

## Creation Special

### Lessons 003 and 004

The History of the "Gap Theory"

- A Long Held View

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### *The Believer's Grace Adjustment to the Justice of God*

- Psalms 66:18 *If I perceive sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*
- Psalms 32:5 *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*
- 1 Cor 11:31 *But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.*
- 1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all other unrighteousness.*

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### *Invitation: The Non-Believer's Grace Adjustment to the Justice of God*

*(If you have never trusted in Christ Alone for salvation...)*

- Ephesians 2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
- Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*

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- Gal. 2:21, *"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*
- Gal. 3:24, *"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."*
- 1 Corinthians 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'*
- John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."*
- *"Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved"*  
Acts 16:31

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**Our Text -**

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

*(2 Pet 3:5-7 KJV)*

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"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

*(Genesis 1:2 KJV)*

6

2 Peter 3:5-7 is NOT a reference to Noah's flood.

There are only two (2) places in the entire Bible where the Earth is flooded by water.

One is at the time of Noah's flood (Genesis 7).

The other is at Genesis 1:2 where it speaks about the condition of the Earth at the time just before God said, "Let there be light."

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Now, if 2 Peter 3:5-7 is not a cross-reference to Noah's flood, then it MUST be a cross-reference to Genesis 1:2 (there is no other alternative - simple logic).

And if 2 Peter 3:5-7 is a cross-reference to Genesis 1:2, then the Holy Spirit is calling your attention to something very significant that millions of Neo-Creationists are blindly overlooking.

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Specifically, that a glorious ancient world that God created in the distant past (Genesis 1:1), had long since been utterly destroyed; plunged into deep darkness and overflowed by a raging flood of great waters on a universal scale at the time of Genesis 1:2.

The seven-days of Genesis that follow chronicle God's methodology of restoring the heavens and Earth and repopulating the world with living creatures, including modern man who is made in His image.

Keep in mind that what transpired in the past directly sets the course for what will happen in the future.

This is why it is essential to understand why there is a gap between the first two verses of the Bible and what happened during that time.

The time-gap in Genesis is obscurely declared but not detailed in the book of Genesis. It is the very first 'mystery' found in the Holy Bible. Knowing that there is a time-gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, and WHY there is a time-gap, will open a more perfect understanding of what the Creation narrative is actually saying.

That these 6 days, or periods, do not include the original creation is clear. God did not "create" light on the First day.

He simply said "let there be light," as one would say "turn on the light."

On the Second day God simply divided the waters by providing clouds to hold the moisture of the atmosphere.

The work of the Third day is twofold, the emergence of the land from the seas, and the reappearance of vegetable life.

This was not a new creation but a “resurrection.”

The earth rises up out of the “Waters of Death,” and seeds, and the roots of plants and herbs, are called upon to germinate and sprout and grow as they did before the catastrophe that submerged the Primeval Earth.

If that catastrophe was what we know as the “Glacial Period,” the resurrection of plant life no more required a “creative act” than vegetation does in the spring of the year after the winter is over.

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That this is what really happened seems clear from Gen. 1:11, 12, where it says,

“Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is **in itself, upon the earth.**”

That is, the seed was already in the earth, having been buried by the flood that swept over the Primeval Earth, and, being indestructible, it only needed the proper condition to spring up and cover the earth with verdure.

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This reveals the fact that the Primeval Earth was clothed with verdure (The lush greenness of flourishing vegetation.), and covered with plants and trees.

The appearance of the sun and moon on the Fourth day was not a new creation.

They had existed in connection with the Primeval Earth and had not been destroyed when it was made waste.

The word translated “made” in the 16th verse is not the same word as is translated “created” in verse one, and does not imply a “creative” act.

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What is meant is that the clouds broke away and permitted the sun and moon to be seen, and that from that time they were appointed to measure the days, and years, and seasons as we have them today.

In other words, on the Fourth day “Time” in contrast with “Eternity” began.

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The work of the Fifth day was the **“creation”** of fish and fowl; Here is the first time we come across the word “create” since we read of the original creation of the earth in verse one.

This shows that all animal life was destroyed in the catastrophe that overtook the Primeval Earth.

We have traces of this animal life in the fossil remains of birds and animals found in the earth.

If scientists will relegate fossils to the period of the original creation there will be no conflict between Science and the Genesis account of Creation.

The remains of man are never found in a “fossil state,” showing that man did not exist on the Primeval Earth.

Man was made for this present earth and is a “New” creation.

The creative work of the Sixth day was twofold, that of land animals and of man.

These land animals were probably the same that we have today, the extinct animals, whose fossil remains we find, having belonged to the Primeval Earth.

The fact that they were created **“After Their Kind,”** which expression is six times repeated, shows that they were not “evolved” from one common specie.

That man also was “created” shows that he has not descended from an ape. Man was made in the **“Image of God,”**

not in the image of an “Ape,” and was not formed from a brute, but of the “Dust of the Earth.”

The fact is, there is an “Impassable Gulf” between the lowest order of man and the highest type of beast that science has failed to bridge.

The “Missing Link” has never been found.

That all the different species of animals were created “separately” is proven from the fact that when species are crossed their offspring are sterile.

