



DayOne

What does the Bible  
really say about...?



# ADAM & EVE

Thomas Fretwell



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*“To my wife Sarah, thank you  
for everything” - Proverbs 31:10*

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Adam and Eve  
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# Why all the fuss?

Where do we come from? What does it mean to be human? These questions are fundamental to life. If we ever want to truly grasp who we are as human beings, we need to understand where we came from. Traditionally, the Christian answer has been that mankind is the progeny of Adam and Eve, the first two humans created by God. As such, mankind is separate from the animal kingdom, endowed with inherent worth and dignity, the only creature given the privilege of being made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

Christian theology has historically understood the pivotal role of Adam and Eve in the grand narrative of redemption. Their story is integral to many of

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the central doctrines of Christianity, especially the doctrines of sin and salvation.

The greatest challenge to this understanding of humanity has come from the theory of evolution. The evolutionary view of mankind, that humans evolved from an ape-like ancestor, proposed by Charles Darwin in the nineteenth century, radically transformed

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*“Our understanding of Adam and Eve is pivotal to understanding the Gospel. Sin came into the world through Adam, and Jesus came to save us from our sins.”*

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the prevailing view of mankind’s origins, shifting it away from the biblical understanding of Adam and Eve to the evolutionary view of Darwin. Noticing that this shift created a sharp

contrast between these two widely differing accounts of human origins, many in the Church tried to invent ways to accommodate the evolutionary story into the Bible. This inevitably resulted in having to change the way the Bible is understood and interpreted. The greatest tragedy in this new reading of the Bible is

that the historical Adam and Eve have either been demoted to the level of symbolic metaphors, or they are the descendants of lower primates. Such alterations completely undermine the authority of the Bible itself.

This departure from the straight forward meaning of the text creates more problems than it solves. Once the authority of the Word of God is undermined, the teaching of Scripture unravels. Our understanding of Adam and Eve is pivotal to understanding the Gospel. Sin came into the world through Adam, and Jesus came to save us from our sins (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22-55). The connection is so clear that even many atheists have realised that if they can do away with Adam and Eve, they can do away with Christianity itself. Listen to the words of Frank Zindler, head of the American Atheists:

*The most devastating thing though that biology did to Christianity was the discovery of biological evolution. Now that we know that Adam and Eve never were real people the central myth of*

*Christianity is destroyed. **If there never was an Adam and Eve**, there never was an original sin ... if there never was an original sin, there is no need for salvation. If there is no need for salvation, there is no need for a saviour. And I submit that puts Jesus into the ranks of the unemployed. I think that evolution is absolutely the death knell of Christianity.*

Frank Zindler, debate with William L. Craig (video)  
Zondervan, 1996.

In view of such challenging words, it is vital to understand that the Bible portrays Adam and Eve as real historical people; they were the first two humans ever created and with them the biblical panorama of sin and redemption begins.







## Fact or fiction

The number of evangelicals who reject the historicity of Adam and Eve is steadily increasing. Many will claim that the story of Adam and Eve is not meant to be taken literally. Instead, it is a symbolic story to teach us theological and moral truths about the nature of man. Still others, who have accepted the evolutionary view of humanity, will say that Adam and Eve did exist, but not exactly as the Bible portrays.

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*“The Bible leaves absolutely no room for the view that Adam and Eve were anything other than real historical people.”*

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Rather, they have evolved from a lineage of ape-like creatures, and they became “human” only when God breathed a soul into them. Such views find absolutely no support in the Scriptures and have been artificially imposed onto the text to

support ideas from outside the Bible.

The Bible leaves absolutely no room for the view that Adam and Eve were anything other than real historical people. The testimony is clear from both the Old and New Testaments, although, as many people point out, Adam and Eve feature heavily in the early narrative of Genesis, they seemingly play a less prominent role in the rest of the Old Testament. However, this does not negate the fact that their presence in the early chapters of Genesis provides an explanatory foundation for much of what follows in the biblical story.

