

# The Historicity of Adam

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One of the most maligned, disbelieved and perverted sections of the Bible is the first three chapters of Genesis. If one were to attend any secular university, or any modernistic or liberal church, one would be told that the early chapters of Genesis do not record actual events. The secular humanist college professor and modernist pastor would argue that these early narratives are myth, legend, saga or parable. In other words, there was not a literal Adam and Eve or a literal space-time fall in history. Given the current and widespread denial of a historical, literal Adam and Eve (and the connection of a historical Adam to the New Testament exposition of the gospel), it is very important to understand the Bible's teaching regarding the historicity of Adam.

In the examination of the historicity of Adam, one needs to consider the following topics. First, one must consider the fact that the modernistic and neo-orthodox rejection of the historicity of Adam is founded upon unbelieving and apostate axioms.<sup>1</sup> Christian Liberals and Bartians have come to their positions on Adam not because of a careful exegetical study of the Bible, but because of their unbiblical, rationalistic, modernistic presuppositions. One must never forget that these men are not formulating their theories in a detached, objective manner. They have an axe to grind. Therefore, they ignore the clear and abundant biblical proof that Adam was a real, literal,

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<sup>1</sup> Bartian or Neo-orthodox writers assign Adam and the fall to the realm of the supra-temporal or supra-historical. Thus, Adam and the fall do not occur within space and time. That is, Adam is not a historical person in the normal, traditional sense of the term. The fall and creation narratives (they argue) are parabolic or spiritual in nature. (Emil Brunner used the term "myth," while Karl Barth preferred the term "saga.") Harrison writes, "It was to the credit of the neo-orthodox theologians that they repudiated the puerile view of the fall that regarded the Genesis account as a conglomeration of narrative material merely designed to explain certain circumstances of human society and animal behavior. However, they were unable to accept the concept of the fall as an historical event, a matter upon which Barth in particular was quite evasive. Instead, they insisted that existential method was incompatible with the view of the fall as an occurrence in the remote past, maintaining that it was something that everyone commits. For this reason it was of paramount theological importance for anyone who was prepared to take a realistic view of human nature. For neo-orthodox thinkers the tradition of the New Testament as enshrined in Augustine and Calvin invited a conflict with modern scientific opinion." (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969], p. 458). In accord with their existential understanding of Christianity, Neo-orthodox theologians regarded the fall of Adam as representing the experience of the fall into sin of every man. Edward J. Young has refuted such intellectual nonsense. He writes, "When Adam sinned, he fell from an estate of being good into an estate of being evil. He was created by God as a creature of whom it could be said that he was 'very good.' From this estate in which he was created by God he fell into an estate of sin and misery and by his disobedience plunged all men into that same estate of sin and misery. Furthermore, by my sin I did not fall from an estate of being 'very good' into an estate of evil. I and all men like me were born into that miserable estate of sin, and when we sinned we simply showed that we were in such an estate. By sinning Adam became a sinner; by sinning we do not become sinners, we are already sinners. Sin does not cause us to fall from the estate wherein we were created, for we were born into a fallen estate. With Adam, however, the case was quite different. His sin brought him into a fallen estate. By disobedience he fell; by disobedience we simply show that we are already fallen. Hence, the experience of Adam was unique; it is his experience alone and not that of myself or of every man." (*Genesis 3* [Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966], pp. 60-61).

historical figure. Second, one must briefly examine the arguments used to deny the historicity of Adam. It will be proven that these arguments are fallacious. The arguments against the historicity of Adam are either founded upon blatant lies (e.g., macro-evolution, higher critical views of the Pentateuch, etc.) or upon pure human speculation. Third, one must consider the overwhelming biblical proof that Adam really existed. One will see that the historicity of Adam and a literal space-time fall are so theologically interwoven with the teaching of the gospel and the second Adam (Jesus Christ), that to deny the historicity of the first Adam logically leads to a denial of the very heart of the gospel itself.

## Some General Principles of Liberal Theology

Before setting forth the biblical evidence for the historicity of Adam one must consider the following question: If the biblical evidence of a literal, real, historical, first created man named Adam is so strong, then why is this truth rejected by so many theologians and scholars in the twentieth century? The answer to this question is very simple. A time came in history (the late nineteenth through twentieth centuries) in which most scholars rejected the inspired, inerrant, and infallible revelation (the Bible) of the one living and true God. If one examines the church fathers, the medieval scholastic theologians, the Protestant Reformers (Luther Zwingli, Calvin, Knox), the Reformed confessions and all the great Puritan and Presbyterian theologians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one will see perfect unanimity regarding the historicity of Adam. Modern critical theories regarding Adam grew up in the soil of unbelief. There was an *a priori* rejection of divine revelation in favor of first, a hyper-critical, secular-autonomous, rationalism, and second, an evolutionary understanding of the world. Thus one could argue that the two different views of Adam (i.e., literal-historical verses mytho-poetry) are in essence expressions of two diametrically opposed world views. The first view believes and receives the Bible as God's word. Therefore, it lets the Bible itself determine its own presuppositions, methodology and interpretation of various texts. This believing approach to Scripture is called "traditional" or "pre-critical." It dominated the theological scene for over eighteen hundred years.

