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INCONSPICUOUS ADAM: WHY THE FIRST ADAM FADES FROM ISRAEL'S MEMORY AND ITS MEANING FOR MODERN DEBATE

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Adam hid. Naked and afraid, the first man found refuge behind some trees. This picture of Adam in Genesis 3:9 serves as a suitable metaphor for him in the remaining Hebrew Scriptures: Adam was inconspicuous. After crowning the genealogy in Genesis 5, Adam's name goes unannounced until a subsequent genealogy in the Chronicler's account of Israel's narrative (1:1). He is mentioned without commentary, receding into the shadows of the family tree. But Adam later reappears. The roots of Jesus' family tree reach back to Adam (Luke 3:38). Moreover, Adam became a pivotal figure in Paul's theology of atonement (Rom. 5:14, 19 cf. 1 Cor. 15:22, 45). Whereas references to Adam in the biblical text are infrequent, he has been nothing short of conspicuous in current theological debate.¹ To some evangelicals, Adam is the product of fiat creation and resembles the wax replicas staged in the Creation Museum.² For others, Adam is the product of theistic evolution, but endowed with Creator God's own image by the impartation of the spirit.³ The competing views are fueled by an honest attempt to reconcile scientific research with biblical revelation. The task is neither easy nor friendly. What is missing from these debates (other than more charity) is an explanation for why Adam faded from Israel's memory.⁴ Like scientific inquiry, the lack of data demands some measure of guesswork. For as much as modern theologians would like an explanation from ancient Israel for her silence, no one gives it. Thus it seems reasonable first to chart the inconspicuous Adam in Israel's history as well as survey

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¹ Stanley N. Gundry, Matthew S. Barrett, Ardel B. Caneday, eds., *Four Views on The Historical Adam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013); Richard Ostling, "The Search for the Historical Adam," *Christianity Today* (June 2011): 23-27; Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012); John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis 1* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010); John C. Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); Dennis Lamourex, *I Love Jesus & I Accept Evolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009); Daniel Trier, "Creation" in Kevin Vanhoozer, *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), pp. 144-146; Ardel B. Caneday, "The Language of God and Adam's Genesis & Historicity in Paul's Gospel" *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 15/1 (Spring 2011): 26-59; Simon Turpin, "The Importance of an Historical Adam," *Answers Research Journal* 6 (2013): 195-209. Online: <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/arj/v6/n1/importance-of-historical-adam> (3/24/14).

² Kevin DeYoung reflects this position on the Gospel Coalition website: "Ten Reasons to Believe in the Historical Adam" (February 17, 2012). Online: www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2012/02/07/reasons-to-believe-in-a-historical-adam. The most notable proponent of a literalistic interpretation of Adam comes from Answers in Genesis, an apologetics ministry led by Ken Ham (see www.answersingenesis.org/about).

³ The BioLogos Foundation exemplifies the effort to blend evolutionary thinking and biblical scholarship. Founded in 2006 following Dr. Francis Shafer's work on the Human Genome project, BioLogos provides a forum for theologians, scientists, and philosophers with an evolutionary bias to discuss matters of faith and science. For more information, see www.biologos.org/about. Waltke writes, "The best harmonious synthesis of the special revelation of the Bible, of the general revelation of human nature that distinguishes between right and wrong and consciously or unconsciously craves God, and of science is the theory of theistic evolution." Waltke's evolutionary leaning does not deny an historical Adam. Commenting on the genealogical record tying Adam to Abraham, Waltke affirms: "There is little doubt that the narrator of Genesis intended his readers to understand Adam and Eve in the same light as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—as real, historical figures. God shaped a real Adam and Eve at the beginning human history." Bruce Waltke, *Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 202, 250.

⁴ While Barrick, the Young-Earth Creationist, questions the salvation of Lamourex, the Theistic Evolutionist, Lamourex questions the intelligence of Barrick's literalism. See William D. Barrick, "A Historical Adam: Young-Earth Creation View" in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, 228-235; Dennis Lamourex, "No Historical Adam: Evolutionary Creation View" in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, 80-85.

other characters and events from Israel's primeval history (Gen. 1-11); then to excavate from Second Temple literature the First Adam, who becomes a critical player in Jewish thinking, a likely influence in Paul's Christology; and to close with some thoughts on the current debate about origins.⁵

I. INCONSPICUOUS ADAM IN ISRAEL'S MEMORY

Although it may seem surprising, Michael Stone opens his comprehensive work on Adam and Eve Literature with this statement: "It is a striking fact which we shall not address here that, apart from the beginning of Genesis, Adam and Eve play almost no role in the scripture of the Hebrew Bible."⁶ Many others have noted Adam's inconspicuous role in the Hebrew Scriptures, and like Stone, none offers a theory for his absence.⁷ The challenge of studying Adam, in fact, begins with the ambiguous Hebrew word *adam*. In Genesis 1-5 the word occurs 34 times⁸, but commentators and translators wrestle with which references should be a proper noun (Adam) versus a common one (the man).

