

In the Beginning...

Many people believe that the Bible says that the earth is about 6,000 years old, based on tracing the time-line back to Adam. If someone could conclusively prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the earth was much older, say even billions of years old, would that cast doubt on your faith in the Bible as the inerrant word of God? Based on the apparent ancient age of the earth, how many people don't trust the Bible can be true? But what does the Bible actually say? Let's search and see.

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Was and Became

(Gen 1:1-2 KJV) "**In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.** {2} 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."

Do you see the difference in the type of the two words "was" in Gen. 1:2? This is no accident on the part of the translators. In the Hebrew language, there is no word for the ordinary words for the verb "to be" in all its forms. In the original Hebrew, am, is, was, were etc. are understood and not written. Therefore, when the translators come upon those verbs, they write it in italics, as it is the above phrase: "darkness *was* on the face of the deep."

However, there is a Hebrew word for "become" in all its forms, and it is "hayah." The translators write this word "was" or whatever form applies in standard type. Therefore, the phrase "the earth was without form and void" should be translated, "the earth became without form and void." In the beginning, (whenever that was) God created the heavens and the earth. At some later point, the earth **became** without form and void. Test this out with other verses using the Hebrew word "hayah." There are 1,160 occurrences, but I'll only list three.

(Gen 2:7 KJV) "And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man **became** (hayah) a living soul."

(Gen 18:18 KJV) "Seeing that Abraham shall surely **become** (hayah) a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

My favorite example is Gen. 19:6 involving Lot's wife.

(Gen 19:26 KJV) "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became (hayah) a pillar of salt."

I am quite sure that Lot did not marry a pillar of salt. No, she became one.

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Without Form and Void

Now, back to Gen 1:1,2 because there is much more to be discovered. In Gen.1:2

"...the earth became without form and void." The English words here bring thoughts of a creation out of nothingness. However, to properly understand Scripture, we should always use the following standards for discovering Biblical truths. First, always compare Scripture with Scripture to discern meanings. Secondly, gather as many witnesses (Scriptural references) as possible. Thirdly, always consider the context in which the passage is written.

(1 Cor 2:13 KJV) "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

(Mat 18:16 KJV) "**But if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.**"

Therefore, if we can find that the phrase “without form and void (tohuw and bohuv) occurs elsewhere in Scripture, then we should have a better idea what the Holy Ghost means by these words. Indeed, they do occur by the mouth of two other witnesses, in Isaiah 34 and Jeremiah 4. It is also critical that we look at the context and see if creation is in view.

(Isa 34:2-11 KJV) "For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. {3} Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. {4} And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree. {5} For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. {6} The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. {7} And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. {8} For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. {9} And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. {10} It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. {11} But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion (tohuw), and the stones of emptiness (bohuv)."

(Jer 4:21-28 KJV) "How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? {22} For my people *is* foolish, they have not known me; they *are* sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. {23} I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form (tohuw), and void (bohuv); and the heavens, and they had no light. {24} I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. {25} I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. {26} I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. {27} For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. {28} For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it."

What do we begin to see thus far? The earth came into a condition that is used in two other places in the Bible as being associated with the judgment and fierce anger of the Lord. As we know, God is not the author of confusion. Is there more evidence a state of judgment is in view in Gen. 1:2?

The Deep or the Abyss

What does the rest of the verse say? (Gen 1:2 KJV) "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep..." What about that word “deep”?

It is the Hebrew word “tohown” which occurs 36 times, meaning in all cases the depths of the sea or the earth. How can darkness be upon the face of the depths of the sea or land if they are not yet created? Notice the first verse cited, not only does “tohown” stand for the sea, but also it occurs in the context of the great flood of Noah’s time.

(Gen 7:11 KJV) "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great **deep** (tohown) broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."

(Job 38:16 KJV) "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the **depth** (tohown)?"

(Psa 77:16 KJV) "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the **depths** (tohown) also were

troubled."

(Psa 104:6 KJV) "Thou coveredst it with the **deep** (tohorn) as *with* a garment: the waters stood above the mountains."

(Isa 51:10 KJV) "*Art* thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great **deep** (tohorn); that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?"

