

Christ in Prophecy

Conference 21: "Dave Reagan on the Beginning and the Ending, Part 1"

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Opening

Reagan: Genesis and Revelation are two of the most abused books in the Bible. They have been spiritualized by interpreters into meaning anything except what they plainly state. So what about it are Genesis and Revelation to be interpreted literally or should they be dismissed as poetry that contains no literal meaning? Stay tuned.

Introduction to Presentation

Greetings in the name of Jesus our blessed hope and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Folks I have been preaching God's Word for over 30 years and during that time I have become increasingly incensed over the way so many Christians insist on spiritualizing what the Bible says in Genesis and Revelation about the beginning and the ending of human history. I recently decided to take the bull by the horns by preparing a hard hitting presentation called, "The Beginning and the Ending." Here now is a portion of that presentation.

Presentation

Let's get started by taking a look at the words that begin the Bible and end the Bible. The Bible begins with these words. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Bible ends with these words, "He (Jesus) who testifies to these things says, 'Yes I am coming quickly.'" Amen! Come Lord Jesus. The Bible begins with a revelation. The Bible ends with a promise. And I want to ask you something do you believe these words? Do you truly believe them with all your heart without any reservation whatsoever? And I want to tell you this if you do you are an exception to the norm.

For the fact of the matter is that the vast majority of all Christians both Catholic and Protestant and even evangelicals do not accept the plain meaning of these verses. The reason is that the beginning and the ending of Bible are the two most abused areas of God's Word. And that's because they have been spiritualized into meaninglessness. Now for those of you who might not be familiar with that particular term let me tell you that it means to argue that the plain sense meaning of Scripture is not its true meaning. That it always means something else.

I want to give you a classic example of spiritualization taken from the writings of this man a renowned theologian of the 20th Century by the name of Lorraine Bettner and it has to do with his interpretation of Zechariah 14:1-9. Now those of you who are familiar with this very famous prophetic passage know what it says. In those nine verses it says that in the end times the City

of Jerusalem will be surrounded by enemy forces. Which I assume will be the Antichrist and his forces. It says that as Jerusalem is about to fall that the Lord will come back in glory and majesty to the Mount of Olives. It says that when His feet touch that mountain it will split in half. And it says on that day Jesus will become King over all the earth. Just as simple as it can be any ten year old could understand it. But in his commentary on this passage Lorraine Bettner completely and totally spiritualized it. Here is what he said it meant he said, "First of all the Mount of Olives stands for the human heart, not the Mount of Olives." He said, "That the enemy forces around Jerusalem and around the Mount of Olives stands for the evil forces in the world that are attacking the human heart." He said, "The return of the Lord there is simply personal salvation; what happens when you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior." And thus his conclusion was that when Jesus comes into a person's heart, the heart splits in contrition. And all the evil forces in the person's life are defeated. And Jesus becomes King of that person's heart. Now I want to tell you something that's what I call a great exercise in imagination. It just makes the passage meaningless.

I personally know a lot about spiritualization because I grew up in a church that specialized in this perversion of Scripture, and I will give you an example. Let's go back to this passage Zechariah 14:1-9 and let me tell you about it. In the church that I grew up in was Amillennial did not believe that there would ever be a millennial reign of Jesus on the earth. The only sermons that I ever heard about Bible prophecy always emphasized one statement over, and over and over. And that statement was this, "There is not one verse in the Bible that even implies that Jesus will ever put His feet on this earth again." I heard that, over and over and over. When I was about 12 years old I was flipping through the Bible one day we never studied the Old Testament. I was just flipping through it and came to Zechariah 14 read those first nine verses I couldn't believe my eyes. I was only 12 years old but I could understand that. So it was just so clear Jesus is coming back to the Mount of Olives. When His feet touch the Mount of Olives it is going to split in half. And it was just so clear. So in fear and trembling I went to my Pastor and I showed him the passage. And I said, "What does this mean?" I don't think he had ever read it. He sat there and he read it, and he read it, and he read it. I thought he was never going to say anything. Finally he stuck his finger in my face and he said, "Young man I want to tell you something. I do not know what this means. But I will guarantee you one thing it does not mean what it says." That was my introduction to spiritualization.

