

The Relevance of Genesis - Why It's Worth Contending For (Jude 1-25)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on 10/3/2010

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¹Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: ²May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. ³Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Last time we heard the testimony of C.J. Mahaney, who is earnest about the faith, and even before he came to the faith, he knew the importance of issues of creation and existence, as he said several times. He didn't want to hear about them at the time while he was getting high on drugs. For many people, issues from the beginning of the Bible (creation and existence issues) keep them from the faith, and some of those types of issues are factors for those who have been in church as a young person who later leave the faith.

Some very well-respected schools and seminaries and scholars are not so sure issues related to creation and early Genesis are worth contending for today, like v. 3, just the parts of our faith that have to do with the gospel and Jesus and salvation. But Jude tells us it's not just about salvation, which he would prefer to just talk about, his favorite subjects are the gospel and Jesus and salvation, but he felt compelled with urgency and fervency to tell us to earnestly contend for the faith of God's Word that has been delivered to us, and he especially has in mind the first book of their Bible, the book of Moses (called *Torah*, Genesis-Deuteronomy, esp. Genesis).

⁵Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt [you can read that story in the end of Genesis and start of Exodus]

... subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, [either referring to fall of before Genesis 3 or maybe Genesis 6]

... He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷just as Sodom and Gomorrah [Genesis 18] and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. ⁸Yet in the same way these men [i.e., sinners today are just repeating what we read about in Genesis, it all goes back to the Bible's first book] ...

⁹But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of **Moses**, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. ¹¹Woe to them! For **they have gone the way of Cain** [Genesis 4], and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. [also both stories from the book of Moses in Heb. Bible] ... ¹⁴It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied [that's Genesis 5]

And by the way, not many bring this out, but this shows us that the literal genealogies in Genesis are accurate, and the line from Adam to Enoch is exactly what inspired NT writers also affirm. Does it matter if there are really gaps in the genealogies of Genesis, maybe making the age of the earth hundreds or a few thousand years older than Genesis indicates? It doesn't affect your salvation, but if you believe Jude is part of inspired, infallible Scripture, Enoch actually was the seventh generation from Adam, and it apparently did matter to the Holy Spirit who inspired Jude (and Moses) to write it.

Does it matter whether or not Adam was a historical figure made by special creation and not an evolved hominid? Exactly 1 month ago this day, a so-called Christian group named BioLogos posted an article on their blog from Denis Lamoureux who holds a PhD in evangelical theology and a PhD in evolutionary biology and wrote a book called *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution* (2008) and *I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution* (2009).

“My central conclusion in this book is clear: Adam never existed, and this fact has no impact whatsoever on the foundational beliefs of Christianity.” This is the first entry in a three-part series: Was Adam a Real Person? ... “So here’s the bottom line: Genesis 1 does not reveal how God actually created life ... To be sure, this idea is challenging and even threatening to many Christians. But ... the Holy Spirit descended to the level of the biblical author of Genesis 1 and used his [Moses’ if he thinks Moses is real] ancient science regarding biological origins in order to reveal the central Message of Faith that He was the Creator of life. Of course, some are quick to ask: Did God lie in the Bible? Absolutely not! Lying requires a malicious and deceptive intention. The God of the Bible is not a God of malice or deception. Rather, by grace the Holy Spirit came down to the level of the ancient Hebrews and employed their ancient understanding of origins ... in order to communicate as effectively as possible inerrant, life-changing, spiritual Truths ... God accommodates in the Bible and simply does not reveal how He made plants, animals... and humans.’¹

There’s actually a Hebrew word for that. You know what it is? *Baloney*. In Greek, it’s pronounced *hogwash*. That blog uses the word “inerrant” but on same page says “Adam never existed.” How would you respond? “Adam never existed, and this fact has no impact whatsoever on the foundational beliefs of Christianity.”

Can you think of any impact to foundational Christian beliefs if Adam never actually existed and wasn’t a real person? ...

