

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

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FALLING INTO THE "GAP" TRAP! Part Two

by Ted J. Clarke

Introduction

Those who promote a vast "gap" of unknown time between Genesis 1:1 and the rest of the chapter do so primarily to accommodate the theories of evolution and specific claims of geology. Many, perhaps most, scientists reject the great catastrophe of the global Flood (Gen.6-9) to account for the various layers of fossilized life forms. Part One on this present topic dealt with attempts by some to establish the gap theory based on Genesis 1:2. This article discusses the distinctions gap promoters try to make between the words "created" and "made" in Genesis and other Scriptures in support of their theories.

God's Working in "Creating" and "Making"

Can the gap theory be sustained by the claim of distinctions between the words **create/created** and **make/made**, as they relate to God in His creation activities? I think not, but some brethren claim that these alleged distinctions prove that all of Genesis 1:1-31 cannot refer to a single six literal days creation such as that mentioned in Exodus 20:11. When giving the "day of rest" commandment, Moses referred to God's rest on the seventh day, claiming "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, **and all that is in them is...**(Exodus 20:11).

In commenting on the Exodus passage, one writer said:

If this passage were all that existed in the Bible about the creation, certainly we could conclude that the entire creation took place within six days, including everything that has ever existed on the Earth being formed during that time. This is a very shallow conclusion, however, and in the view of the writer is inconsistent with the Genesis record as well as other parts of the Bible...The passage of Exodus is a reference to the subjects of the creation week of Genesis - that which

God made (asah), not that which God created (bara-Genesis 1:1).¹

Another writer basically takes the same view, stating:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1). "Created" is the translation of the Hebrew word "bara," the ultimate significance of which is to bring into existence something out of nothing. In Genesis 1 we have reference to both the original creation, and to renovation. Creation refers to bringing into existence; renovation refers to changing, making. The Hebrew word is "asah." Renovating, making refers to the world as we know it. How much "time" (as men view time) elapsed [the so called "gap" -TJC] between the original creation and the renovation (the work of the six days) no one can say with certainty.²

Such claims of distinctions between the Hebrew words "bara" (create) and "asah" (make) simply will not stand up under investigation as one considers what Genesis 1 and other scriptures say about creation. Commentaries on Genesis by H. C. Leupold, G. Ch. Aalders, Gordon J. Wenham, Victor P. Hamilton, and Henry Morris can be researched for valuable insights into these words and how they are used. These sources will show that "create" (bara) is used only of God, but the word does not always mean to bring something into existence out of nothing. It is also true that "make" (asah) is used both of God and man, having the general meaning of fashioning or shaping something. Although it is true that man cannot create, but he can make things, it certainly is not true that man can "make" things like God does it. We intend to show that the proposed distinctions between "create" and "make," which the gap advocates try to apply to God in His creation activities, are artificial and untrue. In fact, in Genesis 1 the words "create" (bara) and "made" (asah) are used interchangeably at times in de-

scribing the same creative acts of God. What God created, He made; and what He made, He created.

As the first author implies in his quote above, if Exodus 20:11 can be shown to refer to the whole of creation (Genesis 1:1-31), then the gap theory falls flat; "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, **and all that in them is.**" No time can be found for a previous creation, because the earth and everything in it, including presently fossilized life forms, would have been formed in that six days. Of course, that would exclude any species which have developed since that time and the geologic changes brought about by catastrophes such as the global Flood (Genesis 6-9).

The use of "created" in Genesis 1:1 does indeed signify God as the Ultimate Source of our world and all that is in it, but that does not preclude other words from being used to convey the same action by God. The word "created" is used in Genesis 1 only in verses 1, 21, 27 and its presence in those verses show that it is used interchangeably with other words equally expressive of God's power. There are three general statements which are made about God's creative actions (1) "And God said, Let there be"; (2) "God created"; and (3) "God made." Each one of these is equal to the others. We can profit here from a contextual and comparative study of Genesis 1. Notice:

1. Genesis 1:3, "And God said, **Let there be light**: and there was light." It does not say that God "created" or "made" the light, but He did say, "Let there be." You will see that God's spoken word both "created" and "made" and that Moses and other biblical writers did not make distinctions in these words regarding God's creative acts.

2. Genesis 1:6, "And God said, **Let there be a firmament**," and in verse 7 Moses said, "And God **made** the firmament." When God said, "Let there be," He "made" the firmament; the same creative act expressed in two different words or phrases.

