

THE GAP THEORIES OF CREATION

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Introduction

We all know of the debate between creationists and evolutionists, and of the legal battle that rages between them. Creationists try to force through legislation requiring the teaching of *both* models and the evolutionists are hell-bent on legislation declaring evolution the *only* model allowed to be presented, taught, and believed. Of course, the creationists' venture was doomed from the start since theirs left no room for compromise. They might have had better success attempting to force the creationist model to be the *only* one allowed by law; at least then there was room for middle-ground compromise, namely the two model approach.

What is not widely recognized among Christians and atheists alike is that besides atheistic evolution, there are in the Christian community three rival theories about the creation. Each believes itself the only true theory, and each believes itself conformed to the Holy Scriptures. The three theories are Theistic Evolution, Special Creation, and the Gap Theory, also called the Ruin-Reconstruction Theory. Each of the three theories has several "flavors" to satisfy those groups that want to blend the authorities of Scripture and science to their own tastes. Theistic evolution denies that the days in Genesis chapter one are literal days. That way theistic evolutionists can fit into the Bible the supposed geologic ages that evolution requires. Special creationists take the days literally but will balk at statements like Joshua 10:13 which says the sun stood still. Most special creationists will reject that as literal. Most advocates of the Gap Theory will take the days of Genesis chapter one as literal, and many will accept the literality of Joshua 10:13, but they will balk about the translation of some words, such as "created" in Genesis one, where they prefer instead a more obscure translation such as "recreated." This paper deals with the Gap Theory, the least renowned of the three among Christians.

What Is the Gap Theory?

Though its adherents will vehemently deny it, in the strictest sense, the Gap Theory is a form of theistic evolution. Whereas most theistic evolutionists insert time for evolution into the Holy Bible by assuming that the six days of creation are six arbitrarily long periods of time, the gap advocates put the time needed for evolution into a pre-

Adamic world before the creation recounted in Genesis chapter one. In both cases, evolutionary time is inserted into the Biblical account with no direct evidence. Thus the Gap Theory is a subtle form of theistic evolution.

There are several forms of Gap Theory. Some insist that there is no gap, others freely admit to a gap, and still others will even accept the notion that the days need not be taken literally in Genesis one. Among the latter was C. I. Scofield, popularizer of the Gap Theory in the early twentieth century.¹ Scofield based his theory on words and phrases extracted from Genesis 1, Jeremiah 4, Isaiah 14, 24, 45, and Ezekiel 28, 35. Building upon Scofield's model, modern gap advocates have added pieces from Genesis 6, II Peter 2, 3, II Corinthians 4, and Matthew 13.

All forms of the Gap Theory believe that an indefinitely long time span exists somewhere in the first two verses of Genesis. There are two major opinions for the location of that period of time. The first opinion places the time *before* the Bible begins, before Genesis 1:1. Advocates of this theory claim that there is no gap, and, in a trivial sense, this is so. The second opinion inserts the time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Advocates of this theory believe that Genesis 1:1 speaks of an original earth that existed over an indefinite period of time. Verse 2 is then taken to speak of the destruction of that earth and the rest of the chapter to speak of its reconstruction. This is properly called the Gap Theory because it proposes a gap in the narrative of Scripture between the first and second verses of the first chapter of Genesis. Again, the supposed time period is designed to reconcile the Bible's creation account with the modern theories of geology and biology.

Regardless of where the time interval is placed, the Gap Theory posits that the world that then existed ended with a war between the angels of God and the angels of Satan. The ensuing war supposedly ended when God expelled Satan's angels from heaven, chained them in hell, and then for some inexplicable reason, sent a flood that destroyed the surface of the earth and killed all animals and men who resided in that ideal, sinless world. Many among the gap advocates assign the fossil record to the flood that destroyed that world. Others invoke the evolutionists' Uniformitarian Principle to consign part or all of the fossil record to the eons that the ideal pre-Adamic world existed. Just how death entered into that world is not explained.

¹ Scofield's note to "evening" in Gen. 1:5 says: "The use of 'evening' and 'morning' may be held to limit 'day' to the solar day; but the frequent parabolic use of the natural phenomena may warrant the conclusion that the creative 'day' was a period of time marked off by a beginning and ending." Scofield gave no example of such parabolic usage, and the authors of this paper cannot think of any. Scofield, Rev. C. I., 1917. *The Scofield Reference Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press).

History of the Theory

Setting the debate of what the Scriptures state aside for the moment, let us look at when and where the various gap theories originated.

The Cabala is a body of mystical teachings of rabbinical origin. Apparently the priests, who were the authority in religious matters did not think much of it. The rabbis emerged as the supreme class of Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. They accused the priests of sin and blamed their sin for the city's fall. Thus they usurped the priestly office. So a rabbinical origin means after A.D. 70, and in the case of the Cabala that means from the seventh through the eighteenth centuries. The Cabala is largely based on an esoteric interpretation of the Hebrew Old Testament. It is strongly tied to Gnosticism, the first Christian heresy against which speaks the entire book of First John.

