

Book Review

Who Was Adam?

Rana, Fazale and Ross, Hugh. *Who Was Adam?* California: RTB Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Dr. Marco Kletting
Modern Physics, Cosmology and Design

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1. Author Information

Fazale Rana is Vice President of the Christian apologetics ministry Reasons to Believe (RTB). He holds a PHD in chemistry from Ohio University. His co-author Hugh Ross is the founder and president of RTB. Ross completed his BSc in physics at the University of British Columbia and MS and PhD in astronomy at the University of Toronto.¹ Both authors have published articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, delivered presentations at international scientific meetings, and addressed church and university audiences in the United States and abroad.² Moreover, Dr. Rana teaches the Human Origins class at Reasons Institute.

2. Summary

The main thesis of *Who was Adam?* is that the biblical text on human origins with the traditional interpretation as Adam and Eve as the founding pair of humanity is compatible with the scientific data on the origin of humanity. The RTB creation model is an Old Earth Creation model holds that Adam and Eve lived ca. 150000 year ago³ and hominids not belonging to modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) were neither truly human nor were they modern humanity's ancestors. *Who was Adam?* covers evidence from genetics, biochemistry, archaeology, (paleo)anthropology geology and astronomy and the biblical text regarding the topic of human origins. The book is organized in 3 Parts. Part I and II contain the content of the first edition and Part III the update for the second edition. Part I covers the impact of Darwin's origin of species, the hominid fossil records, secular human origin models, and the main features of RTBs scientific (testable) creation model with focus on human origins. Part II covers the scientific data related to human origins. This part contains what we know from genetic research like molecular anthropology, which showed that every man living today can trace back their Y-chromosome to a single man living in the distant past (Y-chromosomal Adam) and every woman can

¹ Fazale Rana and Hugh Ross, *Who Was Adam?: A Creation Model Approach to the Origin of Humanity*. (RTB Press:2015), 471.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 269.

trace back their mitochondrial DNA to a single woman living in the distant past (mitochondrial Eve). Furthermore, it argues that the archaeological record indicates that a significant burst of tool sophistication and other innovations like art occurred with the appearance of modern humans. Moreover, the longevity of the people in Genesis is addressed. This part also describes what science can show us about the spread of humanity in the past. Additional topics addressed are the question if human evolution is a fact, bipedalism and brain size, the Turkana Boy, the Neanderthals, the relationship of humans and chimps and the concept of junk DNA. The last chapter of Part II concludes that the scientific data and the biblical data fit well. Part III contains the 10-year update of the book. It contains among other things recent dates for human origins from molecular anthropology, a discussion on new fossil discoveries, the messy problem of Neanderthals interbreeding with modern humans. It is further evaluated how the new data affects the RTB model. It is argued that - while needing some revision - the RTB human origin model still fits all the data very well.

3. Evaluation

3.1. Strengths

Who was Adam? succeeds in demonstrating that the RTB creation model fits the scientific data at least as well as an evolutionary model. The evidence brought forward by the evolutionary model can also be interpreted from a creation model perspective. The arguments are substantiated by various footnotes to original research. For example, while the concept of Junk DNA might have been a good argument for common ancestry in the past, new research shows that Junk DNA is not so junk at all but has function.⁴ Furthermore, the fossil evidence does not prove human evolution. There is no realistic candidate who can serve as a missing link between the Australopithecines and the genus *Homo*. Due to missing links connecting the various fossil findings human evolution cannot be declared as a fact.⁵ Moreover, the observed discontinuities fit nicely within a creation model framework. In addition, the evolutionary mechanisms seem not to be sufficient for modern humans to evolve from a common

⁴ Ibid. 341-348.

⁵ Ibid., 41-42;143-158;277-289.

ancestor of chimps in the given time frame.⁶ In addition to the mechanism themselves, the right (very unlikely) physical conditions have to be in place for life to exist and to develop.⁷ This points to a Designer of the universe who set up the conditions of the universe, solar system and Earth in a way for intelligent life to exist.

A further strength of the book is that it outlines scientific creation model as an alternative model for evaluating and interpreting the data. While pointing out major flaws in the evolutionary framework is important and legitimate offering an alternative model is a big step forward.

Dr. Rana argues that technology and art indicating symbolism appeared with modern humans. This fits well with a resemblance view of the Image of God.⁸ Since purported evidence for symbolism regarding Neanderthals or even *Homo erectus* is heavily debated, it can be argued that there is now a convergence of evidence from the fossil record, genetics and the archaeological record that anatomical and behavioral modern humans appear on the scene at the same time.⁹ Therefore the RTB position, that Adam was a *Homo sapiens* is very reasonable.

3.2. Weaknesses/Critique

The books' main weakness is its structure because it reduces its readability. One needs always to keep in mind that what is presented in Part I and Part II might not be up to date anymore, because it reflects material 10 years older than material in Part II.

The currently available genetic data puts Y-chromosomal Adam in the same period as mtDNA Eve,¹⁰ which is a problem for the RTB model where the Y-chromosome should go back to Noah. Dr. Rana admits that this is a problem for the RTB model. However, I would have expected him to investigate more how RTB can deal with this problem in addition to pointing to the large error bars

⁶ Ibid., 157.

⁷ Ibid., 157.

⁸ Ibid., 83.

⁹ Fazale Rana, "Lecture 18 - Artistic Expression," HO Advanced Seminar in Human Origins (Spring 2022 - Biola), 2017, vimeo video, 48:10, https://vimeo.com/192508948?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=3355087

¹⁰ Rana, *Who Was Adam?*, 265-269

involved in those dates. Also, findings of modern humans in South Africa older than 100,000 ya has also impact on the tower of Babel event and its timing, if one holds that this event impacted all humanity.

3.3. Suggestions for a 3rd Edition

For a third edition I would not go with the format like the 2nd by adding a Part 4 with changes which occurred in comparison to the 2nd edition. Then it is time for an overhaul of the whole book

Moreover, I would also like Dr. Rana to expand on the hypothetical case if it could be proven that for example Neanderthals had symbolism. Would RTB revise his view on the Image of God or would RTB argue that Adam lived before the Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens* appeared and was maybe a *Homo heidelbergensis*.

Furthermore, other scholars argue that the biblical text is also compatible with a view in which humanity already has spread out over the world, but the flood was only a judgment to all people living in Mesopotamia.¹¹ It would have been beneficial to add this briefly in the discussion, since this also a potential solution regarding the apparent conflict of Y-chromosomal Adam and mtDNA Eve.

4. Recommendation

This book is a must read for any Christian in the apologetic ministry. The topic of human origins is crucial for Christian doctrine. Moreover, I would recommend this book to anyone who seeks answers on the topic of human origins - independent of one's world view (YEC, OEC, theistic evolutionist, atheists etc.). *Who was Adam?* is accessible to any lay person interested in the topic on human origins. The expert reader can dive deeper into the various topics by looking up the references to original research provided throughout the book. Moreover, I recommend reading Part III in parallel to Part I and Part II.

¹¹ <https://drmsb.com/argue-biblical-text-local-regional-flood-instead-global-flood/>