The Satanic Rebellion:
Background to the Tribulation

Part 2

The Genesis Gap

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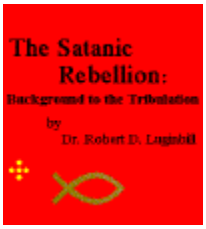

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

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Introduction: Lusting after the glory and adoration God was receiving from the angels, Satan conceived, planned and executed what he assumed was the perfect coup d'état, designed to replace God's rulership of the universe with his own (see Part 1: Satan's Rebellion and Fall). But Satan's assumptions about what God could not or would not do in response to this treachery were faulty: God could and did frame a response that would fulfill His perfect standard of righteousness without compromising His holy character, and, in the course of what we call "time", restore perfection and completeness to His universe. Satan did not believe that God would or could react effectively to his craftily planned rebellion. Just as the wicked often do, the devil and his followers convinced themselves that the Lord would be forced to ignore their iniquity (cf. Job 22:13-17; Ps.10:11-14; 59:7; 73:11; 94:3-7; Is.29:15; Ezek.9:9; Zeph.1:12). People often

make this assumption on the basis of relative sin, and their logic runs something like this: "Since no one is perfect, God cannot judge me without judging everyone else" (salvation corollary: "Since I assume that some people have not heard the gospel, God cannot condemn me for not believing in Christ"). But despite all his wisdom and cleverness, it is turning out for Satan and his angels as the Psalmist records:

[The wicked] forge an evil plan for themselves. In secret they speak of laying their snares. They say, "Who will see them?" They plot outrages and say, "Our plan is flawless." But though men are subtle, heart and soul, God will shoot them with His arrows, and their wounds will come upon them in a moment.
Psalm 64:5-7

Contrary to Satan's expectations, although God was quite capable of answering the attempted coup d'état with main force, in His inestimable wisdom He has chosen to act instead in a manner that the devil could not possibly have anticipated. The instrument by which God has chosen to smite Satan is Man (ultimately in the Person of the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ); and the process, the mechanism through the course of which God has chosen to humble the devil is human history (parts 1, 3 and 5 of this series explain this principle in detail). Therefore God's reaction, while inexorable and totally just, has been in process since before the creation of mankind: for the Lord, the passage of chronological time is not an issue (Ps.90:2-4).

Completely secure in His divinity and perfect character, God was in no hurry to vindicate Himself (as in our sense of time as creatures we might suppose). What transpired following Satan's fall and successful seduction of a large number of his fellow angelic creatures seems to have been analogous to the events following the fall of Adam and Eve. For as with Adam and Eve, instantaneous judgment and death (the stated penalty for transgression) did not immediately take its anticipated form: physical death would be delayed for some time, though ***spiritual*** death, separation from the grace of God, was immediate. In a similar way, though sentence has been passed upon Satan and his followers (cf. the lake of fire "prepared for the devil and his angels": Matt.25:41), final execution of this sentence has yet to be carried out. And just as Adam and Eve were ejected from their Eden, so God ejected Satan from the original paradise, wreaking a terrible judgment upon the pristine earth and plunging the entire universe into darkness (see below section II.2).

Scripture neither mentions nor records the length of the interval between God's confrontation of Satan's coup and His judgment of the primeval world, but it is entirely possible that this period was eons long in human terms. Such a grace interval would demonstrate beyond any shadow of a doubt who had chosen for God and who for Satan, as the devil commenced his earthly reign over what had been the original paradise, the original "Eden" (see part 1). Given the demons' longing for physical bodies and the integral part in Satan's plan that the satisfaction of that desire played (see part 1), it is not unreasonable to suppose that much of the fascinating fossil record of the archaic earth we now possess is a result of the devil's manipulation and misuse of the earth's original fauna for just such purposes: the Bible's identification of Satan with reptiles (dragons, serpents), and his obvious fascination with the same (cf. Gen.3), make the

possibility of this theoretical satanic origin of the terrible, powerful creatures of pre-history all the more conceivable (see below section II.3.f).

Eventually, earth came to bear no resemblance to the primal paradise the Lord had created. Simply by allowing matters to take their course, God had sufficiently demonstrated to all angelic creation how pitifully inadequate Satan's efforts were, how hollow his promises, and how tyrannical his rule. Now was the time to put an end to the devil's "experiments", to turn out the lights in the universe, and to leave the adversary and his followers quaking in expectation of what was to come. When no further purpose could be served by delaying any longer since the devil and his angels had emphatically confirmed their evil and rebellious intentions, God Almighty executed an awesome judgment upon the pre-historic earth, and that judgment occurred in the "gap" between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

The Lord's cataclysmic judgment upon the world of that era (see section II below) also served to demonstrate the faithfulness of the angels who rejected Satan's appeal. They trusted instead in God, that He would somehow not allow His universe to remain cloaked in darkness and devastation forever, and they were not disappointed. For truly, the Lord's solution was something that Satan and his followers did not expect in their wildest imaginings: the complete *re*-creation of the heavens and the earth, accompanied by the creation of something completely new: Man, a creature who would be God's means of exposing all of Satan's slanderous lies, a creature who, while possessing obvious limitations, had what Satan and his demons coveted most: a physical body to house his spirit.

Despite the refurbishing of the universe related in Genesis 1:2 and following, the present heavens and earth are irremediably tainted with evil, and will ultimately be incinerated and replaced by the new heavens and earth "wherein righteousness dwells" (2Pet.3:5-13). At that time, all wickedness (and all wicked creatures) will have been forever removed from God's perfect new universe, a complete and completely harmonious universe which shall never see corruption. At that glorious future time, things will be as they originally were, only better, and without the possibility of evil.

The rebellion of Satan, his fall, God's judgment upon the world of that time, His re-creation of the world and creation of mankind to reprove and repudiate Satan and His lies, and God's final judgments upon the devil and the present world are all issues of prime importance for Christians. Without understanding these matters, it is impossible to fully grasp all the implications of the working out of the Lord's plan through the ages, and, therefore, of our purpose and mission here on earth. The assumption that Genesis 1:1 is of a piece with the seven days of re-creation that follow is an error that undermines proper understanding of these extremely important scriptural teachings.

I. Linguistic Evidence for the Genesis Gap:

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

As Chafer and others have surmised, between Genesis 1:1 and what follows beginning in verse two, we are to understand a break or "gap" in the flow of the discourse.[1] The traditional translation of the Hebrew phrase *bereshith* (בראשית) as "in the beginning" is an acceptable rendering, but tends to be somewhat misleading.[2] In the Hebrew (as in the Greek equivalent *en archei*: ἐν ἀρχῇ), there is no definite article, no "the". Semantically, the difference may seem small enough, but the problem with the traditional translation is that it seems to link the sentence ***forward***, connecting it without interruption to what immediately follows. According to such interpretations, Genesis 1:1 would then be a summary of the seven days of creation (and what follows an expansion), rather than what it actually is, a straight-forward statement of the fact of God's initial creation of the universe (against which the ***re***-construction of the world is then set).[3] This view, however, is one which the language of Genesis 1:1 cannot be easily made to bear.

