

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES FOR SCIENCE & RELIGION



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Introduction

Hermeneutics

DEF: rules of interpretation for reading any piece of literature.

Concordism (Scientific Concordism)

ASSUMPTION the facts of science align with the Bible.

ASSUMPTION God revealed scientific facts about the origin, structure & operation of the natural world in the Bible 1000s of years before their discovery by modern science.

These are reasonable ASSUMPTIONS:

- God created the world ✓
- God inspired the Bible ✓

BUT does the Bible align with the facts of science?

Daily Movement/“Movement” of the Sun across the Sky

“The sun **rises** & the sun sets, and **hurries** back to where it **rises**.” Eccl 1:5

“The sun **rises** at one end of the heavens and makes its **circuit** to the other.”

Ps 19:6

Popular Evangelical Interpretations

(1) Poetic Language Argument

Statements about nature in the Bible are often in poetic passages and they use figurative language. They have no basis in physical reality and are simply fanciful figures of speech.

☛ Therefore, do not read these statements literally.

BUT basic definition of poetry → structure writing

Includes both:

- figures of speech
- references to physical reality (eg, sun & moon in Psalms)

(2) Phenomenological Perspective Argument

Greek *phainomai*: to appear

Statements about nature in the Bible are from the perspective of what they look like to the natural senses (eg. naked eye). They are only phenomenological and merely visual effects.

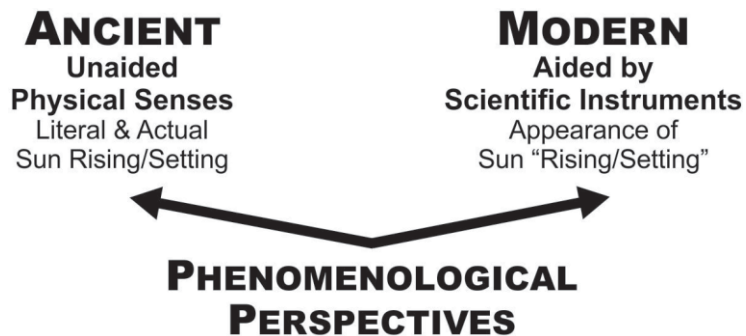
In fact, check any newspaper today and you will find the times for “sunrise” and “sunset.” But everyone knows that the sun does not literally rise or set

☛ Therefore, do not read these statements literally.

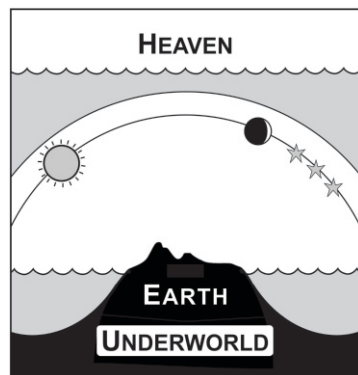
BUT distinguish between (Do Not Conflate):

ANCIENT Phenomenological Perspective

MODERN Phenomenological Perspective

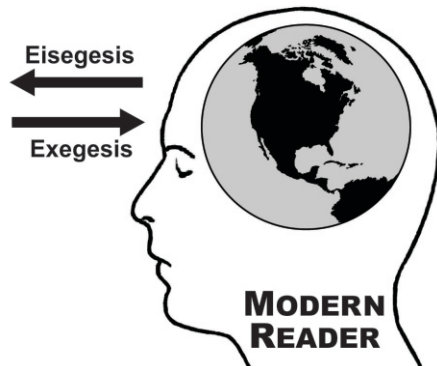
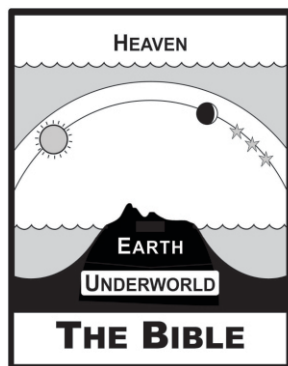


Ancient Science: The 3-Tier Universe



PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11
At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, [1] in **heaven** and, [2] on **earth** and, [3] in the **underworld**, Greek *kata-chthonios* and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hermeneutical Horizons



Eisegesis Gk *eis*: in, into; *ēgeomai*: to guide
DEF: reading our views or agenda INTO a book.
Exegesis *ek*: out, out of
DEF: reading a book's views or agenda OUT of it.

John Walton Aphorism

"The Bible is written FOR us ... it is not written TO us."
Lost World of Adam & Eve (2015), 19.

The Message-Incident Principle



Hermeneutical Principles

1. LITERALISM

Hermeneutical Commandment #1

Thou shall not believe that the Bible is 100% literal!!!

"God will cover you with **his feathers** & under **his wings** you will find refuge."
Is God a cosmic chicken?!?
Ps 91:4

JESUS: "I say to you that anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, **tear it out and throw it away**; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."

Are churches filled with blind men?!?

Matt 5:28-29

COMMENTS

- it is impossible to read the Bible literally 100% of the time
- Jesus did NOT speak literally 100% of the time

JESUS: "Though I have been speaking **figuratively**, a time is coming when I will no longer use this **kind of language**, but will tell you **plainly** about my Father" ... Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking **clearly** & without **figures of speech**."

John 16:25 & 29

- literal passages in the Bible is NOT more important or holier than the non-literal passages → Jesus used both

☞ Jesus used parables in 1/3 of his teaching
the stories are NOT literal historical events that happened

EG The Parable of the Good Samaritan NEVER HAPPENED

THE QUESTION:

When do we read a biblical passage literally or non-literally?

There is no easy answer to this question

BUT you will become more proficient over time with the practice of hermeneutics

CONCLUSION

- everyone is forced to make a hermeneutical decision on whether or not a biblical passage is to be read literally.
- are you aware of your hermeneutical decisions?
- can you justify your hermeneutical decisions?

👁️ **will your science help you to interpret the Bible?**

GENESIS 1-11

Should Gen 1-11 be read literally? Why? Or why not?

NOTE: Gen 1-11 is commonly viewed as a literary unit

History begins around Gen 12

Abraham is a Real Person in History

2. LITERARY GENRE

DEF: the type of literature

EG poetry, narrative, parable, allegory, history, letters, proverbs, laws, sermons, hymns, prophecies etc

NB: The Bible is like an ANTHOLOGY

roughly **50 authors** & written over roughly **1500 years**

Lust & Tearing Out Eyeballs Passage

found in the **Sermon on the Mount** (Matt 5:21-43)

what type of literature is this?

this literary unit has similar passages:

JESUS: "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away." Matt 5:30

Are churches filled with handless Christians?!?

JESUS: "Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek turn to him the other." Matt 5:38

Is this verse against protecting ourselves?!?

Features of this type of literature:

Hyperbole

uses exaggeration → powerful impact & easy to REMEMBER
do not interpret literally

Dialectical Greek *dia*: between; *legō*: to talk
continually talks to us & challenges us
God's Spirit works through it

CONCLUSION

- literary genre DICTATES interpretation
- identification of the literary genre is one of the 1st & most important decisions in hermeneutics
- the challenge for us today is to identify ANCIENT literary genres some will seem "unusual" because we do not use them today

GENESIS 1-11

What is the literary genre is Gen 1-11?

EG Garden of Eden Account (Gen 2-3)

fast-talking snake

two mystical trees: one imparts eternal life

one imparts knowledge of good & evil

History? Allegory? Parable? Myth? Fairy Tale?

3. ACCOMMODATION

DEF: God descending to the level of humans in order to reveal himself

revelation of inerrant Spiritual Truths so humans can understand them

Smallest Seeds

JESUS: "With what can we compare the *Kingdom of God*, or what **parable** will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, **is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth**; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Mk 4:30-32 (NRSV)

Is the mustard seed "the smallest of all the seeds on the earth"?

👁️ **NO.** Orchids are much smaller.

DID JESUS MAKE A MISTAKE?

DID JESUS LIE?

OR

Was Jesus accommodating to his audience?

Was Jesus using the botany-of-the-day?

Ancient Botany?

Dying Seeds

JESUS: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a **kernel of wheat** falls to the ground and **dies**, it remains only a single seed. But if it **dies**, it produces many seeds." John 12:23-24

Do seeds die before they germinate?

👁️ **NO.** Seeds are alive & function metabolically at a very low rate

DID JESUS LIE?

OR

Was he accommodating & using an ancient botany?

CONCERN

some Christians complain that accommodation “waters down” Scripture

Arguments for Accommodation

(1) Example of the **Incarnation** Latin *carnis*: flesh

DEF: God descended & became a human in the person of Jesus
GREATEST ACT OF ACCOMMODATION

In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and the **Word was God**. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made ... **The Word became flesh** and lived for a while among us. John 1:1-3, 14

(2) Jesus’s Use of Parables

DEF: earthly story with heavenly meaning
Jesus used common ideas-of-the-day to teach spiritual truths

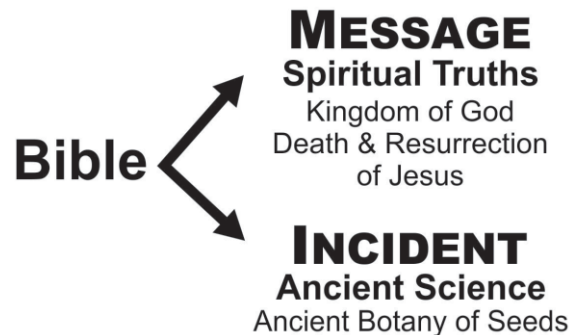
(3) Personal Prayer

when God talks to you does he not accommodate and use:
YOUR language & YOUR categories?

(4) Pedagogical (Teaching)

everyone does it when talking to a 4 yr old

Message-Incident Principle



NO microscopes!

seeds understood from an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective

CONCLUSION

Accommodation is the **Most Important Principle** in Science & Religion
reading beyond accommodation is COUNTERINTUITIVE

GENESIS 1-11

Did God accommodate when he inspired the ancient writers of Gen 1-11 and allow them to use their ancient understanding of origins?

4. MODERN SCIENCE & PARAPHRASE TRANSLATION

DEF: translations that use a modern INCIDENT & keep the MESSAGE

☞ ACCOMMODATION for today’s generation

JESUS: “How can we picture God’s kingdom? What kind of story can we use? It’s like a **pine nut**. When it lands on the ground it is quite small as seeds go, yet once it is planted it grows into a **huge pine tree** with thick branches.