The second view (Modernism or Christian Liberalism) believes that the starting point for truth is human autonomy. This position, therefore, assumes that the Bible is fallible and must be treated as any other human document. In other words, men must apply "scientific" techniques to these fallible human documents to discover the "real" authorship, various myths, redactions, historical and scientific errors and so on. One must keep these facts in mind when considering the historicity of Adam since the Modernist case for a mythical or parabolic Adam is not based on standard biblical exegesis. Christian Liberals simply impose their higher critical paradigm upon the text. Higher critical scholars are unbelievers who, with no objective evidence, force the Scriptures into their naturalistic, apostate mold.

To understand the higher critical paradigm that leads scholars to believe in a mythical Adam, one briefly must consider the basic theory regarding the Pentateuch of Julius Wellhausen

(1844-1918). Wellhausen's views of the Pentateuch have completely dominated modernistic Old Testament biblical scholarship from the 1880's to the present.<sup>2</sup> "[H]e occupied a position in the field of Old Testament criticism analogous to that of Darwin in the area of biological science."<sup>3</sup> "He is to modern biblical scholarship what Abraham is to the Jew, the father of the faithful. More lucidly and compellingly than any other, he gave what many have considered the definitive formulation of the documentary hypothesis."<sup>4</sup> What is the documentary hypothesis? Wenham gives an excellent summary of this theory:

According to this view, the Pentateuch is composed of four distinct sources: J (10/9th century), E (9/8th century), D (7th century), P (6/5th century). These sources were successfully amalgamated, culminating in the composition of the existing Pentateuch in about the fifth century B.C. as far as Genesis is concerned, it was compiled from three main sources: J (comprising about half the material), E (about a third), and P (about a sixth). These sources were distinguished on five main criteria: different names of the deity (J speaks of Yahweh, the LORD, E and P of Elohim, God); duplicate narratives (e.g., different accounts of creation, Gen. 1 and 2; repetition within the flood story, Gen. 6-9; doublets within the patriarchal narratives, cf. 12:10-20 with chap. 20); different style (J and E contain vivid narrative, P is repetitious and fond of genealogies); and finally, different theologies (according to P, God is remote and transcendent; in J and E, God is anthropomorphic, etc.).<sup>5</sup>

There are a number of reasons why the documentary hypothesis approach to the Pentateuch leads directly to the denial of the historicity of Adam. First, the biblical idea of special revelation is rejected in favor of evolutionary presuppositions. "Wellhausen combined his dating of the various alleged documents with a particular evolutionary reconstruction of Israel's history, a reconstruction which was based upon the Hegelian philosophy."<sup>6</sup> Once special revelation and the historical character of Genesis is denied, Adam and Eve become nebulous figures who can arbitrarily be placed into any conception of primeval history that one desires. Second, the documentary hypothesis presents the Pentateuch as a gigantic fraud. The Bible explicitly declares that Deuteronomy and what the Modernists call "priestly legislation" was spoken and written down by Moses (cf., Ex. 24:4-8; 34:27; Nu. 33:2; Deut. 4:1ff; 31:9-24; Josh.

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<sup>2</sup> Although Wellhausen's theories (the documentary hypothesis) are still generally accepted in all university and modernistic seminaries, since the late 1960's many liberal O. T. scholars have openly challenged and disagreed with some of Wellhausen's views. These disagreements among source critics, however, are merely differences of opinion within the Wellhausen paradigm. Scholars are disagreeing over the source of various passages (e.g., J instead of P). "The typical OT introduction or critical commentary on Genesis tends to assume the JEDP theory in a fairly traditional form, and it still forms the heart of most lecture courses on the Pentateuch. No new consensus has evolved to replace Wellhausen's theory, so it still continues to be assumed by many scholars, though there is now widespread recognition of the hypothetical character of the results of modern criticism" (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987], pp. xxxiv-xxxv).

<sup>3</sup> Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. xxvi.

<sup>6</sup> Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960 [1949]), p. 137.

1:7-8; 8:31-32; 23:6-7; 2 Kg. 14:6; etc.). Modernists assert that power-hungry, conniving priests attributed various laws to Moses to gain a hearing for their own version of the law. Once one accepts the idea that much of the Pentateuch is fraudulent, it is logical to assume that Adam and the fall are merely folklore or a literary device. Third, the documentary hypothesis detaches the theologian or exegete from the biblical text and places the bulk of study and investigation squarely upon the subjective, arbitrary, and speculative theories of unbelieving men.<sup>7</sup> The arrogance and stupidity of the modernistic understanding of the Pentateuch is truly astounding. In the name of objectivity and science, the Modernist has rushed headlong into a number of theories that are totally speculative, subjective and not provable. In fact, as archeological discoveries keep advancing, more and more Modernist assertions are proven to be fallacious. “[I]t is quite evident that his [Wellhausen] theory of Pentateuchal origins would have been vastly different (if, indeed, it had been formulated at all) had Wellhausen chosen to take account of the archeological material available for study in his day, and had he subordinated his philosophical and theoretical considerations to a sober and rational assessment of the factual evidence as a whole.”<sup>8</sup> When men reject the inspired, perfect, sufficient solid rock of Scripture for the *a priori*,

