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Making Light of a Problem

Stumped! - or so it would seem. Some stars are billions of light years away from us yet we can see their light every night - when it's not cloudy. There can be no argument at all; the universe *is* billions of years old and not just 6,000, as Creationists say it is. So how can we question statistics and findings like these?

Stars in Creation

The Genesis story cannot be married to the scientific account of origins, though some have tried. In chapter one we read that the Earth was the first object created and that the two great lights, plus the stars, were created on Day 4 of Creation Week (Gen. 1:14-20). We assume that the 'great lights' - one to govern the day and the other the night - were the Sun and Moon, though that is not necessarily so. Thus the luminaries, whether near or distant, were created four days after the Earth. Their purposes were to give light and heat to the

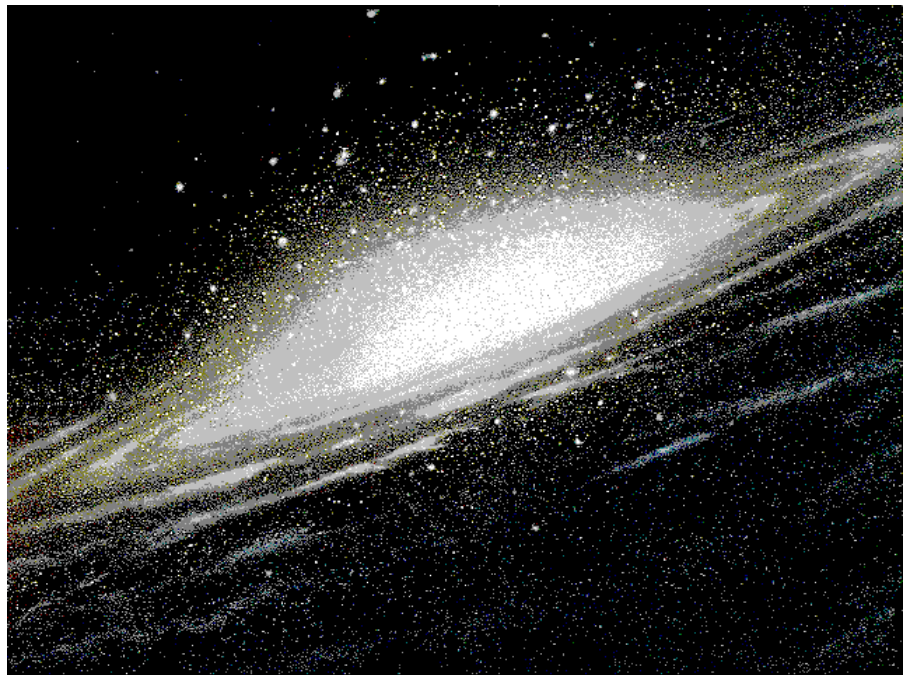
Earth, to separate day and night, and for signs and for seasons. Far from being an insignificant 'microdot' on the 'page' of the universe (see *Genesis Accepted* Number 6), the Earth was the focal point of it all, in the biblical account (see article in this issue on 'Angels as Created Beings').

Some believers in a genuine, though mistaken, attempt to marry the two accounts, have suggested that Moses saw creation in a vision and that the clouds rolled back on Day 4. Then he saw what had actually been there all of the time, for the first time. Hence he placed their creation on Day 4 and not Day 1. It is a nice try but it will not work because it removes God's stated reason for their creation and reduces the Earth to insignificance on the scale of creation.

Others have recognized the problem for what it is and have suggested that when God created He placed the stars at these vast distances but put their light in place across time and space in an instant. There is no doubt that He could have done this, but to all except the most avid fundamentalist, this seems like a fudge. It certainly cuts no ice with the serious scientific searcher after the truth.

Recognising assumptions again

We must remember that all the information we have about stars rests on the assumption that we know the properties of light and that they always apply equally well deep in space and back in time. This is an act



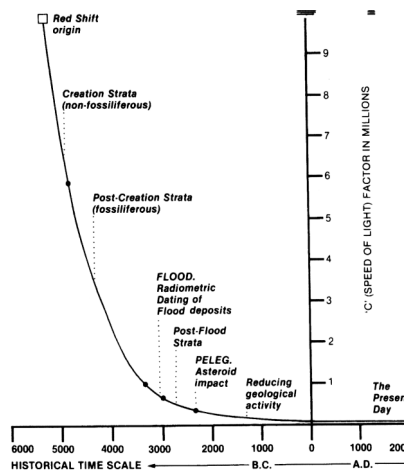
Light from the stars presents a problem for a Young Earth scenario

of faith. Scientists have no way of testing these assumptions. If they can be shown to be false, or at least questionable, there will be reasonable grounds for looking elsewhere for a solution.

Towards a solution

The ideas we are going to explore below are embryonic. Every 'i' has not been dotted nor every 't' crossed within them. Nevertheless they show that there are serious, scientifically sound, alternative explanations for the problems presented by the stars. Final solutions are going to come from somewhere along these lines. There is exciting research currently being done in this field.

Barry Setterfield



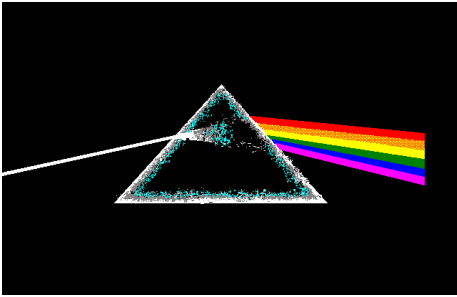
Setterfield's speed of light (C) curve from the 'best fit' equation
(Copied from the CSM disc of pamphlets No 1)

At the end of the 1970s, Barry Setterfield - an Australian graduate in Physics and Geology - was invited to finalize for publication the research of the late Government Astronomer for South Australia, George F. Dodwell. It was while preparing this that he came across figures which indicated that the speed of light - that keystone constant of uniformitarian science - has not, in fact, been constant but had decreased until *circa* 1960, when it settled down to its stable speed of 186,282.34 miles per second. In 1983 he published his first monograph on the subject entitled, *The Velocity Of Light and The Age Of The Universe* (published by Creation Science Association Inc.). It is a technical monograph copiously supported by figures and equations, the majority of which can only be followed by the most expert.

In trying to ascertain the equation for the graph which would best fit the findings, he was astonished to discover that the one which seemed to fit best produced a curve which rose fairly gently going back in time until, at around 4082 BC, plus or minus 100 years, it rose sharply almost to infinity (see diagram opposite). This is virtually the time on the biblical time scale when creation began. He had not expected that but the implications were clear for all to see.

Implications

If the speed of light was nearly at infinity, light from the most distant stars could reach us in a very short time, and those from nearer stars almost instantaneously. If true, this would solve the problem of how stars could be visible only four days after Creation began. However there are other implica-



Some properties of light

tions here for the Creation/Evolution debate.

