



ADAM
FIRST AND
THE LAST

SIMON TURPIN

First printing: July 2023

Copyright © 2023 by Simon Turpin. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, copied, broadcast, stored, or shared in any form whatsoever without written permission from the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews. For information write:

Master Books, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638

Master Books® is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, LLC.

ISBN: 978-1-68344-345-2

ISBN: 978-1-61458-844-3 (digital)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023934579

Cover by Diana Bogardus

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The ESV text may not be quoted in any publication made available to the public by a Creative Commons license. The ESV may not be translated in whole or in part into any other language.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are from the New King James Version, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Please consider requesting that a copy of this volume be purchased by your local library system.

Printed in the United States of America

Please visit our website for other great titles:

www.masterbooks.com

For information regarding promotional opportunities,
please contact the publicity department at pr@nlpg.com.



A Division of New Leaf Publishing Group
www.masterbooks.com

Introduction.....	5
Chapter 1: Adam, Who Art Thou?	9
Chapter 2: Genesis 1: In the Space of Six Days.....	23
Chapter 3: Genesis 2: Defending the Supernatural Creation of Adam	55
Chapter 4: Genesis 3: In Adam’s Fall We Sinned All	75
Chapter 5: The First Adam: The History of Adam’s Descendants.....	93
Chapter 6: The First Adam: Science and the Origin of Mankind.....	117
Chapter 7: The First Adam: Original Sin — How Original Is It?	135
Chapter 8: The Last Adam: His Humanity	153
Chapter 9: The Last Adam: His Deity	173
Chapter 10: The Last Adam: His View of Scripture	193
Chapter 11: The Last Adam: His Life-Giving Resurrection.....	211
Chapter 12: The Last Adam: The Gospel Begins in Creation	227

Simon Turpin is the executive director and speaker for Answers in Genesis–UK and holds a BA and MA in theology. Simon is married to Jessica, and they home educate their seven children and blog about Christian home education at: LeadingThemOut.com. Simon is also the author of *Scoffers: Responding to Those Who Deliberately Overlook Creation and the Flood*.

Was there ever a real historical first man called Adam? Because of belief in evolution and millions of years, sadly, an increasing number of evangelical theologians are denying a literal first man called Adam. If you deny the “First Adam,” not only do you deny the sufficiency of Scripture and undermine its authority, but you ultimately attack the life, teaching, and person of the “Last Adam,” our Lord Jesus Christ. The First Adam being supernaturally created from dust by God as recorded in Genesis is important for a coherent, logical, and internally consistent theological understanding of the biblical message of creation, fall, and redemption. This book by Simon Turpin is a powerful apologetics resource to equip Christians to defend the Christian faith in today’s world.

— Ken Ham



Introduction

Every generation of Christians must face its own theological challenges and is called “to contend ... for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3; NKJV). This generation is no different. Today, however, there is a generation of Christians who do not want to contend for the faith because they tend to think that in an age of intolerance and inclusivism apologetics is being intolerant of others. These Christians argue that we should concentrate solely on telling people about the gospel. There is no doubt that Christians should tell others about the gospel. However, before Jude wrote the above words he had originally intended to write to the believers about their “common salvation” (Jude 3) but was prevented from doing so because of the intrusion of false teachers into the church (Jude 4–19). Jude is not talking about dealing with secondary or tertiary issues, as false teaching strikes at the very heart of the gospel.¹

False teaching and teachers need to be confronted and cannot be left alone (2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 1:9). It is false teachers who cause division in the church and not those who hold to apostolic doctrine (Jude 19). The danger of those who bring teaching contrary to apostolic doctrine is that it deceives those who are naive (Romans 16:17–18). Christians should not receive teaching that is contrary to apostolic doctrine into their church (2 John 1:10). The intrusion of these false teachers into the church is what caused Jude to write his letter. The purpose of Jude’s letter is to urge believers to “contend” for the faith. The term “contend” (*epagōnizomai*) was often used as an athletic image (wrestling) and implies using intense effort on behalf of something. Jude uses this image to exhort his readers to strive intensely to preserve the faith (apostolic teaching, cf. 1 Timothy 4:1, 6:10) that has been handed down to them. This is because it is this faith (doctrine) that believers are to be built up in (Jude 20).

1. The false teaching Jude is dealing with is a form of mysticism based on esoteric knowledge (Jude 8–10).

Jude describes this faith as “once for all delivered to the saints.” In other words, there is to be nothing added or taken away from it. Just as in Jude’s day, believers today need to contend for the faith (apostolic doctrine), as there are those who want to add and take away from it. The idea that we need to simply focus on the gospel (salvation), and not apologetics (contending for the faith), misses the fact that Jude recognized the necessity of apologetics to defend the sound doctrine that the gospel is based upon. Jude’s warning to the church may not be popular, but it is very much needed.

