

Genesis 2-3
Humans need Wisdom to Rule

Recap:

‘The Bible is ancient Mediterranean Literature’

Michael Heiser

The Bible is a divinely-inspired text

They were pre-scientific
cosmology, seat of intellect, reproduction

Everything was spiritual
no separation between natural and supernatural

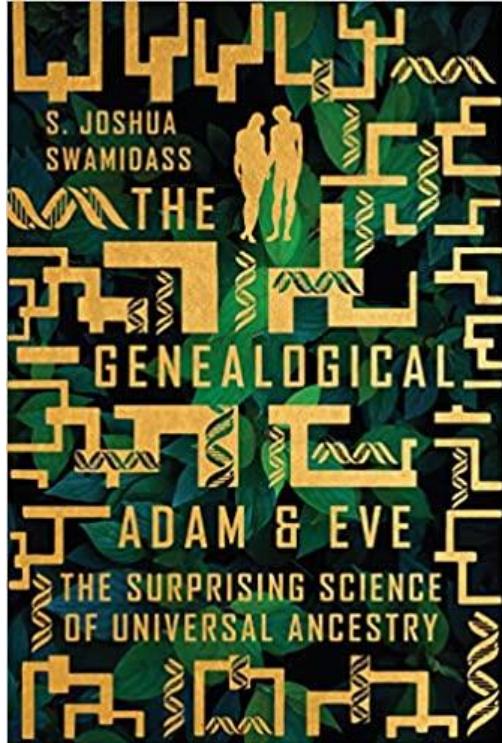
Existence was related to purpose or a function
non-order, chaos or dis-order was non-existence

‘The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for’.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov



The Historical Adam and Eve?



Adam and Eve are historical but not the first or only humans

They wouldn't have been called Adam and Eve as these are the Hebrew words for 'humanity' and 'life' and the Hebrew language had not been invented at the time of the primeval setting of the Garden of Eden narrative

The word ‘adam’ is a Hebrew word meaning human. Regarding this observation, the fact that it is Hebrew indicates the category designation (‘human’) is imposed by those who spoke Hebrew. Adam and Eve would not have called themselves by these names, because whatever language they spoke, it was not Hebrew. Hebrew does not exist as a language until somewhere in the middle of the second millennium BC.... Although I believe that Adam and Eve are historical personages – real people in a real past – these cannot be their historical names. The names are Hebrew, and there is no Hebrew at the point in time when Adam and Eve lived.

If these are not their historical names, then they must be assigned names, intended by the Hebrew speaking users to convey a particular meaning. Such a deduction leads us to a second observation. In English, if we read that someones’ name is ‘Human’ and his partner’s name is ‘Life’ we quickly develop an impression of what is being communicated (as, for example, in Pilgrim’s Progress, where characters are named Christian, Faithful and Hopeful). These characters by virtue of their assigned names, are larger than the historical characters to whom they refer. They represent something beyond themselves. Consequently, we can see from the start that interpretation may not be straightforward’.

‘We need to be respectful travellers; we need to listen to the biblical authors on their own terms’

Tim Mackie



Good Communication

AUTHOR → TEXT → READER

'the author must anticipate the reader's questions and construct the text in such a way that responses which a reader is likely to have will be satisfied as the text is read or reread... In a text, such **repetitions** often become an essential part of the author's strategy. For one reading the biblical text, such **repetitions** are helpful guides to the author's purpose and intention'.

p. 11, The Pentateuch as Narrative, John Sailhammer

How to Read the Bible

- 1) pay attention to literary units

Genesis 2.4a/b-3.24

Formation and placing of 'adam' in and then exiled out of the garden in the East in Eden; in the middle is the tree of life

- 2) pay attention to repetition, including alterations

Repetition of creation narratives, especially repetition of idea of sacred space, tabernacle, temple

- 3) pay attention to where the verbal waves climax and break

Eden narrative climaxes in a poem: when the man sees the woman

Then, enter the snake and a slow descent into exile: snake, woman, man, man, woman, snake, snake, woman, man