Rabbi Lewis Jacobs, while a lecturer in Talmud at Leo Black College, London, had this to say about the *Shemmitot*, the ancient theory of cosmic cycles:

[It] won much support in the early *Kabbalah* but was eventually repudiated. The theory, as it appears in the *Kabbalah*, runs that there are time cycles each lasting six thousand years followed by a thousand year Sabbath. There are seven of these cycles in all culminating in the great Jubilee after 49,000 years have passed. In one version the whole process begins afresh after the Jubilee. Again in some versions the daring view was put forward that each cycle has its own *Torah*. Thus we are now living in the cycle governed by the *Sefirah*² "Judgment" and the *Torah* we now have is one that is adjusted to such a situation. But in the cycle of "Lovingkindness" a different *Torah* prevails containing only positive precepts. It was this idea, in flat contradiction to the dogma (*sic*) of the immutability of the *Torah*, that caused the later Kabbalists to reject the whole doctrine. **But the doctrine was resurrected by more recent post-Darwinian thinkers in a somewhat forlorn attempt at coping with the problems raised for believers by the evolutionary theories and the new picture of the great age of the earth.**³ (*Emphasis added.*)

² The *Sefirot* is the creative powers or potencies in the Godhead.

³ Jacobs, Rabbi Louis, "Jewish Cosmology" in *Ancient Cosmologies*, edited by C. Blacker and M. Loewe, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.), p. 66. Quote is from pages 79-80. Also see I. Weinstock, 1969. *Studies in Jewish Philosophy and Mysticism* (Heb.) (Jerusalem), pp. 230-241.

In short, the Gap Theory stems from a pre-cabala theory that proposes that the universe is “reincarnated” again and again until it is purified seven times as silver in a refiner’s fire.⁴

The English poet and scholar John Milton (1608-1674), has some elements of the Gap Theory in his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, which is an account of the fall of man. Though Milton recounts a war in heaven and speaks of the fiery demise of Satan’s angels, he does not relate that to the destruction of a pre-Adamic world, nor does he speak of a flood of water; he puts future events (e.g., Revelation 12) into the past:

Who first seduc’d them to that fowl revolt?
Th’ infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv’d
The Mother of Mankind, what time his Pride
Had cast him out from Heav’n, with all his Host
Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
He trusted to have equal’d the most High,
If he oppos’d; and with ambitious aim
Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
Rais’d impious War in Heav’n and Battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl’d headlong flaming from th’ Ethereal Skie
With hideous ruine and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defie th’ Omnipotent to Arms.⁵

The fall of Satan is future, *tu wit* Revelation 12 was written long after his fall in Luke 10:18.⁶ Gappists, however, associate it with the war of the giants mentioned in both Babylonian and Greek mythology. A pre-Adamic world is also found in the *Midrash*, which is a collection of Jewish commentaries written between the A.D. 400 to 1200.

Despite this historical background, most people still believe that the Gap Theory originated with Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) in the early 1800s. Indeed, the theory did greatly gain in popularity in the 1830s because of Charles Lyell’s political treatise, *The Principles of Geology*, a book which was a ruse designed to overthrow the crown of

⁴ Reflecting the words in Psalm 12:6-7: The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

⁵ Milton, John, 1667. *Paradise Lost*, Book 1, paragraph 2.

⁶ And [Jesus] said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

England.⁷ Specifically, it was written against William Paley's (1743-1805) arguments, drawn from natural philosophy, in favor of the divine right of kings. Theologians were not prepared to deal with the subtle deception of Lyell's book, and they were certainly not ready to handle any scientific arguments. The result was that the Gap Theory was adopted as the answer to Lyell.

Why were the theologians so incapable of countering Lyell's "science," in particular the Uniformitarian Principle? The reason is found in the Copernican Revolution. In 1542 Nicolaus Copernicus published his book that proposed the earth rotates on its axis once a day and revolves around the sun once a year. Copernicus knew it was a Christian heresy, but the insistence of its advocates that the new theory be accepted or proven wrong—a violation of all rules of evidence—held sway so that by 1650 the scriptural claims that the earth neither revolves nor rotates were relegated to mythology. "The Bible tells us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go!" was the rallying cry, and one either went along or had no future in either theology or the sciences. Thus it was that a veil was drawn between science and the Bible, and that veil kept theologians in the dark about what the Holy Scripture says about science and natural phenomena. After all, if the Bible cannot be believed in its scientific pronouncements, why learn science if one deals with theology? Thus theologians in the nineteenth century, and even today, could not counter the evolutionary onslaught, built on Lyell's treatise, when it came. It was their capitulation to a humanist science on the matter of the motions of the earth that stripped the theologians of any effective arguments.

Troubled Christians turned to the Gap Theory for their reconciliation with science. After all, how else were they to handle the vast ages required by the Uniformitarian Principle (a principle now known to be totally false even as Lyell knew it was when he wrote his book).⁸ The clear teaching of Scripture is that the universe is only about 6,000 years old. To stretch that into hundreds of thousands, let alone billions of years, required some force-fitting of Scripture. Clearly, the least damaging is to insert it where Scripture is essentially silent.

