

5.

IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And as part of this creative work He made many angels, one of whom was named Lucifer. He was the mightiest, most beautiful angel which God made. Probably he was also the first being to be formed. In Isaiah chapter 14, verse 12, he is referred to as the "day-star, son of the morning" (ASV). This verse alludes to the fact that in the dawning of creation when God was just beginning His wondrous works, the angel Lucifer was created. Not only was he the highest and most powerful angel, he was also one of the cherubim and dwelt near the very presence of God. Ezekiel chapter 28 reveals some very interesting facts about this Lucifer, known today as Satan. Although here the prophet is speaking of someone referred to as the "king of Tyre," almost all Bible expositors agree that this passage refers to the devil in his original state. No man or earthly king could ever fit such a description. Let us read it together, starting with verse 12, the second half of the verse:

"Thus says the Lord God;

'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.

You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain

of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.

By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.

You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more for ever' " (Ezek 28:12-19).

What a tremendous passage of scripture this is, revealing to us the status and the nature of Satan as he was originally created. He is referred to here as "the anointed cherub who covers." Lucifer was one of the cherubim – created, chosen, and anointed by God for a special task about which we will speak more shortly.

In the first part of Ezekiel we can learn more about cherubim. We know, for example, that they are winged creatures each having several sets of wings. Instead of feet they have hooves and each has four faces on its head, one on each side. Rather than having a back of the head and two sides of the head they have four faces. One is like a man, one is like a lion, one is like a cherub and one is like an eagle. They also have other interesting features such as wheels full of eyes which go with them wherever they go. When they move they don't turn toward the direction they are going but simply move in that direction instantly, seemingly violating the laws of nature.

By the way these beings are most likely the same as the "living creatures" or "beasts" that we find mentioned in the book of Revelation. Many times the scriptures speak of God's throne being surrounded by cherubim. Psalm 80, verse 1, reads, "You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth." (See also II Kings 19:15, I Ch 13:6, Is 37:16, I Sam 4:4, II Sam 6:2, Rev 4:6-8.) In the book of Revelation it is the "living creatures" which occupy this position.

You may notice that while Revelation 4:6-8 describes each "living creature" as having a different face, Ezekiel sees each cherub having four faces. Why is there this apparent discrepancy? The secret is that the Apostle John was seeing these cherubim from only one direction. These four beings stand on each side of the throne of God and each of them faces it. Since John was looking from only one direction he saw only the one corresponding face on each of the cherubim. Consequently, it appeared to him as if each one had a different face. However Ezekiel gives a more complete description and explains that each cherub has four faces.

Lucifer was once one of these cherubim. These celestial beings' duty is to surround the throne of God and cover His presence. With their wings they conceal the glory and majesty of the Most High God from any would-be onlookers. These cherubim are constantly in the presence of God worshiping Him and covering His glory with their wings (Rev 4:8).

The cherubim also appear symbolically on the top of the ark of the covenant which the children of Israel were instructed to build while they were traveling in the wilderness. The King James version of the Bible and some others use the term "mercy seat" for the top lid of the ark. However there is no chair or "seat" on this cover. Actually, this lid should probably be called the "propitiatory cover" rather than the "mercy seat" since no seat of any sort is ever described as being there. All we are told is that the lid was flat, made out of pure gold and at each end was fashioned a cherub also made of pure gold. These two cherubim stood at each end with their wings stretching up over the top, almost touching in the middle over the ark (Ex 25:20). It was here underneath the covering cherubim

wings and above the top of the ark that the holy presence of God appeared. The high priest once a year would enter into the holiest of holies. There he would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices upon the lid. When he sprinkled the blood, the presence of God would be manifested and the Almighty would commune with the priest from between the golden cherubim. These are symbolic of the cherubim that cover God's glory in the heavenly places.

So now we know who Lucifer used to be. No doubt he was the first created angelic being (Is 14:12) and probably occupied the highest position in the universe. He was one of the cherubim. It is not impossible that he was also the high priest of the universe and led all of creation in worship, praise and adoration of the Most High God. At least we know that he understands something about religion since he has started numerous false ones. Perhaps he is using his experience before his rebellion to do so.

