

their faith once they see the evidence for evolution in university.

The name of our organization has the word “scientific” in it. I believe that members of the American Scientific Affiliation should show “deference to our brothers and sisters in Christ” who have actually studied evolutionary biology. And for those ASA members who have never held a fossil in their hand, or worked at an outcrop, or published a refereed paper on evolution, I believe they should “humbly admit” that they are not competent to comment on the scientific theory of evolution in public.

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## Historical Adam?

As one who has labored in the tar pits of the Bible, science, and history dispute for thirty years and counting, I was pleased to see yet another adventurer in the debate. In his abstract of “Genetics, the Nephilim, and the Historicity of Adam” (*PSCF* 67, no. 1 [2015]: 24–34), Davidson uses “first” three times, such as “first human pair,” as if that designation is a necessary component to a historical Adam and Eve. Here are pertinent questions: Is biblical history also human history? If not, is it at least compatible?

In the interest of shedding historical light on the issue, an exegetical mistake with major consequences befell the early church. When Paul set out on missionary trips, he would visit synagogues seeking out Jews who would listen to the good news that the Messiah had come. Largely he was rejected. Although the emperor of Rome was proclaimed to be a god and Greeks had many gods, Jews knew only one God. A human god was blasphemous to the Jews, yet Paul found a few Jews who would listen and took his message to heart.

Not committed to a one-God concept, Greeks and Romans proved more receptive, and they became an integral part of early congregations. Followers of “The Way,” as the early church was called, consisted of Romans, Greeks, and converted Jews who would pray, take communion, and read the scriptures aloud at Sunday meetings. Although a letter or two may have been in their possession, the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament was an object of weekly reading, and the first book, Genesis, would be a likely starting place. Listening to the stories of Adam, Cain and Abel, and Noah read aloud, Gentiles in the group of believers would have had no reason to think Jewish history

wasn’t their own history too. Thus the mistake was born that persists to this day. Jewish history was perceived as human history.

In 1611 when the King James translators produced an English version of the Bible, they labored under the same mindset as early believers. They thought that the entire human race derived from Adam and Eve, that the flood was worldwide with only a family of eight surviving, and that all humans gathered at Babel and scattered in small groups, speaking foreign tongues. This total misunderstanding skewed the translation and virtually canonized the tradition that had arisen 1,600 years earlier and has survived to this day among many conservative Christians. A liberal response has been to assign Genesis to a “genre” bereft of historical accuracy. Thus the conundrum: “Is Genesis 2–11 true human history, bogus human history replete with theological lessons, or legitimate Semitic history with theological content implicit therein?” Sufficient evidence gleaned from thirty years of digging leads me to conclude that Genesis was written by Semites, for Semites, and about Semites. Gentiles may peruse Semitic history in Genesis and are free to wonder why our own ancestors did not leave us a historical record of our own.

As to the biblical text, recent translations have modernized English equivalents of Hebrew words to some extent, but because of insufficient knowledge of the history of the ancient Near East and its relevance, tradition marches on undeterred by an abundance of contrary evidence. Only within the last two hundred years has the scholarly world been in possession of some of the history of the ancient Near East inscribed on cuneiform tablets in Akkadian and Sumerian languages. This new-found evidence could revolutionize how we understand Genesis.

In his article, Davidson waded into a 2,000-year-old quagmire that has engulfed many gallant exegetes and expositors with a model similar in many respects to Denis Alexander’s “*Homo divinus*” model. Both models fail to address adequately a “blinding glimpse of the obvious” that struck me in 1986, when my article, suggesting Adam was “injected” into a populated world, was published in the *Washington Post*. Clearly, Adam belongs to the Neolithic Period (that is, mention of tents, livestock, musical instruments, and implements of bronze and iron in Gen. 4:20–22), thus appearing no earlier than 10,000 years ago. *Homo sapiens*, however, has a 200,000-year history. Any conceivable “first man” in biological terms, even if one could be found, cannot possibly be our man, Adam.

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