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<sup>7</sup> The absurdity of the documentary hypothesis becomes evident when it is applied to documents which are known to have one author. If, for example, a book contained varying names of God (Jehovah, God), repetition, changes in vocabulary, duplicate narratives and so on, the consistent source critic would have to argue that such a book had multiple authors or redactors. However, the truth of the matter would be that a single author used different words and subtle variations in order to make the story more interesting to hold a reader’s attention. Good writers use variation on purpose. Further, historical narratives often use repetition to emphasize or to examine an event from a different perspective. Why don’t source critics apply their techniques to Plato, Aristotle, or Shakespeare? The answer is simple. Such works do not require faith in God and obedience to His law word. G. Ch. Alders adds another pertinent criticism of the documentary hypothesis. He writes, “When we study the literature which relates to the Pentateuch, it becomes apparent that the theory of splitting sources leads to an almost unending exercise in making new distinctions and recognizing portions. It has been correctly pointed out that the extremes to which the application of this approach has led have finally caused the entire method of splitting sources to appear absurd. Every sober, scholarly researcher must ask himself the question whether we are actually dealing with valuable reality or nothing more than a display of sharp ingenuity. It would be easy to give examples of those who have driven this theory to such extremes that they have lost touch with simple and obvious realities.” (*Genesis* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981] 1:18).

<sup>8</sup> Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 509. If, as Modernists assert, the Bible is a mixture of truth and error, then none of the Bible can be trusted on its own authority. But what is this higher authority? Is it itself infallible, objective and totally reliable? No. The higher authority is merely the latest popular theory taught in modernist institutions. Higher criticism is not a hard science. An archeologist can uncover a pavement stone or ancient monument and can say that Pontius Pilate really existed and ruled when the Bible says he ruled. The modernist scholar, however, says things like: “Based on my analysis of the Hebrew grammar, there are two different authors of the book of Isaiah.” Does the modernist scholar really know whether two different men wrote the book of Isaiah? No. He has a theory. He has an educated guess based on his own modernistic presuppositions. The professing Christian in a modernist church cannot place his trust in any portion of Scripture without first consulting with the latest modernist authorities to make sure he is not believing in some foolish myth, or a redaction by a power hungry priest, or a legend from a second century Christian community bent on molding the human Jesus in their own image. When the sure foundation of the infallible Bible is replaced by the perverted opinions of secular humanists masquerading as Christian teachers, then (according to their own teaching) the Bible cannot be trusted at any single point.

spurious, imaginary deductive system of the Modernist theologians, they have rejected both God and truth.

## Arguments against the Historicity of Adam

Having considered the general foundational principles of liberal theology which have resulted in the rejection of an historical Adam, one must also briefly examine the specific arguments used to reject the orthodox Christian position. There are five main arguments that are commonly used against the historicity of Adam.

### *1. The Talking Snake*

The first argument is based on the fact that snakes are not able to speak. It is argued that the record of the temptation and fall obviously cannot be taken as a literal historical account because one not only encounters a talking snake (which is impossible and incredible), but Eve and Adam do not even regard a talking snake to be unusual. Thus, one must regard the whole account, and in turn Adam himself, as mythical or symbolic. The snake symbolizes evil and the account of the fall is merely a mythical or symbolic way for the primitive author and/or redactor to explain the presence of evil in the world. There are a number of reasons why this argument is fallacious and must be rejected. (1)The fact that a snake spoke and tempted Eve is not impossible or absurd when considered in the overall context of Scripture. In Numbers 22:28, Jehovah spoke

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Modernists are no different than Romanists, for the foundation of their theology is not *Scripture alone* but rather human tradition. Roman Catholics look to the church fathers and the theological inventions of the Middle Ages (e.g., purgatory, Mariolatry, transubstantiation, celibacy for priests and nuns, the papacy, etc.) while Christian Liberals follow the traditions of secular philosophers (e.g., Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, etc.) and apostate theologians (e.g., Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Bushnell, Bultmann, etc.). For both Romanists and Modernists, the ultimate authority is not the Bible but the church. In Roman Catholicism, the Pope and church hierarchy determine doctrine, while among Christian Liberals it is seminary professors and the church bureaucracy. Basically, in modernist denominations whoever has the power determines the doctrine. The only limiting factor in modernist denominations is public opinion. Those in power hold back on the more radical views until the people in the pews who pay their salaries are won over to the new views. Jesus' rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees equally applies to all Modernists: "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.... They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Mt. 15:6, 14). Paul warned us of such evil men: "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). Isaiah warned: "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is. 8:20). The Modernist, by pulling the rug out from under objective truth, is left with an anthropological religion. By making man the ultimate reference point for truth the Christian Liberal is left with rank subjectivism and silly, mystical slogans. Once one understands the overall modernist position in its world view context one should never again fall for the argument that Christian Liberals are rational, objective and scientific while orthodox Christians are fideistic blind followers of authority. Biblical Christianity, which rests on biblical infallibility, is the only rational, defensible position. It is the only position that avoids subjectivism, relativism and mysticism.

