

APD7 - ASK PASTOR DON - Sunday, May 10th, 2020 - 6:30 p.m.

“I’ve been told so many things about the early chapters of Genesis. I’m starting to wonder if Adam and Eve were real people, or just mythological characters used to make religious points more easily understood. Do you think there was an actual physically created couple? And does it matter if they weren’t real people?”

Let me try to start the process of answering this question where I think it needs to begin. I’m not sure of all that’s in this questioner’s mind but there is, I think, a tendency to make this issue smaller than it really is. So we’re not just considering how the writer of Genesis chose to make his points about God using either factual data or religious myths, so that either way, the truths about God and this world come to our attention. And after all, isn’t that the important thing?

The one thing we all know is that we’re here. Mankind has arrived. And he got here somehow. The view that had dominated lately is he **evolved**. Over millions or billions of years of evolutionary process he has reached his present level. And he may not be finished yet.

The Bible, of course, pictures the process very differently. However you interpret the genealogies in the text you get a much shorter history of mankind on earth. Though scholars quibble about it, you end up with thousands rather than billions of years. And you end up with a directly creating act of God as you read the Genesis accounts.

Now that’s precisely where the issue comes to a head. ***How shall we read these creation accounts of Adam and Eve?*** No one denies the accounts are there. The argument centers on ***how they’re to be interpreted.***

So my quick answer to the question as it was asked is ***yes, I am firmly persuaded Adam and Eve are presented as specific, literal individuals.*** And my answer to the second part of the question is ***yes, I think it matters greatly whether or not they’re understood as specific, literal individuals.***

But those aren’t very satisfactory answers. What I need to do is explain ***why*** I’m convinced Adam and Eve are specific, literal people, and ***why*** I think it matters so greatly that we understand them this way. Those are the ***two parts of this answer.***

1) ***I’m convinced Adam and Eve are two specifically created people because that is the only way the Bible describes them.***

Like virtually ***every*** debated theological issue, this one returns to its roots. Almost every debated issue becomes a Bible issue. How are the Scriptures going to be treated and interpreted? More specifically, shall I begin with the lenses - moral, scientific, theological - of the culture and interpret the text so it feels more acceptable and perhaps relevant? This gets done all the time.

Or shall I read the text in a way that is as counter-cultural to today’s culture as the New Testament was to it’s own? Which parts of the Bible can I read unfiltered - ***“Love one another”- “Forgive your enemies” - “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” - “God is love.”*** And which parts need a different approach - ***“Except you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins” - “No one comes to the father but by me.”***

As I read the texts regarding Adam and Eve, here's what I see"

- a) ***When Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus he doesn't just trace Him back to Judah, or even Abraham. He traces Him back to Adam - Luke 3:38.***

Don't rush over this too quickly. Luke's point stands. Every other name in that boring list is obviously meant to be seen as a literal person. None seriously believes **Abraham** was a fictitious mythological idea. We have the name of his father. We know his calling, history, and the country of his birth. The same is true of Mary and Joseph. The same is true of Jacob and Esau.

At which point in Luke's list do you want to inject a fictional character? And if you do, how does the genetic link proceed? Dr. Luke, I'm sure, would not want to take the time to have to explain to us that myths carry no sperm. And a literal Adam is needed if Luke's genealogy is to make any sense.

- b) ***When the prophet Hosea seeks to describe the unfaithfulness of Israel he picks the unfaithfulness of Adam as an example.***

Hosea 6:4-7 - "What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. [5] Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light. [6] For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. [7] But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me."

Again, there's a logical link here. The sins of Israel were committed by real people. And Hosea - the prophet proclaiming God's Word - was a real prophet. And he clearly sees an ***actual unfaithfulness rooted in an actual person when he cites the disobedience of Adam and Eve.***

In other words, Hosea ***equates*** the unfaithfulness of Israel with the unfaithfulness of Adam. If there's no actual act of unfaithfulness in Adam then Hosea's words to Israel make no sense. ***How*** did Israel transgress? The answer of our text is ***"...like Adam they transgressed....(7).***

The point here is the burden of proof lies with the person who ***doesn't*** want to treat these ***two*** examples of covenant unfaithfulness as alike. The text makes no distinction.

- c) ***Jude links Adam with Enoch, describing Enoch as the "seventh from Adam."***

Jude 10-15 - "But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. [11] Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. [12] These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; [13] wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for

whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. [14] ***It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, [15] to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”***

Once again the genealogical issue come to the forefront. Mythological figures don't have sex and produce physical babies. People do. Interestingly, this chapter mentions many Biblical characters - Moses, Cain, Balaam, and the sons of Korah. Adam is in this crowd. He is of the same kind and humanity. You can trace the genealogies from his life.

- 2) ***I'm convinced Adam and Eve were specifically created people because the Bible places their reality at the center of my need for redemption.***

So Adam and Eve are not merely speculative entities. They form the base of all meaningfully discussion of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:12-16, 18-19 - “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— [13] for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. [15] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. [16] And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.....[18]....Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [19] For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.”

This is striking. Our relationship to Jesus as our Savior and Lord is predicated on our fallen relationship to our earthly parenthood through Adam. The second is only necessary because of the first. Take away Adam and there is no longer any need for Jesus. We are tied to ***real Christ*** because we are tied to a ***real Adam***.

Again, we meant to contemplate the scope of the Genesis account of Adam and Eve. The rest of the Bible stands as an unfolding of this first couples actions. The real effects of Christ and the real effects of Adam are what give the whole story of the Bible meaning and urgency. Make Adam a myth and you may just be doing the same to Jesus.

- 3) ***I'm convinced of the reality of specifically created Adam because that alone explains the universal necessity of the gospel.***

Let me try to explain what I see in Paul's words:

Romans 5:12, 17-18 - “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and

death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned....[17]....For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. [18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men."

The main point here is Christ is needed by everybody on earth because Adam's sin reaches everybody in earth. So I know Christ is **needed** by everyone in every culture and in every religion because they are all **related** factually to Adam. Because we all **come** from Adam we are all **fallen** through Adam. This is what gives the church confidence that there has never been and will never be anyone **not needing to be justified through Jesus Christ. We can be confident that our message will always be relevant in every time period and in every corner of the earth.**

- 4) ***I am convinced of the reality of a specifically created Adam because the historic actions of Eve and Adam anchor my hope of resurrection from the grave through Christ Jesus.***

1 Corinthians 15:20-22 - "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. [21] For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. [22] For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

I hope you see what Paul is doing in these verses. It's an argument based on history. It's an argument rooted in something that happened in the creation account.

Here's the argument. Death had a beginning point. Now that's hard for us to grasp because we have only seen life **after** death came into the world. We can't even picture a world without death. Death is the natural order of things since the fall. But Paul's point is blunt and clear - **"...by a man came death...."(21).**

But Paul's not done. Just as death had it's actual entry point into our experience **through a specific man**, our presently invisible, still future resurrection from the realm of death also came **through a specific man**. Both Adam and Christ bring something about. The effect of each one's work is tied together. The work of Christ is **necessary and made relevant** because the destructive work of Eve and Adam has actually transpired.

So to our questioner - and it was a great question - I would offer more than my opinion. The Bible insists on a real Eve and Adam. Indeed, the whole message of the Bible becomes trivial and empty without them. To remove their historic significance undoes more than you can imagine.