Other implications

The radiometric dating of rocks, though suspect in many ways (see *GA* Number 5) nevertheless does come up consistently with figures in the millions, or billions, of years rather than the thousands. Scientists can show that radioactive disintegration rates are linked to the speed of light. If these were almost infinitely fast at the beginning, the Earth's atomic clocks would tick at almost infinite speed too so that when we look at them now they will give enormously high readings from what Creationists believe was a very short time span. Other pointers to the age of the Earth (*GA* Number 6) were not so affected and therefore indicate younger, accurate ages. (There are other implications which we cannot cover in this short article.)

Unintentional confirmation

That Setterfield was right about the inconsistency of the speed of light, received confirmation in a report in the *Sunday Telegraph* for 22nd December 1996. There it said:

'...every now and then evidence emerges that nature likes to play games with science. Take the curious case of the constant speed of light. According to Einstein's Theory of Relativity, light travels at the same speed for everyone, everywhere and for all time... By the late Twenties the accepted figure was 186,285 miles per second... But then things mysteriously went pear-shaped. Scientists who measured the speed of light between 1928 and 1945 all found similar values - and they were all around 3 percent lower than the previously accepted value. Not until the mid-Fifties did the speed pick up again...'

Rupert Sheldrake pointed out this in his recent book, Seven Experiments That Could Change The World, the speed of light is not the only constant that isn't: others, such as the charge on the electron, have also gone on occasional walkabout.'

We must remember that ALL uniformitarian assumptions, on which evolutionary theories depend, rely on the constancy of constants. If they can be shown to be unreliable, or better still false, the edifice collapses like a pack of cards in a breeze.

Starlight and time

Dr. D. Russell Humphreys, a Ph.D in Physics, and a Six-Day Creationist, was

inspired by Setterfield's work, but not convinced by his results or thesis. Even if the speed of light has not been constant, he feels the degree of erring is not sufficient to produce the required effects. He began to examine the problem on the ground of the Theory of General Relativity to see if answers could be found there. He has published an excellent little book summarizing his findings, called *Starlight and Time* (Creation Life Publishers).

Humphreys tells us that if you assume the universe to be unbounded, and to be expanding, and feed that through the mill of the Theory of General Relativity, the Big Bang drops out as a consequence of the data. On the other hand, if you assume the universe to be bounded and to have expanded, you finish up with a white hole cosmology, which actually fits the scientific scenario better than the unbounded cosmos theory, AND the biblical scenario too. As far as we are concerned, the significant section surrounds what happens at the event horizon. Let us explain.

It is known that gravity affects time. Identical clocks at the top and bottom of a mountain will run faster at the top. Neither one is more accurate. Both work perfectly within their time reference; it's just that a neutral observer would find them not running at the same rates. Now, imagine that you are falling towards a black hole. Black holes are so strong in gravity that nothing can escape from them. Matter can come in, and indeed the black hole can expand, but not even light can escape. The light inside such a hole will only move out to the boundary of the black hole and then turn back on itself. This boundary is called the 'event horizon' and as you fall towards it an astronomer watching you from afar would note your watch ticking slower and slower.

You, on the other hand, would see the astronomer's clock running faster and faster. He will begin to whiz around the lab. You will see planets and stars moving rapidly on their orbits and then the whole universe will speed up and age at a frenzied pace, yet your own watch will be ticking normally. As you cross the event horizon you will see bright light once in-

side and your watch will tick on as normal but effectively time stands still at the event horizon. Clocks and all physical processes there are stopped (and run very slowly near to it) **relative** to the clocks away from it.

In a white hole cosmological model (which is a black hole running in reverse), time will still stand still at the event horizon. All things, however, pass out across it and the hole shrinks. 'If you were standing on the earth as the event horizon arrived, distant objects in the universe could age billions of years in a single day of your time. And there would be ample time for their light to reach you (page 28). As time for you ticked normally on your watch, it stood still relative to the rest of the cosmos, which aged as the event horizon passed over you, shrinking the white hole into oblivion.'

In the Humphreys's scenario, God created a ball of liquid water (the 'deep'), which was 2 light-years in diameter with an event horizon some 0.5 billion light years beyond. It is a formless black hole and all the matter of the universe is contained therein. On Day 2, God stretches out space and turns the black hole into a white hole. The event horizon begins to shrink and reaches Earth on Day 4. During this ordinary day, as measured on Earth, billions of years worth of physical processes take place in the distant cosmos. In particular, gravity has time to make distant clusters of hydrogen and helium more compact... [and]... early on the fourth morning, God coalesces the clusters of atoms into stars and thermonuclear fusion ignites them... As the fourth Day proceeds on Earth, the more distant stars age billions of years, while their light also has the same billions of years to travel to the Earth (pages 37-38). Space continues to expand while this is happening and light gets stretched, shifting the wavelengths towards the red end of the spectrum. The furthest stars show the greatest redshift, which is what we now observe. God stopped the expansion before the evening of the Sixth Day and Adam and Eve could see the heavens in all their splendour.

Conclusion

These are two scientifically respectable explanations for the problem posed to Young Earth adherents by light from the stars. They are made by highly credited scientists who believe in a six-day creation, but who do not believe in a flat Earth! You do not have to put your mind into reverse to believe in the biblical scenario. Of course, there is still a good deal of research needed to be done in this area before an absolutely watertight explanation can be offered but be aware that there are answers being worked on and scientists who believe in the Bible are finding answers to the knottiest of questions.



Angels as created beings

The study of angels, and by association the study of Satan, is increasing in popularity today in both Christian and quasi-religious circles. When I was at university, a lassie at a midweek Bible study I was attending said, “I don’t believe in angels. I can’t see why God created them or what they’re for.” So the group did a study on them and at the end she admitted, “Well I have to believe in them because the Bible tells me they are there, but I still can’t see any point in them. God could do all the looking after us Himself without using angels to do it for Him.” She had a point, but the fact of the matter is that God did create them and does use them to carry out many of His wishes in His dealings with mankind. Maybe we’ll never know why but certainly He had/has His reasons.

Now, though we can easily study the types of angels God created and note that they fall into ranks of angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim, in ascending order (though the two latter may well have equal status), there is a good deal of erroneous thinking about them which I want to explore in this article. They do indeed have a wonderful ministry throughout the Bible, and some readers may never have studied this in any detail. However I want to look at a different aspect of the subject here, specifically from a Creation starting point, and possibly say a lot of things which are new to you. A good Bible dictionary will guide you through the sorts of ministry angels performed, and still perform, for the Lord. You will marvel and give thanks for what they do, as a result of such a study, but here I want to try to take you beyond that more simplistic, descriptive approach into areas of analysis you may never ever have considered before! That doesn’t mean to say that this study will be so deep you can’t fathom it. On the contrary it will not be overly deep but probably will be very different for most of you. Maybe it will stretch all our minds in useful directions. I pray that it will for it has definitely stretched mine!

