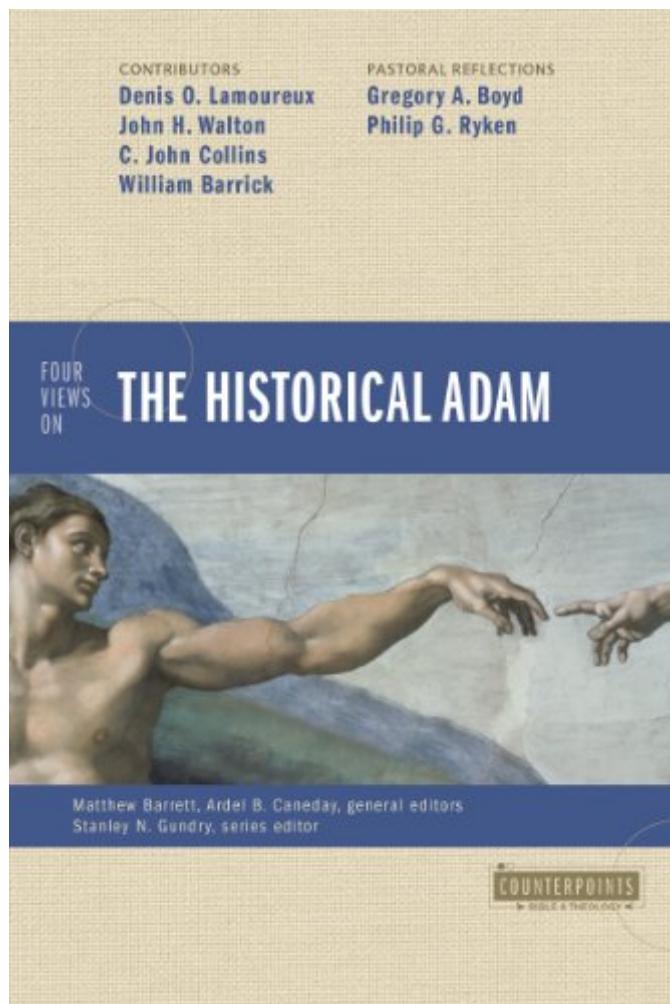


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Four Views On The Historical Adam (Counterpoints: Bible And Theology)



Synopsis

As a part of the Counterpoints series, Four Views on the Historical Adam clearly outlines four primary views on Adam held by evangelicals, featuring top-notch proponents of each view presenting their positions in their own words and critiquing the positions with which they disagree. You will come away with a better understanding of the key biblical and theological issues at stake and of the implications of Adam for contemporary Christian witness and church life. Contributors include Denis O. Lamoureux, John H. Walton, C. John Collins, and William Barrick. Each focuses his essay on answering the following questions: What is the biblical case for your viewpoint, and how do you reconcile it both with modern science and with passages and potential interpretations that seem to counter it? In what ways is your view more theologically consistent and coherent than other views? What are the implications of your view for the spiritual life and public witness of the church and individual believers, and how is your view a healthier alternative for both? Concluding reflections by pastor-scholars Gregory A. Boyd and Philip Graham Ryken highlight the significance of the topic in the faith of everyday believers.

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Customer Reviews

In this counterpoint book the subject of the Historical Adam takes center stage. There are four views presented: (1) No Historical Adam - presented by Denis Lamoureux, Professor of Science and Religion at St. Joseph's College in the University of Alberta; (2) A Historical Adam: The Archetypal Creation View - presented by John Walton, Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College; (3) A Historical Adam: Old Earth Creation View - presented by C. John Collins, Professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary; and (4) A Historical Adam: Young-Earth View - presented by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament at The Master's College. The format of the book is as follows: Each Professor writes an essay addressing three essential questions: (1) What is the biblical case for your viewpoint, and how do you reconcile it with passages and potential interpretations that seem to counter it? (2) In what ways is your view more theologically consistent and coherent than other views? (3) What are the implications your view has for the spiritual life and public witness of the church and individual believers, and how is your view a healthier alternative for both? Upon answering these questions each scholar counters followed by a rejoinder from the presenter. At the end of the book there are two essays representing two different stances on the debate and impact on the Christian faith by Greg Boyd (Senior Pastor at Woodland Hills Church in St. Paul, Minnesota) and Philip Ryken (President of Wheaton College and the former pastor of Tenth Presbyterian in Philadelphia). I appreciated the personal testimony of Denis Lamoureux's pursuit of truth in the fields of science and theology.

The book is a useful introduction to various perspectives on the historical Adam, ranging from complete denial of Adam's historicity (Lamoureux) to full-bore young earth creationism (Barrick). Walton and Collins fall somewhere in the middle. Others have offered more detailed summaries of the content, so I'll content myself with the following observations. I found the arrangement very helpful: each contributor makes his full-length case followed by responses from the other three. This was confusing to some extent -- e.g., in the responses to the first piece, the others had to refer to their own positions, which I hadn't read yet. But on the whole it made for more give and take than simply four contributions that cross-referenced the others. My major frustration, though, with the whole book is that the contributors did a lot of talking past each other. Lamoureux and Barrick were

particularly guilty of this, Collins and Walton much less so. Barrick, especially, seemed to think that repeating other people's talking points is the same as actually making an argument. His chapter was very weak and unnecessarily combative. Lamoureux' contribution was stronger than Barrick, but also suffered from oversimplification (I think). So I think this volume would have been much stronger if the editor had forced the contributors to interact more with each other's views rather than letting assertion and counter-assertion count as argument and rebuttal. One issue that I think should have been addressed is philosophy of science. Lamoureux, the scientist, took an Enlightenment notion of science for granted -- science gives us objective truth about the way the world really is.

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