

Jesus is in Genesis - the Gospel Before Matthew (Genesis 1-3)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on April 7, 2013

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2 weeks ago was Palm Sunday, anniversary of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. I read then from John 12, and it says on that occasion, some Greeks came and asked Philip "*Sir, we wish to see Jesus*" (12:21). When Jesus heard that He said the hour had come for the Son to be glorified. My name is Philip too, and I hope that's what you want every time this Philip stands behind this pulpit, 'sir, we wish to see Jesus. No offense, but we're not here for you, we just want to see Jesus. So if you can help us to get to Jesus, then you get out of the way...*sir we wish to see Jesus.*' That's what I want, that I don't *preach myself, but Christ crucified and glorified.* That's the heart of the gospel, and that's the central message of the whole Bible.

In Acts 8:5 it says Philip "*preached Christ to them.*" That's my call as well. It's one thing to preach *about* Christ, it's another thing to "*preach Christ.*" In Acts 5:42 it says the early Christians "*daily ... in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ*" (NKJV). This was not just what the apostles did or just what happened in corporate gatherings in the temple, this was what all the Christians did continually in their homes, exalting Jesus. As we go from here, we need think much of and talk much of Jesus at home. In Acts they taught Jesus in their homes, kept on preaching the gospel to themselves, applying Christ to marriage, family, life.

Paul told the Colossians to never move on from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:23), and by the gospel He didn't just mean historical facts of what Christ did 2,000 years ago or what we believed in our past when we were saved, but now it's up to us to live the Christian life. No, he says don't move away from 'the gospel' meaning *Christ, who He is, what He has done and continues to do for believers*, as he says '*Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim*' (27-28). The glory of Christ *we proclaim*, he says, all of us. We all need hope from Christ's gospel proclaimed to us, *within us*, or as he says in Col. 3:16 '*let the word of Christ dwell richly in you*'

Paul told the Corinthians '*we preach Christ crucified*' (1 Cor. 1:23), not just for the unsaved, he also said the gospel '*word of the cross... to us who are...saved, it is the power of God*' (1:18). Us who are saved need the word of the cross/word of Christ/word of His grace, the gospel. It's the power of God to us who *are* saved! It's why Paul made *Christ and Him crucified* a total focus (2:2), why he told the Roman church he was eager to preach them the gospel (Rom 1:16). We sing of this "the power of the cross." I hope and pray all of you will come to our conference in 2 weeks, where Jim Newheiser will explain much better than I can how the power of the cross, how the gospel has power to change Christians and transform our everyday relationships. There *is* power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the lamb, we sing, to daily serve Jesus the King.¹

Several of you shared with me how powerful it has been the last 3 messages studying the cross in the gospel of Luke and focusing on Christ crucified and glorified as King, which magnified your grasp of Christ's glory and grace. One powerful aspect of our study from Palm Sunday, Friday, and last Sunday, in my mind, is how Christ fulfilled the OT Law and prophets as Passover Lamb.

Last week I read from Luke 24, where it says Jesus began with the writings of Moses and explained to them things concerning Christ in all Scriptures, opening their eyes to see how He fulfilled the OT, and it says their hearts burned within them as He preached Himself starting in Genesis, it gave them heart-burn spiritually. One of the TMC professors Will Varner calls that 'holy heartburn.' And that's what I hope we get and that's where I want us to turn today in the pattern of Jesus, starting in Genesis. And as you do, I hope to fulfill what they asked another Philip in John 12: *sir, we wish to see Jesus*

Jesus is in Genesis. There is Gospel before Matthew. It says in Acts 8:35 Philip '*preached Jesus*' from the OT Scriptures, and that's a pattern Philip Layton wants to follow today and in this study through Genesis in future weeks. All those verses I just read that Paul wrote about preaching Christ and the gospel and the cross were *before the NT was written*. The apostles preached Christ and the gospel *from the OT*, and Jesus preached His expository sermon on the road to Emmaus (expository means exposing or explaining the meaning God intended when He inspired the text to the original audience). That's what by Christ's help I want to see in Genesis 1-3

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1 is creation week. How do we know it was six literal days?

