

Examining the Cosmos

Session 9 *Origin of Humanity*

Reference Document 14

The Location of Humanity's Origin

Does an African origin of humanity represent a problem for RIB's creation model? Not necessarily. Considering that some biblical scholars understand the Garden of Eden to extend from Mesopotamia and into Africa, Cush may well have been Ethiopia. If this identification is accurate, then there is no conflict between the data and RTB's model.

What if the Garden of Eden is rightly understood to be confined exclusively to Mesopotamia? The data that locate humanity's origin in Africa need not be seen as problematic for a biblical model. Without question, African populations are humanity's oldest (not only because of genetic diversity but also because African DNA sequences encompass DNA sequences from all other human population groups). This inclusion, however, does not mean these groups originated in Africa. When molecular anthropologists use genetic data to locate humanity's origin (and spread), they assume that the current location of population groups represents their location throughout human history. This supposition remains open to question, particularly because many human population groups have migrated as much as thousands of miles throughout their history. The Bible explicitly claims (Genesis 10—11) that God intervened early in human history to move some people groups great distances from their point of origin, while others remained fairly close to their starting place.

One final point worthy of note The Bible teaches that, as a result of their sin, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden. So humanity's population growth began outside the garden's confines. An origin of humanity in East Africa could easily match this scenario.