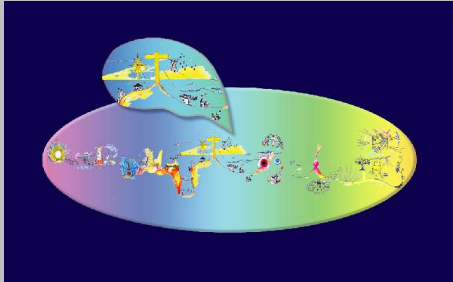


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Eternal Fellowship News Bulletin

We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testaments) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!

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HULDAH MINISTRY

LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

[IN THE BEGINNING]

Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above.

Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars.

Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commended and they were created.

He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away.

Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightening and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendour is above the earth and the heavens.

He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart.

Praise the LORD.

PSALM 148.

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

PSALM 102:25-27.

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. ³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

GENESIS 1:1-3.

In January this year the British government gave permission to Ian Wilmut, an embryologist to clone human embryos for medical research since his team successfully created Dolly the sheep by reproductive cloning technology eight years ago. It is understood that scientists had already started cloning animals many decades before Dolly and today, outrageously, beyond animal clones, research for cloning humans is growing at an alarming rate.

It was just one year ago that a breakthrough in therapeutic human cloning that would open wide the medical potential of embryonic stem cells, was announced by South Korean team's successful achievement of what had so far been thought impossible. Controversial though it may be, there are large amounts of expectations that stem cells taken from cloned human embryos could be used for everything beneficially from repairing damaged organs to curing hereditary diseases. Nobody knows what is the next concerning the idea of cloning humans, however, there is yet another challenge going on to create the first artificial life form. Formation of an actual "living-being" has been attempted in another part of the world.

It has been reported that there are some scientific research groups who are attempting something never achieved previously, i.e., to create a new form of "living-being" from non-living chemicals in the lab. Creating life was once regarded as belonging to the divine realm but today it appears to be within the horizon for ambitious and radical researchers. While there are always risks and worries accompanying such developments, especially if creation of such synthetic and artificial life form were to get out of man's hand, optimism seems to overpower their ethical and religious conscience. What should we make of their challenge in assuming the role of a creator? Jesus' half-brother, Jude's warning should seriously be heeded: ***'And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day'*** (Jude 6), which was spoken, referring to the birth of the '*Nephilim*', i.e., "earth-born fallen ones," possibly produced by fallen angels outside God's creation order in the days of Noah. If the general public morally and conscientiously know the definite need of drawing a distinction between human cloning for medical research and reproductive cloning, more so with God-fearing people, who ought to be properly informed about God's creation order, lest recent incoming deception should overpower the biblical truth.

While evolutionists claim that life emerged in the most primitive form on earth billions of years ago and that man gradually evolved from apelike primitive man, the Word of God declares that man was specifically and purposefully created both in the triune God's image and in their likeness as a "ruler of the whole earth and all the creatures" several thousand years ago and that even the earth itself is very young, possibly, only ten thousand years old or so. Questions of origins are intrinsic to us and despite the clarity of the biblical statements of God as the Creator and also of man as His specially elaborated creation and further, of earth's anthropocentric formation, many different theories concerning creation have appeared. Amazingly, even among creationists, there are various interpretations in hermeneutical presuppositions and methodology and debate about it seems neither completed nor resolved so far at all. There seem to be generally four theories: (1) Evolution supported by non-believers, which claims gradation from the imperfect to the perfect and whose philosophy had already been developed among the ancient Greeks such as Aristotle far before Charles Darwin. It emphasises the spontaneous outbreak of life and rejects God's design and purpose behind the creation. (2) Evolution supported by those who believe in God of the Bible. (3) The restitution or re-creation theory, so-called "Gap Theory" as one form of Creationism, which was popularised by a footnote in the "Scofield Reference Bible" since Dr. Thomas Chalmers in Scotland initially proposed it in 1814. Showing the fact that geological ages were well harmonised with biblical accounts, this theory interprets Genesis 1:1 as God's original creation of a good world and that because of Lucifer (Satan)'s fall, the earth became the formless and desolate mass as written in Genesis 1:2. Among various gap theories a common statement is that Genesis 1:2 is a description of God's judgment upon His original creation of the "universe" (*'the heavens and the earth'*, in Hebrew) and that there is a lengthy time-gap between the original creation in 1:2 and the restored creation recorded in 1:3 onwards. Defenders of this theory claim that what is described in Ge.1:3~31 is actually a re-creation after God intervened into the chaotic disorder caused by Satan, with His new order. Although it is quite amazing to read out such an extraordinary interpretation between only two verses, this gap theory has been supported by quite a few Christian leaders, Bible teachers and Bible-believing scientists. It seems worth examining.