- G** – God says it in The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:8-11)
- E** - Evening and morning (Gen 1:5) indicates normal days
- N** - Night and day are defined and contrasted in the 1st day (v. 4-5)
- E** - Every time numbers are used with *day* in Hebrew it's a real day
- S** - Seasons and years (longer times) are contrasted with days (v.14)
- I** - Interpretation of other Scriptures require a literal Genesis 1
- S** - Scientific theories have not disproven biblical creation

I've preached Gen 1-3 six years ago but I want to review before it before we return to a study of Abraham (Gen 12-25) future weeks. Using that acronym to remember why God created everything in 6 days (not over millions or billions of years as old earth theologians say), what does this have to do with Jesus or His gospel teaching? Do we need to take Genesis 1 literally?

- G** – God says so in The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:8-11)

*“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work ... **For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day...**”*

- It's part of the 10 commandments written in stone by the finger of God Himself. Every week of their life Israelites worked 6 literal days and rested for a literal 24 hours *just as God says He really did His work of creation in 6 days then rested from that work on the 7th day (identical in Hebrew)*

- God did not bear false witness by making Israel think it was all created in 6 days but it was really billions of years. That would be a violation of His 9th commandment. Israel trusted their truthful God that His creation of the universe in 6 days was historical fact, not allegory, analogy, poetry, and they based every week of their life on this, believing God had told them the truth. “If God says it, that settles it.”

- It also points to Jesus, our Sabbath, who fulfilled the Law. We rest in Jesus for salvation (Matthew 11:28 compare Matthew 12 [NT first mention of Sabbath], Hebrews 4:9-11)
- There are a number of parallels between God's work in creation and Christ's work of salvation, between creation week and Passion week which began on the first day of that literal week (Palm Sunday) and finished a new work of redemption on the 6th day of that week when He died on the cross, saying "*it is finished.*" Then His body rested in the tomb on the 7th day, the Sabbath. Because of His finished work of redemption and resurrection on Sunday, Christians now pattern our lives every week toward the Lord's Day.

E -Evening and morning language (Gen 1:5) indicates normal days

- Evening and morning is the clearest way to say 1 real day
- This is normal earthly cycles, earth science 101. Jesus said "***If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?***" (John 3:12)
- Jesus says that right before John 3:16, before the salvation gospel presentation to Nicodemus, and He basically says if you don't believe what I say about your origin, how are you gonna believe what I'm telling you about your re-creation?
- "But scientists and smart scholars say Genesis 1 couldn't happen in 6 days?" I can assure you Jesus is much smarter, so I prefer to trust Him. Man wasn't there, but Jesus was, not just as an eyewitness, but as Creator (as we'll see in a bit) so I'll trust Him, not man. Listen, scientists say a virgin birth can't happen and people can't rise from the dead after 3 days, but we believe Jesus does what's scientifically impossible and unobservable. Regeneration is also impossible spiritually.
- read John 3 again, that's the point: salvation is impossible. But the same Spirit from Genesis 1:2 that was moving over the initial creation, Jesus says in John 3 that Spirit moves in ways that men can't discern by natural means in salvation, in our re-creation

N - Night and day are defined and contrasted in the 1st day (v. 4-5)

- How do we know what 'day' means? v. 5: "*God called the **light day**, and the darkness He called night.*" God defines daytime as the time of light, so we might even say God did each day's work of creation in less than 24 hours in daylight (in fact, the idea is He instantly created; said it, and it was)
- God said "*let there be light,*" but the sun wasn't created till day 4 (v. 17). So some object "how can days 1-3 be literal *solar* days if there was no light for the world from the sun?"
- But Jesus said "*I am the Light of the world*" in John 8:12
- Jesus also showed John a future literal heaven and earth in Revelation 21 that has no sun because "*the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb*" (Jesus, v. 23)
- Genesis 1:3 is a picture of Jesus in the gospel in 2 Cor 4:6: '*For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*' Just as God did that in creation, He does it in a new creation (5:17).

E - Every time numbers are used with *day* in Hebrew it's a real day

- so when Jesus tells the Jews the 3rd day He would rise, it means literally the 3rd day, because a number is attached. This is a fact of Hebrew grammar

S - Seasons and years (longer times) are contrasted with days (v.14)

- the sun and moon in v. 14 are created as markers for what is a day and what is a night, and the end of the verse says "for seasons and days and years" (longer literal timeframes)
- if we don't believe it in earthly things, how will heavenly?