GOSPEL ISSUES

- Gospel of Luke introduces the line of Jesus with Adam and the line of his descendants leading to Christ – if Adam isn’t real, when do we start believing the rest of Luke’s gospel?
- No literal fall into sin = no need for a literal Savior
- If there wasn’t a real “first Adam” how can we be sure of the reality of the “second Adam” which Paul makes parallel in Rom 5 and 1 Cor. 15 at the heart of the gospel

Romans 5:14 *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.* [Christ]

1 Corinthians 15:22 *For as **in Adam** all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*

Mark 10:6 “*But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. [Gen. 1:27]*”⁷ “*FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER,*”⁸ “*AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH [Gen. 2:24]* so they are no longer two, but one flesh.”⁹ “*What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.*”

If God didn't join a literal man and woman together, and Jesus thought He did, then you've got an even bigger problem: Jesus was wrong (this isn't Moses talking here, this is Jesus) and if Jesus was mistaken, He isn't God, and if He isn't God, He can't save us. This is not just about divorce, this is about the deity of Christ. Notice he said in v. 6 “*from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female*” – not “*after billions of years of biological evolution, at the end of a long process, hominids evolved to homo sapiens ...*”

God made man and woman at the beginning, the very first week, the same day he created all the other living land creatures, and that is the basis for marriage, the fact that God literally joined together a literal Adam and a literal Eve in a literal marriage, that's why you need to take Him very literally when He says not to divorce!

If Adam and Eve weren't created in the beginning, but at the very end of billions of years, even if like most Christians you say they were real historical people, if they were created *at the very end of billions of years*, then Jesus in v. 6 is mistaken or misleading. It's not just BioLogos people who have a problem here – *old earth* creationists (who may say God didn't use evolution but created slowly on evolutionary timelines, ex: each “day” in Gen. 1 = age, or that Gen. 1 is just a theological framework or poetry) ... if creation took millions or billions of years, how can v. 6 be true?

Turn back to Exodus 20 for one other example. What's in Ex. 20? The Ten Commandments written in stone by God's own finger. I think this single-handedly settles the debate as to whether or not all things in the heavens and the earth were created by God in 6 days:

Ex. 20:9 “*Six days you shall labor and do all your work,*”¹⁰ “*but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work ...*”¹¹ “*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; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.*”

The literal truth of Genesis 1 is again the literal basis for obedience every literal week of their life with the confidence that God spoke literal truth to them, therefore they should literally obey it. If we can't trust Him on the first page of His book, then when can we?

The excellent commentary, *The Genesis Record*, begins this way:

“The Book of Genesis is probably the most important book ever written ... the foundation of all of the [Bible, without which] ... the rest of the Bible would be incomprehensible. It would be like a building without a ground floor, or a bridge with no support. The books of the Old Testament, narrating God's dealings with the people of Israel, would be provincial and bigoted, were they not set in the context of God's developing purposes for all mankind, as laid down in

the early chapters of Genesis. The New Testament, describing the execution and implementation of God's plan for man's redemption, is redundant and anachronistic, except in the light of man's desperate need for salvation, as established in the record of man's primeval history, recorded only in Genesis.

The Book of Genesis gives vital information concerning the origin of all things—and therefore the meaning of all things—which would otherwise be forever inaccessible to man. The future is bound up in the past. One's belief concerning his origin will inevitably determine his belief concerning his purpose ...

[What does the word "Genesis" mean? ... *origins* ... *beginning*

What are some things that have origin or beginning in Genesis?]

Origin of the universe

Origin of the solar system

Origin of the atmosphere and hydrosphere

Origin of life

Origin of man

Origin of marriage

Origin of evil

Origin of language

Origin of government

Origin of culture

Origin of nations

Origin of religion

Origin of the chosen people

...It is above all else the foundation of God's revelation, as given in the Bible. No other book of the Bible is quoted as copiously or referred to so frequently, in other books of the Bible, as is Genesis.

