

Chapter 5—The Gap Theory

The KEY question:

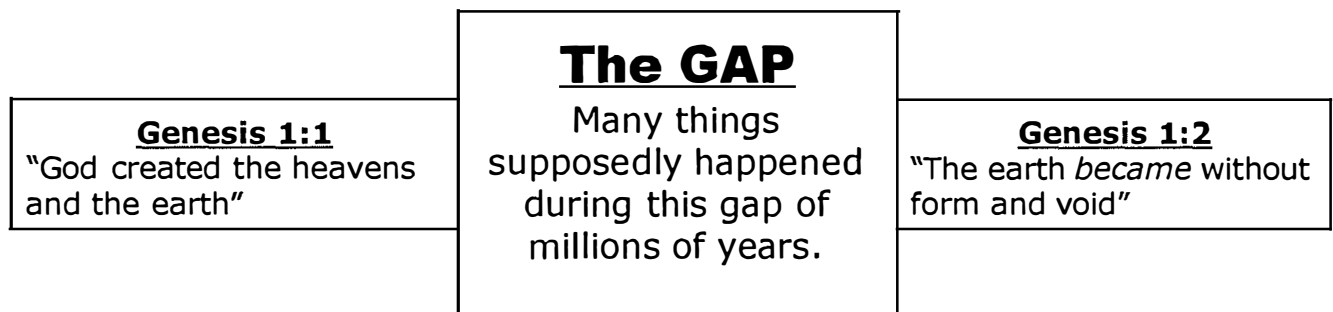
Is there a gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2?

The KEY phrase:

“without form and void” (Gen. 1:2).

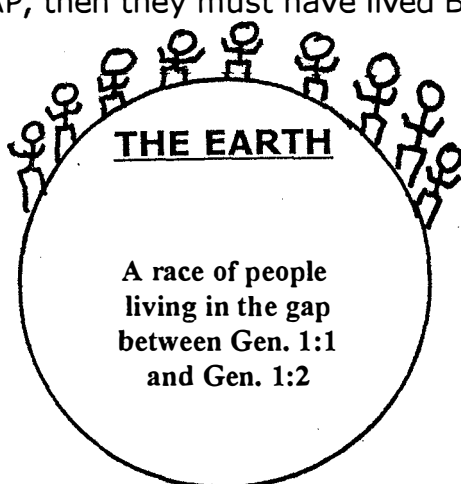
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the _____. And the _____ was _____ and _____” (Genesis 1:1-2).

1. Many people believe that there should be a GAP between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 as illustrated below:

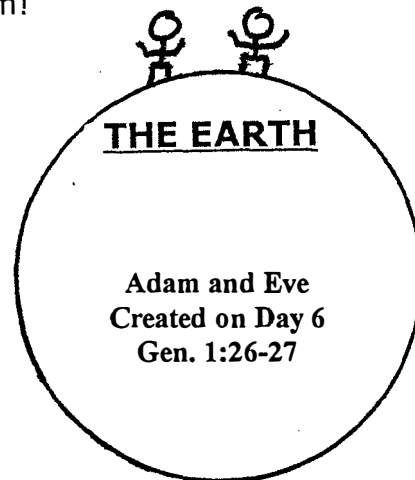


They believe that the GAP involved a very long period of time—many *millions* or perhaps even *billions* of years. During this period of time they believe that some very important events took place (as we shall soon see).

2. Some of the people who believe in this GAP say that there was once a race of men living on earth during this GAP period (some kind of “prehistoric men”). We know that ADAM was not created until which day of the creation week (Gen. 1:26-31)? _____ This means that if there were men that lived on earth during this GAP, then they must have lived BEFORE Adam!

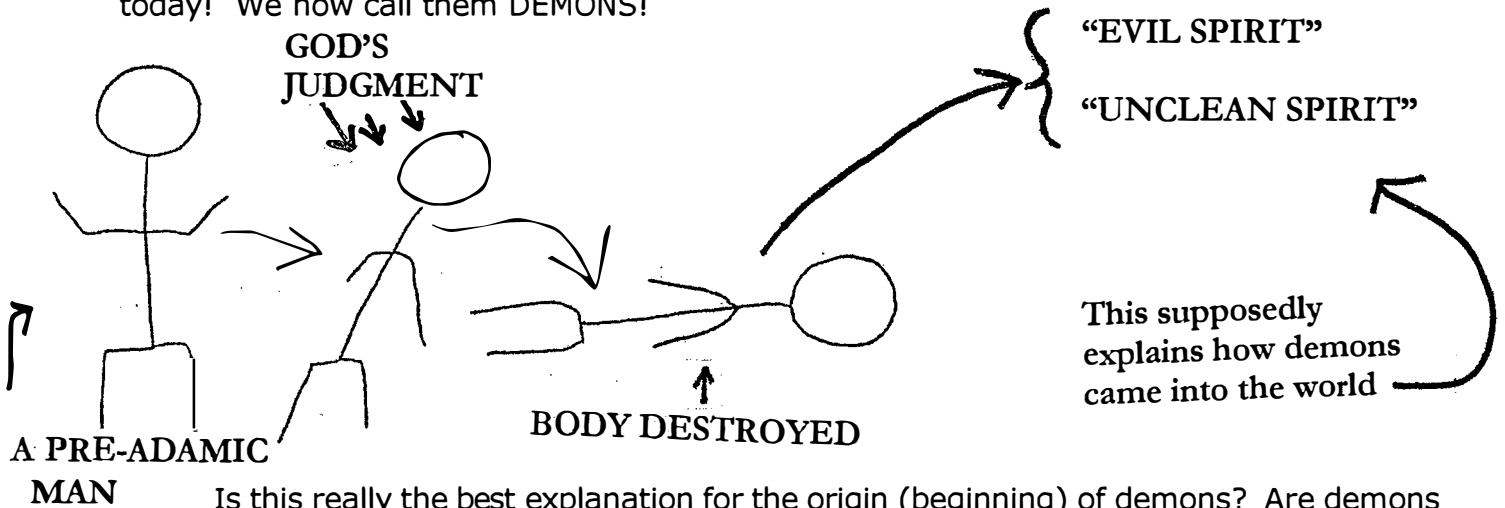


PRE-ADAMIC MEN
(Men Living On Earth Before Adam)



ADAM + EVE
(Created on Day 6 of Creation Week)

What happened to these “pre-Adamic” men? We are told that they were destroyed by God in a world-wide judgment. Some even say that though their bodies were destroyed, the spirits of these evil men continued to live on, and these evil spirits are in the world today! We now call them DEMONS!



Is this really the best explanation for the origin (beginning) of demons? Are demons really the disembodied spirits of a race of evil men who lived before Adam? *Actually demons are angels who sinned and followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God—see our notes on ANGELS.*

3. Why was there such a terrible judgment upon the earth during this GAP? Those who believe in the GAP say that it was during this time that Lucifer (Satan—Isaiah 14:12) fell into sin and was then judged by God. Because of the fall of Satan, the earth experienced a terrible worldwide judgment, and as a result the earth *became* without form and void.