Eagles nest in it.” Mk 4:31

Eugene Peterson, *The Message New Testament*
(NavPress, 1993) 82

- the words “pine nut,” “pine tree,” and “eagles” are NOT in original Greek New Testament
- most Canadians and Americans have never seen a mustard seed tree
BUT most have seen a pine nut, pine trees and eagles

Title page of *The Message New Testament*:

“The **Message** is a contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events, and ideas in **everyday language**.”
Ibid., 1

GENESIS 1-11

Can Gen 1 be **paraphrased** using the modern science of origins as an INCIDENT in order to deliver the **same** inerrant MESSAGES?

Genesis 1:1-5

- ¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
- ³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.
- ⁴ God saw the light was good, and he separated the light from darkness.
- ⁵ God called the light “day” and the darkness he called “night.”
And there was evening, and there was morning—the First Day.

Genesis 1:1-5 & Modern Science

- ¹ Over billions of years, **God created** the heavens, the earth, and the living organisms through evolution.
- ² Now the world did not exist before the creation of space, time & matter. The Spirit of God was ready to hover over the evolutionary process.
- ³ And God said, "Let there be an explosion." And there was an explosion.
- ⁴ God saw **it was good**. He separated the explosion from nothingness.
- ⁵ God called the explosion, "The Big Bang."
This was the first cosmological epoch.

Message-Incident Principle UPDATED

MESSAGES OF FAITH:

God is the Creator & the creation is good

INCIDENTAL MODERN SCIENCE:

Evolution of the heavens, earth & living organisms

☛ **THAT** God created, not **HOW** God created

5. ANCIENT PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF NATURE: THE 3-TIER UNIVERSE

DEF: nature as it **appears** to the naked eye & natural senses
Greek *phainomai*: to appear

NO telescopes!

CATEGORIES OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Ancient Phenomenological Perspective

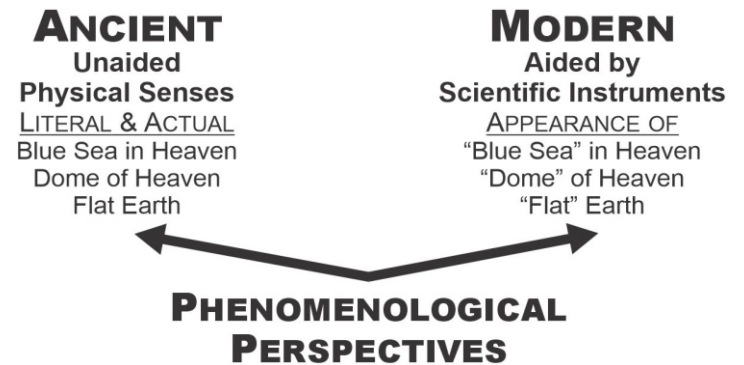
what the ancients saw, they believed was LITERAL & ACTUAL:

- blue sea in heaven:
water is blue & rain falls from above
- dome of heaven:
something solid holds up heavenly sea
- flat earth:
seen from any high point like a mountain

Modern Phenomenological Perspective

what we see, we know it is only an APPEARANCE:

- "blue sea" in heaven:
blue light scattered by atmosphere
- "dome" of heaven:
edge of horizon & curvature of sky
- "flat" earth:
appearance of land from a high point like a mountain



5A. THE EARTH & ANCIENT GEOGRAPHY

1. Earth is Immovable

1 Chr 16:30;
"The world is firmly established; **it cannot move.**" Ps 93:1, 96:10

2. Earth set on Foundations stated 20 X

"God set the earth on its **foundations**; it can never be moved." Ps 104:5

"Foundations" an engineering term.

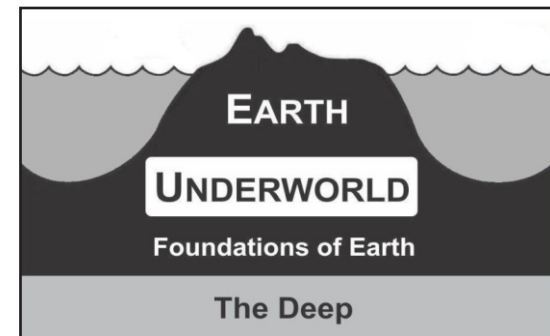
used in building Solomon's palace: "Foundations were laid with large stones ... measuring 12-15 feet." 1 Kgs 7:10

3. Foundations of the Earth Set upon Water

"The earth is the Lord's ... for he has founded it on the seas and established it *upon the waters.*" Ps 24:2

The Lord "spread out the earth *upon the waters.*" Ps 136:6

2nd Commandment: "You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the *water under the earth.*" (NRSV) Exo 20:4



☛ water under the earth often called "the deep"
Hebrew *tehōm*

4. Earth Surrounded by Circumferential Sea

LOGICAL notion → emerged because of two phenomena:

- (1) visual impact of the horizon
forms a circular boundary around the entire world
- (2) geography of the Ancient Near East
traveling in all directions usually came to a sea

ANE Geography

the “end” of the earth was at a shoreline:

- W: Mediterranean Sea
- N: Black & Caspian Seas
- E: Persian Gulf & Arabian Sea
- S: Arabian & Red Seas



Creation of the Outer Boundary of the Circumferential Sea

Job 26:7-14 Creation Account

“God inscribed a **circle** on the surface of the waters.” v. 10

Proverbs 8:22-31 Creation Account

“God inscribed a **circle** on the surface of the deep.” v. 27

Historical Criticism

DEF: the use of Ancient Near Eastern (eg Egypt & Mesopotamia) images and literature to understand the Bible within its historical context

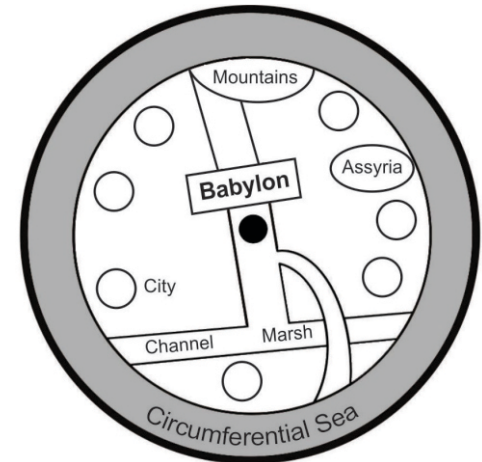
EG

circumferential sea was the geography-of-the-day 2500 yrs ago

Babylonian World Map

6th Century BC/E

The dark circle in the middle of the earth is actually an indentation representing that Babylon is the “belly button” of the earth.



Egyptian World Map

4th Century BC/E

Egypt is in the middle of the world, inside the black circle. Foreign lands are between the Egyptian border and the shoreline.

Figures in black with the boat of the sun god Re near their raised arm are the eastern (left) and western (right) doorways of the underworld.

See Egyptian universe p. 9



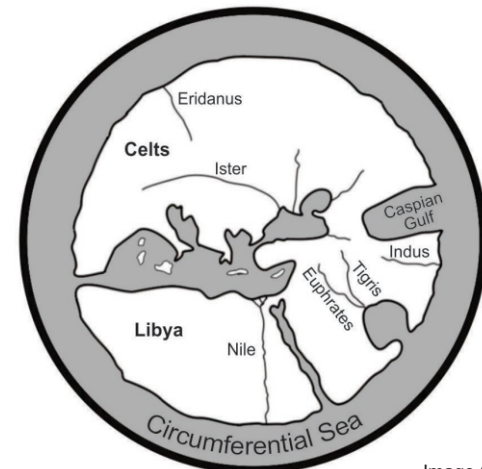
Greek World Map

6th Century BC/E

Hecataeus (550-476 BC)

Word “Mediterranean” from Latin

medius: middle
terra: earth



5. Earth is Circular

EXPLICIT in Scripture:

“God sits enthroned above the **circle of the earth.**” Is 40: 22

Proof-Text “Hermeneutics”

DEF: **tearing** ONE verse out of its context & **manipulating** it to mean something never intended by the author.

EG sound-bite political reporting on TV

BUT READ THE ENTIRE VERSE!!!

“God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.” Isa 40:22

a tent with a domed canopy & flat floor

☞ 3-tier universe

IMPLICIT in Scripture:

King of Babylon: “There was a tree at the **centre of the earth**, and its height was great. The tree grew great and strong, its top reached to heaven & it was visible to the ends of the **whole earth.**” Dan 4:10-11

only makes sense in a 3-Tier Universe:

with a flat earth could one see the tree from “the ends of the whole earth”

ie, the shoreline of the circumferential sea

this is impossible with a spherical earth

Babylon was called the “centre” or “belly button of earth” obviously, the tree & Babylon are not at the centre of a spherical earth which is 10,000 F!!!

6. Earth has Ends

stated 50 X in Scripture → the expression “the ends of the earth”

God: “But you, **Israel** ... descendant of **Abraham** my friend, you whom I have taken from the **ends of the earth**, and called from its **remotest parts [Ur].**” Is 41:8-9

Abraham came from Ur (S. Mesopotamia) Gen 11:31

Ur is the “remotest parts” from Israel for ANE people

JESUS: “The **Queen of the South [Sheba]** will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the **ends of the earth** to listen to Solomon’s wisdom.” Matt 12:42

Sheba is in the SW corner of the Arabian Peninsula

7. Earth has an Underworld

OLD TESTAMENT:

called *she’ōl* 65 X

translated the “grave” and “place/realm of the dead”

“The realm of the dead below [*she’ōl*] is all astir to meet you [King of Babylon] at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you.” Is 14:9

God: “For a fire will be kindled by my wrath, one that burns down to the realm of the dead below [*she’ōl*].” Deut 32:22

God: “Though they **dig down** to the depths [*she’ōl*], from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down.” Amos 9:2

☞ digging downward clearly indicates digging through the earth
underworld is below the surface of the earth

NEW TESTAMENT:

● called *hadēs* 20 X

JESUS: “And you Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven?”