Angels are created beings with free will

The fact that angels are created beings and have free will are the key points being made in this study. Grasp these two notions and hang on to them for they are essential.

As created beings angels were not eternally existent, though they cannot die, and will therefore certainly live on for ever. Colossians 1:15-16 is as good a passage as any to start making the point: *‘He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were creat-*

ed through him and for him.’ Thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities refers to angels. Christ was the creator of all things in both heaven and on Earth, and so angels were definitely created.

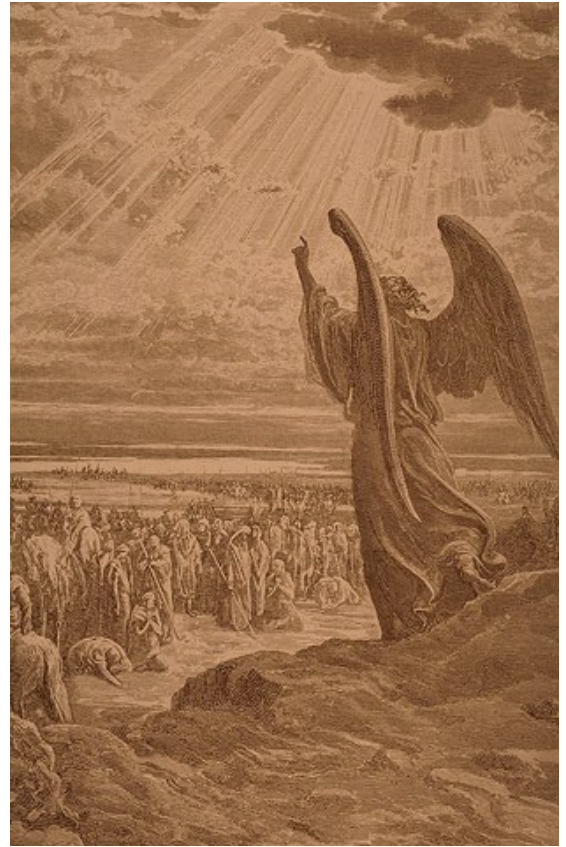
On the question of their immortality, Jesus once was responding to a tricky question from the Sadducees about the status of the saved in the resurrection. They did not believe in the resurrection of the saints but Jesus told them: *‘The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.’* (Luke 20:34-36, emphasis added). When the worthy attain to life in the resurrection they cannot die because they are equal to angels. Obviously then, angels too cannot die, though, like us, they are created beings.

Consequently they did not exist from all eternity. Had they done so, their nature would have been akin to God’s nature. However, as created beings their nature is akin to ours because we too are created beings. We will see that they are, in fact, very like us in their basic creation, more so than we might have suspected on a superficial level of understanding about them.

When were they created?

Here is where we are about to depart from the more conventional views about angels. We know that they were witnesses to the creation of the world. In Job 38:4-7, the Lord is castigating poor old Job for his ignorance. He asks him: *‘Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements — surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?’* The terms ‘morning stars’ and ‘sons of God’ are both metaphors for angels in this passage. They witnessed the laying of the foundations of the Earth and the whole of the magnificence of the creation of the physical universe. They were so excited about it that they sang for joy. Quite clearly they were created before the world was created.

This has led many to believe that they were created in ‘eternity past’ before God began to create on Day 1 of Creation Week. Indeed the most popular scenario is that not only were they created well in



The commander of the Lord’s army (Joshua 5)

advance of the creation of the world but that, by the time God began to create the physical world, Satan and his angels had already rebelled against God and were fallen. This concept is linguistically wrong, spiritually wrong, and is totally unsupported by scripture.

Angels are created beings, as we have already emphasized, and **you can’t have a created being being created before creation began!** Scripture tells us exactly when they were created. ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ (Gen. 1:1). What was the first thing God created? The heavens. So what were the heavens He created? Well they were not the things we normally think of as the heavens because in them, up there, we find the sun, moon and stars. He did not create those bodies until Day 4, so whatever is meant by the creation of ‘the heavens’ it was not the creation of stars and galaxies, or planets and moons. Nor was it the creation of the atmosphere for that came on Day 2. When God separated the waters, He called the upper ‘waters’, or atmosphere, ‘Heaven’ (Gen.1:8), thereby creating our notion of heaven itself as being ‘up there’. This was after His initial creation. So whatever we understand ‘the heavens’ of Genesis 1:1 to mean, it must have included the creation of the created beings whose normal dwelling place is in the heavens: namely the angelic hosts. These included Satan, who then also ‘sang for joy’, as he too witnessed the worlds being created. He was definitely not fallen in Creation Week (see below: ‘Perfection at the end of the first week’).

Angels and time

Therefore, when God decided to create the universe, the very first thing He did was create the angels. Let's be sort of silly and say that in the very first minute of Day 1 God called into being all of the heavenly host. Time had just begun and angels are as much a part of time as we are. It defines their boundaries as it does ours.

Angels, therefore, are not time-less. They have to operate with time in mind just as much as we do. If you doubt this, ask yourself what will happen to them at the end of time? Like us, they await the consummation of the ages, when there will be a Day of Judgement. The faithful angels will go on to an eternity with God, just as faithful human beings will, and the wicked angels will be cast into hell along with their master Satan. Hell was actually prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41).

Some fallen angels are currently being held in the prison of *Tartarus* in the hadean world awaiting judgement (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6). Who they are and what they did was discussed at length in *Genesis Accepted* Number 6. The rest have been thrown out of their place in the heavens and have come down to earth to join Satan doing his worst 'because he knows his time is short' (Rev. 12:7-12). This ejection took place at the time of the Cross, and the triumph over death of the resurrection, because they were defeated by 'the blood of the Lamb' (Rev. 12:11). When did the Lamb shed His blood? At Calvary. Approaching Calvary, Jesus predicted that, "Now is the judgement of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out," (John 12:31). It is Satan who is called 'the ruler of this world' in the context here. Jesus knew what the Cross, and His shed blood, was going to do to the devil; it was a big part of 'the joy that was set before Him' (Heb. 12:2) for 'the reason [He] appeared was to destroy the works of the devil' (1John 3:8). In His revelation to John, Jesus told him that 'the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows his time is short!' (Rev. 12:12). What is short for the devil? His time. Satan is tied inextricably to our world, and therefore to time, just as we are, and so is the rest of the angelic host.

