

ADAM AND EVE
Genesis 3:2-7
By Raymond White

This is a challenge. On the one hand, believing that God created heaven and earth is not a problem. Why? Because that is not verifiable or falsifiable; you just believe it or you don't. But on the other hand, believing that the human race began 6000 years ago when museums around the world contain ample evidence to the contrary, that is a problem.

When we believers stand against evolution, the fossil record does make a good case for us — every species really does appear abruptly in the record, fully formed and preceded by no transitional forms (the first bat was fully a bat, the first fish was fully a fish, etc.) so that the whole thing looks quite intentional. We're on solid ground there.

But the idea that there were no humans on earth prior to 6000 years ago, well, maybe it's time for us to draw another line in the sand. Paleontology is not a flim-flam and human remains really do exist from before 4000 B.C. For just one example, the La Brea Woman lived and died in La Brea California 9000 years ago. She is not an ape, not Neanderthal, not Australopithecus, she was human, 100% human, like you and me. What are we to say about her? We have to say *something* because she's there, folks!

I do believe there was an Adam and Eve in Eden as the Bible says. And I believe they were the *first*. But the first *what*? That is the formidable question. And that drags us, kicking and screaming, to this fair question: How do we reconcile early Genesis with science? My answer is: We dig deeper into what Genesis is really saying, and *not* saying. And if we discover that we have committed our faith to something that science makes impossible *and* it is something that the Bible doesn't require us to believe after all, then why should we continue to believe it? Such things are not the proper hill to die on.

Those early stories of Genesis do sound mythical, maybe even silly. That doesn't mean they're not true, truth is often silly, but it does mean that some things we ought to concede to science — specifically, that people have been here for a very long time.

We do have a right, of course, to be suspicious of science. Even scientists are suspicious of science. And that's a good thing. Suspicion moves science ever forward to new experiments, new theories, new interpretations, and new knowledge. Scientists know that science sometimes gets it wrong, and old theories fall by the wayside as new theories take hold. Since scientists challenge science, people of faith are right to do so as well.

But if we challenge only science, and never challenge our understanding of the Bible, that's disingenuous. Clashes between science and the Bible might as likely be due to our misunderstanding the Bible, and if we can fix *that*, then religion and science might more easily reconcile. And after all, why should we waste effort defending what the Bible *doesn't* say? If we can peel away some dogma we may learn that against the backdrop of *modern* science, those stories of early Genesis are not so silly after all, that the Bible is more natural than super-natural, that God is more an engineer than a magician, and that he has more in common with Isaac Newton than with Harry Houdini.

I believe it is once again time to update our theologies to accommodate good science. But we must do so without changing the Bible — to change the Bible is to change the rules, and that would be cheating, and cheating to win is not a win but a hoax.

My goal then is to re-understand the words *that are there* to mean something that does *not* conflict with good science and never did.

So, let's proceed. What does Genesis actually say about Adam and Eve and their sojourn in Eden?

[1] THE POINT

First, we have to understand and make sense of the *point* of the story (Adam and Eve's temptation and fall), or the details won't much matter. So let's start, not at the beginning but somewhere in the middle and address a long running theological paradox, which, on its surface *does* make Genesis sound loony. But if we dissect it, it may not be so loony after all. Then we can delve into the details and try to square them with science.

[1.1] THE PARADOX OF MORAL JUDGMENT

I pose this question: Since Adam and Eve had no sense of right and wrong before the fall, how could God punish them for making the wrong decision? How can learning right from wrong itself be a punishment-deserving wrong? That would be like punishing a child for acting like a child, finding fault because he does not act like an adult.

Let's review the two conversations: Adam's conversation with God and Eve's conversation with the serpent.

Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. *:17* 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 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: *:3* 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. *:4* And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die/ *:5* For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. *:6* And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. *:7* And the eyes of them both were open, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

So that's the story. God told Adam and Eve don't eat that fruit. But why? Parents will often say to a child, "Because I said so!" God, however, was better than that — he gave a reason: "Because if you do, you'll die." A parent might say to a child (as I once did to my young daughter): "Don't stick the pliers in the socket, you might die." That's the kind of advice God gives here — not just a don't, but a don't with a good reason.

When I told my daughter to not stick pliers in the socket, I did more than tell her, I took the pliers away from her and gave her a little swat on the behind, which was rare.

Why? Because I was a heartless meanie? No. But because the consequences were *so* dire — she could actually die — that I had to stop that behavior *now!* Had the consequences been less dire, like maybe eating too much Halloween candy, I would not have acted so harshly. I'd have simply given her good advice, “don't eat so much candy — it might make your belly ache, rot your teeth, and make you fat,” then allowed her the freedom to choose. That's how kids learn. But pliers in a socket? Oh no. Kids don't learn by dying.

It must be significant that God did not remove the tree as I did the pliers. He left the tree there, it seems as an enticement, an intentional temptation. God's “don't” doesn't feel like a pliers-in-a-socket “don't”, but more like a Halloween candy “don't”. If it was the first kind, an absolute prohibition, why leave the tree? That God left the tree and gave Adam and Eve the choice, shows that the consequence was not *so* dire, and maybe even desirable. That is unless God was a careless parent — some children really do die from electric shock, and when they do, it is the parents' fault for being careless. I don't believe God was careless, therefore the temptation was intentional and had a purpose.

What did they know and not know? They knew that they could die because God had said so, and they did not know that they were making a moral judgment. In fact, they weren't making a moral judgment, and therein lies the paradox.

I will frame the paradox this way: If they sinned by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, how could God hold them accountable for that sin since they obviously did not know what sin (good and evil) was until they ate that fruit? That's a catch-22. Just where does the guilt lie? My answer: There was no guilt or sin. This had nothing to do with guilt and penalty but everything to do with stupidity and consequence.

[1.2] RIGHT AND WRONG VERSUS SMART AND STUPID

Penalty and consequence are different. Penalty is a concept of law, consequence is a concept of reality. It is the difference between getting a ticket for speeding and getting killed for speeding. The ticket is penalty, dying is consequence. Penalty is inducement to not do that which might get us killed. Speeding is wrong because it breaks a law and gets us ticketed. But beyond being wrong, speeding is also stupid because it gets us killed.