No, you will go **down to hadēs.**” Lk 10:15

NIV footnote on *hadēs* : “realm of the dead”

● also called *katachthonios*

“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, [1] in heaven and [2] on earth and [3] under the under earth [*katachthonios*].” Phil 2:10 (NIV)

kata: down

chthonios: underworld, subterranean world

● also referred to as “under the earth”

“No one [1] in heaven, or [2] on the earth, or [3] under the earth [*hupokatō gē*] was found worthy to open the book or to look into it.” Rev 5:3

hupo = under *katō* = down

gē = earth

8. Earth is Flat

NO passage in Scripture directly states: “The earth is flat.”

notion of flat earth was the geography-of-the-day

Flat earth IMPLIED in Scripture:

“The devil took Jesus to a **very high mountain** and showed him

ALL the kingdoms of the world.” Matt 4:8

could one see the Chinese or Aztecs from a mountain in the Middle East? NO

only makes sense if the world is flat

Earth Dearth Argument

IF Scientific Concordism were true,
 IF God intended to reveal scientific facts ahead of time,
 THEN it is reasonable to expect God to reveal the shape of the earth
 EG, comparing the earth to an orange, ball, etc.

BUT

Greek: *gē* earth, land
 250 X in New Testament
NEVER referred to as a sphere or ball

Hebrew: *'eres* earth, land
 2500 X in Old Testament
NEVER referred to as a sphere or ball

5B. THE HEAVENS & ANCIENT ASTRONOMY

1. Sun Moves across the Sky Daily

☛ this was the issue in the Galileo Affair in the early 1600s
 It was NOT about a FLAT EARTH!
 Most educated people believe the earth was a sphere

“The sun **rises** & the **sun** sets, and **hurries** back to where it **rises**.”
 Eccl 1:5

“The sun **rises** at one end of the heavens and makes its **circuit** to the other.”
 Ps 19:6

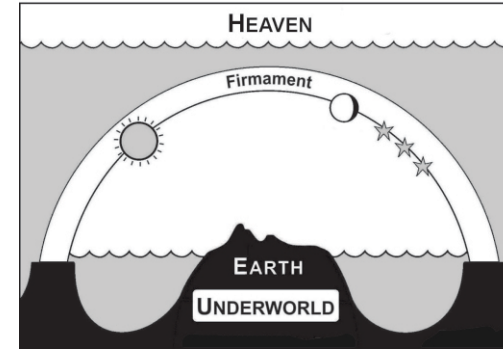
“The sun **stopped** in the middle of the sky & delayed **going down** about a full day.”
 Josh 10:13

NOTE:
 Poetic Language Argument & Phenomenological Perspective
 Argument were not used until after the 1600s

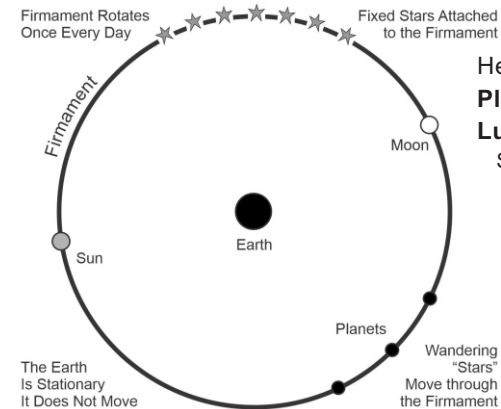
Excursus: History of the Firmament

- Ancient astronomy began with the idea the firmament was a solid inverted bowl-shaped dome in heaven that was above the earth.
- As the science of astronomy advanced, the firmament was later understood to be a sphere well into the 1600s. 3 Models:
 - (1) Geo-centric Universe & One Sphere
 - (2) Geo-centric Universe & Multiple Spheres
 - (3) Helio-centric Universe Greek: *helios* sun

The Firmament in a 3-Tier Universe

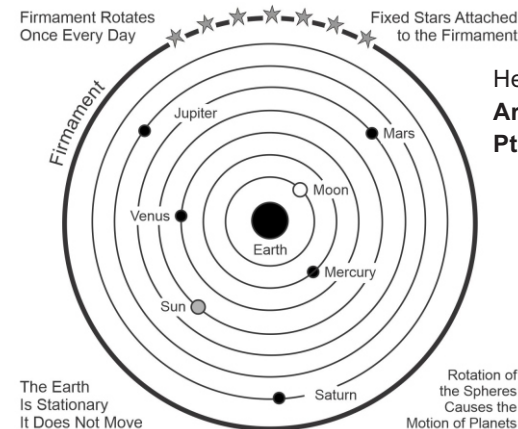


The Firmament in a Geocentric Universe I



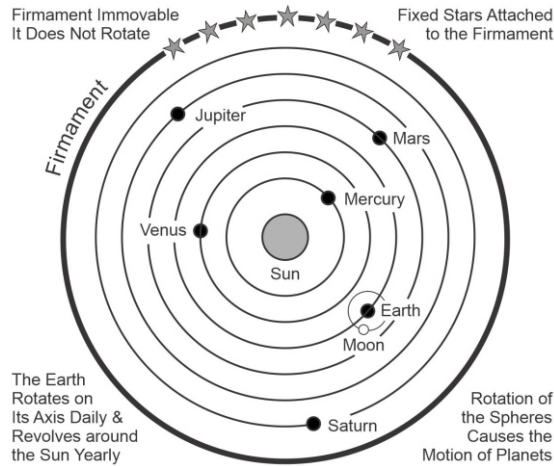
Held by:
Plato (427-347 BC)
Luther (1534)
 See handouts p. 1

The Firmament in a Geocentric Universe II



Held by:
Aristote (384-322 BC)
Ptolemy (100-170 AD)
 The astronomy for 1400 years until Copernicus in 1543.

The Firmament in a Heliocentric Universe



Astronomical model of **Copernicus** (1473-1543)

On the Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres (1543)

Popularized by **Galileo** (1564-1642)

The Galileo affair was over whether the earth or sun moved & was in the middle of the entire universe

2. The Firmament

DEF: a clear & solid inverted bowl-shaped dome in heaven that is above the earth within a 3-tier universe.

2nd Day of Creation

“God said, “Let there be a **firmament** between the waters to separate the water from the water.” So God made a **firmament** and separated the water below the **firmament** from the water above the **firmament**. And it was so. God called the **firmament** ‘heavens.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—The Second Day.” Gen 1:6-8

word “firmament” appears 5X & 3X on 4th Day of Creation

Psalm 19

“The heavens declare the glory of God and the **firmament** proclaims the work of his hands.” Ps 19:1

☞ the firmament did not collapse during Noah’s flood

Many Evangelical Translations of the Bible

use word ‘**expanse**’ or ‘**skies**’ instead of ‘**firmament**’ (NIV 1980, ESV)

WHY?

most evangelicals are **Scientific Concordists**

Ancient Languages

ancient science is deeply embedded in some ancient words

Greek

stereōma
firmament

stereos
hard, firm

Hebrew

rāqīaʿ
firmament

rāqaʿ
to flatten, hammer, stamp down

context of pounding metals:

“They hammered out [*rāqa*] thin sheets of gold.” Ex 39:3

context of creating the heavens:

“Can you join God in spreading out [*rāqa*] the skies, **hard** as a mirror of **cast bronze**?” Job 37:18

Hebrew word *shaḥaq* translated as “skies” seems to be a synonym of *rāqīaʿ*

riqquaʿ
broad metal plate

“Hammer [*rāqa*] the censers into sheets [*riqqua*] to overlay the altar.” Num 16:38

Latin

Vulgate Bible (5th century) the church’s Bible for 1000 yrs
firmamentum
bowl-shaped firmament (early), solid sphere of heaven (later)
firmus
hard, firm

English

King James Bible (17th century) Protestant Bible for 400 yrs
firmament
solid sphere of heaven

Historical Criticism

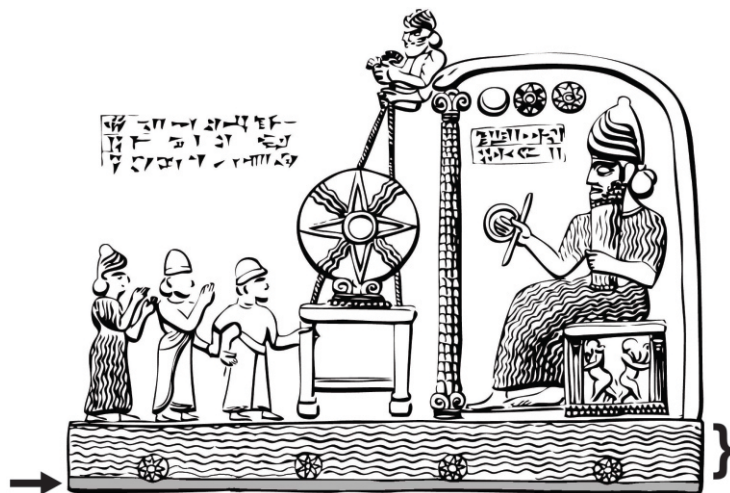
the firmament was the astronomy-of-the-day 3000 yrs ago

Egyptian Universe 1570-1085 BC/E



The firmament (shaded) and stars are the sky goddess **Nut**. The sun god **Re** (falcon head) travels in a boat across the heavenly sea and is received by the god of the afterlife **Osiris** at the entrance of the underworld (lower right corner). The sun passes through the underworld to rise again in the east. The god of the earth **Geb** is reclined; god of the air **Shu** is above Geb.

Mesopotamian Heavens 885-850 BC/E



The firmament (shaded; arrow) supports the heavenly sea (bracket) and stars.
The sun god Shamash is seated.