CHART 1: Translations Handling of <i>Adam/Man</i>		
Genesis	(Articular) Proper Noun: <i>ha adam</i>	(Articular) Common Noun: <i>ha adam</i>
1:27		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
2:7 (2x)		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
2:8		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
2:15		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
2:16		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
2:18		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
2:19 (2x)	NKJV, NLT	NASB, NIV, ESV, NET, NLT, NRSV
2:20a	NKJV	NASB, NIV, NLT, NRSV, ESV, NET
2:21	NKJV, NLT	NASB, NIV, NRSV, ESV, NET

⁵ DeRouchie challenges the neat divide between the primeval history and patristic history in Genesis. He notes that five of the ten genealogies in Genesis begin with a *Waw* conjunction that marks a continuation of the previous *toledot*. Following the pattern, the Abraham story does not begin with Terah (Gen. 11:27), but reaches back to Shem's name (11:10). Of the traditional break between 11-12, DeRouchie remarks, "This distinction is not fully without merit for the narrative pacing slows drastically at chapter 12 and the last four-fifths of the book show a marked shift in content focus." Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the Toledot, Structure," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50:2 (June 2013): 219-247. This paper will continue to refer to the primeval history simply as Genesis 1-11.

⁶ Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature, Vol. 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 1

⁷ This does not include those who do not reckon Adam was a literal person. Lamourex reflects this view as a Theistic Evolutionist, a view, according to his count, that only 10% of born-again Christians hold. Their claim is that "history actually begins roughly around Gen 12 with the call of Abraham." Lamourex, "No Historical Adam" in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, 71.

⁸ In the remaining primeval literature, the word *adam* plays a major role describing godless humanity (Gen. 6:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7; 7:21; 8:21; 9:5, 6; 11:5).

2:22 (2x)	NLT	NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, ESV, NET
2:23	NJKV, NLT	NASB, NIV, NRSV, ESV, NET
2:25	NLT	NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, ESV, NET
3:8	NKJV	NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
3:9	NKJV, NLT	NASB, NIV, ESV, NLT
3:12	NLT	NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, ESV, NET
3:20	NIV, NKJV, NLT	NASB, NRSV, ESV, NLT
3:22		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
3:24		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET

Genesis	Anarthrous Proper Noun: <i>adam</i>	Anarthrous Common Noun: <i>adam</i>
1:26		NASB, NIV, NRS, NKJ, NLT, ESV, NET, NLT
4:25	NASB, NIV, NRSV, NKJV, NLT, ESV, NET	
5:1 (2x)	NASB, NIV, NRSV, NKJV, NLT, ESV, NET	NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
5:2		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, ESV, NET
5:3,4,5	NASB, NIV, NRS, NKJV, NLT, ESV, NET	

Genesis	Proper Noun with Proposition/Conj.	Common Noun with Preposition
2:5		NASB, NIV, NKJV, NLT, ESV, NET
2:20b	NASB, NIV, NKJV, ESV, NET	NRSV, NLT
3:17	NASB, NIV, KNJV, NLT, ESV, NET	NRSV
3:21	NASB, NIV, NKJV, NLT, ESV, NET	NRSV

An apparent shift occurs for Bible translations in Genesis 2:20. After Adam has named the animals, he finds no suitable mate for himself.⁹ Some commentators have detailed this discussion,¹⁰ including the

⁹ The use of the *waw* consecutive, avers Cassuto, creates a powerful “antithesis that Scripture wished to express” between Adam’s naming task and the absence of any other creature worthy of the “‘Adamic’ species.” U. Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1978), 132-133. Westermann writes, “*adam* is certainly not meant to be a proper name.” C. Westerman, *Genesis 1-11* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 201.

¹⁰ See Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 201-203; John H. Walton, “A Historical Adam: Archetypal Creation View” in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, 91.

significance of the vowel pointing,¹¹ but for our purposes, it is sufficient to summarize not only the difficulty surrounding the first man's namesake, but also how great an influence our translations have on our acceptance of *adam* as a proper noun.

