

# GENESIS ACCEPTED



**NUMBER 27**

**January 2014**

<b>Out of Eden</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Lot's Daughters</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Origin of Writing</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>As Reported</b>	<b>9</b>

# Out of Eden

One of the saddest moments in world history was when Adam and Eve were ejected from the Garden of Eden. Artists have depicted it many times, and here are two such paintings (below and right), one a little more racy than the other but probably more accurate! The cherubim were sent there to guard the way to the Tree of Life to prevent Adam and Eve eating from it and becoming immortal (Gen. 3:22-24).



There are several questions arising from this action by God which are not answered directly in the Scriptures but are worth delving into, like where and/or how far did they go, and why did God appoint cherubim to guard the way to the Tree of Life? So let's look at them and see what we can find.

## Where did they go?

Ask yourself where you would have gone had you been Adam and Eve. The Garden of Eden was the only home they had known. They were only banished from it, they were not condemned to be wanderers as Cain was later to be. They knew nothing of the world beyond Eden so why go very far? The obvious answer is that they pitched camp immediately outside the boundary of Eden on its east side, with Eden lying to their west. We can infer this because that's the side that the Bible indicates to us that they went. *'He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.'* (Ge 3:24). There is no logical reason for posting guards at the eastern end of the Garden if Adam and Eve were living on the north, west or south side. They were the only people alive at the time and in desperation they could well have wanted to sneak back in if they could. God had to stop them from so doing. Though they



were banished and prevented from going inside again, it is a pretty safe assumption that they would want to be as close to 'home' where they felt safe as they were allowed to be. But there's a good deal more to it than that.

Though banished from Eden they were not cut off from God and abandoned by Him. He still loved them, cared for them and taught them. The Lord was on Eve's mind when she gave birth to Cain and named him as being a gift from the Lord. God was still at the very ground of their thinking and being.

## Theophanies

In Eden God had walked and talked with them. There is no doubt that they saw a physical, human-like 'being' because they tried to hide from Him after they had sinned and didn't want Him to see their nakedness. Such visitations are scattered throughout the Old Testament and are an interesting study in themselves. They are known as 'theophanies'. One of the most obvious theophanies was when the Lord and two angels visited Abraham and Sarah to tell them about the fulfilment of the promise of a son for Sarah (Gen. 18). The angels then went on to Sodom and the Lord stayed back and conversed with Abraham, who pleaded for the righteous in Sodom. Such visitations were made by the Lord, the Second Person in the Trinity, whom we meet best as Jesus in the New Testament, when His presence was not as a human-like being but a full human being now subject to death. It is therefore inappropriate to call the Incarnation a theophany, for it was so much more. Jesus, the Word, the Lord, was the One who walked and talked with Adam and Eve in Eden and he continued to walk and talk as a human-like being after the expulsion. We know this because when Cain killed Abel he thought the Lord wouldn't notice and that he could hide the body of his brother. He would not have thought this way had he not been used to talking to

another 'man'. The Word was very active in the history of the saved people.

So where would Adam and Eve have thought that the Lord lived? In Eden, since He had thrown them out of His home! Where would they expect to meet the Lord and receive instruction and comfort and learning? Just outside the front door of the old home, as it were. They would expect the Lord to come out of Eden to meet them at the east gate, so He would appear from behind the cherubim and come out to meet and greet them. They still had a lot to learn.

## The Cherubim

So why should the cherubim being there raise a questioning eyebrow? Quite simply that at first sight this seems like a massive case of overkill. Cherubim are the highest ranking and most powerful of the angelic host, yet the Lord felt it necessary to send, not just one cherub to guard the Tree of Life from the clutches of two relatively feeble human beings - feeble, that is, by comparison to angels not by mortal human standards, of course - but more than one! (One picture shows three and the other four but there were at least two.) Couldn't one ordinary, low-ranking angel do the job? Well, no, actually but the answer as to why is not immediately obvious. We have to grasp exactly what is going on here to see why this was necessary, and it's all to do with Satan.

## Satan

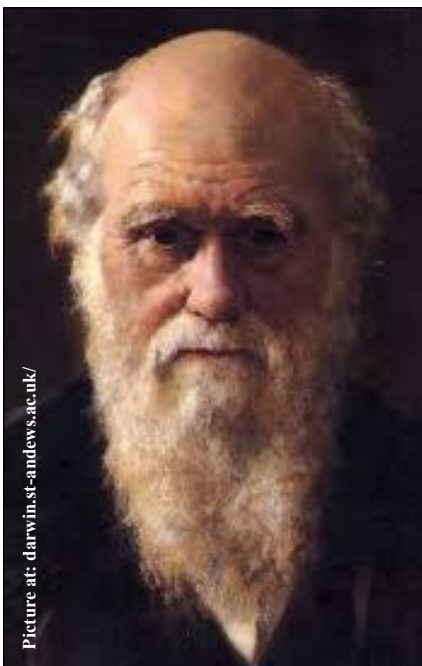
We considered the creation of angels in *Genesis Accepted* Number 7, and naturally we looked at Satan in that context. Nothing much is said about him in Genesis. However, over in Ezekiel we read a description of the King of Tyre couched in terms which could only apply directly and initially to Satan, with whom the King is being compared. Once we grasp this we are on the way to seeing the bigger picture.

To refresh the memory this is what is written in Ezekiel, with important relevant emphasis by us:

*'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).

The picture is clear. Satan was a created guardian cherub and his domain was in Eden. He was perfect, amazingly beautiful and splendid but he became corrupted by pride in his own beauty and magnificence. God therefore cast him out but he wasn't stripped of his powers or his splendour. We don't think of him as a splendid angelic being because we have the cartoon image of a leering old goat with horns and a tail from whom anybody would run a million miles if they encountered him looking like that. Yet Paul tells us he can, and does, disguise himself as an angel of light to lure us into his clutches (2 Cor. 11:12-15).



Picture at: darwin.st-andrews.ac.uk/

### **An 'Angel of Light'**

I have long held the view that Satan chose well when Charles Darwin was 'inspired' to develop his take on Evolution - Darwin did not invent it, or dream it up, it had been around in some form or other since the ancient Greeks. His main contribution was developing the mechanism of Natural Selection in the process, but then Creationists have always accepted the concept of Natural Selection, which only produces variations within a limited field defined as a 'kind' in Genesis.