The crossing of the jackass and a mare is the mule, and a mule is a hybrid and is sterile.

That the whole human race is of "one specie" and had a common origin (Acts 17:26) is clear from the fact that, when the different races of the earth's inhabitants marry their offspring are not sterile but fertile.

This nullifies the argument that the white and colored races are of different origin, and that the white race alone is the Adamic race.

Neither was Adam created a baby or a primitive savage, but a full-grown man perfect in intellect and knowledge, else he could not have named the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air.

And the fact that his descendants had such skill in the invention of musical instruments and mechanical devices and could build cities and towers and such a vessel as the Ark, proves that the men of Antediluvian times were men of gigantic intellect and attainments, and that instead of man having "evolved upward" he has "degenerated downward."

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place=[Philadelphia, PA],  
title=[Dispensational Truth, or "God's Plan and Purpose in the Ages"],  
publisher=[Clarence Larkin],  
author=[Larkin, Clarence],  
year=[1918],  
pages=[13-16])

[BACK TO THE HISTORY OF THE GAP THEORY]  
When you understand this truth, it cuts a clear path through the confusion of conflicting theories and interpretations that have occupied the ongoing Creation vs. Science debate.

The essence of that debate will be discussed in a following chapter.

For now, it is very important that we show you the Biblical clues that tell us why 2 Peter 3:5-7 is not a reference to Noah's flood.

Clue #1 - Compare the phrase: "the heavens and earth, which are now" to the phrase the "heavens were of old":

What does this mean? Ask yourself this question: When Noah's flood happened did it change anything in the upper heavens?

Would a flood on the Earth's surface have any effect on the sun, moon, or stars high above?

The obvious answer is NO.

The heavens of Noah's days were the same heavens as in Adam's day; same sun, same moon, same stars, same planet Mars.

FACT: Noah's flood had no effect on the upper heavens. All of Noah's flood's effects were confined to the Earth's surface and its atmosphere. And although the Bible speaks about the "windows of heaven" being opened and water coming down (Genesis 7:11), the context of that reference is the *First Heaven*, which is the Earth's atmosphere.

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That is where the rain comes from.

Keep in mind that the Bible says there are three (3) heavens. (See 2 Corinthians 12:2).

This will be explained in greater detail shortly.

Again, note the contrasting comparison between the phrases the "heavens were of old" (before the waters of 2 Peter 3:5-7) and the "heavens and earth which are now" (after the waters of 2 Peter 3:5-7).

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If the effects of Noah's flood were confined to the Earth's surface and atmosphere, then Noah's flood did not affect or alter anything in the upper heavens, so logic demands that this verse must be speaking about an event other than Noah's flood.

And Genesis 1:2 is our only other Biblical candidate.

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Let's review:

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

*(Genesis 1:2 KJV)*

At Genesis 1:2 the heaven and the Earth are in darkness and great waters are upon the *deep*.

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If we interpret the *deep* to include everything in the physical universe (as opposed to God's heavenly realm far above (see John 8:23), then the situation becomes clear.

Before any reconstruction of the heavens and Earth could begin, God had to do something with all that water scattered across space.

That is why the Bible says that God "divided the waters" (Genesis 1:6-7).

It was the first order of business after the Lord God turned on the work lights (Genesis 1:3) and began to clear up the mess.

And this verse does not say that this division was between the waters on the Earth's surface and the clouds up in the sky, or describe the construction of some imagined "water canopy" above the Earth that later was the water source for Noah's flood.

That is NOT what the Bible is saying:

"And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so."

(Genesis 1:7 KJV)

The Bible is saying that God established a three-heaven structure between the Earth and the heavenly abode of the Ancient of Days.

The *firmament* is the abode of the sun, moon and stars, and the galaxies.

In other words, it is speaking of the entire physical universe.

And the Bible says that God placed waters above that firmament.

In doing so He placed a "Sea" between the footstool of His heavenly throne and the less than pure physical universe down below.

Prayerfully consider the schematic diagram [BELOW] because this is what the division was all about.

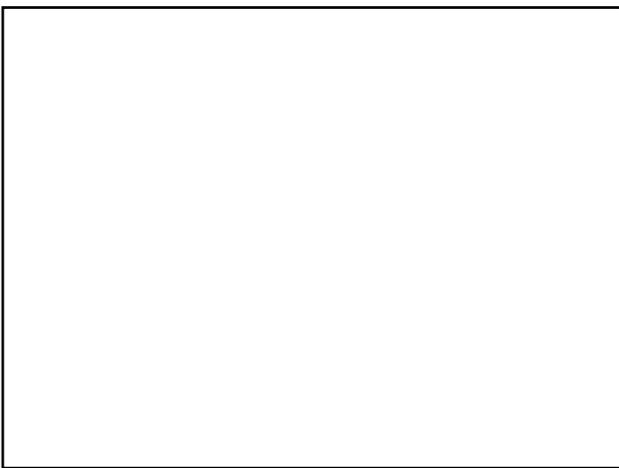


Also make note that in Genesis 1:8 the Lord God says nothing about this being *good*. Although God says, "it was good" concerning days 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 He does not say that about the work of the second day. Ever wondered about that?

