Human Nature in Theistic Perspective

with Celia Deane-Drummond and Paul Wason, "Becoming Human in Theistic Perspective"; John H. Walton, "Human Origins and the Bible"; Mikael Stenmark, "Is There a Human Nature?"; Alan J. Torrance, "Is There a Distinctive Human Nature? Approaching the Question from a Christian Epistemic Base"; Alistair McFadyen, "Imaging God: A Theological Answer to the Anthropological Question?"; Celia Deane-Drummond, "God's Image and Likeness in Humans and Other Animals: Performative Soul-Making and Graced Nature"; and John Schneider, "The Fall of 'Augustinian Adam': Original Fragility and Supralapsarian Purpose"

HUMAN ORIGINS AND THE BIBLE

by John H. Walton

Abstract. The ongoing debate surrounding human origins and the Bible is based on interpretations of various sections of the Bible, particularly Genesis 1–3, which are believed by some to contradict some of the tenets of the modern scientific consensus (e.g., common descent of diversification of species through change over time from a common ancestor, polygenism). This paper suggests that an interpretation of Genesis 2–3 in light of a close reading of the Hebrew text and the recognition of its ancient Near Eastern context demonstrates that the scientific consensus need not be in conflict with sound biblical interpretation.

Keywords: Adam; common descent; cosmic temple; Eden; Eve; evolution; Genesis; origins

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As we try to sort out what a convergence between science and Scripture might look like regarding human origins, we must face the difficult fact that the Bible, as an ancient document, will offer no scientific revelation, and science (i.e., a modern understanding of the material world) will be able to offer little basis for interpreting the Bible. When I say that the Bible has no scientific revelation, I refer to the fact that no scientific information is offered in the Bible that would not have been generally known in the ancient world and compatible with old world science. The Bible is therefore not a source for deriving scientific conclusions, so it could be argued that biblical interpretation should not be encumbered with scientific entailments. This intrinsic distance results in the fact that any

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 ISSN 0591-2385

proposed convergence will be built on hypothetical models that attempt to do justice to both bodies of information.

Rather than looking for positive evidence for such a convergence, this more modest proposal has a more focused objective. Based on careful reading of Genesis as an ancient document, applying all possible hermeneutical care, I would like to try to establish a range of possibilities in which the Hebrew Bible, particularly early Genesis, leaves room to develop a view of human origins that takes account of scientific developments, yet also desires to take the text seriously. Specifically we will explore the interface between the scientific issues related to human origins (polygenism and common descent) and the biblical/theological issues (the role of Adam). The information provided here is meant to serve the needs of those who are inclined to accept the modern scientific consensus regarding common descent and polygenism, yet still have an interest in taking the Bible seriously and retaining their faith commitments.

The main focus of this investigation will be Genesis 2. The opening premise is founded on my previous research, which proposed that the first cosmology account of Genesis (Gen. 1:1–2:4a) is an account of the functional origins of the cosmos, which has been designated as sacred space,[1] serving humans who are in the image of God (Walton 2009, 2011). Consequently, we would expect (though still need to demonstrate) that the second cosmology account (Gen. 2:4b–24) may also have as its principal focus a functional interest and orientation and that sacred space will remain a contextual issue.

I will explore briefly the following:

- Interrelationship of the first and second accounts
- Archetypal role of dust and rib
- Nature of humanity in Genesis
- Implications of "good"
- Adam and original sin
- Conclusions regarding elements that are progressive/developmental and represent continuity in contrast to those that are punctiliar (at a point in time)/*de novo* and represent discontinuity

Interrelationship between the First and Second Accounts

The ubiquitous perception is that there is conflict between the two accounts in both focus and the sequence of some events. One response is to tinker with renderings of verbal forms (e.g., Genesis 2:19 in the NIV, "the Lord God *had formed* out of the ground all the wild animals" in order to

preserve the sequence of the first account), while another is to identify the two accounts as coming from sources (P and J) whose differences had not been reconciled according to classical critical scholarship.

