Debating the Historical Adam Passages

Part 1 of 2: Historical Adam in the Old Testament and Early Judaism
with Darrell L. Bock, Nathan D. Holsteen, Elliott E. Johnson, Robert B. Chisholm, and Mark L. Bailey
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Welcome to the Table, where we discuss issues of God and culture, and today our topics is historical Adam. The context for this discussion has been the recent debate and interaction that’s taken place over how important Adam is theologically, particularly within evangelical circles. And we hope today to cover only the theological biblical side of this discussion, the hermeneutics involved, take a look at some of the passages.

We’re quite aware that this discussion involves science as well as theology but none of the experts with me today are scientists and so we don’t feel expertise in that regard. Our hope is, in the future, to bring to the Table some people with scientific background to discuss that aspect of the question. But we do think it’s important to know what the texts of the Bible and what Second Temple Jewish texts are saying about Adam, and so we’re going to focus our discussion there today.

With me today are, to my immediate right, Mark Bailey, who is president of Dallas Theological Seminary, but also teaches in the Bible Exposition department here. To my immediate left is Dr. Elliott Johnson, who is professor in Bible Exposition as well. And then to my far right is Robert Chisholm, who is chair of the Old Testament department here at Dallas. And then by the genius of technology, Nathan Holsteen, who is in the Systematic Theology department here at Dallas, is speaking to us from his home, for reasons that should be obvious, because there was no room at the inn for Nathan here around the table and so we decided that the best way to bring him in would be through technology.

You will observe that several of the participants at the Table today also participated in a chapel that we had last semester that also discussed this issue; that chapel will be posted alongside this podcast and so you will be able to interact with it as well. And to some degree, we’ll be assuming some of the discussion of that chapel in what we do today. So those are the preliminaries. Welcome, gentlemen.

Great to be here.

It’s a privilege to have you with us today, and I’m just going to dive right in by taking a look at and beginning with Genesis 1. We wouldn’t have this discussion if we did not have this chapter and the chapter – the early chapters of Genesis, particularly Genesis 1 to 3, where we get the creation of humanity, at the end of the creation week we get the discussion of the creation of Adam and Eve in Chapter 2, and then we get what has become known theologically as The Fall in Genesis 3.
So I want to begin first thinking about this from an Old Testament point of view and I’m going to ask Dr. Chisholm to begin and take us into – lead us into how Adam is seen in these three chapters, particularly around some of the questions that get debated about who Adam is.

Robert Chisholm: Well, in Genesis 1, when God says, “Let us make Adam in our image,” as you read on you discover that Adam, the word Adam, Adam is being used for humankind. In fact, in the NETBible we translated it that way. In Verse 27, “God created Adam, humankind, in his own image.” And then it says male and female, he created them. So Adam is – consists of both male and female in Genesis 1.

When you move into Genesis 2 and 3, now Adam is going to be used for the man, the male, who is created, and then God says, “Well, it’s not good for him to be by himself, so I will make a companion that corresponds to him” and then he makes the woman. So there’s a difference in the use of the term Adam as we move from Chapter 1 into Chapters 2 and 3.

Darrell Bock: Okay, and the big discussion is – or a discussion obviously, and this gets into hermeneutics and Elliott, you said you wanted to discuss the hermeneutics of this, but first I’ll ask the question then we’ll talk about the hermeneutics. One of the great discussions surrounding the early chapters of Genesis, of course, is whether we should see this as a portrayal of a figure, a specific figure, or whether there’s something else at a literary level going on. As an Old Testament person, discuss, if you would, that question.

Robert Chisholm: Well, some would argue that God didn’t create an individual, what we’re talking about is a race that’s created. If you just had Genesis 1 you could probably make a decent case for that, but then you get into Chapter 2 and you see that, well, there is an individual man and an individual woman, and as I pointed out in the chapel, a panel discussion that we had, when you read those chapters carefully, present reality is being explained in light of past events, we call that etiology; there’s an explanation for origins of things. And I think that in Chapters 2 and 3 the historicity of Adam, the individual, is assumed for the etiology, that explanation of, for reality to work, the event has to have taken place, and the characters are important, even the snake is important, and I think an ancient history reader would understand there was a literal man named Adam, an individual who was married to a woman named Eve. There was even a snake that came into play, because present reality with regard to snakes is explained in those sections.
So how do we explain that difference? Well, when you get to Chapter 5, I think the two strands, if we could call them that, are brought together because in 5:1 it says, “When God created humankind he made them in the likeness of God, he created the male and female, when they were created he blessed them and named them Adam.” So that sounds more like Genesis 1.