Adam and Eve did not know that eating the fruit was wrong (they had yet to learn right from wrong), but they did know that it was dangerous, and therefore maybe stupid.

A leopard will attack a gazelle without conscience. But a leopard will not attack a lion. Why not? Because he has a conscience after all? No. Because he is not stupid.

When my wife first brought our dog Teddy home (without my pre-knowledge or approval), he needed to be house broken. We went to great lengths to accomplish that. Then one day, when we were sure that goal had been achieved, he had an “accident.” I reacted, if not quite violently, at least harshly. I grabbed him by the neck in mid-piddle and slammed him against the wall and growled a most threatening growl. He understood my meaning: “In the day thou peest in my house, *thou shalt surely die!*”

He got the message. Teddy never peed in our house again.

Was that a moral decision he had made? Did he finally decide to “do the right thing” from then on? No. But what he did understand was survival. He still has no sense of right and wrong, but I attest that on that day he learned smart from stupid.

Well, if a half-breed, mongrel dog is smart enough to do the smart thing, though not the right thing, surely Adam and Eve were at least that smart. That tree of good and evil was dangerous, and they knew it because God had said so.

[1.3] CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

Here's what happened. God said, if you eat that fruit, you will learn the difference between good and evil, but the price will be death. Yes, God said "don't!" But he gave them a sensible reason for the "don't". Then he left the tree there so they could decide.

Satan offered them a different deal. What was this conversation about that Eve had with the serpent? The serpent said two things: **Genesis 3:4** *ye shall not surely die*, and **:5** *ye shall be as gods, knowing good from evil*.

Satan's first claim, you'll not die, was a lie because God had said **Genesis 2:17** *thou shalt surely die*. Or maybe it was not so much a lie as just bait and switch. Maybe God and Satan were both right but both hiding material facts. When God said you'll die, he meant you'll lose access to the tree of life. When Satan said you'll not die, maybe he meant that the forbidden fruit was not poisonous, it's not going to kill you. So Satan could defend himself against the charge of lying — he was literally correct, sort of.

But Satan's second claim, you'll be as the Gods, was definitely the truth because God also said **Genesis 3:22** *the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil*.

So, what was going on? They were *negotiating!* Satan was a salesman pitching an offer. Eve wanted to be as the gods but she was looking for a better price. And Satan offered her that better price: "you won't die." That's what Eve wanted to hear, so she believed it — which shows how willing we are to believe a lie to get what we want. By concealing a material fact, Satan convinced her that the benefit outweighed the cost, and so Eve signed the contract and bought the subscription. It must have been multi-level marketing because she then sold the same deal to her husband.

Did Adam and Eve sin? Well, if they did, it was not knowingly because they had no knowledge of right and wrong. That, they learned somehow from the fruit.

Did God punish them? "Punish" is not the right word. There were consequences, to be sure, and God listed them. They lost their garden home and their access to the tree of life, and now had to work for a living, and death was now inevitable.

But wasn't that punishment? No, it was consequence. A doctor might say to a patient, "You have lung cancer, I recommend chemo." Cancer and chemo are both consequences of smoking. The doctor is not punishing his patient with chemo, he is explaining the consequences. As the patient suffers through the chemo, he might think of it as punishment because it hurts, but it is not punishment, it is intended to help.

Adam and Eve's expulsion was like that. God had to expel them for their own good. To leave them in Eden with the tree of life would leave them eternally cursed, mid-way between humanness and godhood. They now needed a different route to immortality, and for that they had to experience death so that they could live again forever un-cursed.

[1.4] RISK VERSUS REWARD

Was it a bad deal for Adam and Eve to risk death for wisdom, to be fully human, nearly gods? Consider that people risk death for a whole lot less: mountain climbers, race

car drivers, police officers, soldiers, smokers, etc. — a serious list of those who risk their lives would be very long. By comparison, Eve's trade sounds like a pretty good deal.

If we want to insist that their action was sin (which I don't, but still...) we could point to one meaning of the word "sin"; which is, "to miss the mark." *Sin* is an archery word and means you shoot at a target but miss. In that sense sin has nothing to do with intent but everything to do with result: missing. A miss is a miss regardless of the intent.

With that view, one might sin and yet be innocent, as, for example, Oedipus Rex, who, on every hand, acted morally and with high integrity, yet committed two grievous sins: he killed his own father and married his own mother. He committed these sins not because he was malicious but because he was ignorant. Therefore he sinned even though he was innocent. He missed the mark because fate obscured the target. He could certainly justify his actions, "I didn't know," but it was a miss all the same.

We are inclined to forgive ignorant sin, but nature is not so obliging. Had Oedipus and his mother produced a badly deformed offspring, which so often results from incest, no amount legal wrangling or self justification would absolve that harm, that *evil*. Reality sticks like glue and Oedipus did not, could not forgive himself. His self-condemning guilt was so overwhelming that he plucked out his own eyes. We see then that even innocence cannot always absolve us of burdening guilt and of consequence.

Could the Oedipus story actually happen? Yes, it does. There is such a thing as accidental incest where brother and sister get adopted to separate families, raised without knowledge of each other, then meet by chance and fall in love. Rare, of course. But we needn't think such things don't happen — they do. Ignorance may be an adequate excuse, but so what? Resulting evil is still evil. Life is not a game, not a "test," it is a reality.

So there is innocent sin, bizarre as it sounds. And if Adam and Eve actually did sin, it was innocent sin; that is, they didn't know because they couldn't have known. Any notion of good from evil had not yet dawned on them. That, they learned from the fruit, and from the experience.

So they likely avoided guilt. They did not, however, avoid consequences. If in your sleepwalk you step off a cliff, you brake no law and draw no condemnation, but you are dead just the same. That is not punishment from law, that is consequence from nature, from its unyielding cause and effect.

Is that fair? Fair has nothing to do with it. Fair is a notion of justice and law, and has nothing to do with consequences except they sometimes travel the same path, but just as often, they don't.

We often get balled up theologically and judicially when we confuse the two and try to apply nature's laws of consequences (cause and effect) to matters of legal law (justice and fairness) and end up saying ridiculously stupid things; like in court, awarding a woman \$1,000,000 for spilling hot coffee on herself; or like in church, blaming Eve for the fall when we should credit her for it.

