

Biblical Pre-Adamites – Historical Adam

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A concordance between a historical Adam required by Scripture and pre-Neolithic humans required by science is possible. Neither source of information need be violated, provided that the data on both sides are carefully interpreted. A plenary inspiration of the canonical Scripture can be maintained, if later theological traditions are not allowed to interfere or to enforce some interpretations. Modern science is not attributed to the ancients, but God's full knowing of reality and pre-knowledge of the future and his gently guiding the thinking of biblical authors within their own cultural contexts are assumed.¹

1. More focus on integrating science with Adam and Eve

In the Executive Director's Corner of the July/August 2010 *ASA Newsletter*, Randy Isaac commented on the results of the recent *ASA Opinion Survey on origins*.² Regarding the evidence for an old earth and for biological evolution he writes, "a majority of our members are reasonably comfortable with the mainstream scientific understanding of origins". On the other hand, "...there is no consensus on the interpretation of Adam and Eve in the biblical account. None of the [six] provided responses received significantly more than 10% support while 30% indicated it was ambiguous and another 12% provided written comments of clarification. It is no wonder that integration of science with biblical perspectives is problematic when we aren't sure what we are integrating. This is an area that warrants considerably more focus in the future." Accordingly, the September 2010 issue of the *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* was "devoted to the historicity of Adam and Eve".³

Why does the question of Adam and Eve occupy such a central place in the bible-and-science dialog? Is it conceived as the touchstone where the convictions of those christians who defend some kind of plenary inspiration of Scripture clash with those of other christians who ask for a full acceptance of all scientific results without exception? The former see denying the historicity of Adam as a slippery slope leading to denial of the whole bible, which apparently is inseparably linked with a literal Adam, while the latter see that the whole edifice of science is called into question by insisting on a young earth with humans created a few thousand years ago, or even just on a "literal" interpretation of Genesis. This black-and-white picture of two extreme positions is of course somewhat overdrawn, as there are also various intermediate views. But these are minority views only, which have not yet been able to bring about a reconciliation among the christians adhering to one of the two more one-sided views.⁴ The most tragic aspect of this situation is the failure to fulfill the commission Jesus gave to all christians.⁵ The widespread lack of robust ways of integrating science and Scripture represents a formidable impediment to effective evangelism⁶ and a stumbling block for many young people, particularly students of science.

Indeed, this is an area that warrants considerably more focus in the future.

2. Science meets theology

What are "biblical pre-adamites"? Is this a theological or a scientific term?⁷ "Biblical" clearly belongs to the realm of theology, and so does the reference to Adam. But what about the derivative term "pre-adamites"? Does the bible allow humans before Adam? Isn't it unlikely that the writers of the biblical texts would have conceived of any such idea? It is modern science, and in particular archeology and evolutionary biology, that knows about humans living much earlier than the less than a few thousand years before present (YBP) the biblical texts seem to allot to them.

Many, discarding the idea of finding concordance between some biblical texts and science, would consider "pre-adamites" to be a meaningless concept (except in the more recent history of philosophy and religion⁸). But this attitude, in combination with the less subtle discarding of scientific findings on the other side, has led to disastrous consequences for christian communities and their theologies, as well as for many individuals who weren't able to resolve the apparent conflicts. Do we really have to discard biblical statements which appear to be contradicted by science? Certainly not: biblical theology cannot survive — let

alone perform its mission — if it shortchanges the divine inspiration of the entire canonical bible⁹ as a whole.¹⁰

But the conviction *that* God wants to communicate to us something in any biblical text is not enough. In order to find out *what* it is that he wants to tell us in a perhaps difficult passage, we have to consider its original language and genre, its immediate and wider context, the cultural and world view environment of the writer and the original recipients,¹¹ on the one hand — but also the question of truth or factuality,¹² on the other hand. And this second aspect requires that we take scientific and historical reality into consideration (not just what the ancients might possibly have considered "science", but modern confirmed scientific results), in order to find a meaningful interpretation of any biblical text. The suspicion of some christians that the thinking of atheist scientists would be thwarted to such an extent as to invalidate much of scientific theorizing is not founded on sound biblical exegesis, as God's charge to the first humans to subdue the earth was given in the creation covenant for *all* humans,¹³ implying the possibility of producing sound science and technology, a fact which has been abundantly confirmed by the results of the self-correcting process of the scientific endeavor.

Such an attitude of trying to find concordance between science and theology has been rejected by the "warfare paradigm"¹⁴ shared by both extremes of the spectrum of world views in this context, young earth creationism rejecting science as being "godless", and militant atheists deriding the bible as being a collection of fairy tales, errors, falsehoods, and "opiate of the people"¹⁵.

Unfortunately, even among those who don't share this warfare paradigm, but want to do justice to both biblical theology and science, too much is often conceded to "scientific" source criticism neglecting biblical inspiration, or to particular church confessions defining the "correct" faith. So they neglect considering the possibility of concordance between the biblical text and natural science.¹⁶

An essential characteristic of a scientific attitude, which I want to respect, is readiness

- (1) to be fully conscious of one's axioms or presuppositions,
- (2) to distinguish data or observations from their interpretation, and
- (3) to change one's hypothesis, should new data require it. A scheme of interpretation fixed once for all will not do — in either science or theology.

3. Was Adam a real person?

Apparently, the writers of the biblical texts considered Adam to have been a real person, as real as Abraham and David. Taken at face value, the book of Genesis presents a continuous narrative of the history leading from creation to Adam to Joseph.¹⁷ Together with the rest of the Old Testament (OT), which continues this history, the Genesis narrative suggests that Adam lived less than 10,000 YBP. On the other hand, science has provided us with archeological and genetic evidence that modern humans displaying symbolic, cultural and communal behavior date back to at least 40,000 YBP.

Does this mean that either the scientific dates must be in error, or that Adam must have lived much earlier than Genesis suggests, or that Adam must be taken as a symbolical or mythical figure only? I believe neither of these options is true.

