

TIME

A broad study of time with a more detailed study of the Genesis creation narrative.

*“For he saith, I have heard thee in a **time** accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, **NOW** is the accepted **time**; behold **NOW** is the day of salvation.”*
II Corinthians 6:2

Introduction:

I have selected II Corinthians 6:2 as a starting place for this particular Bible study simply because it uses the words “time” and “now.” I will not give an explanation of this verse, but will concentrate at first upon those two words, **time** and **now**.

A simple definition of the word, time, is “duration.” It may be the duration of a person, a place, a thing, an event or a condition. For instance: The time of Moses (the time of a person), the time of ancient Babylon (the time of a place), the time of the Egyptian pyramids (the time of a thing), the time of the Dark Ages (the time of events), or the time of the flood (the time of a condition).

In its broadest sense, time is unmeasured. It includes all eternity. It includes all eternity past and all eternity future including both measured and unmeasured time. It had no beginning and it will have no ending. In Deuteronomy 33:27 the word, eternal, is used to describe the duration of God. He always has been and He always will be. In Psalm 90:2 Moses said, *“...from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”*

The Scriptures use the words “everlasting” and “eternal” interchangeably with reference to the new life which comes to a repentant sinner at the moment he trusts the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. The two words are different in their meaning, but they are both used from different points of view to describe the new life which comes within an individual when he places his faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. John 3:16 uses the word “everlasting” and views the new nature as beginning for the believer at the point of faith and lasting forever from that point forward. However, John 3:15 uses the word “eternal” because at the point of faith in Jesus it is the nature of eternal God which is born within him and will remain within him forever. It is a new **everlasting life** to the believer. He did not get it until he put his faith in Jesus for salvation, but it lasts forever. Yet it is **eternal life** in the sense that the eternal Spirit of God has taken up residence within him. Therefore; even though the two words have different meanings they both give accurate descriptions of the new life which comes to the believer at the point of his faith in Jesus Christ. Yet each word retains its own meaning and is not identical to the other.

Although time, in its broadest sense, is unmeasured and immeasurable, yet God has provided ways whereby a portion of time within eternity can be measured. Beginning with Genesis 1:3, time has been measured primarily by cycles of darkness and light with each cycle making one day. The first three days, although not measured by light from the sun, moon or stars, were, nevertheless, measured by cycles of light and darkness. Those first seven cycles of days made one week. In addition to measuring time by days Genesis 1:4 shows that it can also be measured by seasons and years. In modern times it can also be measured by seconds, minutes and hours. In a broader sense, words such as decades, generations, centuries, ages, dispensations, epochs, eras and eons are likewise used. It may also be noted that Ephesians 2:6 uses the word “ages” to refer to future times which extend into what is generally considered to be unmeasured eternity. Revelation 10:6 uses the word, time, in the sense of “delay.” It declares *“...then should be time no longer.”* This verse does not mean that there would no further existence of time. Nor does it mean that there would be no further measurement of time. Rather, its context reveals that it means that there would be no further **delay** in God sending the judgments

which He has planned for the earth and its occupants. Revelation 12:14 speaks of “...*a time, times and a half time*...” In this context the word, time, speaks of a year. Thus, it speaks of 1 year plus 2 years plus ½ year making a total of 3 and ½ years. Therefore, when the Scriptures speak of time it is important to note in what sense the word is used. Likewise, when the kindred word “beginning” is used, it is important to determine in what sense it is used.

Another matter which should be considered in this introductory material is the distinction between the Hebrew words, (בָּאֵר) bara and (עָשָׂה) asah. The two words are very similar in meaning. They are so similar that some Hebrew lexicons (dictionaries) do not show a clear, distinct difference in their meanings. However, even Hebrew lexicons do show some distinction although that distinction is not made very clear. For example, The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon lists the primary meaning of bara as “To create, form, make” and asah as “To work labour.” It then shows a secondary meaning of asah to be “to make, fabricateto make a thing into something.”

In the Dictionary of Old Testament Words For The English Readers by Aaron Pick the only Hebrew word listed for the English word “create” is bara. For the Hebrew word “asah” he listed only “to make, do, exercise.”

Most grammar books do show a distinction even though in some instances that distinction is not very clear. The Essentials of Biblical Hebrew by Kyle M. Yates, in its Hebrew-English vocabulary list defines “bara” as meaning “to create” or “form.” It then defines “asah” as meaning “to do or make.” It does not define asah as meaning “to create.” Biblical Hebrew Step by Step by Menahem Mansoor defines “bara” simply as “create” and “asah” as “do or make.” Elementary Hebrew by E. Leslie Carlson, likewise, defines bara as “create” and asah as “do or make.” The Handbook of Biblical Hebrew #2 by William Sanford LaSor lists bara as meaning “he created, fashioned” and asah as “he did, made.”

Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies by William Wilson, with regard to the English word “create” discusses the meaning of the Hebrew word, bara, but does not mention asah at all. In his discussion of the English word “make” he does not show a distinction in bara and asah.

The most convincing evidence of the difference in the meaning of the two words is found in Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament published by Samuel Bagster and sons. On page 270 of this book is a list showing that the word “bara” was used 51 times in the Old Testament and shows how the King James translators translated it each time. Forty-three times it was translated “create.” Four times it was translated in some form of “do or make.” Four times it was translated with other meanings. The same book listed the word “asah” well over 3,000 times. The list starts on page 981 and ends on the top of page 997. This list shows that the language scholars almost always translated it in some form of the words, “do or make.”