... The New Testament is, if anything, even more dependent on Genesis than the Old. There are at least 165 passages in Genesis that are either directly quoted or clearly referred to in the New Testament. Many of these are alluded to more than once, so that there are at least two hundred quotations or allusions to Genesis in the New Testament.

It is significant that the portion of Genesis which has been the object of the greatest attacks of skepticism and unbelief, the first eleven chapters, is the portion which had the greatest influence on the New Testament ... there exist over one hundred quotations or direct references to Genesis 1–11 in the New Testament.

Furthermore, every one of these eleven chapters is alluded to somewhere in the New Testament, and every one of the New Testament authors refers somewhere in his writings to Genesis 1–11. On at least six different occasions, Jesus Christ Himself quoted from or referred to something or someone in one of these chapters, including specific reference to each of the first seven chapters.

Furthermore, in not one of these many instances where the Old or New Testament refers to Genesis is there the slightest evidence that the writers regarded the events or personages as mere myths or allegories. To the contrary, they viewed Genesis as absolutely historical, true, and authoritative.

It is quite impossible, therefore, for one to reject the historicity and divine authority of the Book of Genesis without undermining, and in effect, repudiating, the authority of the entire Bible ... By all means, therefore, we must oppose any effort from any source to mythologize or

allegorize the Genesis record. It was written as sober history, the divinely inspired account of the origin of all things. No one, therefore, can hope to attain a true and full understanding of anything, without a basic acceptance and comprehension of the origin of everything ... in Genesis'²

I want to do tonight what I haven't heard done before, and that's to show you how relevant Genesis 1-12 is to things as everyday today as the daily newspaper. I'm not a big fan of trying to read obscure points of future Bible prophecy into current events and nations (Russia, antichrist, mark of the beast, who the horns are, etc.). I prefer to focus on the main and plain things; the return of Jesus, and the salvation of Israel along with the fullness of Gentiles and the fulfillment of any other unfulfilled prophecy (even though we may not agree which those or are or how or when they're fulfilled)

There are pastors who study events in our world and try to equate them with the end of the Bible (as Ken Gentry did a spoof on disp Christians who do their morning devotions in the newspaper [or an updated version would be doing devos watching news on Tevo], some are nervous about bar code scanners, others sing "my hope is built on nothing less than Scofield's notes and Moody Press" ...)

That's not me, but I do think we can safely and scripturally look at events in our world and tie them to events in the *beginning of the Bible*. In fact, I want to argue not only is that valid, it's important we understand everything in the Word *and in the world around us* in light of the worldview that's founded in Genesis 1-12. If you're thinking biblically, Genesis is all around us (and I don't just mean in Sega-Genesis video games). Let's put on our biblical glasses together for news events in the last 30 days in *USA Today*:

- 9/6/10 article "Hawking Book Explains Creation Minus God": 'Why stop with just arguing about God? Describing the creator as "not necessary" is just another day at the office for Stephen Hawking ... 'we're saying there is no need for God to explain the universe ... "The book [*Grand Design*] was really written to address two questions. Where did the universe come from and why are the laws of the universe so finely tuned to allow our existence," ... Hawking says in the new book that cosmologists have made a mistake ... with "the usual assumption in cosmology that the universe has a single definite history," ... they have grappled with a unifying theory explaining both gravity and nuclear forces (now unreconciled by standard theories) ... It costs precisely zero energy (and zero anything else) to make an entire universe ... [and a lot of big words to say basically it's no big deal, no big God]
- Prop 8 (can you think of what in early Genesis speaks to)?
- Death penalty for murderers? (Gen. 9:6)
- Abortion / view of children? (9:1, 6)
- Weather section / changing of seasons / flooding (8:22)?
- Clothing section of newspaper? (Gen. 2-3)
- Conflict between Israel and other nations? (Gen 12ff)
- Crime section of paper? (Gen. 3, 4, 6, etc.)
- Iraq (is the area of Iraq mentioned in Gen 1-12)?
 - o Garden of Eden?
 - o Tower of Babel (Heb. word for Babylon)

