

Pre-Adamism and the Gap Theory

Introduction

As the term “pre-Adamism” implies, it is the belief that human beings existed before the Biblical Adam, in contradistinction to the long-held tradition of Jews, Christians, and Muslims that Adam was the first human created. Today some scholars prescribing to the pre-Adamite theory even deny that the Biblical Adam lived at all, while many others concede that he did. Some scholars teach that all the pre-Adamites were destroyed by God in “Lucifer’s Flood”.¹ Then God started over by creating Adam. This particular view reflects the so-called Gap Theory between Genesis 1:1 and verse 2, in which God first created the earth in verse 1, and then destroyed all life on earth in verse 2 after unknown eons of time. Finally, in verse 3, He recreated life on earth, including Adam and Eve in the Biblical story.² This Gap Theory is known by various other names, including the Reconstruction Theory,³ the Ruin and Restoration Theory,⁴ and the Restitution Theory.⁵

Other pre-Adamism scholars reject the Gap Theory in favor of the idea that all human beings are descendant from pre-Adamites, including Adam himself. In this view, however, Adam was the father of the Jews, and all Gentiles are descendants from a wholly different lineage of pre-Adamites than Adam. Thus, there is a clear mark of distinction between Jews and everyone else, even though all are said to have descended from pre-Adamites.⁶ Most of the relatively modern theories teach this idea that we are all descended from pre-Adamites.⁷

Finally, some pre-Adamism scholars are creationists, while others are evolutionists.⁸ We will refer to this dichotomy when we explore the major motivations for those who believe in pre-Adamism later in this paper.

A Brief History of Pre-Adamism

Ancient Claims for Pre-Adamism

It is well known that Aristotle (d. 322 B.C.) taught that the universe, including the earth, was eternal, that it had always existed. Pagans and other secular thinkers after Aristotle followed his

¹ Russell Grigg. “Pre-Adamic Man: Were there Human Beings on Earth before Adam?” <http://creation.com/pre-adamic-man-were-there-human-beings-on-earth-before-Adam>, 2.

² Walter A. Elwell, Ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), “Gap Theory”, 439.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Francis D. Nichol. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978), 218.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Marvin L. Lubenow. “Pre-Adamites, Sin, Death and the Human Fossils”. <http://creation.com/pre-adamites-and-human-fossils>, 1.

⁷ Ibid, 2.

⁸ Ibid.

example, or at the very least believed the earth was 100,000 years old or older. As a result, we can rightfully classify nearly all *secular* thinkers in history as believers in pre-Adamism because the Biblical and Quranic Adam has traditionally been dated to between 6,000 and 10,000 years from our day.⁹

One of the oldest written sources that makes the pre-Adamist claim is a book called *Nabatean Agriculture*.¹⁰ Other than the understanding that Ibn Wahshiyah (d. A.D. 931) translated it into Arabic in A.D. 904,¹¹ nothing else is universally accepted about the book. Its date, authorship, and other historical facts about the book have never been solved to the satisfaction of most scholars. What we do know is that it is largely a book about agriculture that also contains much folklore, astrology, and religion, all from a pagan perspective.¹²

In his book *Without Form and Void*, Arthur C. Custance (d. 1985) cites Jewish commentators in different Midrash literature as understanding that pre-Adamist people existed before the creation of the Biblical Adam.¹³ This does not mean that all early Jewish rabbis believed this teaching, but it does demonstrate an early Jewish tradition in favor of it.

Birth of the Modern Claims for Pre-Adamism

Isaac de la Peyrere was a French Jew converted to Catholicism who is given the most credit for introducing other Christian thinkers to pre-Adamism in the seventeenth century. In 1655, he wrote a book in Latin entitled *Systema Theologicum ex Prae-Adamitarum Hypothesi*.¹⁴ Peyrere argued, in effect, that there were two separate creations of mankind. There were the pre-Adamite gentiles, and then the pre-Adamites in whose line Adam was born and became the father of the Hebrews.¹⁵ Although this and other theological views eventually resulted in his being deemed a heretic by the Catholic Church, and he publically recanted of his pre-Adamite views, scholars believe that he continued to privately hold that view for the remainder of his life.¹⁶

According to Tony Garland, author Weston Fields, in his *Unformed and Unfilled: A Critique of the Gap Theory*, states that J. C.¹⁷ Rosenmüller (d. 1815), a German scientist, introduced an idea similar to the modern Gap Theory in his scientific book entitled *Antiquissima Tellures Historica*, published in 1776.¹⁸ Garland himself attributes the first of the modern Christian scholars to advocate the Gap Theory to Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers in 1814.¹⁹ American scholar George H. Pember further developed the theory in his *Earth's Earliest Ages*, published in 1876.²⁰

⁹ Like the fact in the previous sentence, this is so much a part of common knowledge that no citation is required.

¹⁰ Judah Halevi. Tr. by Hartwig Hirschfeld. *Kitab al Khazari. The Book of Al Khazari*, Part 1. <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/khz01.htm>, 12-13.

¹¹ "Nabatean Agriculture". http://uses.plantnet-project.org/en/Nabatean_agriculture, 1.

¹² *The Filaha Texts Project*. http://www.filaha.org/author_ibn_wahshiyah.html, 1.

¹³ Arthur C. Custance. <http://www.custance.org/Library/WFANDV/chap1.html>, 3 (original book), 4-5 (web site).

¹⁴ Lubenow, 1.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Rosenmüller's middle name is Georg, so the initial should be G rather than C, an obvious typographical error.

¹⁸ Tony Garland. <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/questions/218.htm?x=x>.