Image Credits
p. 25

CONCLUSION: The Firmament

ancient words → a solid structure in heaven

traditional translations → a solid structure heaven

☛ **NOT** outer space

3. The Heavenly Sea: The “Waters Above”

a logical notion since the sky is blue & rain falls from above

2nd Day of Creation

“God said, “Let there be a firmament between the waters to separate the water from the water.” So God made a firmament and separated the **water below** the firmament from the **water above** it. And it was so ... The Second Day. Gen 1:6-8

leads to the expressions “waters above” & “waters below”
word “water/s” appears 5X

“Praise him [God], sun & moon, praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you **waters above the skies.**” Ps 148:3-4

“God stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers **on their waters.**” Ps 104:2-3

God’s dwelling set in heavenly waters like Shamash throne

Greek

hudor
water

Hebrew

–*ayim*
dual ending
used for things in nature occurring in **PAIRS**

mayim
waters
600X in Old Testament & only in **DUAL**
never in singular or plural

THEREFORE two bodies of water in the natural world:

- (1) “**waters above**” in heaven
- (2) “**waters below**” on earth

Mesopotamian (Akkadian) Word for Heavens

šamê = *ša* (of) + *mê* (water)

Historical Criticism

the heavenly sea was the astronomy-of-the-day 3000 yrs ago
EG Egyptian Universe & Mesopotamian Heavens

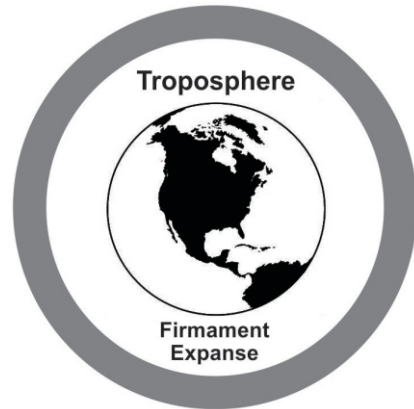
Excursus I: Water Canopy Theory, Young Earth Creation

- YEC claims that the “waters above” is actually a water canopy that once enveloped the earth & then collapsed during Noah’s Flood
- YEC claims that the water canopy provided a unique environment on the earth before the Flood
 - ☛ used a an explanation for why people lived +900 yrs (Gen 5)

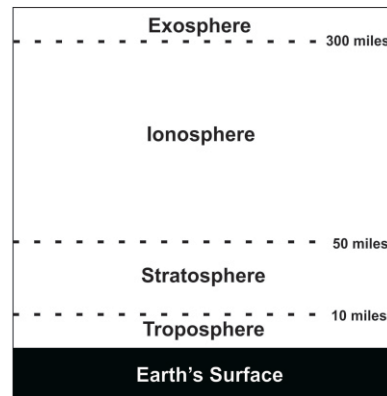
“On the **SECOND DAY of creation**, the waters covering the earth’s surface were divided into two great reservoirs—one below the firmament and one above; the **firmament** being the ‘**expanse**’ above the earth now corresponding to the **troposphere** ... With the Biblical testimony concerning a pre-flood canopy of waters, we have an adequate source for the waters of a **universal flood**.”

Henry Morris & John Whitcomb, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record & Its Scientific Implications* (1961), 229, 77

Water Canopy



The Atmosphere



COMMENTS

- eisegetical spherical earth
- mistaken definition of the firmament: NOT an expanse
NOT the troposphere
- problem with Ps 104 & 148 → written in 10th century BC/E AFTER flood the heavenly waters still in heaven & have not collapsed → “blue” of sky
- problem with 4th Day of Creation
God places sun, moon & stars IN the firmament
Morris & Whitcomb state the firmament is the troposphere
BUT sun, moon & stars are not IN the troposphere

CONCLUSION

YEC Water Canopy Theory is **Un-Biblical!**
☛ **Scientific Concordism FAILS**

Excursus II: Water Vapor Theory, Progressive Creation

- PC claims that the “waters above” is water vapour
 - “God’s ‘separation’ of the water on **DAY TWO [of creation]** accurately describes the formation of the **troposphere**, the atmospheric layer just above the ocean where clouds form and humidity resides, as distinct from the stratosphere, mesosphere, and ionosphere lying above.”

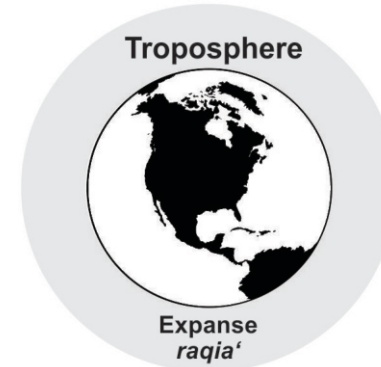
DEF of Hebrew *rāqia’* in the glossary:

“the expanse”

“the atmosphere immediately above the surface of the earth”

Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question: Scientific Advances & the Accuracy of Genesis* (1998), 34, 201

Water Vapor



COMMENTS

- eisegetical spherical earth
- mistaken definition of the firmament: NOT an expanse
NOT the troposphere
- IF the biblical author meant vapour, mist, humidity, or clouds
THEN he should have used the common Hebrew words:
’ed (Gen 2:6) *nasi’* (Jer 10:13) *’ānān* (Gen 9:13)
BUT he used *mayim* (waters) 5X in 2nd Day of Creation
- problem with position of “waters above” → they are ABOVE *raqia’* not IN it
- problem with 4th Day of Creation
“God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them IN the firmament (*raqia’*). Gen 1:16-17
BUT sun, moon & stars are not IN the troposphere

CONCLUSION

PC Water Vapor Theory is **Un-Biblical!**
☛ **Scientific Concordism FAILS**

4. Ends & Pillars/Foundation of the Heavens

- Ends of the Heavens logical since the end of the firmament is at the horizon
JESUS: “God will gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the **ends of the heavens**.” Mk 13:27
“The sun rises at one **end of the heavens** and makes its circuit to the other.” Ps 19:6
- Pillars Foundations of the Heavens logical since something supported the firmament
“The **foundations of the heavens** shook & trembled, God was angry.” 2 Sam 22:8
“The **pillars of the heavens** quake, aghast at God’s rebuke.” Job 26:11

5. Sun, Moon & Stars Placed in the Firmament

4th Day of Creation

“God said, ‘Let there be lights **in the firmament** of the heaven to separate the day from the night, and **LET THEM SERVE** as signs to mark the seasons and days and years, let them be lights **in the firmament** of the heaven to give light on the earth.’ And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them **in the firmament** of the heaven to give light on the earth, to govern the day & the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—The Fourth Day.” Gen 1:14-19

COMMENTS

- worship of heavenly bodies common in ANE
Gen 1 is very polemical (in-your-face) & has a radical inerrant Message of Faith:
**DON’T YOU SERVE THE HEAVENS,
THEY WILL SERVE YOU!**
“Let them **serve** ... you to be markers of times & seasons
- subtle criticism: words “sun” & “moon” not used
creation of stars seems like an after thought
- God of Hebrews created astronomical bodies → they are not gods
De-Deification of Nature
☞ Gen 1 is **BLASPHEMY** to worshippers of heavenly bodies

6. Falling Stars & Rolling Up of the Heavens

Stars are believed to be small & can fall to the earth
LOGICAL notion due to the phenomenon of meteors
same size & luminosity as stars & look like they fall from firmament
JESUS: “The **stars** will **fall** from heaven, and the heavenly bodies will be **shaken**.” Matt 24:29
“The sky will be **rolled up** like a scroll; all the **starry host** will **fall** like withered leaves from the vine, like shrivelled figs from the fig tree.” Isaiah 34:4

QUESTIONS:

How can stars “fall” to the earth when only ONE star would blow us away completely?
Answer: they are tiny specks
How can heavenly bodies be “shaken”?
Answer: they are attached to the firmament
How can heaven be “rolled up”?
Answer: it is like a tent canopy

7. Upper Heavens & Lower Heavens

CAUTION!
complex term → context dictates the meaning

Greek

ouranos
heaven

Hebrew

-ayim
dual ending
used for things in nature occurring in **PAIRS**
shamayim
heavens
400X in Old Testament & only in **DUAL**
never in singular or plural

THEREFORE two heavens exist in the natural world:

- (1) **Upper Heavens**
- (2) **Lower Heavens**

BOTH ARE REAL PHYSICAL PLACES

(1) Upper Heavens

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

a real **PHYSICAL** location just overhead

☛ **NOT** in another dimension as believed today by Christians!

To God: “**Look down** from heaven, **your holy dwelling place**,
and bless your people Israel.” Deut 26:15

“God stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams
of his **upper chambers on their waters**.” Ps 104:2-3

shāmayim shāmayim

term occurs occasionally to indicate specifically the upper heavens
where God dwells

“God made the [1] **heavens** [*shāmayim*; lower heavens], even the
[2] **heavens of heavens** [*shāmayim shāmayim*; upper heavens]
(or **highest heavens**) with all their [starry] host, the earth and all
that is on it, the seas & all that is in them.” Neh 9:6

two types of heavens → upper heavens & lower heavens

(2) Lower Heavens

THE FIRMAMENT

2nd Day of Creation: “God called the firmament ‘**heavens**.’” Gen 1:7

THE AIR SPACE

“God formed ... all the **birds of the heavens**.” Gen 2:19

“The Son of Man coming in the **clouds of the heavens**.” Dan 7:13

Tent Metaphor of the Structure of the Heavens

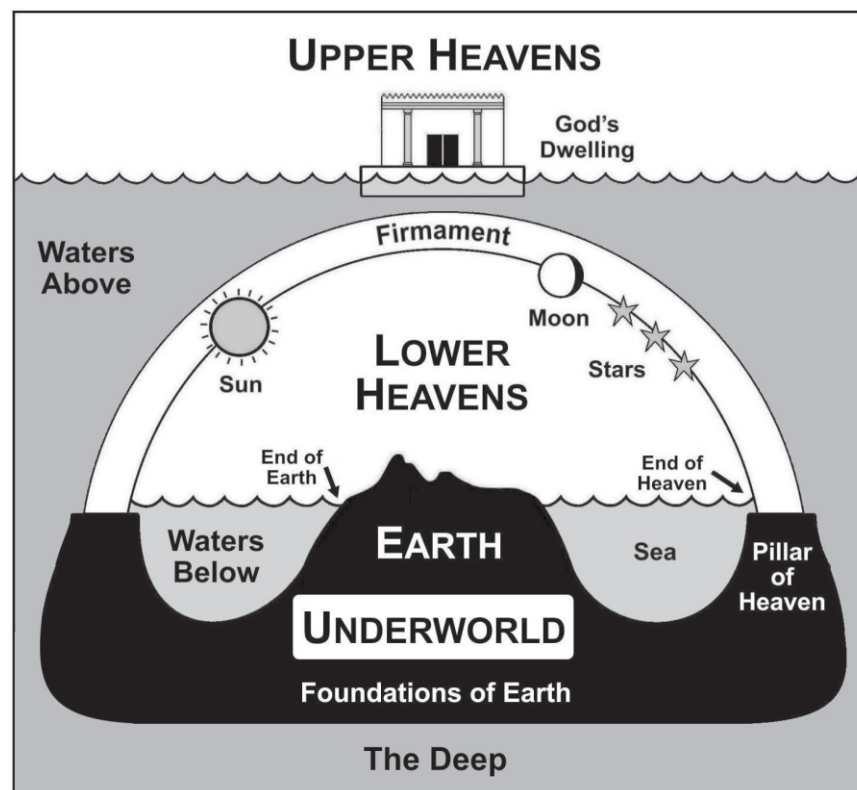
ancient Hebrews used a tent as a model/metaphor to describe physical reality
domed canopy of heaven & flat floor of earth

“God stretches out the heavens like a **tent** and lays the beams of
his upper chambers on their waters.” Ps 104:2-3

“In the heavens he [God] has pitched a **tent** for the sun, which is
like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion like a champion
rejoicing to run his course.” Ps 19:4-5

“God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people
are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a
canopy, and spreads them out like a **tent** to live in.” Is 40: 22

The 3-Tier Universe



CONCLUSION

Hermeneutical Principle 5

Ancient Phenomenological Perspective of Nature: The 3-Tier Universe

- The Bible features a 3-Tier Universe → BEST science-of-the-day in ANE
- The Bible has an ancient phenomenological perspective of the structure and operation of the universe
- Ancient geographical & ancient astronomical features are CONSILIENT
☛ features fit together & give a COHERENT view of the universe
- God accommodated in the biblical revelatory process and allowed the ancient Hebrews to use **ancient geography** and **ancient astronomy**

QUESTION

Does the Bible also feature an Ancient Biology?

