

First Printing: 1976

First Master Books Printing: March 2005

Copyright © 1976 and 2005 by Weston Fields. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews. For information write: Master Books, Inc., P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638.

ISBN: 0-89051-423-2

Library of Congress Number: 2004118181

Printed in the United States of America

Please visit our website for other great titles:
www.masterbooks.net

For information regarding author interviews,
please contact the publicity department at (870) 438-5288.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Publishers Preface	viii
Foreword	ix
Preface	xi
Key to Transliterations	xv
List of Tables	xvii
Introduction	1

SECTION I: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Chapter 1: History of the Interpretation of Genesis 1:1, 2	5
Introduction	5
Scriptural Statements About Creation	8
Enuma Elish	11
Jewish Interpretations	13
Pre-Geological Christian Interpretations	20
Post-Geological Christian Interpretations	37
Summary of the History	44

SECTION II: GRAMMATICAL AND LINGUISTICAL OBSERVATIONS

Introduction to Section II	51
Chapter 2: 'Āsâ and Bārâ'	53
Introduction	53
The Meaning of 'Āsâ and Bārâ'	53
The Relationship Between 'Āsâ and Bārâ'	56
Conclusion	74
Chapter 3: The Grammar of Genesis 1:2	75
Introduction	75
The Clauses of 1:2	77
The <i>Waw</i>	81

Conclusion	86
Chapter 4: “Was”	87
Introduction	87
Translation of <i>Hāy^etâ</i>	88
Lexical Meaning	88
<i>Hāy^etâ</i> as a Copulative	90
The Septuagint	97
The Pluperfect	100
Apposition	110
Conclusion Regarding <i>Hāy^etâ</i>	111
Chapter 5: <i>Tōhû</i> and <i>Bōhû</i>	113
Introduction	113
Definitions	113
The Greek Equivalents	116
Usages of <i>Tōhû</i> and <i>Bōhû</i>	116
Summary of <i>Tōhû</i> and <i>Bōhû</i>	129
Chapter 6: Other Gap Theory Arguments	131
Introduction	131
The Darkness	131
2 Corinthians 4:6	133
Hebrews 11:3a	134
Sin, Fossils, and Pre-Adamic Men	135
Lucifer’s Flood	142
<i>Katabolē</i>	145
Summary	146
 SECTION III: OTHER CREATION THEORIES	
Chapter 7: The Dependent Clause Interpretation of	
Genesis 1:1	149
Introduction	149
Explanation of the Dependent Clause View	149
Exegetical Evidence	151
The Meaning and Implications of the Dependent	
Clause Translation	160
Analogous Scripture	162
Conclusion	163

Chapter 8: The Day-Age Theory	165
Introduction	165
Description of the Theory	165
Examination of the Evidence	168
Conclusion	178
Chapter 9: Creationism and Apologetics	181
Introduction	181
Definition of Apologetics	181
Systems of Apologetics	182
Pre-Suppositionalism and Creationism	190
Chapter 10: An Alternative View of Earth History: Flood Geology	193
SECTION IV: THE YOUNG EARTH: INDICATIONS OF RECENT CREATION	
Introduction to Section IV	197
Chapter 11: The Magnetic Field	201
Introduction	201
The Evidence	201
Conclusion	208
Chapter 12: Radiocarbon Dating	209
Introduction	209
Development of the Method	209
Theoretical Basis of the Method	209
Measurement of Samples	215
Radiocarbon Dating and Dendrochronology	216
Changes Resulting from the Flood	219
An Estimate of Radiocarbon Dating	219
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	221
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED	223
GENERAL INDEX	233
SCRIPTURE INDEX	239
INDEX OF FOREIGN WORDS	243

HISTORY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 1:1, 2

Introduction

With the increase of scientific investigation in the field of historical geology over the past two centuries, and the accompanying decrease in the belief in the young age of the earth, those who believe the Bible literally, and who consequently believe that the earth is very young, have been faced with continual challenges to harmonize the assertions of science and the plain statements of Scripture. Some have *intentionally* abandoned the clear implications of Scripture that the earth and everything on it, the universe and everything in it (even allowing for reasonable gaps in the genealogies of Genesis) were created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) but a few thousand years ago. Others, in an unconscious, or perhaps even a conscious, desire to gain respectability with those in the fields of science who completely dismiss the Bible as unscientific and, therefore, of little or no value where it impinges upon matters of scientific interest, have unwittingly compromised the truths of Scripture by seeking what appear to be unnatural interpretations of Scripture, in order to form *supposed* harmonizations between the *facts* of the Bible and what are felt to be the facts of science, many of which are only *theories*. The Gap Theory is such an attempted harmonization.

As a result of the writings of many of the gap theorists during the past century and a half who have so obviously

been intimidated by contemporary science and have espoused the Gap Theory primarily because it seemed to offer the needed mechanism for harmonization, some of its antagonists have supposed that the theory itself arose for this purpose. In an attempt to allay this allegation forever Arthur C. Custance, in his recent book *Without Form and Void*, has sought to find adherents to some of the theory's basic tenets prior to the rise of modern geology, and its pronouncements about the great antiquity of the earth.

