

A Response to Peter Enns's Attack on Biblical Creationism

Lee Anderson, Jr., Research Assistant, Answers in Genesis, 2800 Bullittsburg Church Rd, Petersburg, Kentucky 41080.

Abstract

This paper overviews the recent work of Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, examining the implications of Enns's conclusions for the topics of biblical inspiration and inerrancy, human origins, and the exegesis of the biblical text. Included in this overview is a discussion of Enns's theological and philosophical assumptions that impinge upon his conclusions, as well as the published concerns that prominent biblical scholars have expressed relating to those conclusions. This paper contends that the views expounded in *The Evolution of Adam* are flawed at a foundational level, and aims to show that Enns's incarnational model of Scripture is theologically unsound, that his presupposed view of the origin of humanity is scientifically unwarranted, and that his understanding of the purpose and meaning of the Creation account in both Genesis and Paul's interpretation of Genesis is biblically unsubstantiated.

Keywords: accommodation, Adam, evolution of Adam, history, human genome project, human origins, incarnational model, inerrancy, inspiration, myth, New Testament use of the Old Testament, orthodoxy, Paul (the Apostle), Peter Enns, presuppositions, Proto-Israel, reinterpretation, theistic evolution

Introduction

Published in January of 2012, Peter Enns's work, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins*, has generated shockwaves through Christian academia. Enns, in his book, affirms a position known as "theistic evolution," which asserts that biological (Darwinian) evolution is a scientifically confirmed fact, but also that God was responsible for overseeing and directing the evolutionary development of all the various life forms. Enns's position is hardly original; theistic evolution has long been promoted as a way for Christians to hold to some semblance of the integrity of Scripture while simultaneously maintaining a degree of respectability within the secular scientific community that has almost uniformly accepted the viability of evolutionary theory. This position has, in fact, been looked upon as a happy medium even by biblical scholars considered to be markedly conservative, theologically speaking (for example, Kidner 1967, pp.26–31). What is unique about Enns's book, therefore, is not its attempt to combine evolutionary theory with Scripture, but rather the manner in which it does so, and his reassessment of the Apostle Paul's view of Adam in the process (see

Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15). Whereas many theistic evolutionists look for an actual "Adam" who became head of the human race, Enns argues for an even further departure from biblical literalism while still maintaining his acceptance of an orthodox view of the inspiration of Scripture and the inerrancy of the Genesis creation record. Since differences between competing views of human evolution can be highly nuanced, especially when the subject of theology becomes intertwined, it is best to let Enns speak for himself in defining the key differences. With respect to the views of mainstream theistic evolutionists, he writes:

Some understandably seek to merge evolution with Adam in an attempt to preserve what they perceive as the heart of Paul's teaching on Adam, yet without dismissing natural science. In other words, evolution is fine so long as an "Adam" can be identified somehow, somewhere. So, for example, it is sometimes argued that Adam and Eve were two hominids or symbolic of a group of hominids with whom, at some point in evolutionary development, God entered into a relationship. At this point God endowed them with his image, thus making them conscious of God and thereby entering into a covenant relationship with

them. Such a scenario is thought to preserve at least the general story of Genesis. (Enns 2012, p. 138)¹

Enns voices several objections to this position, one of which, strangely enough, concerns the awkward blending of biblical and evolutionary perspectives:

It is ironic that in trying to hold on to biblical teaching a scenario is proposed that the Bible does not recognize: gradual evolution over millions of years rather than the sudden and recent creation of humanity as the Bible has it. Now I will say that it is possible that, tens of thousands of years ago, God took two hominid representatives (or a group of hominids) and with them began the human story where creatures could have a consciousness of God, learn to be moral, and so forth. But that is an alternate and wholly ad hoc account of the first humans, not the biblical one. One cannot pose such a scenario and say, “Here is your Adam and Eve; the Bible and science are thus reconciled.” Whatever those creatures were, they were not what the biblical authors presumed to be true. They may have been the first beings somehow conscious of God, but we overstep our bounds if we claim that these creatures satisfy the requirement of being “Adam and Eve.” (Enns 2012, p. 139)

Stated another way, Enns contends that there is no way for the assumptions of an evolutionary perspective of human origins to be reconciled—even superficially—with the Genesis account. The text of Genesis, therefore, must be read on its own terms, even if it flatly contradicts the mainstream consensus on human origins, as Enns later points out:

Searching for ways to align modern-scientific and ancient-biblical models of creation—no matter how

minimal—runs the risk of obscuring the theology of the biblical texts in question. The creation stories are ancient and should be understood on that level. Rather than merge the two creation stories—the scientific and the biblical—we should respect that they each speak a different language. The fact that Paul considered Adam to be the progenitor of the human race does not mean that we need to find some way to maintain his view within an evolutionary scheme. Rather, we should gladly acknowledge his ancient view of cosmic and human origins and see in that very scenario the face of God who seems far less reluctant to accommodate to ancient points of view than we are sometimes comfortable with. (Enns 2012, p. 139)

Described in a nutshell, the chief difference between Enns and other proponents of theistic evolution may well be Enns’s willingness to promote an alternative understanding of Paul’s theological assumptions, beliefs, and assertions in order to reduce tension between the straightforward, literal reading of the Genesis creation record and the alleged scientifically-defensible fact of human evolution. According to Enns, when Paul spoke about Adam, he was not communicating actual history (though Paul believed that he was), rather, he was highlighting an important theological fact (the universal sinfulness of man), employing the most foundational biblical idiom available to him (Enns 2012, p. 142). While this may seem to run contrary to a normal orthodox perspective on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, it is consistent with Enns’s own model. He argues:

¹ Enns adequately summarizes the view of Derek Kidner as well as that of a more recent source, C.J. Collins (2011). Kidner, commenting on the issue, writes, “God, as we have seen, has made all nations ‘from one’ (Acts 17:26). Genetically indeed, on this view, these two groups [i.e., Adamic hominids and non-Adamic hominids] would be of a single stock; but by itself that would avail nothing, as Adam’s fruitless search for a helpmeet makes abundantly clear. Yet it is at least conceivable that after the special creation of Eve, which established the first human pair as God’s viceregents (Gn 1:27, 28) and clinched the fact that there is no natural bridge from animal to man, God may now have conferred His image on Adam’s collaterals, to bring them into the same realm of being. Adam’s ‘federal’ headship of humanity extended, if that was the case, outwards to his contemporaries as well as onwards to his offspring, and his disobedience disinherited both alike” (Kidner 1967, p. 29). He continues, “There may be a biblical hint of such a situation in the surprising impression of an already populous earth given by the words and deeds of Cain in 4:14, 17. Even Augustine had to devote a chapter to answering those who find this difficulty, and although the traditional answer is valid enough... the persistence of the old objection could be a sign that our presuppositions have been inadequate. Again, it may be significant that, with one possible exception, the unity of mankind ‘in Adam’ and our common status as sinners through his offence are expressed in Scripture in terms not of heredity but simply of solidarity.... Adam’s sin is shown to have implicated all men because he was the federal head of humanity somewhat as in Christ’s death ‘one died for all, therefore all died’ (2 Cor. 5:14). Paternity plays no part in making Adam ‘the figure of him that was to come’ (Rom. 5:14)” (Kidner 1967, pp. 29–30). Despite his boldness on this point, Kidner maintains the necessity of a “real” Adam: “What is quite clear from these chapters in the light of other scriptures is their doctrine that mankind is a unity, created in God’s image and fallen in Adam by one act of disobedience; and these things are strongly asserted on this understanding of God’s word as on any other” (Kidner 1967, p. 30). Collins, meanwhile, offers four important criteria which seem to be the bare minimum that he finds acceptable for a viable theistic evolutionary model. Significantly, he also maintains the need for a “real” Adam: First “We should see that the origin of the human race goes beyond a merely natural process. This follows from how hard it is to get a human being, or, more theologically, how distinctive the image of God is.” Second, “We should see Adam and Eve at the headwaters of the human race. This follows from the universal experience of mankind...: where else could human beings come to bear God’s image?” Third, “The ‘fall,’ in whatever form it took, was both historical (it happened) and moral (it involved disobeying God), and occurred at the beginning of the human race. The universal sense of loss... makes no sense without this. Where else could this universality have come from?” Fourth, “If someone should decide that there were, in fact, more human beings than just Adam and Eve at the beginning of mankind, then, in order to maintain good sense, he should envision these humans as a single tribe. Adam would then be the chieftain of this tribe (preferably produced before the others), and Eve would be his wife. This tribe ‘fell’ under the leadership of Adam and Eve. This follows from the notion of solidarity in a representative. Some may call this a form of ‘polygenesis,’ but this is quite distinct from the more conventional, and unacceptable, kind” (Collins 2011, pp. 120–121).

A proper view of inspiration will embrace the fact that God speaks by means of the cultural idiom of the authors—whether it be the author of Genesis in describing origins or how Paul would later come to understand Genesis. Both reflect the setting and limitations of the cultural moment. (Enns 2012, p. 143)

According to Enns, it is thus permissible for the book of Genesis and Paul's later understanding of human origins to be "wrong" in the generic sense of the word and still be divinely inspired and "inerrant" when understood against their respective cultural backgrounds and squared with the theological messages they aim to teach.

Such a conclusion is confusing, no doubt. It casts the book of Genesis, the Apostle Paul's understanding of the Old Testament's history, and the origin of humanity into a whole new light. However, is Enns's view biblically permissible? Does it really match with what the Bible itself asserts about its status as an inspired, inerrant book? Furthermore, does Enns's model of theistic evolution do justice to the scientific evidence? Is it truly able to produce harmony between the Bible's record of creation and the mainstream understanding of biological evolution? Most importantly, does Enns correctly interpret the biblical text? Does his view align with how the individual authors (both human and divine) intended for themselves to be understood? In seeking to answer these questions, this review will now turn to an extended evaluation of the content of *The Evolution of Adam*. It will be followed by a series of critiques and conclude with a verdict on the adequacy and acceptability of Enns's approach.