_Darrell Bock:_ That’s humanity.

_Robert Chisholm:_ Right.

_Darrell Bock:_ Okay.

_Robert Chisholm:_ But then when you continue on, when Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, now Adam is being referred to as the individual, the male, that’s Chapters 2 and 3, the way Adam is used there. So Chapter 5 kind of brings that usage together. And so to me the easiest way to synthesize this material is to argue that in Chapter 1 when it uses Adam in that way, it’s still referring to the man and woman that are then created in 2 and 3; 2 and 3 kind of explain in more detail what’s going on in Chapter 1.

_Darrell Bock:_ So if we were directing a movie, the first – the opening scene would be the panoramic scene of humanity, and then we would zoom in and in zooming in we’d look at particularly at Adam and Eve.

_Robert Chisholm:_ Yes, but I would say in Chapter 1, humanity, even in Chapter 1, would be Adam and Eve, initially, it’s not a broader group, that we’re zeroing in on two of them.

_Darrell Bock:_ They’re both created in the image of God.

_Robert Chisholm:_ Right.

_Mark Bailey:_ It’s interesting in those opening five chapters Adam is mentioned by name 7 times, and by the designation as “the man” 21 times, and so you get that unity between those two terms, both by direct reference and by generic, the man, and so it’s not just the humankind or the group, it is an individual that’s being described.
Robert Chisholm: Now, Adam is used in different ways, when you go from 1 to 2 and 3. And I’m even willing to say that that can be attributed to use of sources. Moses could have used sources, especially in putting Genesis together, when he’s describing events that occurred long before his time. So that may explain the literary variation that we see. But I think when the material is brought together into a unified whole that we have, it’s harmonized, you know; it’s harmonized.

Darrell Bock: Well, obviously Genesis lays an important foundation for what we’re going to be talking about. Let’s talk a little bit about hermeneutical concerns, or at least initially raise them now. Elliott?

Elliott Johnson: In broad terms, we’re being so specific in identifying the origin of Adam because we want to lay the foundation that that’s what the scripture teaches. That’s not always been our discussion. Early on when the Copernicus issue emerged it really wasn’t a question of what science taught and what the Bible taught, it was really a question of what science had interpreted and what those who interpreted the Bible had found. And in fact, they were saying more than the Bible. The Bible never said what they were saying about the earth and the sun, and so we’re going to be very concerned to find exactly what the Bible does teach.

Darrell Bock: And so the point that you’re making here is, is that even though there was a long history of interpretation in reading the Bible in a certain way, that doesn’t necessary mean that that’s the way the Bible should have been read?

Elliott Johnson: That’s correct. And we need to validate, just as the Copernicus conclusions were validated as correct and the church’s interpretation of the Bible was shown to be in error, we have to be very careful today to make sure our interpretation is validated as correct.
Darrell Bock: So the point of the exercise that we’re going through, the point that you’re making is, is that by paying careful attention to the text, we have to see how they are read, how they’re being read and whether or not in the long run that reading makes sense internally, in terms of what’s going on with the Bible, but also beyond that, how that relates to the way – and this is an important part of the discussion, too, how science is being interpreted. We have to also recognize that there are interpretations associated with science and that the given reading of how science operates in a particular period isn’t necessarily always a reflection of the way the reality is.

Elliott Johnson: The reality actually is. And we need to be responsible in our process of interpretation. It’s kind of interesting, in a current discussion on say the age of the earth, just because the Bible has days in the creation story and has numbers in the genealogy of Genesis 5 and 11 does not indicate that the Bible is saying the earth was created so many years ago, precisely. That’s not what the Bible is teaching, that’s not what the Bible is trying to communicate. On the other hand, the Bible is trying to communicate that Adam and Eve were the source of all life in the human race, and that is, at least in distinction to some of the conclusions that science is raising at this point.

