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Adam and Eve in the New Testament

By Norm Fadelle

What can we learn from *Adam and Eve*, as presented and discussed in the New Testament?

They are real, literal people with a history. They are the first man and woman and the original husband and wife. They are the progenitors of all humankind. Together, they are used as the basis of the principles of unity, headship and authority.

Individually, Adam and Eve both serve as examples. Adam is compared and contrasted with Jesus. Eve is the model used to show how Jesus is the *offspring of woman*. She is also the person used to illustrate moral seduction.

Adam and Eve are a featured pair whose existence and behavior are part of foundation Bible teaching.

Overall,

Together

1. Adam and Eve are both named in 1Timothy 2:13 in the factual statement *For Adam was formed first, then Eve*. The text goes on to state that *Adam was not deceived* [by the serpent] *but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor* (v.14). The context describes the issue of a woman needing to learn in a quiet and submissive spirit. When it comes to teaching, she must not usurp authority over men (v.11-12). Why? Because that was the foundation lesson derived from the Genesis story. Verse 15 then says: *Yet woman will be saved by the birth of the child*¹, an allusion to the punishment statement by God to Eve and the serpent (Genesis 3:15-16).

2. Jesus used this kind of factual teaching as his argument with the Pharisees about divorce.

4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." [Matthew 19].

Points:

- In v. 4, Jesus is citing Gen 1:27. The context describes the fact of God creating

humankind with male and female genders for the purpose of having children and populating the earth.

- In v. 5, Jesus is citing Gen 2:24. The context describes the reason for a man and woman to get married and to start their own family. Becoming *one flesh* illustrated what God demonstrated in His creation of Eve as the fitting companion of Adam. Procreating by a unified pair produced children intended to also marry and have children. Marriage comes first, with no hint of breaking up.

- v. 6 For the couple joined together by God, to decide to end their marriage would be ripping them apart. They would be destroying the unity designed by God.

3. The apostle Paul also used Genesis information about Adam and Eve to make his case about headship and authority in the church.

*3 But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5 but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head... 7 For a man ought not to cover [Greek verb katakalupto] his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 (For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.) 10 That is why a woman ought to have **authority**² [Greek noun exousia] on her head ... 11 (Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; 12 for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.) [1Corinthians 11].*

Points:

- v. 3 the head of a woman is her husband. This is a specific arrangement, not a general principle of a man over a woman
- v. 8-9 since the woman Eve was derived from the man Adam, and because the woman was created as the divinely-fitted companion of man, headship goes to the man.

¹ Revised Standard Version footnote

² RSV footnote

- v.10 the woman is given authority as indicated by having a covering on her head when she prophesied and prayed in the ecclesia worship; this showed she was honoring the headship teaching of the church.
- v.11-12 is a reminder that neither the man nor the woman is independent of the other. That man is born of woman is also divine fittingness.

Individual

1. Adam is named twice in Romans 5:14. He is used as *a type of the one to come*, i.e., Jesus. In verses 15-17, Adam and his transgression are contrasted with *the grace of that one man Jesus Christ*. Paul's argument is effective because Adam and Jesus and their respective behaviors are comparable as two real human beings who impacted the entire human race.

2. Adam is likewise brought into Paul's reasoning in 1Corinthians 15. *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive (v.22). Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (v.45-49).*

Jesus is *the last Adam*. He is a *a life-giving spirit*. *The first man Adam, a man of dust was the necessary precursor to the second man [Jesus], the man of heaven*. Paul's comparison works because the reader can identify with both men and can understand why being *made alive* in Christ is a vital, personal hope.

3. Eve is named in 2Corinthians 11. *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (v.3)*. The context describes Paul's concern that the brethren in Corinth are being seduced into believing a different gospel (v.4) by deceitful apostles *disguising themselves as servants of righteousness (v.13-15)*. This concern and exposé make sense because Eve was real person and the serpent was a literal wild creature (Gen 3:1-6).

4. Although not named in the text, Eve is surely part of the symbolic figure of the woman described in Revelation 12. *And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun ... 2 she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth ... 3 And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon ... And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth; 5 she brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and his throne (v.1-5)*. The dragon is explained to be *that ancient serpent ... the deceiver of the whole world (v.9)*. This explicit tie back to the Genesis 3:1-16 story makes this symbolic woman [who bore a male child who would rule the nations] applicable to both Eve and Mary, the actual mother of Jesus (cf. Lk 1:35, Gal 4:4). The child Jesus would escape the murderous Herod, grow up to battle and conquer sin, and *sat down with the Father on his throne (3:21)*.