6. ATTRIBUTION OF DIVINE ACTION IN ORIGINS: DE NOVO CREATION OF THE 3-TIER UNIVERSE

De Novo Creation Latin *de*: from *novus*: new

DEF: creation that is 'brand new' from the start
found in most ancient creation accounts (eg, in the ANE)

Features:

QUICK: within days

NOT over 100s of millions of years

COMPLETE: into fully mature forms

NOT through an evolutionary process

☛ KEY concept to understand anti-evolutionism

Attribution of Divine Action in Origins

DEF: God's creative action is filtered/accommodated through an ANE understanding of origins:

DE NOVO CREATION → Quick & Complete

Genesis 1: De Novo Creation of 3-Tier Universe

QUESTION 1:

Does the Bible reveal the ACTUAL structure of the universe?

ANSWER 1: **NO**

The Bible features a 3-tier universe

QUESTION 2:

Does Gen 1 reveal how God ACTUALLY created the universe?

ANSWER 2: **NO**

2nd Day of Creation:

God creates the firmament & waters above **DE NOVO**

3rd Day of Creation:

God puts the seas in one place & raises dry land **DE NOVO**

4th Day of Creation:

God sets the sun, moon & stars in the firmament **DE NOVO**

QUESTION 3:

Did God LIE in the Bible?

ANSWER 3: **NO!!!**

God ACCOMMODATED

God allowed the use of ancient astronomy & ancient geography as a vessel to deliver inerrant Spiritual Truths

GENESIS 1-11

IF the Bible has an ancient astronomy & an ancient geography,
THEN it is reasonable that the Bible also has an **ancient biology**

IF we do not go to Gen 1 to find out how the heavens & the earth were created,

THEN we should not go to Gen 1 to find out how **living organisms** were created.

☛ or how **HUMANS** were created

THEREFORE if we want to understand how God created the world:

Open the Book of God's Works and Do the Science!

7. SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE & PROFICIENCY OF ITS READERS

DEF: despite the challenges of hermeneutics, the Message of Faith is revealed to those seeking to meet God.

- the Bible is SUFFICIENT in revealing God
- readers are PROFICIENT in grasping the main Messages

NOTE: there is a spiritual component to hermeneutics:

"those seeking to meet God" → not just intellectual
reading the Bible is a mystical & spiritual encounter
hearing the "**Voice of God**" in Scripture

Lesson from Church History

The MESSAGE has always got through to the Church
eg, Divinity of Jesus

The INCIDENT has led to a wide variety of views
eg, origin of the world in Gen 1 → YEC PC EC etc

GENESIS 1-11

Is Gen 1-11 sufficient & are readers proficient? **YES! & YES!**

Christians through history have always grasped 7 main MESSAGES:

1. God created the universe & life
2. The universe & life are very good
3. God created humans in the Image of God
4. Honor the Sabbath
5. Humans are sinful
6. God judges humans for their sins
7. God chose Israel to bless the entire world

8. ANCIENT PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF NATURE: LIVING ORGANISMS & ANCIENT BIOLOGY

DEF: living organisms as they **appear** to the naked eye & natural senses
an ancient understanding of plants & animals → **Ancient Biology**

Ancient Human Anatomy

The Mind is in the Kidneys

“I the Lord search the heart & examine the mind [literally: kidneys]”
Jer 17:10 (also Jer 20:12; Ps 7:9, 26:2)

- ☛ the mind is not in the kidneys (Hebrew: *kilyah*)
BUT from an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective,
the sense of excitement/dread in the stomach

Ancient Botany

Seeds Die before Germination

JESUS: “... unless a **kernel of wheat** falls to the ground and **dies**,
it remains only a single seed. But if it **dies**, it produces
many seeds.” John 12:24

- ☛ seeds are not dead → they are alive & function at a low rate
BUT from an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective,
the outer casing of the seed breaks down & rots
giving the impression that the seed has died

Ancient Taxonomy (Classification of Living Organisms)

Bats Are Birds

“These are the **birds** you are not to eat ... the eagle, the vulture,
[17 other birds listed] ... and the **bat**.” Lev 11:13-19

- ☛ bats are not birds, they are mammals
BUT from an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective,
this is reasonable because bats fly

Rabbits Are Ruminants

“The rabbit, though it chews the cud, ... it is unclean for you.” Lev 11:6

- ☛ rabbits are not ruminants like cows that chew the cud
BUT from an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective,
the repetitive side-to-side jaw action of rabbits
gives the impression they chew the cud like cows

GENESIS 1-11

QUESTION:

IF the Bible views living organisms from an Ancient Phenomenological
Perspective,

THEN does the Bible also view the **ORIGIN** of plants & animals
from an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective?

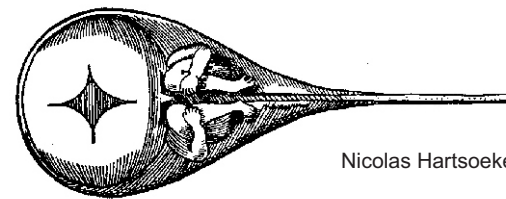
9. IMPLICIT SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS

DEF: the science-of-the-day ASSUMED by **BOTH**:

- (1) Biblical Writers
eg, flat earth
- (2) Modern Readers
eg, spherical earth

Ancient Reproductive Biology

- ancient people did not have modern scientific instruments like microscopes
and & did not know that men provide sperm & women provide eggs
- they assumed that the male provided a “seed” with an entire miniature
person inside it
known as “**Preformatism**” or “**1-Seed Theory**”
a scientific theory up to 1700 even with the 1st microscopes:



Nicolas Hartsoecker (1694)

in order to understand human reproduction, ancient people used the
familiar concepts & terminology of agriculture (farming)
males provided “seed” similar to plant seeds
females provided a “fertile field” for the seed to grow

Ancient Biblical Languages

- ☛ ancient science sometimes embedded in ancient words

Greek noun *Sperma*:

- (1) seed that farmers sow in fields (Matt 13:24, Mk 4:31)
- (2) seed that **ONLY** males ejaculate during sex

Miraculous Birth of Isaac (Gen 17 & 21)

Abraham (100 yrs old) & Sarah (90 yrs old), but God promises a child
By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself
was barren—was **enabled to become a father** [*sperma* + *kataballō*]
because he considered him [God] faithful who had made the promise.

kataballō: to thrown down

kata: down *ballō*: to throw

sperma + *kataballō*

technical term = to ejaculate (used **ONLY** for males)

Heb 11:11

Hebrew noun *Zera'* :

- (1) seed that farmers sow in fields (Gen 47:23, Lev 27:16)
- (2) seed that ONLY males release during sex

Hebrew verb *Zāra'*:

- (1) to sow seed in fields (Exo 23:10, Lev 25:22)
- (2) to be made pregnant
“a woman shall be seeded [*zāra*] with seed [*zera*]” Num 5:28

Children in OT & NT

agricultural terminology used → “fruit of the womb”

“Sons are a heritage from the Lord, the **fruit of the womb** a reward”
Ps 127:3 (NRSV)

Elizabeth says to Mary who was pregnant with the Lord, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb”
Lk 1:42 (NRSV)

GENESIS 1-11

Does Gen 1 feature Implicit Scientific Concepts? **YES**

Ancient Taxonomy: Immutability of Living Organisms (Unchangeability)

ancient people assumed that plants & animals never changed into different plants & animals

makes perfect sense from an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective
EG

they saw a goat births → a goat which births → a goat
👉 they never saw goats change (or evolve)

Genesis 1 & Immutability of Living Organisms

plants & animals are created & reproduce: “According to Their/Its Kind”
this phrase appears 10X in Gen 1

NB: living organisms are created *De Novo* → quickly & fully mature

3rd Day of Creation: Land Plants

“God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, **according to their various kinds.**”

5th Day of Creation: Sea Creatures & Birds

“God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, **according to their kinds**, and every winged bird **according to its kind.**”

6th Day of Creation: Land Animals

“God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures **according to their kinds**: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each **according to its kind.**”

10. SCOPE OF COGNITIVE COMPETENCE

Telescopes & Microscopes Hermeneutical Principle

DEF: intellectual tools thru which everyone sees & understands the world

a feature of **BOTH**: (1) Biblical Writers &
(2) Modern Readers of the Bible

Scope

visual metaphor → “field” of vision
implies limits & boundaries

Cognitive Latin *cognitō*: to learn & acquire knowledge
Cognition

DEF: mental processes in perceiving, reasoning & knowing
cognition is impacted by:

intelligence & knowledge
culture, education & point in history

👉 Scientific Instruments

Competence

being capable or having ability to perform correctly

Biblical Writers → **NARROW SCC**

limited field of vision: the naked eye
no telescopes & no microscopes

NB: no disrespect to ancient people

if we lived at that time, we would have the same views

Modern Readers → **WIDE SCC**

we see deeper into space & inside cells
we enjoy telescopes & microscopes

Human Reproductive Problems

- only women were believed to be the cause of infertility

Why?

