

Was Adam a Real Person? (part 2)

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Date: 15 January 2012

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[0:00] The memory verse reminds us that the Lord Jesus reigns. and what we're studying in this class reminds us that his reign is not always welcomed on the earth.

! Sometimes he's even wounded in the house of his friends. Believers can wound him. Those within the church can do harm to his cause here on earth, but he overrules even that for the good of his true church.

So that error and false doctrine that has arisen in church history have often proven opportunities for the church to dive more deeply into the scriptures, to see what do the scriptures really teach about this subject, and then to set forth a clear statement on what the Bible says, along with scriptural proofs, so that at the end of the day, the church emerges from these doctrinal wars with a clearer understanding of what God has said in the scriptures.

That's why we have statements of faith. That's why we have creedal statements telling us that Jesus is both God and man, spelled out clearly.

Why did those statements come into being? Because somewhere, someone challenged the teaching of God's word and said, Jesus is a man, but not God. Or Jesus is God, but he's not man.

[1:34] And it forced the church back to the scriptures to see what it was that God had said. Well, in our day, there are fresh attacks to be met head on.

And the one we're examining last week and today is, was Adam a real historical person? When you open your Bible and start reading and you read about this Adam, how are you to understand it?

Was he really the first man that God created out of all humanity? Or is he just a mythical figure referring to the whole human race? After all, Adam in Hebrew means humanity, human race.

And increasing numbers of evangelical and reformed scholars are suggesting, even arguing, that Genesis 1 to 3 is not really the history of a real man named Adam.

But it's rather a fictional story, teaching us lessons about the whole human race. Kind of an extended parable. And I'm using notes in this study from a helpful address by Pastor David Murray of Grand Rapids.

[2:47] Some of you young people are with us. And some of you went to Holland this summer, this past summer. And that was the minister for the day at that Lord's Day that you spent in Holland. Well, this is a study that he did called The Quest for the Historical Adam.

And I'll be quoting from it heavily as we did last week. So he started out, he divided his paper into three steps. First of all, the evidence for Adam denying. There are theologians who are denying that Adam was a real man.

We've looked at that. I've just given you the summary of that position. Then we look, secondly, at the evidence for a historical Adam.

Evidence from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. If you had to make the case, and you're the defending attorney in the courtroom, and you're making the case that there was a real man, the first man was a real man named Adam, what would you call as evidence from the Old Testament?

Just give us the idea. You may or may not know exactly where it's found. What would you say to say from the Old Testament, look at this? Anyone?

[4:02] Okay, the genealogies that we find. We find Adam in these genealogies. Peter Pan doesn't have a genealogy. Mythical figures don't have genealogy.

Those are historical things. They tell us this man lived in this world at a certain time, and he was the father of this man. And he had this man when he was 130 years old.

And then he died when he was 930 years old. Statements in the genealogy of the human race have Adam as the first one, and he's linked to all these other human beings.

All right? What else besides the genealogies? The real Jesus is compared to Adam. Okay, that's the New Testament. Okay, we're going to get there.

Anything else from the Old? Chronology. Okay, the chronology. We go to 1 Chronicles. Again, we're looking at time sequence. We're looking, again, at genealogies.

[5:05] These people lived in time. They're not mythical figures that lived in a fairy tale world. No, they're real people who lived here. Anything else from the Old Testament?

I think we've hit upon most of them. Then we came to the New and we said, how did Jesus and the apostles understand the Old Testament? Isn't that a wonderful thing to have the inspired record of what Jesus and the apostles thought of Genesis 1 to 11 and right through to Malachi?

And so when we come to the New Testament, what's the evidence there that points to a real historical Adam? Jim? By one man all is cursed and by one man all is saved.

Okay, so where did we find that? Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15. That's what Scott was referring to. That Adam is there set forth as a pattern, a type of Christ.

And a *tupos*, a type of something, is always a historical person or event or thing that points us forward to another historical event that's coming in the future.

[6:25] Adam was a real man who lived in real space-time history and his life, his existence, in some way foreshadowed another man who would come, named Jesus.

And so as Jim has said, that as the one man Adam represented all his human race and brought them into sin, so Jesus Christ, the second, the last Adam, represents all of his people and brings us eternal life.

Excellent. Any other things from the New Testament? What about New Testament genealogies? How about the genealogy of Jesus?

Where does that trace back to? To Adam. So if Adam is just a mythical figure, does that mean that Jesus is possibly just a mythical figure that never lived?

Well, it certainly opens the door and we'll see more of that later. Is there any place in the New Testament that tells us the order of creation with regard to Adam and Eve?