- 4) read and re-read the Hebrew Bible

Eden, false Edens, anti-Edens and fall narratives populate the Hebrew Bible

The decision to place in sequence two ostensibly contradictory accounts of the same event is an approximate narrative equivalent to the technique of post-Cubist painting that gives us, for example, juxtaposed or superimposed, a profile and a frontal perspective of the same face. The ordinary eye can never see these two at once, but it is the painters prerogative to represent them as a simultaneous perception within the visual frame of his painting, whether merely to explore the formal relations between the two views or to provide an encompassing representation of his subject. Analogously, the Hebrew writer takes advantage of the composite nature of his art to give us a tension of views that will govern most biblical stories'

p.182, The Art of Biblical Narrative, Robert Alter

Pablo Picasso's Guernica



Compare and contrast Genesis 1 and 2

Elohim (title)	Yahweh (name) Elohim
Vast and cosmic	Human and personal
Creation through words	Creation through clay
Balanced separation, filling	man, vegetation, animals, woman
Cosmos is a temple	The mountain garden of Eden, is a sacred space
ROYAL priesthood	royal PRIESTHOOD
Images of God to rule	priestly ‘adam’ to work (avad), take care of the garden
Good, very good	not good
Male and female	man and woman
Benevolent, royal ease	risky, freedom of choice, life and death, good and evil

The Garden of Eden is sacred space

'The garden into which Adam was placed would be a familiar setting for sacred space in the ancient world. The image of fertile waters flowing from the sacred space of God's presence is one of the most common iconography of the ancient Near East'.

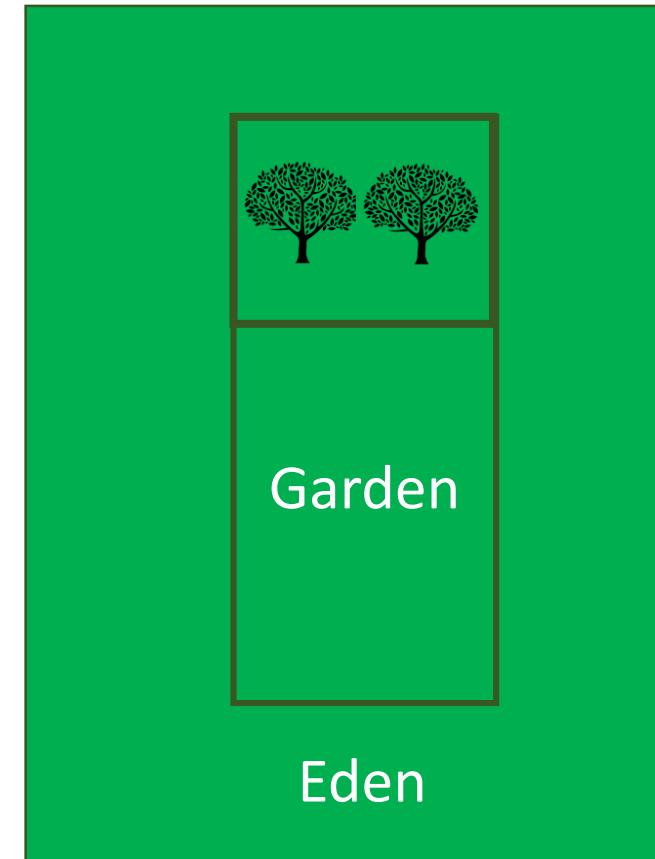
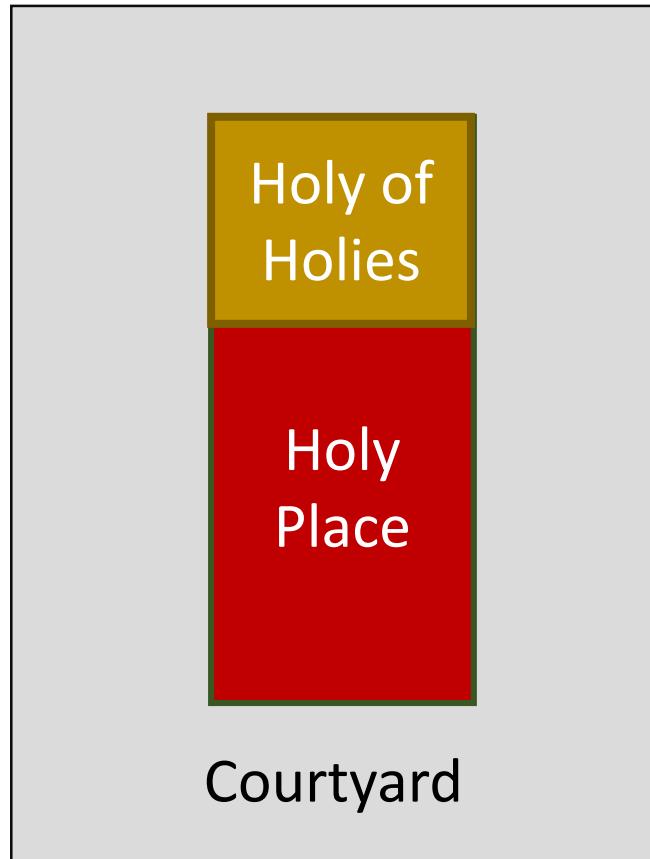
p. 104, John Walton *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*