First of all, the opening sentence of the Bible (taken by itself, and examined without any preconceptions) purports to be just what we are suggesting here: an historical description of God's first action vis-à-vis the material universe, namely His original creation of it. On the other hand, problems for the alternative summary-statement theory arise as soon as we move on to verse two. For the earth is there described as being "without form, and void" (KJV). But if verse one is not an actual description of the creation of the heavens and the earth, but rather merely a summary of the whole seven days that follow, then how are we to explain the fact that there is no re-statement of its initial creation in the detailed account? Where did this formless "earth" come from? Are we to suppose that it did somehow exist ***before*** original creation? That would be quite a blow for all who genuinely believe in a God who transcends the universe and in His *ex nihilo* creation of it (see section II below). If, on the other hand, earth really was originally created "from nothing", it seems beyond odd not to mention that creation in the detailed account of the seven days (if indeed we are to assume that they represent ***original*** creation), and, on that account, strained to assume that the bald statement of its creation in verse one is a mere summary.

A second problem with taking Genesis 1:1 as a summary of what follows rather than an event in its own right is to be found in the grammatical connection between verses one and two. Following the description of God's *ex nihilo* creation of heaven and earth in verse one, we have, in the Hebrew, a disjunctive construction at the beginning of verse two. The combination of the connective *waw* and a nominal form (as opposed to a finite verb) indicates strong contrast in the Hebrew. That is to say, what we have beginning verse two is a "but", not an "and".[4] Grammatically speaking then, we are on much firmer ground in translating "***but*** the earth . . .", rather than "***and*** the earth . . ." (KJV). This rendering to which the actual language of the verse points so insistently (despite all speculation to the contrary) has produced mere head-scratching for those who hold to the summary interpretation. But for those who are willing to follow where the Word of God actually leads, it is an unmistakable sign post, one which points inescapably to a definite gap between the Bible's two initial verses, a hiatus in the action which demands

attention and invites investigation. Clearly, something dramatic must have transpired to account for this stark contrast between verses one and two. The Genesis Gap, therefore, is unmistakably present in the original Hebrew, representing a clear interruption in the narrative between God's original, perfect creation of the world, and His subsequent ***re***-creation of a world ruined by Satan's revolt:

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth. ***But*** the earth came to be ruined and despoiled . . .
Genesis 1:1-2a

Logic, grammar and (as we shall see immediately below) context all argue for what by now should be apparent: verse one describes in simple, straight-forward terms God's creation of the world out of nothing, while what follows, beginning with the disjunctive clause of verse two, describes the state of affairs resulting from Satan's revolt. This is followed in turn by God's reconstruction of the world to make it once again habitable for an entirely new species of moral creature through whom it will be God's good pleasure to repudiate the devil's revolt beyond any shadow of a doubt, a species created "a little lower than the angels" (Ps.8:5) but destined to rise above them: mankind.[5]

II. The Context of Judgment in Genesis Chapter 1: If the language of Genesis 1:1-2 argues for a gap between original creation and the seven days of re-creation, the context of what follows the first sentence in the Word of God would seem to demand it. The contextual problems involved in taking Genesis 1:1 as a summary rather than an event in its own right are daunting indeed, especially if one stipulates a grammatically correct translation of the two verses:

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth. ***But*** the earth came to be ruined and despoiled – darkness lay upon the face of the abyss while God's Spirit brooded over the surface of its waters.
Genesis 1:1-2

1. The Description of Earth in Genesis 1:2: The ruination and destruction of the earth under Satan's pre-historic rule is aptly described by the Hebrew phrase *tohu wa-bhohu* (i.e., "ruined and despoiled": ובהו תהו). Many creative (and misleading) translations have been offered in an effort to remove the difficulties caused by a literal translation of this phrase. For the description of earth in a clearly devastated condition causes obvious problems for the summary-statement interpretation of verse one: since God creates only perfection, how and why and when could the earth have come to be so ravaged if no gap is to be understood between verses one and two?

The words *tohu* and *bhohu* always refer to "emptiness", "uselessness" or, "worthlessness", that is to say, a confused, chaotic state, inevitably the result of some cataclysm, and usually one that has been brought on by divine judgment (cf. Deut. 32:10; 1Sam.12:21; Job 6:18; 12:24; 26:7; Ps.107:40; Is.40:17; 41:29; 44:9; 45:19; 49:4; 59:4):

The ruined (***tohu***) city lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred.
Isaiah 24:10 NIV

And He shall stretch over it the line of desolation (***tohu***) and the plumb line of emptiness (***bhohu***).
Isaiah 34:11 NASB

Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled. Suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my people are foolish, they have not known Me; they are stupid children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void (***tohu wa-bhohu***); and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains and , lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and ***by his fierce anger***.
Jeremiah 4:20-26 KJV

This last passage is of particular interest because of its description of the divine judgment upon the land of Israel ***in the exact same terms used of the ruined earth in Genesis 1:2***. Jeremiah must, therefore, have understood the Genesis 1:2 description in this same way. Earth (in verse two) was a ruin, a chaos resulting from divine judgment, and thus an apt parallel to what was soon to become of the land of Israel once the looming judgment of the Lord was released.

One of Isaiah's uses of *tohu* is also particularly pertinent to our discussion here, because it directly contradicts the notion that God's ***original*** creation of the earth related at Genesis 1:1 could in any way be described as *tohu wa-bhohu*:

For thus says the Lord, Creator of the heavens. He is God, Shaper of the earth. He founded it. He did not create it a ruin (***tohu***). Rather He formed it to be inhabited.
Isaiah 45:18

The word for "create" in the verse above is *bar'ah* (ברא), the same verb used in Genesis 1:1 and the word most commonly employed in the Old Testament to describe the Lord's miraculous, creative acts. According to this passage, God's purpose in originally creating earth was for its useful habitation. It is a confusion, a confounding of His purpose to assume that He had originally created it as an uninhabitable chaos. But in fact, as we are told here, He did ***not*** create earth *tohu*. Therefore it is impossible to reconcile Isaiah 45:18 with Genesis 1:1 unless and until one accepts what the Hebrew grammar of Genesis 1:2 implies, namely, that a gap in the narrative exists between the first two verses of the Bible, a gap representing an indefinite and undefined span of time. Isaiah 45:18 only makes sense when we understand that Genesis 1:2 does ***not*** describe the earth immediately after its creation, but after its devastation (i.e., a ruined world destroyed through God's judgment upon Satan's activities).

2. The Darkness:

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth. But the earth came to be ruined and despoiled – ***darkness*** lay upon the face of the abyss while God's Spirit brooded over the surface of its waters.
Genesis 1:1-2

In biblical symbolism, darkness is not good. Darkness is, in fact, symbolic of evil. The description of the earth as lying under a shroud of darkness is meant to present a very negative picture – not one of ***blessing*** (which we should expect in the wonderful, original paradise of Genesis 1:1: see Part 1), but of ***cursing*** instead. A survey of some of the uses of darkness in the Bible will make this point clear:

a. <u>Darkness as a symbol of evil</u>:

Do not participate in ***dark*** deeds which bear no fruit. But rather expose them as such.
Ephesians 5:11

For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against [angelic] princes, against [angelic] authorities, against the cosmic powers of this [present] ***darkness***, against evil spirits in the heavenly realms.
Ephesians 6:12

[God the Father], who rescued us from the power of ***darkness*** and delivered us into the kingdom of His beloved Son.
Colossians 1:13

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and we walk in ***darkness***, we are lying, and not acting truthfully.
1st John 1:6

But whoever hates his brother is in the ***darkness***, and is walking in the ***darkness***; and he doesn't know where he is going because the ***darkness*** has blinded his eyes.
1st John 2:11

b. <u>Light as a symbol of good</u>:

In Him was life, and this life was the ***light*** of men. And this ***light*** is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not quenched it.
John 1:4-5