Darwin was a harmless grandfatherly semi-recluse who apparently wouldn't hurt a fly. You would not recoil in horror from him, or see him as evil. He was the perfect foil to promote a godless theory and lead people's hearts and minds away from God, the true Creator, and the Bible. Jesus said that we shall know people by their fruit (Mtt. 7:15-20). The 'fruit' of evolution is mind-blowingly evil: 'man is only an animal', thus eliminate the unfit via evolution-based political systems, i.e. Communism and Nazism. Control population via eugenics, abortion and euthanasia. Eliminate God: atheism, agnosticism and humanism. Darwin was a racist who believed that the white races were at the top of the Evolutionary tree and the blacks at the bottom. This list is not complete but will do for now.

Darwin was a sick man for much of the latter part of his life and many believe (and not just Creationists) that his illness was psychosomatic, caused by his awareness of where his theories could lead if followed to their logical conclusions - and they were in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If we can't 'see' Satan's hand behind this avuncular, harmless man, disguising him as an angel of light, I cannot show you another, better example to illustrate Paul's point.

### **The angelic battle**

Paul had no doubt that there was a huge cosmic battle being fought and has been since Adam fell - that was just the opening gambit in the 'game'. He told us that *'... we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.'* (Eph. 6:12). Before man was created no challenge could be made by Satan to God. Satan cannot create; he can only destroy and steal for himself what God made for Himself. The battle is for the souls of people. The Fall began the challenge and Satan had almost won by the time of the Flood. Only eight faithful souls stood between him and victory; it was that close! As it is, Jesus told us that the easy, broad way to destruction will still be followed by the majority (Mtt. 7:13-14), and sadly we have no trouble seeing the truth of this prophecy from then right

up to today. Keeping faith is as hard as it ever was. How many souls do you know who have been baptized and named the Name of Christ as their Saviour, who have failed, or are still failing, to sustain the commitment they once made via those waters of baptism? The parable of the Sower hits home regularly, often to our sorrow as those whom we love dearly succumb to the wiles of the Devil - falling away through neglect and indifference is as much a 'wile of the Devil' as is hostile opposition; he doesn't mind what does it as long as it succeeds.

### **Back to the east of Eden**

*'The wages of sin is death'* (Ro 6:23), but what a coup it would have been for Satan if Adam and Eve had succeeded in returning to the Tree of Life and having eaten of its fruit thwarted their punishment for sin. We cannot begin to imagine what the consequences would have been but the one thing we can say is that God's creation and plan to have a relationship of love with the pinnacle of His Creation, human beings, would have been ruined eternally. If that ever entered his mind, Satan did not get around to trying to accomplish it. God was, as always, many moves ahead of him. He had even planned our salvation before He ever began to create, against the high possibility of a scenario like this. Revelation 13:8 indicates the plan to slay the Lamb was known to God before the foundation of the world.

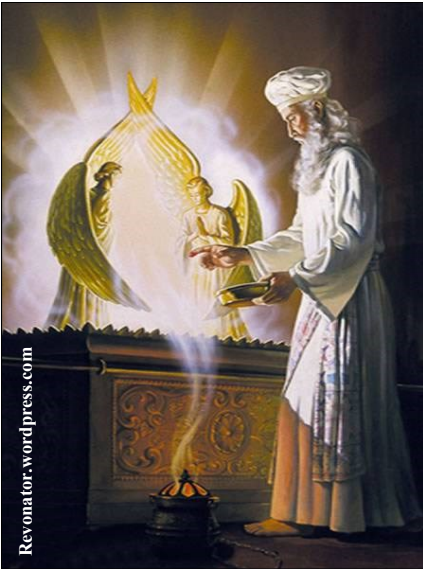
But Satan was a guardian cherub, one of the most powerful of the angels and therefore what appears to us like overkill was no such thing. One ordinary angel would have been more than a match for the two humans but he would not have been able to withstand an onslaught from a guardian cherub even though he was a fallen guardian cherub. It needed a greater number of equally powerful angelic beings to ensure that the path to the Tree of Life was safely guarded. The cherubim, therefore, were not there just to keep Adam and Eve away from the Tree of Life, they were there to prevent Satan from assisting them to get to it. There is, of course, no hint in scripture, that they ever attempted it; they wouldn't dare even if they wanted to. (Since Eden is not there any more - we understand that it disappeared at the time of the Flood and that the new, post-Flood Earth was completely refashioned physically - so there is now no point in looking for it.)

### **The Lord and the Cherubim**

So the cherubim stood guard at the eastern side of Eden, which was the paradise of God (cf. Rev. 2:7). We have already noted that to Adam and Eve, Eden would be the Lord's home and from where He would come when they met Him. So the cherubim guarded the way to

the throne of God and He would appear to them from behind the cherubim.

So from the earliest days humans understood that cherubim guarded the way to God and that access to Him was via their presence. Nothing is made of this in other parts of the scripture but cast your minds forwards to the tabernacle and thence to the temple. Eden has long been destroyed by the Flood and the cherubim stood down from sentry duty. Then ask



**The Holy of Holies**

yourself ‘Where did the Jews go to meet God and stand in His presence?’ The Holy of Holies was where God ‘dwelt’ and where the High Priest only could enter, and that just once a year. There were now to be no daily chats with the Lord on a face-to-face basis as had happened and been necessary in the beginning. Changes had been made but one thing had not changed - the presence of the cherubim! On top of the Ark was the Mercy Seat between two cherubim, and that could well have been how Adam and Eve met the Lord after their expulsion from Eden. He would sit between two cherubim and talk to them.

One final pointer to this as a possibility is the alignment of both the tabernacle and the temple. The Holy of Holies was located at the western end of both the tent and the building. This is precisely the same position, relative to God’s ‘home’ as was found immediately after the Fall and expulsion from Eden. The Lord would come out from the east of Eden, which, of course, was the west end of where Adam and Eve would now be living. They therefore came to the west to meet the Lord, and the Jews later were to do exactly that again as they approached Him for forgiveness and mercy.

### **The Lord’s Blessing**

The cherubim guarded the way to God who could only be met on the Mercy Seat

between the two cherubim. Blood had to be taken and sprinkled all around in the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest could do this and then only once a year. Of course this was not expected from Adam and Eve but the prototype was in place and the Law of Moses built on it. But the Cross has changed all that!

When Jesus died the veil of the temple was split in two, never to be mended again. There was no need for cherubim to guard the way to God, no priests were necessary and no blood had to be sprinkled ever again to atone for our sins. We only need one High Priest who intercedes for us at God’s throne and we can come any time, anywhere, and in any place to Him, just as Adam and Eve could in Eden before the Fall. The Tree of Life is still there but does not need guarding any more because it cannot be accessed until, once again, we are allowed to enter the Paradise of God again at the end of time.