The reason our generation needs to contend for the faith is that from childhood we are informed by ideas in our culture that are inherently pagan, and often we are not even aware of this. These ideas are usually accepted uncritically, shaping the way we think (i.e., worldview). One of the most common invasions of secular thought into the Christian mind in our own day is the current pagan understanding of the created realm: evolutionary naturalism. Unfortunately, many Christians uncritically accept the pagan view of the created order into their worldview. Yet the philosophy of evolutionary worldview provides a direct challenge to the biblical worldview. Over the last number of years, the question of whether man was specially created directly from the hand of God or whether he evolved from an ape-like creature has become an increasingly controversial issue within the Church. In today’s secular culture it is common to view the biblical history of Adam as a story, myth, or parable.

Although liberal theology has long viewed Adam as a myth, what makes this present debate novel is that this is now also becoming the standard interpretation for many within the evangelical community and, consequently, the problem has become far more intense than when evangelicals first had to deal with it.

New Testament scholar and former Bishop of Durham (UK) N.T. Wright, who believes young-earth creation is false teaching,² says in his book *Surprised by Scripture*:

-
2. Wright states, “I wonder whether we are right even to treat the young-earth position as a kind of allowable if regrettable alternative, something we know our cousins down the road get up to but which shouldn’t stop us getting together at Christmas ... And if, as I suspect, many of us don’t think of young-earthism as an allowable alternative, is this simply for the pragmatic reason that it makes it hard for us to be Christians because the wider world looks at those folks and thinks we must be like that too? Or is it — as I suggest it ought to be — because we have glimpsed a positive point that urgently needs to be made and that the young-earth literalism is simply screening out? That’s the danger of false teaching: it isn’t just that you’re making a mess; you are using that mess to cover up something that ought to be brought urgently to light.” N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Scripture: Engaging with Contemporary Issues* (London: SPCK, 2014), p. 31.

[J]ust as God chose Israel from the rest of humankind for a special, strange, demanding, vocation, so perhaps what Genesis is telling us is that God chose one pair from the rest of early hominids for a special, strange, demanding, vocation. This pair (call them Adam and Eve if you like) were to be representatives of the whole human race.³

Interestingly, Wright goes on to say, “I do not know whether this is exactly what Genesis meant or what Paul meant. But the close and (to a Jewish reader) rather obvious parallel between the vocation of Israel and the vocation of Adam leads me in that direction.”⁴ If one of the world’s leading theologians and former bishop of Durham doesn’t know what Genesis or Paul meant, how can anyone else know!? Sadly, viewing Adam as anything other than the first human who was supernaturally created is now becoming a standard interpretation for many within the Christian community. Because many have chosen to reinterpret the Bible with regard to its teaching on the history of Adam, many other biblical teachings are being attacked. For example, the very teachings of Jesus regarding earthly things such as creation and the Flood are being attacked on the basis that, because of His human nature, there was error in some of His teaching. Such evangelical theologians admit that Jesus affirmed the history of such things as Adam, Eve, Noah, and the Flood, but they believe that Jesus was wrong on these matters.

The problem with this is that it raises the question of Jesus’ reliability, not only as a prophet, but, more importantly, as our sinless Savior. These theologians go too far when they say that, because of Jesus’ human nature and cultural context, He taught and believed erroneous ideas. For example, commenting on Jesus’ words in Matthew 19:4–5, theistic evolutionist Dr. Denis Lamoureux states: “Powerful evidence for a strict literal reading of the Genesis creation accounts comes from Jesus himself . . . [However,] Jesus accommodated by employing the ancient science of the *de novo* creation of ‘male and female’ in Genesis 1:27 to emphasize the inerrant spiritual truth that God is the Creator of human beings.”⁵ It is interesting that Lamoureux admits that Jesus understood Genesis as literal history, however, he believes the reason why Genesis should not be read “literally” — or, rather, plainly — is because Jesus accommodated His teaching to the beliefs of His first-century audience.⁶

3. Ibid., p. 37–38.

4. Ibid., p. 38.

5. Denis O. Lamoureux, *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), p. 115, 132.

6. Ibid., p. 31.

This is critical because, if we claim Jesus as Lord, what He believed—including on creation, Adam and the Flood — should be extremely important to us. These are vital issues for Christians to think about. We must realize that there are consequences to synthesizing evolution and millions of years with the text of Scripture. Doing so affects not only how the early chapters of Genesis are interpreted, but also the coherency and internal consistency of the biblical message of creation, the Fall, and redemption. Christians need to realize that the idea of evolution and millions of years is not just a side issue, nor is it just about how people understand Genesis 1–11; rather, it has consequences for how we read the rest of Scripture. It is therefore fundamental to the Christian faith. Sadly today, more and more evangelical Christian scholars are having to redefine passages of Scripture because they have adopted the idea of evolution and millions of years into their thinking. These questions may be the biggest doctrinal issues facing our generation, and the church's attitude toward them could be a defining moment in Christianity. This is because they bring into focus whether the clear statements of Scripture are to be accepted, or whether they are to be denied because of “scientific” (i.e., evolutionary naturalism) concerns. The church is facing a crisis because too few of her people and leaders understand the consequences of combining the Bible and evolution. Too many like to go with the cultural flow and be thought of by “the great and the good” as enlightened and intelligent people rather than as “anti-intellectual” or “fundamentalists” (epithet fallacies).