These perceived problems, however, arise primarily from the tacit expectation that both accounts provide a material sequence of origins whose details have to be harmonized. If, however, the first account is ordered by important functions (days 1–3: Time, weather, food production; see Gen. 8:22) followed by identification of functionaries (days 4–6), that account offers no suggestion of a material sequence. Instead, it deals with functional elements according to its own sense of priority. Inserting the content of the second account into the seven days of the first account is therefore unnecessary. These are separate accounts that approach origins at different levels and use different, though related, models. The second account is not reporting material events that happened somewhere in the seven days, for neither account is addressing material events. They are not synoptic accounts but sequential accounts that are well aware of each other. The sequential character of the accounts is evident in the text because of the use of the *toledoth* formula in Genesis 2:4, a formula that is used consistently in Genesis to introduce later developments.[2]

The two accounts coincide in their general subject matter, since they are both talking about the ordering of sacred space. The first account deals with creation of order on the cosmic level, and it is to that level that the seven-day model is relevant. The second account deals with the creation of order on the terrestrial level. In the latter, people are installed in sacred space immediately adjacent to and as agents of God's presence to care for it. The first account sets up the cosmos as sacred space to function on behalf of people; the second account sets particular people in sacred space to function on its behalf.

The implications of this are far-reaching. First, and most importantly, it means that the first account does not necessarily refer to Adam and Eve (though Adam and Eve have the image of God and the roles laid out there). It refers to all humans—indeed, to humanity.[3] The people in the first account could *be* Adam and Eve (as traditionally), could *include* Adam and Eve, as some suggest, or one could claim that Adam and Eve came later (as the *toledoth* introduction may imply). But all of these are beside the point. The statements in the first account refer to setting up the functions for all humanity at all times and places, just as the cosmic functions continue day by day. As in the rest of the first account, the statement about people should not be read as a first material act, for material origination is not the focus. In this respect, the first account could coincide with the typical ancient Near Eastern view of people being created *en masse* with their functions in view.[4] I am proposing that neither account alone nor either account individually is designed to give a material sequence.

A second ramification is that the topic of reproduction that figures prominently in the first account need not be in view in the second account. This becomes important when we try to understand the role for which Adam needs a helper. If we cannot be certain that the first account refers to Adam and Eve, we would have reason to interpret the second account independently. In Genesis 2:15, Adam is given a priestly role, which would involve normal priestly functions: serving as a representative in sacred space, guarding sacred space from the intrusion of disorder and expanding the order of sacred space. We can presume that it is in this role that Eve serves as a complementary helper to Adam (not simply as a reproductive partner[5]). This priestly role, not mentioned in the first account, would support an understanding of Adam and Eve as the fountainhead for humanity that may be understood as representational rather than biological. Adam (and eventually Eve) is plausibly differentiated not as the only members of their species, but as the designated representatives of their species in the center of sacred space—a species that has been endowed with the image of God (an act of [functional] creation). If one were to adopt this hypothesis, Adam and Eve would not necessarily be the first humans in God's image or those through whom all humanity is descended.[6] But as the human representatives (priests) serving in God's presence, the disorder of sin would be seen as entering the world through them, and all humans would now be subject to that disorder and would be seen as being corporately subject to sin through these representatives. That disorder has permeated human nature.

Adam's role as priest is further indicated by God's stated intention for Adam. This is evident in the wording of Genesis 2:15: "The LORD God took Adam and caused him to rest in the Garden of Eden." Two elements of this verse, whose significance has not been previously recognized, require comment. The opening clause is comparable to that found in Genesis 5:24 where God "took" Enoch. In that context, Enoch has been distinguished by his faithfulness and consequently is moved (taken) to a different realm, which the text does not identify. A situation parallel to Enoch's occurs in ancient Near Eastern literature. In the Gilgamesh Epic, the flood hero, Utnapishtim, is removed to another location. Note the striking language of tablet 11 lines 199–206:

Enlil came up into the boat,
He took hold of my hands and brought me out.
He brought out my woman, he made her kneel at my side,
He touched our foreheads, standing between us to bless us:
"In the past Uta-napišti was (one of) mankind,
But now Uta-napišti and his woman shall be like us gods!
Uta-napišti shall dwell far away, at the mouth of the rivers!"
They took me and settled me far away at the mouth of the rivers. (George 2003, 717)

Notice the verbs "took" and "settled," similar to the verbs used in the biblical accounts. He is taken to a paradise-type location (at the mouth of the rivers!), where he enjoys immortality. He is neither in heaven nor in the netherworld. He is in a remote place in the normal world, yet Gilgamesh can eventually get to him.

