

# Adam Was Not the First Human, for the Bible Tells Us So

Jeremy Christian - Updated on January 8, 2019

*For as long as he can remember, Jeremy has been formulating theories that reconcile his fascination with science and his faith in God.*



*"God Created Evolution" is a project consisting of multiple articles that evaluate the first 11 books of Genesis in the context of known history and modern science.*

## Was Adam the First Human?

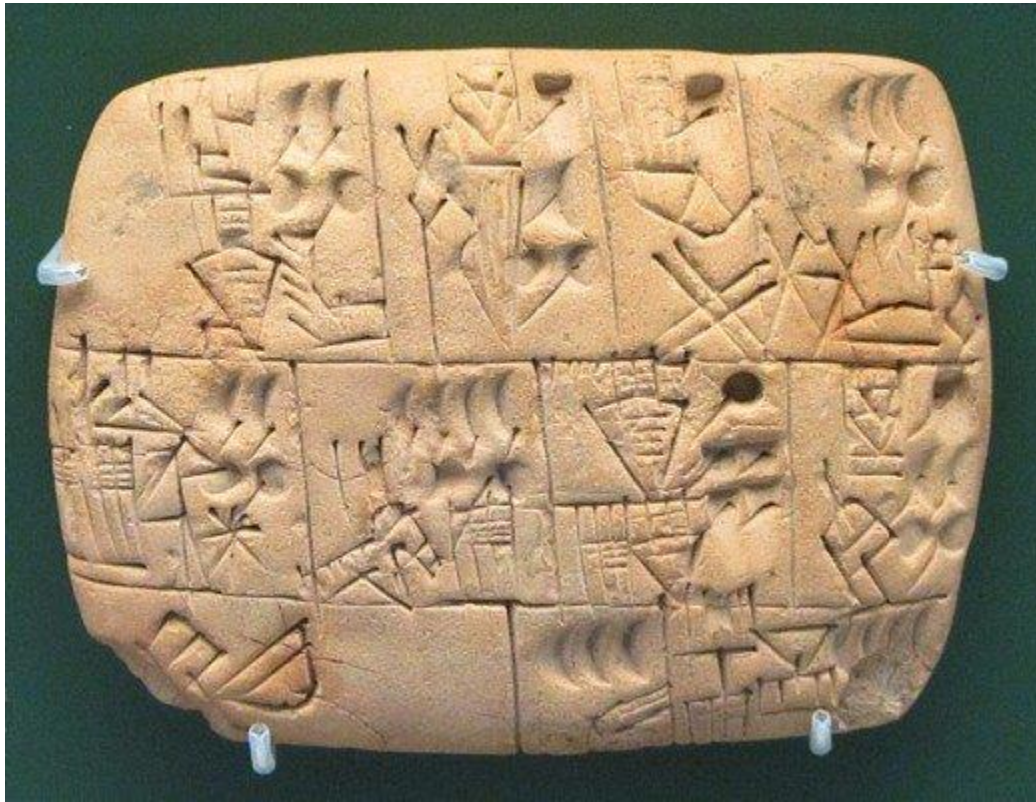
The creation of man in Genesis has always been read to mean that Adam was the first human God created. Why is that exactly? This isn't stated anywhere. In fact, what it actually says is that God created humans on day 6 of the creation account in chapter 1, then God rested on day 7 at the beginning of chapter 2, then comes the story of Adam's creation. It's nothing more than an assumption that these are two tellings of the same event.

For most of recorded human history, it really didn't matter. The events listed in the creation account were of little consequence. Whether God created all the earth in six days or in 4.54 billion years was irrelevant as there was no way of knowing one way or the other. There wasn't any reason to even suspect it was any different than how it read, and the overall message of the Bible didn't hinge on it.

Today, it does matter. In these modern times, we now understand more about the history of the earth and humanity than ever before. Modern understanding has proven to be in direct conflict with traditional interpretations of Genesis. This has resulted in many rejecting the Bible as nothing more than mythology, and many others rejecting modern wisdom and scientific progress as false.

The creation versus evolution debate has come to be one of the most divisive topics we face. Many people of faith fight tooth and nail to keep topics like evolution out of the school curriculum, and many others don't see why their children must remain in the dark because some people can't let go of their old religious beliefs.

