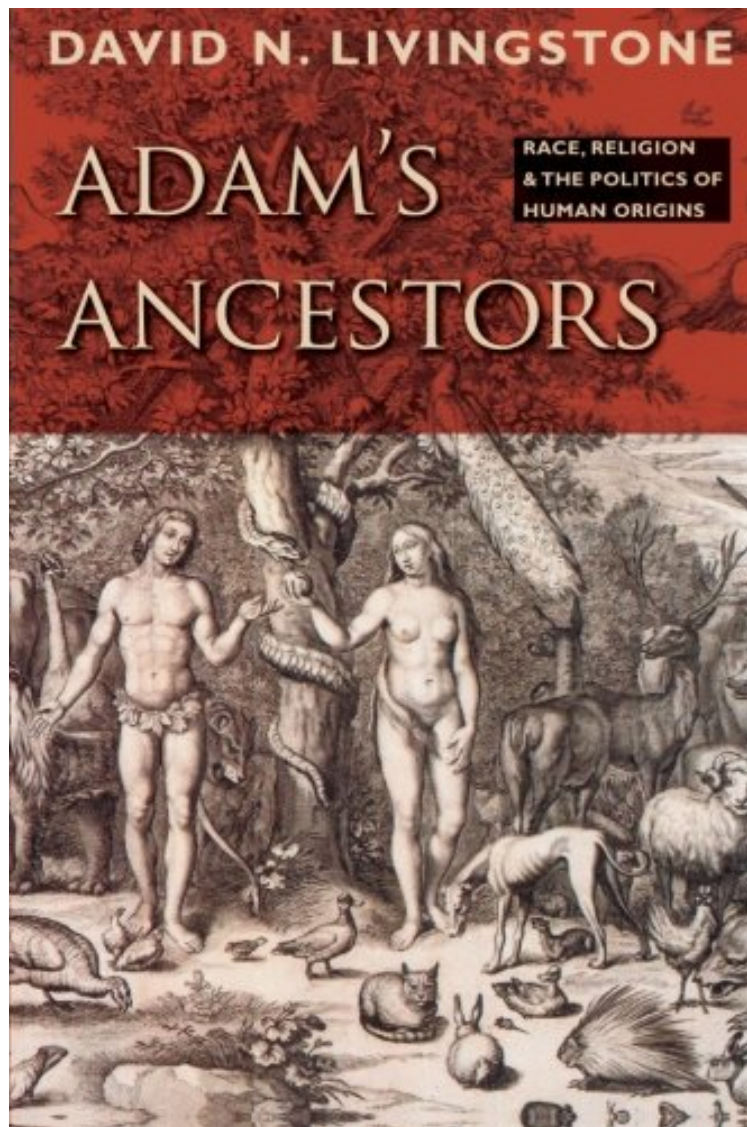


(Free pdf) Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins (Medicine, Science, and Religion in Historical Context)

Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins (Medicine, Science, and Religion in Historical Context)

David N. Livingstone

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David N. Livingstone : Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins (Medicine, Science, and Religion in Historical Context) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins (Medicine, Science, and Religion in Historical Context):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Ironic, Intellectual History of the Pre-Adamite Idea By George P. Wood