CHART 2: Israel's Testimony – Recalled People and Events		
Testimony	People Mentioned	Event Mentioned
God's Ten Words (Ex. 20:1-11)		Exodus, Creation
Deuteronomy 1:1-4:14	King Sihon, King Og, Aaron,	Exodus, Wilderness
Joshua's Testament (24:1-14)	Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Moses, Aaron, Balak, Balaam	Exodus, Wilderness, Conquest, Settlement
Nehemiah (9:1-12)	Abraham, Pharaoh, Moses, King Sihon, King Og	Exodus, Wilderness, Conquest, Settlement, Judges, Monarchy, Exile
Psalms 78	Jacob, Joseph, (tribe of) Judah, David,	Exodus, Wilderness, Conquest, Settlement, Monarchy, Exile
Psalms 105	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron	Covenant, Exodus, Wilderness, Settlement
Psalms 135	Jacob, Pharaoh, King Sihon, King Og, Aaron, Levi	Exodus, Wilderness, Conquest, Settlement
Psalms 136	Pharaoh, King Sihon, King Og,	Creation, Exodus, Wilderness, Conquest, Settlement

The challenge continues with Adam's appearance in a later genealogy. Following the reference in Genesis 5, *adam* reappears as the first person of the Chronicler's *toledot* (1 Chron. 1:1). Ten generations span from Adam to Noah. From Noah to Abraham, the Chronicler lists another ten generations, with additional offspring included (1:24-27). The author cites the names plainly; however, the Chronicler's *toledot* is selective and stylized. More striking — except for three illusory references to Noah in prophetic oracles — this genealogy is the only other *explicit* memory Israel records from her primeval history.¹² While evidence for God's fiat creation pervades the Hebrew Scriptures,¹³ historical recall pays greater attention to the themes of covenant and exodus, wilderness and conquest, settlement and monarchy.¹⁴ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dominate Israel's headlines. Moses, David, and

¹¹ Casuto outlines a case for Adam as a proper noun, arguing the *shewa* beneath the preposition affixed to *adam* is not accidental, but shows the article has dropped out and the word functions as a proper noun. The same thing happens to the God's title *Elohim* (*From Adam to Noah*, 166-167).

¹² Noah, Daniel, and Job stand as examples of righteous men (Ezek. 14:14). Moreover, God recalls the days of Noah, where he exacted judgment on the people with a flood (Isa. 54:9). Otherwise, the remaining names do not appear outside Chronicles 1 and Genesis 1-11, except as locations (e.g. Sheba) or people groups (e.g., Ludites).

¹³ The Sabbath command is grounded in a six-day creation tradition (Exod. 20:8-11). A great deal of Hebrew poetry, wisdom literature, and prophetic assume God as Creator (e.g., Job 38-40; Pss. 8, 19, 33:9; 104, 139; Prov. 8:22-31; Isa. 40; Hab. 2:18-20), but the details of the Genesis 1 account are treated loosely.

¹⁴ In *The Word that Redescribes the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), Walter Bruggeman stresses that Israel's memory "is saturated with miracle, wonder, wondrous deeds, mighty acts." Additionally, "Her memory centers around "that wondrous past: exodus-wilderness-land of the credos" cited by Bruggemann (Deut. 6:20-24; 26:5-9; Josh. 24:1-13; Pss 78,

numerous prophets, priests, and kings cast towering shadows over Adam, Noah, and other primitive figures in the pages of the Hebrew text.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Adam did not fade forever. New Testament authors break from the tradition of their inherited Scriptures.¹⁶ They draw from Israel's primeval history regularly. Jesus refers to the wedding in Eden (Matt. 19:5-6), blood of Cain (Matt. 23:35), and days of

CHART 3: New Testament References to the Primeval History – People and Events			
Adam	Lk. 3:38; Rom. 5:14 (2x); 1 Cor. 15:22, 45; 1 Tim. 2:13, 14; Jude 14	Image of God	2 Cor. 4:4; Phil. 2:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 1:15; 3:10; Jas 3:9
Eve	1 Tim. 2:13	Creation ¹⁷	Acts 14:15, 17:24-26; 1 Cor. 11:8-9; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 4:11
Cain	Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11	Flood	Mt. 24:38; Lk. 17:27; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pt. 3:20; 2 Pt. 2:5
Abel	Mt. 23:35; Lk. 11:51; Heb. 11:4	“Fall” ¹⁸	Rom. 1:18-32; 5:12-21
Enoch	Lk. 3:37; Heb. 11:5, Jude 14	Babel	n/a
Noah	Mt. 24:37,38; Lk. 17:26; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pt. 3:20; 2 Pt. 2:5		

Noah (Matt. 24:37). The epistles mention Eve, Cain, Seth, Enoch, Noah. Luke's genealogy traces Jesus back to Adam, in concert with the *toledot* of Genesis and Chronicles.¹⁹ And Paul calls Jesus the Second Adam in two theologically dense passages (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:20-50).²⁰

105, 106, 135, 136), only in Psalm 136 is “there an opening element of creation.” Nevertheless he concedes that, “the particularities of Israel's memory are embedded in a larger, deeper recall of creation” (pp. 10-11).

