

## “THE CREATION OF MAN.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

July 28, 2013, 6:00PM

**Sermon Texts: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-8, 18, 21-23.**

**Belgic Confession: Article 14**

### Introduction.

Years ago when I was pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Grove, WI I was invited to speak at the local high school baccalaureate service. After preaching a clear Gospel message about finding the meaning of life by living our lives for God, a trio of students got up and sang the old classic rock and roll song “All We Are Is Dust in the Wind.”

Really! Is that true, is that all we are is just dust in the wind? From dust we come and to dust we shall return. Psalm 103 says we are dust:

**Psalm 103:14-16** For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are *dust*.

15 As for man, his days are like *grass*; he flourishes like a flower of the field;

16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.

Or what about what Bildad says to Job:

**Job 25:6** how much less man, who is a *maggot*, and the son of man, who is a worm!”

Are we just another one of the animals? Are we just a product of natural evolutionary forces?

Or are we:

**Psalm 8:5-6** Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

Is it true:

**Acts 17:28** In him we live and move and have our being.

Did God really:

**Psalm 139:13-14** For you formed my inward parts;

you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

What is man? Where did we come from? How did we get here? Where are we going? Does our existence have any meaning or purpose? That’s the question this evening.

### Were Adam and Eve, the first human couple or not?

The article in the Banner two issues ago brings to light that the historicity of Adam is one of the most important doctrinal issues facing the church today. What we have in the Banner is just the

tip of a large iceberg that has been adrift in the sea of theology for some time and has caused many shipwrecks.

Two recent shipwrecks in the reformed world are the dismissals of two professors from reformed seminaries.

Professor *Peter Enns* was dismissed from Westminster Theological Seminary for among other things, denying a real Adam.

Professor *Bruce Waltke* was dismissed from Reformed Theological Seminary for his views on theistic evolution and suggesting Adam is now extinct.

Recently professor *Tremper Longman* of Westmont College, a Presbyterian college in Santa Barbara publicly expressed his doubts about a historical Adam.

Edwin Wahlout is not alone in the views he espouses in his article. Many Christian college and seminary professors doubt a six-day creation and a historical Adam.

It's regrettable and disappointing that in this day and age it's more fashionable and acceptable to pose questions than it is boldly to announce truth with conviction. As I have said before post-moderns are more interested in questions than in answers.

Wahlout puts his trust and confidence in science in general and in evolution in particular. He fails to acknowledge that science is constantly changing and that evolution is actually coming under increasingly heavy attack even in the academic and secular world.

The alternate view to the Adam and Eve of Genesis is that there were thousands of years of hominids wandering the earth without souls and that at some point God chose one couple from out of all of them and gave them souls and they became the first modern humans.

Wahlout believes that since mankind descended from apes and chimpanzees, Genesis is wrong and has to bow to science and evolution. Wahlout's evolutionary continuum raises all kinds of serious problems and questions and he outlines in his article.

Wahlout's article is an excellent illustration of what happens when you start cutting out parts of the Bible.

It's like going out to your yard to trim a big hedge. If you cut a bit too much from one part, then try to balance the rest out then get off somewhere else and try to balance some more. Before you know it you don't have a hedge left.

I saw a man near CHCC earlier this week driving some stakes in the ground and he had some string. The next day I came by and he was removing the stakes and string and his hedge was trimmed in a nice straight line. He had a standard, a measure, a way to stay true.

That's what we have with Scripture and our reformed confessions, a standard to keep us thinking straight.

Wahlout says that Adam and Eve have been traditionally believed to be the first humans, the first couple. He reduces this doctrine to a mere tradition.

He's wrong, this isn't a traditional belief, this is a Biblical belief. We don't hold on to it because it is really old or because our grandparents believed it or even because it's in some creeds. We hold on to it because it's what Scripture reveals and teaches.

### **Belgic Confession Article 14.**

Belgic Confession Article 14 and 15 shift our focus from what we believe concerning God (Theology proper, the doctrine of God) to what we believe concerning man and mankind (Anthropology, the doctrine of Man).

We also shift our focus from Genesis One which can be summed up as God created the heavens and the earth, to Genesis Two which narrows the focus to the creation of man.

Remember it's the purpose of creeds and confessions and catechisms to summarize and affirm what Scripture teaches. Article 14 affirms what Scripture reveals and teaches regarding creation in general and the creation of man in particular. Genesis is not dismissed as a myth or a fairy tale and Adam is not a fictional character.

### **Genesis 1 and 2.**

All of Genesis is written as an *historical narrative* from Adam to Noah to Abraham to Joseph. Adam is presented as just as real a person as Abraham. Sure there is some poetry and figurative language but just compare Genesis 1 and 2 to Psalm 104 (a creation Psalm) if you want to see the huge difference in style. People try to dismiss Genesis as figurative poetry to which we can say even if it was whoever says poetry can't be historically accurate. There are lots of historically accurate facts in the Psalms.

Yes, there were many *other creation narratives* floating around the ancient world. Some of you may have read the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in high school or college. God told Moses to write this one to reveal what really happened. This is the Word of God on the subject. This is not just one more mythical account of creation.

Genesis 1 and 2 teaches us that *God is personal*, that He is intimately and purposefully involved in creation and in governing all things. Creation is not the result of impersonal, mechanistic forces or evolutionary processes.

God made the dust out of nothing and then God made man out of the dust. The Hebrew word for man is adam which comes from the word for earth, adama. We have a pretty humble beginning, yet from such a humble origin God created the noblest of all His creative works, making us just a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5).