Is Adam the father of all human beings, or do they have multiple fathers? For centuries, Christendom had a simple, biblical answer. Adam was the father of the human race. But during the Age of Discovery, Westerners' contact with other cultures increasingly called into question the chronology, ethnology, and geography of the early chapters of Genesis. The earth was older and its people more diverse and far-flung than the biblical history accounted for. In the mid-seventh century, Isaac La Peyrere (a heterodox Protestant of Jewish descent) published two treatises--each a pioneering work of biblical criticism--that advanced a novel thesis: there were men before Adam. Adam was the father of the Jews, but other races were descended from other, equally ancient, progenitors. In line with this theory, La Peyrere also advocated a local flood affecting only Adam's semitic descendants rather than covering the whole world. As La Peyrere's idea took root and grew in succeeding centuries, it mutated in several ironic ways. First, while La Peyrere intended his theory to create safe political space for European Jewry, the pre-Adamite idea caught on with racists--including many otherwise orthodox Christians--who used it to advance the thesis of "Caucasian" superiority to the "Mongoloid" and "Negroid" races on the ground that the former were of Adamite descent while the latter were of pre-Adamite descent. (To be fair, though, not all advocates of pre-Adamitism were racist, including La Peyrere himself; and not all advocates of the biblical record were egalitarians.) Second, while La Peyrere was heterodox and a pioneering biblical critic, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, his idea found a home among theologically conservative Christians who used pre-Adamitism to reconcile Scripture with emerging scientific discoveries, including the geological record of the earth's old age, the paleontological record of long-deceased animal species, and the evolution of the human species itself. Not all Christians took this route, of course, but many leading intellectuals in Britain and America did. Third, La Peyrere's thesis contributed to the secularization of science by detaching most of human history from the biblical account and making it a fit object of historical and scientific study rather than textual exegesis. Increasingly, therefore, professionalizing scientists stopped thinking in terms of the biblical account of human origins and spoke more broadly of the human species' monogenetic or polygenetic origins. Only religious conservatives still used the language of Adamic or pre-Adamite. Fourth, while La Peyrere's original idea was clearly polygenetic--with Adam as the father of Jews, and all other groups having equally ancient fathers--Darwin introduced a novel element, namely, pre-Adamite monogenism. All are descended from an aboriginal human pair who themselves evolved from human or humanoid ancestors. One of the key theological concerns of orthodox Christians was to protect the doctrines of original sin and redemption through Christ. The unity of the human race (monogenism) went hand in glove with these doctrinal concerns. For those Christians impressed by evolutionary accounts of human origins, Darwin's pre-Adamite monogenism allowed them to eat their scientific cake and have it theologically, too. These ironies make for a very messy history, which David N. Livingstone narrates with clarity and skill in *Adam's Ancestors*, an excellent academic treatment of an idea that once roiled the intelligentsia but is now--for most--intellectual arcana. Without an understanding of this history, however, it is difficult to understand the development of the science of human origins in the West, not to mention the development of biblical criticism there. If you want to understand the interaction of Scripture and science in Western history, this is a great book to start with.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good background for the current interest in the historicity of Adam

By Paul R. Bruggink

This is a very well documented (896 footnotes) history of proposals of the existence of human beings prior to Adam and Eve, starting with Origen (ca. 185-ca. 254) and continuing through Isaac La Peyrre (1596-1676), the impact of Darwin's "On the Origin of Species", and progressing up to the present time. David Livingstone covers the history of important issues around whether human beings were or were not one species and how these views were used to argue for and against slavery and racial intermixing. Pre-adamites are tied to the issue of one origin and therefore one species of humans (monogenesis) vs. multiple origins and therefore multiple races of humans (polygenesis) which can then be "ranked" and used to justify slavery. He discusses how the publication of Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" in 1859 made polygenesis less likely, at which point pre-adamism became the vehicle of choice for those interested in justifying white supremacy. He also discusses the various ways that pre-adamites figure into the accounting for differences in races and languages. Along the way, Livingstone presents a history of monogenesis and polygenesis in the UK and in the USA. He does not go into the theological issues raised by pre-adamites, such as the Fall, death before sin, or references to Adam in the New Testament. Livingstone finishes up by discussing the continuing legacy of Adam's ancestors: (1) continuing to be employed within an antievolutionary framework, (2) enabling reapproachment with Darwinian biology, and (3) continued use of pre-adamite theories to justify white supremacy. The book includes 30 pages of Notes, a 31-page Bibliography, and a 15-page index. This book gives a very thorough history of the issue in Christian and secular thought over the past two thousand years. I recommend it to anyone who has an interest in the current debate over the historicity of Adam and Eve.

0 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The book is fine, it took over a month for the delivery

By AOB

This is a good book describing the origin and development of the idea that there were humans preceding Adam, and of polygenesis, and the relationship of this idea to ideas about race, religion, and politics. I ordered the book from Deastore on June 28, 2013, and it arrived in the middle of August.

Although the idea that all human beings are descended from Adam is a long-standing conviction in the West, another version of this narrative exists: human beings inhabited the Earth before, or alongside, Adam, and their descendants still occupy the planet. In this engaging and provocative work, David N. Livingstone traces the history of the idea of non-adamic humanity, and the debates surrounding it, from the Middle Ages to the present day. From a multidisciplinary perspective, Livingstone examines how this alternative idea has been used for cultural, religious, and political purposes. He reveals how what began as biblical criticism became a theological apologetic to reconcile religion with science and evolution in particular and was later used to support arguments for white supremacy and segregation. From heresy to orthodoxy, from radicalism to conservatism, from humanitarianism to racism, *Adam's Ancestors* tells an intriguing tale of twists and turns in the cultural politics surrounding the age-old question, "Where did we come from?"