In this I see a possible explanation for the language in both Genesis 2 and Genesis 5. For Adam, he is specially selected, removed to an isolated place in the normal world, and given rest (with all its biblical implications when God is the subject, cf. Exod. 33:14; Deut. 12:10; Josh. 21:44; 1 Chron. 23:25; Isa. 14:1) and immortality.[7] This would then constitute the election of Adam, whether one believes other people existed or not. This needs further study and discussion.

Archetypal Role of Dust and Rib

Traditionally interpreters have considered "dust" and "rib" to be the material ingredients in a material process delineated by the verbs *yatsar* ("formed") and *banah* ("built"). Careful consideration of the text, however, suggests another conclusion. Briefly stated, the text of Genesis 3:19 makes it clear that we are all made from dust (cf. Ps. 103:14, which uses *yetser* and dust referring to all). If we all can be described as formed from dust even though we were born from our mothers, we could conclude that Adam's being formed from dust does not convey a unique material origination for him. This means that the dust should be viewed first and foremost as providing an archetypal affirmation rather than one pertaining to chemical ingredients (which we would have had to disagree with anyway!). The ingredients referred to in accounts of human origins throughout the ancient Near East (clay, blood of the gods, spit of the gods, etc.) likewise pertain to archetypal affirmations about the nature of humanity (Abusch 1998, 363–83). The verb *yatsar* does not suggest anything different because that verb can also be used in nonmaterial contexts (note Zech. 12:1).[8]

Likewise, the text indicates that the word *tsela'* ("rib") is archetypal in that it turns out that the focus is all womankind and all mankind (see the universal statement in Gen. 2:24). Womankind generically is drawn from the side of generic mankind. It is not a "rib" of the man that is used, but one of his (two) sides, in keeping with the use of the term throughout the Old Testament. We should not think in terms of surgery, but of a vision[9] while he slept (Gen. 2:21) that conveyed the intrinsic nature of woman—man's other half (Gen. 2:24). Upon waking, the man recognizes that she is both his bone and flesh (Gen. 2:23).

Based on this evidence, I would be inclined to conclude that we would be justified in interpreting the second account as an archetypal account (which by its nature is essentially functional, as I have suggested for Gen. 1), rather than as a material account of human origins. If that is the case, it

is no different than Psalm 139:13 ("You knit me together in my mother's womb"—not a material account). Throughout the rest of Scripture, Adam and Eve are consistently invoked as archetypes of all humanity. Ancient Near Eastern literature likewise consistently deals with human origins by means of archetypes.[10] This does not address the historicity of Adam and Eve, because archetypes can often be represented by historical people.

The Akkadian tale of Adapa provides interesting insight into the use of archetypes in ancient literature. The tale includes no account of human origins but demonstrates explicitly the way in which one person (Adapa) serves as an archetypal representative of all humanity who has been given wisdom, but denied immortality (the same two issues represented by the trees of the garden).[11] It might be significant also to note that even though people already exist, Adapa is "created" (Akk. *banu*) as an expression of his election to represent the people as priest.[12] Egyptian iconography also represents election to office in terms of forming on a potter's wheel as the creator god, Khnum, is shown fashioning the king on the potter's wheel. A Neo-Babylonian text likewise concerns the "creation" of the king in strongly archetypal terms:

Belet-ili, you are the mistress of the great gods.
You have created lullu-man:
Form now the king, the thinking-deciding man!
With excellence cover his whole form,
Form his features in harmony, make his whole body beautiful!
Then Belet-ili fulfilled her commission with the major gods contributing specific attributes.
The great gods gave the king the battle.
Anu gave him the crown, Ellilga[ve him the throne],
Nergal gave him the weapons, Ninurtaga[ve him shining splendor],
Belet-ili gave [him a handsome appea]rance.
Nusku gave instruction, imparted counsel *and sto*[*od by him in service*]. (Clifford 1994, 69–70)

These examples show that archetypal treatment was the common way to portray human origins in the ancient world. We should not then be surprised if we find the same in the Hebrew Bible. It has always been there in the Hebrew Bible, but it has taken the rediscovery and analysis of ancient literature to bring it to our attention.

