passed away. While the writer(s) of 1 Clement could have been thinking of Adam as an allegorical marker, this reference, combined with 1 Clement 6.3, seems to indicate that this “father” who is the beginning of generations that have “passed away” was a real human being who existed.

It must be stated that the question of the historicity of Adam was not the goal of the epistle of 1 Clement. While the usage of the figure of Adam may be observed and interpreted, the anachronistic question framed by the modern debate regarding the historical Adam must not be read into the text as a focal point. That said, it appears that while it was not the focal point, an assumption of the historical existence of Adam can be observed from the letter. Specifically, Adam is referred to as the one from whom all generations flow (1 Clement 50.3), he is given credit as saying a phrase within the Genesis narrative (1 Clement 6.3), and his sons are highlighted as an historical reference in pointing to the issue of jealousy.

In the reference in 1 Clement 29.2, Adam is mentioned along with another historical figure: Jacob. The reference to “Jacob” is not to the biblical character, but to the people who took his name. Jacob is assumed to be understood as a reference to a group of people based on a historical character. Similarly, Adam identifies a people referenced. In this construction, given that both are used as markers, it could indeed be assumed that if the writer intended for his readers to consider one of them as a truly historical person, or believed himself that that person was an historical person, that the other person would be considered the same as well. The historicity of Adam might further be assumed given that words are placed within his mouth in the earlier quote from 1 Clement 6.3. The writer declares that Adam spoke certain words found within the biblical narrative. It could be argued that he is referencing a symbolic person from the Genesis narrative, but it could retorted that such a view would do injustice to the entirety of sections 4-15 of the letter, given that biblical characters are offered as examples for consideration. For, within these sections, the intended purpose

14 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 113.
15 Vandoodewaard, The Quest for the Historical Adam, 25.
appears to be like that of Hebrews chapter 11, where specific persons are listed as examples of faith.

Within the “generations” reference (1 Clement 50.3), there is every indication that literal generations flow from a literal person named Adam: αἱ γενεαὶ πασαι ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ ἕως τησδε τῆς ἡμέρας παρηλθον. So, if the “generations” are to be considered historical (and in this sentence they would be, given that the phrase ends with “to this day”), then the person of Adam would be as well, given the connection between the two. If the original reader were to follow generations backwards from “this day” to the beginning of the given chronological chain, then the conclusion would be that the beginning of the chain (i.e., “from Adam”) would be real given that the end of the chain (i.e., “this day”) is also real. This is furthered by the historical reference of death given at the end of the sentence, namely, that these generations (presumably that have flowed from Adam) have passed away. The argument of the sentence rests on the shared belief that generations have passed away, thereby further making “Adam” the beginning of a real, historical chain or set of generations. It seems unlikely that the writer would reference one end of the chain “to this day” as a real reference without the other end of the chain also referring to a real, historical beginning, that is Adam.17

And this usage in particular goes a long way to combat the idea that the persons referenced within the letter are only story markers, and not of actual people. The chain that develops here comes down to the present and therefore, the idea that what is being pointed to is simply a marker, or only an illustrative example, rather than an historical person, is unlikely. We are arriving at this point by implication, and it must be articulated again, that the intent of the writer is not to develop an argument regarding the historicity of Adam. And yet, it becomes clear that the writer viewed Adam as an historical being; a true person in the chain of human history.

Within the 1 Clement references given, there is not a hint that the individuals named (Adam, Cain, Abel, Jacob) are assumed by the writer as fictional, but rather appear to be considered historical individuals.

IV. 2 CLEMENT

This “first sermon”18 of the early church does not provide any explicit reference to the person of Adam. 2 Clement 14.2 uses a quotation from Genesis 1 as a spiritual reference to the Church. Specifically, the preacher declares: “…for the Scripture, ‘God created humankind male and female.’ The male is Christ; the female is the church. Moreover, the books and the apostles declare that the church not only exists now but has been in existence from the beginning, (2 Clement 14.2).19 Here, the Old Testament

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17 I realize that this argument could involve a much more detailed discussion of the interpretation of original source material as well as the structure and flow of the Greek language used. For the sake of this discussion, the argument is limited to an “at face value” discussion.


text is interpreted spiritually or even allegorically as a reference to the church and Christ.

In 2 Clement 15.2 there is also a reference to God as Creator. Beyond these two references, very little related to the discussion of Adam is given at all. This does not undermine the use(s) of Adam within 1 Clement, as it is nearly universally agreed upon that the authorship and context of 1 Clement and 2 Clement are different. What is of importance is the reality that the early Christian movement considered Genesis to be Christian Scripture. This is germane to the research at hand given that the focus of this paper is a person originating from that Old Testament book, namely Adam.

Based on the aforementioned quote from 2 Clement, the argument could be given that there appears to be a symbolic use of the phrase “God created humankind male and female.” However, this usage does not actually address the question of Adam’s historicity, but rather the larger issue within the biblical narrative of God as Creator of human beings in general. Therefore, what can be gleaned from this letter is the place of Scriptural weight given to the book of Genesis.

V. BARNABAS

Known as the Epistle to Barnabas, this letter gives brief mention of the biblical person of Adam. The larger context of the letter is a necessary aid in determining how to interpret that reference. Holmes writes that the unknown author uses, “an allegorical interpretation of scripture that Christians are the true and intended heirs of God’s covenant.” Therefore, Old Testament scriptures would have been viewed not only as Jewish literature, but also as Christian scriptures. Specifically, laying aside any possible allegorical interpretation, the Christians were seen as having a connection to Adam. While this is clear, it still remains to understand how Adam was utilized. Clearly the author intended the reference to Adam to be viewed, given the context of the letter, as having a connection to the Christian faith. Within this letter, we read the following:

But now learn what knowledge has to say: set your hope upon Jesus, who is about to be revealed to you in the flesh. For a human is earth suffering, for Adam was formed out of the face of the earth.

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21 Holmes writes, “The so-called Epistle of Barnabas represents one of the earliest contributions outside the New Testament to the discussion of questions that have confronted the followers of Jesus since the earliest days of his ministry: How ought Christians to interpret Jewish scriptures, and what is the nature of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism? Writing at a time when the level of competition between church and synagogue still ran high (and perhaps also Jewish Messianic expectations, the anonymous author deals with both of these questions...).” See Holmes, The Apostolic Fathers, 370.

22 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 370.

What, therefore, does “into the good land, a land flowing with milk and honey” mean? Blessed is our Lord, brothers and sisters, who endowed us with wisdom and understanding of his secrets. For the prophet speaks a parable concerning the Lord; who can understand it, except one who is wise and discerning and loves his Lord? So, since he renewed us by the forgiveness of sins, he made us people of another type, so that we should have the soul of children, as if he were creating us all over again. For the scripture speaks about us when he says to the Son: “Let us make humankind according to our image and likeness, and let them rule over the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea.” And when he saw that our creation was good, the Lord said: “Increase and multiply and fill the earth.” These things he said to the Son. Again, I will show you how the Lord speaks to us. He made a second creation in the last days. And the Lord says: “Behold, I make the last things as the first.” It was with reference to this, therefore, that the prophet proclaimed: “Enter into a land flowing with milk and honey, and rule over it.” Observe, then, that we have been created anew… (Epistle of Barnabas, 6.9-14).

Much like the preacher in 2 Clement, the Epistle to Barnabas utilizes Genesis as an authoritative source for making his point(s). The reference above, given the general allegorical nature of the work, does not give a definitive answer regarding the assumed historicity of Adam. However, there is a seeming connection between “earth” and “Adam.” The Epistle reads: “For a human is earth suffering, for Adam was formed out of the face of the earth.” This translation of Holmes is clear (γὰρ τῆς γῆς ἡ πλάσις τοῦ Α’δάμ. ἐγένετο). Adam is put forward as connected to the earth because he came from the earth. This phrase comes in the middle of a passage that speaks to the wisdom of individuals who set their “hope upon Jesus, who is about to be revealed to you in the flesh,” (Epistle of Barnabas, 6.9). Accordingly, if a human suffers, it is earth suffering, given that the text assumes a connection between all humans and Adam, and between Adam and the earth. While not airtight, this reference seems to imply that to the writer, Adam was an historical person. It would be possible to utilize Adam as the figurehead and symbolic first human in this passage, but this does not seem to be the case.

24 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 397-399.

25 Needham writes regarding the Letter of Barnabas that, “It is an essay on how to interpret the Old Testament in a Christian way. The Letter is quite anti-Jewish in tone, claiming that the Jews misunderstood God by taking certain parts of the Old Testament law literally, where God meant them to be understood in a symbolic or spiritual sense.” See N. R. Needham, 2000 Years of Christ’s Power, Part One: The Age of the Early Church Fathers (London: Grace Publications Trust, 1997), 61. Given the connections between the spiritual and literal sense, for our purposes, the discussion regarding the historicity of a biblical character must be handled with caution. Also, given that the author of Barnabas is inclined to certain aspects of allegory (i.e., number interpretation), this caution is furthered. See Everett Ferguson Church History Volume One, From Christ to Pre-Reformation: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context (Grand Rapids, Mich.: 2005), 51-52.

26 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 397.
likely thrust behind the writer’s use of the person of Adam. This is seen first in this phrase considering the connection between earth and humans. Next, this connection, without a break, moves to Adam as the explanation of that connection. If one were to consider Adam as allegorical or symbolic, then it would be fair to consider, based on the phrase, both earth and humanity as symbols as well. Of course this is not the case, nor would it have been the view of the original author, therefore it is a reasonable assumption that in the mind of the writer, the chain (human=earth, Adam=earth, therefore Adam=truly formed human) is unbroken and Adam is an historical being. Of course this phrase alone does not answer the question as to the view of the historicity of Adam in Barnabas, particularly given the fact that this is the only Adamic reference in the work. But it is an essential clue as to how the writer viewed the person of Adam. Much like the letter of 1 Clement then, it is the implied chains of connections which indicate the view of Adam as historical.

It has been demonstrated within the secondary literature that there are various concerns in understanding how the early church writers/Fathers interpreted Scripture. Therefore, the historicity of Adam in these texts is not found in specific declarations of the authors wherein they clearly indicate their view of the historicity of Adam, but rather through a series of implications based on their various word usages and sentence structures.

VI. THE EPISTLE TO DIOGENETUS

Described by Lightfoot as the “noblest of early Christian writings,” this apology for the Christian faith provides references related to the person of Adam, both in connection to the garden of Eden, as well as to the person of Eve and to the first couple as well. The fact of God as Creator and Providential Sustainer of the universe is heartily affirmed within the letter. Within the content of the letter, there is reference to the book of Genesis, which is important to our discussion and does point to aspects which further this research. For instance, we read the following:

For it is not without significance that the scriptures record that God in the beginning planted a tree of knowledge and a tree of life in the midst of Paradise, thereby revealing that life is through knowledge. Because our first parents did not use it purely, they were left naked by the deceit of the serpent,” (Epistle to Diognetus, 12.3).

Let your heart be knowledge, and your life the true teaching, fully comprehended. If this is the tree you cultivate, and whose fruit you pick, then you will always be harvesting the things that God desires, things that the serpent cannot touch and deceit cannot infect. Nor

28 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 686.
29 See Epistle to Diognetus, 7.1–2, 8.
30 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 717.
is Eve corrupted; instead, a virgin is trusted. Furthermore, salvation is made known, and apostles are instructed, and the Passover of the Lord goes forward... (Epistle to Diognetus, 12.7-9).  

Within these two quotes, while Adam is not mentioned, the story in Genesis surrounding him is stated as an historical fact, to include the various Genesis details (i.e., tree, Garden, etc.). In the reference in 12.3, the writer asserts that God planted two trees (the two trees of Genesis 2-3) and the result was "thereby revealing that life is through knowledge." The assumption is that because God wanted to reveal life as coming through knowledge, God planted two trees. The theme, or focal point is met with a reference to an historical fact. By implication then, if the trees are historical, then the two first humans mentioned alongside those two trees are historical. Later Eve is mentioned, although the usage is an obscure usage, which does not provide further clarity about whether the author considered Eve to be a truly historical person.

Also of great importance to this discussion is the phrase (within 12.3) "first parents." Again, some would argue that the writer does not concern himself with the actual historical existence of such persons, but only what they represent within the unfolding biblical narrative. But this would be an incomplete analysis of the author's meaning. Prior to mentioning these two individuals, a statement of fact is given:

For it is not without significance that the scriptures record that God in the beginning planted a tree of knowledge and a tree of life in the midst of Paradise, [emphasis mine] thereby revealing that life is through knowledge. Because our first parents did not use it purely, they were left naked by the deceit of the serpent, (Epistle to Diognetus, 12.3).  

The fact that God planted two trees appears to be assumed as an historical event. It therefore follows that the subsequent mention of "our first parents" would follow as an historical usage. The construction appears to point in that direction, rather than a symmetrical usage where one aspect of the story is mentioned as historical, while the other is not.

VII. OTHER WRITINGS

The other writings of the Apostolic Fathers do not make any relevant mention of Adam. Such letters as Polycarp, Ignatius, or works such as the Didache do not have relevant references to Adam, nor do the Fragments of Quadratus or Papias. There are mentions of God as Creator in The Shepherd of Hermas (3.4), but the utilization and treatment of Adam is absent. Given that the focus of this paper is assessing the historicity of Adam in

31 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 717-18.
32 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 717.
33 Lampe summarized the work by saying, "That Hermas is representative of wider circles of Christianity can be illustrated by the history of the effects of his writings...Hermas clearly represented in his ideas a broad section of Christianity not only in Rome but in other Christian communities as well." See Peter Lampe, From Paul to Valentinus: Christians At Rome in The First Two Centuries (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2003), 236
the Apostolic Father, the lack of Adam references makes our task a difficult one. Specifically, there are fewer references to the person of Adam than there are works with the Apostolic Fathers corpus. Therefore, whatever conclusions are made regarding the treatment of Adam within the corpus must be made in a tempered manner. And yet, with the references that are given, both of Adam, as well as those of surrounding material, some conclusions can be drawn regarding how the authors viewed the historicity of Adam.

VII. CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to develop a hypothesis regarding the treatment of Adam within the body of literature known as the Apostolic Fathers. Specifically, the question of the historicity of Adam was raised but with the caution that it would be anachronistic to ask of this body of literature a question uniquely relevant to our postmodern time and contemporary scientific inquiries. This aside, how the authors of the various works within the corpus viewed the person of Adam was sought from a careful analysis of the sources themselves. As mentioned, given the few references to Adam in this body of literature, any conclusions must be made with a measured hand.

Based on the given summary, and an analysis of the relevant passages, it is the opinion of this writer that the writers of the Apostolic Fathers who mentioned the biblical character Adam, viewed him as an historical being. This conclusion is made based on several factors. First, the person of Adam is used in discussions of theological and apologetic issues with a seeming assumption that he was a truly historical being. This needs to be mentioned, for in none of the references is there a hint of the opposite assumption. Secondly, in these references, there are connections in word usage, which seem to suggest that the arguments being made depend upon Adam being an historical person (e.g., 1 Clement, Epistle to Barnabas). In these instances, while an allegorical interpretation of the text must be considered, in the actual phrases themselves, there are historical elements involved in the arguments such that a) earth and Adam are connected, or b) generations of people who have passed away and Adam are connected, or c), a saying in Genesis is attributed to Adam. Lastly, there are other references, that while not specifically mentioning Adam, mention elements of the same biblical account in Genesis (e.g., the tree of life, etc.) that appear to be considered as truly historical referents. Therefore, if the trappings of a story are considered historical, the characters in that same story would seem to be considered historical as well.

The actual historical existence of Adam is not proved in this paper, nor could it be. What is demonstrated is only what the authors who referenced Adam within the period would have assumed and have had their original readers assume regarding the historicity of Adam. Given that no passage in this examined corpus focuses on the question of the existence of Adam, the research must examine the way in which Adam is used and referenced. It would be a clearer conclusion to take Adam as an historical being among these writers than to assume they thought he was not truly an historical person. This is based on the particular way in which the person of Adam is utilized within the various sources.
What remains to be added to this research is a comparison of how these references to the person of Adam within the Apostolic Fathers compare to similar usage of other biblical characters. Specifically, a paper of larger scope could detail the usage of any and/or all other biblical characters referenced and how those characters are used compared to how Adam. This could add further validity to the conclusions made here regarding the hermeneutical approach each writer intended for his own work. Yet, this would in the end only serve as further material that reveals the assumptions of what the writers thought regarding character historicity.

The question of this paper is only a small piece of the much larger debate regarding the historical Adam. The larger question of his existence cannot be resolved by this research. However, this research is given as an aid to understand how one set of Christian writers, in one particular period of Christian history, used the person of Adam within their writings, and therefore, what they thought about the man called “Adam.” For the contemporary church, our question should be how we might understand biblical characters like Adam, in conversation with the rest of the church. We are not the first to read the Scriptures, or encounter the man named Adam. It is helpful to consider in any theological or historical question that arises that there are likely previous generations who have already analyzed the biblical data referred to in the inquiry. It is helpful to refer to the way the previous Christian generations have handled that data. The person of Adam was important to the various topics that early writers discussed while. These first Christians read of him as well, and in so doing, their own use of him helps us in our continuing theological and historical inquiry. For these early writers, Adam was a marker, a symbol for character lessons, but also an historical person. They viewed time in terms of “all the generations from Adam to this day...”
“Hinlicky has done the church and the academy a great service with this book.”
—Tom Greggs, University of Aberdeen

“Retrieval theology at its best.”
—Hans Boersma, Regent College

“McKnight has given the church an enduring gift.”
—Tish Harrison Warren, author of Liturgy of the Ordinary
The reemergence of faith and science discussions in recent years is revealed by the number of new books that have come out on the subject. The conversations appear to hold constructive promise, as more and more evangelicals are thinking through the issues with more openness and willingness to affirm scientific consensus on various issues. The conversation has been furthered by the work of certain prominent scientists who are also evangelicals, such as Francis Collins, founder of BioLogos and leader of the Human Genome Project. Others, such as John Polkinghorne and Alister McGrath, have been encouraging the conversation in winsome and intelligent terms for many years. Such movements have helped many Christians, especially in the US, move beyond the Scopes Trial of 1925, or the caricatured “debates” between the likes of Ken Ham and Bill Nye.

As the conversation has progressed, especially over issues related to creation and evolution, the age of the earth/universe, and interpreting ancient texts like Genesis 1-2, the related question of an historical Adam and Eve has emerged. If the universe is around 14 billion years old, and
the earth around 4 billion years old, and evidence for hominid life goes back a few million years, what are we to make of the account of humanity, specifically Adam and Eve in the early chapters of Genesis? Is it really possible that all of humanity could have descended from this original pair? The scientific evidence says no.8

In addition to the scientific developments, and their increasing acceptance among evangelicals, there has been significant work in biblical studies that bears relevance. Old Testament scholar John Walton (Wheaton College), has produced some very important and compelling arguments for how to interpret Genesis 1-2, and how to understand Adam and Eve. His arguments seem more compatible with scientific accounts of human origins. These issues are important for theology and the church because the question of an historical Adam and Eve affects our understanding of biblical interpretation, the doctrines of the fall and original sin, and our preaching of the gospel. It leads us to ask questions such as, how should we read Genesis 1-11—as legend, myth, straightforward history, or something else? Was there really a primal pair who disobeyed God and brought death to creation? Does original sin have any historical grounding? Are Adam and Eve merely typological characters? If Adam was not a real person, does that make the incarnation unnecessary? And, does the Apostle Paul intend only a theological or typological connection between Adam and Christ when he writes of being “in Adam” and “in Christ”? To what extent does this language depend upon Adam and Eve being understood as real, historical persons?

Many Christians are concerned not only about how to properly interpret the biblical texts, but also about how some interpretations might impact traditional Christian theology and preaching. As good responses and arguments are offered on the above issues throughout the academic theological community more and more scholars are asked to weigh in on the subject. One such scholar is New Testament specialist, N. T. Wright. Wright is Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at St. Andrews University (Scotland). He has written deeply and widely on topics which include biblical studies, the life and thought of Jesus and Paul, theological explorations of the doctrine of justification, eschatology, ecclesiology, and more. He has written over sixty books, including many commentaries, and is an internationally sought-after lecturer. As an expert in biblical studies, and an influential interpreter of Paul, Wright has been asked to speak and write on his view of the historical Adam and Eve, especially in the light of the New Testament’s (Paul’s) use of them.9

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8 See the discussion in Haarsma and Haarsma, Origins, especially 251-273.
9 See the following video clips for examples of Wright’s responses to these questions and related issues: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BP1PpDyDCw, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5ZOI43TrbY,
I. WRIGHT ON ADAM AND EVE

Wright has not yet undertaken an extensive research study of the historical Adam and Ève question, but has offered some general thoughts and suggestions on the subject in a couple of recent publications. While his past work in commentaries and such has focused on interpreting those texts (such as Romans or 1 Corinthians) in light of Paul’s agenda, his recent reflections have been prompted by the larger faith and science discussions mentioned above, and thus connect more directly to those concerns.

In 2014, Wright published *Surprised by Scripture: Engaging Contemporary Issues.* This work contains several essays that began as lectures to various audiences, mostly in the United States. Three chapters address questions about faith and science. The first, “Healing the Divide Between Science and Religion,” offers a British perspective on the debate over evolution in the United States, where the factions are more polarized than in the UK. Wright suggests that much of the problem between science and Christianity, in the US and elsewhere, can be seen as a kind of Epicurean impulse to separate the spiritual world from the physical. The second chapter, “Do We Need a Historical Adam?” speaks directly to our question at hand, but does not provide the kind of answer that the questions suggests (as we will see below). The third chapter, “Can a Scientist Believe in the Resurrection?” focuses on the case for a physical resurrection of Jesus, and how historians and scientists go about verifying facts by different means.

The influence of and interest in Wright’s perspective on these matters can be seen in that two of these chapters have been edited and/or expounded upon in two other publications. The recent (2016) book edited by members of BioLogos, *How I Changed My Mind About Evolution: Evangelicals Reflect on Faith and Science,* includes an excerpt from Wright’s chapter on “Healing the Divide Between Science and Religion.” John Walton’s important new work on *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (2015) includes an excursus by Wright in the chapter on Paul’s use of Adam which is just a slightly expanded version Wright’s chapter, “Do We Need a Historical Adam?” We will now look more deeply at that chapter, as it is presented in its longer form in Walton’s book.

II. DOES WRIGHT ACCEPT AN HISTORICAL ADAM AND EVE?

Wright initially addressed this question at a BioLogos conference in 2013 (the basis of the later chapter and excursus). His answer to the question, “Did Adam and Ève really exist as historical persons?” is, in short, yes. And while that is important to understand, it is almost beside the point. The Bible is making much larger and more important claims about God, humanity, and the world than simply talking about two historical people. Also, the existence of a primal pair, who were called to image God and yet

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fell to temptation, does not mean that Adam and Eve were the first two humans created, nor does it mean that all humanity descended from them.

Wright essentially agrees with Walton on interpreting Genesis 1 as an exalted temple narrative, and in viewing Adam and Eve as representatives from a larger group of humans called out by God to serve in his garden temple. They are given the royal-priestly “vocation” to bear God’s image by reflecting his wisdom, love, and blessing into the world and by representing the creation in joyful praise and in relationship with the Creator God. Wright gets at these conclusions not so much by studying ancient Near-eastern literature and such, but by thinking backwards within the biblical narrative (from Christ back to Israel, from Israel back to Adam and Eve). He then discusses Paul’s use of Adam in light of the larger biblical narrative. Wright’s key suggestion about how to understand the historical question is this,

…just as God chose Israel from the rest of humankind for a special, strange, demanding vocation, so perhaps what Genesis is telling us is that God chose one pair from the rest of early hominids for a special, strange, and demanding vocation. This pair (call them Adam and Eve if you like) were to be the representatives of the whole human race, the ones in whom God’s purposes to make the whole world a place of delight and joy and order, eventually colonizing the whole creation, were to be taken forward. If they failed, they would bring the whole purpose for the wider creation, including all those other nonchosen hominids, down with them. They were supposed to be the life-bringers, and if they failed in their task, the death that was already endemic in the world as it was would engulf them as well.12

There’s a lot in this paragraph. Much of it is taken from seeing the issue of Adam and Eve as a “rather obvious parallel,” or backstory to the story of Israel—called and commissioned by God, failing, and being exiled. And it serves to explain, in a way, why the nation of Israel could not fulfill her vocation. Israel was “in Adam.” That is, Israel was herself affected by the failure of the first representative pair, and in need of rescue by a true and faithful human representative. If we allow this larger narrative to inform our exegesis of Paul’s works we will begin to see, Wright argues, “that the traditional Western picture of an Adam-and-Christ soteriological scheme represents a shrinkage of the original Pauline vision.”13

Wright says something similar in a recent interview he gave for the Religion News Service, with Jonathan Merritt. When asked whether Adam and Eve were real historical persons, he replied,

The way I see it is that there were many hominids or similar creatures, part of the long slow process of God’s good creation. And at a particular time God called a particular pair for a particular task: to look after his creation and make it flourish in a whole new way.

Actually, this fits with the scientific evidence according to which there were some significant changes in the hominid population and lifestyle around 6000 years ago, though I wouldn’t myself put too much weight on that.

The point is that if you start, not with Adam and a “moral test,” but with Adam and Eve and a vocation (see Psalm 8), then a lot of things in Paul look significantly different. There is more to Paul—and to Genesis—than you might have thought. It all works, it’s all good, it’s all about God’s grace—and it’s about a justification through which humans are “put right” in order to get the original project back on track, so that we might be “putting-right” people for the world.14

To understand Paul’s use of Adam in passages such as Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, Wright argues, one must understand that Paul is thinking in the above terms. These are the key passages that Wright addresses. Herein, he argues that “Paul’s exposition of Adam in these passages is explicitly in the service not of a traditional soteriology but of the kingdom of God. (And) there is a close parallel between the biblical vocation of Adam in Genesis and the biblical vocation of Israel.”15

Wright examines mainly Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. Both passages make connections between Adam and Christ. The Romans passage highlights how Adam’s sin brought in the “reign” of death. This is contrasted with the superabundance of grace that comes through Christ’s obedience. The result is justification/righteousness and eternal life for “the many.” In his large commentary on Romans (2002), Wright states,

Paul clearly believed that there had been a single first pair, whose male, Adam, had been given a commandment and had broken it. Paul was, we may be sure, aware of what we would call mythological or metaphorical dimensions to the story, but he would not have regarded these as throwing doubt on the existence, and primal sin, of the first historical pair.16

This shows that in his exegetical work Wright affirms that Paul believed in a historical Adam and Eve. This does not settle the question of whether or not there actually was a historical pair, but only that Wright thinks Paul believed there was such a pair. One could argue that Paul may have believed many things about history that were not actually true. This only matters if Paul’s use of Adam in formulating a theological truth depends upon Adam being a real historical person. That is not so clear in this passage. In fact, Wright highlights that Paul uses the word “type” in reference to Adam

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(5:14). But this does not mean Adam is not a real person, but only that “Adam prefigured the Messiah in certain respects.” What is interesting to me here is whether or not Wright’s understanding of Adam has developed since he published the Romans Commentary in 2002. The commentary does not reveal Wright’s own opinion. He states that he wants to stick more to exegesis rather than engage in hermeneutics, but he does not question Paul’s belief in a historical pair. In fact, his language seems to agree with Paul here. The excurses in Walton’s book suggests that Wright still affirms a historical Adam but is perhaps expanding his view to include other hermeneutical possibilities, such as Adam and Eve as representatives of a larger group of humans, rather than being the very first humans.

The passage in Romans may or may not depend upon a historical Adam, though it does seem to depend upon a historical fall into sin and death. Wright understands the passage to be talking ultimately about the kingdom of God because of the “reign” language used in the passage. It speaks of death reigning because of Adam, then of believers’ reigning through the work of Christ. This is related to the larger biblical narrative of God’s plan to rule on earth through human beings. Thus, Christ is putting people right again (justification) so that they can continue God’s plan of ruling on earth in righteousness. For Wright, this passage, and Romans more generally, is not so much about “how we get saved” individually, as Wright puts it, but about the big story of God and creation. This is how the Adam-Christ language functions. And this should guide how we think about the implications of a real historical Adam, and indeed, the effects of that original rebellion on humanity and creation as a whole (i.e., our doctrine of original sin).

The key verse in 1 Corinthians 15 is verse 22, “for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ” (NRSV). The passage is about the resurrection of Jesus. His resurrection life overturns the results of Adam’s sin, which was death for all. Now all who believe (“those who belong to Christ,” v.23) will live again by being resurrected when Christ returns. The passage also deals with Christ reigning until death is destroyed. Wright sees here the same themes as before. The Adam-Christ language is about the kingdom of God coming, and Christ fulfilling the human vocation in which Adam failed. Wright summarizes this idea in his large work, The Resurrection of the Son of God, in an extensive section on 1 Corinthians 15, by stating,

the failure of humankind (‘Adam’) to be the creator’s wise, image-bearing steward over creation has not led the creator to rewrite the vocation, but rather to send the Messiah as the truly human being. The purpose is that in his renewed, resurrected human life he can be and do, for humankind and all creation, what neither humankind nor creation could do for themselves.18

These are the key points of the Pauline texts referring to Adam. They are not so much about personal soteriology, nor are they proof texts for an

17 Wright, “Romans,” 527.
18 N. T. Wright, The Resurrection of the Son of God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 334. See 312-374 for the full section on 1 Corinthians 15.
historical Adam, *per se.* Wright is not really concerned about that question as he exeges the passage, even though he affirms a primal pair. His concern is that we read the Bible for what it is saying, and not miss the author’s point by looking for answers to our own contemporary questions. In fact, he writes, “If we can study Genesis and human origins without hearing *the call to be an image-bearing human being renewed in Jesus,* we are massively missing the point, perhaps pursuing our own dream of an otherworldly salvation that merely colludes with the forces of evil.”

All of this is part of Wright’s main concern for reading the Bible well and faithfully. For him that means taking historical, literary, and theological issues seriously. Namely, taking the original author’s/audience’s concerns seriously. He believes that we go astray when we ignore the main point of the text by trying to force it to answer our contemporary questions in an explicit way. On matters relating to the creation and Adam and Eve, Wright thinks that too many readers have done precisely that. We have missed the point about God’s kingdom, the creation project, the royal-priestly vocation of humanity, and Jesus’ relationship to the salvation of the cosmos by trying to make the text address merely individual soteriological concerns. Or perhaps, we have used the Bible to fight cultural battles where the terms are set by sociological and philosophical forces at play in our times. Thus, misreading the text in light of contemporary concerns leads to missing the point of the whole narrative of scripture.

