



# Biblical Cosmology Primer

## The Firmament

*"When the Christian layman in Geology or Astronomy finds a discrepancy between the Scriptures and what confronts him as a result of scientific work, the proper thing for him to do is to abide by the Scripture and lay that thing of science aside as erroneous."*

*- Dr. A. L. Graebner, "Quarterly" VI, 42. 1902*

The Firmament of heaven is the most glaring truth in the Scriptures, of a cosmology most ridiculed for centuries. That is why this series begins with the second day of creation. This is the component of the overall flat, enclosed cosmological model that is most provable in the Bible exclusively.

Young Earth creation ministries today boast of holding to a literal interpretation of the Bible in order to establish the fact that the world was created in six literal days. They, however, dare not use this same hermeneutical principle with regards to their overwhelming assumptions about the cosmos, lest they find themselves despised, rejected and out of a job.

**Many who claim to know their Bible will reply with  
Isaiah 40:22 which says:**

*"It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in"*

They quote that verse, 'to lead into' what they want it to say (eisegesis), rather than doing just a little more study 'to lead out of' the text (exegesis) the author's original intent. They assume the phrase, "circle of the earth" refers to the globe or a ball when in fact Isaiah used a different Hebrew word altogether when he did want to signify a ball.

**Isaiah 22:18 says:**

*"He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house. "*

This little story you are about to read is a scenario that mirrors a growing number of real-life discussions taking place around the country between Pastors and the college age members of their flock.

Read carefully the dialogue taking place between this first-year college student named Steven and his Pastor, Albert. Steven has just finished his first year at a major Christian University in the Midwest and has come home for summer break.

While at college, Steven was introduced to the concept of the Biblical Flat Earth by a fellow student. He was given a large amount of Scripture, and after hours of discussing this with his friend and looking through the Bible himself, Steven came home very confused and very hungry for answers.

He was anxious to talk to his parents about this, and after a lengthy discussion, and no answers, his parents recommended he meet with Pastor Albert. His Dad said that it would be appreciated by Pastor Albert if Steven made a copy of all this material, giving it to the Pastor that upcoming Sunday. Steven's Dad said that this would be the respectful thing to do, rather than to blindsides Pastor Al at the meeting. His Dad said: "Let the Pastor know that he can have as much time as he needs to prepare to answer all of these questions you have."

Three weeks later, Steven and Pastor Albert get together, and Steven opens the discussion with...

***Pastor***, can we agree that there are three heavens?

***Pastor Al***, the first being the space around us, where the birds fly, the second being the firmament itself, and the third being where God's throne is? Even if we don't agree which heaven is the firmament, Gen 1:8 says "the firmament is heaven".

***Yes Steven***, we are in agreement so far...

***Pastor***, let's start with the Hebrew word for heaven(s). "Heavens" in Hebrew is Shamayim -- sham means 'sky or lofty' -- mayim means 'water'. Thus, the heavens literally mean: SKY-WATER

***Pastor Albert***, do we agree so far?

***Yes Steven***, but remember there had been a great flood since, and the waters above rained down upon the earth, so those waters are not up there anymore. Those were pre-flood conditions we know very little about.

**Pastor**, there are many places in Scripture that describe 'Heaven'. You may be surprised to know how often heaven is referred to as being surrounded by water or even being the source of water:

*Ps 148:4; Jer 51:16; Jer 10:13; Job 38:37; Deut 11:11; Isa 55:10; 2 Sam 21:10;  
Deut 33:13; Ps 18:11; Rev 22:1; Rev 7:17; Rev 11:6*

**Pastor Albert**, by the way, the above Scriptures are all in post-flood context.

### **Genesis 7:11b-12a; 8:2**

*"...all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth..."*

*"The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;"*

**Pastor**, I think it's pretty clear that there were three sources of water God used to flood the Earth. One of those three was through "the windows of heaven".

## **Psalm 18:11**

*"He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies."*

**Pastor Al**, the Psalmist says God is surrounded by dark waters.  
Please keep in mind Pastor, this is 1,500 years after the flood.

**Pastor Al**, do you have any issues so far of where this has come?

**Yes, Steven**, maybe the psalmist was only speaking poetically; you know, the psalms were actually written as musical poetry.

**Well Pastor**, does that mean that we can view the book of Psalms as nothing more than poetry? ... And are the books of Deuteronomy, Samuel, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel Amos and Revelation also just poetry?

**Pastor**, moving forward, the King James translators chose the English word "firmament" to translate this word with. What is the root word in this? Firmament ... it denotes something "firm".

***Pastor***, this very word, even in the Latin Vulgate, has the same meaning:  
“Firmamentum”

**In the Hebrew (raki’a), according to many respectable sources,  
literally means:**

*Solid expanse, firm, solid body having doors and windows, vault of heaven, supports the upper reservoir, support also for the heavenly bodies, beaten out like with a hammer, crystalline, supporting God’s throne.*

***Pastor***, all of these descriptions come from the Bible, and are likewise corroborated by many respected sources such as Easton’s Bible Dictionary, Brown-Driver-Briggs, Josephus and the Septuagint.