### **The Battle**

We mentioned that the Fall was just the beginning of the great cosmic battle for control of the world and the hearts of men, and how close Satan came to winning it at the Flood. How Satan must have rejoiced when he saw Jesus being nailed up on the Cross at Calvary. He knew that the incarnate Lord was now subject to death. He had made several attempts to kill Him or get Him to veer from His appointed path. He had no idea just what that path might be because had he known he would have done all he could to keep Jesus away from the Cross, not get Him nailed up on it. So he tried to kill him as a baby in Bethlehem; he tried it in boat in the storm on Galilee; he tried to have Him thrown over the cliff at Nazareth; he tempted Him to take the easy option and then he triumphed as Judas played into his hands and betrayed Him into the hands of the authorities. He’d cornered Him and caught Him off balance and the rush to Calvary was necessary to prevent any mistakes happening this time. The battle was over; he’d won!

Eve had the promise that one of her descendants would crush the serpent’s head. In Revelation 12 we read the following mighty passage: *‘Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been*

*thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!’*” (vs. 7-12, emphasis ours).

The final battle has been won. Satan has been thrown out of heaven and cast down. And what was the weapon which won that battle? The blood of the Lamb. And where and when did the Lamb shed His blood? At Calvary. The very action of Satan achieving his ambition to destroy the Saviour was the very means whereby His blood was shed and the victory became that of the Lamb, for three days later He rose in triumph. Yes, we still have to do battle against the dreadful forces of evil, for Satan is now literally hell-bent on doing his worst, out of spite, or wrath, because his time is now short and he’s a snarling, vicious ‘dragon’, a roaring lion seeking to devour any whom he can (1 Pt. 5:8) - and that includes not only the Hitlers and Stalins of the world but also the little harmless old ladies and gentlemen who live ‘good’ harmless lives but who refuse to name Jesus as ‘Lord’. He’s not particular. You don’t have to register 100% on the evil scale, just 1% will do providing the soul has not been pardoned and the name written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. The vilest offender who truly believes, obeying the Saviour a pardon receives, as we sing, and Satan can now do absolutely nothing at all to thwart that from happening. He may go down with all ‘guns’ blazing, and may take most down with him, but he’s lost the war, begun at the Fall in Eden and ended at the empty tomb.

### **The promise to Eve**

When the Lord told the serpent, just before He threw Adam and Eve out of the Garden forever, that an offspring of Eve’s shall bruise his head and he shall bruise his heel (Gen. 3:15), the battle was joined. When Jesus cried out from the Cross as He died, “It is finished”, He wasn’t just referring to His immediate suffering, horrendous though that was, nor to His life on Earth. He was referring to the whole battle which had been raging for about 4,000 years. The victory had been won.

And what are the cherubim doing now? They are still close to God around the throne singing praises to the Lamb who alone was worthy to receive all honour and glory (Rev. 5). But then they were there when it all began as they watched the Lord punishing His wonderful humans by throwing them out of Eden.

# Lot's Daughters

I am encouraged to take a short walk as often as I can just to help my heart along. I sometimes enjoy it but mostly the effort is very hard, not so much because of the heart but because my hips complain like mad at times. In mid June last year (2013) I was walking slowly up the hill behind our house towards the village church, and just opposite the church gate, on the other side of the road, is a small heap of stones, obviously placed



The stone heap on which I sit

there for a purpose. In the days of mounting horses you might be guilty of thinking it had some function like that, but not in our day - and it is a fairly recent heap of carefully constructed stones. Anyway, there's one nice flat stone on the top and I find it very useful to sit on and take a rest. On this day I was doing my usual resting trick when a man came by looking like a farmer, which he sort of is. Barbara sometimes buys eggs from him. He started chatting to me and he told me that he built the heap of stones I was sitting on to protect his walls from damage by coaches, vans and lorries. The council had widened the road there so these vehicles could get through easier - there's a village school at the top of the hill - and his wall was now in danger of taking a bashing at times. This was a preventative measure.

Well, we got talking about other things, as you do, and especially how we could play in the roads as children and not be bothered by cars whizzing past all the time. He then dropped into familiar 'old man' posturings and began to long for the 'good old days' when life was more innocent and quieter, people were nicer, and children were freer and, though they had a lot fewer things to entertain them, they made their own fun - you get the picture. I muttered the usual sympathy for that point of view but then added, "You know, the frightening thing about today is that these days are the 'good old days' that the children of today are going to look back on

when they reach our age and say that 'things are not as good as they were in my day'." Of course, we remember the things that seemed better when we were young than they are today but we forget the many things that were an awful lot worse. You could say that 'nostalgia is not what it used to be' but it's probably exactly the same as it ever was - highly selective!

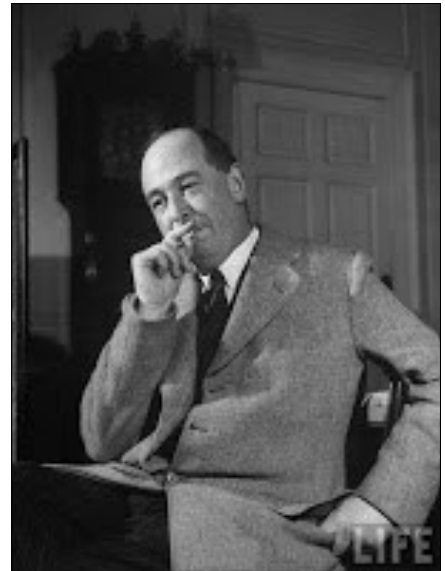
## Some dangers of judging the past

Realising this it's as well to recognize the dangers of judging the past, and people of the past, by today's standards. Things change and sensibilities alter. I remember when we showed the film 'Shadowlands' as an outreach event at the congregation here in Aylesbury, which was about the life of the great Christian apologist C.S. Lewis. There was a comment that Lewis was portrayed as smoking all the time. The problem was C.S. Lewis was a chain smoker and did smoke all the time. You could not portray him accurately without his having a cigarette in his mouth. Smoking was a normal part of manliness in his day. I got quite a surprise when I read Biggles books to Arthur, that Biggles, Ginger, Algy and Bertie, his team of 'cavalier' flying heroes, were always lighting up and enjoying a cigarette. It's what tough men did; only sissies didn't smoke. (For readers who have no knowledge of Biggles, he is a fictional World War I flying ace, who somehow managed to be young enough to fly against the Nazis in



World War II. He had numerous adventures when pilots flew by the seat of their pants in machines made more of balsa wood and string. He was the epitome of a daredevil British super hero and boys loved these stories - well, I did!).

