

24-1020a Transcript

24-1020a - [_Why Are We Losing Them When They Leave For College?](#)^[1]

Read by Scott Reynolds, **Bible Readers:** Roger Raines and Wyatt Woosley

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Why Are We Losing Them?

Transcript (0:04 - 37:05)

Scripture Readings

1st Reader: Roger Raines

(0:04) Today's scripture reading is Genesis 1st chapter 1 verse 1. (0:10) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Amen.

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2nd Reader: Wyatt Woosley

(0:20) Good morning, I'm going to be doing the second scripture reading and that is 2nd Peter chapter 3 (0:27) verses 3 through 5. 2nd Peter chapter 3 verses 3 through 5. Above all, be aware of this, (0:36) scoffers would come in the last days, scoffing and following their own evil desires, saying, (0:44) where is this coming that he promised? Ever since our ancestors fell asleep, (0:50) all things continue as they have been since the beginning of creation. This concludes this reading.

2 Peter 3:3-5 (NKJV)

knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,

Transcript

Preacher: Scott Reynolds

KEVIN CAIN, JD

[Editor's Note: The following article was written by A.P. auxiliary staff writer, Kevin Cain, who holds degrees from Freed-Hardeman University (B.S., M.Min.) and the Doctor of Jurisprudence from South Texas College of Law. A former Briefing Attorney of The First Court of Appeals, his current practice focuses on litigation at the trial and appellate levels in both State and Federal Courts.]

Why Are We Losing Them When They Leave For College?

(1:01) Good morning, it's good to see everybody. I came across an article on the Apologetics (1:07) Press website and apologetics is, if you remember from Tom's Wednesday night class on apologetics, (1:15) it's not feeling sorry for something and apologizing for it, but it is reasoned arguments (1:22) and writings and justification of something like a theory or a religious doctrine.

(1:29) Anyway, I came across this article on the Apologetics Press website that I felt we (1:37) needed to see. It's on a significant relevant topic and expertly written. I'd like to present (1:44) it to the church in accordance with the Apologetics Press copyright permissions (1:49) and the article is entitled, Why Are We Losing Them When They Leave for College? It was published (1:55) in October 20th, 2019 by Apologetics Press Inc.

and the URL for the article to the Apologetics (2:05) Press website is posted in these notes on the website, on our website, and they will be available (2:15) after the presentation today. The article was written by Kevin Kane, JD, and that's a doctor (2:22) of jurisprudence. Kevin Kane began this article by asking, why are we losing them when they leave (2:31) for college? This is Kevin Kane speaking, not me.

We just happen to both have a daughter. So (2:39) we took her to Bible class. We took her to worship services regularly.

We took her to countless youth (2:47) events, trips, and activities. She was baptized at camp when she was 14, and I thought we did (2:53) everything right before she left for college. We did what the preachers and elders said we should (3:00) do when it comes to raising our sweet daughter, and yet when she left home for higher education, (3:08) she also left the church about the same time.

She does not attend worship services or Bible class. (3:16) She's not involved with any other Christians or on-campus Christian organizations. (3:21) She's not in contact with any of her old Christian friends.

She's gone, and it breaks my heart every (3:29) day. Where did we go wrong? Too many parents have lived a similar experience. If it only happened (3:38) once, it would be a tragedy, but when we see it happen time and time again, it's an epidemic.

(3:47) The obvious question is, why? Why are so many of our young people leaving for college (3:54) and leaving the church at the same time? What are we missing? What did we fail to teach them? (4:02) What went wrong? There are countless theories as to why this epidemic continues. (4:08) People speculate that they are leaving because the church is too conservative. (4:13) The music is boring.

The preacher uses too much scripture. The church is outdated (4:18) on its views of marriage and women's roles. Parents were too strict.

The church building (4:25) is outdated, or the youth minister didn't connect with my child on a personal level. (4:33) Theories and opinions abound, but what is missing are facts and objective answers. (4:40) Parents and elders are looking for answers.

