



“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”
I Thessalonians 5:21



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***“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Acts 16:31***

The RICHES

OF GRACE

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"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

The Gap Theory

- AN UNPROVABLE THEORY -

(All text used in this article is from the King James Bible)

1611)

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 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.”

Genesis 1:1-2

The Gap Theory (or Ruined-Reconstruction Theory) is an attempt by Christian theologians to harmonize the Genesis account of creation with the accepted geological ages. Even though many good and Godly Christians have been influenced by this teaching, it is still a compromised position to reconcile Moses and Darwin. The Gap Theory accommodates evolutionary teaching in that it allows millions of years for the age of the earth. It is only a theory which is unscientific, unscriptural, and unnecessary.

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:”

I Timothy 6:20

What is the Gap Theory?

The so-called “Gap Theory” teaches that there is a gap or long period of time between **Genesis 1:1 and 1:2**. This theory allows for the earth to be millions of years old. It is the belief that God originally created a perfect heaven and earth, perhaps with a pre-Adamic race. But, through Satan’s fall, God brought judgment upon the earth and its inhabitants. Thus, the earth became “without form and void.” This theory holds that the present creation is only a re-creation beginning in **Genesis 1:3**. Simply put, proponents of this teaching believe that before Adam was created, the original perfect creation was destroyed by God because of the fall of Satan.

Where did the Gap Theory Originate?

The man most responsible for the Gap Theory was a notable Scottish theologian named Thomas Chalmers (1780-1846). Around 1814, he proposed the Gap Theory to harmonize the book of Genesis with the teaching of some geologists of his day. As some scientists began to question the age of the earth and to say it was much older than the Bible implied, the Gap Theory emerged and was promoted to accommodate this thinking. Please keep in mind that Chalmers was a contemporary of Charles Darwin (1809-1882). Darwin wrote The Origin of the Species which taught that through millions of years everything evolved. Chalmers would have had access to some of Darwin's earlier writings and could have been influenced by them as many other theologians were at that time. Before the nineteenth century, scientists believed the earth to be no more than 6000 years old. I don’t know of any Hebrew scholar before this time who believed there was a gap between **Genesis 1:1 and 1:2**. In order for Chalmers to teach his theory, he had to correct the King James Bible in **Genesis 1:2**, changing the word “was” to “became,” saying it was a mistranslation. This theory has been popularized by the book Earth’s Earliest Age (1876) by George H. Pember and by the footnotes of the Scofield Reference Bible (1909). Another promoter of this theory was Clarence Larkin’s book Dispensational Truth (1918). Before the 1800’s, no one translated **Genesis 1:1-2** as the Gap Theorist does.

Gap Theorists use to promote their teachings is **2 Peter 3**. They say that the “*world that then was, being overflowed with water perished*” in **2 Peter 3:6**, is a reference to the gap in **Genesis 1**. But, according to **2 Peter 2:5**, the world that perished was Noah’s world and not a pre-Adamic world. The Apostle Peter is not referring to two different floods in **2 Peter 2** and **2 Peter 3**. The same terminology is used in both chapters. **2 Peter 2:5** speaks of a flood that destroyed the world in Noah’s day, which is called “the old world; **2 Peter 3:6** speaks of “*the world that then was.*” It is interesting to note that Jesus never spoke of a gigantic tragedy or gap even though He mentioned Noah’s flood (**Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:27**). The only flood Jesus ever spoke of was Noah’s flood and He called it “the flood.”

10. There is no **scientific proof** that the earth is millions of years old. There is evidence of a young earth, less than seven thousand years old. This fits the chronology of the Bible itself. There are many good scientists and theologians who believe in a young earth. There are many good books and materials available for Christians who desire to study this subject.

Conclusion

Even though most people who accept the Gap Theory believe the Bible and oppose evolution, they still unknowingly accept many evolutionary teachings and interpretations. This theory leads to doubt and speculation when it comes to the Scripture, instead of relying on “**thus saith the Lord.**” I do not know of anyone personally who thought of this teaching on his own. He had to be taught it. It did not come from his study of Scriptures. If a man was put on a deserted island with only a Bible and no former training, he would never come to the conclusion that there was a gap or a long period of time between **Genesis 1:1 and 1:2**.

destroyed in **Jeremiah 4:27**. The city of Jerusalem is referred to in verse twenty-nine. This prophecy describes what is going to happen to Palestine when the Babylonians would come. Please remember, the context must be considered when looking for truth in the Bible. Two other verses used by the Gap Theorist's are **Isaiah 24:1** and **Isaiah 45:18**. Neither of these passages are associated with a gap in **Genesis 1**, but are dealing with prophecy.