3. Genesis 1:20, "And God said, **Let the waters bring forth** abundantly the

(Continued on page 2)

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(Continued from page 1)

moving creature...and fowl that may fly." Then, in verse 21 Moses notes, "And God **created** great whales...and every winged fowl." Thus, when God spoke His "Let there be" statements He "created" (v. 21) and "made" (v. 7) --all being equal to each other.

4. Genesis 1:25, "And God said, **Let us bring forth** the living creature after his kind," which was followed in verse 25 by Moses saying, "And God **made** the beast of the earth after his kind." When God said, "Let there be" (referring to animal life), He both **created and made, Moses using the terms interchangeably.**

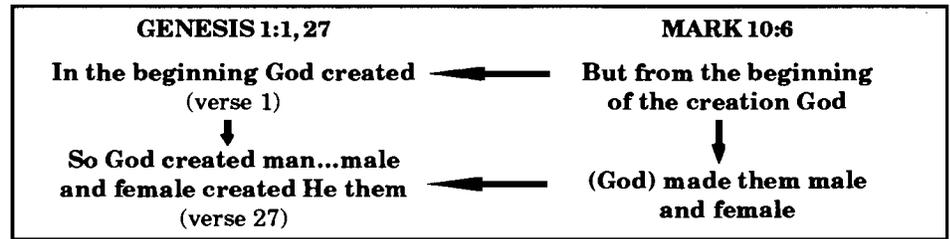
5. Genesis 1:26, "And God said, **Let us make** man in our image, after our likeness." When Moses spoke of this act of God, he wrote, "So God **created** man in His own image, in the image of God **created** He him; male and female **created** He them" (verse 27). In these verses the fact that God "made" man in His own image in one verse and "created" him in His own image in the next is absolute proof that Moses used these terms as equivalents in discussing the creation events. **Remember this point!** Although these are not all of the "Let there be, created, and made" passages in Genesis 1, they are sufficient to show that each was equal to the others in the writings of Moses.

Several points can be made which destroy the gap theorists' contention about the supposed distinction between "create" and "make" as they apply to God's creation. First, why is it that God had to **create** the great whales and winged fowl (1:21), but He **made** the beasts of the earth (1:25)? All categories of animals are composed of the elements of the earth, so there is no reason why God would "create" one and "make" the other, unless both terms are used interchangeably. Second, the fact that both words are used in bringing man into being "in God's image" shows that they

If God **made** all things that are in the heavens and earth, as both Moses and Nehemiah say, that would include the great whales, winged fowl, and man too. Genesis 1:21, 27 says that God **created** these life forms, proving again that the Bible writers used the terms interchangeably. There is no support for the gap theory in the alleged differences between "create" and "make" as those terms apply to all events in Genesis 1:1-31.

Jesus and Moses

Jesus tied together the whole chapter of Genesis 1 into a unified creation in Mark



are considered equal by Moses. One cannot say that it is the spirit of man that God "created," while He "made" the physical body from the dust, for Moses said that man, in the "image of God," was both **made and created**. Also, what God **created** was "male and female" (verse 27), which refers in part to their physical bodies, formed from the dust and a rib (Genesis 2:7, 21-23). One cannot avoid the conclusion that Moses used "create" and "made" as conveying equal thoughts as they applied to God's creative work. Third, since this is the case, one does not have to be a "scientist" to be smart enough to see that when Moses said in Exodus 20:11, "For in six days the Lord **made** heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is," he was talking about the complete six day creation event of Genesis 1, including verse 1, "In the beginning God **created** the heaven and the earth." For Moses, what God "made" and what God "created" were all connected to the great creation chapter of Genesis 1:1-31, a six day creating/making with no time for a "gap" of millions or billions of years.

Nehemiah 9:6 is one of the most inclusive verses in all the Bible of all of God's creative activity, and Nehemiah says that God **made** (asah) it all!

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast **made** the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

10:6. Christ combined Genesis 1:1 with 1:27, placing man here on earth "from the beginning of the creation," not some millions or billions of years later. If the Lord was talking about Genesis 1:1 & 27, and it ought to be obvious that He was, do we not contradict Him if we contend for any gap theory of earth's history? The **Arndt, Gingrich, & Danker Greek-English Lexicon** (2nd ed.) notes that the word Jesus used for "creation" (ktisis) refers to "the sum total of everything created...from the beginning of the world... Mk. 10:6" (pp. 455-56).