After 1859, the year Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published his theory of biological evolution, theologians also had to contend with biological evolution. In general, they preferred to ignore it, though when pressed, they could fit evolution into the unspecified eons of the

⁷ To learn more about Lyell's attempt, see Bouw, G. D., 1998. "A Brief Introduction to the History of Evolution," *B.A.* 8(85):9.

⁸ The Uniformitarian Principle is phrased as, "The present is key to the past." This echoes 2 Peter 3:4, "...all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation."

gap. The theory received a big boost with the publication of C. I. Scofield's notes in 1909 and its revision in 1917. The theory has particular appeal to those who are mostly ignorant of science and who feel the Biblical record of origins should be held as authoritative and yet at the same time accommodate science, too.

The Gap Theory and the geologic column

Originally, the Gap Theory only had to account for the geologic column. The geologic column is composed of a hypothetical sequence of rock layers that were allegedly laid down over billions of years. (There are only two areas in earth where the sequence exists, elsewhere, the layers are out of order.) That said, let us examine how the geologic column fits the Gap Theory.

The modern Gap Theory consigns the fossil "record" to the processes going on in the pre-Adamic earth or the result of the war between the angels of God and the rebellious angels of Satan.

The first problem we encounter is that if the fossils were buried in the flood that allegedly destroyed the pre-world, why is there a fossil record at all? If the fossils were deposited during the time the old world existed, then the flood that destroyed that world could not have done much damage. Indeed, it is doubtful that the word formless could have been applied to the resulting earth. On the other hand, if the fossils were deposited during the flood that ended the war, and that war resulted in a formless earth as Genesis 1:2 says, then any fossils in the rocks would have lost their form, too.

The second problem is that the fossil record starts right at the surface of the current earth and extends down hundreds to thousands of feet. So how many feet down did the earth become formless and void? If the surface was formless and void for thousands of feet down, could the fossils have remained in suspension until the earth was reconsolidated when they were embedded in the rocks? The problem with such a theory is that the earth was formless and void until the third day, at least 24 hours during which time turbulence would have to keep rocks in suspension, grinding any animal bodies to mush. If we assume no turbulence, then the rocks would have sunk but the corpses of animals would have risen towards the top. There would not have been any fossils.

The third problem involves evidence for Noah's Flood. We should expect to find two sets of sedimentary layers. A deeper set that resulted from the pre-world's destruction and a secondary, less violent

remnant of the Noachic flood. Yet we see no such fossil record. Nothing in the fossil record shows evidence for two floods. Since Noah's is the only flood unequivocally mentioned in Scripture, it follows that the evidence supports one flood, not two.

Then there is the fourth problem, that some fossils, such as sharks, are identical to the pre-world form and the current world. Why would God recreate some species and not others?

Finally, some who have recognized that the Gap Theory offers no solution to the fossil problem have proposed that God formed the fossils into the rocks to fool the evolutionists. That proposition violates both science and Scripture by virtue of the fact that Scripture teaches that the creation is reasonable because it was performed by a reasonable God (Isaiah 1:18).

Scofield expressed his faith in the Gap Theory to account for the fossil record with these words:

Relegate fossils to the primitive creation, and no conflict of science with the Genesis cosmogony remains.⁹

If this is true, why have evolutionists not discovered it? They persist in insisting that there is a conflict between their molecules to man theory and the accommodation afforded by the Gap Theory. They claim that the layers are of different ages. A layer in the geologic column has its age determined by the kind of fossil found in that layer. A fossil is said to be "older" if it is judged to be simpler or more primitive; less evolved. Thus animals without backbones (invertebrates) are felt to be oldest. Fish are deemed younger, followed by amphibians, reptiles, and finally by mammals as the youngest. This runs full into the face of Scofield's claim. Thus the Gap Theory is inconsistent in that it denounces evolution yet accepts the geologic column and its ages.

If the gap reconciles the Bible with the geologic column, modern geologists do not recognize it. They reject any notion that a worldwide catastrophe formed the rock and fossils making up the geologic column. Such violence violates the Uniformitarian Principle, and that principle is sacrosanct to geology to this very day. If the judgment upon the rebellious angels was responsible for formation of the fossil record, then the geologic column formed rapidly, contrary to the opinion of modern geology.

⁹ The last sentence of the note to Genesis 1:11. In the same note he supposes that animal life only is to be found in the fossil record, but that is not the case; there exist a great many plant fossils, too.

