S Joshua Swamidass: Great to see you all!

Becky English: https://network.asa3.org/page/DivingDeeper

Kirk Bertsche: Likewise! Hello from cold, drizzly San Jose

darew: Can you explain the term Homo heidelbergensis, in relation to other Homo species names?

S Joshua Swamidass: It's one of many species of Homo.

darew: I was hoping for more history on who invented this name in relation to the others.


Craig Story: The wikipedia page on Homo heidelbergensis has 57 references and is quite extensive. Usually science pages are edited by people in the field are fairly reliable, but I am not an expert in this field so I cannot verify the info. Looking at the pics, it seems like a species/subspecies/group that is on the way to more modern anatomy.

Craig Story: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homo_heidelbergensis

S Joshua Swamidass: William Lane Craig's book is important because he is the vanguard of a new group of Christians that are coming to terms with evolutionary science, but with different theological commitments than most evolutionary creationists. This group was told emphatically (and falsely) that their position was in conflict with science. Now that this new group is finding their voice, theological disagreements are rising to the surface. Disagreement is expected among academics, but meaningful dialogue can only proceed if we are accurately representing those with whom we disagree.

PSCF review of Craig's book seems to substantially misrepresent Craig's position. To give one prominent and unfortunate example out of many, the review asserts that Craig is seeking a "genetic" Adam and Eve, when Craig is clear that he is only committed to a genealogical Adam and Eve. They chide, "Craig gives Dennis Venema a hard time for “fixating” on the genetics. But, the entire section and justification for two genetic ancestors is about genetics." This appears to be a substantial misreading of the book. Dennis Venema (and most evolutionary creationists) used genetics to argue against Craig's position, arguing against both a genetic and a genealogical Adam and Eve going back millions of years. In his book, Craig shows (correctly) that the genetic evidence does not even rule out a genetic Adam and Eve, though he is only theologically committed to a genealogical Adam and Eve.

If we can accurately represent the scientific evidence and fairly engage one another's actual positions, there's still room for disagreement. As I detailed at AAR and ETS this last year, I do disagree with Craig's theological position at some key points. But Craig is one example of a growing group of Christians I want to focus first on welcoming into our community. This new group is growing. Their growth is being received as a good thing by those of us seeking to advance science in society. (See, for example, Nathan Lent's review of Craig's book in the skeptic, https://www.skeptic.com/reading_room/mytho-history-evolution-of-adam-and-eve-quest-of-historical-adam/).

Fred Cannon: What are your thoughts on this: Genesis 1 is about Adam-humanity, as HALOT and BDB says. Genesis 2 is about someone named Adam. That takes away all the “theological” need to make Adam and Eve the first humans. Genesis one could have taken millions of years, as refereed science says.


Mark McEwan (ASA, CSCA): I agree that it's really important to recognize and appreciate that—despite whatever disagreements about Adam & Eve, genealogies, etc.—it's terrific that we have so many more evangelicals considering evolution at all than we would have had ten or twenty years ago.

Angela Kantola: Reacted to "I agree that it's re..." with 🤚

Seth Hart: Reacted to "I agree that it’s re..." with 👍

Oscar Gonzalez: Reacted to "I agree that it’s re..." with 👍

S Joshua Swamidass: Reacted to "I agree that it’s re..." with 👍

Judith Toronchuk: Reacted to "I agree that it’s re..." with 👍

Mark McEwan (ASA, CSCA): I've winced a few times at the subtitle of Dennis & Scot's book, too: “Reading Scripture *after* Genetic Science.” But I wonder if “after” can be taken in a chronological sense, not necessarily in terms of priority/authority. I see it more that science prompts us to take a fresh look.

S Joshua Swamidass: David Wilcox’s question is a good one.

S Joshua Swamidass: When a “human mind” arises is a matter of open scientific debate, it seems. But there is also a difference in definitions at play. I think WLC is thinking about this in terms of a “minimum capability” threshold which might in fact be
quite different (and even lower) than present day humans. Wilcox, on the other hand, is meaning some close approximation of present day humans.

S Joshua Swamidass: That would be a great paper! But that definitional issue would be a key thing to work out. I do know that WLC is okay with the idea that early “humans” are not as intellectually advanced as us now. Because of that, presenting differences between (e.g.) Sapiens and Neanderthals is not really evidence against his view, if Neanderthals still meet his minimum threshold. In this, WLC’s position is pretty close the view that many catholics (Kemp, Feser, nd Bennette) all hold on precise this question.

S Joshua Swamidass: Would James Peterson be interested in publishing an article on that in PSCF?

S Joshua Swamidass: Nothing yet in peer reviewed literature, but there is some at peaceful science.org.

Mark McEwan (ASA, CSCA): It would be very helpful to me to see a table that concisely summarizes the (dis)agreements between WLC and Josh, along with Venema and others. I find it hard to keep track of the details. Is such a resource out there?

S Joshua Swamidass: I don’t think anyone thinks that Stephen.

Sy garte: I am confused. Is it true that Sherlock Holmes as a fictional character had no effects on the real world? What about the fictional characters in the parables of Jesus (prodigal son, good Samaritan, etc). I might be misunderstanding his point.

Terry M. Gray: Sy, the story has an effect, but not the characters themselves.

Steve Schaffner (Broad Inst): If the consequences of Adam’s sin are spiritual and not physical, do they have to transmitted by physical genealogy?

Seth Hart: On what the Enlightenment view of truth is, just to give their comment some clarity, there's been a lot of scholarship lately on how the word "fact" evolved to become a synonym for truth. Originally, the word (factum) denoted something formed or made and recognized the human "making" of truth by the mind. According to these scholars, facts became more objective and mind independent after Newton.

See, for example, Dennis Sepper's title Goethe contra Newton, pgs. 165ff.

S Joshua Swamidass: WLC rejects that view, though I (and others, such as Walton) are friendly to it.

Sy garte: Dr. Wilcox, if I remember correctly there was a period about a decade ago, when paleoanthropologists were promoting a view of similarity between H. Sapiens and earlier hominins, based almost entirely on analysis of some newly found sites. I believe that Craig is referring to those paper primarily to come to his (I agree, mistaken) conclusions.

Terry M. Gray: The solution to sin doesn't have a genetic component.

Terry M. Gray: Right. It doesn’t have a genealogical one either, although it does have representational one.

Jay Charlotte Hollman: I now remember Dr Craig’s rebuke of the Nobel Laureate for trying to ask a second question. The Nobel winner was Bill Phillips who was also an invited speaker at the meeting at John Brown University in 1999.
S Joshua Swamidass: I'm not aware of serious scholarship that argues sin is connected to genetics (DNA). However, quite a bit emphasize the “natural” headship of Adam and Eve, which make them the our proper representatives. Historically that has been understood to be by way of universal ancestry. This this bigger point that is far larger than how original sin is transmitted.

S Joshua Swamidass: Jack Collins explicates this quite nicely in his book and PSCF article from years back.

dwilcox: Given that our uniqueness genetically is the neural plasticity in development, it seems to me that the logical passing on of sinfulness is by enculturation.

S Joshua Swamidass: I agree actually, based on the scientific evidence. It’s really something outside the proper evidential claims of science.

Becky English: We encourage you to continue this discussion on the forum for this Diving Deeper Discussion: https://network.asa3.org/forums/Posts.aspx?topic=1724495

Tom Roose: Bill, Thank you very much!

Peter Karlskov-Mortensen: Thank you.