¹⁵ While Abram/Abraham accounts for roughly 246 hits on BibleWorks word search, Isaac accounts for roughly 112, Jacob accounts for roughly 349, Moses accounts for more than 700, and David accounts for more than 1000.

¹⁶ Stephen's speech in Acts (7:2-53) parallels the testimonials of the Hebrew Scriptures, beginning with Abraham and moving from covenant to exodus to wilderness to conquest/settlement to monarchy to exile. None of the sermons to Jewish audiences in Acts (2:17-36; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 13:6-41) refers to the primeval history, rather they call upon Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, and other prophets. However, when Paul addresses Gentile audiences, he reaches further back than Abraham, touting God as creator: every nation from one man (Acts 14:15; 17:24-26).

¹⁷ This is not a comprehensive account. The Acts 17:24 and 1 Corinthians 11:8 refer to the creation of humankind.

¹⁸ Concerning the “Fall” see Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology: Israel's Gospel* vol. 1 (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 145-147. Goldingay distinguishes between theological tradition and Genesis: “In Christian tradition the ‘sin’ of Adam and Eve thus brings about the ‘Fall’ of the human race. Genesis 3 does not speak of this event as ‘sin’ or as a ‘fall,’ nor do any other First or Second Testament texts... It is then more a story about loss than one about a fall: about loss of innocence, loss of relationships, loss of possibilities, loss of life” (p. 145).

¹⁹ Bock writes, “The key feature of the genealogy is that it goes past Abraham to Adam.” Not only does Luke extend Jesus' lineage, but he also places it between the baptism and temptation scene. The context is not accidental; rather Luke positions Jesus, the Son of God, to overcome the devil since Adam, the first son of God, did not. Bock notes, “Outside of Jesus, Adam is the only one related to the title son of God in Luke.” Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 348-362.

²⁰ “Some have detected covert references to Adam in several other passages (e.g., Rom. 1:18ff, 7:7-12; Philip. 2:5-11, Col. 1:15); others remain skeptical,” noted Wright. He also makes a case for Philippians 2:5-11 betraying an Adam-christology, contrasting “Adam, in arrogance, thought to become like God; Christ, in humility, became human.” N.T. Wright in *Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 18, 91.

This resurrection of Adam (and the primeval history) was not a miracle. Jewish writers in the latter half of the Second Temple period had excavated him. Retellings and revisions of Israel's past proliferated by the end of the first century, as evidenced in the Apocryphal texts, Dead Sea Scrolls, Pseudepigraphical writings, works of Philo, and Rabbinic traditions. In some form or another, Adam conspicuously surfaced in every collection. By the time of Jesus and Paul, Adam was a household name.

II. EXCAVATED ADAM IN SECOND TEMPLE LITERATURE²¹

Peter Enns comments, "With respect to the Adam story, Paul was hardly the first Jewish interpreter to try to come to terms with it, and there was considerable diversity in how the story was read."²² Second Temple authors represent a full range of opinions on the virtue of Adam. Whether they were expanding on his life (e.g., Jubilees), placing him as Israel's true head (e.g., Wisdom of Solomon), or accusing him of human death (e.g., 2 Esdras), each author plays off Genesis 1-5 and reckons Adam an iconic figure of Israel's past. Needless to say, current authors have provided comprehensive analysis of these ancient texts, which is outside the scope of this paper.²³ Nevertheless, the following chart summarizes both the diversity of Adamic theology and depth of coverage given to Adam in Jewish literature. Three introductory comments are worth noting: First, while most sources are from the Second Temple period, *Genesis Rabbah* is not.²⁴ Second, the earlier references to Adam tend to cast him in a more positive light. Third, many authors take liberties with the Genesis account, adding interpretive and creative glosses.

Positive reflections on the life of Adam begin with Sirach. Toward the end of the book, the author composes a hymn in honor of Hebrew ancestors (44:1-49:16). Adam's name is missing from the outset of the poem. Those lauded by the poet include Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and numerous kings and prophets. At first, the omission of Adam suggests his life did not deserve "glory," "majesty," or "honor" (44:2, 7) like the notable ancestors. In fact, Adam seems to fit into the category of men for whom "there is no memory; they have perished as though they had never existed" (44:9, NRSV). But later in Sirach 49:14-16, Ben Sira has not forgotten Adam; he reserves the first man for last line of the hymn:

Few have every been created on earth like Enoch,
for he was taken up from the earth.
Nor was anyone ever born like Joseph;
even his bones were cared for.
Shem and Seth and Enosh were honored,
but above every other created living being was Adam. (NRSV)

²¹ I will refer to the latter part of the Second Temple period, roughly dating from 170 BCE to 70 CE, including some documents that post-date this period, but may trace their source to this era. I am specifically referring to the non-canonical literature.

²² Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, 98. Enns makes an interesting caveat concerning Jewish interpretive methods: "Ancient interpreters were not neutral observers of the text—which is often considered to be a model of biblical interpretation in the modern world. Rather, they read selectively, capitalized on ambiguities in the text, and brought it all to bear on some pressing concerns of their community" (p. 100).

²³ Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*. Bob Becking and Susanne Hennecke, eds. *Out of Paradise: Eve and Adam and Their Interpreters* [Hebrew Bible Monographs] (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2010). Enns, *Evolution*, 99-103. Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1984), 162-193. J. Tromp, "The Story of Our Lives: The qz-Text of the Life of Adam and Eve, the Apostle Paul, and the Jewish-Christian Tradition concerning Adam and Eve," *New Testament Studies* 50/2 (April 2004): 205-223.

²⁴ *Genesis Rabbah* is commonly dated in the 4th Century CE, post-dating the Second Temple period.

CHART 4: Adam in the Second Temple Period		
Meaning	Source	Date ²⁵
Adam as First to Sin/Death	1QH 8:11-15 Wisdom of Solomon 2:23-24; 10:1-2 2 Esdras 3:4-10; 3:20-22, 26; 4:30; 7:116-18 2 Baruch 28:42-43, 45-46; 54:15-16 <i>Genesis Rabbah</i> 14:6	30-1 BCE 150-100 BCE 70-100 CE 70-100 CE 300-400 CE
Adam as Cause of Death	Jubilees 4:29-33 2 Baruch 17:2-3; 18:2; 23:4	175-100 BCE 70-110 CE
Adam as Cause of Hard Work	Sirach 40:1	175 BCE
Adam as Father of Humanity	2 Esdras 6:56-59 Sirach 40:1	70-100 CE 175 BCE
Adam as Ruler of Creation	2 Esdras 6:53-54; 7:118; 9:17ff;	70-100 CE
Adam as Honorable	Sirach 49:14-16 1QS 4:22-23 Philo <i>On the Creation</i> 69-88	200-175 BCE 150-75 BCE 30 CE
Adam as Priest	Jubilees 3:26-31	175-100 BCE
Adam as Blessed	Jubilees 19:23-24 (cf. 21:11-13)	175-100 BCE
Adam as Recipient of Glory	1 QS 4:22-23 CD 3:20 <i>Life of Adam & Eve</i>	150 BCE 150 BCE 200-400 CE
Adam as Image Bearer	Wisdom of Solomon 2:23-24 Philo, <i>On the Creation</i> 134 Philo, <i>Questions on Genesis</i> 1:4, 5, 8 Philo, <i>Allegory</i> 1:88-108; 2:13	150-125 BCE 30 CE 30 CE 30 CE

Other Second Temple literature joins the chorus of appreciation for Adam. The Qumran community places the righteous in Adam's lineage. "Thereby He shall give the upright insight into the

²⁵ Dates were collected and synthesized from various sources. Emanuel Tov, ed, *The Texts from the Judean Desert: Indices* [Discoveries in the Judean Desert 39] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); Bruce M. Metzger, Roland E. Murphy, eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, eds, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* [2 vol.] (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 1998); Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996).

knowledge of the Most High and the wisdom of the angels, making wise those following the perfect way. Indeed God has chosen them for an eternal covenant; all the glory of Adam shall be theirs alone" (1QS 4:22-23).²⁶ Again, in the *Damascus Document* "those who kept God's covenant... remained steadfast" will receive eternal life and "the glory of Adam is for them" (CD 3:20).²⁷ Commenting on the writings from Qumran, N.T. Wright argues that referring to Adam "is one of the many ways in which the sect claims for itself the status of being God's true Israel, those who are to be seen as his true humanity."²⁸

Both the *Life of Adam and Eve* (Latin *Vita* and Greek *Apocalypse of Moses*) and *Jubilees* show Adam as penitent and priestly.²⁹ He repents for his sin, and God receives him at his death. Indeed, as much as death is judgment for Adam (*Jubilees* 4:29-33), it does not remove Adam from receiving God's blessing. "And of all the blessings with which the LORD blessed me and my seed will be for Jacob and his seed always. And in his seed my name will be blessed and the names of my fathers Shem and Noah, and Enoch, and Mahalalel, and Enosh, and Seth, and Adam" (*Jubilees* 19:23-24).³⁰