No microscopes & genetic instruments

👉 **NARROW SCC**

Not competent to understand cause of infertility like today:

35% male, 35% female, 20% both, 10% unknown

- perfectly logical conclusion for agricultural people

Experience of Sex

men ejaculate & women do not

perception → sex like farming → men sow seed
women like fields → receive seed

Experience of Agricultural Fields

ancient people knew that fields can be a problem

JESUS'S PARABLE OF THE SOWER

A farmer went out to sow his **seed**. Some fell along the [1] **path** and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on [2] **rocky places** and they withered because they had no root. Some fell among the [3] **thorns**, which choked the plants. Some seed fell on [4] **good soil**, where it produced a crop. Matt 13:3-9

perception → fields determine whether or not seeds work

Experience of Sowing Seed

it was assumed that seeds were 100% efficient

today we know the worst germination rate of wheat & barley: 85%

perception → seeds ALWAYS work

Conclusion

ancient people were perfectly logical to think that a woman who could not have children was like a **barren field** in farming

Women Deemed "Barren" in Old Testament

"Now Sarai was **barren**; she had no child." Gen 11:30

"Isaac prayed to God for Rebekah, because she was **barren**." Gen 25:21

"Rachel was **barren**." Gen 29:31

Hebrew

'āqār

barren women → only women are barren, never men

'āqar

verb "to uproot" & "to pluck up"

"a time to plant & a time to **uproot** what is planted" Eccl 3:2 (NASB)

QUESTION: Why was a barren woman seen as "uprooted"?

Experience of Miscarriages

they would have seen small partially developed fetuses

perception → a "seedling" UPROOTED from the womb

Women Deemed "Barren" in New Testament

"But they had no children, because Elizabeth was **barren**." Lk 1:7

"For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the **barren**, and the wombs that never bore.'" Lk 23:29

"Sarah herself was **barren**" Heb 11:11

Greek

steiros

barren women (women only → never men)

Feminine: *steira*

origin of English word "sterile"

stereos

hard, firm

QUESTION: Why was a barren woman seen as "hard"?

Experience of Sow Seed in Fields

ancient people would have known that seed thrown on hard ground did not germinate & take root

the man was ejaculating "seed," but it was not germinating & taking root in the woman's womb because her womb was like a **hard** "field"

GENESIS 1-11

Does Gen 1-11 reflect a **NARROW** Scope of Cognitive Competence? **YES**

Age of the Universe

- ancient people were not aware of the geological record & did not have radiometric dating instruments
- earliest communities were oral (pre-literate)
they had genealogies of important people in the community
BUT
genealogies were **SHORT** → limited by human memory
- 1st genealogies of the Hebrews are **SHORT**:
10 people in Gen 5 and 10 people in Gen 11
from the creation of the world (Gen 1) to Abraham (Gen 11)
☛ Therefore, the age of the universe is **YOUNG**

Excursus: The "Hermeneutical Brakes"

Were the biblical writers **COMPETENT** to know:

structure of the universe? **X**

size of mustard seeds compared to all other seeds? **X**

cause of human reproductive problems? **X**

OR were the biblical writers **COMPETENT** to know:

Jesus had changed water to wine (John 2:9)? **✓**

Jesus had healed a man who was born blind (John 9:6-7)? **✓**

Jesus had risen to life after he had died on the Cross (Lk 24:36-53)? **✓**

QUESTION:

Which group of questions are **FOUNDATIONAL** to Christianity?

11. HISTORICAL CRITICISM

DEF: the use of Ancient Near Eastern (eg Egypt & Mesopotamia) literature & images in order to understand the Bible within its historical context

Ancient Reproductive Biology

Aeschylus (5th Century BC/E)

“The mother of what is called her child is no parent of it, but the nurse only of the young life that is **sown** in her. The parent is the male, and she but a stranger, a friend, who, if fate spares his **plant**, preserves it till it puts forth.” *Eumenides* (v. 658-661)

preformatist reproductive biology (1-seed theory)

agricultural language: “sown” “plant”

George Eldon Ladd Aphorism

“*The Bible is the Word of God given in the words of men in history.*”

Message-Incident Principle

Message = “Word of God”

Incident = “words of men in history”

NT & Criticism
(1967), 12

GENESIS 1-11

- Is Gen 1-11 historically conditioned?

Is Gen 1-11 the *Word of God* given in the *words of men* in history? **YES**

- ☛ Gen 1-11 features the main motifs found in ANE accounts of origins

Motif

DEF: reappearing concept, symbol, character, theme, etc

MAJOR MOTIFS in ACCOUNTS OF ORIGINS

(1) De Novo Creation

quick & complete origin of the universe & life

(2) Lost Idyllic Age

disruption of an original creation

(3) Tribal Formation

origin of a community from a single founding male individual

(4) Great Flood

destruction of life & survival of a few humans & animals in a boat

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ORIGINS MOTIFS ARE THE SCIENTIFIC & HISTORICAL PARADIGMS-OF-THE-DAY

QUESTION:

The Hebrews appear LATE in the Ancient Near East (1200 BC/E)
2000+ years after the Egyptians & Mesopotamians

Did the Hebrews **RE-CYCLE** the Origins Motifs-of-the-Day & **RE-INTERPRET** them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by replacing the pagan theology with inerrant Spiritual Truths?

Excursus: Historical Criticism & De Novo Creation Motif

Egyptian Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (1550-1100 BC/E)

I [creator god Atum] the one who acted as husband with my fist:
I copulated with my hand, I let fall [the seed] in my mouth,
I sneezed Shu [air] and spat Tefnut [moisture] . . .
Then Shu and Tefnut [mated and] gave birth to Geb [earth]
and Nut [starry firmament]

COMMENTS

- understanding origins by using a well-known creative process:
preformatist reproductive biology (1-seed theory)
the seed of Atum creates Shu & Tefnut

Mesopotamian “Bilingual Creation of the World by Marduk” (3000-2000 BC/E)

All the lands were sea . . .

Marduk [main creator god] constructed a raft on the waters;
he created dirt and piled it on the raft.

In order to settle the gods in the dwelling pleasing to them,
he created mankind.

Aruru [goddess of child birth] created the seed of mankind with him.

He [Marduk] created the wild animals and all the animals of the steppe.

He created the **Tigris** & the **Euphrates** and set them in place,
giving them a favorable name.

He created the grass, the rush of the marsh, the reed, and the woods;
he created the green herb of the field,
the lands, marshes, and canebrakes,
the cow and her young, the calf, the ewe and her lamb,
the sheep of the fold; the orchards and forests.

COMMENTS

- understanding origins by using a well-known creative process:
fabrication by craftsman & builders
underlined word “created” → Akkadian *banû*
DEF: to build, to construct
- opening scene like Gen 1:2 with water covering the earth
Marduk made a raft & placed earth on it
☛ indicates flat earth & circumferential sea
- goddess Aruru created the “seed of mankind” in man
preformatist reproductive biology (1-seed theory)
- humans are created to be slaves of the gods

12. ATTRIBUTION OF DIVINE ACTION IN ORIGINS: THE DE NOVO CREATION OF LIVING ORGANISMS

When thinking about origins, we need to think like an ancient person

OBSERVATION

in his/her life time an ancient person saw:

a goat births → a goat which births → a goat

the parents & grandparents of that ancient person saw:

a goat births → a goat which births → a goat

NB the “goat births a goat” series is a data set, like any today

CONCLUSION 1

from their ancient phenomenological perspective, this ancient person, his/her parents, and his/her grandparents came to the very reasonable conclusion that goats are **immutable & never change**

THE QUESTION

ancient people, like us today, naturally asked the question:

Where do goats come from?

THE ANSWER

ancient people would reasonably have thought:

... an even earlier goat ← an earlier goat ← a goat today
which came from which came from came from

CONCLUSION 2

ancient people assumed living organisms were immutable (unchangeable) and they reasonably concluded that God had created DE NOVO a first goat or a first group of goats

De Novo Creation of 1st goat/s ... an even earlier goat ← an earlier goat ← a goat today
which came from which came from came from

RETROJECTION Latin *retro*: backward; *jacere* to cast, throw

DEF: to cast back in time

EG crime scene investigation (CSI)

police take evidence **present** at the scene, and cast it back in time to reconstruct the **past**

to understand the origin of goats, ancient people **RETROJECT** the “goat births a goat” data sets back in time to reconstruct the creation of goats

CONCLUSION 3

from their ancient phenomenological perspective, ancient people reasonably concluded the 1st goat/s were created **DE NOVO** (QUICK & COMPLETE)

☛ ancient people did not: have the fossil record & know about evolution

THE KEY: Connect Immutability & De Novo Creation

- Attribution of Divine Action in the Origin of Living Organisms connects:
 - (1) **Immutability** that plants & animals (Ancient Taxonomy)
 - (2) **De Novo Creation** of plants & animals (Ancient View of Origins)

Retrojection of the observation that living organisms give birth only to “their/its kind/s” back in time connects Immutability & De Novo Creation

- God’s creative action is filtered/accommodated through an ANE understanding of origins:

DE NOVO CREATION → Quick & Complete Creation of Plants & Animals

- God ACCOMMODATED in the biblical creation accounts (Gen 1 & Gen 2) God allowed the use of **Ancient Biology**

an incidental vessel to deliver the inerrant Spiritual Truth:

☛ **God is the Creator of plants & animals**

GENESIS 1-11

QUESTIONS:

Young Earth Creation & Progressive Creation reject biological evolution because Gen 1 & Gen 2 state God created plants & animals **DE NOVO**

BUT

Is anti-evolutionism (YEC & PC) ultimately based on:

Ancient Biology?

Ancient Taxonomy?

Humans are created **DE NOVO** in Gen 1 & Gen 2

BUT

DE NOVO creation is an ancient understanding of origins.

Does this mean that the Bible **does not** reveal how God actually created men & women?

Excursus: Historical Criticism & Human Origins

Two creative mechanisms in the ANE:

(1) Plant-Like Mechanism Context: preformatism (1-seed theory)

Assur Bilingual Creation Account (KAR 4)

the gods plant the seeds of humans in the earth and people later
“sprout from the ground like barley”

Hymn to E’engura

“humans broke through the earth’s surface like plants”

Hymn to the Pickax

a god strikes the ground with a hoe-like axe “so that the seed
from which people grew could sprout from the field”

(2) Craftsman-Like Mechanism

Epic of Atrahasis

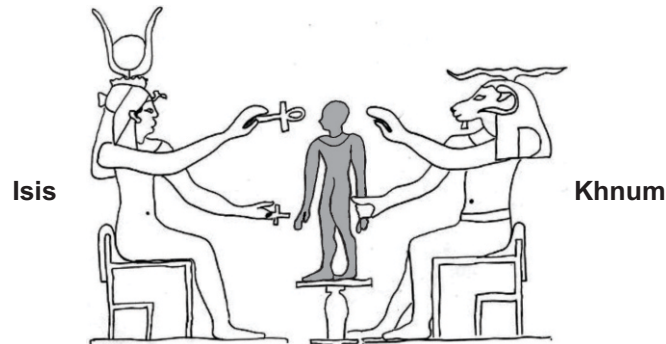
a goddess mixes clay & blood of dead god to form 7 males & 7 females

Enki and Ninmah Account

an intoxicated god uses earth to make imperfect humans

Egyptian Pyramid Texts & Coffin Texts

god Khnum fashions humans on a potter’s wheel & goddess Isis gives life



COMMENTS

Plant-Like Mechanism seems to be the creative method in **Gen 1:24**

“God said, ‘Let the earth produce [yāšā] living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals.’”