Overall

1. The unnamed woman in Revelation 12 fled and was pursued by the dragon. However, God saved and provisioned her (v.13-16). She had other children who were targeted by the dragon. God would deliver them as well, particularly because they proved faithful. *Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus(v.17)*. The Revelation story reveals these offspring to be the Bride of Christ who ends up being a symbolic city where nothing unclean or false can enter (19:7-9, 21:9-21). The picture is *the paradise of God restored, with nothing accursed, and the right to the tree of life granted (22:1-3, 14, 2:7)*.

The story in Gen 3:20-24 showed God forgiving Eve and Adam. By God's *keeping open the way to the tree of life*, they and all faithful offspring would have hope.

“Adam and Eve are a featured pair whose existence and behavior are part of foundation Bible teaching.”

The Mortality of Adam and Eve

By Jonathan Burke

It is often claimed that the term 'very good' in Genesis 1:31 means Adam and Eve were created neither mortal or immortal (nor experiencing impulses to sin). However, the verse does not say this.

Genesis 1:

31 God saw all that he had made—and it was very good! There was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

In this verse we are told God saw all He had made, and it was very good. The error has arisen by isolating the words 'very good', applying them to Adam and Eve in a unique way (instead of to the entire creation), and giving the Hebrew phrase a meaning it does not have. It makes no sense to read these words as meaning 'Adam and Eve were not mortal or prone to sin', since they refer to the entire creation, and since the Hebrew words simply do not have this meaning.

This same Hebrew phrase 'very good' is used of Rebekah in Genesis 24:16, and she was obviously both mortal and prone to sin; it is also used of the land of Israel (Numbers 14:7), David's behaviour towards Jonathan (1 Samuel 19:4), and figs Jeremiah saw in a vision (Jeremiah 24:2). This Scriptural evidence confirms that all Genesis 1:31 is saying is that God saw all He had made, and it was exactly as it should be.

Man became a living being (Genesis 2:7)

In the record of God's creation of Adam, we find God formed Adam of the dust of the ground, God breathed the breath of life into him, and Adam became a living being.

Genesis 2:

7 The Lord God formed the man from the soil of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Three times Adam's mortality is identified here; made from the soil of the ground, given the breath of life, and became a living being. All three of these terms are used consistently throughout Scripture to identify mortal beings, and differentiate them from non-dying beings.

'Fourth, Genesis does not state that human beings are immortal by nature. Instead, the first humans, Adam and Eve, were created mortal and their lives were sustained only by God's provision. God placed the tree of life in the center of the garden so that, by eating its fruit, the man and the woman could potentially live forever (Gen 2:9; 3:22).'³

'Given the other uses of the phrase *יה נפש* in Gen 1, 2, 9, it seems unlikely that 2:7, "man became a living creature," means any more than the TEV rendering "and the man began to live." By blowing on the inanimate body made from the earth, God made man come alive. It is not man's possession of "the breath of life" or his status as a "living creature" that differentiates him from the animals (pace T. C. Mitchell, VT 11 [1961] 186). Animals are described in exactly the same terms.'⁴

In Genesis 3:19, God confirms that Adam and Eve will return to dust because that is what they were made from, not because their nature is being changed to mortality.

Genesis 3:

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat food until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you will return."

"The Lord God formed the man from the soil of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

Adam is told explicitly that he will return to dust because he was made from dust; he would die precisely because he was created mortal. Secondly, Adam received a condemnation for his disobedience. It was not the immediate death that he had been warned about ("but you must not eat

³ Christopher A. Davis, *Revelation* (The College Press NIV Commentary; Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 2000), 23.

⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (vol. 1; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 60-61.

from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die.” Genesis 2:17), for Adam and Eve were forgiven, and they received a covering symbolic of the covering of their sin (“The LORD God made garments from skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them”, Genesis 3:21).

So in what way did Adam receive a condemnation as a result of his disobedience, which was conveyed by the news that he would now work until he returned to dust? He was barred from the opportunity of eternal life which had been available previously.