When was Lucifer created? When did Lucifer fall into sin? When did God judge Satan? *To help answer these questions, see our study on “When Did Satan Fall?” (Pages 58a and following).*

4. Because of Lucifer’s fall into sin, we are told that God judged the entire earth. What kind of a judgment was this? Some who believe in the GAP think that God judged the earth with a terrible **worldwide flood**. This was not Noah’s flood because that did not happen until Genesis chapters 6-8. This was supposedly an earlier flood which some have called “Lucifer’s Flood.” Was there really such a flood? Does the Bible say anything about such a flood? Does the Bible teach that there have been two worldwide floods?

God’s Judgment



LUCIFER’S FLOOD

(Between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2)

God’s Judgment



NOAH’S FLOOD

(Genesis chapters 6-8)

5. As a result of "Lucifer's Flood," all the plants and animals and living organisms that were supposedly living on earth at this time suddenly died in this judgment. They were buried in mud and many FOSSILS were formed.

Were there really plants and animals living on earth during the GAP between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2? Is this really the way fossils were formed? When did **DEATH** first enter the world? [Remember, plants were not created until Day 3 and animals not until Days 5 and 6, according to Genesis chapter 1].

6. Those people who believe in the GAP say that the earth **BECAME** "without form and void" (Gen. 1:2) as a result of God's judgment on the earth following Lucifer's sin.

FIRST, they believe that God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). This was a perfect creation. SIN had not yet entered the universe!

SECOND, they believe Lucifer fell into sin (Isa. 14:12-14) and for the first time sin entered the universe. This event supposedly took place during the GAP (between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2).

THIRD, they believe God judged Satan and as a result of this terrible judgment, the earth **BECAME** without form and void (ruined and desolate)--see Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23 where these two words ("without form and void") are used to describe the destruction and desolation which followed God's judgment.

Thus, these people believe that the earth **BECAME** ruined and destroyed (without form and void) because of God's judgment. They believe that Genesis 1:2 describes a ruined earth that is no longer perfect—an earth that has been **MARRIED** and **SPOILED** by sin and judgment.

If you had a delicious ripe apple (without blemish and without spot!) and then several months later you returned and found the apple in a rotten, spoiled, worm-filled condition, you would logically conclude that though the apple was once "perfect," something happened in the GAP of several months, and the apple **BECAME** ruined and spoiled!

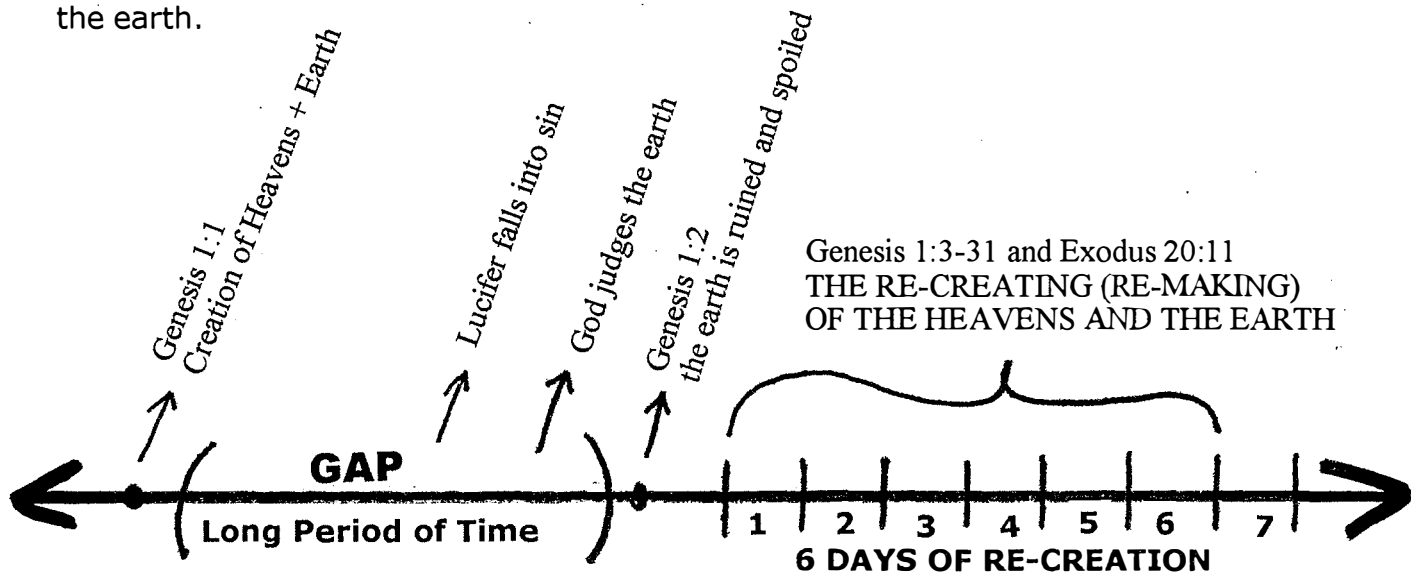
Those who believe in the GAP believe that Genesis 1:1 describes the **PERFECT EARTH**. Then something happened in the GAP (Lucifer's fall and God's judgment) and the earth **BECAME** spoiled and ruined (Genesis 1:2).

But, does Genesis 1:2 really describe a ruined earth? Did the earth really become spoiled at this time? Is there really such a GAP?

We all know that the world became ruined and spoiled as the result of man's sin (see Genesis 3), but did the world also get spoiled in the GAP between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?

7. Genesis 1:2 says "and _____ was upon the face of the deep." Those who believe in the GAP tell us that the word "darkness" in Genesis 1:2 describes SIN and JUDGMENT. Sometimes the Bible does use the word "darkness" to describe a sinful condition. For example, John 3:19-20 says that men loved the darkness of sin rather than light (see also John 1:5; 8:12; Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:9-11). What happened when Christ was judged for our sins (Matthew 27:45)? _____ Does God sometimes judge the earth by sending darkness (see Exodus 10:21-23; Revelation 8:12; 16:10)? _____ Thus we are told that the DARKNESS in Genesis 1:2 proves that God judged the earth sometime during the GAP. But is this really true? Is "darkness" always used to describe something evil? Can darkness be found on a perfect earth? Did God create the darkness?

8. The earth was originally created perfect (Genesis 1:1). If the earth was later judged and ruined and spoiled during the GAP, then God must do His work of creation all over again! He must create the heavens and the earth a second time! Thus the 6 days of creation that we read about in Genesis 1 are not really days of creation, but they are days of "RE-CREATION" (creating again). During these 6 days God re-created (re-made) the heavens and the earth. Before the GAP-judgment, there were plants and animals and even men living on the earth. But they were all destroyed in the judgment of Lucifer, and God must create life once again. So these people believe that Genesis chapter 1 does not describe God's original CREATION but it describes God's RE-CREATION of the heavens and the earth.



