

Telos. The plot of the story is “resurrection,” the transformation from the “fleshly” earth to the “spiritual” earth. N. T. Wright points out that this process has already begun (e.g., *Surprised by Hope* [2008]). It was revealed in Jesus’s resurrection, and continues via the work of the Holy Spirit within God’s people.

The two stories have a foundational difference—one tells the story of the forming of the earth, the other, the story of the transforming of the earth to receive heaven. The essence of the second story is resurrection—and that cannot happen through the “natural” forces that science studies. How do the two stories fit together? I think Eden is a key. But understanding Eden and evolution is a problem. If the fall of humanity is considered the explanation for evil—human sin, animal / human death and natural disasters—the long history of evolution does *not* look like paradise, but rather, business as usual.

The debate over the meaning of Eden is certainly hot. Is an event in “real” history necessary? Or is Eden a “mythic” story representing the plight of *Ha’adam*—of all humanity? Must we go back close to a million years to find a common ancestor, or did Eden happen a few thousand years ago? Do we need a common genetic ancestor, or will a common genealogical ancestor do? Is a Fall in Eden necessary to explain human sin, natural disasters, and the need for salvation? Or could the event have another meaning?

The following insights from Clouser seem particularly important in this debate. First, the word “*neshamah*,” God’s breath into Adam, means the Holy Spirit infilling the mortal flesh—it is God’s Spirit. It is the word used for filling Old Testament prophets and New Testament believers, and thus for filling an already living, but mortal, Adam as well. It is the same Spirit breathed into the disciples by the resurrected Christ.

Second, the apostle Paul says that sin was not imputed before the law, but sin *was* imputed to Adam, to the people in the flood, to those of Sodom and Egypt. All those judgments for sin happen before the Torah which was given on Mount Sinai. Thus, the first “law” was given to Adam, and therefore unimputed sin must have existed before Adam.

Third, Augustine misinterpreted Paul—and Genesis. The first misunderstanding was due to a bad translation of Romans 5:12 from the Greek (yielding

inherited “original sin”), and the second, to his Platonic understanding of the “good” as ultimate perfection, rather than the Hebraic understanding of “*TOV*” as completeness. Hence, Adam was offered redemption, and thus potentially had eternal life. That is what Adam lost in the “Fall.” He became mortal again.

Within this view, Eden becomes the hinge in creation, the first injection of heaven into earth, the physical creation seeded with the life of heaven. Eden was a potential inflection point between creation and consummation. Through creation, *Ha’adam* had become *TOV*, complete, ready to be filled by the Holy Spirit, equipped to be commissioned as God’s agent / image to spread heaven’s life across the earth.

Of course, God was not taken by surprise by Adam’s choice to build the city of man rather than the city of God. Human civilization subsided into the morass of Babylon, enslaved by the earthly authority Adam had ceded to the *Ha’satan*. But God continued divine contact, made covenant, filled the temple with *shekinah* glory, and brought redemption through Jesus the Messiah, the cross, and resurrection. The eternal plan was put back on track—the beautiful but aching old creation could hope to be fulfilled / reborn as the glorious new creation. And we, along with it.

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2022

FRED CANNON, “Acts 17:26: God Made of One [Blood]—Not of One Man—Every Ethnic Group of Humans,” *PSCF* 74, no. 1 (2022): 19–38; and WILLIAM HORST, “From One Person? Exegetical Alternatives to a Monogenetic Reading of Acts 17:26,” *PSCF* 74, no. 2 (2022): 77–91.

Acts 17:26 is often claimed as a key proof text in the New Testament that a person named Adam was the first anatomical human being. In this study, Fred Cannon shows exhaustively that the words “Adam” or “Man” are not even in the original Greek text of Acts 17:26, despite translations such as the NIV, NEB, and ESV that add “Adam” or “Man” to their English versions of the text. KJV, NKJV, RSV ... are all more accurate translations on this point. “One flesh,” “one

Article

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blood,” and “one” are found in the ancient copies of Acts 17:26, but not “Adam” or “Man.”

In the following issue of *PSCF*, William Horst pursues the next step of asking whether as often claimed, “Adam” does not appear in the actual text, but is implied. With utter fairness and clear exposition, he shows that there are multiple justified interpretations of the Greek text of Acts 17:26 that do not imply “Adam.” Whatever the New Testament evidence might be for understanding the history and role of Adam, Acts 17:26 should not be misrepresented as a proof text about Adam. Making that clear, is a substantial contribution to listening carefully to what the New Testament does indeed actually teach.

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2022

TONY JELSMA, “An Attempt to Understand the Biology of Gender and Gender Dysphoria: A Christian Approach,” *PSCF* 74, no. 3 (2022): 130–48.

Gender dysphoria is a highly controversial topic in society, and particularly vehement viewpoints have been taken and expressed across the Christian spectrum. I applaud Tony Jelsma and the ASA for sharing a very well-researched and presented article on this topic.

It is personally of interest to me in having a grandchild with whom I am very close, who struggles mightily with gender issues. The article helped me understand some of the broader issues and considerations.

Lynn Billman, Lakewood, Colorado.



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The block includes two images: a lush tropical waterfall surrounded by dense greenery, and a black sand beach with waves crashing against the shore.