Contrary to the claims of Gap Theory advocates, the ruin-reconstruction theory explains nothing about what we see in the rocks and fossils today. If the earth became formless as Genesis 1:2 says it does, then there could be layers but no fossils in the rocks. For this reason Jack Sofield calls the Gap Theory a “suicidal concept.” By that he means:

Regardless of what tack the Gap Theory sets out on, in regard to the judgmental catastrophe used to punish “Lucifer” prior to or subsequent to the geologic ages, the gap is self-negating. That is, the very concept that spawned it is done away by it. This might be referred to as a “suicidal” concept. In spite of this impasse in logic and the presence of such an imposing dilemma, the Gap Theory is believed to be supported by Scriptural references. This seems contradictory to the very nature and character of the God who says, “...let us reason together...”¹⁰

The Gap Theory and the Fourth Day of Creation

Scofield allows three creative acts. The creation of (1) the heavens and the earth, (2) animal life, and (3) man. The first he relegates to the dateless past and the other two he relegates to the creation of this earth.¹¹ He places the creation of light, the firmament, the sun, moon, and stars, and the plants in the pre-world, rejecting the clear statement of Exodus 20:11¹² that God created everything in the heavens and the earth during the six days of the creation week. His claim is that the destruction was so complete that no light could reach the surface of the earth. Thus it is assumed that the vapor canopy shrouded the earth keeping the light from the sun, moon, and stars from penetrating it until the fourth day. In other words, God neither created nor made anything on the Fourth Day.

However, IIPeter 3:5, which modern gap advocates claim refers to the pre-Adamic world, says the old heavens were destroyed, too, in verse seven. It follows that the sun, moon, and stars must have been destroyed, too, if the Gap Theory is correct. Thus stellar evolution theory (the aging of stars) runs contrary to the Gap Theory for God

¹⁰ Sofield, Jack C. “The Gap theory of Genesis Chapter One: (A Layman’s Critical Appraisal), preface, last paragraph under the heading of “Scientific Dilemmas.” www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=36.

¹¹ Scofield’s note to the word “created” in Genesis 1:1.

¹² Ex. 20:11— For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*.

must have recreated the astronomical bodies on the fourth day after all. Again we see the suicidal nature of the Gap Theory.

Some Questions That Arise

The Gap Theory invites some questions; ones that call into question God's omniscience and omnipotence.

1. Why would the Creator spend billions upon billions of years developing a physical universe into perfection and then suddenly allow it to be destroyed in a shattering catastrophe, especially if he knew it was coming?

2. Why would God allow such total destruction of the earth, which presumably annihilated all forms of life including pre-Adamic cave(?) men and afterwards restore it and refill with the same basic forms of life? Why did he not preserve them in the first place, as he did in this creation? Was his hand shortened?

3. Related to that, since sin was the downfall of the first creation, why would God allow sin to enter the second creation? Why did he not introduce grace into the first creation?

4. In the absence of any statement from Scripture, we cannot automatically assume that the fossils were formed during a gap or indefinite period. Genesis 1 indicates that plants, animals and man were not created until the third, fifth, and sixth days, not before that.

5. If the sedimentary rocks containing the various fossils of all forms of life in the supposed "first creation" is real, then this witnesses of suffering and death in the past eons of time. Since the wages of sin is death, who sinned early on in the first creation to introduce death into that world? Why did billions of years pass before Lucifer's rebellion precipitated the punishment, and for whom, Lucifer's rebellion, or the anonymous first sinner?

The Gap Theory and the Scriptures

Earlier we mentioned that the Gap Theory drew scriptural support from passages in Genesis 1, 6, Jeremiah 4, Isaiah 14, 24, 45, Ezekiel 28, II Peter 2 and 3, II Corinthians 4, and Matthew 13. Before we tackle each group of passages individually, it behooves us to look at the use of English words that are commonly abused by Gap Theory advocates. Two immediately come to mind: *world* and *replenish*.

The word *world* has changed significantly in meaning in the last 200 years. The primary definition in the Old Oxford English Dictionary of 1933 is "Human existence; a period of this." The second definition is "The earth or a region of it; the universe or a part of it." The third and last group is "The inhabitants of the earth or a section of

them.” The first definition runs four columns, the second three and two-thirds columns, and the third runs eight columns. That was the state of affairs in 1933. Today the first definition is “The earth.” That is because modern dictionaries no longer say what a word means but merely chart the most common usage. Such practice was started in the 1960s when the primary definition was still the order of man on the face of the earth. Now that definition is allocated to last place. Significantly, the first usage of *world* in Scripture is found in I Samuel 2:8,

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them.

Clearly, the scriptural definition is the order of man on the face, or pillars, of the earth. Although Scripture does broaden the definition to *the order of man in the earth and creation*, it never is a synonym for earth or heaven.

To claim a pre-Adamic world thus implies an earth peopled by men. It would be more correct to speak of a pre-Adamic earth, especially if there were not men on it. The Gap Theory is thus guilty of building a case by twisting the meaning of a scriptural world.

Something similar is done with the verb *replenish* in Genesis 1:28.¹³ The primary meaning in the O.E.D. is, “Fully or abundantly stocked with things or animals...[or] persons.” It adds that this definition was “very common” between 1533-1660, the time when the A. V. was translated. Until the pre-Adamic world advocates started using it to mean “refill” back in the late 1700s, the word *replenish* was rarely a synonym for *refill*. In the case of Genesis 1:28, the backdrop is the environment which the Lord created prior to man, for man. We see an identical usage of the word in Genesis 9:1¹⁴ There, too, the plants had been restored in preparation for the occupants of the ark as attested to by the olive leaf returned by the dove in Genesis 8:11. Because the primary and most ancient of meanings for *replenish* is to fill an environment prepared for its occupants, Gap advocates cannot insist on using it as a proof for the recreation of a pre-Adamic earth.

