

Fatal Flaws in the Gap Theory: Why the Earth and the Heavens are around Six Thousand Years Old

by Jeremy James



One of the greatest challenges facing true Christians today is Satan's alternative reality, a misleading description of the universe that conflicts with the Biblical account.

Among the most significant features of Satan's alternative reality is the belief that the universe is billions of years old and trillions of miles in extent. Both are magnitudes so extreme that it is simply impossible to visualize them in concrete terms. For example, a light-year is the distance that light can travel in one year, namely 5,878,499,810,000 miles. This number is so large that it really makes no sense. Even to scientists it is just an abstraction, with no meaningful application to the world we know around us. The same can be said about such commonly used geological statistics as "one hundred million years ago." It too is just a vague, sterile abstraction.

The Bible tells us that God does not take any longer than is necessary to carry out His purpose:

**"Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it."
(Jeremiah 1:11-12)**

Since the almond is the first tree to bloom after the winter period, it is used to illustrate expediency. As the LORD said to the prophet, **"I will hasten my word to perform it."**



Almond tree near Jerusalem

There is not the slightest hint anywhere in Scripture that the LORD requires either billions of years or trillions of miles to carry out His plan for mankind. He created the world for a purpose and will not take any longer than is necessary to fulfill that purpose. We should remember that the LORD made the world in the knowledge that His Son would one day rule on earth as Kings of Kings. It is inconceivable that He would have required His Son to wait a staggering period of time for the completion of something which, in His sovereignty, He could bring about in a much shorter period.

Christians need to think deeply about these issues. A sovereign God does not waste His time. Everything about creation tells us that the LORD does everything with the utmost precision and economy. The world around us teems with wonderful examples of this!

What Gap Theory Teaches

The Gap Theory teaches that an enormous period of time passed between the events described in the first verse of Genesis and those described in the second verse:

**"[1] In the beginning God created the heaven[s] and the earth.
[2] 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 theory was formulated in the 19th century by Thomas Chalmers, a Scottish professor of theology, to address just one problem – how to account in a scriptural manner for the supposedly enormous expanse of geological time (hundreds of millions of years) which scientists were then proposing. The theory was largely dismissed as spurious but gained significant traction when Scofield endorsed it in a couple of footnotes in his Reference Bible of 1917.

As with many forms of Biblical speculation, a seemingly small change can have major implications for our understanding of Scripture.

Gap Theorists (GTs) fill the 'gap' with many, if not all, of the following elements:

"[1] In the beginning God created the heaven[s] and the earth."

He then made the angels, all of whom were obedient for a time before a large number rebelled. Before the rebellion the angels inhabited both heaven and earth, but the massive cosmic conflict that resulted from their rebellion did such immense damage to the earth that the LORD in judgment sent a worldwide flood and darkened the universe by shutting down the sun, moon and stars.

"[2] 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."

According to the GTs, any references to the events in italics were omitted from the Bible because they did not have a direct bearing on the LORD's plan of Redemption for mankind.

A surprising number of highly respected Bible scholars have endorsed some form of Gap Theory, including Merrill Unger, Vernon McGee, and Arnold Fruchtenbaum.

The purpose of this paper is to show that the Gap Theory is false and that it provides a breeding ground for error, science fiction, and New Age heresy. Even though many believers have not heard of the Gap Theory, they are studying books and using materials produced by leaders who firmly believe some version of the theory. As a result a great many professing Christians today are convinced that the earth is millions of years old. What is more, they mistakenly believe that this extremely elongated view of earth history does not conflict with Scripture.



The Unspoken Dangers

While it may seem to some as little more than a quibble over Biblical semantics, the Gap Theory is actually laden with confusion and hidden dangers. Even its most discerning supporters underestimate the extent to which it opens the door to false teaching and harmful speculation.

