

## *Chapter 11*

# THE ORIGIN OF MAN

## THE FIRST MAN (ADAM) WAS CREATED SUPERNATURALLY AND DIRECTLY

In the only eye-witness account of the original creation, God testifies that on Day 6 He simply announced His intention to create human kind and it was accomplished: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness,’ . . . God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen 1:26–27). The account continues, noting that “the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Gen 2:7). Jesus affirms His conviction of the truthfulness of this account when He asks the obdurate Pharisees: “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female?” (Matt 19:4).

Critics have contended that Genesis 1 and 2 contain contradictory accounts of the original creation written by two different authors. This suggestion of two authors is based, in part, on the assertion that the divine name Elohim is used in Genesis 1 and Yahweh is used in Genesis 2. However, Elohim is used in a compound with Yahweh in 2:7–8 (although critics dismiss this as the work of a redactor trying smooth over the transition between the two authors). What is more, Genesis 1, which deals with creation in totality, uses Elohim because this is the name primarily associated with the creating God, the transcendent God of the universe. Genesis 2, on the other hand, focuses particularly on the creation of mankind, God’s image bearers, and uses Yahweh because this is the name primarily associated with the covenanting God, whose moral character His image bearers share.

The suggestion of contradiction stems, first, from the alleged difference in sequence between the two chapters. That is, in Genesis 2, the sequence begins, rather than ends, with man, trees, animals and woman. However, this sequence is ordered logically, not chronologically, as in Genesis 1. And, as such, the purpose is to set the stage for man’s fall into sin in Genesis 3 by adding supplementary details to Genesis 1. Genesis 2 does this by telling about the garden (i.e., where the Fall took place), the trees (i.e., the objects of God’s revelation) and the woman (i.e., the accomplice of man and the prime target of

the temptation). Second, the suggestion also stems from the assertion that the word “generations” (κῆν; Heb., *toledoth*) in Genesis 2:4 refers to origins and, thus, gives the impression of a second and different account of creation as found in Genesis 1. However, the word *toledoth* speaks of history; that is, it refers to what the heavens and the earth produced or begat (from the verb *yalad*), not to how the heavens and earth were themselves produced. This is why the NASB and NIV translate the entire phrase “this is the account of the heavens and the earth.” In short, Genesis 2 is not a second account of the creation story but, rather, the beginning of what happened to the heavens and earth after their creation.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Creation of Man Was Direct and Immediate*

All the creative acts of God were instantaneous. This is seen in the oft-repeated “Let there be . . . and it was so” sequence of the creation narrative. Each creative act was accomplished by a divine fiat. There was no process, as such, involved.<sup>2</sup> Two lines of argument support this conclusion.

First, the Hebrew verb *bara'* (to create) suggests immediate, supernatural creation (Gen 1:1, 21, 27). Granted, this verb does not of itself refer to creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing)<sup>3</sup>; however, the verb always denotes *divine* activity. In other words, man does not *bara'* in Old Testament thought.

Second, the verbs parallel with *bara'* also suggest immediate, supernatural creation. For instance, Genesis 2:7 states that the Lord God “formed” (*yatsar*) man from the ground. Here God does the immediate forming; no process or secondary causation is implied. Also, the text says that God “breathed” the breath of life into Adam’s nostrils (Gen 2:7). This likewise indicates a direct act. Again, no intermediary object or activity came between God’s breathing and the newly-formed body of man.

<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, one wonders why the book of Genesis would have been accepted into the Hebrew canon were such a blunder as described by the critics to have occurred in the book’s first two chapters.

<sup>2</sup> Contra Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), pp. 505–7. Erickson opts for the mediating position between creationism and evolution known as *progressive creationism*. He asserts that this view and theistic evolution are the two most viable creation theories (p. 506). However, his argument against fiat creationism, based on the idea that *min* (“kind”; see, e.g., Gen 1:11) does not strictly mean species, is not entirely clear (cf. p. 503).