The evidence is overwhelming that the Hebrew scholars who translated the King James Version viewed the primary meaning of “bara” as “create” and primary meaning of word “asah” as “to do or make.” The evidence is overwhelming that, while the two words may be similar in meaning that they are not identical in meaning. It is true that in the Bible they are used interchangeably on a few occasions. However, at no time do they have the same exact meaning. Like the words “everlasting” and “eternal,” they retain their distinct shade of meaning. In each instance when “bara” is used it carries with it the primary meaning of the creation of a new thing. As my Hebrew instructors used to tell us that the word “bara” always means the creation of a **new kind of thing**. They said that the word “asah” can mean the making of a new thing, but that it does not mean **a new kind of thing**. I am sorry to say that our instructors did not cite a source of proof for that statement, but so far I have not seen evidence that they were wrong. Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies, page 263, seems to support what they said. That book defines “bara” as: “The production of something new, rare, and wonderful.”

It should also be noted that Hebrew verbs **do not show the element of time**. In most languages,

verbs show an action to be either past, present or future. This is not so with Hebrews verbs. They show that the action of the verb is either complete or incomplete. **In order to see the time element in the Hebrew verb the reader is totally dependent on context.** In *The Essentials of Biblical Hebrew* Kyle M. Yates said, “The inflections of a Hebrew verb indicate *state* instead of time. They present the condition as complete or incomplete. The completed states are called perfects; the incomplete states are called imperfects.” The incomplete action of the imperfect verbs may be either continuous action or repeated action.

He also said, **“The time of a Hebrew verb is indicated by the context.”** The time of the action of the verb may be shown in the immediate context, the passages immediately near the verb, or it may depend on some distant part of the Bible. The time element of a verse, like all other elements of the verse, must be interpreted in harmony with the overall teaching of the Bible.

Yet one thing which somewhat relates to time in the Hebrew language is the Hebrew narrative. A Hebrew narrative is revealed by a series of imperfect state verbs joined to each other and joined to the preceding action or actions by means of special conjunctions which are called “waw consecutives.” In each case the waw consecutive would carry the sense of “and then, and as a consequence, as a result.” (See *The Essentials of Biblical Hebrew* by Kyle M. Yates, pages 103-104.)

Therefore, the narrative begins with the action of the verb or verbs which precede the series of imperfect state verbs which each have a waw consecutive. The first of the imperfect state verbs with a waw consecutive follows after and is a consequence of the actions which precedes it. J. Wash Watts, in his book, *A Survey of Syntax In The Hebrew Old Testament*,” on page 108 said, “Thus viewed, the relationship is that of temporal sequence, logical result, logical cause, or logical contrast, i.e., the waw makes the verb to which it is attached to be a temporal sequence, a logical result, a logical cause, or a logical contrast of the verb preceding.” Such a narrative begins with Genesis 1:1 and continues through Genesis 2:3.

The distinction between the words “bara” and “asah”, the distinction between Hebrew verbs in the perfect state and those in the imperfect state and the use of the Hebrew narrative will all be important in understanding the account of creation given in the Book of Genesis.

I. Looking forward at the time line

- A. I wish to use “**now**” as a starting point from which to consider the time line.
 - 1. Yet even that is somewhat difficult to do because, to be exact, what is “now” right at this moment will be past history in another moment and a different moment will be “now.”
 - 2. However, I will use the word “now” in a broader sense to include the general period of time in which we live.
- B. Starting “now” and looking forward we can foresee two things about time.
 - 1. As of now time is being measured by the light of the sun in conjunction with the rotation of the earth. (One complete rotation of the earth measures one day.)
 - 2. Time will continue to be measured by sunlight and the rotation of the earth until the light of the sun will be replaced by another light, Rev. 21:23-25.
 - 3. Starting at that point there will be no night and, therefore, no measurement of time by cycles of darkness and light, Rev. 21:25.
 - 4. If it is to be measured at all it will be measured by events that take place, Eph. 2:7.

II. Looking backward at the time line to the beginning of time measured by days

- A. If we look backward from “now” we will, at first, be looking back into measured time.
 - 1. It has been measured by the rotation of the earth with the light of the **sun** shining upon it on one side and darkness being on the other side. .
 - 2. It has been measured this way from Day Four, Gen 1:14. (It was measured in this manner, for the three days prior to that, but not by the light of the sun.)
 - 3. There have been only three notable exceptions: (1) When Joshua and the Children of Israel fought against the Amorites, Josh. 10:12-14; (2) When the sun went down by ten degrees in the days of Ahaz, II Kings 20:11; and (3) When it went backward by ten degrees in the days of Isaiah the prophet, II Kings 20:8-11.
- B. Prior to Day Four it was measured by a special light shining upon the rotating earth for a period of three days, Gen.1:3-13.
- C. Each of the first 6 days consisted of one darkness period followed by one daylight period, Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.
 - 1. Therefore, they were not figurative days representing eons of undetermined length.
 - 2. They were literal days measured by one night period and one daylight period.
- D. The seventh day was established as a sabbath day for man to observe, Gen. 2:1-3.
 - 1. The word “sanctified” means “set apart.”
 - 2. God set this day apart from the six work days for man to refrain from work on each seventh day as He had done on that first seventh day.
 - 3. It was to be a day in which man would rest and worship God, his Creator.
 - 4. The seventh day likewise consisted of a darkness period followed by a daylight period.
 - a. It must be acknowledged that there is no verse which specifically says that it consisted of only one darkness period and one daylight period.
 - b. But it is inconceivable that God would require man to refrain from work for a figurative day which represented eons of time. (Therefore, it, too, was a literal day.)
 - 5. The six literal days, which preceded the sabbath, plus the sabbath, which was also a literal day, made one literal week.
 - 6. That literal week set the pattern for the weeks which would follow.