Central space 'in the middle' are the two trees: the Holy of Holies

Of the Garden: the holy place

Of Eden (a region called 'delight') the central courtyard

The Garden of Eden as a sacred space



Genesis One: purpose

Genesis Two: how

What is the purpose of humanity?

To rule over the cosmos as kings and queens on God's behalf

How are humans to rule on God's behalf?

Childlike, innocent humans need wisdom to rule

God can see if something is good or not good

Humans can also determine what is good

The Temptation

The great temptation is to rule for one's own benefit at the expense of others and the land

The great invitation is to rule by God's wisdom, at one's own expense for the benefit of others

To say no to eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil is to say no to ruling for one's own benefit at the expense of others

The Consequences

The humans choose to rule in independence from God's wisdom

The humans choose to redefine good and evil on their own terms

Humans are exiled from the life of God

The woman is promised a human seed who will crush the serpent's head

Why did the biblical authors write the Bible?

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own **interpretation of things**. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were **carried along by the Holy Spirit**.

Inspired interpretation of events, Peter writes in 2 Peter 1.20

Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was **said in all the Scriptures concerning himself**.... He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.**"

Pointing to Jesus, Luke quotes Jesus 24. 27, 44

from infancy you have known the **Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Wisdom literature, Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3.14

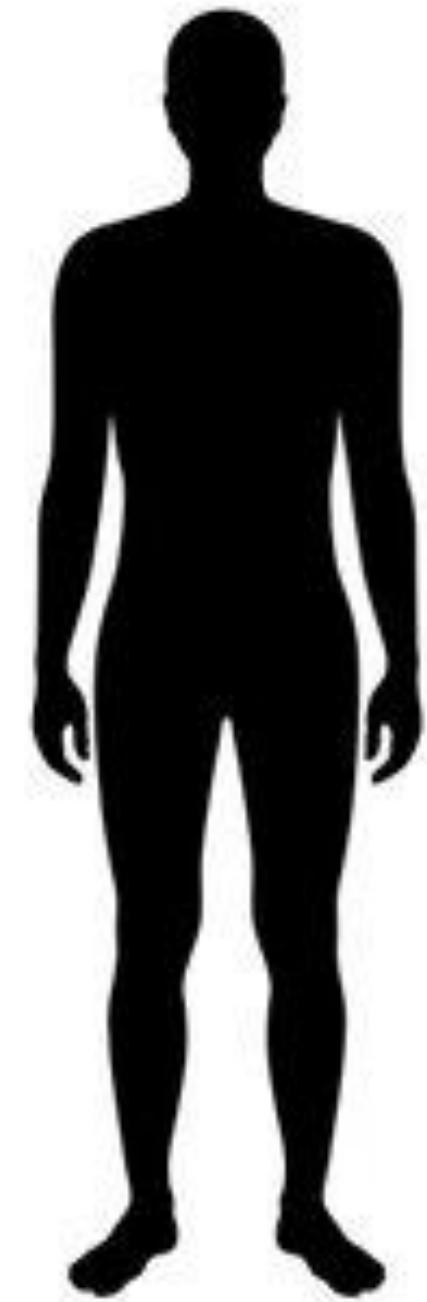
Promise of a seed of a woman who will crush the seed of the snake

Moses – inaugurates a new creation, when in the Exodus story, he parts the chaos waters of the sea and walks through on dry land; his tabernacle is a mini-Eden. However, he doesn't fully represent God so is forbidden from entering a new Eden, a Promised Land, and prophesies that another 'prophet' will come

David – establishes Jerusalem on a sacred mountain, reminiscent of Eden but sees someone 'tov' and takes her (and kills her husband); he is promised a son who will fulfil the vision of Genesis 1, and rule in God's wisdom

Solomon – is likened to a new Adam – when he asks for wisdom to rule; and the nation prospers such that everyone is under their own vine and figtree, and Solomon's temple is a mini-Eden; but he turns away from God and worships idols. Another 'son' of David will rule

