

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript
Episode 357
The Genealogical Adam and Eve, Part 2
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Episode Summary

Were Adam and Eve historical people? Is their historicity compatible with genetic science's findings about human origins? This episode continues our discussion of whether a historical Adam and Eve is compatible with genetic science. Our guest is once again Dr. S. Joshua Swamidass. Dr. Swamidass is an M.D. and Ph.D. research scientist. His recent book, published by InterVarsity Press, is entitled, *The Genealogical Adam and Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry*. Contrary to other Christian biologists, whose research in the last twenty years has led some apologetics ministries to deny the historicity of Adam and Eve, Dr. Swamidass argues that a historical Adam and Eve is quite possible and not in conflict with genetic science. In Part 2 of our conversation, we get into the specifics of Dr. Swamidass's hypothesis and how it could be sustained by the biblical text and be congruent with biblical theology.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 357: The Genealogical Adam and Eve, Part 2. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! Happy New Year!

MH: Yep. Happy New Year! We are finally out of 2020.

TS: Yes, 2021.

MH: Do you feel different yet? [laughs]

TS: Mm, no. Not much. [MH laughs] Did you have a good New Years? Did you stay up late? Do you do that? I can't remember if you stay up on New Years. No, you go to bed.

MH: Yeah, we stay up till midnight. I mean, we're up till midnight. Then it's like, "Turn the light off; we're done." So yeah, we didn't do anything special.

TS: You've got to make sure the world doesn't end or anything crazy at midnight.

MH: Right.

TS: I hear you.

MH: Well, I didn't run across any theories about that that required me to stay up a few minutes later. But I don't really need that to make it worthwhile.

TS: Yeah, I hear you. Alright, Mike, let's get into Part 2. You know, it's a fascinating conversation that you had last week, and we're continuing the conversation this week. And don't forget, we have a link on the episode page (NakedBiblePodcast.com), where you can get up to 40% off and free shipping until January 15th. We're also giving a few copies of this book away. Mike, what is the book? Do you want to plug the book here for us real quick?

MH: Yeah, it's *The Genealogical Adam and Eve*. It's by S. Joshua Swamidass. And he is associated with the Washington University in St. Louis. He's a scientist. But *The Genealogical Adam and Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry*. Josh's hypothesis—his thought experiment that he puts forth in the book—is that the genetic story (the evolutionary, all this stuff we read about the evolution of humans and hominids, descent from the great apes, and all that) is true of humans outside the Garden, but inside the Garden, we have Adam and Eve created specifically and specially by God, and that all of us are their descendants (the descendants of Adam and Eve). So we have two stories: one is a genetic, scientific story, the other is the story of Scripture. And Josh as a scientist argues that those two stories are both true and they are not incompatible.

TS: Alright, awesome. Well, don't forget, we're also giving away a few copies of this book, so use the hashtag #NakedBible out there on the internet, on the interwebs, wherever you live, the platform, Facebook, blogs, Twitter... I don't care. Just use the hashtag #NakedBible. I will search for you and I will find you. [MH laughs] If you've got a funny picture reading Mike's book or listening to the podcast, or you have a cute dog picture with some swag of ours [MH laughs] or something, I don't care. [MH laughs] Just... We want to expose people and grow this audience as much as we can here. And 2021 is going on our seventh year, which is absolutely crazy.

MH: And seven is a factor of 21. Is there any significance to that, Trey? Do you want to speculate?

TS: There might... Yeah, yeah, there is, actually. Exactly. [MH laughs] Exactly right.

MH: Right, exactly. [laughs]

TS: So having said that...

MH: There's something to that.

TS: ... I'm going to again give away a few copies of this book, so use the hashtag #NakedBible out there, if you will. And we appreciate everybody listening. So Mike, let's just get right into this great conversation and continue it right now.

5:00

MH: Well, we're glad to be back for Part 2 of our conversation with Josh Swamidass. If you have not listened to the first part, please make sure that you do. We are talking about his work on Adam and Eve. He's a scientist, specifically credentialed in the fields of biology and genetics. And his book, *The Genealogical Adam and Eve*, is basically arguing that, "Hey, there's a genetic story here that involves other people outside the line of Adam and Eve, outside the Garden. This is where evolution factors in. He embraces evolution. He doesn't like being called a theistic evolutionist or an evolutionary creationist. We talked about that last time. But he is simultaneously saying that the idea of a historical Adam and Eve, created brand-new with no parents as recently as 6,000 years ago, is viable. The science does not condemn that. It does not rule that out. So Josh, welcome back. And I'm going to ask you, as we start here, just to once again real briefly tell people who you are, what your credentials are, and then we'll get right into the content of the book.

JS: Yeah, so I'm a scientist and a physician. I have an M.D., PhD, and I'm at a secular institution, Washington University in St. Louis. I'm a scientist, a computational biologist. And as long as we're talking about qualifications, I should point out that the science I'm going to be talking about is not controversial, actually. It's well-established science that... My book is endorsed by Nathan Lents, who's an atheist biologist. And it's been positively reviewed by people like Ken Miller at the National Center for Science Education. And even Jerry Coyne has agreed that the science that I'm explaining here is valid. And of course, he's not going to agree with what Scripture is saying and the possibility of the miraculous.

MH: Sure.

JS: But the actual genetics and science I'm talking about is just good science. And I think it's also something that's been really overlooked and neglected. And it's really led to a lot of unnecessary conflict. And that's what's really exciting about this. Maybe with some better understanding of the science and of Scripture, we just don't have to resign ourselves to conflict. Maybe there really could be a better way forward.

MH: Mm hmm. Well I'm going to start in terms of the thesis... We did this as a teaser at the end of the first part. But I'm going to jump in here and read a little bit

from my response to your book. I was part of an American Academy of Religion panel discussing the book. And on pages 9-10, you say here and there, I've sort of lumped these things together... But here's the thesis of what the book is about. *The Genealogical Adam and Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry*. So Josh wrote:

Entirely consistent with the genetic and archeological evidence, it is possible that Adam was created out of dust and Eve out of his rib less than 10,000 years ago. Leaving the Garden, their offspring would have blended with those outside it, biologically identical neighbors from the surrounding area. In a few thousand years, they would become genealogical ancestors of everyone... Evolution would be progressing in the mystery outside the Garden... God created everyone outside the Garden through a providentially governed process of common descent, a process legitimately described by evolutionary science.

MH: So there's both sides of the thesis. And Josh, you can elaborate on that if you need to, just to sort of lay out the hypothesis as our starting point. And you might want to even clarify by getting into what you're claiming as opposed to what you're not claiming.

JS: Yes, it's a hypothesis, which means you can almost think about it as a speculation or a fiction, that we can wonder and then analyze from several points of view, right?

MH: Thought experiment, yeah.

JS: A thought experiment is how I put it, right? So what I'm not saying is that Scripture teaches all of that.

MH: That's good. [laughs] That's a good place to start. [laughs] You're not making the Bible speak science, in other words. There's no "Bible code" that this is all encrypted in there somewhere, and we need equidistant letter sequencing in a Bible code to figure this out.

JS: Yeah, so in that regard we're really not... I mean, I don't know how it's possible to accuse me of that negative form of concordism called eisegesis or scientific concordism. Because I'm not actually saying that, that science is in there. It's like, Scripture doesn't teach evolution. Right? [laughs]

MH: Right. It's still important to say that, though. Because there's been so much of that that a lot of people's minds will just sort of default to that idea. And that's not what you're doing.

JS: Yeah. And I would say it's symmetric. It goes the other way. I'm not saying that science demonstrates all of this to be true. I don't think you can derive the

historical reality of Adam and Eve from scientific evidence. That's not what science is trying to do either. Nor can you demonstrate scientifically that they were *de novo* created. I think I actually do demonstrate scientifically that we wouldn't be able to tell either way.