This book will seek to defend the historicity of Adam as a person who existed in space and time, how he was specially created by God, his fall from grace and its impact on his ancestors and creation. It will show that the arguments against this are based, not upon the clear teaching of Scripture, but upon evolutionary presuppositions or influenced by an ancient near Eastern (ANE) view of the world. I will also show why understanding Adam to have been the first man created is important for a coherent, logical, and internally consistent theological understanding of the biblical message of creation, the Fall, and redemption. The latter half of the book will explain the importance of Jesus as the Last Adam in His incarnation, His deity, His death and Resurrection, and His view of Scripture. It will also look at how the Apostles used creation to not only expose the folly of the unbelieving worldview but to share the gospel with unbelievers.



Chapter 1

Adam, Who Art Thou?

It is probably safe to say that the combination of Darwin's theory of evolution in *Origin of Species* and the rise of uniformitarian science in the 1800s has influenced the understanding of Genesis 1–3 more than anything else. Jewish scholar Louis Jacobs acknowledges this with regard to its influence on the understanding of Adam: “There is no doubt that until the nineteenth century Adam and Eve were held to be historical figures, but with the discovery of the great age of the earth ... many modern Jews [and Gentiles] have tended ... to read the story as a myth.”¹ The post-enlightenment emphasis on rationalism (elevating human reason above supernatural revelation) together with the rise of biblical criticism and evolutionary theory laid the foundation for the debate on the subject of the historicity of Adam and whether he was the sole progenitor of the human race. Because of this, critical scholars have long denied the historicity of Adam, as have neo-orthodox theologians. The Swiss theologian Karl Barth, for example, believed that Genesis 1–3 was neither myth nor history but a saga,² and denied that Adam was a historical figure. Instead, he preferred to see Adam as being a symbol for everyone.³

Today, however, a significant paradigm shift taking has taken place within the evangelical academy in its approach to understanding the identity of Adam. In an article in *Christianity Today* published in 2019, “Ten Theses on Creation and Evolution That (Most) Evangelicals Can Support,” the author Todd Wilson (a theistic evolutionist) wrote:

-
1. Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 13–14.
 2. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation*, Vol. 3, Part 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), p. 90.
 3. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, Vol. 4, Part 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), p. 508–509.

I suspect in 20 years' time, support for Adam and Eve as real persons in a real past will be a minority view even within evangelicalism. Should this come to pass, I remain confident that the Christian faith will survive, even though this will require some reconfiguration of our deepest convictions.⁴

Given everything that has been written on Adam over the past decade, viewing Adam as a real historical individual who was supernaturally created by God is already a minority position within evangelicalism. For a mixture of biblical and scientific reasons, an increasing number of evangelical scholars have come to openly deny the supernatural creation of Adam. This shift has come about largely among evangelicals who are committed to embracing evolution as the way God created the world and formed the first human being — a view referred to broadly as theistic evolution. Theistic evolutionist Dennis Venema provides a helpful definition of the theistic evolutionary position:

This view holds that science is not an enemy to be fought, but rather a means of understanding some of the mechanisms God has used to bring about biodiversity on earth. This view accepts that humans share ancestry with all other forms of life, and that our species arose as a population, not through a single primal pair.⁵

One of the reasons why many theologians either reject Adam as an historical individual or see him as anything other than the originating head of the human race is the supposed evidence from biological evolution. Dr Francis Collins, who was the director of the Human Genome Project and founder of the theistic evolutionary think tank BioLogos, has been greatly influential in this area. In his book *The Language of God* he states: “Population genetics ... look at these facts about the human genome and conclude that they point to all members of our species having descended from a common set of founders, approximately 10,000 in number, who lived about 100,000 to 150,000 years ago.”⁶ Collins is quite clear that mankind descended from a population of around 10,000 and not from two individuals. Collins sees the creation of Adam in Genesis 2 as a “poetic and powerful allegory of God’s plan for the entrance of the spiritual nature (the soul) and the Moral Law

4. Todd Wilson, “Ten Theses on Creation and Evolution That (Most) Evangelicals Can Support,” *Christianity Today*, January 4, 2019, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/january-web-only/ten-theses-creation-evolution-evangelicals.html>.