Why are they leaving, and what can be done? (4:48) First, are the statistics as bad as we have heard? The short answer is, yes. Campus Renewal (4:58) out of Austin, Texas estimates that between

60 to 80 percent of Christian denominational students (5:07) leaving for college also leave their faith behind as well. Another study by respected pollster, (5:15) George Varna, involved interviews with 22,000 adults and over 2,000 teenagers in 25 separate (5:24) surveys here and after called the Varna study.

And the purpose of this study was not only to (5:34) determine how many young people were leaving religion, but also to find out why. The survey (5:42) among conservative evangelicals concluded that two-thirds of young people give up on religion (5:49) when they head for college. While there are general studies outside the Churches of Christ, (5:55) these numbers are nevertheless alarming.

While the numbers at the congregation where you attend (6:01) may be better, any statistic above zero percent is worrisome. So who's to blame? (6:08) When things go this wrong on this scale, we like to blame the elders, the youth minister, (6:15) the preacher, the church, the church as a whole, global warming, or pretty much anyone (6:22) but ourselves. If we can point the finger at someone before they point that finger at me, (6:29) we don't have to feel too bad about these alarming numbers, right? (6:35) Interestingly, the Varna study delves deep, and I mean deep, into analyzing why these young people (6:42) are leaving religion behind.

For example, the Varna study determined that of all the 20-something (6:50) evangelicals who attend church regularly, but no longer do now, 95 percent attended church regularly (7:00) during elementary and middle school. 55 percent attended church regularly during high school, (7:09) and 11 percent were still going to church during college. (7:17) From those stats, we see that only 11 percent of those who left the church did so (7:25) during college years.

Almost 90 percent of them were lost already in middle school and high school (7:35) before going to college. About 40 percent are leaving the church during elementary and middle (7:42) school, and this shocked me when I first read it. We are not losing most of our young people when (7:48) they leave for college and have to face the world alone for the first time.

Most of them are (7:54) checking out mentally, if not physically, as well in junior high and high school. We are losing them (8:02) earlier than we might have thought. The Varna study goes on to make an interesting comparison (8:09) between those who regularly attended Bible class and those who did not regularly attend Bible class.

(8:16) Compared to those who grew up not attending Bible class, students who regularly attended Bible class (8:25) are more likely not to believe all accounts stories in the Bible are true or accurate. (8:33) They are more likely to doubt the Bible because it is written by men and has errors in the (8:39) translation. They are more likely to accept that gay marriage and abortion should be legal.

(8:46) They are more likely to believe that God used evolution to change one kind of animal into (8:51) another. They are more likely not to believe the earth is less than 10,000 years old. (9:00) They are more likely to believe dinosaurs died before people were on the planet, (9:06) and they are more likely to believe that good people don't need to go to church.

(9:12) These statistics appear to be upside down. How could it be that a person who grew up attending (9:21) Bible school is less likely to believe in basic Bible principles as compared to a person who did (9:29) not regularly go to Bible class? That simply does not make sense, I'll admit. I had to read (9:36) these results several times before I finally concluded that I was not misreading or

(9:42) misunderstanding all this.

Are we doing something wrong or missing something in a traditional Bible (9:50) class curricula? What we begin to see from these important findings in the Barnett study (9:56) is a significant correlation between believing in the creation account and whether they will (10:04) remain faithful to God or whether they will come back to the church. There is a direct tie between (10:12) what they believe about Genesis and their attitude toward Christianity. The conclusion here (10:22) is painfully obvious.

If the authority of God's Word is undermined in Genesis, (10:29) this leads to a slippery slope of unbelief about the whole of the Bible. If we as teachers, (10:37) parents, preachers, and elders have been chipping away at the accuracy and reliability (10:44) of the events in the first 11 chapters in Genesis, or we ignore cultural attacks on (10:51) Genesis 1-11, if we really cannot rely on these events as being historically accurate, (10:58) why should we believe in the accuracy of the details of the life of Joseph in Genesis (11:04) chapters 37-50? Why should we believe the accuracy of Moses delivering Israel from slavery (11:12) in the book of Exodus? Why believe the account of David and Goliath? How could we believe in (11:19) the miracles of Elijah and Elisha? Why should we even believe the prophecies of Jesus? Ultimately, (11:28) why believe the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John if we cannot rely on the accuracy (11:37) of Genesis 1-11? Our kids are smart enough to know that when we compromise in one area of the Bible (11:47) like Genesis 1-11, we can hypocritically compromise wherever we want. The damage has been done, (11:56) and for most of our young people, it depends on how they view the foundation and the very (12:02) beginning of the Bible and the creation account.