I want to tell you something people love to spiritualize Scripture they love to because when they do they can make the Bible say whatever they want it to say. And guess what? They become God. Most professing Christians today are members of churches whose leaders use spiritualization to play games, fast and loose with the beginning of the Bible and the ending of the Bible. The preaching and teaching that most Christians today hear is based upon spiritualization. And guess what? It converts the opening of the Bible into a mythical story. And it converts the end of the Bible into mythical promises.

Regarding the origins of our planet and life the Bible clearly reveals that both were created by God about 6,000 years ago. Christendom never had any problem with this until about the 19th Century. All the scientist before that time even the man acknowledged to be the greatest scientist who ever lived Sir Isaac Newton believed the biblical story and affirmed it in all their

writings. But in the 19th Century scientist began to challenge the biblical story; reaching it culmination with Darwin's theory of evolution. As the 20th Century began the Bible was on the defensive and the battle came to a climax in 1925 with the Scopes Trial when William Jennings Bryan tried to defend the biblical view of creation while Clarence Darrow mocked and scoffed and ridiculed.

In response to these relentless attacks of scientist Christian theologians began to run for cover. They began to try to make the biblical story line up with the claim of the scientist that the universe is billions of years old and that all life evolved haphazardly from a single source. This was accomplished primarily in one of two ways or a combination of both. First was the Day Age Theory the idea that each day of Genesis represented a million or more years. The second way was the Gap Theory. According to this particular idea there is a gap between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis. And the idea here, and there are different versions of this Gap Theory. But the idea here is that God originally created the cosmos. And then after He created it Satan fell. Satan came to earth. The whole cosmos was thrown into absolute waste and confusion and it existed in that terrible state for some millions or billions of years. Until God finally decided to bring order out of the chaos in which He did the second creation that we read about of the six days.

Some who subscribe to the Gap Theory believe that the recreation process took only six days. But most would contend that the days were millions of years. And thus most Christians today take the Day Age Theory add the Gap Theory and come up with a span of time that is literally billions, and billions of years trying desperately to make the biblical story correspond to scientific theory. Today the Gap Theory or some version of it is held by most Christians even Evangelicals. Many believe that God intervened at some point in those billions of years and created man. Many if not most believe in Theistic Evolution. In other words they believe that God created all life, but that it emerged over a long period of time through a process of guided evolution. When challenged to simply believe the story of the Bible what happens is they respond with scoffing. And I have had some experiences with this.

The first time I experienced it I will never forget it was so shocking. It was about 1982, we started this ministry in 1980. It was about 1982 I went to a church in northern Oklahoma and they asked me to teach the combined adult Sunday school classes in addition to preaching that morning. So I was teaching a Sunday school class on something about Bible prophecy I don't remember what. And in the middle of the lesson just off hand, it wasn't some point I was trying to make, I just made an offhand comment. And the offhand comment was that I just couldn't understand why people couldn't accept the Genesis story of Creation to mean what it says. That God created all life and the universe supernaturally 6,000 years ago. When I said that an explosion occurred, there was a man in the class who jumped up and he began to scream at the top of his voice. It scared me to death. The man said, "I can't believe that you believe such nonsense!" He said, "It's ignorant people like you who make Christians look like fools." And he turned around and stomped out of the class.

Well here is another example of what I am talking about: in 2009 we aired a series of programs with Dr. Jobe Martin. Now many of you know him he was one of our speakers last year. He is a wonderful man of God, scientifically trained man. You remember his story last year? He was a

Professor at Baylor Dental School and he got up and started teaching kids that teeth originated and evolved from fish scales. And there was a girl in the class who came up afterwards and said I would like to challenge you on that. He said, "I've got an open mind." And next thing he knew he had become a believer in Creation because she used the Word of God to convict him. And he devoted his life since then to a Creation ministry. Well we interviewed him on TV. And in one of those interviews there were four interviews in all. And in one of those interviews we talked about the age of the earth. And he confirmed his belief and all of the reasons why he believed the earth was created 6,000 years ago, supernaturally by God.

Well I got this letter. This letter came from a Christian believer in Latvia he watched the program on one of our international satellites. And Latvia is one of the former Russian Baltic Republics. Listen to what he says in the letter: "Is the cause of Christ really advanced by having on your show a wild-eyed fanatic who cannot comprehend the concept of proof? Possibly we are not talking about the same Creator? My Lord cannot lie, thus He cannot create an old looking earth to deceive modern man. Satan's best troops in the battle today to stymie the growth of Christianity are you Young Earth advocates. There are hundreds of reasons that speak of earth's age but the well meaning fools like you refuse to learn science before they argue against it. Dear Sir preach what you will but do not do it in the name of Christianity. Do not make my Lord a deceiver and Christians an uneducated lot."