If Genesis 1:27 refers to God's creating the first humans in his image at least 40,000 YBP, while Genesis 2:7 refers to God's preparing one particular man out of the Neolithic Sumerians for a specific calling, the dilemma would be solved without any incrimination of either science or the bible. I consider this proposal to be a hypothesis, which of course must be tested for real compatibility with both science and the bible.¹⁸ I shall consider this compatibility to be given if the hypothesis provides conflict-less, plausible interpretations of all solid data.¹⁹

In the following sections, the relevant scientific fields of archeology,²⁰ geology, and history will be examined for compatibility with the corresponding biblical data. Then the relevant biblical fields of OT exegesis, New Testament (NT) exegesis, scriptural theology, inspiration of Scripture, and scriptural anthropology will be examined for compatibility with the proposed hypothesis of concordance.

4. Archeological data: first modern Homo sapiens before 35,000 YBP

Archeology suggests that before about 35,000 YBP, there was an "awakening" of Homo sapiens with emotional, religious, cultural, communal, agricultural, organizational, economical, intellectual, technical, and artistic aspects, which was then displayed in Western Europe. If this corresponded to a spiritual event,²¹ it may have been a supernatural divine input, superimposed at a given moment on the biological evolution of modern Homo sapiens, rather than an accidental "awakening" of the rational mind. This special event would have occurred somewhat earlier in Africa in a probably very small community.

In a very interesting review paper, *Human origins: Out of Africa*,²² Ian Tattersall summarizes data relevant to these questions. He says African Homo sapiens becoming modern humans occurred in two unanticipated "short-term" steps:²³ (1) between 200,000 and 150,000 YBP with a uniquely derived skeletal structure very different from that of Homo heidelbergensis, the presumed ancestor of Homo neandertalensis and Homo sapiens — ascribed to a radical reorganization of gene expression in the latter line of descent; then (2) after 100,000 YBP (possibly well afterwards) with the first symbolic behavior — as opposed to merely technologically complex behavior. Language is "perhaps the ultimate symbolic activity", which, in contrast to "theory of mind",²⁴ has the advantage of being a communal attribute. The first fully mature expression of this symbolic capacity did not appear until about 35,000 YBP in Europe. Why this delay in exploiting the biological exaptations²⁵ given by the first step? Shortly after 77,000 YBP (the age of the first clearly symbolic artefacts, which were found at Blombos cave, South Africa), southern Africa experienced an episode of aridification that may have largely depopulated the area for an extended period. As a consequence, symbol-using Homo sapiens disappeared from the archeological record for about 40,000 years.

Could these indications — pointed out by Tattersall — about the delayed, sudden "discovery" of symbolism, language, community, combined with the severe bottleneck, extended for 40,000 years, which hid the dispersion of the moderns from South Africa to Europe, be hints as to when and where Genesis 1:27 may have occurred? This is where the combined scientific and biblical evidence apparently leads. It would bring us to somewhere between 30,000 and 70,000 years before Adam for an event which may correspond to Genesis 1:27.²⁶

5. Geological data: Noah's flood recent and local

What does Noah's flood have to do with the question of a historical Adam? A historical flood or even a historical Noah does not automatically imply a historical Adam. Yet a flood which can be temporally and locally correlated with the biblical description of Noah's flood has implications regarding the time and place where one might have to look for a historical Adam.²⁷

That the earth is older than a few thousand years has been known for more than 200 years. On the basis of astronomical and geological data it is now known to be 4.56 billion years old. Within certain given limits, geological formations can be dated absolutely by radioisotope dating or relatively by stratigraphy.

Noah's home in Mesopotamia lies on top of 200 million years worth of sedimentary rocks, although these were supposedly laid down by the flood in his time, according to the flood geology of young earth creationism.²⁸ Noah pitched the ark with bitumen, a product generated in these sediments during many millions of years. For these and many other reasons, a global flood, followed by the buildup of all of modern topology, after the origin of humans is out of the question.²⁹

Similarly, Adam's Eden, which in Genesis 2:10-14 is located at the confluence of four modern rivers,³⁰ lies on top of a package of sedimentary rock up to 250 million years old, but supposedly laid down 1000 years after Adam was in the garden of Eden.

6. Historical data: Adam's world Neolithic and local

Some consider the entire text of Genesis 1-11 to be mythological, rather than a historical narrative. This narrative, however, melds seamlessly into the stories of Abraham and his descendents and continues just as seamlessly into the rest of the OT. So where would history begin? Some aspects and details of the stories in Genesis 1-11 have a few clear parallels in Accadian or Babylonian myths of the first and second millennia BC and in third millennium Sumerian sources.³¹ Now those who deny any historical reality of

Genesis (at least of chapters 1-11) believe that Israel must have learned about those Mesopotamian texts after 600 BC in the Babylonian exile, using them to formulate their own myths laid down in Genesis 1-11. But what if both extra-biblical myths and Genesis go back to some real historical events and persons? A comparison of these two types of sources immediately shows that Genesis must be closer to historical reality,³² as it consists of clearly narrative texts, with very few metaphorical or symbolic elements. Certainly, Genesis is written in a phenomenological, anthropomorphic, pre-scientific language, but it lacks the typical mythical elements.³³

On this basis, two facts about the world of Adam and his descendants described in Genesis 2-5 become obvious: first that Adam squarely belongs into the Neolithic of Mesopotamia, and second that he came into a world already populated by other people. This concurs with observations made in the Genesis text. Adam tended the garden "in Eden" or "east of Eden",³⁴ and the garden is distinguished from the place called Eden.³⁵ Adam and his family lived of agriculture, which began to be practiced around 10,000 YBP. Cain was exiled into a land called Nod, where he feared someone would kill him — and God confirmed that there were indeed people who were liable to do so.³⁶ In Nod, Cain built a city he called after the name of his son, Enoch.³⁷ Why would places and lands have names if there weren't people living there already? Who populated the city of Enoch? Cities (fortified settlements) began to be built after agriculture was well under way. In the fifth generation after Cain, Tubal-cain, a forger of instruments of bronze and iron is mentioned. Even if various generations might have been left out, this context makes it unacceptable to place Cain, and by implication Adam, much earlier than a few thousand years BC, as the iron age is taken to have begun in the 12th century BC only.³⁸

