

# GENESIS CHAPTER TWO and "Who was Adam?"

© Rodney Whitefield [whitefield@att.net](mailto:whitefield@att.net)

This document may be freely distributed provided it is complete and unchanged.

Considerable controversy exists about the question, "Who was Adam?" This paper provides enhanced understanding of the Hebrew of Genesis chapter two. When studied carefully, Genesis chapter two does allow for the existence of a plural number of humans prior to the placing of a human into the "garden of Eden." It affirms the existence of "Adam and Eve" as real persons.

## The Hebrew word אָדָם **humankind** (אָדָם sounds like ha-adam.)

The plural meaning of the word אָדָם **humankind** came into active discussion with the 2015 publication of John Walton's *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*. In Gen. 1:26 God says, "Let us make אָדָם adam . . . ." Then in Gen. 1:27, God creates the plural, male and female אָדָם **humankind**, i.e., humans. The plural nature of **the word** אָדָם **humankind** is verified in Gen. 1:28 when God blessed **them** and gave **them** dominion. Below are three translations which illustrate that the plural meaning of אָדָם was well-known:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>NET</sup> Gen. 1:27 God created אָדָם **humankind** in his own image, in the image of God he created **them**, male and female he created them.

<sup>NIV</sup> Gen. 1:27 So God created אָדָם **mankind** in his own image, in the image of God he created **them**; male and female he created them.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 1:27 So God created אָדָם **man** in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

The Hebrew word אָדָם "theadam" is plural, meaning **humankind** or **mankind** as translated by the NET and NIV. In Hebrew, prefixing the name of an ancestor by ה "the" indicates a plural – as אָדָם "theadam" has been translated in the above examples, and in <sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 15:21 shown below:

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 15:21 And אָדָם the Amorites, and אָדָם the Canaanites, and the אָדָם Girgashites, and אָדָם the Jebusites. (The Hebrew letter ה is the prefix meaning "the.")

When the English word **man** is preceded by "the," as in "**the man**," "the man" indicates a specific individual human. In the absence of a preceding "the" or "a" the English word man refers to mankind as a category – a category including male and female. The word **man** in <sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 1:27 has the same meaning as the words **humankind** and **mankind**. The NET and NIV have correctly translated ". . . in the image of God he created אָדָם **them**; . . ." The KJV incorrectly translated "him."<sup>2</sup>

## Genesis 2:7 and its interpretation

Based on the foregoing, we come to Gen. 2:7 with the expectation that אָדָם, **mankind or humankind**, is a plural referring to "humans" as a category. The KJV and twelve other translations correctly translate אָדָם as **man**, a plural category including male and female. And yet, it is commonly interpreted that there were no humans prior to there being a single, specific, male human in the "garden of Eden" in Gen. 2:7 – the one whom **translators** call **Adam**. In the following, we will examine the reasoning supporting the "no humans before this specific male Adam" interpretation. We will find that the text does allow a plural number of humans (male and female) prior to and for the events of Gen. 2:7-8.

That Gen. 2:7 speaks of the first human, a male, is **not** found in the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:7. That interpretation comes to us from the writings of Augustine and enters Gen. 2:7 through the insertion of an "a" in line (3). This will be discussed in the next section. We will determine when the Hebrew word אָדָם **humankind** refers to an individual male human and how the transition to that meaning was accomplished.

## Genesis 2:7 and the plural nature of many of the words

<sup>1</sup> John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press, 2015), 58-62.

<sup>2</sup> Biblical Hebrew uses a masculine singular ending to refer to words or phrases which include both male and female. In Gen. 1:27 the direct object marker אֹתָם, referring to the following "male and female," ends with the appropriate masculine singular ending ך. The next direct object marker אֹתָם, which follows the words "male and female," used a third person masculine plural ending. A singular male plus a singular female is a plural. Both direct object markers should be translated **them**.

To explain the plural nature of the words in Gen. 2:7, we start with a modified rendering of Gen. 2:7 as shown below. To facilitate our discussion, הָאָדָם **humankind**, as it was translated by the New English Translation (NET) in Gen. 1:27. Translating הָאָדָם **humankind** will help clarify when הָאָדָם can refer to a specific individual male **human** in Genesis chapter 2. Other Hebrew words and their prefixes are shown colored before the translation's English words printed in red and brown. I have retained the translation "breath" for the Hebrew word נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** and "became" for the Hebrew verb in line (3).<sup>3</sup>

### Gen. 2:7

- (1) וַיִּצְרֶה And the LORD God **formed** הָאָדָם **humankind** עָפָר dust of הָאֲדָמָה **the** ground,  
(2) וַיִּנְפֹּחַ and **breathed** בְּאַפָּיו **into their** nostrils the נְשָׁמָה breath of הַיּוֹם **lives**; (הַיּוֹם is a plural, i.e., "**lives**."  
(3) and הָאָדָם **humankind** became living לְנֶפֶשׁ **souls**.