The Barnett study also looked into the beliefs (12:11) of young adults who said they planned to return someday, like when they have kids of their own, (12:20) versus those who never planned to return. When asked, do you believe all the books of the Bible (12:29) are inspired by God? Of those planning on returning, 76.4% said yes. Of those never coming (12:40) back, only 41.9% said yes.

Do you believe in creation as stated in the Bible? Those planning (12:49) on returning, 92.1% said yes. Those never coming back, only 47.8% said yes. Do you believe in the (13:01) creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? Those planning on returning, 91.3% said yes.

(13:09) Those never coming back, only 50.6% said yes. Do you believe all the accounts, (13:16) stories in the Bible are true or accurate? Those planning on returning, 58.5% said yes. (13:24) Those never coming back, only 16.8% said yes.

Those who have left and never planned to return (13:34) have serious doubts about the accuracy of the Bible, especially when it comes to creation. (13:42) In those early formative years, they were clearly left with questions and reservations (13:47) about the reliability of God's Word and the creation account in particular. And now, (13:56) after years of doubting the first chapters of Genesis and years of the constant bombardment (14:01) of evolution in school and pretty much everywhere, and increasing compromise by religious institutions (14:08) regarding creation, they find themselves bogged with no thought of ever returning.

(14:18) In 1859, Darwin published *On the Origins of Species*, and 12 years later, *The Descent of* (14:25) *Man*. In these two volumes, he made popular the idea that single-celled organisms change through (14:33) the process of evolution into ape-like creatures and eventually into humans. In response, (14:42) many of the religious institutions in England and eventually across the United

Kingdom and Europe (14:51) began to adopt Darwin's ideas.

They reinterpreted Genesis' account of creation and proposed (14:57) views such as theistic evolution. They compromised what they had always taught, (15:04) God created the world in one literal week, and tried to engender scientific credibility by (15:11) claiming that God worked through evolution to create the world. To see the long-term effect (15:18) of this compromise, just look at the superficial state of religion in Europe today.

It can be (15:27) summed up by looking at the beautiful cathedrals and the places of worship throughout the continent, (15:34) amazing museums filled with architectural works lacking in the work of the Lord. (15:42) The damage was done, and the slope was more than just a little slippery. This thinking and (15:48) rationale of making compromises in the creation account sent a very clear message to everyone, (15:55) especially to the upcoming younger generations.

It was now acceptable to use man's ideas to (16:03) reinterpret the Bible rather than to use the Bible to judge man's ideas. God set up a system (16:12) where he laid out his divine perspective on how man should view the world, Psalm 32, 8. (16:20) God made man, Genesis 1, 27. Therefore, man should listen to God, the Creator, Deuteronomy 28, verses 1 and 2. (16:35) When man started listening to sources outside of God, a spiritual perspective would encourage man (16:43) to judge those worldly ideas by God's standard to see if they are sound and righteous, Acts 17, 11, (16:53) 1 John 4, 1. But now, young people see organized religion doing something altogether different.

(17:02) Now they see church leaders conforming and changing God's Word to fit alleged (17:06) scientific theories and notions rather than an accurate view of the physical world that (17:13) corresponds perfectly with the Bible. The divine source these young people once believed was the (17:22) truth. Here is the rational next step that signals the beginning of the end for so many young people.

(17:32) If I can't trust the Bible in earthly things, why should I trust it in spiritual things? (17:42) That's a fair question. If you answer that you cannot trust the Bible in either arena, (17:51) then what good is God's Word? And that is the conclusion that many young people are reaching. (18:01) In contrast, if you are struggling and you want to compromise and believe the Bible (18:08) may not be scientifically accurate, but it is still relevant for spiritual matters, (18:16) then think about what message that sends.