Daniel - in the lions den is like a new Adam who is at peace with the animals; and he prophesies a son of humanity who will come and exercise dominion over the nations



What the longing, the anguish, the yearning of the Hebrew
Bible is –

is a new Adam who will resist the temptation to rule according
to his own wisdom,

but will live by God's wisdom

and will seek to determine what is good and evil
according to God's interpretation not his own

The gospel writers use Eden and anti-Eden imagery in to bookend their accounts of Jesus' ministry, thus intentionally portraying Jesus as the new Adam, the new human who will bruised by the snake but will crush the snakes' head



Jesus baptism and testing narrative

God brings Eden to earth in the person of Jesus: heaven and earth are one, once again

Jesus, the Son of God, goes through the chaos, death waters of baptism, into the wilderness beyond echoing the creation, flood and exodus narratives as He inaugurates a new creation, a new Exodus

after his 40 day fast Jesus completely resists the satan's temptations to eat, to rule the kingdoms of the earth and to prove his identity, thus in an anti-Eden wilderness exile, Jesus completely removes the barrier back to Eden



Jesus' suffering, death, resurrection and ascension narratives

Jesus wrestles with laying down his life in order that others may live in the Garden of Gethsemane (olive press) on the night of his crucifixion, reversing the original garden narrative where the humans seek to rule for their own benefit at the cost of others

Jesus chooses to die to self for the benefit of others, is betrayed in the same garden, crucified on a tree on a mountain outside Jerusalem, buried in a garden, and through his resurrection from the garden tomb, inaugurates a new Eden

What does Genesis 1 and 2 say about Jesus?

The end of the Bible: Revelation 20-22 is a reversal of Genesis 3 back to 1

The snake / enemy is defeated through the Jesus' death and resurrection

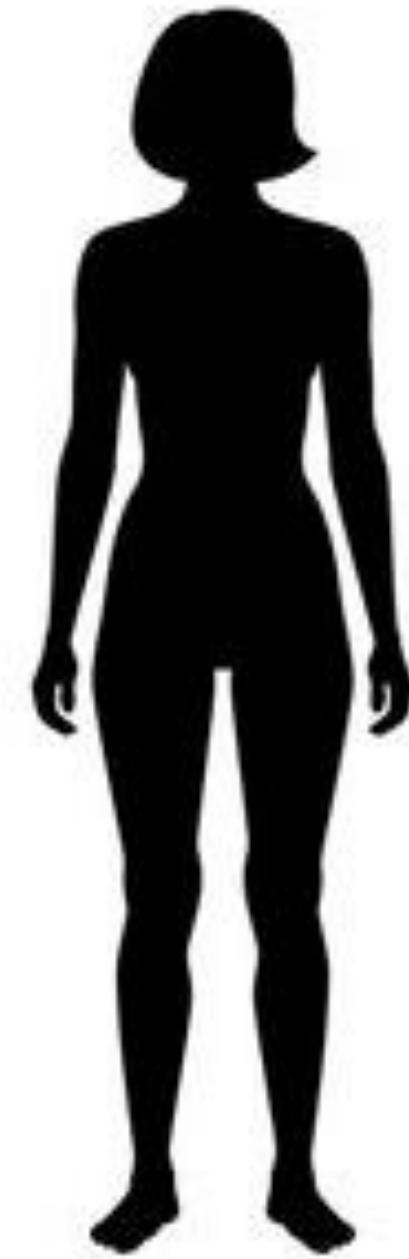
Genesis Two shows the creation of an 'adam' a human; who is laid down into a sleep, and out of whose side a woman is built

These two images are fulfilled in Jesus the true human who alone has said no to ruling in His own wisdom, but sought to rule out of intimacy with God

In his sacrificial death, a woman, a bride, followers of Jesus were formed out of his side to partner with Him as his fellow royal priesthood, to rest and rule with and on God's behalf forever

Genesis One creates a silhouette of a male and female ruling as God's human representatives over the cosmos.

Revelation 22 fulfils the vision of the silhouette as Christ and his bride, the church rest and rule from the new Eden, the heart of the new creation forever



What does say Genesis 1 and 2 say about wise living today?

The KEY is to be SIGNIFICANT before God and SURRENDERED to God

All humanity are created in God's image to rule

Ruling looks like servant-leadership, Christ crucified

Where we rely on God's wisdom to rule, at cost to ourselves for the benefit of others

We become God's temple and His royal priesthood, recovering the unity of heaven and earth wherever we go

We are invited to live into the vision with the end in mind