through the mouth of a donkey. In the Gospel narratives, one encounters demons speaking through possessed human beings (e.g., Mt. 8:29, 31; Mk. 5:12; Lk. 4:41; 8:28). There also is the account of Satan entering into Judas immediately prior to his betrayal of Jesus (cf. Jn 12:27). If demons can possess and speak through fallen human beings, then Satan (the prince of demons) can certainly make use of a simple creature such as a snake. The idea that a snake spoke in Genesis 3 is only impossible if one rejects the supernatural character of Scripture. (2) In Genesis 3:14, God proclaims a curse against the snake and then, in verse 15, sets forth the conflict between God's people and Satan's people coupled with a prediction of victory by Christ over the devil. The idea that God cursed a poetic metaphor or an imaginary symbol is absurd. "The unusually vigorous condemnation pronounced by God in verses fourteen and fifteen seems almost pointless if the whole account is merely the story of an inward struggle on the part of Eve."<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, in verse 14, the snake is condemned to go upon its belly. "If the reference is to the devil or to some power higher than a snake, why this condemnation in verse fourteen?"<sup>10</sup>

A clever Modernist could argue that verse 15 actually proves his whole contention (that the narrative of the fall is mythical or symbolic) by pointing out that the sentence "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" is a very non-literal prophecy regarding Christ's victory over Satan. This argument falls to the ground, however, when one considers that subsequent revelation says very plainly that Adam's fall into sin was a literal, historical event (e.g., Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Tim. 2:13 ff.; 1 Cor. 11:8ff.) and that the crushing of the serpent's head *represents* victory over Satan (e.g., Rom. 16:20). "[I]t cannot be denied that there is poetry, symbol, and allegory in Scripture. But this does not warrant arbitrarily relegating a given portion of Scripture to the level of poetry, symbol, or allegory. The real issue is, what did the sacred text itself intend? When the Scripture intends to record history, we may not simply declare it to be poetic or symbolic or allegorical."<sup>11</sup> In other words, one must submit to the Bible when it identifies one portion of Scripture as a literal, historical narrative and another as truth expressed in poetic language. If one is not willing to submit to the clear teaching of Scripture on important matters of biblical interpretation, then one is no longer a true theologian but rather a mere speculative philosopher.

But (says the Modernist) isn't it strange that Eve is not surprised or startled that a brute creature such as a snake can speak and make logical inferences? Although men and women

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<sup>9</sup> Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3: A Devotional and Expository Study* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> G. Ch. Alders, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 1:45. "That Genesis intended to give history is not difficult to establish. There is not one substantial argument which can be advanced that would prove the contrary. All the reasons that have been given from time to time for questioning this intent of the book are, at best, tenuous. The entire design of the book indicates that the positive intent was to present actual history. This is in keeping with the nature of the entire Pentateuch, of which Genesis is a part, and which is unmistakably a work of history. This is confirmed by its own self-designation as *tôledôt*—'history' or 'account' in Genesis 2:4; 6:9; 11:27; 37:2. This is in keeping with the general impression the entire book gives. Also, there is a constant use of a verb form which, in Hebrew, serves to describe historical events" (*Ibid.*).

today would obviously be shocked by a talking snake, one must keep in mind the naiveté of Eve who although sinless, good and intelligent, had only existed for a day or two before the temptation. How was Eve to know that such an occurrence was out of order apart from prior empirical observation, or personal training by Adam or God. The fact that Eve was not surprised is not a significant objection at all.

## 2. Common Creation and Flood Stories

The second argument against the historicity of Adam is based on the supposed parallels and striking similarities between the creation and flood accounts in Genesis and the ancient Mesopotamian creation and flood narratives (i.e., the *Enuma elish* and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*). This argument should also be rejected for the following reasons.

(1) Although there are some similarities between Genesis and the *Enuma elish* (e.g., Both narratives begin with something analogous to a watery chaos and end with the Creator at rest. There are also similarities in the sequence of creation.), the differences are much greater and significant. “Since a careful comparison with pagan mythology reveals only the most casual parallels between Mesopotamian and Hebrew accounts of creation, and in view of the fact that none of the characteristic elements of the Babylonian myths appear in Genesis narratives, it would seem unwise to employ the term ‘myth’ in order to describe the biblical accounts of creation, the fall, and so on...”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, both accounts flow from very different, antithetical worldviews. Harrison writes,

