

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Investigating the Gap Theory

(Jerry Fite)

Did God create the heavens and the earth in the beginning, and then the earth became waste and void due to God bringing judgement of death and destruction upon sinful pre-adamic man and angels? Then, after this indefinite period of time, did God reconstruct the ruined earth, beginning on day one?

Some, feeling the pressure from evolutionary geological thought, have viewed Genesis 1:2 as providing the gap (maybe millions and millions of years) to harmonize Scripture with the thought that the earth is millions of years old. Others, not trying to accommodate any scientific theory, believe the language of verse two says that after creation, the earth “became” waste and void. Therefore, Genesis 1:1 is the only verse in the chapter speaking of the original creation. The other verses speak of the earth’s reconstruction. Regardless of intent, seeing a gap of a long period of time between the beginning and day one is a false view.

The Hebrew verb, “hayetha” is properly translated “was” in accurate translations. It conveys the thought that when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was brought into existence instantaneously without form (no continents, hills and valleys) and was

void of inhabitants. There is nothing in the verb to lead one to believe that after created, the earth “became” waste and void.

Genesis 19:26 documents the event when Lot’s wife “became” a pillar of salt. Was there an indefinite period of time between her being a woman, and then only a pillar of salt? She, all of a sudden “was” a pillar of salt, indicating a complete and instantaneous judgment upon her sin. Likewise, the earth was instantaneously created in its waste and void form. But there is no indication that this action was the result of judgment.

Jehovah, in establishing His uniqueness, says, “For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited: I am Jehovah; and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:18). If God did not “create” it waste and void, then does it not follow that it “became” waste and void? No, if context still determines meaning. Notice the rest of the verse that completes the meaning. It also was formed to be inhabited. The verse is teaching that God’s plan for the earth was not for it to remain waste and empty. It was to be inhabitable. From the beginning to the sixth

day this plan of God in creation was completed.

But the “gap theorist” may bring up another point from the Hebrew verbs “bara” and “asah”. God speaks of bringing things into initial existence by using “bara” which is translated “created”. But, according to the theorist, when God is remaking or making over again things, He uses “asah” which is translated “made.” So, God “created” the earth in the beginning (v. 1), the animals of the sea and air (v. 21), and man (v. 27). All other things were “made over” or “made again,” not created.

Such a view fails to see that the words are use synonymously in Genesis 1. Man was “created” in God’s image (v. 27), but prior to the action, God said, “Let us make man in our image (v. 26).

There is no indefinite period of time dividing the beginning from day one. “*For in sixth days, Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day...*” (Exodus 20:11). A gap of indefinite periods of time exists only in the mind of theorists. Gap theorists and Theistic Evolution theorists wrest the Scriptures. Beware!