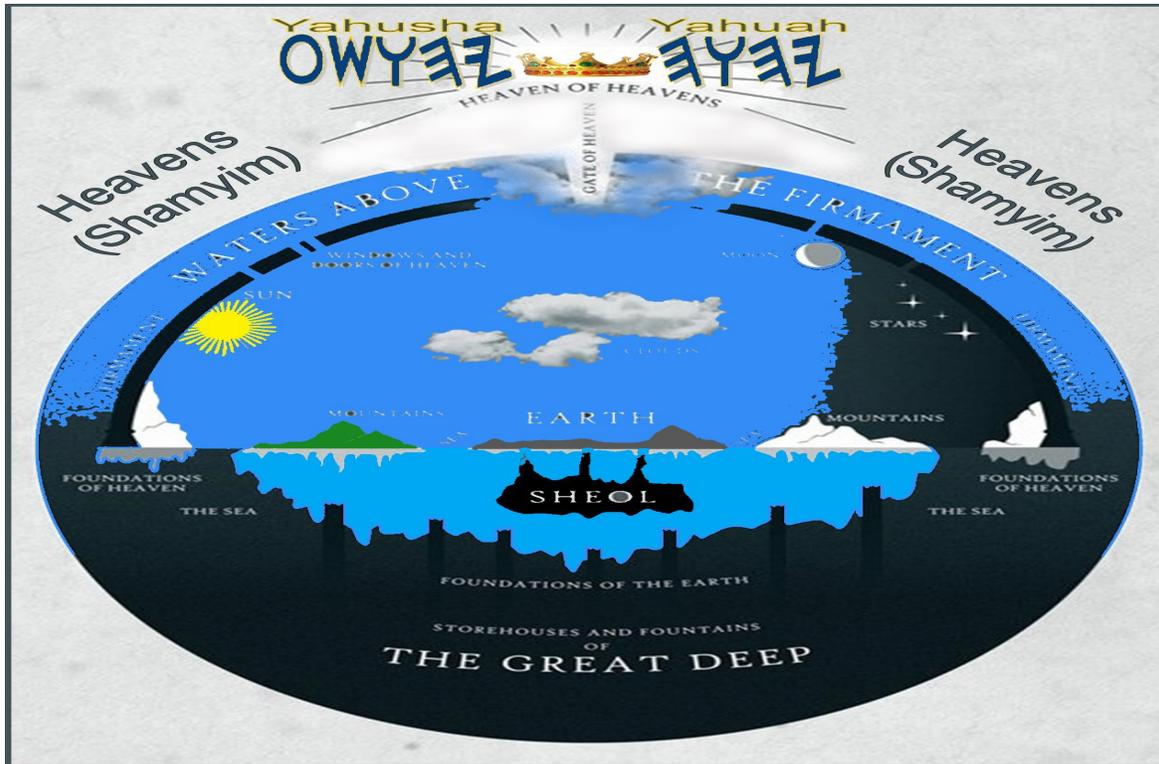


The Shamyim (Heavens) and the Earth



It is generally agreed that the Scriptures describe an immovable earth. There are many scriptures that suggest the Earth is immovable.

1 Chronicles 16:30: tremble before him, all the Earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.

Psalms 93:1: אַיָּאֵל (Yahuah) reigns; he is robed in majesty; אַיָּאֵל (Yahuah) is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.

Psalms 96:10: “Say among the nations, “אַיָּאֵל (Yahuah) reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.”

Psalms 104:5: “He set the Earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.

The ancient Hebrews had the Egyptians to the southwest and the Babylonians to the northeast. Both civilizations had flat-earth cosmologies. The Scriptural cosmology closely parallels the Sumero-Babylonian cosmology, and it may also draw upon Egyptian cosmology.

The Babylonian universe was shaped like a modern domed stadium. The Babylonians considered the earth essentially flat, with a continental mass surrounded by ocean. The vault of the sky was a physical object resting upon the ocean's waters (and perhaps also upon pillars). Salt-free waters below the Earth sometimes manifest themselves as springs. The Egyptian universe was also enclosed, but it was rectangular instead of round. Indeed, it was shaped much like

an old-fashioned steamer trunk. (The Egyptians pictured the goddess Nut stretched across the sky as the enclosing dome. She was seen as a star-covered nude woman arching over the earth). What was the Hebrew view of the universe?

The Order of Creation

The Genesis creation story provides the (1st) first key to the Hebrew cosmology. The earth was created on the (1st) first day, and it was “without form and void **Genesis 1:2.**” On the (2nd) Second day, a vault, the “Expanse or the Firmament of the King James version was created to divide the waters, some being above and some below the vault. Only on the (4th) fourth day were the Sun, Moon, and Stars created, and they were placed “in” (not “above”) the vault.