Not only do we know that Satan was great in glory, power and beauty when he was created but also that he fell, was corrupted and began to sin. He began to think of himself very highly and was lifted up within himself because of his greatness. His pride was his undoing. He must have thought something like this: "I am so beautiful, so mighty – all the other creatures in the universe respect and admire me. Why do I need God? Why do I need to submit to Him and worship Him? I'll start my own thing." And so he did. Of course in order to do this he needed to establish his own kingdom. He had to lure away from God's kingdom a number of adherents – followers who would worship him and do his bidding instead of loving and obeying God. I'm sure that he found it impossible to be more righteous, holy, just, true, perfect and pure than God Almighty. So he had to choose something different. He had to base his kingdom on something else.

The Bible tells us that the devil is the father of lies. He invented this for himself. He became the originator of all kinds of sin, establishing his kingdom on hatred, darkness, lust, greed, corruption, lying and every imaginable kind of evil. He changed his nature to be the opposite of all that God is. And no doubt he began to visit other beings in the universe to seduce them to join his kingdom and to follow

him in his rebellion against the Most High. As we all know, he is still engaged in this same evil activity today.

It is probable that God gave the earth to Satan as part of his jurisdiction sometime before his fall. The scriptures are not explicit about these things and so we can only speculate concerning some of these ideas, but we do know that at some point in time the devil obtained authority over the earth. He is called the “ruler of this world” (Jn 12:31, 14:30, 16:11). We also know that the angels are sometimes referred to as “stars” (Job 38:7, Dan 8:10, Rev 12:4). It is possible that in the beginning each angel was given a star and the surrounding planets, if any, over which to rule. If this is so, the devil’s domain would be our solar system, the center of which is the sun. It is interesting to note how many of the ancient pagan religions worshiped the sun, and by so doing were really worshiping the devil.

One thing is certain and that is that the devil is the ruler of this present world. When he was tempting Jesus in the wilderness he claimed to have authority over it and the Lord did not dispute that authority. He only rebuked him by quoting the holy Word. Other places in the scriptures also show us that the devil has jurisdiction and authority over this earth (Jn 14:30, 16:11, II Cor 4:4). In all probability this authority was given to him before his rebellion while he still retained his original position before God.

BEFORE THE “SIX DAYS”

Since it appears safe to assume that Satan (Lucifer), the highest angelic being whom God created, was given this earth as part of his domain before his fall, we can’t help but wonder what it was like at that time. Although the Bible does not tell us these things specifically it does give us some hints from which we can draw some reasonable conclusions. The book of Genesis states that God made the heavens, the earth and all that is in them in six days. However this scenario does not provide an explanation for when the angels were created and when and how Satan fell. Neither does it tell us how his fall affected the earth over which he ruled. In order to investigate these things further let us look at the first verse in the book of Genesis.

We read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). This first verse tells us of God's creation, and we can be assured that when God creates anything He makes it perfect and beautiful in every detail. But surprisingly, the second verse begins: "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen 1:2). This sounds as if God created a formless blob – a dark, empty wasteland – and then began working on it to make it look better. Although God could have done things in this way, or any other way which He chose, the remainder of His creative work was not done in this way.

Actually there is a better understanding of verse two to be seen. In fact there is a better translation of it which will help us to understand more clearly what the Biblical record is saying. The third word in the second verse is translated by the New King James version "was" – "The earth was..." This Hebrew word can just as correctly be translated "became." It is the same word which is used in the story of Lot and his wife fleeing from Sodom and Gomorrah in which we read that Lot's wife "became" a pillar of salt. In this case Lot's wife was not originally a pillar of salt, but she became one as a result of God's judgment upon her for her disobedience. This Hebrew word can just as correctly be translated either "was" or "became." Therefore it would be grammatically acceptable to use "became" in the second verse of Genesis, which would then read, "The earth *became* without form, and void," thus giving a whole new perspective on this passage.

The phrase "without form and void" can also be translated differently, and to do so will help us see more clearly what has happened. The Hebrew words here are "tohu wah bohu" and could better be rendered "waste and empty." These two Hebrew words, "tohu" and "bohu" are found together two other times in the Biblical record. In both places, they refer to God's judgment upon and subsequent destruction of something (see Is 34:11, Jer 4:23-27). They do not speak of creation, but of wrath and desolation (note context) – the judgment of God which leaves something waste and empty.