Since Dr. Custance's book is largely concerned with the validity of the Gap Theory, and some appeal for its validity has been made to its history, we have thought it both profitable and necessary to survey the history of the interpretation of Genesis 1:1 and 2, with the emphasis of the examination being placed upon, but not limited to, those commentators who have been claimed ancestrally by gap theorists.

In our opinion, historical interpretation does not, contrary to Roman Catholic dogma, necessarily validate or invalidate present, contemporary interpretation. However, it does serve a useful purpose in indicating what other students of Scripture have concluded, and it is always unwise to ignore this in any manner.

In approaching this study one must exercise great caution. *Inference from the writings cited must be distinguished from the implications of these writings; and implicitness must be separated from explicitness.*

Illustrations of this will be observed in some of the writings quoted below regarding the chronological development of Genesis 1:1 and 2. Certain commentators, both ancient and modern, have not placed the action of Genesis 1:1 within the first of the six creative days of Genesis 1. They have, instead, postulated a creation of the basic material of the universe in Genesis 1:1; next, an interval, small or great, between 1:1 and 1:2; then, a continuation of creation in Genesis 1:2.

This postulation of an interval *must not* be construed

into or confused with the classical form of the Gap Theory, which proposes a complete and perfect creation of both universe and earth in Genesis 1:1, a ruin of the earth during a chronological gap between 1:1 and 1:2, and a subsequent recreation beginning with Genesis 1:3. This ruin-restoration idea *must* be carefully differentiated from the simple interval belief if many of the following quotations are to be understood properly. Those who hold a ruin-restoration Gap Theory *cannot* find philosophical ancestors in those who saw only a time-gap in original creation, and nothing more.

Not all gap theorists agree on the details of the theory, but the one unifying principle of all gap theorists is that Genesis 1:2 (1:1 in the case of the dependent clause view) records the ruin of a once-perfect earth, and a lengthy time-gap between the original creation and the restoration recorded in Genesis 1:3 to the end of the creation narrative. Other details of the theory are mere embellishments and are neither essential to the theory, nor universally held by all gap theorists. The traditional Gap Theory, with variations due to personal preference, is as follows:

In the far distant dateless, past God created a perfect heaven and perfect earth. Satan was ruler of the earth which was peopled by a race of “men” without any souls. Eventually, Satan, who dwelled in a garden of Eden composed of minerals (Ezek. 28), rebelled by desiring to become like God (Isa. 14). Because of Satan’s fall, sin entered the universe and brought on the earth God’s judgment in the form of a flood (indicated by the water of 1:2), and then a global ice-age when the light and heat from the sun were somehow removed. All the plant, animal, and human fossils upon the earth today date from this “Lucifer’s flood” and do not bear any genetic relationship with the plants, animals and fossils living upon the earth today. The biblical proofs for this theory are as follows: The verb *hāyeṭâ* in Genesis 1:2 should be translated “became” or “had become,” not “was.” The words *tōhû wābōhû* (without form and void) represent a sinful,

and, therefore, not an original state of the earth. Furthermore, Isaiah 45:18 states that God did not make the earth “*tôhû*,” so the earth which Genesis 1:2 describes as *tôhû* could not possibly be the originally created one. There must be a sharp distinction, particularly in Genesis 1 and 2, between the Hebrew verbs *‘asâ* and *bârâ* (“made” and “created”). The darkness of Genesis 1:2 represents an evil state since God is light. This state of darkness, therefore, must have been a result of judgment, not perfect creation. God told Adam to *replenish* the earth (Gen. 1:28), so it must have been filled previously. The garden of Eden in Ezekiel 28 is different from the one in Genesis so that the Genesis Eden must be the second one.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the tide of historical geology first began to inundate traditional interpretive concepts, proponents of this Gap Theory have almost uniformly appealed to it for the harmonization of huge quantities of time required by evolutionary scientists and the rather recent creation Genesis seems to present. Whatever the theory’s origin may have been, for the past one and one half centuries this has been its purpose and this has been its use.

Scriptural Statements About Creation

Of all the places the contemporary interpreter might search for historical interpretation of Genesis 1:1, 2, other Scripture is surely the most obvious. Yet, entire volumes have been written which have overlooked this fertile field that has one advantage other writings cannot have: inerrancy. In this present section, therefore, the testimony of various biblical writers is consulted.

Exodus 20:11

The implications of this passage are so far-reaching that it will be considered more fully in a separate section. It does deserve mention, however, under the present discussion, for it is an obvious repetition and interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2

by its own author: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." This states categorically the time limits of God's creation, but there is an interpretive problem revolving about the word "made" (*'āsâ*) which must later be discussed at some length. This verse is repeated with minor changes in Exodus 31:17. If there were no other interpretation of the Genesis creation account in Scripture than this one, the chronology and literality of the events would still be fixed.

Nehemiah 9:6

Nearly a thousand years after Moses wrote of creation in Genesis, and restated its six day duration in Exodus, Nehemiah, in citing the words of a group of Levites concerning the works of God among Israel, records this about creation: "Thou alone art the LORD. Thou hast made the heavens, The heavens of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them." This verse, as Exodus 20:11, is later discussed at greater length, for as in Exodus, its word for both the creation of the *heavens* and of the earth, is "made" (*'āsâ*).