Here is an interesting side question: Do children sin? That's a bigger question, too big to deal with here so I've reserved it for another writing.

Back to Adam and Eve.

If Adam and Eve did sin, their sin is that they missed the mark. Whether sin or not, they did it ignorantly and not maliciously, and therefore they were innocent.

And does it even matter that they missed a mark if they hit another mark, a good mark? All they did was chose a different destiny for themselves and for us — a destiny to

be fully human and eventually gods, rather than remain in a limbo paradise forever. Yes, Adam and Eve died, but they came out ahead on the deal. The price was exorbitantly high, but what they got was worth it.

[1.5] WHY THE FALL?

So, why did God put them through all that? Because they could not become fully human unless it was *their* decision. That's what being human means, taking charge, just as becoming an adult means maturing and taking charge of one's own life.

But it couldn't be their own decision unless there was a violation. It had to be a determined decision against God's advice so that they would own it. It wouldn't do for them to say to God, "This was your idea, therefore it's your fault." God had to be able to say, "No, I tried to talk you out of it. Remember? This is on you. *Your* choice, *your* life." The human race is what it chose to be, we are not cosmic victims. That's the point.

Think of your own children. If your child says "yes" to *every* instruction and is perfectly compliant in every way, then he or she is like the Stepford Wives, and you'd suspect that something is wrong. Maybe autism, or some other serious problem that strips a child of his will. Every parent hopes, or should hope, that sooner or later their child will show some defiance and become independent. For children to become fully functioning human beings, at some point they must strike out on their own apart from their parents' advice. If that never happens, we parents would be terribly disappointed.

And it was so for Adam and Eve. Be grateful they did, or you wouldn't be here.

I tutor math. I'll tell you the moment I know I've done a good job. It's when my student says to me, "I think you just made a mistake," and he's right. That's when I know I've succeeded. When he is confident enough to correct me, he really understands.

God said, "don't eat that fruit," and Adam and Eve responded by eating that fruit. That's the moment they became fully human and began their trek to godhood.

But the cost was exorbitantly high. Really good things are expensive like buying a house straps you with a 30 year mortgage. Adam and Eve gained something and lost something. They gained a path to godhood (humanness) and lost a short-cut immortality. The tree of life gave them a taste of what godhood could be like, but a taste was not good enough. They rejected it and opted for the real thing. That's the trade-off. In the cosmic scheme of things, nothing is free.

Was it worth the price? Certainly it was.

[1.6] MORMON POST-SCRIPT

I do not know what the myriad Christian denominations teach about the fall of Adam and Eve and their progeny with them — whether it was a good thing or a bad thing, a sin or a gallant act of heroism, or all of it mixed together. But I think that most Christians have a dim view of Adam and Eve, and fault them for our human condition.

Mormons, however, do not share that negative belief about the fall. Instead, Mormons praise rather than scorn our first parents for their courageous choice, and that theological posture is best summed up with this Mormon verse —

2 Nephi 2:22 ... if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden ... :23 And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no sin. :25 Adam fell that men might be, and men are, that they might have joy.

[1.7] WHAT WAS IN IT FOR GOD?

Why did God put himself through all this? The simple answer is because he wanted to. Well, okay, but why? Because he loves us. Again: Why?

Here is my guess, and it's just a guess so please don't read false doctrine into this.

If you paint a beautiful painting you can admire and enjoy it anytime you want. But there's a limit to your enjoying it simply because you created it and are too familiar with it. Musicians have a similar experience. They can work so hard perfecting a piece that they no longer have pleasure in it. They know it too well.

But if you look at someone else's paintings, listen to someone else's music, or go into the forest and look at God's trees, the experience is quite different. Not only are you experiencing beauty, but random beauty that you are not familiar with that hits you fresh.

Maybe God is like that. He enjoys his creations but what he really wants is to enjoy someone else's creations. And in order to enjoy that experience, he had to create us with independent free will. To enjoy something "other," he had to relinquish control.

And that was risky. When you look at someone else's paintings, they may not please you, they may even be ugly. Or they may be beautiful. It's the luck of the draw. I like Raphael and Dali and Kinkade. I do not like Picasso, not even a bit.

What does God like and what doesn't he like? He likes righteousness, and he does not like unrighteousness. I think he also likes accomplishment, and I'm sure he likes love.

We are not much different than God in that regard. We also want our children to be kind and good, and not mean and evil. We want them to achieve, to contribute, to matter, but at the same time we want them to be fully independent *from us*. We want them to be what we want, but we also want them to arrive at that on their own. That is paradoxical, and is the same mire that God is stuck in. You can't have it both ways. God (George Burns) said it distinctly in the movie *Oh God – Book II*: "I've never figured out how to make something with only one side to it." That's so good it should be in the Bible.

Which brings me to this enduring question: If God is all powerful and all loving, why is there evil? My answer to that question is the same for this question: Why do you, a parent, give your children problems to solve and not give them the answers? Because it's not the answers they need but how to *find* the answers.

Knowing that $2+2=4$ is not a big achievement, a parrot can say as much with no understanding at all. What we want for our children is for them to understand *why*, so that they can *discover* answers *without* our help. That's why we teach them to add with their fingers rather than just remember and parrot back to us " $2+2=4$ ".

God wants the same for us. So he has stuck us in a world that reeks with problems to solve, evils to vanquish, sickness, accidents, death, violence, violence to children, hate, war, global warming, dangerous weather, earthquakes, tsunamis, erupting volcanoes, and a sun that will one day nova and incinerate us. And God audaciously says to us, "I give you dominion. And, for a homework assignment, I also give you all the problems that

come with dominion. Solve them, all of them, and become like me.” And it all began with a tree in Eden.

Why doesn't God get rid of evil? Because *we* need to learn how to get rid of evil. We need evil if we are ever to become gods. That's why God sent Eve to deal with the devil, and why children best learn some things, naughty things, from their friends at school rather than from their parents. How will they handle that information? No one knows. That is the risk parents take when they send their children to school, and the same risk God took when he placed Adam and Eve in Satan's kill zone. It will not do for God to solve all our problems for us, *we* need to solve them just as a child uses her fingers to understand *why* $2+2=4$. Ships are safest in a harbor, but that's not what ships are for.