My Mum had a cousin who nagged her boyfriend, later her husband, to smoke, as she wanted to go out with a 'real man', and then later spent the latter part of his life nagging him to stop, because our perception of smoking had altered as time went on. She was a very good nagger. She paid for it in the end because he dropped dead from a heart attack probably brought on by smoking - as did C.S. Lewis, though Lewis was about five years older. My Dad was a smoker too, not a heavy smoker, but he died at 60 from a heart condition. They didn't know the dangers



C.S. Lewis

in their day. Barbara and I often muse on what people of the future will look at as being accepted unreflectively in our time today and wonder 'How could they do that, or think that and call them selves Christians, or just civilised people?' We can't know this because we are living in it and amongst it now and don't have the knowledge or attitudes which will arrive in the future to change our perceptions.

## Be careful when judging

So as we look at people of the Bible, and especially those from the earlier parts of the Bible, such as in Genesis, we should be very careful not to jump to conclusions based on today's standards and understanding unless we are very careful. I want us to have a look again at what many consider to be a dreadful story in Genesis 19 where Lot's daughters get him drunk so they can sleep with him and have children by him. This, of course, is incest and incest is a heinous crime to our minds. We condemn the girls, and Lot, out of hand for it. Now, I'm not going to whitewash their actions and pretend it was okay but let's see if we can get a little into their minds and thinking as we look again at the story. There's an awful lot going on here which we are not directly told about.

## Examples of 'unacceptable' marriage

Let us begin by realising that the laws regarding close relative sexual contact were not to be clearly defined by God for another 500 years, in Leviticus 18 and other passages. Obviously brothers and sisters had to marry at the start of the world because Adam and Eve could only produce their own children. People try to trap Christians by asking where Cain got his wife from. That's easy, she was his sister - she had to be. The Bible tells us that Adam had other sons and daughters (Gen. 5:4) and they simply had no other alternative. That was not a sin back then and we know that quite a few societies practised brother and sister marriages until well on in time. The pharaohs of Egypt did

it regularly to keep their blood-line pure. Indeed Abraham and Sarah, by our standards today, were living incestuously. They had the same father, Terah, but not the same mother, so they were half-brother and sister (Gen. 20:12). This marriage is nowhere condemned, indeed it was greatly blessed by God. Later, in Genesis 38, we read of Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, getting tired of waiting for Judah's youngest son to grow up and be given to her so she could have a child by a levirate marriage. She tricked Judah, her father-in-law, into fathering twins for her and with no hint in the scriptures that she had done anything massively untoward. One of the lads, Perez, is in Jesus' family tree, so this liaison was blessed by being in the faithful line through whom came the kings of Israel and the Messiah Himself. Finally, the great Moses was a child of an incestuous marriage for his father, Amram, was the nephew of Jochebed, his mother, so they were aunt and nephew, which may not be as close a relationship as the others but it is still a forbidden one under the Mosaic Law. (Incidentally, this is a small pointer to the fact that Moses did not make up the Law to suit himself for, if he had, it would have been very odd had he set up such a marriage as being forbidden and thereby putting his own parentage under a cloud henceforth. Aunt/nephew marriage I think would definitely have got in under the radar had the author been Moses and not God.)

#### Natural law and Lot

So forbidden sexual relationships were obviously not as clearly defined back then as they are now. Father/daughter liaisons would, however, seem to be against natural law irrespective of any written law. The girls obviously recognized that their dad, Lot, would not have gone along with it as an idea had he been in his right mind and clear-headed. They therefore deliberately planned to get him drunk so he wouldn't realise what he was doing and with whom he was doing it. However, the horror of the plan and the thinking behind it may not have been as abhorrent to them as it does to our minds. It seems as if they saw it as a practical solution to a difficult situation. It was almost like a cold, calculating business deal. How could it be?

#### Not naturally immoral daughters

These were not naturally immoral girls. We know this because of what happened when the two angels arrived in their family home. Earlier in chapter 19 we find their father offering them as replacement victims to the men of the town who were lusting after the angelic guests Lot was entertaining in his house. This would have violated the code of hospitality and Lot preferred to have his daughters violated than his guests. We'll not comment on that choice but the words he used as he

offered them to the men of Sodom are significant: '...I have two daughters who have not known any man...' (Ge 19:8). Now catch the inference here. Sodom was a vile and wicked place. Sexual sins and perversions were massively commonplace and these were grown-up girls about to be married to local lads, and their honour was intact. They had not become part of the licentiousness which permeated the whole city. They were good, chaste girls. There is no hint in the narrative that they slept with their father out of hot passion, as they gave in to the sin of lust. Equally there is no hint at all that this became a lifestyle choice once it had produced its desired goal. They did it once for a reason; it achieved its purpose; they did not repeat it.

#### Background

We must look at the background to the story a little more. Lot and Abraham had not lived closely together for many years. No doubt the girls were told by Lot about how he and his uncle followed the call of God and left Haran for the land of Canaan and how God guided them. They would know about the promises God made to their great-uncle and aunt, Abraham and Sarah, but he was now 99 and she was 89 and people of that age simply don't have children. Indeed great-uncle Abraham had been given Sarah's maidservant, Hagar, to get around this problem, and she had apparently produced an heir for him. This action, which we today seem to accept fairly comfortably because we now have the full picture, if practised by Christians in our time, would rightly and readily be condemned by us. Then two 'men' came into town and their dad offered them hospitality. They couldn't have known that these men were angels and that they had literally just told their great-uncle and aunt that this time next year they would have their promised son. The girls must have been witless worrying about what was going to happen to them as the mob of the men of Sodom were surrounded their house. Lot was hardly the epitome of coolness and calm! They then saw what happened to these evil men and found themselves making frantic preparations in the middle of the night to leave hastily as soon as dawn arrived. Their fiancés laughed at the idea. They had a choice to make and chose to stick with dad and mum. (I have been thinking a good deal about this flight and realized recently that Lot would have had servants in his house. They would have prepared the meal for the angels; they would have helped them pack up and make ready to flee; so would they then



#### The destruction of Sodom

have been left behind to perish in the holocaust? Could you imagine that being what happened? No! We only read about the family fleeing, as servants don't count much as people, but I'm now inclined to think that Lot took his household with him as he fled. And I think this because they later flee to a cave outside of Zoar. There they would have needed bedding, food, drink, cooking facilities and so on. Could you imagine just a man and two young daughters carrying a host of stuff so they could live in a cave for a while? How did the girls get the drink to make their father drunk? They had to have servants with them; they just had to have had help.)

