

Disconformable contacts in the Grand Canyon and the lack of a global sequence

Mike Oard's recent paper asks the question, "is the geological column a global sequence?"¹ He notes a disconformity in a sequence of strata between the Muav and Temple Butte Limestones in the Grand Canyon that suggests a fold in the Temple Butte at the disconformity.² This implies that both limestones were deposited at the same time or there was only a brief gap of time between the deposition of the two strata.

Several years ago, Clifford Burdick³ briefly described a location on the North Kaibab Trail in the Grand Canyon where the Cambrian Muav and the Mississippian Redwall Limestones were intertongued with each other forming repeated sequences.⁴ The Creation Research Society sponsored two field trips in 1986 to study the stratigraphic relationships at the place where Burdick found these sequences.⁵

The National Park Service had erected a sign on the North Kaibab Trail identifying the contact between the Redwall and Muav which read:

"AN UNCONFORMITY

Rocks of Ordovician and Silurian Periods are missing from the Grand Canyon. Temple Butte Limestone of Devonian age occurs in scattered pockets. Redwall Limestone rests on these Devonian rocks or on Muav Limestone of much earlier Cambrian Age."

We inspected the outcrop within this area and determined that the purported unconformity was not as obvious as uniformitarians might believe. The conclusions reached from our investigation determined that both the Redwall and Muav Limestones were deposited at or near the same time.⁶

Based on the recent work by Oard¹ and our past investigation⁴, it would appear that the geologic column is not a

global sequence. This is consistent with ideas espoused by John Woodmorappe⁷ who also noted the nonexistence of the evolution-based, uniformitarian geologic column.

Emmet L. Williams

Alpharetta, GA

UNITED STATES of AMERICA

References

1. Oard, M.J., Is the geological column a global sequence? *Journal of Creation* 24(1):56-64, 2010.
2. Oard, ref. 1, figure 6.
3. Burdick, C.L., *Canyon of Canyons*, Bible-Science Association, Minneapolis, MN, 1974.
4. Weisgerber, W., Howe, G.F. and Williams, E.L., Mississippian and Cambrian strata interbedding: 200 million year hiatus in question, *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 23(4):160-167, 1987.
5. Weisgerber *et al.*, ref. 4, p. 161.
6. Weisgerber *et al.*, ref. 4, p. 163.
7. Woodmorappe, J., The essential nonexistence of the evolutionary-uniformitarian geological column: a quantitative assessment; in: *Studies in Flood Geology* (2nd ed.) Institute for Creation Research, Dallas, TX, pp. 105-130, 1999.

Hebrew scriptures as an aid to developing a creationist taxonomy (1)

After reading Lightner's article¹ and then because it seemed so antagonistic against an article by Joel Klenck,² I read the latter's article as well. After reading Klenck's essay, Lightner's article was comparatively more problematic. She critiques Klenck and Berndt's³ analyses, authors who argue in favor of a biblical classification system, as "presumptuous" (p. 77), "this presumptuous methodology" (p. 77), "egregious errors" (p. 77), "ignores a basic understanding of how languages work" (p. 77) and "not strong" (p. 80).

Yet she pretentiously describes her essay as "... a more realistic view on what can be gleaned from Scripture" (pp. 77-78).

I was initially intrigued but this feeling soured when I saw a string of errors and mistakes. First, Lightner throughout her manuscript appeared very hostile to the idea that the Bible or God could provide a classification system or taxonomy with regard to living creatures, which was the premise of Klenck's article. Far from being presumptuous or not strong, I found Klenck's analysis insightful and with regard to the Hebrew, quite sound. He presents a two-level classification system where God describes groups of terrestrial animals in Genesis 1-2 and in Leviticus 11, delineates kinds of animals to each group. This methodology was supported by other scriptures.

Second, Lightner tries to argue that the great sea creatures are part of the swarmers (Genesis 1:21). Her argument is tenuous. The verse indicates a clear distinction between "... great sea creatures *and* every living creature that moves with which the waters swarm ... [emphasis mine]". These are two groups. Instead, Lightner tries to force the two groups together. Then she weakly supports her unique interpretation by stating both groups "... are specified separately here to emphasize that they were created by God and are subject to Him." Lightner should consider the most obvious interpretation; the two entities are mentioned because they are two groups of created animals.

Third, Lightner questions if God's reference to fish in Genesis 1:26 means that they were a subset of swarmers, the created group mentioned in Genesis 1:21. She then states, "If so, it could imply that man was not given dominion over all the earth..." and "If so, this could undermine the idea that fish or swarmers are taxonomic terms." She ignores an obvious answer: Fish were a part of marine swarmers. Has Lightner not seen a school of fish?

That God did give man dominion over all created animals is clearly stated in Genesis 1:26 “over all the earth” and Genesis 1:28 “over every living thing that moves on [or in] the earth.” With regard to marine animals, *remes* (swarmers) is the super-group in Genesis 1:21 and *dag* (fish) is a subset of *remes*.