Content

Enns's purpose for writing *The Evolution of Adam* is twofold: The first, he writes, is to combat "the relentless, articulate, and popular attacks on Christianity by the New Atheists" whose recent writings

have aggressively promoted evolution and argued that evolution has destroyed the possibility of religious faith, especially a faith like Christianity, whose sacred writings contain the story of Adam, the first man created out of the dust several thousand years ago. (Enns 2012, p. ix)

The second is to interact with the "well publicized advances in our understanding of evolution, particularly genetics" (Enns 2012, p. ix). Enns makes his starting assumptions abundantly evident in his point-blank assertion,

The Human Genome Project, completed in 2003, has shown beyond any reasonable scientific doubt that humans and primates share common ancestry. (Enns 2012, p. ix)

He attempts to reconcile the presumed indisputable fact of human evolution with the biblical text by contending that "Scripture [is] a product of the times in which it was written and/or the events took place" (Enns 2012, p. xi) and thus bears the marks of its historical setting(s). In defense of the perspective he advances in his book, he gives three opening premises:

(1) Our knowledge of the cultures that surrounded ancient Israel greatly affects how we understand the Old Testament—not only here and there but also what the Old Testament as a whole is designed to do. (2) Because Scripture is a collection of discrete writings from widely diverse times and places and written for diverse purposes, the significant theological diversity of Scripture we find there should hardly be a surprise. (3) How the New Testament authors interpret the Old Testament reflects the Jewish thought world of the time and thus accounts for their creative engagement of the Old Testament. It also helps Christians today understand how the New Testament authors brought together Israel's story and the gospel. (Enns 2012, p. xi)

It is important to note that Enns does not argue that Adam evolved, *per se*, but rather

that *our understanding of Adam has evolved* over the years and that it must now be adjusted in light of the of the preponderance of (1) scientific evidence supporting evolution and (2) literary evidence from the world of the Bible that helps clarify the kind of literature the Bible is—that is what it means to read it as it was meant to be read. (Enns 2012, p. xiii)²

This contention has a particularly significant bearing on the interpretation of the Pauline writings at two major junctures: Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. Accordingly, Enns sets out to demonstrate not only that the Genesis account of human origins needs to be reevaluated, but that Paul's understanding of Adam must be as well (Enns 2012, p. xviii). Enns states his goal for this book in the following way:

[To] show that Paul's use of the Adam story serves a vital theological purpose in explaining to his ancient readers the significance for all humanity of *Christ's death and resurrection*. His use of the Adam story, however, cannot and should not be the determining

² Enns's reading of the biblical text stands opposed to a more literal approach following the historical-grammatical hermeneutic. Enns attacks a straightforward reading of the creation narrative of Genesis arguing that it is promoted by those whose views are "rooted in a precommitment to read the Bible literally at virtually every point despite evidence to the contrary" and who "avoid engaging science by reinterpreting it to conform to that conviction" (Enns 2012, p. xiv). This is a serious charge, especially in view of the fact that Enns never presents any solid scientific evidence (he assumes the conclusions of the Human Genome Project, but does not defend them), and because he never sets forth an articulate approach to understanding a Christian perspective on the philosophy of science. As such, it is at least questionable if Enns's own preliminary assumption (that is, that human evolution is a fact) actually squares with a biblical view of science itself, much less a proper biblical interpretation of alleged scientific evidence. These issues will be examined under "Critique."

factor in whether biblically faithful Christians can accept evolution as the scientific account of human origins—and that the gospel does not hang in the balance. (Enns 2012, p.xix)

In order to see how Enns goes about arguing this bold thesis statement, it is necessary to consider his presuppositions concerning Genesis and the Pentateuch. On this subject, he notes that while the undermining of the authority, accuracy, and historicity of Genesis could indeed undermine the authority of the entire biblical text, he maintains that there is sometimes a real need to challenge traditional views (Enns 2012, p.7). Significantly, Enns rejects the traditional view of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in the second millennium BC, looking instead to the Babylonian captivity as a key time in the “formation of Israel’s Scripture as a self-defining statement” (Enns 2012, p.9). This revised understanding of the writing of Genesis must serve to adjust the reader’s thinking about what to expect from the book in terms of its theology and message (Enns 2012, p.10). Consistent with his markedly Wellhausian stance on the composition of the Pentateuch, Enns regards Genesis as a text fraught with “ambiguities and inconsistencies” (Enns 2012, p. 12). Without restating his defenses for presupposing this view on the composition of Genesis, it is worth noting his pointed conclusion:

The Pentateuch was not authored out of whole cloth by a second-millennium Moses but is the end product of a complex literary process—written oral, or both—that did not come to a close until the postexilic period. This summary statement, with only the rarest exception, is a virtual scholarly consensus after one and a half centuries of debate. (Enns 2012, p.23)³

Supposedly, seeing the validity of the postexilic date of the composition of the Pentateuch helps readers to “understand the broad purpose for which it was compiled” (Enns 2012, p.26). Summarily stated, the formulation of the Pentateuch specifically, but also of the Hebrew Bible generally, as Enns sees it, was “an exercise in national self-definition in response to the Babylonian exile” (Enns 2012, p.28).

Having established his outlook on the composition of the Pentateuch, Enns goes on to demonstrate how the content of Genesis was allegedly impacted by the stories and myths of the surrounding ancient Near Eastern peoples. He writes:

Placing Genesis side by side with the primordial tales of other ancient cultures helps us gain a clearer understanding of the nature of Genesis and thus what we as contemporary readers have a right to expect from Genesis. Such comparisons have made it quite clear that Israel’s creation stories are not prepared to answer the kinds of questions that occupy modern scientific or even historical studies. (Enns 2012, pp.35–36)

Comparing the Genesis creation record with the *Enuma Elish*, he contends that Genesis is not a prototype for the Babylonian myth, but rather presupposes the “far older Babylonian theology of the dominant culture” (Enns 2012, p.39).⁴ Because of the presumed connection between the *Enuma Elish* and the biblical creation record,

any thought of Genesis 1 providing a scientifically or historically accurate account of cosmic origins, and therefore being wholly distinct from the ‘fanciful’ story in *Enuma Elish*, cannot be seriously entertained. (Enns 2012, pp.40–41)⁵

³ Enns offers seven brief arguments for this view [criticism is recorded in brackets]: (1) The entire Pentateuch is written in the third person and in the past tense [however, other biblical texts speak of their respective authors in the third person]. (2) There is no claim in the Pentateuch that Moses is its author [note, however, the implications of Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27–28; and Deuteronomy 31:9–24, as well as a host of texts throughout the remainder of both the Old and New Testaments]. (3) The Pentateuch contains numerous explanatory comments that reflect a time beyond that of Moses [however, the possibility of updating by a later author must be considered]. (4) The Pentateuch assumes that conditions present at the time of writing were in existence in ancient times [however, this is not the case universally; the Pentateuch sets forth in Genesis certain traditions that were obsolete by the time of Moses]. (5) The presence of “doublets” (for example, Genesis 1 and 2; 15 and 17; 12, 20 and 26; Exodus 3 and 6; Exodus 17 and Numbers 20) suggests a complex literary or oral history [however, this ignores important distinctions and nuances in these passages]. (6) These doublets are not easily harmonized but present significantly different points of view [however, this notion is logically arbitrary and presuppositionally charged]. (7) The language of the Pentateuch reflects the state of Hebrew in the first millennium BC [however, there are no examples of Hebrew from the second millennium BC that may be used to demonstrate that the style of the Pentateuch is inconsistent with an earlier time; the Gezer calendar (tenth century BC) is the earliest extant piece of Hebrew writing]. Enns seems to conveniently overlook that one of the main voices in the opposition to Wellhausen’s Documentary Hypothesis was the premier Old Testament scholar G.L. Archer who, like Enns, received his doctorate from Harvard University. Archer’s work, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* deals at length with Wellhausen’s view (and its more recent reformulations). Archer convincingly undermines many of Enns’s arguments, especially those regarding doublets and “late words” as criteria for sources division, as well as the necessary reconstruction of Israel’s history that undergirds the view. Additionally, he presents many positive evidence from Scripture and archeology alike for the antiquity of the Pentateuch (Archer 2007, pp. 71–151).

⁴ Note that this ignores two facts: the existence of Yahwistic theology (even, perhaps in written form) much earlier than the Babylonian myth (note, for instance, the book of Job and its references to YHWH) and the polemical nature of the creation account. The book of Genesis may well presume the existence of the *Enuma Elish*, but it is distinct enough in its theology that it ought not to be read as a parallel account, but rather as a polemic.

⁵ At this juncture, it must be noted that Enns does not recognize the necessity of theological truth being grounded in an accurate account of history. The notion that the Bible contains any error whatsoever, if even on the finer points of history and science, seems to contradict the Bible’s own claim of being wholly truthful (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17). This conundrum will thus require attention in greater detail in the following critique of Enns’s work.

Similarly, Enns draws comparisons between the biblical Flood narrative, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and the ancient myth of *Atrahasis*. Though he admits that the biblical account has unique polemical elements, he concludes that

The distinct theology of the biblical flood story, however, does not imply that it is of a higher historical or scientific order than the other ancient flood stories. (Enns 2012, p. 49)

To summarize, therefore, Enns asserts that the book of Genesis, as a product of its own time and culture, is not necessarily any less “mythological” or any more historically accurate than contemporary non-inspired sources, but that it still conveys a true theological message.⁶

To follow along with Enns’s line of argumentation and assuming that it is not warranted to read the early chapters of Genesis as truly representative of actual history, the question remains to be asked: How did ancient Israel perceive the creation narrative? The following remark about the relationship between Israel’s cosmological beliefs and the nation’s identity helps to set the stage for Enns’s response to this question:

Ancient worship was in effect a celebration of the intersection between divine primordial activity and present earthly reality. Israel’s creation stories, as we

have seen, inherited many of the themes in stories of their more ancient neighbors. And like them, Israel also celebrated the intersection of primordial time and present time. Israel’s creation stories were not simply accounts of “how it all began.” They were statements about the continuing presence of God who acted back then. Israel’s creation stories rooted their present experiences in the very origins of the cosmos. (Enns 2012, pp. 61–62)

According to Enns, one of the main locales where this intersection is found is in the Adam story of Genesis 1 and 2. In view of the following parallels, Enns (2012, p. 66) opts to read the account of Adam’s creation as a highly figurative story about Israel’s origin:

Comparison in the Stories of Israel and Adam

Israel	Adam
Creation of Israel at the Exodus	→ Creation of Adam out of dust
Commandments (law of Moses)	→ Command (the tree)
Land of Canaan	→ Garden paradise
Disobedience leads to exile/death	→ Disobedience leads to exile/death

Thus, in Enns’s view, Adam is “proto-Israel,” and the story is not about humanity’s beginnings, but about Israel’s beginnings.⁷ As Enns argues, “When seen from this perspective, efforts to reconcile Adam and evolution become unnecessary—at least from the point of view of Genesis” (Enns 2012, p. 70).⁸

⁶ In order to arrive at this conclusion, Enns overlooks the clear indicators of the Old Testament (and specifically the book of Genesis) that the biblical authors believed that they were conveying true history and presented their writings as such. S. W. Boyd (2005, pp. 677–690, 705–712) lists 15 proofs that the authors of Old Testament narratives believed they were portraying real historical events: (1) God’s people are defined in terms of their past; (2) God’s people are commanded to keep the memory of their past alive; (3) God’s people engage in retrospection on their past; (4) the remembrance of the past devolves on the present and determines the future; (5) customs are elucidated; (6) ancient names and current sayings are traced back to their origins; (7) monuments and pronouncements are assigned a concrete reason as well as a slot in history; (8) historical footnotes are sprinkled throughout the text; (9) written records used as sources are cited; (10) precise chronological reference points are supplied; (11) genealogies are given; (12) observations of cultic days and seasons are called acts of commemoration; (13) prophetic utterances are recalled and related to events in the narrative; (14) “time” words challenge ancient readers to validate historical claims made in the text; and (15) historical “trajectories” link different portions of the text and widely separate historical periods. As will be demonstrated later, Enns’s rejection of the historicity and scientific veracity of the text is conditioned very little by the theological thrust of the text (for the two are not mutually exclusive, regardless of his objection to the contrary), and very greatly by his presupposed interpretation of select scientific data. Despite acknowledging the changing nature of scientific thought and interpretation, he overlooks its presuppositional basis and the inherent clash of authority between God’s Word and man’s word. Contrary to Enns’s claim, Genesis does not cry out to be read as something other than a historical description of events (cf. Enns 2012, p. 58), for to do so would be to read the text counter to its evident genre and counter to all the evidence that its writer intended for it to be understood as real history.

⁷ Significantly, there are other valid explanations of the similarities between the Genesis narrative and Israel’s beginnings as a nation. It may be more appropriate, however, to assert that Israel’s history recapitulates the creation narrative, rather than the creation narrative being contrived as an inventive parallel to explain Israel’s origin.