Robert Chisholm: If we could go to that Copernicus point, they were arguing on the basis of the Bible that the sun went around the earth, but I think if you look at the passages that describe the sun as if it were going around the earth, no theological truth is built on that. They were just assuming that this language of appearance, which everyone kind of accepted at that point in time, was true, but there’s no theological construct that’s developed from that.

We’re arguing that in the case of Adam and Eve, and even the snake, there is a theological construct there, this is – I’m getting back to this etiological argument, present reality is interpreted in light of these events. If the events didn’t happen then the theology of the text breaks down. So hermeneutically I think there is a difference there.

Darrell Bock: All right, it’s an important difference, I think, as well.

Robert Chisholm: Yes, it really is.

Darrell Bock: Nathan, you have anything you want to observe as we wrap up our discussion on Genesis and turn to some other texts?
Nathan Holsteen: Yeah, I would absolutely agree with what has been said so far. When we’re talking about the Copernican revolution, we’re talking about a principle that doesn’t form a foundational part of that system of thought. We speak of the depth of ingression in any system of thought to indicate how foundational that principle might be.

Darrell Bock: Okay, I have no idea what the depth of ingression would be. And if I have no idea, I guarantee you, our audience is certainly at a loss. They’re in egress at the moment.

Nathan Holsteen: Take a question about a house, is it a problem with a shingle or is it a fault in the foundation? It’s obvious that one is a minor problem and the other is a very critical problem. When we’re talking about does the sun revolve around the earth, theologically that’s a shingle, that’s not a terribly important principle, whereas now when we talk about the historicity of Adam – and we’re going to talk about this more later, but we have a principle here that is critically connected to principles that are essentially Christian, and so, yeah, we have to be careful when we play with the foundation. And I think that’s what I’m hearing Dr. Johnson and Dr. Chisholm say. I completely agree.

Darrell Bock: So just to review, as we come out of Genesis, we have in the first chapter the creation of humanity, focused in a male and a female. In Chapter 2, we have a focus on the creation first of Adam and then Eve from him. And then in Chapter 3, we have the failure of Adam to obey God, which leads to a whole series of consequences: the snake now will crawl on the ground, there will be enmity between the woman and the snake and what the snake represents. I did that very, very carefully. And so there is an impact –

Robert Chisholm: Woman will suffer pain in giving birth.

Darrell Bock: Woman will suffer pain in childbirth, it’s going to take labor to bring forth food.

Robert Chisholm: And in the end, we die.
Darrell Bock: And in the end, we die, minor detail. And so there are a whole series of consequences. This has theologically of course been labeled as The Fall, and when we talk about foundation, we’re in the early chapters of the book of Genesis, we’re laying the foundation of the story of scripture by what is said here, and the dilemma of Adam’s failure is literally a shadow that casts itself across the entire rest of the canon. The story moves on from there, it picks up steam, if you will, in Chapter 12, with the promise to Abraham that God is going to begin to move to deliver us out of this dilemma in which we find ourselves, and we’re off and running into the history of Israel and eventually the story of the messiah and everything that’s tied to Jesus.

Robert Chisholm: And isn’t it interesting that at the very end, in Revelation, you have Eden imagery used to describe the restoration.

Darrell Bock: Take us back to where we started.

Robert Chisholm: No more death. A Garden of Eden imagery is used there in a positive way.

Elliott Johnson: It’s also interesting the way everything is tied to the genealogy of Chapter 5. One Jewish commentator said this, “This is the record of the line of man. By tracing all humanity back to a common parentage this phrase conveys the presupposition of the absolute unity and equality of the human race as created by God.”

Darrell Bock: And so what I’ve been trying to do with this summary is to unpack what Dr. Holsteen meant, or Nathan, I’m going to use first names, meant, when he said this is Christian. And actually, I would say it’s Judeo-Christian, it’s Christian and it also is rooted in the theology of Judaism at the same time.