Conclusion

We do not know what all God may have done in the eternity before He started the record of time in Genesis 1:1, but the creation which begins with that verse is set forth as a literal six days of God's creative work. If some think "this is a very shallow conclusion," we could only ask them to respond to the teaching we have presented in this article. If scientists reject the biblical account of creation because they cannot accept what it says over their theories, why should any Christian try to force the Bible to say what it does not say, just to placate the scientific community? Honoring God's word regarding the creation of the universe in which we live requires that we avoid falling into the "gap" trap. If those who believe in the "gap" theories want to find support for it in the Scriptures, they are going to have to try to find it elsewhere than in making distinctions between God's "creating" and "making" activities

recorded by Moses.

ENDNOTES

¹"Flat Earth Bible Study Techniques," by John N. Clayton, IN: *Does God Exist?*, Vol. 3, No. 10 (Oct. 1976), pages 5-6.

²Roy C. Deaver, *Romans: God's Plan for Man's Righteousness* (Austin, TX: Biblical Notes, 1992), page 167.

[Editor's Note: I have merely quoted what these men have written. If anyone questions the accuracy of these quotes, I will be happy to supply you with the article or section of the sources from which these quotes are taken. I have no desire to ever misquote or take one's comments out of context.]

"THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH" (Matthew 5:5)

HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR INHERITANCE?

by Brent Pollard

Of all the beautiful attitudes that Christ wanted us to embody I think the most difficult to understand would have to be that of meekness. Most people equate meekness with weakness and do not understand what relationship that these "weak" individuals could have with this earth. Others, in a state of perplexity, wonder why Jesus would offer something that is passing away (1 John 2:15-17) as a reward for desirable behavior. Perhaps we would benefit from an examination of the true meaning of meekness as well as its relationship to an earthly inheritance.

Meekness comes from the Greek word "praus" and carries with it three distinct ideas. First, there is the idea of moderation that can be associated with meekness. *Praus* (meek) or *praotes* (meekness) was commonly used by such Greek philosophers as Aristotle to describe a wonderful virtue that kept one between two extremes. In other words, if you were meek, then you would do the right thing in reference to the situation with which you were presented. Paul spoke also of this attitude as being one that we should show to all men (cf. Philippians 4:5).

Second, meekness was used to describe an animal that had been domesticated or had learned to accept control. But where does such control come from in connection with man? Man cannot control himself (cf. Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 7:15). Thus, this idea of domesticity being related by Christ is the result of one's learning to be controlled by God. Jesus offered unto all that labored and were heavy laden not

only rest but also a yoke (Matthew 11:28, 29). Yokes were used on livestock so that they could be controlled by their masters to do such tasks as to plow fields. Essentially, Christ, in that passage, was offering to take control of our lives. Jesus truly understood this control because He was in complete submission to His Father the entire time He ministered upon the earth (cf. Luke 22:42).

Third, meekness was used as a contrast to pride. God resists the proud (cf. 1 Peter 5:5). So, a failure to be meek would mean that we invite God's resistance. Why? Proud people consider themselves self-sufficient and, therefore, not needy of God. God will not exalt us unless we first humble ourselves under His mighty hand (cf. 1 Peter 5:6). We must be meek to gain God's favor.

Meekness, then, carries with it the idea that one is moderate, humble, and under the control of God. How then does such a one inherit this earth? After all, it is usually the wicked that seem to prosper (cf. Job 21:7; Psalm 73:3; Jeremiah 12:1, 2). The Lord, then, must be talking about a different type of inheritance. Besides, a literal inheritance of the earth would be empty because it would be an inheritance that is passing away (1 John 2:17). In truth, the meek are enjoying their inheritance of this earth right now!

The meek are now in control of this earth because their disposition makes them so. They understand what is proper in any given situation with which they are confronted. When provoked to violence, they know to turn the other cheek (Matthew 6:39). When presented with temptation, they instinctively look for the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). The meek understand that this temperance is needed to win the imperishable crown (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). Indeed the meek are so because in their spiritual growth they did not neglect to add this wondrous virtue (2 Peter 1:6).