Psalms 96:5

Psalms 96:5 is representative of a number of psalms which reiterate God's creation of the heavens and earth, including Psalms 95:5, 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 136:5, 7. Such statements as "the Lord made the heavens" (Ps. 96:5), and "the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth," must be taken as explicit statements of how the Hebrew mind viewed creation. The Jew interpreted Genesis literally and without qualification. He was not given to say that the Lord created the heavens and earth and recreated the earth! When he spoke of creation, he spoke only of the *prima facie* meaning of the Genesis account, for he had no reason, either scientific or

theological, to invent complicated and devious interpretations.

Psalm 148:5

The Psalmist exhorted, “Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created.” The antecedents of “them” in Psalm 148:5 are found in the preceding four verses: the heavens, the heights, all his angels, all his hosts, sun and moon, stars of light, highest heavens, and waters that are above the heavens. It is well to notice that the verb “created” here comes from the root *bārā*’, since the verb *’āsā* is used in Genesis 1:16 to refer to the creation of some of these same things. In this verse is an interpretation of Genesis which says it was *fiat* creation (He commanded, *šiwwâ*), and it is strongly implied that it was *creatio ex nihilo*.

Isaiah 45:18

“For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, But formed it to be inhabited).” This verse leaves little doubt that the writer believed that God was completely the ultimate source and cause of the universe, and of the earth in particular. This verse has often been used to prove the Gap Theory (as mentioned above), since Genesis 1:2 records that the earth was *tōhû* (unformed) and this verse says that the Lord did not create it *tōhû*. This problem is of sufficient magnitude that it, too, will be discussed at some length in a later section.

John 1:3

Speaking of the Word, who is Christ,¹ John says that “all

1. It is quite possible that the concept of the “Word” should be traced not so much to hellenistic philosophical influence as to contemporary Jewish deference to the divine name YHWH and dislike of anthropomorphisms. This can be readily seen in the Aramaic *Targum Onkelos* of Genesis 3:8 where *qal mêm^erâ*’ *dayyâ* (the sound of the word of the LORD) is substituted in the Aramaic Targum

things came into being [*egeneto*] through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” John not only tells us that Christ was the instrument through which the Godhead accomplished creation, he also strongly suggests that creation was *immediate* and *special*, not *mediate* and *evolutionary*.

Hebrews 11:3

“By faith we understand that the worlds (*tous aiōnas*) were prepared by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made of things which are visible.” This is an obvious reference to *creatio ex nihilo*. The ages were prepared by the spoken word (*rhēmati*) of God, a reference to the original creation recorded in Genesis 1. Since Custance uses this verse (by a redefinition of *katartizō*, to frame, prepare) to support the Gap Theory, this verse is also discussed at some length in a later section.

Summary

The Scriptures discussed in this section are notable for at least one thing: their silence on anything but original creation. An argument *ex silentio* is, of course, somewhat less than satisfactory, and certainly not conclusive in itself. But there is no hint in the straightforward verses recounting creation of any ruin and subsequent restoration. On this the Scriptures are absolutely silent. Could not that be an indication that these writers knew of no such interpretation of the Genesis account? We, for our part, are inclined to think so.

Enuma Elish

Liberal scholars almost uniformly propose that mythological sources were the literary and theological ancestors of the biblical creation account. One of the most common Near Eastern myths to which it has been traced is the *Enuma Elish*.

for the Hebrew *qôlYHWH* (the sound of the LORD). Cf. *Miqrā'ôt Gedôlôt* (New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1951), *Berêšit*.

In his *Babylonian Genesis* Heidel has made a chart of the similarities between the creation accounts of Genesis and the *Enuma Elish*, which is reproduced below:

Enuma Elish	Genesis
Divine spirit and cosmic matter are coexistent and co-eternal.	Divine Spirit creates cosmic matter and exists independently of it.
Primeval chaos; Ti'amat enveloped in darkness.	The earth a desolate waste with darkness covering the deep (<i>tehom</i>).
Light emanating from the gods.	Light created.
The creation of the firmament.	The creation of the firmament.
The creation of dry land.	The creation of dry land.
The creation of luminaries.	The creation of luminaries.
The creation of man.	The creation of man.
The gods rest and celebrate.	The creator (God) rests and sanctifies the seventh day. ²

It is obviously true that the Genesis account and the *Enuma Elish* describe a common event. However, the similarities they possess do not in themselves demonstrate conclusively which was the source or which had the older source. Those who have rejected supernatural revelation *a priori* are compelled to find naturalistic explanations for this similarity, while those who have accepted inspiration of the Genesis account contend that it is the correct account and quite legitimately view the *Enuma Elish* as a corrupted description of the same event.

The similarities, furthermore, should not be allowed to obscure the significant differences in the accounts:

What characterizes this work is that it does not present a true doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, but rather begins with the assumption that matter is already at hand. It is true that *Enuma Elish* posits a time when heaven and earth had not been formed, but when Tiamat, Mammu, and Apsu existed together, apparently

2. A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 129.