I - Interpretation of other Scriptures require a literal Genesis 1

- If there is death and decay and thorns and the curse before Adam's sin, that's a problem in Romans 5:12, 8:19-22, and the prophecies of restoring earth to a pre-fall uncursed state
- Jesus said in Mark 10:6 "*From the beginning of creation, God made [man] male and female...*" Jesus clearly said Adam and Eve weren't created at the end of billions of years of creation, He says in Mark 10:6 God made mankind at "the beginning of creation," i.e., during the creation week
- If Jesus was mistaken or misleading, the gospel falls apart

S - Scientific theories have not disproven biblical creation

I'm not a scientist, but theology is the queen of sciences. We don't trust man's changing theories, we trust unchanging theology from God, the same yesterday, today, forever. Science observes things in the present but can't prove the past, faith is needed. I don't have enough faith to be an evolutionist or atheist.

But you're not here to be convinced there's Intelligent Design in the universe. You say "Sir, we wish to see Jesus, the intricate *Designer* and intimate Creator and infinitely sufficient Savior." You can see Him in Genesis 1:1. To prove it turn to John 1. If you wish to see Jesus ... the 1st verse of the gospel says He's in the 1st verse of the Bible.

1st way we see Jesus in Genesis: Personal Presence (Genesis 1:1)

Gospel of John, 1:1: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with God, and the Word was God.** ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ **All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being...** ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father...*

The God of Genesis 1:1 is Jesus. Gen. 1:1 'In the beginning *God* created the heavens and earth.' John 1:1 'In the beginning *Jesus was that God* and was with His Father; *Jesus* created heaven and earth.' Colossians 1 says all things were created by Christ and for Christ. He's creator and sustainer of everything in the universe. He doesn't do nothing in heaven in the OT while the Father and Spirit do their job till Jesus comes to earth in the NT. Jesus is active in the OT

There's a 2nd way we see Jesus in Genesis: Parallels and Mysteries

Marriage in Genesis 2 is called a mystery by Paul in Ephesians 5. A parallel truth that was a mystery till revealed by Christ in the NT is that man's earthly marriage is to parallel Christ's heavenly one. Paul says marriage is a profound mystery of Christ and His church, the bride of Christ. My love to my wife is to parallel Christ's love. Just as God the Father presents to His son Adam a bride, God the Father always had a plan to present to His son Jesus a bride. That's the mystery of marriage that parallels Christ's love (Eph 5, Rev 19).

A 3rd way Jesus is in Genesis is physically in pre-incarnate form

Pre-incarnate just means prior to His incarnation (becoming flesh, just like carnal means fleshly or physical, but Jesus without sin). Jesus in the OT at times we see physically visibly bodily appearing. I think John 1 explains what Genesis 3 says about the Lord walking:

3:8 *They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

The Lord is walking in some physical form they could hear and tried to hide themselves from. It isn't God the Father, it has to be the 2nd person of the Trinity, God's Son, who the NT calls Jesus. Our kids are learning *The Catechism for Young Children* (we have extra copies at the resource table in back and there are music CDs that help boys and girls learn good theology, even 2 year olds can). It goes through the effects of Adam's sin in ways a lot of adults can benefit from, the basics of historical theology we can all learn from

If you were to ask our kids what is God like, they might sing back "God is a spirit and has not a body like man." That truth is simple enough for a kid to understand, but scholars struggle to understand if "God is a spirit" (John 4:24) and a spirit does not have a body as men do (Luke 24:39), then how is God walking around in Gen 3:8?

Flip back to John 1. Theologians call it a "Christophany," a visible physical appearance of Christ in a "pre-incarnate" form (before His incarnation, virgin birth). Theologians like using big words but the basic idea or concept of Christ appearing in the OT is in John 1:18: ***No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.***

Nobody has ever seen God the Father in the history of the world, but His Son has been seen. Whenever God appeared in a physical or visible way, it wasn't God the Father who none can see and live. God the Son, the One and Only (as some translations say it) who is at the Father's side, He is the only One who has *revealed, declared, made known or made visible* the Father who no man has ever seen. Christ the creator is God's *image or visual representation*, making visible the invisible God (Col. 1:15-16). God's fullness dwells in bodily form in Christ (Col. 2:9), not in the Father or Spirit. So any time the Lord appears in bodily form, it's not the Father or Spirit.