[7:39] Remember that? 1 Timothy 2, when Paul's giving instructions to the church on the headship of men and male leadership that he uses as an argument that God created Adam first and then Eve.

Well, if Adam stands for the whole human race, it doesn't make sense. God created the whole human race first and then Eve. No, it's speaking of a historical figure, a man, a real man named Adam.

That's 1 Timothy 2. And then how is Enoch explained or described for us in Jude? Jude. He is who? The seventh from Adam.

You see, there again, we have an anchor to help us to know when did this guy show up on the earth? When did he live? Jude says, well, he was the seventh from Adam.

Oh, he's a real man then and he lived in the seventh generation after a real man, Adam. And so Adam is a time marker.

[8:50] The first man is the time marker for those who follow after him. There was another text that I jumped right over in my notes and I had two of you come to me afterwards.

That's what I love about this church. You know the scriptures. And you turn me to Acts 17. And Acts 17 and verse 26 says, From one man, He, God, made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth.

And so Paul is there in Athens. He's arguing with the philosophers about this unknown God that they have an altar to. And he says, Him whom you ignorantly worship, I'm going to declare to you. Let me tell you what this unknown God is like. Well, he created all things. He starts with creation. And then he argues for the common origin of all men.

That all men and all nations have come from one man created by God. And what's his point? Well, he's undercutting all supposed racial superiority.

[10:00] Say, Has that ever been a problem in the world? Different races thinking that they're superior than other races? The Athenians thought that they were some special order of men.

And Paul just cuts the feet right out from under that argument. We all have come from the same man. Therefore, we're all brothers. We're all on equal plane. The Greeks.

The Greeks thought of themselves as something special. The Jews. We see that in the New Testament. Hanging their hat on the fact that Abraham was their father. So they're so much more

important than the Gentiles.

And I think there was a group called the Nazis that argued for superior race as well. And this is the argument, you see. We've all come from one man. And that gives us another argument.

Acts 17:26 for the real historical Adam. Well, those are the first two points of his paper.

[11:04] Now he turns to the so what. Does it even matter whether there was a real man named Adam or whether that was just a figure, a mythical figure to make some points?

We want to see what is at stake in this current debated point. Many Adam deniers will tell us that there are really no serious implications to their denial.

In a book, the final chapter of the book, *Evolution, Creation, A Christian Approach to Evolution*, Dennis Lamberow says, My central conclusion in this book is clear.

Adam never existed and this fact has no impact whatsoever on the foundational beliefs of Christianity. So that's the claim of many of these who deny a real Adam.

It doesn't affect anything of our doctrine in Christianity. Rather, I think, as we already began to see last week, it's rather like the thread in a sweater, one continuous knitted sweater.

[12:23] And when you start pulling on this thread, you start seeing the sleeve come unraveled, the neck, the waistline. All this is coming unraveled because of the denial of this foundation of a real Adam.

So, here are some of the implications. If we deny a real Adam, how will it affect, first of all, our doctrine of sin? What the Bible teaches about sin?

Robert Strimple of Westminster Theological Seminary wrote that the question was Adam a historical person is really the question was the fall a real event in human history?

For if Adam simply stands for the truth about every person who ever lived from the very beginning of that person's life, what does that mean? Well, that means that sin is simply a part of what it means to be human.

No, it's not. We didn't come from the hand of the Creator sinful. We were created upright and all men have gone astray from their Maker.

[13:34] But if the fall is not a historical fall by which the whole human race that started out perfect then plunged themselves into sin by disobeying God, then we're left with, well, this is just the way God made us.

We're human. And that means we're imperfect. And it means that, well, we just can't help it that we are what we are. And the guilt is shifted to God rather than man.

Now, some Adam deniers allow for a fall. But since they believe Adam, Adam, stands for all mankind, they say it was a group fall.

That the whole of humanity fell at the same time. That's what the Genesis 3 is telling us. That the whole human race fell as a group together.

Not in Adam. No, he doesn't exist. Just as they grew up in this big human race, it was a group fall. But that causes a problem when we come to Romans 5, doesn't it?

[14:43] Because by the one man's sin, the many were made righteous. Yes, it was a group fall. We all fell, but we all fell in Adam.

A real man, Adam, who brought us all down with him. So, the doctrine of sin is affected if we lay aside this idea that Adam was a real person.

What about the doctrine of Christ? I've already alluded to this, but if we reject the Bible's teaching regarding a historical Adam, do we have any reason to believe the Bible's teaching regarding a historical Christ?