¹⁹ Ibid. <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/questions/169.htm?x=x>, 3.

²⁰ Ibid.

Numerous other scholars in the twentieth century have also advocated the Gap Theory and pre-Adamism.²¹

Motivations for Believing in Pre-Adamism

First, it should be noted that some scholars have no discernable motivation for believing in pre-Adamism and/or the Gap Theory. Instead, they have drawn their conclusions simply by their interpretation of the Biblical and/or scientific evidence. Second, we should also note that not every scholar who has voiced any motivations for this belief is in universal agreement on what those motivations are. Having stated these important caveats, we will outline the major motivations for why some people have adopted pre-Adamism and/or the Gap Theory.

The Biblical Cain

According to Genesis 4:1, 16-18, Adam's and Eve's first child was a son named Cain, who went on to marry a woman and build a city. Who, then, did Cain marry if Eve was the only woman on the earth at the time? And where did all the people come from who inhabited Cain's city? Moreover, verse 14 says that Cain was worried about being killed after God said He was cursed (verse 11). In order to answer these questions, some have argued that Adam and Eve could not have been the only people on the earth when Cain was born. Either God created many full-grown married couples more or less simultaneously when He created Adam and Eve, or there were people created before Adam and Eve.

Ancient Secular Ideas of an Old Earth

As we already noted above,²² beginning with the Greek philosopher Aristotle (d. 322 B.C.), ancient secular thinkers widely regarded the entire universe as eternal. The earth, then, was also considered either eternal or at least hundreds of thousands of years old or older. In either case, such people could not believe in the Biblical Adam, nor could they believe that he was the first human, who lived no more than 10,000 years ago. Obviously, their old-age thesis for the earth motivated them to believe that people lived long before any alleged Biblical Adam.

Racism as a Motivation for Pre-Adamism

As early as the eighteenth century, some Christian thinkers taught that Caucasians and people of color were so different that they could not have come from the same lineage. Thus, they began to advocate that people of color, especially black Africans, must have been created separately and before Adam. These scholars also viewed people of color as inferior to Caucasians, which in turn became part of the justification for racism and slavery as practiced by Europeans, especially in the Americas.²³

As history shows so well, this motivation increased in the nineteenth century. Among those so motivated included American scientist Josiah C. Nott (d. 1873), who co-authored *Types of*

²¹ Elwell, 439.

²² See "A Brief History of Pre-Adamism", "Ancient Claims for Pre-Adamism", par. 1 in this paper.

²³ Grigg, 2.

Mankind in 1850,²⁴ American physician Samuel G. Morton (d. 1851),²⁵ and American geologist Alexander Winchell (d. 1891), who authored *Adamites and Pre-Adamites* in 1878.²⁶

Modern Geology and Darwinism

It can be said that modern geology was born with Scottish James Hutton's presentation of a paper entitled "Theory of the Earth" to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1785. He proposed that the earth must be very old in order to have allowed for sufficient time for mountains to be eroded and for sediments to harden into rocks at the bottom of the oceans and rise to become land. In 1830, Sir Charles Lyell published a book entitled *Principles of Geology*. In it he argued for the principle of uniformitarianism, the principle that geological change has always proceeded at the same slow rate that it does today. In stating this principle, it became obvious that the earth must be very old indeed.

Then British naturalist Charles Darwin published his book *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection* in 1859, arguing that life had evolved very slowly by incremental changes from a living single-cell organism into more complex and varied forms of life. This, he argued, must have taken millions of years to get to the stage when he lived in the nineteenth century.

These relatively new concepts in Western civilization revolutionized thinking, eventually resulting in reinterpretations of the first eleven chapters of Genesis and dividing the Christian movement. In other words, these ideas were certainly not consistent with traditional Christian thinking about the earth being about 6,000 years old and that Adam had been the first human being. Therefore, especially for Christian theistic evolutionists, pre-Adamite theories seemed plausible.

Biblical and Other Supports Analyzed

Genesis 1:1-2

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (New King James' Version)

Proponents of the Gap Theory insist that there is a gap of millions of years between verse 1 and verse 2, in which a wicked earth and all life on it was destroyed; some even maintain there were repeated creations and destructions and re-creations.

Although not all such proponents make the same linguistic arguments from verse 2, we will briefly cover all such arguments that are made.

²⁴ <http://until-darwin.blogspot.com/2012/02/on-josiah-nott.html>, 1-2.

²⁵ Samuel George Morton Papers. <http://www.amphilsoc.org/mole/view?docId=ead/Mss.B.M843-ead.xml>.

²⁶ The Online Books Page.

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Winchell%2c%20Alexander%2c%201824%2>

The Hebrew Letter Waw Means “Afterwards”

First, Garland quotes German scholar Johann A. Dathe from his 1776 book *Antiquissima Tellures Historica* stating the following:

Waw²⁷ ...before ‘the earth’ cannot be translated ‘AND,’ for it would then refer back to verse 1, where the narrative has “the earth and heaven were created by God.’ Whereas verse 2 proceeds to tell how the earth, at some uncertain time, had undergone some remarkable change. Therefore *waw* stands for ‘afterwards’ and is so to be interpreted, as it so often is—for example in Num. 5:23 and Deu. 1:19.