TIME LINE

Is this the way it really happened? Does Genesis chapter 1 describe a CREATION or a RE-CREATION?

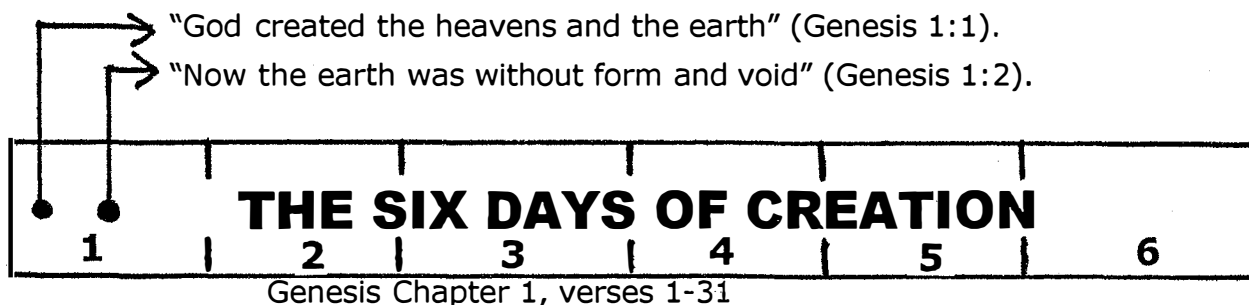
9. Those who believe in the Gap Theory tell us that the earth was once filled with animals (including dinosaurs), plants and even a pre-Adamic race of men! But we are told that these were all destroyed Lucifer's judgment and the earth then became void or empty (Genesis 1:2). So it was necessary for God to refill the earth. It was once filled (with plants and animals and men), but now it must be filled again! This is why God told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful, and multiply and _____ the earth" (GENESIS 1:28). But does the word "replenish" really mean "to fill again" (or does it simply mean "fill")? Is Genesis 1:3-31 really a description of God filling the earth for the second time?

10. Is there really a GAP between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2? Does God want us to read between the lines or between the verses? If there was really a GAP, why are there not any verses which tell us about this GAP and which describe what really happened?

10 GREAT PROBLEMS OF THE GAP THEORY

1) The Problem of the Gap

Is there really a GAP of millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2? Read Exodus 20:11. How long did it take God to make the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything that is in the heavens, the earth and the sea? _____ Was the creation of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1) included in this six day period? _____ If all of God's creation from Genesis 1:1-1:31 took only 6 days, then how can there be a GAP of millions of years between Gen. 1:1 and Gen. 1:2?



"For in *six days* the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them" (Exodus 20:11).

There is no room for a GAP! The creation of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1) took place on DAY _____ (see Genesis 1:5). One week later everything was _____ (Genesis 2:1).

2) The Problem of Pre-Adamic Men

Were there really men living before the time of Adam? In 1 Corinthians 15:45 Adam is called " _____ ." If Adam is the FIRST MAN, then there can be no other men before him!

The first place in the Bible that mentions the word "man" is in Genesis 1:26-27. Do these verses describe the creation of men who lived on the earth before Adam, or do they describe the creation of Adam and Eve? _____

The Bible says nothing about "pre-Adamic" men! If a scientist were to discover the bones of a "pre-historic man," we would know that this man was a descendant of ADAM! (Unless they were the bones of some ape or monkey mistakenly thought to be human). All men have come from Adam. Is Adam your ancient ancestor? _____ See Luke 3:23-38.

What about DEMONS? Where did they come from? Are demons the spirits of wicked men who once lived on earth before Adam was created? No, the BIBLE teaches that demons are ANGELS who joined in Satan's rebellion and who sinned against God Almighty.

Please do the following MATCHING problem:

- | | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | The holy angels. | A. | Matthew 9:34
Matthew 12:24 |
| 2. _____ | The devil's angels. | B. | 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 |
| 3. _____ | One third of the angels follow Satan. | C. | Matthew 25:31 |
| 4. _____ | Satan is the prince of the demons. | D. | Revelation 12:4 |
| 5. _____ | The angels who sinned. | E. | Matthew 25:41
Revelation 12:7 |

3) The Problem of Lucifer's Fall

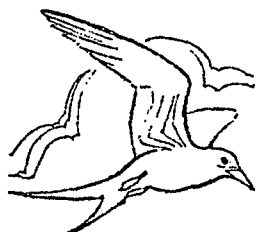
When did Lucifer fall? When did Lucifer become the devil (God's accuser) and Satan (God's enemy)? Those who believe in the GAP say that Lucifer fell sometime during the GAP between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. But the Bible indicates that Lucifer was created and fell into sin even before Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:1 describes the creation of the heavens and the earth (this Hebrew word "heavens" has the plural ending **-IM** and it can be translated "heavens"-see page 5 in these notes where the Hebrew plural is discussed).

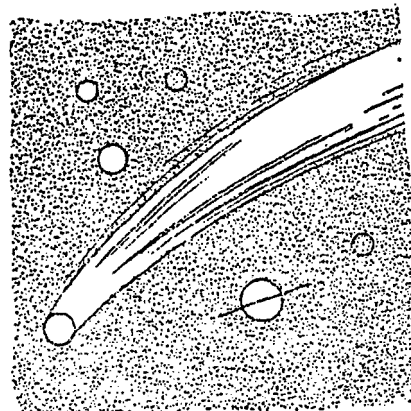
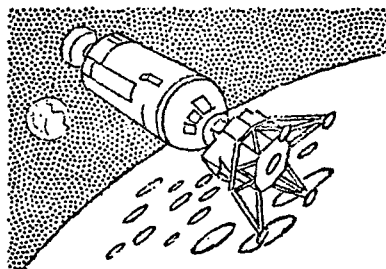
The 3 Heavens

The Bible indicates that there are 3 heavens (see 2 Cor. 12:2—"caught up to the _____ heaven"):

1) THE FIRST HEAVEN is that which can be seen in the daytime, where "the birds fly and the clouds go by." This is the atmospheric heaven. Jesus said in Matthew 6:26, "Behold the _____ (birds) of the _____ (heaven)." See also Psalm 8:8 ("the fowl of the air [heaven]").



2) THE SECOND HEAVEN is that which can be seen at night—the stars, the moon and the planets. This is the stellar universe with all of its billions of suns and galaxies! David referred to the second heaven in Psalm 8:3, "When I consider thy _____, the work of thy fingers, the _____ and the _____ which thou hast ordained."



3) THE THIRD HEAVEN is that which cannot be seen except through the eyes of faith. It is sometimes called "the heaven of _____" (Nehemiah 9:6). It is the "H_____" of all the heavens (Luke 2:14). Today the third heaven is also called "P_____" (2 Corinthians 12:4). Paul was once taken there (2 Cor. 12:2). The Lord Jesus is there today (Hebrews 8:1; 9:24) . This is where God the Father manifests His presence (Matthew 6:9) and we know Him as our _____ Father" (Matthew 6:26). This is where the believer goes when he dies (Phil. 1:23). This is also the abode or home of the angels (see Rev. 5:11; Mark 12:25, 13:32; Luke 2:13; Matthew 28:2).