The interpretation that says Adam was the first man in existence is the primary misconception that makes the Bible and modern science seemingly incompatible. Correcting this one small error takes pre-flood Genesis out of the realm of mythology and plants it firmly into known history.



*Sumerian writing tablet recording the allocation of beer.*

## **The Mythology of the First Civilization**

Civilization first began in Mesopotamia over five thousand years ago, and the Sumerians are credited as the inventors. They built the first cities that ever existed, with populations in the tens of thousands made possible through their development of large-scale year-round agriculture.

Throughout the rise of civilization the Sumerians became talented builders. They also created the first government, the first laws, arithmetic, astronomy/astrology, the wheel, sailboats, frying pans, razors, harps, kilns for firing bricks and pottery, bronze hand tools, and plows, to name just a few.

Not long after large-scale agriculture first began, a crude form of writing was developed out of the need to keep records of labor and materials. Another first accredited to the Sumerians. Over the centuries that followed, writing became more advanced and they began to record stories passed down through generations that explained how their people came up with all of these ideas that would forever change the human race. The funny thing is, these stories didn't give credit to their ancestors. They claim they were taught by immortal human-like gods.

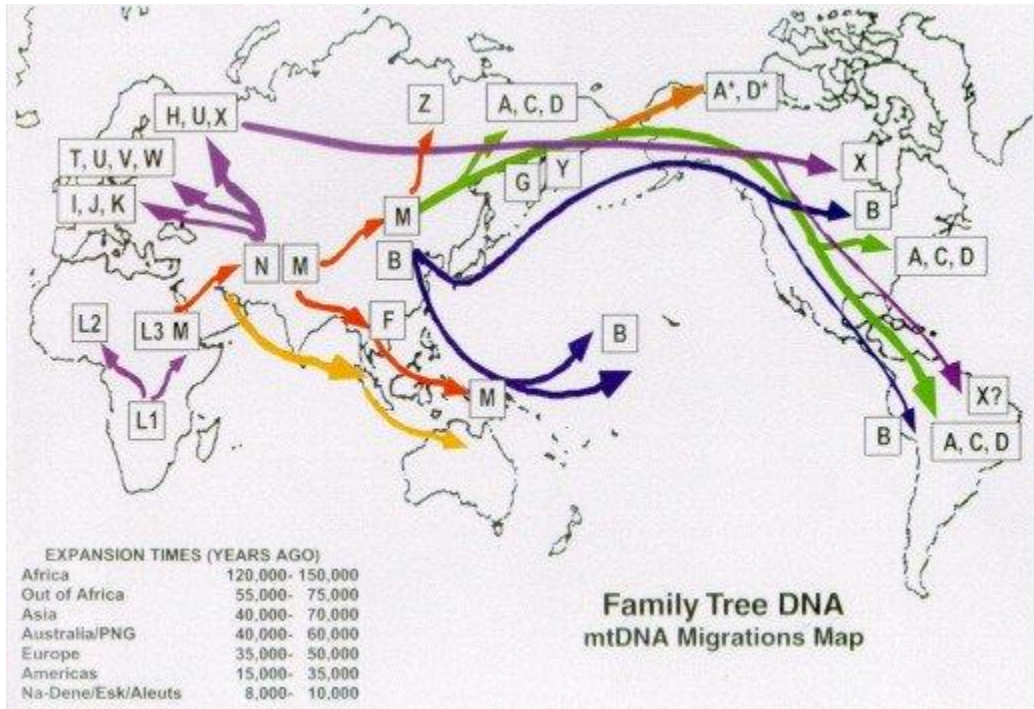
The Sumerian and Akkadian tablets where these Sumerian stories are found predate the oldest books of the bible by over a thousand years by our best scholarly estimations. Some of these tablets contain stories that share many very similar components to stories found in early Genesis, including the story of Adam and Eve, the biblical flood, and the confusing of a once universal language. Numerous tablets from throughout the latter part of the 3rd millennium BC containing these stories have been found all around Mesopotamia, suggesting they were very well known in the region during that time. Because of this, it has become a more and more common assumption that some of the stories found in early Genesis were actually inspired by these ancient tales.

