



**Review: “Gap” in Syntax of Gen 1:2, Critique by Youngblood, & Rebuttal: Romans 8:19-22; Geologic Ages v. Catastrophism; Dinosaurs’ Demise; Lucifer’s Fall**

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Creation, Chaos, & Restoration*. 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1995), 10n:

In Hebrew syntax, a sequential construction is expressed by a ך (waw) + verb + noun word order [translated “and the earth was”]. A disjunctive or contrastive construction is expressed by a waw + noun + verb word order [translated “but the earth became”] as in Genesis 1:2. [Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 650-51.]

**Genesis 1:2a - But the earth became formless and void ...**

הָהוּ *tohu* וְהָבֹהוּ *wabohu* -

Best translation: “desolate and empty.”

If we had stayed with the sequential construction then “desolate and empty” would refer back to the creative act of verse one. However, the correct translation recognizes that this is a disjunctive construction and thus the verse does not relate back to Genesis 1:1 but rather to:

**Isaiah 45:18 - For thus says the Lord, Who created [בָּרָא *bara*: out of nothing] the heavens [the universe] (He is the God who formed [יָצַר *yatsar*: to mold preexisting matter] the earth and made it [עָשָׂה *asah*: from a preexisting pattern], He established it and did not create it [בָּרָא *bara*: out of nothing] a waste place [הָהוּ *tohu*], but formed it [יָצַר *yatsar*: to mold preexisting matter] to be inhabited), “I am the Lord, and there is none else.”**

Youngblood, Ronald F. Harris. “הָהוּ *Tohu*: Confusion, the Empty Place.” In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 964-65:

The “gap” or “interval” theory, which posits a millennia-long period of time implied by or in Genesis 1:2 and which usually translates 1:2a by the less likely “but the earth became without form and void,” has come into increasing disfavor in recent years. Its main exegetical support, Isaiah 45:18, reads “(God) did not create (the earth) *tohu*,” and has been interpreted to mean that therefore an original creation (described briefly in Genesis 1:1) was destroyed; that the geologic ages ensued (during the “gap”); and that the new creation portrayed in Genesis 1:3ff. was built on the wreckage of the old. But Isaiah 45:18, after the phrase quoted, goes on to say that God “formed (the earth) to be inhabited,” thereby assuring the reader that *tohu* was not his ultimate purpose in creation.

In response to this critique there are several points made which do not correspond with the “gap” or “interval” that I teach. We’ll take them point by point:

1. I do not “posit” that there is a “millennia-long period” between verse one and verse two. The period of time is unknown and could contain millions of years or only hundreds. The length of time is dictated by how long it took for several events to transpire:
  - the time period between original creation and the Luciferian Rebellion (Job 38:7),
  - the length of the original trial of Lucifer and the fallen angels (Matthew 25:41),
  - the time it took Lucifer to prepare his appeal (Revelation 20:10), and
  - the time it took for the Supreme Court of Heaven to make the decision to allow the appeal trial (Genesis 1:3).



2. Youngblood points out that the translation “but the earth became without form and void” has come into disfavor. But he doesn’t explain why the disjunctive construction should not be translated this way. He immediately turns to Isaiah 45:18 as proof. But this verse confirms the disjunctive construction that begins Genesis 1:2.
3. Youngblood accurately points out that Isaiah 45:18 states that the universe was created perfect, or “God did **not** create (the earth) *tohu*” but goes on to say the “gap” or “interval theory” contends that the “original creation (described briefly in Genesis 1:1) was destroyed.”
4. If “God did **not** create [ *bara* ] (the earth) *tohu*” then how did He create it? God is perfect therefore we must conclude that (1) all His creative acts are perfect and (2) He therefore does not create chaos.
5. If God by definition could only create the universe in a perfect state, and if God could not be the Creator of chaos, then the original creation must have not been “destroyed” but rather placed into a chaotic state following the fall of Lucifer.
6. We know from Romans that the present universe, including Planet Earth, became cursed and disordered at the fall of Adam:

**Romans 8:19** - For the creation waits eagerly with confident expectation for the revealing of the sons of God [ **the resurrection at the Second Advent** ].

**Romans 8:20** - For the creation was subordinated to futility [ *ματαιότης, mataiotēs*: **absence of order caused by sin (see the “curse” of Genesis 3:17b, cf. the disordered mind in Ephesians 4:17)** ] against its own will, but because of Him Who has subordinated it in confidence.

**v. 21** - Therefore, the entire universe shall also be set free from the slavery of corruption [ **release from the curse beginning with the Millennium** ] into the freedom of glory with the children of God.