There is even something more surprising involved here. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, uses the word "abussos or **abyss**" for this word deep in Gen. 1:2 and all of the above cited Scriptures. We can see that the abyss is associated with the sea, but it is also linked to something else. Again, let's search and see.

(Luke 8:31 KJV) "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the **deep** (abyss)." (The abyss refers to the sea here.)

Notice that the next two passages talk about the same event. The beast of the last days arises out of the sea or the abyss, which are used interchangeably.

(Rev 11:7 KJV) "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit (abyss) shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."

(Rev 13:1 KJV) "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."

(Rev 9:1-2 KJV) "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit (abyss) {2} And he opened the bottomless pit (abyss); and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

(Rev 20:1-3 KJV) "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit (abyss) and a great chain in his hand. {2} And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, {3} And cast him into the bottomless pit (abyss), and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

(Rev 9:11 KJV) "And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit (abyss), whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon."

(Rev 17:8 KJV) "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit (abyss), and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

Notice how closely the abyss is related to Satan and his motley crew? Knowing this casts new understanding on Rev. 21:1, which looks forward to a new earth that is uncorrupted by sin and Satan.

(Rev 21:1 KJV) "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and **there was no more sea**."

We also know that there are great parallels between Genesis and Revelation. In Genesis 1:2, we have the earth becoming a state of confusion and emptiness, which is always associated with judgment and wrath of God. From there, you immediately have a reference to darkness over an area specifically associated with Satan and the fallen angels! Furthermore, we know that Satan was already a fallen creature before Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden.

Do you see the case is beginning to build strongly for a huge potential time gap between Gen 1:1 and Gen. 1:2. First, God created the heaven and earth then something happened. Apparently this involved Satan and the angels, and as a result, God wrought a devastating judgment, necessitating a re-creation of the earth. Is there any further evidence for this?

Foundation vs. Overthrow of the World

Let's look at verses in the Bible that deal with the "foundation of the world" and see what surprises may pop up. The first interesting thing to note is that ordinary word used in the New Testament for foundation meaning a basic beginning or groundwork is "themelios." That is the word used in all the following verses and in almost all non-creation related verses in the New Testament.

(Luke 6:48-49 KJV) "He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation (themelios) on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. {49} But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation (themelios) built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

(Rom 15:20 KJV) "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation (themelios):"

(Rev 21:19 KJV) "And the **foundations of the wall** of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The **first foundation** (themelios) *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;"

However, this is the surprising point. All of the references in the New Testament that speak of the foundation of the world use the Greek term "katabole," which is the word we get our English word "catastrophe!" The word "katabole" comes from two Greek words "bollo" meaning to cast and "kata" meaning "down or out." The same word (katabole), which is used for the "foundation" of the world, is also used in the following verses and is translated "cast down."

(2 Cor 4:9 KJV) "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down (katabole), but not destroyed;"

(Rev 12:10 KJV) "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down (katabole), which accused them before our God day and night."

"Katabole and katabollo" also occur dozens of times in the Septuagint, and *it never* is used to mean create or lay a basic foundation. Just a few examples are Job 12:14, Prov. 7:26, Isa. 16:9, Ezek. 26:4)

Both Welch and Bullinger agree that the best translation for the term foundation here should be "overthrow." In view of what we have already found regarding this time of apparent judgment in Gen. 1:2, this fits perfectly! Notice also in these following verses that some things are *before* the overthrow of the world, some are *since*, and some are *from* the overthrow of the world.

(Mat 13:35 KJV) "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation (overthrow) of the world."

(Mat 25:34 KJV) "**Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation (overthrow) of the world:**"

(Luke 11:50 KJV) "**That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation (overthrow) of the world, may be required of this generation;**"

(John 17:24 KJV) "**Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation (overthrow) of the world.**"

(Eph 1:4 KJV) "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation (overthrow) of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"

(Heb 4:3 KJV) "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation (overthrow) of the world."

(Heb 9:26 KJV) "For **then** must he often have suffered since the foundation (overthrow) of the world: but now once in the end of the **world** hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

(1 Pet 1:20 KJV) "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation (overthrow) of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,"

(Rev 13:8 KJV) "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation (overthrow) of the world."