If we view Adam and Eve as archetypes, we must also address the question about whether there may be literary elements rolled into the archetype. It would be difficult to arrive at such a conclusion with any certainty, but our current investigation simply asks whether it is possible. To answer at that level, we need only find a precedent, and such a precedent does exist.

The author of Hebrews, for example, refers to Melchizedek, who is a known historical figure (Gen. 14), an archetypal figure (Psalm 110), and whose profile is enhanced through literary development (found in Intertestamental literature Kobelski et al. 1981), thus creating a complex

usage in the New Testament. Many interpreters feel little obligation to believe that the historical figure had no father or mother, interpreting it instead as an element that arguably appears in Hebrews from the later literary development of the character. It should also be noted that Melchizedek is compared to Christ as Adam is, and the points of comparison exist at all three levels. We have no idea whether the author of Hebrews recognized that he was combining historical, archetypal, and literary elements or if it would have concerned him/her. We must think carefully and discuss deeply whether this provides a model for thinking about Adam and Eve.

Combining the archetypal nature of the account and the priesthood of Adam and Eve, one plausible scenario that might be proposed for consideration would take the following hypothetical form: People were created mortal (no material discontinuity required) and given the image of God (spiritual discontinuity, so, in this scenario, direct gift). Adam and Eve were the hope of humanity—chosen to bring others into life in the presence of God.[13]All humanity was supposed to gain this life through the mediation of Adam and Eve. When Adam and Eve sinned by seeking to put themselves at the center of wisdom and order ("becoming like God" Genesis 3:5; cf. Jesus being tempted to become like God when offered all the kingdoms of the world),[14] they were cast out and death became the inevitable doom of all, so death came through sin. As Adam and Eve lost the opportunity for all to have life, Christ provided the opportunity for all when he came to offer the way to life in the presence of God. The main problem I might anticipate with this concerns the ontology of sin. If there were people outside the garden, subject still to death but in the image of God, how were they not sinful? If they were sinning, how did sin enter the world through one man? A possible solution might be devised in a nuanced understanding of accountability, that only the wisdom gained in the garden brought recognition of what was sinful (following the logic of Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13–14).[15]

Nature of Humanity in Genesis

I would cite five basic defining features of humanity offered in Genesis 1–3:

- All humans are in the image of God (defining their identity and function as vice-regents).
- Humans are created mortal (from dust), though they initially have or hope to have an antidote (tree of life representing the presence of God).
- Humanity is gendered with male and female as partners in their assigned functions, sharing an essential unity.

- Humanity is sinful by the choice of Adam and Eve.
- Humanity is subject to death because their sin forfeited their access to the tree of life.[16]

We can categorize these features as pertaining to origins (first three) or to circumstance (last two). In those pertaining to origins, the result of the proposed functional focus of the accounts would be that there is no material account of human origins offered in Genesis. People are distinguished from other creatures by virtue of the image of God and given the functions of vice-regents: subduing disorder and ruling. These functions are sharply in contrast to those that pertain to humanity in the ancient Near East, where humans are slave labor meeting the needs of the gods.

This profile, in itself, does not seem to demand, and may even rule out, that all human beings are the biological descendants of a primordial couple. They represent us all (archetypes) as their primary role. Eve as the "mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20) need not be seen any differently than Jabal, the "father of all those who live in tents and raise livestock" (Gen. 4:20).

The most important aspect of the nature of humanity is that all humans are in the image of God. It is important for us to understand this concept in light of ancient literature and Hebrew Bible context rather than through modern psychology and neuroscience. We may find explanations in the modern sciences of how brain capacity developed to allow people to function as God's images, how brain chemistry works to allow advanced brain function, and how these functions differentiate hominids from other species, but these do not offer a definition of what the image of God *is*.