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MH: And that's actually helpful. [laughter] You know? The impasse there is actually helpful. Honestly, it is. Like in the AAR thing, I thought, "Here I am, there's four other PhDs in here." But I still felt like the urge that I had to make this point, that, "Look, he's not making a biblical argument. Instead he's offering a hypothesis, a thought experiment, that just says, 'General revelation (science) tells us one story and Scripture tells us a second story. And those two stories follow the similar trajectories. And they overlap. They entwine. They have a relationship with one another. But they are nonetheless distinct, and they're both coherent on their own terms.'" I mean, I still felt the urge to say that. So I'm affected by [laughter] this whole thing, too.

JS: Well, you're echoing what I've said. I don't know if I would call science general revelation. I think general revelation is a lot bigger than merely science.

MH: Right.

JS: But I think science is telling us one aspect of the reality of the physical world. You can call it natural history. Maybe that's one way to call it, right? And I think Scripture also is telling us another aspect of the same physical world, but it's from a different perspective. It's kind of like the blind men with the elephant, right? [laughs] They're taking different parts of the elephant and describing it. And one story doesn't actually negate the other. Both could actually be true at the same time. And what this book is trying to do is take a step back from being the blind men and kind of let the scales fall from our eyes and try to be in the king's court looking at the blind men touching the elephant and saying, "Oh! That's what an elephant is!" [laughs] "Maybe that's what it is." And I think I succeeded in that. I think I convinced a lot of scientists that there's no evidence against this and that it's consistent with what they know from evolution. And their biggest objection is, "But the evidence doesn't show us it's true." And I'd say, "But I'm not trying to do that." And then you go to the theologians or the exegetes. And I think most exegetes are becoming convinced that there's space for this. Maybe Scripture doesn't teach it, but it's not in conflict with the teaching of Scripture. And the biggest objections are on the level of, "Well, you don't have any strong evidence for evolution X, Y, or Z there." But then why would I expect that? [laughs] That's not what I'm trying to do. So in a lot of ways, I think it's becoming... I mean, it's kind of meeting that very critically important but fairly focused standard of... You know, it's just consistent with Scripture. And it's consistent with science. And of course, it raises theological questions. And that's fun. And we can talk about that later. But that's actually maybe what the big payoff is, is to be able to have all this fun talking about theology. But the conflict can be really gone here.

MH: Yeah, you know, one of the problems is that we... I run into this a lot. I know this isn't going to be a surprise, either, to you or to people in the audience. But usually it's in other areas—the kind of turf that I cover in *Unseen Realm* and this or that article or whatever it is. But there's this assumption that... You have people who will read a passage and they'll say, "Well, if I take this passage at face value, this is what it means." And they don't really realize there are certain assumptions to that statement. In other words, you're assuming that your face-value reading as a 21st century person would be the same as the face-value reading of somebody living in the 1st century, or the middle of the first millennium B.C. I mean, that's a huge assumptive leap. Really, if you really think about it...

JS: And I'm talking long-term.

MH: [laughs] Right.

JS: Because how often is that even true? [laughs]

MH: Right. How often can that be true of anything? I mean, fundamentally, you have any person living at a different time period, they're... We just had John Hilber on, who wrote a book on ancient Near Eastern cosmology and the whole issue with interpretation. And basically everyone's "face value" reading is going to be informed by their cognitive environment. Okay? And everybody's cognitive environment is different, especially when you have these huge chronological gaps and these cultural gaps between individual people. And so we have to realize that. We have to own that when it comes to reading Genesis. This is why John Walton, who can write a whole book and make a really good argument that can make sense out of the notion that, "Hey, if you read Genesis, it's very possible because of the way it's ordered, because of the terminology that's used, that Genesis could be read by an ancient person as God building a temple. And he calls it earth." It's temple building. There's a reason why the narrative is what it is, that would totally be missed by—it would escape—somebody from a 21st century audience who's reading Genesis specifically in their cognitive environment. They're wondering about, "Oh, what about evolution? What about this? What about that?" They have a whole different set of questions.

JS: I think you're hitting on a really key example that I often give to "the earth." Right?

MH: Mm hmm.

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JS: They didn't mean the planet when they wrote that, did they? I mean, they didn't have a concept of the planet.

MH: No, they didn't. And again, I did my own thought experiment a few years ago about the Flood. Because I always get the question, "Do you believe the Flood

was local or regional or the entire earth?” Okay? And the answer is, “Well, yeah.” [laughter] You know? Because if you take Genesis 9... This isn’t that difficult to do. And the blog post is pretty long, but basically I was arguing, “Here’s how you would argue for a local, regional view of the Flood from Scripture.” But the way that... I hate to even use a word like cheat, because it’s not cheating. It’s just what the text says. You have in Genesis 9:19 the discussion of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Okay? Three sons of Noah. It says, “These three were the sons of Noah. And from these (these three guys) the people of the whole earth were dispersed.” And now we know how a Scripture writer would define “whole earth” as the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth because we have the next chapter (Genesis 10) that lists out “the whole earth” that descended from Shem, Ham, and Japheth. We’ve got (if you’re reading the Masoretic Text) 70 nations there. And North America’s not in there. [JS laughs] South America’s not in there. Australia’s not in there. I mean...

JS: India isn’t in there.

MH: Right! “The whole earth,” which is a phrase that you’ll find in the Flood narrative, is restrictively defined by the biblical text. It has nothing to do with a war between ICR (the Institute for Creation Research), geology guys, and Old Earth geology guys. It has nothing to do with that. So the question is, “Whose face-value reading is the right one now?”

JS: So this is a great example of where I actually saw that conflict between, I want to say, looking at a literal reading of Genesis and Young Earth creationism. They were very committed to seeing that as the planet earth, even though I can’t even just imagine how cognitively 3,000 years ago anyone even could have written down that it was the planet earth when they didn’t even know it existed.

MH: Right. It’s long after most Young Earth creationists would assign the authorship of the Torah. Okay? It’s long after that that you get an ancient notion that world is a globe and we’ve got all these other places. That’s really not part of the biblical worldview. And again, my position to this audience (obviously it’s my audience) is well-known. I don’t think it matters at all. Because if God wanted to provide that information, he’s perfectly capable of giving us that information, picking writers that knew that stuff, or dispensing it to them. We just don’t have it. It’s just not there. And so that should tell us (it *should* tell us) that that really isn’t what God was concerned to communicate. There’s something else going on.

JS: This is something like the key concept between one of the biblical arguments I do make in the book, that genealogical ancestry matters more than genetic, right?

MH: Yeah. Oh yeah. It’s right in concert with that. They are not thinking genetics. I get questions about genetics, not only with Adam and Eve, but the Nephilim and all this stuff. Look, no Scripture writer has any understanding—an inkling—of

genetics or what that means. They *are* concerned with genealogy. It's very obvious, because you get these long, boring genealogies all over the place in the Bible. I mean, this is where they're tracking. And they're doing it for various reasons. And this is what's important to them. And so all you're saying in the book (to loop back to the book) is that this is what we ought to be focused on. [laughs]

JS: So why is it that everyone got focused on genetics instead?

MH: You're asking me? I think that part of the problem is... It's sort of a perfect storm. It begins with the discovery of other peoples. And this is pre-Darwin. And of course, that forces the question, like, "Hey, where'd they come from? Where did these other people...?"

JS: By other people, you're meaning, just for the listeners, you're talking about 1492, Columbus sails the ocean blue. And sees there's people on the other side of the...

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MH: Yeah, the age of discovery, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th centuries. It's like, "We can't take a trip without finding a new population somewhere!" Like, "What do we do with all these people and these places that the Bible doesn't mention?" And so it created a tension. And again, books like Livingston's *Adam's Ancestors* (which I have referenced before on the podcast) have a whole intellectual history of this, but basically it forced people to make... They wouldn't have to frame the decision this way, but for many it was, that, "We either better find these people in the Bible somewhere... We've got to get them in there somewhere, or we have to give up Scripture." You know? And so this is where you get all these weird... I'll be generous and call them "exegetical attempts" to come up with other population groups in the Bible. "Oh, we've now de-encrypted it. South America's really over here. And Ophir is in the Philippines now!" And all this weird stuff. But there was a good motivation behind it in terms of, "We need to look at the Bible this way now or else we have to just jettison it. We can't have the biblical view of human origins." Well, that gets married to... In the late 1800s, you have the era of higher criticism. You go into the 1900s, the early 20th century/late 19th century, and you've got [laughs]... Again, the elephant in the room here is anti-Semitism. There were a lot of people who had other reasons to want to dump the Jewish view of origins in favor of, like, the Indic origins of this. And they're just wonderful books. There's a great book called *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Civilization*. It's an, I don't know, it's...