The answer is very simple.

Although this division was not good, it was necessary to protect the creation from the flaming glory of God's Holiness.

Nothing impure can stand in His presence, and even the presence of a regenerated heavens and earth was not completely pure before God (see Job 25:5).



**God called the Firmament Heaven**

By Pastor Bob Enyart - Denver Bible Church

**On Day Two God Made the Crust of the Earth:** Dr. Walt Brown's *Hydroplate Theory* helps to understand the global flood, geology and the relevant scriptures. On Day Two of creation, God formed the crust of the earth, called the *firmament*, which was miles above a worldwide subterranean ocean, and the crust of course also held waters upon its surface. If this is true, we would expect to read in the Bible that initially, the surface of the earth was covered only with water, and that then God made the earth's crust above the water.

And consistent with the Hydroplate Theory (which describes a one-mile thick layer of water that was ten miles below the earth's surface), in fact the Bible teaches that God:

"In the beginning *God created... the earth*. ...and darkness was on the face of *the deep*. And the Spirit of God was hovering over *the face of the waters*" ([Genesis 1:1-2](#)). So that God,

- "laid out the *earth above the waters*" ([Psalm 136:6](#)). And, - "by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth [was] *standing out of water and in the water*" ([2 Peter 3:5](#)).

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"Thus God made the firmament, and divided the *waters which were under the firmament* from the waters which were above the firmament" ([Gen. 1:7](#)). So,

"The earth is the Lord's... For He has *founded it upon the seas*, and established it *upon the waters*" ([Ps.24:1-2](#)).

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**Where the Water Came From:** The global flood then began when those "fountains of the great deep were broken up" ([Gen. 7:11](#)) for the pre-flood earth had been "standing out of water and in the water, *by which* the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water" ([2 Peter 3:5-6](#)). Those waters had been stored up for global judgment if needed. For when "the heavens were made," the Bible says of much of the Earth's water back then that God "lays up the deep in storehouses" ([Prov. 33:6-7](#); see also [Prov. 8:27-28](#)).

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Dr. Brown's book, *In the Beginning*, demonstrates powerfully that the world's major geologic features flow logically from these initial conditions. But some creationists who disagree point out that, "God called the firmament *Heaven*" ([Gen. 1:8](#)), claiming that this firmament must be either the atmosphere (Henry Morris) or outer space (Russell Humphreys).

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**Heaven on Earth, Hell Beneath:** However at RSR we show that, whether figurative or literal, the crust of the earth is the boundary between heaven and hell. **It is consistent with the Bible story that God would originally call the crust of the earth "heaven."** Everything below the crust can be referred to as hell, the place of the dead which functions as the prison that God had planned for any future unrepentant beings. "Hell *from beneath* is excited about you, to meet you at your coming" ([Isa. 14:9](#); etc., and Abraham's bosom notwithstanding).

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For the newly-made earth, the Lord logically referred to everything from the crust and above as heaven. Hence dozens of verses indicate that heaven also refers to the earth's atmosphere as in "rain from heaven," the "dew of heaven," "birds of heaven," "dust from the heaven," city walls "fortified up to heaven," smoke rises "to the midst of heaven," "the heavens are shut" in drought, "frost of heaven," "clouds of heaven," "snow from heaven," "hail from heaven," and the east winds "blow in the heavens." Thus even after the Fall, from Genesis and Job, through the Gospels, Acts and Revelation, the Bible continued to refer to the atmosphere, one molecule above the ground, as heaven.

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Also, the Bible's thirty-two occurrences of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" appear only in the royal Gospel of Matthew, and some of these ([Mat. 11:12](#); [13:24](#) with [Mat. 13:38](#); [16:19](#); [Mat. 18:1](#) with [Luke 9:46](#); etc.) locate this kingdom of "heaven" at least partially on earth.

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**Lucifer Fell from Heaven on Earth:** "God called the firmament Heaven," because the earth's crust formed the boundry between heaven and the future hell. The firmament also divided the waters of the earth ([Gen. 1:2, 6](#)) which even reserved the floodwaters of judgment below ground. For God "lays up the deep in storehouses" so "let all the earth fear the Lord," ([Ps. 33:7-8](#)), because He "shut in the sea with doors" until in the flood "it burst forth and issued from the womb," ([Job. 38:8](#)).

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But after the Fall, which likely occurred within a week of Creation, earth lost its heavenly designation, for apparently God will never fully replicate the first earth. Only two detailed Bible stories involve happenings that occurred prior to the Fall, the creation account and the record of Lucifer's fall. And both of these events refer to earth as heaven. Isaiah 14:12 describes "Lucifer" as "fallen *from heaven*," yet Scripture places him *on earth* at the moment of his fall. "You were *in Eden*, the garden of God," (Ezek. 28:13).

And "you have said in your heart: *"I will ascend into heaven... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,"* (Isa. 14:13-14). "Yet you shall be *brought down* to Sheol, to the *lowest depths* of the Pit," (Isa. 14:15).

Even though he was on earth, Lucifer fell "from heaven," because prior to the Fall, the surface of the earth was part of heaven's realm.