Fourth, Lightner states that *chayat ha-aretz* is not found in Genesis 1:26, then questions “Is man not to rule over them?” Predictably, she then questions if *behemah* (her “livestock”), *creepers* and beasts of the earth are taxonomic terms. In the Syriac, the verse does mention the beasts of the earth. Again, Genesis 1:26 mentions human dominion “over all the earth.” Also, that animal groups in Genesis 1:25 are not mentioned in 1:26, does not refute their existence or their definition as a created group of animals, especially as each group has its associated kinds (“according to its kind”).

Fifth, Lightner argues that since Genesis 1:28 mentions “over every living thing [*chay-ah*] that swarms [*ramas*, similar to *remes*]” that this refutes that the three created groups in Genesis 1:25 are taxonomic categories. Again, her conclusions are extreme. As the mention of *chay-ah* is a general reference to all animals and *ramas* a general reference to swarming; neither refutes the efficacy of the three created groups, *behemah*, *remes* and *chayat ha’aretz*, noted in Genesis 1:25.

Sixth, Lightner states that because *chay-ah* is a general term for beast, animal, or living thing, *chayat ha’aretz* cannot be used as a taxonomic group. This is clearly not the case, since Genesis specifically notes that *chayat ha’aretz* is a group of animals with their own kinds (Genesis 1:21; Genesis 1:25). Also, *chayat ha’aretz* is mentioned as a group of animals, in addition to other animal groups, specifically *op*, *remes* and *behemah* (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 1:30). Lightner is trying to advocate confusion where there is biblical clarity.

Seventh, Lightner makes a mistake by emphatically declaring that *seres ha op* should be equated with *op* or birds and bats because *op* is found in this phrase. Lightner’s mistake is similar to her demanding that everyone leave a flower shop because there is “the tiger lily” (or in literal Hebrew phraseology “lily, the tiger”; read “the lily of tiger”) and therefore, a tiger, in the shop. However, with the flower, *tiger* is used to describe *the lily*; this does not signify the flower is a tiger. Leviticus 11:20 is the first verse of a long passage about *seres* or swarmers mentioning those that fly (v. 20), creep on all fours (v. 21), jump (v. 22), creep on the ground (v. 29) and have many legs (v. 42).

To sum up, I am surprised by the general tone and analytical ability of Lightner. Her analysis is combative, confusing and uneven.

Gal Pfeffer
Savannah, GA

UNITED STATES of AMERICA

References

1. Lightner, J.K., Hebrew Scriptures as an aid to developing a creationist taxonomy, *Journal of Creation* 24(1):77–81, 2010.
2. Klenck, J.D., Major terrestrial animal taxonomic classifications as defined by God, *Journal of Creation* 23(2):118–123, 2009.
3. Berndt, C., *Biblical Classification of Life: A Framework and Reference for Authentic Biblical Biology*, Elihu Publishing, 2000.

Response to Gal Pfeffer’s comments

As a creationist I desire to honor God, so it is certainly important to me to avoid being presumptuous as much as is humanly possible. For example, at one time I assumed that the clean/unclean lists of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 were identifying kinds where the Hebrew word *min* was used. I am very grateful for the work of Williams and the others I cite in that paragraph of my paper, who have a more extensive background in Hebrew than I, because it alerted me to

the fact that I was being presumptuous in my thinking.¹

I have studied Hebrew, but I only have an elementary understanding of that language. I have knowledge of several other languages, two of which (Spanish and Indonesian) I have used numerous times to communicate with native speakers who had no knowledge of English. I taught some foreign language and comparative language patterns when I homeschooled my children. So I think I have a reasonable grasp of patterns of language usage for someone who is not actually a linguist.

As a baraminologist, I would be thrilled if the Bible gave us taxonomic terms. At one time I was quite hopeful that it might. However, it was my examination of Scripture, including the patterns of the words as they are used in various contexts, which caused me to abandon this idea. Klenck’s paper assumes that certain terms are taxonomic, but he fails to analyze Scripture in a way demonstrates this.² As stated in my paper, although I don’t believe God intended to give us taxonomic terms, I do believe that Scripture provides useful information to help inform creationist taxonomies.

My purpose in discussing Genesis 1:20 and 21 was to demonstrate that the words are not used as strict taxonomic terms. Pfeffer proposes that *great sea creatures* are different from *every living creature that moves with which the waters swarm*; two specific and distinct groups. So why weren’t the great sea creatures mentioned in the previous verse where God spoke them into existence? If the terms involved are not taxonomic, the differences between verses 20 and 21 are not significant. It is just two ways of saying the same thing. Once one assumes the terms involved are taxonomic, the difference between these two verses is a serious problem. It implies God said something different than what He did.