Throughout the ancient Near East, an image, whether of god or king, was believed to contain the essence of that which it represented. It was that essence that allowed the image to carry out its designated function (Batto 2004, 143–86; Curtis 1984; Hallo 1983, 1–8; Middleton 2005, 93–231; Winter 1997, 359–81). Only once in ancient literature is there a reference to people in general having been created in the image of deity, the Egyptian *Instructions of Merikare*, dated to about 2000 BCE. Egyptian literature as a whole generally speaks only of the king in such terms.[17] The divine image is the source of the king's power and prerogative. In Assyrian literature there are three major contexts in which images occur. First, as in Egypt, the king is occasionally described as being in the image of deity (Curtis 1984, 87–90).[18] Second, an idol contained the image of the deity (Curtis 1984, 97–113). And third, the image of a king was present in monuments set up in territories he had conquered (Cogan 1974, 58–61; Curtis 1984, 119–20). With regard to the first category, Irene Winter concludes that the image conveys "qualities of ideal, divinely sanctioned rulership, not just personhood" (Winter, 373). Thus, in an image, it was not physical likeness that was important, but a more abstract idealized

representation of identity relating to the office/role and the value connected to the image (Winter, 374–6). When Assyrian king Esarhaddon is referred to as "the perfect likeness of the god," it is his qualities and his attributes that are under discussion (Parpola 1993, 207).[19]

The image of God did the work of God on earth. Three ideas combine to capture this concept: function, identity, and substitute. The first has been articulated by J. Richard Middleton and pertains to the role of vice-regent given to humanity as a whole (Middleton 2005). The second has been developed by Ryan Peterson and suggests that the image is a title that identifies and classifies humans. The identity that it gives us distinguishes us from other beings. The idea of the image as a substitute is the conclusion of the analysis of Assyrian images of the king carried out by art historian Zainab Bahrani (Bahrani 2003). She demonstrates that the image stands in for the king through an ideologically designed iconography. All of these are pertinent to the biblical concept, but none of them have anything to do with brain science or psychological evolution.

In the biblical view, people in the image of God embody God's qualities and do God's work. They are symbols of God's presence and act on God's behalf as God's representatives. The two words used in the text differ in nuance with "image" referring to the something that contains the "essence" of something else, while "likeness" is more connected to "substance," expressing a resemblance at some level.[20] The Aramaic portion of the bilingual inscription from Tell Fekheriye uses cognates of both of these terms indicating that the statue both contains the essence and represents the substance of Hadad-Yith'i, King of Guzan.[21]

All people are therefore in God's image because we fill this definition both corporately and individually. No extreme of handicap nor level of intelligence nor extent of sin or redemption alter the blunt fact that we possess the image of God by decree and commission, though it could readily be acknowledged that different individuals may carry out that role in different ways or to different extents. Nevertheless, to be human is to bear intrinsically the image of God.

Implications of "Good"

"Good" in this context talks about being functionally viable, as demonstrated by the statement in Genesis 2:18 that it is *not good* for man to be alone. It refers to the order that God was establishing. All that God ordered was very good—that is, functional for the purposes he intended. That does *not* mean that everything was ordered. God chose a *process* that gradually brings order.[22] When God created order, he did not transform nonorder[23] (i.e., unordered space) into order, but pushed the nonorder aside to make a place for order (e.g., dry land emerges from sea). Nonorder remains in the cosmos to which God has brought a degree of order (that is why sacred space

needs guarding and expanding[24]). The Sea, a manifestation of nonorder, continued to exist as part of an unordered realm. People were given a role in the continuing process to establish order as they were commissioned to subdue and rule.[25] Less order existed outside the garden. The serpent as a chaos creature (Averbeck 2004, 328–57) is from the unordered realm and represented disorder, and sin brought increased disorder. This is not to suggest that sin defines or was part of the previous disorder; it is simply at this point a new manifestation of disorder, possible because full order had not been established. Sin is not *simply* disorder, but it contributes to disorder. Nonorder is not essentially evil, but disorder's manifestation in sin is. The punishment for sin resulted in humans being evicted into a realm of reduced order. Total order has still not been achieved even in our day—only New Creation will eliminate disorder and nonorder (Rev. 21). The continued presence of nonorder and disorder is not an indicator that God lacks the power to dispel both and bring order. In his wisdom he has chosen a process, and has chosen to involve humanity in the process (Gen. 1). This theology could converge with the concept of evolution, itself a process that results in increasing order. Evolution could therefore converge with God's process of bringing order over time, though evolution is not capable of resolving nonorder in general or the disorder of sin in particular.