JS: So you're saying that basically there's a perfect storm of a whole bunch of...

MH: There's a perfect storm. You've got the discovery of Indo-European material, the discovery that Sanskrit is an Indo-European language, you've got Indic material. That's where we get this Indo-European thing going on here. There's a relationship here. "And we've inherited that as Europeans, so ah, now we've got

a new origins story that's superior to this Jewish nonsense." So that gets married to the age of discovery, which gets married to Darwin. Darwin comes along in the mid-19th century. So you have all of these things sort of just... It's the perfect storm.

JS: It still puzzles me how genetics ends up becoming the dominant frame by which...

MH: Because I think the scientific community now uses genetics as the death-blow argument for evolution and against...

JS: That's true. Well, let's slow down, though, because we probably need to explain what the difference between genetics and genealogy is, right?

MH: Yeah. This is about... We're trying to discuss your book here, so let's go back to that. [laughter]

JS: Well, I don't want the audience to get lost. This is a fun conversation.

MH: Right. But alright, explain the difference... Because you're arguing there's a fundamentally important difference between genetic and genealogical ancestry in your thesis. This is part of the reason why both these stories can be true. So what's the difference?

JS: Yeah, and I'd say that most people, even, they heard that last discourse and they're probably really confused. Because they're thinking, "Wait a minute, I thought they were the same thing." [laughs] "That genetics tells you ancestry. And genealogical ancestry, isn't that just the same thing?" But it turns out that they're very different. Genealogical ancestry is the ancestry in an ordinary sense of the term, by just talking about the reproduction of individuals over time. So my parents are my genealogical ancestors. My grandparents and my great-grandparents and my great-great-grandparents are all my genealogical ancestors.

MH: Mm hmm.

JS: It's using the language of reproduction—parents and offspring. And that has a correspondence with genetics on some level, but it really starts to fall apart pretty quickly, and that's the part where it gets surprising. So one way to think about that is if you think about your genealogical ancestors going back in time. We all have a mother and a father. They're our genetic ancestors and our genealogical ancestors. But they're only 50% our genetic ancestors each, right? Because we each get half of our DNA from each one of them. Our grandparents (all four of them) are our genealogical ancestors. But they are our genetic ancestors, but only 25%. You go back another generation, it's 1/8th, 1/16th, 1/32nd, 1/64th. And so that way genetic ancestry ends up very quickly diluting.

And there's only so many pieces in your genome, and it's determined by recombination. And so in just, like, ten generations, so we're about 300 years or so, or less than 300 years, the majority of your genealogical ancestors don't give you any DNA. And that's really surprising, right?

MH: Yeah, that was really... Again, I'm interested in genetics, but my knowledge of it is so primitive that I needed that sketched out in your book.

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JS: Well, it turns out a lot of biologists have missed this, too. So it's well-established in population genetics, but a lot of biologists have told me, "Oh, I didn't even know that to be true!" [laughs] I mean, it's a little...

MH: It's a little frightening.

JS: Yeah. It's kind of like... And this is one of those ways where I would say that, you know, this is what I love about science, actually, is that it's just deeply not intuitive. You have to carefully think about things. And it actually reforms your intuition, right? Just go back a few hundred years, like, the majority of your ancestors don't give you any DNA. Maybe around 40% or so. But if you go back, maybe 1,000 years ago, 2,000 years ago, 3,000 years, we're talking about 99.99% of your ancestors don't give you any DNA! [Laughs] The few that do give you DNA are like lottery winners. So it's not that 100% of them give you no DNA, it's just that the vast majority don't.

MH: So you can be genealogically related to *all* these people, but not all these people contributed anything to your genome.

JS: Yeah, I'd say as a rule, none of them gave you anything. Like, if you want to round off to one, none of them gave you anything. Of course, some of them did, because eventually you basically... They're like lottery winners, that...

MH: Yeah, somebody somewhere in... "I've done Ancestry.com, and I'm looking at a page now that I've got 500 ancestors here going back 300 years! And what you're telling me is that I might as well just put my paper printout on the wall and throw a dart at it, and [laughs] I'd get lucky that one of them that I actually hit..."

JS: Yeah, I mean, honestly does, Ancestry.com stuff, I mean... In a lot of cases, it's basically a horoscope. [laughter]

MH: Right! I'm glad you said that instead of me, because I've read some... I haven't done the Ancestry thing [laughs], but I have read what you just said. But I'm not the authority on it. [laughs]

JS: This is the beautiful thing. It means that when we kind of start talking about who our ancestors are, just very quickly, we all have the same ancestors. So you know, we all descend from the people who made the pyramids of Giza. We all descend from the people who tamed the first horses on the steps near the

Ukraine. [laughs] We all descend from people all over the world, actually, it turns out. The human race is one race. We're just much more united than meets the eye, you know? [laughs]

MH: So are those, being related to the... See, I like the idea of being related to a pyramid builder, so let's use that. [laughter] So the layman's question is, "Did I get genetic material from that person, or is this a genealogical relationship, or both, or neither? Or is it all a myth? [laughs] Don't crash my myth here."

JS: Well, "Do you get genetic material from them?" it probably depends on... The answer is *maybe* you did. [laughter]

MH: They might be one of the lottery winners.

JS: Yeah, maybe, yeah. And that might be dependent on particularly where your family of origin is from and things like that. And I don't even think we have that really well sorted out yet. But if we're talking about genealogical, you know, most of us didn't get any DNA from those people, but we still descend from them. And we're still related to them. I mean, there really was a physical chain of descent. It's not like it's less real.

MH: If we all go back to Adam and Eve, we have to genealogically, in some way, descend from them. All of us descend from Adam and Eve, is what you're saying. That's why you're saying that genealogically, yeah, I would be in some inconceivable way (because nobody has this mapped out) genealogically related to the guy who built the pyramid, or something like that.

JS: And this is actually where I think there's a commonality... I think there's an important lesson that I learned from work that made the same point as yours about the Nephilim interbreeding with humans. I mean, I know the position you take on it. I recently read *Unseen Realm*, which is a great book, by the way. Those angels are giving input into Adam and Eve's lineage. It seems like the teaching of Scripture is that Adam and Eve's lineage ends up not being pure, right?

MH: Yeah, I mean, that's again... To steal the term I used earlier and sort of poked fun at, that's the "face-value reading" of that. [laughter]

JS: Yeah! And so when I read that, it's not a statement about Adam and Eve's lineage's purity. It's actually a statement of their impurity. And how somehow God still works through it. So yeah, Adam and Eve are our first parents. But that doesn't mean that there weren't other people that gave input into that lineage. And that's why I couldn't see the conflict, as I looked at science. And if it's genealogical ancestry that matters, then it just turns out that genealogical ancestry, when you get that far into the past, is essentially invisible. So Adam and Eve would just basically be in a blind spot. It wouldn't mean that what we're learning in genetic science is wrong; it's just more like a streetlight, or maybe like

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a telescope. It's just, that comes with major peripheral vision and a limited view. So it tells us things about immediate relationships and maybe things in past, but there's just so much that we just don't know.

MH: Is this what you mean by "genetic ghosts"? Because you use that term...

JS: Yeah. So if someone's an ancestor of yours and they don't give you any DNA, you can't ever see them in DNA. DNA evidence will never reveal them, so therefore they're ghosted and they're ghosting you, right? [laughs] So you call them a genetic ghost. That's one way how the term genetic ghost is used in literature. There's other ways, but that's the way I'm meaning it here. And that's just a stunning reality. Because if the majority of our ancestors are genetic ghosts, that means that Adam and Eve, if they're real, we just have no way of knowing what their genome was. All we'd really know is that they were genetically compatible with us.

