

Appendix A

Does the Bible support the Gap Theory?

The most common rendering of the first two verses of Genesis chapter 1 reads:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
(verse 1)*

*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. (verse 2)*

Orthodox Jews and conservative Christians have always read Genesis 1 as literal history of a few thousand years old, taking the obvious and straightforward reading of it. It is difficult to believe that some cryptic message has to be deciphered from the Bible's first book – a book that quite obviously, as any good book, introduces a story with initial terms, definitions, and clarifications.

However, it is a belief in some Christian churches that a vast period of time passed between the first two verses of Genesis 1. This has come to be known as the “Gap Theory.” The book of Genesis was not interpreted this way among the Christian communities until the early nineteenth century when geologists had for some years earlier begun studying the earth fossils and postulated that the earth must have existed for a very long time, maybe billions of years, which is in accord with the Theory of Evolution.

The new idea is something like this: Billions of years ago God created a perfect universe. The earth was ruled by a powerful angel over some ancient life forms until iniquity was found in him. He rebelled by desiring to become like God. He and his minions then fell out of favour with God and they became the Adversary (Satan) and demons. In their big tussle with God they lost. The event resulted in an earth-wide cataclysm – a “Lucifer’s flood,” bringing along with it the death of the ancient life forms, dinosaurs, fauna and flora – apparently preserved in the fossil record. There was a change of condition – the earth became without form and void. Subsequently, according to this “gap” idea, God then re-created or reconstituted the earth (a devastated remnant of the old one) in the six literal days of creation recorded in the first chapter (from verse 3 onwards) of Genesis.

The argument for this theory then makes verse two to read: “The earth *became* [Hebrew *hayah*] without form [Hebrew *tohu*] and void [Hebrew *bohu*]” or (as some would render it) “The earth *became waste and desolate*.”

Does ‘was’ mean ‘became’?

While it is arguable that the Hebrew word for “was” from the original text, *Hayah*, can be translated as “became,” it *usually* is translated as “was.” The word appears some 4900 times in the old text and over 97% of these are translated as “was.” To translate *Hayah* as *became* would at best give 3% chance of accuracy, which is not very high indeed. Recognized linguists and lexicographers have almost uniformly rejected the translation of *became* for the above and some other verses.*¹

Tohu va bohu

Gap theorists will often support their claim by referring to *Isaiah 45:18 KJV* “...*He hath established it, He created it not “in vain” [Hebrew tohu], he formed it to be inhabited.*”

It would be entirely true to say that God did not form the earth to be uninhabited. It is also true that He created it not *tohu*. So ‘gap’ theorists say that since God did not create it that way, it must have *become* that way. But the above verse does not provide the idea of a “gap” in God’s establishing of the earth for a purpose, i.e. forming it to be inhabited.

For thus said Jehovah, Creator of heaven, He is God, Former of earth, and its Maker, He established it – not empty He prepared it, For inhabiting He formed it: ‘I am Jehovah, and there is none else.’
(*Isaiah 45:18 YLT*)

Reading the first two verses along with the subsequent verses would naturally give the idea that God was not done with creating the finished product yet! In Genesis 1:2 the words “without form and void” are *tohu* and *bohu*. *Tohu* (Strong’s #8414) means waste, wilderness, desolation, confusion, empty place, without form, nothing, (thing of) nought, vain, vanity; whereas *bohu* (Strong’s #922) means to be empty, a vacuity, undistinguishable *ruin*, void. The root meaning of *tobu va bohu* therefore seems to be “unformed and unfilled” as offered by Weston Fields.

This is the beginning of the potter working the clay into something recognizable and desired. This does not conflict with a gapless picture but supports the literal six day creation without compromising the text. God formed the earth to be inhabited, but at the point in time of verse 2, He was not finished with His awesome creation. The second verse begins with the conjunction *and* (Hebrew *waw*) and this same conjunction introduces every single verse in the creation chapter, implying there is a sequence of actions executed in the process. There was this happening, and then this happened, and then this happened, and then this ... each following directly upon the other. It was not really finished until He said so at the end of the six days of creation.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ...
(*Exodus 20:11*)

The above scripture is the definitive verse outside the Genesis account concerning the time frame of creation. It states categorically that God created every physical thing in six days. There is just no allowance for a gap.