There are some who understand Wright’s comments on this subject to be a direct denial of an historical Adam. But these do not do justice, or pay heed, to Wright’s claims. Wright does in fact affirm the existence of an historical Adam and Eve. Their role and identity might be different than we have previously imagined. They were likely not the first two people created, though Wright’s comments on 1 Corinthians 15 in *The Resurrection of the Son of God* would seem to suggest that Wright believes (or that Paul believed) Adam to have been the first human and is contrasted with the new humanity present in the resurrected person of Christ. Wright may have developed or changed his understanding on this point, but he does not deny or question the existence of a primal pair whose disobedience was morally culpable, with the result that all other humans, whom they represented, were made subject to death and moral corruption. The accusation against Wright is all the more surprising given that others, such as

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John Collins and Tim Keller use Wright’s work to support their own positions affirming the real historical existence of Adam and Eve. Thus, it is not at all so clear that Wright rejects an historical Adam and Eve as it is clear that he is open to a fresh understanding of Adam and Eve as a representative, specially called, pair of humans.

Wright does not answer all the questions that remain. What about death before the fall? What about original sin and how it’s passed? Does he agree with Walton on Genesis 2? Wright seems to affirm, generally, what Walton suggest about the early chapters of Genesis. So we might reference Walton's work on these lingering questions. But Wright does provide what I think is a satisfactory account of an historical Adam and Eve that preserves orthodox soteriology, allows for current scientific claims about human origins, and re-directs us in our Bible reading to the actual points Paul is making when he refers to Adam.

III. PREACHING ON ADAM AND EVE

In much evangelical preaching, I would venture to guess we assume that Adam was a real historical person who literally disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, and that he and Eve are the progenitors of the whole human race. Much of our theology of human origins and the fall into sin has been unaffected by scientific accounts of human origins. If we begin to take both those scientific accounts and (especially) the more exegetically-driven accounts of those like John Walton and N. T. Wright, how should we preach about the significance of Adam and Eve and their fateful decision to disobey?

Wright himself addresses this question in his chapter on the historical Adam in *Surprised by Scripture.* He recalls being asked about how to preach these themes, and answers that the larger story is rich enough and compelling enough to provide a wealth of sermon material. “It’s the greatest story ever told, and it will draw all our stories up into it.” It may, however, require some rearrangement to our thinking and presenting of the gospel. The gospel message should not be merely about “me and my salvation. It ought to be about God and God’s kingdom. That’s what Jesus

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22 See C. John Collins, 81-88. Collins makes use of Wright’s Romans Commentary, just as I have done above. He also looks at Wright’s, *The Resurrection of the Son of God,* wherein he highlights where, in contrast to the 2002 Commentary on Romans, Wright states that Paul’s use of Adam is “not typological (two events related in pattern but not necessarily in narrative sequence), but narratival. Gen 2.7 begins a story which, in light of vv. 20-28, and the analogies of vv.35-41, Paul is now in a position to complete” (italics added). See Wright, 354 n. 128.


24 This section is left out and substituted for an alternative conclusion in his “Excursus” in Walton’s book.

announced, and so should we. The full good news is that in Jesus God has become king of the world”.26

I might add that this kind of preaching on Adam and Eve reminds us what we are saved for. Recalling the human vocation to “image” God, and understanding it in those relational/representational terms, helps us turn our eyes from the death and mess we are saved from, and leads us toward the re-humanizing effects of the Holy Spirit, exhorting us to bring the new creation project forward. We are to get to the good work of seeing the victory of Christ’s death and resurrection applied to all areas of life, so that the world may be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the water fills the sea (Hab. 2:14).

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26 Wright, Surprised by Scripture, 40.
Many generations of early American school children began their ABCs with that recitation. That phrase was used to teach children the sound produced by the letter “A.” But it was also to teach children their need for Christ. Schools today rarely use the same rhymes found in The New England Primer, but churches still confess the historical reality of Adam and his sin as a fundamental doctrine of biblical faith.

Today, the historicity of Adam has come under attack, principally due to new findings in human genetics. It is now regarded as genetically improbable—some insist, impossible—for the human race to have arisen from a single couple. Francis Collins represents this challenge: “Population geneticists, whose discipline involves the use of mathematical tools to reconstruct the history of populations of animals, plants, or bacteria, look at these facts about the human genome and conclude that they point to all members of our species having descended from a common set of founders, approximately 10,000 in number, who lived about 100,000 to 150,000 years ago.”

Dennis Venema clarifies the issue further, “If a species were formed [from a single pair]...or if a species were reduced in numbers to a single breeding pair at some point in its history, it would leave a telltale mark on its genome that would persist for hundreds of thousands of years—a severe reduction in genetic variability for the species as a whole.” On the contrary, the human race embodies remarkable genetic diversity that, according to the operations of genetics, cannot be explained by a single set of parents. As a result, new doubts have been raised about the historical viability of the Genesis narrative concerning Adam.

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Some theologians have resisted any revision of traditional dogma concerning Adam; others have welcomed this impetus for a fresh look at the Eden narrative, either asserting a revised view of Adam or concluding his story to be typological rather than historical. There is no consensus, yet, how to respond to the fresh challenges posed by modern genetics. But all sides of the discussion generally concur on one point: that the Adam narrative is an origin story (an etiology) for the human race. But is it, in fact, this point of consensus that needs correction?

The Adam account does bear the hallmarks of an etiological narrative. It also contains numerous etiological motifs, such as an origin story for marriage (2:24), for serpents crawling in the dust (3:14-15), for pain in childbirth (3:16), for human clothing (3:21), and for the soil’s resistance to cultivation (3:17-19), just to note a few. The Eden narrative certainly is an etiology. But an etiology for what? What, indeed, is the later reality validated by this origin story? Traditionally, the text has been regarded as an etiology for the human race. In this paper, I will argue that the Eden narrative presents a more narrow topic. Adam is introduced as humanity’s first father, not in his reproductive capacity but in his royal appointment. The thesis of this paper is that the Eden narrative introduces Adam as humankind’s first king, and the narrative is an etiology of kingship with only tangential relevance at best to the question of humankind’s biological

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9 Chisholm, 33–43.

10 Derek Kidner, Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 29–30; followed by John Stott, Romans (BST; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 162-6; considered by Collins, Adam and Eve, 130. See also, Ivan Engnell, “Knowledge’ and ‘Life’ in the Creation Story” in Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas, Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East: Presented to Harold Henry Rowley by the Editorial Board of Vetus Testamentum in Celebration of his 65th Birthday, 24 March 1955 (VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1969), 103-19; Walter Brueggemann, “From Dust to Kingship,” ZAW 84 (1972), 1-18; Manfred Hutter, “Adam als Gärtner und König (Gen 2, 8. 15),” Biblische Zeitschrift 30 (1986), 258-62; Robert B. Coote and David Robert Ord, The Bible’s First History (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 42-81; Seth D. Postell, Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2011). In a comparison with other ANE origins stories, Giorgio Castellino has argued that the Adam and Eve narrative is about “the origin of civilized life in cities, as well as the origin of other social structures and activities of humanity.” (Giorgio R. Castellino, “The Origins of Civilization according to Biblical and Cuneiform Texts” in Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura, eds., I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11 [SBTS 4; Winona Lake, In.: Eisenbrauns, 1994], 75–95.)
origins. Consequently, current genetic findings have no bearings on the question of Adam’s historicity. He was a real person who was appointed by God as humanity’s first universal king, but—as we will examine in this paper—the Genesis text does not actually require that Adam was the sole progenitor of all subsequent human beings.

“In Adam’s fall—as our first universal king—we sinned all.”

Regarding Adam as humanity’s first universal king is not necessarily exclusive of the view that Adam may also have been the first human being and progenitor of the whole human race. In fact, traditional dogma holds that Adam was both our first parent and our first head. However, the Eden narrative is often approached as primarily about Adam’s reproductive fatherhood and incidentally about his regal status. I will argue that the kingship of Adam is the text’s primary message. Any implications of the text for human ancestry is secondary at best. While this conclusion is nuanced differently from the traditional view, it is not inconsistent with orthodox soteriology. In fact, the likeness of Jesus to Adam is based on their like role as federal heads of humankind, not paternity. It is regency rather than reproduction that, in Pauline thought, links the First and Second Adams. Jesus never begat biological offspring. Jesus is the Second Adam strictly by his succeeding the First Adam in his role as humankind’s universal king (Rom. 5:12–21).

In his classic commentary on Romans, Robert Haldane (quoting Thomas Bell) wrote, “Since [Jesus] is called the second man...because He was the second public head, it follows that [Adam] is called the first man not because he was first created, or in [relation] to his descendants, but because he was the first public head in [relation] to Christ the second. Thus the two Adams are the heads of the two covenants...”11 This statement by Haldane and Bell is significant, since both of these eighteenth-century churchmen undoubtedly thought of Adam as the sole father of the human race. But they recognize it was not Adam’s genetic fatherhood at issue in Paul’s epistle to the Romans. It is Adam’s royal office at the head of the human race that is the focus of Paul’s argument in the New Testament.12

This realization underscores the importance of there having been an actual, historic Adam as the type of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, it also shows that the connection need only be one of kingship. It is my contention that the Eden narrative (Gen. 2:4-4:26)13 is an etiology of kingship, not human biological origins.

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13 The Eden narrative or Adam and Eve narrative (I use those terms synonymously) begins with the cosmic genealogy marker in Genesis 2:4 and ends with the birth of Seth (Abel’s replacement) in 4:26. The beginning of the next narrative is indicated by a new genealogy marker at 5:1.
I. ADAM AS FARMER

Rather than bringing questions that are foreign to the text, prudence begins with the questions raised by the text itself. The Eden narrative begins with a specific problem: the need for agriculture. Adam is introduced as God’s solution to the need for cultivated fields.

Following its genealogical heading (“These are the generations of the heavens and the earth...”; 2:4), the narrative opens with this problem: “No bush of the field (śîah hāssādeh) was yet in the land, and no small plant of the field (ʾēšeb hāssādeh) had yet sprung up...” (2:5). These two phrases for various kinds of foliage “of the field (hāssādeh)” refer to cultivated growth. Theodore Hiebert protests the frequent oversight of this nuance: “Both kinds of vegetation are customarily translated with such generic terms that little can be made of them, when in fact they describe a very precise agricultural environment.” The first term (śîah hāssādeh) refers to pasture for livestock and the second term (ʾēšeb hāssādeh) refers to field crops cultivated for human consumption. 

The question with which the text itself opens, and for which the reader is to expect a solution, is the land’s lack of cultivation.

The reason the land was lacking crops was because “the Lord  God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.” But solutions are quick to follow: “and a mist (ʾēd) was going up from the land and watering the whole face of the ground—then the Lord God formed the man...and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it” (2:6-15). In order to bring about cultivated fields, two needs are indicated and satisfied. The first need is for rain, presently matched with the provision of “a mist (ʾēd)...watering the whole face of the ground.” (We will return to this theme of rainfall and the initial “mist,” later.) The second and most important need is for a farmer. God formed Adam and placed him in Eden in order to produce, beginning in that place, the cultivation previously lacking.

This agricultural detail is so important, it is not only the introductory purpose for the man’s existence but is also the feature captured in his name. ʾĀdām (“man”), is derived from ʾadāmâ (“arable soil”). Although “traditionally translated by a general term, such as ‘ground’... ʾadāmâ is ...arable land, fertile soil that can be cultivated.” The specificity of the term is illustrated in the curse upon Cain, whose banishment sends him away from the ʾadāmâ (arable land) he had been farming to a barren ʾereṣ (generic “land”) farther east of Eden (4:12-14).

In fact, the curse upon Adam as well as that upon Cain both center on their access to the farmable land where God had initially placed them.

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14 Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version, expect where indicated as my own translation by “a.t.” (author’s translation).
16 Hiebert, 34.
17 Hiebert, 35; Wenham, Genesis 1–15, 107.
To Adam it was said, “Cursed is the ground (ʾadāmā) because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...” (3:17-19). Furthermore, Cain was told, “And now you are cursed from the ground (ʾadāmā)...When you work the ground (ʾadāmā), it shall no longer yield to you its strength...” (4:11-12). The whole Adam narrative is concerned with the acquisition and loss of agriculture.

This is a fitting preface to the Pentateuch which contains many narratives about wandering peoples seeking to become agrarian, settled societies. In particular, the heritage of Abraham is the story of a family that left the settled kingdoms of the east (“Ur of the Chaldeans,” Gen. 11:31) and became wandering herdsmen, hoping to possess farmable land in Canaan where they might re-settle.18 The concern for settled agriculture is an important theme of the Pentateuch introduced as the presenting problem of the Adam narrative. But with this opening focus on crops, why was Adam placed by God in an orchard?

II. ADAM AS SACRAL KING

Adam was appointed by God to cultivate field crops (2:5). He was not introduced into the land to tend fruit trees in an orchard. Nevertheless, he was placed by God in an arboreal garden as the setting from which to carry out his calling. “The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put (yāšēm) the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food... The LORD God took the man and put (yanniḥēḇū) him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat’...” (2:8-17).

Confusion arises when readers mistakenly equate “Eden” with the “Garden of Eden.” But the two are not identical. The Garden of Eden was a garden located within the broader region called “Eden.”19 Note especially Genesis 2:10, where the text describes a river flowing “out of Eden to water the garden.” Eden was a larger territory for Adam’s labor, in which the garden was a place for his residence. The text tells us that God formed the man from the arable soil (ʾadāmā) but “put” or “settled” (yāšēm) him in the garden (2:7–8). Indeed, God “rested” the man there (yanniḥēḇū, from the root nūḥāh; 2:15). That verb nūḥāh (“rest”) is not a term of labor but refreshment.20 The garden was not the realm of Adam’s work; it was a place for his rest.

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18 The only instance of farming by the patriarchs is the account of Isaac’s early cultivation efforts, which ultimately failed because the owners of the land drove him out of it and forced him to go back to nomadic herding (Gen. 26:12-22; cf., 46:31-34).
It is commonly thought that Adam was an orchard keeper based on a certain reading of Genesis 2:15, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” However, the pronoun “it” (the Hebrew pronominal suffix, –ah) repeated twice in that passage probably points to Eden as a whole and not narrowly to the Garden of Eden. John Sailhamer pointed out, “the suffixed pronoun in the Hebrew text rendered ‘it’ in English is feminine, whereas the noun ‘garden’...is a masculine noun in Hebrew.” Furthermore, the expression “to work it and keep it (lĕʼahod ʾălēḥomrā)” is used two other times in the context (2:5; 3:23), and both of those instances refer to tilling the soil not tending trees. Adam’s assignment was to oversee the agricultural development of the whole land of Eden from his garden residence.

This insight is significant, since placement in a paradisiacal garden overlooking ones larger domain is a standard trope of kingship. It was an ideal of royalty throughout the ancient Near East, including in Israel, to locate a royal palace among gardens on a hill or mountain overlooking the land. “I built houses and planted vineyards for myself,” Ecclesiastes 2:4-5 quotes King Solomon, “I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees” (cf., 1 Kgs. 21:2; 2 Kgs. 21:8, 26; 25:5; Jer. 39:4; 52:7; Neh. 3:15). In fact, the Hebrew word “paradise” (pardēs, itself a loan word from Persian) literally means a “royal orchard” or “enclosed royal garden” (cf., its use in Neh. 2:8; Songs 4:13; Eccl. 2:5). The term pardēs is not itself used in the Eden narrative; Genesis uses the older (pre-Persian) Hebrew term for garden (gan). Nevertheless, both the Septuagint and New Testament writers recognized the royal significance of the Edenic garden as indicated by their translating gan with paradeisos (cf., Rev. 2:7). The text even expects the reader to recognize this garden was enclosed (as royal gardens typically were), since Adam was expected to keep it free from beasts that do not belong in it (like the serpent; 3:1) and it had an entrance that could be blocked by a single guard wielding a sword (3:24).

Throughout the ancient Near East, a king’s palace was stereotypically built among gardens. The British Museum has an impressive relief sculpture from ancient Ninevah, in which King Sennacherib is portrayed standing next to his palace surrounded by a beautiful orchard. The book of Esther similarly describes the Persian king feasting with Esther and Haman, from which he exits “into the palace garden” (Esth. 7:7). Nebuchadnezzar

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21 Sailhamer, 45.
24 Coote and Ord, First History, 51.
legendarily built the “hanging gardens of Babylon” around his palace.\(^{26}\) The beauty and fruitfulness of the king’s garden was a demonstration of his royal management,\(^{27}\) so that the title “gardener of [deity’s name]” was a stock title of kingship.\(^{28}\) Nicolas Wyatt concludes, “The idea of the king as the gardener is found in Mesopotamian royal ideology, and the Primal Man of Gen. ii–iii is to be interpreted as the paradigm of the king.”\(^{29}\)

It was also typical of kings to populate their royal gardens with transplanted trees of exotic varieties and also with animals. Tiglath-Pileser I spoke of his gardens in the following inscription: “I got control of and formed herds of nayalu–deer, ayalu–deer, gazelle and ibex which the gods Ashur and Ninurta, the gods who love me, had given me in the course of the hunt in high mountain ranges...I took cedar, box-tree, and Kanish oak from the lands over which I had gained dominion—such trees as none among previous kings, my forefathers, had ever planted—and I planted [them] in the orchards of my land...I received [as] tribute from the lands of Byblos, Sidon and Arvad...a crocodile and a large, female ape...”\(^{30}\) Leo Oppenheim explains the use of large royal parks (called ambassu) associated with the palace gardens of Assyrian kings: “Wild animals were kept in the ambassu for hunting, and it was also planted with fruit trees of all kinds, imported olive trees, and foreign spice plants.”\(^{31}\) Stephanie Dalley affirms that, realistically the garden immediately surrounding a Mesopotamian palace “was sometimes large enough to accommodate a few attractive animals such as deer and gazelle,” but “the royal urge to collect zoological specimens had generally to be satisfied in a wider landscape” leading to the development of large royal parks annexed to the palace.\(^{32}\) Coote and Ord further note, “The valley east of the city wall of monarchical Jerusalem also contained a royal garden; it may have gone back to the time of David.”\(^{33}\) The depiction of Adam’s residence in an idyllic garden of fruit trees and all manner of wildlife which he studied and named (2:19–20) further elicits the royal paradigm.

Temples were also typically located in gardens in the ancient world, but this is because temples were “royal palaces” for the gods. Rightly, many scholars have recognized the presence of temple imagery in the Garden of Eden. Gordon Wenham captures this consensus, “The garden of Eden is not viewed by the author of Genesis simply as a piece of Mesopotamian farmland, but as an archetypal sanctuary, that is a place where God dwells and where man should worship him. Many of the features of the garden may

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26 Josephus (citing Berossus), *Contra Apion* 1.19.
29 Wyatt, “When Adam Delved,” 118.
32 Dalley, 3.
33 Robert B. Coote and David Robert Ord, *The Bible’s First History* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 51. This garden is what became, in New Testament times, the Garden of Gethsemane—a favorite place where Jesus went to pray and where Jesus, unlike Adam, resisted Satan’s temptation.
also be found in later sanctuaries particularly the tabernacle or Jerusalem temple.”

It is certainly correct to recognize temple imagery in the Garden of Eden. The Jerusalem Temple was also located within a garden supplied with water (1 Kgs 7:23-39; cf., Exod. 30:17-21) and fruit trees (Psa. 52:10; 84:3; 92:13-14). The Garden of Eden is described as a place where Yahweh “walks to and fro (hithallēk)” (3:8) to meet with his people, an expression elsewhere used for God’s communion with Israel in the tabernacle and the temple (Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:15; 2Sam. 7:6–7). The eastern entrance to the garden was guarded by cherubim (3:24), just as the temple’s entrance faced east (cf., Exod. 27:16; Num. 3:38) and was guarded by cherubim (cf., Exod. 25:18–22; 26:31; 1Kgs. 6:23–29). Eden’s tree of life is broadly recognized as an organic counterpart to the ever burning menorah in the tabernacle and temple (Exod. 25:31–40). The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (with its attendant commandment) is described in terms elsewhere used to identify the role of the Law in temple for teaching and holiness (cf., Gen. 2:9, 17; Psa. 19:8–13). For these and other reasons, scholars generally concur that the Garden of Eden was an archetype for Israel’s tabernacle/temple, leading many to recognize Adam’s role as having a priestly character.

However, the priestly role of Adam is only half the picture. Priests did indeed serve in garden temples, but it was emblematic of priestly kings to live in palaces adjacent to the temple sharing the same garden. Thus the heavenly king (the god) and his earthly “son” (the king) dwelt together in the same garden. This is exemplified in the architecture of Zion, where the palace of Solomon was built adjacent to the temple of Yahweh on the top of Mount Zion. The king’s palace was literally “at the right hand” (Psa. 110:1) of Yahweh’s “palace.” This is precisely the arrangement depicted in Yahweh’s placement of Adam to reside adjacent to his own dwelling in the garden located within the broader territory of Eden. G. K. Beale observes, “God places Adam into a royal temple to begin to reign as his priestly vice-regent. In fact, Adam should always be referred to as a ‘priest-king’…”


36 Cherubim (kerûbîm, derived from the Akkadian kuribu) “were the traditional guardians of holy places in the ancient Near East.” (Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 21; Barker, 141–5.)


That Adam was formed “from the dust” further contributes to his introduction as a king. That idiom is opaque to modern readers, but Walter Brueggemann has shown that the idiom “from the dust” is used in the Hebrew Scriptures as a metaphor of royal election. For example, God described his enthronement of King Baasha in these terms: “I exalted you out of the dust and made you a leader over my people Israel” (1 Kgs. 16:2). More particularly, the Song of Hannah treats this “from the dust” imagery as a stock descriptor of all Israel’s princes: “He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes” (1Sam. 2:8; cf., Psa. 113:7-8). Brueggemann concludes, “To be taken ‘from the dust’ means to be elevated from obscurity to royal office... Adam, in Genesis 2, is really being crowned king over the garden with all the power and authority which it implies.”

In the cases of David and Baasha, the phrase “from the dust” is a metaphor. Nothing is said about Adam’s biological lineage apart from his fashioning from the dust (2:7), leading many to conclude it is not a metaphor in Adam’s case. Maybe Adam was literally formed out of dust. Regardless of the literal or metaphorical intent of Adam’s calling from the dust, the use of this idiom without reference to lineage may have a further significance. Elsewhere in Genesis, the lack of recorded parentage is used to identify divine appointment at the head of a new dynasty. There is one other king in Genesis who is introduced without human genealogy: Melchizedek (14:18). Presumably, Melchizedek did have biological parents. However, the New Testament author of Hebrews interprets the absence of genealogy as indicating his direct ordination by heaven: “he is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God” (Heb. 7:3). Adam’s exaltation “from the dust” without human genealogy likely serves this same purpose, presenting him as chosen by heaven and a “son of God” (Lk. 4:38; cf., Gen. 1:26-27; 1Chr. 1:1).

The creation week in Genesis 1:1-2:3 had used the royal language of divine “image bearer” (a syntactical equivalent for “son of God,” both terms widely discussed as royal titles). “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in...
our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion...” (1:26). That previous creation narrative introduces the purpose of all humanity as one of dominion over the world to foster its fruitfulness (1:26–30) as regents of God. It is not a coincidence that the Eden account follows by describing the world’s need for cultivation and the inauguration of one particular king, Adam, to lead his offspring (2:18, 21–24; 4:1–2) in that duty.

This conclusion, that the Eden narrative is about the origin of kingship, is not surprising when considered within the context of other ancient Near Eastern creation stories. Coote and Ord explain, “analogous [creation] texts from the Middle East are basically about the understanding of labor in the state, especially the relation between the ruler and the laborer.”44 The Babylonian Enuma Elish, for example, connects the ordering of the world with the establishment of Marduk’s royal-temple through which humans were organized into work corvées. “The story is not the story of the creation of the world; it is the story of the creation of the Babylonian state, told as if the state were the world.”45 Giorgio Castellino prefers to call these “myths of organization” rather than “creation myths.” After reviewing an extensive catalogue of such creation myths, Castellino concludes, “[In] all of these texts...the author’s intent is not to focus on the creation of the world, but to take this as a point of departure. Its purpose is to introduce the organization of the earth. Consequently we call these texts narratives of ‘organization’ rather than ‘creation’.”46

Ancient Near Eastern creation/organization myths typically speak of the creation of humankind as a group, formed to till the ground for the gods. It seems rare to find such texts depicting the creation of a single human, as Genesis describes the singular formation of Adam. But in those rare cases where the creation of a specific man is reported, it is the king whose origin is in view. In the pictorial Egyptian Coffin Texts, for example, “the god Khnum is fashioning the young ruler on a potter’s wheel.”47 The internal evidence of the Hebrew Bible, on its own, supports the reading of Adam’s settlement in the garden of God as indicating his royal appointment. Nevertheless, this reading also comports with the political interests of ancient Near Eastern creation stories generally.

But what land had God ordained from whence Adam was to extend his reign over the world? Where was this land called “Eden” located?

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44 Coote and Ord, First History, 44.
45 Coote and Ord, First History, 46.
III. LOCATING EDEN AND ITS GARDEN

Eden is neither a mythical nor a mysterious place. The author provides named rivers and neighboring lands to help ensure the reader knows where Eden was located. The land of Adam’s domain is a place the reader is expected to recognize. According to the modern consensus, the Garden of Eden was located in Mesopotamia. But there is an alternate, more ancient interpretation of Eden’s location that makes better sense of the text: Eden is the land of Canaan.

There are two features of the text that have led many to identify Eden with Mesopotamia. First, of the four named rivers said to flow from Eden (2:10-14) only two are now known: the Tigris (ḥīddeqel) and the Euphrates. These are the rivers that bound Mesopotamia, leading many scholars to look in that region for Eden. Second, the text says that “the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east” (2:8). Assuming Canaan is the author’s vantage point, “in the east” would naturally point to a region east of the Jordan River. Mesopotamia is the most likely candidate for a land east of Canaan where the garden might have been located. For these two reasons, Eden has become identified with Mesopotamia by most modern commentators. However, the thesis that Eden is Canaan has a long history. Furthermore, the Canaan thesis makes better sense of many details in the text, beginning with the land’s name.


49 E.g., Wenham, Genesis 1–15, 66-7; C. John Collins, Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2006), 119–20. However, Collins notes, “The problem [with placing Eden in Mesopotamia], of course, is that the present climate cannot sustain such a picture.” However, the climate of Canaan perfectly fits the picture as argued in this paper.

50 Alessandro Scafì, Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), e.g., fig. 10.31 (page 334); cf., John H. Sailhamer, Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account (Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Books), 216–21. The modern demise of the Canaan thesis might be due, in some measure, to the influence of the Reformer John Calvin who lent vigorous support to the Mesopotamian thesis. It was the misfortune of the Canaan thesis to find a period champion in Michael Servetus, the infamous theological rival of Calvin. Servetus stressed the identification of Eden with Canaan as part of his unorthodox teachings on baptism. He argued that Christian baptism was like fleeing the rivers of Babylon to be washed in the rivers of Eden, which he identified as the Promised Land. (George H. Williams, Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought: The Biblical Experience of the Desert in the History of Christianity and the Paradise Theme in the Theological Idea of the University [Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2016], 72–3.) Perhaps motivated by his opposition to Servetus, Calvin went to unusual lengths to demonstrate the opposite: that Eden was located in Mesopotamia. Calvin devoted many pages in his commentary to the argument (John Calvin, Calvin’s Commentaries [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 1.1.118–24), and he even commissioned a drawn map “that the readers may understand where I think Paradise was placed by Moses” (Calvin, 1.1.120). This was the only place in his commentaries where Calvin employed the power of a visual aid to bolster his argument!
It was once popular to regard the word “Eden” (ʾēden) as a cognate of the Akkadian edinu (“steppe”). However, Genesis treats Eden as a highland terrain with a river flowing out of it (2:10) rather than steppe land. Furthermore, on both lexical and inscriptive grounds, many scholars now regard a different etymology as more likely. The term derives from the Hebrew root ʿdn, “abundance, lushness.” The Septuagint translators perceived this root, translating “Garden of Eden” as “Garden of Delight” (paradeisou tēs truphēs). Eden “does not mean ‘steppe’ but the area of abundance.”

As further examination of the text will show, this title is meant to evoke visions of “the land of milk and honey” (cf., Deut. 9:7-10) in contrast with the deserts that surrounded Canaan. What else would a Hebrew audience envision as “the good land,” than Canaan? The Eden narrative could hardly use the later titles “Canaan” or “Israel” for the land, since neither of those people groups had yet inhabited the land at the time Adam was placed there. Furthermore, the purpose of the narrative is to introduce the land’s first king, and so the names of later rulers in the land like “Canaan” (cf., Gen. 10:6) and “Israel” (cf., Gen. 35:10) could not be used. Just as Genesis 11:2 (cf., 10:10) used the ancient title “Shinar” for the plain where the Babel was founded, the descriptive name “Eden” was used for the land the reader is expected to recognize as Canaan.

Another feature that identifies Eden with Canaan is its annual rainfall. The Eden narrative opens with the expectation of rain: “the Lord God had not caused it to rain (māṭar) on the land” (2:5). This statement reveals the present lack of rain, but also the anticipation that God would send rain. We do not need to read this statement as though the entire world lacked rainfall, or even that Eden had never before experienced rainfall. It may be a seasonal indicator, marking the narrated events as occurring in summer time prior to the late autumn rainy season. In either case, the expectation of rain from Yahweh upon the land adds to its identification with Canaan.

“In the great river valley civilizations of the ancient Near East, Egypt and Mesopotamia...” Theodore Hiebert explains, “agriculture was dependent on the inundation of lowlands by flooding rivers and on irrigation systems related to them...By contrast, [the Gen. 2:5] reference to rain alone reflects the rain-based, dryland farming characteristic of the highlands on the shores of the Mediterranean where biblical Israel came into being.” Moses described the Promised Land as, “a land flowing with milk and honey...not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it, like a garden of vegetables. But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land that the Lord your God cares for...” (Deut.
The other great kingdoms of the ancient Near East developed agriculture through irrigation. Egypt irrigated its croplands from the Nile and Babylon sustained crops by irrigation canals dug from the Tigris and Euphrates. Genesis 2:5 locates Adam's farming kingdom in a land that received rainfall from Yahweh.

The rain had not yet come at the time Adam was placed there. But then “[an] ’ēd was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground” (2:6). The meaning of the obscure word ’ēd is not certain. The Septuagint translates the term as pēgē (“spring”). If this is correct, then the passage indicates the presence of spring-fed rivers (like the one mentioned in 2:10) that provided water in the land during the dry months of the year (cf., Psa. 1:3). This fits the dependence of Canaan on such spring-fed rivers that flowed from its rain-watered mountains. However, Mitchell Dahood has persuasively argued that the Hebrew word ’ēd is cognate with the Eblaite i-du, which means "rain clouds." This is probably correct, since the passage itself introduces two needs: "rain" and "man" (2:5), which the subsequent provision of “ēd” and “Adam” satisfy (2:6). This parallelism supports Dahood’s interpretation of the ’ēd as rain clouds. We should probably read the text, “Yahweh God had not yet caused it to rain on the land and there was no man to work the ground. Then rain clouds went up from the land and watered the whole face of the ground, and Yahweh God formed the man of soil of the ground” (2:5–7, a.t.) The Lord placed Adam in Eden just at the season when rain clouds were beginning to gather, promising the early rains that would soften the soil for the planting season. The expectation of rainfall further identifies Eden as Canaan, a land distinguished in the Pentateuch by its rainfall adequate for farming without irrigation.

