

THE FALL OF MAN

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Abstract

The problems generated by a literal reading of Genesis, chapter 3

The Genesis story of Adam and Eve, if taken literally, has God leaving his new creations in the presence of a devious serpent and with access to deadly fruit. Adam and Eve, being naïve, they listened to the serpent's advice and partook of the forbidden fruit. Accordingly, we present day humans are to suffer for their disobedience. The foregoing are questions frequently raised by critics that creationists and main stream churches seemingly have no rational answers for:

- 1- Nowhere in the text is there any indication that God taught Adam & Eve what is good and what is evil. Failure to do so left these naïve creatures vulnerable to overtures of the serpent.
- 2- Why did God fail to inform them that the serpent could not be trusted?
- 3- Why are we to suffer death and punishment for an act committed long before we existed? Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and it is they alone that should be punished, not those who were not involved.
- 4- Why was the fruit allowed in the Garden of Eden? If God cared for his creation why was there easy access to the forbidden fruit that by partaking of it would result in death?
- 5- Why was it necessary to punish Adam and Eve when God could have prevented them from disobeying Him but failed to do so?
- 6- Once God discovered that Adam & Eve had tasted the forbidden fruit, God did nothing to stop sin from spreading to future generations by separating or sterilizing Adam and Eve.

A solution

Consider the third question as it is the one most often raised by skeptics. The most common answer given by theologians "We are the children of Adam and Eve and through them inherited sin." They are wrong as there is nothing in Genesis that indicates a transfer of sin to future generations. The text of chapter three explicitly involves only Adam and Eve. It is however inferred that there was transference of sin to future generations when

Cain killed Abel. The question that should be asked is “By what mechanism was this transmission of sin possible?”

What would have happened to Adam & Eve if they had not eaten the forbidden fruit? Presumably they would have lived indefinitely. Death was punishment for eating of the forbidden fruit, and it would be unlikely God would punish Adam and Eve with death if they had obeyed him. It is interesting that the first life on earth was the prokaryote that did not die but continually divided by meiosis¹ into identical cells and thus was essentially immortal. It was also non-sentient, and thus incapable of sin. At some point far back in time a genetic mutation took place that changed one of these benign, non-sentient life forms into a eukaryote life form that employed sexual reproduction. See exhibit 1. It was only with the arrival of sex and the eukaryote life, a form that divided by mitosis¹ and result in non-identical cells, that death enters and senescence developed leading eventually to the ability to sin.

If a genetic mutation was involved, then the story begins to make sense because a genetic mutation can be passed on to future generations. If this hypothesis is correct, then the logical place to conduct a search would be in the DNA of the human cell. To Moses, the presumed author of Genesis, the X-shaped chromosomes in the human cell, when aligned, probably appeared to him to be a rib cage. Strange that God would select one of Adam’s ribs to form Eve. Why did not God simply form her from clods of soil in the manner that Adam was created? A plausible answer appears in Exhibit 2 detailing the chromosomes of the male and the female that shows the female with 23 paired chromosomes. The male also has 23 chromosomes but not all are paired. One part of the male 23rd chromosome is deformed and gives the impression that there is a missing rib. If, as the Genesis story alludes, Eve was formed when one of Adam’s ribs was removed then Adam must have originally had a complete set of chromosomes. An asexual with all chromosomes intact would be a logical source and once a rib was removed Adam came into being. The asexual was technically female and thus Eve was first, not Adam, something that the patriarchal society of the Genesis author’s time would have never accepted. This missing rib heralded a major change in the development of life on earth. This mutation produced unique life forms that would eventually lead to sentient life. Sentient life could have controlled their own actions and thus introduced the potential for good or evil. Is this what the author is trying to describe with his limited understanding of nature? Could it be that the serpent is RNA inserting a fragment of genetic material, the forbidden fruit, into a cell’s DNA and thus causing a mutation that gave rise to a life form that was capable of what the author would call ‘sin’?

According to Genesis 3:24, God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden and “He placed a cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword that turned every

which way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” A search of the internet reveals Microtubule Spindle Fibers are in the human cell at the time of cell division, they do wave back and forth, look like flaming swords and prevent the dividing chromosomes from returning to their former condition; just as Adam and Eve are barred from returning to Eden. See Exhibits 3 & 4.