⁸ Enns seeks additional confirmation of his view in the similarities between the Creation account and the tabernacle. He argues that the tabernacle reflects the cosmic order of creation, “especially in the instructions that are given in Exodus 25–31. Both tabernacle and cosmos come to exist through the sixfold creative act culminating in a seventh act of rest. Six times we read, “The LORD said to Moses” (Exodus 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1), which parallels the six creative words of Genesis 1, “And God said...” (vv. 3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 22). These six creative acts are followed by a seventh “The LORD said to Moses in Exod. 31:12, which introduces the Sabbath command. This suggests to many readers, past and present, that building the tabernacle is a microcosm, the re-creation of the cosmos on a smaller scale” (Enns 2012, pp. 70–71). This observation is, as Enns demonstrates, confirmed by at least five other elements: (1) After the tabernacle is constructed, Exodus 39:32 remarks that the work was “completed,” employing the same Hebrew verb (*kālāh*) which Genesis 2:2 uses to refer to the completion of God’s creative work. (2) The chief craftsman of the tabernacle is Bezalel, who is filled with the Spirit of God (31:3) to do his creative work. In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God is hovering over the water just before God begins His creative work. (3) In Exodus 39:43, the text notes that Moses “inspected the work and saw” that they had completed the work according to plan. Likewise in Genesis 1, God inspects His creative work and sees that it is good. (4) Moses blesses the people after the completion of the tabernacle (Exodus 39:43), which corresponds to God’s act of blessing His creation in Genesis 1:22, 28; 2:3. (5) In Exodus 40:33, it says that Moses “finished the work,” which echoes how God finished His work on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2; Enns 2012, p. 71). This does not inherently demand, however, that the Creation account be viewed as a corollary to the formation of Israel, or that Adam be viewed as a “proto-Israel.” These arguments may suggest, rather, that God’s ministry in and through Israel was aimed at countering and eventually overcoming (through the Messiah and the New Creation over which He will be head) the effects and consequences of the Fall. These similarities do nothing to define the parameters of the narrative, that is, whether or not Adam is the head of the human race, or representative of Israel only. Enns says, “Reading Genesis 1 as a simple description of cosmic events (mislabelled as ‘literal’) truly devalues the rich theology the biblical writers put there” (Enns 2012, p. 73). However, such theology is disconnected, misguided, and meaningless if the account of Adam does not convey real history.

In view of this explanation of Adam's function within the confines of the book of Genesis, the question remains: How does Enns's position correlate with Paul's perspective on Adam and the Genesis creation narrative? Enns observes:

The conversation between Christianity and evolution would be far less stressful for some if it were not the prominent role that it plays in two of Paul's letters, specifically in Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:20–58. In these passages, Paul seems to regard Adam as the first human being and ancestor of everyone who ever lived. This is a particularly vital point in Romans, where Paul regards Adam's disobedience as the cause of universal sin and death from which humanity is redeemed through the obedience of Christ. (Enns 2012, p. 79)

A straightforward reading of Paul would seem to necessitate, in fact, a real, historical Adam. In contrast to a straightforward reading of Paul when it comes to Adam, however, Enns contends that Paul's writings were conditioned by two factors: (1) the Jewish climate of the day, which was "marked by imaginative ways of handling Scripture" and (2) Paul's uncompromising Christ-centered focus (Enns 2012, p. 81). Notably, Enns claims,

Paul is not doing "straight exegesis" of the Adam story. Rather, he subordinates that story to the present, higher reality of the risen Son of God, expressing himself within the hermeneutical conventions of the time. (Enns 2012, p. 81)

Accordingly, Enns contends that Adam, understood by Paul as the first human, "supports Paul's argument about the universal plight and remedy of humanity, but it is not a necessary component of that argument" (Enns 2012, p. 82). He concludes,

To put it positively, as Paul says, we all need the Savior to deliver us from sin and death. That core Christian truth, as I see it, is unaffected by this entire discussion. (Enns 2012, p. 82)⁹

Ultimately, "Paul's use of the Old Testament, here or elsewhere, does not determine how that passage functions in its original setting" (Enns 2012, p. 87). More specifically, Paul may employ "Adam" in a way contrary to (or at least not perfectly commensurate with) how he functioned in the Genesis narrative,

but this ought not detract from the validity of the theological argument that Paul is making concerning humanity's universal sin problem and need for a Savior.¹⁰ Thus, even though the account of Adam in Genesis was to be understood—in its original setting—as a record of "proto-Israel," Paul presses the story into service in a different fashion and, by reinterpreting the text as a factual historical record about the first human, aims to demonstrate man's pervasive sin problem and universal need for a Savior. The Genesis account of Adam's sin becomes "Exhibit A" among Paul's supporting evidences.

In discussing Paul as an ancient interpreter of the Old Testament, Enns writes, "Paul (and other biblical writers) shared assumptions about physical reality with his fellow Hellenistic Jews" (Enns 2012, p. 94). In other words, Paul was a product of his own times, and imbibed the views of his contemporaries when it came to the subject of human origins. He thus employs the Genesis record of Adam in his theological argumentation under the assumption that it is an accurate representation of history, when in fact, it is not. Enns continues:

Many Christian readers will conclude, correctly, that a doctrine of inspiration does not require "guarding" the biblical authors from saying things that reflect a faulty ancient cosmology. If we begin with assumptions about what inspiration "must mean," we are creating a false dilemma and will wind up needing to make torturous arguments to line up Paul and other biblical writers with modes of thinking that would never have occurred to them. But when we allow the Bible to lead us in our thinking on inspiration, we are compelled to leave room for the ancient writers to reflect and even incorporate their ancient, mistaken cosmologies into their scriptural reflections. (Enns 2012, pp. 94–95)¹¹

The point that Enns makes here is the crux of the issue. To summarize, he asserts that a proper understanding of biblical inspiration allows for errant assumptions and statements reflective of incorrect ancient understandings to permeate the text, and that these errant assumptions and statements are intertwined with, but do not detract from, the truth of the Bible's theological message.

⁹ The unavoidable rejoinder to this is that Paul's assertion of humanity's need for a Savior is historically based. If Paul is wrong, therefore, in his view of Adam, his argument is rendered invalid.

¹⁰ This assertion leaves some very pressing questions about Enns's view of the inerrancy and perspicuity of Scripture, and makes it unclear where Enns stands on the issue of the singular meaning of Scripture. It seems to assume that Paul necessarily departed from the original, intended meaning of Genesis 1–2, though Enns fails to mention possible alternatives wherein Paul's usage of Adam accords with his original function in Genesis. Although this issue will be explored more thoroughly in the following critique of Enns's book, it is impossible not to comment here that this statement effectively demonstrates that Enns's understanding of how Scripture "must" be read (and, more specifically, what Paul "must" have meant relative to what Genesis "must" have meant) necessarily places the presupposition that biological evolution is an uncontested fact above a natural reading of Scripture.

¹¹ For Enns's brief summary of the history of Jewish scriptural interpretation, see Enns 2012, pp. 96–99. Note that Adam is referenced in the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Jubilees, 2 Esdras, 2 Baruch, and the writings of Philo. Though these sources are thoroughly Jewish—not Christian—statements in 2 Esdras 3:7 and 2 Baruch 23:4; 48:42–43; 54:15 seem to accord rather closely with Paul's view of Adam and his relationship to humanity's universal sin problem in Romans 5 (cf. Enns 2012, pp. 99–103).

As Enns says,

Paul's handling of Adam is *hermeneutically* no different from what others were doing at the time: appropriating an ancient story to address pressing concerns of the moment. That has no bearing whatsoever on the truth of the Gospel. (Enns 2012, p. 102)

So too, "Paul does not feel bound by the original meaning of the Old Testament passage he is citing, especially as he seeks to make vital theological points about the Gospel" (Enns 2012, p. 103).¹²

Before moving on to examine some critiques of *The Evolution of Adam*, it is appropriate to let Enns make some concluding remarks:

When we keep in mind some of what we have seen thus far—the ambiguous nature of the Adam story in Genesis, Adam's functional absence in the Old Testament, the creative energy invested into the Adam story by other ancient interpreters, and Paul's creative use of the Old Testament in general—we will approach Paul's use of the Adam story with the expectation of finding there not a plain reading of Genesis but a transformation of Genesis. We will see that, whatever Paul says of Adam, that does not settle what Adam means in Genesis itself, and most certainly not the question of human origins as debated in the modern world. Paul was an ancient man with ancient thoughts, inspired though he was. Respecting the Bible as God's Word entails embracing the text in context. (Enns 2012, p. 117)

However much Paul's view of Adam intersects at points with what we see in Genesis, the Old Testament, and early Judaism, Paul's Adam stands out. Adam's primordial act of disobedience invariably brought all subsequent humanity to be enslaved to the power of death *and* sin. The reason behind Paul's distinct portrayal of Adam reflects his Christ-centered handling of the Old Testament in general.... Israel's story, including Adam, is now to be read in light of its climax in the death and resurrection of Christ. In other words, Paul's understanding of Adam is shaped by Jesus, not the other way around.... I want to suggest... that the uncompromising reality of who Jesus is and what he did to conquer the objectively

true realities of sin and death do not *depend* on Paul's understanding of Adam as a historical person. (Enns 2012, p. 122)

By saying that Paul's Adam is not the historical first man, we are leaving behind Paul's understanding of the *cause* of the universal plight of sin and death. But this is the burden of anyone who wishes to bring evolution and Christianity together—the only question is how that will be done.... So, although my suggestion here leaves behind the truly historical Adam of Paul's thinking, so do any other attempts—except those of strict biblical literalists, who reject the evolutionary account of human origins. (Enns 2012, p. 123)

With these conclusions duly noted, this review will now move on to critically evaluate Enns's presuppositions and interpretations.

Critique

Assessment of Enns's work may be categorized under three broad headings. The first critique concerns Enns's presumed standard of the inspiration and inerrancy of the biblical text. Mainly, does Enns's view of the inspiration and inerrancy of the text remain within the bounds of biblical orthodoxy? If so, is it robust enough to properly ground his interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis and his perspective on humanity's beginning? The second critique relates to Enns's outlook on human origins. Does his view match with the language and theology of the biblical text? Is his view truly demanded by the scientific evidence as he claims? Furthermore, is his view logically robust? The third critique centers on Enns's method of handling the biblical text, especially the passages in the New Testament which, at face value, seem to militate against his view of human origins. Can the New Testament authors really be understood in a way that harmonizes with Enns's perspective on the Genesis account of Adam and Eve?