While the biblical writers showed a distinct interest in nature, they did not regard it as necessarily constituting the life of God, who was invariably considered as an independent Being. As distinct from the gods of Mesopotamian and Egyptian polytheism, the God of the Hebrews demonstrated His personality and sense of purpose by means of significant continuous acts in history. Man himself was a creature of God, furnished with a sense of destiny and cautioned to formulate the pattern of his life within the context of divine promise and fulfillment in history. Thus the Old Testament can never be regarded as a typical mythology in part or in whole, because it proclaimed God as the Lord of History in contradistinction to the polytheistic patterns that made life and history in general dependent upon the rhythm of natural forces.<sup>13</sup>

(2) There is almost a universal tendency among Modernist and Neo-orthodox theologians to assume, with absolutely no evidence, that the biblical creation and flood narrative were in some manner based on the Mesopotamian myths instead of vice-versa. Thus, once again Modernists exhibit their anti-supernaturalistic bias. The idea that the author of the creation narrative in Genesis borrowed from near-eastern pantheistic mythology is a gratuitous assumption that betrays the clear teaching of Scripture.

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<sup>12</sup> Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 456.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 457.

### 3. Evolutionary Theories

The third argument against the historicity of Adam is that the creation account in Genesis totally contradicts the teachings of science, in particular macro-evolution. If evolution was true, this would be a good objection. However, since evolution is both thoroughly unbiblical and unscientific (properly defined) this argument is easily rejected. Why is evolution unscientific? Why is evolution an imaginative, atheistic myth? Note the following reasons: (1) Evolution is a biochemical impossibility. Not only was the idea of spontaneous generation disproved over one hundred years ago, but as scientists learn more about simple one-celled organisms, it is evident that the first step of evolution is about as likely to occur as the creation of a nuclear submarine in a junk yard during a tornado.<sup>14</sup> (2) The geologic column disproves uniformitarianism and contradicts the continuance sequence charts found in all secular science textbooks. (3) The fossil totally disproves evolution. Not only are fossils found in the “wrong” areas of the geological column (the supposed *stratigraphic leaks*); but they always appear fully formed with the *complete absence of transitional forms*. “This fact is absolutely fatal to the general theory of organic evolution. Even the great champion of evolution himself, Charles Darwin, acknowledged this fatal flaw.”<sup>15</sup> One could multiply proofs against evolution; however, space restraints require one to move on. Evolution is a religious faith based on a subjective, imaginary philosophy of origins. It is a factitious, atheistic scam.

### 4. Genesis as Poetry

The fourth argument is based on the idea that the early chapters of Genesis are poetry, not straightforward prose. Poetry (it is argued) indicates a non-literal, symbolic story. Therefore, one should accept the doctrine of these chapters, yet not make the mistake of receiving them as real history. Although one can find poetic elements in the early chapters of Genesis (e.g., Adam’s statement in 2:23 regarding his new wife, Eve), there is no real evidence to support the contention that these chapters are poetry. Hebrew scholar Edward J. Young writes,

We confess to becoming a little tired of reading dogmatic assertions about how Genesis three is to be interpreted when these assertions are accompanied by no evidence. The mere declaration that we misunderstand the chapter if we think that Adam was a real person who lived in a garden is not sufficient argument to lead us to agree. And the constantly reiterated error that ultimate truth cannot be given to man in propositional statements should, at least occasionally, be supported by evidence.

On the other hand, there is sufficient evidence to show us that we should read the third chapter of the Bible as prose and not as poetry. For one thing the characteristics of Hebrew

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<sup>14</sup> See Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

<sup>15</sup> Scott M. Huse, *The Collapse of Evolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), p. 41.

poetry are missing in this chapter. If the writer, whom we believe to be Moses, wanted to write poetry, why did he not do so? Why did he make his writing look so much like prose that men thus naturally interpret it? Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism, in which two lines or parts of lines bear a parallel relationship one to another. Such parallelism is lacking for the most part in chapter three.... Everything in the chapter leads to the conclusion that the writer is giving straightforward prose. He believes that he is writing about certain things that did actually take place.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, there are no examples in the whole Old Testament of Hebrew poetry being used to set forth mythological stories. Although Old Testament poetry *contains* metaphorical, non-literal descriptions of God (e.g., having wings) and His activities (e.g., riding on the clouds), such poetic imagery is very easy to identify. The only reason that modern scholars refer to Genesis 3 as poetry or parable (with no textual evidence) is the simple fact that they themselves do not believe the events of this chapter to be real or factual. They are attempting to justify their unbelief.

## The Biblical Evidence for the Historicity of Adam

Having noted that the typical arguments against the historicity of Adam are not based on sound reasoning, solid biblical exegesis or factual evidence, it is now time to examine the abundant evidence for the historicity of Adam. There are several arguments that need to be considered.