#### The trauma of Zoar

So their party leaves Sodom in haste and flees to Zoar. Mum gets there but then goes back some way to see what was happening to Sodom. Their old home, their fiancés, their friends and cattle and other possessions had been buried under the heavenly bombardment. Their mum was overcome and foolishly died, as they'd been warned. They'd lost everything from their past and their future. They were grieving, as was Lot. Their minds would be all messed up. This wasn't just the death of one beloved family member, their mother, this was the loss of many people they knew, and some they may well have loved deeply. So here they were. Their lives appeared to be in ruins. They'd lost everything. Abraham and Sarah were old and well past it as far as having children were concerned. How were they going to find husbands now amidst all this mess? If they could find men willing to marry them they had no dowry or anything else to offer. No matter how attractive they were as people marriages were not usually love matches. They were normally political or business mergers as both sides saw advantages in the union. They now had absolutely nothing of any sort to offer anybody. If the godly promises made to their family were ever going to be fulfilled, they were the only females available of child-bearing age through whom these promises now could be fulfilled.

And in the cold light of day, in their cave above the valley, looking over at the

smoke and devastation, smelling the sulphur and brimstone which had fallen in judgement on their home and friends, like their great-uncle and aunt before them they didn't know how any promises could be fulfilled. So they deliberately decided to take matters into their own hands. They could have children through the godly line - however it now obviously had to be through their dad acting as the father. But he was grieving for the loss of his wife and his possessions. The servants who were there to help could not be used to fulfil the promises. They were not in line at all. What could they do? Abraham still had to learn to lean on God in full trust. Ishmael was not to be the answer but he had only learnt that a few days earlier - and Lot and his daughters could not know about this. It was to be many years hence that Abraham finally learnt to trust God to the n<sup>th</sup> degree, as he willingly prepared to offer up Isaac in the belief that God could raise up children for him as He, God, purposed. Lot never got to that point in his walk with God but let's not blame any of them for not yet knowing how God would resolve their problems and fulfil His promises. We know because we know the end of the story but they were living through it, and it was a massively traumatic experience for them to say the least.

#### Pondering the implications

Their solution to commit incest so that they could bear children by their father may have been a poor one; it may well have been sin in God's eyes, not so much because of what they did but because of their lack of faith and trust in Him. We need to ponder on two things



**Ruth (a Moabitess) and Naomi**  
(Ruth descended from Lot's elder daughter)

more: nowhere in this narrative, as also in the other cases we mentioned earlier of what we would call incestuous acts or relationships, is there any condemnation of the actions for their moral ineptitude, which seems somewhat odd and needs explanation - or an attempted explanation; and secondly we know and understand that conceiving a child is not an automatic result of a single sexual union. We believe that God has a hand in many, if not most, children who are born, and especially of those born to believers who love Him no matter how imperfect they might be. Abraham and Sarah had despaired of Sarah ever conceiving. They must have tried many times without success. There are many cases of barren women in the Bible and then God decides to open their wombs. So two one-off couplings are actually quite remarkable in that they hit the jackpot on both occasions. It would have been monumentally easy for God to

have withheld His blessing on their actions, but instead He allowed them to succeed. Two nations were to be born from it and one of their 'daughters' was to become the grandmother of the great king David, and thereby an ancestor of the Lord Himself. Ruth was a Moabitess, Lot's older daughter's descendant and a very important person in the history of Israel and of our salvation. So we need to ponder on why God allowed this dreadful action, to our way of thinking, to succeed.

#### Beware how you judge

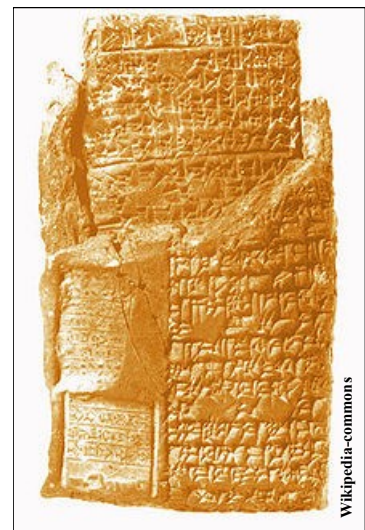
God has never accepted the premise that we can sin so that grace may abound, but He can turn our weaknesses into strengths for His purposes. He has done it time and time again. However, whatever the motive was in the girls' minds as they carefully and clinically laid their plans to get pregnant by their father, I don't believe that they saw it as sinful but more as a necessity. That, naturally, does not make it right but it changes our perception of the girls and what they did. Lot, of course, was not culpable at all in this sad story, but I think now we might be able to see why we should perhaps be slow to judge and possibly condemn the actions of many in the past, and that sometimes includes those from our fairly recent past. Maybe it is always best to leave any judging to God for He knows the truth and He knows the true motives and the hearts of those who serve Him however faulty they may be to us with our understanding. One day others might be looking back and might well be judging our spiritual integrity and legacy!

## The Origin of Writing

When I was growing up, some 55 or so years ago, I well remember liberal critics of the Bible declaring that Moses couldn't have written the Pentateuch, including Genesis of course, because they couldn't write in his day, so they thought. Then some archaeologists, probably excavating at Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), found evidence that not only could Moses have been able to write, Abraham too, who lived 400 years before him, could also have known the art. In fact writing dates back even further than Abraham. They date it to about 3,200 BC and Abraham lived around 1900 BC, and, of course, he lived in Ur with his father Terah until they moved up the Euphrates valley to Haran, living there until his father died.

#### The handicap of illiteracy

Writing, and the ability both to read and write, is so fundamental to our lives that it is very difficult for most of us to imagine how we could manage without being able to do so. Some of us here in Aylesbury have a little insight into this problem because we know a man who can't read and write in any meaningful sense of those skills. He has tremendous difficulties in coping with many simple daily tasks of living. One of our sisters in particular has had to help him manage for many years now since his mother died. He was raised in the church, and is baptized, but one of the main reasons he gives as to why he doesn't attend services is because our worship is heavily dependent on the ability to read. We study the Bible and use hymnbooks and expect a reasonably good level of literacy amongst our members. What we could do about this to help him, I have no idea. He can't cope with it and feels isolated. Illiteracy like his today is relatively rare but it closes so many doors and isolates the illiterate person. He has no access to the world of computers, or books, and can't understand gas bills and bank statements and other things like that.