Why didn't God just make us exactly like him from the get-go? God could have created us to mirror his will precisely, thus nipping sin and evil in the bud. But he didn't. Why not? Because had he done that, he would have had no pleasure in a world of robots. For God to enjoy us and *our* creations, we had to be an *us*; that is, an us with independent will apart from his, so that our creations would be *our* creations. For me, happiness is watching my kids and grandkids do things I cannot do. I wager that God feels the same. Human destiny then is off the chart, and God says, as any parent says, “go, and do.”

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father.

And so God took a horrible risk: he created us — freewill beings, beautiful, and dangerous. Face it, much of the joy of children is the chaos they throw at us. What will they do next? We wonder, and hope, and stand in awe of our own creation. And we fret.

[2] THE DETAILS

Now that we've made sense out of the *point* of the story, let's take on the *details*. It is said that the devil is in the details, and the details of Eden's story are devilish indeed.

Truth is easy, lies are hard. When we tell the truth we rattle off details without blinking an eye, so much in fact that our listeners sometimes would rather we shut up. But when we lie, we stumble on contrived details and avoid providing details at all until asked. So, for an interrogator seeking the truth, details, and particularly irrelevant details, matter. The Eden story has lots of details that invite our examination.

[2.1] THOSE TREES

What about the fruit? Does it even make sense that a bite of forbidden fruit or the fruit of the tree of life could so alter them? Can we take this story literally, or must we see it as an allegory, a child's yarn? Let's be brave and take the story literally.

There are many things that can alter you drastically with one bite. Like cyanide for instance, which would change you for the worst rapidly. Slower changes happen from bad cholesterol, good Omega-3, and a host of other things. Almost everything we eat alters us in some way for the good or for the bad. That's what food does — you are what

you eat and that is literal. Dieticians and researchers are hard at work figuring out what is good to eat and what is bad.

What about Adam and Eve's new sense of right and wrong? Can a fruit *teach*? Well, I've read that Ginkgo Biloba improves memory. I know from personal experience that it vanquishes tinnitus; it did mine. What about Prozac? Doesn't Prozac promise a similar thing? It calms us down and gets our attitude under control so that we can think straight. Some medications reduce rage and the impulse to kill or commit suicide. They are, without too much of a stretch, a conscience restorer. A tree of knowledge of good and evil then is not so farfetched after all. There could actually be such a thing.

What about the tree of life? Adam and Eve were immortal. However, they were not immortal by nature, they were immortal only because they had access to that tree. If they were immortal by nature as God is, they wouldn't have needed the tree, would they? They were immortal so long as they ate the fruit of that tree.

That puts a different spin on the notion of immortality and makes immortality a more reasonable goal. Isn't that, after all, what the medical profession is about? Isn't that the holy grail of medicine, immortality in a bottle? So, why not immortality hanging on a tree? Monsanto is busy, busy, busy altering the DNA of food. Maybe there is a fruit that eliminates aging and we just have to find it. If anybody does, it will likely be Monsanto.

Adam and Eve had it, immortality on a tree, and lost it. That is no more ridiculous than curing cancer with a pill which could soon happen. Would that surprise anyone? Eden's tree of life is just the kind of story that could actually have happened.

[2.2] ADAM'S RIB

Genesis 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead therefore; :22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

Silly story, isn't it — making a person from a rib (chortle). How stupid is that? We once believed it, but now we routinely dismiss such things in favor of reason and common sense. Creating Eve from Adam's rib was the stuff of fairytales and simply could not have happened.

But hold on, let's not be hasty. Times have changed, again, and with today's medical advances, this silly story of Genesis shifts from silly to plausible, and from plausible to "hey, maybe we can actually do that."

Surely you've seen the movies Jurassic Park and Avatar. Yes, they're fiction, but not *so* fiction. We don't laugh because the premise of both movies is not absurd. Today's science fiction is not far ahead of science fact. Cloning an extinct species (Jurassic Park) or a giant blue alien (Avatar) is not farfetched; in fact, it is pretty near-fetched. We're not just almost doing such things, we *are* doing such things. Gene splicing tweaks DNA and morphs one kind of creature into another. And if we can do that, why can't God?

Why a rib?

In 2011 my wife, Cyndi, tripped and fell hard against a coffee table. The impact broke her jaw, but she didn't know it until two years later when she began suffering with it in earnest. Then we finally got her to a doctor and learned of the break.

The surgeon, Doctor Elias, began the surgery by putting Cyndi in a “deep sleep,” just as God did to Adam. That is reasonable. It would be *unreasonable* to perform a surgery without first inducing a pain-free state by some means.

Once Cyndi was out cold, Dr. Elias opened her up in two places: her jaw of course, but also her rib. Why her rib? Because he removed from her rib a piece of cartilage, which he shaped into a shim. Then he removed the small piece of broken bone from her jaw and inserted the cartilage shim into the space. Then, when he was finished, he “closed up the flesh,” just as God did. And behold, Cyndi’s jaw worked. And it is still working today. How wonderful is that? Thank you, Dr. Elias, and modern medicine.

How then is this Genesis story ridiculous? It isn’t ridiculous. It is plausible and consistent with modern surgical techniques, *if* you take the story literally. God is not a magician who snaps his fingers to make things happen, he’s a scientist — and in this story a surgeon and an anesthesiologist — who must go through a process to get done what he wants done. That is a reasonable God.

Most believers prefer the magician God with unlimited power. But that’s not the God of the Bible. I prefer the scientist God who has limits, who has to work to get things done, and has trouble dealing with evil. The magical God can’t explain why he tolerates evil. The scientist God can. He can’t just wish evil away, he must defeat it.

We can tweak DNA to alter a species, but can we get an entire person from a rib? Actually we don’t need the entire rib, we only need the DNA and we can grow the body, or Avatar. Or someday we’ll be able to. We’re not quite there yet but we soon will be. Does anyone doubt that? We already clone. We may improve on that and maybe soon.