Genesis 3:

22 And the LORD God said, “Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not be allowed to stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

23 So the LORD God expelled him from the orchard in Eden to cultivate the ground from which he had been taken.

This statement would be meaningless if this had been their only possible destiny while in Eden, but we know it was not; the opportunity for immortality had already been provided (Genesis 3:22), but was now denied. Thus Genesis 3:19 simply confirms what Genesis 2:6 tells us; that Adam was a mortal being and would consequently return to dust, having lost the opportunity for eternal life. Paul cites Genesis 2:7 when describing the nature we ourselves bear, making it clear that we share the nature with which Adam was created, the nature of Adam before the fall.

1 Corinthians 15:

47 The first man is from the earth, made of dust; the second man is from heaven.

48 Like the one made of dust, so too are those made of dust, and like the one from heaven, so too those who are heavenly.

49 And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, let us also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Paul says Adam was ‘from the earth, made of dust’ (verse 47), and that we, who are also ‘made of the dust’, are ‘Like the one made of dust’ (verse 48); we therefore have the same nature as Adam when he was made from the dust. In verse 49 Paul says it again, ‘we have borne the image of the man of dust’.

You will surely die (Genesis 2:17)

Contrary to common teaching, the Hebrew phrase which the KJV misleadingly translates ‘dying thou shalt die’, does not refer to a gradual process of decay resulting in eventual death, or to a ‘spiritual death’.

‘For in the day that you eat of it is literally “for on the day [of] your eating from it”; that is, “the very day you eat from it,” or “straight away.”

You shall die is the same Hebrew double verb construction as is translated “freely eat” in verse 16, and here the meaning is “you will certainly die,” “you will die for sure.” The emphatic statement may also be translated “you will die on the day you eat it.”⁵

Use of this phrase elsewhere in the Bible proves it speaks of the certainty of death, and is not saying that transgression would result in Adam and Eve being made mortal.

‘Here in 2:17 we have translated it as *surely* as on the basis of its occasional use as an idiom meaning “for certain,” as in 1 K. 2:37, 42, where Shimei is threatened with death “on the day you go forth and cross the brook Kidron.” As the next few verses indicate, Shimei could not possibly have been executed “on the day” he exited his house. The verse is underscoring the certainty of death, not its chronology. Again, Pharaoh’s words to Moses, “in the day you see my face you will die” (Exod. 10:28), mean that if he values his life he ought not to seek a further conference with Pharaoh, or else Moses will be no more.’⁶

⁵ William David Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis* (UBS Handbook Series; New York: United Bible Societies, 1998), 70.

⁶ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17* (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 172.

Death through sin (Romans 5:12)

In support of the idea that Adam was not created mortal, appeal is sometimes made to Romans 5:12, since only mortality entered the world by sin, then Adam could not have been mortal before he sinned.

However, Romans 5:12 says it was death that came as a result of sin, not mortality.

Romans 5:

12 So then, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned –

Death and mortality are different concepts and two different words in Greek (death is *thanatos*, mortality is *thnētos*). When Paul wrote 'death' he did not mean 'mortality'; Romans 5:21; 6:16, 21, 23 and 1 Corinthians 15:21 all show death is the consequence of sin, not mortality. So we know exactly how Paul writes 'death is the consequence of sin', and we find it in Romans 5:12; 5:21; 6:16, 21, 23 and 1 Corinthians 15:21, using *thanatos*. The word should not be interpreted as 'mortality' in Romans 5:12 and 'death' in all the others; it should not be interpreted as 'mortality' in Romans 5:12 at all.

The correct interpretation of Romans 5:12 has been a matter of considerable dispute historically. Interpreting correctly the Greek text of Romans 5:12 is not a simple task, as the grammar of the key phrase at the end of the verse, *eph ō pantes ēmarton* (ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον), can be understood in several different ways.

Romans 5:

12 Διὰ τοῦτο ὡσπερ δι' ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διήλθεν, ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον·

The footnote in the New English Translation describes the three main grammatical options for understanding this phrase (others are possible, but less likely).