**Legal text on clay tablet from ancient Babylon**

He also gets diddled by the unscrupulous once they mark him down as a sucker, and the jobs' market is severely restricted, or was severely restricted in his case before he retired. Reading and writing is therefore a most basic skill and has been almost since time began.

### Today's given wisdom

I say 'almost since time began' because a little use of the written word on the Internet will reveal that conventional wisdom now places the origin of writing to three locations, all around 3,200 BC, as we said. The civilisations involved were found in Mesopotamia, which we have noted already, Egypt and the Indus Valley in the Indian sub-continent. The Chinese came along a little later, so we're reliably told. At first sight this might seem a reasonable estimate but it is totally wrong as far as the biblical record is concerned. However there are features here which serve to confirm the accuracy of the biblical record, and that we can rely on the truth of the Bible, which is God's Word, from start to finish. In fact using God's Word to study these ancient peoples is the only way to make true sense out of them and their mysterious origins as peoples.

### Ancient dark ages

If you examine the histories of the three cultures where popular academics believe writing originated, you will find that almost nothing is known about them until they began to write. Before they left written records there is nothing we can learn about them, which would kind of make sense anyway. Their people therefore 'must have' lived in a so-called dark age, in all three cases, just managing in a primitive sort of way to eke out a living and get by somehow, until suddenly they sparked into life. The popular world-view not only believes in biological evolution, where we all evolved from molecules to men, but also in sociological evolution, where we evolved from grunting, primitive cave dwellers hunting down prey and dragging our wives around by their hair, until we became more and more sophisticated over time. Now it's our wives who pull us around by the nose! This scenario, apart from the last one, is absolute nonsense. There were no dark ages in these lands.

What we should learn from their supposed histories is that before writing existed in these lands these three civilisations did not, in fact, exist at all. But the mysterious dark ages are put in there not because there is any evidence for them, for there isn't, but because obviously they **must have** been there for these civilisations to appear, as it were, so suddenly from nowhere. They exploded on to histo-

ry and were well-formed and sophisticated in things like building pyramids, and canals, and farming techniques. It's a puzzle and leaves plenty of room for faithful academic guessing based on 'the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen' (cf. Heb. 11:1). Like modern astronomers when discussing origins, they have to invent 'cold dark matter' (CDM) to make their models work, but nobody has ever detected it or seen it but it **must** be there to prop up their ideas.

### The biblical teaching

So what does the Bible have to say, for it contains the true picture? The first thing we need to note is that the Bible says nothing at all about the origin of writing. What it does indicate is that people have been able to write from the time of Adam, or at least from the time that Adam was alive, and somebody could have taught him how to do it, or done it for him at his dictation. In other words Adam did not have to learn to speak but was created with a full and fluent vocabulary so he could converse instantly with God and name all the animals on the very day he was created. The early patriarchs were able to write down the story of Creation and these early days, from which Moses obtained his facts when he penned Genesis. There were lots of things Adam, Eve and the early patriarchs needed to know how to do right away without floundering in the dark and having to invent things. Adam was told to tend the Garden of Eden. You need tools to do any tending and you need to know how to tend anyway. He would have to fashion tools to do the job. He would need to know how to cut his toenails and finger nails and trim hair, and give Eve a perm! He would need to know on Day Six what a bed was so he could lie down and go to sleep. It would not have been cold at night because they did not need clothes but a sort of home and



Adam names the animals

(Picture taken in The Creation Museum, Kentucky, USA)

place to have as a base would be needed from Friday 6<sup>th</sup>, the very first day of their lives. Adam hardly needed to know how to write initially because he didn't need to send any notes, letters or e-mails to Eve! Distance communication only became necessary as the population expanded, so he would have had to have been taught how to do it later, or to tell his story to one who could write it down for him. But who would do it for him and how did they learn?

### Who taught the early patriarchs?

Well, there's a simple answer to this question; they were taught writing by angels, just as they would have been taught many skills by them. In Jewish books the angels who ministered to humans in these early days were called 'Watchers'. They came down as instructors in Jared's time. Later these angelic Watchers (sons of God as Genesis 6:2 calls them) sinned and fell, after mingling amongst people as they had to on Earth, when they '*saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.*' They left their proper habitation (Jude 6) and by taking human wives went one stage further in sin than the original rebellious angels did at the Fall, and God determined to destroy the Earth because of the massive corruption they caused. God has locked these 'Watchers', now languishing as fallen angels, away in *Tartarus* until the end of time, so that they can never corrupt the Earth like this again (cf. 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6).



Ancient pyramid structures from around the world

Pictures from Google: pyramids and ancient pyramid structures

We do pick up on this story from the Jewish *Book of Jubilees* and reference is made therein to writing:

*'Mahalalel took unto him to wife Dinah, the daughter of Barakiel the daughter of his father's brother, and she bore him a son... and he called his name*



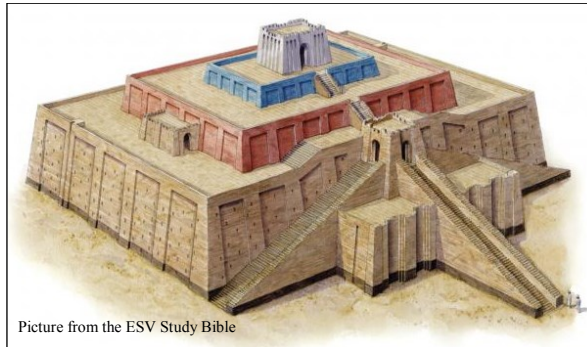
Jared, for in his day the angels of the Lord descended on the earth, those who are named Watchers, that they should instruct the children of men, and that they should do judgement and uprightness on the earth. And... Jared took to himself a wife, and her name was Baraka, the daughter of Rasujal, a daughter of his father's brother... and she bore him a son... and he called his name Enoch. And he was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, that men might know the seasons and the years according to the order of their separate months. And he was the first to write a testimony and he testified to the sons of men among the generations of the earth...' (The Book of Jubilees, chapter 4:15-18. NB: the omissions are all dates when these events are supposed to have occurred but are irrelevant to the narrative. G.A.F.). (Incidentally, these are the first recorded marriages of first cousins. All previously mentioned unions are between brothers and sisters!)

So, according to *Jubilees*, it was Enoch who was taught to write, and he was known as 'Enoch the scribe'. Adam died towards the end of Enoch's somewhat shorter life of a mere 356 years here on Earth, but he had plenty of time to tell Enoch his story and get him to record the details of Creation and the Fall, or, of course, he could have learned to write it for himself; this we'll never know.

