# Two Theologies of Humanity: The Creation of Man and Woman in P and J

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### Abstract

This paper shows that the main reason for the difference between the two stories of the creation of woman in the Pentateuch is theological, and that the difference can be understood only by reading each story in the context of its source, namely P and J. The time at which the woman is created, the future for which she is destined, and the way in which she is fashioned are all directly determined by the time, purpose, and procedure of the creation of the human race in each of the sources. These are determined in turn by two different perspectives on the relations between God and humanity.

### Keywords

Creation, Genesis 1–11, Pentateuch, Theology, Gender

### 1. Introduction

One of the most basic insights of modern biblical scholarship is the distinction between the two stories of creation at the beginning of the Pentateuch, and with it the understanding that in order to trace the ideas that they express, they must not be reconciled with each other but must each be interpreted separately.[[1]](#footnote-2) One of the significant differences between the stories touches on the creation of woman: According to the first story, men and women were created together, both in the image of God; according to the second story, the man was created first and only later was the woman formed – from the body of the man, and for him. Based on this difference, it is widely understood that the first story expresses a more egalitarian perspective.[[2]](#footnote-3)

But the stories of creation do not stand on their own. Each of them is the beginning of a long literary thread: One belongs to the Priestly source and the other to the Yahwistic source.[[3]](#footnote-4) In order to understand them properly, one must take the continuation of the text into account. The distinction between the sources, and the identification of the narrative sequence, are the key to revealing complete, sequential stories, unified linguistically, narratively, and ideologically. In this article, I therefore intend to suggest a new answer to the old question, How is the relationship between women and men presented in each of the creation stories? Yet each of the stories will be examined in its own broader context, that is to say, in the narration of creation and the beginnings of humanity in the source to which it belongs.

I will try to show that the difference between the two stories is not exhausted in the description of the creation of woman. The time at which the woman is created, the future for which she is destined, and the way in which she is fashioned are all directly determined by the time, purpose, and procedure of creation of the human race in each of the sources. All of these are determined in their turn by two different perspectives on the relations between God and humanity. The difference between the stories is first and foremost theological.[[4]](#footnote-5) Neither of the stories reflects a perspective of equality between men and women, but each of them presents the essential relationship between men and women in its own way, in light of its perspective on humankind and the nature of the attachment between humanity and the God that created it.

Methodologically, the article illustrates the utility of considering the narrative flow of each of the sources as a basis for literary and theological analysis. This method runs counter to three alternatives: First, in contrast to any attempt to force the different sources to match a single, harmonistic perspective, looking at each of them separately makes it possible to trace a continuous plot thread and a coherent theological perspective.[[5]](#footnote-6) Second, in contrast to a focus on the creation story alone, consideration of the source gives us a broader context that bases our understanding of the story on a complete, deep theological perspective and not on a single snapshot.[[6]](#footnote-7) Finally, the method exemplified here dissents from the assumption that passages that are clearly linked must be layers built on top of one another, so the earlier passage could obviously not know anything about the later.[[7]](#footnote-8) In contrast to this widespread trend, this article shows that different passages in a narrative sequence must be interpreted each from the other, just as in every work of literature the beginning of the story cannot be correctly understood until it is read with the knowledge of what happens in the continuation of the plot, and each detail in the plot must be understood against the background of all the other details.

### 2. P: The Image of God and the Purpose of Humanity

#### 2.1 The Pre-Creation Situation and the Purpose of Creation

In order to understand the nature of the creation of the world and its purpose according to the Priestly source, one must consider the prelude to the story (Gen 1:1–2). God did not create the entire world *ex nihilo*: Before He did anything, the world already existed, but it was covered with water and everything was dark.[[8]](#footnote-9) That is the “problem” that God must cope with — the world was in chaos, gloomy, not in a fit condition for life to arise. His first action, therefore, was to light up the world (v. 3), and His efforts in the story are devoted to imposing order, separating the elemental forces, and bringing forth something new and useful from the old disorder (vv. 6–10). There follows the creation of plants; sun, moon, and stars; and the animals, most of whom come from the ground or the water (vv. 11–25). Only at the end are human beings created (vv. 26–28). According to P, then, humanity is created after the world has been set in order, and its creation is not intended to rectify the chaos that ruled on earth in the pre-Genesis situation. Why then was humankind created?