In the King James Bible Genesis 2:7 states that Adam was formed from ‘the dust of the ground’. E.A. Speiser in his translation of Genesis¹ states ‘God Yahweh formed man from clods in the soil’. A clod of soil is another way of describing soil that sticks together suggesting clay, and it was in the interstices of montmorillonite clay that science believes first life arose. Such clay has the property of acting as a jig keeping molecules together so that they can form more stable compounds that otherwise would disintegrate.

If the foregoing is correct, then rational answers to the questions posed at the beginning emerge.

- 1- In order for God to teach Adam and Eve right from wrong, then early life must have ears to hear and a mind to comprehend; obviously early life forms had neither.
- 2-5 - If Adam and Eve were the first Eukaryote cells, then the development of sex and the beginning of senescence was a natural act that had to happen if life were to evolve to its present form. This step in evolution had nothing to do with disobedience or punishment.

In the tract ‘The Patriarch’s List’² the six days of creation are not 24 hour days but immense epochs of time. Adam supposedly was to die the day he ate of the fruit, and yet he lived on a minimum of eight hundred years and possibly in excess of nine hundred years. If the story of the Patriarchs of Genesis is traced back to its origin, in the oldest extant religious document, their combined life spans is not 1,656 years but 4,320,000,000 years; right in line with modern science.

If the foregoing is coupled with the findings of ‘The Creation Story’³, where there are things mentioned that could not have been known until well into the 20th century, then it is almost certain that what Genesis is describing is evolution. The odds that Moses would by mere chance describe these things, and have all the events in the proper chronological order of occurrence, are unlikely in the extreme. If these findings are correct then theologians, creationists and skeptics have failed to recognize an interpretation that is solidly in line with modern evolutionary science and offers a validation of the Bible.

Why does the Genesis creation story seem to read like a myth?

Fundamentalists insist that the text of Genesis is the direct word of God and must be taken literally. This concept is where the problem starts. There is no indication that God dictated the story to Moses, the presumed author. Most likely Moses received a

vision from God and then, lacking the necessary words and understanding, wrote down in his limited capacity what he had seen. If what Moses is trying to describe is evolution then his description must be accepted by the people of his time or else the story will not be passed down to future generations. If many people in the 21st century have difficulty accepting evolution, then how much more so would it have been in Moses time in an age of gross ignorance of the workings of nature? Accordingly it was written in a manner that would be acceptable to people of his time.

NOTES

- 1) Genesis, the Anchor Bible Series by E.A. Speiser, Double Day & Co. 1964
- 2) A separate tract (The Patriarch's List), demonstrating that the 'days' of creation are vast ages.
- 3) A separate tract (The Creation Story) detailing the many points in Genesis 1 that match modern science.

