

The Age of Angels

Ezekiel 28:12-19

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Provocative Question:

What happened between Genesis 1:1 & 1:2?

Why isn't the Gap Theory discussed in church?

- We avoid controversy in today's church.
- Controversy divides people and we should be united.
- It is not considered relevant for the here and now.
- It is only a theory; shouldn't stick to what we know for sure?

How might consideration of the Gap Theory be important?

- It will shed more light on God and His ways.
- It will help us better understand how the earth appears to be older than Genesis would lead us to believe.
- It is a non-essential but provides an opportunity to delve deeper into God's Word for those who take inerrancy seriously.

Does Genesis 2:1 say the angels were created during the 6 days of creation?

Genesis 2:1 sums up the creation week – *"thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them were finished."*

No... The angels are not specifically mentioned in the six days of creation but this could have happened in there somewhere. However, Genesis 2:1 just says all of creation was finished on the sixth day, not that all creation happened during the six days.

When was the earth created?

A careful reading of Genesis 1 indicates that the earth was actually created prior to the six days of creation. The first thing God created on the first day of creation was light per Genesis 1:3. The previous verse, Genesis 1:2 says the earth was already in existence prior to the day light was created. Granted, the earth was formless and void but it had to have been created sometime prior to the six days of creation.

When were the angels created?

Job 38:4, 7 – *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? ...when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"*

The term *"sons of God"* refers to angels because they were all created directly by God. So this verse says that the angels were all created prior to the creation of the earth. This means we know that both the earth and the angels were created prior to the six days of creation.

Where in Scripture might we find more details about the creation of angels?

God did reveal to us more details about the creation of angels because He told us about the origin and fall of Lucifer, the most notorious of all the angels.

So this provides us with our main text for this study... Ezekiel 28:12-19. We will also refer to a parallel passage in Isaiah 14...

The name Lucifer is used in Isaiah 14 and it means "light bearer, luminous, or star of the morning." What does this name reveal about his creation?

This name reflects how Lucifer was created; his other names are more descriptive of him after his fall. Satan is more of a title of his role and means "adversary." The term Devil is from the Greek word *diabolos* and means "accuser, slanderer, or one who maligns."

The Ezekiel passage we'll look at starts out talking about the King of Tyre but it becomes obvious pretty quick that this passage is not about some earthly king.

Why might Lucifer be called the King of Tyre in this passage?

No doubt Satan was the spirit behind the King of Tyre as he has been other earthly kings in history. Indeed, Jesus referred to Satan as *"the ruler of this world"* in John 12:31.

Ezekiel 28:12-19

¹² *"Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*

¹³ *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.*

¹⁴ *"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.*

¹⁵ *You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you.*

¹⁶ *"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.*

¹⁷ *"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.*

¹⁸ *"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.*

*¹⁹ All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you;
you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever."*

Did you identify some reasons this passage can only be referring to Lucifer?

Lucifer was created perfect, he was referred to as the anointed cherub and given great authority serving in the presence of God. He was also in the garden of Eden. The Bible only tells us about one angel in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. And Satan was already in his fallen state when he tempted Eve to disobey God. Notice that Satan was created perfect in wisdom, beauty and his ways to serve in the presence of God on the mountain of God.

What might be the significance of the 9 precious stones that adorned Lucifer?

- This is reminiscent of the 12 precious stones that adorned the high priest who presided over the priests who served in the Tabernacle and Temple.
- It is interesting to note that the number 9 is often associated with the judgment of God in Scripture.
- The words translated timbrels and pipes probably refer to the sockets and settings for the precious stones.

What do we know about the cherubim?

The cherubim are a special class of high-ranking angel that had four faces, wings and served in the presence of God. Most angels are not described as having wings as popular culture depicts them, but the cherubim certainly did.

Verse 14 says this particular cherub was anointed by God to "cover." What might that mean?

It brings to mind the cherubim depicted on the Ark of the Covenant with wings covering the lid. The lid of the Ark is called the mercy seat and it represents the throne of God in heaven. The point is that Lucifer was given a position of great power represented by him being close to God.

Verse 14 says Lucifer "walked back and forth in the midst of the fiery stones." What does this bring to mind?

God gave Moses a vision of Himself which included this in Exodus 24:10, *"there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity."* The fiery stones were probably the sapphire stone pavement near God's throne in heaven that reflected God's glory.