#### 2.2 The Purpose of Humanity, and Its Resemblance to God

The creation of humanity in P is intended to serve another purpose, which is expressed quite explicitly in the text. The description of the creation of humanity (Gen 1:26–28) includes three components unique to this source: (1) humanity is created in the image of God; (2) it is created male and female; and (3) it receives from God the blessing of fertility. What is the connection between these three components?

God needs a creature that will resemble Him: a creature that, for reasons unexplained in the text, is called אדם. This creature will rule over all the rest of the creatures, and so, in a roundabout way, God will rule over all of creation. As scholars have noted, the word צלם (“image”) literally refers to a statue, so for humanity to be in the image of God must mean that humanity resembles God visually: Humans look the way God looks.[[9]](#footnote-10) But the image does not just resemble God: Just as images of the gods of the ancient Near East carry inside them the presence of the gods themselves, so too in P all human beings carry inside themselves the presence of God, serving as a kind of embodiment of God on earth.[[10]](#footnote-11)

In order for humankind to be able to fulfill its purpose — to represent God on earth and to rule the world through His power — it must proliferate, for which purpose it must include both males and females; and in order for humans to proliferate on a scale great enough for them to rule the world, they require divine blessing. Fertility is therefore presented as a blessing to humanity (Gen 1:28) even though the purpose it serves is divine. The text does not say a word about emotional or sexual attachments between women and men; the focus is on fertility, and for this both men and women are needed. It is possible, then, to conclude that according to P the goal of the creation of woman was fertility; but this same conclusion is valid for the creation of man.

The second section of the P story opens with a brief reprise of the creation of humanity (Gen 5:1b–2). After repeating that humanity was created in “the likeness of God” (v. 1b), we are told that Adam begot his own son “in his likeness after his image” (v. 3), just as God had created the original human. According to P, humans were never placed in the Garden of Eden, never sinned or were expelled from there, nor were there ever any people named Cain and Abel, one of whom murdered the other. The first important event that happened on earth after creation was that humanity began to fulfill its purpose — to proliferate. Since the first human was created in the image and likeness of God and begot his own son in his own image, it follows that Adam’s son, and all the generations that came after — would likewise be minted in the image of God. The divine blessing has begun to materialize: Images of God have begun to proliferate.

The additional component of the blessing and of the realization of humanity’s purpose is that people spread throughout the world and thus fill it with the divine presence. This process is described in the Priestly parts of the genealogy in Genesis 10, which conclude with the sentence, “These are the groupings of Noah’s descendants, according to their origins, by their nations; and from these the nations branched out over the earth after the Flood” (10:32). There was no need for direct divine intervention in order to disperse human beings throughout the world; this was the natural result of their proliferation. Humankind was given God’s blessing and therefore proliferated, split into clans and peoples and spread throughout the world, precisely as God had planned.

#### 2.3 The Implication of ***אדם*** and the Absence of Women’s Names in P

In the world of P, it is impossible to imagine the original creation without women, since this kind of creation would not have served its purpose. P is not interested in the first man and woman as individuals, but in humanity as a whole; the word *אדם* in P includes both sexes (Gen 5:2).[[11]](#footnote-12) This fact is sometimes explained as expressing an egalitarian approach,[[12]](#footnote-13) but the word *אדם* in P has an additional implication: it is also used as the personal name of the first man (5:3). The first woman, by contrast, not only has no name; she is not mentioned at all, and it is the men who “beget” their offspring (5:3–32). The first women mentioned in P are Noah’s wife and daughters-in-law (6:18), and the first woman who gets a name of her own is Sarai (11:31). In the P stories of the Primeval History, there is not one single name of a woman.

