

EISENBRAUNS

Specializing in the ancient Near East and biblical studies since 1975

The “Image of God” in the Garden of Eden

The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the mīs pî pīt pî and wpt-r Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt

Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 15

by Catherine McDowell

Catherine McDowell presents a detailed and insightful analysis of the creation of *’adam* in Gen 2:5–3:24 in light of the Mesopotamian *mīs pî pīt pî* (“washing of the mouth, opening of the mouth”) and the Egyptian *wpt-r* (“opening of the mouth”) rituals for the creation of a divine image. Parallels between the mouth washing and opening rituals and the Eden story suggest that the biblical author was comparing and contrasting human creation with the ritual creation, animation, and installation of a cult statue in order to redefine *šelem ’elohîm* as a human being—the living likeness of God tending and serving in the sacred garden.

McDowell also considers the explicit image and likeness language in Gen 1:26–27. Drawing from biblical and extra-biblical texts, she demonstrates that *šelem* and *dāmût* define the divine-human relationship, first and foremost in terms of kinship. To be created in the image and likeness of Elohim was to be, metaphorically speaking, God’s royal sons and daughters. While these royal qualities are explicit in Gen 1, McDowell persuasively argues that kinship is the primary metaphor Gen 1 uses to define humanity and its relationship to God.

Further, she discusses critical issues, noting the problems inherent in the traditional views on the dating and authorship of Gen 1–3 and the relationship between the two creation accounts. Through a careful study of the *tôledôt* in Genesis, she demonstrates that Gen 2:4 serves as both a hinge and a “telescope”: the creation of humanity in Gen 2:5–3:24 should be understood as a detailed account of the events of Day 6 in Gen 1.

When Gen 1–3 are read together, as the final redactor intended, these texts redefine the divine-human relationship using three significant and theologically laden categories: kinship, kingship, and cult. Thus, they provide an important lens through which to view the relationship between God and humanity as presented in the rest of the Bible.

Eisenbrauns, 2015. Pp. ix + 246. English. Cloth.
ISBN: 978-1-57506-348-5 List Price: \$47.50
<http://www.eisenbrauns.com/item/MCDIMAGEO>

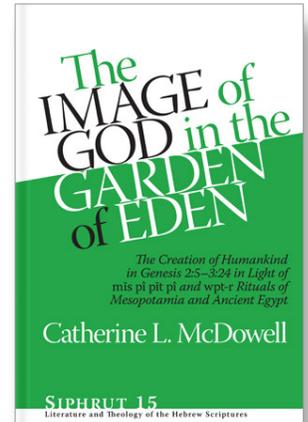


Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction
Chapter 2. The Eden Story: Genesis 2:5–3:24
Chapter 3. The Creation of a Divine Statue in the Ancient Near East: The Mesopotamian <i>mīs pî pīt pî</i> and the Egyptian <i>wpt-r</i>
Chapter 4. The Meaning of <i>šelem</i> and <i>dāmût</i> in Genesis 1:26–27 and the “Image” Concept in Genesis 2:5–3:24
Chapter 5. The Relationship between Genesis 1:1–2:3 and Genesis 2:5–3:24
Chapter 6. Summary, Conclusions, and Implications
Bibliography
Index of Authors
Index of Scripture