When God says that He created the heavens (Gen. 1:1; Exodus 20:11), which of the heavens does He mean? To answer this question, please do the following MATCHING problem:

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | Where in Genesis 1 does it mention the FIRST HEAVEN?
(Hint: the creation of the birds!) | A. GENESIS 1:14-17 |
| 2. _____ | Where in Genesis 1 does it mention the SECOND HEAVEN
(moon, stars, galaxies, etc.)? | B. GENESIS 1:20,26 |
| 3. _____ | Where in Genesis 1 does it mention the THIRD HEAVEN—God's throne, the angels, the cherubim, the heavenly paradise? | C. NOT MENTIONED
IN GENESIS
CHAPTER 1 |

Therefore, "the heavens" in Genesis 1:1 (and in Exodus 20:11) must refer to the _____ HEAVEN (atmospheric heaven) and the _____ HEAVEN (the stellar universe). The creation of the THIRD HEAVEN is not mentioned in Genesis chapter 1. How long did it take the Creator to create the FIRST and SECOND HEAVENS and all that is in them (Exodus 20:11)? _____ Does this mean that God did not create the angels? NO, the Bible says that "by Him (Christ the Creator) were _____ created" (Col. 1:16; see page 2). Also in Nehemiah 9:6 the people praised God because He created ALL THINGS: "Thou, even Thou, art LORD alone; Thou hast made heaven, _____, with all their _____ (angels), the earth, and all things that are in it, the seas, and all that is in them, and Thou preservest them all; and the _____ (angels) worshipeth Thee."

Notice that Nehemiah 9:6 mentions the THIRD HEAVEN ("heaven of heavens") and it mentions ANGELS ("host of heaven"). The following is a comparison between Nehemiah 9:6 and Exodus 20:11.

Exodus 20:11	Nehemiah 9:6
<p><u>GOD MADE:</u></p> <p>HEAVEN (including all that is in the first and second heavens)</p> <p>[No mention of "the heaven of heavens" or of angels]</p> <p>EARTH (including all that is in or on the earth)</p> <p>SEA (including all that is in the sea)</p> <p><u>The purpose of the verse:</u> To set forth God's creation week as a pattern for the children of Israel (as God worked and rested, so they were to do the same).</p>	<p><u>THE LORD MADE:</u></p> <p>HEAVEN (including all that is in the first and second heavens)</p> <p>HEAVEN OF HEAVENS (including angels)</p> <p>EARTH (including all that is in or on the earth)</p> <p>SEA (including all that is in the sea)</p> <p>[No mention of the length of creation or of how many days it took]</p> <p><u>Purpose of the verse:</u> To praise the LORD as the Creator of ALL THINGS.</p>

Some Observations:

1) When God mentions the creation of the UNIVERSE (first and second heavens), He gives the length of creation as 6 days (Exodus 20:11; Genesis 1).

2) When God mentions the creation of ALL THINGS (the UNIVERSE and the THIRD HEAVEN including angels), He does not give the length of creation (Nehemiah 9:6 and Colossians 1:16).

3) Angels must have been created prior to Genesis 1:1 because when the earth was being created they were there to praise God and to witness the creation of the UNIVERSE (see Job 38:4,7 on the next page).

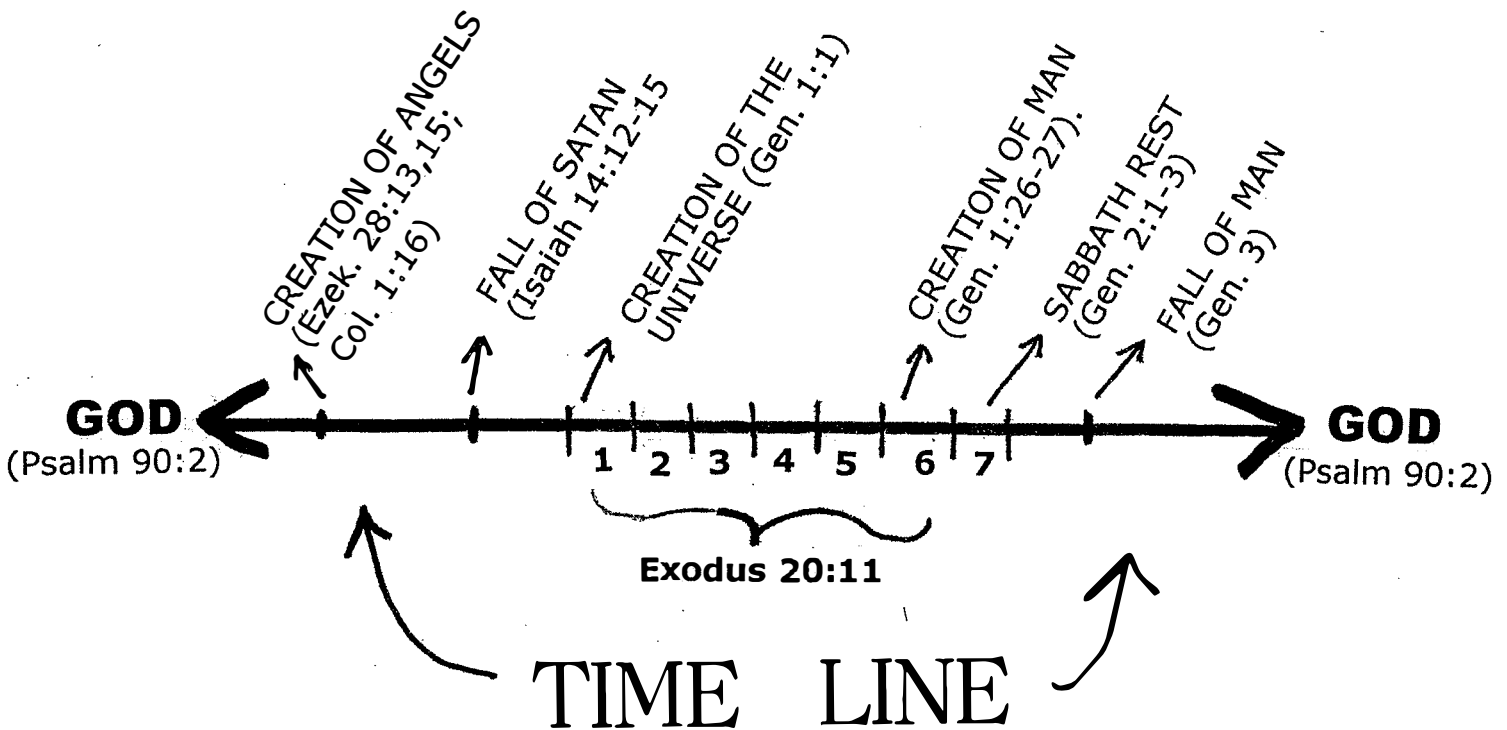
JOB 38:4,7

“Where were you when I laid THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH? . . .
When the **morning stars** (leading angels) sang together, and all the
sons of God (angels, see Job 1:6; 2:1) shouted for joy.”