### 3. J: Is It Not Good for Man to Be Like God?

#### 3.1 The Pre-Creation Situation and the Purpose of Creation

The J creation story too opens with a description of the situation on earth before God begins to act (2:4b–6). But the situation that is described is different. The problem that God must cope with in J is not the primordial chaos of P. The pre-Genesis situation of J is a lack of plant life due to a lack of rain; the earth exists (and is not covered with water), but it is waiting for man to come and till it. Fittingly for such a situation, in J the man is not the last thing to be created but the first (2:7), immediately after which the addition of plant life becomes possible (2:8–9). Despite the absence of an explicit etiology, the commentators took the fact that man was intended to till the *אדמה*, the soil, as J’s explanation for the name *אדם*.[[13]](#footnote-14)

#### 3.2 The Description of the Creation of Woman

Why, according to J, did God create the man alone first? As in P, the answer is connected to the purpose of humanity: humanity’s role in J is to till the soil, for which — the story assumes — there is no need for women. More precisely, there is also no need for men in the plural, just for one man. But it quickly becomes clear that “It is not good for man to be alone” (2:18). The text does not explain *why* it is “not good,” and readers are supposed to puzzle this out for themselves; admittedly, the problem is not obvious enough for God to have anticipated it. In contrast to P, in J the woman does not serve the divine interest but the man’s, and even the man does not serve the divine interest directly.[[14]](#footnote-15)

If in P women — and men — are necessary if humankind is to proliferate, and the creation of humanity is accompanied by a blessing of fertility, in the J creation story fertility plays no role; it arrives only after the Garden of Eden story (in 4:1), and even then the author appears to have no particular interest in discussing it for its own sake. While in P there is no description of the relationship between women and men, in J this is the focus of the story. The first man and woman are a kind of married couple, as is evident from the etiology at the end of the story, “Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh” (2:24). This statement does not apply to the first couple themselves, since the first man had no father or mother; the text is explaining that, based on the story told here about the first man and woman, men are accustomed to leave their parents and cling to their wives, since the woman was taken from the man, she was flesh of his flesh, and they long to reunite.[[15]](#footnote-16)

#### 3.3 The Implication of **אדם** and Women’s Names in J

We have seen that in P the word *אדם* indicates humanity as a whole, men and women alike (5:2), but it is also the personal name of the first man (5:3). As noted, some see in this fact additional evidence that P has an egalitarian perspective, while J (as it were) sees *אדם* as meaning “man” and not woman. But a closer look at the text leads us to almost the opposite conclusion. First, the collective noun *האדם* indicates the entire human species not just in P but also, when we read on, in J (6:5–7). Second, unlike P, in J the first man is not called אדם, “Adam”, but *האדם*, “the man" or "the human" (2:7–4:1, *passim*). Admittedly, there do seem to be occurrences in which he is called *אדם* without the definite article: לְאָדָם*,* “for Adam” (2:20, 3:17 and 21).[[16]](#footnote-17) But the difference is restricted to the vowel under the preposition ל (“for”) in לאדם: *לְאָדָם*, with a *shewa* under the preposition, means “for Adam,” while *לָאָדָם*  with a *qamatz* would mean “for the man.” However, this vowel reflects the canonical text and not the Yahwistic story at its source. The punctuators, knowing that *אדם* would go on to be used in the text — that is, in P — as the personal name of the first man, gave the preposition the appropriate vowel. But wherever in the J story the letters and not the vowels are determinative we find *האדם* and not אדם. It is therefore apparent that if we are reading the J story on its own, the correct reading is *לָאָדָם*.[[17]](#footnote-18)

In J, therefore, the first man does not have a name — he is simply “the human.” The reason for this is apparently that at this moment he is the only individual in the world who belongs to the human race, and so has no need of a name. The woman, by contrast, does have a name. At first she is called Woman(*ʾiššâ*), “for from man (*ʾiš*) was she taken” (2:23), but *ʾiššâ* is the common noun indicating the individual human female, and the name of the first human’s *ʾiššâ* (his “woman” or “wife”) is Eve (3:20).