Under this perspective, if a young person has questions (18:23) about how to feel about God or think about his fellow man, then you go to church for the answers. (18:30) If you have questions about facts and reality, you go to school and ask your science teacher. (18:38) This practice of trying to harmonize creation with evolution, often called theistic evolution, (18:45) has created an environment where the church has basically disconnected the Bible from the real (18:52) world.

The first chip to fall and where the slippery slope begins is the belief that the (19:00) earth is billions of years old. The battleground is not necessarily evolution, as there are many (19:08) evolutionists who still believe in God, and there are many who do not believe in God and also do not (19:15) subscribe to the theory of evolution. The major attack on biblical authority today starts with the (19:22) attack on the first verse in the Bible.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, (19:31) Genesis 1.1. Thank you, Stephanie, for reading that. Notice the grown level of disbelief in the (19:43) statistics below as they bottom out

on the subject, the age of the earth. 77% believe in (19:54) Noah's ark and the global flood.

75% believe in Adam and Eve and the garden. That's three out of four, three quarters. 62% believe Abraham fathered Isaac when he was 100 years old.

60% believe in (20:12) the Tower of Babel, and only 20% believe the earth is less than 10,000 years old. The number (20:22) one area of disbelief among young people who are leaving religion and their faith behind (20:31) is the age of the earth. This is where we are losing them.

This is where the line in the sand (20:43) has been drawn. For those surveyed who do not believe in the accuracy of the Bible, (20:49) the Barna study asked the reasons why they did not believe the Bible events are accurate. (20:56) Only 24% said they were written by men.

That's only one out of four. (21:06) Less than that, 80% said the Bible was not translated correctly. 15% said the Bible (21:13) contradicts itself.

14% said science shows the world is old. Only 11% said the Bible contains (21:21) errors. Less than that, 7% said there's so much suffering in the world.

4% said Christians do not (21:30) live by the Bible. Notice how low these are. And 4% said evolution proves the Bible is wrong.

(21:41) Interestingly, 82% of those who said they did not believe all the accounts in the Bible that are (21:47) true and accurate did so because of doubts about the authority of the Bible. This is the problem (21:55) and a significant reason why they are leaving. This should come as no surprise to the Bible (22:03) student who knows through inspiration what people will be like in times like this, (22:11) knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, (22:19) following their own sinful desires.

They will say, where is the promise of his coming? For (22:25) ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning (22:32) of creation. Peter continues, for they deliberately overlook this fact that the (22:40) heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, (22:52) 2 Peter 3, 3-5, not evolution. Thank you, Wyatt.

In this period of time where scoffers and (23:03) critics will ridicule faithful Christians for anticipating the return of Christ, (23:08) notice that these people will deny the creation account. And from a simple strategic perspective, (23:16) it makes sense. If you can get them to doubt the first historical act of God in the Bible, (23:23) God made the world in six days, getting them to doubt the rest of the Bible will be easy work.

(23:31) This is not to say that there are not other factors at work and relevant causes of this (23:37) dilemma. However, it seems clear that basic beliefs about the first few chapters of Genesis (23:44) are a significant part of the problem as to why so many young people leave the church. (23:54) So what's the solution? The problem is devastating.

The numbers are heartbreaking, (24:00) and the cause of all this is discouraging. So what can be done? Is the point of all this (24:07) just to scare us and make us feel bad? Or is there something we can do? The good news is (24:14) there are answers and solutions, but it will take hard work to right this shift. (24:20) We need to rewrite our curriculum.

That is not to say that we have not been doing a good job (24:28) of teaching our children about the Old Testament, Christ, the church, and salvation. However, (24:35) we may be under-emphasizing or overlooking a critical component in a balanced spiritual course (24:43) of study—apologetics. We need more classes on apologetics, especially on fundamental questions (24:52) on the existence of God and the first eleven chapters of Genesis, especially the historical (25:00) reality of the creation account.

Please do not be prideful and say, (25:05) we've been doing this for years, or I've spent years developing these lessons. That work should (25:12) not be overlooked and is genuinely appreciated. However, it is time to take a fresh perspective (25:21) of what we are teaching in light of these alarming statistics.