The brief summary of the theory is as follows: God first created a perfect universe as written Ge.1:1, ***'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'*** At that time, Satan was the archangel among all the angels created by God and was ruler of the earth. But this most beautiful and perfect angel, Lucifer wanted

himself to be god and rebelled against his creator God. The result was God's judgment on the earth in the form of a flood, which they call "Lucifer's flood" which was much bigger than Noah's Flood. Thus, darkness covered the whole earth and a global ice-age started as written in 1:2, '**Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.**' In a nutshell, the gap theory claims that there is a chronological gap of indeterminable period between the first two verses of Genesis, in which the destruction of an original universe and the lengthy geological ages can be placed. According to Bible teachers and biblical scholars who have been studying these issues, there appear to be numbers of exegetical and theological grounds in the defenders' arguments. Some of them are as follows.

First, in terms of exegetical support:

- 1) The Hebrew Bible, Masoretic text of Genesis has a small mark of indicator '*rebhia*' following verse 1, which guides the reader to have a pause before going on to the next verse. The '*rebhia*' also seems to indicate that the conjunction "ו (vav)", with which Genesis 1:2 begins, should be translated 'but' rather than 'and'. This leads to the following interpretation: '**But the earth was formless and empty....**'
- 2) The Hebrew verb "to be" in verse 2 can be translated as not 'was' but 'become', which would then read, '**but the earth became formless...**'
- 3) Isaiah 45:18; '**he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—**' might be regarded to suggest that God never intended to create the world a ruin, contradictory to what is stated in Genesis. Accordingly, the defenders argue that God was not responsible for creating the state of '**formless (thu) and(va) empty (bhu),**' which is interpreted by them as 'chaos' as a result of His judgment. However, it is also true to be able to take the implication of the text more simply as 'emptiness', actually as the NIV translation above connotes. The defenders also point out that this Hebrew phrase '*tohu va-bohu*' describing a disorderly condition is used in two other passages; in Isaiah 34:8-10 and Jeremiah 4:22-23. The same phrase is used in both places in association with judgment. Such scriptural examination could be concluded to illustrate a state of desolation resulting from God's judgment upon wickedness. Thus, a rebellion of heavenly hosts, fallen angels might have provoked such God's judgment upon His original creation before His re-creation.

Secondly, in terms of theological support:

- 4) The passage of Job 38:1~15 reveals the existence of heavenly creatures, '**the sons of God**' (the angels) when the Lord laid the foundations of the earth. Various passages of Scripture indicate that heavens and heavenly hosts were created prior to the creation of earth. Nehemiah speaks about different realms of heavens in 9:6: '**You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.**' From this verse as well as Paul's accounts of his experience of being caught up to '**the third heaven**', it is apparent that there are more than one heaven, probably at least three heavens, only one of which we can see above earth. Water also appears as plural in form in Genesis 1:2, because the Scripture indicates there is more than one sort of water; water above the heavens and water under the heavens. However, significantly there is only one earth, the word for earth is singular.
- 5) The accounts of man's Fall in Genesis 3 reveals the fact that Satan was already there as the fallen to deceive Adam. According to Ezekiel 28, whose passage is generally thought to be a reference to the fall of Satan along with Isaiah 14, (though the church has not traditionally held such interpretations), the archangel named Lucifer once occupied an honourable position in heaven. However, after his rebellion he was cast out from God's presence in heaven. Thus, Scripture indicates that he would have set up his fallen kingdom possibly somewhere in mid-heaven: '**Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**' (Ep.6:11-12, Line added). Since then up to this day, Satan continues to be against God and God's followers as '**the prince of this world,**' an accuser, and a slanderer. The defenders claim that the fall of Satan and his fallen angels is possible to have taken place prior to any of the six days of creation. However, though Satan's desire to be a ruler of the world cannot be denied, it should be reminded of that his fall itself might have occurred without any relationship to earth.