In P, then, אדם is the name of the first man, whose woman has no name. By contrast, in J it is the first man who has no name and is simply called *האדם*, “the human,” while the first woman does have a name. Procreation is attributed in P to men but in J to Eve, noting the participation of the man and of Yhwh (4:1). In the J genealogy that follows, the role of women in giving birth is similarly noted, and a number of their names are mentioned:

Cain knew his *wife*, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he then founded a city, and named the city after his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methusael, and Methusael begot Lamech. Lamech took to himself two wives: *the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah.* Adah bore Jabal; he was the ancestor of those who dwell in tents and amidst herds. And the name of his brother was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the pipe. As for Zillah, she bore Tubal-cain, who forged all implements of copper and iron. *And the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.* (4:17–22)

Admittedly the role of woman in this passage is confined to bearing children, yet that is also the only role of several of the men. In any case, women are given more respect in this description than in the P genealogy, where they are not mentioned at all.

#### 3.4 Does J Contend that the Woman Was Not Created in the Image of God?

According to P, all of humanity, women and men alike, were created in the image of God. Since in J the woman is created after the man, are we to understand that in J only the man was created in the image of God? Not at all. In J, no one — not the woman and not the man — is created in the image of God, and that should not be slipped into the one story from the other.

That is to say, even in J — just as in P — the woman’s relationship to divinity is identical to the man’s. It is the connection between God and humanity that is framed differently in J, both in terms of the time and the way the connection is formed and in terms of the kind of resemblance between humans and God. In P, that resemblance is at the heart of the divine plan and is intended to serve a distinct divine interest. In J, not only is humanity not created in the image of God; that is precisely God’s great concern throughout these stories: the suspicion that the humans may become like Him.

This concern is expressed first in the words of the serpent, explaining the reason for the prohibition of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and bad: “God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God [or: gods], knowing good and bad” (Gen 3:5). As Israel Knohl has explained, knowledge of good and bad is connected with the possession of moral judgment and is considered a divine trait.[[18]](#footnote-19) We read of Solomon that he asked God for precisely this kind of judgment: “Grant, then, Your servant an understanding mind to judge Your people, to distinguish between good and bad; for who can judge this vast people of Yours?” (1 Kgs 3:9). His request receives a positive response, and the story that appears immediately afterward, the “judgment of Solomon” in the case of the two women, illustrates his moral wisdom. The people discern Solomon’s impressive judicial ability and see in it a divine quality: “When all Israel heard the decision that the king had rendered, they stood in awe of the king; for they saw that he possessed divine wisdom to execute justice” (1Kgs 3:28).

According to the book of Kings, God looked with favor on Solomon’s request to resemble Him in the power of judgment. But according to J, God tried to prevent the first human couple from acquiring this power, as the serpent understood. Indeed, after they eat God says, “Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!” (Gen 3:22). Apparently — according to the original plan — the first human was intended to live forever. But if the human were to become both as wise as God and as immortal, the resemblance between them would be too great. Now that the human has acquired one divine quality, God prevents him from acquiring an additional divine quality: He expels him from the Garden of Eden and blocks the way to the tree of life.

The theme of humanity’s attempts to become like God, and God’s attempts to prevent it, continues throughout the J telling of the "Primeval History".[[19]](#footnote-20) To God’s dismay, an attempt to cross the border between human and divine occurs from the divine side as well, when the divine males take themselves wives from among the human females (6:1–4).[[20]](#footnote-21) An additional attempt is made from the human side in the story of the Tower of Babel (11:1–9), where humanity tries to attain another divine quality: being one. The humans understand that they will not be able to overcome death, but they believe that through their combined efforts they will be able to reach heaven. God’s concern is expressed in this story in language comparable to that used when it is expressed in the Garden of Eden story:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 3:22 | 11:6 |
| *And Yhwh God said* **[ויאמר יהוה אלהים]** | *And Yhwh said* **[ויאמר יהוה**] |
| *Now* [**הן**] that the man has become like one of us knowing good and bad | *Now* [**הן**] that, as one people with one language for all this is how they have begun to act |
| what *then* [**ועתה**] if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever! | *then* [**ועתה**] nothing that they may propose to do will be out of their reach! |