The Garden's compass location in Genesis 2:8 also supports the Canaan thesis. “And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east (gan-bēēden miqêdem)...” Most commentators regard this as indicating a location in Mesopotamia. But it is the garden that is in the east, not the whole territory of Eden. The verse first locates the garden inside of Eden, then adds that it was in the easternmost part of Eden. Terje Stordalen points out,


57 In Canaan, about four inches of rain fell during "the early rains" (in October or November). This softened the ground so farmers could get their seed into the earth. Heavier rains (typically four to six inches a month) through the rainy season helped the crops to grow. Tapering off in the springtime, “the later rains” (generally around March) ensured a good crop (see Deut. 11:14; Jer. 5:24). David C. Hopkins, “Life on the Land: The Subsistence Struggles of Early Israel,” *BA* 50 (Sept., 1987), 184; Carl G. Rasmussen, *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 29.

“[When used in] a geographical sense...םֵדָה [‘from the east’] would still not be read as a simple reference to any ‘easterly location.’” This particular prepositional construction is used for “an utmost extremity. Assuming a parallel, ‘absolute’ topographical מֵסֵדָה in Genesis 2:8, would locate Eden in the utmost east.” Mesopotamia is not at the uttermost, eastern edge of the world from Canaan. The construction better suits a pointer to the easternmost part of Eden as the garden’s location.

This reading is supported by the subsequent description, “A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden...” (2:10). Eden was a land with higher elevations from which a rain/spring-fed river flowed down into the verdant garden located along its easternmost border. It is not difficult to recognize the Jordan River valley in this description, located along the eastern border of Canaan. Later in the book of Genesis, when Abram first set eyes on the Jordan River valley, it was described as “like the garden of the Lord” (13:10). If Abraham thought about “the garden of the Lord” as he laid eyes on the Jordan River valley, perhaps the reader of the text is expected to do the same.

The eastern border was a land’s “front door” in the ancient Near East. Maps today are drawn with north at the top, since moderns conceive of the world as a globe spinning on a north-south axis. In the ancient world, east was regarded as the forward direction since the sun rises in the east. The temple on Mount Zion was built with its doors and its main gate facing toward the Jordan River valley to its east as the main approach to the temple mount. This comports with Eden’s description of its eastern garden as an approach to the sanctuary of God’s presence.

Genesis reports two sacramental trees “in the midst (בֶּטֹק) of the garden” (2:9). We have already noted the sanctuary significance of those trees, it is now helpful to note their location in the “midst” of the garden. Rather than reading the phrase (בֶּטֹק) (“midst”) as the center-point of the garden, בֶּטֹק should here be understood as the heart or deepest point in the garden.60 Entering Eden through the lush garden valley on its eastern border, a person would ascend from the valley to approach the dwelling place of God in the hills. The climax of that approach was the mountain from whence Eden’s river flowed down into the valley. The sacramental trees marked the deepest point on that approach, where access to the presence of God on that mountain might be enjoyed.61 The imagery supports a location in Canaan, with the dwelling place of God (and the source of Eden’s primary river, further discussed momentarily) on Mount Zion.

The most important clue for locating Eden is the set of map references in Genesis 2:10-14. These verses provide a textual map for locating Eden based on a list of five rivers, four of which are named (Pishon, Gihon,

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60 Cf., Hamilton, 162.

61 Genesis 2:9-10 might be read as explicitly locating the trees at the same place where the river was sourced: “The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, also a river that flowed out of Eden to water the garden...” (a.t.)
Tigris, and Euphrates), as well as three named regions (Havilah, Cush, and Assyria). The first river in the text is unnamed, but it is the one that flows out of Eden into the garden valley and which feeds the other four. This river is probably the Jordan River, elsewhere in Scripture called the “river of God” (Pss. 36:8; 46:4; 65:9; cf., 133:3) and “the river of delight (‘ādan, cf., ‘ēden)” (Psa. 36:8).

The Jordan River, as we know it today, is fed from springs on Mount Hermon in the far north of Canaan. But the Eden narrative offers a different vision of the Jordan’s ideal source: springs of water from the temple mount. This idyllic vision is part of the Prophet Ezekiel’s interpretation of the Eden narrative (Ezek. 47:1-12). The prophet envisions a river flowing from the Zion temple with trees of life growing on either side of it. That river flows eastward into the Jordan Valley, even making the Dead Sea alive again (cf., Rev. 22:1-2). Although “the river of God/delight” flowed from Hermon’s slopes in the days of ancient Israel, Ezekiel interprets the Eden narrative as casting an idyllic vision of a time when the Jordan was sourced from the temple of God on Mount Zion.

In the Eden narrative, this river (Jordan) flows from the Temple Mount through its eastern garden (Jordan River valley) and from there feeds four subsidiary rivers. Those four subsidiaries are named in the text and given explicit, geographical locations. Two of the rivers are easy to locate: “the Tigris (ḥiddeqel), which flows east of Assyria, and...the Euphrates (pērat)” (2:14). The other two rivers are more difficult to locate: “the Pishon... that flowed around the whole land of Havilah” and “the Gihon... that flowed around the whole land of Cush” (2:11, 13). While these latter two rivers are no longer certain, the lands which they watered are easy to identify. Cush is most naturally identified with regions at the heart of Africa. Gihon must be the ancient name for a river that flowed through Egypt and the heart of Africa. There is some evidence the name “Gihon” may once have been identified with the Nile River. The geography of this association makes sense, however it must be admitted that the present topography of the Middle East introduces significant difficulties for the water flow here envisioned. The Nile flows north, away from “Cush” and toward the Mediterranean. If the Jordan River is imagined by Genesis 2 as flowing into the Nile (Gihon?) and from there flowing toward Cush, that would defy the land’s actual topography. This does not undermine the vision presented in Genesis 2 of a river flowing from Canaan toward Cush, but it does suggest the rivers named are literal while their perceived linkages are metaphorical. Ezekiel’s vision of a river flowing out of the temple that revivifies the Dead Sea offers a biblical illustration for this capacity to weave literal locations and bodies of water into metaphorical directions of water flow to communicate the text’s message.

The land of Havilah is elsewhere identified with the Arabian peninsula (Gen. 25:18; 1Sam. 15:7). The Pishon River may, then, refer to the waters that surround the Arabian Peninsula. Notably, the land of Havilah is identified by its mineral wealth, rather than arable land. Both Mesopotamia (Tigris and Euphrates) and Egypt (cf., Cush/Gihon) were irrigated from their respective rivers. Arabia (Havilah) however was not arable for farming, which may explain its unique commendation for mineral wealth in the Genesis description. These identifications for the Gihon and Pishon rivers may or may not be correct, but the lands they feed are almost certainly to be identified as African Cush and the Arabian peninsula. Thus all three named regions fed by this system of rivers are those immediately surrounding Canaan: Assyria (and Babylonia), Cush (and Egypt), and the Arabian peninsula. Only Canaan is watered directly by God, and the rest of the lands receive their waters secondarily.

The topography in that part of the world makes it impossible for such a massive water system to work in this manner, literally. As previously noted, the Jordan River is actually fed by springs from Mount Hermon, not from the temple mount. With the topography of the Middle East, it is not possible for the Jordan River to flow from its midpoint below Zion, both northward into the Tigris and Euphrates and southward into rivers of Africa and Arabia. But the prophets help us in this conundrum. Micah envisions a day of God’s glory when Mount Zion will be lifted up above the other mountains of the earth (Mic. 4:1–2). The Prophet Isaiah also envisions a day when the proud mountains of the nations will be brought low and valleys will be raised, changing the world’s topography around an elevated Mount Zion (Isa. 40:3–5). Zechariah similarly envisions that, “on that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea” because “the whole land shall be turned into a plain...But Jerusalem shall remain aloft...” (Zech. 14:8, 10). If the prophets can envision a day when Mount Zion would be higher than the others, it should not surprise us if Eden captures the vision of a time when this was the case in the past—at least symbolically. All of the geographical references provided in the text support the identification of Canaan as Eden, even though the hydromechanics of the region make it impossible for the rivers to have actually flowed in the manner described.63

The Eden narrative posits Mount Zion as the true “navel of the world” by linking real locations known to the Hebrew audience with water connections never to have actually existed. Similar ways of writing in the prophets, as noted above, teach us why this was done. The Eden narrative was written in this way to indicate the preeminence of the rain-watered kingdom established in Adam as a source of blessing to the other lands of the world. Eden’s water system introduces in a figure, what Genesis later states as God’s covenant purpose for the household of Abraham in their (re-)settling Canaan: “Go...to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation...And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (12:1–3).

Another line of evidence that identifies Eden as Canaan emerges from the movements of God’s people in the book of Genesis. After Adam’s sin, Genesis 3:24 reports that Adam settled just outside of Eden on its eastern border (perhaps in Moab). Thereafter, Cain was sent further east, far away from Eden (4:16). After the flood, Cain’s heritage re-emerges in the lineage of Ham, whose descendants built the Tower of Babel in the plain of Shinar, that is Babylonia (11:2), located in the east. It is from the region of Mesopotamia that God called Abram to head west again, first as far as Haran (11:31) and later (back) to Canaan (12:1). This circle of movements supports the thesis that the Land of Abundance (Eden) from which Adam was sent (to the east) is the same as the Land of Milk and Honey to which Abram was later called (back to the west). When God called Abram to Canaan, he attached this purpose to that call: “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (12:2-3). This sounds similar to the blessing portrayed by the rivers flowing from Eden into the rest of the surrounding world. The purpose for which Adam was set up as a king in Eden/Canaan continues to be God’s purpose for the house of Abraham, returning to Eden/Canaan.

Finally, there are numerous references in the Psalms and the Prophets that identify Canaan with Eden. Terje Stordalen has compiled an extensive catalogue of innerbiblical references to Eden, saying, “Biblical reflections of the Garden of Eden do in fact come in a large number... hover behind at least 30 biblical passages, possibly many more,” and connections between Eden and Canaan are common among them. For example, Isaiah 51:3 reads, “The Lord comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord.” Ezekiel similarly declares, “Thus says the Lord God: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled...And they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden’” (Ezek. 36:33–35). Joel proclaims of God’s judgment, “Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain!...For the day of the Lord is coming...The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness” (Joel 2:1-3). In Psalm 36:7-8, the psalmist sings, “The children of man...feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights (‘adānēkā, plural of ‘ēden)” (a.t.)

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64 "The sons of Cain...represent urban, royal culture. When this culture is wiped out in a great downpour, the line is reestablished in Ham, whose sons are...the great city builders of Genesis 11.” (Coote and Ord, First History, 75.)

65 Note, Mesopotamia can hardly be Eden if Cain moved east of Eden to get there!

66 This calling is also harmonious with what happens in the Book of Acts, when the church spreads from Jerusalem outward into all the world (Act 1:8).


4:18; Psalms 65:9-13; 133:3; and numerous other texts further support this identification.\(^69\)

The internal evidence in Genesis and reflections in later Scriptures indicate that the location of Eden was not a mystery. It is supposed to be recognized as the Promised Land, and the “temple/palace mount” of Adam as Mount Zion.\(^70\) The Eden narrative is an etiology, not merely for human kingship but for the Davidic throne specifically. It is the throne appointed by God on that mountain that was ordained “from the beginning” to extend his righteousness into all the earth. The passage supports the vision cast by later prophets for a son of David who would yet fulfill the calling of Adam (a “Second Adam”) from that location (Isa. 11:1–12:6; cf., 2Sam. 7:19).

**IV. CAIN AS FIRST CITY-BUILDER**

The irony at the heart of the Eden narrative is this: Adam failed to establish the intended agricultural kingdom in Eden (Canaan) due to his sin; nevertheless, his firstborn son Cain successfully built the world’s first urban kingdom in the east, in spite of his sin. Thus, the vision of a settled kingdom began with Adam, but it was through wicked Cain that the first kingdoms were realized and the vision of universal kingship actually took root in the lands later associated with Babylon. The paradigmatic contest between Israel and Babylon finds its etiology in the story of Abel/Seth and Cain.\(^71\)

After being exiled from the land for ignoring God’s law, Adam settled immediately east of Eden (3:23–24), likely in the plains of Moab.\(^72\) Moab was also fertile for cultivation. Adam farmed there albeit with great hardship (3:18–19) due to his loss of access to Yahweh’s presence. He and his wife also gave birth to sons in that land, beginning with Cain and Abel. As typical of an ancient Near Eastern household, the eldest son shouldered the strenuous work of the fields with his father, while the youngest son was left to tend the family flocks (4:2; cf., Num. 14:33; 1Sam. 16:11).

The story of Adam’s sons took a tragic turn one spring. Genesis 4:3 provides a time stamp for the event: “At the end of days (\textit{miqqēṣ yāmîm}) Cain brought to Yahweh an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel

\(^{69}\) Notably, Ezekiel 28:1-19 (cf., Isa. 14:13-23) draws upon the story of Adam’s fall in Eden to issue a charge against the king of Tyre in his own day. Nicolas Wyatt suggests the interesting (albeit doubtful) suggestion that Ezekiel might actually be retelling the fall of Adam, reasoning that the phrase commonly translated “king of Tyre” might actually be \textit{melek sōr} meaning “king of the rock” with reference to Adam as the king upon Mount Zion (“the rock”). (Wyatt, “A Royal Garden,” 9; but see C. John Collins, Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care [Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2011], 69–70.)

\(^{70}\) Cf., Sailhamer, 69–77.

\(^{71}\) John H. Sailhamer, The Pentateuch as Narrative (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 102, 110–11.

\(^{72}\) Note the biblical city of “Adam” located just barely over the border from Canaan, east of the Jordan River in the region of Moab. When Israel entered the land of Promise, the waters of the Jordan River “rose up in a heap...at Adam” (Josh. 3:16), opening the way for the people to enter the land. Was the name of the place coincidental, or was there legendary association of that place with Adam’s settlement when banished from Eden just opposite the entrance guarded by the cherubim?
brought one also from the firstborn of his flock and of their fatness” (4:3–4, a.t.) The phrase “at the end of days” (miqqēṣ yāmîm) is idiomatic for the end of the Hebrew year just before the next (2Sam. 14:26; 1 Kgs. 17:7; cf., Jer. 13:6; Neh. 13:6). That would indicate the springtime, when the rains have ceased and both the grain harvest and lambing season are beginning. The offerings brought by Cain and Abel at that time were their first fruit offerings.73 But Yahweh “had no regard” for Cain and his offering (4:5). Cain grew angry as a result and murdered Abel (4:8). “And the LORD said [to Cain], ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground (hā-adāmâ). And now you are cursed from the ground (hā-adāmâ), which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground (hā-adāmâ), it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer (nā-ʿwānād) on the earth (bā-ʾāraṣ)” (4:10–12).

The farming heir of Adam was cast out from the fertile fields (hā-adāmâ) just outside of Eden. He was banished instead to the desert regions farther east of Eden, characterized as “the land of wandering (bē ʾeres nād)” (4:16, a.t.) The description of the lands east of Eden as lands of wandering indicates the lack of settled societies in those places. Cain’s banishment was not merely an exile from farming and from family; it was an exile to the “other” way of life: “vagrant wandering” (nā-ʿwānād; i.e., “hunter-gatherers”).

Remarkably, the narrative presupposes the presence of other populations already dwelling to the east of Eden! Up to this point in the narrative, it is possible to regard Adam as the first king and also humanity’s first progenitor. It is only as the narrative follows Cain away from Eden into “the land of wandering” that we realize the author’s worldview includes other populations already present. Questions like, “Where did Cain get his wife?” (4:17) and “Who were the other people Cain was afraid would kill him when he was cast out?” (4:14) and “Who lived in the city built by Cain?” (4:17) have been asked for centuries.74 Typically, these questions have been viewed as marginal issues mainstream exegetes answered by postulating extreme fecundity to Eve (cf., 5:4). However, in light of current questions about Adam’s biological relationship with the rest of the human race, those peripheral details about other populations contemporaneous with his household may be much more important than previously recognized.

Walter Moberly notes that the text’s presupposition of a populated world is actually pervasive through the text, beyond the most obvious instances connected with Cain’s exile. For example, Moberly notes, “at the outset (Gen. 4:2), Abel is said to be ‘a keeper of sheep’ while Cain is ‘a tiller of the ground.’ Such divisions of labor...presuppose a regular population with its familiar tasks...” Furthermore, “it is when Cain and Abel are in the

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73 This time stamp shows that Cain’s offering was not rejected due to its being bloodless. Both sons were supposed to bring the first fruits of their labors to the altar. (Cf., Keil and F. Delitzsche, Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, Volume I: The Pentateuch [James Martin, trans.; Grand Rapids: Erdmann, 1980], 1.110. Contra, e.g., The Scofield Study Bible: New King James Version [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002], 10-11.)

74 E.g., Jubilees 4:9; Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 1.2.2; Augustine, City of God, 15.8; A. J. Rendle Short, Modern Discovery and the Bible (London: Inter-varsity Fellowship, 1954), 81.
open countryside that Cain kills Abel [4:8]. The point of being in the open countryside is that one is away from other people in their settlements...murder is best committed without an audience...”75 A broader population is assumed throughout the Eden narrative, although it is clearest when Cain is banished to the lands of the east, where he fears attack, finds a wife, and founds a city.

Augustine is the first of the Church Fathers to address the problem of other populations in the Genesis account, and his interpretation became the standard view. Augustine suggested that the “other sons and daughters” ascribed to Adam and Eve in Genesis 5:4 comprised a multitude large enough to fill those roles.76 But Augustine’s solution is not without problems. In particular, banishment to the east was a punishment for Cain. Are we to suppose that other sons and daughters of Adam had been exiled to that distant “land of wandering” prior to Cain? Had large numbers of other sons and daughters of Adam previously been exiled for earlier crimes like that leading to Cain’s banishment? It seems that the narrative simply presupposes there are other, non-settled groups of wanderers “out there.”77

Other explanations of Cain’s contemporaries have also been attempted. In the early part of the twentieth century, John Maynard reasoned, “After the death of Abel, his father Adam was the only other man left on the face of the earth...[Therefore] we are led to suppose that...[Cain feared] jinn or spirits.” Maynard further proposed that the mark God placed on Cain was circumcision, “since it is well known that circumcision was looked upon by many peoples as a charm against the evil spirits.”78 But the text says nothing about evil spirits, and it is not possible the text expects that Cain populated his city with amicable jinn!

Perhaps the most sophisticated examination of the issue was produced by the French Calvinist Isaac La Peyrère in his 1655 treatise, Prae-Adamitae.79 Like many children reading the story, La Peyrère developed questions about Cain’s family from his earliest years: “I had this suspicion [sic.] also being a Child, when I heard or read the History of Genesis: Where Cain goes forth; where he kills his brother when they were in the field; doing it warily, like a thief least it should be discovered by any: Where he flies, where he fears punishment for the death of his Brother: Lastly, where he married a wife

76 Augustine, Questions on the Heptateuch 1.1; City of God 15.8, 16.
far from his Ancestors, and builds a City.”

Decades later, he published his examination of the relevant texts in Genesis along with a lengthy treatment of Paul’s discussion of Adam in Romans 5. La Peyrère concluded that Genesis 1:26-27 reports the creation of all humankind, but Genesis 2 is only about the beginnings of the Hebrew race. La Peyrère was not alone. Philip Almond finds, “Pre-Adamitism was probably a not uncommon belief [in seventeenth century Europe].” Notably, these challenges to the Augustinian interpretation were being debated, with extensive exegesis of the relevant texts in both Genesis 2 and in Romans 5, a full two centuries before Darwin—and long before the science of genetics even existed!

Ultimately, any effort to use the Bible to explain the origins of those among whom Cain settled must lean on arguments from silence. The text presupposes the existence of dangerous populations of wanderers in the east without explaining them. That is significant. It is not part of the writer’s agenda to report the origins of those other populations! The Augustinian interpretation inserts assumptions into the text. So do other efforts to explain the origin of those peoples, including those of Maynard and La Peyrère and others. It is not possible to make any assertions from Scripture as to where Cain’s contemporaries came from. Genesis is silent on that question. Thus, we can reliably conclude that Genesis 2:4-4:26 was written to address a different topic than the origins of all human populations. The question of human biological origins is not the burden of the passage. The origin of all humanity is the burden of a passage in the previous chapter: Genesis 1:26-27. That text reports that God created humankind in the categories of “male and female” by his command. But the Eden narrative tells a different story. And the Eden narrative occurs at a time when humankind was already greater than a single family, since the text presupposes a broader population than Adam’s household without any concern to explain their identity or relationship to him. The etiological function of the Eden narrative is one of kingship and not genetic origins.

Cain was filled with fear at the prospect of being sent out among the “wanderers” to the east. He would be a vulnerable loner with no kinship group for his protection: “I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me” (4:15). In his great mercy, God promised Cain protection in his exile: “And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him” (4:15). As a result, something remarkable took place. Cain, and not Adam, built the first kingdom! “Cain... built a city, [and] he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch” (4:17). To name the city for his son indicates the establishment of

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80 Isaac La Peyrère, *A Theological Systeme upon that Presupposition that Men Were before Adam* (London, 1655), proeme.
dynasty. Unlike the agrarian kingdom intended to arise in Eden/Canaan, Cain represents the appearance of the great urban-based empires of the east (e.g., Babylon). There is no discussion of agriculture in Cain’s line since the ’adāmâ was closed to him. Irrigation enabled the infertile lands in Mesopotamia to be cultivated, but the Cain narrative only tells us that he built cities.

Genesis further identifies the staple institutions of the great Mesopotamian empires as emerging in Cain’s line. Cain’s descendant Jabal “was the father of those who dwell in tents (ʾāhal) and have mîqneh” (4:20). The latter term means “possessions,” often with particular reference to livestock but sometimes as a more generic term for wealth. Most scholars understand the term’s use here as indicating “livestock,” concluding that Jabal was the founder of the bedouin way of life. However, Abel had already kept herds and presumably would have taken them along the seasonal circuits of grazing lands. It is better to read this instance of mîqneh as a general term for material goods and to regard Jabal as setting up the first caravan trade networks: “the father of those who live by tents and possessions” (a.t.) Judges 6:5 similarly describes the Midianite caravans passing through Israel as those who come with “their possessions (mîqneh)...and their tents (ʾāhal)” (a.t.) Jabal is not the inventor of beduin herding, but that staple of the great Mesopotamian empires: trading caravans. Another of Cain’s descendants, Jubal, “was the father of those who play the lyre and pipe” (4:21), while Tubal-cain “was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron” (4:22). Also Lamech introduced polygamy by taking two wives, and he began the custom of instilling fear among his subjects with excessive retribution against any who wronged him (4:19, 23-24). These are all the stereotypical markers of the despotic urban empires of the east. “This is a stock motif of royal excess...” Coote and Ord conclude, “In this exposed of royal urban culture, urban culture is exposed as the worst fosterer of revenge of all. The line of Cain and Ham is the foil to the line of Abram, Israel, Judah, and David.”

Questions swirl as we consider how to regard the timing of these massive innovations, such as the forging of both “bronze and iron” by Tubal-cain (4:22). The human development of bronze and the later innovation of iron smelting were discoveries separated by nearly two thousand years. Genesis is telescoping a long process of advances into the record of a few generations. However the chronology of these developments are

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84 Cf., Coote and Ord, *First History*, 73.
86 Since, in that context, the only animals traveling with the Midianites are specifically identified as camels (Jdg. 6:5), the term mîqneh can hardly mean the Midianites are bringing their cattle with them on raiding ventures through Israel!
87 “Lemek is a made-up, or nonce, word. It is a thinly disguised cipher for Hebrew melek, meaning, ‘king.’” (Coote and Ord, *First History*, 78.) With the despotic character of Lemech, the Cainite model of kingship reaches its maturation.
88 Coote, *First History*, 80.
89 The Bronze Age is generally dated from 3300-1200 B.C., and the Iron Age from 1200-500 B.C.
understood, the text is describing the emergence of powerful empires—of a very different character to that intended in Eden—through the line of violent Cain. Adam failed to establish the Yahwistic, agrarian kingdom in Eden to which he was called. Instead, kingdoms of luxury, weaponry, and despotic violence emerged in Mesopotamia. But even those kingdoms owe their successes to the original kingdom vision of Adam, and to God’s mercies on Cain for Adam’s sake.90

Notwithstanding the disappointment of Cain’s developments, the hope of a godly kingdom in Eden did not end with Abel’s death. The Eden narrative closes with this final word of hope: “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, ‘God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.’ To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord” (4:25–26). Cain had established an urban dynasty of despots in his son Enoch. Seth established a community of worship in his son Enosh. The etiological function of the Adam and Eve narrative is once again evident in this final motif: the beginning of Yahwistic worshipping communities in Enosh. The contrast between Cain’s line and that of Seth could not be more pronounced; nor could it be more comforting for readers in later Hebrew communities of worship living under the shadow of the great despotic empires of the east.91

V. ADAM’S HERITAGE OF KINGSHIP AND KINGDOMS

In this essay, it has been argued that Adam is introduced as the first universal king and not the first progenitor of humanity. This thesis has been grounded in the opening chapters of Genesis, but it finds further support in the way Adam’s heritage is reported in the rest of the book. Genesis is the book of beginnings, but it is specifically about the beginnings of kingdoms.92 It is not about the beginnings of human families spreading through the world, except as an incidental feature of the establishment and spread of dynasties. A survey of the genealogies throughout the rest of the book of Genesis will support the thesis of this essay, by showing that its opening concern to identify the origin of kingship in Adam is the basis of the book’s sustained interest in kings and kingdoms.

90 The recent proposal of Jacques Cauvin is intriguing. Cauvin has correlated Neolithic evidence for agricultural innovations with remnants of period art that indicate a contemporaneous sense of the divine emerged in those same groups. He draws the conclusion that it was the development of religious thought that explains the radical shift in mindset and practices required to change from hunter-gathering bands to a settled society. (Jacques Cauvin, The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture [Trevor Watkins, trans.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000].)

91 These conclusions are particularly compelling in connection with the redaction of the final form of the Pentateuch at the hands of Ezra (Ezra 7:1–26). The Enoshite worshipping community outside of Eden might provide an etiological pointer to proto-synagogues among the exilic diaspora.

Eden is where God’s appointed king (Adam) was to establish fruitful and godly rule. From Eden, he was to lead the whole world in united labor and worship before God. But Adam failed. The tragic result of Adam’s fall was the division of the human family (4:1–26). On the one hand, a fragile line descended from Seth of those who “call[ed] upon the name of the Lord” (4:25–26). On the other hand, a powerful line of those who built cities (4:17–24) and opposed the heritage of faith descended through Cain.93 The rest of Genesis follows from that dilemma at the end of the Eden narrative, following the slow growth of God’s kingdom from Seth’s heritage while mighty kingdoms arose all around from Cain’s heritage of violence.

There is an element of irony (even humor) woven through this process. From the book’s opening to its end, the godly line struggles to form even a household—let alone to achieve nationhood. Meanwhile, great kingdoms arise rapidly all around them: kingdoms like Babylon (11:1–9), Egypt (12:1–20), the Amorites and Moabites (19:30–38), the Canaanite forebears of the Philistines (21:22–34), the desert tribes of the Negev (25:12–18), and the Edomites. The Edomites are the last of the neighboring kingdoms to emerge in Genesis (36:1–43). Notably, it is in connection with that kingdom’s appearance that Genesis introduces the punchline of its ironic story of emerging kingdoms: these other kings all reigned “before any king reigned over the Israelites” (36:31). The other kingdoms achieved greatness first; meanwhile, the people of God’s promise continued to struggle even to form a family, and to keep that family from self-destructing (e.g., 4:1–26; 37:1–38:30).

There is a Table of Nations in Genesis 10:1–32 that provides an “index” of the emerging world order after the flood. In that Table of Nations, Genesis reports seventy kingdoms that were to emerge, each with its own settled domain. Meanwhile, God’s people barely managed to achieve a household of seventy individuals by the close of the book. And they are heading into a foreign land (Egypt) when the book ends (Gen. 47–50; Exod. 1:1–7).

But there is a deeper layer of irony in the story: despite their weakness and inability to form a nation themselves, the household of faith is the actual source of life for the other kingdoms all around them. Throughout Genesis, the patriarchs are found interceding for the other nations. The first time Genesis introduces the pharaoh of Egypt, he comes under “great plagues” (nega‘; 12:17; cf., Exod. 11:1) for violating the house of Abram and taking Sarai into his harem. The very existence of pharaoh’s house, and perhaps all Egypt, hung in the balance because of pharaoh’s mistreatment of Abram’s house. When pharaoh realized what he had done, he restored Sarai to Abram and was therefore spared destruction from God’s plagues.94 Likewise, it was due to Abram’s intervention that the land of Canaan was delivered from the imperial aspirations of the proto-Babylonian Empire. Genesis 14 tells of a massive invasion of armies under the leadership of the “king of Shinar” (14:1), Shinar being an archaic title for Babylon (11:1–9). The passage lists a great alliance of eastern kings entering the land from

93 Cf., Augustine, City of God, book 15.
94 This time; but consider the events of a later generation: Exodus 7:14-12:32.
its eastern approaches, an early foreshadowing of the Babylonian invasion with its many vassal states. The city-states around Sodom and Gomorrah faced the first wave of this invasion and could not resist them. But Abram rallied his army of “318 trained men” for a surprise attack (14:14). He did this to save his nephew Lot. Nevertheless, as a result of Abram’s intervention, these proto-Babylonian aspirations in the land were brought to a halt. Also, the Canaanite kingdoms of Sodom and Gomorrah were preserved.95

Soon after, Abraham’s first son Ishmael and his mother Hagar were sent away. They had mocked the covenant promises of God (seen in Hagar’s contempt for Sarai, 16:4; and in Ishmael’s mocking Isaac, 21:9–13). They were sent from the household for showing themselves to be those who despised the covenant. Though Ishmael was no longer part of the covenant family, God blessed him because of Abraham’s love and prayers for him. Ishmael’s offspring went on to form a great nation (17:18–21; 21:13; 25:12–18).

A second story about Sodom and Gomorrah appears in the text, with Abraham interceding for God’s mercy on those cities which had only increased in their wickedness (18:1–33). God told Abraham his intention to destroy those cities. Abraham reasoned that there was still hope for their redemption, so long as a small number of righteous were present among them. So Abraham began his famous series of appeals to spare Sodom and Gomorrah. There is an important window into the theology of Genesis in these petitions of Abraham, who expects that a small household can bring God’s mercy to great kingdoms. But the necessary number of righteous was not present in Sodom and Gomorrah, so their judgment followed. Nevertheless, because of Abraham’s intercessions, Lot and his daughters were rescued out of Sodom. At the climax of the account, Genesis reports the ultimate result of Abraham’s intervention: the birth of Moab and Ammon to Lot’s daughters (19:34–38). Once again, new kingdoms emerge out of the intercessions of Abraham.