In line (1) of Gen. 2:7, I have not included "of the" before the word "dust," words that the KJV added which can lead readers to think that Gen. 2:7 is about making mankind from עָפָר dust.<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew word הָאָדָם **humankind** sounds like *ha-adam* and הָאֲדָמָה **the ground** sounds like *ha-ad-a-mah*.<sup>5</sup>

In my opinion, "dust of the ground" is best interpreted as a statement of mortality. עָפָר **dust** indicates the mortality of animals in Psalm 104:29, it indicates human mortality in Job 34:15, and in Genesis chapter 3 which continues the story in the garden. The הָאָדָם **humankind** in line (1) consist of individual males and females which receive "the נְשָׁמָה breath of הַיּוֹם **lives**" breathed **into their** nostrils. ( נְשָׁמָה sounds like *nee-sh-māt*.)

In line (2) the pronoun "**their**" comes from the pronominal ending ךִּי on the Hebrew word בְּאַפָּיו "in his nostrils." In biblical Hebrew, a masculine, singular, pronominal ending is used for nouns referring to a group that includes male and female members. The ךִּי ending, a 3rd person masculine, singular, ending, is appropriate when referring to a group composed of male and female הָאָדָם **humankind**.

Prior to Gen. 2:7, Gen. 1:27 used a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular ending to refer to the male and female humankind that God created.<sup>6</sup> The singular "his" commonly found in line (2) of Gen. 2:7 results from an incorrect presumption that Gen. 2:7 is speaking about the first human. We will later determine when הָאָדָם **does** refer to an individual male.

The addition of the "נְשָׁמָה breath of הַיּוֹם **lives**" to הָאָדָם **humankind** provides all humankind with capabilities suitable for the events which follow in Genesis chapters 2 and 3. These are the naming of animals, tilling the garden, understanding moral issues, and the ability to choose the good and not choose the evil. These capabilities are beyond that required to be נֶפֶשׁ "living creatures," the air-breathing creatures which appear in Genesis chapter 1. Genesis does not distinguish between the lower animals and humans on the basis of the word נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*. The word וַיִּנְפֹּחַ translated "and breathed," is not רוּחַ *ruach* (spirit) or נְשָׁמָה *neshmat* – words which are also translated breath. וַיִּנְפֹּחַ is a more forceful term used for the blowing into a fire to melt metals, and used to describe a seething pot.<sup>7</sup>

In line 3, the customary word "a" has been omitted between the words "became" and "living." The plural הָאָדָם **humankind** do not become a singular. The correct translation of the prefixed word לְנֶפֶשׁ is souls. נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh* is plural without being prefixed by הֶ - a plural composed of individual souls. This is illustrated in the second line of Gen. 46:26, where I have italicized and struck through ~~the~~, a word added by the KJV.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 46:26 כָּל All לְנֶפֶשׁ **thesouls** that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, כָּל all ~~the~~ לְנֶפֶשׁ **souls** were threescore and six; (i.e., 66 souls).

Lam. 3:25 shown below illustrates the plural meaning of the word לְנֶפֶשׁ "**to nephesh**" in line 3 of Gen. 2:7.

<sup>3</sup> The translation of נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** and the verb in line (3) is covered in more detail in "*The Neshmat of the Spirit of Lives: How humans differ from the lower animals*." - downloadable as a free pdf from <https://creationingenesis.com>

<sup>4</sup> Hebrew has no word "of." The word עָפָר does not have the prefix הֶ meaning "the." The Hebrew word "**the dust**" is הָעָפָר .

<sup>5</sup> הָאֲדָמָה , *ha-ad-a-mah*, is land suitable for agriculture ( i.e., farming). It is land of which Gen. 3:17-19 says הָאָדָם **humankind** will "... in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto הָאֲדָמָה **the** ground; . . ."

<sup>6</sup> See end note 2, page 1.

<sup>7</sup> Job 41:20, Jeremiah 1:13

<sup>KJV</sup> Lam. 3:25 The LORD is good unto **them** that wait for him, לְנֶפֶשׁ **to the** **soul** that seeketh him.

The לְנֶפֶשׁ "**to** nephesh" in Lam. 3:25 refers to any individual נֶפֶשׁ person of the category specified in that verse. That category is a plural number of נֶפֶשׁ **souls** - those לְנֶפֶשׁ "that seeketh him." They are the "**them** that wait for him" – a plural composed of individual human souls (i.e., persons).

Gen. 2:7, as presented on page 2, now has three plural Hebrew words: הָאָדָם **humankind**, הַיּוֹם "**lives**," and לְנֶפֶשׁ "**to** nephesh" which I have translated **souls**. (In Gen. 2:7 the לְ "**to**" is not necessary in English following the word "became.") The plural **humankind** become a plural of individual living human נֶפֶשׁ **souls**. That Gen. 2:7 speaks of the first human, a male, is **not found** in the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:7.