Dathe apparently assumed that translating *waw* as *and* would be repetitious and superfluous. However, it could just as easily amplify the creation statement in verse 1 by further describing what the earth was like originally. There is no justification for translating the word as *afterwards* unless the rest of the clause was translated so as to require it. As we see below, such is not the case. The Hebrew Bible translates that word as *now*, without conveying any interval of time between verses 1 and 2.²⁸

The Hebrew Words “without form, and void” Mean “made formless and void”

The Hebrew word translated as *without form* in Genesis 1:2 “has no certain cognates in other languages, [so] its meaning must be determined solely from its OT contexts.”²⁹ This trusted Hebrew language authority then demonstrates that it basically means “chaos”, “confusion”, or “emptiness”.³⁰ It never means “laid empty” or “made empty/chaos” or any such related terms.

The Hebrew word translated as *void* in the same verse means “void”, “waste”, or “emptiness”.³¹ There is no hint in the original Hebrew that it means “made void” or “laid waste”, or any such related ideas.

Together these words simply describe a condition of formlessness and emptiness without any hint of something having been made into those conditions. A verb would have to express causation in order for that interpretation to be valid.

The Hebrew Word for “is” Means “became”

According to several sources, the Hebrew word usually translated as the first occurrence of *is* in verse 2 should be translated “became” instead, so that the earth *became* formless and void.³² This Hebrew word can mean *became*, as it is almost universally translated in Genesis 19:26,

²⁷ This is a single letter attached to the Hebrew word for “the earth”. Some translations, like the New King James’ Version, do not translate this letter at all, while other English translations render it as “And” or even “Now”.

²⁸ <http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0101.htm>. This is taken from the standard Masoretic text and the JPS 1917 edition.

²⁹ Harris. Vol. 2, 964 under entry #2494.

³⁰ Ibid, 964-965.

³¹ Ibid. Vol. 1, 92 under entry #205a.

³² Examples include Elwell, 439 and Charles C. Ryrie. *The Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978). New American Standard Bible, 7 under study note for 1:2.

where it is said that Lot's wife "became a pillar of salt" (New King James' Version, New American Standard Bible, et. al.). However, the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* cites Genesis 1:2 as an example where this Hebrew word is used as a predicate adjective in a "description of a past situation which no longer exists..." and is correctly translated as *was*.³³

Moreover, this conclusion is reinforced by *The Interlinear Bible*, a literal translation, by the Septuagint (LXX), the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, and by other texts in the Bible. For example, Isaiah 45:18 implies that God created the earth to be inhabited:

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 [translated as "without form" in Genesis 1:2], But formed it to be inhabited), I am the Lord, and there is none else. (New American Standard Bible)

According to Genesis 1:2, God did indeed create the earth "without form". But the passage in Isaiah strongly suggests that He did not create the earth to be "without form" for long, but "to be inhabited." This is inconsistent with an interpretation in Genesis 1:2 that God *caused* the earth to be "without form" in some distant past.

After referring to the 7th day of Creation Week, the writer of Hebrews 4:3 declared that "the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Here *the works* must refer to the creative activity of God during the six days of Creation Week. Therefore, *the foundation of the world* must refer to the time that God actually formed the earth itself. This verse then teaches that God created in six days immediately (or nearly so) after He formed the earth itself. This leaves no room for a gap of any significance between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.

Finally, there is the statement in Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished." This verse alludes back to Genesis 1:1, where "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", so that Genesis 2:1 ends what Genesis 1:1 stated. Sandwiched between these two "bookends" are the six days of Creation Week (Genesis 1:3-31). This means that Genesis 1:2, like verses 3-31, belongs to Genesis 1:1, and there can be no appreciable gap between the two verses. They are all part of the same story.

Formed and Filled

In its description of the six days of Creation Week, Genesis 1:3-31 builds upon the condition of the earth being formless and empty by forming and then filling the earth. This is illustrated by the following chart:³⁴

³³ Harris. Vol. 1, 214 under entry #491.

³⁴ Adapted from Doug Baker. Explorer I: Exploring Bible Truth, "Lesson 3—Can Christians Believe in Evolution?" (Edmond, OK: Builders of Faith, 2014), 2.

| | <u>Formed</u> | <u>Filled</u> | |
|-------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Day 1 | Light (1:3-5) | Specific Lights (1:14-19) | Day 4 |
| Day 2 | Sky & Sea (1:6-8) | Birds & Fish (1:20-23) | Day 5 |
| Day 3 | Land & Vegetation (1:9-13) | Land Animals & Humans (1:24-31) | Day 6 |

There is nothing in Genesis 1, or anywhere else in Scripture, which refers to some re-forming or re-filling of the earth. This evidence is much more consistent with the conclusion that God originally created the earth formless and empty but very shortly thereafter began to form and fill it.

“Replenish the earth”

In the King James’ Version of the Bible, the first parents were told by God to “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth... (Genesis 1:28). Some argue that the use of the word *replenish* means that the earth had been filled with people previously but that God was starting over after a previous destruction of all life.

This argument is based on pure linguistic ignorance. First, although today the English word *replenish* means “to make full or complete again”,³⁵ implicitly meaning that something was once full or filled but has been diminished or depleted, that was not the meaning of the word in the seventeenth century, when the King James’ Version of the Bible was translated.³⁶ Second, Biblical language authorities recognize that the original Hebrew word in Genesis 1:28 means “to fill”³⁷, *not* “to fill again” or anything like that. This is the reason that all modern versions of the Bible translate the Hebrew as “fill the earth” or some other phrase that means the same thing.³⁸ Therefore, Genesis 1:28 simply means that our first parents were to have children, whose children and so on would “fill the earth”. Thus, this verse gives no support to the notion that there had been a devastation of the earth’s human population prior to this.

The Biblical Cain

First, those familiar with the Judeo-Christian Scriptures understand that Bible writers focused on the history and geography of those people and places where God’s chosen people³⁹ were located

³⁵ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/replenish>.