Second Temple literature also viewed Adam positively in his role as image-bearer. It was this very role that prompted Satan to tempt Adam and Eve according to Wisdom of Solomon (2:23-24 cf. *Life of Adam and Eve*). Moreover, "Wisdom protected the first-formed father of the world, when he alone had been created; she delivered him from his transgression, and gave him strength to rule all things" (10:1-2, NRSV). Although Adam is not mentioned by name, the author can have no other figure in mind. Finally, Philo writes extensively on Adam as image-bearer.³¹ "Nothing earthborn is more like God than man" (*On the Creation*, 69).³² However, the first-century Jewish expositor discerned two separate creations of man: Genesis 1:28 detailed the Image-Made man; Genesis 2:7 described the Dust-Moulded-man. Commenting on Genesis 2:16-17, Philo raises the question which "Adam" God commands "for the writer has not mentioned him before, but has named him now for the first time. Perchance, then he means to give us the name of the man that was moulded" (*Allegory*, 1:90).³³ While Philo does admit "there is a vast difference between the man thus formed [Gen. 2:7] and the man that came into existence after the image of God" (*On the Creation*, 134), the latter Adam is no Neanderthal.³⁴ "That first man, earth-born, ancestor of our whole race was made, as it appears to me, most excellent in each part of his being, in both soul and body, and greatly excelling those who came after him in the transcendent qualities of both alike" (*On the Creation*, 136).³⁵

Of course, not every reference to Adam in Second Temple literature is positive. Sirach implies Adam is the cause of hard labor (40:1). And 2 Esdras and 2 Baruch, which post-date most canonical New Testament texts, peg Adam as the primary cause of death and sin.³⁶ Concerning the restriction God

²⁶ Martinez and Tigchelaar, eds, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1:79.

²⁷ Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin Press, 1997), 129.

²⁸ Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 24.

²⁹ These documents post-date the Second Temple period (100-400 CE); however, their contribution may draw upon earlier Jewish traditions. See Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*, 42-74.

³⁰ "Jubilees," trans. by O.S. Wintermute in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed by James Charlesworth, (New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985), 2:93.

³¹ Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 172-173. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1981), 284-286. In his article, "The Origin of Paul's Doctrine of the Two Adams in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 23.3 (2003): 343-370, Stephen Hultgren makes a strong case against Philo influencing Paul's Adam-christology.

³² Philo, *On the Account of the World's Creation Given by Moses* (trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, Loeb Classical Library; 10 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 1:55.

³³ Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis II, III* (trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, Loeb Classical Library; 10 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 1:207.

³⁴ Philo, *On the Creation* (trans. Colson and Whitaker), 1:107

³⁵ Philo, *Allegory* (trans. Colson and Whitaker), 1:107-108.

³⁶ The fact that these authors post-date Paul does not conclude the apostle influenced them. It is possible all three borrowed from a common source.

spoke to Adam regarding the Tree of Knowing, 2 Esdras reports, “he transgressed it, and immediately you appointed death for him and for his descendants. From him there sprang nations and tribes, peoples of all clans without number. And every nation walked after its own will; they did ungodly things in your sight and rejected your commands, and you did not hinder them” (3:7-8, NRSV). In fact, Adam’s transgression and plight became a standard focus during this period. “For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the hearts of the people along with the evil root; but what was good departed, and the evil remained” (3:21-22, NRSV). So calamitous was the disobedience of the first Adam that Ezra gives this final word (7:116-118):

It would have been better if the earth had not produced Adam, or else when it had produced him had taught him not to sin. For what good is it to all that they live life in sorrow now and expect punishment after death? O Adam, what have you done? Though it was you who sinned, the misfortune was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants. (NRSV)

Similarly 2 Baruch accuses Adam of bringing sin and death into the world. “For when Adam sinned and death was decreed against those who were to be born, the multitude of those who would be born was numbered. And for that number a place was prepared where the living ones might live and where the dead might be preserved” (23:4).³⁷ More concisely: “For, although Adam sinned first and has brought death upon all who were not in his own time, yet each of them who has been born from him has prepared for himself the coming torment” (54:15).³⁸ And though composed at a much later date, *Genesis Rabbah* echoes the disapproval of Adam. “[God] reasoned: ‘He may sin and there will be none to set it right. Hence, I will create Adam first, so that if he sins, Abraham may come and set things right’” (14:6).³⁹