(4) Six-day Theory for creation states that the universe was created in six days. While in the 19th century many Bible-believing scientists accepted the "Age-day" theory, there are also other various fashions of interpretations such as "One-thousand year-day" theory, "Galaxy-days (360 million years)" theory, and "Six revelation days to Moses" theory. Among many, "Six-day creationism" counts six literal days involved in

the whole process of creation and it supports a relatively young earth (less than 10,000 years or so) and the formation of the fossil record caused by Noah's Flood, and not by 'Lucifer's flood'. The view of 'Six-day creationism' can be summarised as follows:

1) the order of creation as recorded in Genesis 1 correlates to a basic outline of earth history. The sequence of events both physical and biological is more significantly depicted than the length of time in the Scripture. What should be noted concerning the time factor is that the days of creation do not begin until after the initial cosmic events, '*in the beginning*', which Dr. Victor Pearce points out: 'All the heavens, ie. the universe in its earlier stages, were created before the days began to be recorded so that no time scale can be assessed from the Genesis account, except that it was from the beginning onwards. This is followed by void and darkness of verse 2, into which many primeval processes can be fitted. The days following are then measured by the end of one day to the beginning of the next. It is the end which marks the first day— a significance you should note.' (*Weighing The Evidence*, p.42-43, Scripture Press Foundation (UK) LTD). While uniformitarian geology would assign the billions of years to the '*days*' in Genesis, the Hebrew word for '*day*' cannot be an indefinite period and there is no reason that it needs to be taken symbolically here and should be interpreted literally as a 24 hour-day. In passing, the doctrine of uniformitarianism claims that natural laws and processes have never yet been interrupted to the extent of a total destruction of human civilisation thorough divine intervention.

2) Interestingly, the accounts of man's Fall, at which moment disorder, deterioration and downwards direction to death started, well fits to "the second law of thermodynamics" or "the law of Entropy" which says that order in any closed system tends to diminish into chaos and ending. Such a finite universe has both a beginning and an ending, and the contrast between the infinite Creator God and His finite creation is stark, which is indeed alluded to in Ps.102:25-27 as quoted at the beginning.

3) While uniformitarian geology explains fossil-bearing strata as gradual and evolutionary formation of long period of time, supporters of creationism assign them to a result of the cataclysmic Flood. Then how can such strata be formed? It is a quite fascinating question. The idea is explained as follows: 'A flood of worldwide proportions would be immensely destructive. It would require huge amounts of water pushed up from beneath and precipitated from above, presumably by the condensation of a vapor or cloud cover, with cataclysmic effects on the earth's crust. The amount of water necessary to cover the earth would carry virtually all soil with it into the oceans by erosion, where it would pile up in strata. Various creatures would be buried in those strata, the simpler and smaller on the bottom, the larger and more vigorous on top— hence, the appearance of various ages in which life developed from simpler to more complex forms. After the Flood new land masses would have emerged, and some of these newly formed strata would have been exposed.' (James M. Boice, *Genesis* Vo.1. p.59, Zondervan publication). According to Boice, the following points further substantiate creationists' views: The observation that present-day conditions are forming very few potential fossil deposits necessitates catastrophic upheaval in the past to produce fossil beds. A universal flood more adequately explains some exceptional unruly situation of strata which is disharmonious with the theory of lengthy geological ages. The existence of huge fossil deposits such as the mammoth deposits can best be explained by biblical catastrophes such as Noah's Flood and abnormal climate.

There is also a kind of compromise approach to the interpretation of creation. It accepts the regenerated world that completely and newly started with a messianic line from Adam on earth around 6,000 years ago. While supporting the lengthy geological time scale and fossil record, they also support a Six-day re-creation theory. Bible believing defenders consisting of many Christian scientists believe that a race of manlike beings, i.e., the pre-Adamic race of hominids inhabited earth before Adam and Eve. They were not made in God's image and modern man is not descended from the apelike hominids such as the Neanderthal. Indeed, the recent DNA testing reported one year ago, revealed the fact that Neanderthals were a species entirely distinct from humans and man is not even partially descended from them. Very discouraging for the evolutionists though it may be, but significantly, this means that any notion that modern humans had a close evolutionary relationship with the Neanderthals has completely been abandoned. However, returning to the issue of the recent scientific interpretations, critical point of their argument lies in the fact that death of creatures took place before man's Fall. If God's judgment was brought to the whole earth because of man's sin, 'death' as its consequence should be introduced to the world after Adam. If this logic is true, the fossil record should be regarded as post-Adamic.

Due to limited space after brief examination of the numerous creation theories, we will explore further on this topic next month.