7. The word “darkness” in **Genesis 1:2** is used to promote the Gap Theory teaching. They consider darkness as unnatural and evil since God is light. Their argument is that God originally created the world in light and later plunged it into darkness because of Satan's rebellion. The problem with this argument is that God is the author of darkness. According to **Psalms 104:19-24**, physical darkness is not evil. It is considered a blessing to man because it is for his good. It allows him to rest from a day's work. God created darkness according to **Isaiah 45:7**. In **Psalms 18:11**, darkness is said to be God's secret place, and **Exodus 20:21** tells us that God was in a thick darkness on Mount Sinai. Each day of the creation week began with darkness (night time) and ended with morning (**Genesis 1:5**).

8. The word “replenish” is another supposed proof text for the Gap Theory. In **Genesis 1:28**, God told Adam to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it. Noah was told to do the same thing in **Genesis 9**. The argument is that the earth was once filled but now had to be refilled, that is, filled again. First, there were no people before Adam, so how could he refill the earth again with people. Secondly, it is assumed that the word “replenish” means only to refill. In the 1828 Webster's Dictionary the primary definition is to “fill” with no thought of a repetition, and the secondary definition is “to fill again.” So the word means to fill up the earth completely, or fully. To replenish means to fill the earth with people. If there were no people before Adam how could he refill the earth with people?

For a further study, please consider the Hebrew word that is translated replenish and its meaning.

9. The teaching of the Gap Theory actually minimizes **Noah's flood** in **Genesis 6-8**. It fails to connect the flood of Noah with fossils, dinosaurs, and the present formation of the earth. If these things are a result of the Noahic flood, then there is no need for a gap. One of the key passages the

Why is the Gap Theory Wrong?

1. The **chronology** in the Bible gives us the only accurate record of creation and when it took place. Usher's Chronology gives the date of creation at about 4004 B.C., making the earth about 6,000 years old. The actual six days of creation are recorded in **Genesis 1**. **Genesis 5** gives the time from Adam to the flood and **Genesis 6-11** gives the time from the flood to Abraham. From **Genesis 12 to 2 Chronicles** we have the time from Abraham to the captivity, also giving the length of time the kings reigned. Then Daniel's seventy weeks in **Daniel 9** take us from the time of the captivity to the Messiah. The Bible record is so accurate that the Jews knew when and where the Messiah would be born. When God said, “In the beginning” in **Genesis 1:1**, He is referring to the creation of all things which included the creation of man on the sixth day. According to **Matthew 19:4**, the Lord Jesus Christ referred to the creation of man and the institution of marriage as being in the beginning, that is, the beginning of the universe and time as we know it (**Mark 10:6 and John 1:1**).

2. According to **Exodus 20:11**, the entire creation was completed in six days, that is, everything that exists in heaven, earth and the sea. “*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.*” The phrase, “**and all that in them is,**” would include man, angels, Lucifer, dinosaurs, stars, animals, etc. This verse proves that nothing was created before the six days of **Genesis 1**. Some people try to make a distinction between the words, “create” and “made”, especially in this verse where the word “made” is used. But both are used in **Genesis 2:4** to describe the same event. The word “formed” is also used in the creation of Adam and Eve. Other references to consider are **Colossians 1:16**, **Genesis 1:26-27**, **Matthew 19:4**, **Isaiah 45:12**, **Ps. 96:5**, and **Deuteronomy 4:32**. Anything that was “made” by the Lord was “created” by Him, because both words are interchangeable in Scriptures. If God created everything in six days, there is no room for a long period of time between **Genesis 1:1** and **1:2**. Even Webster's Dictionary defines “create” as made and “made” as create.