In the study that follows, we will determine when Genesis chapter two **does** use הָאָדָם **humankind** to refer to an individual male human. How Augustine came to his interpretation that Gen. 2:7 referred to the first human is explained in another paper, "*The Neshmat of the Breath of Lives: How humans differ from the lower animals*." The translation of נִשְׁמַת neshmat and the translation of the verb וַיְהִי in line (3) is covered in more detail in that paper. That paper is downloadable as a free pdf from <https://creationingenesis.com>

In Gen. 2:8, we again encounter the plural הָאָדָם **humankind** as shown below: (I have relocated the word "eastward" to where it is located in the Hebrew and the Septuagint. Consistency with Gen. 3:24 requires that the הָאָדָם **humankind** are put east of the garden. In <sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 3:24 the ". . . Cherubims, and a flaming sword . . ." are ". . . placed at the east of the garden of Eden . . .")

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden ~~eastward~~ in Eden; eastward and there he put the הָאָדָם **humankind** whom he had formed.

יָצָר      אֲשֶׁר      אֶת-הָאָדָם      שָׁם      וַיִּשֶׁם      מִקֶּדֶן      בְּעֵדֶן      גֶּן-      אֱלֹהִים      יְהוָה      וַיִּטֵּעַ      Gen. 2:8  
he had formed    whom    **humankind**    there    and he put    eastward    in Eden    a garden    Elohim    Yahweh    And planted < Heb. starts here.

Gen. 2:7-8 are connected verses. The first Hebrew word of Gen. 2:7 is the verb וַיִּצָּר "**and** formed." The final word of Gen. 2:8 is the verb יָצָר "he had formed." הָאָדָם **humankind** is plural in both verses. Gen. 2:8 adds **no** evidence of a transition in the meaning of הָאָדָם **humankind** from the plural to the singular.

Starting with Gen. 2:7, Gen. 2:7-9 and Gen. 2:15-25 are written as a sequence of events. הָאָדָם **humankind** is not used in Gen. 2:9. Gen. 2:9 does inform us that when the הָאָדָם **humankind** are put eastward in Gen. 2:8, the "garden in Eden" is **not ready** for occupancy. It is in Gen. 2:9 that the Lord God made the trees grow to provide food. The verb וַיַּצְמַח is a causative form which translates as "caused to grow," as shown below:

<sup>NAS</sup> Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground the LORD God **caused to grow** every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; . . .

We will now consider Gen. 2:15 as shown below:

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 2:15 And the LORD God took the **humankind**, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

וַיִּשְׁמְרָהּ      לְעֲבֹדָה      עֵדֶן      בְּגֶן-      וַיַּנְחֵהוּ      אֶת-הָאָדָם      אֱלֹהִים      יְהוָה      וַיִּקַּח      Gen. 2:15  
and to watch it    to till it    of Eden    in garden    and settled him    **humankind**    Elohim    Yaweh    And took < Heb. starts here.

וַיַּנְחֵהוּ is **not** the word וַיִּשֶׁם translated "**and** he put" in Gen. 2:8. וַיַּנְחֵהוּ has a masculine singular ending, the proper ending for referring to הָאָדָם as a plural, as noted on page 1 in footnote 2. I have translated the word וַיַּנְחֵהוּ as "and settled him."<sup>8</sup>

Gen. 2:15 is the verse where the Hebrew word הָאָדָם **humankind** starts to refer to a single male human. Understanding the first word of Gen. 2:15, which the KJV translated "took," is significant. When applied to a plural source, וַיִּקַּח often indicates the selection of one, or a smaller number, from many. **It is that selection that introduces the singular "him."** Examples of the word וַיִּקַּח indicating selection follow:

<sup>NET</sup> Gen. 18:7 Then Abraham ran to the herd and וַיִּקַּח chose a fine, tender calf, and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it.

<sup>8</sup> "Settled" has been used by in the: CEB (Common English Bible), the NAB (New American Bible), and the NJB (New Jerusalem Bible).

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 4:19 And Lamech **וַיִּקַּח** took unto him two wives:  
the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair;  
and they **וַיִּקַּח** took them wives of all which they chose.

The above three verses, all in Genesis, speak of the selection of **one**, or a few, out of a larger number. As of yet, there is no indication that the word **הָאָדָם** **humankind** in Gen. 2:15 is not plural. Considered alone, the **וַיִּקַּח** "and took" may be a taking of **one** of the **הָאָדָם** **humankind** or a taking of a larger number of the **humankind**. But Gen. 3:23 also uses **לָקַח** a form of the Hebrew word **וַיִּקַּח** that appears above in Gen. 2:15, and thereby indicates that the singular "him" is correct. Gen. 3:22-23 takes place when the male-female pair, the pair later named Adam in Gen. 5:2-3, are being "sent forth from the garden," as shown below.