III. Taking a look at Day Seven of the Genesis narrative, Gen. 2:1-3

- A. All actions which took place on this seventh day took place following all other actions of the narrative, were a consequence of those previous actions and brought to a conclusion the entire narrative.
- B. God did no work of any kind on the seventh day.
 - 1. He did no bara work (creative) and He did no asah work (making or fashioning), V. 3. (Both bara and asah were used showing that the two words are not identical in their meaning, but that each has its own distinct meaning.)
 - 2. He had finished all of His creative work prior to the seventh day.
 - 3. He merely set this day apart from all other days of the week for man to also refrain from work on the seventh day of the week in commemoration of the great creative work of God.
- C. Thus, by refraining from work and sanctifying the seventh day God brought to a close the narrative which had begun in chapter one, verse 1.
- D. Verses 1 and 2 of chapter 1 are not to be understood in light of what took place on the seventh day, but rather the action on the seventh day was to be understood in light of all of the actions of the narrative which had taken consecutively back to and including the actions

of verse 1.

- E. The seventh day consisted of an evening and a morning, that is, it consisted of a period of darkness and a period of light.
 - 1. It must be acknowledged that there is no statement which says that the seventh day was made up of one darkness period and one daylight period, but it is inconceivable to think that the seventh day was different from the other six days.
 - 2. It is even more inconceivable to think that God would require man to refrain from work for a day which consisted of thousands upon thousands of years.

IV. Taking a look at Day Six of the Genesis creation narrative, Gen. 1:24-31

- A. All actions which took place on this sixth day took place consecutively after all previous actions of the narrative and were a consequence of them.
- B. On Day Six God created the beasts of the field, V. 24-25.
- C. He also created man on the sixth day, V. 26-28.
 - 1. The action verbs in verse 27 is bara, which has the primary meaning of “creating a new thing,” that is, a new kind of thing.
 - 2. Yet the creation of man is also properly referred to in Genesis 5:1 and 9:6 by the word “asah,” which has the primary meaning of “do, make, form or fashion.”
 - 3. However, this does not mean that the words bara and asah are the same in meaning.
 - a. Bara is used to show that in the creation of man God brought forth a new thing, a new kind of thing.
 - b. Asah applies to the process of forming, fashioning or making man out of the dust of the earth.
- D. Man did not evolve from lower life forms, but was created directly from the dust of the earth on the sixth day.
- E. The creation narrative does not reveal that God used dirt of the earth to form man's body, but we are dependent on Genesis chapter three for this information.
- F. On this sixth day God also gave instructions to man concerning the food that He had provided for man to eat. (The flesh of animals was not at that time to be on man's diet, V. 29-31.)
- G. The actions which took place in verses 1 and 2 are not to be understood in the light of what happened on day six, but rather the actions which took place on day six are to be understood in light of all that had taken place in the narrative prior to day six.
- H. Day six consisted of one darkness period and one daylight period, V. 31.
 - 1. If this was the same kind of day which we have today, then darkness was on one side of the earth while light was on the other.
 - 2. The light would then move to the other side of the earth as the earth rotated.

V. Looking back to Day Five of the creation narrative, Genesis 1:20-24

- A. All actions which took place on this fifth day followed in consecutive order after all of the previous actions of the narrative and were a consequence of them.
- B. On the fifth day God created the creatures of the sea and the air.
- C. Verse 20 makes a statement which includes both the sea creatures and the birds of the air without using either the word bara or the word asah, but which clearly means that God created them.

- D. Verse 21 says that God created (bara) every living creature of both the sea and the air. (The word, bara, would mean that God brought forth new things, new kinds of things, to dwell in the sea and air.)
- E. However, the word asah (make, form, fashion) is used in Exodus 20:11 to describe all of the creatures which God created rather than the word, bara.
 - 1. The use of this word would stress that God used pre-existing material to make, fashion or form the bodies which He made for them, while bara would have stressed that these were new kinds of things which He created.
 - 2. Thus, the two words were used interchangeably, but each retained its distinctive meaning.
- F. Day Five also consisted of one darkness period and one daylight period, V. 23.

VI. Looking back to Day Four of the creation narrative, Genesis 1:14-19

- A. All actions which took place on this fourth day followed in consecutive order after all of the previous actions of the narrative and were a consequence of them.
- B. On Day Four God put lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth.
 - 1. There is no mention of God creating the firmament of heaven on this day.
 - 2. Rather, He said, "Let there be lights **in** the firmament, indicating that the firmament already existed." V. 14.
 - 3. Neither is there any mention of Him creating the sun, moon or stars on this day.
- C. These lights were to be for signs, seasons, days and years, V. 14.
- D. They would replace the light which had shined upon the earth for the first three days.
- E. These lights were arranged so that they would allow a period of darkness on one side of the earth and a period of light on the other, V. 19.
 - 1. It is not to be presumed that on this day the entire earth was in darkness of night and was then followed by a period of daylight.
 - 2. Rather, it is to be presumed that the fourth day was a day like ours and that the earth rotated in such a way as to allow for the sun to shine on one side of the earth as the earth rotated.
- F. Thus, God provided a time which was conducive to sleep and rest and a time which would provide light for work and other activities.
- G. The actions which took place on day 4 do not throw light on the actions of the verbs of the verses 1 and 2, but are to be understood in the light of all of the verbs of the narrative which had already taken place prior to day four.
- H. Day four, like the others, consisted of one darkness period and one daylight period, V. 19.

VII. Looking back to Day Three of the creation narrative, Genesis 1: 9-13

- A. All of the actions of the third day followed consecutively after all of the preceding actions of the narrative and were a consequence of them.
- B. In "A Distinctive Translation of Genesis" J. Wash Watts translated verse 9: "Then God continued, saying, 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together to one place. And let the dry land appear,' and gradually it came to be so."
- C. The earth had been completely covered by water.
- D. At God's command dry land rose up out of the water, God caused vegetation of all kinds to appear on the land, V. 11-12.