We now have 3-D printing. An interesting promise of 3-D printing is bio-printing where researchers are trying to make wonderful things like kidneys and livers tailored to each person. We’ll get there, and the sooner the better.

We should note that Genesis does not say that God did not return the rib to Adam once God was done with it. Nor does the text say that God necessarily removed it. Yes, it says the rib became a woman, but that doesn’t necessarily mean all of it. Some mornings I will turn an egg into an omelet. That doesn’t mean the shell is in the omelet (yuck!), it means that what I want *of* the egg is in the omelet. There was something in that rib that God needed to build a woman. I’m guessing, DNA. But maybe other material too. Maybe cartilage. We shall see where science leads us.

We’re just at the beginning of this brave, new world. Avatar is just around the corner. But it’s all old-school for God, it’s just new-school for us younger gods.

My point is that none of this Genesis story sounds unreasonable — not any more. Except the talking serpent. That sounds pretty mythical. But I’m sure that’s hyperbole. We do call evil people snakes (*Matthew 3:7 vipers*), and Satan fits that description.

But why this extra-ordinary effort? Why the surgery? Why didn’t God create Eve as he had Adam, from the dust of the earth? After all, it worked once. So, as the saying goes, if it ain’t broke, why fix it? The implication is that Eve was special in a way that Adam was not. Adam was standard issue, Eve was tinkered with.

[2.3] GENDER GAP

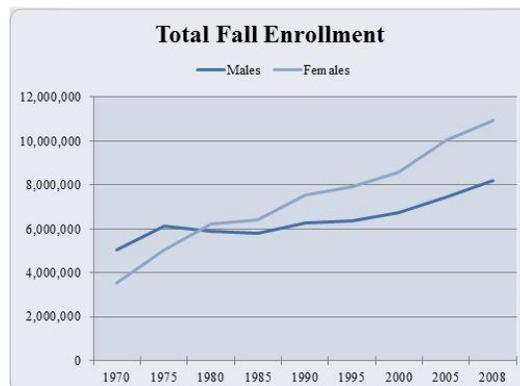
That men and women are different is obvious. It’s okay to be different, in fact it’s necessary. Women are inclined to nurture children; men, not so much. Men are more

inclined to hunt and kill mammoths; women, not so much. This natural divergence promotes Domestic Specialization which distributes workload and improves a primal family's chances of survival.

Divergent inclinations are not caused by social brainwashing but are innate, built into the genes and wired into the brain. We see, for example, a conspicuous difference in the criteria for selecting sexual partners. It is no secret that men prefer pretty women and that women prefer powerful men. This difference is beneficial. Male preference for pretty women makes us healthier, and female preference for powerful men makes us stronger. This do-sa-do propels the human race forward into its ever improving destiny.

Gender differences are innately good. However, they become bad when they are used to gain advantage and manipulate the other gender. For example, there are still countries where women are not allowed to attend school. That is a pretty rigid glass ceiling and a rotten way for men to keep women subjugated.

In America, of course we have no such thing. We do have, however, an opposite situation. Since the 1970s, female college enrollment has exceeded male enrollment by widening gaps. In 2008, Fall enrollments were 11,000,000 females and 8,000,000 males.



That difference of 3,000,000 females is not a statistical blip, it is a major concern. Feminists may think this a victory, but consider: Since women tend to not want to marry beneath their social status, unlike men who don't care, where are these 3,000,000 surplus educated women going to find educated men for lifelong partners? Successful men always have an advantage over less successful men in partner picking, but with these numbers, successful men will have an even greater advantage — not only over less successful men but also over women. More and more, educated men will have their pick of women while educated women will face ever growing competition from each other.

So, what do we expect to happen? Polygamy? Successful men having multiple women and unsuccessful men having none? That unintended consequence would be a strange feminist victory. I'd suggest that we try to persuade more males to go to college, but feminists might see that as anti-women — why, I'm not quite sure.

When did the battle of the sexes begin? Apparently in Eden, or just after.

Genesis 3:16 Unto the woman he [God] said ... thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

This bad mistranslation (from a male dominated age) seems to instruct Eve to love Adam and let him be a tyrant over her. But that's not what the verse is saying, not at all. To understand what it *is* saying, let's read another verse with a similar verbiage —

Genesis 4:7 *And unto thee [Cain] shall be his [Satan's] desire, and thou shalt rule over him.*

This “desire” is not love but hunger. Not, I love my wife, but I love a prime rib. Read it this way: Cain, Satan *desires* to control you, but you must resist.

Now read Adam and Eve the same way: Eve, you will desire to control Adam — after all, you gave him the fruit — but, Adam, you must resist.

The issue is not who should control who but that manipulating control (from either side) is a bad thing and should be resisted.

Genesis 3:17 *And unto Adam he [God] said, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife ... cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow thou shalt eat of it all the days of thy life.*

Whether Eve's advice to Adam was good or bad is open to interpretation. It had some bad consequences for sure, but it all worked out. Either way, there are lessons here.

First: Don't make major decisions alone. Eve was alone when she made her deal with the devil. Had she asked Adam, they might have made a different decision, or not, but at least together.

Second: Be careful with your partner's advice. It might be good or it might not.

Third: Be *very* careful giving advice. If your partner takes your advice, will you be embarrassed later when things go awry? I think Eve's advice to eat the fruit was the right advice, and Adam was right to take it. But still, when you give advice and it is taken, just understand that the result, good or bad, is on you. Note that Eve has received more than her fair share of undeserved blame. Better is to make decisions together, then the blame is shared.

It's time for a joke: God created Eve. She was doing well until one day God said, “Eve, how would you like a man?” Eve said, “What's a man?” God said, “He's sort of like you but different in some ways. He runs fast, is a good hunter, and he'll be fun in bed.” Eve said, “Okay, I'll take one.” God said, “Good choice. Oh, but by the way, he has an ego and you'll have to let him think I made him first.”

[2.4] WHY EDEN?

Have you ever asked that question, or heard anyone else ask it? Or is it just me? I think it's fair to ask, what was wrong with planet earth so that God had to make a special garden? Here is the key verse, and it's critical to understanding the creation epoch —

Genesis 2:7 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. :8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man*

whom he had formed. :15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden.

