

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE NAME ADAM

CULTURAL INSIGHT

In Hebrew, the word translated as the name Adam (*'adam*) is a common noun that means “human being” or “humanity.” In fact, most places in Genesis 2–5 where the King James Version reads “Adam,” the Hebrew text simply reads “the human.” This is made clear by the presence of the definite article in the underlying Hebrew. In some places the definite article is not present, suggesting that it could be read as a name, which seems to be the root of the translational choice in the King James Version.

This idea can perhaps be seen in the inspired introduction to Creation in Moses 1:34: “And the first of all men have I called Adam, which is many.” A similar notion is visible in Genesis 1:27, when God made “man [*'adam*] in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Humanity (*'adam*) at Creation encompasses both males and females.

Related verses

Moses 1:34

Genesis 2:19–23; 5:1–2

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