<sup>ASV</sup> Gen. 3:22 And Jehovah God said, Behold, **הָאָדָם** **the man** is become as one of us, to know good and evil;  
and now, lest **he** put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of **הַחַיִּים** life, and eat, and live for ever --  
(**הַחַיִּים** is a plural, i.e., " **the** lives.")

<sup>ASV</sup> Gen. 3:23 therefore Jehovah God sent **him** forth from the garden of Eden,  
to till **הָאֲדָמָה** the ground **מִנֶּחָם** from whence **לָקַח** **he was taken**.

The singular pronouns referring to the two that are being "sent forth from the garden" are correct by the rules of Hebrew grammar, as explained earlier. The **הָאֲדָמָה** "from whence **לָקַח** **he was taken**" is the **הָאֲדָמָה** of Gen. 2:7 – **הָאֲדָמָה** **the** ground from which the LORD God formed **הָאָדָם** **humankind**.

The word **הָאָדָם** **humankind** applies to the male-female pair and applies, individually, to the male. The male of the pair being sent forth from the garden is the same male of which Gen. 2:18 says "*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.*" Gen. 3:23 informs us that the **הָאָדָם** **human-kind** in Gen. 2:15 had come from outside of the garden - a fact that is fully compatible with there being a plural number of humankind outside of the garden.

As explained on page one, "When the English word **man** is preceded by "the," as in "**the man**," "the man" indicates a specific individual human. The translation of **הָאָדָם** as "the man" in Gen. 2:15-25 is appropriate when referring to a specific male **human**. Most English versions translate **הָאָדָם** as "the man" in these verses, a translation that refers to an individual. In this case, the individual male was the one **וַיִּקַּח** "selected" and "settled" in the garden in Gen. 2:15.

We now consider Gen. 2:18, because this verse could be used to argue that the plural **הָאָדָם** **humankind** is singular in Gen. 2:7 and there are no other humans at this time. Gen. 2:18 is below:

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 2:18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that **הָאָדָם** the man should be **לְבַדּוֹ** **alone**; . . .

The use of the Hebrew word **לְבַדּוֹ** **alone** in Gen. 2:18 does not imply that other **הָאָדָם** **humankind** **do not** exist. That is illustrated by how **לְבַדּוֹ** **alone** is used in Gen. 43:32 and Num. 11:14-15 shown below. Gen. 43:32 is when Joseph eats with his brothers after they return with Benjamin. Joseph is "**לְבַדּוֹ** by himself" while in the presence of other people – he is not "**alone**" in the sense that other people do not exist. **לְבַדּוֹ** is used three times in this verse. (The **ם** ending on **לְבָדָם** indicates the plural "them," and the ending on **לְבַדּוֹ** is masculine singular.)

<sup>NAS</sup> Gen. 43:32 So they served him **לְבַדּוֹ** by himself, and them **לְבָדָם** by themselves, and the Egyptians, who ate with him, **לְבָדָם** by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians.

In Num. 11:14-15, while surrounded by people in the camp, Moses says to God:

<sup>KJV</sup> Num. 11:14-15 I am not able to bear all this people **לְבַדִּי** **alone**, because it is too heavy for me.  
And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, . . .  
(The ending on **לְבַדִּי** is first person masc. sing., meaning "I.")

The above verses tell us that the un-named **הָאָדָם** **humankind** in the garden in Gen. 2:18 may be **לְבַדִּי** **alone** as one **הָאָדָם** **humankind** who is responsible for the garden, but does **not** tell us that there are **no humankind** nearby or outside of the garden. The Hebrew continues to use **הָאָדָם** **humankind** throughout the reminder of Genesis chapter 2. The KJV, LXX, and Vulgate first translate **הָאָדָם** **humankind** as the personal name **Adam**



in Gen. 2:19 The impetus for this seems to be the presence of וְלָאָדָם "and to adam" in Gen. 2:20. How should וְלָאָדָם be translated? Gen. 5:2 gives the name אָדָם "adam" to **them** – the male-female pair in the garden of Eden.

For וְלָאָדָם "and to adam," the translational difficulty comes because biblical Hebrew does not allow the prefix הֶ meaning "the" to follow הֵ, meaning "to" or "for." An הֶ following a הֵ represents either the first letter of a verbal conjugation, the first letter of a Hebrew word beginning with הֶ, or the first letter of a pronoun ending. The New Revised Standard shown below illustrates that correct translations are known, and illustrates one method of translating Gen. 2:20 that is in accordance with Gen. 5:2.

