

## **Adam and Eve: *A Fresh Look at Our Beginnings***

**D. Gene Williams Jr., PhD**  
**Defend the Word Ministries**  
**NorthPointe Church**

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Have you ever wondered where Adam and Eve fit into God's story--and into ours? Their story in Genesis 1–3 isn't just ancient history. It's the foundation of the Christian message: why the world is broken, why we need Jesus, and what it means to be fully human.

For centuries, Christians like Augustine and Luther saw Adam and Eve as real people whose choices shaped all of history. Today, though, discoveries in science and archaeology raise new questions: Were Adam and Eve the first humans to bear God's image? Were they alone in their covenantal calling, or part of a wider population of archaic, non-Adamic *Homo sapiens*?

After years of studying Scripture, church tradition, and scientific findings, I developed what I call the Covenantal Image-Bearing Model. It places Adam and Eve about 100,000 years ago, during the Last Ice Age, in a lush green valley where the Persian Gulf now lies. I believe God chose them--not just to live--but to bear His image in a way no one else before them had.

This paper is a simplified walk-through of my two longer academic works, *Adam and Eve in Christian Orthodoxy* and *An Apologetic for the Covenantal Image-Bearing Model*. If you want deeper footnotes and theological background, those are available on

my website. For now, I'll walk you through the story like a timeline--what I believe happened, when, and why it still matters today.

---

## THE HUMAN WORLD BEFORE ADAM AND EVE

Let's start from the beginning--not with Genesis chapter one, but with the humans who lived before Adam and Eve. These were the people Cain feared when God sent him away after he killed Abel--the same people he later intermarried with.

Scientific discoveries show that archaic, pre-Adamic Homo sapiens--biologically human populations--have been around for about 300,000 years. They had bodies and minds like ours, made tools, and lived in communities across Africa. But something profound began to change around 100,000 years ago: early signs of symbolic thinking appeared, like ritual burials.

My model places Adam and Eve at the heart of that transformation-- not contradicting science, but embracing the clues found in both Scripture and creation.

Psalms 19 reminds us: "*The heavens declare the glory of God... the law of the Lord is perfect.*" I believe we should listen to both.

Now picture this: It's the Last Ice Age. Sea levels are much lower, and what's now the Persian Gulf is actually a lush, green valley, fed by rivers like the Tigris and Euphrates. Even today, satellite images show ancient riverbeds hidden beneath the water. Geologists like Jeffrey Rose believe this region stayed habitable until about 6,000 BC, when rising seas finally submerged it. I believe this is where Eden was located.

In that fertile valley, God either chose a man and a woman from among these archaic, pre-Adamic Homo sapiens and breathed into them His Spirit, granting them the image of God--or He specially formed them as the first Adamic Homo sapiens to begin a new covenantal relationship. Either way, this wasn't just the breath of biological life that animals have. It was the beginning of true spiritual life. Adam and Eve were the first to walk with God in covenant, with moral awareness, divine calling, and the ability for true fellowship with their Creator.

Eve was not an afterthought. She was an intentional and equal partner, fully sharing in Adam's image-bearing role. Genesis 2:18 says it was not good for Adam to be alone. This doesn't mean he was the only human biologically alive--it means he was the first spiritually alive human, the first in covenant with God. He needed a partner who also bore the *imago Dei*, not just another companion.

In this model, God didn't need to evolve new biological forms at the time of Adam and Eve's calling. Fully modern Homo sapiens sapiens already existed--biologically ready but spiritually unawakened. We call them pre-Adamic humans. Meanwhile, archaic non-Adamic humans like Neanderthals, Denisovans, and Herto Man represented distinct biological lineages. They were closer to modern humans than earlier hominins but still remained outside the covenantal line.

Through Adam and Eve's descendants, the image of God spread--not just through natural descendants, but also through limited interbreeding with these earlier populations. This interbreeding introduced traces of archaic DNA into humanity, but the spiritual identity of Adam's line remained intact. God had graciously prepared a biological

foundation through pre-Adamic humans, but humanity still fell again through disobedience.

When interbreeding happened, it most likely involved archaic males and Adamic females--a pattern consistent with how hybrid fertility works because in mammals this order tends to be more fertile. Over time, through both natural births and this covenantal grafting, the *imago Dei* spread across all humanity.

The early struggles of humanity may have been tied to these messy beginnings. After the Fall, the image of God began to move outward, but the covenantal line was often diluted by crossings with spiritually unawakened humans. For tens of thousands of years, humanity struggled to fully live out its divine calling. Yet even as the ancient archaic lineages faded and the Adamic lineage took deeper root, God's plan kept moving forward.

By about 70,000 years ago, humans began to create symbolic art, develop trade networks, and migrate into new parts of the world.

