

The Bible At the Movies

Summer 2018

Jurassic World 2: Fallen Kingdom

Genesis 1:24-25

July 1, 2018

Focus: We are called to live a life of balance rather than excess or deprivation. All things in moderation (self-control).

Passage: *Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened. ²⁵ God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.*

Trailer Quote: "These creatures were here before us. If we're not careful, they're going to be here after" (2:15)

Intro Paragraph: The Behemoth in the book of Job. Leviathan and the flying serpent in the book of Isaiah. Dragons in the books of Jeremiah and Malachi. Stories of dragons and dinosaurs are legendary in popular culture, and some descriptions in the Bible may fit the characteristics of dinosaurs! Although there are challenges to coexisting on earth, God's entire creation is good. (reference: <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/origins-3-dinosaurs-in-the-bible-chris-jordan-sermon-on-creation-152165?page=1>).

Message

Welcome and Intro to the series...

So, here we go again. Once more our society is threatened by runaway dinosaurs who are going to eat everyone and take over the world. The original movie release was in 1993 and this movie, Fallen Kingdom, is the fifth in the franchise, unless you include the two Lego versions (LOL). The basic plot of each of the Jurassic movies is this; after discovering fossilized DNA of a dinosaur, scientists believed that they could re-create a dinosaur and bring back the species. With the help of a well-meaning philanthropist, a theme park like experiment is started – that inevitably goes haywire. Dino's run wild, people get eaten, it's just not good. This latest release has Dino's being shipped to a major city where they... wait for it, break out of their captivity and start wreaking havoc. Didn't see that coming, right. So, feel free to check out the movie, I give it 3 stars out of five but, parents, it's a bit graphic so I would not recommend it for young children.

So, let's hit the first question people of faith tend to wrestle with when it comes to this area of science... what does the Bible say about dinosaurs? The answer is, very little... primarily because they are long gone by the time the Bible is being written down as we know it today. But, that raises other questions, right? Let's dive in and see what's going on here.

The Bible was first translated into English in 1611 (King James Version). The first fossil was discovered in 1690 and was thought to be of a giant human but was most likely not. In 1830 a dino fossil was found in England of what was thought to be a giant lizard. The word 'dinosaur' wasn't invented until 1841 –by Sir Richard Owen, a British scientist. (Dinosaur = deinos meaning terrible or wonderful, and sauros meaning lizard). So, just to make you think a moment,

George Washington, our first POTUS never knew about dinosaurs. So, we shouldn't be surprised that we don't see that word in the Bible! But, great beasts *are* referred to in the Bible. Take for example:

"I want to emphasize Leviathan's limbs and its enormous strength and graceful form. ¹³ Who can strip off its hide, and who can penetrate its double layer of armor? ¹⁴ Who could pry open its jaws? For its teeth are terrible! ¹⁵ The scales on its back are like rows of shields tightly sealed together. ¹⁶ They are so close together that no air can get between them. ¹⁷ Each scale sticks tight to the next. They interlock and cannot be penetrated. ¹⁸ "When it sneezes, it flashes light! Its eyes are like the red of dawn. ¹⁹ Lightning leaps from its mouth; flames of fire flash out. ²⁰ Smoke streams from its nostrils like steam from a pot heated over burning rushes. ²¹ Its breath would kindle coals, for flames shoot from its mouth. (Job 41:18-21 NLT).

This passage says that leviathan is a fire-breathing dragon like beast! Is that possible? Fireflies or lightning bugs are winged beetles that use light to attract mates or prey. This is a chemically-produced light from the lower abdomen. The electric eel is capable of generating powerful electric shocks, which it uses for hunting and self-defense. The bombardier beetle ejects a noxious chemical spray in a rapid burst of pulses from special glands in its abdomen that is accompanied with a popping sound. So, is it possible that our infinitely creative God could have also made fire-breathing dragons? Yes!

The word that is translated as dragon, serpent, sea monster or dinosaur shows up 28 times in the Bible. But, the Bible is not the only place where dinosaurs are talked about. Other civilizations have dino stories too:

- A Sumerian story dating back to 2000 BC tells of a hero named Gilgamesh, who, when he went to fell cedars in a remote forest, encountered a huge vicious dragon that he slew, cutting off its head as a trophy.
- When Alexander the Great (c. 330 BC) and his soldiers marched into India, they found that the Indians worshipped huge hissing reptiles that they kept in caves.
- China is renowned for its dragon stories, and dragons are prominent on Chinese pottery, embroidery, and carvings.
- Petroglyphs (drawings carved on rock) of dinosaur-like creatures have been found.

The descriptions of these animals fit with what we know about dinosaurs. The Bible mentions such creatures, even ones that lived in the sea and flew in the air. There is a tremendous amount of other historical evidence that such creatures have lived beside people.