**v. 22** - For we know that the entire creation groans [ *συστενάζω, sustenazō* ] and suffers great agony [ *συνωδίνω, sunōdinō*: **a personification: the creation is depicted as enduring labor pains and suffering between the curse in Genesis 3:17b and the Millennium (see Isaiah 65:18-25)** ] along together with us until now.

7. If the fall of man caused the universe to be cursed to be followed by restoration to perfection at the Millennium then it follows that the fall of Lucifer would have caused the same thing, also followed by a restoration to perfection during the six days documented in Genesis 1:3-31.
8. Youngblood goes on to suggest that those who subscribe to the doctrine of the “gap” or “interval” imagine that the “geologic ages ensued (during the ‘gap’).” The geologic ages referenced by science may or may not have occurred during this time.
9. The fossil record shows great upheavals which science explains with geologic ages but these fossils also support the catastrophist’s view. Various strata were probably laid down during both the interval between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 as well as during the universal flood of Genesis 7-8.
10. Some have asked where the dinosaurs fit into this scheme. I suggest they were wiped out during the “gap” or “interval” between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. We glean from this interesting observation in:



**Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia, 15th ed., s.v. "dinosaur":**

Most types of dinosaurs continued to flourish until the very latest phases of the Cretaceous Period. Then they disappear completely from the geologic record [ **the cataclysm between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2** ]; the earliest beds of the Cenozoic, the age of the mammals [ **Restoration: Day 6, Genesis 1:24** ], which appear to follow closely in time, show not the slightest trace of a dinosaur. What caused this sudden extinction? The answer is not at all clear.

1. What caused this was the original sin of Satan. This act called for a trial at bar at which the entire angelic population appeared before the Supreme Court of Heaven.

2. A "trial at bar" according to:

**Black, Henry Campbell. *Black's Law Dictionary*. Rev. 4th ed. (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1968), 1676:**

A trial resorted to in cases where the matter in dispute is one of great importance and difficulty. It takes place before all the judges at the bar of the court in which the action is brought.

3. The trial following the Luciferian Rebellion was tried by all the Judges: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
4. The question before the Court was whether the rebellious angels would choose to follow, serve, and obey God or continue their sedition and follow Lucifer instead.
5. Revelation 12:3, 9 note that the number of angels choosing the latter amounted to one-third of the angelic population. They were all convicted of sedition and sentenced to eternity in the lake of fire, which was created for the devil and his angels:

**Matthew 25:41 -** "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

6. It was at this trial that Lucifer was assigned the title consistent with his function in the courtroom. Since Lucifer acted as defense attorney for himself and the rebellious angels his title was:

**שָׂטָן *Satan* -** The basic meaning is "hostility" and "opposition."

Other concepts include "animosity toward; to be at enmity." It describes those who express hatred by "repaying good with evil; to seek an opponent's downfall." In a legal sense it refers to a defense attorney, an accuser, or an adversary. In Job, Satan is Job's enemy and opponent. We can also see Satan's function in the divine courtroom in Zechariah 3 where he is called an accuser or adversary:

**Zechariah 3:1 -** Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord [ Jesus Christ ], and Satan [ שָׂטָן ] standing at the high priest's right hand to accuse [ שָׂטָן ] him.

7. The Hebrew title *Satan* is used twice, first as a title and secondly as a function. A corrected translation that reflects these ideas is:

**Zechariah 3:1 -** Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord [ Jesus Christ ], and the Adversary [ שָׂטָן ] standing at the high priest's right hand to be an adversary [ שָׂטָן ] to him.

8. The Bible assigns this title to Lucifer for the remainder of the Angelic Conflict. His title's Greek equivalent is:

**διάβολος *diabolos* -** Translated "the devil."

9. This word also means the "slanderer" or the "adversary" as can be noted in:



**1 Peter 5:8** - Be of sober spirit. Become vigilant. Your adversary [ ἀντίδικος *antidikos*: an opponent in a lawsuit; an adversary ], the devil [ διάβολος *diabolos*: accuser or adversary ], prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

10. The Greek also expresses the Hebrew title **שָׂטָן** *Satan* with the transliteration:  
**Σατανᾶς** *Satanas* - This title also means adversary and becomes the noun “Satan.”
11. Thus the title, Satan, is primarily a legal term indicating that in the appeal trial, Lucifer serves as the defense attorney for himself and the fallen angels. The chilling reality we learn from this is that Lucifer was the first trial lawyer.