MH: Mm hmm.

JS: And that's actually what ends up being the really key point that enables us to say that there's no evidence for or against *de novo* creation—that we just can't tell that. God can tell us through Scripture, of course, but science can't say that he didn't create them from scratch. And it raises some interesting theological questions, right? So one idea I put forward is that maybe God (and I think you would resonate with this, I imagine, too, Mike)... that maybe God *intended* for them to interbreed with everyone outside. And part of their purpose was to expand the Garden across the earth. And the Fall is actually them turning from that purpose and getting kicked out of the Garden instead of actually expanding it.

MH: Yeah, I mean, I do think that's the point of the creation mandate. You don't need people outside of the Garden to hold that point. In other words, if someone out there is rejecting the idea of people outside the Garden, that doesn't impinge upon how we understand the dominion mandate. Because like in *Unseen Realm*, (since you've read the book I don't have to retrace all the steps here)... But you know, God saying that... First of all, all the earth is not Eden. Eden is a little slice of the earth. And that's a superior... It's as close to perfect as we can possibly get on this planet, and everything outside of Eden is something a little bit different. But it's all good. It's all *very* good. God is satisfied with the state of creation as it's made. And that doesn't mean that there's nothing in creation that could possibly kill you now. Well, of course there is. You could fall off a cliff, a rock could fall on you... There are lots of things that could happen. So in that sense, we don't have perfection. And the biblical writer doesn't even use the word for perfect in Genesis 1:31. He uses a different word. But God is satisfied with it. And then we have the mandate given to Adam and Eve. "Essentially go out..." And this was God's intent. They're going to have to go out and make

everywhere else in the world like this place—spread the goodness of God, the good rule of God, all this sort of stuff. That’s a theological discussion.

JS: And you’re right. That doesn’t depend on people outside. But I think there were people outside.

MH: Yeah, if you *have* people outside... Yeah, it doesn’t cancel it either.

JS: Yeah.

MH: So if you had people outside, it doesn’t get in the way of it. The people outside become... And it kind of works both ways, especially after the Fall. In other words, in hindsight, there’s a Fall and so on and so forth. So there’s this... Because of the Fall and the effect it has, then when Adam and Eve go out, if there is this other population, there’s a deleterious effect factor there. In other words, they’re going to interbreed with other people, and that’s not going to make them better, it’s going to make things worse because there’s entropy for the whole thing now.

JS: Yeah.

MH: Whereas before, if this would’ve been happening (again, it’s a nonscriptural hypothesis)... But before if they’re having children, without a Fall, then you have to look at that differently. You have to talk about that circumstance differently. But all we have scripturally is, for sure, there’s this Fall, and then we have Adam and Eve go out. And that’s where it gets into Genesis 4, which is right after the Fall. And for those of us, the people in this audience... I’ve talked a little bit about Genesis 4 before. But this is about the best you can do, for people outside the [Garden]. Everybody knows the Cain and Abel story. And so after Cain commits his crime of murdering his brother, he gets confronted by God. And I’ll just read verse 13-17.

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. ¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. ¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

35:00

¹⁷ Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.

MH: Now there... As I put in my AAR response (the longer one, anyway, that may or may not go to print), this is a passage that just bristles with problems. I mean, there are ambiguities here. You could read it two ways. So after hearing God's judgment, Cain said, "Hey, this is just too much for me. Behold you have driven me *today* away from the ground and from your face I shall be hidden." So you could take the word "today" (the Hebrew is *ha yom*) and assume a tight chronology—that I'm getting driven out *today*, and then basically right on top of today (this really tight chronology), Cain goes and settles in the land of Nod. And he meets a woman and he marries her and he builds a city. So the assumption is, he runs into people who are already there. And so there must have been people outside the Garden for Cain to marry and to get help with building his city. Because you don't build a city all by yourself.

The other side would turn it around and say, "Well, we don't have to assume a tight chronology. We're not given a chronology. We can say that *ha yom* (today) should be *contrasted*, not read in concert with the verbs that follow, but *contrasted* with the verbs "shall be" a fugitive, and "will kill" Cain. That there's distance. There's chronological distance put between Cain's crime and his punishment, and even most importantly, his expulsion. We're just not told how much time is in between these things. We're also not told if Adam and Eve are having other children. We know in Genesis 5 that they do, but we're also not told that this is the first time they have other kids. I mean, there's all sorts of these assumptions.

And so people long before Josh Swamidass have looked at Genesis 4 and a few of the statements in Genesis 5 and wondered, "Hmm. I wonder if there could be other people outside the Garden, and if Adam and Eve were just sort of created anew or selected out of an existing body of humanity in parallel with Israel, for instance." Scholars have noted a lot (and I've brought up Seth Postell's book on this podcast before, *Adam as Israel*) that there are these parallels between Adam and Israel. As Israel was an elect people out of the rest of humanity, maybe Adam and Eve were a couple out of the rest of... All of these questions are legitimate. They're all part of biblical studies. Genesis 4 has certain ambiguities that allow these questions not only to be asked, but that also allow people to hold these positions. But they have to be honest. Both sides have to be honest and say, "Look, my argument here—my position here—is based upon what *might* be, not really what *is*. But Scripture could sustain either side—either one of these."

And so that was the view that I took going into your book. It's very clear, because you state it right up front, that your hypothesis assumes and needs people outside the Garden. So it's like, "Okay. There's nothing that destroys that in Scripture. So that's a trajectory that might be the case. So I wonder what this guy says," as I read the book. So again, that was my position going into the discussion about this. And then when I saw you focusing—really drawing this distinction, which I had never really thought about it—the difference between

genetic and genealogical ancestry, that yes, they're related, but there's a significant difference between these two things. It's like, "Well, I hate to say it, but that could make good sense." [laughter] In other words, I could see this being workable. "This could work. This is workable. It's sustainable. It doesn't violate anything..."

We could talk about other passages, like Romans 5 is always a big one. But again, as I looked at this I thought, "This is a workable model. This is certainly a possibility. It belongs on the table for discussion." But I take it not everybody has taken that view. [laughs]

JS: Well, I think most people... Even BioLogos has come around to agree that it needs to be on the table. I just think they're struggling with the fact that they really screwed up the science here and are struggling with being transparent in correcting that, I think primarily...

MH: And they made public statements. And they're invested in this other position. And so it's a little awkward that they have to walk that back.

40:00

JS: Yeah, I think it is. And I think they're also trying to figure out how to... Well, let's take them off of it. I think that most people... Reasons to Believe I think are Old Earth creationists. They don't affirm evolution. But they actually hosted a big workshop with me and other scholars at the beginning of this year to explore this model alongside theirs.

MH: How did that go? I mean, because I've had Hugh Ross on the podcast a couple of times. And I met Hugh (believe it or not) at a conference where the topic was God, Man, and ET. This was years ago when I was still a grad student. And I got to know him a little bit. I really like him. But I'm not a concordist. But I've had him on the podcast twice since because I value the work that he does and that Reasons to Believe does. And obviously they're going to have a different take on it. So how did that conversation go? Because we're going to have people here in the audience that really enjoy Hugh, and for good reason, and value what he does. So what was that like?

JS: Yeah, so I think... It was a beautiful conversation. It was virtue in the wastelands. [laughs] It's exactly what it should be. [laughter] And it wasn't dependent on agreement. I think the reality is that... Where there isn't clear direction from science and there isn't clear direction from Scripture, there's going to be disagreement in the Church. And so the question is, how do we come to beautiful community—the beloved community—even when there's disagreement?

MH: Can you describe what their position is? I know you might not want to speak for them, but... They're clearly public about this, so I think it's worth asking.

JS: Yeah, so I'm proposing this idea of a very recent Adam and Eve. They take a different view of the image of God than I think I completely get. And I disagree with them on some of the scientific stuff. But the simple way to put it is that they would say that Adam and Eve would not just be at the headwaters of civilization, but they would have to be at the headwaters of homo sapiens. And they've really drawn a connection between their understanding of "human" in Scripture and homo sapiens. I think that's...