5. Dennis Venema, “Ask an Evolutionary Creationist: A Q&A with Dennis Venema,” <http://biologos.org/blog/ask-an-evolutionary-creationist-a-qa-with-dennis-venema>.

6. Francis Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (London: Pocket Books, 2007), p. 126.

into humanity.⁷ A number of other proposals for understanding Adam have been suggested by scientists and theologians who embrace evolution or old earth creation model.

Dr Denis Alexander, a leading theistic evolutionist in the UK, believes that Adam was a Neolithic farmer: “God in his grace chose a couple of Neolithic farmers in the Near East ... to whom he chose to reveal himself in a special way, calling them into fellowship with himself — so that they might know him as a personal God.”⁸ This interpretation of Adam, however, requires that there were *Homo sapiens* who were not the image bearers of God and therefore could not experience salvation as they were not descendants of Adam (cf. Romans 5:12–19). It also requires an adoptionistic understanding of Adam rather than a special creation of Adam. Furthermore, is this in any way even a possible legitimate exegetical reading of Genesis? It is difficult to imagine that any person without previously being taught this would come to the conclusion that Adam was a Neolithic farmer. The Neolithic period is an evolutionary interpretation of archaeological evidence, not a valid interpretation of Scripture. Alexander’s suggested model for understanding Adam and Genesis 1–3 should cause us to be wary, because it is far from the plain reading of Scripture.

Influential evangelical Old Testament scholar, and old-earth creationist, C. John Collins is another of the leading voices in this rethink of Adam’s creation. In his book *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?* he is troublingly unclear on the Genesis account. For example, when it comes to reading the material in Genesis 1–11, Collins believes the “author was talking about what he thought were actual events, using rhetorical and literary techniques to shape the readers’ attitudes towards those events.”⁹ Crucial to his discussion of Genesis 1–11 is how he defines history. Collins describes Genesis 1–11 in its form as “history like”¹⁰ with a “historical core.”¹¹ For Collins, Genesis 1–11 is historical in the sense that the events recorded within it actually happened; however, the description of those events is symbolic since the author uses rhetorical and literary techniques.¹² The high level of (supposed) figurative and pictorial language means that the passage, therefore, should

7. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

8. Denis Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2008), p. 290. Alexander acknowledges that this is his view on page 303.

9. C. John Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why It Matters* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2011), p. 16.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

not be seen as literal.¹³ In fact, Collins constantly warns against a literal reading of Genesis 1–11.¹⁴

Unfortunately, this is a caricature of the young-earth position as biblical creationists interpret Genesis 1–3 using the historical-grammatical approach, taking the text plainly according to its literary genre (i.e., historical narrative), which of course takes into account such things as metaphors and figures of speech (Genesis 2:23, 4:7, 7:11). Nevertheless, Collins's approach to Genesis allows for the possibility that Adam was merely the head of a tribe rather than the direct ancestor of every human. He states: "If someone should decide that there were, in fact, more human beings than just Adam and Eve at the beginning of mankind, then, in order to maintain good sense, he should envision these humans as a single tribe. Adam would then be the chieftain of this tribe ... and Eve would be his wife. This tribe 'fell' under the leadership of Adam and Eve."¹⁵ Collins is uncertain how Adam was formed, other than that God's supernatural intervention was necessary in some way. He states: "The standard young-earth creationist understanding would have Adam and Eve as fresh ... creations, with no animal forebears ... I think the metaphysics by which the first human beings came about ... matter a great deal. This common ground matters more than the differences over where God got the raw material, because either way we are saying that humans are the result of 'special creation.'"¹⁶ The process of Adam's creation, however, is the most crucial part of this debate, as God tells us how He created Adam and where He got the material from (Genesis 2:7). If, however, Adam was not the first man and there were other creatures prior to Adam, what God did with Adam was not that special, and in what sense could he be said to be "the first man" (1 Corinthians 15:45)?

Over the last several years John Walton, an Old Testament scholar who is a specialist in ancient Near Eastern (ANE) studies, has proposed a novel interpretation of Genesis. Walton's primary emphasis in interpreting Genesis is the worldview of the ANE literature.¹⁷ Walton's argument is that, when Genesis 1 is read against its ANE background, it does not speak about the material origins of the world but rather its functional origins. Walton has applied this to the discussion on how Genesis 2–3 understands Adam and

13. Ibid., p. 17, 20, and 31.

14. Ibid., p. 33–35, 58, 85, 92 and 124. Unfortunately, Collins does not define what he means by "literal," which leads to his caricaturing of the "literal" position as "literalism" (154).