### Writing Genesis

The Book of Genesis is not haphazardly written. The stories are punctuated by important verses which bracket each section, indicating who wrote them or who was the source for the details. Just as we believe that Mark wrote his gospel based on Peter's testimony, and Luke used Paul and probably Mary, Jesus's mother, for much of his detail, so Moses used the records left by various patriarchs both before and after the Flood for the details in Genesis. It's a study in itself, but chapter 5:1 opens, 'This is the book of the generation of Adam.' Other punctuating verses omit the words 'the book of...' but include the words 'the generations of...' and feature the heavens and earth – which God must have recounted to one of the patriarchs, and Adam is obviously the favourite candidate (2:4), Noah (6:9) and others post-Flood down to Jacob (37:2).

But it is in the account of the events of the Flood that we see clear evidence of writing. Chapter 7 is critical in this assessment and we see it best from verse 11. 'In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And



Picture from the ESV Study Bible

### A Ziggurat - thought to be like the tower of Babel

rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark,... And the Lord shut him in.

The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved on the earth,... Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.' (Ge 7:11-24). The dates, the timing, the depth of the waters all betoken careful notes being taken and depth soundings being recorded. Again, legend has it that Noah took scrolls on to the Ark containing a record of all the knowledge accumulated before the Flood so that they could use it as reference material after it was over. He certainly had the time to collect it. These also included the historical records of the genealogies and Creation and the Fall.

### The true date of writing

If writing was taught to Enoch, who was born approximately 600 years after Creation, so it could date from, say, 700 years after Adam was created. Adam lived to be 930 so had a heap of time - 230 years approximately - to get to understand it. If we take a biblical age for the Earth, we are looking to around the year 3,300 BC when writing was invented, which is very close to the modern guesstimates of 3,200 BC. This, however, cannot be true. The Flood almost wiped the slate clean 1656 years after Creation – this would therefore be around the year 2350 BC, which clearly conflicts with the academic estimates for the three civilisations whom they declare were the first to write, by approximately 1000 years (we can't pinpoint the exact dates but these approximations will be more than adequate for our purposes). The modern academic dates are all based on the carbon C<sub>14</sub> dating techniques on which archaeologists have to rely. At best, by their own admission, these are very unreliable before about 700 years ago, and are

probably not even all that reliable that far back in time. (This is a topic for those interested in the science behind the figures and the details don't need to concern us here.) The point is, we can reliably take these figures with a huge pinch of salt and need not be afraid of them at all.

### The ancient civilisations arise suddenly

The Bible tells us quite clearly that just over 100 years after the Flood, in Peleg's time (Gen. 10:25), the people were at it again in defying God's orders – this time to go and fill the Earth. They stayed in one place at Babel and built a tower there. God was very displeased with them for that and confused their languages (Gen. 11:1-9). This had the desired effect and people who had the same language congregated together in different parts of the world all of a sudden. They all had the same background knowledge. They knew how to read and write but now had to learn new types of reading and writing. They were highly intelligent with a cross-section of skills, knew how to build, and work the land – after all Noah became a farmer and he was still alive. The mysterious dark ages of their past never existed. They had all lived in the one spot, had one language and knew about life and living from the same source.

### The swift rise of paganism

How they became pagans and forgot the true God is a story we have already told in part (*Genesis Accepted*, Number 12 for example) and maybe returned to at a later date. Nevertheless it only takes one generation for people to forget civilisation and what they learned and return to savagery, for if the children are not taught properly they won't remember because they can't, and therefore won't believe. That's why we are fast becoming a godless society today. Just look at quiz programmes on television, of all differing standards, and note how even intelligent people often fail on simple Bible questions. We have to be part of the fight-back. If we neglect to teach our children about spiritual matters, not just by Bible studies and lessons but by our own commitment, example and dedication, we will lose our children to the Lord. We can't over-emphasize this enough.

Thus, if we follow the account in the Bible about Creation and the development of people from the Fall, through the Flood and on to Babel, we would expect to find pockets of civilisation bursting into view in different areas simultaneously, as if from nowhere, with reading, writing, technology and so on already at an advanced level. They were the lucky ones who got

the cleverest genes in their language pool after the Babel mixing occurred. Others did not fare quite so well and could not set up in the same way, so found themselves living at a lower level of civilisation, and, yes, some may have lived in caves, or become more primitive hunter-gatherers and nomadic herdsmen rather than sophisticated city dwellers. Take the Flood and Babel out of the picture, as most modern academics do, and you are left with no explanation concerning the origin of these

great ancient civilisations; you have no ideas as to how writing developed and how long such skills have been known, so you invent things like 'dark ages' to plug the gaps in your knowledge.

**Confidence in the Bible**

The story which unfolds in the Bible from its earliest chapters leaves no mysterious dark ages to confuse us and tells it as it is, and was, and why. We can rely on it because the Author who inspired the Book

we find it in was there. He witnessed it and inspired His people to record faithfully what happened. We can rely on the Bible fully and we can have complete confidence in it from its opening verse in Genesis to the Amen at the end of Revelation, and everything in between. It is God's written record and He wants us to read it. That is why He gave our ancestors the skills of reading and writing. It's His main way of communicating with us!

# As Reported!

From time to time we read things in the papers which reflect on our interest in origins and Genesis in particular. They are not sufficient to make a full article about them but are well worth

bringing to your notice, with a few comments, to help strengthen faith. They frequently hit the headlines but then when they don't quite produce the expected, or desired effect, this is either suppressed or

stuck into an obscure slot deep inside the paper. We hope to carry these small items when we can.

Editor

## Ships of the desert were once giants of the Arctic



*Northern cousin: Artist's impression of the giant camels*

**THEY** are known as the ships of the desert - but remains of a giant camel have been found in the High Arctic. Bone fragments were unearthed on Canada's Ellesmere Island, 750 miles further north than the species has previously been discovered.

They reveal the creature must have roamed the frozen northern forests around 3.5 million years ago and was 30 per cent larger than today's camels. Manchester University scientists who tested collagen from the fragments found an almost identical match between the now extinct animal and the modern-day one-humped camel common in the Sahara. Results were published in the journal Nature Communications.

Dr Natalia Rybczynski, of the Canadian Museum of Nature who led the field expeditions, said the discovery may suggest camels were originally 'adapted to living in an Arctic forest environment'.