'The translation of the phrase ἐφ' ᾧ (eph hō) has been heavily debated. For a discussion of all the possibilities, see C. E. B. Cranfield, "On Some of the Problems in the Interpretation of Romans 5.12," *SJT* 22 (1969): 324–41. Only a few of the major options can be mentioned here: (1) the

phrase can be taken as a relative clause in which the pronoun refers to Adam, "death spread to all people in whom [Adam] all sinned." (2) The phrase can be taken with consecutive (resultative) force, meaning "death spread to all people with the result that all sinned." (3) Others take the phrase as causal in force: "death spread to all people because all sinned."⁷

The reading 'death spread to all people because all sinned' makes the most sense in the context of Romans 5:12, because Paul is clearly speaking about the death which is the wages of sin, and that death is the eternal death received as a punishment at the judgment seat. The wages of sin is death; death forever, just as the gift of God is life forever.

Romans 5:

23 For the payoff of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Mortality is not the wages of sin, nor can it be; it is not possible to punish mortals with 'more mortality', and if Paul had wanted to say 'the wages of sin is mortality', he could have used the Greek word for 'mortality', as he does elsewhere. Additionally, a wage is something which is earned by deeds, and none of us have earned mortality by our deeds (not even by our sins); we inherited mortality from our parents. The wages earned by sin is eternal death at the judgment.

Significantly, the view that Adam became mortal after the fall and consequently transmitted mortality to all human beings, typically appears in Jewish literature after the destruction of Herod's Temple in the Jewish War of 63-70 CE.

'Those other authors who shrewdly exploit the ability of Adam, an individual figure, to mediate [transmit to others] death, and perhaps sin with it, tend to write *after* the temple was destroyed by the Romans.'⁸

Since this view was not the typical background for the New Testament writer, when Paul writes about Adam, we can be almost certain he was not writing from a Jewish background in which Adam was

⁷ New English Translation (1st ed. 2006).

⁸ John R. Levinson, "Adam as a Mediatorial Figure in Second Temple Jewish Literature," in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (BRILL, 2012), 248.

created non-mortal and then only became mortal after his sin. This provides us with a useful reference point from which to understand what Paul says about Adam.

Historical witness

That Adam was created mortal was held from a very early date within Judaism.

‘Several Second Temple Jewish authors pay upon this; for authors in the wisdom tradition, *adam* is mortal by design, by nature.’⁹

This view is found in a range of Jewish sources, ‘including Ben Sira, the author of the Wisdom of Solomon, Philo Judaeus, and the composer(s) of the Hymn Scroll’.¹⁰ These writers believed that mortality entered the world as a natural part of creation, and that this is demonstrated by God breathing life into the earth to form Adam and the animals.¹¹

‘Mortality is not mediated, therefore, by the errant act of a single figure or character, such as Adam or Enoch or Abraham or Moses. Mortality is a *human* quality and not a quality mediated by *Adam*.’¹²

The Jewish writer Ben Sira believed that Adam was not the original transmitter of mortality to humans because of his sin; Adam was created mortal.

‘Death is part of God’s design for the first human couple, not a punishment for sin.

This understanding is reinforced in 41:4, where *Sirach* asserts that death is “the Lord’s decree for all flesh” and not a punishment for sin’.¹³

The author of the book called the Wisdom of Solomon made the same point.

‘In brief, the Wisdom of Solomon picks up both Gen 1:26-28 and Gen 2:7 to press the point that the first man was mortal, in need of wisdom, *even as all human beings are mortal*, in need of wisdom.’¹⁴

This view is also found in the Qumran texts, in particular 4Q504.

‘Secondly, the same text, 4Q504, also states that Adam was mortal prior to his disobedience.’¹⁵

The view that Adam was created mortal thus formed the typical Jewish background to Paul’s own instruction under Gamaliel. This means that if Paul actually thought differently, his writing would demonstrate this very clearly. However, his comments about Adam do not look any different to the view we find in Second Temple Period texts by Jewish writers who believed Adam was created mortal. This is very strong evidence confirming the evidence in Paul’s own writing that he believed Adam was created mortal.

Within Christianity this view has been marginal, but still found support consistently throughout history among such writers as Nemesius (fourth century),¹⁶ Pelagius (fourth century),¹⁷ Caelestius (fourth

⁹ John R. Levinson, “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure in Second Temple Jewish Literature,” in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (BRILL, 2012), 248.

¹⁰ John R. Levinson, “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure in Second Temple Jewish Literature,” in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (BRILL, 2012), 257.