<sup>3</sup> E.g., *bara'* apparently denotes *preservation*, not direct, supernatural creation, in Psalm 104:30.

## ***Man's Body Was Created from Previously-Existing Inorganic Matter***

The “dust” with which God made Adam’s body was ordinary ground, earth or dirt.<sup>4</sup> Adam’s body was created on Day 6 from dirt created on Day 1. Dust does not imply some kind of animal ancestry, if the narrative is to be taken soberly, particularly Genesis 3:19 (“To dust you shall return”) nor does it denote, as Millard Erickson suggests, “some elementary pictorial representation which was intelligible to the first readers” and, presumably, is unintelligible to us.<sup>5</sup>

## ***The Creation of Man Was Supernatural***

Although God used previously existing material, the act of man’s creation was no less creative, direct and supernatural than those acts that were technically *ex nihilo*. In fact, the verbs used to describe Adam’s (and Eve’s) creation are used to describe the other creative acts in the creation narrative. For instance, in Genesis 1:26, God proposes to “make” (*asab*; cf. 1:7) man in His image and the next verse states that God “created” (*bara*; cf. 1:1) man, male and female, in His own image. Therefore, simply because Genesis 2 also speaks of Adam and Eve’s being respectively “formed” (*yatsar*; 2:8) and “fashioned” (*banah*, lit. to build; 2:22), this does not imply either a contradiction or a less-than direct or supernatural creation. There is, in short, a basic synonymy between the verbs used.

## ***Adam's Spirit Was Created by a Direct Inbreathing from God***

The “breath of life” was more than air rushing into Adam’s lungs, although it may have included this. It was actually the creation of his spirit; the image of God was being infused into him. Elihu, one of Job’s conversation partners, seems to indicate this same idea when he says, “the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4; cf. 32:8). The “life” here is probably the life principle of mankind; i.e., *personal*, human life in the image of

<sup>4</sup> Contra Erickson, *Christian Theology*, p. 506: The dust “need not be actual physical soil.”

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

God which is given and sustained by the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> This life was supernaturally and miraculously given by God to the first man and is subsequently mediated by procreation to each member of the human race.

### *Adam's Individual Personhood (Nephesh) Resulted from the Union of the Body and the Spirit*

It was not until the spirit joined the body that Adam had any kind of existence. Before then, he was nothing; he had no evolution or ancestry prior to his direct creation by God on Day 6. As well, Adam had no physical life apart from his spiritual life as God's image-bearer. That is, with God's inbreathing, Adam "became" a living, personal being (*nephesh*, usually translated soul; see, e.g., κϒν) (Gen 2:7).<sup>7</sup>

## THE FIRST WOMAN (EVE) WAS CREATED SUPERNATURALLY AND DIRECTLY

The Bible is clear about the creation of the first woman. The fulfillment of God's intent to create His image-bearers (Gen 1:26) was that "male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27). God "fashioned into a woman" the rib taken from Adam (Gen 2:21–22). God "created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created" (Gen 5:2). Further, Paul bases his directive for male leadership in the local church on the fact that "Adam was first created, and then Eve" (1 Tim 2:13).

### *Eve Was Created Potentially in Adam*

In one sense, Eve had a separate and direct creation in that God personally created her subsequent to Adam's creation on Day 6. Still, in another sense, her

<sup>6</sup> This "breath of life" is not simply one's driving physical force, which even animals possess, which is why Robert A. Pyne is incorrect when he notes both (1) that "there seems to be no distinction between people and animals with regard to this concept [of "breath" in Gen 2:7]" and (2) that "animals and people are animated by the same life-giving breath of God" ("Humanity and Sin," in *Understanding Christian Theology*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003], p. 687). To the contrary, while animals are said to have both spirits (Gen 6:17; 7:15, 22) and souls (Gen 1:20, 21), these components are vastly different than man's. The soul of an animal is no more than an abstract, animating life principle, roughly akin to its blood and brain. And, the spirit of an animal is its capacity for breath and is not related to God in any personal sense.