Instant shouting for joy

So God called all the angels into being in an instant, in one magnificent burst of creative energy at the very beginning of Day 1 - but nobody witnessed it. There were no other created beings to witness it. This was the only time that such a thing occurred. There-



Balaam's ass shies away from the angel

after none of God's acts of Creation went unappreciated. How could they appreciate the Creation?

Everything God created during that amazing first week of time was up and running perfectly from the instance of its creation. Nothing had to grow, or learn, or mature. Adam was fully functional and able to name the animals even before Eve was created. He had all his faculties and all the understanding he needed from the second he took his first breath. The angels were no different. They did not have to think about singing and shouting for joy. They did not have to learn to appreciate what God was doing as He created the world. They praised Him and sang for joy fully knowing why and what they were doing despite only being, as we suggested, one minute old! Both they and Adam shared an instantaneous 'knowledge and understanding' faculty.

Perfection at the end of the first week

By the end of the first week, in fact on Day 6, 'God saw **everything** that he had made, and behold, it was very good (Gen. 1:31, emphasis added). God looked at the heavens and the earth, which He created in the beginning, and every other thing He created on each of those special Days, and pronounced them to be 'very good'. He could not have done so had His heavens already been corrupted. Satan, created on Day 1, was still living in a perfect state, as were all of the angelic host. The whole of Creation was perfect, both in heaven and on Earth. It was not half-and-half with the Earth being 'very good' but the heavens already being fallen.

So when did Satan fall? I am going to suggest that the Fall, so graphically pictured in Genesis Chapter 3, was when both Satan and Adam and Eve fell. It was one single act of rebellion in the heavens and on Earth. There were not two separate rebellions: a heavenly one before Adam's transgression and then the earthly one. To

think this is the fault of the notion of a split Creation. I want to maintain this point by considering the whole of Creation as a single event and not as two separate events.

The Unity of Creation

Had angels not been created beings but rather had some sort of eternal existence, they would have been almost God-like, and their natures would be akin to His, as we have already said. But they are, in fact, exactly like us in so many ways - some more

of which we are going to consider further on - that we are forced to conclude that they are actually far more like us than they are like God!

Once we grasp the notion that Creation was one unified act ensuring that both the heavens and the Earth were part of the same picture, and neither is complete without the other, we can move forward in our analysis and understanding of angels.

I must confess that I used to think of them as almost two separate creations. I have long believed that angels were created as the first act of Creation on Day 1, as outlined above, but that the angels did their thing in the heavens, and we do our thing on Earth, and that the two realms only mixed on rare occasions when God sent, and sends, His angels on special commissions down to us.

I am now going to suggest that the evidence actually strongly points to an entirely different scenario. The heavens and the Earth are wonderfully intertwined. Just as Paul used the analogy of the parts of the body to designate different functions in the church, and that not all have the same gifts or functions within it (1 Cor. 12:12-27), so I am going to suggest that this analogy applies equally well to Creation. Just as the body has many members, which do not all have the same function yet all are equally members of it, so Creation has many members. Some are called to be cherubim and seraphim, some archangels, some angels, and some humans, yet each form part of the unity of the Creation. Creation was not a bitty, unplanned thing where God made some angels, then He thought it was such a good idea that He would make the Earth and put people on it. No, it was all part of a united master plan of Creation, beautifully inter-linked and serving a united purpose. On realising this fact, I realised that so much of the nature and function of angels made amazing sense, and the pieces began to drop into place like a jigsaw when you find the

linking pieces to join up the separate bits you have been working on. Once you see the links, you begin to grasp the meaning of the whole and the picture starts to make sense as never before.

The nature of angels and men

Angels, like men, have free will. They choose to remain faithful or they can rebel, just as we can and do. For example, Jesus went into the hadean realm between His death and resurrection to proclaim something to certain 'spirits in prison [who] formerly did not obey.' (1 Peter 3:19, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6.) (Again, see *Genesis Accepted* Number 6 for further analysis of this particular disobedience). What are the implications of this?

For there to be freedom of the will there has to be a definition of choices which can be made. For Adam and Eve it was very simple. 'Do not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' (Gen. 2:16). Obviously they could do it but they mustn't. They must freely exercise their wills to choose to do as God told them. Angels do the same. God must have given them a set of instructions - call them 'Angel Commandments' - which they had to obey. They most certainly could disobey them but, like their human counterparts, they were not to. Some apparently did, led by Satan, so they disobeyed and fell.

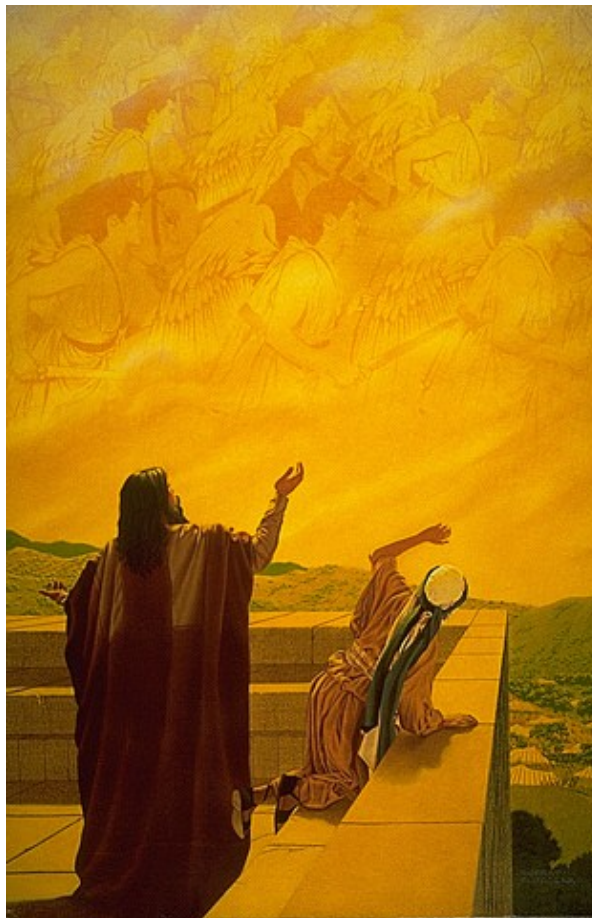
Angelic Commandments

We have absolutely no idea exactly what God's commandments to His angels were. However, by looking at the nature of the ones given to mankind and seeing just how some of the angels and Satan behave, we can possibly draw up a few. I tried to get to ten, just to establish a parallel pattern, but I couldn't. Nevertheless here are those which I think might be possibilities:

1. 'You shall have no other gods before me.'
2. 'You must honour the name of the Lord your God.'
3. 'You shall not murder.'
4. 'You shall keep your proper station and not desire to be as humans.'
5. 'You shall not steal.'
6. 'You shall not bear false witness.'
7. 'You shall not covet.'