³⁶ James A. H. Murray, Ed. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. VIII (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1970), “Replenish”. A transition to the idea of restoring something to a former amount or condition seems to be in process in the 17th century, although the former meaning was used as late as 1741.

³⁷ R. Laird Harris, Ed. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 505 under entry 1195.

³⁸ Examples include the New King James’ Version, New American Standard Bible, The New English Bible, Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, English Standard Version, The Living Bible, Modern Language Bible, New International Version, The Bible: An American Translation, The Interlinear Bible, et. al.

³⁹ In the oldest Biblical times, those included Adam, Eve, Seth, and many others. After the Flood, those were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel (see Genesis 32:22-32), and the 12

and with whom they significantly interacted in history. The reason for this is that their mission was to inform the polytheistic nations around them of the true monotheistic God and His love for them. Because of its purpose to chronicle the highlights of God's people, the Bible leaves out many unnecessary details. Therefore, it is possible to believe that Adam and Eve were the first people God created, and that Cain was their first son. Possibly they had a daughter first, or soon after Cain, so that Cain later married one of his sisters.

Second, the Biblical worldview, for those who accept it, is that the very first couple fell into sin, which led to the Second Law of Thermodynamics⁴⁰, so that naturally all things, living and non-living, begin to decay, fall apart, or die. In other words, this worldview implies that there has been a progressive degeneration of the human race over human history. This degeneration can account for the very likelihood of birth defects in babies born to couples who are closely related to each other now. But it is reasonable to assume, even if not provable, that this was not the case in early human history. Thus, to our modern ears, we rightfully recoil from the idea of siblings marrying each other. However, it is reasonable to believe that this was no problem, physically or socially, in the early years of human existence.

As for the numerous people who inhabited Cain's city, we should note that the Bible does not say how long it was before Cain was born, or how long it was before his son was born.⁴¹ Neither does it tell us *when* Adam and Eve had other children, but Genesis does tell us that he did have sons and daughters.⁴² A glance at Genesis chapter 5 reveals that people typically lived several hundred years. If you take that testimony seriously, then just ask a mathematician how quickly the population could expand, and the objection shrivels to nothing. Naturally, if you reject the literal interpretation of the Bible, then you probably are going to believe in the existence of pre-Adamites. But the fact that many Christians do just that frankly seems a bit of a contradiction that they call themselves Christians. This literal interpretation would also provide more than adequate evidence that there were plenty of people around during Cain's life that could possibly kill him.

It may be a good thing to dwell on this literal versus non-literal interpretation of Genesis for a moment. Most critics of the Bible believe that the first eleven chapters of Genesis constitute an allegory, so that they should not be interpreted literally. However, please note this scholarly definition of an allegory:

An allegory is a prominent figure-of-speech technique used in literature. Often confused with symbolism, which is narrower, an allegory is an entire story or poem that presents a moral lesson. Characters and events are presented in a way

tribes of Israel were known as Israelites or Hebrews. Later in the history of Israel, the southern kingdom of Judah became God's chosen people, as the northern kingdom of Israel was defeated and scattered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.

⁴⁰ This is otherwise known as the Law of Entropy.

⁴¹ Genesis 4:17 declares that Cain named his city after his son, so naturally his son had to be born before he built the city.

⁴² See Genesis 5:4.

that projects a moral lesson that goes beyond the plot and requires some level of interpretation by readers.⁴³

Given this definition of an allegory, it is clear that Genesis 1-11 does not read like an allegory. Rather, it reads as straight history. Therefore, from a literary point of view, if a person believes in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, he cannot be intellectually honest and interpret these chapters as anything other than straightforward history. There is nothing except the present experience of human lifespans to suggest that the lifespans in Genesis 5 are not literal. And the presumption that present experience is indicative of the distant past is a presumption that cannot be proven, especially when Jesus and the Christian New Testament writers strongly imply a belief in the literal history of those chapters.⁴⁴

Isaiah 14

Scholars recognize that Lucifer and his end is being described in verses 12-21 in Isaiah 14; see especially verse 12, which names him as Lucifer. The mention of *nations* (v. 12), *kingdoms* (v. 16), *world* (v. 16), and *cities* (v. 17) as *destroyed* (v. 17) is interpreted by some Gap Theory adherents as references to a past destruction of the earth and its population, reinforcing their view of Genesis 1:2.⁴⁵

However, a careful reading of the chapter of Isaiah 14 demonstrates that verses 3-23 speak of the king of Babylon. Sandwiched between the explicit references to literal Babylon (verses 3-11, 22-23) is the discussion about Lucifer (verses 12-21). This is a device sometimes employed by Eastern writers in which they suddenly talk about the ultimate king of Babylon in the spiritual sense, that is, Lucifer himself.⁴⁶ Therefore, the predicted fall of Babylon and its literal king illustrates the activities and ultimate fall of Lucifer himself. With this in mind, the references to nations, kingdoms, world, and cities as destroyed refers primarily to the imminent destruction of literal Babylon, and secondarily to the final destruction of the world and Lucifer at the end of time.⁴⁷ There is, therefore, no justification whatsoever for viewing this as an earlier destruction of the world and its peoples.

Isaiah 24:1

Some have interpreted Isaiah 24:1 as referring to the distant past in which God destroyed the earth before re-creating it in Genesis 1: “Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it

⁴³ Neil Kokemuller. “What Are the Characteristics of an Allegory?” <http://classroom.synonym.com/characteristics-allegory-21741.html>.

