

Acknowledgment

can be reconciled with God. Yet there is no claim there that all human beings are genetically or genealogically related to Jesus of Nazareth. Why would it be important that a couple, called Adam and Eve, be genealogically related to all human beings? Is the brokenness of sin passed on by the physical connection of parent to child? It could not be by genetics because people alive today have very few, if any, genes from any one or two persons in the past. Is there something about a genealogical connection of parent to child that passes on actual guilt or something else?

If, in this proposed scenario, that genealogical connection determines one's guilt or character, then what of the people who have *not* been genealogically related to Adam and Eve as that connection may have slowly spread across the world? And why would there be such an inheritance? Jeremiah and Ezekiel emphasize that God holds each generation accountable for its own actions (Jer. 31:29–30; Ezek. 18:1–4). Would it be consistent to affirm then that each human being's relationship with God is established by an ancestor at least 250 generations in the past (following Swamidass's working estimate of say 10,000 years since Adam and Eve, and each generation as about forty years)?

In contrast with Swamidass's effort to make room in what we have learned from genetics for Adam and Eve as a particular couple, Luke Janssen offers

a different reading of Adam and Eve. He thinks that the opening chapters of Genesis are to be read more like the call to be born again in John chapter 3 or the dramatic imagery of the book of Revelation. When you read a story of a bone being molded into a woman, a fast-talking snake, a tree with fruit that makes one eternal, and an angel guarding it with a flaming sword, such a story appears to be using symbols to represent something deeper, as Jesus does in much of his teaching and as John does in the book of Revelation. Janssen thinks that the opening chapters of Genesis are a symbolic story, expressing essential truths that God still wants us to hear. As in the thought of the church father Irenaeus, for Janssen, our devastating fall as human beings came from not accepting an offered relationship and calling; that is, it was not from already-present perfection in two particular people.

In the last article of this issue, George Murphy, a physicist and pastor, wants us to see the grand scale of time in which God chooses to enable choices other than the Creator's. God's intentional self-limitation in creation, and later in incarnation, makes possible life that can be received and freely returned by grace to a right relationship with the Creator.

A wide range of book reviews rounds out this issue. There is much to consider. Many thanks to the thoughtful authors. ★

James C. Peterson, *Editor-in-Chief*

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