Greater emphasis on apologetics and (25:29) the historical reality of the creation account is needed in our classes. We need to start younger. (25:39) We need to be teaching apologetics at a younger age.

And yes, this obviously includes our high (25:46) school and junior high students, but also our elementary and even preschool children. (25:52) Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (25:59) Proverbs 22.6. Apologetics Press offers a variety of resources to help you instruct and instill (26:07) within our young people the belief and love for God, His Word, and His creation.

(26:13) There is the Learn to Read series that uses the theme of, (26:17) God created everything, to help children begin to read. My personal favorite is Dogs, Frogs, (26:25) and Hogs. These books contain simple phrases like, God made dogs.

Like the early readers we were (26:33) introduced to in public school. These books take simple phrases and concepts, mingle them with God's (26:39) creative power, and ingrain them in precious minds who need to know God. There is also an early (26:48) reader series that uses more words and somewhat more sophisticated topics to impress on slightly (26:55) older children the complexity and beauty of God's creation.

The little boys I read to love, (27:03) God made insects. The girls tend to like God made puppies. There is something for everyone here.

(27:10) The level of information increases when you move to the advanced reader series. These include (27:17) titles like, Copies of God's Design, Human Body, and Migrating Animals. As your children grow in (27:25) their reading skills and in their ability to process information, these readers follow them (27:30) along the way, emphasizing over and over again the reality that God made it all.

(27:39) As your kids get even older, there are books that mature with them while tackling more difficult (27:45) concepts. Dinosaurs Unleashed is one of the best sellers in the apologetics press, (27:51) and the kids love it. The artwork is amazing and the message is invaluable.

God made everything, (27:58) and that includes dinosaurs. There are other books for this stage of life, (28:04) like How Do We Know God is Real? and Wonders of God's Creation. One of my personal creative (28:11) favorites is the Dinosaur Field Journal.

This is a great resource for the adventurer (28:18) inside our sweet children. As they reach their

teenage years, there are other excellent books (28:25) that challenge our young people to question what they are hearing in the world and to be secure (28:32) in their faith. These include *The Dinosaur Delusion*, *Truth Be Told Exposing the Myth of (28:39) Evolution*, *Always Be Ready, Out With Doubt*, *Matter of Fact*, and *Reasons to Believe*.

Finally, (28:47) every student leaving for college should be equipped with the *Defending the Faith Study (28:53) Bible* from Apologetics Press. The Bible is filled with resources designed to arm our teens and (29:00) college-aged youth and older people like me with information to combat the atheistic assumptions (29:06) and difficult questions that so many young people face in school and among their friends. (29:12) This Bible has helps and resources throughout that include scores of special sections that (29:19) cover topics such as God's existence, science in the Bible, God's justice and hell, defending (29:26) the Bible's position on prayer, theistic evolution, and the Bible and slavery.

Comments are written (29:34) and produced by faithful members of the Lord's Church, thorough and complete reputations of alleged (29:41) Bible contradictions and discrepancies, a litany of positive evidences for the inspiration of (29:48) the Bible such as documented archaeological discoveries, comparisons of modern scientific (29:54) findings with the biblical text, and historical evidence that validates the predictive prophecies (30:01) of the Bible. Biblical answers to some of life's most profound questions such as (30:08) why did God create people and why do people suffer? How will it all end? And the good news is (30:16) that while there are many books and resources highlighted in this article, this is just the (30:22) tip of the iceberg. Apologetics Press has countless volumes of books, readers, magazines, and other (30:29) sources to help fortify your children's faith and assist moms and dads in reaching one of their (30:36) greatest goals in life, in their lives.

See their children remain faithful to God. Please take (30:44) advantage of these resources. We need more teachers willing to step up.

If we are going to (30:52) have more classes on apologetics, we obviously need more teachers willing to tackle these classes. (30:59) We not only need teachers to step up in Bible class, but also parents to get more involved in (31:05) teaching and reinforcing apologetics at home. Unfortunately, we tend to think of apologetics (31:12) as somewhat of a specialized discipline where only experts like the staff at AP (31:19) can effectively teach this material.