We shall now look in some detail at the proof texts offered for the Gap Theory.

¹³ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

¹⁴ And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Genesis 1:1

As is usually the case for men with a pet theory that they want to read into Scripture, the reason the pet theory is not *clear* in the Bible is because a text was either incorrectly translated or else corrupted by some scoundrel who replaced all then-extant copies with his corrupt version. For the advocates of the Gap Theory, the claim is applied to the translation of the entire first chapter, especially the first two verses of Genesis 1. Take the first verse, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” for example. Linguist, anthropologist, and Gap advocate Arthur Custance says of this verse, “As it stands, this cannot properly be translated ‘in the beginning.’”¹⁵ To support his claim, Custance claims that the Hebrew pointings were not in the “originals,” even though Jesus said they were.¹⁶ Custance claims the proper translation is “In first” or “To begin with,” but he freely admits that no early translation or authority goes along with his speculation:

But no authority can be given for any change in the present text [i.e., “In the beginning” —*Ed.*] other than the *feeling* that it does not make good sense.¹⁷ [Emphasis mine.]

The bottom line is that the criticism of Genesis 1:1-2 rests on a feeling.

After 26 pages of “could be” and “maybe,” Custance cautiously proposes that Genesis 1:1-2 should be translated:

In a former state God perfected the heavens and the earth. But the earth had become a ruin and a desolation, and the darkness of judgment was upon the face of it.

Throughout his paper Arthur Custance freely admits that support for his opinions is lacking in the past literature. So the proposed error of translation in Genesis 1:1 must be rejected since it not only lacks support but also violates the continuity implied by the Biblical doctrine of preservation of Scripture (Psalm 12:7).⁴

¹⁵ Custance, Arthur C., 1957. “Doorway Papers: Analysis of Genesis 1:1-2,” Paper no. 11, pg. 1.

¹⁶ Matthew 5:18 “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” The Old Testament is indicated by context (“law”), so the jot refers to the least Hebrew letter, *yod*. The tittle is the least accent mark and so refers to the vowel points, that is, to the Old Testament pointing.

¹⁷ Custance, *loc. cit.*, p. 2.

Genesis 1:2—*vau*¹⁸

Most who claim there is evidence for a pre-Adamic world in Scripture make two major points of the *vau* connective that starts verse 2 in the Hebrew. Now *vau* may be either conjunctive or disjunctive; it may mean “and” or it may mean “but.” *Vau* is the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It occurs about 28,000 times in the Old Testament of which 25,000 times it is used as a connective (and) and 3,000 as a disjunctive (but). It seems about eight times more likely that *vau* is conjunctive than it is disjunctive by sheer chance alone. But the majority of Hebrew scholars consulted for this paper agree that the correct translation is “and,” not “but.” Ditto for all ancient translations except Origen’s *Septuagint*.¹⁹ The LXX’s *de* disjunctive at the start of verse 2 echoes Origen’s preferred pre-world model. He preferred it because it reflected Greek mythology which he deemed superior to Scripture.

Genesis 1:2—Was or Became?

Of course, whether the first word of Genesis 1:2 is and or but is small potatoes compared to the fourth word of the verse: “And the earth was without form, and void.” The preferred reading for most gap advocates is “But the earth *became* without form and void.” They claim that the word, *hayah* in that verse should be translated “became” instead of “was.”²⁰ The problem with that claim is that there is no *hayah* in the Hebrew of verse 2. Even though “was” is not in italics in the A.V., there is nothing there in the Hebrew.

The rule for italics in the A.V. is that words in italics are intended to communicate the sense of the original, although the words themselves are not in the Greek or Hebrew texts. Contrary to modern mythology, the italicized words cannot be ignored or removed without damage to the translation. The translators included them precisely to clarify the meaning in the original, so that there could be no chance of a misunderstanding. This is exactly the opposite of what is taught today, which is that the words in italics may safely be ignored. The first italicized word in the A.V. is the second “was” of verse 2, but the translators deemed the first “was” so nascent to the text that they did not itali-

¹⁸ In this paper we will maintain the A.V. spelling of this letter as found at Psalm 119:41.

¹⁹ Although the *Septuagint* is claimed to be a pre-Christian translation of the Hebrew *Tenach* into Greek, the preponderance of evidence dictates that such a claim is sheer fiction. The LXX is Origen’s sixth column of his *Hexapla*, a parallel Bible. Origen was the author of that version having collated it from several second-century translations of the Hebrew to Greek, which drew from the Greek New Testament where passages overlapped the Hebrew.