Christ? Not only is the historicity of Christ threatened, but also his veracity and reliability, because he spoke as if the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were real persons.

So, did he do so because he didn't know better? He hadn't come into this new light that Adam was just a mythical figure?

[15:48] If so, then his words are fallible. Did he do so because he knew it, but acted like he was really a historical person? Then he's not a faithful witness.

And so the whole doctrine of Christ comes into question. And as we've been saying, the doctrine of salvation thirdly comes into question because Paul is saying that all men are either in Christ or in Adam.

there are these two representative men. And all who are in Adam are guilty and condemned. And all who are in Christ are righteous, redeemed.

It all depends who you're in. Are you in Adam? Are you in Christ? Those who are in Adam have been declared guilty.

Those who are in Christ have been declared righteous. And that parallelism, drawn in the New Testament, Romans 5, falls to the ground if Adam was not a historical person.

[17:00] You do not need a historical atonement to undo a mythical fall. This is what James Montgomery Boyce said.

All you need is another myth. If the fall was mythical, then I just need a mythical atonement. But if I need a real atonement of real human blood, then it argues that there was a real human being named Adam that plunged us into this mess.

But the two stand or fall together. It's because Adam was real that Christ also had to be real to make that atonement. The doctrine of salvation is affected by this issue.

Was Adam a real man? And then the doctrine of resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15, that chapter that's on the resurrection, argues that all in Adam die, even so all in Christ will be made alive.

Well, will we really? Or is that just speaking metaphorically or something? Well, if Adam was mythical, then maybe Jesus is mythical and maybe the resurrection with Jesus is mythical as well.

[18:21] And so the argue that the scripture is set before us, a real Adam who plunged us into sin and death, followed by a real Christ who represents all of his people and lifts us from death to life and will in the final day of resurrection speak and bring us out of the graves to everlasting life.

It affects the doctrine of resurrection. And lastly, it affects practical theology. Isn't it interesting that when Paul would teach the church about male headship in the church government, he says it depends upon Adam being created first, first, first, Timothy two.

And if Paul got the order wrong, if it really wasn't Adam created first before Eve, then he got the application wrong too. Charles Hodge says 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 proofs of great moral principles.

So, why is a woman not up here teaching and preaching today? Well, Paul says because in the beginning God created the man before the woman.

He anchors it in that reality. I don't think it's beyond saying that when men treat that fact, that historical fact, as myth, that we see more and more women in the pulpit exercising a role that God never gave to them from the very created order.

[20:16] So, you see just how influential this discussion is. Was Adam a real man? It's not like the discussion. how many angels can you stack on the point of the needle?

That doesn't have a lot of ramifications for our life. But was Adam a real man is pulling the thread with which the whole system of the scriptures comes unraveled.

So, the conclusions. He's got three. And again, you were all over this last week. You beat me to the punch. Number one, Adam denial usually begins with the denial of the literal six-day creation account in Genesis.

Murray says, not everyone who denies a literal six-day creation ends up denying a literal Adam. However, from what I've read, everyone who ends up denying a literal historical Adam began by denying a literal six-day creation.

So, there is this connection that is hard to miss. And he says that's a real warning to us. If we crack our foundation of creation, we don't know how much will crumble away.

[21:48] You see, macroevolution leaves no room for God's immediate special creation of Adam and Eve. rather, many apes who had evolved from many lower life forms at some point gave birth to human beings.

Many of them, not one, but many. And so, it argues against, macroevolution argues against the creation account. So, if we throw aside the creation account and say, no, God used evolution to do all this, well, then we're ready to say, just as God's representation in Genesis 1 and 2 is mythical, it's not to be taken literal, therefore, when we come to chapter 3 and his creation of man, although man appears in chapter 2, but there in the sixth day, that too is figurative.

The one follows the other. Beware of any denial of the creation account in Genesis. Second, we should be very wary of any approach to Scripture that it ends up with us having to depend on Ph.D. scholars to interpret the Bible for us. The Bible wasn't written for men hid away in ivory towers.

Who is the book of Romans written to? No trick question. to the church at Rome.

[23:27] Who are you? church at Grace Fellowship Church. Who is the letter to the Corinthians written to? The church of God in Corinth. Normal cobblers, farmers, whatever their occupation, the scriptures were written for ordinary human beings.

So when you as an ordinary human being pick up Genesis, your Bible and start reading Genesis, how do you read it? Well, for thousands of years, men read it as historical narrative.

I'm reading about a real Adam. The first man God created. And then God created Eve out of his rib. And all the human race has come from that first pair.