These words “tohu” and “bohu” are found separately many other times in the Old Testament and most of the time they clearly refer to God’s judgment, His wrath or His destruction. Only a few times can they be construed to mean something positive and none of these occurrences conclusively refer to something good. One passage which is particularly striking concerning this subject is Isaiah 45:18 where we read, “For thus says the Lord who created the heavens; who is God, who formed the earth and made it; who has established it, who did not create it in vain.” The Hebrew word here for “in vain” is “tohu.” Clearly then, God originally created the earth not tohu or “without form,” as our present translation would lead us to believe.

Linking all of these items together, a picture emerges. It becomes clear that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth perfectly, just as we would expect, but something happened. At some point in time something occurred and the earth “became waste and empty.” This most logically corresponds to the time of Satan’s rebellion. When the god of this world rebelled against the one true God, corrupting himself and his own nature, in the process he corrupted the territory over which he ruled. It is probable that God then judged that world and destroyed it by a flood of water.

This is the condition in which we find the earth in the second half of Genesis 1:2 – covered with water and in darkness and desolation. Although we cannot make an airtight case from this one verse and a few others which are associated with it, still I feel that in all probability this is the way it happened. What is hinted to us in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis is the way things actually occurred. For a more in-depth study of this subject see: G. H. Pember, “Earth’s Earliest Ages” (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1975).

Another interesting point here is that this word “created” which is used in the first verse of Genesis – where we read “God created the heavens and the earth” – means to make something out of nothing. Most of the other words in the first chapter of Genesis which are translated “made” refer to something being constructed out of materials that were already present. The word “created” meaning to

make something out of nothing is used only two other times: in verse 21, concerning the animals, and in verses 26 and 27 regarding the creation of human life. The other acts which God did during what we know as "the six days of creation" are most probably six days of restoration – a restoring of the earth which God had originally created. A good example of this is found in Genesis 1:11 where God says, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth." It is quite possible that these seeds which sprouted and began to bring forth many varieties of plants were already in the earth. The ruined earth which God was restoring possibly contained seeds that God simply caused to germinate, sprout and begin bringing forth fruit.

The "destroyed" earth which we read about in verse 2 of Genesis chapter 1, has been flooded with water. In the absence of any light, this water would have been frozen. If there were light previously which was removed as a result of judgment, this would result in a sudden and widespread "ice age" killing most, if not all, life. Possibly, this layer of ice covering the oceans and land, would insulate the extreme depths of the sea near the thermal vents where conceivably, some ocean life could have survived. This could explain the "living fossil" fish which are encountered at great depths. These thoughts are of course only speculation and do not have any extensive scriptural basis.

So what we could have then in the first chapter of Genesis is a record of God restoring and recreating something which He once made perfect and complete but which was destroyed because of Satan and his rebellion. Though we cannot prove any of these things conclusively and it is nothing to base our faith upon, I believe you will see as we proceed how it explains many more things than it makes unclear, and how this understanding provides us with a much better picture of what God is doing on the earth today. In fact a good criteria for judging the truth of certain teachings may be: that they explain more things than they confuse, that is to say that they enlarge our revelation concerning the purposes of God rather than

obscuring them. Any teaching concerning scripture which reveals, unveils and expands our understanding concerning God should carry a certain amount of weight.

THE LAYER OF WATER

There is an interesting fact which is worthy of mention here and that is that during what we know as the "six days of creation" God suspended a layer of water above the atmosphere, covering the entire earth. In Genesis 1:6-8 we read: "Then God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' Thus 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. And God called the firmament Heaven." So we are told that God separated the waters. Some He situated above "heaven" and others below heaven. This "heaven" is what we know today as the "air" or atmosphere.

Having a suspended layer of water above the atmosphere produced various effects. One result was that the climate and the weather was very different than what we know today. We are led to understand that during the time when this layer of water was intact, it did not rain upon the earth but that the vegetation was watered by a mist which came up from the ground (Gen 2:5,6). It may be that this layer of water acted sort of like the glass in a greenhouse and that the earth was pretty much one temperature and that the climate did not vary much from place to place.