- E. This third day, like the others, consisted of a period of darkness and then a period of light.
- F. The actions which took place on Day Three do not throw light on the meaning of the verbs of the perfect state which began the narrative, but are to be understood in light of all of the actions in the narrative which took place prior to day three.
- G. Day Three, likewise, consisted of one darkness period and one daylight period, V. 13.

VIII. Looking back to Day Two of the creation narrative, Genesis 1: 6-8

- A. All of the actions which took place on the second day took place after all of the preceding actions of the narrative.
- B. On day two all land of the earth was still covered by waters, liquid waters.
- C. It was on this day that God caused an atmosphere to surround the earth which would lift up vaporous waters above the liquid waters which were on the earth. (This atmosphere would be beneficial to man and beast in numerous ways.)
- D. The actions which took place on day two are not essential to the understanding of the actions which precede it in the narrative, but rather are to be understood in light of all of the actions which had already taken place in the narrative.
- E. Day two, as the other days, consisted of one darkness period and one daylight period, V. 8.

IX. Looking back to Day One of the creation narrative, Genesis 1: 3-5

- A. Verse 3 contains the first of the imperfect state verbs joined to the previous action by a waw consecutive.
 - 1. Like the other verbs in the imperfect state which are in this narrative they are joined to the previous verbs, which are in the perfect state, by a waw consecutive.
 - 2. These verbs show incomplete or linear action which follows after the action of the verbs in the perfect state which began the narrative.
 - 3. Their actions takes place after and are a consequence of the actions of the perfect state verbs which precede them.
 - 4. J. Wash Watts in his book, "A Distinctive Translation of Genesis" translated verse 3 of the creation narrative as follows: *"Afterward God proceeded to say, 'Let there be light and gradually light came into existence.'"*
 - 5. By using the terms "proceeded to say" and "gradually" he showed the linear action of the imperfect state and by the word "Afterward" he showed the meaning of the waw consecutive.
 - 6. In his book, "A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament," he listed several other ways that the meaning of the waw consecutive can be expressed, listing: so, therefore, thus, hence, accordingly, consequently, for because, since and inasmuch.
 - 7. Therefore, prior to Day One the earth existed, but was in the condition described in verse 2.
- B. The Bible nowhere tells what caused the light.
 - 1. I strongly suspect that God, Himself, was the source of that light, but the Bible does not say so.
 - 2. There is the possibility that God caused some natural phenomenon to produce the light and so I list that as a possibility.
- C. Verse 5 says that God divided the light from the darkness.
 - 1. While I would not be dogmatic about the meaning of that statement, I take it to mean

- that He put the light on one side of the earth and darkness on the other side of the earth (This would be in harmony with the other days of that week.)
2. As viewed from some given location the darkness period followed by the daylight period made the first day, V. 5.
- D. Neither this verse nor any of the following verses of the narrative help to show the meaning of verses 1 and 2. (Rather the action of this verse and all of the rest of the narrative take place after and are a consequence of the action in verses 1 and 2.)

X. Looking back to the verbs which precede the waw consecutives, Genesis 1:1-2

- A. In order to understand the time element in the Hebrew narrative it is important to understand that all of the actions of the imperfect state verbs joined to their preceding verbs by waw consecutives follow after and are a consequence of the action of the preceding verb or verbs.
1. In his book, the Essentials of Biblical Hebrew on 103-104 Kyle M. Yates had this to say: “The prefixed waw is sometimes pointed waw plus pathah plus daghesh forte and in this case bears the title 'Waw Consecutive.' The Waw Consecutive may be prefixed to the imperfect form of the verb. It not only joins the imperfect to its precedent but also shows that the imperfect is a definite consecution of its precedent. The translation of the Waw Consecutive is 'and, and then, and as a consequence, furthermore, and as a result.’”
 2. This is true of all of the verbs in the narrative which are joined to preceding verbs by waw consecutives.
 3. What this means is that each of the actions of the verbs beginning with Genesis 1:3 and extending through Genesis 2:3 follow after and are a consequence of all of their precedent verbs including those found in verses 1 and 2.
- B. There are three Hebrew verbs in these two verses plus one which translators have supplied.
1. The three which are there are: **“created”** (verse 1), **“was”** (verse 2), and **“moved”** (verse 2).
 2. In verse 2 a second **“was”** has been supplied by translators in the clause, “...darkness *was* upon the face of the deep.”
 3. The leading verb of the whole narrative is the verb **“bara”** in verse 1 with the primary meaning of creating a new thing, a new kind of thing.
 4. God is said to be the Creator.
 5. In the Hebrew text the expression “in beginning” is listed first in the verse whereas the verb would usually be placed first.
 - a. This inverted order places emphasis on the phrase “in beginning” and carries the idea of “in the **very** beginning.” (Barnes' Notes On The Old And New Testaments” says that this means “...the **absolute** beginning of created things...”
 - b. He surely must have had reference to material things for angels were created prior to the creation of material things, Job 38:7.
 6. The term “in beginning,” even the emphatic beginning, could not, however, mean that this was the beginning of time in its broadest sense.
 - a. Time is duration whether it be the duration of a person, a place, a thing, an event or a condition.
 - b. It is obvious that God existed prior to the creation of the earth; He could not have done the creating if He had not already existed.