*God created man in a different way* from all the rest of creation. For everything else God simply spoke it into existence. For us God is like a potter intimately forming and shaping us with His own hands, as if He were forming a masterpiece.

**Isaiah 64:8** O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Evolution says there's nothing special about us, we are just one creature in a long line of mutations. Genesis says we are separate from the rest of creation and distinct from all other creatures. We are created special, in a special way and for a special purpose.

Instead of being an accident of nature or a product of natural selection or the survival of the fittest, we are the product of grace. Why would God use the processes of evolution to cover up His glory and grace?

Genesis teaches *Adam's creation was punctiliar* in time, meaning that it happened at a specific moment. First, there was no Adam and then God created him from the dust and there was Adam. He was the first human and there were no humans before him.

Genesis teaches that God "Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7). This is understood to be God giving to man a *soul*, a spiritual life, different from all other creatures on earth. God created man body and soul, not body for millions of years and then finally a soul.

Genesis teaches that all creatures *reproduce according to their own kind*. Plants don't become fish and fish don't become animals and animals don't become humans. There is room for variation within species but there is no true evidence for one species evolving into another species, let alone inanimate objects becoming animate creatures.

Genesis teaches that we are made by God in *God's own image*. Man is not just a natural being, he is a supernatural being, he carries the imprint of his supernatural creator. Male and female reflect God's image and together give us a more complete picture of what that image is.

If we are the product of evolution we lose our dignity and worth. If we lose our dignity and worth then there is no reason to fight abortion, sex trafficking, slavery or abuse, things that result from a devaluation of human worth.

Genesis teaches what Article 14 states that the height of our original glory is seen in that we were "capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God" (BC, Article 14). We were created *completely able to do the will of God*, to keep the law. We were able to sin and able not to sin. We truly had free will. So high were we created.

### **Genesis and the rest of the Bible.**

Let's not stop with Genesis 1 and 2 for evidence for a real Adam. Let's let Scripture interpret Scripture and look at the whole counsel of God's word.

**Genesis 5:1-5** This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. 2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. 3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. 4 The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. 5 Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

God gives us specific numerical facts and figures, factual statements about his children and lifespan. This is not the stuff of someone who never existed.

The **Biblical genealogies** present Adam as a real historical person. You may find the long genealogies in the Bible boring reading and even question why the Holy Spirit inspired them, but here is your answer. The genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 trace from Adam to Abraham. The genealogy in I Chronicles 1 traces from Adam to Abraham to David and on to the exile.

There is no place where we see a division between non-historical fiction and historical non-fiction in Genesis or in any genealogy.

Add to this that Jesus, the Son of the living God, comes to earth and takes on human flesh and in **Luke 3** traces His human lineage back to Adam which would be a lie if there were no historical Adam.

**Jesus** quotes from Genesis 1 and 2 when teaching about marriage. He treats it as a true account of real historical events and people.

**Paul** builds his core arguments for redemption and justification on a real person Adam.

**Romans 5:12** 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 ... 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, ... 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.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

Do you hear the triple parallel between the historicity of Adam, of Christ, and of us?

Again in:

**I Corinthians 15:21-22** 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.

Without the first Adam, we lose the theological significance of Christ the second Adam. If Adam never existed Paul's entire theological argument falls flat and the parallel between Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience is meaningless.

If Adam's sin isn't imputed to me, how can I know that Christ's righteousness is imputed to me?

Paul also writes about Eve; and other NT writers mention Cain, Abel, Enoch and Noah all as historical. Jesus, Luke, Paul, John and the writers of Hebrews all testify to their historicity.

If Adam is not real then who else is not real in Genesis or the Bible? At what point does the Bible become truth and not myth?

### **Application and conclusion.**

***There are three non-negotiables in Genesis.***

***First***, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and He did it out of nothing, ex nihilo.

**Second**, God created man in His own image. Man is a special creation of God.

**Third**, there was a historical person named Adam created by God from the dust of the earth and a historical person named Eve created by God from one of Adam's ribs.

Christians may disagree on the age of the earth, but Christians can't disagree on the historicity of Adam and Eve. That's a Gospel issue. Too much rests on this truth. Biblical authority, our understanding of the image of God, the origin and nature of original sin, the incarnation of Christ, the plan of salvation, the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

It's heresy to say Adam evolved from an ape or that he had human or humanoid parents. It's blasphemy against our creator who made us and against our redeemer who became like us.

It's a denial of the authority and inerrancy of the Bible to say that Adam was not a historical person.

We have to care about what God says about creation and us. If we deny the historical Adam then we start to unravel the Bible as a whole. If we say parts are wrong, then how can we have confidence in the rest?

God gave us the Bible to guide our understanding and to instruct us as to the real meaning of life, humanity, sin and death, and God's plans for redemption. The Banner is wrong to erode our trust in the Bible and should be publishing articles that build up our confidence, even as I am doing this evening. May God have mercy and help us all.

**Prayer:** Holy Father, what is man that you are mindful of him, and yet you are our Father and we are your children fearfully and wonderfully made. In you we live and move and have our being. Thank you for the testimony of your Word and for the confidence that we can have in it. Make us wise to stand and defend your truth against all lies and accusations, against all myths and silly wives tales. Guard our church and our denomination and our schools from Satan's relentless attack against the authority of your Word. Have mercy on us and help us for the sake of your churches witness to the infallible Truth.