There's no doubt Sumerian mythology had an impact on subsequent civilizations. The Akkadians were definitely inspired by this first civilization, considering they basically adopted much of the Sumerian lifestyle, including their mythology. Greek and Roman mythology also contains echoed themes that suggest the roots of

their beliefs may have come from the well-known Sumerian beliefs as well. They all speak of multiple immortal gods, human in form, both male and female, who were fallible, moody, and often at odds with each other, and they all speak of the intermingling between these immortal beings and mortal humans, producing demigods and titans.

## Were There People Before Adam and Eve?

If the creation of Adam in Genesis happened in an already populated world, given the time frame and location specified, then the humans who eventually became the Sumerians would have been the people that populated the landscape.



*A map of DNA migration.*

## The Books of Moses

Other than the obvious correlation between a handful of stories in early Genesis with Sumerian mythology, the Books of Moses are very much unique.

The most obvious quality that differentiates them from the others is that in this story there is only one God. The Greeks were fascinated by these books, which is why some of the oldest manuscripts of the Torah that still exist today are written in Greek. They also had a strong impact on the Romans, who after over a century of Christian persecution legalized Christianity, then a few decades later made it the only legal religion. What's more, the books have continuously been an ever-present influence on the western world in every age since. Today, the Books of Moses serve as the foundation for the world's two largest religions, making up half the world's population, three thousand years later. No other writings from these ancient civilizations can make that claim.

At the same time, in today's scientifically enlightened age many dismiss Genesis as nothing more than mythology. There are nearly as many in the non-religious, secular, agnostic, or atheist category as there are Muslims, making them the third largest group behind Christians and Muslims.

One reason for this is because it has been confirmed that those events in early Genesis did not happen. For instance, we've confirmed geologically that there has never been a global flood. The last time the entire planet was covered with water was over three billion years ago when land did not yet exist, let alone humans. And we

have confirmed genetically that, while every human alive today does actually share a common ancestor, this ancestor existed in Africa tens of thousands of years before the events of Genesis.

Those interpretations of Genesis that say the flood was global and that Adam was the first human to exist were formed centuries ago by people who couldn't have known any better. Now, we do. Rereading the first five and one-quarter chapters of Genesis for what it actually says, and not for what we've always been told it says, tells a very different story that's much more in sync with our modern scientifically-based understanding.

## **What Was the State of the Earth During Genesis?**

The first order of business is to establish the proper context. What was the state of the Earth during the time frame in which early Genesis is set?

### **Pre-Flood Genesis in an Already Populated World Context**

We now know that by 10,000 BC *homo sapiens* had already populated the planet and had over the course of many generations established themselves as the dominant species in the animal kingdom, which is exactly what the humans created in Genesis 1 were commanded to do:

*And God blessed them, and God said unto them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28)*

We also know that humans in this same region were the first to use the seeds in seed bearing vegetation to grow food starting around 9,000 BC, which matches up with the illustration in Genesis 1 of God teaching humans. Where these same verses also state that the animals will use these plants for food as well, only with the humans does it specifically talk about the seeds that then bare other seed-bearing plants:

*Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food. " And it was so. (Genesis 1:29-30)*

And we also know through climatological evidence that this same region matched the description given at the beginning of Genesis 2 from around 6,200 BC due to the dramatic shift in climate that transformed much of the region from lush green lands to desert. An aridification event often referred to as the 8.2 kiloyear event:

*No no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground. (Genesis 2:5)*

### **Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden**

But where the humans (and everything else) in Genesis 1 were specifically told what to do, in Genesis 2 Adam was only told what not to do: He was to eat from any tree but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17)*

In fact, the whole theme of the Adam and Eve story has to do with them exhibiting their own individual free will. For instance, one of the very first things it says God did after placing Adam in the garden was to bring the animals to Adam to see what he would call them.

*And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. (Genesis 2:19)*



*Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.*

The humans created in Genesis 1 were given very specific commands that would take generations to realize. They were told to:

- Populate and subdue the Earth
- Establish dominance in the animal kingdom

So how could Adam, Eve, and their descendants be expected to accomplish these things considering how capable and willing they were to disobey?

Reconsidering things with the idea that Adam was not the first human, but rather was the first human capable of behaving contrary to God's will in an already populated world of humans yields many interesting possibilities both throughout the remainder of the bible itself, as well as far outside of it.