7. Old Testament data: distinguishing between man and Adam

The Hebrew word '*adam*' is used as a generic term meaning "man" or "human", and it is the name of the man Adam. Therefore, the context must determine which is meant. Often, there is no possibility of a mistaken interpretation, e.g. in Genesis 4:1, where "Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived...", which cannot refer to man generically, or in Genesis 6:9, where "Noah was a righteous man...", which cannot refer to Noah's ancestor Adam. But which is meant when it says in Genesis 1:27 "God created man in his own image" and in 2:7 "God formed the man of dust"? Those who believe that Adam was the first man God created — which was virtually everyone until relatively recently — interpret both statements as referring to this supposedly first human with the name of Adam. The authors of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT made in the second century BC, had to decide which was meant for each occurrence of the Hebrew word '*adam*', because Greek distinguishes between the two meanings: *anthrōpos* for "man", and *Adam* for the name Adam. And in virtually every case, their decision was unobjectionable³⁹ — and remains so today.

But problems began when something became known about the age of the earliest modern Homo sapiens, who lived *before* the last ice age. Does Genesis 2-4 talk of a man who never existed? Or did Adam live 50,000 or even 200,000 YBP? Or did the creation of man happen many thousands of years before the man Adam was specially created? Or did Adam have parents and was born into some local population? Of whom does Genesis 1:26-30 talk?

Genesis 1:1-2:4 reads like a narrative of the origin of everything, including humans. As a traditional young-earth interpretation is no longer compatible with modern knowledge, various different views of this narrative have been proposed, such as myth, accommodation, and other understandings, of which the first readers of the original Genesis 1 text would hardly ever have thought. Of course, it would have been natural for these original authors and readers to use language in a phenomenological way. It would have been very reasonable for them that a story is never complete, but selects details according to what the author wanted to emphasize. They would not have taken all expressions in a poetical text to refer to some physical entity. But they certainly meant Genesis 1:1-2:4 to represent a narrative of the real origin of everything, including humans.

As the canonical biblical texts represent, as I believe, that which God wants to communicate to humans of *all* times and *all* cultures, it is reasonable to assume that he had it formulated in a way which would harmonize with reality, as well as with whatever the readers of any time or culture could understand of it.⁴⁰ This implies that readers of different times or cultures might not see the same message in a given text, yet all of them would be linguistically correct and theologically sound — which is feasible, given the ambiguity of

any language. Therefore, any attempt to find *the* only correct interpretation of a given statement is generally doomed to failure. This is particularly true for divinely inspired texts, whose principle aim is to lead humans to the Messiah Jesus as their Savior, and which therefore, in the OT, make extended use of messianic prophecy, whose full intent the first hearers or readers couldn't fathom.⁴¹

Based on these principles, I want to discuss the use and meaning of the Hebrew word *'adam* in the OT.

In Genesis 1:27, it says: "in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them".⁴² One would be mistaken to think this refers to Adam and Eve: "he created him" collectively designates humanity, as the "them" shows. Otherwise, if it referred to Adam, would it exclude Eve from being a created human being? Furthermore, saying "male and female",⁴³ God also emphasized that he blessed these people such that they would fill the earth.⁴⁴ At the same time, the close personal love relationship between a man and his wife is sanctified to serve as a metaphor for the relationship between God and his people and between Christ and his Church.⁴⁵

It has been suggested that Genesis 1:27 must designate Adam, because in Hebrew, *ha'adam*, with the article *ha*, is used for the first human in Genesis 1:27, the same as in Genesis 2:7, where clearly the man Adam is meant,⁴⁶ the article being retained in what follows. But this argument is not conclusive. Genesis 1:26 has "Let us make man" (*'adam*, without the article), immediately followed in 1:27 by "So God created man" (*ha'adam*). Both refer to the same collective of humans,⁴⁷ and this is confirmed by the explaining specification, "male and female he created them", which implies that in 1:27 "man" does not specify Adam, but designates humanity generically. Genesis 2:7-4:1a uses *ha'adam*, including the article (except 2:23b and 4:1b which have *'ish* rather than *'adam* for "man" — *'ish* is used when marriage or gender is an issue). The article *ha* is used to refer back to the previously mentioned man, and of course, in this context, Adam is meant each time, beginning with 2:7, and here it refers back to the "man" (without *ha*) in 2:5, "there was no man to work the ground". In 4:1a, when Adam fathered Cain, the article is used with his name, but not in 4:25, when the same Adam fathered Seth. Genesis 5:1-5 omits the article consistently (4 times⁴⁸) for the same Adam with whom Genesis 2-4 is dealing. From Genesis 6 onward, "man" cannot denote Adam any more, yet in virtually every case in the rest of Genesis we read *ha'adam*, the same form used for Adam in Genesis 2-4. Thus, the use of the same expression, *ha'adam*, in both Genesis 1:27 and 2:7 cannot, in itself, indicate that the individual Adam is meant in 1:27.⁴⁹

8. New Testament data: Adam is never said to have been the first human

Being written in Greek, the NT clearly distinguishes between the terms "man" (or "human") and "Adam". In the NT, the name Adam occurs in only seven verses, one each in Luke and Jude, and five in Paul's letters. Luke 3:38 mentions Adam in his genealogy of Jesus: "...the son of Adam, the son of God". As biblical genealogies may contain smaller or larger gaps and may occasionally (as here) refer to adoption, one need not assume that Luke claims Adam to be a direct "son of God". God also called Israel "my firstborn son".⁵⁰ Jude just referred to the received genealogy from Adam to Enoch.⁵¹

Paul, in a few cases, quoted from or alluded to Adam's story in Genesis 2-3.⁵² In other cases, he contrasted Adam with Christ, taking both as representatives of humanity.⁵³ We don't know whether Paul believed Adam to have been the first man or was just referring to the received Genesis text for making a theological point. But even if he did think Adam was the first man, God providentially kept him from saying so.