Anthropologists call this leap "*behavioral modernity*." I believe it wasn't just cultural--it was spiritual.

---

## THE FALL: A SPIRITUAL DEATH

God gave Adam and Eve a covenant: walk with Him, enjoy His creation, but do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But in Genesis 3, they disobeyed. This act--known as the Fall--shattered their relationship with God.

God had warned that they would die “*in the day*” they ate the fruit (Genesis 2:17). Yet Adam lived for many years afterward (Genesis 5:5). So, what kind of death happened immediately? It was spiritual death--separation from God. Shame, fear, and exile followed. Later, physical death also took its toll.

Romans 5:12 says, “*Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men.*” Notice it does not say that death first entered the entire world, but that death spread to all humanity. Creation groaned because we no longer lived up to our purpose: to be God's image-bearers. But it does not mean there was no physical death before the Fall.

After all, Adam named the animals, and many of the names he gave reflected their behavior. For example, the Hebrew word for “*owl*” comes from a root meaning “*to do violence,*” and the raven’s name relates to darkness and scavenging. These creatures were not herbivores—death and predation already existed in the animal kingdom before humanity’s fall. It’s worth remembering that Adam was formed outside the garden, where he would have witnessed the untamed world firsthand. This experience most certainly would have shaped how he named the animals.

---

## **THE FLOOD: A MASSIVE REGIONAL EVENT**

Centuries later, Genesis 6–9 describes a great flood. Many have read this as a global event, but a closer look at the text allows-and arguably demands--a different understanding.

Genesis 8:5 says that the mountain tops became visible. Then in Genesis 8:7, a raven is sent out, flying back and forth searching for dry land. Later, in Genesis 8:8–9, a

dove is released but returns because, as verse 9 explains, “...*for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth.*” Clearly, if mountaintops were already visible but dry ground was still hard to find, the phrase “*whole earth*” is better understood as referring to their entire known world--not the entire planet as we would define it today.

Scientific evidence supports this reading. Around 5,600 BC, the Persian Gulf region experienced massive flooding as glaciers melted and sea levels rose. However, life in other parts of the world continued without interruption. For example, the Pando tree system in Utah--still alive today--has been thriving for over 80,000 years, long before and after the time of the flood.

Thus, the flood was real, but it was regional, not global. It wiped out Adam and Eve’s covenantal line, except for those preserved on the ark. Through Noah and his descendants, God began again.

After the flood, humanity spread even farther at the Tower of Babel (~4,000 BC), and later, God called Abraham (~2,000 BC) to renew His covenant. All of this continued the unfolding story that leads ultimately to Jesus--the Savior who would restore everything that was lost.

---

### **TRIUNE IMAGE: BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT**

Another key part of this model is the belief that Adam and Eve were created with three parts: body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). This reflects the very nature of God Himself--Father, Son, and Spirit.

Pre-Adamic humans may have had bodies and souls, but Adam and Eve were the first to receive a living spirit, enabling them to walk in true relationship with God.

This triune nature sets humanity apart and helps us understand why spiritual death is such a devastating loss. It's not just about moral failure--it's about the breaking of our deepest connection with the God who created us to reflect His image.

---

## **HOW THIS MODEL COMPARES TO OTHERS**

I'm not the first person to wrestle with these questions--and I don't reject other faithful views. In fact, my model builds on many of them:

- The Historical-Literal View sees Adam and Eve as the first and only humans. I agree they were real, but I place them further back in time.
- The Genealogical Adam and Eve Model (like the one proposed by Joshua Swamidass) places them 6,000–10,000 years ago, teaching that their descendants mixed with other humans. I take a similar approach, just farther back.
- The Representative View sees Adam and Eve as symbolic representatives of a larger group. I see them as both symbolic and real--real people with a real covenantal role.
- The Augustinian View focuses on how sin is passed down. I agree that sin spreads to all humanity, but not genetically--instead, through covenantal and spiritual inheritance.

Each of these models brings important insights. My Covenantal Image-Bearing Model simply seeks to bring them together in a way that holds firmly to the essentials of our faith while engaging respectfully with scientific discoveries..

---

## WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

Adam and Eve's story isn't just about the distant past--it's about us.

They show us what it means to be human, what it means to fall, and why we need a Savior. As 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, "*As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.*" That connection is crucial. If the Fall wasn't real, the rescue mission of Jesus would lose its purpose.

This model holds fast to the core truths of the gospel: a real Adam and Eve, a real Fall, real sin, and a real Savior. It also offers a way to answer modern challenges--whether about fossils, flood evidence, or genetics--without giving up the good news.

We don't need to be afraid of asking hard questions. Faith and reason, Scripture and nature, all ultimately point us back to the same place: the God who made us, loves us, and redeems us through Christ.