### *1. Biblical Genealogies*

The first argument is based on the biblical genealogies. All the biblical genealogies trace the human race back to one man—Adam (cf. Gen. 5:3 ff.; 1 Chron. 1:1 ff. Lk 3:38). Although a careful analysis of the biblical genealogies has conclusively proved that genealogies in the Bible are frequently abbreviated by the omission of unimportant names, the men that are listed were without a doubt regarded as real historical people by the divinely inspired writers.<sup>17</sup> There are a number of reasons why the genealogies support a historical Adam. (1) As noted, the men discussed were obviously meant to be regarded as real historical figures. In Genesis chapter 5 one is even told the age at which sons were born and the numbers of years the father lived after the birth of his son. Even the father's age at death is recorded. (2) The lists which set forth the godly line and the origin of confessional Yahwism are given (in part) to focus attention on God's grace and to highlight the significant contribution of this line to the world. This purpose would be meaningless and dishonest if these men were mythical figures. (3) If the genealogical list in Luke chapter 3 which traces the lineage of Jesus all the way to Adam is fraudulent, then the book of Luke and the gospel itself is based on myth or lie. Such a view would, at bottom, be a

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<sup>16</sup> Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>17</sup> See William Henry Green, "Primeval Chronology" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 47 (1890), pp.285-303.

repudiation of the gospel itself. Note also how the account in Luke says “the son of Adam, the son of God” (3:38). Luke, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes it crystal clear that no human being preceded Adam; he came directly from the creative work of God. “Luke (like Paul in Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49) obviously thought of Adam as a historical person.”<sup>18</sup>

## *2. An Explicit Statement by Paul*

The second argument for the historicity of Adam is based on the explicit teaching of the Apostle Paul. When Paul preached and wrote under divine inspiration he taught a literal, historical Adam. To the Athenian philosophers (who rejected the original unity of mankind) Paul declared, “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26).<sup>19</sup> When Paul preached the gospel to pagans who had no familiarity with the Old Testament, he first pointed them to God the creator of all and in particular the creator of all mankind through the making of one man. Out of one man or one blood came every nation upon the earth.<sup>20</sup> Paul is telling the Athenians that their pagan concept of arising from the native soil and their view of racial superiority that is founded upon such a myth is completely false. Because all nations arise from one man created by the One living and true God, all men are responsible to obey this God and treat each other as equals created in the image of God. If one argues that Paul begins his presentation of the gospel with a myth, why should Paul be believed when he presents the resurrection (cf. Acts 17:31) in the same sermon? To teach that one (the creation of Adam) is a myth and the other (the resurrection) is true, is illogical and arbitrary.

## *3. The Comparison of Adam to Christ*

Another passage which explicitly teaches the historicity of Adam is Romans 5:12-21. This section of Scripture is a primary passage for the doctrine of original sin. Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ (the second Adam). “[T]he two Adams are the heads of the two covenants. The one the representative of all who are under the covenant of works, communicating his image unto them; the other the representative of all who are under the

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<sup>18</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Luke* (Nashville, TN: Broadmas Press, 1991), p. 142.

<sup>19</sup> Critical texts which generally speaking are based on the Alexandrian or Egyptian type of texts omit the word blood from verse 26. The verse would read from “one” (NASB, RSV) or “one man” (NIV) instead of “one blood” (KJV, NKJV). The meaning in both cases is essentially the same.

<sup>20</sup> John Stott notes that the findings of science support the teaching of Scripture on this issue. He writes, “All human beings share the same anatomy, physiology and chemistry, and the same genes. Although we belong to different so-called ‘races’ (Caucasoid, Negroid, Mongoloid and Australoid), each of which has adjusted to its own physical environment, we nevertheless constitute a single species, and people of different races can intermarry and interbreed. This homogeneity of the human species is best explained by positing our descent from a common ancestor. ‘Genetic evidence indicates,’ writes Dr. Christopher Stringer of London’s Natural History Museum, ‘that all living people are closely related and share a recent common ancestor.’”

covenant of grace, and communicating His image unto them. By the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, and by the obedience of the other many shall be made righteous."<sup>21</sup> Throughout this section Paul bases his whole argument regarding the reality of sin and death in the world to the one trespass of the one man Adam. "[T]he apostle places his imprimatur upon the authenticity of this account [Genesis 3]. The importance he attached to this incident of Genesis 3 is attested by the fact that the subsequent development of his argument turns on it. That sin entered through one man is our integral element of the comparison or parallel upon which is to be built Paul's doctrine of justification."<sup>22</sup> On six different occasions Paul explicitly asserts that sin and death reign over all because of the *one sin* of the *one man* Adam: "through one man sin entered the world" (v. 12), "by the one man's offense many died" (vs. 15), "the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation" (vs. 16), "by the one man's offense death reigned through the one" (vs. 17), "through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation" (vs. 18), "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (vs. 19).