Let's assume for a moment that the theory is correct. The following are just some of the Biblical interpretations and theological ideas that come to life if a gap of unspecified duration is introduced between the first and second verses of Genesis:

1. Restoration is not creation

The Gap Theory reduces the Genesis account of Creation to a secondary work, more properly an act of restoration than an act of creation. In doing so it greatly demeans the six days of Creation, a very short period to which the Word of God ascribes enormous significance. It also causes great confusion. For example, did the stars exist before Genesis 1:16? Did the moon exist during the 'gap'? The GTs like to argue that the craters on the moon are a remnant of the great war that allegedly took place during the 'gap', but if the moon came into being in verse 1:1, what did God create, make or restore in verse 1:16?



2. Trivializing sin

The Gap Theory trivializes sin. Since it is impossible to conceive of a universe – "Creation" – without biological life-forms of some kind, then such life-forms must have existed when God created the heavens and the earth initially (as per Genesis 1:1). If so, then death was a reality before man fell. Since the Bible implies throughout that death is the result of sin, and states this fact explicitly in the Book of Romans, then any 'theory' that conflicts with it must be false. The supporters of the Gap Theory seem to be blind to the ghastly theological consequences of their theory and its smug indifference to the awful reality of sin.

3. Undermining God's sovereignty

The Gap Theory gravely diminishes the sovereignty of God. Instead of presenting Him as the Creator whose will and word are final, He is portrayed instead as a Being whose actions are constrained in certain ways by His own creation. If He could create a being in His own image and likeness only after millions of years had expired, then either His earlier plans were completely frustrated by Satan or His existing plan for mankind (and His Son) is both random and capricious.

4. Timeframe distortion

The Gap Theory conflicts with the careful and often meticulous way the Bible treats historical events. Take the Flood, for example. The genealogies in Genesis tell us that this momentous event took place around 2350 B.C. The LORD states specifically that "the fountains of the great deep" broke and the rains began to fall on the 17th day of the second month. This was clearly an actual event that commenced on a given day. The plain meaning of the Bible as a whole, and of the Book of Genesis in particular, will be impaired if the worldwide Flood of Genesis 7 is described in concrete terms and yet its supposed predecessor is neither mentioned nor implied.

Through their advocacy of sloppy hermeneutics (albeit in this one instance), supporters of the Gap Theory give comfort to the mavericks and false teachers who twist and bend selected verses of Scripture to bolster their pet theories and New Age ideas.

They are also deflecting attention from the physical ramifications of the Flood itself, an event which transformed the geological profile of the entire earth and deposited huge quantities of biological material, some of which we are still finding today in the form of fossils.

5. The unlimited gap

The fact that the 'gap' has no specified duration means that all kinds of speculation can be added to God's Word on a "Well, it *could* have happened" basis. The fact that the Gap Theory seems to invite such speculation, and even to justify it on Biblical grounds, is a matter of great concern.

6. The lie of Evolution

The false teaching of Evolution will be accepted by more and more Christians. Since the alleged evolutionary process requires vast quantities of time to take effect, the 'gap' provided by the Gap Theory can be made as long as the evolutionists need to accommodate their false teaching.

7. The Book of Enoch

Gap Theory greatly blurs the distinction between science fiction and science fact. The *Book of Enoch*, which many believe to be an inspired work, will win even more adherents. It is already being used to support the false Nephilim or demon seed theory, which teaches that the fallen angels produced hybrid children by human women. This in turn will reinforce the false belief that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe.

These are not the only implications of the Gap Theory but they suffice for our purpose. They show beyond all doubt that it is both scripturally false and spiritually dangerous.

The main textual arguments for the theory are set out in **Appendix A**. They depend on an awkward application, akin to a reinvention, of four standard Hebrew words. It strains credulity that a major reinterpretation of the Bible should have been accepted by scholars of any tradition on the basis of such feeble evidence.



**The disc of the earth, as God made it.
The outer rim is the Antarctic.**

The 'Little Gap' Theory

A new version of the Gap Theory has emerged in recent years which we dub herein the 'little gap' theory. This does not propose the existence of biological life prior to the six days of Creation and thereby avoids any suggestion that death had existed before the Fall. It also proposes a very short gap, comprising (it would appear) just a few years. This gap is considered necessary in order to explain how Lucifer could have reigned in a garden of crystal, "in the midst of the stones of fire," as described in Ezekiel 28, before fomenting his rebellion. It would also allow a greater time interval between the creation of the angels and their subsequent celebration of the occasion when the LORD laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:7).