The mighty kingdom of Gerar almost came to a sudden end for a sin similar to that previously committed by Egypt’s pharaoh. Gerar’s king Abimelech took Abraham’s wife into his harem (20:1–18). Before any violation occurred, God pronounced a curse upon Gerar and “closed all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife” (20:18). The entire “house of Abimelech” (which might mean his palace household or his kingdom) would have become extinct within the generation had not Abraham intervened. When Abimelech restored Sarah to Abraham with pleas for mercy, “Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech” so that his house became fruitful again (20:17). The kingdom of Abimelech was nearly annihilated but was spared by Abraham’s intercession. The kingdom of Gerar went on to make a covenant of perpetual peace with Abraham, explicitly acknowledging that the land of Canaan was one day to become the land of Abraham’s offspring (21:22–34; cf., Gen. 26:1–33).

One of the most intriguing features of the Gerar story is that Genesis identifies Gerar as the progenitor of the later Philistine kingdom (21:32–34; cf., 26:1, 8, 14–15). Many scholars think that it is an error on the part of the

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95 But consider the later invasions from Babylon; 2 Kings 24:1–25:30.
author of the text that the Philistines are named in the time of Abraham, since the Philistines came from the Aegean region and only settled the western coasts of Canaan in the thirteenth century B.C. However, this anachronism is deliberate. The author of Genesis understood that the Philistines came from outside of Canaan (10:14; cf., Num. 24:24; Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7). Nevertheless, when the Philistines arrived in the land, they settled in what was formerly Gerar. By making this identification of Gerar with later Philistia, the writer is revealing his purpose for writing about these ancient kingdoms. The text is not concerned with the nations of Abraham’s day, but was compiled to teach later Israel about the nations of their own time. The very nations that later became Israel’s most vicious enemies—indirectly including the late arriving Philistines—owed their existence to the intercession of the patriarchs.

The final kingdom described in the book of Genesis is the kingdom of Edom (36:1–43). The Edomite princes and their domains are traced to the lineage of Jacob’s brother, Esau. Esau had sold his birthright and had despised the covenant (25:29–34; 26:34–35; 27:41). Nevertheless, Isaac pronounced a blessing on Esau, promising him an independent existence free from Jacob’s rule (27:39–40). Esau settled east of the Jordan where he fathered the kingdom of Edom. In later history, Edom was to betray Judah by aligning with Babylon against Jerusalem. This treachery, in violation of Esau’s oath with Jacob (33:1–20), was to earn a particular curse from God (Obed. 1–21; Psa. 137:7–9). Though one of Israel’s most bitter adversaries in later generations, Edom too owed its existence to the blessing of Abraham’s house.

The real irony of the Genesis story is that each of these kingdoms described were Israel’s chief enemies in later generations, yet each of them—Egypt, Babylon, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, the Negev tribes, and even Edom—owed their own existence to the intercession of the patriarchs. God’s people struggled even to form a stable family, yet they were already the source of life to the mighty kingdoms emerging all around them. This is the marvelous irony traced by this book about the beginnings of the world’s kingdoms.

It is a commonplace that the book of Genesis is structured around genealogies. There are, in fact, ten genealogies dividing the book

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98 There is one exception to this pattern: Genesis 14:18-24 introduces the one instance where Abraham is on the receiving end of a blessing from another king. Melchizedek, who was both “king of Salem” and “priest of God Most High” (14:17), is the only example of a king who blesses Abraham rather than the other way around. Melchizedek is also the only king in Canaan who is introduced without any genealogy (Heb. 7:3) and is claimed by the psalmist as the order into which David’s reign was ordained (Psa. 110:4). Perhaps Genesis “frees” Melchizedek from his place in the genealogies of “other nations” in order to enable Israel to lay claim to his heritage and the holy mountain (presuming Salem = Jerusalem) where both Adam and later David were to reign.
LeFebvre: Adam Reigns in Eden

51

into its various sections: the generations of the heavens and the earth (2:4ff.), of Adam (5:1ff.) of Noah (6:9ff.); of Noah’s sons (10:1ff.); of Shem (11:10ff.); of Terah (11:27ff.); of Ishmael (25:12ff.); of Isaac (25:19ff.); of Esau (36:1ff.); and of Jacob (37:2ff.). “Genesis is a book whose plot is genealogy.” This concern with genealogy is deeper than a mere fascination with families, however. These genealogies trace the lineage of kings from the first kingdom in Eden to form the many nations of the ancient world. In his study of the Genesis genealogies, Sven Tengström identified two forms of genealogy: “the erzählerische or narrating type and the aufzählende or enumeration type. The narrating type... is used merely to introduce the story of the next set of the ancestors of Israel... The enumeration type... is used to introduce Stammtafeln or tribal trees which are concerned with the relationship between Israel’s ancestors and the other nations of Israel’s world.”

The genealogies do not provide exhaustive catalogues of early human procreation. Instead, they are the lineages of rulers: heads of clans and heads of kingdoms. This purpose is made explicit at the end of the Table of Nations (10:1–32): “These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these [i.e., the names in the genealogies] the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood” (10:32). The Table of Nations provides an index of the 70 nations of the ancient world, and the genealogies are provided to trace that spread of kingdoms.

The genealogies of faithful Seth and Shem reach their climax in Jacob’s prophecy concerning Judah: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah... and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples” (49:10). The book of Genesis reports the beginnings of all the other nations of the earth, but it also points ahead to the rise of David as the dynastic head for Israel. The same Davidic interest is reflected in the Chronicler’s genealogies as well. Chronicles recapitulates the line from Adam all the way to the coronation of David (1Chr. 1:1–10:14). In the New Testament, Luke continues this theme tracing the royal genealogy to Jesus all the way from David and ultimately

99 N. Steinberg, “The Genealogical Framework of the Family Stories in Genesis,” Semeia 46 (1989), 41. In fact, the Greek word genesis means “generation(s).” The reason the book was titled Genesis in its ancient Greek translation (the LXX) is because it is a book of “generations,” the beginnings of peoples. Cf., Matthew 1:1, “The book of the genealogy (biblos geneoseis) of Jesus Christ...”


101 Abraham Malamat, “King Lists of the Old Babylonian Period and Biblical Genealogies,” in Hess, Inscriptions from Before the Flood, 183–99; cf., the Sumerian King List, which begins, “After the kingship descended from heaven, the kingship was in...”

Adam (Lk. 3:23–38). This pervasive interest in genealogies is particularly concerned with kingship, flowing from Adam to David to Jesus.103

Genesis is a book of joyful irony (cf., Psa. 2:4, 12), introducing the fledgling community of faith emerging in the shadows of the mighty kingdoms of humankind. And it all begins with the First Adam and his failed reign—but God’s faithful purpose—announced from Eden.

VI. EVE AS “MOTHER OF ALL LIVING”

There are, therefore, two lines of kingship that flow from Adam and Eve: the unrealized hope for a righteous kingdom in the lineage of Seth and later Abraham; and the realized advance of kingdoms in the lineage of Cain and the sons of Noah. The genealogy of kingdoms is traced to Adam and Eve, but is this couple also presented as the biological progenitors of the whole human race? Since the Cain story presumes the existence of other peoples outside of the household of Adam, biological origins does not seem to be the burden of the text. If there is any place in the Eden narrative, however, where the text might present Adam as the sole progenitor of all humans, it is when Eve is called “the mother of all living” (3:20). This statement is often interpreted to mean that all humans were born through Eve. However, examination of the text reveals that the designation “mother of all living” is not a reproductive notation: it is a soteriological statement.

Genesis 3:15 (the so-called “proto-evangelium”)104 divides the human race into two categories: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Both “seeds” are groups of humanity.105 Adam called his wife “Eve” (ḥawwâ which means “life”) to identify her as “the mother of all living” (3:20) with respect to the “seed” to arise from her in contrast to the human “seed” associated with the serpent. The title “mother of all living” is not, therefore, about all human beings descending from Eve. It is about “all living” human beings—in the soteriological sense of the term in light of Genesis 3:15—being those found among “the seed of the woman.” She is the mother of all who have the hope of life, not the mother of all humans.

This special use of the term “life” is a theme all through the Eden narrative. In particular, the Tree of Life in the Garden promised everlasting life in God’s presence for those with access to it (2:9; 3:22). The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil promised death if its fruit was violated: “in

103 David’s prayer in 2 Samuel 7:18–19 suggests that David himself recognized that his special anointing by God was in the lineage of Adamic kingship. When God promised David a universal and everlasting kingship from his enthronement on Zion (2Sam. 7:1–17), David declared, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me to this place? This was an easy thing in your eyes, O Lord God, yet you have spoken even of your servant’s house for a great while to come, and this is the law of Adam (tôrat hāʾādām), O Lord God!” (2Sam. 7:18–19, a.t.) This cry suggests David understood that the promised Second Adam (Gen. 3:15) was to come in his dynasty.


105 The term “offspring” (zāra’) refers to the human male seed (i.e., semen, and its resulting offspring). Neither the serpent nor the woman produce this seed themselves. It is the offspring (from the seed) of men who are divided into these two lines: the serpent’s heritage of death or the woman’s heritage of life. (Cf., Walter C. Kaiser, “יִֽהְוָא (zāra’) I,” TWOT, 1.252–3.)
the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (2:17). The serpent deceived the couple, insisting they would not die if they stole from the forbidden tree (3:4). But when the man and his wife ate the forbidden fruit, they did die—in this specialized use of the terms “life” and “death.” On the very day they ate from the forbidden tree, they were cast out from the presence of God and cut off from the Tree of Life (3:22-24). Physical death would also follow (3:19) without access to the sustaining presence of God. But the death in view in the narrative is more involved than a mere cessation of breathing. It is separation from God’s presence.

Despite their banishment from Eden, the man retained the knowledge of agriculture (3:18-19) and the support of his wife to raise a family (3:16; 4:1-2). God also promised to provide a new king through the offspring of Adam’s wife, who would one day conquer the serpent (3:15). It is that promise of life exclusively for the heritage belonging to Eve’s household that prompted her title “mother of all living.” Adam’s ascription calling his wife “Eve” (“life”) was a pronouncement of faith, not a mundane reproductive datum. She is mother to the household of life from which, in fact, her own firstborn son Cain was ultimately separated (4:4).

Just as the narrative highlight’s Adam’s kingly role rather than his reproduction, the narrative’s focus on Eve is on her role as an educator. In the ancient Hebrew household, the mother was the first teacher of the children. While the men of the household labored in the fields, the mother nurtured the little ones physically and intellectually in their earliest, formative years. She oversaw the child’s learning of language, including the stories that embodied the community’s faith. This is why Nehemiah decried the intermarriage of Jews in Jerusalem with “women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab” such that “half their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah” (Neh. 13:23-24; cf., 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). It is also why the provision of a Hebrew nurse for Moses in his infancy (his own mother!) would prove so decisive in his adulthood (Exod. 2:7-10). This convention is also reflected in Paul’s references to the church as a “nursing mother” in whose care believers are reared in faithfulness to Christ (1Thess. 2:7; cf., 1Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12). The Edenic reference to Eve as “mother of all living” indicates the importance of maternal catechism, and the faith learned from infancy in the believing home, for continuing the line of promised life. Eve’s title “mother of all living” does not identify her as the womb from whom all human seed descended, but as the mother from whom all households in the heritage of life have arisen.

Paul draws upon this description of Eve as “mother of all living” in his first epistle to Timothy. Paul writes, “[the woman] will be saved through childbearing—if they [i.e., her offspring] continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control” (1Tim. 2:15). Paul uses the term “childbearing” here, not strictly for the birthing event but for the entire birthing and nursing process during which the child is weaned from its dependence upon

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106 Collins, Genesis 1–4, 116–9, 180-84; Wenham, Genesis 1–15, 74–5.
107 Kidner, 30 n. 1; 72.
its mother.\footnote{Cf., Lamentations 2:22, “those whom I bore and reared” (a.t.)} It was typical, at least by Second Temple times, for mothers to nurse children until sometime around age three (2Macc. 7:27; cf., Gen. 21:8). Paul is pointing to Eve’s title “mother of all living” as indicating the vital role of mothers within the church in their catechism of children from earliest infancy. It is not the childbearing of all women everywhere that Paul sees in that Genesis designation, but the salvific ministry of mothers who nurture their children “[in faith and love and holiness, with self-control].” Paul’s citation is consistent with the interpretation of Eve’s designation “mother of all living” as a reference to her vital role in the heritage of life.\footnote{Cf., William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles (NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), 111.}

The title “mother of all living” is a salvific title, not a reproductive title. It refers to the “seed” of life in contrast to the “seed” (humans!) of the serpent’s line. The text does not identify all human beings as descending biologically from Adam and Eve. Their universal headship is that of king and first educator.

\section*{VII. CONCLUSIONS}

In this paper, I have argued that the Eden narrative is an etiology of kingship. As such, it teaches the origin of humanity’s fallen condition as a consequence of the first universal king’s failure. The Eden narrative is not, however, an etiology of human biological origins, as indicated by the presence of other, contemporaneous populations presupposed within the text.

Adam was a real, historical person. He was the “first man,” the “ideal man,” and the “father of us all” in the sense that he was humanity’s first universal king. He is also the one from whom later kings of the biblical world arose, as traced in the various genealogies of Genesis. Many later kings attempted to gain universal dominion (e.g., Dan. 4:31-32), but only two have received that authority from God: the First Adam (Gen. 2:4-4:26) and the Second Adam (Php. 2:9-11; Rom. 5:12-21; 1Cor. 15:22-28). It is in this role of universal kingship that Jesus is likened to Adam.

This conclusion is consistent with Paul’s teaching about Adam in the New Testament. In his sermon to the Areopagus, Paul proclaimed, “The God who made the world and everything in it...made from one man every nation of mankind (\textit{pan ethnos anthrōpōn}) to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place...But now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed...by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:24-31). It is Adam’s role as the first king, from whom “every nation” of humankind arises,\footnote{Contra Walton, 186-7.} that Paul identified as the type Jesus fulfills as the final judge.\footnote{For a full survey of biblical texts about Adam, see Collins, Adam and Eve, 51-92.} Paul’s similar statements about Adam in his epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians (Rom. 5:12-14; 1Cor. 15:21-22) also emphasize the “reign” of sin and death spreading through the world by Adam’s fall and Christ’s
victory as our royal representative. “The ‘king’ of the ראשׁית (‘beginning’) provides the job description for the king of the אחרית (‘end’).”

Admittedly, to isolate Adam’s royal precedence from issues of human biological origins raises other questions. Were populations in “the land of wandering” Homo sapiens, or was the “breath of life” given to Adam a distinct mark of the first Homo sapiens within a broader, interbreeding hominid population? More importantly, this account maintains the traditional dogma that Adam’s sin brought guilt upon the whole world resulting in the curse of death and separation from God. But how should pre-fall evils and deaths be understood? These are important questions, but they are not necessarily without solutions.

It is my contention in this paper that Genesis 2:4–4:26 is silent regarding the family tree of human biology. The Bible offers neither reason to dispute nor to affirm the findings of modern genetics. If current scientific theories on human biological origins continue to prove sound, there is no biblical reason to refute these conclusions. But if current theories are ultimately found to be wrong, and it is found that the human race does in fact arise from a single couple, this too is biblically plausible since the Bible is silent on the relationship between Adam and other populations in “the land of wandering.” Genesis 1:26–27 states that God created humankind in

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113 Postell, Adam as Israel, 163.
114 Youngblood, Genesis, 65; Kidner, Genesis, 28.
the categories of “male and female.” But beyond that, Genesis is silent on the question of human biological origins. This means that Christians need not feel threatened by the findings of the biological and genetic sciences. It also means that scientists working those fields ought not suppose their research is undermining biblical theism. There is no necessary conflict between Genesis and genetics.

But the most important fruit of this study is theological. Even though the impetus of this study has been the challenge emerging from modern science, its fruits are productive for the church’s theology. The shadow of Christ in the contours of the Eden narrative are more pronounced when viewed as an etiology of kingship, than when treated as an account of human paternity. I believe the present study offers important contributions that strengthen the Christology woven into the Eden narrative.

The Bible is God’s inspired word (2 Tim. 3:16), but our interpretations of it are fallible. There are times when discoveries within the fields of history, archaeology, or the natural sciences challenge a long-held interpretation of the Bible. In such times, it is proper to welcome the challenge and to assess whether or not our interpretation of the Scriptures requires revision—even revisions as theologically earthshaking as it was to abandon geocentrism under the Copernican revolution. I believe we are facing just such a time in the modern challenges emerging from the fields of biology and genetics. And when we do re-examine the Eden narrative, we find the text more pointedly focused on Christ than recognized under a view that made Adam’s reproductive fatherhood central. “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all,” but “the Last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45).

These topics are understandably controversial. In his recent book defending a traditional view of Adam, William VanDoodewaard offers a closing word of exhortation with which I too want to conclude this paper. VanDoodewaard writes, “In any pursuit to harmonize our knowledge of God’s special and general revelation, we must walk humbly—this is true for all of us. We are called to be watchful in love for one another, and where there is error to respond in a spirit of Christlike faithfulness... As we seek to grow together in understanding God’s handiwork in creation and His gracious Word to us, may it lead us to wonder and worship.”

It is my prayer that God would grant me this same humility as I offer these contributions to an important theological frontier, and as I listen to those arguments advanced by others. May the Second Adam advance the truth of his reign among us!

117 My convictions concerning the nature of Scripture align with the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1.
120 I want to express my particular appreciation for the critical feedback I received from those who kindly read earlier drafts of this paper, including Hans Madueme, Kenneth Turner, John Walton, Scott McCullough, Rich Holdeman, Darrell Bock, Matthew Mason, and the Saint John Fellowship of the Center for Pastor Theologians.
“Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the royal son!...
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory!
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Adam is thus scattered throughout the globe. Set in one place, he fell and, as it were, broken small, he has filled the whole world.

—St. Augustine

It is difficult (to move from the profound to the trivial) to read St. Augustine’s ruminations on Adam and not think of Humpty Dumpty, that famous egg who, perched on a wall, took a similarly precipitous fall, with similarly deleterious results. This Augustinian account of humanity’s plight (i.e., its fragmentation) may surprise, since it is not the one more traditionally associated with his name—that of original sin, an innate guilt inherited from Adam. But in rendering the human predicament thus, Augustine is far from idiosyncratic. In sources Jewish, Christian, and pagan alike, one way of articulating humanity’s besetting condition is to describe it in terms of estrangement. The problem, that is, is social—we are alienated from the other—and so the solution must be social as well. Humpty Dumpty, of course, could not be put together again, but Christian theology, largely following St. Paul, insists that Adam can. One purpose of this essay is to show how this is so—using Paul, and the small thread of Ephesians 5:31, as our guide to a broader exegetical tapestry.

It turns out, however, that this tapestry begins in Genesis itself—since the problem of isolation, and its solution, emerges already in Genesis 1-2, before we ever get to Genesis 3, the text more typically appealed to for humanity’s “fall.” This is somewhat opaque, however, largely because a very simple word (Heb. אדם, ādām) has come, in the history of Christian theology, to signify a (very) lot—namely, Adam proper, primus homo. But

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can Genesis 1-2 handle this load? Here again Humpty Dumpty comes to mind—now, however, not the children’s rhyme, but his literary afterlife as a linguist, portrayed by Lewis Carroll in his famous children’s story Through the Looking Glass. Perched on a wall, and conversing with Alice (of Wonderland fame), Humpty Dumpty at one point uses the word “glory” in an utterly nonsensical way. Alice queries the use, confessing her ignorance, and so Humpty defines his term: glory is “a nice knock-down argument”—a definition to which Alice objects. Humpty, a Saussurean before Saussure, responds, and the dialogue that follows is worth quoting in full.

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—not more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all.”

Alice is puzzled into silence, and so Humpty takes up again, closing his linguistic considerations with an exclamation: “Impenetrability!” Alice again requests a definition, and this time Humpty provides not a nonsensical definition, but a tedious (if sensible) explication of what he meant in using the term—the work it did in his sentence. The dialogue continues:

“That’s a great deal to make one word mean,” Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

“When I make a word do a lot of work like that,” said Humpty Dumpty, “I always pay it extra.”

Alice may be puzzled, but Humpty is, in a real sense, right. It is a language’s users who define its terms. In the history of interpretation, what matters is not so much the signifier עָדָם but who is its master. Like Humpty’s “impenetrability,” ’ādām has done a lot of work for its users. It deserves its pay. Enough has been said to make the point, and to set the stage. These two themes—what words (i.e., ’ādām) mean, and how ’ādām is put together again—which converge so nicely in Humpty Dumpty and Adam alike, serve as the twin foci of this essay. We begin, then, with the latter.

I. FROM ONE, TWO AND FROM TWO, ONE: HUMAN ORIGINS IN PLATO’S SYMPOSIUM

Not, however, with Genesis, but with Plato—from one story of human origins to another. The work is Plato’s Symposium, and the scene is an after-dinner drinking party. Here, enjoying the merriment of good food, good

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drink, and good company, the comic poet Aristophanes regales his elite circle of friends with an aetiology of eros—a mythical tale of the origins of human love. To understand love, Aristophanes opines, one must understand human nature (ἀνθρώπινος φύσις), for long ago, our natural form (φύσις) was not what it is now (Symp. 189d). Then begins an elaborate anatomical description of humanity’s primitive form, with not two but three sexes: male, female, and the androgyne (ἀνδρόγυνος), which shares the physical characteristics of both (189e). What matters most, however, is not the taxonomy of the sexes, but their physical depiction:

The form of every person was completely round, with back and sides making a circle, and with four arms, the same number of legs, and two faces exactly alike set on a round neck. There was one head for the two faces (which looked in opposite ways), four ears, two sets of genitals and everything else as you might guess from these particulars. They walked about upright, as we do today, backwards or forwards as they pleased. Whenever they wanted to move fast they pushed off from the ground and quickly wheeled over and over in a circle with their eight limbs, like those acrobats who perform cartwheels by whirling round with their legs straight out (189e-190a).

What we have here are circle people. For those devoid (as I am) of a healthy imagination, envision two people standing back to back and fused together; inflate them into a balloon-like shape and you have Aristophanes’ original “hominids.”

The problem, as the latter half of the description suggests, is that these creatures were quite powerful—so powerful, in fact, that they “tried to make an ascent to heaven in order to attack the gods” (190b). This, of course, the gods could not abide. So after holding court in a divine assembly, Zeus emerges with a proposal to slice the creatures in half. For the gods, this has the benefit of simultaneously weakening (in strength) and increasing (in number) their work force (190c-d). And so Zeus does this, dissecting the creatures vertically down the middle, and instructing Apollo to turn their heads round, draw the skin over the incision, and sew up the wound (190e). The plan worked, but with a nasty side effect; Zeus solved the problem of the gods, but introduced the plight of humans. With their natural form (φύσις) severed, each half longed for the other, desiring to be put back together again (συμφῦναι)—a desire that ran so strong that, when its other was found, they refused to do anything separate (e.g., eating), thus withering away (191a-b). Faced with this dire state, Zeus had mercy (ἐλέέω), moving their genitals round to the front, thus making procreation—and the propagation of their species—possible again (191b-c).

5 Eros, of course, being the Greek god of love. The subject, which was the focus of a speech given by each of the attendees in turn (Phaedrus, Pausanius, Erixymachus, Aristophanes, Agathon, and Socrates), was proposed by Erixymachus (Symp. 177a-d). For text and translation, see Plato, Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias, trans., W. R. M. Lamb, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925). All translations below are from Plato, The Symposium, ed., M. C. Howatson and Frisbee C. C. Sheffield, trans., M. C. Howatson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
What is it, though, that draws these half-creatures together? Why can they not live apart, and go on their own merry way? The answer, for Aristophanes, is *eros*—thus the aetiology.

So it is that ever since that far-off time, love of one person for another has been inborn in human beings, and its role is to restore us to our ancient state (ἀρχαῖος φύσις) by trying to make unity out of duality (ποιῆσαι ἕν ἐκ δύοιν) and to heal our human condition (ιδασασθαι τὴν φύσιν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην). For each of us is a mere tally of a person, one of two sides of a filleted fish, one half of an original whole (ἐξ ἑνὸς δύο). We are all continually searching for our other half (191d).

Love, that is, is the craving and pursuit of our original selves—literally, the other for which we were made. It is love that repairs the breach, heals the dissection, and makes two one. Hephaestus’s offer to these primitive creatures—“to join you together and fuse you until, instead of two, you become one (ὡστε δύ’ ὄντας ἕνα γεγονέναι)—is, in fact, their deepest desire, their duality forged into unity (192d-e). All creatures, Aristophanes insists, would want this, for it is the putting back together of their primeval self, the restoration of nature.8

With this, Aristophanes draws his myth to an end, but not before closing with an exhortation—one that functions to recapitulate the whole. We were one (ἕν), Aristophanes writes, but now, because of our wrongdoing (ἀδικία), we were driven apart (διῳκίσθημεν). The proper response, of course, is to act piously—to live reverently—toward the gods (εὐσεβεῖν περὶ θεούς), for they may divide us again. If we do so, Aristophanes insists, we may still get now, in the present, that for which we long, our “particular beloved” (193a-b). And as for the future? Eros, the god of love, gives us “highest hopes” (ἐλπίδες μεγίστες), for with a bit of piety (εὐσέβεια) to the gods, “he will restore us to our original state (εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν), and heal us and make us blessed and happy (μακαρίους καὶ εὐδαίμονας)” (193d). Call it Aristophanes’ version of the “creation, fall, redemption, and restoration” narrative so vital to my own Reformed upbringing. Or as C. S. Lewis famously put it, on the lips of Lord Digory in *The Last Battle*, “It’s all in Plato, all in Plato: bless me, what *do* they teach them at these schools!”9

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6 The meaning here is one half of a small object (e.g., one side of a coin). See Plato, *Symposium*, trans., Howatson, 24n101.

7 Hephaestus, of course, is an appropriate choice to do the welding, as the son of Zeus, the husband of Aphrodite, and the god of craftwork and sculpting himself. The language of two becoming one is ubiquitous in Aristophanes’ speech. See, e.g., the immediately following at *Symp.* 192e: “We know that no one who heard these words [from Hephaestus] would deny them or admit to wanting anything else. He would simply think that to join with and melt into his beloved, so that instead of two they should become one [ἐκ δυοίν εἰς γενέσθαι], was exactly what he had so long desired.”

8 So, Aristophanes: “The reason is that our original nature was this (ἡ ἀρχαία φύσις ἡμῶν ἦν αὐτῷ), and we were a whole” (192e). Trans., from Howatson, slightly modified.

II. ‘ADĀM, MAN AND WOMAN: HUMAN ORIGINS IN GENESIS

It’s not all in Plato, of course. To the casual reader, Aristophanes’ myth may look nothing like Genesis 1-2.10 But it is an interesting guide—one that sends us back to look again at our own story of human origins. The two central texts here are Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:4-25—Genesis’ twin accounts of the creation of humanity.

So first, the former.11 In three terse and poetic phrases, Genesis 1:27 recounts the creation of the primeval human:

And God created the human (ḥā’ādām) in his image,
in the image of God He created him (ʾā),
male (zākār) and female (nəqēbāh) He created them (ām).12

Immediately, Alice’s question to Humpty Dumpty emerges: what do words mean? And how much can they mean? Two items are worth clarifying here. First, when we meet ʾādām in Genesis 1:27a, we are clearly not meeting a gendered figure, at least not yet—otherwise verse 27c is nonsense. Rather, this ʾādām—the generic Hebrew word for “human,” with no connotation of gender—has within itself, as is clear from verse 27b-c, both male and female. This point, common enough in the secondary literature, is not controversial.13 A second, however, is somewhat more so—that ʾādām need also not connote a collective. English translations invariably treat the singular ʾādām of 1:27 as a plural, designating God’s creation of “all humanity” or “human nature.”14 This is subtly evident where translations

10 And there are, of course, significant differences between the two, not least in the god’s motivation for the division (the weakening of humans vs. the provision of fellowship), but also in how each conceives the pinnacle of human love (homosexual vs. heterosexual). My only suggestion is that Aristophanes’ myth, with its heavy (and obvious) emphasis on unity and duality, can help us to see central elements of our own story—this same motif, in fact—which have otherwise been neglected for other narrations of the “plight” and “solution.”

11 For those who know his work, my indebtedness below to Iain Provan, Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament Really Says and Why It Matters (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014) will be obvious. As his research assistant in the latter stages of that project, I come by the influence honestly. He, of course, should not be held responsible for any of what I say below—I no longer agree on all the particulars, and say things slightly differently than he would—but, having worked with him closely, it is now virtually impossible for me to read these texts apart from his influence. Provan’s reading of the relevant passages is at Seriously Dangerous Religion, 80-90, and now also in Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception (London: SPCK, 2015), 59-78. For a similarly fascinating take, see Leon R. Kass, The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 36-40, 54-122.

12 For reasons that will soon become clear, related to his consistent translation of ʾādām throughout Genesis 1-2, here and below I follow the translation of Robert Alter, Genesis: Translation and Commentary (New York: Norton, 1996).

13 So, e.g., Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, WBC 1 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 32; for ancient Judaism, Philo, Opif. 134; and for early Christianity, Gregory of Nyssa, Hom. Opif. 16. It is, however, vital when we get to Genesis 2:5 and following, where the same word (ʾādām) now gets treated very differently.

14 Amongst commentators, Wenham (Genesis 1-15, 32) is again representative, but here also Provan, Seriously Dangerous Religion, 80. The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria’s
drop the Hebrew definite article (ḥā), and render hā ʾādām simply as “man” (so NASB, ESV, KJV, NET). It is explicit, however, in the NRSV:

So God created humankind (ḥāʾ ʾādām) in his image, in the image of God he created them (瑄); male and female he created them.

It is far from obvious, however, that this is the best (or most natural) way to read hā ʾādām. For one, it straightforwardly ignores the force of the definite article; for two, it disregards the singular pronoun of 1:27b (瑄); and for three, it fails to consider the context of 1:26, and the lack of the article with ʾādām there. Instead, it seems to arise from a theological reflex to subsume the creation of “all humanity” under God’s jurisdiction—a reflex I wholeheartedly endorse, but which the text, sensu stricto, does not say. The original readers of Genesis 1:26–27, I suggest, would have heard something like the following:

Let us make a human in our image!

And so God created the human in his image…

Male and female he created them.

Put these two observations together—that the ʾādām met in 1:26–27 is non-gendered and singular—and I suggest we are not terribly far from Aristophanes’ primeval creature, save the comical anatomical description. To say it otherwise, Genesis shares with Aristophanes’ myth a concern for the unity and duality of the primeval human—a widespread concern in antiquity. In Genesis 1:26–27, our primeval human is “him” and “them,” reading of Genesis 1–2 is multiform and complex (Leg. 1, 2; Opif.: QG 1), but a similar impulse is at play when he writes of Genesis 1:27: “And when Moses had called the genus ‘man,’ quite admirably did he distinguish its species, adding that it had been created ‘male and female,’ and this though its individual members had not yet taken shape. For the primary species are in the genus to begin with” (Opif. 76 [Colson and Whitaker, LCL]). Amongst early Christians, see Gregory of Nyssa, Hom. Opif. 16.