The designation of God's work as "good" then does not suggest that the cosmos was perfect and it does not suggest that there was no death or other manifestations of nonorder. The existence of violence in whatever populations might have existed prior to humans gaining the image of God would not be surprising or problematic. The functional cosmos was set up around people in God's image, and that was what was good. If there were any hominid creatures prior to the endowment with God's image, they would be in the category of animals with regard to the question of sin. There would still remain a point in time when accountable people in God's image first sinned and became subject to death, and therefore in need of salvation.

Adam and Original Sin

The doctrine of original sin as formulated by Augustine is the foundation for Protestant and Roman Catholic theology, though from the beginning it was rejected by what became the Orthodox branch of Christianity. No such doctrine is articulated in the Hebrew Bible as part of Israelite theology, so we cannot co-opt Augustine's formulation to provide an interpretation of what the author of Genesis would have intended to communicate to the original Israelite audience. In contemporary thinking, Augustine's formulation is being increasingly reevaluated.

For our purposes, the main question is whether original sin and its consequence of death are inherited biologically, thus requiring the biological parentage of Adam and Eve for all humanity. There are some

important reasons for rejecting that assumption. First, we note the obvious, that though Jesus possessed a biological humanity, he did not inherit sin.[26] Related to that point is that Adam's sin should not be viewed as passed on biologically, since the correlating solution, the death of Christ, is not founded on biological parentage but on a representative role.

A second fruitful area of discussion pertains to information rarely addressed. Traditional Christian doctrine, supported by several affirmations in the Bible, considers the whole cosmos to have been corrupted by sin (e.g., Hos. 2:18; Rom. 8:22). Obviously that means, at least, that the ripple effects of sin cannot be restricted to the mechanism of biological or genetic relationships. Rather, sin brought a new level of disorder for humans and for the cosmos that was initiated by their act of disobedience. Humanity was supposed to continue God's process of moving the cosmos from nonorder to order. With the failure of humanity, all creation was stuck in its partially ordered condition and could be personified as longing for the intended order to be achieved. All of humanity was caught in the ripple effect of sin and the disorder that it brought, arguably, because of the unique priestly role of Adam and Eve. In the Hebrew Bible, the priest is recognized as having an efficacious role for all Israel (i.e., those in cities of refuge can return upon the death of the high priest; see also Leviticus 16 and Mal. 2:1–9). Consequently, in light of these reasonable alternatives, we could conclude that human subjection to Adam's sin does not necessarily require that all humans are biological descendants of Adam.[27] Sharing in Adam's sin is more important than sharing his genes, which, by some interpretations, could be considered nonessential. The most important issue in Romans (and theology in general) is that people in the image of God sinned, and therefore all are subject to sin and death and in need of salvation. Adam was our first High Priest, and Christ is our ultimate High Priest. The Bible therefore could be read as requiring only that the sin of our representative Adam extended to us all, as the salvation of our representative Christ is extended to us in a similar manner.

Conclusions

Finally we must consider the impact the above analysis has regarding how we think about human origins. We must try to discern from a biblical/theological standpoint which aspects of human origins may be understood to be progressive/developmental and allow continuity in contrast to those that must be viewed as punctiliar/*de novo* and represent discontinuity. By this point we can recognize the problem that we face: the scientific questions we are asking are largely material and the interests of biblical authors are largely functional. At this point, a few bullet point observations will have to suffice and will hopefully generate additional discussion:

- The image of God pertains to all humans once it is given and distinguishes us from all other creatures. This constitutes an important level of species discontinuity, but could conceivably be configured as either progressive or punctiliar. I am inclined toward the latter.
- If the Bible does not offer an account of material human origins, there could theoretically be continuity at the material level with origins being progressive rather than punctiliar, allowing for common descent.
- Note that Jesus is characterized by material continuity and spiritual discontinuity—thus the hypostatic union. On the material side, he had all the pseudogenes and genetic dead ends that we all have—in other words, his body did not make vitamin C any better than ours do.
- Material discontinuity is essential neither to sound theology[28] nor to our human identity (though biblical authors would not have been thinking about that one way or another—remember, functional ontology!). Material continuity would allow acceptance of common descent.[29]
- Even if the endowment with the image of God and the entrance of sin are both punctiliar, as I am inclined to think, that has no significant impact on the scientific understanding of human origins.
- Spiritual discontinuity is vouchsafed by the existence of the spiritual self, which exists apart from the biological organism of a person and continues to exist when the biological organism (our bodies) die. Our soul/spirit is not the product of biological evolution.[30]