While we cannot explore more fully the case for the 'little gap', the fact remains that several of the fatal defects already identified still apply to it. Once a gap is conceded, there is no way of restricting its duration. Moreover, even a tiny gap must necessarily trivialize the account of Creation given in Genesis. [A detailed exposition of the 'little gap' theory may be found in *The Footsteps of the Messiah* by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, pps.548-556.]

The Six Days of Creation

Throughout the Bible the LORD asserts His sovereignty by referring repeatedly to the fact that He is the author of Creation. He made the heavens (the atmospheric sky, the expanse of space, and the third heaven), as well as the earth, sun, moon and stars. He also made everything, including all life-forms, that can be found on earth and in heaven, and did so over a six-day period. The following verse states this very clearly:

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:11)

What is more, He declared that when He had completed His work at the end of the sixth day, everything was absolutely perfect. This meant that the craters on the moon could not have been caused by cosmic war and destruction.

The LORD refers repeatedly to the six days of creation and even required the Chosen People to respect every seventh day as a sabbath, a day of complete rest, in recognition of the great work that He had accomplished in six days. These six days are six literal 24-hour days, during which He made everything on earth and in heaven (as per Exodus 20:11). Since the angels are in heaven, they too must have been made during the six days of creation ("**...and all that in them is...**"). And since they witnessed the moment when the LORD laid the foundations of the earth on Day One, they must have been created earlier that same day.

We need to remember that a day with God is better than a thousand elsewhere, and probably feels many times longer than a day here on earth: "**For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.**" (Psalm 84:10)

We know that Adam and Eve must have rebelled within a few weeks of their creation since their first child, Cain, was born in sin. As husband and wife they would have commenced marital relations within a day or two of their creation, and since both enjoyed perfect health, conception would almost certainly have taken place shortly thereafter.

The temptation in the Garden of Eden took place after Satan himself rebelled, which probably happened within days of his creation. Thus he could have presided over and enjoyed his own mineral garden for a time before he fell. There is no need to postulate a 'little gap' in order to accommodate his short reign.

The entire tragedy of human existence, stretching over a period of some six thousand years, can be traced back to just a few horrifying minutes when the first man and the first woman deliberately rejected the authority of God.



The Word of God speaks to us on the foundation of history. It respects natural chronology and treats it in a strictly linear fashion. The LORD even created the moon and the stars to enable us to regulate and compute the passage of time.

In order to understand the Bible as God intended, we must approach it as an historical document, a record of our past and our future. The Enemy tries to undermine this straightforward hermeneutic by tempting man with the allegorical method of interpretation, a search for hidden meanings and symbols, and a misidentification of Israel in End Time prophecy. He also seeks to cause confusion by meddling with the Biblical timeframe, of which Gap Theory is a prime example.

Satan's Alternative Reality

The Enemy has been working relentlessly for centuries to induce mankind to accept an alternative reality, one where the earth is but a tiny speck in an inconceivably vast universe, where time and distance must be measured in billions of years and trillions of miles, where life is an evolutionary accident, where cosmic laws are arbitrary, where morality is relative, and where the universe itself sprang spontaneously out of nothing in an event known as 'the big bang'.

Lies, lies, lies. But what should we expect? After all, he is the master of lies. He has even convinced the majority of mankind that the Enemy – Satan himself – does not exist!

In an excellent videotaped interview [[link](#)], the scientist Dr Raymond Damadian, who invented Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), referred as follows to the intensity of the programming to which all men, and scientists in particular, are subject:

"The problem is that when you're a scientist and you've undergone the kind of extensive education that you're undergoing, in the process without your even knowing it you are being programmed into the sacredness of materialism and evolution. What is really happening is you're being put in chains..."