Unless you think these are isolated examples let me point out that a group of evangelicals have just formed an organization called the BioLogos Foundation. The define purpose of this organization is to convince Christians "that the process of evolution is a tenable, biblical position and is the best Christian apologetic to defend Genesis 1-3 against its critics." This group has actually taken the position that if Christians do not accept the theory of evolution the Church will soon die off because it will be rejected as, "an insignificant cult."

The relevance of what I am sharing with you was impressed upon me yesterday afternoon. Found out I couldn't check in until 3:00 so I sat down at the computer at home and started doing some surfing. And low and behold I ran across the latest edition of, "Christianity Today." I don't know how familiar you are with that magazine. It was founded in 1956 by Billy Graham to expose and defend biblical truths. But if you know anything about it you know that over the past 20 years it has become increasingly liberal to it is about as liberal as you can get today. And yet they claim still to be evangelicals. Here is the latest edition that came out yesterday. "Christianity Today," a picture of a Neanderthal looking man on the cover and the title is, "The Search for the Historical Adam." And the main article theorizes that Adam was really a mythical character and that men evolved from lower life. It is in fact a shameless apologetic for Theistic Evolution.

Let's consider for a moment some of the key questions that are always posed by those who scoff at the Genesis account of Creation. (1) How do you account for the apparent age of the earth? (2) How do you explain the fossil records? (3) How do you explain the fact that light from distant stars is reaching us; light that would have taken millions of years to arrive? (4) How do you explain the complexity of life without millions of years for it to develop? On and on the questions go. From a secular viewpoint the questions appear to present an invincible argument

against the Biblical story. But from a faith viewpoint they do not present insurmountable problems. That's because all of these questions, all of them can be answered by one simple observation; Special Creation always carries with it the impression of age. I want you to think about that. Special Creation always carries with it the impression of age. So if I were to create a full grown tree like that; if I had the power of God to speak a tree into existence. And then I revealed it to you, you would argue all day long it was 10-15 years old. If I were to create a full-grown man instantly and then introduced him to you and ask you to guess his age you would probably say he was at least 18 years old. And if I told you he was 1 minute old you would say I was nuts. In both cases there would be an appearance of age. But it would be an illusion.

Another factor to consider is that the earth looks old because it is in bondage to decay. You see the original earth was created perfect. And the Bible indicates that it was encased in a thick vapor canopy and that there was lush vegetation all over the earth. That's why they find dinosaurs at the North Pole and the South Pole with vegetation in their stomachs. But that earth was spoiled by the sin of man. When Adam and Eve rebelled God responded by putting a curse on the earth and all of creation was put in bondage to decay. And if you don't believe that just go back to your room and look in the mirror. We are in bondage to decay. That second earth was then further radically changed, radically changed by the Noahic Flood that suddenly created the continents, the great mountains and the chasms.

Consider for example Grand Canyon appears to have developed as a result of millions of years of erosion. But we now know from the Mount St. Helen's explosion in 1980 that such canyons can be created literally over night, they do not require eons of time. But let's get back to the basic issue. The Bible teaches that God is omnipotent. He could therefore have created the whole universe in the twinkling of an eye. God does not need time. Time is the god of evolutionist. God does not need time. He choose instead to create the universe and all of life in it in six days because the Bible says He gave that to us as a model for life namely that six days of labor should be followed by a day of rest.

Let's return now to those questions of the skeptics. How do you account for the apparent age of the earth? Answer: The apparent age is just that. It is apparent and not real. Again the original earth looked old the day it was created. And that appearance of age has been accelerated by the curse of God which put the whole universe in bondage to decay. Nor is it dishonest of God to create an earth that looks old. Again the appearance of age is a corollary of Special Creation. Furthermore God has clearly told us how He created in His Word. How can He be accused of deception when He has told us how He did it? (2) How do you explain the fossil record? The answer is very simple the fossil record is not a record of age. It is the record of an historic event the Noahic Flood the entire fossil record was laid down in the great catastrophic event. (3) How do you explain the light of distant stars reaching the earth? Answer God created the light of the stars already reaching the earth. Therefore what we observe today through a telescope is what has been happening to those particular creations since 6,000 years ago when they were created. No matter how far away they are because the light was created reaching us.