To summarize, the Second Temple literature not only provides a complex portrait of Adam, but it also takes interpretive liberties with the account of his life in Genesis 2-3.⁴⁰ Writers call upon Adam as an historic person, lumping him together with other undisputed figures from Israel’s past; at the same time, they repurpose his history to draw theological conclusions on the nature of sin, death, and Israel. In other words, the silence broken by Second Temple literature calls upon Adam more as a theological illustration, than as an historic individual. Paul’s unflattering depiction of Adam falls into this category. He casts the first man as the original sinner and forefather of death (Rom. 5:12, 14, 17; 1 Cor. 15:22). In this emphasis, the apostle’s valuation of Adam ignores the positive marks given by some of his predecessors (e.g. Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon), and focuses on Adam’s negative legacy (e.g. 2 Baruch, 2 Esdras). Thus Wright concludes, “If there is a ‘last Adam’ in the relevant Jewish literature, he is not an individual, whether messianic or otherwise. He is the whole eschatological people of God.”⁴¹ The surprise, of course, comes when Paul turns the tables and announces Jesus, the obedient Israelite, as the Second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:20-50). Wright contests that Paul “is not concerned to offer a full

³⁷ “Second (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch,” trans. by A.F.J. Klijn in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., ed by James Charlesworth, (New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985), 1:629

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:640.

³⁹ *Genesis Rabbah*, trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: The Soncino Press, 1961), 114.

⁴⁰ Enns places Paul in the same hermeneutical stream. “Paul does not feel bound by the original meaning of the Old Testament passage he is citing, especially as he seeks to make a vital theological point about the gospel” (*The Evolution of Adam*, 103).

⁴¹ Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 21.

statement of parallelism (or otherwise) between Jesus and Adam,” since “Adam and Christ as individuals are not the main subjects of discussion.”⁴²

III. THE CURRENT DEBATE ABOUT ORIGINS

Current quests for the Historical Adam often appears misguided. Unlike the quests for the historical Jesus, which analyzed massive collections of ancient manuscripts, biblical documentation on Adam is relatively sparse. Non-canonical literature refers to Adam far more often than canonical literature. Near the turn of the century, Hebrew and Christian authors played loosely with the vague details of Adam’s life laid out in Genesis 1-5. Any work on the use of the Old Testament in the New will show similar habits.⁴³ Modern historiography expects too much from ancient interpreters.

Comparative religion has proven helpful on this front.⁴⁴ The account of Adam’s life grew out of a specific context with a different set of historical presuppositions. The Hebrew Scriptures interpreted Israel’s history through a theological, not scientific lens. This, of course, is not to imply theology and science are incompatible.⁴⁵ Nor are history and theology for that matter. Moreover, recent debates about the Historical Adam are muddled by scientific bias.⁴⁶ Both BioLogos Foundation and Answers in Genesis weigh too heavily on the scientific data in their hermeneutic.⁴⁷ The former tends to reduce Genesis 1 to poetry or polemic to accommodate evolutionary thinking, while the latter tends to reduce Genesis 1-2 into a Case for Cosmic Origins to accommodate a theory of inspiration.

One of the challenges of this modern debate is that historical and scientific methods change over time.⁴⁸ When we measure the historicity and scientific plausibility of Adam (and the whole primeval history) against modern standards, we engage in an ever evolving battle. Thus we need to underscore the inconspicuous Adam and not the historical one. By asking why the first Adam disappears from Israel’s memory, we posed a complex question. Was it shame? Was it incredulity? Was it preference for Abraham? Was it oversight?

Perhaps Adam is inconspicuous because we are in search for historic traces of him. In reality, Adam is not inconspicuous, he is ubiquitous. Man’s sinful bent, his struggle with family work and death,

⁴² Ibid., 29, 32

⁴³ Two introductory texts on the topic include: Richard N. Longnecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2nd ed. 1999). G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

⁴⁴ John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006). John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy, *The Lost World of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 49-59. John D. Currid, *Against the Gods* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013). In *The Lost World of Genesis One*, Walton makes a compelling argument for an archetypal creation of mankind: Adam represents mankind in his *function* as ruler not in his *material* origins (pp. 68-71), which reflects his chapter “A Historical Adam: Archetypal Creation View” in *Four Views* (pp. 89-118). In the end, this paper most closely aligns with Walton’s proposal.