In Romans 3-8, Paul wants to strengthen the faith of those who have come to believe in Christ — and are therefore "in Christ". In Romans 5:12-21, he compares the old, fallen humanity with the new, redeemed humanity. Adam is a "type" foreshadowing, by contrast, Christ, the head of redeemed humanity. Adam is a representative of all fallen humans. Christ is the model man, the representative of all those redeemed by him. He represents the redeemed before God, who sees all redeemed humans "in Christ", all the unredeemed "in Adam". Just as the redeemed humanity includes all OT and NT saints, so all humans before and after Adam are included in the fallen humanity, as all have fallen.⁵⁴ Only verse 14 mentions Adam at all: "...death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam". This applies also to pre-adamites.⁵⁵ with the expression "from Adam to Moses", Paul referred to the absence of the Mosaic Law. Sin became possible when humans were created in God's image. So "sin came into the world through one man", namely the first one of those humans who sinned, even long before Adam.⁵⁶

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul defends a real, bodily resurrection as absolutely essential for the christian faith.⁵⁷ Adam is named in the statement of verses 21-22: "...as by a *man* came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in *Adam* all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." The first sinner is not called "Adam", but "a man".⁵⁸ Then Paul contrasts the old, fallen humanity, the representative of which is Adam ("in Adam"), with the new, redeemed humanity "in Christ". If Paul thought Adam was the first man, God kept him from saying so explicitly. The context is the future resurrection, not the question of whether or not it was Adam who was the first human to fall by sinning.

In verses 35-53, Paul explains what a bodily resurrection means: "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" He doesn't discuss whether Adam was the first man, but contrasts the old, "natural" humanity, represented by Adam, with the new, spiritual humanity represented by Christ. In verse 45, "Thus it is written, 'the first man Adam became a living soul';⁵⁹ the last Adam became a life-giving spirit," Paul quotes Genesis 2:7, "the man became a living soul".⁶⁰ He correctly identifies this man with Adam, but strictly speaking, the original OT text should be either quoted as "the first man" or "the first Adam", but *not* "the first man Adam," so translators should not place the initial quotation mark before "the first man", but before "became".⁶¹ In verse 45, Paul contrasts the "first Adam" with the "last Adam" (who is Christ), and in verse 47 the "first man" with the "second man" (who is Christ). As Christ was neither the last man nor the second man, no temporal consideration can be in view with respect to Adam, either. Thus, the text cannot be taken as proving that Adam was the first man historically. Paul makes a theological, typological comparison of the two human collectives represented by Adam, the "man of dust", and by Christ, the "man of heaven" — as an explanation that resurrection consists of a transformation of the "natural body" of "dust" into a spiritual or "heavenly body".⁶²

9. Harmonious Scriptural theology

Christian theology endeavors to formulate a world view based on what is conceived to be God's revelation through the bible.⁶³ Basically, it has to accept all biblical statements whose assured version of the original canonical texts is available as facts of God's revelation, as well as all scientific statements representing assured scientific findings as facts of God's creation. Both types of facts require interpretation before they are understood and can be built into an all-encompassing biblical theology. Where careful interpretations cannot eliminate a contradiction between the claims of the two realms (or within them), there must be some remaining knowledge gap or misinterpretation in one or the other (or both) of these sources of information. Harmony between the "two books of God's revelation", bible and nature, isn't an unreasonable, unrealizable ideal of so-called concordists, but is part and parcel of a real biblical theology which neither denies God as the ultimate author of the bible, nor conflicts with natural, physical reality.

Accommodation, the idea that God accommodates the way he reveals his truth to the world view of the original community in which a given text originated, has to be qualified. If it is understood as a linguistic consideration helping to understand how God packaged a given communication, it has to be accepted and applied. But if it becomes a tool for eliminating certain parts or aspects of the text by claiming God accommodated even to error (whether of a scientific or a theological kind), it has to be rejected.

Source Criticism, as well, comes in different flavors: "lower" source criticism, which tries to derive the most probable form of the original texts from the available manuscripts and fragments, is a must, but "higher" source criticism, which doesn't consider divine inspiration of the text, is thereby fatally flawed. Claiming that redactors or copyists by mistake falsified statements they didn't understand or tried to "improve" text they didn't like, may even become a tool for eliminating (or "correcting") certain parts of a text in the hands of theologians who don't understand it or don't like what it says. Anti-supernaturalistic prejudice was an important motivation for the philosophers and liberal theologians who created this destructive kind of JEPD source criticism, which unfortunately is still widely influential today.⁶⁴

10. All Scripture inspired by God

Does the bible itself require its plenary inspiration, or has this idea been read into it?

With respect to the OT, Paul says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God..."⁶⁵ And Peter concurs, "...no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the

will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶ Then, Peter even places Paul's letters on the same inspired level as "the other Scriptures".⁶⁷ This concurs with Jesus' saying, "until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished".⁶⁸ With the expression, "the Law", Jesus here refers to all OT Scripture. He says that all Scripture talks of him and must be fulfilled, and (indirectly) that the NT authors will also write under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Paul warns his readers "not to go beyond what is written".⁷⁰ He also carefully distinguishes his own personal ideas from what the Lord led him to write.⁷¹

The 66 biblical books recognized by the Church as divinely inspired (and later declared canonical) are normative for any bible interpretation. This also implies that any particular interpretation of a biblical text and any theology must remain provisional, rather than being fixed into a dogmatics believed to be infallible.⁷²

This is what must be understood under the terms "plenary inspiration of the bible" — and taking a "literal" approach to interpretation which does not degenerate into a "literal mistake".⁷³

11. Scripture unites all humans as created, free, accountable, eligible for salvation

The first humans, as defined in biblical theology, are those created in God's image: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). All humans, regardless of gender, color, culture, age in which they live or lived, or other qualifiers, are of equal standing before God.⁷⁴ He gave them dominion over all animals and authority to subdue the earth.⁷⁵ The image of God implies, on the one hand, the authority of a vice-regent or ambassador representing God to the creation, with the responsibility to care for it, and, on the other hand, of a priest representing the creation before God the Creator. Genesis 1:27-30, in this way, describes the first covenant God made with humans — and he made it with *all* humans.