The book of Genesis is written as one unified historical narrative. The history of the early chapters (1-11) cannot be divorced from that of the later chapters (12-50), which are rarely contested by scholars. The repeated occurrence of the Hebrew expression '*toledoth*', "these are the generations of", or "this is the written account of" (*Genesis 5:1*) ensure that no schism can be placed into the narrative as the literary structure is consistent throughout the book. In addition, the detailed genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11, which

connect Adam with more prominent biblical characters such as Noah and Abraham, provide clear historical evidence that Moses, as the author of Genesis, considered

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*“To claim that undisputed historical characters... somehow descended from “symbolic” persons is theologically flawed and historically pointless...”*

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Adam to be the literal historical ancestor of humanity.

Outside of Genesis there is still a wealth of evidence which proves that the Scriptures teach Adam was a historical person. The consistent use of genealogies is perhaps the most striking argument for historicity. The whole purpose of a genealogy is to trace a person’s historical lineage. If a genealogy was populated with mythical or symbolic figures, the whole thing would become meaningless. To claim that undisputed historical characters like Abraham or King David, somehow descended from “symbolic” persons is theologically flawed and historically pointless as well as highly illogical.

This poses a problem for those who believe that



Adam was not a literal historical person. The genealogy in 1 Chronicles 1–9 traces the ancestry of the sons of Israel all the way back to Adam. There is no hint in this nine-chapter list of names that we are to interpret them in any other way than real historical people. Equally as problematic for those denying a literal Adam is the genealogy in Luke 3:23–38, which traces the lineage

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*“The reference to ‘one man’ clearly teaches that all humanity can trace their existence back to Adam, just as the genealogies show.”*

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of the Messiah. First, the fact that a New Testament author like Luke, whose historical accuracy is well documented, utilises these Old Testament genealogies to show the lineage of Jesus,

points to their accuracy and historicity. Second, if the messianic line originates with a mythical figure, who is only included to teach theological truths, then it totally undermines the theological argument of Luke who is demonstrating that the Messiah is a Jew from the tribe of David. Luke’s second New Testament volume, the book of Acts, also implicitly confirms the early belief

that Adam was the literal and historical ancestor of the human race. In Paul's famous sermon on Mars hill, where he preaches the gospel to the Athenian philosophers and idol worshippers, he states that God, "made from *one man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). The reference to "one man" clearly teaches that all humanity can trace their existence back to Adam, just as the genealogies show.





# The creation of Adam

The Bible is very clear: humans and animals have two separate lineages. In no way do these two lines cross at any point. We learn from Genesis 1:27 that Adam was created in the “image of God”. This is important as it affords humanity a uniqueness that is not given to anything else in the created order. Humans are made to resemble God in certain ways. This image is not a physical likeness, because God is spirit (John 4:24), but it does imply there is a spiritual component to man, referred to as the soul (Genesis 2:7; Luke 10:27). Mankind’s cognitive faculties are also far superior to the animal world, providing a sharp distinction between man and beast. Mankind has the ability for advanced reasoning, superior emotional capabilities and the freedom of choice. Men and women are also endowed with minds that are capable of communing

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*“Mankind has been given an inherent moral awareness, the ability to choose between good and evil, right and wrong.”*

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with God through prayer and expressing themselves in worship. Another aspect to this “image” is that people are created as moral beings. Mankind has been given an inherent moral awareness,

the ability to choose between good and evil, right and wrong. The Bible refers to this as a conscience (Romans 2:14-15) and it means that people are morally responsible agents. These factors determine that mankind is created to be utterly unique.

In Genesis chapter 2, which serves largely as a recapitulation of Genesis 1:1-2:3, except that it concentrates more on the creation of Adam, we learn that God created Adam from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7). The text is very clear that Adam was alone at this point. It says, “there was no man to cultivate the ground” (Genesis 2:5). This excludes all explanatory models that teach Adam was selected from an already existing group of humans, either as an archetype of

# ADAM & EVE

Were Adam and Eve real historical people? This is becoming an increasingly controversial question within the church.

This booklet explores the biblical teaching about Adam and Eve. It will demonstrate why it is essential to understand that the Bible clearly teaches they were real historical people. By using data from both the Old and New Testaments it seeks to provide a clear understanding of what the Bible teaches on this foundational issue.



*Discussion questions are available to download from [dayone.co.uk](http://dayone.co.uk)*



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