The World that was then

Is there still more evidence to support a world undergoing judgment prior to the time of Adam? Yes, I believe so. Notice in the following, Peter talks about the world that was, the earth that is now, and the new earth that shall be. He says in 2 Pet. 3:4 that people ignorantly think that all things have continued as they have from the initial creation, but they should consider the world that was utterly destroyed (the original Greek word for perish, "apollumi") by flood. Now, is this the flood of Noah or an earlier, more complete destruction by flood? Did this flood involve an earth that we know nothing of, save that Satan and fallen angels were involved?

(2 Pet 3:3-8,13 KJV) "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, {4} And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. {5} **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: {6} Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:** {7} 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. {8} But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day..."Nevertheless we, according to his promise, **look for new heavens and a new earth**, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Is there any further evidence of a flood prior to Genesis 1:2? Consider the following.

Waters Already Present

Notice in the Genesis 1, the continual insistence on the waters, which the passage assumes are there already.

(Gen 1:2 KJV) "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."

(Gen 1:6-7 KJV) "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. {7} 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."

Also, notice in the next verse that the dry land is not created but the waters are drawn away and the dry land appears.

(Gen 1:9 KJV) "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so."

Notice in the next verse, that when God creates Adam and Eve, He tells them to replenish the earth. The original word for replenish "male," means to fill or *refill*.

(Gen 1:28 KJV) "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish the earth**,

and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Satan and the Mountain of God

Remember also that Satan is already a fallen creature and evil by the time man is on the scene. Of course, this necessitates that his fall was prior to this creation.

(Gen 3:1 KJV) "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

I think the next verse is very instructive too. Ezekial speaks of a time before Satan's fall when Satan had access up and down the mountain of God. What is the mountain of God? We can't be sure, but if we apply our previous rule of comparing like references and finding more than one witness in Scripture, then perhaps we will discover something important.

(Ezek 28:12-16 KJV) "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. {13} Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. {14} Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. {15} Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. {16} By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the **mountain of God:** and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

(Exo 3:1 KJV) "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the **mountain of God, even to Horeb.**" (Mt. Horeb is the same as Mt. Sinai. See 1 Kings 8:9)

(Isa 2:3 KJV) "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the **mountain of the LORD,** to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

(Dan 9:20 KJV) "And whiles I *was* speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD **my God for the holy mountain of my God;**"

(Micah 4:2 KJV) "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, **and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,** and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

It appears that the mountain of God is either Mt. Sinai or Mt. Zion (Jerusalem), or perhaps both. Either way, the point is that the mountain of God, in all the other references outside of Ezekial 28, refers to a definite geographical spot on earth. Is it possible with all the other evidence presented thus far, that this too points to a previous habitation on this earth prior to the creation of Adam involving angels?

Summary

What conclusions can we draw from all that has been presented in this paper?

First, God creates the heaven and earth (Gen.1:1), then an overthrow and judgment involving Satan and a previous

dominion here takes place (Gen1:2). God redesigns and recreates the heavens and the earth about 6,000 years ago and creates man at that time. How long was that interval between Gen.1:1 and Gen. 1:2? Maybe it was decades; maybe it was billions of years. Who can know what God does not reveal? If the earth and the heavens are relatively young, that's fine. But if the earth and the universe are really millions or billions of years old, that's fine too. There is no need for the introduction of blatantly false theories such as evolution or "long" days of the creation week. These are emphatically opposed to Scripture. Our faith is secure by sticking to what God actually says, and always comparing spiritual with spiritual.

Great acknowledgement goes to C. H. Welch for opening my eyes to most of what has been presented in this paper. For more instruction on this subject, I would highly recommend the following: audio W-35 "The Foundation of the World," audio W-105

" 'Rent' Gen 1:2" available on this web site," and the article entitled "Overthrow or Foundation" vol. 7, pp. 103-117 of *The Alphabetical Analysis* and the article "Bottomless Pit" vol. 9, pp. 21-26 also of *The Alphabetical Analysis*.

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