⁴⁴ There is validation for a 7-literal-day creation, Adam, Adam made from dust, Eve, the serpent story, fall into sin, Cain, Abel, and the Cain and Abel story, Noah and the global Flood, and numerous names of those who are said in Genesis to have lived such long lives: Matthew 19:4-5; 23:35; 24:37-39; Luke 3:35-38; 11:51; 17:26-27; Romans 5:14-19; I Corinthians 15:22, 45-49; I Timothy 2:13-14; Hebrews 4:3-4, 9-10; 11:4-7; 12:24; I Peter 3:20; II Peter 3:3-6; and Revelation 12:19.

⁴⁵ Q169: A Pre-Adamic Race of Men? <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/questions/169.htm?x=x>, 7-8.

⁴⁶ In Ezekiel 28, the Lord speaks against the king of Tyre until he telescopes into talking about Lucifer in verses 12-19 because those latter verses obviously and primarily apply to Lucifer.

⁴⁷ Thus, the destruction of literal Babylon in historical time was a type of the destruction of the wicked and the world at the end-time, just as the king of Babylon is a type of Lucifer.

waste...” This understanding completely ignores the context of Isaiah 24. In Isaiah chapters 13-23, God is pronouncing judgment against numerous nations of the world, including but not limited to, Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom, and Tyre. Those were literal nations in Isaiah’s day. In chapter 24, this section of judgment pronouncements culminates in the prophecy of the destruction of the entire earth. Obviously, then, this judgment on the earth cannot reach backwards into Isaiah’s past but is a prophecy about the future.

Jeremiah 4:23-26

²³I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light. ²⁴I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. ²⁵I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. ²⁶I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of the Lord, By His fierce anger. (New King James’ Version)

Some proponents of the Gap Theory view this passage as describing the pre-Adamic world in which “there was no man...” and “all its cities were broken down...”⁴⁸ After all, it uses the language of Genesis 1:2 in declaring that the earth “was without form, and void...”

Again, the context of Jeremiah 4 precludes any possibility that it is talking about some remote past when the earth “was without form, and void...” Instead, it is a warning to Judah of God’s great judgment to come.⁴⁹ Historically, the next judgment on Judah was executed by the nation of Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar, resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple in 586 B.C. Note that this judgment would not be total, for verse 27 states that “Yet I will not make a full end.” Some people would survive, as we know that Daniel and others did so.⁵⁰ Therefore, “It seems best to understand [understand] Jeremiah as using phraseology associated with the original creation as an indication of how severe God’s judgment would be—leaving the land almost as unfruitful as if it were prior to creation of life.”⁵¹

An Eternal Universe and Earth?

Obviously, if Aristotle and secular thinkers until the twentieth century development of the Big Bang Theory were correct that the universe, including the earth, is eternal, then there would be sufficient room for a gap of eons of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. However, as we have demonstrated elsewhere, that is an unreasonable thesis philosophically.⁵²

First, matter-energy can only exist in time and space.... The process of the change of anything represents the motion of something, as more eloquently

⁴⁸ Q169: A Pre-Adamic Race of Men? <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/questions/169.htm?x=x>, 1, 5.

⁴⁹ See Jeremiah 4:5-7.

⁵⁰ See Daniel 1:1-6.

⁵¹ Q169: A Pre-Adamic Race of Men? <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/questions/169.htm?x=x>, 5.

⁵² Doug Baker. *A Search for Ultimate Truths: A Philosophical and Historical Journey* (Edmond, OK: Builders of Faith, 2014), 22-23.

written by Aristotle. For example, when a dog walks or otherwise moves, that is change. And the process of change can be measured in time. Thus matter-energy exists only in time and space. And anything that exists in time and space is limited by those forces and thus cannot be eternal. The whole universe consists of various kinds of matter and energy. Therefore, the entire universe cannot be eternal.⁵³

Now if the universe is not eternal, might it not be very old? Certainly, that is possible. We will explore this issue shortly.

The Racial Argument

As we noted earlier, many Caucasians could not imagine that people of color could possibly be related to them. Therefore, there must have been at least two different lineages of human beings because Caucasians and people of color could not have had a common lineage. However, this conclusion ignores a basic fact of biology that we all learned somewhere in our education.⁵⁴ Do we remember our basic genetics? DNA has numerous genes, most of which are not expressed in any one given individual, human or animal. Instead, there are recessive genes and dominant genes.

We also know that major environmental changes, diet, and other factors can switch certain genes off and switch other genes on. This is called genetic adaptation. It is the reason that Darwin noticed that birds of the same general type had developed longer or shorter beaks in order to adapt to their different food sources.⁵⁵ There is thus no reason to doubt that the different races were built into our human gene pool from the beginning and that the different racial varieties have emerged from our very different climates or other environmental circumstances. Therefore, there is no compelling reason to believe that the different races reflect completely different lineages of people, some of whom were allegedly created before Adam.

The Principle of Uniformitarianism

Inorganic Dating Techniques

Geologists assign ages to inorganic material—like rocks and minerals—on the basis of different radioisotope techniques called radiometric dating. Such techniques, like potassium-argon and uranium-lead dating, measures the decay of radioactive inorganic material into other, less complex matter until the chain reaction ends. By measuring the amount of original material in the rock or mineral with other decayed elements called daughter-products, scientists can know how long that rock or mineral has existed because they assume the rate of radioactive decay has always remained the same.

⁵³ Ibid. See page 23 of this source for two additional philosophical arguments against the universe being eternal.

⁵⁴ This is so basic that the citing of sources is unnecessary.