Perhaps another result of this layer of water is that in those days, people lived much longer – approximately ten times longer than we do today. It can be theorized that this was a result of this suspended water layer. Although no one knows for certain what causes aging, it is possible that it is at least aggravated by some kind of radiation or bombardment of subatomic particles reaching the earth from outer space. This watery suspension could have been protecting the earth and its inhabitants from such things by absorbing these rays. Today, for example, some radioactive material is stored under water and the water absorbs the radiation which is emitted. What we do know certainly is

that when this layer of water was removed, the maximum ages of individuals begin to decline rapidly. When God flooded the earth in the days of Noah, we are told that the "windows of heaven were opened" (Gen 7:11). Thus, when the first rain occurred, the water which was suspended above the "heaven" was released and rained torrentially down upon the earth, flooding it completely. When all the water was released and the sun began to shine once again, the first rainbow appeared as a sign of God's faithfulness (Gen 9:13). Naturally, since it had never rained before, there could never have been a rainbow.

Immediately afterwards, the ages of men began to decline. Whatever it is that is bombarding the earth from space began to build up in the soil, the environment and also in the plants and animals until reaching a kind of equilibrium. This process took hundreds of years, but when we track the ages of the descendants of Noah, it is easy to see the steady downward progression until we arrive at ages which approximate what we experience today. So part of God's judgment upon mankind during the days of Noah was to remove the watery, protective layer and so to reduce the number of days that any one man could practice evil upon the earth. I believe that this judgment too will be lifted during the Kingdom age (see Is 65:20). Another incidental idea which can be surmised is that the existence of this layer of water, protecting the earth from radiation, would greatly skew some of the scientific dating techniques used to determine the ages of fossils and bones from this period.

DEMONS AND FALLEN ANGELS

Another thing about which we can speculate is that during this time when the original earth was governed by Lucifer before his rebellion against God, there may have been some kind of creatures or beings inhabiting it. Perhaps some of them even resembled man in some way. We do not know such things certainly, but if there were such creatures, when Satan rebelled he no doubt induced them to rebel with him. When a person examines the fossil record, interesting facts emerge which tend to give credence to this idea. Many of the dinosaurs for example

which could have lived during this time seem to have been very vicious, aggressive animals, reflecting the character of their master. It is even possible that the fossil "men" which some claim to have found (although the evidence for them is very scanty except in the case of the Neanderthal) could have been the inhabitants of the earth during this age. According to this idea, after these creatures (whatever they were) rebelled together with Satan, God judged that first creation with an inundation of water in which all the beings upon the earth were destroyed. This is exactly the picture of the earth which we are shown in the second verse of Genesis: the earth waste, empty, covered with darkness and submerged under water.

If there were such beings upon the earth before Satan's rebellion this would explain to us the origin of the demons. Most Christians have been taught that demons are fallen angels. This is not necessarily the case. Although it is a strong traditional belief within the church, there is not one verse of scripture which says that this is so. Unfortunately, this connection has been made mainly by guesswork and many have accepted it as a fact, without any scriptural basis whatsoever.

What we do know however is that in the scriptures there is a strong association between demons (unclean spirits) and water. Jesus said that when a demon has gone out of a man it wanders through waterless places seeking rest (Mt 12:43). It seems that demons need some kind of water to have "rest." When Jesus cast out the legion of demons they requested that they could enter into the swine feeding nearby. These swine then rushed down the embankment into the sea (Mk 5:12,13). Evidently those demons were anxious to get there. There is also a verse in Job which mentions "the shades (spirits) of the dead" trembling underneath the water (Job 26:5 Amplified). Who are these "shades" if they are not demons? It is doubtful that this verse is referring only to the limited number of sailors who had died at sea before the book of Job was written. All the dead, whether they drown or die by other means go to the place God has prepared for them be it hades or sheol. Those who drown do not get special treatment and have their spirits waiting at the bottom of the sea.

Thus we could conclude that in the original creation there were creatures on the earth with “bodies” of some sort. After God’s judgment, their bodies were destroyed yet their spirits continued on. These are what we now know as the demons – the unclean spirits. And these unclean spirits live or prefer to live in water. Although again we may not be able to draw absolute conclusions from these things there is some scriptural evidence supporting them. This would provide an explanation for us as to why demons would desire to possess or inhabit a human body. If they were once spirits dwelling in some kind of body and then were “disembodied” by God’s judgment, no doubt they would want to again inhabit a body. Also, it may be that they prefer living in water because it might closely simulate being in a physical body.