Mark Bailey: Let me raise one more, Darrell, from the Genesis account, and that is the phrase the image of God, the Imago Dei, because that’s foundational to the theology that we will talk about throughout the scriptures and that’s both an Old Testament and a New Testament affirmation. You have it in Genesis 1:16, as well as in verse 27. You have it alluded to again in Chapter 4, where as Adam was created in the image of God, Cain and Abel were created in his image and you get the reproduction of that, and that gets affirmed in 1 Corinthians 11:4 as well as in James 3 in verse 9.
And so both the Old Testament and the New Testament in the intertextuality of the Imago Dei that’s found, interestingly enough, in the foundational chapters. So it goes back to Bob’s statement that what you have stated as the theological implications in history are – must therefore be rooted in history.

**Darrell Bock:** And you’ve raised a point that I wanted to be sure we did lay the foundation for and it’s this, that when we talk about God creating man and woman in his image, we’re talking about that moment, however you conceive of the timing of it all, we’re talking about that moment in which God makes human beings a special part of this creation. Another part of Genesis 1 is the idea that the last thing that God creates in this week is humanity. He stands and she stand at the pinnacle of this creation. Man, in Chapter 2, is the pinnacle of the creation, and yet the creation is incomplete until woman is created and completes the creation of the humanity that we see in the image of God, male and female.

All these things are important, they’re important for this discussion, they’re actually important to other discussions we’ve had on this podcast that talk about issues of sexuality and gender, et cetera. So when we talk about a foundational chapter, this is an important, important starting point, and it is very significant that we are in the first chapters of the first book of the Bible and we’re not located somewhere in the middle of the prophets somewhere down the road. And when we talk about the picture of a foundation with all of the issues that that brings philosophically and otherwise, that clearly is the way the Bible is laying itself out, and I think that’s an important point to be made.

We spent some time here on Genesis and I think it’s important to do so for that very reason. Nathan, you look like you wanted to say something. You want to dive in or am I just reading your look?

**Nathan Holsteen:** I was nodding in absolute agreement.

**Darrell Bock:** Okay. Well, we’ll take that affirmation as approval, a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval and we’ll move on. Let’s turn our attention next to – we’ve already alluded to this and we can cover this briefly, but there are a series of genealogies that also are related in the Old Testament to this discussion. We’ve alluded to the genealogy in Genesis 5. There is a genealogy in 1 Chronicles 1, there’s even a genealogy in the New Testament in Luke 3 that extends all the way back to Adam. So what does that tell us?
Elliott Johnson: One thing it tells us is that we’re comparing individuals, Adam along with the individuals that are part of that genealogy are – the individuality of Adam is clearly emphasized.

Darrell Bock: Yes, and almost assumed. I mean, it’s a given.

Mark Bailey: To put a mythical character or a categorical kind of statement of all humanity doesn’t fit the genealogical placement. Ironically, the Genesis 5 links you to Adam himself and the human race; in 1 Chronicles 1, the nation of Israel, and especially as it develops from Adam to the Davidic Dynasty. And then in Luke 3, where Luke tracks it backwards, whereas Matthew tracks it forwards in history, Luke tracks it backwards, to Adam and then, you know, as a son of God, as a creation, an offspring of God himself. And so you have the genealogy of Jesus. So it’s interesting, I found, you know, you have Adam, David and Jesus, which is linking obviously not only humanity but also then, in the incarnation, with the son of God.

Darrell Bock: One of the differences that you get, of course, between Matthew and Luke is that Matthew only goes back to Abraham, but Luke, because of his more universal concerns, although Matthew has them too but Luke highlights them, goes all the way back to Adam, and then he – it is interesting that that genealogy ends with Adam, the son of God, which is an allusion to this Imago Dei, to this being made in the image of God that we’ve talked about. So we’re seeing multiple authors handle the text this way, that’s part of the point that’s being made here.

Robert Chisholm: And what seems apparent is Adam is not being viewed as a mythical figure and he’s not being viewed corporately or collectively, he’s an individual and he’s an individual who lived, who began this genealogical tradition.