²⁰ For instance, see the tract by Arlen L. Chitwood entitled: “Genesis 1:2, ‘And the Earth was...’ or ‘But the Earth Became...’” The Lamp Broadcast, Inc., Norman, OK, p. 4.

cize it. David Lifschultz, once in line to be the high priest, summarizes the debate this way: “If *hayah* were there, it would mean, ‘was.’”²¹

Genesis 1—Created Versus Made

Gap Theory advocates spend a lot of time and paper forcing the Hebrew word *bara* to only mean create out of nothing and to restrict the Hebrew word, *asah* to only mean “make” or “form.” Of course, they are two different words and so cannot have identical meanings. One could point out all the instances where the two words appear interchanged, such as when God says “Let us *make* man in our own image” in Genesis 1:26 and in the next verse it says, “So God *created* man in his own image,” but that is not necessary. If God used the material of the ruined pre-earth to make the present one, then the creation of the heaven and the earth was not a creation but a reformation from existing matter and so should always be used with make, not create. Thus those who place the gap before Genesis 1:1 run into trouble with the use of “create” in the first verse. If they are right, it should read, “made.” Indeed, if the entire first chapter of Genesis describes a recreation or a restoration, why did it not say so? Revelation 10:6²² lumps everything together under the word, “created.” The predominant spirit of the Gap Theory’s advocates is a passion to correct the “errors” in not just the A.V., but all Reformation translations, not to mention the “originals.”

Genesis 1—Sun, Moon, and Stars

Then there is the issue of the sun, moon, and stars. Since these are presumed to exist before the ruin of the pre-Adamic earth, it follows that they were neither created nor made, nor formed on the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19). The text says that these were made on the fourth day; the word *created* is not applied to them, even as it was not applied to the beasts in verse 25 and man in verse 26.

The claim is that a water canopy or a cloud hid these bodies from the surface of the earth and that God removed that obstruction on the fourth day. Some claim that the firmament of Day Two refers to the recreation of the atmosphere, and that the obscuration was due to the waters above the firmament. Gap advocates who want to continue with a vapor or ice canopy from creation to the flood may claim that the canopy was made transparent or translucent on the fourth day, but the

²¹ Lifschultz, David, 2006. Private communication.

²² And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein.

matter of extinction of starlight passing through the canopy to give light on the earth is not considered. The simple fact is that “God set them in the firmament” (v. 17), not above the firmament. Furthermore, the definition of “made” (*asah*) must now be “corrected” to include “revealed.”

Without Form, and Void

The phrase, “without form, and void” in Genesis 1:2²³ occurs in two other places in Scripture, too. Although Isaiah 24:1²⁴ is sometimes thrown into this mix, the Hebrew *tohuw* and *bohuw* do not occur there and neither does “without form, and void.” Instead, *baqaq* and *balaq* are there translated “empty” and “waste” respectively. The broad context of Isaiah 24:1 is a future event, not a flashback to a pre-Adamic earth. Besides Genesis 1:2, *tohuw* and *bohuw* do occur together in Jeremiah 4:23,²⁵ and Isaiah 34:11.²⁶ Of these two, only Jeremiah 4:23 reads “without form, and void”; the Isaiah passage reads, “confusion” and “emptiness.”

Since all but Genesis 1:2 speak of judgment and destruction, Gap advocates insist that Genesis 1:2 must also be the result of judgment. The problem is that in the greater context, the other verses are future events. Jeremiah 4:23 is closest to Genesis 1:2, and the A.V. 1611 even cross-references the two, but the destruction described in Jeremiah is not the destruction envisioned by Gap advocates. The latter is total, while the former involves a flood, not seen in Jeremiah, and a complete erasure of all cities and lands inhabited by pre-Adamic man. Jeremiah 4:23, like the events in Isaiah 24, refers to a future judgment, *viz.* the events described in Revelation, rather than what happened long ago. The subjects of the judgments are Israel and Edom, not the entire world and certainly not a pre-Adamic race. The judgments spoken of are limited to specific peoples and specific places. Jeremiah speaks of survivors on the land that is “without form and void.” Indeed, the Lord even says, “Yet will I not make a full end” in verse 27. Clearly, these verses have nothing to do with a pre-creation world and to read these back into 1:2 is nonsense.

²³ And the earth was **without form, and void**; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

²⁴ Behold, the LORD maketh the earth **empty**, and maketh it **waste**, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

²⁵ I beheld the earth, and, lo, *it was* **without form, and void**; and the heavens, and they *had* no light.

²⁶ But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of **confusion**, and the stones of **emptiness**.

Gap advocates also extract an argument from Isaiah 45:18.²⁷ Gappists claim that “created it not in vain” refers to the pre-world and that to assume otherwise violates Genesis 1:2. But to do this they must refer to the “original Hebrew” and ignore the word “formed,” which, instead of pointing to Genesis 1:2 points to Genesis 1:9-13; the events of the third day, namely the formation of the dry land and the plants, not the formation of the earth on the first day. The simple fact is that this is a statement of intent. God here tells us that he did not create the earth for no reason (in vain) but created it so the finished product could be inhabited to suit his purposes.

Matthew 13:35²⁸

At issue here is the foundation of the world. Gap advocates claim on the grounds that the Greek is *katabole*, that the correct translation is “casting down of the world” instead of “foundation of the world.” *Katabole* is never translated as cast down, being a noun. It occurs eleven times in the New Testament and in ten of these times it is translated as “foundation.” The exception is found in Hebrews 11:11²⁹ where it is translated “to conceive.” One may argue that Isaac, the fruit of that conception was a foundation of sorts. Just because the verb *ballo* is usually translated as “cast,” does not mean that the noun expresses an action. Consider those who feel “cast down.” We do cast or pour foundations even in modern times. This argument is hardly conclusive, especially when to embrace it we must surrender the inerrancy and preservation of the words of God.