I agree, then, with David Daube, “The Interpretation of a Generic Singular,” in The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism, JLCRS (London: Athlone Press, 1956), 441–43, who recognizes that the rabbis read Genesis 1:27 as what he calls a “specific singular” (i.e., an androgynous first human; see further Section III below), but I disagree that an “ordinary reader” would read in 1:27 a “generic sense” (i.e., “mankind,” 441). On the contrary, the rabbis are evidence of precisely the opposite—that at least some of Genesis’ “ordinary readers” read it straightforwardly as what it seemed to be, a reference to one original (androgynous) human.

On this score, see the NRSV and NIV, where treating hāʾ ʾādām as a collective has the further consequence of translating the singular pronoun “him” (瑄) in 1:27b as a plural (“them”).

As observed by Wayne Meeks in his seminal article on the topic, “The Image of the Androgynous: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity,” HR 13 (1974): 165–208, here 185–86. For Meeks, the focus is on the androgyny of this primeval human as envisioned by Genesis 1:27, and he brings a raft of data to bear on the question to show that it could, with some frequency, be read this way in antiquity (see my discussion below). The implication of my reading is, of course, the same—and I find persuasive Meek’s argument (pp. 166, 180–89) about Galatians 3:28 (“no male and female…in Christ”; cf., 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:10–11), that an early Christian baptismal formula envisaged baptism “revers[ing] the fateful division of Genesis 2:21–22” (185), thus envisaging an eschatologically androgynous future—but my primary concern in this paper is not androgyny (or not) per se, but the
“male” and “female,” one and two. Or as Genesis 5:2 itself puts it, after echoing Genesis 1:27 at 5:1: “Male and female he created them (ʾām), and He blessed them (ām), and called their name ‘human’ (ʾādām) on the day they were created.” The authors of Genesis, it appears, have little problem naming male and female, together, ʾādām.

Whatever their other differences, the second creation account (2:4-25)—which zooms in with some intensity on this ʾādām—mirrors the first on this score. The noun הָאָדָם (ʾādām) occurs fifteen times in the space of 2:4-25,19 first in 2:5, where there is “no human (ʾādām) to till the soil.” In response to this lack, God places “the human” (ḥāʾ ʾādām) in the garden he had planted, “to till it and watch it” (2:8, 15). There is much else that could be said about the theological poetics at work in this story,20 but training our focus on ʾādām, the figure we meet in Genesis 2:4-25 is again clearly singular and non-descript (i.e., not “humanity” writ-large and not gendered).21 In fact, the reader who arrives at Genesis 2:5 via 1:26-27 (which is to say, all readers) is specifically conditioned to read ʾādām generically here—that is, not the zākār or the nəqēbāh of 1:27, but the non-gendered ʾādām.22 Nor does this change across Genesis 2.23 There is no good reason, in other words, for the KJV to start translating ʾādām as Adam at 2:19; nor for the ESV, NASB, NIV and NET to begin at 2:20; nor, for that matter, for the LXX to shift from ἄνθρωπος to Ἀδάμ at 2:16. From 2:5-23, we are dealing with a non-gendered human; nothing in the text suggests otherwise—that is, until this human is separated in verse 23, and our authors signal that now,
finally, we meet “man” (ʾîš) and “woman” (ʾîšāh) proper.24 Thus, popular imagination aside, we do not meet Adam in Genesis 2. To channel Alice, that would be to make the word do too much work.

So, no gender: but what of the plight of this ʾādām? Here the text is much more explicit: “It is not good for the human to be alone” (2:18). We already had a hint of this when, in Genesis 1, the only creative act not directly labeled “good” is the creation of the ʾādām.25 But here it is explicit. For the first time in Genesis, something is not good—call it bare singularity, the problem of human isolation. And so God resolves a fix: “I shall make a sustainer beside him (ʿēzer kənegdō)” (2:18). Recall, we are not here dealing with a gendered male seeking a (female) companion—despite what the ESV, NASB, NIV and NET do,26 which, combined with the translation of ʿēzer as “helper” (2:18, 20), has had deleterious effects in the reception history of this passage. No, the problem is not that the lonely male needs female company; it is that the singular human needs duality—community, another “self”—literally, one who is “like opposite him.”27 Or better, it needs its counter-part.28 This isolation is, in fact, a dangerous situation for the ʾādām, as is implied by the noun ʿēzer, elsewhere in the Old Testament used primarily of God’s “help” of his people (i.e., deliverance).29

And so, God sets out to rectify the situation. Just as he did with the human (2:7), God “fashion[s] from the soil” a host of creatures, parading them before the ʾādām (2:19), but for the human, no “sustainer beside him” (ʿēzer kənegdō) was found (2:20). This is not a happy state of affairs. The ʾādām is in trouble; it needs its other half. Singularity, it turns out, in and of itself, is not good. And so, in an act of divine mercy, God puts the human

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24 A side benefit of this reading is that it solves the problem of the woman not being present at God’s command not to eat from the tree of knowledge (2:16-17), which the serpent’s words to the woman at 3:1 clearly presuppose. On this reading, she was there, in the form of the ʾādām (so Provan, Seriously Dangerous Religion, 81).

25 Compare 1:31 (in view of vv. 26-30), for instance, with 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25. An exception is 1:6-8.

26 That is, they all shift to “Adam” proper at precisely this point (2:20), thus implying that Adam (male) needs Eve (female), with the latter the “helper.” To be sure, this sexual complementarity is basic to the narrative that follows (2:23 forward), but it is not the issue at stake in 2:18-22.

27 Provan, Seriously Dangerous Religion, 87. For a remarkably similar take from antiquity, see Philo, QG 1.17, although he then goes on to insist that the male is prior to, and therefore has greater honor than, the female (1.27).


29 Ex. 18:4; Deut. 33:7, 29; Ps. 20:3; 115:9-11; 121:2; 124:8; 146:5
to sleep, takes one of its “sides” (ṣēlā’), fashions a woman (‘išāh), and brings her to the human (2:21-22). And with this, the human has its ‘ezēr kōnegdō:

This one at last, bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh,

This one shall be called Woman (‘išāh),
for from man (‘ēti) was this one taken. (2:23)

Now, and only now, do we have “man” and “woman” properly so called. The human has become male and female (cf., 1:27); unity has become duality, and the human rejoices.

A danger lurks here too, however—one that becomes very real across the pages of Genesis. With the human thus divided, the possibility of relational breakdown—the fragmentation of the ʾādām—emerges. Duality itself is dangerous.

Therefore does a man leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife and they become one flesh. (2:24)

On this reading, marriage is the immediate response to the danger posed by the division of the ʾādām. It is, in real time, the place where the ʾādām is put back together again. Singularity and duality each present unique challenges—part of the plight—and in the span of eight verses (2:18-25), God reckons with both, inaugurating human community (from one, two) and forestalling its fragmentation (from two, one). The human, then, is not a bare singularity, nor a bare duality, but a singularity in duality—a relational union not unlike the triune God. This should not surprise, for we are made in his image (1:27b).

The creational vision, however, does not hold. Grasping after knowledge not theirs to have, the man and woman get what they want—“The eyes of the two were opened” (3:7)—but do not like what they see. Shame intrudes into the human condition (3:7, 10-11; cf., 2:25), stretching the sinews of the “one flesh” almost immediately.30 By 3:16, the duality, originally marked by mutuality and reciprocity, is schismatic: “Your desire,” God says to the woman, “shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”31 Sterile translations aside, the human pair, as Iain Provan suggests, are engaged in a “struggle for dominance.”32 The woman seeks to “devour” the man (tōšiqāh; cf., 4:7); the man asserts his own “mastery.” Both are unbecoming ways to treat one’s own flesh. Such estrangement now runs like a thread through the rest of Genesis. Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Leah and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers—all are at odds, repeating and perpetuating the enmity of the primeval pair. Duality, it turns out, is devastating. The ʾādām is fractured; it is a plight in need of a solution.

30 No longer, for instance, is the woman “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh (2:23); she is now “the woman whom you gave to be with me” (3:12).

31 Here I follow the NRSV. Alter’s “longing” (for בושם, tōšiqāh) seems to me not to capture the spirit of conflict basic to 3:16. While not perfect, “desire” (so NRSV) can at least have aggressively negative connotations.

32 Seriously Dangerous Religion, 118 (see 117-19).
III. REUNIFYING ‘ADĀM: AN ANCIENT THREAD OF ADAMIC EXEGESIS

Not the only plight, of course. None of the above calls into question other, more traditional, ways of conceiving humanity’s “fall.” Nor do I wish too. Adam, like Humpty Dumpty, has a long literary afterlife, and ancient readers of Genesis, like their modern counterparts, can do myriad things with him. In ways not foreign to contemporary portraits, they can identify Adam as the progenitor of humanity (Tob 8.6; LAE 1; Apoc. Ab. 13.5), and of sin and death (4 Ezra 3.7, 21-26; 7.116-18; 2 Bar 17.3; 19.8; 23.4-5; 48.42-47; Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:21-22; Apoc. Ab. 8.9), and as the prototype of virtue (Philo, Opif. 134-50), and the object of eschatological glory (Sir 49:16; Apoc. Ab. 11.9). They can also read the nature of this ʾādām in more traditional ways: in 1:27, both as a collective—the “genus” within which God creates the “species” male and female (Philo, Opif. 76; cf., Leg. 2.4)—and even qua Adam, with Genesis 2 then a physiological exposition/expansion of 1:27 (Josephus, A.J. 1.32-34). This is only the barest of beginnings. As John Levison shows in his Portraits of Adam, there are about as many uses for Adam in Jewish antiquity as there are readers of Adam.

One of these uses, however, undeniably follows the reading I offer above. That is, among the varied possibilities, interest in the unity, separation, and reunion of the primeval ʾādām—sometimes conceived as an androgyne—was clearly a live option for Genesis’ readers in antiquity. It is one thread of the tapestry of ancient Adamic exegesis, and one in which (as I will suggest) Paul himself has interest. Intriguingly, Aristophanes’ myth in Plato’s Symposium never lies far “off set” for these readers; in a few instances at least, they seem to be reading the two texts hand in hand. Such was clearly the case for the great medieval Jewish philosopher Judah Abrabanel, who, in his Dialoghi d’amore, suggests that Genesis is, in fact, the muse for Plato’s myth—the latter having (according to Judah) studied in Egypt alongside ancient Israelites, from whom he learned it.

33 On one level, “Adam” emerges as the author of pseudepigraphical first-person account like the Testament of Adam and the Apocalypse of Adam, while the Life of Adam and Eve purports to fill out the biographical picture. On another, Adam is the focus of ancient exegesis itself. See the discussion of the relevant texts of the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, Jubilees, 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra and the Life of Adam and Eve), as well as Philo and Josephus in John R. Levison, Portraits of Adam: From Sirach to 2 Baruch, JSPSup 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988). For a list of other Adam traditions he does not treat, see pp. 29-31. See also Gary A. Anderson, The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

34 Interest in Adam and Eve did not end in late antiquity, of course. For a recent work that takes the story of their reception down to the present, see Stephen Greenblatt, The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve (London: The Bodley Head, 2017).

35 These are but a few examples. For his summary account of the varied portraits, see Levison, Portraits of Adam, 145-61. See also Robin Scroggs, The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology (Basil: Blackwell, 1966), 16-31.

36 Judah writes: “The myth was handed down by earlier writers than the Greeks—in the sacred writings of Moses, concerning the creation of the first human parents, Adam and Eve … it was from [Moses] that Plato took his myth, amplifying and polishing it after
If Judah connects Genesis and Plato’s *Symposium*, but does not offer his own reading of the former, roughly a millennium earlier, a series of rabbis did just the opposite—reading an androgyne in Genesis, but never mentioning Plato.\(^{37}\) Some of this is purely textual: a discussion about whether it is licit to write Scripture in a foreign script turns to the question of the origins of the Septuagint, and the rabbis involved attest a version of LXX Genesis 1:27 and 5:2 that reads: “Male and female he created *him*,” specifically drawing attention to the singular pronoun (b. Meg. 9a). More often, however, it is interpretive. Appealing to Psalm 139:5 (“You have shaped me back and front”), R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar suggests that the first human had “two faces” (διπρόσωπος; b. Erub. 18a; b. Ber. 61a)—likely an echo of the similar phrase in Aristophanes’ myth (*Symp.* 189e).\(^{38}\) If this seems tendentious, the evidence of Genesis Rabbah—that lengthy late-antique Jewish midrash—is decisive.\(^{39}\) There, R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar is cited again, now commenting directly on Genesis 1:26-27: “When the Holy One, blessed be he, came to create the first man, he made him androgynous, as it is said, ‘Male and female created he them and called their name man’ (Gen. 5:2)” (Gen. Rab. 8:1).

So far, the union of the primeval `ʾādām. But what of its division—is this a plight in need of a solution? Immediately following the above, the midrash on Genesis 1:26-27 continues, now with R. Samuel b. Naḥman: “When the Holy One, blessed be he, created the first man, he created him with two faces, then sawed him into two and made a back on one side and a back on the other” (Gen. Rab. 8:1). This is clearly indebted to Plato, but there is no sense, at least explicitly, that this division represents a problem. In the Apocalypse of Adam, however, it does. Speaking to his son Seth, Adam recalls those halcyon days “when God had created me out of the earth along with Eve, your mother” (NHC V 5 64.6-8).\(^{40}\) Alas, such androgynous union was not to last: “Then god, the ruler of the aeons and the powers, divided us in wrath. Then we became two aeons. And the glory in our heart(s) left us” (NHC V 5 64.20-25). As for the Apocalypse’s “Adam,” so also for the Gospel of Philip: “When Eve was still in Adam death did not exist. When she was separated from him death came into

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\(^{37}\) In addition to the evidence cited below, see W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 3rd ed. (London: SPCK, 1970), 52-57, who traces the rabbinic doctrine of the unity of humanity in Adam, and connects this to Paul’s conception of the church as the body of Christ.

\(^{38}\) On these two rabbinic examples, see further Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 185n88 and 186n90.


being” (NHC II 3 68.22-24).

Primeval division, that is, is a plight; it ruptures a more perfect union. A union, however, that can be put together again, thus solving the plight. Immediately following the line just quoted, the Gospel of Philip continues: “If he enters [Eve] again and attains his former self, death will be no more” (NHC II 3 68.25-26). The solution here is sexual union, but a few pages later, the solution is Christological: “Because of this Christ came to repair the separation which was from the beginning and again unite the two, and to give life to those who died as a result of the separation and unite them” (NHC II 3 70.12-17). As the Gospel of Thomas has it, to make “two one” is, in fact, to “become the sons of man” (NHC II 3 106)—that is, children of the human. Such overcoming of duality heals the primal division. Reunification is not purely a gnostic phenomenon, however. In 2 Clement, the reunification of opposites, not least male and female, heralds the arrival of God’s kingdom, and this on the lips of Jesus. Asked when the kingdom will come, Jesus replies, “When the two shall be one, and the outside as the inside, and the male with the female, neither male or female” (2 Clem 12.1; cf., Gos. Thom. 22). The author of 2 Clement proceeds to interpret this ethically (12.5), but the logion itself is enough: for a strain of the Jesus tradition (cf., Matt 22:30; Mark 12:25), God’s promised future is androgynous, and reverses the division of Genesis 1:27 and 2:22. This need not wait for the eschaton, of course. For that great Platonizing Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria—himself no friend of androgyny (Contempl. 63)—Genesis 2 itself already narrates the overcoming of this duality. Echoing Aristophanes, Philo writes of Genesis 2:21-24: “Love supervenes, brings together and fits into one the divided halves, as if were, of a single living creature” (Opif. 151-52; cf., Leg. 2.18). The rupture is healed; love stands in the gap, and puts the human back together again.

IV. PULLING THE THREAD: UNIFYING ADAM IN PAUL

So too, it turns out, with Philo’s younger contemporary, St. Paul:

Husbands, love (ἀγαπᾶτε) your wives, as (καθώς) Christ loved (ἡγάπησεν) the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor,


42 This reunification takes place, famously, in the bridal chamber itself. See here the Gospel of Philip at NHC II 3 70.17-20: “But the woman is united to her husband in the bridal chamber. Indeed those who have united in the bridal chamber will no longer be separated.” See further Meeks, “Image of the Androgyne,” 189-97, on the reunification of the androgyne in so-called gnostic texts. More generally, on the reunification of opposites, see Derwood C. Smith, “Jewish and Greek Traditions in Ephesians 2:11-22” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1970), 121-38.

43 To be sure, Philo speaks critically of Aristophanes’ myth (and rejects androgyny) at Contempl. 63, but his reading of Genesis 2:21-24 here presupposes his engagement with it, and shares its concern for the union of formerly “divided halves.” See Levison, Portraits of Adam, 75-76.
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way (οὕτως [καί]) husbands should love (ἀγαπᾶν) their wives as their own bodies (ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα). He who loves (ὁ ἀγαπῶν) his wife loves himself (ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ). For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

“Therefore (ἀντὶ τοῦτον) a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh (καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν).”

This mystery (μυστήριον) is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love (ἀγαπᾶτω) his own wife in this way (οὕτως), as himself (ὡς ἑαυτὸν), and the wife, that she respects her husband (Eph. 5:25-33).44

As with Philo, it is love—here repeatedly as a command (5:25, 28 [2x], 33)—that plays a central role in putting the human together again. It is love, however, in the school of Christ—formed, shaped, and modeled after his love for the church (vv. 25-27). It is also, however, love in the school of the body—indebted to a view of the human person diametrically opposed to the rugged, autonomous modern; a catechesis in “marriage-as-more-than-contract.” That is, for Paul, marriage creates “one flesh” (v. 31), one “body” (v. 28), one “self” (v. 28, 33). Like for Genesis’ authors, it puts the human together again.

Modern translations like the NRSV do not help us here. After 5:25-27 has delineated the “how” of wife-love (the “school of Christ”), verses 28-31 go on to narrate the “why” (the “school of the body”).45 The answer, implied by the NRSV, is an appeal to self-love born out of self-interest. I place the Greek and (NRSV) English of 5:28 below:

Οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν [καί] οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα.

In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies.

The critical addition in the NRSV is the “they do”—not present in the Greek, which reads literally, “…to love their own wives as their own bodies.” That is, where the Greek is ambiguous, the NRSV is not. Reading ὡς as a comparative, the NRSV’s Paul makes the love of self an example for the love of wife.46 This way of reading ὡς then sets off something like a chain

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44 For reasons that will soon become clear, I avoid the NRSV translation here, and use the ESV, modifying it slightly (see v. 33).
46 For commentators who take this line, see Andrew Lincoln, Ephesians, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 378; Ernest Best, Ephesians, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 548-50.
reaction: verse 28b ("He who loves his wife loves himself") now reads like the flip side of 28a—a utilitarian argument for wife-love; and verse 29 cements (γάρ) the argument in an appeal to empirical realities—crassly put, you look out for yourself, so look out for your wife as well. Thus runs Paul’s logic if wife-love is based on a comparison to the empirical reality of self-love, conceived autonomously. To the question of “why,” Paul answers (essentially) “me.”

If this is the case, however, why does Paul cite Genesis 2:24—and the “one flesh” (μία σάρξ) union of husband and wife? In fact, it is precisely this Genesis citation that rules out the comparative sense of ὡς. The whole of verses 28-30 builds toward the citation in verse 31, and only makes sense in light of it—that is, if Paul believes (following Genesis) that marriage creates a real, ontological union of persons (“one flesh”). It is the vital link, and all that precedes it is best read with it in view. With Genesis 2:24 (Eph. 5:31) in view, the ὡς does not suggest comparison, but explicates identity.47 Strange as it may sound to moderns—for whom joint bank accounts are difficult to conceive, much less a joint self—but very much in keeping with the sketch from antiquity I have drawn above, Paul here means what he says: “husbands are obligated to love their own wives as their own bodies” because, well, they are those bodies (v. 28a); “the one who loves his wife loves himself” because, well, she is that self (v. 28b); and Paul’s observation that “no one ever hated his own flesh” (v. 29) gains its rhetorical power from the fact that, well, she is that flesh. And Paul knows all of this because, well, Genesis 2:24 told him.48 And just in case the reader missed it, Paul returns to it one more time (v. 33), now unmistakably: “Let each one love his own wife in this (σῶτις) way, as himself (ὡς ἑαυτόν)”—thus bookending the argument begun at verse 28. Marriage creates “one flesh,” one “body,” one “self.” It puts the ʾādām together again.

Only, though, to a point. This is, to channel Paul (5:32), a small mystery—negligible in fact—compared with the “great mystery” (μέγα μυστήριον) that Paul reveals through a bit of (highly) creative exegesis. Marriage, as we learn already in Genesis 3, is an unstable locus for God’s project of setting the ʾādām to rights, and never the primary one for Paul (cf., 1 Cor. 7:8, 27-29, 32-38). Rather, the primary locus of this project is Christ, and Christ’s body—the church (ἡ ἐκκλησία). In fact, this relationship undergirds this entire section (5:23-24, 25-27, 29-30, 32), and the letter as a whole. Here, too—as with the union of husband and wife—we tend to

47 So, in line with the same sense in Takamitsu Muraoka, “The Use of ΩΣ in the Greek Bible,” NovT 7 (1964): 51-72 (here 56-57), and contra BDAG, s.v. ὡς 1a. Similarly, see Markus Barth, Ephesians 4-6, AB 34A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 629-30; Rudolf Schnackenburg, Ephesians: A Commentary, trans., Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 252-53; and Frank Thielman, Ephesians, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 387.

48 The same logic lies beneath Paul’s polemic in 1 Corinthians 6:15-19 (specifically the otherwise difficult verse 18)—although here it is sexual union itself that forges the bond—and his instructions to Corinthian husbands and wives in 1 Corinthians 7:1-4. It is also the logic behind Jesus’s words in Mark 10:1-12 // Matthew 19:1-9. The same basic impulse is in the rabbis (b. Ber. 24a; b. Yeabam. 62b). For discussion, see J. Paul Sampley, ‘And the Two Shall Become One Flesh’: A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33, SNTSMS 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 33.
think in something less than real terms. But, as in the marriage relationship, everything in Paul’s Christo-ecclesial logic in 5:25-33 depends on a real union. Christ “loved the church” and “gave himself up for her”—all with the dual purpose of “consecrating” her and presenting her “glorious” (5:26-27). The language is marital, but as we have seen, precisely because it is marital, it is about union. Paul gets suggestive in 5:29—everyone “nourishes” and “cares” for their flesh (σάρξ), just as (καθὼς καὶ) Christ also [does] the church” (i.e., his σάρξ)—and explicit in 5:30: “We are members (μέλη) of his body (τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ).” None of this is a great surprise; he has said similar things elsewhere (Rom. 6:4-5; 1 Cor. 6:15; 12:12-27).

The real surprise—the μυστήριον—is Paul’s argument in 5:31-32. Immediately after 5:30, Paul cites Genesis 2:24: “…because we are members of his body. For this reason (ἀντὶ τούτου), a man will leave his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (5:31). Paul will make his scriptural exegesis explicit in 5:32, but it is worth stopping here, and attending to how he situates his citation. In LXX Genesis 2:24, the purpose clause that begins the verse (ἐνεκεν τούτου) looks back to the human’s exclamation: “Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” and its subsequent division into female (γυνη) and male (ἀνήρ; 2:23). For Genesis, as we have said, marriage (2:24) is the response to this union/division (2:23). Paul, however, retains the Genesis citation in toto,49 but gives it a new antecedent (“we are members of his body”): Genesis 2:24, for Paul, now explains a different union—that of Christ and his church.50 One can get at Paul’s logic by phrasing the citation as a question, and making its antecedent the answer. Why, in other words, does the “husband” leave and cleave to his “wife” (5:31)? Because, 5:30: “We (ἡ ἐκκλησία) are members of his body.” But this makes no sense—unless Paul thinks the “husband” of Genesis 2:24 is Christ and the “wife” is his church. Which is precisely what he admits in 5:32: “This mystery is great, and I refer it to Christ and the church.” That is, Paul reads Genesis 2:24, and he sees there, in the foggy mists of primeval history, Christ cleaving himself to his church.51 The Christo-ecclesial body—that μέγα μυστήριον of Genesis 2:24—is Paul’s answer to the plight of Genesis’ fractured ἅδαμ. Here, in this body, standing amidst a fractured humanity, the ἅδαμ is made whole.

Is this excessive exegesis—too much to read out of a simple citation? Quite the opposite, 5:31-32 is simply the (scriptural) culmination of an argument that pervades the letter. Ephesians may never utter the name

49 Modifying only the purpose clause (ἐνεκεν τούτου → ἀντὶ τούτου), which does not change the meaning, but which may only enhance the point here, that Paul is drawing attention to his citation’s new antecedent (so Thielman, Ephesians, 388-89).
50 Even more so, of course, for those early readers of Paul (א D F G, etc.) who included a paraphrase of Genesis 2:23 (ἐκ τῆς σαρκός αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων, “from his flesh and from his bones”) prior to the citation—thus making the physical connection of the church with Christ’s body all the more tactile.
51 Much as, for instance, Philo looks into that foggy past and sees the Mind (“male”) cleaving to sense perception (“female”), thus constituting a human body (Leg. 2.14). The referents given to the actors of Genesis 2:24 are different, but the form of exegesis is identical.
“Adam” (Ἀδάμ), but it uses its generic Greek equivalent (ἄνθρωπος) in highly evocative ways. Foremost, of course, in that central Christo-ecclesial passage, Ephesians 2:14-16:

For he himself is our peace, who has made both one (τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἑν) and has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility, the enmity in his flesh, abolishing the law of commandments in decrees, that he might create in himself (ἐν αὐτῷ), from the two (τοὺς δύο), one new human (ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον), so making peace, and might reconcile both in one body (ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι) to God, killing the enmity in him.

Given the above, the text largely exegetes itself. It would, in fact, be difficult to find a passage that draws together more of our themes to this point. Paul’s gentile pagans were “alienated from Israel,” “hopeless,” and “godless” in the world (2:11-12). That basic duality for Paul—Jew and gentile—was, outside of Christ, a fact of human existence. In Christ, however, precisely this duality (τοὺς δύο) is, at least soteriologically, abolished. Duality, that is, becomes unity. Jew and gentile “both (οἱ ἁμαρτήματα) have access in one Spirit (ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι) to the Father” (2:18). Christ reconciles “both (τοὺς ἁμαρτήματα) to God in one body (ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι)” (2:15; cf., 3:6). They comprise “one new human” (ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον; 2:15)—the restoration, nay renovation, of the primeval ἄνθρωπος/ʾādām. That human, of course, is none other than Christ himself; the church (ἐκκλησία) is his body (Eph. 1:23; cf., Col. 1:15-22). Or again, the Christo-ecclesial body is Paul’s answer to the human plight.

None of this, strictly speaking, is for that body itself. This unified people, Paul’s eschatological ἐκκλησία, composed (shockingly) of Jew and gentile alike, is a portent—raised and seated “in the heavenlies” (2:6; cf., 6:10-20) so that a whole host of malevolent, cosmological forces (ἀρχαί καὶ ἐξουσίαι) might see the “manifold wisdom of God” (3:10), that is, the

52 In Paul’s corpus, Ἀδάμ occurs seven times, at Romans 5:14 (2x); 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45 (2x); and 1 Timothy 2:13–14.
53 That is, it uses precisely that term (ἄνθρωπος) that the LXX uses across Genesis 1-2 to translate מָנָא—until, as we saw, the shift in 2:16 to Ἀδάμ. See LXX Genesis 1:26–27; 2:5, 7 (2x), 8, 15, 18.
54 The translation is my own.
55 It is, in fact, precisely the gentiles’ reception of the πνεῦμα—and their newly vivified life—which so shocks Paul, and convinces him that these pagans are now God’s people, apart from Torah (Rom. 8:1–17; 15:16, 19; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:13; 2 Cor. 3:3; 5:5; Gal. 3:1–5, 14; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 1 Thess. 1:5–6; 2 Thess. 2:13; cf., Luke’s account of Peter in Caesarea in Acts 10:34–48 [particularly, vv. 45–47]). Which is also why Paul, to put it mildly, insists that his newly-renovated pagans in Galatia continue as they started (by πνεῦμα), and not by the law (Gal 3:2–3).
56 A renovation that continues: speaking later to these gentiles-in-Christ, Paul can urge them to put off the “old human” (παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος; 4:22), so characteristic of their pagan life, and to put on precisely this “new human” (καινὸς ἄνθρωπος; 4:24)—since this is God’s fresh act of creation, and the “body” that is growing up into its “head” (4:15–16). See here also Colossians 3:9–11, particularly the evocative language of this new human, in which there is no Greek or Jew (etc.), being renewed in the “image” (τίκών) of the one who created it (cf., Gen. 1:27).
remarkable plan (οίκονομία; 3:8-10) that—despite their cultic, ethnic, political, and socio-religious hostilities (see 2:11-12; 4:17-24)—God had in fact flipped the script on the powers at the cross (2:16), joining these two into “one body,” so “making peace” (2:15). Nor, however, is the “oneness” of this ἐκκλησία just an apocalyptic sign for a motley crew of “powers” in the netherworld. It was (and is) a sign to the world—heaven and earth—of its promised future (1:10). For the moment, of course, the world will have to wait. In the present, it is only here—in this Jew-gentile body (σῶμα), the church—that humanity finds its connection to Christ, its head (κεφαλή; 1:23). There is coming, though, a day—the “fullness of the times”—when “all things will be recapitulated in Christ” (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ; 1:10).

Of that promised future the church is a signpost, or better, a sacrament—sacramentum rendering in Latin the μυστήριον of Ephesians 1:9 and 5:32 (cf., 3:3, 9). This is, truly, a great mystery—that the church makes present now, to echo Irenaeus, the final recapitulation of all things (Haer. 3.11.8; cf., 1.10.1);\(^\text{57}\) that the church makes visible now the great surety of the Christian hope: that one day, that greatest of dualities—heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1)—will be one. Not only now, of course, but for Paul, from “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). And so we come full circle, back to primeval history. This, it seems, is the greatest mystery of all—that this was the plan all along. That long before there was Adam and Eve, there was Christ and his church. That long before the plight, there was the solution.