According to the ‘gap’ theory, only the surface of the earth was reconstituted in the six days. The earth’s core, the basic structure, the great fossil beds containing the remnants of the dinosaurs, etc., all of these would predate the six days of Creation. But the scriptural narrative says specifically that everything in the earth and in the heavens and in the sea was made in the six days.

Genesis 1:31 says: “And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good.” If Adam and Eve were walking around on top of buried fossils from past periods – fossils that tell of a rebellion, death and punishment; something bad rather than good – it would be difficult to believe this scriptural statement to be an accurate reflection of such a scenario.

Refer to chapter 6 for the author's understanding of the actual creation event.

The world that then was

¹This is now, beloved, the second letter that I have written to you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by reminding you; ²that you should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior: ³knowing this first, that in the last days mockers will come, walking after their own lusts, ⁴and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." ⁵For this they willfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth formed out of water and amid water, by the word of God; ⁶by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

(2Peter 3:1-6 WEB)

The phrase "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" in the above scripture (verse 6) has sometimes been taken to refer to a primordial earth before the six days of "recreation." But a careful reading of the context (preceding verses) precludes this supposition. Verse 5 tells of "an earth formed out of water and amid water" and this clearly points to *Genesis 1:9-10* (in the so-called re-creation process *after* the "gap") which described dry land coming out of the water level, and obviously there is a portion of the land still below the water level or "amid water." This has been the structure of the earth since creation: a portion above the sea level and the larger portion below it. The world [Greek *kosmos*, – not earth] of people and creatures living since the creation perished in what came to be known as Noah's Flood, where eight persons and many selected animals were saved. Since then, the story of this worldwide flood was captured into the annals of different cultures around the world, the progeny of Noah's family the descendants of Adam. Such knowledge cannot be easily forgotten. This cataclysmic event is well preserved in written history – and also in geological history if interpreted aright. Scientists working in "Creation Science" have now shown that rocks and fossils need not take millions of years to form; they can form quickly. The fossils record is record of Noah's Flood. Hard evidence is there for all to see if all are willing to see.

According to the apostle Peter, some people have "willingly forgotten" this event. There was no uniformitarianism, no evolution, in the history of the earth. Geological history is punctuated with this cataclysmic event known to all cultures of the world. If some ancient type of people and living creatures were created before Adam and they perished in a pre-Adamic flood, none of them survived to tell the story! How then could anyone be said to have willingly forgotten such an event! The Gap Theory does not seem to hold water except in a cloud of circumstantial inferences,*² which are difficult to make out, much less to remember. Peter's mention of "the world that then was" is referenced to what he wrote earlier (2Peter 2:4-5) about the same "old world" in which angels sinned and from which God saved Noah, so that there is no mistaking what world he was talking about.

The foundation of the world or its disruption?

A study of the phrase “the foundation of the world” used in the New Testament may yield an answer that dispels the Gap Theory. The above phrase is found in 10 verses of the New Testament. The word “foundation” in the phrase is translated from the Greek *katabole* (Strong’s #2602). Another Greek word *themelios* (Strong’s #2310) is also translated as foundation in 15 other verses. Most Bibles do not make a distinction between the two Greek terms in their translations. Happily, I found a literal version, The Concordant Literal New Testament, which makes the distinction. Here the rendering of *katabole* is “disruption.” In all those 10 verses usually translated as “the foundation of the world” they are here in this Version consistently and accurately rendered “the disruption of the world.” The part of the word *kata* in the Greek always signifies a downward force. The verb form *kataballo* (Strong’s #2598) which appears in 3 verses in the New Testament, has however been correctly translated in all the versions in at least 2 of the verses.

Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down (*kataballo*), but not destroyed;
(2Cor 4:9 KJV)

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down (*kataballo*), which accused them before our God day and night.
(Rev 12:10 KJV)

Kataballo has been translated as cast down, smitten down, made low, knocked down, struck down, struck to the ground, badly hurt. All these words convey a downward force, and almost always in a negative sense. And such a translation ought also to have been made on the third verse (*Hebrews 6:1*) where *kataballo* is found, for the sake of accuracy and consistency. Here again the CLNT scores well in its consistent literal translation.

Now, the noun form *katabole* must be consistent in meaning to the verb form *kataballo*, if language is to make sense. The CLNT consistently translates *katabole* as “disruption” and *kataballo* as “disrupting,” “cast down,” or “cast out.”