Verse 15 – What might it mean that Lucifer was perfect in his ways?

Lucifer was certainly a formidable creature with perfect beauty and wisdom. And he was also perfect in his ways. The only indication of what this could be referring to is the function of the office God ordained him to and the "trading" he conducted. Verse 16 says that Lucifer engaged in an abundance of trading.

Why might the fact that the angels engaged in trading shed light on why Lucifer was referred to the King of Tyre?

The city of Tyre was an ancient Phoenician nation-state in what is now known as Lebanon. The Phoenicians were known for

becoming wealthy from trade. And their end would be the dust bin of history when Alexander the Great conquered them.

Why don't we normally think of angels engaged in trade?

The idea of commerce is generally considered such a worldly activity. The stock market before electronic trading comes to mind where buyers and sellers gathered together yelling bids and counter-bids at each other. Angelic trading was surely much more civilized.

How might the angels have been engaged in trade?

In the Age before Adam, God may have given the angels a mission to accomplish and Lucifer would have had a significant role in administering that mission. We don't know what that mission was but can surmise that its purpose was to determine which angels would remain in their created condition loyal to God and which ones would rebel against him. Just as this Age is determined which humans would embrace the provision God made for our salvation and who will reject it.

What biblical support is there for the idea that the angels were given a mission by God prior to the Age of mankind?

God is the *same yesterday, today, and forever* so He works in patterns...

- Genesis 1:28 describes the mission God gave mankind before our original sin saying, *"fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*
- As God commissioned mankind to be stewards of the earth, it is likely that God likewise made the angels stewards of the earth before us. The trading that the angels engaged in was probably related to their stewardship of the pre-Adamic earth.

What do we know about the division between the holy and the fallen angels?

Lucifer was the highest ranking of the angels who rebelled against God. Per Revelation 12:4, a third of the angels joined Satan in rebellion against their Creator.

Verse 16 – What was the consequence for Lucifer's rebellion?

Lucifer lost his position serving close to God when iniquity was found in him being cast out of the mountain of God per Ezekiel 28:16.

- But Satan continued to have access to God in heaven as we see in Job.
- And even today Satan gets to have an audience with God in his role as the accuser of the brethren per Revelation 12:10.
- But the day will come when Satan and his fallen angel followers will be cast out of the spiritual realm and on to the earth (Revelation 12:8-9).

God gives us some insight into Satan's motivation for his rebellion in Isaiah 14:12-14...

Isaiah 14:12-14

¹² *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!*

¹³ *For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;*

*I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'*

Why did Lucifer rebel against God?

Satan arrogantly thought he could be like God. He aspired to "ascend into heaven" in Isaiah 14:13.

What does this tell us about where Lucifer was when he rebelled against God?

This indicates that the pre-Adamic earth where the angels engaged in trading was where Satan sinned in his heart rejecting his relationship to God.

- This reinforces the idea that the pre-Adamic earth was the place where the eternal destiny of angels was determined.
- Likewise, the earth today is where mankind undergoes trials that determine where we'll spend eternity and what our rewards will be.

What was God's plan of salvation for the angels?

God made no provision for the salvation of angels like He did for people but unlike people who can choose to be in a relationship with our creator, all angels were created in a relationship with God and could choose to break from that. Apparently a third of them made that choice.

If the pre-Adamic earth was where angels conducted their trading, what does that tell us about what purpose the trading served?

The trading the angels engaged in on the pre-Adamic earth was probably used to sort out the capacity individual angels had in working with God to manage His creation as the first stewards of the earth.

Is there any indication in Ezekiel 28 of how long the angels engaged in trading?

This is not revealed in Scripture but we get some indication that there could be some significant time involved. Ezekiel 28:16 says that Satan engaged in an "abundance" of trading which resulted in him becoming filled with violence within.

Verse 17 – What connection did Lucifer's trading have with his rebellion?

Lucifer's beauty, wisdom and ways made him a very successful trader and this went to his head leading him to think he could be like God. As verse 17 puts it, his heart was lifted up because of his beauty corrupting his wisdom.

What indication is there in the passage of time from verse 18?

More indication of the passage of time is given in verse 18 where it says Satan defiled his sanctuaries. Apparently, Satan had authority over multiple sanctuaries. A sanctuary is a place of refuge or safety; it is also used to refer to a nature reserve. Satan defiled the places on earth over which he had authority.