15. Ibid., p. 121.

16. Ibid., p. 122.

17. John Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), p. 15.

Eve. He argues that in Genesis 2 “the forming accounts of Adam and Eve should be understood archetypally rather than as accounts of how those two individuals were uniquely formed.”¹⁸ Nevertheless, Walton does understand Adam and Eve to have been real people who existed in history. Walton bases this on the fact that, in the Old Testament, Adam is part of a genealogy (Genesis 5:1; 1 Chronicles. 1; cf. Luke 3:38) and the New Testament understanding of the entrance of sin and death requires a real event and real people.¹⁹ Yet, Walton insists there are some elements of Adam’s profile that are not intended to convey historical elements: his name and his forming account are archetypal.²⁰ Regarding the Hebrew word *’ādām* in the context of Genesis 2, Walton argues that rather than referring to a proper name (Adam), it means “humankind,” which is why he believes Adam is archetypal.²¹ The archetypal view allows Walton to argue for other humans having lived before Adam. Walton states:

Current scientific understanding maintains that there was no first human being because humanity is the result of an evolving population. The evidence of genetics also points to the idea that the genetic diversity that exists in humanity today cannot be traced back to two individuals — a single pair — but that such diversity requires a genetic source population of thousands.... So far in this book, however, the analysis of the relationship of Genesis 1 and 2 has raised the possibility that the Adam and Eve account in Genesis 2 could have come after an en masse creation of humanity in Genesis 1 ... though Adam and Eve should be considered as having been included in that group.²²

In concluding that Genesis 2–3 is speaking of Adam’s functional rather than material creation, Walton is making a very questionable leap from the ANE accounts to the biblical account of creation and offers a false dichotomy between material and functional creation. These ANE texts are totally different in form and function, and contain a distorted worldview (i.e., polytheistic). Walton also allows his interpretation of Genesis to be governed by an evolutionary understanding of history. This is the reason he believes personal evil existed before the Fall of Adam, rather than being the result of his sin (cf. Romans 5:12).²³

18. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 102–103.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

The idea that Adam did not even exist has become another popular opinion among a number of theologians.²⁴ Theologian and scientist Dr Denis Lamoureux, who is influential among many evangelicals, argues this way: “My central conclusion . . . is clear: Adam never existed, and this fact has no impact whatsoever on the foundational beliefs of Christianity. . . . I simply want evangelicals to be aware that there are born-again Christians who love the Lord Jesus and who do not believe there ever was a first man named “Adam.””²⁵ Lamoureux’s acceptance of evolution may not have resulted in his giving up his faith in Jesus. However, he has had to reject other vital doctrines of the Christian faith: original sin and the inerrancy of Scripture.²⁶ In doing so, Lamoureux has given up his foundation for even needing Jesus: if there is no Adam or original sin, why do we need a Savior from our sin?

Lamoureux’s primary emphasis on interpreting Genesis is in light of the worldview of the ANE. Lamoureux, therefore, describes Genesis 1 as an “ancient poetic structure”²⁷ which he believes God used as a vehicle to communicate spiritual truth.²⁸ Lamoureux believes that Genesis 1 is “ancient science” which leads him to interpret passages that deal with the physical world through what he calls the “message-incident principle.” This means that the Bible’s spiritual truths are inerrant, but it presents them in the appearance of incidental and errant “ancient science.”²⁹ Lamoureux’s belief that Genesis 1 reflects the erroneous “science” of ancient people is an idea based upon a modern assumption and not a biblical one. Understanding Genesis this way is a movement away from a unique worldview that was revealed to the people of Israel (Exodus 20:1–17) and downplays the supernatural revelatory nature of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

Because of the supposed conflict between theology and science, another book has appeared, *Adam and the Genome*, which abandons a historical Adam. The book is split into two sections, with biology professor Dennis Venema tackling the scientific issues of the genome while New Testament theologian Scot McKnight deals with Adam from a biblical perspective.

24. Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012).

25. Denis O. Lamoureux, “Evolutionary Creation View,” in Matthew Barret and Ardel B. Caneday (eds.), *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), p. 37–65.

26. Denis Lamoureux, “Beyond Original Sin: Is a Theological Paradigm Shift Inevitable?” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Belief* 67, no. 1 (2015), p. 35–49; Lamoureux, *Evolutionary Creation View*, p. 63.

27. Denis O. Lamoureux, *Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes!* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), p. 30.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 89–90.