---

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

If you're interested in going deeper, I encourage you to explore the full versions of this study:

Adam and Eve in Christian Orthodoxy and its companion paper, An Apologetic for the Covenantal Image-Bearing Model.

There, I dive more deeply into church history, Hebrew grammar, science, and biblical theology--all while holding fast to what matters most: the truth of God's Word and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



As Christians, we can be confident, curious, and charitable. We hold tightly to the essentials and walk humbly where mystery remains.

**As Augustine of Hippo once said:**

*“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love.”*

(In Latin: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.*)

God's world was already caught in a cosmic conflict before Adam and Eve received the image of God. Dark powers had rebelled against their Creator, and the earth was not yet fully at peace. Humanity was created to bear God's image into this broken world--to be His rulers, His stewards, and His healers.

But instead of subduing the chaos, Adam and Eve fell into it. They joined the very rebellion they were meant to defeat. Yet God did not abandon His plan. Through Christ--the true and faithful Image--we have hope: the cosmic war will end, creation will be set free, and humanity will one day rule again in righteousness and peace.

The Church must hold fast to this vision, proclaiming a gospel that speaks to both our origin and our destiny in Christ. Go forth, then, and be faithful imagers of Christ our God!

## APPENDIX A: INTEGRATED TIMELINE: COVENANTAL IMAGE-BEARING MODEL + ANTHROPOLOGICAL

Timeframe	Scientific / Historical Event	Covenantal Interpretation (Your Model)
~300,000 BC	~300,000 BC: Archaic, non-Adamic Homo sapiens appear (e.g., Jebel Irhoud, Morocco)	Biological populations begin, without spiritual <i>imago Dei</i> or divine covenant.
~200,000 BC	Genetic diversification of Homo sapiens across Africa	Reflects natural dispersion, not yet a covenantal population.
~100,000 BC	Early migration into the Levant (Skhul and Qafzeh)	Anatomically modern humans exhibiting symbolic behaviors, such as ochre use and intentional burials, are present at Qafzeh Cave. These behaviors suggest the presence of the <i>imago Dei</i> .  This early migration attempt may reflect the initial fulfillment of God's command to “ <i>be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth</i> ” (Genesis 1:28). However, due to small population sizes and limited technological advancements, or due to interbreeding, their expansion was constrained.
~70,000 BC	Emergence of widespread behavioral modernity	A significant increase in symbolic expression, art, and long-distance trade occurs. These developments, coupled with improved tools and larger population sizes, facilitate broader human expansion and the dissemination of the <i>imago Dei</i> across diverse populations.
~60,000–20,000 BC	Homo sapiens migrate worldwide (e.g., Asia ~60,000–50,000 BC, Australia ~50,000 BC, Europe ~45,000 BC, Americas ~20,000 BC)	Adam’s descendants interbreed with pre-Adamic humans, spreading <i>imago Dei</i> and fallen nature genealogically, universal by Jesus’ time (Genesis 4, Romans 5:12).  This spread was facilitated primarily by archaic male-to-Adamic female interbreeding, which, based on mammalian fertility patterns, ensured efficient transmission of the <i>imago Dei</i> and fallen nature across global populations.

Timeframe	Scientific / Historical Event	Covenantal Interpretation (Your Model)
~8,000-6,000 BC	Persian Gulf region floods due to glacial melt (Eden submerged)	Beginning of the end for the Edenic homeland; remembered later in flood traditions.
~6,000-5,600 BC	Noah's Flood (regional, not global)	Divine judgment on Adam's covenantal line; Noah's family preserved (Genesis 6–9).
~5,600–4,000 BC	Noah's family repopulates the region	Adam's covenantal line regrows. Civilization develops around Mesopotamia.
~4,000 BC	Early linguistic and cultural diversification in Mesopotamia.	God confuses languages at Babel (Genesis 11), forcibly dispersing the covenantal lineage globally. This initiates the global spread of covenantal identity, completing the genealogical reach of Adam.  According to the Divine Council Worldview (Deuteronomy 32:8–9, LXX/DSS), this dispersion also marks the assignment of the nations to spiritual rulers (“ <i>sons of God</i> ”), with Yahweh reserving Israel as His own inheritance. This act explains the rise of distinct religious worldviews and cosmic rebellion outside the covenantal center.
~3,000–2,000 BC	Rise of early civilizations: Sumer, Akkad, Egypt	Cultural growth post-Babel. Covenant line continues through Shem → Abraham (Genesis 11).
~2,000 BC	Rise of Sumer, Akkad, Egypt.	God reestablishes covenant in a new form—Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12)—building on Adam's legacy.
~1,400–1,000 BC	Exodus, Conquest, and United Monarchy (Moses to David)	Covenant narrows: national focus (Israel) to prepare for the universal Messiah.
~700–400 BC	Prophets foretell a coming Redeemer (Isaiah, Micah, etc.)	Prepares for reversal of the Fall—Adamic curse to be undone by a New Adam.
~5 BC	Historical figure in Roman Judea.	<i>Fulfillment.</i> Birth of Jesus Christ. Second Adam reverses Fall, restoring <i>imago Dei</i> (Romans 5:12–21, 1 Corinthians 15:22).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Source

The Holy Bible, *English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2001.