Dr Damadian himself broke out of his chains, which he called "the bondage of secular materialism," when he found Christ and accepted salvation.

Satan is using his great arsenal of lies to bind men's minds and keep them in chains. Even born-again Christians, who ought to have a thorough foundation in God's holy Word, have difficulty evading some of these lies. They are woven together so well and repeated so often that it does not even occur to most people that they are in bondage.

A kind-hearted Christian woman in our local church put it like this: "The lies are repeated so often, over and over, that it is nearly easier to accept them than to continue fighting against them." This is exactly what Satan relies on. The relentless repetition of false and misleading information will always get results in a world where few people give serious thought to the validity of what they are being told.

The Bible tells us that the earth is at the center of the universe, but Satan has convinced mankind that it is located at the outer edge. The Bible speaks of time and distance in terms that are intelligible, while Satan has tricked men into thinking in terms of billions of years and trillions of miles – neither of which make any sense. He has taken the rational, meaningful universe that the LORD has created and turned it into a grotesque caricature of reality. The earth is supposedly a sphere spinning through space at several thousand miles an hour, when our God-given common sense tells us that this cannot possibly be true. The Bible tells us that the earth is stationary – and the Bible is right!

God is dealing with man in a timeframe of several thousand years, not millions of years. He made the earth for His Son and in doing so gave it the most prestigious position in all creation. The sun, moon and stars were made for man and, relative to the earth, are far smaller and much nearer than our subtly enchained minds have been led to believe.

True Christians should give greater glory to God! They should think far more seriously about the literal truth of His holy Word and consider how best to slough off the insidious chains that are holding their minds captive.

Why not start by throwing out the Gap Theory and taking God at His word? – in the **beginning** He made the heavens and the earth, and **everything** in them, in **six days**.

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A Summary of the main arguments for the Gap Theory

The Hebrew word *bara*

The GTs ascribe a meaning to the word *bara* which it simply does not have. According to them it always means 'to create out of nothing' and that a related word, *asah*, cannot have the same meaning but must always be understood to mean 'to make out of something.' Thus they reason that God created the world out of nothing in Genesis 1:1 (which used *bara*) and later restored it (i.e. made it out of existing material) in Genesis 1:2 (which used *asah*) after an unspecified period of time had elapsed. But this is fallacious reasoning. The Bible uses these words interchangeably to mean creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). Many examples could be given, such as Nehemiah 9:6:

"Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made [*asah*] heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."

The Hebrew words *tohu* and *bohu*

The GTs make equally unscholarly use of the words *tohu* and *bohu*. Like many words, whether in Hebrew or any other language, their meaning varies with the context in which they are used. The KJV translates *tohu waw bohu* in Genesis 1:2 as "without form and void." This is an accurate description of the earth that the LORD had just created. The waters still covered the surface and no form or purposeful structure had yet emerged.

In a later passage of Scripture, Jeremiah 4:23, the KJV translates the same words (*tohu waw bohu*) in exactly the same way ("without form and void") but in this context it refers to a destructive judgment that the LORD had decreed upon Jerusalem. The GTs take the context of Jeremiah 4:23 and impose it on Genesis 1:2. They then proceed to argue that in the latter instance the LORD had judged the earth and had destroyed all life in a worldwide flood. But this kind of reasoning is obviously nonsensical. One cannot treat language and its context in this way.

The Hebrew word *hayah*

The final problem is the GTs' use of the word *hayah*. This almost always means "was" ("And the earth was without form, and void"). However in this instance the GTs try to make *hayah* mean "became." Such a connotation had never been applied to Genesis 1:2, whether by Jewish or Christian scholars, until Chalmers decided in the 1830s to change the context. Thus *hayah* was interpreted to mean "became" – 'And the earth *became* without form, and void' – in the same way that "was" implies a process of change in a sentence like *The stadium was packed*. Clearly the stadium took an hour or more to fill up and so it 'became' packed. But such an elastic use of the word *hayah* in Genesis 1:2 is not justified, either by the context or by the normal rules of Hebrew grammar.