The solution to the problem is to scatter the humans throughout the world so that they will not be able to unite (11:7–8). Here we see a resemblance between J and P, along with the sharp difference between them. Both sources tell us that humanity split up into different ethnic groups scattered in various places. That is a necessary component of the story, being the actual reality. There is common ground as well between the theological explanations suggested for this fact by the two stories: The scattering of humanity throughout the world is connected to their being like God. Yet the nature of the link between the scattering of humanity and their relationship with God is quite different between the two sources. In P, humanity is supposed to be like God in order to spread throughout the world. The likeness of humanity to God is the original plan, it is in God’s interest, and humanity’s being scattered throughout the world is a fulfillment of the blessing of creation: “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it” (1:28). By contrast, in J the likeness of humanity to God comes at the humans’ initiative, against His will. The likeness is not a visual one but rather is connected to the power to make moral judgments. Since the humans have succeeded, in opposition to God’s plan, in becoming like Him, God is forced to scatter them across the earth in order to impair this power.[[21]](#footnote-22)

It emerges that in J too the woman resembles God just as the man does. Moreover, the woman is the first to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and bad and so to become like God. It is she who gets the man to do it. The idea that it is only in P that the woman and the man are equal in their standing before God, and that in J only the man was created in God’s image, stems from a careless combination of reading the stories harmonistically and reading them separately. A coherent reading of J not based on Priestly assumptions shows that from the outset neither the man nor the woman was intended to resemble God, but eventually both of them did indeed resemble Him in equal measure, or more precisely, the woman was the first to resemble God and the man followed in her footsteps.

### 4. Conclusion

Neither of the stories of creation at the beginning of the Pentateuch express an outlook of equality between women and men. Even though at first glance the Priestly story of creation seems more egalitarian than the Yahwistic one, looking at each of the stories not as an isolated episode but as the introduction to a broader literary tapestry displays a more complex picture. In both sources a preference for men over women is recognizable both explicitly and implicitly. All the same, it is clear that in both sources the status of man and woman with regard to God is identical, and in both the relationship between the creation of woman and the creation of man reflects a theological approach with regard to the purpose of humanity in God’s eyes.

According to P, humanity was intended to rule over the world by means of God’s own power. For this reason, it had to be created from the start in God’s image, to be granted the blessing of fertility, and afterwards, through natural means, to spread out through the length and breadth of the earth. That is why humanity was created both male and female. When P describes the fulfillment of the blessing, it only mentions men, and the word *אדם* "human" becomes Adam, the name of the first man. By contrast, in J the original role of humanity is to till the soil, and for this reason there is no need for more than a single man, who is not awarded lofty status or even a name of his own. But the loneliness of this one man forces God to create one woman, and fertility is the inevitable but unplanned result of this plot development. Just as in P, the man and the woman in J resemble God to the same extent; but the resemblance of humanity to God is not imprinted in the humans by their creation according to divine plan, but achieved at a later stage by the humans themselves, through violating God’s will. Finally, even the scattering of humanity across the world in J is not the fulfillment of the original plan but an unplanned alteration of it that God is compelled to make.

1. \* I want to thank Prof. […] and […] for their useful comments and corrections. This study was done as part of my fellowship at the Judaism and Human Rights Program of the Israeli Democracy Institute, and appeared in a different version in Hebrew in the program's journal: "Women, Men, and God in the Creation Stories: A Theological Debate between the Sources of the Pentateuch", *Judaism, Sovereignty and Human Rights* 4 (2018), 130–151. Preparing this renewed version was made possible thanks to a grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