## **Who Were the "Others" That Cain Feared?**

Within the Bible, some of the more cryptic and confusing verses in the chapters to follow begin to make much more sense if the region was already populated when Adam was created. Like the unnamed "others" that Cain expressed concern about in chapter 4. The concern God is validated by somehow "marking" him to protect him from harm.

*Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." But the Lord said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. (Genesis 4:13-15)*



*Cain leads Abel to death.*

It also puts a whole new spin on the first few verses of chapter 6, those which talk about the "sons of God" finding the "daughters of humans" beautiful and having children by them. This comes right in the middle of its explanation for why the flood was necessary. It even goes on to explain that humans are mortal and live less than a hundred and twenty years, contrary to the hundreds of years it says Adam and his descendants lived in chapter 5.

*And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took for themselves wives of all whom they chose. And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." (Genesis 6:1-3)*



*Noah's ark.*

## **Was the Flood Really Global?**

This should be obvious, but many still hold onto the belief that the flood completely covered the entire Earth. Even in the traditional context this would not make sense as the flood occurred just 10 generations after Adam. So Adam's descendants could not have populated more than a small portion of the Earth. There would be no need in that sense to flood the entire planet. Not to mention the fact that the authors of the bible would have no sense of what global really means as the entirety of the Earth from their perspective was the land they lived in.

But even beyond that reasoning, there are a couple of subtle clues that tell us the flood wasn't a global phenomenon that wiped out everything that lived. The first comes at the end of chapter four when the author explains that three of Cain's descendants were the "fathers of all those who: lived in tents and herded cattle, played stringed instruments, made metal tools."

*And Adah bore Jubal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents, and of those who have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she*

*also bore Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron; and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah. (Genesis 4:20-22)*

These descendants come seven generations after Cain, which is the same number of generations Methuselah was from Seth. Methuselah died the same year as the flood, probably in it. Specifically stating that these descendants "fathered" or "instructed" anyone would be totally pointless if Cain's descendants and everyone else were wiped out in the flood. Plus, it's clear these verses are referring to individuals the intended reader is familiar with, so they couldn't be people who hadn't existed since the flood.

The other clue can be seen in the only two biblical mentions of the 'Nephilim'. One before the flood:

*The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown. (Genesis 6:4)*

And one after:

*So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." (Numbers 13:32-33)*

Of course, simply proving the flood wasn't actually global doesn't do much considering the whole purpose of the flood was to wipe out the "wicked" element that had risen in humanity. A localized flood would hardly accomplish that in this already populated world scenario. But, if Adam was the introduction of free will, and wickedness was only possible through free will, then a local flood of the Mesopotamian valley would be all it would take. In fact, that valley, which is a geological equivalent of a storm drain, would be the perfect location to place an element as potentially dangerous as free will.

## **Adam Was Not the First Man**

In this modern age, many will surely find this a bit much to swallow. But in the context of the evolution of life as we understand it, the appearance of a new species of humans with free will and extended lifespans would be no more of a leap than the change from single-celled to multi-celled organisms or the adaptations that made crawling up onto land from the sea possible.

Even in the progression of the *Homo* genus, there were large leaps forward from one species to the next. However, if an even more advanced species did actually appear just a few thousand years ago, they're certainly not here anymore. Of course, according to the story, they were all washed away by a large flood. Mass extinctions play a crucial role throughout the evolutionary history of life. In that context, the flood was merely the last of many edits that shaped life as we know it today.

Is this possible?

Even if any physical remains that could potentially confirm this theory had been washed out to sea by a large flood, certainly the existence of beings like this would have left some sort of lasting impression, especially if they existed for over sixteen hundred years in a region populated by humans. You might expect to see rapid advancements in intellectual and technological capabilities, like what appears to have happened with the Sumerians and the Egyptians. Or you might expect to see their influence reflected in the mythology written by these ancient civilizations, like what can be seen in the Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman stories: Immortal beings who lived the equivalent of ten mortal lifespans who were exceptionally wise and knowledgeable in agricultural practices, who were prone to human emotion, who bred with mortal humans and created beings of both bloodlines, then disappeared.