

May More Scientists Care About Adam and Eve

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HUMAN ORIGINS

Adam, Eve, and the beginning of humankind

A theologian looks to science to find the Bible's first couple

By Stephen Schaffner

Adam and Eve are not figures that turn up often in serious scientific discourse. Introducing them as historical characters in, say, an evolutionary biology lecture would be more than a few eyebrows. William Lane Craig, a widely published philosopher, theologian, and Christian apologist, is not one to shy away from such a provocative pairing, however. In his latest book, *In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical and Scientific Exploration*, Craig sets out to locate the Bible's first couple. The relevant subject matter is large and touches on evolutionary biology, paleoanthropology, paleoneurology, archaeology, and genetics. Craig's argument is that the Bible's account of Adam and Eve should be considered a question of scientific interest: When did we have the capacity for complex behavior, and where did it come from? The book is a thoughtful exploration of the limits that have been placed on the study of human origins and the role of the Bible in that study. Out of necessity, given the lack of formal scientific literature on the topic, Craig's work is a welcome contribution to the field.

In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical and Scientific Exploration
William Lane Craig
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This letter responds to a [review](#) of *In Quest of the Historical Adam* published in *Science*.

*In Quest of the Historical Adam*¹ is an olive branch to the scientific community. The author is putting forward an account of human origins that includes Adam and Eve. But this account is also consistent with evolutionary science. The author invites a conversation about how to understand sacred and natural history together. If evolution is true, could we all still descend from Adam and Eve?

Reviewing the book, Schaffner suspects that for “many scientists, including religious scientists, the exercise will be seen as misguided or simply incomprehensible.” He admits his “own reaction is along similar lines.”² To a degree, he is right. For many scientists, the questions of Adam and Eve do seem misguided.

But scientists should care. The BioLogos Foundation is an “evolutionary creationist” organization founded by Francis Collins. They, along with some secular scientists, claimed that (1) the genetic evidence demonstrates our ancestral population size was never less than 10,000 individuals at any point in the last 18 million years. Therefore, (2) Adam and Eve could not be ancestors of us all.³⁴

The genetic evidence does not, and never did, demonstrate either of these two claims. Even if Adam and Eve lived less than 10,000 years ago, they would be *genealogical* ancestors of us all.⁵⁶ And as this new book explains—if Adam and Eve lived in the more ancient past, they could also be universal *genetic* ancestors of us all.⁷ Many religious communities find high value in this corrective. Recognizing its legitimacy, BioLogos has since deleted several articles from their site.⁸

We live in a fractured society. This book builds a bridge across one fracture. With rigor and honesty, may more scientists engage the many questions about Adam and Eve. In doing so, may more religious communities come to peace with evolutionary science.

References

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