- c. Also, as noted earlier, the Scriptures teach that God is eternal, Psalm 90:2.
- 7. It was, however, the beginning, the **very** beginning, the **absolute** beginning of material things. (God created new things, new kinds of things.)
 - a. He did not **asah** the earth. (That is, He did not shape, fashion or form the earth from pre-existing material things. He created it without the use of pre-existing materials.)
 - b. If He had produced the earth from pre-existing material it would not have been an absolute beginning for those things; it might have been a beginning, but not an absolute beginning.
- C. There are two direct objects of the verb, "created."
 - 1. The first one listed is "**the heaven.**" (Several translators render this: The heavens, plural, because the Hebrew word is always in the plural.)
 - a. The heavens which are spoken of here are not to be confused with the firmament which was created on the second day and is called "Heaven" in verses 6 & 7.
 - b. That heaven was not created until the second day.
 - c. Since the heavens in verse 1 are listed first, they get the emphasis, the prominence.
 - d. A modern term would be "universe."
 - 2. The second direct object of the verb "created" is **the earth.**
- D. The Hebrew verb in this verse is in the perfect state which expresses completed action.
 - 1. This means that the creation was not done in a primitive condition to be finished later. ("Hebrew has no 'tenses.' Tenses indicate time. The time of a Hebrew verb is indicated by the context.....The completed states are called perfects; the incomplete states are called imperfects," The Essentials of Biblical Hebrew by Kyle M. Yates, pg.37.)
 - 2. So in the **absolute beginning** of material things, suddenly God created a whole new universe, including the earth. (It was **sudden!** It was **completed action!** It was **done!** It was **finished!**)
- E. The second verb which was used prior to the waw consecutives is the verb "**was.**"
 - 1. This verb does not primarily express action, but rather existence.
 - 2. The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon by B. Davidson on 181 lists the following possible meanings for this word: **to be, to exist, to belong to, to become.**
 - 3. Therefore, Genesis 1:2 declares that the earth **was** "...without form and void..."(KJV)
 - 4. J. Wash Watts, in his "A Distinctive Translation of Genesis" on page 17 renders this, "**...waste and void...**"
 - 5. E. Leslie Carlson in his Elementary Hebrew on pages 6 and 7 renders it "**...desolation and waste...**"
 - 6. The word which the King James translators rendered "without form" is the Hebrew word, **tohu**, which is defined in The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon on page 750 as: **desolation, desert, emptiness, vanity, a vain worthless thing.**
 - a. It is obvious that the word, desert, does not apply here because the earth was covered with water.
 - b. It is also obvious that the word, emptiness, does not apply because it was covered with water.
 - 7. The idea seems to be that the earth was in a desolate condition and was, therefore, unproductive.
- F. The third use of a verb in these first two verses is the word, **was**, which was supplied by the translators to convey the meaning of the Hebrew text to English readers in smooth English.
 - 1. The King James translators rendered this part of the verse: "...and darkness **was** upon the face of the deep."

2. Barnes Notes On the Old and New Testaments on page 47 describes the scene as darkness upon the faces of “surging, raging, primeval waters.”
- G. There is no information given in the narrative indicating how the earth came to be in desolation, covered with raging waters and enveloped in darkness.
 1. Some have sought to explain it by saying that God created it in that condition in verse 1 with the intention of developing it later.
 2. Others have sought to explain it by saying that in verse 1, God did not create the earth in desolation, but that something happened to the earth between verse 1 and verse 2 to bring it into desolation.
 3. This question will be dealt with later.
- H. Likewise, there is no information given in the narrative which indicates how long the earth **was** in this condition prior to Day One.
 1. There was no measurement of time by days until verse 3 when God said, “Let there be light.”
 2. It is certain, however, that it was in this condition prior to Day One and that the darkness described in verse 2 was not the same as the darkness which was a part of Day One.
 3. The waw consecutive verbs did not start until verse 3 and this means that all of the verbs in verses 1 and 2 took place prior to verse 3.
 4. It further means that all of the action starting with verse 3 took place after verse 2 and was a result, a consequence of all that took place in verses 1 and 2.
- I. The fourth use of a verb in the first two verses is a verb which is translated “moved.”
 1. It is said that “the Spirit of God **moved** upon the face of the waters.”(KJV)
 2. Language scholars differ on the meaning of the verb which here is translated, moved and this writer is not well enough informed on the matter to try to settle their differences. (But I do know that when the Spirit of God is moved to take action some changes are about to take place.)
- J. Therefore, we can see four actions or conditions listed in these two verses precede the action in the chain of waw consecutive verbs which start in verse 3. They are as follows:
 1. God created both the heavens and the earth.
 2. The earth was in desolation and was unproductive.
 3. The earth was covered with water and surrounded in darkness.
 4. The Spirit of God moved to take action.
- K. Each of the waw consecutives which follow starting with verse 3 carries the idea of “and, and then, and as a consequence, furthermore, and as a result.” (The Essentials of Biblical Hebrew by Kyle M. Yates, page 104.)

XI. Looking at a special problem

- A. If the Creation Narrative given in Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 2:3 were the only information given in the Bible about the creation of the earth, the interpretation of this passage would be relatively simple: It would mean that in verse 1 the elements of the earth were created in a desolate primitive condition and that later, during six days of creative work, they were formed into a habitable place.
- B. However, there is a statement made by the prophet Isaiah which makes the interpretation of the Genesis passage very difficult.
 1. Genesis 1:2 says that the earth **was** in “**tohu.**” (A desolation)