And this is the message which we have heard from Him and report to you, that God is ***light***, and in Him is there is no darkness.
1st John 1:5

Every good gift and every perfect present is from above, coming down from the Father of ***lights***.
James 1:17

And the city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminated it and the Lamb was its lamp. And the nations will walk by its ***light***.
Revelation 21:23-24

c. Darkness and light contrasted:

If your eye is bad, your whole body is ***dark***. So if the ***light*** within you is ***darkness***, how great that ***darkness*** is!
Matthew 6:23

This is the [basis for] judgment, that the ***light*** came into the world, and that men loved ***darkness*** rather than ***light***.
John 3:19

To open their eyes, and to turn them away from the ***darkness*** and into the ***light***, and from the power of Satan unto God.
Acts 26:18

So let us put aside the deeds of ***darkness*** and clothe ourselves with the weapons of ***light***.
Romans 13:12

You were once ***darkness***, but are now ***light*** in the Lord.
Ephesians 5:8

What partnership does righteousness have with immorality, or what fellowship does ***light*** have with ***darkness***?
2nd Corinthians 6:14

But you are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people to be preserved in order that you might proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of the ***darkness*** into His marvelous ***light***.
1st Peter 2:9

But you, brothers, are not in ***darkness*** that the day [of the Lord] should catch you like a thief. For you are all sons of ***light*** and sons of day. We are not of night nor of ***darkness***.
1st Thessalonians 5:4-5

d. Darkness resulting from divine judgment: A special category in the biblical use of darkness is the literal blotting out of light that attends divine judgment. This category of

usage is particularly important to our discussion because it is exactly this sort of darkness which we are considering in Genesis 1:2. As a result of Satan's activities on the original earth, God judged that primeval world and the earth was cursed by association with Satan's sin (just as the restored earth would later be cursed for its association with Adam's sin: Gen.3:17-19; Rom.8:19-22). One of the results of that judgment was that God plunged the original earth (and universe, for that matter) into darkness. In this and other instances, we may say that in addition to being ***symbolic*** of evil, the darkness is also very real, inflicted in literal fashion as part of the judgment of God (e.g., Is.45:7 where the darkness "created" is parallel to the "disaster" of judgment, while light is parallel to prosperity; cf. Is.5:30; 8:22; Ezek.32:7-8; Acts 13:11):

1. The Supernatural Darkness upon Pharaoh's Kingdom: Darkness was one of the ten plagues upon Egypt which demonstrated God's power over Pharaoh (Ex.10:21-29; cf. Ps.105:28). Although the rest of Egypt was "blacked-out" by the Lord's powerful judgment, the Israelites were spared from the plague (Ex.10:23). The darkness was apparently horrible, a palpable curse which constituted the penultimate plague, to be followed only by the death of the Egyptian first-born (Ex.11). A similar divine blotting out of all light occurs at Exodus 14:20. Here the cloud of God's presence creates a supernatural darkness for the purpose of restraining the Egyptian army, yet at the same time it provides light to the Israelites (cf. Josh.24:7).

2. The Supernatural Darkness at the Crucifixion: Just as the Passover lamb, that poignant type of Jesus Christ dying for us, was commanded to be slaughtered "between the ***evenings*** (pl.)", (i.e., at a time neither clearly day nor night: Ex.12:6; 29:39-41), so Christ's death on behalf of all mankind was destined to be accompanied by an analogous, yet supernatural darkness. The three synoptic gospel writers all record this darkness (lasting approximately three summertime hours: Matt.27:45-54; Mk.15:33-39; Lk.23:44-49), with Luke adding the important detail that "the sun gave out" (literally "eclipsed"). Immediately following this period of unprecedented darkness, the veil of the temple is split miraculously in two, and our Lord breathes His last – until His resurrection. Thus the supernatural darkness of the cross is likewise a sign of divine judgment – our Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf submitting to the Father's judgment upon all our sins and dying in our place. He endured this terrible darkness and all that it entailed that we might forever live in the light with Him.

3. The Supernatural Darkness at the Second Advent: Prior to the return of our Lord (the second advent), earth will undergo the most terrible period of her history, the Great Tribulation (Dan.12:1; Matt.24:21 & 29; Mk.13:19 & 24; Rev.7:14). But before the devil and his antichrist can accomplish their purposed annihilation of all believers, the "day of the Lord" will begin, a day of wonders and judgments that will shake the earth as never before (Joel 2:1ff.), and a period of supernatural darkness is prophesied as one of the final portents of impending judgment immediately preceding Christ's return (Is.13:9-13; 34:4; 60:1-2; Ezek.32:7-10; Joel 2:2, 2:10, 2:31; 3:15; Zeph.1:15-18; Zech.14:6-7; Matt.24:29; Mk.13:24-25; Acts 2:17-21; Rev.6:12-13).

4. The Supernatural Darkness of the Lake of Fire: The picture of "hell", as it is commonly understood, differs in the Bible quite substantially from many of the popular

accounts with which we may be familiar. One difference apropos to our topic is that hell will be a place of terrible and unbearable ***darkness***. This is despite the fact that hell is also described as a lake of burning sulfur and fire (Is.66:15-16 & 24; Dan.7:9-11; Matt.3:11-12; 5:22; 18:8-9; 25:41; Mk.9:43 & 48; Jas.3:6; Rev.19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8). Here is the "outer darkness" that will deprive its inhabitants – those who rejected Christ in life – of the very thing they so stubbornly rejected in life, i.e., "light" (Jn.3:19-21). Just as the darkness of the Exodus plague (Ex.10:21) and the 5th bowl judgment of Revelation (Rev.16:10-11) are tangible, this too will be a palpable, painful darkness (Matt.8:12; 22:13; 25:30). Even now, this particular type of supernatural darkness and fire exists in the interim hell (for unbelieving humans: Lk.16:24; 2Pet.2:17; Jude 13) and Tartarus (for certain of the fallen angels: 2Pet.2:4; Jude 6), although the ultimate "lake of fire" has yet to receive its first inhabitants (Rev.19:20; 20:10).

Therefore, from everything we know about the use and meaning of darkness elsewhere in the Bible, to describe the universe as dark and without light (as Genesis 1:2 does) is to describe a status quo of ***cursing***, rather than blessing, and of ***divine judgment***, rather than original, miraculous creation.

3. The Sea:

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth. But the earth came to be ruined and despoiled – darkness lay upon the face of the ***abyss*** while God's Spirit brooded over the ***surface of its waters***.
Genesis 1:1-2