Job was not there when God laid the foundation of the earth, but the angels were! When God created the earth in Genesis 1:1, the angels were already there witnessing the event. At the very beginning of DAY 1, the angels were already there watching what the Creator was doing. This is why Genesis 1 does not mention the creation of angels. They had already been created!

4) It was not Satan’s sin that spoiled and ruined the earth, but it was man’s sin that did this. The earth was cursed, not because of Lucifer’s fall, but because of Adam’s fall (see Genesis 3:15-19).

Consider the following TIME LINE:



To help you better understand SIN, SATAN, SALVATION and THE SAVIOUR we are going to tell you a true story. It is the greatest story ever told! The living GOD wants men and angels to understand WHO HE IS and WHAT HE IS LIKE. On the next page we will consider **GOD’S GREAT DRAMA OF REDEMPTION**.

THE DRAMA OF REDEMPTION

The main characters in this drama are:

1. The living God, the CREATOR of ALL THINGS.
2. Lucifer (Satan).
3. The angels.
4. Sinful men like you and me.

SCENE 1--IN HEAVEN

In the very beginning, even before the beginning of the universe in Genesis 1:1, God created the third heaven ("the heaven of heavens"--Nehemiah 9:6) with all of its host of angelic creatures, more than any person could count (Rev. 5:11). One of these created angels was Lucifer, the cherub who covered and protected the very throne of God (Ezekiel 28:12-16). One day this angel's heart was lifted up in pride because of his beauty (Ezekiel 28:17) and he thought too much of himself, a mere creature, and he began to think wrongly about God, the unique Creator. He tried to claim for himself what only belonged to God. Being lifted up in pride (1 Tim. 3:6), he sinned by putting himself in the place of God (notice the five "I WILL's" of Isaiah 14:13-14). For the first time, a creature had sinned against the Creator!

This was not an outward sin, it took place inwardly ("For thou hast said **in thine heart**"-Isa. 14:13), but God who sees into the heart of His creatures must judge sin immediately. God the Righteous One exercised perfect justice and sentenced him to the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41). The other angels were amazed. This was something they had never witnessed before. Never before had God judged anyone. There had never been an occasion for Him to do so. God's perfect justice was seen for the very first time.

We are told in the Bible that following his fall into sin, Lucifer became the DEVIL. The word "devil" means "THE ACCUSER." It is not unreasonable to say that the devil accused God of being unfair and unjust before the other angels. You can just imagine the accusation that Satan hurled at the Creator: "HOW CAN A LOVING GOD SEND ONE OF HIS CREATURES TO HELL? THAT'S NOT FAIR!!" (Unsaved men, who are children of the devil--John 8:44, often hurl similar accusations today). Apparently Satan managed to convince one third of the angels that God was unloving and unfair (Revelation 12:4) and by doubting the character of God, they too fell into this terrible sin. These fallen angels are also called demons or unclean spirits or Satan's angels.

Even though God had prepared the lake of fire for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), we are amazed to learn that He did not send them there immediately. God wanted to first teach all the angels something. God wanted to vindicate His character and prove once and for all that He was a Just God and also a loving God. It was as if God were saying to all the heavenly host, "I will show you how holy and just I am (how much I hate sin and how I must judge sin) and yet I will also show you how loving and gracious I am. Just watch what I am about to do." The angels are very curious as to what God is about to do!

SCENE 2--IN HEAVEN

As all the angels watch with interest, God begins His great work of creation. By the word of His mouth (Ps. 33:6-9) the heavens and the earth are created (Gen. 1:1). The holy angels rejoice as God lays the foundation of the earth (Job 38:4,7). The earth (which was created even before the sun, moon and stars) becomes the stage of this great drama. The earth becomes the focus in Genesis chapter 1 (See Gen. 1:2-"AND THE EARTH..."). The trillions of stars are mentioned almost as an afterthought (Gen. 1:16). Planet earth becomes the focal point for all that God is going to do, as He begins to demonstrate and exhibit His perfect character. Finally the climax comes as the Saviour steps out of heaven's glory and humbles Himself by becoming a Man (Phil. 2:6-8). Later He humbles Himself further by going to the cross of Calvary. It was here that God showed how much He hates sin. It was here that God showed how He must judge sin. And yet it was here that God showed how loving and gracious He is towards His creatures, even towards man. Thus it was at the cross that Satan was defeated and God's character was vindicated. Satan's charges were once and for all proven to be false!

Today the angels are intently observing the church and learning of God's manifold wisdom (Eph. 3:10) and His bountiful grace (Eph. 2:7). Finally the drama of redemption will be complete at the close of the millennial kingdom and Satan and his angels will finally face their doom in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10), realizing fully that God is absolutely right and fair in all that He does.

TO GOD BE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER!!!

[Note: For a much more complete study of these things, see Pastor Parson's study on ANGELS]

4) The Problem of the Worldwide Judgment ("Lucifer's Flood")

The Bible only speaks of one worldwide, universal judgment which has fallen upon wicked men. What kind of judgment was this and when did it occur (see Luke 17:26-27; Matt. 24:37-39; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5; 3:5-6)? _____

God has told us much about Noah's flood. He has given us 3 chapters in the Bible that describe this worldwide judgment—Genesis chapters 6-8. It is also mentioned elsewhere in the Bible as seen from the verses given above. But God tells us nothing about Lucifer's flood! This is because THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A FLOOD! God has not bothered to tell us about something that never happened!

5) The Problem of Fossils

Were fossils really formed during the gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2? What is a fossil? A fossil is the remains of an animal or plant which has been preserved in hardened mud or coal, etc. Genesis 1 teaches us that plant life was not created until DAY _____. Also we know that the first animal life did not come into existence until DAY _____. But those who believe in a GAP say that there was animal and plant life on Planet Earth even before Genesis 1:2. They say that by the time Adam was created on DAY _____ there were thousands of fossils under the ground, including the bones of dinosaurs and even pre-Adamic men! They believe that all these animals must have died in the judgment that fell upon the earth as a result of Lucifer's sin, and thus long before Adam was created millions of animals and plants had already died! It was as if Adam was walking on a graveyard, with numerous animals buried under his feet!