There are a number of reasons why modernists cannot sidestep the fact that this portion of Scripture unequivocally teaches that Adam was a real historical person. (1) Paul, writing by divine inspiration, assumes the historicity of Adam in his argumentation. If one does not accept the Genesis 3 narrative as genuine history, then Paul's whole argument regarding Christ as the covenant head of those for whom He dies falls to the ground. "Inasmuch as the New Testament is the Word of God, whatever it asserts is the truth, and when the New Testament speaks of Adam and Eve as historical, the question is settled."<sup>23</sup> (2) The point of this section of Romans is to show that Christ's work remedies the fall of Adam and even gives blessings far beyond what Adam's sin has done in the production of evil. "[T]he gospel of the grace of God has proved itself much more efficacious in the production of good, than sin in the production of evil."<sup>24</sup> Paul's argument (the obedience of the One versus the disobedience of the one) is wrong and misleading if Adam and the fall are myths. "You do not need an historical atonement to undo a mythological fall or a mythological transgression. All you need is another myth. But if Christ needed to be real to save us, then Adam was real, too. It is because Adam was real that Christ also had to be real to make atonement."<sup>25</sup> Because of Adam's sin real guilt and moral pollution

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<sup>21</sup> Robert Haldane, *Romans* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958 [1874], p. 213.

<sup>22</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 1:181.

<sup>23</sup> E. J. Young, *Genesis 3*, p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Hodge, *Romans* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989 [1835]), p. 177.

<sup>25</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 1992), 2:583. Boice adds this important point: "I am convinced that the major reason why the liberal scholars want to regard the opening chapters of Genesis as mythology is that they do not want to face the reality of the fall of the race in Adam or the guilt that flows from it. If there was no fall, then all this business about Adam and Eve and the serpent and the Garden of Eden is meant to only describe our unfortunate but inevitable human condition. It is meant to only say that we live in an imperfect world and must therefore continually struggle against imperfection. Rather than involving guilt, a framework like that actually gives us cause for pride and an imagined heroic stature. We are to not be blamed for anything. We have simply inherited imperfection and are, if anything, to be praised for how well we are struggling against it. In fact, we can be said to be doing better and better all the time." (Ibid.).

passed to the human race. But, Christ (the second Adam) by His historical act of obedience (His suffering, death and resurrection) removed the guilt, penalty and pollution of sin for the believing sinner. “This section insists upon our accepting the story in Genesis as literal actual fact and history. You do not really understand the need of salvation unless you believe that history, and understand what happened in Adam, and our relationship to Adam. So it is a most important section, and it is only those who have understood its teaching who have not allowed certain scientists to stampede them into accepting the theory of evolution.”<sup>26</sup> How can one have faith in Christ as the second Adam, the Head of a new humanity when the first Adam is regarded as a myth or poetic metaphor? The issue of a historical Adam cannot be regarded as unimportant for its denial affects the very heart of the gospel.

### *5. Adam and the Resurrection*

Paul also teaches the historicity of Adam when he discusses the resurrection in 1 Corinthians. He writes, “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.... It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Cor. 15:20-22, 44-49). Paul, in a lengthy discussion of the importance and reality of the resurrection, contrasts Adam and Christ. He notes that there is a causal relationship between the death of Adam and the death of his descendants. There is also a causal relationship between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of His people. Then Paul points out that union with Adam is the cause of death and union with Christ is the cause of life. Both Adam and Christ are heads and representatives of groups of people. All who remain in Adam are condemned and all who are in Christ are justified and receive the resurrection unto life. Paul continues the contrast between the first and second Adam in his discussion of the nature of the resurrection. Note the parallels: living being—life-giving spirit; made of dust—the Lord from heaven. Before the resurrection Christians bear the image of the man of dust, but after the resurrection, they will bear the image of the heavenly man.

One cannot regard Adam as a mythical figure without also completely destroying Paul’s argumentation. Would Paul use a myth or lie as a foundation to establish the necessity of believing in a literal bodily resurrection for salvation? Perish the thought! If one half of the parallel is not really true or historical, why should anyone regard the other half as true (or a

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<sup>26</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, Exposition of Chapter 5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), p. 181.

future reality). Further, if Paul is wrong concerning Adam, would it not be logical to conclude that he also is wrong concerning Christ and the resurrection? If Adam was not a literal, historical figure, then Paul was deluded. If Paul was deluded, then the doctrine of justification and the resurrection are not proper or worthy objects of faith. If the modernist scheme is true, Christianity is finished. “Remove Adam and his historicity from these verses and all the profound truths that Paul is teaching go by the board. They are then not truths at all and Paul’s words must be abandoned. Adam is gone, but so is Christ.”<sup>27</sup>

## 6. Paul’s Teaching Regarding Women

There are other important doctrines that are based upon a literal, historical understanding of the creation and fall narratives. When Paul discusses women in public worship, he presupposes a literal, historical view of Genesis 2 and 3. Paul writes, “For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man” (1 Cor. 11:8-9). “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Tim. 2:12-14). Regarding the wearing of head coverings and the need to learn in silence, Paul appeals to two facts recorded in the history of creation. First, Eve was formed out of the man; she originated from him. This is a direct appeal to Genesis 2:21-23. Adam was created first, out of the dust of the ground. Eve was created for the man to be a helpmeet unto him. “Paul explicitly specifies that the woman was ‘taken out of’ (*ek*) the man and created to help, or to be ‘for’ (*dia*), the man.”<sup>28</sup> Hodge writes, “In this way does the New Testament constantly authenticate, not merely the moral and religious truths of the Old Testament, but its historical facts; and makes those facts the grounds or proofs of great moral principles. It is impossible, therefore, for any Christian who believes in the inspiration of the apostles to doubt the divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, or to confine the inspiration of the ancient writers to their doctrinal and preceptive statements. The whole Bible is the word of God.”<sup>29</sup>