Presumed standard of inspiration and inerrancy

The main objection to Enns's conclusions about Genesis, Paul, Adam, and the origin of man stems from concern over his view of the inspiration and inerrancy

¹² In an effort to demonstrate that Paul's use of Old Testament passages is commonly inconsistent with their original meanings, he sets forth five examples: (1) Paul's use of Isaiah 49:8 in 2 Corinthians 6:2; (2) his reference to Abraham's "seed" in Galatians 3:16, 29; (3) his use of Habakkuk 2:4 in Galatians 3:11; (4) his use of Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26–27; and (5) his treatment of Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4. It is not possible within the confines of this review to thoroughly exposit each of these examples in order to prove that Paul's use of the Old Testament is consistent with its intended meaning. Even Enns's own treatment is necessarily brief. However, it is worth noting that in all the examples that Enns employs, he looks only at the direct connections between the two passages in question without exploring the vast web of intertextuality. He fails to trace out the key themes from the Old Testament which either (1) lead up to the point of the Old Testament text in question that may possibly feed into the New Testament usage of that text, or (2) lie between the Old Testament text in question and Paul's later reference to that passage that may also have influence on Paul's usage of that text. It is glaringly obvious that Enns overlooks such elements as analogy, typology, and corporate solidarity, to name a few. So too, it seems that Enns's interpretations are conditioned by the assumption that there is in fact incongruity between Paul's use of Old Testament passages and the original, intended meaning of those passages. Biblical teaching allows for the presupposition that Scripture is a unity and that the New Testament properly understands the true meaning of the Old Testament; it does not validate Enns's presupposition that the New Testament authors distorted the meaning of the Old Testament in order to promote their own messages.

of Scripture. Notably, Enns's view of inspiration and inerrancy, as expressed in *The Evolution of Adam* is derived directly from his conclusions expounded in a former work, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Enns 2005, cf. Enns 2006a, pp.203–218; 2007, pp.219–236). This work has already been reviewed by several prominent Christian scholars, and it is beyond the goal of this review to outline and examine all of the points that the book makes. However, a brief overview of the some of the history of the interaction that has taken place over *Inspiration and Incarnation* will likely be profitable. In this work, Enns seeks to emphasize

That the Bible, at every turn, shows how "connected" it is to its own world is a necessary consequence of God incarnating himself....It is essential to the very nature of revelation that the Bible is not unique to its environment. The human dimension of Scripture is essential to its being Scripture. (Enns 2005, p.20)

Of direct relevance to this review, it is to be pointed out that Enns looks at whether the book of Genesis reports historical fact, or just perpetuates a bunch of stories culled from other ancient literature. Significantly, he rejects a distinct bifurcation between "myth" and history, asserting that "God *transformed* the ancient myths so that Israel's story would come to focus on its God, the real one" (Enns 2005, p. 54). As such, he views the Bible as a culturally-conditioned product, but one that still communicates theological truth.

Enns asserts that the Old Testament is a highly diverse collection of literature and

that diversity is inherent to the Old Testament text and not imposed onto the Bible from outside attacks on its unity.... [I]t is an important part of Scripture's own dynamic. (Enns 2005, p. 73)

In defense of his point, Enns adduces several examples from multiple Old Testament books (cf. Enns 2005, pp. 74–107). Enns's definition of "diversity" is, however, what many others would generally call "contradiction," in the sense that one text contradicts the historical, polemical, or theological message of another passage. At any rate, Enns concludes that this diversity shows that "there is no superficial unity" to the Bible (Enns 2005, p. 108). Whatever unity is to be found in the text, Enns argues, is a unity "that should ultimately be sought in Christ himself, the living word" (Enns 2005, p. 110).

Compounding the difficulty of reading the theologically-diverse text of the Old Testament, Enns contends that the New Testament authors did not always interpret and apply the text of the Old Testament in a straightforward fashion. The three points which Enns makes about the New Testament use of the Old are as follows: First, "The New Testament authors were not engaging the Old

Testament in an effort to remain consistent with the original context and intention of the Old Testament author." Second, "They were indeed commenting on what the text meant." Third, "The hermeneutical attitude they embodied should be embraced and followed by the church today." He then concludes, "To put it succinctly, the New Testament authors were explaining what the Old Testament means *in light of Christ's coming*" (Enns 2005, pp.115–116). In order to validate his points, Enns offers a brief survey of biblical interpretation in the second temple period (Enns 2005, pp.116–132), and then, arguing that the Apostolic writers operated according to similar interpretive methodology, adduces several examples of New Testament texts that, he believes, provide evidence that the New Testament authors interpreted and applied the Old Testament text in a manner incommensurate with the original meanings of those respective texts (Enns 2005, pp.132–142; Enns mentions the use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15; Isaiah 49:8 in 2 Corinthians 6:2; Abraham's "seed" in Galatians 3:16, 29; Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26–27; and Psalm 95:9–10 in Hebrews 3:7–11).

Reception of Enns's work by the conservative Christian academic community has been largely negative. G.K. Beale, in his review of Enns's book, expresses great concern over Enns's contention that the writers of Scripture (especially Genesis) presented myth as history. Despite Enns's highly nuanced view of the meaning of "myth," Beale, upon careful reading, concludes, "[Enns] uses 'myth' still in the essentially normal sense, that is, stories without an 'essential historical' foundation" (Beale 2006, p.297). The natural consequence of Enns's view of the inclusion of myth within inspired Scripture means that there are no "grounds upon which one can decide what parts of OT history are historically true and which are not" (Beale 2006, p.296). Beale refrains from niceties in his conclusion on the matter, saying,

It is apparent that Enns's overall point... is to affirm that 'interpreted history' means significant varying degrees of distortion of the record of that history for the purpose of making a theological point. (Beale 2006, p. 298)

So too, Beale contends that Enns merely uses the word "diversity" as a covering for what he really means—error (Beale 2006, p. 300). Later, in examining Enns's assumptions on the issue of socially constructed cultures, presuppositions, and biblical interpretation, Beale writes,

Of course, Enns himself also has his own preconceptions (which he surely would admit), and these are preconceptions formulated by his own socially constructed reasoning abilities. Why could not his preconceptions be the ones that are distorting Scripture? (Beale 2006, p. 306)

He does not shy away from noting that he thinks Enns “has been too influenced by some of the extremes of postmodern thought” (Beale 2006, p.303).¹³

D.A. Carson, much like Beale, in his review of Enns’s work, takes issue with Enns’s assertion that the “historical” texts of the Old Testament (specifically in Genesis) contain “transformed” (that is, reinterpreted) myths. In particular, Carson observes that

while Enns rightly asserts that there is no convincing evidence of direct borrowing between Genesis and the relevant ANE accounts of creation and flood, he does little to point out the differences. That the categories of thought are remarkably similar is obvious, and should cause no surprise among those who fully recognize how much the biblical revelation is grounded in history...; yet competent scholars have laid out the differences between Genesis and the other ANE accounts with penetrating attention both to detail and the big picture, and Enns does not interact with that literature. Had he done so, perhaps his argument would have been a tad less tendentious. (Carson 2006, p.34)

Many of Carson’s concerns with Enns’s book relate to Enns’s assertions on the New Testament’s use and interpretation of the Old Testament. Contrary to Enns’s arguments, Carson contends that there is a marked distinction between how Paul and the other New Testament writers employed Old Testament passages in their arguments vis-à-vis the use of the Old Testament by their contemporaries. He writes,

If Paul’s way of reading the Hebrew Bible, the OT, is methodologically indifferntiable from the way of reading deployed by his unconverted Jewish colleagues, how are they managing to come to such different conclusions while reading the same texts? (Carson 2006, p.40)

He remarks that the difference comes down to much more than Paul’s belief in the resurrected Christ (Carson 2006, p.41). Rather, he asserts that the New Testament authors were well aware of the theological trajectories of the Old Testament. Accordingly, he states:

Their hermeneutic in such exposition, though it overlaps with that of the Jews, is distinguishable from it, and at certain points is much more in line with the actual shape of Scripture: it rests on the unpacking of the Bible’s storyline. (Carson 2006, p.44)

Carson concludes appropriately,

The failure to get this tension right—by “right,” I mean in line with what Scripture actually says of itself—is what makes Enns sound disturbingly like my *Doktorvater* on one point. Barnabas Lindars’s first book was *New Testament Apologetic?* The thesis was very simple, the writing elegant: the NT writers came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he had been crucified and raised from the dead. They then ransacked their Bible, what we call the OT, to find proof texts to justify their new-found theology, and ended up yanking things out of context, distorting the original context, and so forth. Enns is more respectful, but it is difficult to see how his position differs substantively from that of Lindars, except that he wants to validate these various approaches to the OT partly on the ground that the hermeneutics involved were already in use (we might call this the “Hey, everybody’s doing it” defense), and partly on the ground that he himself accepts, as a “gift of faith,” that Jesus really is the Messiah. This really will not do. The NT writers, for all that they understand that acceptance of who Jesus is comes as a gift of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:14), never stint at giving *reasons* for the hope that lies within them, *including reasons for reading the Bible as they do*. The “fulfillment” terminology they deploy is too rich and varied to allow us to imagine that they are merely reading in what is in fact not there. They would be the first to admit that *in their own psychological history* the recognition of Jesus came before their understanding of the OT; but they would see this as evidence of moral blindness. As a result, they would be the first to insist, with their transformed hermeneutic (not least the reading of the sacred texts in salvation-historical sequence), that *the Scriptures themselves can be shown to anticipate a suffering Servant-King, a Priest-King, a new High*

¹³ See also the response to Beale’s initial review article by Enns (2006b, pp.313–326). Enns does little in the way of adjusting his views in response to Beale’s objections, though he does seek to clarify his position on certain issues. Particularly telling is his explanation on the topic of inerrancy: “Beale is also concerned that I only use the term ‘inerrancy’ once in the entire book. This is true, but the reason for it is not that I do not hold to it. My concern is that inerrancy can be too quickly raised to stifle discussion rather than to promote it. Saying ‘inerrancy’ to those struggling with biblical and extrabiblical phenomena will not settle the issues with which these readers are struggling. They are seeking ways to articulate a high view of Scripture, and the way to help them do that is by providing sensitive theological models to address the problems they face. Again, such models will help them to see that the issue is not whether the Bible is inerrant (which is what Beale seems to think is at stake), but how the Bible is inerrant, in view of the form that Scripture takes, by God’s will and providence” (Enns 2006b, p.323). Continued interaction with Enns’s view on inspiration by Beale provided the basis for his later book, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (2008), a book which met with a scathing review by Enns (2009a, pp.628–631). Enns writes, “The value of *Erosion* is that Beale is very clear about what he thinks constitutes a proper Evangelical view of biblical authority. In fact, he seems to have drawn a line in the sand, and it is good to know what Beale thinks Evangelical biblical scholarship should look like” (Enns 2009a, p.629). He concludes, “Beale laments that the doctrine of inerrancy is eroding. In my opinion, the reason for this is not the insidious influence of a new breed of Evangelical scholars but the very thinking displayed in this book. If *Erosion* represents the kind of work necessary to defend the model of inerrancy Beale fancies, the erosion he fears may quickly become a landslide” (Enns 2009a, p.631).

Priest, and so forth. In other words, Enns develops the first point but disavows the second. The result is that he fails to see how Christian belief is genuinely warranted by Scripture. No amount of appeal to the analogy of the incarnation will make up the loss. (Carson 2006, pp. 44–45)

In addition to Beale and Carson, Bruce K. Waltke has expressed doubts about the helpfulness of Enns's work, suggesting that his model

represents the Mosaic Law as flexible, the inspired religion of Israel in its early stage as somewhat doctrinally misleading, the Chronicler's harmonization as incredible, NT teachings as based on questionable historical data, and an apologetic for Jesus of Nazareth's Messianic claim as arbitrary. (Waltke 2009b, p. 83)

More so than Beale and Carson, Waltke interacts with Enns's work on an exegetical level, offering alternative explanations to the interpretational difficulties that Enns adduced in chapters 3 and 4 of his book. It is beyond the scope of this paper to look in detail at each of the responses. The point is, as Waltke makes clear, that "Every text on which Enns's model of inspiration depends is open to other viable interpretations" (Waltke 2009a, p. 117). Waltke seems to have little difficulty in harmonizing the supposedly "diverse" Old Testament texts, which may well indicate that Enns is predisposed to "finding" contradictions, rather than attempting to see what the collective witness of Scripture is attempting to communicate.