Of course, God knew beforehand that man, being created a real, free personality, would not be able to permanently withstand temptation and refrain from sin and rebellion. It's not that God would be unwilling or unable to keep man from temptation or sin, but such an endowment would be a logical impossibility if man is free but nevertheless a creation rather than the Creator himself. God wants sons and daughters as royal children ready to undergo the education making them capable of being transformed into the holiness which is God's own. It was therefore before the "foundation of the world"⁷⁶ that God designed a way of salvation through the propitiatory death of his own Son Jesus, in whom he took the unavoidable death penalty for human sin upon himself.

This situation characterizes humanity as a whole, but it also applies to every human individual of all times and places. Everyone is a person God created in one's mother's womb by acting in all natural processes.⁷⁷ The child grows and matures in abilities, character, freedom, and corresponding responsibility. And at some point of this development, a more or less subtle or deliberate decision to sin against God will occur, so that salvation will be necessary. It is impossible to determine from the outside when this occurs, as only God sees the heart, and he is the only one who can judge the situation with full justice, factoring out all evil influences from the environment which may be none of the individual's fault. God's judgments are absolutely just; he will not impute to a person someone else's sin.⁷⁸ People may be plagued by sufferings as a consequence of their parents' and others' sins,⁷⁹ but God does not count those sins against them. Sin is neither a product of evolution nor in any other way inherited, nor can its guilt be expiated by any human acts or rituals.

So what about pre-adamite humans who were real humans according to Genesis 1:27? What about those among today's humans who are neither descendants of Adam nor heard the OT messianic promises or the gospel of Christ's substitutionary atonement? Together with Adam's descendants, they all bear the image of God with all its implications and consequences. There is only one human "race" or species: we must not make any distinctions of eligibility for any spiritual goods between them. Genesis 1:27 therefore must describe an event which occurred long before Adam's time, and Adam's fall cannot have any influence on these pre-adamite or otherwise non-adamite humans.

12. Conclusion

Thus it is possible to formulate a concordant interpretation of early Genesis uniting the historical Adam required by the data of Scripture and the pre-Neolithic humans required by the data of science. A careful interpretation of the data on both sides will prevent conflicts. A plenary inspiration of Scripture, in the sense of accepting all scriptural data as inspired by God, is respected. Some theological traditions that would interfere are ignored, since they contradict Scripture. The scriptural text is not charged with "teaching science", as all of it is interpreted within the linguistic and cultural environment of the ancients. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the ambiguities inherent in any language provided for the possibility that God gently guided the writers, within their own thinking, in such a way that their statements concord with *both* their own understanding of the world *and* the reality and pre-knowledge of God.

¹ This article presents a formulation of science-Scripture harmony which hopefully will be acceptable to christians of the whole spectrum. My desire is to try building a bridge between the two camps of creationist christians rejecting large amounts of science, on the one hand, and those among the scientifically literate christians mythologizing or even rejecting important parts of Scripture, on the other hand. A bridge spanning a wide chasm, such as the one unfortunately existing here, cannot be built with a few new bricks. An overview is required of the most important factors each of these two camps needs to consider. None of the previously proposed science-Scripture models, even among those somewhere in the middle between the two extreme positions mentioned, overcomes all conflicts. In the recent Opinion Survey on Origins by the *American Scientific Affiliation* (ASA), none of the 6 responses provided for the interpretation of Adam and Eve does, although the survey attempted to cover the whole spectrum of possible interpretations. - Here I propose a model that I believe gives the possibility of overcoming all contradictions. Although various parts and aspects of these ideas have already been published during the past 12 years, the present attempt at bridge-building does include some new details updating and confirming earlier ideas. Furthermore, my model now constitutes not just, as in my previously published texts, a tentative suggestion, but a definite claim that such harmonization might be possible, without violating any known facts on either side.

² R.D.Isaac, *The Executive Director's Corner* (2010), *The Newsletter of the ASA and CSCA* Jul/Aug, 2.

³ A.Leegwater, *Editorial* (2010), *PSCF* 62/3, 145-146. This *PSCF* issue apparently reflected the same concern that the Adam issue has an importance for ASA, just as the Executive Director's Newsletter editorial pointed out.

⁴ E.Ruppel, *Clearing the Middle Path* (2011), ASA website (accessed on Oct.06, 2011).

⁵ Matthew 28:18-20.

⁶ M.Ruse, *The shame of Calvin College* (2011), *Chronicle Higher Education*, July 20 (ASA website, accessed on Aug.19, 2011).

⁷ By "theological", I denote concepts based on exegesis of the canonical bible (66 books). By "scientific", I denote the natural sciences and history.

⁸ This is the context primarily considered by D.N.Livingstone (2008), *Adam's ancestors: race, religion & the politics of human origins* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD).

⁹ The 66 books which don't include the so-called Apocryphs.

¹⁰ It is necessary to demonstrate that all of the canonical Bible can be accepted literally (meaningfully interpreted), while also accepting all established scientific facts. This is not a "tour de force" or eisegesis, but a theological requirement. On the one hand, God's will to reveal his redemptive plan (which categorically surpasses all human wisdom) to those ready to yield their lives to him requires absolute respect for his Word (in the sense of both Christ and Scripture). On the other hand, God creating through his pre-established natural laws requires accepting scientific facts. And finally, God's creating real persons and respecting the freedom he has given them requires both his refraining from imposing his miraculous interventions on unbelievers and keeping all supernatural interventions to the degree of ambiguity (with respect to reality/facts) necessary in his eyes.

¹¹ P.Rüst, *Phenomenological Language in Ancient Revealed Narrative* (2006), *PSCF* 58/2, 164-165. My *PSCF* papers referenced in these endnotes can also be found on my homepage www.aneste.ch. Some of these might clarify what I am saying in the main text or answer possible objections.

¹² What do I mean by *truth*? My view of truth includes the scientific *correspondence to the facts*. But it also includes the theological concept of *all truth is God's truth*, be it scientific facts or biblical revelations, implying that there cannot be any contradiction within or between domains - as long as facts are clearly distinguished from their interpretation, and various uncertainties are taken into account. The aspect of *non-propositional truth* is a part of meaningful interpretation in context (metaphors etc.) which I am also emphasizing. Proper understanding of *theological truth* requires a personal faith in Christ as Lord (John 14:6). I assume these different aspects to be self-evident for born-again christians. *Ancient Hebrew and Greek views* might have recognized this in partial ways. As this paper is not meant to be a philosophical one, I didn't articulate these different aspects in detail here.