But then when a guy named Charles Darwin appears on the scene and begins to erode the idea of special creation and posit, no, we have this macroevolution, then theologians start saying, well, I'm not sure.

I'm not sure about this. Maybe Adam's just a mythical figure too. And it's the scholars who are telling us how to understand the scriptures.

[24:47] Murray says, we do not want to end up back in pre-reformation days when ordinary people had to depend on the priest for a right understanding of scripture.

I'm afraid that we are creating a new priesthood of scholars who we need to tell us what parts of scripture are poetry and what parts are historical. No, the Bible was written for the ordinary man. It's not saying that God does not give gifts to men and that some men are not called to give their life to study and teaching and explaining the Bible. But when that explanation flies in the face of text after text in its ordinary understanding, red flags should be flying up and saying, no, wait a minute. God wrote the Bible for me. For me. God wrote the Bible. And third, we must assert both the individual reality of Adam and our corporate oneness with Adam.

It is true that Adam means human race. And it is true that Adam, the first human being, represented the whole human race.

[26:04] And what he did plunged the whole, affected the whole human race. So it is not an either or thing. We are not saying either Adam was a real man or he represented the whole human race.

No, it is both. The Bible says both. He was a real man who as a real man lived here and died here and did certain things here and didn't do other things here.

He represented the whole human race. And so when he fell, we fell. Turn to Romans 5. And I want to show you that passage once more that makes this comparison so plain that he was a real man, a historical figure, but he also represented as our federal head the whole human race.

And Paul starts this whole argument in verse 12 of chapter 5, telling us how sin and death came into the world through the one man. And now here in verse 18, he concludes his argument consequently, verse 18, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men.

Who had the one trespass? The one man Adam. And that resulted in condemnation not just for Adam, but for all men.

[27:28] So also the result of one act of righteousness. righteousness. Who did that? Christ was justification that brings life, not just for him, but for all men who are in him.

Verse 19, for justice through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners. So also through the obedience of the one man, the many will be made righteous.

Murray says, I like to illustrate it by means of a train. Think of Adam being the locomotive, the engine, and then every ordinary human being since Adam being hooked up to his train.

Adam's sin has derailed us. It's taken us off the track to eternal life, and it's put us plunging into hell. And we're all hooked to him.

Our latch, our car, is hooked. Tied to Adam. We were born in Adam. We fell in Adam. We're condemned in Adam. There we go. We're heading to hell. Every one of us who have Adam is our father.

[28:40] But there's a second man who represents his people. And Christ stands before us in the gospel as a different train.

Only two trains in the world. And here is Jesus Christ, and he's calling sinners to unhook, to unhook, unlatch from Adam, and to hook onto him by faith.

And when they do, they are no longer condemned, because this engine's heading to eternal life.

And so the whole question comes, are you hooked to Adam?

Are you hooked to Christ? Christ? We're all on just one of those two trains. And we're either dead in sin, heading to eternal damnation, or we're living in Christ, looking towards eternal resurrection.

And you might say, I don't like that idea. Why should what Adam did send me to hell? I mean, why should what that historical figure did affect my eternity?

[29 : 57] I don't like that plan. Well, if you scrap that plan, then you also scrap the only way of salvation. Because the only way you'll be saved is if what Jesus Christ did is made yours, in the same way that what Adam did was made yours.

The two stand or fall together. If you want to scrap the idea of a real man, Adam, representing you, and therefore you are lost in Adam, then you're going to have to scrap the idea that you can be saved in the second, the last Adam, Christ.

Christ. So, these are the issues that are connected to this issue of was Adam a real person or wasn't he?

Perhaps one of the most serious of all is the whole doubt it places upon a historical Christ. If Adam, because the two are so connected in genealogy, in theological arguments, in Romans 5, and the whole New Testament, if Adam's not a real person, then maybe Jesus is not a real person either. You say, oh, that's nonsense. Well, it is, but there are PhDs and growing by the number who believe just that.

[31 : 31] I was reading B.B. Warfield's book, The Person and Work of Christ, and came upon this intriguing chapter called Christless Christianity. Isn't that good?

What might be in that chapter? Christless Christianity. And it talks about the way that liberal theologians have been debating for a long time on who the historical Christ really is, who he really was, what he really said.

You say, well, duh, just read the New Testament, see who he is, and what he really said. And they would say to you, oh, now, now, you can't really mean that we're supposed to believe what was written by those enthusiastic followers who tended to embellish and enlarge upon the facts so that in the end you actually had Jesus raising people from the dead and walking on water and doing all sorts of things that we all know don't happen in a naturalistic world.