Few know the name Dora Maar. She was one of the models that Picasso used for his portraits. We have photographs, so we know what she looked like. But if we look at some of Picasso's portraits of her, we realize that we could never reconstruct the photo from the portrait. Picasso was painting a portrait of a real person, but his artistic conventions were not chosen to allow us to reconstruct a photo or to show what she *really* looked like. He chose to represent truth and reality in his own way, and we cannot begrudge him that, whatever our preferences or interests might be. In the same way, the author of Genesis chose his own conventions for his narrative art. If it proves impossible for us to reconstruct a photo-like portrayal of what it *really* looked like, that does not mean that the artistic account is any less true or real. The artist must be granted his conventions.

Can we not say as with the material aspects of the cosmos and the material aspects of the incarnation that the material aspects of Adam and Eve are a mystery? The text's interest appears to be in that which is functional

and that which is archetypal. Finally, whatever evolutionary processes can be acceptable in the material realm as proposals are subject to scrutiny, for a Christian the adopted model must be subordinated to a teleological understanding.

Notes

1. Sacred space is the result of divine presence, which radiates its sanctity to the surrounding area.
2. Exceptions to this occur when the book follows the nonpreferred genealogical line (e.g., Cain) and then comes back and runs a parallel account following the preferred genealogical line. That is, the places that *toledoth* introduces synoptic material only occur when brothers' lines are being traced (see Gen. 5:1; 25:19; 36:1; and 37:2).
3. The author very carefully uses the definite article on *Adam* in v. 27 and then identifies "them" as both male and female so that no mistake can be made on that count.
4. There all humans at all times exist to serve as slave labor for the Gods. Main ancient sources of information include Sumerian literary works (Song of the Hoe, Hymn to E-engura, Enki and Ninmah, KAR 4), Akkadian literary works (Atrahasis, Enuma Elish), and Egyptian texts (Coffin Spells [spell 80, CT 2:43 and spell 1130], Instruction of Merikare).
5. This is a logical deduction in that it would be ludicrous to think that Adam went looking for a suitable reproduction partner among the animals in Gen. 2:19–20). Reproduction is not an issue in Gen. 2.
6. Notice how the new NIV makes some distance between Genesis 5:1–2 and 5:3 "When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them 'Mankind' when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years. . . . " The main obstacle to this thinking is in Acts 17:26, but we must keep in mind the way that inspired reporting takes place. We know that Stephen makes some factual errors in his speech before the Sanhedrin, but Luke accurately reports the speech rather than offer a version edited by fact-checking. Likewise in Acts 17, Paul is making a speech and Luke faithfully records it. We are not bound to the factuality of the details he gives; this is the dilemma of narrative truthfulness: a factual and faithful account of a historical event that itself contains error or deception will, in faithful reconstruction, also retain the original error or deception. The text of Genesis conceivably notes the existence of other humans in the references to Cain's marriage and Cain's fear that he will be hunted and killed.
7. Additional information may be provided by the parallel in Ezek. 28:13–14 between Eden, the garden of God, and the "holy mount of God." Locating Eden on the mountain of God would make it both remote and inaccessible on the one hand, yet also the source of the known Tigris and Euphrates Rivers on the other.
8. If Gen. 2 occurs after the creation of people *en masse* in Gen. 1, the archetypal view of Adam made from dust would be paralleled in the Egyptian accounts where, even though people have long existed, pharaoh is portrayed as being formed out of clay on the potter's wheel of Khnum. This does not contradict the fact that pharaoh was born just as any other man was born. His being formed on the potter's wheel is an indication of his designated role as king.
9. Cf. Gen. 15:12 and Dan. 10:9.
10. For other archetypal perspectives from the ancient Near East, see Walton (2006, 207–10) and Walton (2011, 74–86).
11. See Izre'el (2001, 120–23). For discussion of both Adapa and Gilgamesh as archetypes of humanity who forfeit immortality, see Mettinger (2007, 99–122), especially 120.
12. See Fragment A i.6' and discussion in Izre'el, *Adapa*, 12.
13. Unlike Utnapishtim, who only enjoyed it himself, unable to give it to others through the plant of life. For this understanding of life in the Pentateuch, compare Deut. 30:11–20 which indicates obedience and life are not beyond their reach; they do not have to ascend to heaven (like Adapa), they do not have to cross the sea (like Gilgamesh/Utnapishtim); it is near, not far away. Moses sets before them life and death and urges them to choose life in obedience to the law, resulting in access to the presence of God.
14. Note how the use of a tree as a physical representation of wisdom, but not the actual source of the wisdom, is paralleled in the Samson story where his hair is designated as the physical representation of his strength, though not the actual source of his strength. His possession of