<sup>NRS</sup> Gen 2:20 וְלָאָדָם The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; וְלָאָדָם but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

וְלָאָדָם "The man" refers to the male of the male-female pair named אָדָם Adam in Gen. 5:2. He is the only one of the male-female pair that has appeared at this point in the story. In my opinion, translating as וְלָאָדָם "and for the male Adam" would introduce אָדָם as it is defined in Gen. 5:2 - without naming the male אָדָם Adam.

## How we will now proceed

We will consider Gen. 2:21-23, verses about אָדָם humankind and the אִשָּׁה woman in the garden.

- 1) First we will consider Gen. 2:22 to establish that verse has a singular word.
- 2) Then we will consider Gen. 2:23 to understand the meaning of "bone from my bones" and "flesh from my flesh," and look again at Gen. 2:22 to explain more about the word בָּנָה "banah."
- 3) Then we will return to Gen. 2:21 to consider this verse in light of our finding that the אָדָם human-kind Gen. 2:7 is not the first human.

Gen. 2:22 is shown below. My translation is shown under the Hebrew.

<sup>NET</sup> Gen. 2:22 Then the LORD God וַיִּבְרֶן made a woman from וַיִּצְלַע the part he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.<sup>9</sup>

וַיִּבְרֶן אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה וַיִּצְלַע אֶת-הַצֵּלָע אֲשֶׁר-לָקַח מִן-הָאָדָם וַיִּבְרָאָהּ אֵל-הָאָדָם  
 the-adam onto and brought her to a woman the-adam from he took which the side Elohim Yaweh and built < Heb. starts here.  
 (wife)

In the above Hebrew, אִשָּׁה sounds like "ee-shaw;" אֶת-הַצֵּלָע sounds like "le-ee-shaw;" and נָשִׁים nashim sounds like "na-sh-im." אִשָּׁה ee-shaw is the singular word for woman or wife.

The Hebrew word אֶת-הַצֵּלָע "to a woman" is noticeably singular. It differs from the plural word נָשִׁים nashim for women or wives. The singular אֶת-הַצֵּלָע le-ee-shaw favors considering אָדָם humankind in Gen. 2:22 to refer to a single male - thereby adding evidence for our earlier conclusion that this starts in Gen. 2:15. But, it is important to note that Genesis chapter two **does not** name this male. The name אָדָם Adam is given to them, the un-named male, and the woman Eve, in Gen. 5:2.

This individual male, the one who **we** call **Adam**, is one human "selected" from the larger number אָדָם humankind that exist. This conclusion contradicts the interpretation that there were no living humans prior the events of Gen. 2:7. But, it provides Hebrew textual support for N. T. Wright's proposal, shown below, provided that the words "**early hominids**," (which I have shown bolded), are replaced by "**early humans**."<sup>10</sup>

*"... that just as God chose Israel from the rest of humankind for a special, strange, demanding vocation, so perhaps what Genesis is telling us is that God chose one pair from the rest of **early hominids** for a special, strange, demanding vocation. This pair (call them Adam and Eve if you like) were to be the representatives of the whole human race, the ones in whom God's purpose to make the whole world a place of delight and joy and order, eventually colonizing the whole creation, was to be taken forward. God the creator put into their hands the fragile task of being his image bearers. If they fail, they will bring the whole purpose for the wider creation, including all the nonchosen hominids, down with them . . ."*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The NET comments on their translation, saying in a footnote: "Traditionally translated "rib," the Hebrew word actually means "side." The Hebrew text reads, "and he took one from his sides," which could be rendered "part of his sides." That idea may fit better the explanation by the man that the woman is his flesh and bone." <https://netbible.org/bible/Genesis+2>  
<https://netbible.org/bible/Genesis+2>

<sup>10</sup> N. T. Wright, *SURPRISED BY SCRIPTURE*, (New York, NY, Harper Collins Publishers, 2014), 37-38.

<sup>11</sup> N. T. Wright, *SURPRISED BY SCRIPTURE*, (New York, NY, Harper Collins Publishers, 2014), 37-38.

At this point, we have found there are a plural number of humans in existence, and we have found evidence that Gen. 2:22 does use the plural Hebrew word **הָאָדָם** **humankind** to refer to a single male human. We have quoted a well-known scholar's suggestion why these two findings are compatible.

We will now look at Gen. 2:23, the outcome resulting from the actions in Gen. 2:22.

<sup>NET</sup> Gen. 2:23 is shown below:

<sup>NET</sup> Gen. 2:23 Then the man said, "This one **at last** is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called 'woman,' for she was taken **out of man**."