Is this really true? When did death first enter the world? "Wherefore, as by _____ (ADAM) sin entered into the world, and _____ by sin, and so _____ passed upon all men" (ROMANS 5:12). Death entered the world as the result of Adam's sin! Read Romans 8:19-22. The entire creation is under the terrible corruption (disease, decay and death) and curse that resulted from man's fall into sin. But before Adam's fall into sin and the curse that resulted, there could be no death. What chapter in the Bible describes the sin of Adam and the curse that resulted? _____ Could death enter the world before this time? _____

6) The Problem of the Word "BECAME"

Those who believe in the GAP want to re-translate Genesis 1:2 so that it will read this way: "And the earth **BECAME** without form and void." But the Bible says, "And the earth _____without form and void." (Note: Most translations of Genesis 1:2 have "was" and not "became." Also the Greek Old Testament called the Septuagint has the verb "was" and not "became.") Genesis 1:2 says that the earth **WAS** this way, it did not **become** this way. What was the earth like when God first created it? It was without form and void! Why was it without form and void? Because that is how God made it! But God was not finished with the earth yet! It was only DAY _____ of creation! Genesis 1:2 describes an earth at the early stages of creation, but it was an earth that had never been cursed. It was UN-CURSED, but it was also UNFINISHED. Before this chapter ends we will study the meaning of the phrase "without form and void."

7) The Problem of Darkness

God says that "the earth was without form and void and _____ was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. 1:2). What is darkness? Is it something evil? Is it something wicked? When you put a young child to bed certainly you do not tell him that an evil darkness will come when the lights go out! Darkness is not morally evil. Darkness is simply THE ABSENCE OF LIGHT! If you do not have any light, then you will have darkness! When the light of the sun is shielded by the moon in a solar eclipse, it becomes dark! If you turn the lights out, it becomes dark! When did God first create light? Genesis chapter 1 verse _____. Does this explain why there was darkness in verse 2? _____

In Isaiah 45:7 God the Creator says, "I form the _____ and I create _____." Also in Psalm 104:20: "Thou makest _____ and it is _____," and we learn in verse 24 that it is in God's W_____ that all of this is done! In Genesis 1:2 "darkness" does not mean judgment! It means just what it says—"darkness" See also Psalm 139:11-12.

8) The Problem of a Re-Creation

As you read through Genesis chapter one, does this seem to be describing a creation or a re-creation? Is God creating everything all over again, or is God creating everything for the first time? Genesis 2:3 says that "He (God) had rested from all His work which God _____ and _____. It does not say that "He rested from all His work which God RE-CREATED and RE-MADE." Also, Exodus 20:11 does not say "For in six days the LORD **RE-MADE** the heavens and earth!" Sometimes we make mistakes and need to do something all over again! But God's work of creation was a perfect work and it only needed to be done once! See Psalm 18:30! God makes no mistakes.

9) The Problem of the word "replenish"

Genesis 1:28 says, "Be fruitful, and multiply and _____ the earth." The word "replenish" does not mean "to fill again" or "to refill," but it simply means "to fill." In 1611 when the King James Bible was published, the word "replenish" meant "to fill." So God was telling Adam and Eve to fill the earth! It had never before been filled with people, and it was God's will that the earth should be filled up with people. God wanted the earth to be FILLED with life, and this would include plants, animals and people!

10) The Problem of Reading Between Verses

Please do not look for a GAP or for anything else between two verses. In reading the Bible, God wants us to read the verses, not between the verses. We need to read the lines, not between the lines! Your heart will never be blessed by reading the gap between Hebrews 13:5 and Hebrews 13:6. But if you read Hebrews 13:5 and then read Hebrews 13:6 and then if you believe those verses (wonderful promises!), your heart will be greatly encouraged!

We must read Genesis 1:1 and then read Genesis 1:2. Do not read between these verses, because there is nothing there! The person who reads between the verses can make the Bible say anything he wants. The person who reads only the verses is better able to see what God has said. Read God's Word, not the GAPS! Do not look for secret messages that are not even there!

WHAT DOES GENESIS 1:2 REALLY MEAN?

“without form and void”

Genesis 1:2 is closely related to Genesis 1:1. Genesis 1:1 tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. Verse 2 then gives us ***a break in the action*** [*Note for teacher: Verse 2 is called a disjunctive clause*]. In Genesis chapter one there is a great deal of creative action taking place, and throughout the chapter God is describing His work of creation. He created the heavens and the earth (v.1), then He created the light (v.3), then He made the firmament (v.7), then He gathered the waters unto one place (v.9), then He made vegetation (vs.11-12), then He made the sun, moon and stars (vs.14-16), and so forth to the end of the chapter. But when you come to verse 2, instead of continuing the action and telling us the next thing that He did, God stops for a moment and there is a break in the action. It is as if God were saying, “Let’s stop for a moment, and before I tell you about the rest of My work of creation on DAY 1, let Me describe what the earth was like when it was first created. When I first made the earth, it was without form and void.” So Genesis 1:2 describes the earth and tells us what it was like when God first created it! God could have omitted verse 2 and gone from verse 1 immediately to verse 3, and there would have been no break in the action:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and God said, Let there be light” (Compare Genesis 1:1 and 1:3)

But God wanted to stop and explain to us what the early earth was like. Genesis 1:2 describes the newly created earth of verse 1 and tells us what it was like—it was “without form and void.”

Another example of this is found in Genesis 2:11-14. In these verses the names of four rivers are given: “The name of the first . . .The name of the second . . .The name of the third . . . etc.” In verse 11 we are given the name of the first river (“Pishon”) and also we are told of the land of Havilah where there is gold. Then in verse 12 there is a break in the action. Instead of giving the name of the second river (that is not given until verse 13), God stops to describe what that gold was like (“And the gold of that land is _____”).

Another example is found in Jonah 3:3. We are told that Jonah went to Nineveh. The next thing to happen is that Jonah entered the city (verse 4). But in verse 3 there is a break in the action as the city of Nineveh is described: "Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city." Before continuing the action God wanted to stop and tell us what kind of a city Nineveh really was. [Please note: it would be silly to translate the verse this way: "Now Nineveh **became** a great city." It was already a great city, even before Jonah arrived there!]

Other examples are found in Zechariah 3:1-3 and 1 Samuel 4:14-15. Let us now compare all these examples:

- 1) Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
 Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was without form and void.
- 2) Genesis 2:11 The name of the first is Pishon; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.
 Genesis 2:12 Now the gold of that land is good.
- 3) Jonah 3:3 Jonah went to Nineveh.
 Jonah 3:3 Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city.
- 4) Zechariah 3:1 And he showed me Joshua . . .
 Zechariah 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel.
- 5) 1 Samuel 4:14 And the man came in hastily and told Eli.
 1 Samuel 4:15 Now Eli was ninety eight years old, and his eyes were dim.

The break in the action is for the purpose of description.

Genesis 1:2 is God's perfect description of the early earth on the first day of creation! What was the earth like at that time? It was without form and void!

If the earth was originally WITHOUT FORM and VOID, then what does this mean? Why would God create the earth this way? What do these words mean?

"Without form" simply means **UNFORMED**! The earth was UNFORMED. It needed to be formed and shaped and prepared for man! It was also "void" which means devoid of life, empty or UNFILLED. The earth at this point was very empty (no plants, no animals, no people, etc.). The original earth was not ruined and spoiled but it was UNFORMED and UNFILLED!! In other words, it was UNFINISHED!