Seven is a biblical number associated with angels so maybe my seven are not too far out! It should not be too difficult to see how most of them would apply to angels. In Isaiah 14:12-15, we see a picture of some of the thinking of Satan ('Lucifer', AV) applied to the King of Babylon:
*"How you are fallen from heaven,
 O Day Star, son of Dawn!*

*How you are cut down to the ground,
 you who laid the nations low!
 You said in your heart,
 'I will ascend to heaven;
 above the stars of God
 I will set my throne on high;
 I will sit on the mount of assembly
 in the far reaches of the north;
 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High.'
 But you are brought down to Sheol,
 to the far reaches of the pit."*
 Satan, in pride, wanted to make himself 'like the Most High'. In other words, he wanted to be a god and set himself up as one. That was a form of blasphemy ('commandment' number 2), and many



Angelic armies surround Elisha and his servant

angels decided to have him as their god (number 1). Satan was a 'murderer from the beginning and has nothing to do with the truth' (John 8:44) and thus he broke 'commandments' numbers 3 and 6, He stole the affection of Adam and Eve from God by lying to them after coveting their allegiance (numbers 5 and 7).

My 'commandment' number 4, might not be so obvious, or acceptable to many because I apply it biblically to the actions of angels as 'the sons of God' in Genesis 6:1-4, fully covered in *Genesis Accepted* Number 6. The commandment, as I might articulate it from the Ten Commandments, would be 'You shall not commit adultery.'

That angels can and do interact with people, appearing frequently as normal people themselves, is perfectly well understood in the scriptures. For example, two angels came to visit Abraham, along with the Lord Himself (Genesis 18), prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. They seemed to be normal men and the men of Sodom wanted to treat them as such by inflicting their abnormal practices on to their bodies. Hebrews tells us that we might have entertained angels unaware, not realising that they were heavenly messengers (13:2). However, there were obviously heavenly 'rules' about how this contact should be made and sustained. It had to be done according to God's laws or not at all. If my assessment of Genesis 6:1-4 is correct, these 'sons of God' broke the rules by lusting after women and God locked them away in the hadean prison called *Tartarus* to await the Judgment Day. Since angels are immortal He couldn't kill them, so permanent imprisonment was the only instant and effective punishment they could be given.

This works the other way. Humans can contact the spirit world but must abide by God's rules if we do. The only way we are allowed by Him to do so is by prayer through the mediation of the Lord (1 Tim. 2:5). That we can contact the spirit world via mediums and wizards, i.e. by necromancy, is asserted in the Bible, as is the fact that we mustn't. The punishment God demanded for such action in the Old Testament was excommunication from His presence for the client and instant death by stoning for the medium (Lev. 19:31, 20:6, 27). There will be no place in heaven for those who disobey in this regard, just as there was no possible escape from punishment for the angels who disregarded their 'commandment' in this area of their ministry.

Whatever the details might be, there is no logical doubting that God had to give His angels some sort of commandments to obey in order that they might remain faithful and obedient to Him as they exercised their free will. It can be no other way for we know that some angels did not obey. They had to be disobeying something to be disobedient.

The puzzle of Satan's sin

Realizing and accepting the logic of the paragraph immediately above helped me to puzzle out something which had perplexed me for many years, namely how Satan, a perfect being before he fell, could indeed rebel and fall. What gave him the idea to rebel? Why did he do it? How could he possibly become proud?



The birth of Jesus announced to the shepherds

The nature of angels and humans

Angels

In order to try to come to some sort of understanding of the problem of Satan's sin, it will be helpful to consider the differences between the basic natures of angels and men, for I believe that herein lies the answer to the problem. It only becomes a relevant way of thinking once we accept the basic premise that both creatures were part of the same creation, as a unified whole, and not two separate creations, one before Day 1 of Creation Week and one after.

We believe that angels were called instantly into being by God's Word and were complete in their numbers, this being determined by God. They cannot reproduce their kind and thereby take responsibility for offspring. Consequently they are not invited to have a relationship of love, angel to angel, and it is a truism that angels nowhere express, give or receive love. Magnificent and powerful as they are, their task is one of service. They are God's messengers: this is what the name 'angel' means. In order to be messengers they have to have a field in which to operate. That field is provided by the world and the people God placed on it. We remember that Hebrews reminds us: 'Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?' (Heb 1:14). Thus one of the main things they do is minister to the elect, i.e. serve mankind, or a certain segment of mankind. To put it simply, they are servants.

They also praise and worship God, of course, but they do so by sight and not by faith. Consequently, faithful, obedient angels are already in the state of a heavenly relationship with the Father; all they can do is lose it. If they do sin and lose it, there is no way back for them. Thus at the Judgement, faithful angels simply continue as normal and move smoothly into the totally heavenly situation with God and the saved humans. The fallen angels, however, are punished by going into hell, the place prepared for them, there to be joined by all the lost human beings. Then every lost being is finally separat-

ed from God forever.

Both humans and angels have two responsibilities towards their Creator: they worship Him and they serve His creatures, especially human beings. We think of it for us as being a horizontal relationship towards

others and a vertical relationship towards God. Angels have the reverse: a horizontal relationship towards God and a vertical relationship towards humans! In their service they are totally bound up in this world. They rejoice when a sinner repents and is baptized. They play a part in carrying the souls of the dead to Paradise (Luke 16:22). Indeed the more you consider what they do for us you realize that their service is inextricably intertwined with our world. They don't occasionally flit into it, it is their permanent occupation when they are not directly praising God.

Humans

Humans, on the other hand, were not called into being at all. They are the only creatures whom God made deliberately, and carefully. As the Psalmist said, '[we were] fearfully and wonderfully made.' (Ps. 139:14). God almost stopped and took His time fashioning this, His last creation. Eve too, of course, was as much a part of this fashioning since she was taken from man and fashioned to complement him. She also was not called into existence by God's Word. It is safe to say that the greatest complexity to be found in any of God's created creatures is to be found in human beings. Magnificent though angels are, they are probably nowhere near as complicated in their make-up as we are.

There obviously was a reason for this care and special treatment. When it came to making mankind, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Gen. 1:26). No other creatures, not even angels, were made in the image and likeness of God. Whereas God filled the heavens with His angels, He only placed two humans on His Earth. They were then commanded to reproduce and do the filling over time.

Now, we can probably speculate for a long time on precisely what is meant by the 'image and likeness' of God. However, several significant points can be made about some of the meaning. God took such care over us because He had a very differ-

ent intention for the functioning of humans in His creation. Whereas angels were intended to be servants and messengers, people were made for love: to love and be loved. 'God is love' (1 John 4:8) and we were created to glorify Him reflecting in our creation this aspect of His nature. Angels reflect God's power and might, but we show His love. We were to learn to love and give love by marrying and producing children. Nurturing through dependency, first on parents, then through a loving marriage, was vitally important to how we are to learn to love our heavenly Father. Angels, we know, don't nurture, marry or reproduce.