strength was linked to obedience in connection with the physical object. Likewise the bronze serpent on the pole was a material symbol of the healing that was provided by Yahweh and Yahweh alone.

15. This is another area that still needs much thinking and discussion.

16. It is important to note and worthy of further discussion that the "tree of life" motif in the ancient Near East is used as a representation of the presence of deity. Ultimately life is found in the presence of God and he is the source of life.

17. The earliest such use is in the eighteenth dynasty in the second half of the second millennium BCE.

18. Mostly Neo-Assyrian, with the earliest in the Middle Assyrian, thirteenth century, Tukulti-Ninurta.

19. This same text refers to a "well-known proverb" that "Man is the shadow of god." See Lambert, *BWL*, 282.

20. For discussion of the two terms and many other related issues, see Garr (2003).

21. *COS*, 2.34.

22. This could be viewed as picking up the same theology that we see throughout biblical theology, the status of "already/not yet." By God choosing to use a process, I do not mean in any way to suggest that God himself is in process.

23. "Nonorder" is not evil and is represented in the *tohuwabohu* in Gen. 1:2.

24. For the concept of the expansion of order and sacred space in biblical theology, see Beale (2004).

25. Notice that "subdue and rule" is not repeated in Gen. 9. Presumably this is because people can no longer expand sacred space (since they lost access to it). All they can do is maintain the order that already exists (thus the judicial mandate in Gen. 9:6).

26. Early doctrinal discussions attempted to protect Jesus from inheriting sin biologically through doctrines such as the immaculate conception and certain understandings of the virgin birth. Yet at the level of logic, for Jesus to be fully human there must be material continuity of some sort. When we factor in modern science we would have to conclude that Jesus's humanity would have to be represented genetically. He had the full set of chromosomes and would have carried all the same genetic mutations that all of us carry. His body, for example, like ours, would not have produced its own vitamin C.

27. For an example of pertinent theological thinking in the Hebrew Bible compare the way that Achan's sin of taking goods from Jericho brought the ripple effect of sin to all Israel (Josh. 7:1, 10–2).

28. Though Romans would need additional analysis and comment as it addresses separate issues than Genesis.

29. Genetics potentially addresses two separate issues in the discussion of human origins: polygenism vs. monogenism, and material continuity (common descent) vs. material discontinuity (*de novo*, punctiliar material creation). The former is addressed using computer models to track genetic distribution with billions of samples involved. Those techniques are still being refined, and the results therefore remain, for the time being, hypothetical and debatable. On material continuity, however, conclusions are based on specific observations in the mapped genome of a variety of species rather than on deductions. The existence of common fusions and pseudogenes are obvious and not under contention. Imagine a math test where the students are asked to do a complicated equation. One would expect any two students' work to have a lot in common. But if you noticed a lot of errors on one (miscalculations, miscopied numbers from one step to the next), then saw another student's paper that had the same errors, you would naturally conclude dependence (continuity). Such is the implication of the comparative genomic evidence.

30. It is my intention to say this as generally as possible so as not to give preference to a dualistic view or other variations. I merely refer to that part of a human that survives death. The Israelites believed there was such an aspect of the person as does Christian theology.

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