

# Letters

to mythology, where does one place the people listed in the genealogies of Genesis in chapters 4–6? How far down the list of names must one go after Adam and Eve to encounter the first historical person? For example, is it Abraham? Or is he also part of ancient history? How about Enoch, mentioned once in Genesis 4 and twice in the New Testament (Hebrews 11 and in Jude)? Noah and the flood are referred to in the New Testament by our Lord, and again with all other Old Testament heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11. Are these real people or so-so stories? What criteria do we use to make that distinction?

This is not a rhetorical question. For me, it is the logical follow-on to the claims that Adam and Eve never existed. Once you argue yourself out of Adam (an Adam who did exist), what chapter in Genesis starts to become historical? For example, C. S. Lewis considered the first eleven chapters of Genesis as myth.

In my opinion, creationists ignore legitimate scientific explanations and try to force-fit them into Genesis 1 and 2. On the other hand, evolutionary creationists consider accounts recorded in Genesis 1 and 2 as ancient stories and try to re-interpret them in the light of the “proven facts” of Darwinian evolution.

Ultimately, we should show deference to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and humbly admit that we will never have the full picture of creation, this side of eternity.

Ken Touryan  
Fellow of the American Scientific Affiliation

## Response to Ken Touryan

I am grateful to Ken Touryan for his letter because he raises some significant issues. I believe that real history in the Bible begins roughly around Genesis 12 with Abraham. Like many other evangelical theologians, I view Genesis 1–11 as a unique type of literature (literary genre) that is distinct from the rest of the Bible. So from my perspective, was Abraham a real person? Yes. Was there a King David in the tenth century BC? Yes. Were the Jews deported to Babylon in the sixth century BC? Yes. Was there really a man named Jesus in the first century AD? Yes. Are the gospels eyewitness accounts of actual historical events, including the Lord’s teaching and miracles, and especially his physical resurrection from the dead? *Absolutely yes!* Even though I do not believe that Adam was historical, I thoroughly believe in the historicity of Jesus and the biblical testimonies of his life. See 1 John 1:1–3; 2 Peter 1:16–18; Luke 1:1–4; and

Acts 1:1–19. Also see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (2006).

Now an important clarification and correction needs to be made regarding Touryan’s comment that “evolutionary creationists consider accounts recorded in Genesis 1 and 2 as ancient stories and try to re-interpret them in the light of the ‘proven facts’ of Darwinian evolution.”

This is an absolutely false assertion. I have *never* interpreted scripture in the light of evolution. I interpret scripture in the light of scripture and ancient Near Eastern literature. As my article shows, the *de novo* creation of humans is an ancient conceptualization that is no different than the *de novo* origin of the firmament, the heavenly sea, and the sun, moon, and stars placed in the firmament. I reject scientific concordism for biblical reasons, *not* because of evolution. In fact, my PhD in evangelical theology came before my PhD in evolutionary biology. I rejected the historicity of Genesis 1–11 and concordist interpretations of these chapters in seminary when I was still a thoroughly committed anti-evolutionist.

It does concern me that an ASA Fellow uses scare quotes in the phrase “the ‘proven facts’ of Darwinian evolution.” First, evolution is a fact. For those of us who have actually studied evolutionary biology to the PhD level, there is no debate because the evidence for evolution is *overwhelming*. In fact, a 2009 Pew study reveals that 97% of scientists accept evolution. Second, those of us who have actually published on evolutionary topics in refereed scientific journals rarely qualify evolution as “Darwinian.” Does Touryan as an aeronautical engineer refer to gravity as Newtonian?

Finally, and most disturbing to me, is Touryan’s final sentence in his letter: “Ultimately, we should show deference to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and humbly admit that we will never have the full picture of creation, this side of eternity.”

Earlier Touryan accuses me of making a “bold statement” with regard to my denying the historicity of Adam. But I believe I offered a reasonable argument in my article—the Bible has an ancient understanding of the origin of the heavens and earth; it stands to reason that this is also the case with the origin of living organisms, including humans. And ancient Near Eastern creation accounts confirm my contention.

In contrast, Touryan’s final sentence is merely a “bold” proclamation with no academic substantiation whatsoever. It is this type of anti-intellectualism that plagues evangelical Christianity, and it has been a stumbling block to many of our young people who have lost

their faith once they see the evidence for evolution in university.