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C.S. Lewis wrote the preface to D.E. Harding's esoteric *The Hierarchy of Heaven & Earth* in which Harding wrote that "Hierarchy is... something like the ancient circles of heaven and earth and hell" (1952, p. 27), and that the "narrowest Hell would be widest Heaven if the Devil could only bring himself to turn round and look out from the Centre instead of in at himself" (p. 187).

In the modern classic, *Soul of Science*, (1994, p. 38), Pearcey and Thaxton describe the view of Christian "medieval cosmology" that "at the very center of the universe was Hell, then the earth, then (moving outward from the center) the progressively nobler spheres of the heavens." Christians continue to affirm this hierarchy quoting Paul who was "caught up to the *third heaven*" (2 Cor 12:2), the first being the sky, the second is space, and the third God's habitation. King David even seems to refer to the "earth" as "the foundations of heaven" (2 Sam. 22:8).

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**Moses Qualified His Last Four Uses of Firmament:**

Moses used the word *firmament* nine times in the creation account. He intentionally distinguished the last four occurrences from the first four, all of which pivot around the central instance where God called the earth's firmament Heaven. Each of the four in the second grouping (Genesis 1:14, 15, 17, 20) is qualified separately by an exceptional repetition. The prepositional phrase "of the heavens" makes a distinction between the first firmament of the earth, and the second "firmament of the heavens." And if *firmament* means the "heavens," the very term "firmament of the heavens" would seem unnecessarily redundant.

However, the qualifier "of the heavens" is added so that the reader will not confuse this firmament of sky and space with the previous firmament of earth. Thus, readers alien to the notion of "heaven" on earth should nonetheless be able to separate the two firmaments, and understand God's meaning. Now, millennia after the Fall, God's own record of creation notwithstanding, sin has almost completely obscured the original perspective of the earth's surface as "heaven."

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**Kingdom of Heaven Lost on Earth:** When man rebelled, earth became more like hell than heaven. Thus man's habitation on the surface of the earth lost its heavenly designation. The Bible describes Hell as below, bounded by the firmament. However in the beginning "God called the firmament *Heaven*" because that's where He placed Adam and Eve, above ground on the surface, in the heavens, in fellowship with Him, not in any other realm but in His kingdom, in heaven on earth. [END FIRMAMENT]

## History of the "Gap Theory" Interpretation

The Ruin-Reconstruction or Gap Theory interpretation of the Genesis narrative is this: The seven days of Genesis were indeed seven literal 24 hour days, but they are not a description of the original creation of all things (Genesis 1:1).

Rather, they are a Divine special regeneration of the cosmos made from what already was here before the present world of Man.

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In other words, there are two (2) creation events in Genesis. The first is described in a one-sentence statement at Genesis 1:1 and occurred billions of years ago. The second occurred relatively recently and was accomplished in 7 days, and very detailed, beginning at Genesis 1:3.

This is why the Bible at Genesis 2:4 says:  
"These are the generations *[plural]* of the heavens and of the earth."  
(Genesis 2:4 KJV)

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This Ruin-Reconstruction interpretation of Genesis was the bread and butter Creation doctrine of the Protestant Fundamentalist movement in the early part of the 20th century. The interpretation has mainly been credited to the Scottish theologian, Thomas Chalmers, who began to preach it back in the early 19th century.

However, there were theologians who also held this view long before Chalmers' days (See this link: [documented evidence](#)).

**CONCLUSION FROM THE "DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE"**

Altogether, therefore, we can find strong support from the very earliest times to the present for the view that an interval of unknown duration followed Gen. 1. 1 before the work of the six days was initiated either to "*bring order to*" or "*restore order to*" an earth that at that moment was evidently quite unfit for habitation.

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This view is indeed a long-held one, beginning with the Massoretic and the Jewish Commentators, re-appearing by implication in one of their earliest Aramaic Versions, reflected perhaps by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, adopted by some of the Church Fathers, held thereafter by early and later Medieval writers who, expressly stated and elaborated upon it preserved in the centuries that followed to influence 18th century translations, seized upon by commentators when modern Geology challenged the Mosaic chronology, and subsequently explored by a few of the best Hebrew scholars right up to our own day.

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Yet, for some strange reason, it is still identified by many modern writers as a recent invention, without linguistic or exegetical support in Scripture, and never favoured by any scholar with a reputation!

Contrary to Young Earth Creationist allegations, Chalmers did not invent the Gap Theory as a compromise of the Word of God to accommodate science and the theory of evolution.

[END OF DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE]

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**GAP - A LONG-HELD VIEW**

**Chapter 1.**

It is a rare thing nowadays to find in a scholarly work on Genesis any acknowledgment of the fact that there is evidence of a discontinuity between the first two verses of Chapter One and that this was ever recognized by commentators until modern Geology arose to challenge the Mosaic cosmogony.

The usual view is that when geologists "proved" the earth to be billions of years old, conservative biblical students suddenly discovered a way of salvaging the Mosaic account by introducing a gap of unknown duration between these two verses.