Additionally, Waltke disagrees with Enns on the New Testament writers' use of the Old Testament. Getting to the heart of the issue, he writes,

As an alternative to interpreting the apostles as grounding some of their doctrines in the allegedly fictitious traditions of Second Temple literature, I prefer to think that these stories cited by the apostle are historically true. In my opinion Second Temple literature preserved, not generated, these non-biblical stories. The apostles seem to represent these ancient traditions as real history and so has the church in the history of interpretation. *If the stories are not true, the theological truth based on them is also called into question. A community to sustain itself must be based on reality, not on fiction.* Though Enns is trying to be helpful, he does not succeed. (Waltke 2009b, p. 93, emphasis added)

Continued interaction between Enns and Waltke (cf. Enns 2009b, pp. 97–114) brought little resolution to their differences, except on a select number of minor issues. In the end, however, the inevitable conclusion that Waltke reached is that Enns's view of biblical inerrancy and infallibility does not reside within an orthodox definition. He boldly contends:

Tensions in the Bible do not trouble me; they mirror the messiness of life and promote profitable

theological reflection and growth. But Enns takes us beyond diversity. His alleged entailments of his interpretation of the model of incarnational inspiration include—at least so it seems to me—such human foibles as contradictions, mistaken teachings in earlier revelation, and building doctrines on peshet, arbitrary interpretations, and he does not correct me. These assertions go beyond mere tensions and call into question the cogency of the biblical writers, the inerrancy of the Bible's Source, and the infallibility of the divine/human texts. (Waltke 2009a, pp. 127–128)

By far the most thorough review of Enns's former work has come from the pen of James Scott. Over against Enns's contention that a proper doctrine of Scripture can be derived from the examination of the characteristics (as opposed to the statements) of Scripture itself, Scott asserts:

It is illogical to suppose that the Bible's own doctrine of Scripture can be modified by any study of the data. Our understanding of what Scripture says about itself can be corrected only if the meticulous exegesis of its relevant didactic statements yields a superior understanding of them. (Scott 2009a, p. 132)

He charges that Enns ignores what Scripture actually says about itself with respect to the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy, allowing his interpretation of biblical "behavior" to trump the clear interpretation of biblical statements (Scott 2009a, pp. 134–135). Scott later posits that the only course to follow is to determine precisely what the Bible teaches about itself in relation to inspiration, "and see what implications that doctrine has for our handling of Scripture" (Scott 2009a, p. 137).

As Scott demonstrates, Scripture claims to be the written word of God (2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 3:7; 4:12; cf. Romans 3:2), though it was transcribed by humans (cf. Romans 10:19–20). Scripture often mentions both the divine and human authors together (Acts 3:18; 28:25; Romans 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). Scott thus concludes that

This human instrumentality implies that God is the originating and controlling author of Scripture. That is, he determined what men would write in the Bible, not only as their message, but more importantly as his message. God used the writing efforts of inspired men to speak his word to us. He did not merely approve or endorse what they wrote, or have enough influence on what they wrote that he could claim it as his own; rather, he caused them, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to write what they wrote. God did not concur with what the human writers wanted to write; they concurred with what he wanted to write. (Scott 2009a, p. 141)

Of natural consequence to this reality, therefore, the following remains true: Whether they [the human

authors] were writing things learned by special revelation or by ordinary means, "a supernatural divine influence superintended, directed and controlled the writers of Scripture when they were writing." The human aspect of inspiration, then, is not the writer's prior nonrevelational learning, but his active, thoughtful concurrence during the inspiring work of the Spirit and willful writing in accordance with the impetus of the Spirit. (Scott 2009a, p. 145)

Additionally, several aspects of God's own character have an incredibly direct bearing on Scripture, three of which are highlighted by Scott:

First, God is omniscient: he "knows everything" (1 John 3:20); "his understanding is beyond measure" (Ps 147:5). From this we can infer that God cannot say or cause to be written in his word anything that he thinks is true, but in fact is false. The statements of Scripture cannot and therefore do not manifest any ignorance on God's part. Inspiration does not render the human writer omniscient (see, e.g., 1 Cor 1:16) or make the biblical text exhaustive of divine knowledge at any point (cf. 1 Cor 13:8–12), but the Author of Scripture nonetheless speaks out of his omniscience. Second, God is truthful. That is, he always communicates the truth. "God is true" (John 3:33); hence, his words are "trustworthy and true" (Rev 22:6). He "will not lie" (1 Sam 15:29); he "never lies" (Titus 1:2). Because God is omniscient, he will not unintentionally say something that is untrue; because he is truthful, he will not intentionally say something that is untrue. God not only intends to speak the truth, but, because he is omniscient, always succeeds in stating what is true. Because inspiration gives us "the immediate word of God Himself," Warfield states, it gives to Scripture "a trustworthiness... which is altogether Divine."

Third, God is immutable, or unchangeable. "I the LORD do not change" (Mal 3:6). He remains "the same" forever (Ps 102:27). Thus, his word is "unchangeable" (Heb 6:17–18). He "cannot deny himself" (2 Tim 2:13), and thus he is always self-consistent and noncontradictory. If he is immutable, his truth, as expressed in Scripture, never changes. If he is self-consistent and noncontradictory, his written word must be free of inconsistencies and contradictions. (Scott 2009a, pp. 148–49)

Scott also contends,

Since God is an objective Being, it follows that his truth is also objective. There is one standard of objective truth, and that is the knowledge held by God. The word of God expresses that knowledge, and thus is objectively true, conforming to what really is. There is no human standard, ancient or modern, that determines what truth is. There is only the eternal and perfect standard of divine knowledge. Whenever God speaks, he necessarily speaks in accordance

with that standard. Thus, everything that he says in his written word, the Scriptures, expresses and is perfectly consistent with the objective truth of divine knowledge.

Because the God of all truth is the author of Scripture, we say that Scripture *cannot* contain any error (i.e., is *infallible*) and therefore *does not* contain any error (i.e., is *inerrant*). It is without error in the sense that it is consistent with what God knows to be true and what is objectively true in God's Being and in his creation (including what has happened in history). Furthermore, since God is immutable and his word is therefore self-consistent, it follows that no passage of Scripture contradicts or is inconsistent with any other passage of Scripture. (Scott 2009a, p. 149)

To summarize, Enns's work suggests that the Bible promotes erroneous worldviews, contains discrepancies, and makes faulty interpretations. However, such a claim directly conflicts with what the Bible clearly maintains about itself, as well as with what it reveals of the character of its divine Author, God Himself. Scott rightly quips:

Enough of this double-talk; error and contradiction cannot be redefined as integrity and trustworthiness to suit Enns's view of an error- and contradiction-laden "word of God." Without an objective standard of truth... Enns's whole position reduces to irrationality. Because he does not start with the immutable God of absolute truth, who speaks only in accordance with that truth—doctrine revealed in Scripture, not dreamed up by theologians and imposed on it—Enns's position is self-destructive in the end. (Scott 2009a, p. 154)

Scott further recognizes that, while Scripture is invariably true, it does interact with other sources and beliefs that are not true. Nevertheless, Scripture often refers to ancient concepts and beliefs without endorsing whatever mythological baggage clings to them (Scott 2009a, pp. 159–160). The idea of "accommodation" must not allow for the endorsement of error. Notably, Christ Himself, in interacting with the religious leadership of His day, sought to correct errant perspectives rather than "accommodating" Himself to His audience and assuming, if even for the sake of argument, that their views were true. Scott rightly notes,

Stating a known falsehood, either in a narrative of what ostensibly happened or as the premise of an argument, is lying, pure and simple. What one's hearers happen to believe is irrelevant. (Scott 2009a, p. 162)

In relation to Paul particularly, Scott contends, Most people who speak of what Paul meant are focusing on what Paul understood as he wrote, as if he was not inspired, and in that they err. (Scott 2009a, p. 169)

The meaning of the text is that which is underwritten by God, the meaning which He intends for the text as communicated in the precise words and expressions He employs. Scott adds:

We must always bear in mind that the human writer's understanding of what he was writing under inspiration was never the complete meaning, in all of its depth and implications, as understood by God. The human writers held many views, some of them quite erroneous, but the significance of inspiration is that out of the mix of ideas in their minds, only true statements were written down. (Scott 2009a, p. 170)

Consequently, when it comes to the New Testament's use of the Old Testament,

If the NT asserts that a certain meaning is in an OT text, then it must be there, or else the word of God is inconsistent and its Author is making false statements. (Scott 2009a, p. 174)¹⁴

This is something which Enns apparently cannot accept.

The point behind this lengthy presentation of responses to *Inspiration and Incarnation* is to show that Enns's incarnational model of the inspiration of Scripture is deeply flawed at multiple points. It is both presuppositionally and exegetically unsound. As such, it cannot serve as a viable foundation for the determination of a true biblical perspective on creation and human origins.

Predetermined outlook on human origins

Enns's perspective on inspiration is not the only questionable factor underlying his conclusions in *The Evolution of Adam*. In fact, it ought to go without saying that his basic assumptions concerning the validity of human evolution (and, by extent, his belief in evolutionary theory as a whole) are deserving of critique. Darwinian evolution, in spite of all of its pedigree, has not actually been proven. In truth, because evolutionary theory is conjecture about past events made in the light of certain interpretations of modern data pieced together by fallible human interpreters relying on particular (mostly philosophical) axioms, it can never be proven scientifically. This fact alone suggests that evolution's foundation is shaky; however, when it is combined with the fact that there is no observable evidence confirming the continuation of evolution in the present (and there is certainly no written record documenting the progression of evolution in the past), it becomes all the more questionable whether Enns is warranted in affirming so tenaciously that the theory of evolution is beyond "any reasonable scientific doubt" (Enns 2012, p. ix).

Because this is not a scientific report, this paper will not seek to rebut the theory of evolution in toto;

however, it will seek to engage with Enns's assumption of evolution as a fact in view of (1) the terminology and theology of the Genesis text, (2) the nature of science and its implications for the study of human origins, and (3) the assumptions and logic underlying evolutionary theory.

First, Enns's assumption that biological evolution is a fact runs contrary to the terminology and theology of the Genesis text. Most notably, the repetition of the phrase "according to its kind" (לְמִינֵהוּ; Genesis 1:12, 21, 25) indicates that there is a distinguishable order between the various creatures. While it is sometimes difficult to determine scientifically where the barriers are located, the fact remains that the Bible teaches fixity of the created kinds (not, as some would erroneously claim, the fixity of species). The text leaves no room for the supposition that one kind may give rise to another, regardless of the time involved. Naturally, Enns might object that this amounts to reading Genesis' creation narrative counter to its function of setting forth a story of "proto-Israel" and expecting from it answers to questions of origins that it, as an ancient narrative, was not prepared to answer. However, if this is truly the case, that is, if Genesis does not really intend to seriously address the question of cosmic origins and if it is really about the beginning of Israel rather than the beginning of mankind, why is there such a heavy focus on distinctions in the created order in the first place? The repetition of the phrase "according to its kind" becomes completely irrelevant!