2. Isaiah 45:18 says, “...*he created it not in vain...*” (The Hebrew word which here is translated “vain” is “**tohu**,” the same Hebrew which is used in Genesis 1:2.)
 3. That is, Isaiah said that God did **not create** the earth in the condition that Moses described in Genesis 1:2.
- C. These two Bible statements which appear to be contradictory pose a great problem for Bible believers.
1. Because the two statements are so widely separated in the Bible record most Bible readers are unaware that they seem to contradict.
 2. Many good men, who are aware of the problem, seek to solve the problem by interpreting the statement of Isaiah to mean only that God did not intend to leave the earth in a desolate condition.
 - a. They conclude that in Genesis 1:1 God **did** create the earth in a desolate condition, but with the **intention** of not leaving it in that condition.
 - b. Their conclusion is in direct contradiction to what Isaiah said.
 - c. Isaiah said that God did **not create** the earth in **tohu**; But by their interpretation they say, “**Oh, yes He did!** He just did not intend to **leave** it in **tohu.**”
 - d. They say that in Genesis 1:1 God created the elements of which the earth is composed, but that the elements were in **tohu** until Day One when God began to make the earth habitable.
 - e. Isaiah said, “**Oh no they were not! He did not create them in tohu! He did not create them in a desolate condition!**”
 3. It should be understood by Bible believers that a correct interpretation will not contradict the direct statement of either Moses or Isaiah. (It will not contradict inspired Scripture.)
 - a. It will not contradict either Genesis 1:2 or Isaiah 45:18. (It will harmonize with both.)
 - b. The word “tohu” means the same in both Genesis 1:2 and Isaiah 45:18. (It means a desolate condition in both verses.)
 - c. The word “bara” means the same in both verses. (It means “to create a new thing.”)
 - d. Therefore, the interpretation which concludes that God did, at the first, create the earth in a desolate condition, is in direct contradiction to what Isaiah said in Isaiah 45:18. (Isaiah said that God did **not** create it in **desolation!**)
 - e. An explanation must be found which is in harmony with both the Genesis record and Isaiah's record and it must be a **biblical** explanation.

XII. Looking for a biblical explanation for the desolation described in Genesis 1:2

- A. Let us look first at Isaiah 14:4-17.
1. In this passage is a proverb which may provide an explanation which harmonizes with both Genesis 1:2 and Isaiah 45:18.
 2. A proverb is a saying in which one person or thing is compared to another person or thing for the purpose of teaching a lesson.
 - a. In a proverb the lesson may be shown by either a likeness between the two or by a contrast between the two.
 - b. In verse 4 Isaiah is told to speak this proverb against the king of Babylon.
 - c. Therefore, this proverb makes a comparison between the king of Babylon and someone else.

- d. In verse 12 that other person is identified as Lucifer. (Lucifer is said to be the name which was given to the angel who had led a rebellion against God and is now known as Satan.)
 3. Therefore, the proverb would show that the king of Babylon was like Lucifer (Satan).
 - a. They were alike in several ways.
 - b. They were not identical, but they were similar
 4. They were alike in the following ways:
 - a. They were alike in their evil character. (The evil character of the king of Babylon was like the evil character of Lucifer.)
 - b. They were alike in their pride and self-exaltation. (The king of Babylon had exalted himself as Lucifer had earlier exalted himself.)
 - c. They were alike in their destructiveness. (The king of Babylon had wrought great destruction much like Lucifer had also wrought great destruction.)
 - d. They were alike in their downfall. (Isaiah was not here predicting a future fall of Satan. He was comparing the fall of Satan, which had already taken place to the fall of the king of Babylon which was yet to take place.)
- B. Let us also look at Ezekiel. 28:1-19.
1. The word, proverb, is not used in this passage, but it is obvious that a comparison is made between the king of Tyrus (or Tyre) and one who had been an anointed cherub, verses 12 and 14.
 2. The anointed cherub is not specifically identified by Ezekiel, but it is apparent that he is-- or at least had been -- an exalted angelic being.
 - a. It is also apparent that he is an angel who had rebelled against God.
 - b. It would seem that he is the angel who led the rebellion against God and that he is none other than Lucifer, who became Satan.
 - c. As the king of Babylon had been compared to Satan by Isaiah, even so the king of Tyre is compared to Satan by Ezekiel.
 3. The king of Tyre and Satan are said to be alike in the following ways: (Alike, but not identical)
 - a. Each of them had a heart which was lifted up in pride, V. 2. (Each of them thought of himself as being God, V. 2.)
 - b. Each had great wisdom, V. 3-5.
 - c. Each was very beautiful, V. 12, 17.
 - d. Each had, at first, behaved in an acceptable manner, V. 15.
 - e. Each had become extremely wicked, V. 15-16. (Each had already rebelled against God.)
 - f. Each had been guilty of great violence, V. 16.
 - g. Each had been or would be cast down, V. 8-9, 16-19. (Satan had been and, like him, the king of Tyre would be.)
 4. Let us consider some things about Satan as portrayed in these passages.
 - a. He was created as an angelic being, Ezek. 28:14-15; Isa. 14:12.
 - b. Prior to his rebellion he had occupied an exalted position, Ezek. 28:4, 16; Isa. 14:12.
 - c. He became filled with pride, Ezek. 28:2, 5; Isa. 14:13-14.
 - d. He became rebellious against God. Ezek. 28:2; Isa. 14:13-14.
 - e. He became violent and destructive, Ezek. 28:16; Isa. 14:4, 6, 16-17.
 - f. He had already been cast down prior to Isaiah's day, Isa. 14:12. (He had already

- fallen prior to Isaiah's day and he had already weakened nations prior to Isaiah's day.)
5. It should be noted that neither Isaiah nor Ezekiel predicted a future downfall of Satan.
 - a. They spoke about an event that had already taken place and with which they compared the future downfall of the two kings.
 - b. If the fall of Satan from heaven had not already taken place then their audience and their readers of that day would not know what they were talking about.
 6. There are, however, reassuring predictions in Scripture that Satan will eventually meet his final downfall never again to interfere with the affairs of God's world.
- C. Let us look at Luke 10:18.
1. Jesus viewed the downfall of Satan as having taken place at some time in the past.
 2. This statement is in agreement with the downfall of Lucifer and the anointed cherub as described by Isaiah and Ezekiel in the above mentioned passages.
- D. Let us consider Revelation 9:11.
1. This passage uses two names to describe Satan.
 2. The first name is the Hebrew word, Abaddon which means “destroyer.”
 3. The second is the Greek word, Apollyon, which also means “destroyer.”
 4. The double use of words meaning “destroyer” emphasizes the extreme destructive nature of Satan after his rebellion against God.