How do you explain the complexity of life without millions of years for it to develop? Answer: God does not need time for Special Creation. Thus when Jesus converted water into wine at the

marriage feast in Canaan he did so instantly proving that He was the God of time. With God there is no need for time. To try to solve the contradiction between scientific theory and the Biblical Story by using the Gap Theory or the Day Age Theory is an admission that God needs time when He does not need it.

Incidentally one problem with the Gap Theory is that it appears to contradict a statement in Scripture, look at this statement in Isaiah 45:18, "For thus says the Lord who created the heavens. He is the God who formed the earth and made it. He established it and did not create it a waste place but formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord and there is none else." And both the Gap Theory and the Day Age Theory contradict the fundamental teaching of the Bible that death did not exist before Adam and Eve. You see if you believe in the Gap Theory or the Day Age Theory then you believe that there was life long before Adam and Eve. There was life and death. That the fossil record was laid down over billions of years, and there was constant life and death and survival of the fittest long before man came on the scene. But the Bible says death was the result of sin. So these concepts directly contradict what the Bible has to say on this.

The whole theory of evolution is the greatest fairy tale every concocted by the depraved mind of man. The complexity of both the universe and life attest to Intelligent Design and the necessity of a Creator as Dr. Morris pointed out today. And as he pointed out, he stole my example. All my life I wanted to go one place and the Board of Trustees for our 50th Wedding Anniversary present gave us a free trip to South Dakota so I could go see the place I wanted to see since I was in junior high school. I went up there and I saw it with my own eyes and I took this picture of Mount Rushmore. And as I stood there I thought, "Wow isn't it amazing what can happen accidentally as a result of erosion." Now I want to tell you something folks. Anybody who stood in front of this and said that would be written off by scientist as an absolutely totally insane person. And yet that same scientist will turn around and argue that both the universe and life evolved accidentally. It is no wonder that Ray Comfort wrote a book entitled, "You Can Lead an Atheist to Evidence but you Can't Make Him Think."

Take for example the theory that the creation of the universe began billions of years ago with a big bang. This theory is based on supposed evidence that the universe is expanding. But the Bible has an explanation for this. Eleven times we are told in the Scriptures that God stretched out the heavens from the point of creation. Here is one example from Isaiah 42:5, "Thus says God the Lord who created the heavens and stretched them out. Who spread out the earth and what comes from it? Who gives breath to people on it and spirit to those who walk in it?" If the universe truly is expanding then it is most likely leftover momentum from God stretching out the heavens. The whole idea of the universe originating from a big bang explosion is absolutely preposterous. Let me ask you a simple question: How many explosions have you ever witnessed or heard of that produced order instead of chaos? Come on folks. And how many explosions have ever occurred from nothing? Nothing exploding? I was sitting there the other day thinking about that and so help me as I was thinking about it I was clicking on the internet and I ran across this poster. Big Bang Theory, in the beginning there was nothing which exploded.

The whole idea of the universe and life originating from an explosion is as absurd as thinking as some evolutionists has postulated that if you would only give 10,000 monkeys enough time they would eventually produce the entire works of Shakespeare by randomly taping the keys of a typewriter. I told you their God is time. Just give us enough time.

And concerning the Theory of Evolution that's it, it is just a theory. As John Morris pointed out so brilliantly today the scientific method requires observation. No scientists were present to observe the creation of the universe or life. The only person who was present has revealed to us in His Word how it happened. The reality is that the advocates of the theory of evolution have been running for cover ever since the discovery of DNA and its incredible complexity. So much so that Richard Dawkins one of the worlds's leading evolutionists recently said he was giving up on evolution. He said he had come to the conclusion that life came here either floating on crystals through space, or was planted here by aliens. This is one of the world's leading scientist's folks.

The bottom line as John Morris pointed out so beautifully today is that these so called scientist are unwilling to admit the existence of a creator God because they don't want anyone to be responsible to. The Bible sums it up best in the Old Testament it says, "The fool has said in his heart that there is no God." In the New Testament, "Even though they knew God they did not honor Him as God but they became futile in their speculations professing to be wise they became fools."

Closing

Next week the Lord willing we will present the rest of this presentation as it relates to the book of Revelation and End Time prophecy. I hope you will be back with us at that time. Until then the Lord willing this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries saying, "Look up, be watchful for our redemption is drawing near."

End of Program