That's how we know it's not God the Father in some bodily form walking in the garden with Adam and Eve, it's God's Son, Jesus. There are other times that I believe Jesus appears in physical form (to Abraham in Genesis 15, 19; John 8 says Abraham saw Jesus).

4th way we see Jesus in Genesis: Pictures, Types, and Shadows

In some sense these are similar to parallels to Jesus, but a 'mystery' technically is something OT believers couldn't grasp without NT revelation, while the pictures, types, and shadows of the sacrificial system, OT believers could grasp as pointing forward to Messiah. In the OT, God told Moses the Tabernacle set up was a *copy and shadow* of heavenly things, and things still to come (Heb 8:5, 10:1)

Romans 5:14 talks about the sin of Adam in Genesis 3, and it says "*Adam...is a type of Him who was to come*" (who is Christ). So as we look at Adam's sin in Genesis 3 we need to be look for a type or picture or prefiguring or foreshadowing of things to come in Christ

In Gen 3:21 instead of them dying for sin, 3:21 says *The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.*'

Earlier in verse 7 they tried to *make themselves coverings* with fig leaves, but those can do nothing to hide sinners from holy God or from the death they deserve for their sin. No manmade covering can do, man's only hope is for God Himself to provide a covering. Adam and Eve could have and should have died that very same day but we see a picture here of Christ, a prefiguring or foreshadowing of the gospel work of the Lord Jesus providing sinners a covering.

It says in v. 21 the Lord "*clothed them,*" the same Hebrew word we see in Ps 132:9, 16 for being *clothed with righteousness/salvation*. The word for animal skin in v. 21 is used in Job 2:4, 'skin for skin' ('life for life' was how the Law defined it, death for sin which God said Adam and Eve should suffer if they ate the forbidden fruit). It is the same word 'skin' later used in OT Law for animals killed as sacrifices for sin, substitutes in sin offerings instead of sinful man (ex: Ex. 29:14). Animals don't give up their skin while alive, and if they did they wouldn't stay alive for long with all the blood. Skin for skin, God covered man's naked skin with skin of another, and covered their sin and shame by taking the lifeblood of another.

An animal was slain by the Lord God, instead of Adam and Eve, blood of another shed for the first time, to make sinners a covering. Instead of sinners' flimsy tiny fig leaves, the Lord clothes them. It's a picture of Christ's work for sinners in the gospel (Isaiah 53). It's a type or shadow (a shadow is never as clear as the person but you can see some of the shape and form of the person)

Adam and Eve grasped on some level this need for sacrifice to be able to restore worship and fellowship with God, and apparently taught it to their sons because chapter 4 starts with them offering sacrifices to the Lord. Animal sacrifices didn't start at Mt. Sinai, they are pictured in Genesis 3, and practiced by believers in Genesis 4, 8, 12, 26, 35 (Adam's family, Noah's family, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's family)

What happens in Gen 3 points to our need for a substitute sacrifice. What happens in Gen 3:21 is a shadow of Christ and His provision. Isaiah says all our righteous deeds are like filthy rags, but he says in Isa 61:10 '*I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult ... For **He has clothed me** [same word as Gen 3:21] **with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness** ...*

Before we move on from this point, if you've sinned against God and others, God will call you account like He does in v. 13 and ask you "what have you done?" You can't run and you can't hide like our first parents tried in v. 7, and you can't make excuses or blame others as they tried in v. 12-13. When fiery judgment comes, fig leaves won't protect you. God sees right through all the facades we try and put up to hide who we really are and have done. But there is grace pictured here, the shadow of the cross gives hope for sinful man to be 'clothed in righteousness divine.'²

The curse of death comes in this chapter but so does God-given clothing from a death of another taking what they deserve for them. Look beyond the tree in Genesis that brought a curse to the world, look to the tree of Calvary in the gospel of God's love to the world. Look beyond the Garden of Eden to the Garden of Gethsemane, beyond the first Adam's failure to the last Adam's victory in Jesus. Look to Jesus the merciful Savior who seeks lost sinners who will lay aside their fig leaves and filthy rags of righteousness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ and His perfect righteousness by faith in Him. Repent of your excuses, renounce your efforts of covering your sin, replace them with confessing your sin, trust Christ as your covering and only hope.