God is also a Creator, and so are we. Angels do not have any creative ability. They work as commanded within their boundaries but though they have freedom of will and choice, they do not create anything. They do not act under their own initiative and make decisions beyond their decision to obey God's will and do His bidding. Humans, though not nearly as magnificent in their external appearance as angels, nor remotely as powerful and knowledgeable, nevertheless have dimensions to their nature which go way beyond anything given to any other creature. We have the divine within us as no other creatures do.

So back to Satan and his rebellion

Let us begin to suggest an explanation by looking at the kind of created being he was. In Ezekiel 28 there is a lament over the King of Tyre. However, there is absolutely no way at all that this lament could refer literally to him. It is carefully couched in terms which can only hark back to Satan and how God lamented over him when he corrupted himself and fell. The lament over the King of Tyre is an echo of that sad occasion in Eden at the beginning of the world. Here it is:

'You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, ruby, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendour.' (Ezek 28:12-17).



Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden

We notice several pointers here. There is the amazing bejewelled splendour of this being, who was ‘created’, not born, and was in Eden as a ‘guardian cherub’. He was perfection itself, in beauty and wisdom. He was blameless from the day he was created until his heart became ‘proud because of [his] beauty; so [he] corrupted [his] wisdom for the sake of [his] splendour.’

So Satan was a ‘guardian cherub’ who, through pride in his beauty and splendour corrupted his wisdom. He was therefore of the highest rank of angelic beings and the most magnificent of the lot. Now can we see why he might have corrupted his wisdom and sinned?

There is absolutely nothing in the scriptures to support this view beyond the clues mentioned above but just imagine a scenario something like this. The angels were dazzled by both the splendour and wisdom of this most splendid cherub, and they admired him for his beauty and wisdom. He was the top ranking angelic being of all. Nevertheless he was, like all of the angels, a servant, a guardian cherub, and where was his guardianship placed? In Eden. So what, or who, was he guardian of? Adam and Eve!

Now Adam and Eve were wonderfully made but they could not match his splendour, nor indeed his wisdom, yet here was he, the most magnificent angel of all, who received admiration from his fellow creatures in the heavens, having to serve these puny creatures. Furthermore God was paying them all the attention in Eden and was concerned only that they both behaved themselves and were looked after. And God gave His top angel the meanest job of all. Pride turned into jealousy, and jealousy turned into hatred, and hatred is akin to murder. Why shouldn’t *they* serve *him*?

Many years later, the true Lord and Master was awaiting His capture, trial and death,

in an upper room. He took a towel and wiped the feet of His servants, doing the task for them which was the most menial one of all in their social structure. He told them that the greatest must be the servant of all. He was not too proud to do it, but Satan resented it and preferred to elevate himself, above the humble state of serving, to that of being worshipped.

We have already made reference to, and fully quoted, the vignette in Isaiah 14 where we read about the King of Babylon being castigated in terms which could only literally apply to Satan. The sin described here was one of wanting to ‘make myself like the Most High’. He wanted to be God. This, of course, was blasphemy, which I made my second ‘commandment’ for angels. However, he had so bedazzled many of the angels that when he decided to make a bid for power by corrupting the world, they followed him. They failed to keep my first ‘commandment’ and adopted another god.

The Fall

It is now possible to catch a glimpse of the full nature of the Fall and see its significance. Here was the guardian cherub of Eden corrupting the very ones he had charge of. This was the ultimate betrayal of trust. He could only do this once there was in place something, somebody who could also use their free will to disobey and give themselves to him. Satan had great wisdom and he appeared to offer it to Adam and Eve, and in his tempting them, both he and they fell. He, of course, rebelled from what he knew; they rebelled from ignorance. There is no way back for Satan and his angels but God graciously granted a way back for mankind, if they will choose it freely. There was only one Fall and it took place in Eden. It affected both the heavens and the Earth, indeed the whole universe, or creation (Rom. 8:20). God had created the heavens and the Earth

as one and they fell as one.

Mankind in God’s plan

On looking at the creation of angels and men, and what they were created for, it is clear to see that the apex was definitely the human beings not the angelic ones. That mankind was so precious to God can be seen in the trouble He went to to provide us with a way of escape from the clutches of sin and death. Just as His focus was on the first Adam in creation so He sent the second Adam to the rescue. The nature of man as a tripartite being of soul, body and spirit (2 Thess. 5:23), and his confinement to the limitations of the physical world, made him lower than the angels. Once sin came in, and death through sin, this position was confirmed. But this was never God’s ultimate plan for us. Our obedience and love was to be given through faith, not sight, but once we had passed the test of faith our status was to be raised far above the angels in the heavens. After all, the servants are not greater than those they are sent to serve, a fact which probably also irked Satan.

It is in Romans that we see this spelled out. Let us let scripture speak the wonder for us:

‘So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I



Angels guard the body of Jesus

consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.' (Rom 8:12-18).

We, who are faithful, are going to be heirs with Christ by adoption. We will be equal to Christ and that is a status far above the angels. No, we won't be 'God' in any sense at all, of course. Just as in our human families we have true sons, begotten of their fathers, and nobody else can ever hold to that

relationship, yet we can adopt sons into the family and they can be granted equal status by the father with his other son, or sons. God intended, and intends, us to be heirs with Christ, sons by adoption. We will judge angels, whatever that means! (1 Cor. 6:3).

It is love which defines us and makes all of this possible. 'God is love' and it is we who were made to love Him in return, not angels. It is we who were intended to

show God's love in creation. That is why, unlovely though we now are through sin, God loves us and sent His Son to die for us. His plan in Creation was to create beings who would freely choose to love Him, and who then would spend eternity praising Him and loving Him because He is indeed a great and wonderful God.

To get the full measure of this amazing picture we have to appreciate the nature of angels as created beings.

A Mighty Hunter (Nimrod)

The human capacity for making mountains out of molehills, or reading into seemingly innocent statements things that are not there, sometimes seems almost boundless. Nevertheless occasionally such 'mountains' may have unexpected substance to them once we begin to delve into the 'molehills' from whence they sprang.

Stuck in the middle of a seemingly boring genealogy in Genesis 10 - you know, in the bits nobody bothers to read - is the following piece of information:

'Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord."' (vs. 9).

Verses 10-12 tell us where he settled and how far his influence reached, which was quite impressive, and that's all we know about Nimrod. The main thing is that he was 'a mighty hunter before the Lord' and he was the first to be recognized as such.