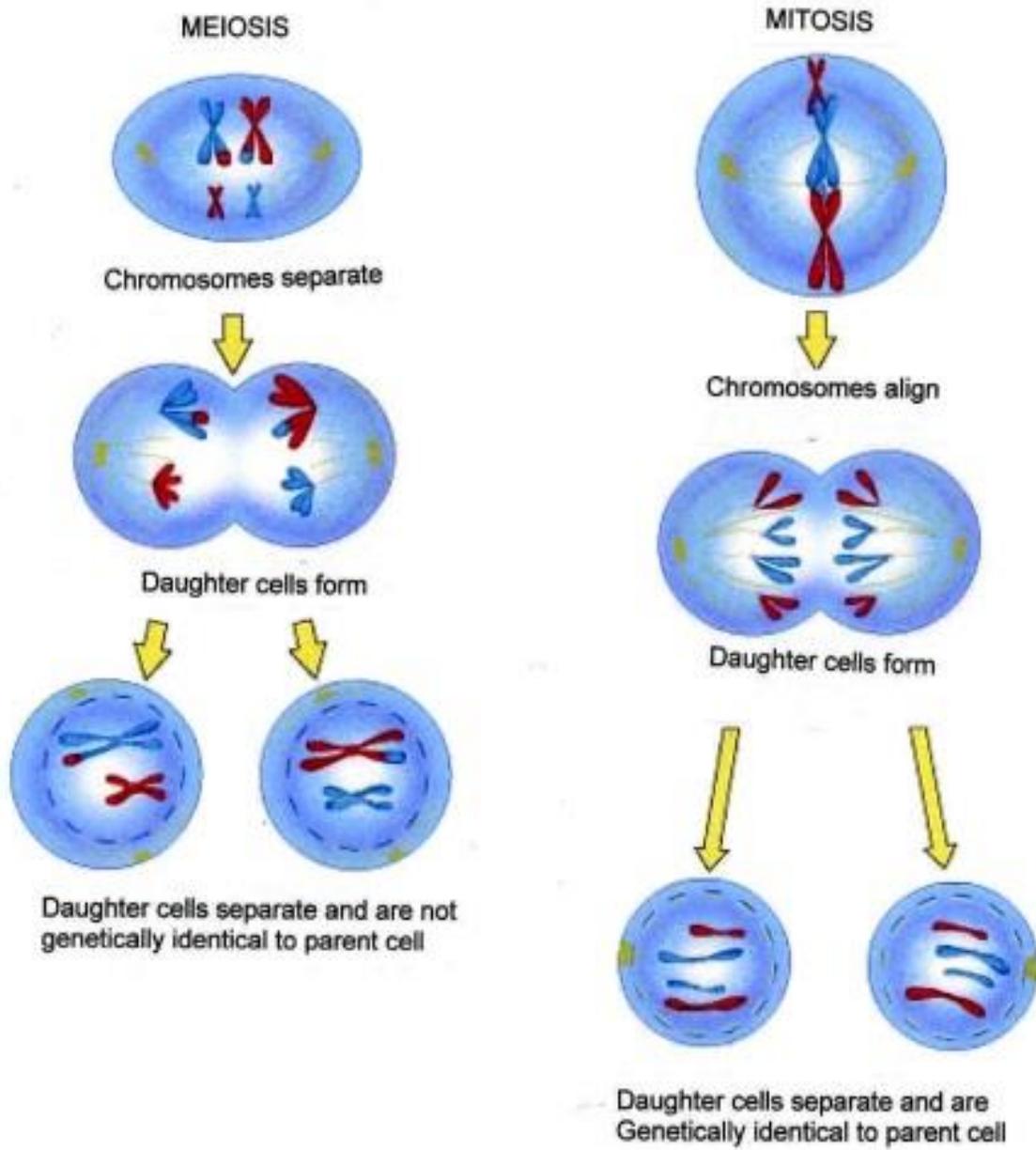


Exhibit 1 Meiosis versus mitosis

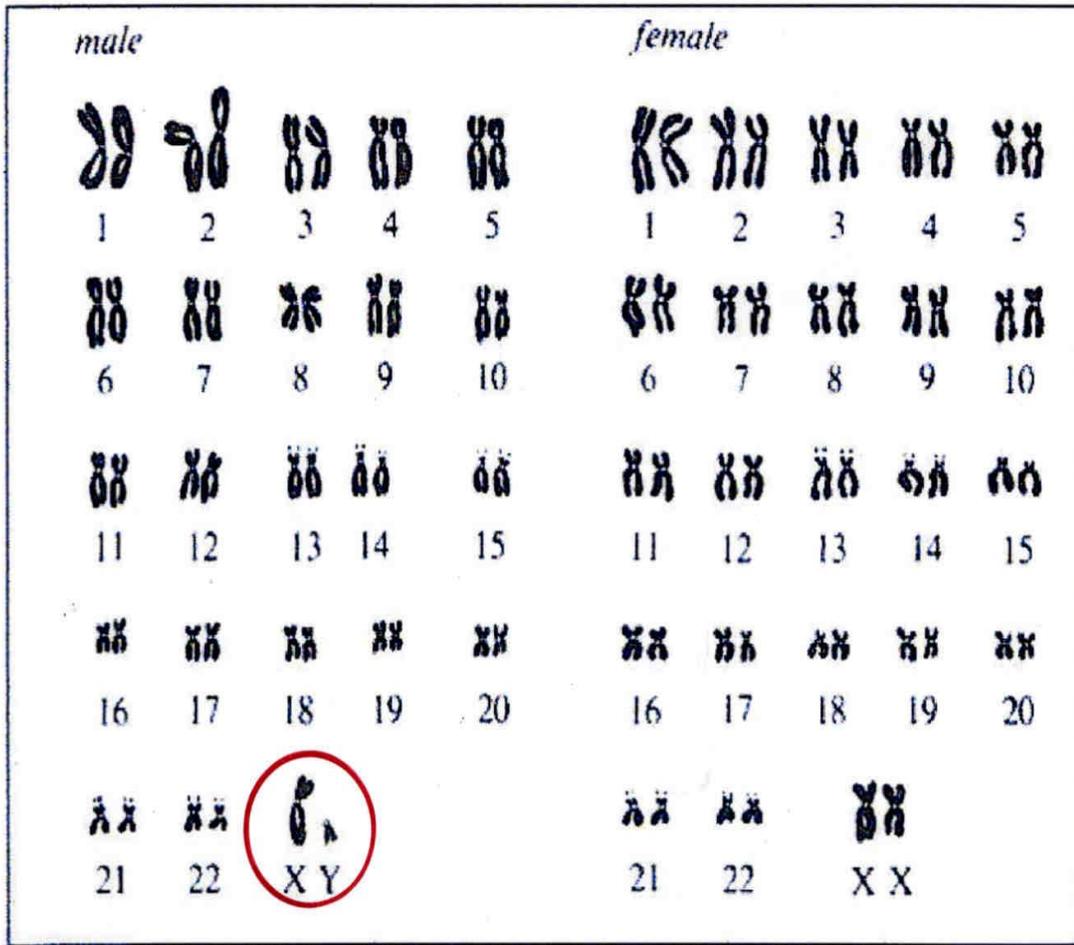


Exhibit 2 Male versus female chromosomes. (Courtesy Nancy Koster)
 Is Adam's missing rib the deformed 23rd chromosome?