We see Jesus present here, paralleled here, personally here, physically here, #4. Prophetically 3:15 is the first direct prophecy of Christ. It's called the 1st gospel. God says to Satan in the garden: ¹⁵ *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and **her seed**; **He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.***”

Notice “her seed” isn’t plural (*they/them*) but singular (*He/Him*). In the 2nd half of v. 15, God speaks of a singular male born of woman. The phrase “her seed” never appears anywhere else in the OT, only in the NT in Revelation 12 (KJV), where it says “*that old serpent called the devil and Satan*” was at war with “*her seed*” (v. 9, 17). Who is the “her” and who is “her seed”? Rev. 12:5 “*She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.*”

Revelation 12 is language right out of Genesis 3. “Her seed” isn’t just a reference to godly descendants; ultimately “her Seed” is a future singular *descendant* of woman: *He will* crush Satan’s head. Seed in Scripture belongs to the father in genealogy and in biology, but this unusual phrase is a hint that Messiah would not be born in a normal way as *seed of a man and woman* but a *seed of a woman*?

Isaiah 7:14 confirms the Messiah would be virgin-born of a woman with no male seed involved. He would be fully human in the womb of a woman, but would also be divine so He could defeat the devil. A rabbi wrote of Gen 3:15 'Who is this? This is Messiah the King?'

We could trace the singular “seed” promises in Genesis, but let me just let an inspired rabbi Paul explain the significance in Galatians:

*‘He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ ... when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, **born of a woman**...so that He might redeem...that we might receive...adoption’ (3:16, 4:4-6)*

It all begins in Genesis, not in the NT gospel, this is the 1st gospel! If we wish to see Jesus, He's here, on the same page sin enters the world, so does Jesus. The first gospel isn't Matthew ... it's Genesis. It's not just the NT that's about Jesus, the whole Bible is about Him

Man was created in God's image in Genesis 1 before he sinned, and man still has it imperfectly along with Adam's sinful likeness and nature, but Christ is and restores an exact and perfect image of God and He comes to reinstate man to His likeness through the gospel.

We see God veiled in flesh in Jesus, incarnate deity, God with us. In Adam everyone born will die but Jesus is born that man no more may die. Adam's sin brings death, darkness but a 2nd Adam, Jesus, son of righteousness obeyed so there's light and life to all He brings. You can study that more in Romans 5:12-21 and also in 1 Corinthians 15.

Because of sin, none of us are God's natural-born sons. He has only one begotten Son. From the seed of man and woman, we all inherit sinful guilt and nature of our first parents, but in this chapter where sin corrupts mankind and even the earth is cursed (v. 17b), a seed of a woman, born of a woman, is promised to come to reverse the curse, to redeem us so that we can become adopted sons of God! It says Messiah will be wounded in His heel (crucifixion drove nails in the heel) but in so doing He will make the serpent bite the dust. The woman's conquering seed makes the devil cruisin' for a bruisin' on the head.

A venomous serpent striking a man's heel is to give a deadly blow (that was Satan's goal with Jesus and Jesus did die from the sting of death's venom). But Jesus rises from the dead in victory to say "*O death where is thy sting!*" (1 Cor 15:55). The serpent strikes the heel of Jesus but in the process he loses his venom and sting as the death-conquering Messiah steps on the serpent's head and gives us the antidote so death loses its sting for us who trust in the Messiah (and one day that dying defeated snake will be cast in a lake of fire)

That's what we celebrate at Easter and we sing of it at Christmas:

Late in time, behold Him come, **Offspring of a virgin's womb.**
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the **incarnate Deity,**
 Pleased **with us in flesh to dwell,** Jesus our Emmanuel [God with us!] ...
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness! **Light and life to all He brings ...**
 Mild He lays His glory by, **Born that man no more may die ...**
 Rise, the **woman's conquering Seed, Bruise in us the serpent's head.**
Adam's likeness, now, efface, Stamp Thine image in its place:
Second Adam from above, Reinstate us in Thy love.
 Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"^{1,3}

¹ Lewis E. Jones, "There is Power in the Blood," 1899.

² Charles Wesley, "And Can It Be," 1738.

³ Charles Wesley, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," 1739.