XIII. Looking at some big questions

- A. How could it be possible for Isaiah to be right in Isaiah 45:18, where he said that God did not create the world in tohu, and for Moses to also be right in Genesis 1:2, where he said that the earth was in tohu, covered with water and in total darkness?
1. There is only one way they could both be right.
 2. Something would have to have taken place between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 to bring about the desolation which Moses described in Genesis 1:2.
- B. When Satan was cast out of heaven did he cause the desolation which is described in Genesis 1:2?
1. If he did, the Scriptures do not specifically say that he did.
 2. What the Scriptures do specifically say concerning Genesis 1:1 is that God did not create the earth in a desolate condition.
 3. They also specifically say in Genesis 1:2 that by that point of unmeasured time the earth was in a desolate condition.
- C. Let us consider the time of Satan's fall from heaven.
1. It could hardly have taken place prior to the creation of the earth, Job 38:7.
 2. It could hardly have been at the crucifixion of Jesus as some have concluded from John 12:31.
 - a. Whatever that verse means, it does not speak of Satan being cast out of heaven at the time of the crucifixion
 - b. Jesus had already seen Satan cast out of heaven prior to His crucifixion, Luke 10:18.
 - c. Isaiah spoke of the fall of Satan as being prior to his time, Isa. 14:12.
 3. Genesis 3:1-6 gives evidence that his fall had already taken place prior to the temptation of Adam and Eve. (Satan had already become corrupt in his character and, thus, had become the Tempter of man.)

4. This narrows his fall down to sometime between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 3:1-6.
- D. If it took place between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 this would well explain how that in Genesis 1:1 it was not created in desolation, and yet in Genesis 1:2 it was in desolation.
- E. Here are some things of which we can be sure:
 1. Satan did rebel against God.
 2. He did fall from heaven.
 3. Scripture does portray him as a mighty destroyer.
 4. After he fell he did bring about great destruction in earth.
 - a. This was portrayed by both Isaiah and Ezekiel.
 - b. He is still a great destructive force in the world today.
 5. He had fallen prior to the temptation of Eve.
 6. **If** he did fall between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 that would harmonize with both Genesis 1:2 and Isaiah 45:18.
 7. **If** Satan did **not** fall between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 then we still have a tremendous problem trying to harmonize Genesis 1:2 with Isaiah 45:18. (We cannot harmonize the two passages by substituting what some writer thinks for what God's inspired writer has said. We cannot substitute the premise that Isaiah 45:18 was never intended to mean that God did not create the world in a desolate condition for that which Isaiah actually said by inspiration of God.)

XIV. Looking back to Genesis 1:1

- A. This was the time when God created the heaven and the earth.
 1. This was an event which had taken place in unmeasured time prior to Genesis 1:2.
 2. The earth had to be created before it could lie in darkness covered with water.
 3. This was the beginning, not only of the earth and the heavenly bodies, but also of the material substance of which they were composed.
 4. The usual order for the construction of a Hebrew verse was that the verb with its modifiers would stand first and the subject with its modifiers would follow.
 - a. Any time anything was placed before the verb it was for the purpose of placing emphasis upon it.
 - b. In Genesis 1:1 the verb is "bara" meaning "He created."
 - c. But preceding the verb is "breshith" meaning "in beginning."
 - d. Thus, in this construction it means "in the **emphatic** beginning, "in the **very** beginning" or, "in the **absolute** beginning."
 5. Therefore, this creation was not a renovation of pre-existing material, but the absolute beginning of both the substance and the finished product.
- B. The creation of the heaven and the earth took place suddenly.
 1. The perfect state of the word "bara" speaks of completed action.
 2. In the absolute beginning, it was **done!** (It was **finished!** It was **completed action!**)

XV. Taking a look at the context and contents of Isaiah 45:18

- A. Let us consider first the context of the verse.
 1. The Children of Israel had been carried away from their homeland.
 2. The verse was intended to encourage the Jews to take advantage of their opportunity to return to their homeland.

3. It was also designed to encourage them to place their faith in God for His help in their efforts to return.
 4. It stressed the idea that the Creator God was worthy of their trust.
- B. Let us look at the contents of the verse.
1. It declares that God created both the heavens and the earth, using a kal active participle of the verb, bara. (This speaks of the act of creating the heavens and the earth and, thus, speaks of Genesis 1:1.)
 2. It also states that He formed and made the earth, using asah which means to fashion or form plus a second word, yatsar, which also means “to form, fashion, make.” (This speaks of the work which God did during the first six days.)
 3. It further declares that God did not create it in tohu, which means desolation. (This speaks not of the forming or fashioning the earth which was done in the six days, but of the actual act of creation which was done in verse 1.)
 4. The Jews to whom Isaiah wrote may or may not have known that the earth was not created in tohu (desolation) because Moses did not mention it in the Genesis creation narrative.
 - a. They did, however, know that it was in tohu, desolation, in Genesis 1:2 because Moses did mention that.
 - b. They also knew about the great changes which God had brought about in the six days of both bara and asah work which God did in the six days of His labor.
 5. Isaiah's reminder must have been a great encouragement for them to trust God to bring them out of the desolate condition which their own nation was in at that time. (It would encourage them go back to Canaan and trust God for His help.)
 6. There is nothing in this context which would indicate that God did create the earth in tohu, desolation, with the intent of bringing it out of desolation at a later time.
 7. To the contrary, there is the clear positive statement that God did not create the earth in the condition which is described in Genesis 1:2.