⁵⁵ Darwin based his theory of evolution of slow, incremental changes over eons of time on his observations. However, we now know so much more about genetics that it can explain this phenomenon.

However, experts have noted numerous “solubility problems in the sedimentary rock strata”,⁵⁶ which means that new elements can be introduced into a rock that can skew its reading. Also, enormous amounts of heat “can lead to contamination of rocks and minerals so they indicate that less radioactive decay has occurred. Such occurrences thus suggest that the rock is much older than it actually is.”⁵⁷ There is also geological evidence from tectonic plates, the volcanic “ring of fire” underneath and around the Pacific Ocean, and the observation that South America and Africa were probably connected at some point in the past that all point to the reasonable conclusion that the earth has experienced cataclysmic upheaval in the past. This would have provided the high temperatures necessary to have led to the contamination of many rocks. It certainly means that the principle of uniformitarianism regarding the radiometric dating methods cannot be assumed.

Moreover, no one really knows that the rate of decay in radioactive inorganic material has always been what it is today. Therefore, to assume that as fact might be reasonable, but it cannot be empirically verified.

Carbon-14 Dating

Dr. Willard Libby (d. 1980) invented the Carbon-14 dating technique after World War II.⁵⁸ When cosmic rays hit atoms in the earth’s atmosphere, it sometimes creates other cosmic rays that turn nitrogen-14 atoms into Carbon-14 atoms when they collide. Normal carbon atoms are Carbon-12, and both Carbon-12 and Carbon-14 inhabit all living things, including plants, animals, and humans.

“The ratio of normal carbon (carbon-12) to carbon-14 in the air and in all living things at any given time is nearly constant...Carbon-14 decays...to nitrogen-14 with a half-life of approximately 5,730 years. After the organism dies it stops taking in new carbon.”⁵⁹ This means that after an organism dies, it takes 5,730 years for half of its Carbon-14 to decay; then it takes another 5,730 years before half of that half decays, and so on. By comparing the amount of Carbon-14 and Carbon-12 in a dead organism, scientists can determine how long ago that plant, animal, or human lived—or more precisely, when it died.

Basically, anything that used to live or anything with carbon in it can be dated using the Carbon-14 method. This includes wood, coal, diamonds, charcoal, fossils, bones, seeds, and sea shells. Theoretically, something might be dated as old as about 100,000 years. However, in practice, the maximum age of an organism can be dated as old as between 50,000 and 80,000 years.⁶⁰

To rely on Carbon-14 dating, at least two different assumptions must be made. First, it is assumed that the amount of Carbon-14 in the atmosphere and in living things has always been what it is now. Second, it is assumed that the radioactive decay rate has always been what it is

⁵⁶ “Carbon Dating of Fossils”. <http://www.dinosaurc14ages.com/carbondating.htm>, 12.

⁵⁷ Baker. *A Search for Ultimate Truths*, 7.

⁵⁸ *A Science Odyssey: People and Discoveries*. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aso/databank/entries/do47ra.html>, 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 2.

⁶⁰ “Carbon Dating of Fossils”, 2.

now. In other words, the principle of uniformitarianism is assumed to always be true. Unfortunately, we can assume whatever we wish to, but we cannot know that it is true.

Indeed, what if the dozens of global Flood legends were true? More importantly, what if the Genesis Flood story accurate? If so, let us examine what we find there, as follows:

Genesis 1:6-7—At Creation, God divided the waters between the earth and the sky.

Genesis 2:5-6—In the beginning, it never rained, but mist from the ground was the water source.

Genesis 7:11-12—At the Flood time, it rained 40 days and 40 nights, consecutively.

Genesis 6:5-7, 11-13—God sent the Flood because of wickedness on the earth. Thus, the rain was not a gentle one, but a torrential rain!

The Genesis evidence is that a huge canopy of water vapor enveloped the atmosphere of the earth before the Flood. Such a volume of water at the Flood itself implies that the pre-Flood canopy would have been sufficient to keep out most cosmic radiation from interacting with the atoms in our atmosphere. Therefore, *if* this evidence were true, then there was a time when Carbon-14 was probably barely measurable on the earth. Thus, organic material that had lived before the Flood would appear to be much older than it actually is by Carbon-14 dating. Again, we do not have to prove the unreliability of the Carbon-14 dating method beyond about 4,000 years or so. All we have to demonstrate is that it is plausible to believe that the principle of uniformitarianism has not always been true.

Tree Ring Dating

Tree ring dating is often touted as a highly accurate way to determine the age of trees. It is believed that in a “normal” year, a tree produces one ring. By counting tree rings, you can then know how old a particular tree is. The age of many trees has been dated to a few hundred years, “but a few give longer ages than the Bible seems to allow,⁶¹ supposedly up to 10,000 years or so.”⁶²

However, the science of tree ring dating is not nearly as precise as most of us have been led to believe. Even under normal conditions, some trees either create no rings or even an extra ring during a year’s time. But the most important factor is that unusual weather patterns, with alternating strong rain storms and dry weather, often create several rings in a year’s time, apparently each ring in conjunction with periods of strong rainfall.⁶³

If there really had been a global Flood on earth, the oceans would have been warmer for some time due to the volcanic and other heat-generating activities. Warmer seas would have produced much greater water evaporation, a major building block of super storms. In the far northern and far southern areas of the planet, this would have produced an Ice Age. Such conditions probably

⁶¹ Most scholars date the history of life on earth to be anywhere from approximately 6,000 years to 10,000 years. But 10,000-year-old trees would not allow for a global Flood spoken of in Genesis chapters 6-8 and seemingly confirmed by dozens of global Flood legends in numerous world cultures.