<sup>7</sup> *Nephesh* in Old Testament thought commonly stands for the person as an *individual* human being.

creation as a separate act must not be pressed unduly or the organic unity of the race is lost. Therefore, it is said that Eve was created *potentially* in Adam, because from him she was taken and given individual existence by a special creative act of God.

### *Eve Had a Direct Creation*

Even allowing for the potential of Eve in Adam, it is still true, as noted, that Eve had a direct and supernatural creation. Although she too was made from previously existing material (i.e., Adam's rib), the act was no less creative than if it had been out of nothing. The verb employed in Eve's creation is *banah* (to build; Gen 2:22) and is synonymous with *bara'* as a direct, creative act (Gen 1:28). In creating Eve from Adam's side, God may have taken some of Adam's flesh along with the rib because Adam says concerning Eve, "flesh of my flesh," along with "bone of my bones" (Gen 2:23).<sup>8</sup>

### *The Woman Became Man's Helper*

In contemplating the creation of Eve, God declared, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18). Eve became a helper complementing Adam. She corresponded to him in every way; she too was in the image of God, a role no animal filled (Gen 2:19–20).<sup>9</sup> Further, this role of "helper" essentially describes one who provides what is lacking and can do what a man cannot do alone. "Or," as Allen Ross notes, "we may say that human beings cannot fulfill their destiny except in mutual assistance."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Before her creation from Adam's rib and flesh, the woman too had no history or ancestry of any kind. What is more, the very existence of the woman contradicts organic evolution. That is, the theory of organic evolution cannot account for the female counterpart of anything, much less of woman. (Not to mention, it would be special pleading were theistic evolutionists to argue for the uniformitarian evolution of Adam and the immediate, divine creation of Eve.)

<sup>9</sup> "Suitable" translates the Hebrew substantive *neged* plus the preposition *ki*, which together denote *adequate, corresponding to, agreeing to, a counterpart, suitable*.

<sup>10</sup> *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), p. 126. The Old Testament commentator George Bush refers to Eve as Adam's "second self" (*Notes on Genesis*, 2 vols. [New York: H. M. Newman, 1844], 1:64).

## *Lessons from the Creation of the Woman*

### **The Physical and Spiritual Unity of the Race**

The Bible is clear that the human race is a physical unity. Paul asserts this to the idle philosophers at the Areopagus, saying that God “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). In another place, Paul says that “man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; . . . man has his birth through the woman” (1 Cor 11:8, 12).<sup>11</sup>

There is also a spiritual unity of the race based on this physical unity. By *spiritual* is meant both (1) that the origin and transmission of each person’s soul/spirit is through one’s physical parents and (2) that Adam’s guilt and depravity are similarly transmitted to each person. Further, it was Adam, not Eve, who was the representative of the race. God went to Adam first after the sin in the garden. Again, it is in Adam that all die (1 Cor 15:22), not in Eve. However, the entire human race gets to Adam physically through Eve. That is, while the guilt of Adam’s first sin is imputed immediately (judicially) at conception, the depravity and moral/spiritual pollution of that sin runs down the genetic bloodlines, i.e., the physical unity of the race from Adam through Eve.

### **The True Dignity of Women and Womanhood**

A woman is created just as much in the image of God as is a man (Gen 1:26–27). In this sense, men and women are equal before God in every way as *persons*. However, men and women are distinct in their *roles* of manhood and womanhood generally and in their *roles* in the home and the local church specifically.<sup>12</sup> The mere fact that woman (Eve) was taken from man (Adam) and that man named her (Gen 2:21–23) suggests a distinction in and priority of function, not to mention several New Testament texts state the functional distinction explicitly (1 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:11–12; Eph 5:22–24, 33). So, for example, men do not have the rights of women when it comes to being a possible marriage partner for a man (and vice versa) or to fertilization, gestation and the nursing of children. And, women do not have the leadership rights of men in the home and church. Still, even in light of these differences, the Bible does not

<sup>11</sup> It seems that Paul’s proscription against women exercising authority in the local church operates on the basis of Adam’s (man’s) temporal priority in creation (1 Tim 2:12–14) and Eve’s (woman’s) breaking or seeking to reverse this priority and the different roles it established.