"As David Livingstone shows in this fascinating book, which carefully traces the history of speculations about Adam's ancestors, debates about human origins have always had, and continue to have, moral and political dimensions." (*Sciences Humaines*) "Livingstone traces in detail a fascinating and sometimes troubling story... A book to ponder." (Ernan McMullin *Tablet*) "The mark of the true scholar, the really inventive one, is that he or she shows us that there are problems and issues worth discussing that we simply did not know about or even speculate about... I really recommend David Livingstone's book. It informs and leaves you with more questions than when you started. What more could you ask of scholarship?" (Michael Ruse *Books and Culture: A Christian*) "Provides both college-level and general-interest lending libraries with a fine history of non-Adamic humanity and the debates surrounding it." (*Midwest Book*) "Adam's Ancestors is a model of meticulous historical scholarship. It is greatly enhanced by a geographer's sensitivity to the role of place in intellectual history." (Donald A. Yerxa *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*) "The amazing scope of *Adam's Ancestors* contributes to its appeal, and it can be highly recommended both for its sweeping synthesis and for the nature of the questions it raises in the mind of the reader." (John M. Lynch *British Journal of the History of Science*) "Richly detailed, amply illustrated work." (J David Pleins *Reports of the National Center for Science Education*) "Adam's Ancestors is a very well researched history of the idea that there were multiple creations prior to that recorded in Genesis. The text is extremely well referenced and is an excellent source for anyone wanting to learn about this topic." (Heather J. Edgar *Journal of Anthropological Research*) "Engaging and important book." (Mitchell B. Hart *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*) "Adam's Ancestors offers a rich discussion, ranging from the sober and serious to the wonderfully bizarre, representing the best summary of pre-Adamite materials to date." (Brad D. Hume *Isis*) "The book is rich in detail, revels in marvelously obscure figures, and brings long forgotten characters to life. It is ideal for graduate students and professional scholars and a must for those interested in the politics of racial and ethnic identity, as well as the history of biblical exegesis." (Craig R. Prentiss *American Historical*) "What I finally took away from this fascinating book is that far from being an eccentric and obscure debate, the substance of the argument over pre-adamites is still with us, and perhaps even growing in importance." (Stephen H. Webb *in Religion and Theology*) "An original and useful contribution to the history of human origins research and the history of science and religion." (Matthew R. Goodrum *Annals of Science*) "A great piece of scholarship and an equally great read. Particularly instructive is Livingstone's discussion of monogenism, polygenism, and the various ways these theories of human origins were used in the social and political arena. This is a substantial contribution to the history of anthropology, of evolution theory, of race and racialist thought, and of science and religion." (Nicolaas Rupke, *Institute for Science History, Georg-August University of Göttingen*) "A remarkable achievement. It is a tightly organized and coherently packaged account of a set of ideas which mainstream scholarship now ignores. Controversial themes and explosive issues abound in Livingstone's work, which is important, topical, and fascinating." (Colin Kidd, *University of Glasgow*) "One of the great strengths of this book lies in its demonstration that the history of a concept long since accepted by many, but by no means all, remains strikingly relevant to science and society." (*Progress in Human Geography*) "Livingstone has obviously done a tremendous amount of reading in preparation of his project, and the sheer detail of the persons and positions in the centuries-long debate is impressive, nearly overwhelming." (Jack David Eller *Anthropology Database*)

From the Back Cover In this engaging and provocative work, David N. Livingstone traces the history of the idea of non-adamic humanity, and the debates surrounding it, from the Middle Ages to the present day. From heresy to orthodoxy, from radicalism to conservatism, from humanitarianism to racism, *Adam's Ancestors* tells an intriguing tale of twists and turns in the cultural politics surrounding the age-old question, "Where did we come from?" "Adam's Ancestors offers a rich discussion, ranging from the sober and serious to the wonderfully bizarre, representing the best summary of pre-Adamite materials to date." *Isis* "One of the great strengths of this book lies in its demonstration that the history of a concept long since accepted by many, but by no means all, remains strikingly relevant to science and society." *Progress in Human Geography* "As David Livingstone shows in this fascinating book, which carefully traces the history of speculations about Adam's ancestors, debates about human origins have always had, and continue to have, moral and political dimensions." *Sciences Humaines* "The book is rich in detail, revels in marvelously obscure figures, and brings long-forgotten characters to life. It is ideal for graduate students and professional scholars and a must for those interested in the politics of racial and ethnic identity, as well as

the history of biblical exegesis." *American Historical* "The amazing scope of *Adam's Ancestors* contributes to its appeal, and it can be highly recommended both for its sweeping synthesis and for the nature of the questions it raises in the mind of the reader." *British Journal for the History of Science*

About the Author David N. Livingstone is a professor of geography and intellectual history at the Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, and author of several books, including *Putting Science in Its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge*, *The Geographical Tradition*, and *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders*.