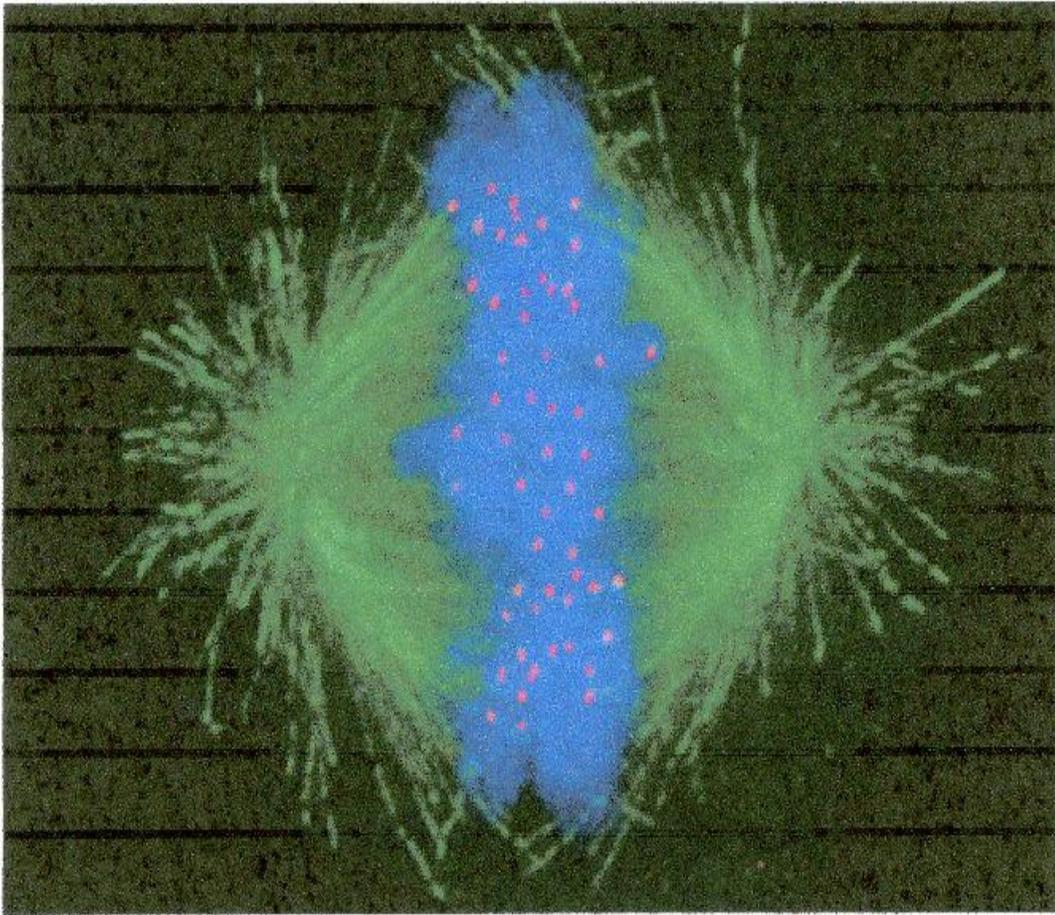


Exhibit 3 Microscopic photo of fiber bundles rearranging chromosomes “The flaming sword of Genesis 3:24?”
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kinetochore.jpg>