XVI. Separating fact from theory

- A. **Fact:** Genesis 1:1 speaks of the time when the earth was created.
- B. **Fact:** It was not created in a desolate, uninhabitable condition.
 1. *“...he created it not in vain...” Isa. 45:18.* (Hebrew, tohu: desolation)
 2. This is not theory. (This is “Thus saith the Lord.”)
- C. **Theory:** It was created in the desolate condition described in Genesis 1:2 with the intention that it would later be made into a habitable condition. (This is “Thus saith certain commentaries,” but it is not “Thus saith the Lord.”)
- D. **Fact:** It was in desolation (tohu) in Genesis 1:2. (This, too, is “Thus saith the Lord.”)
- E. **Theory:** There was no gap of unmeasured time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.
 1. There is no record in Scripture which states that no time gap existed between verse 1 and verse 2.
 2. There is no evidence in Scripture which clearly establishes that no time gap existed between the two verses.
 3. Therefore, the premise that there was no time gap between the two verses is not fact, but is also theory.
- F. **Fact:** Satan fell from heaven, Luke 18:10.
- G. **Fact:** Satan is a very destructive character, Rev. 9:11.

- H. **Fact:** Satan fell prior to the temptation of Adam and Eve. (He had ceased to be a holy angel and had become an unholy rebel against God.)
- I. **Theory:** Satan fell in unmeasured time prior to Genesis 1:2 and that he caused the desolate condition which is described in Genesis 1:2.
1. It is a theory because there is no direct statement to that effect in scripture.
 2. Yet it is no more a theory than the premise that God created the earth in a desolate condition with the intention of making it habitable at a later time.
 3. If one premise is to be rejected because it is a theory then both premises are to be rejected because both are theories.
- J. **Theory:** Satan did not fall between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. (There is no evidence in Scripture that he did not fall until some later time.)
1. Some maintain that Satan did not fall until the crucifixion of Jesus and cite John 12:31-32 as proof.
 2. However, prior to His crucifixion Jesus stated that He had already seen Satan fall, Luke 10:18.
- K. The weight of evidence in Scripture is clearly in favor of the premise that Satan fell prior to Genesis 1:2 and that he caused the desolation described in that verse.
1. In Isaiah 14:1-17 the evil character, the destructive nature and the predicted fall of the king of Babylon is compared to the evil character, the destructive nature and the fall of Satan.
 2. In Ezekiel 28:1-19 the evil character, the destructive nature and the fall of the king of Tyrus (Tyre) is compared to the evil character, the destructive nature and the fall of Satan.
 3. Another thing that is in favor of this premise is that it is in harmony with both what Moses wrote by inspiration of God in Genesis 1:2 and also with what Isaiah wrote by inspiration of God in Isaiah 45:18. (The other theory is in contradiction to Isaiah 45:18.)
- L. Another big question: Does Exodus 20:11 nullify the premise that Satan fell from heaven between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 and caused the desolate condition described in Genesis 1:2?
1. In order to answer this question let us first note what the verse says: ***“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”***
 2. The Hebrew word which here is translated “made” is “asah.” (The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon by Davidson lists “work and labor” as the primary meaning of this word. He lists “make and fabricate” as its secondary meaning.
 3. Exodus 20:11 does not say that God created (bara) the earth in six days; it says that He “made” (asah) the earth into a habitable condition in six days. He even created some new things in those first six days, but He did not create (bara) the earth within those six days.
 - a. On Day Six He created beasts of the earth and He created man, but He did not create the earth on that day.
 - b. On Day Five He created the creatures of the sea and air, but He did not create the earth on that day.
 - c. On Day Four God arbitrarily made lights to shine in the heavens upon the earth, but He did not create the earth on that day.
 - d. On Day Three He made dry land to rise up out of the waters and He brought forth

- e. vegetation, but He did not create the earth on that day.
 - f. On Day Two He lifted up some of the waters which covered the earth and made a firmament, but He did not create any land on that day.
 - g. On Day One God spoke and arbitrarily caused a great light which would shine on the earth and start measuring time, but He did not create the earth on that day.
 - h. He did not create the earth within that entire six day period.
 - i. The earth had already been created and according to Genesis 1:2 it was already in darkness and already covered with water prior to Day One. (The waw consecutive verbs did not start until verse 3. This means that everything prior to that waw consecutive took place prior to Day One. The earth was in unmeasured time in Genesis 1:2.)
 - j. In Genesis 1:1 God created the heavens and the earth, but according to Isaiah 45:18 He did not create it in a desolate condition.
 - k. Then after the earth came to be in a desolate uninhabitable condition, God made it habitable in six days.
4. Therefore, the answer to the question is: No, Exodus 20:11 does not nullify the premise that Satan fell and caused the condition described in Genesis 1:2.

XVII. Looking back prior to Genesis 1:1

- A. As already noted, at some point of unmeasured time prior to the creation of the earth, God created angels.
 - 1. They already existed prior to Genesis 1:1 and were on the scene to shout and sing when God created the universe including the earth.
 - 2. Yet even the angels were created beings; they had not always existed, John 1:3.
- B. As far as Biblical record reveals prior to the creation of angels, only God existed.
 - 1. There was no material substance.
 - 2. There was no other being, either material or spiritual.
- C. However, the Bible does record at least one important act which took place at some point of time prior to the creation of the earth and possibly before the creation of angels: God looked ahead in time and saw **us** and loved **us** and determined that He would send His only Begotten Son into this world to shed His blood for **us** and provide a way whereby **we** could be saved, Rev.13:8; John 1:29; John 3:16, and Heb. 13:20. (The everlasting covenant pertaining to the redemption of man was made between the three persons of the Holy Trinity before the world was ever created.)

Conclusion: ***Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!***