Besides, consider the implications of Luke 11:50-51 if the foundations of the world refer to the destruction of the pre-world. Luke 11:50-51 says, “That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.” The generation Jesus is referring to is, in this particular case, the generation that saw his miracles and signs and rejected him. If the Gappists are right, then the sins of the pre-Adamic

²⁷ For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and *there is* none else.

²⁸ That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

²⁹ Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

world, including the sins of the fallen angels, are required of that generation, too. Clearly, this borders on the ridiculous.

II Corinthians 4:6³⁰

This is a rather subtle argument. To a gap advocate, this means that the light of the sun, moon, and stars was revealed on the fourth day. It also solves a dilemma for those who insist that the light created on the first day had to be God's light, which light is eternal and thus uncreated. The interpretation brought to bear is that just as the sinful pre-Adamic world was engulfed in darkness and the new world came to light, so the Adamic nature of the natural man is confined to darkness until the light of the gospel comes in.

The first problem is that the light God created on the first day is not the same as his light. His light is so bright that it would vaporize us in an instant. Instead, he created a light that was weak enough to avoid that problem. Only a spiritual body can survive in God's unadulterated light. The verse means that the light shining in our hearts is spiritually perceived and, as verse seven notes, kept in an earthen vessel "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

This item relates to a claim made by a faction of Gap advocates that the darkness of Genesis 1:2 describes an evil, anti-God condition. Nevertheless, God makes darkness (Psalm 104:20³¹) and it, too, is proclaimed good in Genesis 1:31.³² The whole argument boils down to reading something back into the first verses of Genesis that is not there to begin with.

Fallen Angels

Pretty much all we have examined so far involves criticism of the word of God; changing the words of God to read one's own views back into the text. For those who believe in both the inerrancy of Scripture and the preservation thereof by divine interventions, as taught in Psalm 12:7,³³ and those who know what it means to "keep" his words (i.e., to defend and protect them), the critical comments roll off like water on a

³⁰ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

³¹ Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

³² And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

³³ Thou shalt keep [thy words], O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

duck's back. For those who do not believe in the preservation of God's words, the critical issues serve only to dull the faith and vex the spirit.

In this section we look at the fallen angels. According to Gap advocates, the fallen angels are those who sided with Lucifer and were thrown out of heaven to earth, destroying it in the process. They are now bound in darkness awaiting their fate at the Great White Throne judgment. This is by far the most interesting section. In it we will draw from Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28 & 35, Genesis 6, and II Peter 2.

Isaiah 14

We start with Isaiah 14:1-27. The chapter begins with a restored Israel taking up a proverb against the king of Babylon:

1 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

2 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

3 And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.

4 That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

It is important to realize that this is not the Babylon of the exile. By the time Israel reentered the land under Darius the Mede, Babylon no longer had a king but was an occupied city. The verses after this contrast a troubled Babylon with a peaceful, serene Israel. It is clear from Nehemiah and Ezra, who led the people and priests back into the Promised Land, that such a condition did not exist in their days. In other words, this awaits a future fulfillment.

The crux of the Gap argument starts at verse 12:

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, *Is* this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

17 *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners?

18 All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.

19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and as* the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

The reference has shifted from the king of Babylon to Lucifer, Satan. We have dealt with the Lucifer issue elsewhere and shall not repeat those arguments here.³⁴ Suffice it to say that in verse 12 nearly all modern versions ascribe an attribute of Christ to Satan.³⁵

Having looked at the context and the principle characters, it is clear that Isaiah 14 has no bearing on the fall of Lucifer from heaven. Indeed, in Job 1:s and 2:1 we see that Satan still had free access to heaven, even as he will until his time is short in Revelation 12. There is no support here for a pre-Adamic world nor, it seems, for bound angels, let alone a bound Satan.

Ezekiel 35

Ezekiel 35 is another situation like Isaiah 14. In this case, the king against whom the proverb is taken is Mount Seir, the land of Esau, Idumea. The chapter ends with a passage that is reminiscent of Satan's desire in Isaiah 14:13-15 (see above):

13 Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard *them*.

14 Thus saith the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate.

15 As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, *even* all of it: and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

Because of the similarity, Gap advocates believe that this, too, refers to Satan before the destruction of the pre-Adamic earth. Still, the context is Idumea and mount Seir looking to a future fulfillment. That this reflects back to before the creation is a further stretch than Isaiah 14, which, as we saw, is a tremendous stretch to begin with.

³⁴ Bouw, G. D., 2001. "The Morning Stars," *B. A.* 11(97):69-95.

³⁵ Day star refers to Christ in II Peter 1:19 and morning star in Revelation 22:16.