   The research on the creation stories in general, and on the creation of woman in particular, is enormous, and only a very few references can be mentioned. For discussion of the classic research on the book of Genesis and some basic literature, see recently Jean-Louis Ska, "The Study of the Book of Genesis: The Beginning of Critical Reading", in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation,* Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 152,ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr and David L. Petersen (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 3–26. The basic separation between the two stories appears in every critical commentary on the book of Genesis and in every discussion on creation in the Bible, and it can be found also in non-academic religious interpretations; see, for example, the very influential essay of the Orthodox Jewish leader Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Lonely Man of Faith", *Tradition* 7 (1965), 5–67, in which he assumes, in relation to American Orthodox Jews, that "We all know that the Bible offers two accounts of the creation of man" (10). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See, for example, Susan Niditch, "Genesis", in *Women's Bible Commentary: Twentieth-Anniversary Edition Revised and Updated,* ed. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville and Kentucky: WJK, 2012), 27–45: 30; Sara Japhet, "In God's Image or from the Rib of Man? Woman’s [[[if this was copied from the English table of contents (which I could not find online) you can certainly change it back]]] Status in Biblical Thought according to the Creation Stories", in *Reading Genesis: Israeli Women Write on the Women of Genesis*, ed. Ruti Ravitzky (Tel-Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1999), 29–37 (Hebrew). The issue of androcentrism in the J creation (and Garden of Eden) story has been discussed intensively in feminist readings of the Bible. For brief discussion and bibliography see Erin E. Fleming, "Creation", in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies,* 1 (2014), 60–68. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For current discussions on the formation of the Pentateuch see Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid & Baruch J. Schwartz (eds.), *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); Jan C. Gertz, Bernard M. Levinson, Dalit Rom-Shiloni & Konrad Schmid (eds.), *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Europe, Israel, and North America* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016). The current paper applies the Neo-Documentarian approach, which emphasizes, even more than the classic Documentary Hypothesis, the importance of the narrative sequence and the methodological necessity of looking at each of the sources separately before attempting theological analysis. See Baruch J. Schwartz, "The Torah: Its Five Books and Four Documents", in *The Literature of the Hebrew Bible: Introductions and Studies*,ed. Zipora Talshir (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2011), 1, 161–226, esp. 177–225; Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven: Yale University, 2012), esp. 246–249. In regard to Genesis 1–11, this paper is based mostly on the classic source division which is found in most early critical commentaries, for example John Skinner, *Genesis*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1994 [1910]), 1–239. Indeed, the identification of two main sources in the so-called Primeval History is generally accepted, with some revisions, also among scholars who ordinarily employ a redaction-history approach. See Jan Christian Gertz, "The Formation of the Primeval History", *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation,* Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 152,ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr and David L. Petersen (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 107–135. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. This is by no means an apologetic attempt to deny the deeply patriarchal character of both of the sources, as well as all (or almost all) Biblical and other ancient texts. What I do want to deny is that the difference between the stories derives from their different views about gender. Fleming ("Creation", 63) and others have pointed out the different themes of the stories, arguing that P is concerned with cosmological and biological issues while J deals with sociological or anthropological questions. To my knowledge, the proposal of this paper, that the different descriptions of woman’s creation are connected first and foremost to the different conceptions of the relationship between God and humanity in P and J, has not been presented in the scholarship. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. For example, David J. A. Clines (*What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament,* JSOT Supplement Series, 94 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990], 34–45)claims that the woman was created after the man (in the second story) in order to fulfill their blessing to multiply (in the first story), somehow ignoring the contradiction between exactly these paragraphs. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. This seems to be the case with the vast majority of discussions on this issue. See, for example, the studies which are mentioned in note 2 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. An example of such a reading is David Carr's diachronic analysis of Genesis 2–3. Carr sees the contrast between the relatively harmonious relationship of the genders in Genesis 2:23–24 and their hierarchical separation in Genesis 3 as evidence of a different stratum, which aims to oppose the former stratum. However, this contrast is well explained in the story itself, as a *punishment,* so not only there is no need to separate them, but this separation prevents us from understanding the supposed earlier stratum, which must be interpreted in light of the so-called later stratum, which is actually the continuation of this very narrative, and this fact is not in contradiction with the justified distinctions between two episodes of the one story. See David Carr, "The Politics of Textual Subversion: A Diachronic Perspective on the Garden of Eden Story", *JBL* 112 (1993), 577–595, esp. 580–581. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. As is well known, this opening is similar to that of *Enūma eliš*. For a brief discussion see E. A. [[[or Ephraim Avigdor]]] Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 8–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Mayer Gruber, “‘In the Image of God’: What Is It?” in *Homage to Shmuel: Studies in the World of Bible*, eds. Zipora Talshir, Shamir Yona, and Daniel Sivan (Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University and Bialik Institute, 2001), 81–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. On this concept of image and presence in Biblical and Rabbinic thought see Yair Lorberbaum, *In God's Image: Myth, Theology and Law in Classical Judaism* (New York: Cambridge University, 2015), esp. 50–58. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. According to *HALOT*, 1, 14, the common meaning of *אדם* is "mankind", and it is a proper noun only in Gen 4:25, 5:1a, 3–5; 1Chr 1:1. On Gen 2:20b, 3:17, 21 (all of them in J) see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. See, for example, Japhet, "In God's Image", 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. See, for instance, Genesis Rabbah 17:4 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 156), in which the first human says to God: "It is fitting for me to be called *אדם*, because I was created from the *אדמה*". [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. The easing of the man’s loneliness serves here not just as an explanation for the creation of woman (2:21–22) but also, even earlier, as an explanation for the creation of animals (2:19–20). The word *עזר* in Biblical Hebrew does not refer to a slave, servant, or sidekick, but the opposite: a savior. In almost all of its biblical occurrences it refers to God. Thus the expression *עזר כנגדו* ("a fitting helper", NJPS; 2:18, 20) does not imply that the woman is subordinate to the man. For discussion and literature see Raanan Eichler, "Corresponding to Him: The Message of Gender Equality in the Biblical Account of the Garden of Eden", *Judaism, Sovereignty and Human Rights* 2 (2016), 17–32, esp. 19–20 n. 6 (Hebrew). However, even if the woman is intended to rescue the man from his loneliness and not to be his servant, that does not negate the fact that he is created first and all the other creatures are created for his sake. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. There is no need to see this verse as a gloss (cf. Angelo Tosato, "On Genesis 2:24", *CBQ* 52 [1990], 389–409). Since it is the conclusion of this episode, it functions in a way that is typical of etiologic formulas, which almost by definition interrupt the narrative sequence by referring to the present in a story about the past. In any case, the woman's creation story itself is etiological in its character, even if the explicit formula may be a later interpolation. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. 4:25 is apparently redactional, see Risa Levitt-Kohn, “Whom Did Cain Raise? Redaction and J’s Primeval History”, in *Le-David Maskil: A Birthday Tribute for David Noel Freedman*, eds. Richard Elliott Friedman and William H.C. Propp (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 39–46. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (London: Methuen & co., 1904), 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Israel Knohl, *Biblical Beliefs* (Jerusalem: Magness, 2007), 29–34. Knohl argues that knowing good and bad refers also to sexual ability. However, even though Genesis 3 may imply this meaning, it is hard to conclude it clearly from Barzillai’s statement in 2 Sam 19:36. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Knohl, *Biblical Beliefs*, 28–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. The comparison that Guy Darshan ("The Story of the Sons of God and the Daughters of Men [Gen. 6:1–4] in Light of the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women", *Shnaton* 23 [2014], 155–178 [Hebrew]) made between Genesis 6:1–4 and archaic Greek texts shows that this story, despite its enigmatic and possibly fragmentary character, does belong at this point in the narrative sequence of J. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Thus, in fact, in both P and J the dispersal of humanity was a result of divine intervention; but – in the same manner as the creation of woman, animals and even man – in P it was a deliberate and intentional plan, while in J it was God's response to unplanned occurrences which he did not expect. This can be seen only when the two narratives are not blended together into one. Otherwise it is hard to explain the simple narrative function of the Tower of Babel story. For an example of such an explanation, according to which humanity had already begun to be dispersed (Gen 10:5, 20, 31, 32) but *then* the people rebelled against God's will, see Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1966), 64–67. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)