¹¹ ‘According to these authors, creation, not sin, mediates mortality. The inbreathing into earth provides the basis for mortality; it is not a loss mediated by Adam’, John R. Levinson, “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure in Second Temple Jewish Literature,” in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (BRILL, 2012), 257.

¹² John R. Levinson, “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure in Second Temple Jewish Literature,” in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (BRILL, 2012), 257-257.

¹³ John Toews, *The Story of Original Sin* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013).

¹⁴ John R. Levinson, “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure in Second Temple Jewish Literature,” in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only*, ed. Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini (BRILL, 2012), 260.

¹⁵ John Toews, *The Story of Original Sin* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013).

¹⁶ ‘Nemesius argues that Adam was mortal, but capable of becoming immortal.’, Nils Arne Pedersen, *Demonstrative Proof In Defence Of God: A Study Of Titus Of Bostra’s Contra Manichaeos : The Work’s Sources, Aims, And Relation To Its Contemporary Theology* (BRILL, 2004), 360.

¹⁷ ‘Pelagius believed that Adam was mortal even before his fall from grace, that his sin was not passed to future generations, that infants are not born with Original Sin and do not require immediate baptism, that man has free will and does not need prevenient grace to live a completely good life, and that there were good men before the coming

century),¹⁸ Theodore of Mopsuestia (fourth century),¹⁹ Severus of Antioch (fourth century),²⁰ Narsai (fifth century),²¹ Julian of Eclanum (fifth century),²² Augustine (fifth century),²³ and Isaac of

Nineveh (seventh century).²⁴ It was also held by a number of medieval rabbis, including Nachmanides.²⁵

of Christ.', Andrew G. Traver, *From Polis to Empire, the Ancient World, C. 800 B.C.-A.D. 500: A Biographical Dictionary* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 282.

¹⁸ 'Was Adam mortal? (Though this was not one of Pelagius's doctrines, Caelestius had affirmed this at Carthage and it was included in the charges made against him.), Carol Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (OUP Oxford, 2000), 106.

¹⁹ 'He believes that Adam was originally created mortal and, because of sin, kept humanity in a mortal state that left human beings prone to sin', Frederick McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Routledge, 2009), 33; 'Theodore states both: that death is the consequence of sin, and that mankind was created mortal.', Hanneke Reuling, *After Eden: Church Fathers And Rabbis on Genesis 3:16-21* (BRILL, 2006), 122.

²⁰ "Severus taught that Christ's body before the Resurrection was corruptible, and that Adam had been created mortal and corruptible.", J. A. S. Evans, *The Age of Justinian: The Circumstances of Imperial Power* (Psychology Press, 2000), 183.

²¹ 'We can also recall here that for Isaac, Adam, who was mortal from the beginning, had not been created to stay in Eden, but to come out of it, so that he can write for example in Capitoli della conoscenza 3,2: "We are not mortal because we sin, but because we are mortal we were pushed towards sin" (see Discorsi spirituali, 119). Disobedience did not bring the house of Adam towards death, nor did disobeying the commandment force them to leave paradise: it is certain that (God) did not create Adam and Eve so that they should stay in paradise, in a small area of the earth, but so they could be lords over all the earth" (see Gen. 1:28);', F. Regina Psaki and Charles Hindley, *The Earthly Paradise: The Garden of Eden from Antiquity to Modernity* (Global Academic Publishing, 2002), 83.

²² 'Julian found support for the idea that Adam had been created mortal in the words of 1 Cor. 15:45:', F. Young, M. Edwards, and P. Parvis, *Studia Patristica: Augustine, Other Latin Writers* (Peeters Publishers, 2006), 159.

²³ 'Augustine holds that "Adam's body, a natural and therefore mortal body, by which justification would become spiritual and therefore truly immortal, in reality by sin was not made mortal (because it was that already) but rather a dead thing"', Maggi, 'In the Company of Demons: Unnatural Beings, Love, and Identity in the Italian Renaissance', p. 195 (2008); Augustine's views on this point were contradictory, 'Adam's mortality is a tricky subject. There is a clear sense for Augustine in which Adam is already mortal before he ever partakes of his partner's fruit and enters into the doom of death. He is mortal by virtue of his flesh. But Augustine also wants to insist that Adam's original mortality is somehow less

This interpretation became more widespread in the Renaissance era, and was held by Erasmus (15th century),²⁶ as well as the Socinians.²⁷ It was common among the Radical Reformers, typically as a result of their rejection of the immortal soul, and became increasingly popular in the early modern era with the rise of Unitarian beliefs and the Restoration movement.