The name of our organization has the word “scientific” in it. I believe that members of the American Scientific Affiliation should show “deference to our brothers and sisters in Christ” who have actually studied evolutionary biology. And for those ASA members who have never held a fossil in their hand, or worked at an outcrop, or published a refereed paper on evolution, I believe they should “humbly admit” that they are not competent to comment on the scientific theory of evolution in public.

Denis O. Lamoureux, DDS, PhD, PhD  
Fellow of the American Scientific Affiliation  
Associate Professor of Science & Religion  
St. Joseph’s College, University of Alberta

## Historical Adam?

As one who has labored in the tar pits of the Bible, science, and history dispute for thirty years and counting, I was pleased to see yet another adventurer in the debate. In his abstract of “Genetics, the Nephilim, and the Historicity of Adam” (*PSCF* 67, no. 1 [2015]: 24–34), Davidson uses “first” three times, such as “first human pair,” as if that designation is a necessary component to a historical Adam and Eve. Here are pertinent questions: Is biblical history also human history? If not, is it at least compatible?

In the interest of shedding historical light on the issue, an exegetical mistake with major consequences befell the early church. When Paul set out on missionary trips, he would visit synagogues seeking out Jews who would listen to the good news that the Messiah had come. Largely he was rejected. Although the emperor of Rome was proclaimed to be a god and Greeks had many gods, Jews knew only one God. A human god was blasphemous to the Jews, yet Paul found a few Jews who would listen and took his message to heart.

Not committed to a one-God concept, Greeks and Romans proved more receptive, and they became an integral part of early congregations. Followers of “The Way,” as the early church was called, consisted of Romans, Greeks, and converted Jews who would pray, take communion, and read the scriptures aloud at Sunday meetings. Although a letter or two may have been in their possession, the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament was an object of weekly reading, and the first book, Genesis, would be a likely starting place. Listening to the stories of Adam, Cain and Abel, and Noah read aloud, Gentiles in the group of believers would have had no reason to think Jewish history

wasn’t their own history too. Thus the mistake was born that persists to this day. Jewish history was perceived as human history.

In 1611 when the King James translators produced an English version of the Bible, they labored under the same mindset as early believers. They thought that the entire human race derived from Adam and Eve, that the flood was worldwide with only a family of eight surviving, and that all humans gathered at Babel and scattered in small groups, speaking foreign tongues. This total misunderstanding skewed the translation and virtually canonized the tradition that had arisen 1,600 years earlier and has survived to this day among many conservative Christians. A liberal response has been to assign Genesis to a “genre” bereft of historical accuracy. Thus the conundrum: “Is Genesis 2–11 true human history, bogus human history replete with theological lessons, or legitimate Semitic history with theological content implicit therein?” Sufficient evidence gleaned from thirty years of digging leads me to conclude that Genesis was written by Semites, for Semites, and about Semites. Gentiles may peruse Semitic history in Genesis and are free to wonder why our own ancestors did not leave us a historical record of our own.

As to the biblical text, recent translations have modernized English equivalents of Hebrew words to some extent, but because of insufficient knowledge of the history of the ancient Near East and its relevance, tradition marches on undeterred by an abundance of contrary evidence. Only within the last two hundred years has the scholarly world been in possession of some of the history of the ancient Near East inscribed on cuneiform tablets in Akkadian and Sumerian languages. This new-found evidence could revolutionize how we understand Genesis.

In his article, Davidson waded into a 2,000-year-old quagmire that has engulfed many gallant exegetes and expositors with a model similar in many respects to Denis Alexander’s “*Homo divinus*” model. Both models fail to address adequately a “blinding glimpse of the obvious” that struck me in 1986, when my article, suggesting Adam was “injected” into a populated world, was published in the *Washington Post*. Clearly, Adam belongs to the Neolithic Period (that is, mention of tents, livestock, musical instruments, and implements of bronze and iron in Gen. 4:20–22), thus appearing no earlier than 10,000 years ago. *Homo sapiens*, however, has a 200,000-year history. Any conceivable “first man” in biological terms, even if one could be found, cannot possibly be our man, Adam.

Dick Fischer, MDiv  
[www.genesisproclaimed.org](http://www.genesisproclaimed.org)