Now, I don't offer up all of this as a way to say that I don't believe in the creation account we read in Genesis chapter one. I believe that **God created all things and there is a process that creation follows** because God is a God who makes order out of chaos. I also believe what the Bible says about God and time and that for God, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day. I believe that God could very well have created beasts that lived and died out, either through natural selection or catastrophic events as a part of God process and plan. To limit God to something other than that such as a literal 7 days, or Young Earth theology is placing boundaries on God I am not willing to impose on our God. So, did dinosaurs exist, science tells

us so, the Bible references them, other cultures talk about them. So, for most of us, including church leaders like the Pope, we all believe dinosaurs existed.

Then, what do we make of the problem we find in the Jurassic World, Fallen Kingdom? Where humans have decided that we can “make” animals, that we can control wild things, that we can mess with the balance of things as God established it long, long ago. Humans trying to overcome or control nature. Complete control or no control. But, God is on the throne and it was good but, when we try to muddle with the things God is in charge of, we mess things up...the tower of Babel story in Genesis is an excellent example.

Now, let’s look at what God has said from the beginning. There is a directive found in Genesis 1 that causes us to see God’s desire for a plan: *Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened.*²⁵ *God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.* **Genesis 1:24-25 NLT.** We look at this passage and we can see a plan put in place from the beginning. The plan starts with an understanding that nature is built to maintain itself. When all things are as they should be, the animal kingdom has an order about itself that include its of perpetuation.

So, God creates everything and sets up a divine plan that God says is good. And then, God does something most of us do not understand, God puts us – humanity – in charge. God gives stewardship of all of creation to humans. Why would God put any of us in charge of something so valuable and precious? I’m mean really, has God seen how we can mess things up? Doesn’t an omniscient God know that we are going to mess this up? The ongoing work of God is handed over to those who are created in the image of God. I believe God thought that, since we’re created in His image that we might care for the things God creates with as much love and tenderness as God does. Look at what Genesis 1:26-28 says about who we are and our work in the world.

²⁶ *Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”*²⁷ *So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*²⁸ *Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”* Genesis 1:26-28
NLT

The whole point of the Jurassic movies is that our greed, fueled by our scientific prowess and a just a little arrogance, leads us to believe that not only are we in charge of all the earth but, we also can create just like God did, out of nothing...a task God did not hand over to humanity. And while being in the image of God makes us creative, we are not the Creator, we are not God. **The lie of the devil is that we can be God** and that lie has led us to believe that we have the power, the knowledge, the skills and abilities to not only care for creation...we can also create things on our own like God. What Jurassic World points out is not only how much we have messed up the care of the creation...we are called to care for the world but, that we are not the creators and

when we take on that role – things have a tendency to get really dicey. Really big dino's with really big teeth and really big appetites start eating people. That's never good. So, what's the answer? How can we stop all the madness and come back to a place where God intended us to be as humans in a unique relationship with God? Well, let's first establish that we are in a unique relationship with God. As humans, we are the only aspect of creation that is made in the image of God. We are to be a representative of God in all we do, all we say, all we feel, all we...you get what I mean. We are to be a reflection of God...not God but, a reflection of God. We are an image of God...like what we see in a mirror or in a painting is an image of the real thing. And how we live our lives in this world, for the short time we're here, is a reflection on God. His calling for all of us, those who are made in the image of God, be the best reflection you can be...every day.

As image bearers, we have been given a responsibility...to care for the world we live in. The best way to do that is to do what God has set in motion from the beginning...to be good stewards of the earth, of animals, of each other. To find the place in the middle of the extremes where life can flourish as it's supposed to because the extremes don't work, we've all seen that time and time again. God is entrusting us with the task of keeping the world a beautiful place where life is sacred but, not crazy or extreme, amazingly wonderful but not so out there that it no longer points to God. That means we look after the beauty of this world without going to polar opposites on how that is done. The extremists exist on every issue and they push the envelope to try and advance their agendas. What I'm saying is that the only agenda that we should be advancing is God's agenda to care for the world we live in.

So, how do we do this as Christians? The first things we need to do is to **adopt a Kingdom view point**. To believe that the entire world is given to us by God and we are stewards of that world. That means we have responsibilities but, it also means we take seriously the facts that we are not in charge and ultimately, we are not in control...only God is. Only God can make things right, only God can fix what is broken, only God can turn our upside-down world right side up. When we try to do it, big creatures with little arms start eating people...not good.

- **Be a good steward**

So, let's plant gardens and trees, let's drive smarter – more fuel-efficient cars, let's control how much of the earth resources we expend, let's eat healthier, let's spend less, let's use less, let's help more, let's do things that are redeeming, let's make bad things better, let's improve where we can...you get what I'm saying, right. But, I'm also saying, eat red meat and eggs once in a while, go to a game just for fun, maybe have a beer or maybe brew your own, go hunting and fishing and eat what you bag, you're with me...right? And in everything we do, let's be known as reflections of God in the world by being the people who:

- **Care for creation**

All things in balance, being good stewards and caring for the world. We would do a lot better to find the middle because the extremes just don't work...they end up eating people.