

Adam – Historical or Figurative?

Over the past several years we re-affirmed our Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Community Covenant, approved our Strategic Plan, all integral documents that guide how we live together and how we will guide the school in the future. A third guiding document for us is our Statement of Faith. A current debate among theologians is the question about the historicity of Adam. Was the Biblical Adam a real man or a literary figure representing the first man? The following are some of our key observations.

We believe there are several reasons to believe Adam was a literal, historical person:

1. Creation record – The best historical record of the beginnings of humankind is the Genesis account, which records that Adam was created by God from dust, in God’s image, a new being, not a product of evolution (Gen 1:27; 2:7).
2. Historical genealogy – The genealogy of Jesus Christ from Jesus back to David, to Abraham, to Noah, to Enoch, and to Adam, “the son of God” (Luke 3:23-38). It would be unusual to blend historical figures with non-historical ones in a genealogical record such as this one in the Gospel of Luke.
3. Pauline theology – The portrait of Christ as the second Adam in light of the first Adam by the Apostle Paul (Romans 5:12-19; I Corinthians 15:45-49) would suggest that he believed both were literal figures.
4. Social/Cultural mores – The definition of marriage as “a man and his wife” is established shortly after the introduction of Adam and Eve. Jesus affirms it as God’s design for marriage (Matthew 19:4-6), suggesting that Jesus believed Adam and Eve were literal people.
5. The Authority of Scripture – The Scriptures indicate consistently that Adam and Eve were real people and we have found no indications within the Text otherwise.

Therefore, we accept the presentation of the biblical text affirming that Adam and Eve were literal, historical people.

Tim Keller brought many of these points together in an article in Christianity Today (June 2011): *“[Paul] most definitely wanted to teach us that Adam and Eve were real historical figures. When you refuse to take a biblical author literally when he clearly wants you to do so, you have moved away from the traditional understanding of the biblical authority... If Adam doesn’t exist, Paul’s whole argument — that both sin and grace work ‘covenantally’ — falls apart... If you don’t believe what he believes about Adam, you are denying the core of Paul’s teaching.”*

Together with our Board of Directors we have taken the position, as a college, in favour of believing that Adam is a real, historical figure, and that the creation of Adam and then Eve, was the ultimate act of creation. We believe this is in keeping with our Statement of Faith which in reference to this topic states:

- We believe in the direct creative acts of God as recorded in Genesis.
- We believe humanity was created in the image of God. In Adam all humankind fell and incurred eternal separation from God.

To help us go forward together, every year, we, as a board, management team, faculty, and staff, recommit ourselves to our Statement of Faith. We know that the teaching of the Scriptures to students and future leaders in the church is a sacred trust given to us. We desire to be found worthy of this trust and high calling.

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