I'll be the first to admit that the folks at Apologetics Press (31:26) are outstanding teachers and preachers, especially in the area of apologetics. They have unique (31:33) knowledge and talents that make them exceptionally qualified and true blessings in the church. I get (31:39) it.

However, you probably don't know much about how to treat type 2 diabetes or Reye's syndrome. (31:48) Nevertheless, I am confident that if your child was diagnosed with one of these conditions, (31:55) it would not take you long to become an expert in this arena. Your child's physical condition (32:02) would require you to learn a considerable amount of complicated medical information, (32:08) but you would master it because your child's life is worth it.

We need to get just as serious (32:15) and motivated when it comes to the spiritual welfare of our children. Yes, I know apologetics (32:23) can seem a little complex and will require some study and effort on our part, but it is worth it. (32:30) Our children are leaving the church in alarming numbers, (32:36) and a significant reason why is because of how they view the first few chapters (32:42) of the Bible.

The world is constantly attacking the Bible and especially the creation account. (32:50) We need to get prepared. We need to prepare our children.

They are worth it. And it's history, (32:57) not stories. I know this will sound like nitpicky semantics, but please stop calling historical (33:05) events in the Bible stories.

It's not that this is in any way inaccurate, but when children hear (33:13) the word stories, they think of everything from Winnie the Pooh to Harry Potter. The term stories (33:20) can imply that the information to be revealed may not be entirely accurate. When we talk in (33:27) class about the story of creation, our children may be equating this in their minds with the (33:34) fiction in the storybooks we read to them about talking bears and flying superheroes.

(33:41) Let's start talking about the creation account rather than a story. Let's refer to the flood (33:48) as an event or a historical reality rather than the story. We can do better to impress on our (33:57) children that what happened in the Bible, especially in the first 11 chapters, is just as real as when (34:05) man landed on the moon, when George Washington was our first president, and when Shakespeare (34:11) wrote Hamlet.

Let's get real with our teaching. So what is not the solution? (34:20) To the surprise of many, one interesting thing gleaned from the Barna study is that the young (34:27) people largely are not leaving religion because the worship and singing is not cool enough (34:37) to look at some churches who subscribe to the sister act theory of church retention. (34:43) One could easily conclude that young people are leaving the church (34:47) because worship services just aren't exciting enough.

Some have the mindset that if we just (34:54) make our worship and singing culturally relevant, the young people will flood back (34:59) into the pews and stay with us. The statistics simply do not support this assumption. (35:07) Becoming culturally cool may have an immediate short-term impact on enthusiasm and attendance, (35:15) but it's just a band-aid for a much deeper disease.

While contemporary music and concert (35:22) environment is popular these days in many worship services, it is not the problem. (35:30) The Barna study made clear that the primary problem driving young people away is not cool (35:36) worship services, but the rejection of belief in basic Bible teachings. We don't need gimmicks, (35:45) entertaining concerts and light shows and worship.

We simply need the preaching of God's word. (35:53) Are there other things that can be done to help address the problem of young people leaving the (35:57) church? Absolutely. Pray for them every day that God will bless and protect them as they increase (36:03) in wisdom and stature and in favor with man and especially in favor with God.

Remove hypocrisy from (36:11) the lives of elders and parents who interact with these young people. Be consistent with your kids (36:18) in terms of emphasizing the importance of spiritual matters over everything, including sports and (36:26) academics. Keep your kids involved in church and spiritual activities and surrounded by godly (36:33) influences.

These are all helpful and worth consideration. But at the core of this problem (36:41) is whether our kids believe the first few chapters of Genesis. No more excuses, no more compromises.

(36:50) It is time to take a stand and proclaim in the beginning God created the heavens and the

earth (36:58) and after six days God saw that it was very good. (37:05) The invitation is being extended now to anyone who is subject to it. Come while we stand and sing.

[1] Kevin Cain, JD (October 20, 2019), Apologetics Press, Inc. Article, Why Are We Losing Them When They Leave For College, <https://apologeticspress.org/why-are-we-losing-them-when-they-leave-for-college-5738>