In biblical symbolism, the sea is usually not a positive sign. On the contrary, the sea is often associated with evil. In keeping with usage employed elsewhere in the Bible, any description of the earth's surface as lying under the face of the deep conveys a very negative picture – not one of blessing (which we should expect in the wonderful, original paradise of Genesis 1:1: see Part 1), but one of cursing. This can be readily seen from a survey of these symbolic uses of "sea" in the Bible:

a. Water Versus Land: Despite the somewhat romantic picture that we have of the sea today, we need to understand that from the point of view of an ancient agricultural people such as the Israelites were, land is the thing. For people not much involved in maritime commerce, the sea marks the boundary of what can be cultivated, of what can be inhabited and inherited. Land has value; the sea merely marks its end (e.g., Josh.15:12 & 47; 23:4). It was a good ***land*** the Lord promised to the Israelites, a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Ex.3:8, 17, 13:5; Lev.20:24), whose bounty in no way derives from the sea. This "good land" was to form the basis not only of the economy, but of the community now-and-future through the principle of everlasting inheritance (Lev.25:8-55). Viewed from this perspective, it should be clear that the references to the dark abyss (i.e., the deep sea) and to the waters of a universal ocean then engulfing the entire earth (implied, and then confirmed in verses 6-10) could only have seemed foreboding in the extreme to their contemporary audience. This impression is

strengthened by God's assessment of His removal and collection of these waters in order to allow the dry land to appear once more: "And God saw that it (i.e., the separation of the dry land from the sea) was good" (Gen.1:10). As a race, we humans were originally taken from the ground (Gen.2:7), and even though it has been temporarily defiled with a curse as a result of Adam's sin (Gen.3:17-19), it is still one of the primary provisions of God's grace to us through its agricultural bounty (Acts 14:17). The land, that is, the earth, will see its redemption and restoration at the return of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:21; Rom.8:19-22). Land is our ultimate habitation, while the sea, despite its own unique bounty and appeal, is essentially inhospitable to human life, and changeable by its very nature, a quality that puts it completely at odds with God's promises of eternal and lasting inheritance.

b. The Sea as a Sign of Divine Judgment: As we saw in more detail in Part 1 of this series, Hades, or "hell", is divided into three compartments: 1) Abraham's Bosom, the place of deceased believers prior to Christ's ascension (Lk.16:19-31); 2) "hell" or Hades proper (also referred to as *sheol*, *gehenna*, "torments", and "the grave"), the place of the deceased unsaved to this day (Matt.5:29-30; 23:33; Lk.12:5; 16:23; Rev.20:13-15); 3) the Abyss, the place where certain of the fallen angels are presently incarcerated (Lk.8:31; 2Pet.2:4; Jude 6; Rev.9:1-11; 20:1-3). Therefore to translate Genesis 1:2 with the word "abyss" (as we do above) is to suggest a context of divine judgment (rather than one reflecting the blessing of original creation). There is good reason to suggest that this translation is justified:

The word we are translating "abyss" in Genesis 1:2 above (often rendered "the deep") is the Hebrew *tehom* (תהום). While one might have expected to encounter here the far more common Hebrew word for sea (*yam*, ים), we find *tehom* employed instead, doubtless because of its somewhat more sinister connotations. The word is usually suggestive of dramatic and powerful events, often involving the judgment of God (cf. Ex.15:5 & 8; Job 38:16-17; Ps.42:7; 71:20). This point was not lost on the ancient scholars who made the famous 3rd century B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint (abbrev. LXX). They eschewed more common Greek words for "sea", instead rendering *tehom* with the Greek *abyssos* (ἄβυσσος), the word, incidentally, from which our English "abyss" is derived. From this point on in the Septuagint, *abyssos* is by far the most common translation of *tehom*, establishing a precedent which greatly influenced the writers of the New Testament. So we see, for example, that in Revelation the Beast can be described in one place as "coming up out of *the sea*" (Rev.13:1; cf. Dan.7:3), and in another as "coming up out of *the abyss*" (Rev.11:7; 17:8), so that the apostle John was quite comfortable interchanging this name for the chasm of Hades with the sea whose depths cover it. Thus, from a scriptural point of view, the subterranean realms below the earth can be construed as part and parcel with the deep sea which covers them (cf. Job 26:5-6, where *sheol* and "under the sea" are one and the same).

This equating of the sea with the nether-world buried beneath it helps to explain the difficult passage in Revelation where we are told that at the final judgment, "the sea will give up her dead" (Rev.20:13). When John immediately adds to this statement that "death and Hades will give up their dead", he is merely explaining that in prophetic terms there is virtually no difference between the sea on the one hand and death-and-

Hades on the other (a hendiadys for one single place: torments, or hell). These two venues are, from an earthly perspective, one and the same place (though, technically speaking, they are distinct: Hades is the place *under* the abyss or sea, and the sea or abyss is what separates Hades from the world above): the sea (or, more properly, Hades-beneath-the-sea) is the present location of deceased unbelievers (believers have already been removed to heaven from Abraham's bosom at the ascension of Christ), and of the demons who are now imprisoned (cf. 1Pet.3:19-20; Jude 1:6-7; Rev.9:1-20). The latter, long since under sentence of judgment along with their leader, Satan (Jn.16:11), require no further adjudication after the Satanic rebellion is at last finally crushed. But "the dead" [unbelievers] in Hades, their abysmal place of incarceration lying below the sea's deepest depths, will stand judgment at the end of human history before being consigned to the lake of fire (Rev.20:11-15).

That the sea often corresponds to hell in the Bible is another indication that its appearance on the scene in Genesis 1:2 in this world-encompassing form should not be taken as a neutral signal. An imperfect world, a world in the grips of divine judgment, a world ***that needs a hell***, has a sea. The very presence of the sea (especially in the form of the *tehom*-abyss sea) suggests very strongly that in Genesis 1:2 we are dealing with the aftermath of some awe-inspiring divine judgment, and not with the original creation of Genesis 1:1.

c. The Sea as an Instrument of Divine Judgment: Besides being a sign that divine judgment has occurred, the sea is sometimes an instrument of that very judgment. Cases of this type of divine judgment are relatively rare in scripture and always highly significant events. In addition to the Genesis judgment we are now considering, two other large scale "water judgments" stand out:

1. The Antediluvian Civilization (Gen. 6-9; cf. 2Pet.2:5; 3:5-7): As in the Genesis Gap judgment where the sea completely covered the earth, in this case as well God “did not spare” that ancient civilization, God "did not spare" that ancient world but "brought the flood upon its ungodly people" (2Pet.2:5). Water was the means of annihilating the pre-noahic civilization, completely extirpating the sinful world of that time in one of God's most spectacular water-judgments. His promise to Noah afterwards, sealed with the rainbow, has guaranteed for us that this flood and the Genesis Gap judgment will be the only two universal water judgments on the present earth (Gen.9:8-17).

2. The Egyptians in the Red Sea (Ex.14-15): The fact that there will be no more world-wide water judgments in the manner of the great flood has not ruled out water as a more local instrument of divine judgment (cf. Tyre: Ezek.26:19-21). The most spectacular of these is the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in their pursuit of the Israelites through the Red Sea. God actually parted this massive body of water (see the Exodus 14 series) to demonstrate His power and majesty, then caused it to return to its place in a complete and devastating judgment upon Pharaoh and his followers (Ex.14:18; 15:1-18).

As an additional parallel to the Genesis Gap judgment (or, perhaps better, a corollary) we might also add that of Sodom and Gomorrah. In Genesis 1:1-2, we see in the Bible only the result of divine judgment, i.e., the depths of the sea surrounding the entire

earth, whereas in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, we see in the Bible only the judgment actually delivered (Gen.19:23-29), that is, the fire and brimstone "rained down" upon the entire area. Nevertheless, the location of these cities can scarcely be anywhere else but below the waters of the Dead Sea (now covering the "plain of the Jordan" of Gen.13:10ff; cf. Zeph.2:9). Similarly, the fossil record we possess of the pre-historic earth has often been taken to suggest a cataclysmic end (fire and brimstone?) to some of the more famous ancient inhabitants, the dinosaurs (although we are left to supply the reason: God's judgment against Satan's perversion of the original earth); in this case, the Bible mentions only the aftermath: the sea.