- Sin has consequences as we have seen from Adam and Eve disobeying God resulting in this fallen earth. It is likely the sin of Satan resulted in consequences on the pre-Adamic earth where he conducted his trading.

Verse 18 also refers to the multitude of Satan's inequities in the conduct of his trading which would require some amount of

time. Given the patience of God, this could represent a lot of time.

What does verse 18 have to say about the ultimate consequences for Lucifer's rebellion?

Satan's inequities will result in his ultimate demise, "*I turned you to ashes upon the earth.*" I take it that this is yet future since Satan is currently engaged in accusing the brethren during this Age.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is described in Revelation at the end of the Millennial Kingdom when God uses Satan to spur on the last human rebellion and then is banished from the earth per Revelation 20:9, "*fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.*" Then Satan is thrown into the Lake of Fire which is permanent eternal hell. No one ever gets out of the Lake of Fire. As Ezekiel 28:19 puts it, he "*shall be no more forever.*"

So, while we don't know how long the pre-Adamic earth existed and served as a place where angels were tested as stewards of a physical world, what can we be sure of?

That there had to be consequences for the sin of Satan and the other fallen angels. Thus, the creation of the physical world during the six days of creation described in Genesis Chapter 1 could have actually been a re-creation of a new physical world following God's judgment on a world corrupted by fallen angels.

In Genesis 1, the earth is described as formless and void, in darkness and covered in water per Genesis 1:2. Why would God create the earth to be this way?

This state could have been the consequence of the sin of the fallen angels. God works in patterns He reveals to us. He re-created the earth during Noah's day by flooding it in judgment of mankind's sinfulness. It is easy to see how He might have used the same form of judgment in response to the sinfulness of the fallen angels.

How does that fact that God promised to "never again" destroy the earth by a flood three times in Genesis 9 reinforce that idea that a flood was used previously?

Why would God emphasize "never again" so much? If the flood of Noah was a singular event, why didn't God just say He would not flood the world again. But instead, He emphasized this three times that He would "never again" flood the earth.

Why is it not too great a stretch for us to realize that there was a previous age for the earth prior to Adam?

The earth-Age we are now in is different from the one before the flood. In the Age before Noah's flood, it did not rain anywhere on earth per Genesis 2:5. And the earth will be different again with most of the curse removed when Jesus rules during the Age of the Millennial Kingdom as described in Isaiah 65. After that, the earth will be renovated by fire making it different again for the Eternal State. That makes five different Ages for the earth that Scripture reveals. Each different earth-Age is the result of God re-creating the earth following a time of judgment as a consequence for the failure of those undergoing trials. In all cases, God delivers those who are faithful to Him and each Age provides important lessons to be learned by God's people.

Since mankind is currently in an Age of trials today, why wouldn't God have arranged an Age of trials for the angels as well?

During this age of trials for mankind, the angels are engaged in activities that serve God's purpose in that regard.

- As part of worshiping God, the holy angels are serving as God's messengers, as His soldiers in spiritual combat, and as His ministers to the people of God.
- God could accomplish His purposes without using the Angels but He often chooses to involve them in His work to bless them.
- Even the fallen angels are used by God to tempt us during this time of trials for mankind.

What light does that shed on our role during the Millennial Kingdom?

As angels are being used by God today to minister to us so that some will be saved... we too will be used by God to minister to the mortals of the millennial Kingdom

What does our deeper understanding about God's purpose for an Age of Angels cause us to consider about the Eternal State?

Who is to say that God is done creating when the ages of mankind's trials are over and we are comfortably settled into our eternal abodes in the New Jerusalem?

- In describing the New Jerusalem, why would God say in Revelation 21:27, *"there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."*
- Does this mean that in the future of the Eternal State there will be other intelligent beings who will undergo an Age of testing?
- The idea that God will never stop creating seems to be re-enforced by Isaiah 9:7 which says, *"of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end."*

How should this vision of the Eternal State motivate us to get on with what God is calling us to do?

Each of us should want to be a part of what God is doing in eternity. It is guaranteed to be exciting and worth all the difficulties we navigate in our current time of trials.

So what are we to take from this look at the origin and fall of Lucifer?

This is just more evidence that God is more amazing than we can imagine. Just when we think we have Him figured out, He will reveal something about Himself that will blow our minds. And God reveals these amazing things to those who want to go deep with Him. Even the smallest details in Scripture speak to us about our Lord that will bless us if we take the time to get to know them.