### Secondary Source

Alexander, Denis. *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* 2nd ed. Oxford: Monarch Books, 2014.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Benziger Bros., 1947.

Augustine. *The City of God*. Translated by Marcus Dods. New York: Modern Library, 1993.

———. *On the Grace of Christ, and on Original Sin*. Translated by Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, edited by Philip Schaff, 217–255. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Berkouwer, G. C. *Sin*. Translated by Philip C. Holtrop. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Genesis*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.

Collins, C. John. *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

Haldane, J.B.S. “Sex Ratio and Unisexual Sterility in Hybrid Animals.” *Journal of Genetics* 12 (1922): 101–109.

Hippolytus of Rome. *Apostolic Tradition* 21.8. Translated by Burton Scott Easton. *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934.

Hublin, Jean-Jacques, Abdelouahed Ben-Ncer, Shara E. Bailey, Sarah E. Freidline, Simon Neubauer, Matthew M. Skinner, et al. “New Fossil from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco and the Pan-African Origin of *Homo sapiens*.” *Nature* 546, no. 7657 (2017): 289–292. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature22336>.

Irenaeus. *Against Heresies*. Translated by Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut. In *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 309–567. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. 5th ed. London: Continuum, 2000.

Levering, Matthew. *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation: Cosmos, Creatures, and the Wise and Good Creator*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.

Lewis, C. S. *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1947.

- Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis 1–11:26*. Vol. 1A of *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 1996.
- Meyer, Stephen C. *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*. New York: HarperOne, 2013.
- Middleton, Richard. *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005.
- Moo, Douglas J. *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Random House, 1979.
- Petraglia, Michael D., Bridget Allchin, Quentin G. Bailey, Dorian Q. Fuller, and Nicole Boivin. "Out of Africa: New Hypotheses and Evidence for the Dispersal of *Homo sapiens* Along the Indian Ocean Rim." *Annals of Human Biology* 37, no. 3 (2010): 288–311.
- Rose, Jeffrey I. "New Light on Human Prehistory in the Arabo-Persian Gulf Oasis." *Current Anthropology* 51, no. 6 (December 2010): 849–883.
- Ross, Hugh. *Navigating Genesis: A Scientist's Journey through Genesis 1–11*. Covina, CA: RTB Press, 2014.
- . *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008.
- Sankararaman, Sriram, Swapan Mallick, Nick Patterson, and David Reich. "The Combined Landscape of Denisovan and Neanderthal Ancestry in Present-Day Humans." *Current Biology* 26, no. 9 (2016).
- Stringer, Chris. *The Origin of Our Species*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Swamidass, S. Joshua. *The Genealogical Adam and Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019.
- Tattersall, Ian. *Masters of the Planet: The Search for Our Human Origins*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- . *The Strange Case of the Rickety Cossack: And Other Cautionary Tales from Human Evolution*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Ussher, James. *The Annals of the World*. Translated by Larry Pierce and Marion Pierce. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003.
- Walton, John H. *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11: A Continental Commentary*. Translated by John J. Scullion. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

- Wolters, Albert M. *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Williams Jr., D. Gene. *Baptism in Biblical Theology: A Typological, Covenantal, and Linguistic Examination*. Accessed April 2025. <https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr>; <https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html>.
- . *Cogito, Ergo Sum: The Rational Soul and the Image of God*. Accessed April 2025. <https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr>; <https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html>.
- . *From His Side: Recovering the Meaning Behind Eve's Origin*. Accessed April 2025. <https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr>; <https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html>.
- . *Genesis: Hyperbole and History in the Flood, Lifespans, and Language of the Ancient World*. Accessed April 2025. <https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr>; <https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html>.
- . *Trichotomy, Dichotomy, and Naturalism: A Study of the Soul and Spirit in Biblical and Theological Contexts*. Accessed April 2025. <https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr>; <https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html>.
- . *What It Means to Be the Image of God: A Theological and Functional Perspective*. Accessed April 2025. <https://triinitysem.academia.edu/GeneWilliamsJr>; <https://defendtheword.com/insights-and-studies.html>.
- Wright, N. T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperOne, 2008.