Hebrew verb yāšā’ (to produce) is the same verb found in Gen 1:12

“the earth produced vegetation”

☛ implies animals created from seeds that sprouted from the earth

Craftsman-Like Mechanism is the creative method in **Gen 2:7**

“The Lord God formed [yāšar] the man from the dust of the ground & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man [Adam] became a living being.”

Hebrew verb “yāšar” (to form) is the root of the term “potter”

“We [humans] are the clay, you [God] are the Potter,
we are all the work of your hand.” Is 64:8

☛ **De Novo Creation of Adam → ANE creative mechanism**

13. AUTHORIAL INTENTIONALITY

DEF: what an author intends to communicate to his/her audience

The Bible has DUAL intentionality:

1. Divine Intention (Holy Spirit)
2. Human Intention

Structure of the Universe

“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

[1] in heaven and

[2] on earth and

[3] in the underworld,

and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

Phil 2:10-11

1. Divine Intention

Primary: Message of Faith

Jesus is Lord over the entire universe

Secondary: Incidental Ancient Science

Holy Spirit allowed the use of 3-tier universe

☛ God **accommodated** to the level of ancient people

2. Human Intention

Primary: Message of Faith

Jesus is Lord over the entire universe

Secondary: Science-of-the-Day

Apostle Paul views the lordship of Jesus within his categories
of the **astronomy & geography-of-the-day**

QUESTION:

What other ancient science might be in Paul’s writings?

Ancient Biology?

De Novo Creation of Adam?

GENESIS 1-11

- Does Gen 1-11 feature DUAL authorial intentionality? **YES**

1. Divine Intention

Primary: Messages of Faith

1. God created the universe & life
2. The universe & life are very good
3. God created humans in the Image of God
4. Honor the Sabbath
5. Humans are sinful
6. God judges humans for their sins
7. God chose Israel to bless the entire world

Secondary: *Incidental Ancient Motifs*

Holy Spirit allowed the use of ancient **Origins Motifs-of-the-Day**
ancient scientific & historical paradigms of origins

1. *De Novo* Creation
2. Lost Idyllic Age
3. Tribal Formation
4. Great Flood

☞ God **accommodated** to the level of ancient people

2. Human Intention

Primary: *Messages of Faith*

same 7 inerrant spiritual truths above

Secondary: *Scientific & Historical Paradigms-of-the-Day*

human authors understood origins thru the 4 motifs-of-their-day

- Did the author of Gen 1 **intend** to write a chronology of how God created universe & life? **NO!**

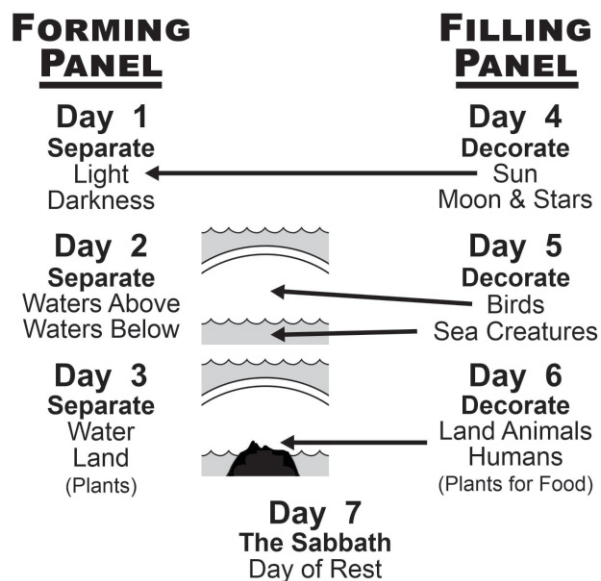
The so-called “contradiction” of light (Day1) being created before the sun (Day 4) is evidence of **poetic license**.

☞ ancient people certainly knew that light comes from the sun!!!

The author uses an ancient poetic structure → **Parallel Panels**

Gen 1:2 describes the Pre-Creative State:

dark watery formless (Hebrew: *tōhū*) & empty (*bōhū*) earth
Days 1-3 bring form to the world & Days 4-6 fill the world



NB: by casting God’s acts of creation in the Hebrew work week, the author intentionally calls us to Honor the Sabbath

14. SCIENCE IN THE BIBLE: “CONSERVATIVE” & “LIBERAL” INTERPRETATIONS

QUESTIONS: what defines Conservative or Liberal Christianity?
will it be our views of the science in the Bible?

CONSIDER ASTRONOMY:

St. Augustine (415)

“Bear in mind that the term ‘**firmament**’ does not compel us to imagine a stationary heaven: we may understand this name as given to indicate not that it is motionless but that it is **solid** and that it constitutes an impassable boundary between the **waters above** & the **waters below**.”

Literal Meaning of Genesis, II:10

Martin Luther (1536)

See handouts image p. 1

“Scripture ... simply says that the moon, the sun, and the stars were placed in the **firmament** of the heaven (**below** and **above** which are the **waters**) ... The bodies of the stars, like that of the sun, are round, and they are **fastened** to the **firmament** like globes of fire.”

Lectures on Genesis, J. Pelikan, ed (1958) 42-3

John Calvin (1554)

See handouts lower image p. 8

“We indeed are not ignorant, that the circuit of the heavens is finite, and that the earth, like a little globe, is placed **in the center** ... The **primum mobile** [the **firmament**] rolls all the **celestial spheres** along with it.”

Commentary on Genesis (Ethereal Library, 2007) I: 24-5, 114

COMMENTS

“**Conservative**” view of astronomy for 16 centuries accepted:

- (1) firmament
- (2) geocentricity

THEREFORE

☞ are all 21st century Christians liberals?

GENESIS 1-11

“**Conservative**” view of biological origins for 20 centuries accepted:

- (1) *De Novo* creation of plants & animals
- (2) *De Novo* creation of Adam & Eve

QUESTIONS:

Does rejecting the *De Novo* creation of:

- plants & animals make you a **LIBERAL**?
- Adam & Eve make you a **LIBERAL**?

☞ are Adam & Eve like the firmament?
an ancient biology of human origins?

15. TOWARD THE LITERARY GENRE OF GENESIS 2-4

Internal Biblical Features Point to Genre:

Symbols, Wordplay & Archetypes

Archetypes (Greek *arché*: first, beginning; *tipos*: type, model, example)

DEF: an original type or model from which similar things or being are patterned

EG Adam & Eve are archetypal sinners

- garden paradise in a symbolic land named “Delight” (Hebrew: *eden* → transliteration, NOT translation)
- archetypal sinful 1st man named *adam* made of earth (*adamah*) he could be called “Earthling”
- archetypal sinful 1st woman named “Life” (*hawwah*) she is “the mother of all the living” Gen 3:20
- symbolic tree I
fruit that imparts knowledge of good & evil
- symbolic tree II
fruit that imparts eternal life
- archetypal & symbolic tempter
talking snake instills doubt in the Words of God
- cherubim → like the Sphinx in Egypt
mystical creatures--human head, lion body & eagle wings
- symbolic flaming sword moving back & forth
protecting symbolic garden
- archetypal murderer named “Spear” (*qayin*)
condemned to tremble (*na’*) & wander (*nad*)
- symbolic land named “Wandering” (*nod* → transliteration)

These features point to a made-up story → **Parable-Like Story**

NB: 1/3 of Jesus’s teachings were parables → events never happened

PROOF: God uses fictional stories in the Bible

Adam & Eve story in Gen 2-4 never happened

☛ **Story reveals Adam & Eve are YOU & ME**

GENESIS 1-11

The Problem with Modern Readers:

OUR scientific & historical literature deals only with hard facts
made-up stories like parables are **NEVER** included

WE read Gen 2-4 & WE automatically:

historicize the parable-like story → fueled by **Concordism**

WE transform **Fictional Adam** of the parable into **Historical Adam**

Don’t Conflate, but Separate the inerrant spiritual truths from the incidental parable-like story in Gen 2-4 & Fictional Adam

16. THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

Pentateuch made up of 4 documents put together by Redactor/s:

Jahwist (**J**) 950 BC S Kingdom (Judah)

Elohist (**E**) 922-722 BC N Kingdom (Israel)

Deuteronomist (**D**) 622 BC

Priestly (**P**) 550 BC Exile

} **Classical Hebrew** 1000-600 BC

Transitional Hebrew 600-450 BC

Based on: (1) event contradictions (2) duplicate accounts (3) stylistic differences
Historiographical intention of 4 authors: to write their version of history of Israel

D part of **Deuteronomistic History** with Josh, Jud, 1 & 2 Sam, 1 & 2 Kgs

Debate over order: JEDP or JEPD → **DOL:** JEP¹DP² → Laws P¹ & Narrative P²

Genesis 1 (P)

Genesis 2 (J)

Order of Creation	Vegetation Birds Land animals Male & female humans	Male human Vegetation Land animals & birds Female human
Literary Style	Structured & Repetitive	Free-flowing narrative Symbols & Wordplay
Scene Setting	Cosmic Sea & heavenly bodies	Rural No sea or heavenly bodies
Divine Being	Transcendent & in heaven	Immanent & on earth
Divine Name	God Hebrew: <i>Elohim</i>	Lord God <i>Yahweh Elohim</i>
Creative Action	Verbal commands	Hands-on
Relationship to Humans	Regal	Personal
Food Commands	Without a prohibition Focus on sustenance	With a prohibition Focus on obedience

What about Moses?