**Gen. 2:23**  
 מִבְּשָׁרִי וּבִשָּׁר מֵעַצְמִי עֵצָה זֶה הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר < Heb. starts here.  
 from my flesh and flesh from my bones bone at last this "the-adam" and said  
 זֶה לָקַחָהּ מֵאִישׁ כִּי אִשָּׁה יִקְרָא לָזֶה  
 this (one) was taken from ish because ishah shall be called to this (one)

The word **מֵאִישׁ** translated "out of man" uses the word **אִישׁ** ish. **אִישׁ** ish primarily represents a humankind as an individual.<sup>12</sup> This adds to the conclusion that the word **הָאָדָם** humankind is now referring to an un-named male. A person referred to as an **אִישׁ** ish is often a person of distinction, or with authority over others. Joseph was referred to as "**הָאִישׁ** **the ish**, the lord of the land" in Gen. 42:30.

"The man," of Gen. 2:23 is one individual, "selected" from the larger number of **humankind** created in Gen. 1:27. In Gen. 2:23, the **זֶה הָאָדָם**, which the NET translated "at last," is most commonly translated "This is now." The KJV translated **פַּעַם** "time" 58 times, once 14 "times", and "now" 7 times. "This time" **would work as well**.

**The meaning of "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" can be found from** Gen. 29:12-14 where "my bone and my flesh" expresses relatedness.<sup>13</sup> These verses follow after Jacob meets his future bride, Rachel, for the first time. Gen. 29:14 uses "my bone and my flesh."

<sup>NAS</sup> **Gen. 29:12** Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Gen. 29:13** So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Gen. 29:14** And Laban said to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh. . . .

**Gen. 29:14**  
 וּבִשָּׁרִי עֵצָמִי אֶךְ לָבָן לוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר  
 and my flesh my bone (f. sing) surely Laban to him and said < Heb. starts here

In Gen. 2:23 the un-named male **הָאָדָם** **humankind** says "bone from my bones" and "flesh from my flesh." In this phrase there is a repetition of the Hebrew word "bone" and the Hebrew word "flesh." The doubling of "bone" and "flesh" in Gen. 2:23 does not change the meaning of "my bone and my flesh" as said by Laban. The doubling intensifies the relationship.<sup>14</sup>

The relationship "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" in Gen. 2:23 must be at least as close as that of Jacob and Laban.

<sup>12</sup> R. Laird Harris Ed., *Theological Word book of the Old Testament Vol. 2.*, (Chicago, IL, Moody Press, 1980) #83 p 85.

<sup>13</sup> Additional verses using bone and flesh to identify relationship are Judg. 9:2, 2 Sam. 5:1, and 2 Sam. 19:13.

<sup>14</sup> The most familiar example of the use of repetition in comparative progression is the three stage sequence of קֹדֶשׁ holy, followed by קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשׁ holy of the holies (translated "most holy" in the KJV) and the superlative קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשׁ "holy, holy, holy," found in Isaiah 6:3. Since "holy, holy, holy" expresses the highest degree of holiness, the double repeat would more logically be translated "more holy." The word מְאֹד "very" also has a progression from מְאֹד to מְאֹד מְאֹד, "exceedingly" appearing six times. מְאֹד מְאֹד translated "exceedingly" appears six times. Both express a higher degree of good than מְאֹד "very."

Now we again look at Gen. 2:22 before we return to Gen. 2:21.

In my translation under the Hebrew, I have adopted "**the part**" for the translation of הַצֵּלַע "**the 'tsay-law'**" as in <sup>NET</sup>Gen. 2:22 shown below. That will be explained more fully when we return to considering Gen. 2:21.

<sup>NET</sup> Gen. 2:22 Then the LORD God וַיִּבְנֶה **built a woman**  
from הַצֵּלַע **the part** he had taken out of **the man**, and he brought her to **the man**

לְאִשָּׁה מִן־הָאָדָם אֶת־הַצֵּלַע אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה וַיִּבְנֶה Gen. 2:22  
to a woman the humankind from he had taken which the part God Lord and built < Heb. starts here.  
וַיְבִאָהּ אֵלָיו הָאָדָם  
the humankind on to and brought her

The first word of Gen. 2:22 is וַיִּבְנֶה, a form the word בָּנָה "banah." The most common meaning of the word בָּנָה "banah" is "build." But בָּנָה "banah" also has another meaning attested in verses which speak of the building up of a family line of descent. In Gen. 16:2 below, בָּנָה "banah" occurs when referring to Abraham and Sarah's maid. And "banah" occurs in Gen. 30:3 when referring to Jacob and Rachel's maid.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 16:2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that אֶבְנֶה **I may obtain children** by her. ( אֶבְנֶה - I **may build**.)

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 30:3 And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, וְאֶבְנֶה **that I may also have children** by her. ( וְ is the "that I.")

At this point we have found that:

1) בָּשָׂר "flesh" and עֶצֶם "bone" are being used to describe the male and female sides of an ancestral line of descent. בָּשָׂר "flesh" is masculine in gender<sup>15</sup> - and עֶצֶם "bone" is feminine in gender. This leads to the possibility that בָּשָׂר "flesh" is being used to refer to the male line of descent and עֶצֶם "bone" to refer to the female line of descent.