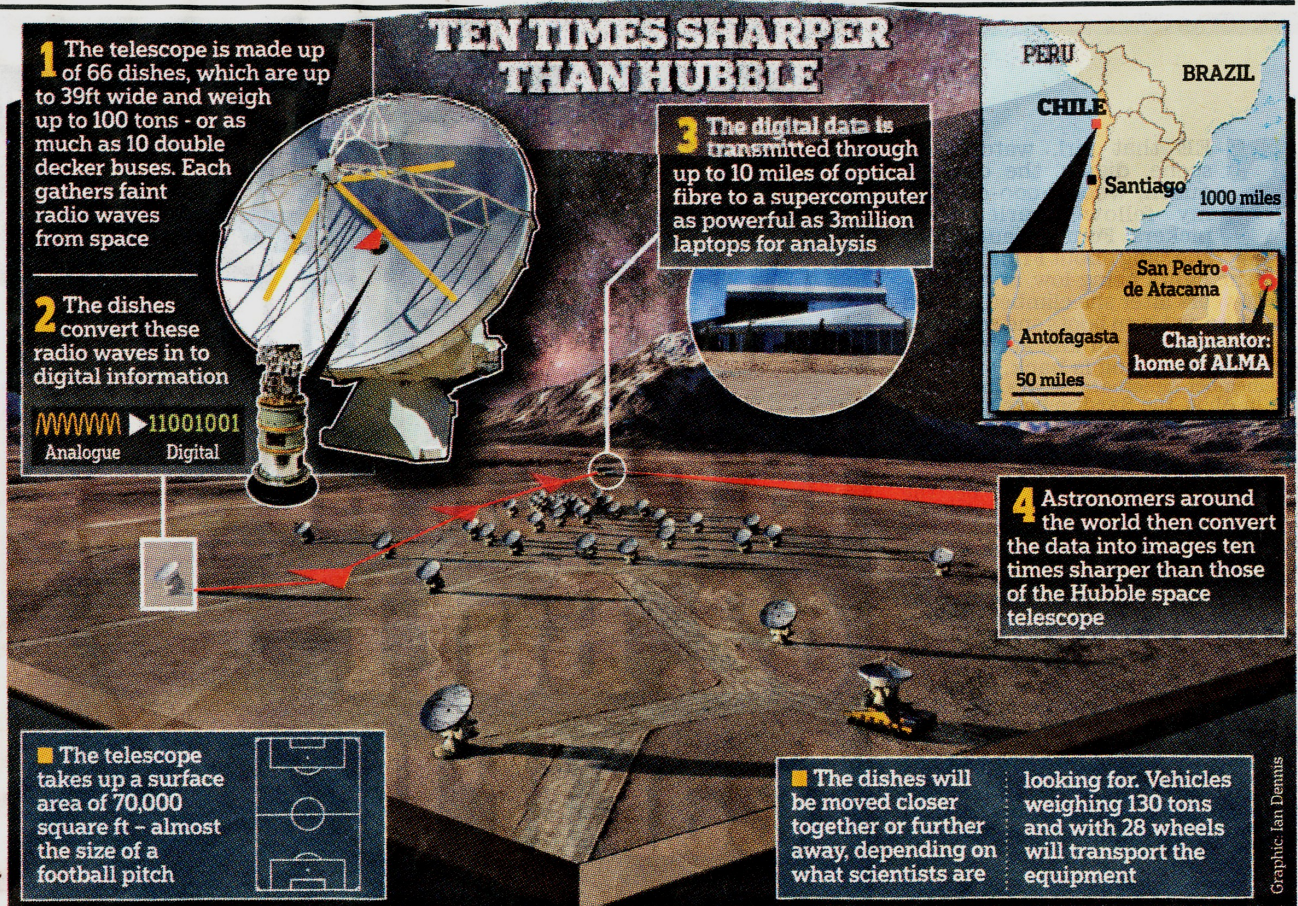


*'I told you we should have turned left at junction 15'*

This is no surprise to a Creationist. If you remember back to the account of the antediluvian world, there was only one continent and its climate was mild all over. Also the physical conditions of the world encouraged giantism. The fossil records show giant ferns and trees, giant insects, giant reptiles (called dinosaurs by us today), and many giant species. It is to be expected that we can find animals in locations we would not expect today under current conditions. Also, if the world is only approximately 6,000 years old we would easily expect 'yesterday's' camels to show little or no biological differences from 'today's', smaller offspring.

This find fits perfectly into the Genesis scenario, apart from the evolutionary time-scale given to it by the scientists.

Daily Mail



Graphic: Ian Dennis

They never give up! This telescope cost £1,000,000,000 to build high up (16,400ft) in the Chilean desert. The Atacama Desert is one of the driest deserts in the world and is ideal for such a scheme because of its height and a distinct lack of light pollution there. It is not one telescope but rather a project linking 66 giant, yet movable, dishes to a supercomputer.

The blurb accompanying this photograph has the following to say: 'It is hoped it will provide answers as to where the stars, the planets and ultimately ourselves came from... This could shed light on our creation, as it is believed the elements spewed out by

dying stars went on to seed the sun, the planets and, eventually, humans...

Brian Ellison, of the Science and Technology Facilities Council and ALMA's UK project manager, said: 'It is said we are all made of stardust. ALMA [Atacama Large Millimeter Array] will answer certain questions about where we came from.'

It is supposed to 'allow astronomers to peer back to almost the first moments after the universe was formed...[and] will give astronomers a glimpse of galaxies from just after the Big Bang.'

It is ironic that these scientists

could just trot down to a bookshop and for under £20 they could buy a book which will tell them all they want to know about origins. The Bible says that 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' (Gen. 1:1). We are made of dust; God said so, and He merely spoke the stars and planets into existence.

One great problem with the Big Bang is that they do indeed find galaxies perfectly formed and 'old' looking just after the supposed Big Bang, but they shouldn't have formed at all that early on. Ultimately you can rest assured that ALMA will demonstrate the accuracy of the Genesis account.

*Genesis Accepted* is published when available. All correspondence and cheques to:

**Graham A. Fisher,**  
**5 Portway, North Marston, Buckingham, MK18 3PL, (UK).**  
**☎ (01296) 670568. Email: gafisher888@aol.com**



**Subscription: £6.00 for three copies (£2.00 per copy)**

**PDF copies available. Back copies on the Web at: [www.greatbarrchurchofchrist.org](http://www.greatbarrchurchofchrist.org)**

All quotations are from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible (Anglicized version, 2002), unless otherwise indicated.