He really existed → showed up at Transfiguration of Jesus (Matt 17, Mk 9, Lk 9)

Lived in during Ramses II (1279-1213 BC; Exo 1:11)

Wrote ONE Scroll → “The Scroll of the Law of God” (Josh 24:25)

Wrote in **Archaic Hebrew** (1300-1000 BC)

Moses Scroll used by J author as a source (maybe also D & P)

GENESIS 1-11

Gen 1-11 is made of the J & P accounts of origins (No E or D)

“The Parade Example” is the biblical flood

☛ interweaves J verse, P verse, J verse, P verse, etc

re-assembly of J & P verses creates coherent J & P flood accounts

J flood matches language of J creation (Gen 2); P flood & P creation (Gen 1)

The Holy Spirit inspired J author, P author & Redactor

☛ redaction of J & P origins created a **complementary** inerrant revelation:

God is BOTH Transcendent & Immanent

Humans are BOTH created in the Image of God & Sinful

17. BIBLICAL INERRANCY: AN INCARNATIONAL APPROACH

(Biblical Inerrancy: belief the Bible is absolutely true & without error)

DEF: re-defining inerrancy using parallels between:

- Jesus (The Word) & the Bible (The Word)
- Greatest Act of Revelation (God in human flesh) & Biblical Revelation (God's Words in human words)

The Incarnation Latin *in: in carnis*: flesh

DEF: belief that God became a human in the person of Jesus

“In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made ... **The Word became flesh** and lived for a while among us.” John 1:1-3, 14

EARLY CHURCH HERESIES:

Docetism

Jesus a God who only appeared human

Arianism

Jesus a human with supernatural power

CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN POSITION:

Jesus fully God & fully man → Mystery of Incarnation

Ontology of Jesus

God: inerrant & perfect Spiritual Being

Man: incidental & imperfect physical body

Temporality of Jesus

God: eternal & transcends time

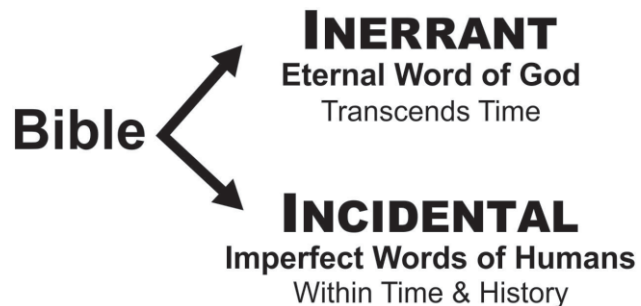
Man: bound within time & the history of the 1st century

Pedagogy of Jesus

God: taught the inerrant Word of God

Man: used incidental & imperfect human words

EG ancient science in Mustard Seed Parable



GENESIS 1-11

PARALLELS TO EARLY CHURCH HERESIES:

Biblical “Docetism”

Gen 1-11 is completely divine with NO human elements

☛ science in Gen 1-11 is inerrant

Biblical “Arianism”

Gen 1-11 is completely human with NO divine elements

☛ spiritual truths in Gen 1-11 are erroneous human superstitions

CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN POSITION:

Gen 1-11 is fully divine & fully human → similar to Jesus

science in Gen 1-11 is the erroneous ancient science of humans

Spiritual Truths in Gen 1-11 are inerrant and divinely inspired

18. ST. AUGUSTINE’S PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE ON SCIENCE & RELIGION

In science-religion debates, Augustine reminds us: Never lose perspective on what is most important to Christianity—our faith, NOT science

“It is also **frequently** asked what our belief must be about the form and shape of heaven **according to Sacred Scripture**. **Many scholars** engage in **lengthy** discussions on these matters, but the sacred writers with their deeper wisdom have omitted them. Such subjects are of **no profit** for those who seek beatitude, and, what is worse, they **take up precious time** that ought to be given to what is **spiritually beneficial**.”

What concern is it of mine whether:

[1] heaven is like a sphere and the earth is enclosed by it and suspended in the middle of the universe, or whether

[2] heaven like a disk above the earth covers it over on one side? ...

The Spirit of God, who spoke through them [sacred writers], did not wish to teach men these facts that would be of **no avail for their salvation**.”

Literal Meaning of Genesis (415), IX:20

COMMENTS

- Christianity concerns spirituality, NOT science
“beatitude” “spiritually beneficial” “salvation”

- scientific concordism was entrenched in the early Church
“form and shape of heaven **according** to Sacred Scripture”
“many scholars” “frequently asked” “lengthy discussions”
- Science-Scripture debate over astronomy:
 - [1] Greek Geocentric Universe See handouts middle image p. 8
Heaven → Sphere
science-of-the-day in 5th century
 - [2] Ancient 3-Tier Universe See handouts upper image p. 8
Heaven → Disk
1st conception of the structure of the universe

BUT

no one today holds either view of the structure of the universe
concordism debates in Augustine’s day → **WASTE OF TIME**

GENESIS 1-11

do “lengthy” & “frequent” discussions today on scientific concordism in
Gen 1-11 “take up precious time” & they are of “no profit” spiritually?

Are debates over scientific concordism in Gen 1-11 a WASTE OF TIME?

19. ST. AUGUSTINE’S PASTORAL WARNING TO CHRISTIANS REGARDING SCIENCE & RELIGION

“Usually, even a **non-Christian** knows something about the earth, the heavens, and the other elements of this world, about the motion and orbit of the stars and even their size and relative positions, about the predictable eclipses of the sun and moon, the cycles of the years and seasons, about the kinds of animals, shrubs, stones, and so forth, and this knowledge he holds to as being certain from **reason** and **experience** [ie, science].

Now, it is a **disgraceful** and **dangerous** thing for a non-Christian to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking **nonsense** on these topics; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation ...

If non-Christians find a Christian mistaken in a field which they themselves know well and hear him maintaining his foolish opinions about our book, **how are they going to believe** those books in matters concerning the resurrection of the dead, the hope of eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven, when they think their pages are full of falsehoods on facts which they themselves have learnt from experience and the light of reason? [ie, science]

Reckless and **incompetent** expounders of Holy Scripture bring untold trouble and sorrow on their wiser brethren when they are caught in one of their mischievous false opinions and are taken to task by those who are not bound by the authority of our sacred books.

For then, to defend their utterly foolish and obviously untrue statements, they will try to call upon Holy Scripture for **proof** and even **recite from memory** many passages which they think support their position, although they understand neither what they say nor the things about which they make assertion.” *Literal Meaning of Genesis, 1:42-3*

COMMENTS

- non-Christians can discover truth about the creation

Is there a similar situation **TODAY**?

To recast Augustine’s words:

“Usually, even a non-Christian knows something about the age of the earth, the fossil record, evolutionary genetics, and developmental biology ... and this knowledge she/he holds to as being certain through scientific method.”

- Augustine’s pastoral warning is directed at Christians who place stumbling blocks between non-Christians & God

Apostle Paul: “We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.” 2 Cor 6:3

Is there a similar situation **TODAY**?

To recast a cliché:

If Christians cannot even get simple things correct like the **age of the rocks**, why should non-Christians bother listening to them about mysteries regarding the **Rock of Ages** [God]?

GENESIS 1-11

ASSUME that Scientific Concordism FAILS

Can St. Augustine's pastoral warning be recast today for the Origins Debate?

*Is it a disgraceful and dangerous thing
for a non-Christian to hear a*

Christian concordist

*(eg, Young Earth Creationist or Progressive Creationist)
presumably giving the meaning of Genesis 1-11?*

What do you think?

20. SIR FRANCIS BACON'S HERMENEUTICAL INSIGHT

Bacon was a founding father of the scientific method in the 17th century

DEF: the use of science in biblical interpretation

everyone already does it whether or not they are aware of it

EG no one reads passages referring to the sun "moving" literally

WHY? we all accept modern astronomy

- operates at an incidental level
does NOT have an impact on the Message of Faith
- science assists in SEPARATING the Message from the incidental
ancient science & helps avoid CONFLATION

"Our Saviour [Jesus] says, 'You err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God' [Matt 22:29], laying before us **two books or volumes** to study, if we will be secured from error;

[1] first the **Scriptures**, revealing the will of God, and

[2] then the **creatures** expressing his power; whereof **the latter is a KEY** unto the former:

not only opening our understanding to conceive the **true sense of the scriptures**, by the general notions of reason and rules of speech; but chiefly opening our belief, in drawing us into a due meditation of the omnipotency of God, which is chiefly **signed and engraven** upon his works."

*Advancement of Learning
(1605) 1.6.16*

COMMENTS

- the **Creatures** (creation) HELP find the "true sense" of the **Scriptures**
they do not cancel the Scriptures
they do not replace the Scriptures
- Two Types of Divine Revelation → Two Divine Books
 - (1) **Special Revelation**
Scriptures reveal "the will of God"
 - (2) **General Revelation** → Natural Revelation & Intelligent Design
Creatures reveal "the omnipotency of God, which is signed and engraven on his works"

GENESIS 1-11

- Will **evolutionary biology**, like modern botany and reproductive biology, help Christians in understanding the biblical accounts of origins in Gen 1 & 2?
- Are Jesus' words in Matt 22:29 applicable today to:
 - Scientific Concordists
"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures."
the Bible features ancient science
the Holy Spirit accommodated to the level of ancient people
 - Anti-Evolutionists
"You are in error because you do not know the power of God."
God has the unfathomable power to create the universe & life through evolution and allow them to self-assemble

21. SIR FRANCIS BACON'S TWO DIVINE BOOKS VISION FOR SCIENCE & RELIGION

"To conclude, therefore, let no man out of a weak conceit of sobriety, or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain, that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the **Book of God's Words**, or in the **Book of God's Works**; divinity [ie, theology] or [natural] philosophy [ie, science]; but rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficiency in both."
*Advancement of Learning
(1605) 1.1.3*

FINAL QUESTION

Do you accept a: Concordist Two Divine Books?

OR Non-Concordist Two Divine Books?

FINAL COMMENT

Bacon's Vision is my hope & prayer for all of us!

IMAGE CREDITS

All images other than those listed below in the artwork of D.O. Lamoureux
Scripture verses from New International Version of the Bible (1980, 2011)

Page 1

- Martin Luther Geocentric Universe. From his Bible Translation (1534) across from Genesis 1. Re-drawn by Andrea Dymstrash (2007).

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- Lamoureux, D.O. (2013). *Babylonian World Map* [Image]. Re-drawn and adapted from E. Sollberger *The Babylonian Legend of the Flood* (London, UK: Trustees of the British Museum, 1961), 45. Used with permission.
- Eisenbrauns Inc. (1997). *Egyptian World Map* [Image]. Re-drawn from O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, T.J. Hallett, trans. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 38. Used with permission.
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