⁶² John D. Morris. “Tree Ring Dating”. The Institute for Creation Research, <http://www.icr.org/article/tree-ring-dating>, 1.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 2.

lasted for a few centuries and almost certainly produced multiple rings each year in many trees. Therefore, the oldest trees on earth today, being post-Flood trees, would almost certainly appear to be significantly older than they really are.

When there is conflicting tree-ring evidence in the same vicinity, Carbon-14 dating techniques are often used on dead wood in the area, with the older readings generally being accepted as the real age of the trees.⁶⁴ However, we have already noted that the major assumptions underlying Carbon-14 dating cannot be proven. Therefore, we cannot know with reasonable certainty that a reading is accurate. Obviously, any trees living on earth today would have grown after the end of the global Flood, if you assume there was a global Flood. Some argue that Carbon-14 readings after the Flood would have to be accurate because there is no other known event that could account for inaccuracies. We agree that most post-Flood Carbon-14 dates are accurate because we can usually compare them with known historical events. However, the loss of the cosmic ray-blocking water canopy over the earth would require some significant number of years before the ratio of Carbon-14 and Carbon-12 would have settled to what it is now. Therefore, we should expect that the Carbon-14 dating of earth's oldest trees would show them to be older than they really are because there would have been less Carbon-14 on the earth at that time—more than before the Flood, but significantly less than now.

Other Biblical Arguments Against Pre-Adamism

Adam was the First Man

The context of Genesis 2:7, 15-16, 19-21 clearly refers to the first man on earth. He is called “the man” in verses 15-16 and “Adam” in verses 19-21. In the Biblical Hebrew language, “the man” and “Adam” is the same word. Thus, the first book of the Bible plainly calls Adam the first man on the earth.

Christian gospel writer Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus, the founder of Christianity, all the way back to Adam, who is called “the son of God”.⁶⁵ Of course, this expression *son of God* is not meant to call Adam God in the same way that Jesus is called the Son of God in the Christian New Testament. In other words, Adam is not a divine being. But he is the son of God in the sense that God made him personally as the first man.⁶⁶

I Corinthians 15:45 openly declares, “The first man Adam became a living being.”

The Bible's testimony that Adam is the first man on the earth means that Christians cannot accurately believe that other human beings lived before the time of Adam.

Sin and Death

In Romans 5:12-14, the Christian apostle Paul states quite plainly that sin and death entered the world through one man, and then death came to all men as a result (v. 12). This one man is

⁶⁴ Don Batten. “Tree ring dating (dendrochronology)”. <http://creation.com/tree-ring-dating-dendrochronology>, 1.

⁶⁵ Luke 3:23-38, especially v. 38.

⁶⁶ Genesis 2:7.

explicitly named as Adam in verse 14. It is noteworthy that this passage does not say, and neither does any other Bible passage either, that sin and death *re-entered* the human race or planet earth but *entered* (as in the first time). This historical statement is reinforced by I Corinthians 15:21-22: “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”

It is general knowledge that archeologists have discovered human fossils that possess the evidence of violence, disease, and even cannibalism. According to the Bible, these things are sins or the results of sin. Because the Bible says Adam introduced sin and death into the earth, then it is incompatible with the Bible to believe that pre-Adamites existed, sinned, and died. Yet the entire pre-Adamite Theory declares that people lived, sinned, and met God’s destruction in judgment all before Adam was created.

Some old-Earth advocates [among Christians] attempt to blunt the force of the relationship between Adam’s sin and physical death by claiming that only *spiritual* death resulted from Adam’s sin, and that physical death is a natural occurrence and a part of God’s original creation.⁶⁷

Yet it is obvious from I Corinthians 15:21-22 that it is physical death that resulted from Adam’s sin, for bodily resurrection is the antidote for physical death. Even a superficial reading of the entire chapter of I Corinthians 15 is a discussion of bodily resurrection from the dead. Certainly, spiritual death results from sin as well. But one of its fruits is physical death, which is the reason the plan of salvation requires the undoing of physical death through a bodily resurrection.

Pre-Adamites and Salvation

If the sins of Adam and all his posterity required God to become a man and die as our Substitute in order to save any of them, then why was there no plan of salvation for the alleged pre-Adamites? Did God only develop love for mankind with His creation of Adam and Eve? Christians believe that God’s character does not change⁶⁸ but remains constant throughout eternity. Therefore, it is difficult to understand how a Christian could possibly believe that some people lived and sinned and died without any hope of salvation.

A New Approach

Although some Christian scholars still maintain the pre-Adamite and Gap Theory views, it has largely been replaced by a new approach. In order to preserve their belief in the secular old-earth idea, many scholars now interpret each day in the Creation story of Genesis 1 as an indefinite but long period of time. This is the major way they attempt to reconcile Darwinian evolution with the Bible.

⁶⁷ Lubenow, 3.

⁶⁸ See Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8.