V. CONCLUSION

What to make of all of this? And why does any of this matter in a volume devoted to essays on the historical Adam? Traditionally, the question of Adam and Paul runs from Genesis 3 through Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15—over the well-worn paths of (original) sin, guilt, death, and the soteriological importance, or lack thereof, of (the historical) Adam for how to conceive them. This essay studiously avoids these flashpoints. On that way of narrating the plight, the individual stands center stage, with his or her status before God paramount. In this essay, I forge a different path through both Genesis (fronting chs. 1-2) and Paul (fronting Ephesians). There is in each, I suggest, an alternative (social) depiction of the human predicament and its solution—one which resonates with a broader ancient concern (Jewish, Christian, and pagan alike) to overcome the plight of duality. Other ways of narrating the plight are valid—no, important. What I offer here is one, among many, of the threads that make up the tapestry of ancient Adamic exegesis.

It is, however, to my mind, a particularly important one for our own day, not least for our ecclesial witness within it. That is, I offer this thread not purely as an intellectual exercise, but for pastors trying to navigate what are turbulent cultural and ecclesial waters at present. In an age of ironies such as ours—of technological connection and social disintegration; of tribalism

and transhumanism; of global politics polarized between ethno-nationalisms that idolize the *Volk* (on the right) and identity politics that fragment the body politic into so many interest groups (on the left)—the question of a common humanity is vital. Do we share anything in common? Christian faith insists that we do: not just the image of God in us, but Jesus Christ himself as the true human who grounds our common humanity. So, Paul:

> Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and *in him all things hold together* (Col. 1:15-17).

This common humanity, however, which is not so common today, is realized now, in a focused way, in the church. As Paul goes on, “He is the head of the body, the church” (1:18). For those Christians who wish for a less fragmented society, the answer is a renewed belief in, love for, and vital connection to the church, where God is putting humanity back together again. Ecclesial identity trumps, and must *always* trump, all other forms of identity. To fail in this regard is to reject precisely the locus in which God's salvific work is, at present, made real. And (it needs to be said) this is manifestly *not* a call to insularity, precisely because the church is a *firstfruits*—anticipating the more robust, cosmic, and final reconciliation of *all* things (Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 1:9-10).

In this respect, and back to the question at hand, this essay is in large part a plea for a hierarchy of concerns vis-à-vis the question of Adam. Much concern with the loss of the “historical Adam” arises from an understandable concern that it ruptures the link between Adam and Christ, thus cutting the ground out from beneath soteriology. In plain language, it removes the plight to which Christ is the solution. But this gets the order of Adam and Christ exactly backwards, making Christ dependent on Adam, and elevating Adam to a position of greater soteriological significance than the church. This is, to my mind, a mistake. As I have been at pains to say, Christ and the church precede Adam, and long outlast him. Put otherwise, the story of the first humans is *internal* to the larger, more fundamental story of Christ and his church, which is itself a story about all of humanity, and creation writ large (so, Romans 8). The loss of Adam does not entail the

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58 For those who find the language of “belief” jarring vis-à-vis the church, it is precisely such an article of faith according to both the Apostle’s and Nicene Creed.

59 Such concern seems to be the motivating factor, for instance, behind the collection of essays in Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves, eds., *Adam, The Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014). See the editors’ comments in their introduction at pp. ix-x, as well as in their essay, “Threads in a Seamless Garment: Original Sin in Systematic Theology,” 209-24, most directly at p. 210: “If we are to be theologically consistent, rejecting a historical Adam and original sin would leave us without a recognizably Christian gospel.” Much better, to my mind, are the essays in Stephen C. Barton and David Wilkinson, eds., *Reading Genesis after Darwin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). On themes related to this paper, see particularly Stephen C. Barton, “‘Male and Female He Created Them’ (Genesis 1:27): Interpreting Gender after Darwin,” 181-202 in the aforementioned volume.
loss of Christ.\textsuperscript{60} Quite the contrary: there is no such thing as humanity apart from Christ, and no such thing as humanity renewed apart from Christ’s church. A high “adamology” does not absolve a low ecclesiology. Instead, it reflects disordered priorities.

But to end on a more positive note: this reading of Genesis 1-2 and Ephesians is profoundly good news, the best possible news, for it insists that the solution precedes the plight. It insists, in other words, on the absolute priority of God in salvation at every turn. The good news is not just soteriological, nor ecclesiological, nor even Christological (tout court). It is theological proper. It is good news about God. Knowing that his 
ˈādām would fracture, God set out from eternity past to put it right in Christ and church. And now, in the present, looking out over his fragmented ˈādām, he sees the beginning of a καινός ἄνθρωπος, a new human. He sees the church; he sees Christ. “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (Rom. 11:33). It would not be an inappropriate thing, in light of such a gift, to do as Paul does, and to throw our hands up in praise at the wonder of the divine economy.

If all of this seems a revisionist account of Genesis 1-2, of humanity’s plight and solution, I insist that it is not. It has, in fact, an ancient pedigree. As St. Cyril of Alexandria lamented, “Satan has broken us up,” and it is Christ’s work to put us back together.\textsuperscript{61} That is exactly what he has done, is doing, and will do. The first word belonged to St. Augustine, and so the last word does too—now, however, in full:

“Adam is thus scattered throughout the globe. Set in one place, he fell and, as it were, broken small, he has filled the whole world. But the Divine Mercy gathered up the fragments from every side, forged them in the fire of love and welded into one what had been broken. That was a work which this Artist knew how to do; let no one therefore give way to despair. An immense task it was indeed; but think who the Artist was. He who remade was himself the Maker; he who refashioned was himself the Fashioner.”\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{60} Madueme’s and Reeves’s use of “seamless garment” for the place of Adam in the fabric of Christian theology is telling, given that this analogy, in the history of Christian theology, is typically reserved for the church. To be sure, the essay purports only to be about original sin, but at every point in their rhetoric, the “historical Adam” and original sin together signify the area of their primary concern; they are both part of the “seamless garment.” Even in their title, then, they engage in the sort of replacement that I here question. Their “seamless garment” is, in actuality, something closer to dominos, and I do not believe theological doctrines should be set up as such. I prefer the image of a pyramid, which allows fundamental things to remain fundamental, and not dependent on things of lesser importance.

\textsuperscript{61} In Joan. 7 (PG 74:69), here cited in de Lubac, Catholicism, 34. More broadly, de Lubac’s discussion (pp. 33-47) of sin and redemption in fundamentally social terms—with copious references to the church fathers, but also derived from Paul’s and John’s writings—has been a fundamental point of entry for this essay.

\textsuperscript{62} Enarrat. Ps. 95, 15 (PL 37:1236). Trans., de Lubac, Catholicism, 376.
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SEE THE TRUE AND BETTER ADAM: TYPOLOGY AND HUMAN ORIGINS

BY JOSHUA PHILPOT

 Nearly every biblical studies scholar accepts the premise that the biblical authors employ typology as a literary device both within the canonical Old Testament (OT) and in New Testament (NT) allusions and quotations. This premise is largely without dispute, although the scope of typology is debated. The main features of biblical typology are historical correspondence and escalation, which can be applied to persons, events, and institutions. The question proposed in this paper is as follows: if one accepts that the antitype in a typological relationship is a historical person (e.g., Jesus), then must the type be historical also? One way to address this question is to consider Adam, whom the Apostle Paul says is a “type (τύπος, typos) of the one who was to come” (Rom. 5:14). The thesis is that the use and reuse of Adam as a typological figure demonstrates that the biblical authors assumed Adam to be historical, and that the use of Adam in a typological relationship requires historicity.

In order to arrive at a confident conclusion, this paper will be divided into several parts. First, I will endeavor to show what typology is (a working definition), and that the basis for typological relationships in the Bible are found within the OT and not simply across the NT. I will argue that the biblical authors show that God acts in accordance with his nature, and thus the development of typological patterns involves his sovereign guidance and intervention in historical acts of correspondence and escalation. Second, I will demonstrate evidence that typological relationships between persons, events, and institutions only appear in historical accounts, and thus the basis for the presence of a type-antitype relationship must be founded upon historical data and not literary contrivance. Third, I will draw a conclusion as to whether the presence of the Adam-Christ type is only possible if the historical nature of the type and antitype is assumed.

I. TYPOLOGY FROM ABOVE

 Discussions about the relationship between the OT and the NT often include the notion of typology, especially with regard to OT quotes by

1. Joshua Philpot is the Pastor of Worship and Administration at Founders Baptist Church, Spring, Texas.
2. In the present work, “above” means the analysis of typology as a hermeneutical discussion in which the biblical canon is the ground and warrant for typological interpretation. A
Jesus and the apostles. These discussions normally entail the realized or fulfillment formulae that the NT authors employ to quote connections with the OT, e.g., “As it is written,” or “that it might be fulfilled.” A quotation formula is not necessarily an indicator of a typological relationship, but the discussion proceeds nonetheless, and the relationship between what was written down in the Old and applied in the New becomes the subject of inquiry within a given text. Definitions of typology are legion, but they generally consist of components that are agreed upon, at least in part, by the vast majority of biblical scholars. Achtemeier’s definition is common, that typology “from below” would be the analysis of typology based on a combination of Scripture and critical methods. In systematic theology, “above” and “below” are traditionally used to describe one’s approach to doing Christology.


typology is “the study which traces parallels or correspondences between incidents recorded in the Old Testament and their counterparts in the New Testament such that the latter can be seen to resemble the former in notable respects and yet to go beyond them.” As a subset of the canonical approach to reading the OT and NT, typology assumes the teleological relationship of one text to another (historical correspondence), with one divine author guiding persons, events, and institutions through human agency. The question of whether the analogical relationship includes a prophetic element—“prophetic” in the sense that the type foreshadows a greater future occurrence (i.e., escalation)—is also a subset of typological analysis, although if one accepts the divine inspiration of the Bible then the forward-looking nature of the type is a given.

The presence of the Greek τύπος and its cognates is the first possible indicator that a typological relationship exists. The lexeme occurs 15 times in the NT and can mean imprint, image, form, pattern, or example. Most scholars do not hold to the minimalist criteria that seeks to identify types as only those that include an instance of τύπος, or that there must be a fulfillment formula within the immediate NT context referencing an OT text. But since there is no clear formula that may indicate a type, the method

Baker, Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of the Theological Relationship Between the Old & New Testaments (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), 169–89.

6 Achtemeier, “Typology,” 926.


9 Two influential works on τύπος in the last century are Goppelt, Typos, and Richard M. Davidson, Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τύπος Structures 2 (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series; Andrews University Press, 1981). Davidson’s study is more recent, but he unnecessarily obscures biblical typology by assigning new vocabulary to τύπος structures, like Vorbild (the impression, or type) and Nachbild (the image, or antitype), which he calls “molds.” Similarly, Benjamin J. Ribbens, “Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue,” JTI 5, no. 1 (2011): 81-95, defines typology as “ikonic mimēsis” (distinguished from “symbolic mimēsis”) which correlates with “figural interpretation,” an analysis that follows the work of Frances M. Young, Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

10 BDAG, s.v. “τύπος.” Cf., John 20:25(2x); Acts 7:43, 44, 23:25; Rom. 5:14, 6:17; 1 Cor. 10:6; Phile. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7; Heb. 8:5; 1 Pet. 5:3. The cognate ἀντίτυπος appears in Heb. 9:24; 1 Pet. 3:21. LXX: Exod. 25:40; Amos 5:26; 3 Macc. 3:30; 4 Macc. 6:19.

11 On the other side, there is the typological maximalism of scholars like Peter Leithart: “Far from being illegitimate grounds for theology, typology, I submit, is the only ground for understanding the theological contribution of the Old Testament” (Peter J. Leithart, A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel [Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003], 16). Later in the same work, Leithart writes, “My argument will be that typology not only can be made practical, but that, rightly done, it is the only possible basis for practical use of the Old Testament” (18); “A church that refuses typology cannot hear the word of Yahweh” (24); “All application of Scripture is presumptively, even when not explicitly, typological” (24). The argument in the present paper affirms Leithart’s concern that typology is both relevant and inherent in the text of the Bible. But statements like “only ground for understanding” or “only possible basis” or “cannot hear” overstate the case.
proposed by G. K. Beale is worth adopting. He sees five characteristics that are common in types and which serve to reveal typological relationships with or without the presence of τύπος: (1) close analogical correspondence of truths about persons, events, or institutions; (2) historicity; (3) a pointing-forwardness; (4) escalation in meaning between correspondences; and (5) retrospection.\(^\text{12}\)

While these five characteristics are often narrowed down to two for the sake of brevity, that of historical correspondence and escalation,\(^\text{13}\) Beale is right to note several other key factors in types. David Schrock, in addition, argues that any typological analysis must also include the covenantal context of a type, and that “genuine types must arise from within the biblical text and be organically related to one another through the progressive covenants of the Bible.”\(^\text{14}\) Schrock’s analysis builds upon that of Richard Lints, who argues that the biblical text has three interpretive horizons: textual, epochal, and canonical.\(^\text{15}\) These refer to the immediate context of a biblical passage (textual horizon), the context of the given epoch of Scripture wherein the passage falls, such as the Mosaic period or Davidic dynastic period (epochal horizon), and the context within the whole of revelation (canonical horizon). Schrock follows Gentry/Wellum in suggesting that this model can be strengthened by placing the epochal horizon within the progressive-covenantal structure of the Bible which finds its telos or goal in Jesus.\(^\text{16}\) Thus, in order for a genuine type to exist, it must be “textual in its origin, covenantal as to its theological import, and Christotelic in its teleological fulfillment.”\(^\text{17}\)

For the attentive reader, the historical character of typology presents a question: is a typological relationship merely the re-presentation, or re-imaging, of facts across the testaments? There is general agreement that typology, by its very nature, entails the coexistence of the symbolic and the physical within each type, and so goes beyond the simple repetition of persons, events, and institutions. One well-known example is the OT tabernacle, which symbolically embodies the religious ideal of God’s dwelling place, as far as the OT is concerned. Yet it is also a physical structure


\(^\text{13}\) See, e.g., the work of James M. Hamilton Jr., “The Typology of David’s Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel,” *SBJT* 16, no. 2 (2012): 4-25; idem., “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification Between Joseph, David, and Jesus,” *SBJT* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52–77. Hamilton’s analyses also include sequential event correspondence as an indicator of a type. In addition, Hamilton argues that the likelihood of a type increases with the presence of linguistic correspondence.


\(^\text{16}\) Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012); “…to reflect upon typological structures and their development is simultaneously to unpack the biblical covenants across redemptive history” (107).

\(^\text{17}\) Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type?,” 5.
from a specific time period in the history of Israel that is often repeated/reused in Israel’s literature and worship for theological emphasis.\(^{18}\) Both the symbolic and physical features of the tabernacle are embodied in the NT with the person of Jesus Christ, whose eternal nature comprises both the symbolic notion of Christian salvation and the physical manifestation of God’s presence on earth.\(^{19}\)

If the central assumption is that God’s revelation progresses through stages of redemption, or epochs, a revelation that develops over time, then a key conviction undergirding the discussion of biblical typology must be the *historicity* of the persons, events, or institutions within which the type-antitype relationship exists, which is the primary concern of this paper.

A major question thus emerges from this outline: is the character of the type determined by the intention of a divine author?\(^{20}\) Given the divine nature of the biblical text, to read the Bible as a unified presentation of God’s Word accords best with the nature of the text itself, given its divine inspiration.\(^{21}\) This interpretive strategy is better suited to the nature of biblical exegesis as opposed to reading the Bible as one interpretive interest among others. Lints rightly notes, “An evangelical theological vision must… be embedded in the framework of God’s lordship over all of history.”\(^{22}\) Our interpretive framework, therefore, should be the interpretive framework of the Scriptures. This framework should seek to make sense of history, both past and future, in the same way that the Scriptures do.\(^{23}\) If one holds that Scripture is the final authority on matters of faith and doctrine, then one must adopt the notion that Scripture interprets Scripture, or the *analogia fidei* (analogy of faith), a principle held so highly by the Reformers and theologians ever since. The contention of this paper is that a key way in which the OT and NT reveals an internal interpretive framework is through typology.

Typology, thus, is first an attempt to analyze the relationships between texts of Scripture (where they exist) within the redemptive-historical framework of the Bible. Second, it seeks to understand and embrace the

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\(^{20}\) This question is also the concern of Ellis, *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament*, 127.


\(^{23}\) “...a theological framework cannot simply mine the Scriptures looking for answers to a set of specific questions that arise uniquely in the modern era. It should seek out the questions that the Scriptures are asking, for these remain the questions that are important for understanding the past and present and future.” Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 269.
worldview of the biblical authors who wrote under divine inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). And finally, typological relationships arise out of the text and should not be forced onto the text. In this way typology is distinguished from allegory in that it involves real historical realities and presupposes corresponding events.

A. Old Testament Typology within the Old Testament

As noted above, types are discovered exegetically and not on a merely analogical or arbitrary basis. Lest the analysis of typological relationships be relegated to OT connections within the NT or to fulfillment formulas alone, many scholars have also noted patterns of how OT authors use and reuse persons, events, and institutions typologically within the OT in order to advance their message. Indeed, von Rad has noted that while inner-biblical relationships exist at a purely textual level in the OT, one must look beyond them. The theological import of these relationships and its bearing on the interpretation of a given OT text is more in line with

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25 The literature on the difference between typology and allegory in the Bible is vast. Lints argues for a greater emphasis on typology since “allegory involves a relationship stemming from some accidental or peripheral aspect of the original event, person, or institution” (Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 304 fn17). See also G. K. Beale, “Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of Jesus’ and the Apostles’ Exegetical Method,” in The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New, ed., G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 395; Carson, “Mystery and Fulfillment,” 404. For an argument that the allegorical method is warranted in Scripture if intertextually based and exegetical, see A. B. Caneday, “Covenant Lineage Allegorically Prefigured: ‘Which Things Are Written Allegorically’ (Galatians 4:21–31),” SBJT 14, no. 3 (2010): 50–77. Jean Daniélou, From Shadows to Reality: Studies in Biblical Typology of the Fathers (London: Burns & Oates, 1960), in addition, shows that the use of typology was central to the Fathers (not simply the Reformers) and their understanding of the Bible. Against the common assumption, Daniélou goes on to say that the Church Fathers do not conflate typology with allegory and knew the difference very well. Further, the trend to use allegory to express Christian philosophy is “something quite different from typology. It goes back to Philo. In his Treatise on Paradise, Ambrose, who was much influenced by Philo, writes as follows: ‘Philo confined his attention to the moral sense, because his Judaic outlook prevented him from a more spiritual understanding’ (IV, 25; C.S.E.L. 281, 21). Spiritual here denotes the Christological or typological sense, while moral implies philosophical allegory. What Ambrose calls the moral sense is therefore something entirely different from typology” (57). Eventually, “Christian philosophy freed itself from an allegorism which artificially tied it to the Bible, and became an independent approach” (58).

traditional typology than historical-grammatical exegesis since these texts often have a foreshadowing sense (thus in agreement with Beale’s outline above). He writes,

We see everywhere in this history brought to pass by God’s Word, in acts of judgement and acts of redemption alike, the prefiguration of the Christ-event of the New Testament. …This renewed recognition of types in the Old Testament is no peddling of secret lore, no digging up of miracles, but is simply correspondent to the belief that the same God who revealed himself in Christ has also left his footprints in the history of the Old Testament covenant people.

Thus, the OT narratives, according to von Rad, already possess a forward-looking element (Beale) even before the epochal change brought about by Christ. Typology is not direct prediction, like prophecy, but indirect (cf., Rom. 16:25–27). For von Rad, “Jahweh’s designs far transcend [the] historical contexts,” and the cyclical nature of historical persons, events, and institutions point to final fulfillment or ceaseless movement toward such fulfillment:

No special hermeneutic method is necessary to see the whole diversified movement of the OT saving events, made up of God’s promises and their temporary fulfillments, as pointing to their future fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This can be said quite categorically. The coming of Jesus Christ as a historical reality leaves the exegete no choice at all; he must interpret the OT as pointing to Christ, whom he must understand in this light.

27 Contra Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible*, 181, who argues that typology is strictly retrospective and not prospective in the same sense that prophecy is prospective. So also Walther Eichrodt, “Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?,” in *Essays on Old Testament Interpretation*, ed., Claus Westermann (London: SCM, 1960), 229: “While in prophecy the messenger of God proclaims the future which has been opened to him and seen by him, a type possesses its significance, pointing into the future, independently of any human medium and purely through its objective factual reality; and in many cases its function is still hidden for contemporary people and is disclosed only when the gaze is turned backward from the New Testament time of salvation.” This would indicate that Eichrodt holds to a prospective nature of typology (“pointing into the future”), even if the prophetic element of typology was lost to the original author of the type.


The NT authors, therefore, do not invent typology, but typological interpretation receives its imprimatur from the OT, which, as von Rad concludes, is pointing toward the fulfillment of all types in Jesus Christ.  

B. Two Conceptions

Two conceptions of typology have taken root in biblical scholarship among those who share the common ground I detail above on the characteristics of a type. The first conception is typology that understands there to be correspondence and escalation between various persons, events, and institutions in salvation history. We might call this the traditional position of typology. With Beale, the primary distinction is that typology in this conception is also predictive. The patterns between persons, events, and institutions point forward to greater persons, events, and institutions. This pattern can be seen initially within the OT (as noted above in von Rad), and is not limited to OT/NT type-antitype relationships primarily. Thus, there is divine activity within each type leading and shaping salvation history to an appointed antitype. The presupposition in this conception is the acknowledgement that the human author is inspired by the divine author, and thus writes without full knowledge of the future events to which he points. In this way, he spoke better than he knew. This conception, in addition, treats historical persons and events recorded in Scripture as literally true. The correspondence between types in the first conception may have a vertical dimension (i.e., the relationship between earthly and heavenly realities) or horizontal dimension (i.e., the relationship between earlier and later historical facts). Both dimensions are prevalent, although the vertical dimension finds more footing in the text and in modern scholarship than the horizontal.

The second conception of typology recognizes the patterns of correspondence between persons, events, and institutions, but attributes this relationship to literary contrivance rather than divine intervention. This conception is more prominent in historical critical circles. The text and the

32 Herbert Hummel argues persuasively for the validity of OT types in Hummel, “The Old Testament Basis of Typological Interpretation.” In his view, the OT authors lay the foundation for the typological interpretation. See also Bird, “Typological Interpretation within the Old Testament.”

33 On this delineation I follow the work of Paul M. Hoskins, Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 18–32.

34 So also Gentry/Wellum: “Typology ought to be viewed as a subset of predictive prophecy, not in the sense of verbal predictions, but in the sense of predictions built on models/patterns that God himself has established, that become known gradually as later texts reinforce those patterns, with the goal of anticipating what comes later in Christ” (Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 103).

35 Baker, Two Testaments, One Bible, 178.

36 Note Goulder’s assumption that “the more completely an incident or detail falls into pattern as an antitype, the more suspicious we shall have to be of its historicity… the thicker the types, the less likely is the passage to be factual” (M. D. Goulder, Type and History in Acts [London: SPCK, 1964], 182). Other proponents include von Rad, “Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,” 319–429; Lampe, Essays on Typology, 9–38; R. T. France, Jesus and the
authorship is a literary phenomenon. Typology is only useful insofar that it can be used independently of historical presuppositions. Thus the weight of responsibility in shaping a type is the biblical author(s), and the reshaping of the text over several epochs happens without divine intervention. In this conception, the type is not predictive, and any prospective element to a type is discounted.\(^{37}\) The proponents of this conception attempt to acknowledge typological relationships that are acceptable to critical scholarship. Naturally, this conception is less confident in the historicity of the biblical narratives.\(^{38}\)

### C. Two Assumptions

Within the first, more traditional conception, typology is grounded on two assumptions. The first assumption is that the basis for typology is God's unchanging nature, that is, that God acts consistently according to his nature and purposes. Indeed, “it is God's ability to hold history together that serves as the foundation of typology.”\(^{39}\) The God of the OT is not unpredictable like the gods of the ANE. Nor were the prophets ignorant of God's nature and purposes. Rather, God's actions and intentions are given according to his principles of revelation to men. He does not change.\(^{40}\) He keeps his word and reveals himself to subsequent generations.\(^{41}\) His promises are confirmed and fixed in time, and yet he is at the beginning and at the end: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god” (Isa. 44:6). Thus typology depends on a strong view of divine providence and knowledge.\(^{42}\)

The second assumption, prophecy, depends on the first. By definition, a type speaks to a greater reality in the future, and thus the greater significance of a type is forward-pointing. Something yet to come takes precedence over the present type, and thus typology has an \textit{a fortiori} (lesser to greater) quality.\(^{43}\) The OT describes a revelation and divine action which are shown...
to be incomplete. And yet this does not mean that its future fulfillment was lost to the prophets. If the conviction of the first assumption is that God is Lord of history, it follows that prophetic predictions were not fleeting utterances or wishful thinking. Foulkes rightly comments:

When [the prophets] warned of God’s impending judgments, they were not beating the air; their words contained inspired predictions of future events. The prophet was not always given to see the time in which, in the purpose of God, the inevitable judgment or deliverance would come. Prophet and psalmist alike, as they shared the same understanding of history, were baffled by continuing successes of wicked men and nations. But basically they understood the factors that determined the history of their own and other nations. They understood the principles of divine action that already had been revealed in history, and which would work themselves out in the future as they had done in the past.

Further, the command to recount the past acts of God for future generations is foundational to Israel’s belief system and worship. This point can be illustrated by noting the Song of Deborah (Judges 5), where the musicians gather at the watering places, and “there they repeat the righteous triumphs of the Lord” (5:11). Thus the prophets have a basis for their sermons, that God will act in ways that he has in the past.

The theory that God’s past actions may be recited to every generation as myths finds no basis in the OT. If history in the biblical mindset is instruction in the ways of God, and if the truth of the narratives must be preserved, then it is implausible that types might be based on abstractions:

The narration of history is prophetic: it is less an account than an address, not an it but a thou, not a once upon a time but a now. Judgment is pronounced on all the past, so that it may become instruction, a very word from God for the present. As God has acted, so He is acting in the contemporary situation in judgement or in mercy and so He will act in all His future dealings with His people.

The importance of noting these assumptions for typology, therefore, should be obvious. The repetition of persons, events, and institutions in

awaits the consummation (the ‘not yet’), has introduced greater realities—realities directly linked to the inauguration of the kingdom, the dawning of the new covenant era, and the arrival of the new creation” (107).

46 Foulkes calls this “rehearsal,” whereas Wright calls it “recital” (George Ernest Wright, God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital [Studies in Biblical Theology 8; London: SCM Press, 1952]). For various texts that commend the rehearsal of Israel’s history for future generations, see Num. 33; Deut. 1:19-3:28, 29:2-29, 32:7-47, 33:1-29; Josh 23-24; Judg. 5:4-31; 1 Sam. 7; 2 Sam. 22; 1 Chr. 16:8, 12, 15-22; 2 Chr. 20:6-9; Neh. 9:6-31; Mic. 6:3-5; Hab. 3.
the typological schema assumes historicity. The providential and prophetic basis for typological relationships is firmly fixed in the historical outline, and thus there is no room for abstractions. An abstraction within a type would be the result of literary contrivance on the part of the biblical author in which he refers to a non-literal person, or a symbolic figure, or one which is simply a representation of a greater ideal (in our case, Adam). But if abstractions were plausible types, then a single instance would be so rare as to stand apart.

As it stands, the Bible is full of people who are identified by the standard criteria as types in one epoch (e.g., Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, Elijah), which involves a fundamentally organic relation between their counterparts in later epochs (e.g., principally Jesus, but also other prophets like Moses and John the Baptist). If just one link in a strong chain is broken or weak, the entire chain fails. Thus it is with typology. From Adam to Noah to Abraham to David to Jesus, the historical correspondence within the chain must be solid and without any weak parts (i.e., abstractions). If one of the types in the strand is not historical, then the whole typological pattern collapses.

On this foundation, I conclude that in order for a type to exist within a biblical text, the type and antitype must have its basis in historical facts.


50 I distinguish here between “representation” and “representative.” In theology, Adam is the federal head of humanity as the “representative man,” the progenitor of the human race. He is sometimes referred to as a representation of human origins, meaning Adam is used literally as a wisdom figure to refer to the earliest stages of mankind’s interaction with God, or to Israel’s beginnings, such as Peter Enns’ “proto-Israel” thesis. Enns writes that we should read “the Adam story not as a universal story to explain human sinfulness at all but as a proto-Israel story,” or to read “the Adam story as a wisdom text—a narrative version of Israel’s failure to follow Proverbs’ path of wisdom.” In this way Adam is a personification of sorts, and the effects of his sin refers to the failure to fear God and attain wise maturity. In other words, Enns is saying that Adam is an abstraction, a kind of etiological paradigm through which we learn how temptation works. Peter Enns, The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn’t Say about Human Origins (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012), 91, 142. For an argument against this view see C. John Collins, Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?: Who They Were and Why You Should Care (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011).

51 One might conceive of a type in the realm of literary stories like the ANE tales of Leviathan, which find their way into the biblical text (Job 3:8, 41:1; Ps. 74:14, 104:26; Isa. 27:1). But even the creative use of Leviathan has a basis in real history. It is clear from Ps. 74 (“crush the heads of Leviathan,” cf., Ezek. 32) that Leviathan refers to Egypt, and from Isa. 27:1 (“In that day, “fleeing serpent,” “twisted serpent”) that the tale of Leviathan is being used literally to refer to Satan, whom the NT calls the “ancient serpent” (cf., Isa. 51:9; Rev. 12:9, 20:2). The point is not whether typology employs metaphors to recall persons/events, but whether the type is a historical person or occurrence.

52 Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 304.
D. Objections to the Historicity of Types

An objection to the first conception that types must have a historical reality based on Scripture also comes from David Baker, who suggests, on the evidence of the types of Jonah and Job, that “it is possible to have correspondences between an imaginary person and a real person.”53 In his view, even if the type is artificial, the type still has educative value. He writes,

There is an undoubted correspondence between Macbeth or Hamlet and real people, and the significance of these characters is not lessened by the fact that they are fictional. Likewise, whether or not they ever lived, there are real correspondences between the lives of Jonah and Job as portrayed in the biblical stories and those of Jews and Christians today.54

To this line of thinking, I offer three counterpoints. First, although the analogy from Shakespeare might serve to illustrate Baker’s point, it does not illustrate a biblical point. Shakespeare never claims divine inspiration as the biblical authors do. Thus, it is the analogy and not the biblical text that is artificial, however convenient that analogy may be. Second, on the basis of the divine inspiration of types/antitypes, one must accept that if Jonah or Job are merely symbolic of a greater principle—the literary contrivance of the second conception, parabolic or otherwise55—then they are the only biblical types that might fall into that category. Thus, Jonah and Job would be outside the norm of what constitutes a biblical type. It is the convenience of the skeptical critic that he or she might choose which types are historical and which types are not. But insofar as the authors of the NT are concerned (namely, Matt. 12:38–42; Luke 11:29–32), Jonah’s three days in the great fish correspond typologically to Jesus’ three days in the tomb. If one accepts that Jesus’ three days look back to the three days of Jonah, is it possible, within the context of the Bible, to confirm the factuality of the one while denying the other? In addition, if one argues as Baker does that Jonah and his three days refer not to a factual person or event, then one must also apply the same logic to the rising up of the men of Nineveh in judgment (the main point of Jesus’ message), as well as the Queen of the South (1 Kgs. 10:1–13; 2 Chr. 9:1–12), as well as Solomon, all characters that Jesus uses typologically to illustrate the salvation he brings through judgment. Would Matthew and Luke (and Jesus, for that matter) mix an imaginary type with real types? The link between Jonah and the others in relationship to “this generation” supports the conclusion that Jesus considered these to be historical.56 Further, Matthew’s assertion that “one greater than Jonah

53 Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible*, 180 fn17.
54 This analogy is offered in a section arguing for the basis of typological relationships, chiefly that types are historical by definition. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible*, 179–80.
56 Although the conclusion here was reached independently, see the same argument for internal consistency and authenticity of the Jonah story in Douglas K. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*,}
is here,” indicating escalation from type to antitype, prophet to prophet, accords best with correspondence to a factual type and not an imaginary one. What good is it for Jesus to be greater than an imaginary prophet?