Additionally, looking at the issue from a more theological perspective, it can be observed in multiple locations in the text that mankind is a special creation of God, completely distinct from the animals. This is pointedly evident in Genesis 1:26–27, which describes man as being made in God's image. Enns states:

Although what "image of God" means in its fullest biblical witness may be open for discussion, in Genesis it does not refer to a soul or a psychological or spiritual quality that separates humans from animals. It refers to humanity's role of ruling God's creation as God's representatives. (Enns 2012, p. xv)

There is clearly a measure of validity to Enns's point in view of the connections drawn in Genesis 1:26 and 28 and, though this author believes that a more nuanced understanding of the *imago dei* is warranted based upon certain contextual factors in Genesis 1; for the time being, Enns's view of the image of God will be assumed as accurate. Even granting that the *imago dei* concerns only humanity's role as vice regent over God's creation, this still necessitates seeing a critical distinction between mankind and animals: those who rule versus those who are ruled. This is confirmed

¹⁴ For further critique regarding Enns's exegetical work, see Scott 2009b.

by Genesis 9:6 which speaks of murder as a capital offence because it inherently involves the defacing of the divine image in man. Given that Genesis 9:6 speaks to a post-Fall world and is given immediately following God's pronouncement that animals may be killed for the purpose of food (Genesis 9:2–4), there is explicit textual warrant for seeing humans as being uniquely valued by God. The text pounds a sharp wedge between man and animals, thus demanding that man is seen as much more than an intelligent quadruped evolved from a common ancestor along with other primates. Surely this is also one of the unavoidable theological truths taught in Genesis 2: 4–25, which pointedly presents man as specially and uniquely crafted by the creative powers of God (see especially verses 7 and 22).¹⁵

Second, Enns's belief that evolution is an indisputable fact extends beyond the bounds of what can be proven scientifically. The chief argument that Enns adduces for the validity of human evolution are the conclusions of the Human Genome Project, completed in 2003 (Enns 2012, p.ix). However, the conclusions of the Human Genome Project are hardly beyond contestation. Like the theory of evolution itself, the conclusions adduced by the Human Genome Project are limited by at least two factors: First, they are limited by the innate boundaries of scientific research. Science is capable of confirming or denying through the process of experimentation certain facts of the present-day world. However, because scientific experimentation can only access data that exists in the present, any bearing that experiments such as those of the Human Genome Project can have on the discovery of facts lost to history is limited. Science can never actually prove anything about the past; it can only test present data from which inquirers may develop ideas about the past. Second, the conclusions of the Human Genome Project are limited by the presuppositions feeding into the study. In any kind of scientific research, one's starting assumptions have a direct (sometimes drastic) impact on one's conclusions. As for evolution itself, since it cannot actually be confirmed scientifically, it is reduced to being nothing more than "a matter of sheer faith," a "dogmatic belief" that is "no more 'scientific' than any other kind of religious faith" (MacArthur 2003, p.55).

Because those interpreting the results of the Human Genome Project (such as Francis Collins) presumed that biological evolution was a fact, it is hardly surprising that the conclusions reached reflected that underlying belief. Had a similar project been conducted with its researchers assuming an orthodox view of Scripture, it is conceivable that the conclusions would have differed considerably. Indeed, not everyone has drawn the same conclusions when faced with the study of human genetics. For instance, Fazale Rana and Hugh Ross (who, as adamant proponents of progressive creationism, hardly fall under Enns's despised heading of "strict biblical literalists") addressed the findings of the Human Genome Project, stating that it largely agrees with various genetic diversity studies and demonstrates that "humanity had a recent origin from a single location" (Rana and Ross 2005, p.62). The point is not that Rana and Ross are necessarily correct in their interpretation of the data, or that their model for the interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis is viable. However, the fact that they draw different conclusions about the origin of humanity in the face of the same genetic data demonstrates that even those not committed to a wholly literal view of Genesis do not always concur with Enns's belief that evolution is an irrefutable fact.

Even if there was not some degree of skepticism regarding the conclusions of the Human Genome Project, the fact remains that the theory of evolution leaves many other questions unanswered when it comes to other important lines of evidence. For instance, the concept of human evolution is notoriously lacking when it comes to fossil evidence. Marvin L. Lubenow goes so far as to say that

human evolution has been falsified in that virtually every chart of human evolution since 1990 has question marks or dotted lines at the most crucial point—the transition from australopithecines to true humans. (Lubenow 2004, p.326)

The conclusion of Lubenow's book on the exposé of the shoddy evidence for any transitional forms is crucial:

For 150 years, evolutionists have paraded the fossils they have found as evidence for evolution. They promised more and better fossils in the future, hoping that luck and the tooth fairy would validate their

¹⁵ Surely, another important dimension of being made in the image of God is man's capacity to relate to God. On this, the great apologist Francis Schaeffer is worth noting: "What is it that differentiates Adam and Eve from the rest of creation? We find the answer in Genesis 1:26—'And God said, Let us make man in our image...' What differentiates Adam and Eve from the rest of creation is that they were made in the image of God. For twentieth-century man this phrase, *the image of God*, is as important as anything in Scripture, because men today can no longer answer that crucial question, 'Who am I?' In his own naturalistic theories, with the uniformity of cause and effect in a closed system, with an evolutionary concept of a mechanical, chance parade from atom to man, man has lost his unique identity. As he looks out upon the world, as he faces the machine, he cannot tell himself from what he faces. He cannot distinguish himself from other things" (Schaeffer 1972, p.31). Clearly, though, the Bible sharply distinguishes man from the animals. Schaeffer continues, "The Christian knows that in the flow of history, man comes from a different origin. It is not that God has not made both man and the great machine of the universe, but that he has made man different from the rest of the universe. And that which differentiates man from machine is that his basic relationship is upward rather than downward or horizontal. He is created to relate to God in a way that none of the other created beings are" (Schaeffer 1972, p.32).

hopes. In the early 1970s, when it became obvious that we had a more than adequate sampling of the fossil record, the grim reality dawned that those transitional fossils were not to be found. The punctuated equilibria model of evolution was then invented to explain why they were not found. However, it is imperative to emphasize that the punctuated equilibria model does not remove the *need* for transitional fossils. It just explains why those fossils have not been found. Certainly, the punctuated equilibria theory is unique. It must be the only theory ever put forth in the history of science that claims to be scientific but then explains why evidence for it cannot be found.

The popular myth is that the hominid fossil evidence virtually proves human evolution. The reality is that this evidence has been a disappointment to evolutionists and is being de-emphasized. In actuality, the human fossil evidence falsifies the concept of human evolution. The Bible, the Word of the living God, clearly declares that humans were specially created. The human fossil evidence is completely in accord with what the Scriptures teach. (Lubenow 2004, p. 334)

The point is that the alleged conclusions of the Human Genome Project which Enns sets forth as comprehensive proof of human evolution, even if they did not contradict the biblical text (and they certainly do), still cannot overcome the problems that evolution faces in other branches of science, such as paleoanthropology. The evidence is simply lacking.¹⁶

Third, Enns's attempt to reconcile Christianity and evolution is inconsistent with the logic behind the development of evolutionary theory. The theory of evolution exists as one of fallen man's attempts to explain the origin of life (and of the universe) apart from a Creator or, more specifically, the God of the Bible. To reintroduce God back into a world fashioned by evolution is counterintuitive. The unholy union between biblical Christianity and evolutionary theory prompted one anonymous writer to make the following comment almost a century ago. Though lengthy and somewhat dated, it is worthy of careful note:

When we consider that evolutionary theory was conceived in agnosticism, and born and nurtured in infidelity; that it is the backbone of the destructive higher criticism which has so viciously assailed both the integrity and authority of the Scriptures; that it utterly fails in explaining—what Genesis makes so clear—those tremendous facts in human history and

human nature, the presence of evil and its attendant suffering; that it offers nothing but a negative reply to that supreme question of the ages, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" that it, in fact, substitutes for a personal God "an infinite and eternal Energy" which is without moral qualities or positive attributes, is not wise, or good, or merciful or just; cannot love or hate, reward or punish; that it denies the personality of God and man, and then presents them, together with nature, as under a process of evolution which has neither beginning nor end; and regards man as being simply a passing form of this universal Energy, and thus without free will, moral responsibility, or immortality, it becomes evident to every intelligent layman that such a system can have no possible points of contact with Christianity. He may well be pardoned if he views with astonishment ministers of the Gospel still clinging to it, and harbors a doubt of either their sincerity or their sanity.

If it be said that most ministers who accept evolution do so only in its milder form, the supernaturalistic which permits of belief in a personal God, but claims that evolution is His method of working, man and nature being products of it, it may be said in reply that this view, quite as much as the naturalistic, necessitates the giving up of the account in Genesis, and generally carries with it the belief that the Bible is but a history of the evolution of the religious idea, and not what it everywhere claims to be, a Divine and supernatural revelation. (Anonymous 2008, pp. 92–93)

Not only have conservative Christians rejected the compatibility of evolution with biblical truth; proponents of evolutionary theory in the secular arena have also viewed the combination of evolution with Christian theism as logically inconsistent. Richard Dawkins expounds on the irreconcilability between a sovereign, all-wise Creator God and the haphazard process of natural selection which is the "driving force" of evolutionary development:

Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind, and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the *blind* watchmaker. (Dawkins 1996, p. 5)¹⁷

¹⁶ It is worth noting that the theory of evolution faces challenges from multiple angles, not just human genetics and paleoanthropology. Questions arising in the fields of astronomy, geology, and physics have gone unanswered, and serious studies by highly qualified specialists in these fields have demonstrated in recent works that the current evolutionary model is scientifically untenable in the face of observable evidence. Alex Williams and John Hartnett (2005) have effectively undermined the astrophysical assumptions of big bang cosmology. Likewise the RATE team has completely dismantled the standard view of radiometric dating undergirding evolution's chronological assumptions (see Vardiman, Snelling, and Chaffin 2000; 2005)

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion of other gross logical inconsistencies between Christianity and evolutionary theory, see Joubert 2012a (pp. 99–114; cf. 2012b, pp. 59–71).

Christianity and evolution, in any of its forms, is simply incompatible. Evolution of natural consequence clashes with some of the most foundational truths of Scripture, degrading human dignity by making him a higher form of animal, opposing sound reasoning by replacing an all-powerful Creator with the non-entity called “chance,” and demeaning the truth of Scripture by turning it into a colorful metaphor, a story that conveys some semblance of theological insight, but does not actually convey fact about human origins as it claims to do (MacArthur 2003, pp.72–84). There is no way that biblical Christianity and evolution can be responsibly, logically harmonized. They tell two different stories, one which assumes God and His creative work from the outset (Genesis 1:1), and the other which was forged in the crucible of the minds of those bent on destroying God. Christianity, at least as the Bible describes it, and the theory of evolution represent an either/or choice; they are not reconcilable.

To conclude, therefore, Enns's interpretation of the text is shaped by his preconceived conclusion that biological evolution is true—a position for which he can adduce no proof, only the purported, presuppositionally-shaded “evidences” developed by those working from the position of decidedly anti-biblical axioms. His conclusion flies in the face of the terminology and theology of the text itself, and his attempt to forge a bond between Christianity and evolution utterly defeats the purpose for which biological evolution was formulated in the first place.

Presupposed understanding of the biblical text

Compounding the problem of Enns's errant view of inspiration and his unwarranted assumptions concerning human evolution is his poor handling of the biblical text. This is evidenced nowhere better than in his statements about the composition and function of Genesis and the Pentateuch. The assumption that he (and others holding to similar views) in the modern age can more accurately reconstruct “how things really happened” than those living at the time of the writing of the biblical text smacks of arrogance. By contrast, the witness of Scripture for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is incredibly strong. The Pentateuch itself forcefully implies that Moses was indeed its author (Exodus 17:14; 24:4, 7; 34:27; Numbers 33:1–2; Deuteronomy 31:9, 11). Similarly, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is assumed by later Old Testament writings (Joshua 1:7–8; 8:31–32; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1; Daniel 9:11–13; Malachi 4:4). Additionally, the New Testament affirms that Moses indeed authored the Torah (Matthew 19:8; Mark 12:26; John 5:46–47; 7:19; Acts 3:22; Romans 10:5; Hebrews 10:28).¹⁸ Gleason Archer and others have compiled impressive lists of biblical and extra-biblical evidences indicating the considerable antiquity of the Pentateuch and implicating Moses as the author.¹⁹ The point is that the Enns's adamant denial of Mosaic authorship and the antiquity of the Pentateuch (Enns 2012, p.23) in the face of such considerable evidence makes it impossible to believe that his low view of the composition of Genesis does not play into his low view of the interpretation of its content.