Darrell Bock: And to come back to the point that you’ve made, we’re explaining the origins of things, we’re talking about etiology here, and in explaining the origins of things we’re going back to the beginning of where it starts. And you know, the famous expression about the president is “the buck stops here,” okay, well, we’re reversing this, the buck starts here, okay, it starts with Adam.
All right. Now, let’s go to another text, this is Hosea 6:7, this is probably a less well-known text and it also is discussed because of the way it reads, but what does – what might Hosea 6:7 be telling us about Adam?

**Robert Chisholm:** Well, some argue that this is an allusion to the Genesis story in Hosea. He does allude to Genesis in other places, he’s aware of the Jacob account. And so if you understand this as a reference to the historical Adam, it’s saying that Israel, like Adam, broke or violated a covenantal arrangement. Of course, then we get into the question of is there a creation covenant. I think reformed interpreters tend to read Hosea 6 this way because it kind of supports their view of a covenant, creation covenant. But there are textual issues here.

The NET Bible translates that second line, oh how they were unfaithful to me, but actually in Hebrew it’s sham vare, and so I have argued someplace – I don’t see it in the NET Bible, something that I published. I think maybe in the – I did the Hosea in the Bible Knowledge Commentary way back when and I’ve written some things on the prophet since. And I have argued that “Adam” in the first line is really just a place name, it’s a place name, it was a site where they were violating covenant, and you can read the text that way and see, then, the second line, “there;” in other words, “at this place, Adam,” and in the context there are other locations that are mentioned, Gilead, et cetera.

So I’m not so sure that this is an allusion to Adam, there are some contextual reasons to doubt that, but if you go with that more traditional reading then it is an allusion to that event and it seems to assume that there was some covenant that Adam broke, even though that kind of language is not used of the arrangement in Genesis 2 or 3.

**Darrell Bock:** So the Hebrew here quite literally would read something like “at Adam, they broke the covenant”?

**Robert Chisholm:** Well, you can – to really do that you probably would need to amend the text from “like Adam” to “in Adam.”

**Darrell Bock:** Okay.
Robert Chisholm: Yeah, but bate and coff can be easily confused and so that would not be a difficult change to make, but you do have the sham in the second line and NET Bible is trying to understand sham more in the sense of oh how, some kind of interjection, some kind of idiomatic use of it. I don’t think that’s the more natural way of reading it. Sham, “there,” seems to indicate we’re talking about a place that’s there and that would be Adam, and there was a place Adam that’s mentioned, a location. It is a geographical name elsewhere.

Darrell Bock: But if you were reading this as Adam then it would be an allusion back to Genesis 3.

Robert Chisholm: I think so, yeah, and it would imply that the arrangement between God and Adam was covenantal in nature and those of us who are on the dispensational side have sometimes opposed that idea, we haven’t always seen a creation type covenant.

Elliott Johnson: As a covenant.

Mark Bailey: Yeah, there are some dispensationalists who have argued for an Edenic covenant that’s different than the reformed theological covenant.

Robert Chisholm: Okay, so it would be – however you would describe that covenant, it would assume that there is a covenant there, yes.

Mark Bailey: Well, the there – if you took the first line as Adam, could “there they have dealt treacherously,” could “there” be a reference back to the Garden setting or is that – do you think that’s straining it, Bob?

Robert Chisholm: Well, I think it would be saying that in this context, Hosea is saying that the people of Israel, in his time, and the book is all about covenantal violation, they, like Adam, have broken a covenant, and the Hebrew text just says – it’s just “a” covenant, there’s no article there. So it’s simply saying that the people of Hosea’s time have violated God’s requirements and standards just like Adam did.
Darrell Bock: Now, there is in Second Temple Judaism this belief that there were covenant relationships that extended back before Abraham. There also are commands and relationships set up in the early chapters of Genesis, that’s for sure. They’re told to be fruitful and multiply, they’re told not to eat certain things and to eat certain things. So there are stipulations if you want to put it that way. So you may not have formal full covenant.

Robert Chisholm: B’rit is not used.

Darrell Bock: That’s right, but you have elements that certainly could suggest that God created man to enter into a certain kind of relationship with humanity at least in that loose sense.