Here's the sequence, and it's important. God created this man first. *Then* he *planted* Eden. *Then* he moved the man to Eden *after* this newly planted garden did some maturing. In other words, some serious time passed between Adam's creation and his arrival in Eden. In other words, Adam had real experience with the pre-Eden earth. There is no other conclusion possible.

That fact opens a raft of new possibilities and invites a host of questions; such as: Why did God make Adam *not* in Eden if Eden was the goal? Why not create Adam *in* Eden? What was Adam doing before Eden? And when Adam moved to Eden, what, *and who*, did he leave behind? And of course, what was the rest of the world like?

To contrast Eden to everywhere else, we note that Eden was indeed a nice place.

Ezekiel 28:13 Thou [Tyre] *has been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone...*

Eden was the good life. So good, that God compared the city of Tyre to it. So that's Eden. The rest of planet earth, on the other hand, was not so nice, not Eden-like.

Genesis 3:18 *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.*

Did God decide at the moment of the expulsion to create thorns and thistles just to make their lives difficult? That doesn't make sense, and it contradicts *Genesis 1* which says that God created the plants, all of them, before he created man. So, any idea that God created naughty plants just to annoy Adam and Eve, *would* sound mythical, and pretty silly — abracadabra, now there are thorns and thistles. Better is to accept that God already created all plant life everywhere, good and bad, and Eden was the exception.

Didn't God create thorns and thistles in Eden? There *was* no Eden when God created thorns and thistles. So maybe God just weeded the place.

That's not frivolous. This God of Genesis is a dexterous, corporal being quite capable of weeding a garden. Let's consider what this God of early Genesis was like.

[1] He planted a garden (*Genesis 2:8* *God planted a garden*).

[2] He took walks in it (*Genesis 3:8* *God walking in the garden...*).

[3] He liked cool days and not hot (*Genesis 3:8* *... in the cool of the day*).

[4] He performed surgery (*Genesis 2:21*).

[5] He made clothes and killed animals (*Genesis 3:21* *God made coats of skin*).

God, then, sounds very much like a person, and weeding a garden should be no big deal. Also, he had angels to help; they were dexterous too — later, an angel stood guard with a sword, and if an angel can wield a sword, why not a rake?

This picture suggests that when Adam was expelled, he met *again* the thorns and thistles and other undesirable things he would rather not have had deal with, *again* — like maybe saber-cats. Adam, then, had at least a taste of the hard life before Eden.

Eden was a strange place. It was beautiful, it was safe, it had angels, God hung out there, and it had two odd trees.

So, again: God made Adam, *then* God made Eden, *then* God moved Adam into Eden. But why? Why didn't God make Eden first and Adam in it?

First: Adam was not a product of Eden, he was a product of the natural earth. "Adamah" means "earth." So, God (or the gods) called him earthman. And all it says of Adam's creation was that he was made of the "dust of the earth" and God "breathed into him the breath of life," which can be said just as accurately about any of us. So it is not heretical to believe that Adam was *born*. **Luke 3:38** ... *Adam, which was the son of God.*

Second: Eden was safe, a good environment to learn in. And all that stuff in our museums, which cannot be denied, is proof that huge things, dangerous things, were already going on outside of Eden long before Adam existed.

Third: Eden was where the two trees were. The tree of life changed Adam, and made him something different than what he had been. He wasn't immortal until he started eating the fruit of that tree, and that fruit kept him immortal so long as he had access. And the tree of the knowledge of good and evil also changed him. It gave him a new intellect, an awareness of right and wrong. And, oddly enough, it made him modest — he needed clothes.

Fourth: Eden is where God created Eve. God brought Adam to Eden *so that* he could create Eve by strange means. She, and not Adam, was the new creation. Adam was a product of the earth, likely born like anyone else. But unlike Adam, Eve was a product of Eden and some special one-time medical engineering. If not, then why the surgery? *She* was the special one, God had tinkered with *her* genome to get something new just as he had been tinkering with animal genome for billions of years. Taken literally, Eden begins to feel like a sanctuary, even a laboratory — name the animals, change the people — and God seems more like a tinkering researcher.

That's not strange, *we* are tinkering researchers. And how do we tinker? With Linti Virus which enables us to deliver modified DNA to every cell in a human body.

For those of you who don't know, Linti Virus is modified HIV which is nature's natural message carrier. So, why not put it to good use? And we have. But the messages it carries for us are good messages that cure genetic diseases, not bad messages like AIDS. If we can do that, and we do, so can God. And that is how evolution happened, not by Darwin's natural selection, but by God's willful tweaking which is evidenced by the fossil record's step-wise contiguity and not smooth continuity. Life is digital, not analog.

I wonder what God tweaked in Eve? Maybe he gave her additional courage, or curiosity, made her adventurous, even reckless, smarter, a thinker, a shopper, someone consumed with a new idea, "What would it be like to become a god," who couldn't shake of that idea and would finally surrender to it and eat that forbidden fruit.

Eden is credible. The whole story is credible because Eden is apart. While the rest of the world is off doing its own thing (i.e.: the fossil record), Eden had its own special story out of the way, but still never conflicting with science. Eden, then, begins to sound like a real place — it is not Never-Never-Land, and it is not Oz.

[2.5] THE TIMELINE AND THE EXTENDED FAMILY

Now that we know that the rest of the planet was thriving while Adam and Eve were in Eden, we can explore the possibility that there were humanoids prior to 4000 B.C.

Years ago (well, decades ago) my wife and I visited the La Brea Tar Pits in, of all places, La Brea which is in Los Angeles, California. This is a trip you should make.

In one of the museums is the skeleton of a female, the La Brea Woman, who was about 30 years old when she died. She got trapped in the tar pits about 9000 years ago. She used to be on display I think, and I think I saw her in the 80's but I'm not sure. She's not on display now because the museum is afraid that some native American tribe might claim her remains for burial, and that would be a tragic loss to science. And she, a human woman, was alive on this planet 9000 years ago, long before Adam and Eve.