3. The Gap Theory destroys the meaning of the words “**very good**” in

Genesis 1:31. There is no way the earth could have been called “very good” if God had previously destroyed it with all its life form before the six days of creation. This view would place the Garden of Eden over a graveyard. The fossil record that gives evidence of a violent death and burial on a world-wide scale took place in Noah’s flood, not before the six days of creation. According to the Scriptures, there was no death before Adam (**Romans 5:12, I Corinthians 15:21**). Adam was the first man and through his sin death entered the universe. The gospel message deals with sin and death because sin entered the human race through man, not Lucifer or the angels. The first animal to die on this earth was killed as a sacrifice for Adam and Eve’s sin. The curse upon the earth was not caused by Satan, but by man (**Genesis 3:16-19, Romans 8:9-25, Hebrews 2:5-18**). Do not forget, the “very good” also includes Lucifer (**Genesis 2:1**). He did not fall until some time after the six days of creation, for he was part of God’s creation.

4. Every verse in Genesis chapter one begins with the word “and,” except verse one and verse twenty-seven. Each verse lays a foundation for the next verse. The whole chapter is written this way and we should not think that verses one and two are any different. By every verse beginning with the word “and,” we understand that each statement is chronologically connected with the verse before and after. This is why chapter two begins with the word “thus” instead of “and,” for chapter two is a review of chapter one and the sequence of events has ended. The dictionary lets us know that this word “and” indicates connection. There is no gap anywhere in Genesis chapter one.

5. Another major argument used by many to support the Gap Theory is in **Genesis 1:2**. They believe that the word “was” means “became”. They say the earth “became” (instead of was) without form and void. Of course, this means that they must change the words and clear teaching of the King James Bible to fit their doctrinal position. Verse two is simply describing the earth’s condition immediately after it was created. We will elaborate more on this in the next point. Even though the Hebrew word “hayetha” can be translated “became” instead of “was,” it is not the case here; the context and sentence structure in **Genesis 1:2** will not allow it. In at least 98 percent of the occurrences of “hayetha” in the Pentateuch, it is properly translated as “was.” This amounts to about 258 out of 264 times, not counting other passages in other books of the Bible. The text of **Genesis 1:2** is an explanation as to how the earth was at creation, not

how it became later. There is nothing in verse two to imply judgment from God. Please let me illustrate how the word “was” should not be changed to “became” with other examples in the Scriptures. In **Jonah 3:3**, “Ninevah was [not became] an exceeding great city.” The city of Ninevah did not become a great city after Jonah entered it, but it was a great city before his entrance. Adam and Eve were naked, not became naked (**Genesis 2:25**). The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, not became more subtle than any beast of the field (**Genesis 3:1**). In **Exodus 1:5**, the Bible says that Joseph was in Egypt (already). It would make no sense to say he became in Egypt. Let’s not be found guilty of changing the Bible to suit our own fancy.

6. Another argument used by Gap Theorists is also in **Genesis 1:2**, where the Bible says that the earth was “without form and void.” This phrase does not mean that God created the earth and then destroyed it in judgment. The statement “without form and void” simply means void of life, empty and uninhabited, unfinished or unfashioned. It does not mean a “waste,” but a place where life does not exist in it. On the first day of creation this planet was temporarily without form and void, but by the sixth creation day, the earth was considered very good. It was then complete and inhabited, not without form and void. As a potter would take a piece of clay to shape and form it for a particular purpose, God took this earth and made it to support life. The same principle applies in the creation of man according to **Genesis 2:7**. God first formed Adam’s body out of the ground, then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. God first formed Adam, then put life into him. Adam, though perfect when first created, was incomplete. The same was true of the earth. Even in **Psalms 139:13-16**, David speaks of his conception and his formation in his mother’s womb as being “unperfect.” This word unperfect simply describes the undeveloped body of David before birth. Therefore, the opening verses of Genesis simply describe an incomplete earth and not a destroyed earth.

Another passage used by the gappers to promote their theory is **Jeremiah 4:23**. This is the only other place in Scripture where the phrase “without form and void” is used. In view of this, the Gap Theorists believe that this verse is connected with the supposed judgment that took place in **Genesis 1:2**. But, according to the context, Jeremiah is **not** referring to something in the dateless past, but to the future. Jeremiah saw a vision of the whole land of Judah