MH: So they've essentially stapled together that scientific term with the scriptural definition of "human." Is that fair to say?

JS: Yeah, and I think that that's just very hard to defend. But by the same token in which I've asked people to enter into a thought experiment, I've entered into *their* thought experiment. Right? And thoughts where how to make *that* work. So the way how they have it... I think there has been a stronger genetic challenge. But we actually found some ways to make sense of it, especially if Adam and Eve were *de novo* created in that context, maybe around 200,000 years ago. And God makes Eve with multiple genomes in each of her eggs, then actually maybe there wouldn't be any scientific evidence against that. And one of the things that came out of the dialogue there is, they're seeing (I think) the value of finding a model that can make space for their view without necessarily having negative evidence against other people's views. Just showing that there's space for it can be a legitimate activity. And I think they're kind of going down that path. A.J. [Anjeanette] Roberts, Fazale Rana, and a few others co-wrote a book that has either just come out or is going to be coming out. It's about questions about theistic evolution. I forget the exact title of it [*Thinking About Evolution: 25 Questions Christians Want Answered*]. And the very last chapter of it, they actually really discuss a lot of the dialogue they had with me about the genealogical Adam and Eve. And they even say that they think it's a scripturally faithful position. And they think it's important, even though they don't think it's theirs.

MH: Well, that's significant for them to say. Because it's honest. And again, it allows them to hold their own distinctive position, but yet it doesn't force them to be dishonest about what you're doing. [laughs]

JS: Yeah, and it creates space for me to help them and for them to help me. And so like I said, it's the beloved community. I mean, I'm going to be having Fuzz (Fuzale) on my podcast at Peaceful Science in January and we'll be talking about this and kind of where things stand now. And you know, what I'd say is that the way how they put forward the model, I can't yet say is consistent with the evidence. However, I can say that I think with small tweaks and modifications, I think they can become consistent with the evidence.

MH: Right. You can conceive of a path to get there.

JS: Yeah, and you know, I think the evidence against them has just been wildly overstated, to be honest. And in a way, what they're adopting is a modified version of the genealogical Adam and Eve. They might not like that terminology, but all I mean by that is that it's realizing that there was stuff going on outside the Garden that's affecting the evidence a great deal. So for example, they acknowledge that it really seems like there was interbreeding between human homo sapiens and nonhuman (in their understanding) Neanderthals. And so the DNA...

45:00

MH: Yeah, I remember they refer to the Neanderthal not as (pardon my ignorance of the terminology here)... They didn't want to acknowledge that that was human or a subspecies of human. But they sort of referred to it as an animal—something nonhuman.

JS: Yeah, I don't think that's the best way to think about it. But what I'll give them credit for is that they were really responding to and engaging the evidence. Right? And I want to make space for that. You know? And I'm a scientist. I affirm evolution. They don't. But that's not what my goal is here. It's not my goal to convince them they're wrong and to convince them to agree with me. I want to serve them. And I've found that they have just shown me real love and acceptance, even though I affirm evolution. So I think I would call them peacemakers. And I think, "Blessed are the peacemakers. They're going to inherit the earth."

MH: Yeah. I think that's a good way to put it. I've never seen anything come out of Reasons to Believe that I would put in the "not a peacemaker" bucket. I think they have a good reputation there.

JS: Yeah, and I also think that kind of points to what the end and the aim of this is. A lot of people ask what I personally believe. I don't actually reveal it, really anywhere, on where it comes to Adam and Eve. I'd rather be talking about the second Adam, Jesus. Right? But what I'm really trying to do here is serve the Church. And that means serving people that I agree with but also people in the Church that I don't agree with. And I just think that we as a Church need to find a better way to engage with science that isn't oppositional and that's more attractive, it's more coherent with the evidence, and it displays the beloved community. So what I like about Reasons to Believe, as we've engaged more and more in public, too, is that we're having fun relating as family, as friends, as colleagues, as partners, even though we disagree on important issues.

MH: Mm hmm. So this whole Reasons to Believe tag here takes us into defining human (since they have married that to homo sapiens). Now you have a whole chapter in your book about, boy, nobody can really, just in the scientific community, decide here. There is no consensus, and so on and so forth. So...

JS: That was surprising to you, right?

MH: Well, it was. That was really stunning to me. I just figured that they had landed somewhere. [laughter] You know? It's kind of like the bull's-eye. Most of them were in this big bull's-eye. "Okay, you might have somebody out here that missed the bull's-eye on the jump."

JS: Well, that's where I think honestly there's been a lot of disservice done. Because some of it's probably (actually a lot of it) well-meaning. I think Reasons to Believe really does make that connection. And then BioLogos has been in dialogue with them. They really made that strong connection too, and they weren't really considering or engaging any idea that took a different view of what human is. [laughs] And that for me, it's kind of like [sigh], it's like, it's kind of in the presence of a grand question (something beautiful and sublime) just kind of adopting a cartoon answer. [laughs]

MH: Like for me, I know you cite examples of highbrowed scientific literature on the fact that, "Hey, we don't know what a human is." So you direct your readers to that literature, which I didn't spend any time going out and finding and reading, because I'm not going to understand any of it anyway. [laughs] But as somebody who's a biblical scholar, to me just, it was very obvious that that variability provides space for this whole discussion. That was just a no-brainer.

JS: Yeah, Fuzz said that that was his favorite chapter in the whole book, the one on humans and science. [laughs] And he's been working in this space a lot longer than I. So I took that as very high praise.

MH: Right. Well, that makes me surprised that he's not... Well, maybe because again, you have this problem of investment in a position. But if he said that, it's like, "Well, why don't you just jump in and swim around awhile?" You know, it's...

JS: Well, here's the thing. I think this has at times happened at Reasons to Believe, and it's certainly happened at BioLogos, and certainly happens with Young Earth creationists and I.D., is that it becomes caught up in thinking that by disproving someone else's point of view, you can somehow lend support to your own. [laughs]

MH: Right. Yeah, well, that happens in every discipline.

JS: And I think I'm really, really pressing back on that and saying, "Actually both/and is possible. So you have to do more than show that someone else is false. And maybe it's okay not to have positive evidence either. Maybe it's okay just to show that there's space—that there's room for diversity here. Maybe that's enough.

MH: Something that isn't completely nailed down, that's left to think about. Yeah. It's amazing to me how... Because again, I read books on the history of science

where that space is, like, everything. Without that space, there's no inquiry, there's no pushback. And it's, like, now you look at some of this that goes on in the scientific community, that they don't want that space. To me, that seems awfully incongruent. Like, I'm almost tempted to say, "Don't you realize how your predecessors have worked?"

JS: It is. Well, this is actually... I completely agree with you! I mean, now you're getting me riled up, man. [laughter] Because I think the issue...

MH: Well, if I can see that... I have very few scientific brain cells, but if I can see that, it astonishes me how people in the scientific community don't see it or don't want to see it.

JS: Yeah, *that's* the challenge. Because I think what has really concerned me about the conversation (and it's not just about genetic ancestry versus genealogic), I think you see really clearly in the human distinction, but also even in terms like "sole progenitor" and others that are clearly theological concepts when we're talking about them in theology, that scientists don't actually have the right to come in and be normative and demand that we all follow their definition. And I say that as a scientist. As a scientist, I don't have a right to tell theologians and exegetes what this word means, and then just insert whatever...

MH: And so if we're... Basically your book is saying, "Look, let's focus on what Scripture focuses on: genealogy. And if we're doing that, then we need to adopt the scriptural, theological definition of human and then work from there."

JS: Exactly.

