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# Was Adam the First Human?

*Evangelical organizations are getting into the act of convincing their fellow believers to accept evolution*

Under the pressure of scientism – the exaltation of scientific theory to scientific fact, in particular the theory of evolution – Christian scholars and churches are more and more caving in to the pressure to accept evolution (as used by God) to bring about the present creation. During the past year, well-known evangelical Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke resigned from the conservative seminary at which he had been teaching because of his acceptance of evolution.

One of the current consequences of accepting evolution to explain the origins of creation is to assume that Adam had ancestors with probable animal ancestry. In other words, he was not the first human after all.

## **Biblical support?**

Scholars believing in theistic evolution see proof for the existence of pre-Adamite primates in the Bible. Typical are two arguments from Genesis 4 (as given, for example, by Peter Enns at the BioLogos website). The first goes something like this. After hearing God's judgment on his murder of his brother Abel, Cain was afraid that "whoever finds me will kill me" (Gen 4:14). This suggests other people on earth. Could these be pre-Adamite primates? The second argument asks: where did Cain get his wife from (Gen 4:17)? It must have been someone unrelated to Adam and Eve. So, there were obviously others on earth of whom

Scripture does not explicitly speak. Again, could they have been pre-Adamite primates?

It should be noted that Scripture gives a selective history. God's revelation is concerned with the main line of promise and the challenges that line faced from the evil one. Much history is therefore left unrecorded and our human curiosity must recognize the limitations of the account that Scripture gives. However, the Bible tells us enough to be sure of the following.

First, God did not create pre-Adamite primates who were human or who developed into human beings. God stresses in his Word the vast difference between humans and animals. Adam and Eve were the crown of creation, created after God's image and in his likeness (Gen 1:26-27). When God brought all the animals to Adam so he could name them, Adam found no suitable partner among them (Gen 2:19-20).

Second, all humans are descended from Adam and Eve. "Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living" (Gen 3:20). In his speech before pagan philosophers on the Areopagus, the Apostle Paul said: "From one man God made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live" (Acts 17:26). Clearly all humans trace their ancestry back to Adam and Eve. Paleoanthropological evidence needs to be interpreted in the light of this biblical truth.

Third, Adam and Eve had other children besides the ones specifically mentioned in Scripture. "After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters" (Gen 5:4). Although not all details are clear, it is obvious that there must have been quite a few people on earth directly descended from Adam and Eve. After all, they had been told to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1:28). With Adam and Eve's long lifespan a considerable number of offspring could be expected and each subsequent generation would in turn have more children.

### **Answering the objections**

Scripture does not explicitly state when Cain killed Abel. However, there are some indications that this was not right at the beginning of their lives on earth. Some time had passed. It was "in the course of time" that the events took place (Gen 4:3). Seth replaced Abel as the line of promise

(Gen 4:25). This replacement happened when Adam was 130 years old (Gen 5:3). This suggests a considerable passage of time from creation to the death of Abel. In other words, there was plenty of time for several generations of people to be born and to “be fruitful and increase in number” (Gen 1:28). Considering all of this, Calvin’s suggestion is reasonable when he speculates that Cain was probably already married at the time of the murder. After all, who would want to marry someone who murdered his brother? Whatever the situation may have been, it is obvious that more people were around and that they were all related since all humans come from Adam and Eve. Cain must therefore have married his sister or a close relative. This is the understanding demanded by the biblical text and not surprisingly is therefore the traditional interpretation going right back to Jewish tradition.

Now we recoil at the thought of marrying a brother or sister. But there was no other way for mankind to multiply after the creation of the first humans. And the Lord God made this manner of increasing the population possible without negative effects. One needs to realize that in Adam and Eve’s time, so soon after the fall into sin, the genetics of those first people on earth had not yet been subjected to a long history of slow degeneration and the chances of producing deformed offspring was therefore minimal. After all, God had made everything perfectly and the effect of the curse on the genetic structure of mankind was just beginning. So God saw to it that one could marry his sister or another close relative with no risk to producing deformed children. As time went on and the necessity for such marriages disappeared, they were forbidden (cf. Lev 18:9).

The above answers the objection as to whom Cain could have married. The other objection lodged against Scripture as to whom Cain

could fear for his life is hereby also answered. The people who would likely be the most upset at Cain’s murder of Abel would be the closest relatives. At that point of history there would have been plenty of those around to make Cain fearful for his life.

### **The need to be vigilant**

The pressure of evolutionism on Christians to make their understanding of Scripture shaped by the current scientific theory is greater than ever. Atheists such as Richard Dawkins openly mock the biblical account of creation and push evolution. Even evangelical organizations are getting into the act of convincing their fellow believers to accept evolution. The organization BioLogos (with which Peter Enns and Bruce Waltke are now associated) is committed to making evolution acceptable to the average evangelical. Their website raises the type of objections dealt with in this editorial and pushes evolution. So successful has this organization been that the periodical *Christianity Today* and The Gospel Coalition, a fellowship of evangelical churches, have judged the BioLogos’ impact on the evangelical scene to be one of the top ten stories in 2010.

The effect of all this pressure is starting to show. Just last year, the Christian Reformed Synod opened the door to accepting the theory that Adam had ancestors. It did this by removing from the church guidelines a 1991 declaration which opposed any theory that “posits the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race” (*Acts of Synod 2010*, Art. 53). The pressure to accept evolutionary forebears does not stop at the Christian Reformed Church.

We need to be vigilant and oppose the widening trend to accept evolution as a fact. The clear teaching of Scripture must remain the first authority by which standard the conclusions of science are to be evaluated.