Robert Chisholm: And some have seen that the covenant with Noah alludes back to an earlier covenant.

Elliott Johnson: Chapter 6.

Robert Chisholm: Yeah, because there is clearly covenantal language used when you get to Noah.

Darrell Bock: Okay, so we put a question mark by Hosea, not sure about it. But let me ask – we got our theologian here, by long distance, and I don’t want to exclude him, if he has anything he wants to say about genealogies or Hosea that he wants to add into the mix, if he has anything he wants to say about covenant.

Nathan Holsteen: This passage in Hosea does have a long history in the development of covenant theology in the post-reformation period. It’s a very hot spot in scripture precisely because if you read it as Dr. Chisholm mentioned, “like Adam,” then you’ve got one of the most explicit affirmations in scripture of a pre-fall covenant, which obviously is going to be critical to a covenant or federal theology. So it’s been well worn and deeply discussed, and I would completely agree that I’d put a question mark by it, because as a dispensationalist, I’d prefer to read it “at Adam” they transgressed the covenant.

Robert Chisholm: Location.
Nathan Holsteen: But that could be my bias speaking. So I’m going to be happy with a question mark.

Darrell Bock: I think it is fair to say, though, as we’ve commented earlier, that regardless of what you do with the technical handling of the concept of b’rit and covenant in this passage, there are elements that suggest that clearly God is entering into a relationship with human beings in this chapter. I mean you – if you talk about a foundation, you have to assume that for the rest of the story, and whether you label that covenant or not, there is clearly something going on here that lays the foundation for the rest of God’s relationship with that which he has created.

Robert Chisholm: Yes.

Darrell Bock: Okay. That brings us – I’m going to go next to Second Temple texts. And people who are listening to us, go, “Why in the world would you do that?” Because these are not biblical texts, these are texts written in the period mostly in the intertestamental period between the Old and New Testament but they’re Jewish texts and they show how the text is being read by Jews in the time of Jesus. And I think that these are important texts because they help us to see that what we’ve been talking about is not strictly Christian, it also is a Jewish way of reading the text and is one that is established in Jewish tradition.

So you’re seeing some of the people here flip pages because I’ve run these texts off for everybody.

Mark Bailey: It’s because they’re not in my Bible.

Darrell Bock: They’re not in your Bible, yeah. I don’t want to expand your devotions.

Mark Bailey: But they are important.

Darrell Bock: That’s right. The first text is from Tobit 8:6. I’m going to take all of them together. The first text is from Tobit 8:6 and it simply says this, “You made Adam and for him you made his wife, Eve, as helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said it is not good that man should be alone, let us make a helper for him like himself.” I don’t think you need a degree in theology to interpret what the verse is saying.
The second passage is from Sirach 49, and this is actually in a chapter where several figures are present, Old Testament figures, and I’m just going to pick up the end of the list. Sirach 49:15 reads, and then 16 is where Adam is mentioned, Sirach 49:15 reads, “Nor was anyone ever born like Joseph, even his bones were cared for.” We know what that’s alluding to, of course. And then, Sirac 49:16 reads, “Shem and Seth and Enosh were honored, but above every other created living being was Adam.” Okay, again, don’t think you need a PhD in theology to figure out what that is saying.

And then the last passage is a chapter in Second Esdras, also known as Fourth Ezra Chapter 7, this book is debated as to when it was written but many place its date about AD 100. Also, the chapter has two versions, one of which showed up in the Vulgate and the other didn’t, so it has two different versifications, which is important because some of what I’m going to read is going to appear only in one version of this chapter.

But one of the texts says this, this is Second Esdras 7:11, says, “For I made the world for their sake. When Adam transgressed my statutes what has been made was judged.” That’s in one verse what we talked about when we talked about Genesis 3.

And then much further on in the alternate version we have the following verses, if I can get there, and this is either Second Esdras 7:114 or verse 44, I’m going to start there, actually Verse 43, and then run through several versus where Adam is discussed.

