

The Book of Genesis
Genesis 1:6-13: The Creation of the Expanse
08/28/2019 Wednesday PM

Introduction

- Last week we discussed **Dating Creation**.
- Most people within the church agree that God is the creator of the universe, however many differ on when.
- Two main camps today are what's called "young earthers" and "old earthers." One side believes the earth is thousands of years old and the old believer it is millions of years old.
- If we are going to use the Bible as our only authoritative Word of God, then we must be careful at how we interpret it. Taking the Bible at face value and within its proper context is the best route to go always.
- Last week I presented the "young earth" viewpoint by using the genealogies found in the Scripture as well as historical events that have taken place such as the Exile of the Jews into Babylonian captivity.
- This method gives us roughly 6000 years for the age of the earth. That differs greatly with the 13.7 billion years science suggest for the beginning of the universe.
- I will restate the last point I made in last week's notes, "No side can be 100% accurate about the precise numbers, however, one side is a lot closer to the right answer than the other."
- Tonight, we are going to look at **The Creation of the Expanse**.

Genesis 1:6-8

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

- **V.6** – Here we see God creating what the modern translations call "an expanse." The KJV says, "Firmament."
- The word "expanse" means: "1.) An area of something, typically land or sea, presenting a wide continuous surface. 2.) the distance to which something expands or can be expanded."
- Firmament means: "the heavens or the sky, especially when regarded as a tangible thing."
- The Hebrew word here is *raqiya`*. Here is what the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon says, "1) extended surface (solid), expanse, firmament. 1a) expanse (flat as base, support) 1b) firmament (of vault of heaven supporting waters above). 1b1) considered by Hebrews as solid and supporting 'waters' above"
- The Strong's Concordance definition is, "properly, an expanse, i.e. the firmament or visible arch of the sky:—firmament."
- From the verse, we can see that the "expanse" is "between the waters" to separate them.
- **V.7** – This verse tells us a little more. The expanse separated the water that was above it, from the water that is below it.
- **What is this "expanse" that the Scripture is referring to?**
- **V.8** – This verse tells us that "God called the expanse "sky." The KJV and other translation say "heaven."
- The Hebrew word that is used here for "sky" or "heaven" is *shamayim* which is the same word used in **v.1**, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
- This is speaking of the entire universe which is planet Earth and the rest of the cosmos. We consider everything outside of Earth as "the heavens."
- So when you take these verses together, you see that the "expanse" is not really "something" it is just empty space.
- *Raqiya`* represents the expanse of the cosmos which did not exist in the beginning, but which God had to enlarge or stretch out so as to make the cosmos a habitable place.
- Many places we see in Scripture God speaking of "stretching out" or "spreading out" the heavens. An example of this is in **Job 9:8** which says, "Who alone stretches out the heavens and tramples down the waves of the sea."
- Again, *raqiya`* is more of the process of God expanding the universe, and we call the result of that expansion "the heavens."
- The NIV translating *shamayim* here in **v.8** is not really the best word choice because it seems to make one think about only our sky or our atmosphere. The KJV puts "Heaven" in uppercase for Heaven proper and that too is not the best translation.
- We know that the *raqiya`* does include Earth's atmosphere, but it cannot only be Earth's atmosphere.
- If you look ahead to **vv.14-17** and Day 4 of creation, you will see that God put the sun, moon, and stars inside this expanse.
- So it could not simply mean simply our atmosphere, because the sun, moon, and stars are beyond our atmosphere.
- As far as Heaven proper goes, that is a real that already existed and was not something that was created during the Genesis account as far as I see it.

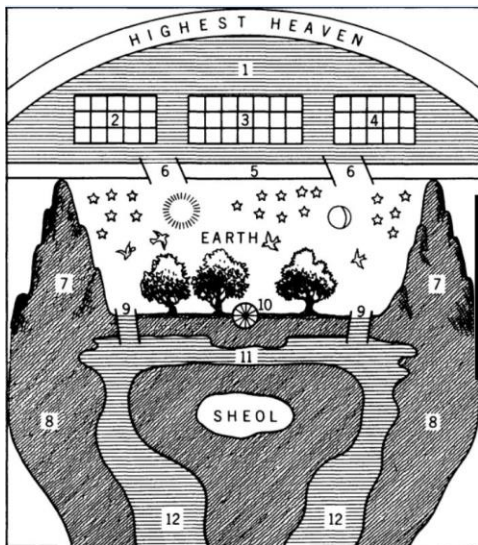
- So with all of this being said, What was it exactly that God did on Creation Day 2?
- The “heavens and the earth” were already created on Creation Day 1.
- It was on Creation Day 2 that God stretched everything out and created the expanse that we see in the heavens today.
- As it pertains to Earth specifically, this was the day that our atmosphere was created and there was a separation from the Earth itself (which was covered by water) and the “sky.”
- So to keep it simple, we teach kids that God made the “sky” or “atmosphere” on Creation Day 2.