MH: Like in Romans 5... We might as well get into Romans 5. And again, even if you're a listener to this podcast, I did a long series on Romans 5 on my blog years ago. I do not take the normative view... I shouldn't say normative. I do not take the majority view of Romans 5:12, that presumes that Romans 5:12 teaches the transference of *guilt*. I don't see guilt in the passage. What I do see is *death*. That's actually what's in the text. So I don't have a view of original sin that presumes that all humans are born *guilty* before God. They are born unable to not sin. So there's a significant difference there, even though it may not sound like it. But in view of that, one of the things that came up... I think it was at the ETS session about your book, which I listened in on, and the Romans 5 issue comes up. And you talk about this in your book as well, that, "What about original sin? What about Adam? And the effect of everybody else?" And so on and so forth. Well, if you're going to say... "Let's focus on genealogy. Let's focus on the theological definition of human." When you get to Romans 5 it's, "Let's read Romans 5 the way Paul wrote it. He's talking about Adam and Adam's descendants. Not people before Adam or that aren't in Adam's lineage."

JS: That's exactly right.

MH: It's a simple hermeneutical decision. But yet we have all this pushback, not just with your book, but just in the whole general discussion. Because if you're even entertaining this space about, "Hmm, I wonder if I should read Genesis 4 this way," somebody invariably is going to bring up Romans 5 and try to kill the discussion based upon "death passed to all men." Well, again, who are we talking about? You have to choose how you're going to read Romans 5. Is it about Adam and his lineage or is it about somebody who was before Adam or...

JS: This gets to actually what is... How does Scripture define human? First of all, Genesis doesn't actually have the word human in it. I mean, I think we kind of have to remember that when we say "human" in English, there's an immense amount of baggage attached to that language, in the same way when we say the word "earth" we think the planet Earth as one of the potential definitions that could have.

MH: Yeah, there's a semantic range to all these things.

JS: Semantic range. And to say "earth" to mean the planet Earth is one valid definition, but it also can mean just dirt. Earth can mean just dirt.

MH: Or a piece of the planet Earth.

JS: Yeah, there's a range of definitions. So it's the same thing with the word "human." And there's a large number of definitions that we come to from our modern point of view that are not what they were talking about. And some of them are actually in theology, too. So I think the systematic theologians have kind of worked out what they are thinking about in terms of what it means to be human, by substantive qualities and such. But that's not necessarily what Scripture's talking about. Scripture's not really talking about systematic theology, it's biblical theology. Right? [laughs]

MH: Yeah, it would be nice if we could talk about biblical theology. [laughter] Now this is my hobby horse. Like, could we at least do theology and root it to the text somewhere? [JS laughs] I know there's value in systematizing things into categories. There's a lot of value in that. But biblical theologians should be giving you the raw material as a systematician to do that work. And that's often what doesn't happen. The systematic occurs before the exegesis.

55:00

JS: This is actually real interesting. I was hanging out with some Catholics yesterday. I was invited to speak to the faculty of a Catholic university, and I had a response from a Catholic theologian and from a scientist, but the scientist was really more of a Catholic philosopher. [laughs] They had the same divide there. And I think what's going on is the theologians and the philosophers are talking about these things in very different ways. Right?

MH: Yeah, it's hard to avoid that. It's just...

JS: And I think it's actually okay as long as they're willing to say to the other person, "There's legitimacy to your definition. You're using the same utterance—the same sequence of letters—to mean something different than we are." Right?

MH: Well, it's a two-step process. For everybody in the room to say, "Look. If you define this term this way, I understand where that takes you." That's step one. Step two is to say, "Your trajectory is as valid as mine." [laughs] Okay? [JS laughs] That's the bigger leap, recognizing that we do have a semantic problem or a semantic issue here. And depending on where you land, you're going to wind up in different places. But that's okay because none of us are omniscient. Let's just own that, you know?

JS: You're right. But I think it's actually an issue of power, in a way. I think we all have to be on guard against linguistic imperialism or linguistic colonialism. [laughs]

MH: No... Yeah, well, that's kind of what I'm getting at. We have to be okay with both of those things—both of those steps. There's a semantic issue here, and my *choice* is not self-evidently superior to your choice.

JS: So let me go over the definition that I'm really trying to resurrect, and explain why it was rejected in the first place and why that doesn't matter, actually. It's a recovery. So the definition I'm using is to say the way how really Scripture is defining "human," the people to whom Scripture is addressed, the story of whom it's telling, is Adam and Eve and their descendants. That's actually almost a non-controversial statement. [laughter] And another way to put it is that Scripture is bound to Adam and Eve and their descendants. Maybe God made people on another planet or another universe, but Scripture isn't telling us *their* story. Of course we know that God created them, too, and he's engaging them somehow, but it's *not* the story that Scripture is telling. Do you follow me there?

MH: Yeah, if you find humans somewhere else, well, okay, God made them, too. But they are not what the biblical story is about.

JS: And you could almost say that that is the fundamental, core insight behind the doctrine of monogenesis and affirmation of sole progenitorship and all of that. So what actually happened with that? So I think there was a splitting in the Church that had to do with the discovery of people in the New World, and it continued on from that. Because you talked about how people started to wonder about people outside the Garden. But that idea in the past was always married to the notion, "Well, there's people out there, in the past, and some of them exist until today. And they are not descended from Adam and Eve. So those people out in the Americas, they don't descend from Adam and Eve. Those people out in Australia, they don't descend from Adam and Eve." And so the idea of people before Adam and Eve was also connected to the idea that not everyone

descends from Adam and Eve now. And so what that had the effect of doing is if you called off this definition of Adam and Eve's descendants, or the lineage is human, that created a problem where it meant Scripture did not actually extend to be a universal story in present day. Moreover, it really started to create questions about the basic humanity and worth of these people as well, right? [laughs]

MH: Yeah. We all know where that went. Yeah.

JS: And so that's polygenesis in the Church, and it's been soundly rejected as heretical. And I agree with that rejection. And the basic affirmation of much of the Church became (or one of the demands about orthodoxy, is another way to put it) is that we all descend from Adam and Eve. Now the way that was resolved was by moving Adam and Eve into the very, very far distant past, out of the range of any sort of oral history. And really, I think that created a major tension. And then on the other hand, you had the exegetes that were kind of left in the dust by this, that it really does seem to be that Genesis is talking about the origin of civilization in some ways. It seems to be talking about something far more recently than that. But to have Adam and Eve that recent, you had to give up on ancestry. So then people started to get more creative in terms of how they thought about original sin and other things like that. And that tension just turns out to be based on a deep, deep misunderstanding. So the reason why people ended up having to reject either a recent Adam and Eve or universal ancestry from Adam and Eve turns out to be based on a scientific ancestry. You can really just have both. You can have your cake and eat it, too.

1:00:00 **MH:** You know, one of the things that kind of mystifies me... And I'm going to use the Catholics here as an example. Because Catholic theologians have sort of been ahead of the curve significantly when it comes to the question of extraterrestrial life. Okay? This is a very old question. It goes back even pre-Christian. Aristotle and Plato are talking about this—the question of other worlds. And if there are other worlds, are there people on those other worlds? It's a very old question. And when it reached into the Church, you had basically... Because Plato was favorably disposed to there being other worlds and the early Church Fathers didn't like what Plato was saying in other regards, they rejected Plato's trajectory as to how you would handle that question. Well that changed...

JS: And to be clear, they also rejected the idea of people on the other side of the earth at the same time.

MH: Yeah, they just weren't buying it. But eventually that changes. When you get into the Middle Ages, it became a point of orthodoxy to affirm that there could be other worlds. Because if you said no to that, you were impinging on God's omnipotence. You were saying God couldn't do this. [JS laughs] And so it flipped. And exegetes at the time, people who were trying to work with the text, they would just, "Well, you know, this is on the table because of a theological category

(omnipotence)”, even though they don’t have anything to exegete. There’s no nuts and bolts they can work with in the text to prove this idea. And they were fine. They were fine with that. So the question is, going back to your presentation in the room with the Catholic faculty, it’s amazing how there could be any resistance to this now. In other words, why don’t they just take the same attitude now?

JS: Well, I would say it was a very positive exchange. They were really excited about the idea. [laughs]

MH: Okay, well then you had a good room, then. Maybe it’s the Protestants, or for other reasons, especially coming out of the fundamentalist, modernist thing... Especially post-Darwin. Let’s just put it that way.