History's view of Nimrod

Now, that's not much of a molehill, is it? You might, therefore, be surprised to know that Nimrod has been cast as a truly satanic character who led the ancient world into idolatry, lawlessness and godlessness. He tried to found the 'First Patriarchal Reich' not too long after the Flood, so it is said, being intent on world domination and total power. Of course, he didn't have millions to slaughter in his

quest therefore mass genocide was not part of his agenda. He couldn't be as bad as Hitler even if he had wanted to be. Could there be any semblance of truth in these accusations? Let's investigate.

Evidence from the genealogies

There was obviously something special about this man. Genealogies are famous for being boring reads unless you are studying them for historical clues. Most names included in them are simply that: names. A few get an occasional word spoken about them so Nimrod, getting four verses' worth, must be somewhat different.

He was a grandson of Ham, one of the sons of his firstborn, Cush. Now, we know from the infamous vignette about Noah's drunkenness in chapter 9:20-27 that there were serious character defects in Ham. A simple glance at the names listed in the three given genealogies of Japheth, Ham and Shem (ch. 10) and we can note that

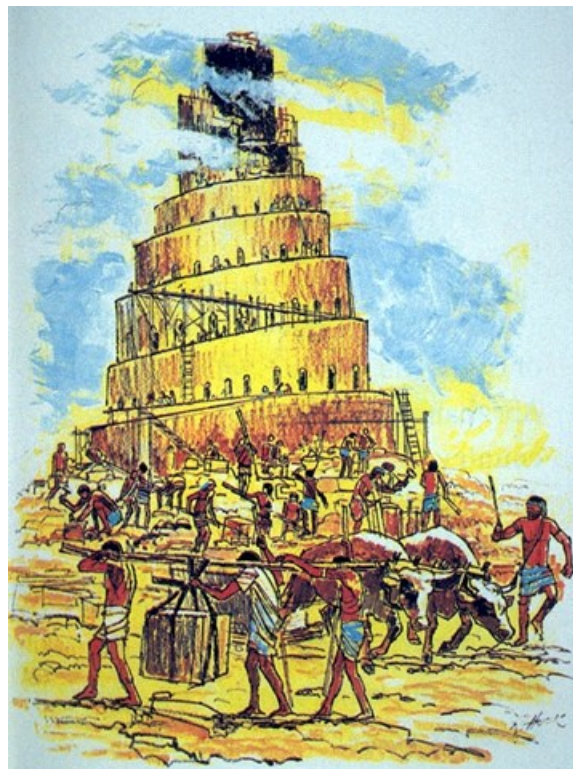
none of the names listed under Japheth and Shem presented biblical historians of the Old Testament peoples with any problems; however under Ham's genealogy there is a fistful of wicked or problematic associations: Egypt, Canaan, Babel, Shinar, Assyria, Nineveh, 'Casluhim (from whom the Philistines came)', Sidon, Jebusites, Amorites, Gergashites, Sodom and Gomorrah. Ham's line, therefore, has a pretty poor track-record in the godliness stakes. Since Nimrod was a prominent figure in this genealogy maybe there is something in the claims made against him.

The post-Flood situation

After the Flood, Noah settled down and became a farmer. He could well have been one before the Flood too depending on what time he had to spare while building the Ark. He was still alive when Abraham was born so had adequate opportunity to know Nimrod very well. Since there were few people on the Earth in the immediate postdiluvian world, and since animal fecundity is greater than human, there would soon be problems of roaming herds of animals and packs of predators. Keeping them under control would have been difficult and dangerous, and anybody who took on the task would have to be strong and brave. Those who couldn't do it would no doubt be grateful to those who could and a mighty leader in the hunting world would command significant social status. That Nimrod was exceptionally good at his job is evidenced by the fact that his name became almost a synonym, or part of a proverb, at the time for bravery. To be that successful he would have had to have been a big man and, by the nature of his occupation, ruthless, fearless and therefore possibly coarse in his manner.

The meaning of 'mighty'

The adjective used to describe him is 'mighty'. It means powerful, warrior, tyrant, champion, giant, strong and valiant, in the list of definitions given by Strong. We meet it first in Genesis 6:4 where we read:



The Tower of Babel

'The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.' The AV designates the word 'giants' to cover the word 'Nephilim', as does the *Interlinear Bible—Old Testament*, so size seems to be part of the concept. That the genes for giantism in men were present before and after the Flood is stated in this verse and a good cross-referenced Bible will guide anybody through the word 'Nephilim' to the sons of Anak, who were giant-sized men and before whom the ten spies were afraid to fight (Numbers 13:32-33). We often forget, or fail to realize, that the Children of Israel of Exodus fame ran scared of an army of giants not an army of normal-sized men. One of their last remnants scared King Saul's army rigid all on his own some 500 years later. Goliath of Gath was one of the Nephilim, a son of Anak. It was probably Ham who carried this gene and it first manifest itself, after the Flood, in Nimrod. It would be no wonder then that he would be feared in his day and generation.

Nimrod's territories

The clues to his territories indicate that Nimrod certainly had ambitions along the lines of universal power politics. His territory covered what we know best as Babylon and Assyria, countries which have long tra-

ditions of opposition to God, and even today present problems as Iraq, Iran and Syria. It is interesting to note that Babylon is the term used in Revelation, and elsewhere, as *THE* archetypal epitome of evil and satanic forces. This was Nimrod's land, which is also confirmed by Micah (5:6). He set the agenda there so in some way it reflects his character.

The Babel connexion

Now, included in the place names directly associated with Nimrod in Genesis 10 is 'Babel... in the land of Shinar'. We know that this was the very place that the famous, or infamous, tower was constructed where God created languages to confuse the people and split them up. Though instructed by God to fill the earth (9:1), they had largely stuck together in defiance of this command. Chapter 11 informs us that the reason they built a city on the plain of Shinar was so they would not be scattered and to make a name for themselves (11:4). They had already acquired sufficient pride in themselves to think they could eliminate God from their thinking. They were one people with one language and probably had one leader, Nimrod. It was 'his' territory after all and Nimrod had subverted the existing patriarchal order of society by setting up a chieftainship based on personal valour and maintained by aggression. God's manner of dealing with

people under the Patriarchal dispensation was to be through the heads of families as ruler/priests not through monarchies, theocracies or autocracies. Nimrod, it appears, may well have had other ideas.

It has been suggested that the Tower of Babel was built higher than the waters of the Flood so that they could survive any attempt by God to destroy them again in that fashion. A failure to believe in God's promises and to strike out independently was opposition to God, pride and a potent form of idolatry.

Idolatry in Nimrod's lands

The region not only became a centre of idolatry but also has a long historical association with magic arts, astrology and necromancy. The Assyrians were to become one of the fiercest and most vicious peoples of the ancient world and its associations have continuously been in opposition to God. Read the Book of Nahum (it won't take long) to see how vile Nineveh became in God's eyes.