Why Does God Not Call the Second Day “Good”?

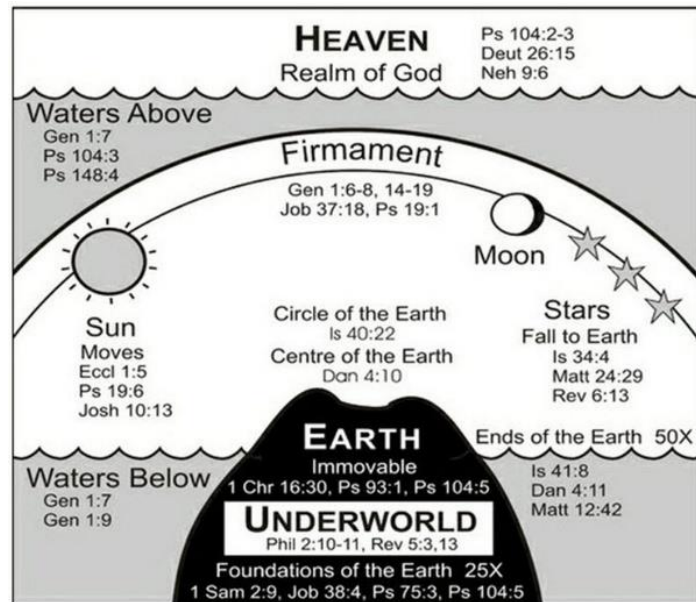
- Day 2 is unique in the Creation Week because it is the only day that God doesn’t call everything “good.”
- The reason for this appears to be that God’s separation of the waters is twofold:
 - First, the expanse separating the waters below from the waters above – Day 2.
 - Second, the separation of the waters below into the seas allowing the dry land to appear – Day 3.
- So God doesn’t declare this good after the incomplete separation on Day 2, but only after the twofold separation in complete on Day 3.
- God makes up the lack of Day 2 having goodness declared by doing it twice on Day 3!

What Does “Waters Above” Mean?

- This is one of the most difficult aspects of the creation account to explain because the Bible doesn’t give us a lot of details.
- However, over the years people have come up with several theories about this topic.
- Some, like English-born Jewish biblical scholar Nahum Sarna (1925-2005) believe that the “expanse” was solid and that it was holding up the “waters above.” Below are illustrations of what he thought the cosmos looked like.



Biblical conception of the world: (1) waters above the firmament; (2) storerooms of snows; (3) storerooms for hail; (4) chambers of winds; (5) firmament; (6) sluice; (7) pillars of the sky; (8) pillars of the earth; (9) fountain of the deep; (10) navel of the earth; (11) waters under the earth; (12) rivers of the nether world.



- If the “firmament” or “expanse” was solid, then we would observe that today in space. However, we do not see the planets and stars sitting in a solid, we see them suspended in an open expanse.
- There have been other theories that have attempted to explain the “waters above” as well.
- One model was the Canopy Theory that spoke of a water canopy that was suspended above the earth that broke open and supplied a lot of the water for the Flood, however this theory has not proven itself to be a viable explanation either.
- One reason is that there is no Scriptural reference for such a thing. The only reference that can be made is the last part of **Genesis 7:11**, “...and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.”
- The plain reading of that does not lend itself to a water canopy, it just means that it rained really hard during the flood.
- Proponents of this theory agree that the canopy is no longer there, but we still speak of heavy rain in this way today.
- The other issue is that a water canopy over the entire Earth would have caused tremendous issues for life on Earth.
- This is one of those areas where we will have to continue to study and we maybe will get an answer later.
- We will explore other theories in later studies.