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This is supposed to have solved the problem of time by an expeditious interpretation previously unrecognized. This convenient little device was attributed by many to Chalmers of the middle of the last century, and popularized among "fundamentalists" by Scofield in the first quarter of the present century. Both the impetus which brought it to general notice and the company it kept in its heyday combined to make it doubly suspected among conservative scholars and totally ignored by liberal ones.

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However, D. F. Payne of the University of Sheffield, England, in a paper published recently by Tyndale Press entitled, *Genesis One Reconsidered*,<sup>3</sup> makes this brief aside at the appropriate place: "The 'gap' theory itself, as a matter of exegesis, *antedated* (my emphasis) the scientific challenge, but the latter gave it an new impetus". Granted then that the view did antedate the modern geological challenge, by how long did it do so? Just how far back can one trace this now rather unpopular view and how explicit are the earlier references? And on what grounds was it held prior to the general acceptance of the views of Laplace, Hutton, and Lyell?

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If its antecedence can be established with any certainty, one then has to find some other reason than the threat of Geology for its having arisen.

The view was undoubtedly held by early commentators without any evidence that it was being presented as an "answer" to some suspected challenge to the veracity of Scripture. It must therefore have arisen either because a careful study of the original text of Scripture itself had given intimations of it, or perhaps due to some ancient tradition about the after-effects of the catastrophe itself, such after-effects as might well have been observed by early man before the new order had effectively buried the evidences of the old.

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For man must have been created soon enough after the event to observe *at least some* of the evidence which time has since eroded away. There *is* evidence of a tremendous and comparatively recent geological catastrophe still to be observed even today in certain parts of the world. There are numerous instances of mammoths and other animals which were by some agency killed *en masse* and instantly buried together, the preyed upon with the predator, while apparently still in the prime of life.

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Such animal cemeteries have frequently been reported in northern latitudes: in Siberia, for example. And similar indications may well have existed in former years in much lower latitudes where early man could have come across them and pondered their meaning. Such evidences of destruction, even if it occurred before the creation of Man, must surely have set mens minds to wondering what had been the cause.

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There is no reason to suppose that early man was any less observant than his modern descendants, or any less curious about the cause of such mass destruction of living forms.

At any rate, here in broad outline is the situation in so far as ancient and modern literature reflects some knowledge of such an event. This outline will be explored in detail subsequently - but a summary review may help to establish the general picture. And it will show that it is indeed a long-held view.

We are in no position at present to determine precisely how the Jewish commentators made the discovery, but their early literature (the Midrash for example) reveals that they had some intimation of an early pre-Adamic catastrophe affecting the whole earth. Similarly, clear evidence appears in the oldest extant Version of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Targum of Onkelos) and some intimation may be seen in the "punctuation marks" of the Massoretic text of Genesis Chapter One.

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Early Jewish writers subsequently built up some abstruse arguments about God's dealings with Israel on the basis of this belief and it would seem that Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians is at one point making indirect reference to this traditional background.

A few of the early Church Fathers accepted this interpretation and based some of their doctrines upon it. It is true that both they and their Jewish antecedents used arguments which to us seem at times to have no force whatever, but this is not the issue.

The truth is, as we shall see, that the idea of a once ordered world having been brought to ruin as a consequence of divine judgment just prior to the creation of Adam, was apparently quite widespread. *It was not debated*: it was merely held by some and not by others. Those who held it referred to it and built up arguments upon it without apparently feeling the need to apologize for believing as they did, nor for explaining the grounds for their faith.

During succeeding centuries not a few scholars kept the view alive, and medieval scholars wrote about it at some length - often using phraseology which gives their work a remarkably modern ring.

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*The Book of Jasher*, Alcuin's version, seems clearly to assume it - even though the document itself has a questionable pedigree. It *certainly* antedates modern Geology in any case.

And for the past two hundred years many translators and commentators have maintained the view and elaborated upon it at length.

In short, it is *not* a recent interpretation of the text of Gen. 1. 1 and 1. 2, but an ancient one long antedating modern geological views. Indeed - it could be as old as the writing of Gen. 1. 2 itself!

Some of the ancient Sumerian and Babylonian fragments that, when pieced together, give us a general view of their cosmogony, seem to lend support to it as a very ancient belief. It is perfectly true that these epics and legends are full of fantasy and absurdity if read at their face value - but it is not absolutely certain that the writers themselves *intended* them to be taken precisely at face value. It may have been for teaching purposes.

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The use of animation as a mnemonic aid is recognized widely today, and scientific textbooks for schools and colleges adopt this technique of teaching without requiring us to believe, for example, that metallic elements do actually "marry"! Such a simile is employed in metallurgical literature because it aptly conveys what seems to be happening when one metal unites with another. The Sumerians and Babylonians may have animated their cosmogonies for the same reason, while they themselves actually held much more down-to-earth views on the matter.

We should not assume that their thinking was altogether childish. At any rate, there are evidences in these ancient texts that they looked upon the earth's very early history as having been one in which things had in some way and at one particular point in time "gone wrong". And this sense of catastrophe is not limited to a recollection of the Fall of man.

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It seems to refer to something prior to it. It was on a cosmic scale. Since there are reverberations of these catastrophic events even as far away as China, it is possible that the earliest writers had knowledge of things which we now discern only very dimly if at all, and that this knowledge was generally shared by mankind prior to the dispersion of Genesis 11. See Appendix XXI.