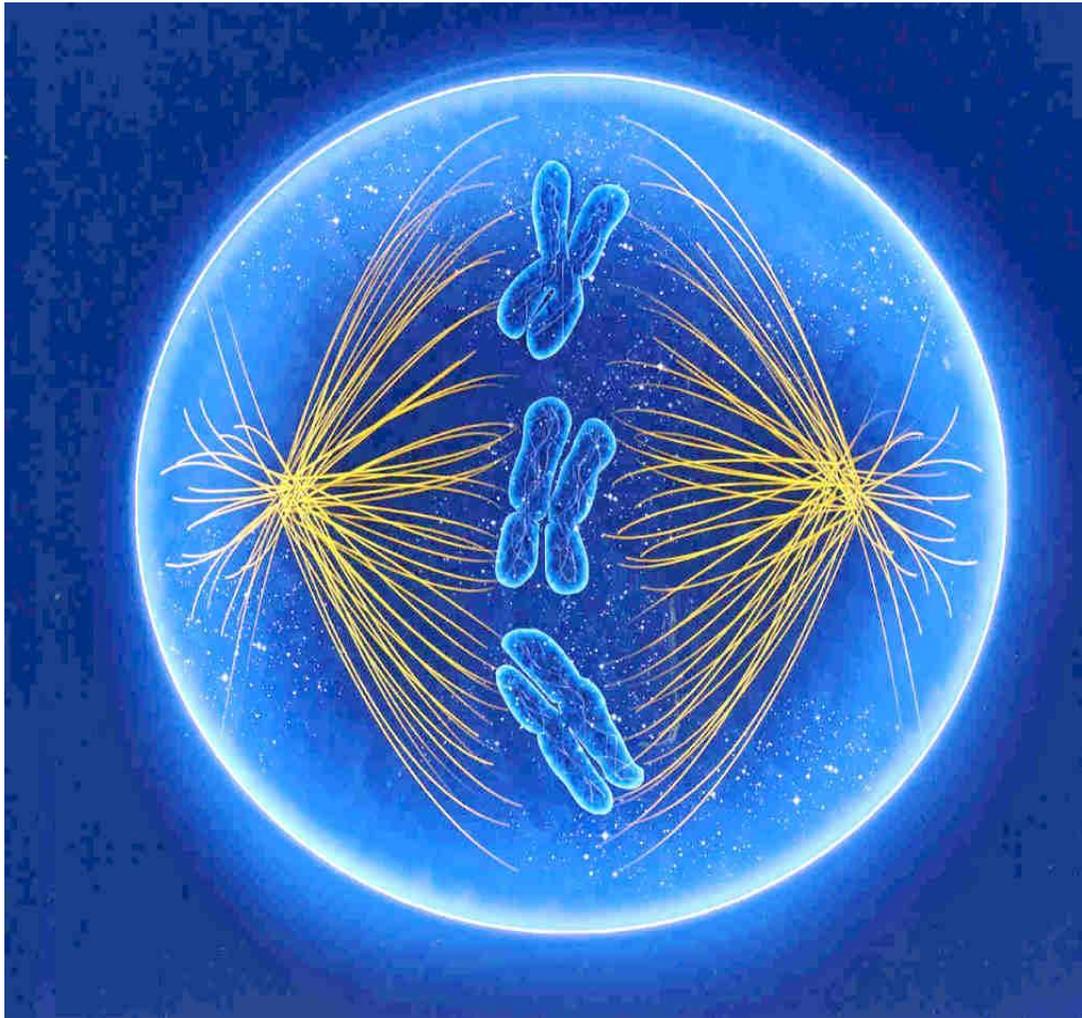


Exhibit 4 Artist's depiction of microtubule fiber bundles. They look like flaming swords and they sway back and forth and prevent the chromosomes 'Adam & Eve' from returning to their former condition.