⁴⁵ Barrick writes, “One of the major characteristics of Genesis 1-11 consists of the centrality of the biblical writer’s intent. A theocentric or theological emphasis in the text, however, does not mean that he record lacks historicity (viz., factual reality for the events and persons).” Barrick, “Historical Adam” in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*,” 204. In fact, Barrick and Bruce Waltke, a Theistic Evolutionist, share this sentiment. In Waltke’s review of Enns book on Adam, he concludes, “[N]othing that science can produce will ever intimidate those who hold to the position that when scripture is judged from the viewpoint of the original authors and is interpreted in accordance with their own words and narration of events, it will not conflict with a correct understanding of the scientific data.” See “A Literal and Historical Adam and Eve? Reflections on the Work of Peter Enns,” *Criswell Theological Review* 10/2 (Spring 2013): 75-82, especially page 82.

⁴⁶ Ostling, “The Search for the Historical Adam,” 23-24. Matthew S. Barrett and Ardel B. Caneday, “Adam, To Be or Not To Be” in *Four Views on The Historical Adam*, 13-25.

⁴⁷ Refer to notes 3 and 4 for further information on these organizations.

⁴⁸ For example, consider the shifts in science from Newton’s Physics to Quantum Mechanics to String Theory. Moreover, consider history from oral tradition to source criticism to deconstructionism to revisionism.

and his estrangement from God covers every page of Scripture. Israel did not need to refer to the historic Adam to relocate her vocation (Gen. 1:28); Abraham gave that to her (Gen. 12:1-3). Israel did not need to recall the error of the historic Adam (Gen. 3:17) to understand her fate and failure: graves and altars covered her land. Israel did not need to turn back to the historic Adam to remember Eden: Moses provided a tent (Exod. 20:8), Solomon a Temple (1 Kings 8:13) and Isaiah a New Heavens and Earth (Isa. 66). Attempts to replace the historic Adam from Genesis with an archetypical Adam, evolved Adam, or Dust-Moulded Adam would not undo the overarching narrative of humankind.⁴⁹ Men and women have always had work to do, bodies to clothe, and children to bear. We tend gardens and pull back weeds. We sweat and fight and die, longing for Eden all the day-long. In fact, herein lies the weight of Paul's Adam-Christology: Jesus' reverses this death sentence. Jesus as the Second Adam redeems humanity by subjecting death to death through His perfect penitence and victorious resurrection.⁵⁰ Wright explains:

“Christ did not begin where Adam began. He had to begin where Adam ended, that is, by taking on to himself not merely a clean slate, not merely even the single sin of Adam, but the whole entail of that sin... He had not merely to replace Adamic humanity with true humanity. He had to deal with the ‘many trespasses,’ and the consequent judgment, which had resulted from the sin of Adam.”⁵¹

Thus Paul is not making a case for the Historic Adam as much as he is celebrating the Risen Christ. (Indeed, he had met the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus.) Resurrection is the historic solution to the timeless problem of sin and death discussed in Romans 1-3.⁵² Paul, as well as Luke, excavated Adam for this theology lesson. Consequently, Paul falls in step with the Second Temple authors, who took creative liberties with the founding (and future) stories of God's people. Eschatology, allegory and apocalypse shaped Israel's identity as a people living through a second exodus. It is not a surprise to find Adam excavated during a time that Israel was rediscovering herself. Evangelicals are doing the same thing with the Historic Adam, while we wait for the Second Adam to restore Eden for us.

In conclusion, current debate about the historic Adam would benefit from revisiting the inconspicuous Adam of the Hebrew Scriptures and tracing the excavated Adam of the later Second Temple period. This article acknowledges that our translations inform our interpretation when we look at the word *adam*. It demonstrates how the Hebrew Scriptures make little reference to the primeval history. Next the paper charts the diverse handlings of the Adamic material from Jewish authors in the later part of the Second Temple period, noting that Paul excavated Adam during this time. Finally, it concedes that Genesis does not aim to answer modern questions of science and history, but rather has spoken God-breathed truth to an ancient culture with competing origin stories.

⁴⁹ This aligns with Boyd's statement, “Finally, it is possible for scholars to affirm all the essential of the Christian faith, including the inspiration of Scripture, while denying the historicity of Adam.” Gregory Boyd, “Whether or Not There was a Historical Adam, Our Faith is Secure,” in *Four Views of the Historical Adam*, 266.

⁵⁰ See Stephen Hultgren, “The Origin of Paul's Doctrine of the Two Adams in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 23.3 (2003): 343-370. Hultgren argues that Paul's inspiration for Jesus as the Second Adam came as a result of his Damascus Road conversion experience (p. 367).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵² Enns writes, “[T]he focus of Romans is that the death and resurrection of Christ put Jew and gentile on an even footing. They reveal the heretofore unrealized fact that together Jew and gentile make up one people of God because they are both saved from the same plight (sin and death) by the same solution (Jesus' death and resurrection).” Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, 130.