¹⁸ Even if it is assumed that Jesus and the New Testament writers were merely accommodating themselves to the common view of the time (that Moses wrote the Pentateuch), it is impossible to hold to the Documentary Hypothesis without attributing to them either gross deception or considerable ignorance.

¹⁹ Archer lists seven major lines of internal evidence implicating Moses as the author of the Pentateuch: (1) The author of the Pentateuch shows attention to detail in a manner befitting only one who actually partook in the incredible events described (for example, the geography of Elim [Exodus 15:27] and the appearance and taste of manna [Numbers 11:7–8]). (2) The author of the Pentateuch shows notable acquaintance with life in Egypt, such as could only be expected of a resident from the time period in question (for example, the Joseph narrative; Genesis 37; 39–50). (3) The author of the Pentateuch writes from the perspective of a foreigner to the land of Canaan and as a native to the land of Egypt when referencing the flora, fauna, creatures and geography of the Promised Land (for example, Genesis 13:10). (4) The author of the Pentateuch presents from Exodus to Numbers an environment that is unmistakably that of a desert (for example, Leviticus 16:10). (5) The author of the Pentateuch, namely in Genesis, references archaic customs which did not continue until the time of the alleged writing of J, E, D, or P (for example, the purchase of a cave in Machpelah [Genesis 23] or the validity of the oral deathbed will [Genesis 49]). (6) The author of the Pentateuch uses archaic Hebrew words and phrases inconsistent with Hebrew literature known to be of a later time (most notably the spelling of the pronoun “she” with a *waw* instead of a *yod*). Such bizarre usages cannot be explained apart from the assumption that the texts are genuinely ancient. (7) The author of the Pentateuch arranged the whole work as a progressive whole, evidencing multiple stages of revelation—something utterly inexplicable from the standpoint of assuming the truth of the Documentary Hypothesis. Archer likewise presents several distinct lines of external evidences, a few of which are listed here: (1) The presence of written records predating Moses, such as the Ras Shamra Tablets, denies the Wellhausen claim that Moses could not have written in the fifteenth century BC. Note also the Gezer Calendar, from ca. 925 BC, which shows that the art of Hebrew writing was well-known and widely practiced by this point. (2) The unearthing of Ur proved it to be a flourishing city ca. 2000 BC and the discovery of the name Abram on an Akkadian tablet dating to the sixteenth century BC lends credibility to the Genesis account of Abraham (note also the unearthing of Bethel and Shechem, likewise important in the Genesis narrative). (3) The discovery of the Nuzi Tablets, dating from the fifteenth century BC, affirm the validity of many of the customs and practices noted in the biblical account of Abraham (note also the Hittite Legal Code in connection with Genesis 23). (4) The Babylonian Code of Hammurabi shows numerous similarities to the codes in the Pentateuch, thus demonstrating the fallacy of the Wellhausen assumption that complex codes could not have been written until the post-exilic period. (5) The Egyptian Execration Texts of the Twelfth Dynasty, the Tel el-Amarna Tablets (ca. 1400–1370 BC), and the “Israel” Stele of King Merneptah (ca. 1229 BC) affirm the political situations of their respective eras in Palestine as recorded in the Pentateuch (Archer 2007, pp.94–99, 141–49). In view of the internal evidence for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and the external factors which undermine the credibility of the Wellhausen position, the Documentary Hypothesis is best discarded.

Enns's treatment of the New Testament text is just as poor. While he is right in asserting that the issue of an historical Adam has perhaps the greatest bearing on Paul's arguments in Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:20–58, the fact remains that many other passages also militate against the idea of an evolutionary origin for mankind. The fact that the Old Testament authors assumed the cosmology presented in Genesis is quite evident (for example, Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 102:25; Isaiah 44:24), and this point need not be belabored. However, when it comes to the New Testament, it must be recognized that there are more than a couple of isolated references by Paul to be dealt with. The following New Testament passages are but an incomplete sample of those which clearly assume, imply, or teach a literal view of the Genesis creation account (that is, as a historical record of how the world and humanity came into existence by direct act of God's creative work in six ordinary days): Matthew 19:4–6; Mark 10:6–9; 13:19–20; Luke 10:50–51; Acts 3:21; 4:24; 14:15–17; 17:24–31; Romans 1:18–25; 8:19–23; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Colossians 1:15–20; 1 Timothy 2:13–14; Hebrews 1:10; 4:1–10; 9:25–26; 11:3–4; James 3:9; 2 Peter 3:3–8; Jude 14; Revelation 4:11; 14:6–7; 21:1–5; 22:2–3.²⁰

In the interest of space and efficiency, only two passages, Matthew 19:4–6 and Jude 14, will be examined here. First, in Matthew 19:4–6, Christ bases His explanation of marriage on the text of Genesis 1. Looking to verse 4, it can be discerned (1) that Christ viewed this passage as authoritative (“Have you not read...”) and (2) that He viewed mankind as having been created in “the beginning.” Based on the New Testament usage of the phrase

from (or in) the beginning” (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς) it is evident that Christ had in view not merely the beginning of the human race or the institution of marriage, but of “the beginning of the whole creation, which encompasses the whole creation period described in Genesis 1. (Mortenson 2008, p. 320)

This being the case, Christ is clearly implying that the account of man's creation as Genesis describes it is to be taken seriously. He leaves no room for any sort of evolutionary belief about humanity's origin. If Christ in this passage, as God-incarnate, is merely accommodating himself to the prevailing view of the day that Genesis 1 was true history, there is at minimum a question about His truthfulness.

Second, Jude 14 makes reference to “Enoch, the seventh from Adam.” Clearly, Jude is assuming

the accuracy of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 1 Chronicles 1. (Luke, in the construction of the genealogy in the third chapter of his gospel makes a similar assumption.) The point here is that Jude, by connecting Adam and Enoch together in the same genealogical line, evidently assumes that both are real historical figures. Jude's assumption leaves no room for taking Adam as a metaphorical figure or as anything less than the living, breathing flesh-and-blood human being that Genesis makes him out to be. If Enns's conclusions about the Bible's allowance for human evolution are to be believed, at what point does the “metaphorical Adam” or Enns's “proto-Israel Adam” give rise to a genealogical line of real historical figures? In other words, where does the line of the metaphorical ancestors of Israel leave off and where does the line of literal ancestors begin? Is Seth a real person? What about Noah? What about Terah? Determination of where the genealogies in Genesis, 1 Chronicles, and Luke begin speaking of actual historical figures is completely arbitrary unless Adam himself is a real human figure, the direct creation of God and head of the human race.

Clearly, explaining Paul's two main references to Adam is not enough; there remains a host of biblical evidence that the Genesis record of creation is to be regarded as fact. That being said, it is necessary to take one last look at Enns's view of Paul. His contention that Paul (especially in Romans 5) references Adam in a way incommensurate with the original meaning of the Genesis account of Adam, and that he “pressed Adam into new service in view of the reality of the empty tomb” (Enns 2012, p. 132), is still intriguing from a theological standpoint. It is worth noting, however, that Mark Seifrid, in his commentary on Romans with special attention to the use of the Old Testament, makes no reference to Paul's theology of the resurrected Christ being imposed on his view of Adam (Seifrid 2007, pp. 628–631). A careful reading of Romans 5 indicates, in fact, that there is nothing within the confines of the text itself to support the idea that Paul reinterprets Adam to suit his own message. Such a notion only arises when it is assumed a priori that the early chapters of Genesis do not speak of the origin of the human race. It seems, therefore, that Enns's contention amounts to nothing more than a clever eisegetical ruse.²¹

Obviously, Enns's understanding of the biblical text in both the Old and New Testaments is skewed. More fundamentally, though, he does not seem

²⁰ On Christ's affirmation of the biblical creation account in His statements in Mark 10:6; 13:19–20; and Luke 11:50–51, see Mortenson 2008, pp. 318–325. For an explanation of many of the key passages in Acts, the New Testament epistles and Revelation, see Minton 2008, pp. 349–369.

²¹ Ron Minton speaks directly to Enns's assertion that Paul (unknowingly) employed myth to explain a spiritual truth. He writes, “Some might object that the Apostles, as children of pre-scientific times, could not distinguish between myth and history. But 1 Timothy 1:4, 4:7, 2 Timothy 4:4, Titus 1:14, and 2 Peter 1:16, all of which use μῦθος (*mythos*, from which we get “myth”), show that the apostles clearly understood the difference between history and myth and between truth and error” (Minton 2008, p. 369).

to recognize the proper foundation necessary for correctly interpreting the text and drawing from it theological truth in the first place. The Bible plainly indicates that the basis for all knowledge and wisdom is the “fear of the LORD” (יִרְאָה יְהוָה; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; cf. Job 28:28). The fear of the LORD entails the utmost reverential awe for God in recognition of and response to His incomparable majesty, immeasurable power, and moral perfection (specifically His attributes of justice and righteousness; for example, Job 37:22–24), as well as His merciful forgiveness (Psalm 130:3–4), His great salvation achieved through the blood of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:17–21), and all His other matchless works (Revelation 15:3–4). At a most basic level, the fear of the LORD is what is demanded of man in view of God’s absolute holiness (Isaiah 8:13). It involves reliance upon God (Psalm 33:18; 147:11) coupled with wholehearted trust in His direction and deliberate avoidance of evil (Proverbs 3:5–7; 8:13) It produces, or is at least evidenced in, obedience to and delight in God’s commandments (Deuteronomy 6:2; 8:6; 10:12–13; Psalm 112:1; Ecclesiastes 12:13). It invariably eventuates in the worship of God (Psalm 22:23; Hebrews 12:28–29; Revelation 19:5).

In view of such passages as Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 1:7, D. Bruce Lockerbie wisely surmises that the fear of the LORD should rightly be the starting point for all Christian thought. He writes, “Wisdom and knowledge, not reason and intuition, are the goal of all cognition, all learning, all thinking. And the beginning point is an obligatory reverential awe before God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth” (Lockerbie 1986, p.9; cf. Mayhue 2003, pp.50–53; MacArthur 2009, pp.86–87). More specifically, as Daniel Castelo argues, the fear of the LORD must provide the necessary grounding for all biblical interpretation and theological method.²² In *The Evolution of Adam*, Enns himself makes an interesting point that relates well to this point. Commenting on theological connections between the early chapters of Genesis and the book of Proverbs, he writes,

The command not to eat of [the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] is not a random test of faith to see if Adam is worthy—to see if this untainted creature might fall from his perch, so to speak. It is about how such knowledge is to be pursued. Knowing the difference between good and evil, right and wrong, is desirable; it is the wish of every parent for their children, the very goal of what it means to be a mature, faithful, covenant-keeping Israelite. This quest to know right from wrong is articulated in Israel’s wisdom literature, namely Proverbs. Having such wisdom is not “bad” in either Genesis or Proverbs; it is the very picture of what God wants for his people. The issue at stake in the garden narrative is how humans are to obtain such knowledge: in God’s way or in some other way. (Enns 2012, pp.88–89)

However, as has already been asserted, wisdom begins with the fear of the LORD and, as is evident in the Genesis narrative and elsewhere, is acquired by listening to God’s revealed word (cf. Deuteronomy 4:10; 17:19; 31:12–13). Apparently Enns overlooks this important principle. By reinterpreting God’s word (Genesis and the Pauline epistles alike), he destroys any opportunity to gain from it the intended meaning and truth that are capable of producing real wisdom. This notwithstanding, the comparison that Enns draws between Genesis 3 and Proverbs is insightful (see especially Enns 2012 pp.89–90). However, the correlation is stripped of the bulk of its meaning and significance if the Genesis account is ahistorical. Succinctly stated, comprehension of the origin of man and of all other related issues (man’s uniqueness, dominion, etc.) begins not with man’s own fallible suppositions (that is, the legitimacy of evolutionary theory) imposed on the text, but with the fear of the LORD and humble submission to the truth which He reveals.