¹³ Genesis 1:28.

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- ¹⁴ This warfare thesis was invented by J.W.Draper (1875), *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (H.S.King, London) and A.D.White (1896), *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (Macmillan, London). Unfortunately, it remains unexplainably influential to this day, even though it has been refuted long ago, e.g. by J.Orr, *Science and Christian Faith* (1915), in *The Fundamentals* 4, 95 (the series of the *Fundamentals* was written as a confession of the original christian "fundamentalism", which was not devoted to science-rejecting young earth creationism).
- ¹⁵ A statement by Karl Marx.
- ¹⁶ P.Rüst, *Accommodationism's Illusion of Solving Biblical Problems* (2004), *PSCF* 56/3, 235-236. My central purpose in this paper is to show that harmonization between plenary inspiration of the bible and established scientific facts is a possibility, although liberal theologians deny it out of hand.
- ¹⁷ The exegesis of Genesis 1 will not be discussed here. An earlier treatment can be found in A.Held, P.Rüst, *Genesis Reconsidered* (1999), *PSCF* 51/4, 231-243; --, --, *Taking Genesis as Inspired* (2000), *PSCF* 52/3, 212-214. A newer Genesis 1 exegesis is (on my website only) in: P.Rüst, *The Biblical Creation Report and Science* (2010), <http://www.aneste.ch/files/CreRepSci.pdf>, with a short summary version in: --, *The Creation Report of Genesis 1* (2011), <http://www.aneste.ch/files/CreationReport-Gen1.pdf>; it describes the relationship between the biblical text and science, and is intended to be accessible to nonscientists, as well, in order to help parents and teachers, in particular, to explain the creation narrative to their young people in a meaningful way (the short German version has been used in a Sunday school class of 3rd- to 6th-graders). - Those denying the basic historicity of Adam fail to explain where in Genesis (or in the entire OT, for that matter) history begins. Some would point to Genesis 12, making Abram historical at age 75, but mythological before that.
- ¹⁸ For concordance between science and the bible, I am not proposing my hypothesis as the only possible ("true") interpretation of the data, but I suggest that the data of the two sources are compatible.
- ¹⁹ P.Rüst, *Early Humans, Adam, and Inspiration* (2007), *PSCF* 59/3, 182-193.
- ²⁰ The fields of DNA analysis, genetics, embryology, evolutionary biology will not be treated separately. I subsume their data under the field of archeology, having discussed the factuality of evolution and its compatibility with divine action in A.Held, P.Rüst, *Genesis Reconsidered* (1999), *PSCF* 51/4, 231-243; P.Rüst, *Creative Providence in Biology* (2001), *PSCF* 53/3, 179-183; --, *God's Sovereignty in Creation - a reply to Howard Van Till* (2002), *PSCF* 54/3, 216-217; --, *Dimensions of the Human Being and of Divine Action* (2005), *PSCF* 57/3, 191-201; --, *Phenomenological Language in Ancient Revealed Narrative* (2006), *PSCF* 58/2, 164-165.
- ²¹ The term "spiritual" may mean different things, cf. P.Rüst, *Dimensions of the Human Being and of Divine Action* (2005), *PSCF* 57/3, 191-201: man has (1) a bodily dimension, shared with all life, (2) a sentient (psychological), soul dimension, shared with all "higher" life (beginning with Genesis 1:21), (3) a spiritual dimension, indicated by the "image of God" (beginning with Genesis 1:27 and valid for all humans descended from these first ones). When people are converted to Christ, accepting him as personal Savior, they are born again into a new, spiritual life, which constitutes (4) a new dimension, in English also designated as "spiritual". In German, there are two different words for "spiritual": *geistig* (dimension 3, which all humans have), and *geistlich* (dimension 4, which only true christians have - unless the term is subverted in religious politics).
- ²² I.Tattersall, *Human origins: Out of Africa* (2009), *Proc.Nat.Ac.Sci.* 106, 16018-16021. Here is a "brick" in my paper that is definitely new: the severe and long-lasting population bottleneck between the first morphologically and genetically modern Homo sapiens with technologically complex behavior, seen in South Africa ~77,000 YBP, and the first modern humans whose symbolic behavior with communal aspect, first seen in Europe ~35,000 YBP, which concords surprisingly well with what the new spiritual creation, as presented in Genesis 1:26-31, might show archeologically. In addition to Tattersall's review, there continue to be more recent reports [e.g. I.S.Castañeda et al., *Wet phases in the Sahara/Sahel region and human migration patterns in North Africa* (2009), *Proc.Nat.Ac.Sci.* 106, 20159-20163 on habitable trans-Saharan corridors around ~45,000-50,000 YBP] which further strengthen this interpretation. But in this overview I cannot describe this "brick" more extensively.
- ²³ In the sense of occurring much faster than anticipated by evolutionary processes, and in a direction unanticipated by evolutionary fitness requirements.
- ²⁴ A theory, formed by a "mind", about what another "mind" (human or animal) may "think".
- ²⁵ Evolutionary novelties accidentally acquired before there was a use for them, i.e. before an enhanced fitness could select them (in contrast to adaptations, which are selected because of their enhanced fitness).
- ²⁶ The 19th century gap model has nothing to do with my views: I don't place any gap anywhere into the text, but do read the whole text as a narrative, interpreting the parts as suggested by the text itself, considering it as divinely inspired. The text itself of neither Gen.1-3 nor the entire bible forces us to equate the first humans of Gen. 1:26-30 with Adam and Eve.
- ²⁷ If a historical Noah (Ziusudra) can be located in Shuruppak in Sumer, dated around 2900 BC, a historical Adam in Ur/Eridu (Eden) about 1000 years earlier falls in line with the Genesis record, but cannot be equated with the first humans showing the symbolic behavior characterizing modern humans beginning around 40,000 YBP in Europe.