JS: Well, I think Catholicism has been generally not anti-evolution. They’re open to it. But they’ve also been in tension. They don’t really have a good way to work through it. And I think it might even be part of... I think philosophy ends up being pretty dominant in Catholic thought, and exegesis is a bit diminished, at times.

MH: Mm hmm.

JS: And I think this might even be part of what’s contributed to it. Because if you’re going to put Adam and Eve that far in the distant past, you have to demythologize (that’s a word I learned from you).

MH: That’s a term to be careful about. [laughs]

JS: You have to take basically this essentially fictional framing, the vast majority of Genesis 1-11. And so if that’s what you’re doing, it just really raises questions about why you’re trying to read it closely at all. And I think they’ve just been in tension. I don’t actually think people have been terribly satisfied with it there. And I think it really just ends up coming to the idea of, if you can accept the idea that God made people in another planet or another universe and not have some...

MH: If we discovered intelligent extraterrestrial life today, that’s where most Christians are going to go. “Oh, okay. God evidently did that, because we can’t have two creators. So God must be responsible for them, too. And we’re just not told about that.” Because the Bible isn’t an exhaustive repository of all human knowledge. It doesn’t talk about toilet paper. It doesn’t talk about microwaves. And again, on the surface...

JS: It’s our sacred history; it’s not everyone’s sacred history.

MH: Right. This should be the simplest thing in the world, again, that would be propelled, let’s say if tomorrow we wake up and, “Wow, there’s the classic intelligent alien on the White House lawn,” and all that stuff. It would be easily

handled. So again, it just mystifies me a little bit. I mean, I know why there's resistance. But I guess I just wish people would think ahead a little bit more. [JS laughs] That we would approach this event (the E.T. thing) this way. Why can't we approach this whole Adam and Eve question really along the same lines, or using the same set of tools?

JS: Well, I think we can, but I think what's really going on... I mean, you could call it resistance. I mean, yeah, I think there are holdouts, and there's going to be... Especially if you make your living in this space [laughs], against evolutionism or against creationism, my goodness, there's going to be issues. But when I think about the diverse group of people that have endorsed the book, the doors it's opening in places that people just never expected, I think really what's going on more, it's kind of like there's been a deep injury—like a psychological injury—that's affected our community. I mean, this has just been a place of so much conflict. It's just a war that's kind of deadened us in a lot of ways.

MH: Are you saying we can't adjust to reality without the conflict? [laughs]

1:05:00

JS: I think that's what it is! I think the positive thing that people talk about with origins is getting past the conflict. But that is a very impoverished view of origins. Because what happens... Why are we supposed to stay engaged past the conflict, right? There's something beautiful that's supposed to be here that people can't even imagine. And I think that's what's missing. And I see it the best actually in people like C.S. Lewis, where, when he saw the challenge of intelligent aliens, the apologetic threat to original sin, and the universality of the testimony of Scripture and all of that, he didn't merely give a philosophical sense of working it out. What he did was actually fairly remarkable. He wrote a trilogy of novels exploring it. [laughs] And he wrote the *Chronicles of Narnia*, too. That's seven novels kind of exploring what it would be like with all of these non-Adamic beings that also God loves and cares about.

MH: He was guilty of having the one quality that I say is actually indispensable to an exegete, and that is imagination.

JS: Yeah!

MH: And people think that those two things are incongruous. But they're actually really important to each other. One gives you the boundaries for your imagination and the other one helps you to think about the data in creative, different ways. And I think they're both really important. And he was guilty of that. [laughs] So beat him over the head...

JS: Well, yeah, I've been accused of that as well. [laughs]

MH: But he wasn't an exegete, but he had that significant quality. I mean, he knew Scripture well enough that that quality became an asset, at least in... Well, in all sorts of ways. So I'm not claiming he was an exegete, but he had a good deal of biblical knowledge, and he had imagination. And look at what he did with it.

So one last question. And again, this is another thought experiment for you as we wrap up here. But in ten years, where do you hope this discussion is? What impact do you hope that the book will have?

JS: Well, that's a great question. I hope that there is an ongoing conversation that's just growing, that's not just in the Church, but outside the Church too, that has all the theologians alongside scientists, along thinking people in the Church, and curious people that atheists and agnostics... just exploring together what it means to be human. And that's the question that origins is supposed to bring us to. And I've found that even atheists are curious about Genesis. We're all really excited when we see really cool things come out of genetics as well. You know, there should be a grand conversation. It should be that beloved community. I think that that community is starting to emerge a little bit in science. I'm kind of an unknown person. [laughs] I didn't realize I'd be engaging the public like this in my life. I thought I'd be just a lowly scientist doing my work. And here I am. But I think there's an opportunity for something beautiful and good here to grow, so that... It should've been what grew in place of the conflict that grew.

MH: The book fits my very short list of criteria for being significant. And that is, it doesn't violate Scripture. In other words, what you're putting forth—the hypothesis that is put forth—can be sustained by Scripture. Again, that means we're not required to adopt it, but we *could* adopt it. Okay? It can be sustained by the text. And it's also useful in a kingdom sense. In other words, I would hope that in ten years, you would have a whole list of people that you'll never know that your book took Adam and Eve off the list of reasons why they couldn't be believers—why they couldn't be Christians.

JS: Yeah.

MH: To me, that would be a significant thing to come out of your work. Those two things really are what attracted me to it, having read the book, and why I wanted to you to be on the podcast. Because that's just being useful. [laughter] That is being eminently useful in an eternal sense. And so I look for people... This podcast is about Bible. Okay? And the Bible in its own original context. So I regularly look for scholars who are trying to do something intentionally for the lay community—for the Church, for the kingdom. That is the sweet spot for me. And unfortunately, it's not a very long list. It takes some grunt work to find these people. [laughter] But in your case, you're not a biblical scholar, but you're doing something that immediately relates to what we do here. So I was thankful that Doug flagged me down and said I needed to talk to you.

1:10:00

JS: Yeah, I'm thankful to Doug, too. I mean, it's been great getting to know you and your work, too, Mike. I really do think that what you're talking about is scholarly work that's quality and that actually engages the public and the Church, right? And you're right...

MH: It's not magic. There's no magic here.

JS: But it's oddly rare, and you're doing that, and I really appreciate that, too. I wish, honestly, I had read *Unseen Realm* before I wrote my book. [laughter] It would've really changed some of the things I wrote, too.

MH: Well, there's always the revised, expanded edition. [laughter] One of those publishing tricks.

JS: Well, like I said, it's an honor to get that praise from you. I really appreciate it. And I really do hope that this serves the Church. And that it really creates a way to even have conversations, I'd say particularly with seekers in science. The reason why I became more public in my faith in 2012... I recently put it on a blog post, saying why I went public on evolution. It was just where I saw seekers in the Church that were in science—that when they came to the Church, the Church didn't make sense to them. They were really struggling. We just need to find a better way that moves us past the conflicts into the beauty, where we're no longer divided but we're actually working together to really love one another and love each other.

MH: Right. You know, it's unity without conformity. And often those two things get conflated, and that's where people get jettisoned or they feel they just have to leave the Church or the discussion. It's unfortunate. It's not something that ought to be.

JS: Well, I'll tell you what gives me a lot of hope, Mike. I think you're a little older than me. I'm in my early 40s.

MH: Yeah, I'm 57.

JS: Yeah, I spend a lot of time with students and people in their early 20s. I've got to tell you, they are ready for a better way. I think they look at the world that they're inheriting from their parents and their grandparents, for all of its positive strengths which it does have, it's just too divided and conflicted and at each others' throats. And the people I deal with, they're just ready to do better than their parents. And wouldn't that be great, if they did better than us?

MH: Yeah, we don't lose anything by that.

JS: So I have a lot of hope. I actually think that the origins conversation is going to change as this younger generation comes to power.

MH: Well, it could. Again, I think your commitment to the Bible in terms of biblical authority is really necessary in that. Otherwise, it could just go off the rails pretty quickly. You provide boundaries, as well, in terms of your commitments to that. That's just a necessary ingredient. Sometimes you don't get it. You and I have had conversations about that that we're not going to loop in here. But I think that's really important.