McKnight's main thesis throughout his chapters is that there was no historical Adam and that this has no impact on the Bible's redemptive narrative. The primary reason, however, why McKnight believes Genesis should be read as something other than a historical description of events is because he believes it was influenced by the texts of the neighboring ANE peoples (i.e., *Enuma Elish*, *the Gilgamesh Epic*, and *Atrahasis*).³⁰

McKnight therefore argues that Adam (and Eve) should be viewed as part of the narrative used by Israel in discourse with the other nations in the ANE: a contextual approach to reading Genesis 1–3 immediately establishes that the Adam and Eve of the Bible are a literary Adam and Eve. That is, Adam and Eve are part of a narrative designed to speak into a world that had similar and dissimilar narratives. Making use of this context does not mean Adam and Eve are “fictional,” and neither does it mean they are “historical.” To be as honest as we can with the text in its context, we need to begin with the undeniable: Adam and Eve are literary — are part of a narrative that is designed to reveal how God wants His people to understand who humans are and what humans are called to do in God's creation.³¹ This contextual reading allows McKnight to believe that there is no single interpretation of “Adam and Eve.” McKnight points out that from the Second Temple period to the time of the New Testament (530 B.C.– A.D. 90), the “Adam and Eve” of the biblical narrative have been interpreted in a variety of ways. That is why through history “the literary Adam was a wax Adam.”³² Even though many theistic evolutionists look for an actual “Adam” who became head of the human race, chosen from a group of hominids, McKnight rightly points out, “One might suggest that, but it is rather obvious to all readers of Genesis 1–2 that there are no other humans present from whom Adam and Eve could have been chosen.”³³ The distinction between Adam as a “literary” figure and Adam as a “historical” figure is foreign to the authors of the New Testament, as they clearly understood Adam as a historical figure who impacted history.

Dr Joshua Swamidass, a professor of laboratory and genomic medicine at Washington University, has given a “novel” model for how mankind may have arisen in his book *The Genealogical Adam and Eve*. Swamidass' view imposes several things on the Bible that simply do not come from an exegesis of the text. For example, Swamidass states, “Looking at Genesis alone, we cannot conclude

30. Venema and Knight, *Adam and the Genome*, p. 111–146.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

that all people descend from Adam and Eve.”³⁴ But this overlooks that God’s creation of mankind in Genesis 1:26–28 depicts Adam and Eve as the sole original couple. This is why Eve is described as “the mother of all the living” (Genesis 3:20) and the Apostle Paul calls Adam “*the* first man” (1 Corinthians 15:45; cf. Genesis 2:7). Swamidass argues for a real “sinless” Adam and Eve and their Fall from grace, but whose descendants slowly mixed with a pre-existing evolutionary population of humans who were living outside the garden in Eden.³⁵

According to Swamidass the “sons of God” are the people outside the garden in Eden and the “daughters of men” are descendants of Adam and Eve.³⁶ But nowhere does the Bible teach that there were people living outside of the garden in Eden. Although there are different views on the identity of the “sons of God” (Genesis 6:1–4), no one has previously argued that they were those who lived outside the garden. Swamidass also argues that the Fall was not universal but only applied to Adam and Eve and their descendants, but this is contrary to Scripture (cf. Romans 8:20).³⁷ He also believes that there was a kind of sin in the world before God’s command to Adam, and this sin was not held against anyone’s account.³⁸ But again, this is contrary to the biblical view that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Because Swamidass is committed to deep time and evolution he imposes ideas onto the biblical text that are just not there. The biblical view is that Adam and Eve are the only *genealogical* and *genetic* ancestors of all mankind.

Christian philosopher and apologist Dr. William Lane Craig (WLC) has argued in his book *In Quest of the Historical Adam* that Adam did not exist at the beginning of creation but was selected from the ancestors of *Homo sapiens* known as *Homo heidelbergensis* who lived around 750,000 years ago.³⁹ In order to place Adam at this point in history, WLC defines the genre of Genesis 1–11 as “mytho-history” and therefore rejects the chronological accuracy of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 (see chapter 5), as he believes chronological calculations are inappropriate for this genre.⁴⁰ But why preserve the historical reality of Adam and Noah while rejecting their ages? The identification of Genesis 1–11 as “mytho-history” means the events in those chapters may have happened, but because they are clothed in (supposed)

34. Joshua Swamidass, *The Genealogical Adam and Eve: The Surprising Science of Universal Ancestry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), p. 138.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 182–183.

39. William Lane Craig, *In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical and Scientific Exploration* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), p. 336.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 153–154.

metaphorical and figurative language they should not be taken literally (or plainly).⁴¹ One of the reasons WLC identifies Genesis 1–11 as “mytho-history” is he believes it contains “fantastic” and “inconsistent” elements:

Despite God’s transcendence so dramatically declared in Gen 1, God is portrayed in the story of man’s creation in Gen 2 as a humanoid deity worthy of polytheistic myths, as he forms man from the dirt and breathes the breath of life into his nostrils. The same is true of the story of the fall in Gen 3, where God strolls in the cool of the day and searches for the man and woman hiding among the trees; of the story of the flood in Gen 6–9, where God regrets having made man and is pleased with the smell of Noah’s burnt offering; and the story of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11, where God comes down to see the city and tower that the people have built. Such anthropomorphic descriptions of God, if interpreted literally, are incompatible with the transcendent God described at the beginning of creation.⁴²