One other thing these water judgments have in common is the fact that they were all provoked by exceptionally evil and hard-hearted conduct. The unprecedented evil of the antediluvian world (Gen.6:1-7; 8:21), the outrageous behavior of the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.19:4-25; 2Pet.2:6-10; Jude 1:7), and the extraordinary hard-heartedness of Pharaoh (see the Exodus 14 series, #2), all suggest that for a water judgment on the order of what we find in Genesis 1:2 (i.e., the complete devastation of the entire earth), some horrendous assault against God's justice must have taken place. Given that no other morally responsible creatures except the angels existed at this point, we may take this as further strong evidence that Satan's rebellion was the cause that provoked this complete inundation of the earth. When we take this perspective, what happens next in the context of Genesis chapter one makes good symbolic sense. God's recovering of the land out of the water is a very clear picture of restoration and deliverance from evil's grip (cf. the Israelites' passage through and out of the Red Sea, and our transfer "from the power of darkness" "into the kingdom of His beloved Son", Col.1:13). The water has symbolically cleansed away the evil (very much like the ritual of John's water-baptism) and now new life is once more free to take hold by the grace of God.[(6)]

Finally, it is worth asking whether God would, through an act of *original* creation, create a world deluged, one in which there was no possibility of life, only dark waters prevailing everywhere, especially in light of the strong biblical symbolism of judgment such a state implies. It seems to stand much more to reason that Genesis 1:2 is recounting the after-effects of judgment (after effects that will require the restoration of the following verses to counteract) rather than the characteristics of God's original creation of the earth.

d. <u>The Sea as a Medium for Evil</u>: Although scripture recognizes and allows for the economic necessities of life, arrogant and idolatrous super-commerce, both past and prophetic, has a special relationship to the sea on which it depends. Both Tyre (Is.23:1-18; Ezek.26-28), and antichrist's Babylon (Rev.18:11ff) maintain a world-wide arrogance of commerce (associated with idolatry, and symbolized by prostitution) which negatively affects their partners, and it is the sea that acts as the link between them. Significantly, it will be remembered from Part 1 of this study, it is the Prince of Tyre whose "trafficking" is used symbolically for Satan's activities in seducing many of his fellow angels to join his cause (Ezek.28:12-19).

e. The Sea as the Point of Origin for Antichrist: The sea is the place from whence the beast, or antichrist, rises (Rev.13:1). As the point of origin for the one who most completely opposes Christ while operating most closely with Satan (2Thes.2:9), the sea is more nearly to be connected with cursing than with blessing. The symbol of "coming up from the sea" first occurs in Daniel 7:3, where all four of the major anti-God empires of history arise from that source, the last being Rome, in both its historic and prophetic incarnations; the title of "beast" is then transferred from the kingdom to its ruler in Revelation 13:1, making the sea the origin not only of the most anti-God empire in history but also of its anti-Christ emperor (cf. Dan.7:3-14; 9:25-27; 11:21-45; 2Thes.2:1-12; Rev.13:1-18; 17:1-18). In Revelation 13:1, Satan is also shown summoning antichrist up from the sea. Moreover, as the location of the abyss (not to mention Hades), the sea is the present abode of some of Satan's incarcerated followers (2Pet.2:4; Jude 6; cf. Rev.9:1-11), the future temporary prison of Satan (Rev.20:1-3), and analogous to the ultimate home of the devil and all fallen angels (i.e., it is the ***lake*** of fire for a reason: Matt.25:41; Rev.20:10). It should also be kept in mind that it is the object of our present study to show that the sea was the means God employed to judge the original earth, after Satan's coup had netted him temporary control of the first Eden. Viewed in these terms, for Revelation to associate antichrist, Satan's all-time main candidate for world rule, with the sea, the means and place of God's judgment on Satan during the Genesis Gap, is to closely link Satan's last attempt at total world rule (which will result in God's judgments at Armageddon) to his first one (which resulted in the Genesis Gap judgment). Thus the symbolism linking the sea to God's judgment on evil is an important theme encountered throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

f. The Sea as the Home of Symbolic Monsters Representing Satan: Besides being the symbolic point of origin for antichrist, the devil's chief minion, Satan himself shares in this close connection with the sea through his identification with the two mythical monsters of the deep, Leviathan (cf. also Job 3:8, 41:1-34; Ps.74:12-14; Is.27:1;) and Rahab (Job 9:13, 26:12-13; Ps.87:4; 89:9-10; Is.30:7, 51:9-10). Biblical writers made use of the names of these legendary creatures to represent Satan symbolically (in his capacity as the dragon-serpent: see Amos 9:3):

On that day (i.e., the Day of the Lord, beginning with the 2nd Advent, following the Tribulation; cf. Is.26:20), with His fierce sword, great and mighty, the Lord will punish Leviathan (i.e., Satan; cf. Rev.12:1-13:1), the slippery ***serpent***, even Leviathan the twisting ***serpent***, and He will kill the monster (or *dragon*) who lives in the sea.
Isaiah 27:1

Often, these monsters are also used to represent empires inspired by Satan (compare the beasts of Dan.7), as in the case of the following passage where the satanic Egypt of the Exodus is called Rahab (notice also the use of *tehom* here for "the great deep" instead of the usual word for sea, *yam*; see section I.3.b. above):

Was it not You who hacked Rahab to pieces, who pierced the monster (or *dragon*)? Was it not You who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep (*tehom*); who made the depths of the sea into a highway for the redeemed to pass through it?
Isaiah 51:9-10

g. The Removal of the Sea: The lack of any sea in the eternal state has puzzled many readers of Revelation 21:1, but should come as no surprise in light of our discussion above. When evil has finally been banished from the universe forever and we inhabit at last the new heavens and new earth "where righteousness dwells" (2Pet.3:13), there will no longer be any need for a sea, either as a means of judgment or as a memorial to judgment past. This striking truth is all the more reason to regard the sea in Genesis 1:2 as a result of (and memorial to) God's initial judgment on Satan's rebellious activities, and not as a part of His original creation of the earth.

4. The Restraining Ministry of the Holy Spirit:

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth. But the earth came to be ruined and despoiled – darkness lay upon the face of the abyss while ***God's Spirit brooded over the surface of its waters***.
Genesis 1:1-2

That the Holy Spirit should be mentioned here in His customary role of Restrainer is a further indication that Genesis 1:2 is describing the aftermath of God's judgment upon Satan and his pre-historic rebellion, not continuing the discussion of original creation from verse one. In His role as the Restrainer, the Holy Spirit hinders the activities and practice of evil, so that His presence in Genesis 1:2 is perhaps our strongest evidence so far that in the second verse of the Bible we are dealing with a waste-land of judgment, a world apart from the original Eden of verse one on the other side of the Genesis Gap. A survey of the Spirit's restraining ministry will make this clear:

a. Holy Spirit Restraint on the Individual Level: As we saw in brief in our prior study of Theology, the Holy Spirit, like the wind (from which His name is derived) is a potent, invisible force.[7] In the analogy of wind used by Jesus, we can perceive it and experience its effects, but we can neither see where it has come from nor tell where it is going (Jn.3:8). In the case of the Spirit's ministry too, though we do not see Him (as believers have seen Christ) or hear His words (as we read the Father's words in scripture), we are nevertheless greatly dependent upon His power and influence in all that we do as believers. This is especially true in this present age where Christians are indwelt by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit's ministries are many and mighty, but the one that concerns our present study is His role as a barrier to sin and evil through His resistance to its contemplation and execution. It should be noted that in this capacity the Spirit has been at work from the dawn of human history – the only reasonable explanation for the fact that mankind has not yet self-destructed. Occasionally in scripture, we are given a glimpse of this important ministry which doubtless forms a large part of every human life, especially of believers (2Pet.1:2). From the point of view of preventing the perpetration of evil, for example, the Spirit's production of ecstatics in Saul and his men prevented his execution of David (1Sam.19:20-24). From the point of view of protecting believers from evil, on the other hand, we may cite the Spirit's prevention of Paul and his companions from entering Asia and Bithynia during the second missionary journey (Acts 16:6-7). Paul's description of the Spirit's opposition to sin and evil in His

individual ministry to each one of us generalizes the principle (note that James 4:5 in the Greek says essentially the same thing as Gal.5:17):