He’s talking about the Day of Judgment. It says, “But the Day of Judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come.” The chapter itself is discussing the age – the Judgment Day and what’s going to happen at the end. “In which corruption is passed away, sinful indulgence has come to an end, unbelief has been cut off and righteousness has increased and truth has appeared. Therefore, no one will then be able to have mercy on someone who has been condemned in the judgment or to harm someone who is victorious.”

Now, here we go. “I answered and said, ‘This is my first and last comment, it would have been better if the earth had not produced Adam or else when it produced him, had restrained him from sinning, for what good is it to all that they live in sorrow now and expect punishment after death? Oh Adam, what have you done, for though it was you who sinned, The Fall was not yours alone but ours also, who are your descendants.” And then it goes on to discuss the implications of what has come on humanity as a result of what it is that Adam has done.

This might be the clearest Jewish text on what Christians have called The Fall, in Second Temple literature, and it’s interesting because it gets – you get this address of pain, if you will, to Adam about what it is that he has foisted onto the human race.
So those are the texts. The floor is open to all my Second Temple Jewish experts here to comment on them. I do think it’s revealing and that’s why I brought them into the discussion, because these are text contemporary to the time of the New Testament, for the most part, and so we’re seeing how the text is being read. Any?

Robert Chisholm: Well, it’s interesting, the transgression of the statutes sounds a little bit like the traditional interpretation of Hosea 6, and it’s interesting how this whole philosophical issue of why did God go ahead and create – it would have been better if he had just not created us at all. That emerges here, I find that interesting.

Darrell Bock: Yeah, yeah, you get – and sometimes you get issues that touch on the edge of theodicy in relationship to the presence of sin in some of these texts.

Robert Chisholm: But the assumption is, there was an historical Adam.

Darrell Bock: Adam, that’s the point, it’s clear, and again, it’s from many writers, it’s not – we’re not just picking one, it’s across a series of people who are writing.

Elliott Johnson: And Adam acted as a character in history and the consequence of his action is experienced by us, which are theological truths which the New Testament certainly makes more explicit, but are understood, apparently, at this early point in Jewish history.

Darrell Bock: Yeah, I think this is going to set up some of the things that we’re going to see in the New Testament pretty nicely in terms of why there isn’t more elaboration in terms of some of the things that are said.

Robert Chisholm: Again, present reality is rooted in past event. If the event did not happen, I don’t know what that does to your theological understanding of present reality.

Darrell Bock: Yeah, I mean, I’ll say it this way, you can get there if you make it a metaphor but it’s a lot more work, you know.

Robert Chisholm: And it’s clear, they didn’t understand it that way.
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**Darrell Bock:** That’s right, that’s right.

**Robert Chisholm:** You could argue they were naïve, misinformed, they’re not as sophisticated in their literary understanding of what’s going on in Genesis. You could argue all of that but the fact is, they read it in a straightforward way. And the etiological dimension of the text itself suggests that.

**Darrell Bock:** Yes.

**Mark Bailey:** Darrell, in light of the date of that, would that also, if I can say this, it buttresses with when Jesus is talking about origins and he refers to Adam and Eve, their creation as a couple, as the beginning, and then the function of marriage in response to the question of divorce.

**Darrell Bock:** Matthew 19 and Mark 10.

**Mark Bailey:** In Matthew 19 and Mark 10. Obviously he’s not hedging his bets that they’re going to point a finger and say, “well that’s mythological.”

**Darrell Bock:** That’s right.

**Mark Bailey:** It is rooted not only in history but it’s also rooted in what the Jewish people believed as evidenced by these kinds of writings.

**Darrell Bock:** That’s right, and like I say, I just think it’s interesting to have these texts on the table because I think they show something about the way in which the text was being read at the time. Nathan, you have anything to add to what we’re saying here?

**Nathan Holsteen:** Actually, I do. I think maybe we just heard a preview of an idea that shows up when Paul writes the letter to the Romans, Romans chapter 8, where he brings the concept of the whole creating groaning because it’s been subjected to futility. I’m wondering if there might be a steady stream of this kind of understanding that undergirds the passage we read in Second Esdras and perhaps even Paul’s own understanding of this. So I’m excited to get to Romans 8.