And so they meet and they debate. How much of what we've got here really happened and how much of it was embellished?

Do you see the problem with that? Who's the standard to say, yeah, that part's true but this part isn't? Who? Man.

[32 : 54] my big pea brain is going to put the God of creation in the dock and I'm going to judge him now and I'll tell you what I think Jesus would have done and said.

And somebody else says, but I don't think so. I think this is true and this is false. And you see they're locked in endless debate. That's why it's been going on. And you'll see it. They hold conferences and they get together.

Insert the historical Jesus. Well, finally, in the middle or in the early part of the last century, some liberals got tired of the whole thing and said it really doesn't matter anyway.

Warfield points out that a group of theologians in none other than Bremen, Germany, declared in 1910, whether Jesus existed or not is in the last analysis a matter of indifference.

Now, these are professors and Christians, you know. it doesn't matter if he ever lived. Are the teachings of Christianity powerful in our lives to elevate our morals and our self-respect, our love for others and our trust in God?

[34 : 03] That's the important thing. Not whether or not Jesus ever really existed or not. A historical Jesus, they said, is not essential to Christianity. Christianity can do just fine without him ever having lived.

Christianity We don't need a real Jesus to make Christianity. That's why Warfield called the chapter Christless Christianity.

Well, what's wrong with that position? There is no Christianity. A Christless Christianity is like an apple-less apple pie.

imaginary apples don't make for good real apple pie, do they? Even so, you can't have Christianity if Jesus is not a real person who really lived, became a real man, kept the law perfectly, died on the cross in the place of real people, really rose from the dead on the third day, really ascended into heaven, really is coming back to judge the world.

apart from these historical events, we have no savior, no salvation, we have no reason being here, turn the lights out and go home. But no men want to play the game of Christianity without Christ, or with a Christ that they are creating in their own minds.

[35 : 40] God will do what drive scholars to such conclusions. Why is it that men call into account the real Adam?

I think you touched on it last week, because there's a prevailing idea that says that those opening chapters of the Bible aren't to be taken historically as accurate.

Everybody knows by now, at least everybody who's educated knows by now, that evolution explains our origins, not special creation.

And that pressure is bearing down upon our world so much that there's a temptation to want to go back and reinterpret the Bible in such a way that doesn't jar with the educated elite.

And so they want to sit down at the table and the educated elite who believe in evolution instead of creation. Say to the evangelical world, we will call you academics if you call us real Christians.

[36 : 54] Christians. If you will drop all this hogwash about needing to believe certain doctrines about a real Jesus who was a real man born of a virgin without any human father and walked on water and died in the place of others and rose from the dead.

If you will still call us Christians without making us believe all these creedal statements, well then we'll call you scholars. And the church has succumbed.

We want to have an influence on the world. We don't want our articles just to go out there and just reach the Christian ghetto. We want to influence the world in their modern thought. And so we're willing to start reinterpreting the Bible to make it fit the common thought today.

don't think it's without reason that we have the high school kids with us today.

These young people are facing pressures to conform to the modern voice of evolution in a way that the rest of us never had to.

[38 : 11] They're going to need to be willing to be counted a fool, a real bumbling idiot, to hang on to the truth that God created all things.

And he created man, the first man, Adam. And he did it in six days. Haven't you seen the rocks?

Haven't you seen? And so Paul's writing to the Corinthian church. And he says, you're so wise.

Wise in worldly wisdom. But we're counted the off-scouring of the earth. We're fools. And you're so wise.

And that's ever been the temptation for Christians to want to be regarded as wise in the eyes of worldly wise men. Paul says, no, we've got to be ready to be called fools for Jesus sake.

[39 : 12] And so may the Lord strengthen and help our young people and give us backbone to hold on, hold on. You see, not all that modern science claims to be facts are facts.

We can wait. We can afford to wait and say the jury's out. But I'm going to hang on to what God's word says. and not tweak it in order to try to make it fit with modern day science.

I just read in the last couple months that scientists did some tests and they saw particles traveling so fast that they said, if this is true, then we've got to scrap our whole understanding of what we thought was true about matter.

We don't even understand matter, the most basic element in the universe. We thought it was this, but now look at this. We're going to have to burn all these textbooks, you see.

So don't hitch your cart so quickly to what goes as modern science. You may be needing to change your position.

[40 : 19] Hang on to the scriptures and make modern science to shed its light. And as it does, if it's true science, it will not be jarring with the account of God's word.

all our time's up. I'm sorry we didn't leave time for discussion. This stuff gets to me. And it concerns me with regard to our young people.

May the Lord help us. We're dismissed. Yes.