There were two things that God needed to do to finish his work of creation--He needed to FORM the earth and FILL the earth!

The expression "unformed and unfilled" does not mean that the earth was imperfect. Even in Genesis 1:2 the earth was PERFECT in the sense that it was everything that God

intended it to be at that point in time! God does everything perfectly! He makes no mistakes! The earth was perfectly created, but it was not yet finished. It was not yet complete.

Was Adam created perfectly in Genesis 2:7? _____ But before God created Eve, was the creation of man complete (see Genesis 2:18)? _____ Even though Adam was created perfect, he was not really complete until God brought him a woman! And when God saw Adam alone (in his pre-Eve condition) He said, "NOT GOOD!" (Gen. 2:18). Likewise, when God saw the unfinished and incomplete earth in Genesis 1:2, He could have said, "NOT GOOD!" It would have been terrible if God had stopped all His work of creation after DAY 1!

But when you come to the end of the creation week, God looks at the earth which He had formed and filled and completed and He says "V_____ G_____" (GENESIS 1:31).

Unformed

Isaiah 45:18 tells us that God "**formed** the earth." Genesis 2:7 tells us that God "**formed** man of the dust of the ground." Think of a master potter. He starts with an unformed and unfinished lump of clay! It doesn't look very good! But there is nothing evil about an unfinished lump of clay! Just give the potter time to do his work! He will begin to form it and shape it and prepare it in just the right way!

God is the Master Artist! He formed the earth and perfectly prepared it for life. He has given our earth the touch of the Master's Hand! If you ever doubt this, just take a look outside at the world He has made! God's artistry and wisdom and masterful design are seen everywhere.

Unfilled

Was the earth really unfilled in Genesis 1:2? Was it filled with plant life yet? _____ Was it filled with rays of light at this point? _____ Was it filled with plants and trees? _____ Was it filled with birds and fish and land animals? _____ Were the heavens filled with planets and stars? _____ Was the earth filled with men? _____ The earth was quite unfilled! But as you read Genesis 1 you see that the Lord did a wonderful job of filling His earth with life! See Psalm 24:1.

God's purpose was to prepare the earth for man! Read Isaiah 45:18. For what purpose did the Lord create the earth? "T_____ B_____ I_____." God wanted to fill the earth with men (see Gen. 1:28). God wanted to fill the earth with living things! If God wanted to have an unfilled and uninhabited earth, then He would have stopped after Genesis 1:1. But God formed the earth and made it and established it and created it TO BE INHABITED! God spent the 6 days of creation getting the earth ready for men! **NOW THE DRAMA OF REDEMPTION IS READY TO BEGIN!!**

The following is supplemental material which goes into more detail concerning the question, WHEN DID SATAN FALL INTO SIN?

THE FALL OF SATAN

When Did This Take Place?

Satan's fall took place in the gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.

This is the position of those who hold to the “gap theory.” This view teaches that God originally created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), including angels and also including (as some would say) a race of pre-Adamic men (ape-men?) and animals (such as dinosaurs). In the so-called gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 there is a vast amount of time, even millions of years. During this time many things are said to happen. Satan falls into sin, the earth is judged, dinosaurs become extinct, etc. This theory was devised in order to try to harmonize the facts of Genesis chapter 1 with evolutionary theory and their so-called geological ages.

This view understands Genesis 1:1 as describing the original creation; Genesis 1:2 as describing conditions as a result of God’s judgment on the world; and Genesis 1:3 and following as describing a “re-creation” of the world.

For a refutation of the Gap Theory, see pages 41-58

Satan's fall took place in the gap between Genesis chapter 2 and Genesis chapter 3.

This is the position of many fine creationists and Bible teachers. These people hold to a recent earth (the age of the earth in terms of thousands of years, not millions of years) and they hold to a literal 6 day creation week. For this they are to be commended.

Why do they believe that Satan's fall took place after Genesis 2 and before Genesis 3? One key reason is that they assume that the creation of Satan took place during the creation week (on the very first day of the creation week). They base this on Exodus 20:11, “For in six days **the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is**, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” They would argue, “The Creator made the heaven(s) and the earth in 6 days and He made all that is in the heaven(s) and the earth in six days. Since the angels, including Lucifer, are part of all that is in heaven, then we conclude that the creation of Lucifer took place during the 6 days

of creation.” They would also draw our attention to Colossians 1:16 where the Bible includes angels in God's work of creation: “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and **invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers:** all things were created by him, and for him” (Col. 1:16).

Another key verse which they appeal to is Genesis 1:31, “**And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.** And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” They would say, “How could God pronounce His ‘VERY GOOD’ upon a universe which contained a wicked, fallen angel, whom we now know as Satan? It seems far more reasonable to think of Satan’s fall as occurring sometime after God gave this pronouncement.”

Another argument is based on Genesis 1:26,28 (in these verses God gives man rule and dominion over the animals). They believe that if Satan had already fallen, then this would compromise the total dominion of the world that God entrusted to Adam, because then Adam would have Satan as a rival who would be working against him. This argument is weak, however, for all would agree that Satan is a fallen creature as Genesis chapter 3 begins. And yet in Genesis 3 (prior to man's fall) Adam still had dominion even though a fallen devil was present. Adam's total dominion was affected by Adam’s sin, not by the presence of a fallen devil.

Thus the two major arguments of this view center around Exodus 20:11 and Genesis 1:31. **The key to understanding when Satan fell is to understand when he was created.** If a person places the creation of Lucifer within the 6 day week of creation, then he is forced to say that Satan's fall took place after Genesis chapters 1 and 2 (while Adam and Eve were alive). This view is forced to conclude that the fall of Satan and the fall of Adam were events that took place at about the same time in history, and that these two events were not separated by a very long period (perhaps by only a matter of days?).

The fall of Satan took place prior to Genesis chapter 1.

This assumes that the creation of Satan (Lucifer) and his fall both took place prior to Genesis 1:1 and that his fall took place prior to the creation of Adam and Eve, not after their creation. Consider the following:

1. Genesis chapter 1 describes in detail the 6 days of creation and what was created on each day. The chapter talks about the creation of the earth, the atmosphere, the sun and moon, the stars, the dry land, the plants, the animals, etc. In this chapter nothing is said at all about the creation of the angels. Was this simply an omission or is it possible that the creation of the angels did not fall within these 6 days?
2. Exodus 20:11 places the creation of Lucifer within the creation week only if it is assumed that the expression “heaven” (or “heavens”) refers not only to the first and second heavens, but to the third heaven as well.¹

¹ The first heaven is the atmospheric heaven, that which can be seen during the day; the second heaven is the stellar universe or that which can be seen at night; the third heaven is the “highest” heaven which is the abode of God and the original home of angels and which can be seen only with the eyes of faith. See 2 Cor. 12:2.