Thus, Gen 1:27 and 2:7 cannot talk about the same event. This is the focus of my proposal for solving the perceived science-Scripture conflict in this area.

- ²⁸ C.A.Hill, *A Time and a Place for Noah* (2001), *PSCF* 53/1, 24-41; --, *Qualitative Hydrology of Noah's Flood* (2006), *PSCF* 58/2, 120-129; A.E.Hill, *Quantitative Hydrology of Noah's Flood* (2006), *PSCF* 58/2, 130-141.
- ²⁹ C.A.Hill, *The Noachian Flood: Universal or Local?* (2002), *PSCF* 54/3, 170-183. Biblical Ararat doesn't refer to present mount Ararat, but to a land reaching down into the Mesopotamian plain. The waters covered all hills visible from Noah's starting place, and apparently the ziggurats were designated with the same term "mountain / hill". That a local interpretation of Noah's flood is compatible with the Genesis text has been documented e.g. in *PSCF* papers by various authors.
- ³⁰ Genesis 2:10-14: *Pishon* (Wadi al Batin), *Gihon* (Karun?), *Hiddekel* (Tigris), *Euphrates*: C.A.Hill, *The Garden of Eden: A Modern Landscape* (2000), *PSCF* 52/1, 31-46.
- ³¹ D.Fischer, *In Search of the Historical Adam: Part 1* (1993), *PSCF* 45/4, 241-251; --, *In Search of the Historical Adam: Part 2* (1994), *PSCF* 46/1, 47-57; -- (1996), *The Origins Solution: An Answer in the Creation - Evolution Debate* (Fairway Press, Lima, OH).
- ³² A strong argument for the historic reliability of Genesis is its "toledot" structure, which has led to the suggestion that the information contained in it has been handed down from patriarch to patriarch since the earliest times of the existence of writing (i.e. the beginning of the third millennium BC at the latest) on cuneiform tablets, which were marked, dated, and linked by their "colophons", cf. P.J.Wiseman (1936), *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis* (Marshall, London); V.P.Hamilton (1990), *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids MI); P.Rüst, *Genesis in cuneiform on tablets* (2002), listserve of the ASA, 28 Sept.-25 Nov.2002. The Hebrew term *toledot* stands for "generations", literally "procreations". Wiseman's very plausible thesis gives the following 11 cuneiform tablets with the Genesis text range, followed [except (1)] by the owner of the tablet: (1) 1:1-2:4a, the heavens and the earth; (2) 2:4b-5:1a, Adam; (3) 5:1b-6:9a, Noah; (4) 6:9b-10:1a, sons of Noah; (5) 10:1b-11:10a, Shem; (6) 11:10b-11:27a, Terah; (7) 11:27b-25:12, Ishmael; (8) 25:13-25:19a, Isaac; (9) 25:19b-36:1, Esau; (10) 36:2-36:9, Esau; (11) 36:10-37:2a, Jacob, followed by Joseph's history written on papyrus and according to Egyptian conventions. Separate sources for the creation report (1) and the Adam story (2) are implied.
- ³³ K.A.Kitchen (2003), *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI); C.A.Hill, *Making Sense of the Numbers of Genesis* (2003) *PSCF* 55/4, 239-251; P.Rüst, *Phenomenological Language in Ancient Revealed Narrative* (2006), *PSCF* 58/2, 164-165; C.A.Hill, *A Third Alternative to Concordism and Divine Accommodation: The Worldview Approach* (2007), *PSCF* 59/2, 129-134.
- ³⁴ Genesis 2:8.
- ³⁵ Genesis 2:10.
- ³⁶ Genesis 4:14-15.
- ³⁷ Genesis 4:16-17.
- ³⁸ But the earliest bronze and iron working might not have left any archeological traces found to date.
- ³⁹ An exception is Genesis 5:1 where the first Hebrew word '*adam*' is rendered *anthrôpôn*, referring to humanity instead of to Adam ('*adam*' is used in a fixed expression with *toledot*, "generations", which requires an individual's name - except in its first occurrence in Genesis 2:4, "these are the generations of the heavens and the earth"), while the second word '*adam*' is rendered *Adam*, referring to the individual Adam instead of to the humans of Genesis 1:27, where the context requires "man" in the collective sense of humanity. Fortunately, good modern translations render Genesis 5:1 as "This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God," steering clear of the Septuagint's mistake.
- ⁴⁰ No mechanical dictation theory is implied, but an intimate spiritual communication between God and his prophet which respects the latter's freedom and makes use of the ambiguities inherent in any language. P.Rüst, *Phenomenological Language in Ancient Revealed Narrative* (2006), *PSCF* 58/2, 164-165.
- ⁴¹ No "teaching of science" or "proof of God" in a scientific sense of proof is implied, as God takes care not to impose himself on unwilling humans. Any concordance of a biblical statement with realities not yet known at the time of origination will therefore be carefully veiled in ambiguity. But after the fact, it makes room for finding concordance in the sense of possible interpretations alternative to the ones refuted by science. A case of "veiled in ambiguity" in Isaiah 7:14 is discussed in P.Rüst, *Immanuel, God with us* (2007), <http://www.aneste.ch/files/Immanuel-.e.pdf>.
- ⁴² The Hebrew terms *zakar* ("male") and *nqevah* ("female") used in Genesis 1:27 emphasize the sexual relationship, in contrast to the usual designations '*adam*' ("human or Adam"), '*ish*' ("man, husband"), '*ishah*' ("wife"). Similarly, the NT has the Greek terms *ârsen* ("male") and *thêlys* ("female") for the sexual emphasis, in contrast to the usual designations *ânthrôpos* ("human"), *anêr* ("man, husband"), *gynê* ("woman, wife"). Luther's translation in Genesis 1:27, "...schuf sie einen Mann und ein Weib", is clearly in error.
- ⁴³ The Hebrew terms specifically refer to sexuality, rather than just to genders, or to husband and wife.
- ⁴⁴ Genesis 1:30: "and it was so": within the 6th creation "day", not the 7th, the earth was filled.
- ⁴⁵ Ephesians 5:32.
- ⁴⁶ P.G.Nelson, *Adam and Eve* (2008), *PSCF* 60/1, 71.