Conclusion

The preceding critique has demonstrated that Enns’s incarnational model of scripture is theologically unsound, that his presupposed view of

²² Castelo writes, “The pursuit of greater clarity regarding the theme of fear in general and the ‘fear of the Lord’ in particular is not simply of importance for biblical interpretation but also for theological construction and Christian praxis. When one assumes that the theological task is not simply the construal of a system of beliefs that has God as its object but also the pursuit of a way of life that is God-directed, then the kinds of dispositions and intentions associated with this pursuit or journey are all-important. Methodologically speaking, theology does not only require articulation but embodiment and performance as well, and when taken as such, the Christian life has to be characterized not only by intellectual habits but by distinct practices and affective dispositions/temper.” He continues, “In other words, the theological task has to do with how one speaks of *and* relates to God, and when one looks at the OT especially, there is no more pronounced claim within the canon as to how believers are to relate to their God than in the ‘fear of the Lord.’ Biblically speaking, the ‘fear of the Lord’ is theological method because the Bible depicts knowing God and relating to God in interrelated ways. From the perspective of Scripture, a theologian is a ‘God-fearer.’ He later posits, “In suffering the *mysterium tremendum et fascians* prior to and throughout the process of engaging in the rational aspects of the theological task, the theologian can be predisposed and sustained in a profound, existential way that subsequently informs and leads to rational activity. In this regard, the ‘fear of the Lord’ is not non-rational but more akin to pre-rational in the sense that it emphasizes vision and perception prior to judgment and action. In this way, fearing God operates in the realm normally considered prolegomenal in that it influences all rational activity that follows; however, the ‘fear of the Lord’ is not simply a principle affirmed at the beginning of a theological treatise that informs the way an emerging system develops. Rather, the fear of the Lord is the disposition that sustains and maintains the task of theological reflection as legitimately theological” (Castelo 2008, pp. 148, 158).

the origin of humanity is scientifically unwarranted, and that his understanding of the purpose and meaning of the creation account both in Genesis and Paul's interpretation of Genesis is biblically unsubstantiated.

What is perhaps most disconcerting about Enns's perspective, however, is that despite holding to it, he nevertheless presumes to remain within the bounds of Christian orthodoxy. Significantly, concerning his perspective on Paul's use of Adam, Enns confesses:

What is lost is Paul's *culturally assumed* explanation for what a *primordial* man had to do with *causing* the reign of death and sin in the world. Paul's understanding of Adam as the cause reflects his time and place. Although Paul interprets this story in his own distinct way and for his own distinct purposes, the Israelite tradition handed to him still provides the theological vocabulary by which he can express his unique theology. There is no hint of modern arrogance (or heresy) whatsoever in a modern reader's making that observation. (Enns 2012, p.124)

On the contrary, this is heresy, for it necessarily ascribes to Paul full responsibility for perpetuating a lie without any textual indicators even hinting at the questionability of the truth value of the "story" in which he grounds his theological assertions. It unavoidably and unashamedly undermines the biblically-based, non-negotiable doctrines of inerrancy and the inspiration of the text by a Being incapable of inventing or endorsing a lie. Enns remarks, "Even without the first man, death and sin are still the universal realities that mark the human condition" (Enns 2012, p.124). Granted; but if humanity does not have a corporate head ultimately responsible for humanity's sin nature, then of logical consequence, there can be no deliverance from sin through Christ, who is likewise the corporate head of all the redeemed. Enns gives lip service to "original sin," being content to have no explanation for why humans are "born in sin" (cf. Enns 2012, p.125). Scripture is clear that all human beings are sinful from conception (Romans 5:19; cf. Job 14:1–4; Psalm 51:5); however, it is insufficient to be content with the ambiguity of the cause, for the nature of the cause provides the basis for why the form of the solution in Christ's substitutionary, atoning death was sufficient. Thus, when it comes to Adam, there is not merely a question of historicity (cf. Enns 2012, p.126), but also of the spiritual and effectual potency of Christ's work. According to Enns, "Paul pressed Adam into new service in view of the reality of the empty tomb" (Enns 2012, p.132). Assuming, however, the validity of human evolution and the non-literal explanation of the Genesis text, this means that Paul, in essence, used a lie to "support" the Gospel truth, and a myth to explain the significance of the present (and historical)

reality of human sin. To so flagrantly dilute this clear biblical teaching as Enns does can only be described as heresy.

What is to be said in response to Enns's contention that his views remain within the bounds of Christian orthodoxy when in fact they promote heresy? What is to be said about Enns's work in the ministry of Christian education when in fact he supports an inherently anti-Christian agenda? The following point, though written almost a century ago, still rings true:

If, as some assert, the clergymen who accepted evolutionary theory were driven to it by fear of ridicule, or of not being thought abreast of "the trend of modern thought," it was not only cowardly on their part, but grossly inconsistent with their Christian profession. For even a partial investigation of the subject must have made clear to them that evolutionism and Christianity are, essentially, intensely antagonistic. The pulpit efforts of some ministers at reconciling them would be laughable from a logical standpoint were the issues involved not so serious and the affects upon some of their unthinking hearers not so deplorable. Certainly, scholarship can no longer be pleaded as an excuse for clinging to Darwinism; and, in the interest of common honesty, these men ought to either drop their materialism or leave the Christian pulpit. (Anonymous 2008, p.94)

The only appropriate conclusion to the matter is, ultimately, to reject Enns's conclusions and to continually strive to combat the propagation of the fallacious, anti-biblical notion of theistic evolution that has, partially thanks to his work, continued to pervade the church. Christians must, as Jude 1: 3 so pointedly puts it, "...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," endeavoring in the process to uphold the whole truth of the Genesis record.

References

- Anonymous. 2008. Evolutionism in the pulpit. In *The fundamentals: A testimony to the truth*, vol.4. ed. R.A. Torrey, A.C. Dixon, et al., pp.88–96. Chicago, Illinois: Testimony Publishing. Repr. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books. (Orig. pub. 1917).
- Archer, G.L. 2007. *A survey of Old Testament introduction*, rev. ed. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Publishers.
- Beale, G.K. 2006. Myth, history, and inspiration: A review article of inspiration and incarnation by Peter Enns. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no.2:287–312.
- Beale, G.K. 2008. *The erosion of inerrancy in evangelicalism: Responding to new challenges to biblical authority*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway.
- Boyd, S.W. 2005. Statistical determination of the genre in biblical Hebrew: Evidence for an historical reading of Genesis 1:1–2:3. In *Radioisotopes and the age of the earth*, vol.2, ed. L. Vardiman, A.A. Snelling, and E.F. Chaffin, pp.631–734. El Cajon, California: Institute for Creation Research.

- Carson, D.A. 2006. Three more books on the Bible: A critical review. *Trinity Journal* 27, no. 1:1–62.
- Castelo, D. 2008. The fear of the Lord as theological method. *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 2, no. 1:147–160.
- Collins, C.J. 2011. *Did Adam and Eve really exist? Who they were and why you should care*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway.
- Dawkins, R. 1996. *The blind watchmaker: Why the evidence of evolution reveals a universe without design*, rev. ed. New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Enns, P. 2005. *Inspiration and incarnation: Evangelicals and the problem of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic.
- Enns, P. 2006a. Bible in context: The continuing vitality of Reformed biblical scholarship. *Westminster Theological Journal* 68, no. 2:203–218.
- Enns, P. 2006b. Response to G.K. Beale's review article of inspiration and incarnation. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49, no. 2:313–326.
- Enns, P. 2007. Preliminary observations on an incarnational model of Scripture: Its viability and usefulness. *Calvin Theological Journal* 42, no. 2:219–236.
- Enns, P. 2009a. [Review of] The erosion of inerrancy in evangelicalism: Responding to new challenges to biblical authority. *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 19, no. 4:628–631.
- Enns, P. 2009b. Interaction with Bruce Waltke. *Westminster Theological Journal* 71, no. 1:97–114.
- Enns, P. 2012. *The evolution of Adam: What the Bible does and doesn't say about human origins*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press.
- Joubert, C. 2012a. Theistic evolution: An incoherent and inconsistent worldview? *Answers Research Journal* 5:99–114.
- Joubert, C. 2012b. Understanding the nature of Scripture, of Jesus, and of the “dis-ease” of theistic evolutionists. *Answers Research Journal* 5:59–71.
- Kidner, D. 1967. *Genesis: An introduction and commentary (Tyndale Old Testament commentaries)*. Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Lockerbie, D.B. 1986. Thinking like a Christian part 1: The starting point. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 569:3–13.
- Lubenow, M.L. 2004. *Bones of contention: A creationist assessment of human fossils*, rev. ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.
- MacArthur, J. 2003. Comprehending creation. In *Think biblically! Recovering a Christian worldview*, ed. J. MacArthur, R.L. Mayhue and J.A. Hughes, pp.55–84. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books.
- MacArthur, J. 2009. The source of all wisdom. *Answers* 4, no. 2:86–87.
- Mayhue, R.L. 2003. Cultivating a biblical mind-set. In *Think biblically! Recovering a Christian worldview*, ed. J. MacArthur, R.L. Mayhue and J.A. Hughes, pp.37–53. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books.
- Minton, R. 2008. Apostolic witness to Genesis creation and the Flood. In *Coming to grips with Genesis: Biblical authority and the age of the earth*, ed. T. Mortenson and T.H. Ury, pp.347–371. Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books.
- Mortenson, T. 2008. Jesus' view of the age of the earth. In *Coming to grips with Genesis: Biblical authority and the age of the earth*, ed. T. Mortenson and T.H. Ury, pp.315–346. Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books.
- Rana, F. and H. Ross. 2005. *Who was Adam? A creation model approach to the origin of man*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress.
- Schaeffer, F.A. 1972. *Genesis in space and time*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press. Repr. in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1985.
- Seifrid, M.A. 2007. Romans. In *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, pp.607–694. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic.
- Scott, J.W. 2009a. The inspiration and interpretation of God's word, with special reference to Peter Enns, part I: Inspiration and its implications. *Westminster Theological Journal* 71, no. 1:129–183.
- Scott, J.W. 2009b. The Inspiration and interpretation of God's word, with special reference to Peter Enns, part II: The interpretation of representative passages. *Westminster Theological Journal* 71, no. 2:247–279.
- Vardiman, L., A.A. Snelling, and E.F. Chaffin, eds. 2000. *Radioisotopes and the age of the earth: A young-earth creationist research initiative*. El Cajon, California: Institute for Creation Research.
- Vardiman, L., A.A. Snelling, and E.F. Chaffin, eds. 2005. *Radioisotopes and the age of the earth: A young-earth creationist research initiative Vol. 2: Results of a young-earth creationist research initiative*. El Cajon, California: Institute for Creation Research.
- Waltke, B.K. 2009a. Interaction with Peter Enns. *Westminster Theological Journal* 71, no. 1:115–128.
- Waltke, B.K. 2009b. Revisiting inspiration and incarnation. *Westminster Theological Journal* 71, no. 1:83–95.
- Williams, A. and J. Hartnett. 2005. *Dismantling the Big Bang: God's universe rediscovered*. Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books.