***Pastor Al***, is there any problem so far with what I’ve described? Were the English translators mistaken to call it the “firmament”?

*If heaven itself means sky-water, and the Scriptures say the firmament was made to separate the waters from the waters, then I believe that the Scriptures agree that the firmament is, and must be solid, hard, vaulted and strong.*



**Pastor Albert**, Please tell me where I am misinterpreting things to this point?

**Steven**, one way to interpret the word “raki’a” is to understand it to be the expanse of the sky, showing its breadth from side to side and depth from unlimited top to bottom, expanding outward in all directions from the observer. This would be the atmosphere in all of its levels. Alternately, I think the pre-flood “waters above” might have been frozen – it is really cold out there, you know. So the frozen waters might have represented an icy, hard layer around the globe, but that is not there anymore – the flood accounts for that.

**Well, Pastor**, according to numerous passages in the Bible - some of which I have already mentioned - the firmament, and the waters above are still there, long after the flood. So exegetically, this alone is enough to disprove the theory of a pre-flood ice canopy” that has since collapsed. So really, this leaves us no choice but to re-visit, and research the firmament, and the waters above.

**Pastor**, can we now look at other places where the firmament (raki’a) is mentioned?

### **Ezekiel 1:22**

*"And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above."*

### **Job 37:18**

*"Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?"*

### **Amos 9:6a (NASB)**

*"The One who builds His upper chambers in the heavens  
And has founded His vaulted dome over the earth ..."*

**Pastor**, it seems that the Scriptures are testifying in agreement in numerous places, that both the firmament, and the waters above, are still intact after the flood. Isn't that the burden of proof when something is true according to the Scriptures?

***Pastor**, I do hear your reservations, but if you were honest you have to admit that none of those are by any means a Scriptural rebuttal of what I have shown you from Scripture. All your objections so far have been based on interpretation and worldview, not on exegesis. I have pointed out these things through exegesis; now are you able, through exegesis, to disagree?*

## **2 Cor 13:1; Deut 19:15b**

*“... EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.”*

***Pastor Al**, everything I read in the Bible now seems to make so much more sense, and has become clearer than it ever has been, when I had read passages like these in the past:*

*“Heaven is my throne and Earth is my footstool” Isa 66:1; Acts 7:49*

*“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool...” Mat 5:34,35a*

*"And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." Ez 1:26*

*"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." Rev 4:6*

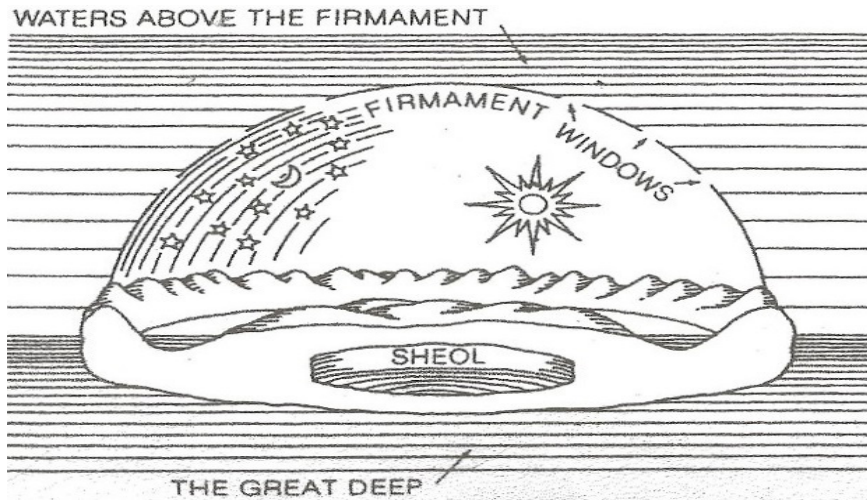
*"Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth" Ps 57:5*

*"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." Rev 15:2*

*This is an amazing thing Pastor Albert!!!*

### ***Our ceiling is God's floor***

**Pastor,** *God's throne sits on top of the dome (firmament). We've already established that His throne is surrounded by water (heavens=shamayin=sky-water). Now, when you read passages like this, "Heaven is my throne, and Earth is my footstool", don't such passages make a lot more sense?*



## The Ancient Hebrew Conception of the Universe

"The Ancient Hebrews imagined the world as flat and round, covered by a great solid dome of the firmament ... Above the firmament and under the earth was water ... The sun, moon and stars moved across or were fixed in the firmament ..."

*Image and description from Harper's Bible Dictionary 1985; page 309*

## **In Conclusion**

Even though this story proves the Biblical case for the dome, there is still much to be discussed regarding the cosmology understood by the forty authors of our God-breathed holy Scriptures.