Another significant verse is found in Rev. 20:13 where we read about the coming final judgment. We read: “The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.” I would like to submit to you that all dead human beings (these are not believers since believers are resurrected 1,000 years earlier), whether they died by drowning or other means are in “death and Hades.” Therefore, the “dead in the sea” must be some other form of creature. Interestingly, these are resurrected first, perhaps being judged first since they were made first.

Angels on the other hand were created higher than human beings. We read that man was created a little lower than the angels (Ps 8:5). They seemingly can appear in bodily form whenever they so desire. They have no need or apparent desire to possess a human body. Also we are told that the fallen angels dwell not in the sea but in the air (Eph 2:2). These facts show us that the fallen angels who are ruling this earth with Satan have their dwelling place in the atmosphere, the air, and not upon the earth or in the sea.

The complete picture of the enemies of God – the demons in the sea and the fallen angels in the air – is clearly portrayed by the passage which describes Jesus going across the sea in a boat (Mk 4:35-41). The waves (home of

the demons) rose up and the wind (the domain of the fallen angels) blew while Jesus was asleep, seemingly in an effort to destroy Him. When He awoke He rebuked them and said, "Peace, be still" (vs 39). Jesus Christ has full authority over both the fallen angels and the demons.

Perhaps you in your walk with the Lord have had some experiences which this interpretation could help explain. From reading the New Testament we know that Jesus gave His followers absolute authority over the unclean spirits, the demons. Jesus and later the apostles cast them out with a word. However sometimes we find ourselves harassed and attacked by spiritual forces which when we rebuke them do not instantly obey our commands. Often, we find ourselves in a spiritual struggle which is not simply resolved with "a word." A possible explanation for this is that they are not demons at all but fallen angels – principalities and powers against whom we are fighting. Although we have the power to win these battles, we are not yet today given full authority over them. Paul says we wrestle against principalities and powers (Eph 6:12). Our warfare against them is a wrestling and a fighting. If you have full authority over someone else, there is no need to wrestle.

On the other hand, our warfare with the demons is one of absolute authority and command. When we rebuke them they will flee. So if you can rebuke evil spirits which are bothering you and they flee away, this may indicate that they were demonic forces. But on the other hand if you find you must wrestle, strive, resist and seek God's help for a long period of time, it is probable that this is the wrestling with fallen angels about which the scripture speaks. I am not saying that we cannot win these battles but only that the manner of warfare and victory is different and should be understood by those who are walking with the Lord.

There are some believers today who, not realizing the foregoing assertions, have followed a policy of rebuking and even hurling insults at the devil and his angels. I have been in some prayer meetings where believers called the devil names and made fun of him – shouting, binding and rebuking with all kinds of volume, if not authority. This is

an activity which is warned against both in II Peter 2:10 and Jude 8. Here we find strong admonitions against “railing at glories (Gr)” or “slander[ing] celestial beings” (NIV). “Railing” means “to revile or scold in harsh or insolent language.” “Glories” here refers to the glorious beings or angels. Some translations use the word “dignitaries” instead of “glories” but the following verse makes it clear that this refers to the devil and his angels. We are told that this “railing” is a foolish, fleshly thing which even the highest, holy angels do not dare to do. Brethren, let us be careful in our warfare with the enemy and do so according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. Do not be led astray into silly and hurtful practices and ideas but rather focus your attention on the Lord Jesus Christ, serve Him with your life and resist the advances of the devil at all times.

Now before we get too far afield let’s get back to our subject at hand. After God’s first creating work, the original earth was corrupted by the fall of Satan and his rebellion against God along with all the inhabitants of the earth. God then judged that earth, destroying it by an inundation of water. This ruined, corrupted earth God set out to restore, recover, and bring back to Himself. He has not allowed and did not allow the devil to defeat Him. He simply began the further outworking of His plan for this earth – to restore it to Himself, to assert His rightful authority over it and to fill it again with beings who would be obedient to Him. This is what we’ll be talking about in the next chapter.

The foregoing discussion has been an effort to paint a picture and set the stage, so to speak, for what we are to be seeing in the rest of this book. If we are to understand God’s purposes for the earth, it is essential that we know its history. The Kingdom of God, His rulership over the earth, is something which is very much on His heart. The view of earth which has been presented here should be a great help to us in understanding why God is attempting to again establish His authority upon it. In order for Him to defeat His enemy completely He must regain control of the territory which has been usurped. And we know that

this plan will be completed when Jesus returns to reign.
God's Kingdom will come to the earth at last.