Conclusion

There is no Scriptural basis for the idea that Adam and Eve were created in a special state which was neither mortal nor immortal. The Bible has no term for such a unique state in either Hebrew or Greek, and the vocabulary used to describe Adam and Eve from the moment of their creation has the same meaning as language used to describe all the other mortal creatures, and is the same language used to describe mortal humans elsewhere in the Bible.

doomed than the mortality that comes to him and his descendants when he joins with the woman and weakens the human condition.', James Wetzel, *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 174; 'Adam's body was corruptible ± Augustine gave no further explanation of this particular mode of consuming food.12 Augustine ... Augustine decided that Adam's body before Sin could be reckoned at the same time mortal and immortal', Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler, *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (Boydell & Brewer, 2001), 206.

²⁴ 'Isaac was not the first in his tradition to question if death really was a punishment for the sin of Adam. Theodore of Mopsuestia and his appreciative follower Narsai had already taught that Adam was in fact created mortal.', Patrik Hagman, *The Asceticism of Isaac of Nineveh* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 200.

²⁵ 'Science, Nahmanides (at 2:17) notes, declares **Adam mortal** from the start, since he was compounded of diverse elements.', Lenn E. Goodman, *Creation and Evolution* (Routledge, 2010), 60.

²⁶ 'And was not Adam by nature already mortal before the Fall? That at least is Erasmus' opinion in the Disputatio: [Christus] mortalitatem assumsit, quae et ante peccatum erat in Adam (LB V, 1270 E).', Gilbert Tournoy, *Humanistica Lovaniensia: journal of neo-Latin studies. Vol. XXXVII - 1998* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1998), 188.

²⁷ 'In developing his Christology, Socinus argued that Christ, like all human beings even before Adam's fall, was naturally mortal.', Jan W. Wojcik, *Robert Boyle and the Limits of Reason* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 45.

Additionally, Paul's deliberate contrast between Adam and Christ is predicated on the fact that Adam was mortal. If Paul believed Adam was created in some special state between mortality and immortality, he certainly gives no indication of this at all.

The very early and consistent Jewish and Christian witness to the interpretation that Adam was created mortal is highly significant. Such a witness does not mean this view is necessarily right, but it does mean the view was not manufactured to avoid a specific controversy or contradiction with science. It also provides us with the interpretive background in which Paul himself was writing, and gives us insight into how his words would have been understood by his audience.

Was the Serpent literal according to the Rabbis?

By Kameron Mazurek

In the narrative of Adam and Eve, it certainly sounds like the serpent is literal. It is something that interacts with humans and that is outside. Although it has some incredible abilities, such as walking and talking, it isn't so far fetched that it is necessarily impossible. The narrative goes on to say the reason the serpent crawls on its belly is because it is cursed.



How did the ancient rabbis interpret this serpent? Answer: In a variety of ways. The serpent was seen a literal, symbolic, or a literal serpent that was symbolic of human nature. Most of the Rabbis did see the serpent as a literal creature. However, the

majority also thought it was meant as a parable for all of humanity.

What did the snake represent? Well that was also a divided issue. Some thought it represented the Angel of Death, but others believed it represented the Evil Inclination (temptation). However, the majority opinion is that the serpent represented the Evil Inclination. The Rabbis used Genesis 3:15 as proof that it represented temptation. In Midrash HaNe'elam, the Rabbis explained that crushing the serpent's head meant learning and following the commandments of God, while the serpent would cause the servant of God to trample the commandments with his heel.

While the majority of Rabbis did think that the serpent was literal, they also thought that it was not intended to be read as simply history and an explanation for the current human condition. Rather, it was a parable that temptation is always around, and if we are not diligently following and obeying God, we will be just like Adam and Eve, and will trample God's commandments with our heels.

Adam and Eve Questions

By Dan Gaitanis

1. What did the Lord God form man out of?
2. What was the first law given to Adam?
3. What did God allow Adam to do?
4. How many lies were told in Genesis 3:3-4?
5. What happened when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit?
6. What were the punishments handed out to the serpent, Adam, and Eve?
7. Explain in simple terms, the prophecy in Genesis 3:15.

Answers in the NEXT edition!

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