It is surprising that this almost unbroken thread of testimony to a view that is now widely held to be of recent origin should have been consistently ignored or unrecognized for so long.

Admittedly it is at times evanescent and occasionally ambiguous, and admittedly the fanciful methods of interpreting Scripture adopted by the Jewish Church Commentators and often emulated by the early Church Fathers do not exactly encourage one to seek for solid factual information in their writings, yet at other times they are quite explicit in their presentations. At any rate, whatever use or abuse they may have made of the information they had, there can really be no doubt that they *DID* have information of this sort, and this information seems never to have been entirely lost sight of from New Testament times to the present.

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It is worth exploring all the strands we have, for in one way or another they each tend to contribute light to the total picture. Yet it must be emphasized once again, after saying all this, that while it is valuable to be able to correct a false impression about the antiquity of this view, it really proves nothing about the correctness or otherwise of the view espoused. The only way this can be done is by a study of the text itself.... which is undertaken in the chapters which follow: the present objective is a lesser one, a historical sketch.

Now after or during the Babylonian Captivity, the Jewish people gradually accumulated the comments and explanations of their best known teachers about the Old Testament for some 1500 years - or well on into the Christian era. This body of traditional teaching was gathered together into the Midrash which thus became the oldest pre-Christian exposition of the Old Testament. It was already the basis of rabbinical teaching in the time of our Lord and must have been quite familiar to Paul.

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According to the Revised Edition of Chambers's Encyclopedia published in 1860, under the heading "Genesis" the view which was then being popularized by Buckland and others to the effect that an interval of unknown duration was to be interposed between Gen. 1. 1 and 1. 2 was already to be found in the Midrash.

In his great work, *The Legends of the Jews*, Louis Ginsberg has put into continuous narrative a precis of their legends, as far as possible in the original phrases and terms. In Volume 1 which covers the period from the Creation to Jacob, he has this excerpt on Genesis 1:<sup>4</sup> "Nor is this world inhabited by man the first of things earthly created by God. He made several other worlds before ours, but He destroyed them all, because He was pleased with none until He created ours." Clearly this reflects the tradition underlying the translation which appears in the Targum of Onkelos to be noted below.

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Furthermore, in the Massoretic Text in which the Jewish scholars tried to incorporate enough 'indicators' to guide the reader as to correct punctuation there is one small mark which is technically known as *Rebhia*, which is classified as a "disjunctive accent" intended to notify the reader that he should pause before proceeding to the next verse. In short, this mark indicates a "break" in the text. Such a mark appears at the end of Genesis 1. 1. This mark has been noted by several scholars including Luther.<sup>5</sup> It is one indication among others, that the initial *waw* (ו) which introduces verse 2 should be rendered "but" rather than "and" a dis-junctive rather than a con-junctive.

Another piece of substantiating evidence is to be found in the Targum of Onkelos, the earliest of the Aramaic Versions of the Old Testament written by Hebrew Scholars. According to the Babylonian Talmud, Onkelos was a proselyte, the son of a man named Galonicas, and although he was the composer of the Targum which bears his name, he is held actually to have received it from Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua, both of whom lived towards the end of the first and the beginning of the second century A. D.

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However, since in the Jerusalem Talmud the very same thing is related by the same authorities (and almost in the same words) of the proselyte Aquila of Pontes, whose Greek version of the Bible was used by the Greek speaking Jews down to the time of Justinian, it is sometimes argued that Onkelos is but another name for Aquila. Aquila Ponticus was a relative of the Emperor Hadrian, living in the second century B. C. Thus even if Onkelos is not yet completely identified, the Targum attributed to him must still be placed early in the second century B.C.

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As his translation into Aramaic of Gen.I. 2, Onkelos has the following:

*w'aretsah hawath tsadh'ya.*

In this passage, the verb is compounded with the Aramaic verb which appears here as a passive participle of a verb which itself means "to cut" or "to lay waste". We have here, therefore, a rendering "and the earth was laid waste" an interpretation of the original Hebrew of Gen. 1. 2 which leaves little room for doubt that Onkelos understood this to mean that something had occurred between verse 1 and verse 2 to reduce the earth to this desolated condition. It reflects Ginsberg's Jewish legend.

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Akiba ben Joseph was an influential Jewish rabbi who was president of the School Bene Barek near Safa. He laid the basis for the Mishna. When Barcochebas rebelled against the Romans, Akiba joined him and was captured. He was executed in 135 A. D. The ancient work known as *The Book of Light*, or *Sefer Hazzohar*, sometimes simply *Zohar*, was traditionally ascribed to one of Akiba's disciples, a certain Simeon ben Jochai.

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In this work, which thus represents an opinion held towards the end of the first century and the early part of the second, there is a comment on Gen. 2.4-6 which, though difficult to follow, reads thus: <sup>6</sup> "These are the generations (ie., this is the history of...of heaven and earth....Now wherever there is written the word "these" the previous words are put aside. And these are the generations of the destruction which is signified in verse 2 of chapter 1. The earth was Tohu and Bohu. These indeed are the worlds of which it is said that the blessed God created them *and destroyed them*, and, *on that account*, the earth was desolate and empty. "

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Here, then, we have a comment which in the time of our Lord was held widely enough that Paul might very well have known about it. In which case we may better understand the background of his words in writing to the Corinthians (II Cor. 4. 6) where he said, "God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus".