2) בָּנָה "banah" has been used in Genesis in the building up the family lines of Abraham and Jacob.

Now we return to Gen. 2:21.

<sup>NAS</sup> Gen. 2:21 and the Hebrew text with my translation under the Hebrew are below.

<sup>NAS</sup> Gen. 2:21 So the LORD God caused a **deep sleep** to fall upon הָאָדָם the man, and he slept; then He took **one** מִצִּלְעָתוֹ of his **ribs** and closed up the בָּשָׂר flesh at that place.

וַיִּשָּׁן וַיִּפֹּל וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה Gen. 2:21  
and he slept the humankind upon deep sleep Elohim Yaweh And caused  
בְּתַתָּהּ בָּשָׂר וַיִּסְגֹּר מִצִּלְעָתוֹ אֶחָת וַיִּקַּח  
beneath flesh and closed up from-sides-his one and He took

Earlier, we found the un-named humankind in the garden of Eden is not the first of humankind. Their existence does not alter the traditional understanding that Gen. 2:21 is about God taking material ("**the part**" in Gen. 2:21) from the male, and using that material to בָּנָה "build" the female.

Gen. 2:21 merely says that these two are not the first הָאָדָם humankind. Instead, this male and female are the first ancestors of the Hebrew family line - an interpretation consistent with their being named אָדָם Adam in Gen. 5:2. In Gen. 2:3 that female is presented to the as yet un-named male. The text of Gen. 2:23 implies the woman is of betrothal age and has language skills.

The existence of additional humankind, not in the garden, makes the existence and origin of the un-named male in the garden understandable. It also helps answer the question about where Cain may have obtained his wives. The questions about Gen. 2:21 now become: Why a **deep sleep**? What was taken? Why was it done this way? These questions are **not** answered in the text of Genesis chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>15</sup> Verses where the word בָּשָׂר "flesh" refers to the male penis are: Ex. 28:24, Lev. 15:2-3, Lev. 15:16, Lev. 18:6.

## The word אָדָם Adam as a name:

Prior to Gen. 16:12, the Hebrew word אָדָם Adam appears seven times in verses where אָדָם can be considered to be the name Adam. I have inserted "אָדָם Adam" where the Hebrew text has אָדָם, and struck through the word ~~אָדָם~~ in Gen. 5:1 These verses are shown below:

<sup>ASV</sup>Gen. 1:26 "... **נַעֲשֶׂה** **Let us make** אָדָם Adam in our image, **בְּדְמוּתנוּ** after our likeness: ..."

<sup>ASV</sup>Gen. 4:25 "... And אָדָם Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth ..."

<sup>ASV</sup>Gen. 5:1 This is the book of the generations of אָדָם Adam.

In the day that God בָּרָא created אָדָם Adam ~~אָדָם~~, **in the בְּדְמוּת likeness** of God **נַעֲשֶׂה** made he him;

<sup>ASV</sup>Gen. 5:2 male and female בָּרָא created he them, and blessed them, and called their name אָדָם Adam, in the day when הִבְרָאָם they were created.

<sup>ASV</sup>Gen. 5:3 "... And אָדָם Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat *a son* ..."

<sup>ASV</sup>Gen. 5:4 "... And the days of אָדָם Adam after he begat Seth were ..."

(The "he" comes from the masculine singular ending on the Hebrew word translated "begat.")

<sup>ASV</sup>Gen. 5:5 "... And all the days that אָדָם Adam lived were ..."

Gen. 5:1 tells us that the pair named אָדָם Adam are נַעֲשֶׂה made "in the **בְּדְמוּת likeness** of God." That is the fulfilment of Gen. 1:26, which reads: "... **נַעֲשֶׂה** **Let us make** אָדָם in our **image**, after our **likeness**: ...". Later, Gen. 5:2 assigns the name Adam to them - the un-named male and the female who were expelled from the garden. In Gen. 5:2 אָדָם Adam is not the personal name of the male. In Gen. 5:1-2 the word בָּרָא bara is used three times, thereby indicating the אָדָם Adam of Gen. 2:15-22 are something new. The newness lies in them (the male-female pair) being נַעֲשֶׂה made "in the likeness of God." They are the only humans said to be in the **image** of God and "in the **בְּדְמוּת likeness** of God."

The אָדָם **humankind** created in Gen. 1:27 were created **בְּצֶלֶם** in the **image** of God. Gen. 3:23 informed us the un-named male being expelled from the garden had been taken from outside the garden (see page 4). That male was already in the image of God as were the plural אָדָם **humankind** from which he was taken - but not yet "in the **בְּדְמוּת likeness** of God."