When discussing women’s role in the church in the Timothy passage, Paul appeals to the fall as an historical event that demonstrates the dire consequences of a reversal of leadership roles. The apostle “shows by a negative example the importance of heeding the respective roles established by God in the creation of Eve from Adam.”<sup>30</sup> “If we are to follow Paul’s reasoning, we must recall that like other exegetes, Jewish and Christian, he regards Adam and Eve as historical persons, but also as archetypes of the human race.”<sup>31</sup> If one argues that Paul was

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<sup>27</sup> Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3*, p. 60.

<sup>28</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 143.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Hodge, *I and II Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974 [1857, 59]), p. 210.

<sup>30</sup> George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 144.

<sup>31</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1960), p. 68.

mistaken in his understanding of the creation and fall narratives, or, that Paul regarded these events as myths but deliberately mislead his readers to make a theological point, then (as noted above) one must logically deny the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

### *7. The Testimony of Christ*

Not only does the apostle Paul teach a literal, historical Adam when he analyzes various doctrines, but Jesus Christ Himself bases His teaching regarding divorce on a literal, historical understanding of Genesis 1:27; 2:24. Our Lord said, “‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate’” (Mt. 19:4-6; cf. Mk. 10:6-8). Christ argues against the very loose understanding of the grounds for divorce among the Jews by appealing to the original institution of marriage. At the creation God made only *one* male (Adam) and *one* female (Eve). These two were joined together in marriage by God. It is clear that Jesus viewed Genesis 2:24 (in combination with Gen. 1:27) as a creation ordinance.<sup>32</sup> Our Lord viewed the creation of Adam and Eve and their union in marriage as literal, historical events that set the proper biblical pattern for all subsequent marriage relationships.

If one does not accept the historicity of Adam, then one is left with only two alternatives regarding Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8. One can argue that Christ was merely human and was simply mistaken when He regarded Adam as a literal, historical, first created man. In other words, Jesus was finite, limited in knowledge and subject to errors in judgment just like everyone else. This view is blatantly unscriptural, anti-Christian and wicked. Another approach is to argue that Jesus was accommodating Himself to the culture and society in which He lived. He knew that the Scriptures were full of mistakes, lies and myths, but He *pretended* they were inerrant because He didn’t want to upset His first century audience. These arguments (which are typical examples of Modernist unbelief) must emphatically be rejected by all professing Christians. The idea that Jesus Christ (who is God [Mt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Rom 9:6], who cannot lie [Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18], who is omniscient [Heb. 4:13; Rom. 11:22]) would appeal to a lie, or a myth, or to a redaction of evil, con artist priests to establish a doctrine or ethical teaching and present that teaching as God’s word which is absolutely true, is an explicit denial of Christianity. If Jesus was *unaware* of the mythological nature of the creation account or purposely lied to the people (to cater to erroneous Jewish teachings regarding Adam), then He

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<sup>32</sup> Creation ordinances are ethical norms which are based upon the work of God in creation. They “depict ‘the constitution of things’ as they were intended to be from the Creator’s hand. They cover and regulate the whole gamut of life: bearing children, superintending the earth as a responsible steward before and under God, responsively ruling the creatures of all creation, finding fulfillment and satisfaction in work, labor, resting on the Sabbath, and enjoying marriage as a gift from above” (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* [Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1983], p. 31).

could not be the Messiah or the Son of God. A Jesus who was not God, who was a lying, sinful man cannot be an atonement for the sins of the elect. One must either believe the words of Christ or cast Christianity aside. There is no middle ground on this issue.

## Conclusion

The biblical evidence for the historicity of Adam is so clear, abundant and interwoven with the teaching of Paul and Christ that it is impossible to circumvent this teaching without also redefining and rejecting the doctrines of Christ and the gospel. The literal, historical understanding of the account of Adam and his fall is rejected today not because of the biblical or even the real scientific evidence, but because men are unwilling to believe the clear teaching of Scripture. Why are men so willing to abandon the word of God in favor of speculative theories that are founded only upon human opinion? The answer lies in the fact that many people are unwilling to lay down the weapons of their warfare and submit to Christ. Men do not want to face the reality of sin and its consequences, death and hell. Men regard the early chapters of Genesis as myth, legend, saga and so forth in order to retain human autonomy. They want to define for themselves what is good and what is evil. Such men are on the broad path that leads to destruction. Bible-believing Christians are not taken in by such rubbish. They know that Adam was just as real as they are. They also know that Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the covenant head of redeemed humanity has conquered Satan, sin and death. “But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)” (Rom. 5:15-17).

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