<sup>12</sup> Whether or not this distinction carries over into the general social structure is not altogether clear in the Bible. However, the implications are that a woman-oriented society at large would be unbiblical (cf. Gen 2:22–23; cf. Isa 3:12).

suggest these imply differing *worth* or that the inferior/superior configuration along various lines implies a varying *value* between men and women. In all of the attributes of personhood, a woman is every bit man's equal and should be accorded the same dignity and honor as a man.<sup>13</sup>

## Man's Complement Can Only Be Found in Woman

As noted, woman is the only real kinship man has. No creature in the animal world is man's true counterpart, nor is another man. Only woman is man's true "helper" (Gen 2:20); only woman partakes of true humanity along with man. In his naming of the animals on Day 6, Adam discovered two important, related truths: (1) He had no companion suitable to him, and (2) there was no suitable helper in the animal world (Gen 2:19–20).

And, because only a woman is man's true counterpart (and vice versa), the Bible uniformly condemns bestiality (Lev 20:15–16), homosexuality (Rom 1:26–27) and other forms of illicit sexual activity such as transvestism (Deut 22:5).<sup>14</sup>

## THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE DESCENDED FROM ADAM AND EVE BY PROCREATION

Moses indicates that Eve "was the mother of all the living" (Gen 2:20). This fact is reinforced after the reduction of the earth's population following the Flood. Then only three progenitors remained, namely Shem, Ham and Japheth, and "from these the whole earth was populated" (Gen 9:19). Paul speaks similarly, saying, "[the true God] made from one man [i.e., Adam] every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).

This physical descent of the race from Adam and Eve is further corroborated by the biblical teaching on the universal extent and, thus, transmission of sin's moral pollution. The corruption and depravity of original sin is transmitted physically (or genetically) from Adam via the procreation process. That is, sin is transmitted through the *human personality*, which itself is generated by the physical union of man and woman. (The *guilt* of Adamic sin is imputed to each person judicially by God immediately at conception.)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Historically, biblical Christianity has always elevated the fortunes of women, lifting them from the status of mere chattel property and abject servitude to men.

<sup>14</sup> Scripture's prohibitions against fornication seem to include all these forms of deviant sexual behavior.

<sup>15</sup> Of course, Jesus Christ is the one exception of the human race to this universal, physical descent of depravity. In Jesus' case, He was born of a woman (Gal 4:4) and received full, authentic and complete humanity from His mother Mary. However, His personality, the eternal

David speaks of this, saying, “Behold, I was *brought forth* in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Ps 51:5). Here David is not blaming his existence on a sinful act of his mother; rather he is recognizing that physical conception brings spiritual iniquity/sin, based on every man’s descent from Adam and Eve. David speaks of this in another place, saying, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; those who speak lies go astray *from birth*” (Ps 58:3). Isaiah records God’s similar statements, this time directed to Israel nationally: “You have not heard, you have not known. Even from long ago your ear has not been open, because I knew that you would deal very treacherously; and you have been called a rebel *from birth*” (Isa 48:8). And, paradoxically, one of God’s reasons for the Flood becomes a reason for God’s promising to never send another flood: “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil *from his youth*” (Gen 8:21).

---

Logos, was not generated by human parents. And, as such, it was not tainted by the effects of original sin. Jesus indicates this, saying of Himself, “For I have come down from heaven” (John 6:38), and Paul says equally clearly, “The second man [i.e., Jesus Christ] is from heaven” (1 Cor 15:47).