So, here's a question: Were Adam and Eve first? Here is my answer: First what? Genesis does not call Adam "first." Now, the New Testament calls Adam first —

1 Corinthians 15:14 And so it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul.

But Paul is wrong, it was *not* written "the first man Adam became," it was written

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

That's all Genesis says, not Paul's "first man Adam".

So, where does Paul get "first man"? He is accurate if he means first *named* man, first *mentioned* man, first *documented* man, first *historic* man — Adam is the first we know of *in history*. So we can infer "first" and "Adam," but the Hebrew text says neither. So it is not anti-Genesis to suppose that there were other humans on earth before Adam.

What were they doing? For one thing, occasionally falling into tar pits.

There is one important thing that did happen just about 4000 B.C.: the invention of writing. So it is plausible that a man, Adam, was taken by God to a secure place, guarded and protected by angels, protected from dying with a unique fruit, where he named animals and learned to write. Naming animals implies writing — Adam was not committing to memory a long list of animals, he was writing them down, that's what naming them meant. He was earth's first scribe.

Clearly there was a first scribe (there's a first everything) and Genesis is saying, that was Adam, and that puts Adam at the dawn of history; indeed, Adam *was* the dawn of history. Prior to that was pre-history (prehistoric) and all we have of it is paleontology and pictograms in caves.. So this date that the Bible gives us for the Eden story, circa 4000 B.C., need not be the beginning of the human race, but the beginning of something else nearly as important: the beginning of the *history* of the human race, which, in a practical view, *is* the beginning of everything. And that squares with science.

Seen this way, the Eden story begins to sound less mythological and more like something that could actually have happened.

Now let's ask the really hard question. Were there people other than Adam and his family? Science demands yes, of course. But does that make Genesis impossible to believe? There are clues in the Bible that Christians gloss over considering them to be mysteries best left alone. They should not be left alone.

Who else was there?

Genesis 4:14 Behold, thou [God] hast driven me [Cain] out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that everyone that findeth me shall slay me.

Everyone? Who is everyone? Who are these people that Cain fears? Not likely any progeny of Adam and Eve's. Abel was Eve's firstborn and Cain her second (*Genesis 4:1-2*). So who then? Answer: someone.

Also, Cain is said to be the first murderer, but there are people out there who already know how to kill, and Cain is afraid of them.

Also, who was Cain's wife?

Genesis 4:16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. :17 And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bear Enoch: and he built a city ...

When Adam entered Eden, he came from the west, traveling eastward to Eden. Then, when Adam and Eve left Eden, they traveled west to familiar territory. Now Cain, fleeing from his family and from God, travels east towards Eden, and beyond to someplace called Nod. And there he found a girl he liked.

It must be that Adam and Eve were west of Eden because if he were east, then to say that Cain went east *of Eden* would be pointless. It also must be that Cain found this girl eastward in Nod because it says "Cain went out," not "Cain *and his wife* went out." There was no wife until he arrived at Nod.

So, who are these people of Nod? They must be people other than Adam and Eve's family because this whole drama occurs before Adam and Eve have any other children. Soon they had Seth, their third, (*Genesis 4:25*). That he is specifically mentioned implies that he was now their only child. They do not have lots of children that have previously migrated to Nod, otherwise, why is Seth so special?

Am I certain of all this? Of course not. I'm just conjecturing, looking for possible ways to reconcile the Bible and factual science. If it all seems bogus to you, that's fine, toss it out. But if we allow this biblical picture, then early Genesis and science do not conflict. We might well be descended from one God-chosen couple, Adam and Eve, but we could be descended from their contemporaries and earlier peoples as well, like maybe the La Brea woman.

And that would be a more plausible situation than to force ourselves to believe the unbelievable; that no one was here prior to 4000 B.C. when they clearly were.

The biblical story of Adam and Eve could well be true after all, *if* we allow Genesis to tell the story it tells and not a fantasy of our imagination, like for instance that Cain married his sister — *that* is a wild conjecture which the Bible says nothing of.

[2.6] BEFORE EDEN

There was a pre-Eden earth, and the Bible authors knew it.

Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form...

The “was” is not correct. It should more accurately be translated “became.” Thus the earth *had* form and lost it. That allows a pre-earth (dinosaurs, trilobites, Neanderthals, whatever), which was wiped out or died out and was replaced. The text could mean a lot of things, but it likely means, or at least *can* mean, an early earth full of activity, and death, and therefore a growing fossil record. *Then* God created a man, moved him to Eden, taught him a lot, gave him a one-of-a-kind woman, then kicked him out to go back home with his new knowledge and his new woman.

Also, there is this —

Psalms 104:30 *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.*

God first created the earth, then renewed the earth by putting man in it. Maybe that pre-earth was wiped out with a meteor strike (circa 60,000,000 B.C.), or perhaps a volcanic eruption. Or maybe those pre-humans were just overran (wiped out or absorbed) by descendants of Adam and Eve.

This would allow earth to have a very ancient history and allow for latecomers, Adam and Eve, in Eden.

Does the verse permit that interpretation? It does when we allow an already created earth to be renewed. God created, then *recreated*. Maybe again and again. The Bible allows it, which is a good thing because science demands it.

[2.7] QUICK REVIEW

Now let's put it all together.

- (1) God created earth, then life discreetly by tweaking DNA per the fossil record.
- (2) God created Adam, not in Eden. Who with? The Bible doesn't say.
- (3) God created Eden. For Adam? The Bible doesn't say.
- (4) God moved Adam to Eden after who knows how long a time already on earth.
- (5) Adam named the animals, hinting that he learned to write.
- (6) God created Eve in Eden by special surgery. She knew nothing of the outside.
- (7) They had the tree of life, and from it, immortality. Neanderthals were not immortal, nor was any other living thing — the fossil record proves that. Only Adam and Eve in that garden were immortal, and only because of that tree. Therefore, Adam was *not* immortal *until* he arrived in Eden. He was not immortal *by nature*, it was that tree that made him so and only as long as he kept eating its fruit. This has to be true, otherwise what's the point of appointing an armed angel to guard the way to the tree of life?
- (8) What they lacked was the knowledge of good and evil, right and wrong, true social conscience, in a word: guilt. They already had a sense of smart and stupid as did every other living thing *and person*. But what God now wanted for them was a sense of right and wrong, moral judgment so that they could become as the gods. To get it, they had to deal with the devil and give up the tree of life.
- (9) They had to willingly make that deadly trade. Willing is not a strong enough word, they had to *willfully* make that trade against the advice of their father so that they would own the decision and the consequences. Eve knew what she wanted and went for

it. Adam, who had experienced the real world, was not so keen. But he had another motive: he wanted the girl (as men do) — so he signed on too. I wonder how long Adam stared at that tree before a woman helped him conquer his fear and partake.