The meek are now in control of this earth because they have allowed the Lord to exalt them to that position. Too many today seek the praise of men rather than the praise of God (even in the church)! This attitude kept many from following after our Savior while He was on earth (John 12:42, 43) and prevents many from following Him today. These are too afraid of what people might say or think because of their discipleship. They do not like to think that any door of alleged opportu-

nity will be closed to them because of their association with the Lamb of God. The meek know how to deal with such prejudiced people, though. They declare to them by their very lives the statement Peter presented to the Sanhedrin, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge" (Acts 4:19b). They reject the exaltation of men for a spirit of humility before God. Because of this righteous attitude, the Lord has lifted them up (James 4:10).

The meek are now in control of this earth because the world does not control them. They are not owned by this world like the greedy businessman who thinks only of the accumulation of more wealth. You see, in reality, such a man does not possess his own possessions but, rather, his possessions have control of him! A meek individual has learned to be content in whatever state he may find himself (Philippians 4:11, 12) because he understands that being under the control of God means also that God's providence will see him through anything. Therefore, the meek do not worry about what they shall eat, what they shall drink or what they shall wear because they understand that their heavenly Father knows that they are in need of those things (Matthew 6:25ff). In their submission to God, they are free to better enjoy this earthly existence. Thus, the meek take the time to "stop and smell the roses," listen to the wondrous sounds that God has enabled them to hear, look at the wonders of God's creation, feel the soothing texture of silk, and taste the sweetness of honey.

I don't know about you, but I want to possess my inheritance right now. I want to enjoy the blessings that Christ has promised us in heavenly places (cf. Ephesians 1:3). A lot of people take that passage to mean the blessings that we will have in heaven. Paul, however, is declaring that the Christian is able to have a taste of heaven on this earth. [see Mark 10:28-30; 1 Timothy 4:8. -Ed.] When we put off the old man of sin at baptism and were raised up in Christ's likeness (cf. Ephesians 2:4-6; Romans 6:3-7), we were made to "sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come (heaven - BP) He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6, 7). In other words, we have blessings now in the church (a group of meek people whose assembly constitutes a heavenly place) and will have

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

the exceeding riches (or blessings) of His grace poured out upon us in heaven.

So, have you received your inheritance? If not, then start down the path towards meekness today. After having put on Christ in baptism (cf. Galatians 3:27), live a life of moderation, humility, and submission to the will of God. In so doing, the world will be yours!

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WHY ONE MUST BE IN CHRIST TO BE SAVED

by Max Patterson

There are many who say we do not have to be members of a church to be saved. If one meant by that statement a denomination, then they are right. However, if the blood purchased church is meant, they are wrong. If a man can be saved outside of the N.T. church then manifold problems are presented. Consider the following reasons why one **must** be in Christ (his body, the church) in order to be saved:

- The body of Christ (the church) is the blood purchased institution of Christ. Acts 20:28; I Cor. 6:19, 20. Church members are blood bought. However, the converse is true. This means if you are not in the N.T. church, you have not been purchased with the blood.

- The Holy Spirit taught that Christ would save the church. Eph. 5:23; 1:22, 23.

- The body of Christ (the church) is where man is reconciled to God. Eph. 2:16. Can a man go to heaven and not be reconciled to God?

- The church is what Christ will present to himself. Eph. 5:27.

- God adds the saved to the church. Acts 2:47. The same way one is saved is the same way one is added to the church.

- If one has to be a child in the family of God to be saved, he has to be a member of the church. They are one and the same thing. I Tim. 3:16. Obviously God has no children outside His family.

- Jesus taught that a man must enter the fold of God to be saved. Jn. 10:1-9. That fold is the church which elders make

certain is fed. Acts 20:28.

- We cannot bear fruit and be saved unless we are a branch in the Vine. Jn. 15:1-6.

- It is impossible to be saved without being justified, which takes place in the body of Christ. Rom. 8:30; Col. 3:15; 1:18. The called are justified. The called are in the body, the church. Therefore, the justified are in the church.

- It is impossible to be saved without being delivered out of the power of darkness. Col. 1:13.

We must be in Christ, that is, in the church, to be saved. Church membership represents the covenant spiritual relationship that we have with God.

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*Hasty words lead to rash decisions
resulting so often in heartbreak.
Think a little before you say a lot.*

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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

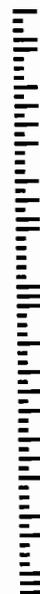
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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