3. It is helpful to compare Exodus 20:11 with another verse on creation found in Nehemiah 9:6. The Nehemiah passage definitely refers to the creation of angels. Notice the expressions that are used:

“For in six days the LORD made **heaven** (or **heavens**) and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Exodus 20:11).

“Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made **heaven** (or **heavens**), **the heaven of heavens**, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and **the host of heaven [angels] worshippeth thee**” (Neh. 9:6).

Notice the additional phrase used in the Nehemiah passage, “the heaven of heavens.” This is the Hebrew way of making a superlative. “A superlative sense is expressed by joining a noun with its own plural in the genitive” (*Hebrew Syntax* by Davidson, p. 49). We even use this in English. We might say, “The Bible is the Book of Books!” By this we mean that the Bible is the greatest Book of all. Here are some Bible examples: “Slave of slaves” means the lowest slave (Gen. 9:25). “Holy of holies” means most holy (Exodus 26:33). “Song of songs” means the most excellent song. “King of kings” means the greatest of all kings (Ezekiel 26:7 and see 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16). For other examples see *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, p. 431 (Section 133i). Thus, “the heaven of heavens” means “the greatest of the heavens” or “the highest of all heavens” (see Brown, Driver and Briggs’ *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 1030). The highest of all heavens can only refer to the third heaven, which is the abode of God and angels.

The expression “heaven of heavens” is found in the following passages: Deuteronomy 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6; 6:18; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 68:33 and Psalm 148:4. In each of these passages the phrase clearly refers to the third heaven, “the highest of all heavens.” Notice also that Psalm 148:1-4 is another passage (like Nehemiah 9:6) which mentions the angels (v.2) and in the same context mentions the highest of all heavens (v.4).

Exodus 20:11 does not mention the heaven of heavens and Genesis chapter 1 does not mention the heaven of heavens either. Neither of these passages mention angels. Could it be that Exodus 20:11 and Genesis 1 have reference only to the first and second heavens and not to the third heaven? And if so, does this indicate that the third heaven with all its host had already been created prior to the six days of creation?²

The Hebrew word “heaven” always occurs in the plural form and may be translated “heavens” if the context so demands. Thus Genesis 1:1 could be translated “God created the heavens and the earth” (referring to the first and second heavens). There are times in the Bible when “heaven” can refer to the third heaven (Matt. 6:9), the second heaven (Psalm 8:3), or the first heaven (Matt. 6:26 “fowls of the heaven”), but the expression “heaven of heavens” only refers to the third heaven.

4. The expression “the heaven(s) and the earth” (found in Genesis 1:1 and Exodus 20:11) refers to the UNIVERSE (the Hebrew language did not have a word for universe as we do). The universe is made up of

²There are 5 passages which make a distinction between the heaven and the heaven of heavens (see Deut. 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chron. 2:6; 6:18; Neh. 9:6), and this may imply that the “heaven” of Genesis 1:1 may not include the heaven of heavens (the third heaven). Also Psalm 68:33 refers to the heavens of heavens **which were of old**. This indicates that the highest heaven is in some sense ancient or old. Why would this be said if the first, second and third heavens were all created recently during the six days of the creation week? But if the creation of the third heaven pre-dated the creation of the first and second heaven, it would be appropriate to speak of the third heaven as being “of old” or ancient.

the earth, the first heaven and the second heaven. It includes the earth with its solar system, its galaxy and the millions of galaxies around it. The third heaven is beyond our universe and unseen by any telescope.

5. Exodus 20:11 and Genesis 1:1 both refer to the creation of the universe (the heavens and the earth), and this took place in 6 literal 24 hour days. In both Exodus 20:11 and Genesis chapter 1, no mention is made of the heaven of heavens or the creation of angels or the creation of the throne of God or the creation of anything else which relates to the third heaven. Also in Ezekiel chapter 28 which tells us of Satan before his fall, there is nothing in the description which speaks of the earth. It all appears to be a heavenly scene, not an earthly scene. Thus the focus of Ezekiel 28 is upon the third heaven (prior to the creation of the universe) and the focus of Genesis 1 is upon the earth.
6. In the passages which do clearly mention the third heaven and the creation of angels (Colossians 1:16 and Nehemiah 9:6) nothing is said concerning the time frame of creation. The main point being stressed in these verses is that He is the Creator of all things.
7. A comparison of Exodus 20:11 with Nehemiah 9:6 would indicate that the expression “heaven(s)” does not necessarily include “the heaven of heavens.” A distinction seems to be made. If Nehemiah felt he needed to add the expression “heaven of heavens” to include the creation of angels, then it seems possible to say that the omission of this expression in Exodus 20:11 suggests that the creation of angels is not in view.
8. It would be nice and neat to be able to say that **everything** (including the “heaven of heaven” and its host) was created within the 6 day creation week, but does the Bible actually say this? It may seem awkward to posit a creation of the third heaven prior to the creation of the universe. However, this actually harmonizes more easily with Job 38:7 [“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"]. This passage in the ancient book of Job is referring to the time when God laid the foundation of the earth. The angels were already there as witnesses and they were rejoicing at God’s work of creation. A natural and normal reading of Job 38 seems to indicate that when God created the earth (Genesis 1:1 on the very first day of creation), the angels were already there witnessing this event. The text in Job 38 does not seem to imply that these angels were recently created just moments before. One would assume, by just reading Job 38, that the angels were created PRIOR to the creation of the earth. Genesis 1:1 seems to put the creation of the earth at the very beginning of DAY 1 of creation. [Note: Those who place the creation of angels within the six days are thus forced to say that they were created at the very beginning of the creation week so that they could thus witness the laying of the foundation of the earth, which also took place early on the first day of creation. This understanding seems strained and forced.]
9. Genesis 1:31 says that God looked at everything which He made (cf. Exodus 20:11)—namely, the entire created universe which He had so wondrously filled and formed during these six days—and He said, “VERY GOOD.” It does not say that He looked at Satan and said, “VERY GOOD.” Satan’s “VERY GOOD” had already been pronounced in Ezekiel 28:15 (“perfect in they ways”), prior to his fall. There is not really a problem with God saying, “VERY GOOD” even though Satan had already fallen. All would agree that a fallen Satan was present in the garden in Genesis 3, but this did not make the universe any less “good” prior to the curse. It was not Satan’s sin that spoiled and ruined the earth and caused all of creation to be subject to vanity (Rom. 8:19-23). It was Adam’s sin which did this. The earth was not cursed because of Lucifer’s fall, but because of Adam’s fall. Before the earth was cursed, was it not a VERY GOOD paradise even though Satan was present?
10. Pastor Parsons has done a detailed study on Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 (Lucifer before and after his fall). This study is available to all who ask for it. From this study it can be seen that one of the key reasons God created the earth was to vindicate His character against the false charges of the devil (the accuser) and to demonstrate something very important to the angels, both good and bad. If one of the key reasons for creating the earth was to demonstrate certain things to angels, then it makes much more sense to say that the angels existed prior to the creation of the earth. This study is entitled *Angels* (68 pages), \$1.50.