Major Arguments for Day-Eons Theory

We agree with the scholars espousing the view that each Creation day equals unknown eons of time on two points. One, the Hebrew word for “day” in Genesis 1 is *yom* and is used in a variety of ways in the Hebrew Bible depending upon the context. One respected authority cites several uses of *yom*, including but not limited to, (1) the light part of a day, (2) a period of 24 hours, (3) a general but unspecified time, and (4) a point in time, in addition to other uses depending upon the form of the word.⁶⁹ Two, “Neither is there a rule of Hebrew language demanding that all numbered days in a series refer to twenty-four-hour days.”⁷⁰

However, by its usage in the Hebrew Bible, when the simple word *yom* is associated with a numeral, it virtually always refers to a literal 24-hour day, unless the context requires a non-literal interpretation.⁷¹ But critics challenge the validity of using that fact to conclude that the days of Creation Week in Genesis 1 are 24-hour days. Instead, they especially point to the fact that none of the six days of Creation Week has the definite article (*the*) modifying the numeral, which they insist outside of Hebrew poetry means that the days do not refer to a literal specific time.⁷² While it is certainly true that each *yom* in Genesis 1 has no definite article,⁷³ each has the Hebrew words for *evening* and *morning*,⁷⁴ which implicitly refers to a 24-hour day unless the context requires a non-literal interpretation.⁷⁵ In fact, whenever the Hebrew words for *morning* or *evening* are used in connection with *yom* outside Genesis 1, it refers to a 24-hour day.⁷⁶ Moreover, whenever both Hebrew words *morning* and *evening* occur together without *yom*, it refers to a 24-hour day.⁷⁷ Therefore, each occurrence of *yom* in Genesis 1 does not need the definite article, for the use of *evening* and *morning* tells us that the day is a 24-hour day unless the context requires a non-literal interpretation.

Not only does the context in Genesis 1 *not* require a non-literal interpretation of each day of Creation Week, but it actually requires a literal 24-hour-day interpretation, for at least two reasons. First, consider the carbon dioxide-oxygen cycle. Plants give off oxygen for animals and people, who in turn give off carbon dioxide for the plants to use. According to Genesis 1:11-13, plant life was created on the third day of Creation Week. But birds were not created until the fifth day (1:20-23), and land animals and people were not created until the sixth day (1:24-31). Thus, if each day of Creation Week represented hundreds of thousands of years or more, all plant life would have long ago died out before any animals or people were living.

⁶⁹ Harris. Vol. 1, 370 under entry #852.

⁷⁰ Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Ada, MI: Baker Publishing Group, Baker Academic, 1998), 271.

⁷¹ Examples of a numerical *yom* that should probably be interpreted in a non-literal way include Daniel 12:11’s 1,290 days, Daniel 12:12’s 1,335 days, and possibly Hosea 6:1-2.

⁷² Gleason L. Archer. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 60-61.

⁷³ *The Complete Jewish Bible*. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/cjb/genesis/1.html>, Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.

⁷⁴ Idid.

⁷⁵ For example, the Hebrew of Daniel 8:14 reads 2,300 “evenings mornings” according to Jay P. Green, Ed. and Translator. *The Interlinear Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), Daniel 8:14. We believe the context requires a non-literal interpretation.

⁷⁶ Paul Taylor. *Creation Today*. “The Hebrew Yom: Taking One Day at a Time”. <http://creationtoday.org/the-hebrew-yom-taking-one-day-at-a-time>, 2013, 1.

⁷⁷ The one exception appears to be in Daniel 14. See Footnote #75 above.

Second, the Sabbath Commandment of Exodus 20:8-11 plainly refers back to the “days” of Creation and commands God’s people to keep each seventh day as a holy memorial of God’s creative power demonstrated at Creation Week. Regardless of one’s theological view as to whom should keep the seventh-day Sabbath today, it is obvious that at least the Hebrews were to keep every seventh day as a 24-hour day. That fact demands that the other six days of Creation Week must also have been six literal 24-hour days.

Conclusion

In the course of our research, we have discovered that there is no Biblical support at all for the existence of pre-Adamites, the Gap Theory, the old-earth theory, or indirectly for Darwinian evolution. Our critics might say that we have ignored science and argued from the assumption that the Bible contains an accurate, literal history. First, the major purpose of this paper was to evaluate the claims by certain Christians of these things as facts. So, of course, if such Christians use the Bible to support their claims, we had to use the Bible as well. Besides, we did not completely ignore science. We demonstrated that these other Christians too readily yielded to the scientific community by conceding that the scientific evidence for the earth being far older than the Bible literally reads was truth. For when the various methods of dating organic and inorganic material are examined more carefully, the principle of uniformitarianism cannot be reasonably relied upon in the distant past.

Therefore, the Bible’s claim that Adam was the first human being cannot be honestly challenged from the Bible itself. Moreover, evidence exists from the earth itself to reasonably conclude that cataclysms and at least one ice age have occurred, and that these events probably make the principle of uniformitarianism unreliable in the distant past in such a way as to make the earth and its once-living organisms measure much older than they actually are.

Science has benefited mankind in innumerable ways to make our lives better and more convenient. But the post-modern man must recognize that when scientists attempt to reach far into the past where they cannot be certain of their assumptions, their pronouncements cannot necessarily be taken as the gospel truth. When anyone delves into the distant past, whether through science, philosophy, or theology, he needs to be careful not to be too dogmatic because faith plays a larger role in one’s conclusions the farther back one goes. And faith is not exclusively a religious word either; even secular people exercise faith every day, usually in very reasonable ways.

Different people will have different views as to what reasonable doubt and reasonable faith are. But that faith must be utilized even by scientists cannot be disputed. Elsewhere, we have examined the historical evidence for Jesus, His claim to be God, and His doctrine of Scripture.⁷⁸ And we find it far more reasonable to believe Jesus and His Word than it is to believe in the principle of uniformitarianism, upon which all modern science bases its conclusions regarding dating techniques—which in turn provides the opportunity for evolution and the ideas examined in this paper to be accounted as true. And when uniformitarianism falls, so does everything that depends upon it.

⁷⁸ Baker. *A Search for Ultimate Truths*, 142-190.

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