Regarding Genesis 1:26, again the issue is whether or not the terms are taxonomic. I do agree that these

verses are saying that Man is to rule over all God created. However, if the previous terms in Genesis are really taxonomic, why don't they appear here? If the terms are more general, and fish of the sea is a general way of referring to aquatic life, then there is no problem. If fish of the sea is considered a taxonomic term which is a subset of the *remes* created on Day 5 (as Pfeffer suggests), then this contradicts the idea that Man is to rule over all the Day 5 *remes*. Man would *only* rule over the fish; other *remes* and the 'great sea creatures' would be excluded since they are not mentioned.

The appearance of 'beasts of the earth' in the Syriac (Genesis 1:26) is interesting, but does not rescue the hypothesis that these are taxonomic terms. Pfeffer retains the assumption of taxonomic terms despite the obvious variability in how these words are used. Creatures are also mentioned 'according to their kinds' in the Flood narrative (Genesis 6:20; 7:14), but the terms are not identical to Genesis 1. Specifically in the latter, *chay-ah*, which Pfeffer recognizes as a general reference to all animals, appears in place of *chayat ha-aretz*.

Klenck appeared to recognize the connection between the verb *ramas* and the related noun *remes* when he discussed the overlap in usage between *remes* and *seres*. I further expounded in my paper: *ramas* is what *remes* do (Gen 1:26); *saras* is what *seres* do (Gen 7:21; Lev 11:41). And yes, for variety, things can be mixed up a little (Gen 1:20, 21). In addition to the variable pattern of usage, the fact that there is overlap between two different words related to motion should be a clue these are not taxonomic terms. Further, the fact that they can be used for creatures created on entirely different days is still stronger evidence. The Hebrew in Genesis 7:8 suggests that the verb *ramas* can be applied to clean and unclean *behemah* and flyers (*op*). It is used of all the beasts of the forest

in Psalm 104:20. I could give similar examples with the verb *saras*.

In my paper I regarded *seres ha op* as part of *op* because 1) they have wings and fly, and 2) insects are listed under the definition of *op* in some Hebrew lexicons and dictionaries. Details regarding the translation of *seres ha op*, a noun-noun construct phrase (i.e. a construct noun followed by an absolute noun) for which English has no equivalent, are discussed in my responses to Klenck and Levy. I also refer to the logical divisions of Leviticus 11 in my response to Levy.

Words which have a range or variety of meanings are typical in languages. Sometimes this can cause confusion. However, they are important in allowing language to be rich and expressive. I believe the Bible is best understood when we guard against carrying in unnecessary assumptions. When I removed the assumption that the Bible gives us taxonomic terms, I found the various passages I have analyzed were no longer confusing.

Jean K. Lightner
Mentor, OH

UNITED STATES of AMERICA

References

1. Williams, P.J., What does *min* mean? *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* (now *Journal of Creation*) 11(3):344–352, 1997; and Turner, K.J., The kind-ness of God: a theological reflection of *min*, "kind", *CORE Issues in Creation* 5:31–64, 2009.
2. Klenck, J.D., Major terrestrial animal taxonomic classifications as defined by God, *Journal of Creation* 23(2):118–123, 2009.

Hebrew scriptures as an aid to developing a creationist taxonomy (2)

Lightner's article is incongruous with Scripture. Lightner attempts to form a 'straw man' argument by stating

that "*Taxonomic terms have a single invariable meaning which applies to a specific object or group*" (p. 77). She should know that taxonomy is merely the practice and science of classification and taxonomic terms do not require a 'single invariable meaning'. She disingenuously states that her article "is not intended to be the final word on the subject" despite that in other venues she firmly states the Bible has no taxonomic system. In addition, Lightner tries to muddy what is a clear biblical classification system with regard to terrestrial animals. It does not take a Hebrew linguist to realize that God in Genesis is mentioning animal groups, each possessing their own kinds.

Gen 1:21—"every winged bird [*ohf*] according to its kind"

Gen 1:25—"beast of the earth [*chayat ha'aretz*] according to its kind"

Gen 1:25—"the cattle [*behemah*] according to its kind"

Gen 1:25—"all creepers [*remes*] of the ground according to its kind"

Hence, each of the groups *ohf*, *chayat ha'aretz*, *behemah*, and *remes* have 'kinds' or *min* associated with them. In addition, Lightner denies that the term creepers or *remes* (Genesis 8:17–19; Leviticus 11:44; 20:25) is used interchangeably with swarms or *sheretz* (Leviticus 11:21,23,29,41–46) despite robust biblical references. The idea of God giving names to groups of animals is continued in Genesis 2.

Gen 2:19—"... Lord God formed every beast of the field [*chayat ha'sadeh*],

Gen 2:19—"... and every bird [*ohf*] of the heavens..."

Gen 2:20—"And the man called names to all the cattle [*behemah*], and to the bird [*ohf*] of the heavens, and to every animal of the field [*chayat ha'sadeh*]."

Again we have a very clear indication that God is referring to groups of animal in that Adam provides names to *all* or *every* kind belonging to these groups. That the terms *ohf*, *chayat ha'aretz*, *chayat ha'sadeh*, *behemah*, and *remes/sheretz*