(10) Adam and Eve were cast out, lost access to the tree of life, lost their immortality, lost their comfortable living, and entered (in Adam's case, reentered) the natural world where their lives were at risk. But they were a new kind of creature which they weren't before: they were wiser, moral, and death-prone. They were true humans with conscience (a sense of right and wrong). They had become, indeed, like the gods.

(11) The price, however, was death. But that's a small price to pay for becoming what God wanted us to be from the beginning. Eve was born in Eden, so she had never experienced and knew nothing of the real world. That explains why she was not reluctant for a change. Adam, on the other hand, who had come from the real world, was very reluctant. He had a good thing going in Eden and he knew it. "Eve, sweetheart, trust me. You really don't want to go out there. Let's stay here. This is the good life." It took a compelling woman to entice him to walk away from it.

(12) All of this invites me to ask this intriguing question: Why death? Why did God punish them with death just because they had the audacity to become what he wanted them to become? Here is my answer: Because their bold leap forward into an existence of conscience and guilt and godhood was only half the journey. Intellectually and spiritually they were now gods, but physically they were still animals — and now, animals with guilt. And the only way to escape that stuck-in-the-middle damnation was to die and trust that God would somehow rescue them and move them along to complete the final leg of their journey to godhood. The final redeeming act was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which was the answer to our residual longing for immortality which we had once gotten from a tree and lost. God was not satisfied for us to be immortal because of a medicinal tree, he wanted us to be immortal within ourselves, by our very nature, wanting it, reaching for it, then dying so that we would let go and grab it. God did not punish them; instead, he did everything he could for them, and us, including the one thing that would drag us from animal-hood to godhood — he had to let us die, just as every loving parent must one day say to every beloved child, "It's time to grow up and become what I raised you to be."

[2.8] CONCLUSION

It's time to wrap this up. So, take it or leave it (most will probably leave it I expect, but that's okay) it's what I think happened, and I think the only way to reconcile early Genesis with paleontology.

Adam and Eve were the first humans, but that does not mean they were the first persons — not the first with language, not the first to make tools, and not the first to live communally. But they were the first to find God, and social conscience, and record history. We then, the whole human race, are descended from Adam and Eve, but likely descended from other people as well. Or maybe not. The Bible does talk of a flood that killed almost the whole human race. If Noah and his family were descended *only* from Adam and Eve, then, yes, all of us are descended only from Adam and Eve and from no one else; they are our exclusive ancestors.

But Cain married outside the family and their children likely were in Noah's family tree, or if not Noah, then his daughters-in-law. If so, they, we, all of us, are descended from Adam and Eve *and others*. Either that, or we can remain at war with all of paleontology, and that is not a place I choose to remain, especially since the Bible does not require it of us. If the Bible required us to believe nonsense, I would comply. But it doesn't, so why should I? There are enough loose ends in the Bible to allow alternate interpretations without scraping the Bible. God gave us brains to think. He gave us revelation *and* science so let's take full advantage of both.

But don't they contradict each other? How can we believe in both? I think they *don't* contradict each other, which is the point of this article. But even if they do, that is not a philosophical disaster. Did you know, for instance, that those two great pillars of modern physics, Relativity and Quantum Mechanics, contradict each other? For example, Relativity insists that black holes are singularities, Quantum Mechanics insists they are not. Well, they can't both be true, can they? All it means is that physicists still have more digging to do. And fortunately, the hole they are digging can be dug from two ends, from Relativity and from Quantum Mechanics. Hopefully, they will meet at some point.

Just so, if there is still tension between the Bible and science, all it means is that people of faith still have some digging to do. And fortunately, again, we can dig our hole from both ends, and hopefully, they'll meet at some point if they haven't already.

[3] NOAH

Here's my parting shot: the story of Noah. Let's face it. That gargantuan flood that killed almost everybody either happened or it didn't. And either Noah save the entire human race by building an arc or he didn't. And I am weary of debating it when, of all the biblical issues, this is the most verifiable and falsifiable — that is, it can be proven true if it's true, and false if it's false.

How? Simple — not easy, but simple. If Noah actually built that arc, then it is still up there on Ararat. All we have to do (an understatement, I know) is go up there and get it.

Yes, I've read a few books about people who've seen it, even touched it. But that doesn't do the job. That's like seeing Big Foot or UFOs — a causal sighting here and there doesn't convince the world. It doesn't even convince me, and I *want* to be convinced. Yes, I have faith. But a giant step forward with real, tangible evidence (i.e.: the arc) would be wonderful. You know it would.

Here's my wish, what I'd really like to see happen before I die. I'd like to see a group of Christian billionaires, and there are a bunch, pull together a pile of money (a hundred billion should do it) and [1] purchase from the Turkish government all land rights from the base of Mount Ararat to the top. Turkey would love the money. [2] Hire a huge expedition to climb up and find the arc. [3] Build a road up to it. Then [4] build an Arc museum, a resort hotel, an Arc college, a mall and whatever else seems to make sense. Remember, this is not Everest we're talking about. Everest is 29,029 feet. Ararat is a mere 16,854 — a trifle, just a smidgen over Mount Whitney's 14,505. Engineers have built things much harder than that, like the Suez and Panama canals for example, and the Great Wall of China.

It would be the most useful archaeological discovery ever, and the most visited, most profitable tourist site of all time. And it would settle the question of the Bible's authenticity once and for all.

And not just the Arc, but imagine what we might find *on* it. Scat from saber cats maybe? I don't know, Your imagination is as good as mine, but something on that boat has got to be useful for all kinds of science.

Well, Christian billionaires. I set before you a challenge. Now get on with it. What else are you going to do with your money before you die?