Now, if *katabole* should be translated as disruption rather than foundation, which is a different Greek word *themelios*, then we may see, as will be shown shortly, that consistency in translation will yield a solution that not only dispels the Gap Theory, but also provide a more accurate perspective of a few scriptures and a finer understanding of an important event – the disruption. Just what and when is “the disruption?”

First, let us note a few verses that relates to the “laying” or “building” of a foundation (of a building, for example) in the positive sense.

He is like a man which built [*oikodomeo*, Strong’s #3618] an house, and digged deep, and laid [*tithemi*, Strong’s #5087] the foundation [*themelios*, Strong’s #2310] on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded [*themelioo*, Strong’s #2311] upon a rock.
(Luke 6:48 KJV)

Lest haply, after he hath laid [*tithemi*] the foundation [*themelios*], and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him...
(Luke 14:29 KJV)

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid [*tithemi*] the foundation [*themelios*] and another buildeth [*epoikodomeo*, Strong's #2026] thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth [*epoikodomeo*] thereupon. (11) For other foundation [*themelios*] can no man lay [*tithemi*] than that is laid [*keimai*, Strong's #2749], which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if any man build [*epoikodomeo*] upon this foundation [*themelios*] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;
(1Cor 3:10-12 KJV)

From the above three sets of scriptures, it can be seen that the noun *themelios* [foundation] is associated with the verb *tithemi* [lay or laid, which is equivalent to found or founded], both having the same stem. To *build* (a house) is *oikodomeo*. To *build upon* a foundation is *epoikodomeo*, the prefix *ep* means "on."

Studying the scriptural usage of these words in a concordant manner, comparing and contrasting their usages in scriptures, would tell us that the verb *kataballo* and the noun *katabole* give the same meaning – i.e. disrupting (or casting down) and disruption. Foundation and disruption are opposite in meaning.

Lamb slain from the disruption of the world – at the time of the “Fall of Man”

Revelation 13:8 speaks of “the Lamb slain from the disruption of the world.” The Lamb here refers to Jesus Christ, as He is frequently referred to as such in the Bible. Was Jesus Christ actually slain way back in time from the disruption of the world? Or was there an actual lamb that was slain at that time, and that slain lamb prefigures Christ?

We know the story of Adam and Eve. They were tempted by the Serpent and succumbed. After they sinned, they became aware of their nakedness. Then “God made coats of skin for the man and his wife, and clothed them.” (*Genesis 3:21*) From where did God make the coats of skin? It is unlikely that He made the coats of skin as a newly created item because He had finished creating in six days. The coats of skin must have come from a lamb He created earlier (on the sixth day) and it was killed by God to clothe the first couple. It provided a covering for sin. This lamb was killed at the time when the pristine world system, the initial perfect order, was disrupted by God Himself, consequent upon the first couple’s sinning. This was a major event.

In *Gen 3:17-19 KJV*, God said to Adam: “cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Judgment was also pronounced upon the Serpent and on Eve three verses earlier.

The world was disrupted at a time just after Adam and Eve sinned, not before. How long a period of time Adam and Eve enjoyed living in Paradise before they sinned is not made known. That period may be a relatively brief one; maybe 30 years as postulated by some, maybe shorter.

The truth of *Hebrews 11:11* brought out by, and inferred by the author from, the CLNT’s consistent rendering is most interesting:

By faith Sarah herself also obtained power for the disruption of seed, and brought forth beyond the period of her prime, since she deems the Promiser faithful;
(Hebrews 11:11 CLNT)

Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was barren. God made a promise to Abraham and his wife in their old age that they, notwithstanding their deadened bodies, would have many descendants. They believed God, and as we say the rest is history. By her faith, Sarah received power so that she produced an egg and she conceived and gave birth to Isaac. The word “disruption” accurately conveys what we now know from medical science: when an egg is mature in the ovary, the sac holding the egg breaks open to release the egg, so it can travel through the fallopian tube for fertilization. The monthly ovulation process (menstrual cycle) experienced by human females is well known. The “disruption of seed” associated with Sarah points us back to the first woman on record, Eve, who had the first “disruption of seed” at a time when the world was first disrupted – at the “Fall of Man,” not before.

Footnotes:

*1. See *Unformed and Unfilled* by Weston W Fields.

*2. It is not possible in this short article to look at all the points raised in favour of the Gap Theory.