

## DIFFERENT VIEWS ON ADAM AND THE FALL

Tim Keller, *Creation, Evolution, and Christian Laypeople*:

**QUESTION THREE:** If biological evolution is true and there was no historical Adam and Eve how can we know where sin and suffering came from?

**Answer:** Belief in evolution can be compatible with a belief in an historical fall and a literal Adam and Eve. There are many unanswered questions around this issue and so Christians who believe God used evolution must be open to one another's views.

### Considerations

Compiled from Michael Reeves, [\*Does It Really Matter Whether Adam Was the First Man?\*](#) and John Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*

[Reeves and Walton take a different view on some of the details, but here's the biblical data which needs to be accounted for *whatever* our view:]

- Sometimes Genesis uses the word "adam" to mean "humankind" in general (e.g. Gen 1:26-27)
- Several genealogies go back to Adam as the first father (Gen 5, 1 Chron 1, Lk 3)
- Jesus refers to the marriage of Adam and Eve in his teaching on marriage (Mt 19:4-6)
- Paul refers to Adam and Eve in his teaching on the roles of men and women (1 Cor 11:8-9, 1 Tim 2:11-14)
- Paul makes much of the analogy between Adam and Christ in his teaching on salvation (Rom 5:12-21, 1 Cor 15:21-22)
- We can accept the historical existence of Adam and Eve without believing that they were: the *first* human beings; the *only* human beings, or the universal ancestors of *all* human beings.
- Whatever we make of the story of the Fall in Genesis 3, the New Testament views sin/death as an alien intruder in God's creation.

## FIVE DIFFERENT MODELS

Source: Denis Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?*, pp. 234-43, 254-56

|                                       | <b>MODEL A</b>  | <b>MODEL B</b>  | <b>MODEL C</b>   | <b>MODEL D</b>   | <b>MODEL E</b>  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Relationship to modern science</b> | Consistent  | Consistent  | Consistent   | Inconsistent in parts  | Inconsistent  |
| <b>Main features</b>                  | Genesis 1-3 has no connection with history.                                       | Evolutionary creationism. Theological literature that corresponds with historical events. Speaks of humanity's growing awareness of God and understanding of moral responsibility             | Evolutionary creationism. Theological literature that corresponds with historical events. Speaks of God choosing to reveal himself to a particular couple of Neolithic farmers in the ancient Near East. | Old-earth creationism. Adam created directly by God, <i>not</i> by an evolutionary process.  | Young-earth creationism. Adam created directly by God on the sixth day.   |
| <b>Who was Adam?</b>                  | Adam is everyman and everywoman.  | Represents the first humans to turn to their creator. Not a particular individual.  | Historical figure who lived perhaps 6,000-8,000 years ago. A product of an evolutionary process, like all other humans.  | Historical figure who lived perhaps 6,000-8,000 years ago. A special creation of God.  | Historical figure who lived perhaps 6,000-8,000 years ago. A special creation of God.   |
| <b>What about the Fall?</b>           | Not a particular event in history. The timeless story of everyman and everywoman. | Not rooted in a particular event but does describe a historical reality. As humanity grew in its awareness of God, it also began to consciously reject God, resulting in alienation from him. | A particular event in history.<br><br>General view: While there was death before the fall, Adam and Eve's sin introduces spiritual death of humans into the world.                                       | A particular event in history.<br><br>General view: Adam and Eve's sin introduces death – both spiritual <i>and</i> physical – of humans into the world. | A particular event in history.<br><br>General view: Adam and Eve's sin introduces spiritual and physical death of all humans, and physical death of other living creatures. |