Thus the flesh (i.e., the sinful nature of Man) sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit sets its desire against the flesh. For these two are antithetical to each other, and so the result is that it is not your own will that you are carrying out.
Galatians 5:17

The last part of the verse is critical to understanding the difference between most instances of the Holy Spirit's ministry of restraint to individuals and the over-arching cosmic ministries of the Spirit we are about to cover below. We are in a position to limit His personal ministries by the action of our free will. He will guide and restrain us from mistakes – up to a point, but, ultimately, God is not going to take away our free will and keep us from the commission of evil when we are dead set on it. That is what is meant by "quenching the Spirit" (1Thes.5:19) and "grieving the Spirit" (Eph.4:30), i.e., stubborn insistence on pursuing a wrong course of action in despite of the Spirit's clear restraint. More extreme cases of this thwarting of the Spirit's ministry of restraint to individuals include "lying to the Spirit" (Acts 5:1-11) and "blaspheming against the Spirit" (Matt.12:31). What all of these cases have in common is human persistence in the face of the Spirit's resistance to sin and evil, but, in all of these cases, what we have are free will acts as the point beyond which the Holy Spirit will no longer restrain from wrong actions.

b. Holy Spirit Restraint World-Wide: Scripture also records two important ministries of the Spirit toward mankind collectively. In these larger scale instances of Holy Spirit restraint the course of human history overall is affected. We can certainly assume that, as is the case with individuals, the actual scope of the Spirit's intervention in human affairs goes far beyond what has been written (as is clearly implied in Acts 17:26-28, for example):

1. Restraint of the Evil Pre-flood Civilization: The pre-flood satanic attack on the human race is examined in Part 5 of this series, so that it will be enough here to state that in the days before that great deluge, true humanity was on the brink of elimination. Angelic cohabitation with "the daughters of men" had begun to produce a not-quite-human population that came close to being universal (this is the most straight-forward interpretation of Gen.6:1-2; cf. 2Pet.2:4-5 & Jude 6-7; see also Part 1 of this series for similar satanic "experiments" in the pre-historic period). This, no doubt, is the kernel of truth behind the many myths of super-human heroes that have come down to us from antiquity; angelically engineered offspring would certainly be "men of renown" (see Gen.6:4). But though powerful in their bodies, this new hybrid race was apparently virulently hostile to God and, by implication, to God's true people (Gen.6:5 and 6:9). Only the restraint of the Holy Spirit – "My Spirit shall not strive with Man perpetually" – enabled Adam's unpolluted seed to coexist with these monsters until the time when God eradicated them from the earth (Gen.6:3, cf. also vv. 5-9).

2. Restraint of the Man of Sin: A different sort of deterrence is to be found in the case of the Spirit's restraining of antichrist (2Thes.2:6-8). Instead of preventing the action of a

large group of inherently evil beings (as in Genesis six), the Holy Spirit is actually preventing the appearance on the scene of history of the most evil human being of all time: the beast, or antichrist. By this ministry, the Spirit refuses to allow Satan's intense attack on the people of God to occur before its proper time. Not until every moment, every spiritual opportunity of this present age of Christ's Church has been played out will the Spirit stand aside and allow the Tribulation to begin. It is a matter of some controversy in evangelical circles as to whether the "Restrainer" in 2nd Thessalonians 2:6-8 is the Holy Spirit (this despite His other well-known ministries of restraint). But the fact that the seven seals must be released from the "Book" in Revelation chapters 5-6 before the Tribulation can begin, clearly points to the Spirit as the Agent of restraint (holding back antichrist and the Tribulation) as implied in the idea of sealing: the Spirit is elsewhere described as the "Seven Spirits" (Is.11:2; Rev.1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6), and the sealing ministry of the Spirit is well-attested in other contexts in the New Testament (2Cor.1:22; Eph.1:13; 4:30). This last point brings us full-circle to where we began our discussion of the Holy Spirit's ministries of restraint. He keeps us safe from antichrist, keeping him and his world-wide reign of terror sealed up until its due time. He has also sealed us up to keep us safe from all threats to our salvation, mind we only take care not to use the freedom God has given us to thwart His ministry (2Cor.1:22; Eph.1:13; 4:30; cf. 2Pet.1:2).

Genesis 1:2 clearly constitutes a case of world-wide Holy Spirit restraint. The description of Him "brooding" over the dark waters that have been poured out in judgment on the earth speaks of deterrence, specifically, restraint of any further satanic activity, of any further interference on earth, of any angelic attempt to reverse the effects of judgment: God would not allow this, and the presence of the Spirit in restraint-mode serves to make this abundantly clear. Before the seven days of restoration, earth has been "sealed up" with the strongest "lock" of all, making any attempt by Satan to resume his activities impossible:

Am I ***the sea*** or a monster of the deep that You set a guard upon me?
Job 7:12

5. The Timing of the Satanic Rebellion: Finally, it should be mentioned that, in addition to the compelling reasons listed above for placing Satan's rebellion within the time frame of the Genesis Gap (that is, between original creation and the eventual re-creation of the earth – a period of unspecified length), there is, in fact, no other period in which it can reasonably be located. After the angels sing for joy with obvious relief at earth's re-creation (and the sea's restriction: Job 38:4-11), the temptation of Adam and Eve by Satan follows their creation in apparently rapid succession, leaving scant time for Satan's own fall and seduction of a large portion of angelic kind (Genesis 1-3; see Part 1 of this series).

III. Creation and Re-Creation:

Before all else, God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:1 describes the original creation of the heavens and the earth. This initial creation of the universe was directed by the Father (Gen.1:1 & 3; Rev.4:11), carried out by the Son (1Cor.8:6; Col.1:16), and empowered by the Spirit (Ps.33:6; Prov.8:27-31). It was an instantaneous action, a true "creation *ex nihilo*", that is, a creative act that produced the universe in its entirety out of nothing (except the will and the power of God). As vast as the universe is, it is yet insignificantly small compared to God (1Kng.8:27; Acts 17:24-26). We may think of the heavens as infinite, but if that is so, they are but unimpressively finite in comparison with the true infinity of God.[(8)] The act of creating the universe was, according to the natural principles with which we are familiar, impossible. It was, by definition, miraculous:

By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the Breath (i.e., the Spirit) of His mouth all their hosts.
Psalm 33:6

Everything came into being through Him [the Son], and without Him nothing which has come into being came into being.
John 1:3

Everything in the heavens and on the earth was created by Him (i.e., Jesus Christ), things invisible as well as those visible – whether thrones, authorities, rulers or powers, everything was created through Him and for Him. And He Himself is before everything, and everything subsists in Him.
Colossians 1:16-17

[God] has in these last days communicated to us in a Son, [the One] whom He has appointed heir of all things, [the One] through whom He created the universe.
Hebrews 1:2