Third, the comparison in Matthew 12 with Jonah, Sheba, and Solomon comes at the end of a section beginning in 12:1 where μεῖζόν (meizon) and πλεῖον (pleion) are used to show how Jesus is “greater” than the temple/priesthood (12:6), prophets (12:41), and kings (12:42). Thus Jonah is the archetypal prophet in this instance where both his life (in the belly of the fish) and message (to the Ninevites) is presented in typological relationship to Jesus’ life and work. As the archetype, Jonah, not Moses, is put forward. If, thus, Matthew intended to show Jesus’ life is concomitant with an imaginary hero like Jonah, the typological relationship would falter. The text assumes that the death and resurrection of Jesus will not be ambiguous. Neither was the death and resurrection of the prophet Jonah. If a person or event is rejected on the basis that it is miraculous, then the Bible’s fabric is torn. If, however, we accept the divine inspiration of the text, then the authenticity of the miraculous events of the Bible (such as Jonah’s three days) are not so far-fetched. The church stands or falls, after all, on the factuality of a dead man coming back to life.

II. TYPOLOGICAL LOGIC

Before delving into specific texts that mention Adam as a type of Christ it may be helpful to summarize the analysis above in a logical fashion. Insofar as the assumptions of typology form the basis for the first conception above, and insofar as this basis illustrates the presence of types within the Bible, the logic of typological relationships can be outlined as follows:

1. The repetition of persons, events, and institutions in the Bible is called “typology.” In other words, the reuse by later biblical authors of persons, events, and institutions recorded by earlier biblical authors is what constitutes typology. In this way typology connects past events with present ones, while also linking current events with the past.

2. Since typology is history (literally history repeating itself), the repetition of a future historical person, event, or institution must have historical correspondence with a past person, event, or institution.

3. Typology thus validates the historical veracity of a past person, event, or institution on the basis of its repetition in history and on God’s unchanging nature.

4. The assumption also includes the repetition of God’s acts in greater glory. Thus a primary distinctive of typology is that it is predictive. The pattern that emerges from a text points forward to something greater or to fulfillment.

WBC 31 (Waco: Word, 1987), 440.
5. Typology, therefore, includes both progression and escalation alongside of historical correspondence and repetition.

6. In the recording of history, the greater glory has been revealed in Jesus Christ who is presented as the Son of God and who is a living human being. As the antitype—the final culmination of OT history—all types point to him or foreshadow him in some way.

7. It follows, then, that if the person and work of Christ is historical (the antitype), then all persons, events, and institutions that point to him (the types or prototypes) must also be historical. Otherwise, the nature of the type-antitype relationship is tenuous, and its basis a mere abstraction.

8. Therefore, if one accepts that God has revealed his purposes to man, and that he is unchanging in his nature, and that he is the Lord of history, then one must also accept the veracity of the historical accounts of persons, events, and institutions recorded typologically in the OT and NT.

III. BIBLICAL WARRANT FOR ADAM TYPOLOGY

My contention in the previous section is that if an antitype (e.g., Jesus) is considered historical by the biblical authors, then the type (Adam, Abraham, David, etc.) must also be historical. Otherwise the human type is a figurative agent being used for the purpose of literary contrivance. In other words, the significance of the antitype—the person and work of Christ—loses its historical import when its type is merely a literary device and not a historical person. But as I argued above, the biblical pattern is to use historical persons as types, not to use abstractions as types. The Bible reveals this pattern progressively yet subtly.

The task at present is to look at specific biblical texts in which Adam is alluded to, or recorded as, a type both within the OT and into the NT. I intend to be intertextual in my approach, but looking not only at explicit statements of Adam and Christ in typological relation to one another. In order to see the forest and not simply the trees, we must look at the Adam-Christ relationship from the larger framework of Scripture. After all, biblical texts do not stand in isolation to one another. Rather, as argued above, “all of the individual texts of the Scriptures stand in a teleological relation to one another because they have one divine author who has brought the facts of history into teleological relation to one another.” And yet, theological patterns are intrinsic to the Bible and should not be the creation of the interpreter. This is why Paul’s assertion in Romans 5

57 “A form of gnosticism results when revelation is considered by itself, as providing a set of general truths that are to be believed independent of the other parts of the redemptive process” (Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 275).
58 Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 273.
59 Vos makes this point forcefully in his Biblical Theology.
that Adam is a “type” is so important because it leaves aside any doubt as to Adam’s relationship to Christ.

Therefore, given the nature of OT types within the OT, we must trace Adam typology through history and not as a singular type-antitype relationship as designated in the NT. This more naturally follows the first conception of typology, affirming the forward-leaning character of the type through the biblical covenants, which finds its ultimate telos in the fulfillment in the NT in Christ’s person and work (cf., Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4; Heb. 1:3).

A. VERBAL, THEMATIC, AND CONCEPTUAL CORRESPONDENCE

Types are determined along the lines of repetition and correspondence, which occur at the verbal, thematic, and conceptual level. Conceptual and thematic correspondence is much more prevalent in Adam typology. At the verbal level, however, we also find repetition and historical correspondence as to the work that God gave Adam to do, outlined in Gen. 1:28. The tripartite command to “be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and have dominion,” finds expression at key stages in the covenantal structure of the OT, informing every period of redemptive history.60 These connections bolster the notion that Adam and his work is picked up by later authors in typological ways as an interpretation of history.

First, the text of Gen. 1:26–28 illustrates the creation of Adam in the image of God followed by the divine commands:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (וירח בוד anv ובעוף השמים ובבהמה ובכל הארץ ובכל הרמש הרמש על הארץ). So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion (פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ וכבשה ורדו) over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה הרמשת על הארץ).

This pattern of commands appears again in Genesis 9 following the flood:

9:1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (פרו ורבו ו⽣ון את הארץ). The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the

60 Although an analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, also relevant is Beale’s book-length treatment of how the Garden of Eden is presented in Genesis as a typological pattern for the Israelite sanctuary, or tabernacle/temple (see The Temple and the Church’s Mission). In brief, Adam and Eve disrupt the project due to sin, but God’s plan to make the whole earth his sanctuary continues. The mission of the church is to further the plan of God formerly established at creation, which finds its fulfillment in Revelation 21-22.
ground and all the fish of the sea (כל חיות הארץ ועל כל דגי הים).

9:7 And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it (מרו זבע בארא ורבע ביה).

Notice how the divine command is repeated to Noah in nearly identical terms, showing that Noah is now part of a new creation in the same way that Adam was. The commands Noah receives (be fruitful/multiply) and mandate (fill the earth) are the same as Adam received. Moreover, the extent of Noah's mandate—birds (עוף) of the heavens (שמים), fish (דג) of the sea (ים), creeping things (רמש) that creep (רמש) on the earth/ground (אדמה/אדן)—matches that of Adam. The main difference is that the pre-fall Adamic command to have “dominion” (רדה) now extends to the realm of “fear” (ירא) in post-fall Noahic conditions. The repetition and verbal correspondence illustrate, therefore, that Noah now serves creation in an Adamic-type role. As the ectype (a type between the archetype and antitype), Noah is not the fulfillment of Adam's mandate, however, which is reserved for the final Adam. Rather, the establishing of a new covenant (ברית), Gen. 9:9) requires a new creation mandate. But the Adam-type pattern is now established on the conceptual level and verbal level.

Contextually, the covenant God makes with Noah (Gen. 8:20–9:17) now forms the impetus for the divine commands to a post-flood generation. Noah and his offspring must subdue the creation as image bearers in the same way that Adam and his offspring subdued creation. Moreover, they must multiply it. Adam's disobedience severed the divine relationship between man and God, and thus the restatement of the command in Genesis 3:15 (image bearers being fruitful and multiplying their offspring) is now given to Noah, while the expectation of divine fulfillment of man's offspring is projected into the future. Noah is Adam's offspring both physically (Gen. 5:28–32) and symbolically as the seed of the woman who carries on the task of defeating the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Moreover, the significance of God's purposes in commanding the creation to be fruitful and multiply is seen in the inheritance of this charge to Abraham and his offspring. The same task given to Adam is now received by Abraham (Gen. 17:6; 22:17), Isaac (Gen. 26:22, 24), Jacob (Gen. 28:3–4; 35:11), Joseph's sons (Gen. 48:4, 16), and Israel (Gen. 47:27; Exod. 1:7, 12).

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61 See the lexical analysis of בֵּרִית by Peter Gentry in Kingdom through Covenant, 717-78.
62 See also Bruce Waltke’s analysis on Genesis 8–9 wherein he demonstrates that the flood narrative is modeled after Genesis 1 in showing a renewed creation: Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, Genesis: A Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 128-29.
63 The connection between Noah and Genesis 3 should not go unnoticed. The name “Noah” (נָחֹ) sounds like the Hebrew word for “rest” (נָחְת) or “comfort” (נָחָם). Thus Lamech, Noah's father, draws out the connection with Genesis 3 when he names his son, “Out of the ground (אדמה) that YHWH has cursed (ארר), this one shall bring us relief (נחם) from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.” In this one sentence, the cursed land and painful toil recalls the cursed land and painful toil of Genesis 3:17.
The Adam-type extends to other covenant heads as well. The mandate to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28) is formalized covenantally through the three administrations of Noah, Abraham, and David. While the details/contexts of each covenant vary, the main premise is the same, that a chosen seed will come and subdue the earth. Each covenant is progressively more particularistic in defining the seed. The Noahic covenant defines the Semitic race (Shem, Gen. 9:26–27), the Abrahamic covenant the nation of Israel (Gen. 12:1–3), and the Davidic covenant the messianic king from the family of Jesse (2 Sam. 7:8–17). Further, each covenant is equally universal in scope, as the Noahic pertains to every living creature, Abrahamic to all the nations, and Davidic to all realms. Moreover, Gage has shown how the investiture of Adam with the commission to “rule” (דָּרֵא) in Genesis 1:28 is linked explicitly in the OT with the work of the last Adam in the NT. He notes, first, how Balaam prophesies that the one from Jacob shall “have dominion” (דָּרֵא in Num. 24:19). Second, David shows in Psalm 72 that a future messiah will “rule (דָּרֵא) from sea to sea” (Ps. 72:8). Third, the Father commands his “son” to “rule (דָּרֵא) in the midst of your enemies” in Ps. 110:2, perhaps the clearest use of “rule” with creational covenantal and messianic implications. In connection with Paul’s citation of this psalm in 1 Corinthians 15:25–26 with reference to Christ’s subduing of spiritual enemies, Gage comments, “While Christ is now Ruler de jure, at the resurrection of the just he will be Ruler de facto, having destroyed death itself (cf., Heb 2:8; Col. 2:15).”

The New Covenant is the ultimate fulfillment of the divine command (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:22–32; cf., Luke 22:20). Like Genesis 1, following the resurrection Jesus breathes new life into his disciples (John 20:22), and commissions them to be fruitful and multiply by filling the earth with new disciples (Matt. 28:19–20). This redemptive correlative to the divine

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66 Originally the seed of promise comes through Isaac and then Jacob (Israel), but Paul is clear that this seed anticipates Christ (Gal. 3:16).


69 Cf., Romans 15:8–12.

70 Goldsworthy, however, rightly notes that dominion is “a consequence of the image” and not a definition of image. See Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 96; Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 169–72. D. J. A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” *TynBul* 19 (1968): 101, concludes, “Image is to be understood not so much ontologically as existentially: it comes to expression not in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. This function is to represent God’s lordship to the lower orders of creation. The dominion of man over creation can hardly be excluded from the content of the image itself.”

command expresses all concerns in the original mandate. The one exception is that the New Covenant mediator serves as the literal fulfillment of the divine command, the chosen Seed of Genesis 3:15 who has defeated the offspring of the serpent through his resurrection (Ps. 110:6; Isa. 53:10). Moreover, the image and likeness of God which was impressed on Adam in Genesis 1:26–27 reflecting both his person and work is ultimately realized in Jesus, the true Adam (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45, 27) and true image of God (John 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15).

In all of this we see the pattern of repetition and verbal correspondence of Adam and his work within the OT and leading into the new. The type characteristics outlined above are thus confirmed in that the historical Adam (both his person and work) is picked up in the Genesis account establishing a typological relationship, which then progresses through the covenantal structure of the Bible. Human identity—being made in the image of God—is thus rooted in God’s creative act. If this is denied, humans are mere cosmic accidents. Returning to Schrock’s test that the covenants help determine hermeneutical warrant for biblical types, we might conclude that the validity of the Adam-type is substantially greater given the repetition of the divine commands to Adam at creation within the biblical covenants in the rest of Scripture. As the covenants escalate within the framework of the Bible, so does the import of the divine commands to Adam, all contained within the OT.

And yet Adam is not called a “type” until Romans 5:14, which is the supposed crux interpretum of the typological relationship between Adam and Christ: “Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type (τύπος) of the one who was to come.” This verse is part of a larger argument in 5:12–21, but alone lays out several points: (1) Adam introduced death into the world, (2) all men die, even great men like Moses or those who did not transgress God’s command in the same way Adam did, and that (3) Adam prefigures or foreshadows Christ (“the one who was to come”) in some way. Moreover, 1 Corinthians 15:20–49 also relates Adam to Christ in two separate verses:

73 Like God, Adam is a communicative being, naming the animals.
74 Like God, Adam fills the earth, subdues it, and rests from his work. On this point see Gage, The Gospel of Genesis, 32.
75 I do not mention the Mosaic administration in this section since the divine commands are not repeated in Exodus 19–24. I note, however, that theological implications of the command are repeated to Israel, who, like Adam, is God’s “firstborn son” (Exod. 4:22–23), and who takes on Adam’s role in the world while bringing about the true Son of the Father (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15), the vine (Isa. 5:1-7; John 15:1), and servant (Isa. 43:1-3; Matt. 12:15-21), namely, Jesus.
76 Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 282 fn35.
77 See Schrock’s conclusion in “What Designates a Valid Type?,” 25-26.
78 Although Davidson unnecessarily muddles the language of the Adam-Christ type-antitype relation with new vocabulary, his analysis is still correct: “Like a hollow mold the OT representative man Adam is a Nachbild (of the divine design) which functions as a dynamic Vorbild, shaping the end (eschatological) product (Christ) so that it ineluctably
15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.
15:45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being,” the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

These explicit occurrences are part of several texts where Adam “the man” is referred to more implicitly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References to Adam</th>
<th>References to Christ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romans 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5:12 “sin came into the world through one man”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5:13 “sin...was in the world before the law”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5:14 “death reigned from Adam to Moses”</td>
<td>“free gift of grace”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“who was a type of the one to come”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:15 “many died through one man’s trespass”</td>
<td>“free gift of grace”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:16 “one man’s sin”</td>
<td>“unlike the free gift of grace”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“judgment...brought condemnation”</td>
<td>“free gift...brought justification”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:17 “one man’s trespass”</td>
<td>“abundance of grace”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“death reigned through that one man”</td>
<td>“free gift of righteousness reign in life”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:18 “one trespass”</td>
<td>“one act of righteousness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“led to condemnation for all men”</td>
<td>“leads to justification and life for all men”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:19 “one man’s disobedience”</td>
<td>“one man’s obedience”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“many were made sinners”</td>
<td>“many will be made righteous”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:20 “increase the trespass”</td>
<td>“grace abounded all the more”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(devoir-être) conforms to the (historical) contours of the Vorbild and surpasses it by fulfilling the (Christological-soteriological) purpose for which the Vorbild was designed.” Davidson, Typology in Scripture, 311.

79 The quotation formula refers to Genesis 2:7, “and the man became a living person/soul” (אדם אדם מה לברק נפש נפש). The LXX follows the Hebrew (καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἀνθρώπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζώσαν), so it is not necessary to draw strict lines as to which text Paul refers. Paul takes liberties in adding ὁ Ἀδὰμ and ὁ πρῶτος (“first”) to the citation 1 Corinthians 15:45, but this practice is not excessive. Paul simply adds “first Adam” in v. 15a to correlate with the “last Adam” in v. 15b, which is not part of the Genesis 2:7 citation. “First” simply designates what is factually true about Adam in Gen 2, and bolsters the thesis here that Adam was considered historical by Paul.

The significance of Romans 5 lies initially in Paul’s explicit use of τύπος to describe the relationship between Adam and Christ. This language removes any doubt as to whether or not this relationship exists. The point of this essay is not to provide a full exegesis of Romans 5:12–21 or 1 Corinthians 15:20–49, but to note the correspondences between Adam and Christ in these passages. Consider, for instance, the historical nature of Paul’s argument in relation to his soteriological intent. First, there is no clear indication that Paul considered Adam to be a mere abstraction. Everything Paul states assumes a historical person, as he has confirmed elsewhere. Second, Paul’s assertion that “death reigned from Adam to Moses” (Rom. 5:14) assumes a genealogical relationship (cf., 1 Chr. 1:1; 81 For a more recent exegesis of Romans 5:12–19, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Original Sin and Original Death: Romans 5:12-19,” in Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives, eds., Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 271-88.

82 Cf., Acts 17:26, “And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth.” So also Frank J. Matera, Romans, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 137; Otfried Hofius, “The Adam-Christ Antithesis and the Law: Reflections on Romans 5:12–21,” in Paul and the Mosaic Law, ed., James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 181; Schreiner, “Original Sin and Original Death: Romans 5:12-19,” 271–72; Yarbrough, “Adam in the New Testament.” We should note that Paul’s understanding that Adam was historical is not a problem to Enns. In his view, Paul does assume the historicity of Adam, and simply used the biblical idiom available to him at the time, reflecting the limitation of the cultural moment. The assumption is that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References to Adam</th>
<th>References to Christ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:21 “sin reigned in death”</td>
<td>“grace…might reign through righteousness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Corinthians 15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15:21 “by a man came death”</td>
<td>“by a man has come…” “resurrection of the dead”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:22 “in Adam all die”</td>
<td>“in Christ shall all be made alive”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:42 “what is sown is perishable”</td>
<td>“what is raised is imperishable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:43 “sown in dishonor,” “weakness”</td>
<td>“raised in glory,” “power”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:44 “sown a natural body”</td>
<td>“raised a spiritual body”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:45 “the first man Adam” “became a living being”</td>
<td>“the last Adam” “became a life-giving spirit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:46 “first the natural”</td>
<td>“then the spiritual”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:47 “the first man was from the earth” “a man of dust”</td>
<td>“the second man is from heaven”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:48 “the man of dust”</td>
<td>“the man of heaven”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:49 “we have borne the image of the man of dust”</td>
<td>“we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Luke 3:38). Third, “many died through one man’s trespass” (5:15) assumes biological death as Genesis 5 confirms, not only spiritual death. Thus, as Paul moves from death in Adam to life in Christ, he has justification in mind (5:16, 18, “made righteous” in 19) as he did at the beginning of this chapter (5:1, 9), a justification built upon the basis of real consequences of real sin from a real human. Fourth, “disobedience” and “obedience” can only be preserved if the antecedent is a historical occurrence like the one documented in Genesis 3. The one who “disobeys” is Adam, or Adam and Eve as a unit. In Paul’s understanding the consequence of these actions is “condemnation” (5:18) and “death” (5:21). Adam’s sin opened the floodgates of transgressions into the world, which finds its source in one sin in the garden. But Jesus, the antitype, forgives sins and offers new life. N. T. Wright comments, “Christ has not only restored that which Adam lost, but has gone far beyond. … God’s action in the Messiah did not start where Adam’s started, and, as it were, merely get it right this time. God’s action in the Messiah began at the point where Adam’s ended—with many sins and many sinners.” And for those who belong to Christ, they are justified, made right before God.

First Corinthians 15 also shows the importance of Adam in Paul’s understanding as a type of Christ. Like Romans 5, Paul presupposes that his Corinthian readers have a working knowledge of Genesis 1–3. Adam’s existence and createdness in a post-fall sense dominates the pericope, and establishes a pattern of death in which no man can escape, for “in Adam all die” (15:21). But in Christ there is a message of hope, for “all shall be made alive” (15:22).

In his argument about the reality of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:12–58, Paul reveals that Adam is a central figure, which is affirmed in Paul’s use of “first man Adam/last man,” “living being/life-giving spirit” language. Unlike Romans 5:14, here Jesus is actually called “Adam,” a strong historical association that cannot be reduced to literary contrivance. Moreover, as the table above illustrates, there is more complexity to the

if Paul had other scientific methods available at the moment, then he would have concluded with Enns that Adam was not a historical being. See Enns, The Evolution of Adam, 142–45.

83 Genesis 5:3b, “[Adam] fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image,” which includes the consequences of Adam’s sin (“and he died” in 5:4). We should not push a sharp division between biological death and spiritual death in Adam. Paul does not propose an either-or proposition, but assumes one with the other. So also Schreiner, “Original Sin and Original Death: Romans 5:12-19,” 272.


85 Since Adam is the one mentioned in 5:14 one must assume that Paul has only Adam in mind, unlike 1 Timothy 2:13–14 where both Adam and Eve are implicated in the original sin in the garden.

86 “Adam was a type of Christ in his federal representation of humankind” (Lints, The Fabric of Theology, 307).

analogy of Adam–Christ in this section than explicit references to Adam, of which there are only three (15:22, 45[2x]).

In sum, we see that Paul’s typological reasoning of Adam as type and Christ as antitype is clear only insofar that he assumes a historical referent. Indeed, Beale’s assertion that “the NT community’s presuppositions are rooted in the OT” is made all the more plausible since the OT, likewise, assumes a historical Adam. Otherwise, Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15—a high point of Paul’s soteriology, Christology, anthropology, and hamartiology—is rendered unintelligible. We might ask in following, is the basis of Christ’s advent and obedience to God’s commands an abstraction or symbolic representation? If so, then the typological relationship falls apart, the result of literary contrivance for the sake of an argument. Yet if the need for Christ’s incarnation is to remedy the effects of one man’s sin as both Romans and 1 Corinthians attest, then both the sin and person must be historical. Both the sin and the person are typified in Adam, just as the remedy for sin (Christ’s work) and the person by which the remedy comes (the God-man) are aligned together as the antitype.

In taking the verbal and conceptual correspondence together, the following sketch demonstrates the strength of the Adam–Christ relationship. This table is not exhaustive, although it summarizes the relationship and illustrates Christologically, however imperfectly, the proverb that a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecc. 4:12):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic and Conceptual Correspondence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Adam</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exercises</th>
<th>Exercises</th>
<th>Gen. 2; Luke 8:24–25; Matt. 8:16; 2 Thess. 2:8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>dominion in the natural realm</td>
<td>dominion in the natural and spiritual realm</td>
<td>Gen. 3; Ps. 8:6; 144:3; Dan. 7:13–14; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:16–20; Rev. 12:1–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Subdued by the serpent = loss of dominion</td>
<td>Rules over the serpent = exercising dominion over all things</td>
<td>Gen. 3; Ps. 8:6; 144:3; Dan. 7:13–14; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:16–20; Rev. 12:1–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Original sin</td>
<td>No sin</td>
<td>Gen. 3:6, 17; Hos. 6:7(?); 4 Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 4:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Overcome by temptation</td>
<td>Overcame temptation</td>
<td>Gen. 3; Matt. 4:1–11; Mark. 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Garden temptation</td>
<td>Garden temptation</td>
<td>Gen. 3; John 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Exiled from the Garden = never to return</td>
<td>Cut off from the land of the living = leads return from exile</td>
<td>Gen. 3:22–24; Joel 2 (esp. v. 3); Isa. 53:8; 55:12–13; John 5:25–29; Rev. 19–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Original death</td>
<td>Firstborn of the dead</td>
<td>Gen. 5:5; Rom. 5:12–21; 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:21–22; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Figural head of the rebellious human race</td>
<td>Head of the new creation, race of the righteous</td>
<td>Gen. 5:1–5; Luke 3:38; Rom. 2:12; Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Gage, “The Last Adam fills the earth by redeeming the sons of the first Adam”(32).
*** The meaning of בָּאָדֶם in Hosea 6:7 is hotly debated (“But like Adam they transgressed the covenant”), and could refer either to the historical Adam or a place name. For an argument in favor of Adam referring to the historical person, see Derek Drummond Bass, “Hosea’s Use of Scripture: An Analysis of His Hermeneutics” 2009, 185; James M. Hamilton Jr., “Original Sin in Biblical Theology,” 202.

As noted above, in order for a genuine type to exist, it must be textual in its origin, covenantal as to its theological import, and Christotelic in its teleological fulfillment.91 Paul’s use of Adam in Romans and 1 Corinthians confirms Adam’s typological character in all three constraints. What one finds in this relationship is astonishing. The strength of textual warrant for Adam–Christ typology is as great or greater than the warrant for exodus or Davidic typology. In the case of human types, Adam is unparalleled. And yet to deny the historical nature of human types is to deny (1) the perspective of the biblical authors, (2) the historical veracity of the accounts in which

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91 Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type?” 5.
types appear, and (3) the nature of biblical revelation as ultimately leading toward teleological fulfillment in Jesus in the incarnation and resurrection.

IV. CONCLUSION

The sum of evidence in this article leads to the conclusion that the typological argument for the real existence of Adam has textual and biblical-theological warrant. I openly admit that the typological argument is not the final word in the debate on Adamic origins. Far from it. Many competent biblical scholars have argued in favor or against a historical Adam. The typological argument is only one of many ways in which we might approach the question. This argument does advance, however, the debate in one unique way, which is thus: It is not enough to look at the biblical material isolated from an overall framework, to which typology contributes. We must use the Bible’s own categories for determining meaning (historically/theologically) and for understanding the perspective of the biblical authors.92

Further, if we are to make sense of who Jesus is, then we must place him within the Bible’s own presentation. The analysis above reveals, finally, three points with respect to the discussion of the historical Adam: (1) Adam is used typologically throughout the OT, especially in covenantal contexts (Gen. 8–9; 12:1–3; Exod. 4:22–23; 2 Sam. 7:4–17; Jer. 31:31–34). (2) On two occasions in the NT, Adam is described as a type of Christ, the antitype (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:22–49). (3) Given this premise, and on the basis of the nature and characteristics of types within the purview of the Bible, if Jesus is a historical person in a typological relationship with Adam, then Adam must also be a historical person. (4) There are no human type-antitype relationships in the Bible that are based upon abstractions or non-literal beings; only real human beings in history are types. If Jesus’ person (inauguration) or work (death and resurrection) were presented as abstractions or symbols with no basis in history, then Adam could be presented likewise. But as it stands, Jesus is never presented as an abstraction, nor is Adam. And thus the burden of proof falls on the skeptic and not the typological structure, which confirms the traditional interpretation of Adam and Christ as real human beings, the beginning and telos of all humanity.

92 Lesslie Newbigin, Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt, and Certainty in Christian Discipleship (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 93–94: “The reasonableness of Christianity must be understood in Christian terms. The story the church is commissioned to tell, if it is true, is bound to call into question any plausibility structure that is found in any assumptions. The affirmation that the one by whom and through whom and for whom all things exists, exists to be identified with a man that is crucified bodily and rose from the dead cannot possibly be accommodated within another plausibility structure (worldview).” In a similar vein, David Wells chimes in on the operating presuppositions and assumptions in which we start biblical investigation: “Included in these are assumptions of a literary type, which determine how Scripture should be analyzed and employed, as well as those of an epistemological nature, which decide whether our twentieth-century cognitive horizons will be permitted to limit or change what can be accepted from the biblical writings, which have their own horizon. Almost as important as these, however, are the choices that we make with respect to the interpretive framework, the categories of understanding, which we employ in our analysis of the biblical material.” See David F. Wells, The Person of Christ: A Biblical and Historical Analysis of the Incarnation (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1984), 21.
The Apostle Paul clearly falls in line with premise 3 irrespective of his limited scientific knowledge. Our theological forebears (the Fathers, Reformers, etc.) understood Christology by reading Paul and the rest of the Bible, and concluded that the text spoke of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. They believed these two were equal. In this way they revealed their vantage point of revelation and their interpretation of history; that is, that revelation is intratextual (working from the Bible’s own categories and presentation) rather than extratextual (approaching the Bible already with a grid that does not come from the Bible). It falls upon the reader of the Bible to determine how he or she might approach it.

Scripture not only records for us the acts of God (history), it is already understood as a word of revelation by the biblical authors. Scripture has given us an interpretive framework to understand Jesus’ person and work, indelibly linked with Adam, historically and typologically. The apostles, chiefly Paul, say that this is what God means in history and revelation. The typological argument advances this notion forcefully, and regardless of current trends within the debate, should not be summarily dismissed.

93 In other words, the biblical authors read the Bible assuming that Scripture is what Wellum calls a “word-act revelation,” that is, that Scripture is God’s own authoritative interpretation of his redemptive acts through human agency. See Gentry and Wellum, Kingdom through Covenant, 87-92.

94 I wish to thank Jim Hamilton, Dave Schrock, Mitch Chase, and Ryan Davidson for reading an earlier draft of this paper and offering substantive feedback.
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BOOK REVIEWS


More now than ever before in my memory, thoughtful Christians engaged in serious Biblical reflection are comfortable with the possibility that Genesis 1 and 2 do not require the interpretation that God created the world in six distinct twenty-four hour periods. Because of this, scientific data that suggests the universe is quite old and that a long evolutionary process of development of living and non-living entities took place can be interacted with seriously and with welcome. The rift between Biblical faithfulness and good science seems to be waning, and that is a good thing.

However, can the pendulum swing too far? Are there scientific claims, even made by Christians, that go beyond the pale of Biblical, theological, and historical Christian thought? Crossway Publishers set several editors to the task of compiling a compendium of articles to critique one form of scientific analysis that they feel is a compromise of orthodox Christian doctrine on matters of God and the created order in Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique. As the title suggests, the particular scientific course critiqued is what is referred to as Theistic Evolution (TE). As these things go, definitions are of prime importance, and Wayne Grudem, one of the editors, is clear that they are taking on a very particular definition, indeed. Grudem defines TE this way: “God created matter and after that did not guide or intervene or act directly to cause any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter until all living things had evolved by purely natural processes” (p. 784). Working from this definition, three sections emerge in this book, the first on the science, the second on philosophical considerations, and third on the exegetical and theological issues.