WLC’s conclusion regarding the transcendent and anthropomorphic descriptions of God is demonstrably false and ignores the context of Genesis 1 and 2 (see chapter 3). WLC dismisses the idea that God walked in the garden as “fantastic” (cf. Genesis 18–19), but if the Creator (John 1:1–3, 14) can walk upon the earth and even upon the sea of Galilee, why not in the garden in Eden? Moreover, the Creator not only breathed physical life into the first man, Adam, but “breathed” new life (symbolizing the Spirit) into the disciples (John 20:22).⁴³ It should be no surprise that WLC does not accept the supernatural creation of Adam and sees the events of Genesis 1–11 as “mytho history” as over the years he has reinterpreted or rejected biblical doctrine that is ridiculed by the world. WLC already rejects the inerrancy of the Bible (he believes in limited inerrancy), and the doctrine of original sin (see chapter 7). He also holds to an unorthodox view of the nature of Jesus (neo-Apollinarianism) and although he believes it falls short as an analogy, he has likened the doctrine of the Trinity to Cerberus (the three-headed dog of Greek mythology).⁴⁴ The corrective lens WLC brings to these doctrines is not derived exegetically from the Bible but is philosophically imposed onto the Bible.

41. Ibid., p. 152–157.

42. Ibid., p. 102.

43. Genesis 2:7 (LXX) and John 20:22 both use the Greek word ἐνεφύσησεν (*enephsēsēsen*, “he breathed on”).

44. All these views held by WLC can all be found at his Reasonable Faith website, <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/>.

The Apostle Paul understood the challenge that philosophy based on human tradition posed to the church in his day. In his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul wrote to them so that no one would “deceive [them] with persuasive words,” (Colossians 2:4) and to warn them not to be taken captive by “philosophy ... according to human tradition” (Colossians 2:8). WLC has been taken captive by the philosophy of the Big Bang and the evolution of man (both of which are based on the philosophy of naturalism), as well as critical ideologies used by Old Testament theologians.

If you believe the doctrine of creation is divine revelation and is foundational for understanding the world, then you need to realize that today you are in the minority of people who call themselves Christians.

False views of Adam

Metaphor for everyone
Neolithic Farmer
Head of a tribe
Archetype of humanity
Adam did not even exist
Adam’s descendants mix with evolutionary population
<i>Homo heidelbergensis</i>
Literary Figure

A major problem with all these varying interpretations of Adam as anything other than the first historical man of the human race is that they are completely out of line with almost all approaches to Adam throughout history. Did first-century Jews think Adam was historical? Yes. Did the New Testament authors think so? Yes. Did Jesus Himself think Adam was historical? Yes. Did the earliest Christians believe this? Yes.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, many scholars today claim that it was not until the advent of modern genetics and the discovery of ANE literature that we now know that Adam was not the first person of the human race. If these modern interpretations of Adam are the biblical ones, why did these interpretations not appear until recently?

45. For a defense of a historical Adam in early Judaism and throughout church history, see William Van Doodewaard, *The Quest for the Historical Adam: Genesis, Hermeneutics, and Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015); and Dr Tom Nettles’ chapter, “Adam’s Place in the History of the Church’s Theology,” in Terry Mortenson (ed.), *Searching for Adam: Genesis and the Truth About Man’s Origin* (Green Forest, AR: Masters Books, 2016), p. 73–111.

Therefore, to claim that, when you read the Bible in its context, Adam is anything other than the head of the human race is to be in complete disagreement with people in the ancient world and throughout the history of the church, who did not understand Genesis that way.

This has become a serious issue for the church. To understand Genesis this way, Christians have to sacrifice the clear teaching of the Bible to fit with a particular evolutionary view of earth's history. What Christians who accept evolution need to realize is that theistic evolution is not biblical orthodoxy — it does not win the respect of the world (not that the Christian should be looking for the respect of the world — Scripture repeatedly warns Christians against seeking the approval of the world — Luke 6:26; James 4:4; 1 John 4:5) and it is not good science — for it is just as scientifically flawed as naturalistic evolution. Theistic evolutionists (and those Christians who reject biological evolution but accept the millions of years in embracing cosmological and geological evolution) seem to be trying to save Christianity from embarrassment so that the Bible might make sense to those who do not believe. However, the secular academy is hostile to Christianity precisely because secular academia is controlled by evolutionary, millions-of-years thinking.

Belief in supernatural creation stands against a dominant intellectual system that establishes what is called “credibility” in the secular academy. Evangelicals who feel intellectually accountable to the academy then have to come up with another way to understand Genesis. Ultimately, these views of Adam are not based upon credible exegetical conclusions but are the consequence of abandoning the authority of Scripture for the sake of the praise of the academy. The great 20th-century preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones explained why the issue of Adam is important:

We must assert that we believe in the being of one first man called Adam, and in one first woman called Eve. We reject any notion of a pre-Adamic man because it is contrary to the teaching of the Scripture.... If we say that we believe the Bible to be the Word of God, we must say that about the whole of the Bible, and when the Bible presents itself to us as history, we must accept it as history.⁴⁶

The reason why we must accept the supernatural creation of the first man Adam is because it is the clear teaching of Scripture.

46. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *What Is an Evangelical?* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), p. 74–75.

✿ The Consequences of Reinterpreting Adam

The atheist philosopher Daniel Dennett, in his book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, likened Darwin's idea of natural selection acting on chance variations to a "universal acid" which is so corrosive that nothing can contain it. According to Dennett, Darwinism "eats through virtually every traditional concept — mankind's most cherished beliefs about God, value, meaning, purpose, culture, and morality — everything."⁴⁷ How the "universal acid" that is Darwinism erodes Christian doctrine is seen in the beliefs of once-professing Christian and committed Darwinist Karl Giberson, who stated in his book *Saving Darwin: How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution*:

Acid is an appropriate metaphor for the erosion of my fundamentalism, as I slowly lost my confidence in the Genesis story of creation and the scientific creationism that placed this ancient story within the framework of modern science. Dennett's universal acid dissolved Adam and Eve; it ate through the Garden of Eden; it destroyed the historicity of the events of creation week. It etched holes in those parts of Christianity connected to these stories — the fall, "Christ as second Adam," the origins of sin, and nearly everything else that I counted sacred.⁴⁸

The issue is not whether a person can be a Christian and believe in evolution, but what one has to concede theologically in order to hold on to one's belief in evolution. While it is possible to believe in God and evolution, you cannot be a consistent Christian and believe in evolution. Theistic evolutionists inconsistently reject the supernatural creation of the world yet nevertheless accept the reality of the virgin birth and the miracles and Resurrection of Christ, which are equally at odds with secular interpretations of science. Theistic evolutionists have to tie themselves up in knots in order to ignore the obvious implications of what they believe. The term "blessed inconsistency" should be applied here, as many Christians who believe in evolution do not take it to its logical conclusions. Christians who accept evolution are unwittingly helping to erode belief in the supernatural creation of Adam and other vital doctrines of the Christian faith. This is evidenced in the secular world which often does see the importance of Adam to biblical Christianity, as we see in these words from Peter Bowler:

-
47. Editorial, "Universal Acid," creation.com, <https://creation.com/universal-acid>, quoting Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 34–40.
48. Karl W. Giberson, *Saving Darwin: How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), p. 10.

If Christians accept that humanity was the product of evolution — even assuming the process could be seen as an expression of the Creator’s will — then the whole idea of Original Sin would have to be reinterpreted. Far from falling from an original state of grace in the Garden of Eden, we have risen gradually from our animal origins. And if there was no sin from which we needed salvation, what was the purpose of Christ’s agony on the cross? Christ became merely the perfect man who showed us what we could all hope to become when evolution finished its upward course.⁴⁹

For those theistic evolutionists who are trying to make peace with the academic community and attempting to meet the intellectual elites halfway, guess what? The intellectual elites do not want to meet halfway. Bowler, unlike many Christians, recognizes that evolution destroys not only the idea of the creation of Adam but also the concept of original sin and the atonement of Christ. This is a practical consequence of synthesizing evolution with the Bible. Unfortunately, there are many evangelicals who have a high view of Scripture and believe in a historical Adam, yet seem unaware of the consequences of accepting the theory of the process of evolution by which Adam is said to have come into existence. Reformed theologian Michael Horton states: “Whatever one’s conclusions concerning the process of human origins, Christian theology stands or falls with a historical Adam and a historical fall.”⁵⁰ While Horton is correct in what he says concerning a historical Adam, his statement shows a lack of understanding of the origins debate.

As we have seen, many theistic evolutionists today who claim to be evangelical have, because of their beliefs about the process of human origins, rejected or reinterpreted the supernatural creation of Adam and a historical Fall along with him. The debate over whether Adam was supernaturally created is ultimately a debate over whether we trust what the Scriptures clearly teach. If we cannot be certain of the beginning, why would we be certain about what the Scriptures teach elsewhere? The idea of the uncertainty of truth is rampant in our culture, partly due to the influence of postmodernism and its deconstruction of truth, and that is why many believe that the question of Adam’s historicity is unimportant. Yet this is not an unimportant matter: it is a theological fact with huge theological implications. As the following chapters seek to demonstrate, if there is no Adam and Eve, the

49. Peter Bowler, *Monkey Trials and Gorilla Sermons* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 7.

50. M. Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), p. 424.

whole of the biblical narrative (creation, Fall, redemption, consummation) falls apart. Adam is essential to the biblical narrative and the gospel. Any attempt to depart from this will only end in an incoherent and inconsistent worldview. Adam is essential to the meta-narrative of the Bible.