In the next edition, we will discuss the heavenly luminaries (sun, moon and stars). The story must continue there because of the implications that arise regarding the physical reality of the dome. If the Earth was created on the second day of creation, and the sun on the fourth, to what did the Earth revolve around if there was not yet a sun? Also, if the Scriptures say the sun, moon and stars were placed INSIDE the firmament, well that sure argues for the heavenly luminaries being local, much closer than we've been told.

Undoubtedly, the questions answered will produce more questions. Many of which your church Pastor and elders are not prepared to answer. After all, they were born into this deception just as you and I were. Their seminary professors were likewise.

It's time to stop giving lip service to this so-called "Biblical Literalism" we've been saying we adhere to. Let's all take that hermeneutic to its logical end and start believing what the word of God has said all along. Then we can start asking other questions, such as why this deception, and who has been behind it?

I have often considered the question: If God says something; is it relative or absolute? ...is it relative to our position, relative to our understanding, relative to the prevalent worldview, or is it absolute? Is it relative to the limited understanding of writers who lived millennia ago, or is it inherent, timeless truth?

If it was relative, then whichever age or belief system we live in, or ascribe to the writers of Scripture; we can interpret to fit the paradigm ...we can actually make of it whatever we fancy....

Of course, it is absolute ...and if that does not fit our understanding, it is because we have a wrong understanding...else we reduce God to someone caught up in relativism or being incapable of inspiring the written expression of facts or concepts correctly.

Do you truly believe the Word was inspired, or is it just the best way human men of old, with limited understanding, and their cultural background, could express themselves?

If you are faced with something in God's Word that does not fit your understanding, do you seek an interpretation that fits your worldview, or do you adjust your worldview to agree with Scripture?

...Or maybe just let it slip by without further vexation of your mind?... I can hear the objections already:

Surely, we cannot take everything literally? There are parables, allegories, dreams and such that are not all literal!

The Bible explicitly tells us when it is speaking in terms of parables or dreams, which are of course allegorical comparisons, metaphors and descriptions to demonstrate principles or concepts. These are clearly not literal absolutes. Even in this instance, however, we must remember that God, who created all things, yes even the things that He uses as metaphors, has created them suited to the purpose of His Word. Thus these are still the most perfectly fitting metaphors, and not simply a "grabbing of the first thing that comes to mind" ...



Biblical metaphors are therefore perfectly suited, but not necessarily exhaustive. For example, Jesus uses numerous metaphors complimentary to one another when He describes such things as the coming kingdom of Heaven... it is like a sower who sowed seed which fell in different places...it is like a man who received a kingdom and went away on a long journey...it is like wheat and tares...it is like a man who planted a vineyard and let it out...it is like ten virgins and a bridegroom...and many more. Each metaphor is perfect, but inadequate by itself.

Note that the Bible says it is “like” ... in other words it tells us that this is a comparative description, and not the real thing. The same with dreams ... dreams have been used to signify something, but they were not literal, they required correct interpretation to be understood e.g. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which only Daniel could interpret, or Pharaoh’s dream which only Joseph could interpret ... there were not seven literal cows that ate seven other cows ... it was an allegorical dream that needed divinely inspired interpretation. These were not literal events, but they signified and demonstrated literal events.

So, when the Bible tells us something, it is meant to be accepted as literal fact, unless the Bible clearly indicates that it is a parable, an allegory or a dream.

## **What God states in Scripture was divinely inspired and requires literal interpretation.**

When God spoke through dreams, parables or allegories these required divinely inspired interpretation. That's why Jesus expounded the parables he spoke to those who were His. That's why God provided inspired interpreters like Daniel or Joseph, when he spoke non-literally, e.g. through dreams.

In other words, either the divinely inspired statement is factual, and requires literal interpretation; or when the statement is non-literal, God Himself provides the divinely inspired interpretation. God does not obfuscate His Word, except to those who do not want to hear it. Jesus spoke to the pharisees in parables, but to His disciples He expounded them.

If you are seeking answers, be careful where you go to find them. This Biblical truth has been over-run by many who claim they know what, how, when and why. Many of them wear a Christian label on their hat, but that should not be blindly assumed as genuine.

### **So-called “truthers” abound in mass on the internet.**

I have created a discussion board where many like yourselves are seeking answers to the many questions about this last days’ delusion. It is still a work in progress so sign up and visit the forum every week or so, to see what’s new. There will be many brothers and sisters who love the Lord and will hopefully be able to answer your questions.

**<http://forums.thelastdays.net>**

<http://thelastdays.net> (under construction)

Other valuable resources are: Noel Hadley’s blog and YouTube channel: “[ourwayisthehighway.wordpress.com](http://ourwayisthehighway.wordpress.com)” and the YouTube channel for William Goodrich, “the Truth is stranger than fiction”

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