The book is long and technical, but can be read a la carte if one wishes. One of the strengths of the compilation is that the science itself plays a central role. In fact, quite respected scientists, arguing from very technical scientific work, are making the case that TE is not scientifically established apart from issues with Biblical data. Let me say here that the thoughtful non-scientist may struggle with section 1, but having this section is critically important in order for a dialogue to persist and bear fruit. A main
objection by those who hold to TE is that those who object simply do not respect or know the science. A book like this quells some of that objection.

What are the central arguments of this book? As one considers the definition of TE that Grudem provides, the concerns boil down to the issue of providence, the place of Biblical authority, and the methodological assumptions of the TE community. Let us look at these in turn.

First, this book maintains that the Bible clearly teaches that God did not just create the world in the first place but that he comprehensively, continually, directly, and meticulously upholds the universe. TE advocates want the process of evolution to be so respected that they do not find the idea of God untethering himself from the process after initial creation to be problematic, it seems. When there are very real gaps and ambiguities, rather than resting in the clarity of Scripture, a doubling-down on traditional evolutionary theory takes place, and this relates to the second strand of concern.

Second, the issue of Biblical authority now comes into play. The writers of this compendium consistently maintain that the work of science has the tendency to go beyond science as a discipline of observation and analysis to that of a worldview with metaphysical implications. Science becomes scientism. Science becomes not just a source of truth about our physical world but a metanarrative, to the point of calling the Biblical text to account at times. Each section of this book consistently points out times that TE advocates question the teachings of Scripture, even when those teachings are nuanced, take genre into account, and allow serious scientific work. The accusations are careful, though. The language of the TE community is one of respecting the text, while admitting the ancient writers were limited by their imaginative horizons.

Third, and quite interlaced with the previous two issues, TE advocates seem quite wed to materialist-naturalistic assumptions in how they do science, claiming that a lean into Biblical theology does not allow the scientist to truly seek inductive answers. But, data does not speak for itself. It needs interpretation. The hermeneutics of science, then, are just as important for science as they are for Biblical interpretation. One cannot avoid pre-commitments, so the books must be cooked at some level.

The authors of Theistic Evolution are thus concerned that scientism has taken hold of many in the Christian scientific community and that a concern to show serious Christians can engage in serious science has led to a equalizing of Biblical authority with certain schools of thought within the physical sciences. In other words, while trying to wed certain parts of theology with science, yet another divorce has taken place unwittingly and faith and science unhinge again, perhaps at other junctures, but important junctures nonetheless. A Christian worldview cannot incorporate a naturalistic approach to anything, even when doxological reasoning is provided, and this conviction does not curb science.

The arguments in this book are nuanced and worth considering for those wrestling with the issues of just how some sort of evolutionary process is true, scientifically and theologically. Again, the book is not taking on an old universe, or that God used a long process of development in shaping the universe and our world in particular, or that some sort of evolutionary
process has internal consistency and clear patterns, nor does this book necessarily deny certain features of pre-Adamic hominids of some fashion. But, the writers are concerned, and I would concur, that the Bible does limit the possibilities of interpretation and calls us to embrace God’s direct and meticulous providence in upholding the universe, and that seeming contradictions between Biblical accounts of creation and science should call certain scientific theories to account since science is still a work in process, whereas the Scripture, though not perfectly understood, is a finished and complete revelation.

My one critique is that I wished more lines were drawn between the crisis that TE poses exegetically and Biblically to pastoral issues of spirituality and ethics. Let me finish with a pastoral account relating to this. Several years ago I taught on the Biblical ethics of sexuality at my church. One of the elders took issue with my teaching, which was the orthodox understanding of sexuality that sex was to be expressed within marriage only and that marriage could only be between one biological male and one biological female. The elder was a serious physicist at a very prestigious university in my region. His reasons for taking issue? Some were quite emotional of course, not least a close family member who is homosexual, but he also led with science. Like the TE assumptions laid out in this book, this elder assumed a certain authority to scientism such that if certain forms of homosexual desire were the result of credible evolutionary processes in some strands of people, then those forms of homo-erotic desire could be trusted. In his view the Bible spoke to an imaginative horizon that it was limited to, given its place in history. He also believed that the Bible focused on certain types of homosexual actions that were rooted in exploitation. I have faced a scenario where a sincere Christian who is a serious scientist let science become scientism, weighed scientism more highly than Christian theology in a key area of doctrine and ethics, and the fallout was painful for all. I did not back down. I believe Scripture, and Scripture alone, frames the larger picture and limits the possibilities of theorization. He eventually resigned his eldership and membership, and he and his wife left the church.

The crisis of science and Christian faith is often unnecessary. But, it is the role of the Bible to frame all of life with ultimate meaning and to limit the possibilities of theories that stem from observing our world. When science is moderated and humble, science itself bear testimony to this.

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1 From what I could glean, there are variances of opinion among the writers when it comes to Biblically acceptable conclusions regarding the age of the universe, pre-Adamic hominids, and the nuances of how God providentially created the world over time, etc.
For those who believe along with Augustine that all truth is God’s truth, no matter where it is found, the continued separation of science and religion in popular imagination is not only regrettable, but dangerous. One can find this separation among both believers and nonbelievers, and unfortunately one can also find it reinforced by those on either side of the debate. High-profile figures in both the academy and the church too often mistreat or misunderstand scientific arguments or religious interpretations, speaking only to the faithful with their misleading rhetoric. Metaphysical arguments are passed off as scientific arguments or vice versa, and anecdotes demonstrating the animosity of one side towards another abound. Perhaps nowhere is this continued separation and even conflict between science and religion more evident than when it comes to evolutionary theory.

These concerns drove the four editors of this volume to organize a research group to engage contemporary scientific discoveries in evolutionary theory from the perspective of historic, orthodox Christianity. Their goal was to think through key areas of theological anthropology such as the image of God, original sin, and the problem of evil, using the discoveries and interpretations of contemporary science as a dialogue partner. The research group consisted of scholars from different denominational backgrounds who participated in several colloquia and a grant project funded by the BioLogos Foundation. There they presented and debated the ideas and research that make up the essays of this book. These events took place at Wycliffe Hall at Oxford, where the editors of this volume all serve as faculty.

In that spirit, the purpose of this book is not to provide a definitive explanation of any of these doctrines, but to present several different theological approaches, methods, and insights that might help provide understanding for the reader who is diligently seeking it. As the introduction points out, this is not a “four-views” book presenting mutually exclusive positions with the goal of having the reader choose one. Some authors support other authors, while others disagree. Some positions critique other positions, while some are complementary. The book offers several possible answers, not definitive answers, and consciously acknowledges the limits of both current scientific theory and knowledge in general.

Following two introductory essays introducing the issues and reflecting on the difference between settled doctrines and theological systems, the book is divided into three parts, each with a respective editor. Part One addresses issues concerning the image of God, Part Two examines issues surrounding original sin, and Part Three focuses on issues raised by the problem of evil. Each part is structured the same way, beginning with a brief introduction by the editor and then moving to an article outlining the key issues raised by the interplay between contemporary science and orthodox Christian theology. Several chapters addressing those issues then follow, offering a variety of approaches to the issues raised, including
biblical, historical, systematic, and philosophical. Put together, each part offers a wide-ranging discussion of a particular doctrine. The respective editors end each part of the book with a reflection on the main thoughts presented in the essays as well as a brief list of further readings.

The book’s strengths and weaknesses are inherent in its goals and structure. The essays are consistently well-written and well-researched, and they certainly succeed in stimulating thought and discussion. They do exactly what the editors hope they will do. For example, I read it while preaching through Genesis 1, so I was particularly interested in the essays on the image of God. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen’s essay helpfully articulated some of the primary contemporary questions and challenges to the doctrine of the image God that evolutionary theory raises. I was not only prompted to think through the doctrine in a fresh way, but was able to bring some of this thinking into my preaching on the subject. Each of the essays on their own, examining the image of God from a functional, structural, relational, or eschatological perspective, did the same. However, since all of the essays approach the doctrine from different perspectives, they raise much more questions than they provide answers. For those with the background and time to think through these issues and incorporate them into their ministries, that is worthwhile, and I would recommend this volume for that purpose. The book advances the discussion and bridges the popular separation between science and faith for those with the theological background to thoughtfully consider the different proposals. For those without a strong background in theology or at least someone well-versed in it to serve as a sounding board, this book would be less helpful.

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Although I’m no scientist, I don’t think it is controversial to call the Human Genome Project the most significant scientific advance since Einstein’s theory of relativity. It has advanced our knowledge of DNA, genetic material, and the makeup of human biology in ways that would have been unthinkable just a few years before its completion. To the surprise of many, the director of this project, Francis Collins, is a fervently committed Christian. In *The Language of God*, Collins describes his journey from unbelief to faith and then provides an overview of several ways that his scientific research supports his theistic and biblical faith.

While a common experience for many Christian scientists is to walk through an existential crisis during college or graduate school before eventually discovering that their scientific research and biblical faith were much more compatible than they were led to believe. Collins’s experience,
however, was different. He grew up in a non-religious home and drifted toward atheism during his college years. However, when confronted with the vibrant faith of Christians while in medical school, Collins was driven to return to reconsider his assumptions. As he encountered C. S. Lewis’s argument for Moral Law, in Mere Christianity, and began to consider the compatibility of science and faith, like Lewis himself, Collins essentially moved from atheism to theism and from theism to Christianity.

Collins’s personal journey from unbelief to belief is an important part of the book; however, most of the book is devoted to exploring and explaining the relationship between scientific evidence and biblical faith. Collins admits upfront that he is not writing theology. He is a scientist explaining the concord between science and faith.

After the introductory section (chapters 1–2) recounting his own journey and considering the plausibility of a worldview that allows for the supernatural, the rest of the book focuses on two major issues: scientific evidence for human existence (chapters 3–5) and the major options for the relationship between this evidence and biblical faith (chapters 6–11).

In the discussion of the question of human existence, Collins considers a number of topics ranging from the history of scientific theories on origins to the Big Bang to the makeup of cells, but the heart of his argument, found in chapter five, unsurprisingly focuses on human genetics. Here Collins retells the story of the Human Genome Project in more detail and then considers the implications of what they had discovered. In short, he argues that the evidence broadly supports Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Following his argument for the genetic evidence for evolution, part three presents a case for the compatibility of evolutionary theory and biblical faith. Collins argues that the scientific evidence for evolution is virtually undisputable; nonetheless, most Americans continue to resist it because they see it as incompatible with both our personal intuitions and, more significantly, the biblical account of human origins. The rest of the book considers the question of whether the relationship between an evolutionary theory of human origins and biblical faith should be antithetical.

Collins presents four possible solutions to this question: 1) science over faith; 2) faith over science; 3) science supplemented by faith where necessary (“science needs divine help”); 4) science and faith in harmony. We cannot examine any of these arguments in detail; however, in his preferred option, science and faith in harmony, Collins concludes that the overwhelming clarity of the scientific evidence and ambiguity of the biblical account should lead us to conclude, like C. S. Lewis, that the account in Gen 1–2 is non-historical.

The book concludes with an exhortation to both believers and unbelievers alike to go where the truth takes them. Once again relying largely on Lewis, Collins urges his readers toward theism that takes account for all of the clear scientific evidence without excluding the overwhelming arguments for the existence of Moral Law in the universe. Following this, Collins includes an appendix treating some of the difficult questions surrounding current advances in bioethics. Again, while the issues are complex, Collins rightly warns us that our track record as a human race should make us slow
to assume that scientific enhancements of the human race would really be for the common good, rather than the good of an elite class or nation.

When considering how to best evaluate this book, as mentioned above, I am not a scientist. I don’t have the capacity to evaluate the biological or genetic arguments that Collins sets forward in this book. However, I don’t think the arguments hinge on science alone. In short, I’m not fully convinced by Collins’s exegetical and biblical assumptions.

First, while Collins’s discussion of the various interpretations of Gen 1 throughout the centuries is largely sound, I’m less sure of his conclusion that “it is fair to say that no human knows what the meaning of Genesis 1 and 2 was precisely intended to be” (p. 153). We should certainly recognize that faithful Christians can disagree over the meaning of these chapters, there is not an unlimited number of valid interpretations of the text. There are really only a handful of interpretations of the text and, while we should hold our view with appropriate humility, I am confident that many Christians now and in centuries past have held the correct interpretation of Gen 1-2.

Secondly, in light of the clear meaning of Paul in Rom 5:12-21 and 1 Cor 11:45-48, I continue to think it is highly improbable that Gen 1-2 does not intend to communicate the existence of a historical Adam. Even if our current interpretations of the genetic evidence seem to point away from a historical Adam, the exegetical evidence for this is strong enough to force us to reconsider the scientific evidence.

Our knowledge of the genetic evidence and its interpretation are constantly changing; the exegetical evidence is not. While we certainly should be open to improving our understanding, we must be careful not to let our current scientific understanding too quickly trump the church’s consensus through the centuries. Our level of scientific understanding is vastly different now than it was two decades ago. Our exegetical understanding of the historicity of Adam and Eve is not entirely different than it was two centuries ago.

This leads to a concluding observation. The rapid expansion of our knowledge of human genetics is a gift from God for which we should be thankful. But the pace of this growing knowledge is very different than the pace of our growth in theological and exegetical understanding. Perhaps there is a different exegetical answer to the question of the history of Adam and Eve; however, we should be slow to press the church to adopt novel approaches to this question and quick to submit to the historical consensus of the church.

I praise God for the work of Francis Collins and the Human Genome Project. I am also grateful for his evident desire to serve the Lord through his scientific research. I would commend this book to anyone wrestling with the relationship of faith and science. However, the exegetical and historical evidence continues to lead me to resist jettisoning the historical Adam. Until then, we should have the confidence that the scientific evidence will eventually advance to help us see the fuller picture and the humility
to continue to search the Scriptures to see where we our understanding may be wrong.

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Some books regarded as great in their first years quickly fade in significance as their cultural moment passes. This has not been the case with Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*. Since its publication in 1952 it has firmly established itself in the Western canon, and it will continue to be read and pondered for centuries to come. The reason is that, while telling a story set in early 20th-century California, it purports to display the universal condition of humanity. The underlying *mythos* of the book is the account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4, and what one of the characters says about that biblical narrative might almost be said of Steinbeck’s novel: “it is everybody’s story ... the symbol story of the human soul.”

For Steinbeck the universality of the Cain–Abel story consists in the deep need every son has for the father’s affection, the corresponding fear of rejection in favor of one’s sibling, the anger that results at perceived slights, and the immoral acts and deep feelings of guilt that follow. This is the basic plot of the story that is told in two iterations: first in the lives of brothers Adam and Charles, and subsequently in the lives of Adam’s twin sons Aron and Cal. In each case, the “A” is granted favor arbitrarily, while the “C” acts out in restless despair. However, in this world there is no purely innocent victim. Being the recipient of both the father’s arbitrary favor and the brother’s envious anger can enervate one’s moral agency. The death experienced here is not necessarily literal, but rather spiritual.

The “sin crouching at the door” of these Abels and Cains is represented by Cathy Ames, who comes crawling up, broken and bruised, onto the porch of Adam and Charles Trask. After becoming Adam’s wife during her convalescence, and giving birth to Cal and Aron in California, she runs away and takes on a new identity as a sadistic and vindictive whore in the town of Salinas. While intensely seductive, she is at the same time a monstrous character who deceives, manipulates, and murders simply because she can. She makes no sense to anyone else, nor to herself. Cathy is believable only as an antisocial psychopath, and some early literary critics saw her character as either a jab at Steinbeck’s former wife or a display of general misogyny. These are, however, missing the point. Steinbeck intends Cathy to be taken symbolically—as the personification of evil. She is inexplicably alluring, a self-destructive force of chaos to which humanity turns in its restlessness.

While *East of Eden* is a description of the tragedy of human spiritual and social life, it is not all darkness. The climax of the book is the realization
that there is a possibility of triumphing over evil. In this regard the story of Adam’s neighbor and friend, Samuel Hamilton is important. The lives of Samuel and his children are marked by the same struggles that beset the Trask family, but somehow their story is one of an overarching joy and fulfillment. This possibility that Samuel represents in an exemplary fashion is stated explicitly by Adam’s wise Chinese servant, Lee. After wrestling intensely with the interpretation of Cain-Abel story, Lee has the epiphany that the Hebrew word *timshel* means neither a simple command that “you must” rule over sin, nor a prediction that “you will” rule over sin. Instead, it is the giving of permission—“thou mayest” overcome sin.

The all-important concept of *timshel* invites further reflection as to what, precisely, it means to have permission to rule over sin. On the one hand, the notion of permission is meant to thread the moral needle between the errors of total freedom or total determinism. The former is a naïve denial of the reality of human existence, while the latter can lead only to despair. By contrast “thou mayest” is a call to responsibility even in the face of our thrownness into a world of chaos that seems to have invaded our very selves. At the same time, permission is not merely a call to responsibility, but also the granting of power to triumph over both one’s wickedness and one’s victimhood. The question these Cain-Abel narratives provoke the form this power takes in one’s life, and how it is attained.

One suggestion as to how one receives this permission is provided in the closing scene as a Cain (Cal) finds renewal by acknowledging his violence and seeking forgiveness from Abel or his representative. An Abel (Adam) finds redemption by granting forgiveness and extending blessing to a Cain. Seen from a wider angle, *East of Eden* attests to the power of narrative itself to transform. It is through stories that one can experience moral change and redemption in time. Finally, since the novel is structured around a foundational biblical text, it invites deep reflection on how it is that the gospel provides permission and renews moral agency in the midst of a fallen world. In these ways, the story generates almost endless possibilities for theological reflection leading to spiritual formation.

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John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015; 255 pages; Price $14.16

John H. Walton is professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College and Graduate School. He has published many books, including *The Lost World of Genesis One*.

The basic thesis of this book is that, if we read Genesis chapter 2-3 in the light of its original contexts; Ancient Near East, we are able to resolve many issues that modern science tend to present and gain a much clearer
understanding of the intention of the author and the message God wants us to learn from it.

He presents this book in twenty-one propositions addressing various issues that a generated when people approach the creation story in Genesis. He argues that, though we should not “overblow consensus on the principles of common ancestry and evolutionary theory as explanation for the existence of life” (13). Whether the scientific conclusion stands the test of time or not, they do not pose any threat to biblical belief (13).

Walton did not engage in verifying scientific claim but instead did a close reading of the Bible as an ancient document and as scripture, exploring its claims in it own terms. He did this against the context of the Near Eastern culture based on recent discoveries on the culture. He asserts that we do not expect a communicator to accommodate an audience that he or she does not know or anticipate (15).

God reveals his work in world in the Bible, but he doesn’t reveal how the world works (17); hence the Bible is not a science textbook. He reemphasizes, “we therefore recognize that although the Bible is written for us (indeed, for everyone), it is not written to us” (19).

He opines that every time we read modern ideas into the text we arrogate authority to ourselves and compromise the text. He engages the text from Genesis and presents some noteworthy points. For example, He points out that in chapter one, voidness and formlessness (tohu wabohu) is not lacking in material but in lack of order and purpose (28). Bara therefore is to bring something into existence by giving it a role and a function in an ordered system. He rejects the idea that creation ex nihilo as a material category comes from Genesis.

Walton examines the seven-day account of creation and working through each of the days he established that Genesis 1 is an account of functional origins and not material origins. An interesting point he makes is on the concept of good; he affirms that good “refers to a condition in which something is functioning optimally as it was designed to do, as God intended” (p. 53). Interestingly, Walton points out that, good does not suggest that everything before the fall was perfect including Adam and Eve (p.57). This idea is radically different from what most of us as Evangelicals (especially from the majority world) have learned during our theological development, but I consider it worth pursuing.

He furthermore discusses the various ways Adam is used in Genesis Chapters 1-5, noting that Adam and Eve must be assigned names intended by the Hebrew-speaking users to convey a particular meaning. He affirms “more is going on than giving some biographical information about two people in history” (59). He recommends that the name Adam refers to human beings as species, in others it refers to the male individual of the species, and in some it refers to the designation of a particular individual as the equivalent of a personal name.

He opines against popular believe that, Genesis 2 rather than detailing creation on day six is actually sequel to the first chapter. With this assertion, the people in Genesis 1 are not only Adam and Eve. It means, “that there may be other people (image of God) in Genesis 2-4, not just Adam and Eve and their family”(64). In interpretation helps to solve many problems
for those wondering how many people were referenced in the early chapters of Genesis.

For Walton, forming from dust should not be rendered in a material sense but as representing the mortality of humans (71-75). He notes, “In the garden, God provided a tree of life. Immortal people have no need for a tree of life. The provision of one suggests that they were mortals (73). The author strongly affirms that we can be born of a woman and still be formed from the dust. He notes, “even though Adam is formed from the dust, he could still be born of a woman” (76).

The author again posits that Genesis does not offer a competing claim about origins. “He is the one responsible for our human existence and our human identity regardless of the mechanism or the time period” (77) Furthermore, he examined the different ancient near eastern accounts on the origin of humans; Sumerian, Akkadian and Egyptian. He notes similarities in the way the ancients presented knowledge in their contexts but also notes that the Bible takes a departure from surrounding cultures.

Examining if Adam and Eve are historical persons, he affirms that theologically issues of sin and redemption may require a strong argument for historical Adam and Eve, but he also observes that to play these historical roles does not necessarily require them to be first human beings. He suggests that one can accept the historical Adam without making decision about material origin. Walton presents Adam as a priest whose assignment was to preserve sacred space. He was to do that with the help of Eve, his wife. Adam and Eve were significant by their election and their role set them apart, not in a generic sense but functional sense. He explains that the early parts of Genesis should be seen as ‘imagistic History’ which is impacted by this type of thinking and he differentiates this from the general idea of myth which may have interpreted Genesis.

An inquisitive reader may not find section on the relationship between the historical Adam, sin, and redemption will need more explanation from Walton. He asserts that all people are subject to sin and death because of disorder in the world not because of genetics (153) therefore there was death before the fall. He concluded this work with the contribution from N. T Wright dealing with the New Testament implications.

Born out of respect for God’s word and need for prosper understanding, this book is very good for anyone trying to reconcile his scientific background and information with the Biblical narrative. As a person who has been very interested in the Old Testament and have been in Christian ministry in Africa for almost three decades, I find Walton’s arguments throughout the book compelling and helpful. He wrote this book in clear and precise language, avoiding technical words, so that anyone with an average biblical education can understand.

Pastors who are working with modern evolutionary minded congregations have a very viable tool for their work. Students in biblical and theological studies will find this book very instructive. It presents a faithful Evangelical perspective to the creation story without dismissing the recent scientific discussions that present alterative narrative on how humans came to existence. Walton presents the hope that it is possible to serve
God without jettisoning of some long held scientific position. I strongly recommend this book for every pastor and Bible student.

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As a general rule, any book that is still being printed after forty years, that has sold more than a million copies, and that has been translated into twenty-five languages, is probably a book worth reading. Richard Dawkins’ book, *The Selfish Gene*, does not disappoint. Published in 1976, this is the book that first propelled Dawkins to fame (and presumably fortune). The book is now in its third impression and continues to hold a place of influence in discussions related to science and evolution. And that’s saying something for a book on science—a field that changes rapidly. Dawkins is especially well known in Christian circles for his book, *The God Delusion*, and his corresponding hostility toward the “mental illness” of faith. Those who have read *God Delusion* and have been unimpressed by Dawkins’ grasp of philosophy and metaphysics may have wrongly written him off as a second-tier thinker. *God Delusion* is, I suspect, Dawkins at his worst. I’ve not read enough of Dawkins’ corpus to say *The Selfish Gene* is Dawkins at his best; but from my limited vantage point, the book is certainly justified in the praise it has received. The book (like most good books) is written in a way that makes it fascinating and intelligible to non-specialists, while yet maintaining the sort of intellectual and scholarly rigor necessary to influence the specialists in the guild. This latest edition has a new introduction, epilogue, and the endnotes have been likewise updated.

Dawkins’ main thesis is the idea that the process of evolution works most fundamentally at the genetic level, rather than the species level. Or to say it again, the key to understanding evolutionary biology is not to look at how “survival of the fittest” intersects with species, but rather how it intersects with genes. Genes (also referred to by Dawkins as “replicators”) do whatever they can to reproduce themselves; this is their mindless and sole aim (hence they are “selfish”). According to Dawkins, the various species that have existed, and that currently exist, are merely vehicles by which genes replicate and multiply themselves. Thus genes, not species, are the “fundamental units” of life in the universe. An extended quote near the conclusion of the book captures well Dawkins’ central idea: “At some point in the evolution of life on our earth, this ganging up of mutually compatible replicators began to be formalized in the creation of discrete vehicles—cells and, later, many-celled bodies.... This packaging of living material into discrete vehicles became such a salient and dominant feature that, when biologists arrived on the scene and started asking questions about
life, their questions were mostly about vehicles—individual organisms. The individual organism came first in the biologist’s consciousness, while the replicators—now known as genes—were seen as part of the machinery used by individual organisms. It requires a deliberate mental effort to turn biology the right way up again, and remind ourselves that the replicators come first, in importance as well as history,” (343). All of which is to say that genes, not species, are the real drivers in evolution.

The main body of the book is Dawkins’ effort to show how his central idea has explanatory force in the field of biology. The existence of male and female, the asymmetrical relation between the sexes, sexual reproduction, altruism, and beyond, are all explained through Dawkins central idea of the selfish gene.

Yet Dawkins, even as a biologist, is unconvinced that genetics can explain everything. In Chapter 11 Dawkins extends his insight regarding genes to a second type of non-material replicator he calls “memes.” (Yes, Dawkins is the guy who invented the term). Memes are cultural replicators such as tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, etc. that develop currency and have staying power in a given culture. “Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperm and eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation,” (249). Human beings, more so than any other species, are uniquely competent in creating memes. Memes might correspond to reality (such as a new scientific discovery), or can be mere legends that have no ultimate connection to reality. This is an insightful chapter that merits a close reading, and was later developed into Dawkins’ second book, *The Extended Phenotype* (1982).

Those interested in religion will note that throughout his work Dawkins presumes that his central insight explains (and explains away) the religiosity of human beings. The selfishness of genes gave the universe human beings, and human beings, through memetic evolution, gave themselves the gods. But it is not clear (either here, or his in *God Delusion*) how the mere idea of evolution (genetic or memetic) inherently disqualifies, at the outset, the idea of God. This is where Dawkins stumbles badly and insists that genetic or memetic explanations *ipso facto* contradict metaphysical claims—as though explaining how the heart pumps blood necessarily invalidates the reality of the soul. The concept of evolution is not without its challenges to certain aspects of Christian theology. But biological evolution, as an explanation for how life came about on earth, or memetic evolution, as an explanation for how God made humanity aware of his presence, is not at all incompatible with Christian theism. Dawkins’ central insight that evolution happens at a genetic level, rather than a species level (or culturally at a memetic level), is neither here nor there with respect to the Christian faith. For the Christian evolutionist or sociologist, Dawkins has, in spite of himself, only shown us a clearer picture of God’s handiwork.

Unlike Dawkins’ *God Delusion*, The *Selfish Gene* is not written with the primary purpose of dismantling faith. He takes a few pot shots along the way, but for the most part he has his sights pointed in other directions. Those
interested in biology, genetics, memes, evolution—and more ultimately, the handiwork of God—will find much to enjoy in Dawkins book.

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A shift appears to be taking place in certain circles of contemporary American evangelicalism. It seems that more and more self-identified conservative Christians are willing to espouse and affirm the narrative of human and cosmic origins coming out of modern science. This transition is far from complete — and whether it will continue remains to be seen. And while some view this shift as welcome or overdue, others still look askance at the scientific community. Still others withhold judgment, perhaps defaulting to a traditional or fundamentalist position, not as a function of staunch and stubborn conviction, but rather ignorance of the finer points and various positions within Christian debate on origins. Deborah and Loren Haarsma’s Origins targets and seeks to help this third group of Christians most directly.

This book serves as an introduction to the issues at stake and the arguments employed by various positions in the Christian debate on human and cosmic origins. In their own words, the authors identify the “purpose of this book [as] to lay out a wider variety of options and to examine what both the Bible and the natural world can teach us about these options” (14). Both of the authors are Christians trained in scientific fields of astronomy and physics, respectively. In addition to their scientific expertise, the Haarsmas demonstrate an awareness and even a sophisticated understanding of Christian theology and biblical interpretation.

The opening chapters provide a helpful foundation for later discussion, outlining the theological and philosophical starting points for a Christian view of science and its relationship to special revelation in the Bible, as well as God’s relationship to the “natural order” of the world. These chapters include extended discussion of such simple but theologically loaded premises as “A scientific explanation of a natural event does not replace God, and it does not mean that God is absent” (46) or, “Because God is the author of both revelations, we believe that nature and Scripture do not conflict with each other” (73).

Having laid this groundwork, the core of Haarsmas’ book outlines different viewpoints on origins. Regarding the text of Genesis, the authors helpful divide perspectives into “concordist” and “non-concordist” views. In these chapters (and throughout the book), the Haarsmas are especially
critical of views and approaches that they find unconvincing scientifically, including almost all “Creation Science” perspectives and theories. This is perhaps not entirely surprising given their own professional backgrounds, but it is something to be aware of before purchasing or reading the book. Those looking for an enthusiastic reading and compelling defense of Young Earth Creationism will not find it here. While the authors do acknowledge some of the strengths of these positions, they do not hesitate to directly (though charitably) point out what they see to be the scientific and philosophical/theological shortcomings of certain views.

The later chapters in Origins deal more directly with the theory of evolution and with human origins in particular, wherein the authors catalogue significant scientific evidence in support of evolution. In these chapters the Haarsmas distinguish between macro-evolution and micro-evolution and various Christian views on both. There is also a chapter devoted to the Intelligent Design Movement, which does not receive a favorable appraisal from our authors, including direct criticism of Answers In Genesis (225). Finally, the book includes sections on theological problems associated with the questions of cosmic and human origins, including an entire chapter devoted to Adam and Eve.

Each chapter concludes with discussion questions, as well as suggestions for further reading. This makes this book especially versatile as a primer on these topics or as a book to be read together and discussed in churches and small groups.

In sum, Origins may serve as an excellent resource for pastors who 1) are not familiar with the nuances of the issues and debates surrounding evolution and Christianity’s relationship to science, 2) would like to grow in their ability to discuss and speak charitably about these issues, or 3) would like to be able to better connect with Christians in their congregations who have training in or work in scientific fields. The writing style of this book is intentionally accessible, thus making this an excellent resource that pastors can recommend or lend to their congregants who are distressed or confused by this debate. For the initiated and those who have already perhaps read several books on this topic, Origins perhaps will be less helpful, though many of the illustrations and discussions may offer fresh language to articulate and understand these discussions. At the very least, becoming aware of and acquainted with this book is well worth the effort for any pastor theologian who aspires to shepherd his or her congregation well with regard to the complex and fascinating topic of human and cosmic origins.

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