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- ⁴⁷ The article *ha* refers back to the immediately previous use of the term *adam*, i.e. to the humanity God declared he was going to create.
- ⁴⁸ Genesis 5, verses 1a, 3, 4, and 5. The occurrences in verses 1b and 2 refer to the creation of man in Genesis 1:27.
- ⁴⁹ P.Rüst, *First man or Adam in Genesis* (2008), *PSCF* 60/3, 206-207.
- ⁵⁰ Exodus 4:22.
- ⁵¹ Jude 14 called Enoch (the son of Jared) "the seventh from Adam", presumably in order to distinguish him from Cain's son Enoch.
- ⁵² First mention in Romans 5:14; first mention in 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Timothy 2:13-14.
- ⁵³ Second mention in Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22; second mention in 1 Corinthians 15:45.
- ⁵⁴ Romans 5:12.
- ⁵⁵ Paul talks about spiritual death as a consequence of sin, and both would certainly apply to pre-adamites.
- ⁵⁶ It is immaterial in this context how large the evolutionary "bottleneck" was when God created these humans in his image, because even if hundreds of the species *Homo sapiens* were spiritually endowed at the same time, one of them must have been the first to sin. Of course, we must assume that if there were any other groups of the same biological species (I know of no scientific evidence indicating this), they would have died out earlier.
- ⁵⁷ N.T.Wright (2003), *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN).
- ⁵⁸ "For" in verse 22 does not introduce an argument equating "Adam" of verse 22 with "the man" of verse 21. It translates the Greek *ōsper gar*, literally "namely [*gar*] exactly like [*ōsper*]", indicating that the comparison being made between verses 22 and 21 is centered on "death" and "resurrection", not on "Adam".
- ⁵⁹ The Greek *egéneto eis psychên zōsan*, literally "became a living soul", is usually translated "became a living being".
- ⁶⁰ The Hebrew *wayahay ha'adam wenephesh ghayah* is rendered *kai egéneto ô ánthrōpos eis psychên zōsan* by the Greek Septuagint, which Paul refers to.
- ⁶¹ Accordingly, some translations do put the quotation marks around "became a living soul" only, without including "the first man, Adam" in Paul's quotation, e.g. the German translations Luther of 1912 and Schlachter of 2000, while others omit quotation marks entirely, e.g. Zürcher of 2008.
- ⁶² Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:47-48.
- ⁶³ Should Jewish theology be part of christian theology, as the OT both represents the Jewish bible and is part of the christian bible? Certainly, christian theology has to take into consideration Jewish OT interpretations, but there must be a parting of ways, because the OT Messiah cannot be both the NT Jesus Christ, the "stone of stumbling and rock of offense" (Isaiah 8:14; Romans 9:33), and a Jewish Messiah who hasn't come yet.
- ⁶⁴ JEPD (or JEDP) stands for Jahwist, Elohist, Priestly code, Deuteronomist, the four sources hypothesized for the texts of the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses called "the Law" in the bible. Theologians, of course, know perfectly well what JEPD means, but I am adding this remark because I want to address non-theologians, as well. Cf. A.A.MacRae (1994), *JEDP, Lectures on the Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch* (Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, Hatfield, PA); P.Rüst (2002), *The Pentateuch dissected and revised*, <http://www.aneste.ch/files/PentatDissect.pdf>, listserve of the ASA, 25 Nov.2002; G.J.Wenham, *The Pentateuch* (2004), in: D.A.Carson, R.T.France, J.A.Motyer, G.J.Wenham (eds), *New Bible Commentary* (Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL). Wenham rather devastatingly critiqued the standard source theory (or rather, any number of conflicting source theories) of "higher" source criticism. I don't doubt the need for "lower" source criticism and for interpretation. In any case, my proposition is not dependent on having the same source for Gen 1 and 2. On the contrary, I suggested in the footnote on the toledot structure of Genesis (in section 6. *Historical data: Adam's world Neolithic and local*) that they are two sources, but both extremely early ones. I am also assuming that both of such originals were inspired by God.
- ⁶⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16 (or "God-breathed"). The Greek text, *pása graphè theópneustos*, doesn't distinguish between "all Scripture is God-breathed" and "all God-breathed Scripture", but the former interpretation is clearly favored by the direct and wider context, cf. D.Guthrie (2004), in: D.A.Carson, R.T.France, J.A.Motyer, G.J.Wenham (eds), *New Bible Commentary* (Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL), 1309.
- ⁶⁶ 2 Peter 1:20-21.
- ⁶⁷ 2 Peter 3:15-16.
- ⁶⁸ Matthew 5:18.
- ⁶⁹ Matthew 11:13; Luke 24:25-27; John 5:46; 14:26; Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:24.
- ⁷⁰ 1 Corinthians 4:6.
- ⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 7:10, 12.
- ⁷² Unfortunately, such fixation on specific interpretations in a dogmatic believed infallible is quite widespread in christendom, not only on the roman catholic or orthodox side, but also in many protestant denominations, e.g. of episcopalian, methodist, or other types.
- ⁷³ Cf. D.Fischer, *Young-Earth Creationism: A Literal Mistake* (2003), *PSCF* 55.4:222-231 (12/2003).
- ⁷⁴ The question of which fossil hominins, such as e.g. "archaic" *Homo sapiens*, or even Neandertals or Flores "hobbits", might possibly have belonged to humanity created in God's image is not easily answered, as this requires

finding indications of concordance between science and theology. An attempt has been made in the above discussion of Tattersall's paper.

⁷⁵ Genesis 1:28.

⁷⁶ Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4

⁷⁷ Isaiah 43:6-7; Psalm 139:13-18; cf. P.Rüst, *Dimensions of the Human Being and of Divine Action* (2005), *PSCF* 57/3, 191-201.

⁷⁸ Genesis 18:23-25; Ezekiel 17:20-21; John 9:2-3; Romans 3:5-6.

⁷⁹ Exodus 20:5.