So why was Nimrod given special attention in the Genesis 10 genealogy? It seems highly unlikely that it was because he was mightily on the Lord's side but rather that he was the leader of rebellion and idolatry. It may not have seemed like much of a molehill initially but perhaps there is serious substance to this particular 'mountain'.

Amber is an amazing thing. It is the solidified resin from trees, which poured out and down the trunk before setting. Often the resin swept over insects, entombing them in an instant and preserving them for all time. The origin of fossils caught this way has been known to geologists for years. In the past there was an amazing outpouring of this resin which allows us to examine the soft-parts of creatures; things not usually preserved in fossil form. We would date it as happening at the time of the Flood, and post-Flood during lesser catastrophic episodes. Conventional science, however, dates it much earlier than this.

The article which accompanied this photograph of a spider trapped in amber says this:

'For 20million years the body lay perfectly preserved at the scene of the crime. Then along came a scientist - to solve the mystery of the deceased spider. Palaeontologist Dr David Penney found the fossilised creature in a piece of amber in the Dominican Republic. And such is the sophistication of modern techniques that, from droplets of the spider's blood, he was able to give a verdict on precisely how it died.

'Apparently it was climbing a tree when

Spiders In Amber



Daily Mail 30.9.05

it was hit by a fatal gush of resin. Measuring just one and a half inches long and three quarters of an inch wide, the spider belongs to a family still commonly found in South America and the Caribbean.

'Dr Penny... managed to extract two droplets of blood, technically known as haemolymph. He used them to trace the events of a day in the Miocene Period. His research, published in the latest issue of the journal of Palaeontology, states that the

spider was probably climbing up a tree when it was struck head-on by a sudden flow of resin. It became engulfed in the resin and died.

'His investigations even show which of the spider's legs broke first. "It's amazing to think that a single piece of amber with a single spider in it can open up a window into what was going on 20million years ago," he said. "By analysing the spider's body in relation to the droplets of blood in the amber we are able to determine how it died, which direction it was travelling in and even how fast it was moving."

'Dr Penney says the blood could provide a potential source of DNA for the 20million-year-old creature. His research bears more than a passing resemblance to Jurassic Park... [where] scientists took blood from insects preserved in amber and used them to recreate dinosaurs...

'Earlier this year [2005 - G.A.F.], it was also reported in the journal Science that researchers had managed to find juicy bone marrow by cracking open the fossilised leg of a 70million-year-old Tyrannosaurus Rex. The scientists were amazed when they recovered what appear to be elastic soft tissues, blood vessels and even, possibly, cells from the bone.'

Let us look at this report critically

First of all it is amazing that we should be told how this creature died, as if this were a new discovery. Any first-year geology student could have told you that. You don't need to have a Ph.D in Geology to discover that profound detail.

The fact that it was moving up the tree is hardly startling, and how he could tell this from analysing its blood needs to be queried. Accepting for now that he was correct, it serves to prove just how sudden the entombment was. The spider had absolutely no notion of impending doom. This is perfectly consistent with the biblical account of the Flood and its sudden surprise arrival on the Earth.

But the most amazing thing of all is that after 20million years there was any blood left to analyse. You see, blood breaks down over time no matter how well preserved it is. And it's only measured in thousands of years not millions.

This is further compounded by the admission that similar soft-part finds have been made in dinosaur remains. Creationists have long known about unfossilized dinosaur bones with soft-parts preserved, including blood. Scientists stand back in amazement, scratch their heads in wonder and say that they have no answer to the conundrum. Of course they don't because they are locked into their millions of years for the existence of these creatures, and the age of the Earth. The answer is that they were alive only a few thousand years ago and not these magical millions of years, and that the Earth is only of a biblical age of around 6,000 years old.

Finally it is stated that the spider has modern 'relatives' still living around the area where it was found. This is always the case. When soft-part evidence is discovered it shows no evolution of the creatures no matter how long ago they were supposed to have lived. Ancient creatures may show minor variations but these are well within the accepted range of genetic information held on the DNA. If evolution were true, we would expect some significant alterations to be in evidence. The spider, and indeed the dinosaur remains, with blood left intact for analysis, betokens death within the thousands of

years as a maximum not millions.

The case of the coelacanth



Coelacanth (*Latimeria chalumnae*)

One of the Creationists' *cause célèbre* is the case of the coelacanth. In 1937 one was dredged up in fishing nets off the coast of Madagascar. Apparently coelacanths swim in depths below 1,600ft so it takes a deep trawl to catch one, though the local fishermen did know of them - but under a different name, of course. So what was exceptional about this strange fish?

Evolutionists are always looking for missing links in the fossil record to support their theories. When I first studied Geology at university, the professor told us that the reason why these missing links were still missing was simply that insufficient fossil-hunting had gone on and that given time they would appear. He had the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things unseen (Heb. 11:1). His faith in evolution was strong and true. Some 45 years later, and millions of fossil finds on, the missing links are resolutely still missing.

Prior to 1937 the coelacanth was one of *the* aces in their pack. It was supposed to have lived from around 400,000,000 years ago to 90,000,000 years ago, when it became extinct. Its fins, which are very distinctive (see picture), were thought to be proto-legs which would develop as reptiles and amphibians evolved from fish. Drawings appeared in journals to explain how this might have happened.

Then this dead one was trawled up, but it had only just died. And it looked exactly like its fossil cousins from '400,000,000 years' ago. There had been absolutely no evolutionary changes in it at all.

Subsequently divers have gone down to the depths at which they live and they have been filmed. Their fins, far from being proto-legs, are a vital part of their normal mobility and whatever interest there is in these amazing creatures, they cannot now be claimed as one of Evolution's

missing links.

Coelacanths are also not just confined to the waters off the African coast but are found as far away as the western Pacific Ocean. So why are their fossils limited to rocks which conventional dating places between 400,000,000 and 90,000,000 years? What about the missing 90,000,000 years down to today? They definitely didn't die out and then spontaneously recreate themselves. One solid geological axiom is that 'Extinction is permanent.'

Conclusions

The answer to this conundrum is that the 90,000,000 missing years just aren't missing at all. They are in the minds of those who try to date rocks by conventional means and are simply figments of the imaginings made in those dating processes. All fossils are the result of swift, catastrophic inundations which entombed creatures suddenly and quickly. The greatest, though not the only one, was the Flood of Noah's day. The 400,000,000-year-old rocks and the 90,000,000 year-old rocks are, in fact, probably contemporary in age dating to little more than 2348BC, and these great ages are a myth.

Spiders' blood, dinosaurs' blood and living coelacanths speak of the Flood and the truths contained in Genesis, if scientists would only believe the evidence before them. and break free from the confines of their current dating methods and systems.

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Cover picture: 'Angels hold back the four winds of strife' (Rev. 7:1). Painting by Joe Maniscalco
(A traditional but somewhat erroneous view of what angels look like)