Now very few will deny that in this passage Paul is referring back to Gen. 1. 3, "And God said, Let there be light.

What is not absolutely certain is how far one can press the analogy. Personally, I believe it makes excellent sense to assume here that Paul had in mind an interpretation of these first three verses of Genesis 1 which sees the situation as a ruin about to be restored by God's creative power, commencing with the giving of light where all was formerly darkness. This *is*, after all, precisely the position that the unredeemed soul is in. The analogy is most pointed and reasonable.

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And if we once allow that this is what was in Paul's mind, then we must surely also admit that Paul, speaking by inspiration, set his seal upon the truth of the interpretation of Gen. 1. 2 for which we are here contending; and the more ancient tradition which lies behind the words of Akiba and the rendering of Onkelos receive a measure of confirmation.

In his *Rabbinical Commentary on Genesis*,<sup>7</sup> Paul Isaac Hershon has this some what obscure quotation which reinforces Paul's analogy: "'And the earth was desolate and void'. The earth will be desolate, for the shekinah will depart at the destruction of the Temple, and hence it is said: 'And the Spirit of God hovered upon the face of the water': which intimates to us that even although we be in exile (after the destruction of the Temple) yet the Torah shall not depart from us; and therefore it is added: 'And God said, Let there be light'. This shows us that after the captivity God will again enlighten us, and send us the Messiah.... ".

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Admittedly, this mode of interpretation is strange to us, but there is really no doubt what is intended. The Promised Land with its capital city epitomized by the Temple, was once the place of God's Shekinah glory. But now it has been destroyed and made empty, as Jer. 4. 24 f. predicted. Nevertheless, it was not destroyed permanently, for the Spirit of God still hovers over the place of His former "glory", though for the present it *is* destroyed and made empty.

In due time, just as God's Spirit hovered over the destroyed earth with a promise of new life to come upon it, so will He restore the Land and the Temple and renew His glory by the presence of His Messiah Who shall come.

There is little question that the whole hope of restoration underlying this passage from the rabbinical commentary is based on a view of Genesis which sees in verse 3 a similar case of restoration after judgment.

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And the belief that this restorative process began in the first case with a command that the light shine out of the darkness, and that this will again occur when a new Light shines unto Israel is surely the Jewish background of Paul's words to the Christian believers in Corinth.

I believe, moreover, that there may be one further evidence in the New Testament of this view in (appropriately) the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here in Heb. 11. 3 the writer makes this significant observation: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God".

The significant thing about this statement in the present context is that the word rendered "framed" is the Greek verb *katartidzo* () which although it is rendered "to perfect" in seven cases in the New Testament (Matt. 21.16; Lu. 6.40; I Cor. 1. 10; II Cor. 13. 11; I Thess. 3. 10; Heb. 13. 21; and I Pet. 5. 10), is more strictly a word meaning 'to repair' or 'to restore'.

In Matt. 4. 21 and Mark 1. 19 it is used of repairing or mending nets. Liddell and Scott give the meaning in Classical Greek as "adjust", or 'Put in order again', or "restore".

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Andin Classical Greek the word was used by Herodotus (5. 106) to mean "to put in order again", and (5.28) "to settle by acting as mediator", and so "to reform"; while Polybius uses it of repairing a ship, or setting a broken bone. Thayer says of its use in I Pet. 5. 10 that it has the meaning of "making one what he ought to be".<sup>8</sup> This could, of course, mean nothing more than the "maturing" of the individual with no necessary implication of a process of mending his ways.

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However, Thayer also adds at the same place, as an illustration of its use in an ethical sense, Gal. 6. 1 where it is used 'of those who have been restored to harmony'. So that we understand by faith how the worlds were *restored* and made fit for man by the Word of God.

Now, any one of these pointers taken alone might carry little weight. But put together they seem to require that we recognize the real possibility that a view of Gen. 1. 1 and 1. 2 which many today feel strained and improbable may in fact have been generally taken for granted in our Lord's day and during the first century or so of the present era.

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In no case does the view seem to have been "defended", and this could be either because it was so widely accepted - or because it did not seem to have any great significance. There are many today who feel that this catastrophic event was a significant turning point in the thread of God's self-revelation and that this is reflected in the recurrent New Testament phrase "since the foundation of the world" a phrase which they believe should rather be rendered "since the *disruption* of the world".

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I also, at one time, felt well satisfied that this is a more correct translation, but I have come to feel that the grounds for it are not altogether satisfactory from the linguistic point of view. Since a good argument is not strengthened by a weak link, I have not appealed to this possibility as part of the "evidence", but careful consideration of some of the *pros* and *cons* will be found in Appendix XIX.

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In any case, the view was never thereafter entirely lost, even though it was sometimes presented only in the form of an opinion that such a gap did exist, a time interval of unknown duration between the initial creation and the work of the six days which began in verse 3.

