

THE GAP THEORY

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In spite of considerable evidence to the contrary, many sincere (although perhaps uninformed) professed Bible believers subscribe to the notion that the Earth is billions of years old. While they may be completely unaware of it, the fact is, they have been influenced by the subtle pressures of evolutionary geology. Some scientists claim that our Earth is approximately 4.5-5.0 billion years old (geologists in Russia double that number, which is a clear indication of the imprecision in the dating techniques).

This insatiable appetite for time on the part of the evolutionist is quite understandable, since he must have vast eons of time for the thousands of undetectable changes to occur that allegedly are involved in the evolutionary scheme of development. If the evolutionist were granted a theoretical eternity, however, it would not assist his case, for **time is not a Creator!** Duane Gish has delightfully observed that the concept of a frog being turned into a prince in an instant is a fairy **tale**, but the assertion that a frog, given three hundred million years, can turn into a man, is considered **science!** In attempting to establish the naturalistic origin of life, evolutionist George Wald asserted: "Time is the hero of the plot." Yet, as some writers have suggested, "Time is the evolutionists' refuge from the slings and arrows of logic, scientific evidence, common sense and the multiplication table."²

As a result of evolutionary brainwashing, some religionists have adopted the idea of a multi-billion-year-old Earth, and, accordingly, have sought to press the Bible into an illegitimate alliance with current pseudo-science. One such bizarre attempt is known as the "gap theory" (sometimes referred to as the "catastrophe theory"), which contends that a vast gap of time existed between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 that may be accommodated to the geological time scheme of modern theorists. During this supposed gap, there lived successive generations of plants, animals, and perhaps even pre-Adamic men. For example, Gleason Archer Jr. of Fuller Theological Seminary (who generally is considered to be a fairly conservative writer) radically identifies such so-called "fossil men" as *Pithecanthropus*, Neanderthal, etc., with a pre-Adamic race of men.³ According to this view, God destroyed the original creation (because of a Satanic rebellion), and so Genesis 1:2 is retranslated to suggest that "the earth **became** waste and void."

GAP THEORY MOTIVATION

Concerning the gap theory, the following facts are evident. (1) It is but a compromising attempt to pacify the indefensible assertions of those who reject plain biblical teaching regarding the origin of man. As Old Testament scholar Oswald T. Allis stated: "This interpretation gained favour about a century ago as a means of bringing Genesis 1 into harmony with the findings of geologists."⁴ (2) There is no genuine evidence in Scripture for this fanciful idea. Does it seem reasonable that an original creation and subsequent catastrophe should be completely unmentioned throughout the entire Bible? (3) Finally, plain teaching in Scripture stands opposed to the mythical gap theory, as the following considerations reveal.

THE BIBLE VERSUS THE GAP THEORY

(1) The conjunction "and" that introduces Genesis 1:2 certainly does not convey the impression of a gap between these two verses.

(2) There is no reason within this context to translate "was" (Genesis 1:2) as "became." The Hebrew verb is *hayah*. It is found more than 1,500 times in the O.T., and although it occasionally may be rendered "became" (22 times), the specific context must require it. And no such requirement is indicated in Genesis 1:1-2. A few years ago, twenty leading scholars of the Hebrew language in the United States were asked if there was exegetical evidence of a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. They emphatically replied, "No."⁵ In fact, noted Hebrew scholar J.W. Watts remarked: "In Genesis 1:2a the verb is a perfect. It indicates a fixed and completed state. In other words, original matter was in a state of chaos when created; it came into being that way."⁶

(3) Adam was given dominion over "**every** living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). It is difficult to harmonize this exhaustive statement with the notion that millions of living creatures already had lived and died by this time.

(4) At the conclusion of the sixth day, "God saw **everything** that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). If Jehovah's original creation had become contaminated through Satan's rebellion (and thus subsequently was destroyed) and the new creation rested upon a veritable graveyard of corruption, it is difficult to see how the expression "very good" would have been appropriate.

(5) Adam is called the "**first** man" (1 Corinthians 15:45), which precludes an alleged pre-Adamic race of men.

For these reasons (and others that could be given) the gap theory should be rejected as an explanation of how to add ages to Genesis 1.

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