As we have seen, however, the second verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:2, is split grammatically from verse one with an abrupt, adversative construction. Verse two propels us untold eons forward in time from the original, awesome act of creation, and moves us to the other side of the Genesis Gap, describing for us the state of the universe as it existed before God *re*-created the earth:

But the earth came to be ruined and despoiled – darkness lay upon the face of the abyss while God's Spirit brooded over the surface of its waters.
Genesis 1:2

Original creation had been marred by Satan's revolt, and cast into darkness by God's judgment upon the rebellious angels. In order to make the universe habitable once more

for creatures with ***physical*** bodies (the attempted possession of which was a major issue in Satan's pre-fall propaganda, it will be remembered from Part 1 of our study), a *re*-creation of the earth was essential. Genesis 1:3 - 2:3, the account of the seven days, is a description of this renewal of the heavens and the earth. The objective behind this process of the seven days is also quite clear: the creation of Man. Everything God accomplishes within the period of re-creation is specifically designed to make life supportable for this His second category of creature possessing free will:

1. The Seven Days of Re-Creation: The creation of Adam and Eve, their temptation by Satan, their fall, and their judgment by God will occupy Part 3 of this series, but we need first to consider several other points concerning the earth's refitting during the seven days:

a. The presence of the heavens and earth in place at Genesis 1:3 shows this is re-creation: As God begins to work on the earth in Genesis 1:3, earth (and the heavens in which it exists) is already in place (an impossibility unless this is a re-creation).

b. The presence of the angels during the seven days shows this is re-creation: The angels are present too, “shouting for joy” at the reconstruction of the earth (also necessarily having been created at some earlier time – before the Genesis Gap – an impossibility unless this is re-creation: Job 38:4-7).

c. God's pronouncement of His acts as "good" shows this is re-creation: God, being God, creates *only* what is good in the first place. Bringing light out of darkness, dry land out of only sea, life out of lifelessness, are all acts of bringing something good out of something "not good" (i.e., darkness, sea, lifelessness). The pronouncement "and God saw that it was good" is a stamp of divine approval on the restoration of what had been originally good and now was restored to its "good" condition following an interval of judgment upon evil (Gen.1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).

d. God's construction of the firmament argues that this is re-creation: In Genesis 1:6-8, God constructs the firmament which separates the "waters above" from the "waters below", and calls this firmament "heavens". Now it can hardly be that we are meant to understand that prior to this constructing of the firmament, the earth, above which this firmament is set, had nowhere to exist, or that the light and darkness, after separation, or the waters, prior to separation, should be understood as having existence, yet somehow not existing in the heavens (for they can only be understood as existing ***within*** the universe). Indeed, both the heavens at large and the earth had already been created in Genesis 1:1. This interpretation is strengthened both by the fact that rather than "creating" the firmament from nothing, the language of Genesis 1:7 specifies that God "made" it from something.[9] Therefore, since there was already a universe, the formation of this firmament can only be seen as an act of *re*-creation.

e. Re-creation explains appearance of age: The Genesis Gap is the most likely explanation for the perceived contradiction between the biblical account of the seven

days and the fossil record. The exact space of time between Genesis 1:1 and God's creation of the angels, or between their creation and Satan's fall, or between God's judgment on the original Eden-earth and His restoration of it in Genesis 1:2 are not recorded for us anywhere in scripture and could well encompass untold eons of time (a commodity which is felt and measured much differently in the angelic sphere, after all). In addition, however, there is also the point that when God creates, He creates in mature perfection. The plants, animals, and people (Adam and Eve) created during the six days are all created in a mature status, thus giving the appearance of age. It is no great stretch to see the restored "heavenly lights" and reconstructed earth benefiting as well from a similar, complete creation that might well give every impression of a lengthy geological history that does not in fact comprise real time, in our limited understanding of it:

By faith we understand that the ages have been constructed by the Word of God, so that what we see (i.e., the material world) ***has not come into being from the things we now see.***
Hebrews 11:3

But it escapes their notice in asserting this, namely, that there were heavens long ago too, and an earth, which was [re-]established out from under water (i.e., the "waters below") and through [the midst of] water (i.e., the "waters above") by the Word of God – [and that it was] through these two [sets of waters] that the world of that time (i.e., in Noah's day) was [again] deluged by water [from above and below] and destroyed. Now the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire by that same Word (of God), preserved for the day of judgment and the destruction of godless men.
2nd Peter 3:5-7

f. Re-creation is analogous to other divine restorations: Adam's fall resulted in a curse on the earth that is analogous to (though not nearly so devastating as) the Genesis Gap judgment (Gen.3:17-19). Nevertheless, all creation now "groans" in anticipation of the removal of the curse, a blessing to come at the return of Christ which also parallels the restoration of earth in Genesis 1:2 (Rom.8:19-22). A few of the many other such instances of the pattern of divine judgment followed by gracious restoration include: 1) the renewal of the earth after the flood (Gen.8-9); 2) Joseph's deliverance from prison and restoration to his family (Gen.45); 3) Israel restored to the land after the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 1); and 4) the most significant and spectacular restoration of all: the reconciliation of sinful Man to God through the redemptive work of the God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. esp. Rom.5:6-11). Suffice it to say that our God is a gracious God who may hold just judgment in the one hand, but always has merciful restoration in the other for all who will repent and return to Him. The restoration of the devastated earth was a clear sign to Satan and his followers that their slanderous insinuations that God would be unable or unwilling to provide for reconciliation were about to be undeniably refuted (see Part 1 of this series).

g. Re-creation is focused on Man as a replacement for Satan and his angels: Finally, all of God's work throughout the seven days is focused on Man:

•Day 1: Light out of darkness, necessary to sustain life.

•Day 2: Atmosphere, also necessary for all life.

•Day 3: Dry land, essential for any animal life, and for Man; vegetation as a source of food, materials, pleasure, etc.

•Day 4: Lights to "serve as signs": for the ordering of human life in necessary increments of time.

•Day 5: Other creatures: enriching human life.

•Day 6: Land animals and livestock to support and bless human life; finally, Man.

•Day 7: God's Sabbath rest: designed for Man's blessing and benefit.

Notice that in Genesis 1:26-30 the creation of Man is the culmination of God's work. The process begins with the divine conference of the Trinity announcing God's decision: "Let Us make Man in Our image, according to Our pattern" (v.26). Man is then created in the image of God (v.27), blessed and given rule over all other creatures on earth (v.28), and provided with food (v.29; as are other creatures: v.30). The creation of Man, along with an environment to support our lives in these physical bodies, is clearly the purpose and goal of the seven days of God's restorative work in the world. Only after the earth has been restored to viable conditions, Man created upon it and placed in charge of it, does God conclude that all He has made is "***very*** good" (v.31: the Hebrew word *me'odth* being added only here to God's evaluations of His various acts during the seven days as "good"). Even the pattern of the seven days is one that suits and reflects the subsequent history of mankind, with each day standing for one millennium of human history and with the seventh day signifying the millennial rule of Christ (this principle is explained in more detail in Part 5 of this series). The fact that God's restorative work during the seven days is entirely focused on Man also argues for Genesis 1:2 beginning a process of ***re***-creation, for Man, specifically through the God-Man, Jesus Christ, is meant in no small part as a replacement for Satan and his fallen angels.

2. The Genesis 2:4 Summary

Genesis 2:4 has traditionally been at the root of much of the confusion about the Genesis Gap and the legitimate distinction drawn by scripture between the original creation of Genesis 1:1 and the seven days of re-creation. For example, the New International Version translates as follows:

This is the account of the heavens and earth when they were created.