Origen, for example, who lived from 186 to about 254 A. D. and to whom the original languages of the Bible were very familiar, has this to say in his great work, *De Principiis*, at Gen. 1. 1: <sup>9</sup>

"It is certain that the present firmament is not spoken of in this verse, nor the present dry land, but rather that heaven and earth from which this present heaven and earth that we now see afterwards borrowed their names."

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And that he saw verse 2 as a description of a "casting down" of the original is borne out quite clearly by his subsequent observation that the condition resulted from a "disruption" which is best described, he suggests, by the Latin verb *dejicere*, 'to throw down'.

In the course of time, attempts were made - not unnaturally - to fill in the details of the event which led up to the devastation described.

Since all such effects were presumed to be moral judgments and since man had not yet been created, the angels were blamed. Somewhere around 650 A. D. , the English poet Caedmon (who died about 680) wrote about Genesis and the creation<sup>10</sup> and presented the view that man had really been introduced in order to replace the angels which had conducted their dominion over the earth so ruinously. Fallen angels were responsible for the catastrophe. Whether the poems attributed to Caedmon were really his is a moot point, but *someone* in the seventh century knew about this tradition.

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According to Bede, these poems were supposed to have resulted from a dream in which an angel told Caedmon to sing and write about the Creation. This he finally did, though at first reluctantly, producing works dealing with the creation of the world, the origin of man, and the whole history of Genesis. All the "poems" or songs thus attributed to Caedmon were first published by Francis Junius in 1665 from a manuscript now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

At present of the whole series on Genesis, Exodus, Daniel, and Christ and Satan, it is generally conceded that only the one on Genesis is really Caedmon's work, and even this has perhaps been transmitted to us in an interpolated and modified form. At any rate, the basic idea regarding the destruction of the old world seems to have been known to him, and subsequent modifications of his original text do not alter the fact that in Bede's time (674 - 735 A.D.) this view was known and discussed whether by Caedmon himself or by those who took it upon themselves to modify his works.

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The earliest manuscript we now have is of the 10th century and it gives no indication (by signature) of its authorship, but the substance of it agrees well with what is attributed to Caedmon.

This work, which is a commentary on the first 22 chapters of Genesis with one small missing segment near the beginning, was written in verse but is rendered as prose by Mason in his translation. Caedmon is not as specific as one would wish but his view in brief is that the created order which preceded the present heaven (and earth ?) system was ruled over by Angels. In his own words:

"These angelic hosts were wont to feel joy and rapture, transcendent bliss in the presence of their creator; then their beauty was measureless. Glorious ministers magnified their Lord, spoke his praise with zeal, lauded the Master of their being, and were excellently happy in the majesty of God. They had no knowledge of working evil or wickedness, but dwelt in innocence forever with their Lord: from the beginning they wrought in heaven nothing but righteousness and truth, until a Prince of Angels through pride strayed into sin: then they would consult their own advantage no longer, but turned away from God's loving kindness.

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"They had vast arrogance in that by the might of their multitudes they sought to wrest from the Lord the celestial mansions. Then there fell upon them, grievously, the envy, presumption, and pride of the Angel who, first began to carry out the evil plot, to weave it and promote it, when he boasted by word - as he thirsted for conflict - that he wished to own the home and high throne of the heavenly kingdom of the north".

So the Lord cast them "that had committed a dire sin" (line 46) into a specially created "joyless house of punishment", banishing them from heaven (line68).

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"Then, as formerly, true peace existed (once more) in heaven, fair amity: for the Lord was dear to all, the Sovereign to his servants" (line 79 and 80). But the "heavenly seats" of these rebellious creatures were now vacant. So (line 92 f. ):

"Our Lord bethought him, in meditative mood how he might again people, with a better race, his high creation, the noble seats and glory crowned abodes which the haughty rebels had left vacant high in heaven.

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Therefore Holy God willed by his plenteous power that under the circle of the firmament of the earth should be established with sky above and wide water, a world-creation (ie. , as opposed to a heavenly one) in a place of the foes whom in their apostasy he hurled from bliss".

The poet then describes how "this broad earth stood.... idle and useless, alien even to God himself" (line 105) until God looked upon it in its joylessness and darkness, and then "created heaven and earth" (line 114).

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It is thus not too easy to see how he views these events in their precise temporal relationship, for he first describes how this "broad earth" existed in its uselessness and then some ten lines later he describes God's remedial action in creating not merely heaven but earth also.

Perhaps he really means creating order on the earth rather than actually creating the globe itself.

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At any rate, there existed an order of created beings prior to all this who, though living in heaven, had failed to fulfill their appointed role in the economy of God. And then there existed an earth in shrouded darkness and in a chaotic state which God later turned into a habitation for an order of created beings destined to replace the fallen angels.

Admittedly not a very clear account, but at least one which makes it apparent that a created order existed long before Day One of the Creation Week.

The purpose of the ordering of this alienated world was to provide a home for this new race. But whether the earth's "state of alienation" from God (as Caedmon evidently views Gen. 1. 1 and 2) was in any way the direct consequence of the fall of the Angels, he does not make clear. Perhaps he thought it was obvious. - GAP - A LONG-HELD VIEW

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