JS: Yeah, so like I said, let's be optimistic. I mean, I think things are broken. We're in a fallen world, right? And it's not all... I mean, we're participating in it. That's not our doing. We've inherited that world. But the beauty is that God wants to redeem it. And I really believe there's a better way, and I think we can find it if we work to find it together.

MH: Well, thanks for coming on. Again, we had two conversations with you. Thanks for your time. I know you're busy. Especially if you have students. But I probably caught you at a good time of the year. I don't know if you're wrapping up your semester or what, or if your students are, or the school's shutting down, or what's going on with...

JS: Well, most of my time I spend doing scientific work, not teaching, so that helps. [laughs] You know, one of those scientists.

MH: That would be a big help. [laughter] But thanks for being on with us for a second time.

JS: My pleasure.

TS: Alright, Mike. So am I getting it right? Some atheists are picking up what Dr. Swamidass is putting down as well? Right?

MH: Yeah. Even though they don't like the theology and they don't like the existence of God or miracles or all that, they have read his book and reviewed it publicly and said, "Yep, the science is good. This is good science. He's right when it comes to the scientific content that he's given us in the book."

TS: And I'm going to pin you down if I can here as far as the Bible creating... In Genesis 1, it says God created men and women. Do you take that to be Adam and Eve or do you take that to be the people outside the Garden of Eden?

MH: Yeah, I think in Genesis 1:26-27 (to be specific), since that is looped in to Adam specifically in Genesis 5:1-5, I think Genesis 1:26-27 *is* talking about Adam and Eve. And of course, so is Genesis 5. So this is why, during the discussion, I would say things like, “Well, the idea is sustainable (to have people outside the Garden) because of these uncertainties in Genesis 4. We also have to admit that there’s nothing in Scripture that actually *teaches* this idea.” So there’s nothing explicitly against it. There’s nothing that explicitly teaches it. We have some ambiguities in Genesis 4 that *allow* it to be a legitimate discussion. And so for the purpose of Josh’s book, he seizes upon this opening in Genesis 4 and says, “Hey, what if there were people outside the Garden? You know what? That would account for both the genetic story and leave the story of Adam and Eve intact.” And so that’s the trajectory that he pursues in the book.

TS: And what do you personally believe? Do you believe people were outside of the Garden of Eden?

MH: I have no idea. I mean, I can’t land there because I don’t see any explicit teaching to it. I’m not offended by the idea. It could very well be. If God wanted to give us greater clarity to shut the door on that, he could’ve done it. But we don’t have that, so to me, it’s one of those things... It’s kind of like these prophecy questions, too, where, “Well, it could be this or that. There are ambiguities in the text. I’m willing to live with either.” But if I move beyond that point, then it’s speculative, and I don’t want to call my speculation Bible *teaching*. So that’s why I tend to not speculate. But at this point, I’d have to speculate. You know, if what Josh is saying scientifically, like if this... And again, I’m not a scientist, but let’s just assume that all the genetic stuff that he’s talking about, that that’s absolutely true beyond reasonable certainty—that that’s true. Then I would have to say, “Well, then that probably is the case. It probably is true that there were people outside the Garden.” But I can’t claim to say that Scripture teaches that. But this is a really good trajectory for letting that truth (assuming that it is true on the genetics side) marry very well with Scripture.

TS: Yeah, is Genesis 1 plural, men and women? Is the Hebrew there plural?

MH: It’s, “Let us create *adam*.” That’s humankind. And then it’s defined later as “male and female.” So *adam* is a term that... A little grammatical lingo here. If *adam* has the definite article (*ha adam*), then it cannot be a proper personal name. Because if people in our audience remember our discussion of the word *satan* (Satan), Hebrew does not tolerate a definite article before a proper personal name. So when you have *ha adam*, it means “humankind,” or “the man,” or “the human,” or “this human.” Something generic. When it *doesn’t* have the article, when it’s just *adam*, then it can be either. It could be either a proper personal name (Adam) or it could still be used (and it is in Genesis 5) generically for all humankind. So you know, there’s nothing really to be gained by making arguments like, “Well, one form of the word has people that are Adam and Eve and another form of the word has people outside the Garden.” That doesn’t work

because Genesis 5 is tied to Genesis 1:26. So your question about Genesis 1 is actually a really important one. It's very perceptive. Since those two things are connected, you can't really argue what Josh needs (this population outside of the Garden) on the basis of the word *adam* or *ha adam*. The only thing you've really got is this trajectory—this open door—because of the ambiguities in Genesis 4. So that's really where people camp out on this question.

TS: And what about Cain's wife?

MH: Yeah, Cain's wife is part of this discussion. You can read Genesis 4 two ways. You can assume a tight chronology (that these events happened bang, bang, bang, one right after the other), and that means when Cain leaves and then he finds a wife and he builds a city (of course he'd have to have help) that there must have been humans already out there.

1:20:00

The other side (the more traditional approach to Genesis 4, that you don't have people outside the Garden) would say, "Look, we don't have a chronology here. We don't know that all these events happened one right after the other. So there could be long stretches of time in between Cain's sin and his judgment and his punishment and his actually leaving home. We don't know how much time has elapsed. So if there is a long stretch of time between any two of those events, then in theory you could loop in the statement later on in Genesis 5 about Adam and Eve having other sons and daughters. You could say, "Well, Cain's wife must have come still from Adam and Eve. It's still one of Adam and Eve's kids. And the people who helped Cain build the city, they're still Adam and Eve's children. It's just now that we've got long lineages, we've got multiple generations in between these events. And so that would account for where does Cain get his wife and who helped Cain build the city. So this is a hermeneutical decision. You either decide to have a tight chronology or not. And depending on which view you take, that either allows you to say there were people already outside the Garden or not. So there are textual uncertainties here. We don't have anything in the text to make us say this one position is it and the other one's not possible. And so if you're going to argue (as Josh does) for this view (accounting for the genetic information with one population group, people outside the Garden) and you're focusing on saying that the Scripture story is about Adam and Eve's genealogy (not their genetic history)... If you're going to do that, you need a population outside the Garden. And he's very transparent about that in the book, and I think, obviously, during our discussion he was, too.

TS: Yeah. I'm one of those that lands that were people outside of the Garden. That's where I've always been.

MH: It's probably a more natural reading to think of these things as happening one right after the other, and that would move you into the camp that, "There have to be people outside of the Garden, or else why say this?" But again, we try

to be honest with the text here. We don't know about the chronology. It's certainly possible that that's the correct way to read it. We just lack certainty on it.

TS: As soon as I build my time machine, Mike, I'll go back and I'll let you know how it really was. [MH laughs]

MH: Yeah, you find out.

TS: Until then...

MH: So that's what you're going to do? That's what you're going to use your time machine for? What if you can only use it once?

TS: Hmm. Only once. That's good. If I could only use it once, I'm going to be real honest with you, and I'm going to go so far into the future, like millions of years. Like, I'm one of those. I want to go hundreds of thousands of years into the future. I don't want to go... If I can't go back to Jesus, which would be my... If I had multiple times...

MH: You want to see if people are still drinking eggnog. Is that what you want to see?

TS: I just want to see the technology. I want to see if we're in space. I want to see what kind of interdimensional traveling we're doing. That's the kind of stuff I want to see.

MH: The bigger questions.

TS: Yeah. Technology...

MH: Not if there's still a McDonald's or anything like that. Yep. Nobody's going to ask if you brought eggnog, let's put it that way. [TS laughs]

TS: Alright, Mike. Well, hey, interesting conversation. I look forward to reading his book. And don't forget, you can go buy his book. We've got a link for it. We have a discount for 40% off with free shipping till January 15th, the next two weeks. So go to NakedBiblePodcast.com and get that link. We're also giving away a few copies for free. Use the hashtag #NakedBible out there and help promote the podcast. And I'll find you and I will send you one of his books. Alright, Mike, well, happy new year again. Congratulations on six years! And I look forward to our seventh. With that, Mike, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.