[double break in spacing]

When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens – [v.5] and no shrub of the field had yet appeared . . .

By translating in the manner above, the NIV (and other versions that take a similar approach) leaves the English reader under the definite impression that verse four is grammatically split in two, with the first half looking backward to the seven days of re-creation, and second half looking forward to the detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve. In fact, verse four is an indivisible grammatical unit, and, what is almost universally misunderstood, a ***summary*** of all that goes before (original creation and the seven days of restoration). Punctuation can be important. Genesis 2:4 ought instead to be carefully distinguished from the ***following*** verse, because verse five begins a more detailed account of God's creation of Adam and Eve, an event that occurred on the sixth day of restoration (Gen.1:27). As did Genesis 1:2, Genesis 2:5 also begins with an adversative *waw* construction which makes the break clear in the Hebrew (see section I above):

Now this was before any wild foliage existed on the earth and before any wild herbage had sprouted, for the Lord had not yet caused rain to fall upon the earth, and Man did not exist to till the soil.
Genesis 2:5

It is just ***prior*** to this detailed account that we are given the summary statement of verse four:

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth in their creation, throughout the entire period that the Lord God fashioned earth and heavens.
Genesis 2:4

Coming as it does immediately after God's resting on the seventh day, verse four begins in the classic manner of an explanation with asyndeton (that is, with no intervening connectives like "and"). Theoretically, the verse could look backwards or forwards. The disjunctive opening of verse five eliminates the latter possibility (because an introductory explanation would not then be ***immediately*** followed by a rough break of the sort occurring in verse five). However, if we take verse four as a summary of everything written so far in the book, the sense will be confusing at best – ***unless*** we factor in that it includes ***both*** original creation ***and*** the seven days of re-creation. Failure to understand that both elements are included in the summary of verse four is at the heart of attempts to link the verse to what follows in an unnatural way, or even to split it in two in the manner of the NIV.

The vocabulary used in Genesis 2:4 to summarize creation and re-creation is both consistent and precise: we are told of the "creation" of heaven and earth, and the Lord God's "fashioning" of them. The word for creation is the Hebrew *bar'ah* (ברא), while to fashion or make is the Hebrew *'asah* (עשה). Now *bar'ah* is most often used in scripture for miraculous, creative activities of the Lord (the word, incidentally, found in Genesis 1:1 for "created"), whereas *'asah* is the most common Hebrew word for making and doing and has many subjects in scripture in addition to the Deity. The clue to why Moses, the writer of the Pentateuch, felt the need to employ both verbs here is to be found in the word "generations" (*toledhoth*, תולדות). This plural is normally used in the Old Testament to detail the ancestry or lineage of human families, and therefore

necessarily includes the idea of development over a significant amount of time. Here, therefore, "generations" is clearly being used by way of analogy to sum up the "developments", that is, the different periods of history for the heavens and the earth, namely: 1) original creation; 2) judgment and Genesis Gap; 3) re-creation. So while it is clearly difficult to reconcile this verse with a seven-day original creation theory, by combining the verb of ***creation*** (*ba'rah* – Genesis 1:1: most suited for original creation), with the verb of ***manufacture*** (*'asah* – found throughout the seven days, e.g., Gen.1:7; 1:16; 1:25: more suited to reconstitution), and by setting ***both verbs*** in a context of lengthy, "generational" development, Genesis 2:4 makes perfect sense as a summing up of all that has gone before: the original creation of Genesis 1:1, the Genesis Gap, and the seven days of re-creation:

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth in their creation, throughout the entire period that the Lord God fashioned earth and heavens.
Genesis 2:4

Also important is the reversal of order between "the heavens and the earth" in the first part of the verse and "earth and heavens" without definite articles in the second half: during the reconstruction, which is what the second half of the verse summarizes, earth is mentioned first and "heavens" are the name given to the manufactured "expanse" or firmament which is not made until day two. Only by understanding Genesis 1:1 as original creation and what follows beginning with Genesis 1:2 as a process of reconstruction does Genesis 2:4 make sense.

3. God's Answer to Satan: As we saw in Part 1 of our study of Satan's rebellion, the devil made a convincing case to his peers that, because of His merciful character on the one hand and the absolute and finite number of the angels on the other, God would be unable to bring judgment upon them for the coup Satan proposed (and subsequently carried out). The devil was wrong on both counts. Judgment came precipitously, the universe was plunged into darkness, and the earth was devastated. To their great surprise, however, final disposition of Satan and his followers was not immediately made. The universe was allowed to remain in darkness with the earth covered by the world-wide sea for an unspecified length of time. Finally, God did begin to restore the earth – an essential first step if Satan were to be refuted and replaced (and not just condemned). The angels who had remained faithful to God were overcome with joy (Job 38:4-7), but the demons must have shuddered (cf. Jas.2:19). Restoration, ***re***-creation of what had been the original Eden, was clear proof that God not only possessed a means of and a plan for the final disposition of Satan and his angels (in complete justice), but also of ***replacing*** what had been lost through their fall.

God was about to do "a new thing", a totally unexpected thing. Man, a creature far inferior in power to the angels (Ps.8), but possessing the precise thing Satan had lobbied for, a ***physical body***, would be introduced to the very same earth (now reconstituted) that had been headquarters for Satan's abortive coup d'état. The conflict would resume – on God's terms. Through mankind, God would demonstrate his ability to be merciful and righteous at the same time, refuting Satan's lie and providing for his replacement at

one stroke. In Part 3, we will examine God's creation of Man, Satan's temporary tactical success at the fall of Man, and God's sealing of the ultimate victory in the provision of the God-Man, His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Jesus Christ, mankind, born in sin through Adam's fall, would choose ***for*** God, and thus replace the fallen angels, created in perfection, who had chosen ***against*** God.

Notes:

1. L.S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas 1948) v.2, p.39 et alibi; also F. Delitzsch, *A System of Biblical Psychology* tr. R.E. Wells (rpr. Grand Rapids 1977) 71-77.

2. For parallels (e.g. Is.15:1-2) see Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* para. 100.2a.

3. Summaries, by their very nature, are more appropriate to the ends rather than the beginnings of literary treatments. Genesis 2:4 is just such a summary, encompassing the whole of creation (and re-creation) up to that point, and occurring where we might expect it to occur – at the ***end*** of the account of the seven days. Curiously, many who take Genesis 1:1 as a "prior" summary are inclined to see Genesis 2:4 as yet another ***preceding*** summary to be linked with what follows. There is no other way to explain the scrum of these verses made by many of the versions (most notable the NIV).

4. See Lambdin's *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (Cambridge 1971) para. 132. For parallels see Gesenius para.164.b.3, as well as these passages: Gen.14:4; Jdg.3:23 with verse 24.

5. For Man's ultimate status vis-à-vis the angels, see Part 1 of this series, Satan's Rebellion and Fall.

6. See part 5 of this series, Judgment, Restoration and Replacement, section II.7, "The Seven Days of Human History".

7. See part 1 of the Bible Basics series, Theology: The Study of God, and Peter's Epistles, lesson #10. For more on the ministry of the Spirit in the restraint of evil, see part 2B Coming Tribulation, section III, “The Restraining Ministry of the Holy Spirit”.

8. See Part I of Essential Doctrines of the Bible: Theology: the Study of God.

9. i.e., He constructed it out of existing material rather than creating it *ex nihilo*, the verb here being *ʿasah*, not *bar'ah*: see section III.2 below, "The Genesis 2:4 Creation Summary".