After Gen. 5:5, the word אָדָם Adam appears more than 359 times (times that are not in the word אָדָם). In those uses, almost universally, אָדָם refers to **humankind** who have an ancestral link to the "un-named male and the female" named אָדָם Adam in Gen. 5:2.<sup>16</sup> Following Gen. 5:5, the word אָדָם next appears in Gen. 16:12, and provides an example of this category reference when describing Ishmael, a son of Abraham.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 16:12 And he will be a wild אָדָם **man**; his hand *will be* against כָּל **every man**, and כָּל **every man**'s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

In Gen. 16:12 אָדָם is **not a name** - it refers to a **humankind** (Ishmael) known to have an ancestral link to the "un-named male and the female" named אָדָם Adam in Gen. 5:2. Knowing of that link, the Septuagint used ἄνθρωπος to translate אָדָם in Gen. 16:12. The KJV's **every man**, referring to Ishmael's relatives, translates the Hebrew word כָּל meaning "all."

## The foregoing pages have shown Genesis chapter 2 and Gen. 1:27 are consistent with:

- 1) The presence of humans, for many thousands of years, **prior** to Gen. 2:7.
- 2) The presence of human-like, non-adamite, species prior to Gen. 2:7.
- 3) A plural number of humans would be alive prior to Gen. 2:15.
- 4) Gen. 2:22 does use the plural Hebrew word אָדָם **humankind** to refer to a single male human. The use of the word אִישׁ ish in Gen. 2:23 adds support for that conclusion.
- 5) And we have Hebrew textual support for N. T. Wright's proposal (page 5) – provided that the words "**early hominids**" are replaced by "**early humans**."

<sup>16</sup> Of the 359 times only a few (less than 5) have been proposed as being the name Adam.



We have found the events described in the Hebrew text of Genesis chapter two are consistent with recent archeological and DNA evidence. This conclusion is a positive support for the Gospel.

**I will now apply the results of the foregoing study to Paul's use of the name Adam<sup>17</sup> in 1 Cor. 15:45.**

Paul, a man who knew the Hebrew Torah<sup>18</sup> well, would have known that:

- 1) In Gen. 5:2 God gave the name אָדָם Adam to the male-female pair who were in the garden of Eden.
- 2) Gen. 2:21-23 says that God made the female from material taken from the male God had "taken and settled" into the garden of Eden in Gen. 2:15.
3. God's building (or making) of the woman in Gen. 2:21-23 was not accomplished by the normal process of sexual relations of a male with a female.
4. The text of Gen. 2:21-23 suggests that, in some sense, the woman God built was a female version of the male from whom she was built.

As a consequence, Paul's use of the name Adam in 1 Cor. 15:45 must refer either to them, the pair in the garden, or to the male of that pair. The male of that pair is the one God "took and settled" into the garden of Eden in Gen. 2:15. <sup>ASV</sup> 1Cor. 15:45 is show below:

<sup>ASV</sup> 1 Cor. 15:45 So also it is written, The first ἄνθρωπος **man** Ἀδὰμ **Adam** became a living soul.  
The last Ἀδὰμ **Adam** became a life-giving spirit.

The first five words of 1 Cor. 15:45 are: "So also it is written . . ." "It is written" refers to the Hebrew of Gen. 2:16-17 which contains God's first command, and the consequence which will follow disobedience.

<sup>ASV</sup> Gen. 2:17 informs that the male was a "living soul," prior to the building of the female. It does that when it warns the male ". . . *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.*"

Of the Greek word ἄνθρωπος translated "man" in 1 Cor. 15:45, Thayer says: "***It is used . . . . . universally, with reference to the genus or nature, without distinction of sex, a human being, whether male or female . . .***" <sup>19</sup>

As a consequence, the English word "man" includes both the male and the female who are named "Adam."

Gen. 3:2-3 (shown below) shows that God's command, and the consequence, applies to both the male and the female in the garden. This supports the conclusion that the Greek word ἄνθρωπος of **1 Cor. 15:45** includes the female in the garden. <sup>ASV</sup> Gen. 3:2-3 is shown below:

<sup>ASV</sup> Gen. 3:2-3 <sup>2</sup> And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat:  
<sup>3</sup> but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said,  
Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

As outlined above, <sup>ASV</sup> 1 Cor. 15:45 **does not** refer to the plural אָדָם **humankind** we found in Gen. 2:7.

The common assumption that 1 Cor. 15:45 refers to Gen. 2:7 derives from Augustine's assertion that Gen. 2:7 referred to the first human. In my opinion, the italicized *became* in the English of <sup>ASV</sup> 1 Cor. 15:45 is also based upon that assertion.

---

<sup>17</sup> The Greek word being translated Adam is Ἀδὰμ .

<sup>18</sup> Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1996), #444 page 46.