Ezekiel 28

Ezekiel 28, of all the references we've checked so far, is the only one that actually harkens back to the time of creation; but like Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 35, a third party is addressed. This time it is the prince of Tyre:

- 1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,
- 2 Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart *is* lifted up, and thou hast said, *I am* a God, I sit *in* the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou *art* a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:
- 3 Behold, thou *art* wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:
- 4 With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:
- 5 By thy great wisdom *and* by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:
- 6 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God;
- 7 Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.

Again, there is pride in the prince and the pride reflects back on that of Satan.

In verse 12 the person addressed changes from the prince of Tyrus to the king of Tyrus. This time the allusion to Satan is direct:

- 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
- 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.
- 14 Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.
- 15 Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.
- 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

We learn here that Satan is the anointed cherub that covereth, that he was in the garden of Eden, that he was covered with precious stones, that he is musical, and that he was created in a day—probably the second or the morning of the third. But there is no reference to a pre-world, nor is there any evidence that he was in charge of a mountain of precious stones. We do come to understand from this passage why some young believers lament, “Why does the Devil have all the good music.” He is an expert musician is why, and that ability was created in him. Indeed, it might be more correct to say that his realm was one of music instead of precious stones. He has used both to tempt the covetousness of men, however, with good success.

But there is nothing here that requires a pre-Adamic earth. Everything could have existed in this present creation. The only evidence we have for a pre-Adamic earth is the Babylonian and Greek tales of the gods and their battle with the giants. In the Babylonian account, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the battle of the giants is found in the context of the tower of Babel. The epic mentions the giants shooting arrows into heaven from atop the tower and blood of the gods dripping from the clouds. So, when it comes to Ezekiel 28, there, too, we look to a future fulfillment of Satan’s demise, even as we saw in the previous two chapters we have examined.

Of Giants and Angels

In this section we examine the last two passages in our list, namely Genesis 6 and II Peter 2 and 3. We start with II Peter 2:4-5:

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.

We see that the old world mentioned here is the pre-flood world. “World” still refers to the realm of man, the definition derived from first usage. We also see that the angels that sinned were not cast down to hell until that flood. These are the same angels mentioned in Jude 6:

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Pre-Adamic world advocates claim the reference is to the garden of Eden, (e.g, Satan in Ezekiel 28:13). But if Satan was the leader of

the fallen angels, how did he get into the position Ezekiel mentions if, they were cast and bound before the “recreation”? How can the rebellious angels be bound and yet still have access to heaven and earth as seen in Job 1 and 2?

On the other hand, this is exactly what the sons of God did. These sons are mentioned in Job 38:7³⁶ where they were present at the laying of the cornerstone of the foundations of the earth, that is, in the third day of creation. These cannot be the godly line of Seth, as is often claimed, since the earth was 130 years old before Seth was even born (Genesis 5:3). So these are either some spiritual creatures not identified in any other way in Scripture, or they are angels. Since Jude 6’s only mate is Genesis 6:2, it seems most likely that the sons of God are angels created to minister to men who, by their close association are enticed by their lusts and thus left their first estate, that is, the ministry and office.

Genesis 6:2 and 4 say:

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.

We see that the sons of God sired mighty men of renown. The giants appear to be associated with these children, and we know the problems that Israel had with giants. Significantly, histories of Ireland and Scotland start with clearing the lands of the giants who had settled there.

The final reference is found in II Peter 3:5-7 where it says:

5 For this they [the scoffers of v. 4] willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Pre-Adamic earth advocates take verse 6 to refer to the condition of the earth before its destruction and subsequent recreation. Certainly verse 5 does not describe the situation in Genesis 1:2, though it could

³⁶ When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

describe the state of the earth in Genesis 1:9.³⁷ That situation persisted until the Noachic flood. The world that then was, called the “old world” in II Peter 2:5 and referring to the order of man on the antediluvian earth, perished in the overflow of water. Note that the heavens mentioned in verse 5 are not said to be destroyed in verse 6. They persist to this day, even as stated in verse 7. Some assume that they were destroyed and so claim, correctly so, that since there is no mention of the destruction of the heavens in Noah’s flood, then this cannot refer to Noah’s flood. But clearly, that reasoning is based on the assumption that the old heavens, too, were destroyed which is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. Besides, heavens is plural which means the flood must have destroyed the universe which is the second heaven, also.

Conclusion

We have examined the most important claims of the pre-Adamic earth advocates and found them lacking in both scientific and Scriptural support. Although tales of battles between the gods and giants exist in ancient literature, these are generally associated with a war centered on the tower of Babel. In recent times, the inability of theologians to handle science correctly caused them to turn to the Gap Theory to accommodate evolutionary times. In so doing, they ended up unwittingly accepting evolution.

When it comes to the Scriptures, most of the verses invoked in support of the Gap turn out, in the greater context, to refer to future times of judgment. We saw that Satan is not yet cast down to earth and still has access to heaven. Certainly this was so Job’s day, and that was after Noah’s flood when the angels that left their first estate were chained under darkness.

We conclude that the Gap advocates must critically alter the words God gave to men if they are to fit their speculations and must invoke a myopic view of context when claiming proof texts. Scripturally and even scientifically, the pre-Adamic Ruin and Reconstruction Theory has no foundation to stand on.

³⁷ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.