



## Through Which Glasses?

*Some Christians want us to interpret the Bible in light of the findings of secular Science.*

*But Calvin tells us that it is through the "glasses" of Scripture that we can properly see and understand the world around us.*

John Calvin said that the Scriptures are given to us as eyeglasses by which we can properly see and understand God's general revelation of himself and his ways. Without these corrective lenses, our sin-clouded eyes distort what we see in the world.

It appears that those who deny Adam have reversed this order. They deny that the Bible says anything authoritative about scientific matters. On the contrary, they treat modern science as the eyeglasses by which we should read the Scriptures, so that through our scientific knowledge we can sift out God's message from the erroneous beliefs of the ancient community of faith. The result is a view of Scripture that says that God did not breathe his truth into the details of the text, but only inspired its core theological message. Thus they say, *"The sacred author was not as concerned about factual details as he was about clearly presenting theological concepts understandable by his intended audience."* This is a far cry from the position taken by the Lord Jesus: *"The scripture cannot be broken"* (John 10:35).

### **One denial leads to More**

Those who deny the existence of Adam may affirm that *"the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God."* However, they do not mean what evangelical and Reformed Christians have meant by this statement. They do not hold to the Bible's inerrancy, but instead believe that it contains many errors and false teachings derived from the culture and time in which it was written. They also do not affirm the Bible's supreme authority in resolving religious controversies. Instead, the Bible must bow to the changing theories of human science. Ironically, they reject some teachings of the Bible as simply the notions of ancient culture, while they impose other ideas upon the Bible from modern culture. Instead of absolute divine authority governing our faith, we have only the relative authority of human culture and opinion.

For example, Peter Enns readily acknowledges that the apostle Paul believed that Adam was just as real as Jesus Christ. But he says that we need not follow Paul's views, for he was an "ancient man," and we know better today. He also teaches that Paul intentionally twisted the meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures in order to fit his gospel message: *"reworking the past to speak to the present."* The same man says that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but composed piecemeal and brought together after the exile, several centuries after the exodus from Egypt. He corrects conservative evangelicals for believing that if the Bible is God's Word, then it must *"be historically accurate in all its details."* Instead, God *"adopted mythic categories"* from the ancient world, myths that we may now discard, so long as we retain the kernel of truth they contain.

These are clear and sobering examples of how denying the reality of Adam puts one on a trajectory to deny the full trustworthiness of the Holy Scriptures. It would turn the Bible into a collection of fables, or mythic stories with a spiritual or moral point, as if all Scripture were one long parable and not a mixture of doctrinal instruction, historical narrative, poetry, proverbs, epistles, prophetic oracles, parables, allegories, types, and apocalyptic literature.

## **No reason to Doubt It**

Those who take this route perhaps may not realize that they are departing from the path of biblical orthodoxy and following the same road as unbiblical neo-orthodoxy ... It is not necessary for us to go in this direction. Why couldn't the ancient Hebrews have understood it if God had told them that he created by a long, slow process of evolutionary change? Every day, as they planted and harvested crops or worked with sheep and cattle, they could see change and improvement in the various seeds they planted or the animals they bred.

Why couldn't God effectively communicate to them that he had conferred a human soul upon an existing animal rather than breathed life into a body formed directly out of the earth? Why not reveal in Genesis that God made many human beings at first, instead of just one? Why would these things have been harder for them to accept than the idea that there is only one true and living God, given that all their neighbors worshipped many gods? And why must we separate the way in which God created from the fact that he is the Creator?

Does it not glorify God as Lord to know that He created man, not through any natural process, but by a supernatural act of creation? Yes, the account of the historical Adam's creation greatly honors God as Creator and Lord.

## **Losing it all**

Furthermore, this is a dangerous direction to go. If the Bible is a mixture of cultural dressing wrapped around divine truth, then how can we be sure which part is the husk and which is the kernel? What one generation embraces as the kernel of divine truth could very well be rejected by another generation as merely more human culture and tradition. We see this happening around us even now with respect to the definition of marriage and homosexuality.

Joel Beeke

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