- Abraham's hometown Ur of Chaldees (another name for those living in later Babylon)
- Countries that view women less than men? (1:27, 2:23-24)
- All the nations, language, and people in news (Gen. 10-11)

Most importantly, the events of early Genesis are the solution to all sin and suffering we see. The foundation for the gospel and Jesus is undermined if we do won't or don't contend for the faith in the beginning of the Bible. Jude tells us we must contend for the faith, not just in matters of salvation, which he would prefer to focus on, but Jude brings in historical events from Genesis and other parts of the writings of Moses, as examples of what to contend for, and as literal historical examples of those who rejected God's revelation.

A rich man who rejected God's Word and went to hell pleaded for someone to warn his family about eternal judgment. The answer from heaven is: *'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them ... If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'*" (Luke 16)

If you don't believe what Moses wrote, you don't need to see a miracle to believe, you need God to do a miracle in your spiritually dead heart first so you can see and believe. It's not an intellectual problem, or problem with your physical eyes or ears, it's a spiritual moral problem, a refusal to listen resulting in judicial blindness. If you don't believe Moses, how will you believe in Christ's gospel?

In John 5:46, Jesus Himself said it this way: *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. **But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"***

Christian scholars who accept evolution or its assumptions don't seem to get this, but young people are smart enough to get this. I think teenagers and younger can see through all the sophisticated language grown-ups use to explain why we don't need to contend for Genesis 1 when there's different Christian views besides a literal 6-day creation, it doesn't really matter as long as you know God is the Creator (however it went down) and Jesus is the Savior. It *does* matter whether or not we believe what Moses wrote, what God said about earthly things. Look at John 3, when Jesus gave the gospel to Nicodemus: 3:12 ***"If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ...¹⁶"For God so loved the world ...***

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to put 2 and 2 together: if the Bible doesn't speak accurately about earthly things how can we be sure of its truth about heavenly things like salvation? If God can't get it right in little details of OT history, can we be confident that the NT history of Christ is also accurate in its details? If we're not sure He actually *created the world*, like it says (maybe it was really a "big bang" and billions of years), are we sure He actually *loves the world*, like it says? If the first judgment of the flood wasn't global, then when Peter makes that parallel to the final judgment, will the coming judgment of fire be global, or a local Mesopotamian fire? Will the new heavens and earth take billions of years as we wait?

Many well-meaning and smart Christian adults and leaders don't understand why Jude is so earnest about contending earnestly for the faith in Genesis when smart Christians have different views, but I think you young people are smart enough to pick up on this. We can contend for the deity of Christ in John 1 all we want and the virgin birth in Matthew 1 all we want (which science also says is impossible, by the way) but if we don't contend for Genesis 1, we have no leg to stand on, no foundation. We have a house built on sand that can't withstand the postmodern storms that will come.

****SLIDES HERE OF YOUTH LEAVING THE CHURCH WHEN GROWN****

Jude's message is as urgent and relevant as when he first wrote it. Both the beginning and end of the Bible is vital. The fact that there are mockers of the faith and more now than in the past shouldn't shake our faith, it should strengthen our faith, as we stand, and don't bend, and contend earnestly for the faith. The presence of those who mock the stories of Genesis is actually an evidence of the truthfulness of Scriptures, like 2 Peter 3 that prophesied mockers would come and even some of the very things they would say, that I've heard some say on TV. Listen to Jude:

¹⁷But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers ... ²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith [that's what I hope we'll do in these Sunday PM studies, with the help of the Holy Spirit], praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. ²²And have mercy on some, who are doubting [if you have doubts or question, please share those with us or your leaders and we'll address them in the future hopefully in a merciful way]; ²³save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. ²⁴Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

¹ <http://biologos.org/blog/was-adam-a-real-person-part-i/>

² Henry Morris. *The Genesis Record*.