The Vault of Heaven

The vault of Heavens (Shamyim) is a crucial concept. The word “firmament” appears in the King James version of the Old Testament 17 times, and in each case it is translated from the Hebrew word רָקִיעַ Raqia (raw-kee'-ah) Strong's#: 7549. means an extended surface, firmament From Raqa Strong's#: 7554. Raqa: means: beat, beaten out, make broad, spread abroad forth, over, out, into plates, stamp, stretch. A primitive root; to pound the earth (as a sign of passion); by analogy to expand (by hammering); by implication, to overlay (with thin sheets of metal) -- beat, make broad, spread abroad (forth, over, out, into plates), stamp, stretch; properly, an expanse, i.e. The firmament or (apparently) visible arch of the sky (Heavens/Shamyim)– firmament, which means: the visible vault of the sky (Heavens/Shamyim). The Hebrew word Raqia comes from Riqqua, meaning “beaten out.” In ancient times, brass objects were either cast in the form required or beaten into shape on an anvil. A good craftsman could beat a lump of cast brass into a thin bowl. Thus, Elihu asks Job, “Can you beat out [Raqia] the vault of the skies, as he does, hard as a mirror of cast metal?” **Job 37:18**

“The fact that Raqia was named “Heavens (Shamyim)” in **Genesis 1:8** and birds fly in the Shamyim (Heavens) (**Deuteronomy 4:17**) seems to imply that the Raqia was not solid. But the word Shamyim (Heavens) is broader in meaning than Raqia. It encompasses not only the Raqia (**Psalms 19:6; 148:4**), but also the space above the Raqia (**Psalms 2:4; 11:4; 139:8**) as well as the space below (**Psalms 8:8; 79:2**). Hence birds fly in the Shamyim (Heavens), but never in the Raqia. Rather, birds fly upon the face or in front of the Raqia. **Genesis 1:20**

This phrase upon the face (surface) of the Raqia is important in that it implies that the Raqia was neither space nor atmosphere. For birds do not fly upon the surface or in front of space or air, but rather in space or air.

This distinction is illustrated in the case of fish, which no one would say swim upon the surface of or in front of the water (**Genesis 7:18**), but rather in the water **Exodus 7:18-21.**

In **Genesis 1:8**, the implication is that the Raqia has the name Shamyim in an exact one-to-one correspondence, just as is the case for the ‘Earth’ and the ‘Seas’ when they are named (v. **10**). There is no reason to see a broader meaning of Shamyim than an exact equation with Raqia. Therefore Raqia is intended rather to refer to that which serves to ‘separate the earth from all that is beyond it’, (that is, what we

call the atmosphere, and interstellar space).

Psalms 148:4 says: ‘Hallu (Praise) Him, you Highest Shamyim (Heavens), And the waters that are above the Shamyim (Heavens)!

Psalms 2:4, 11:4, and 139:8 all refer to אַיָּהּ (Yahuah)’s ‘location’ in Shamyim (Heavens). It is difficult to see how there is some portion of Shamyim that is ‘above’ the Raqia. Not one of these verses speaks of the Shamyim in reference to the Raqia; nor do they make any kind of distinction between them.

Psalms 8:8 and 79:2 both refer to ‘birds of the Shamyim’, again, with no reference to the Raqia. Moreover, the ‘Birds of the Shamyim’ are referred to in **Genesis 1:26**. There is nothing in either of these verses that in any way indicates that the (2) two words refer to anything different within their contexts.

The point is that whereas water presents a tangible and identifiable starting point, the ‘sky’ does not, and it is to the credit of the OT writers (as well as evidence of their inspiration, and perhaps of the equivocal language they were inspired to use) that they do not say where the Shamyim (Raqia) begins’ and ‘ends. **Genesis 1:20**, which does not say precisely where the Shamyim starts in relation to the ground (for there is no indication that birds flying higher are considered to be any closer to the Raqia than those flying low to the ground); nor for that matter does it say or even imply what this Raqia is made of. Even so, the parallel in **Genesis 1:26** strongly suggests that birds live in the Shamyim just as fish live in the sea—and thereby points to the words of **Genesis 1:20** as purely said from the point of view of a writer on earth.

Genesis 1:17 also testifies that the Raqia is not air or atmosphere for it says that Alahym (God) placed the Stars (and probably the Sun and Moon) ‘in the Raqia of the Heavens (Shamyim).’ But the Stars are not located in the air or atmosphere. Rather (as anyone can tell on a clear night away from city lights) they look like they are embedded in a solid vault which is exactly why scientific people believe in a solid vault, and why **Genesis 1:17**, in accordance with that belief, says אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) placed the Stars in the Raqia.

Elihu's question shows that the Hebrews considered the vault of Heavens [Shamyim] to be a solid, physical object. Such a large dome, which would be a tremendous feat of engineering. The Hebrews and supposedly אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) Himself considered it exactly that, and this point is hammered home by (5) five scriptures:

(1) Job 9:8, “...who by himself spread out the Heavens [Shamyim]...”

(2) Psalm 19:1, “The Heavens [Shamyim] tell the esteem (glory) of אַיָּהּ (Yahuah), the vault of Heaven [Raqia] reveals his handiwork.”

(3) Psalm 102:25, “...the Heavens [Shamyim] were your handiwork.”

(4) Isaiah 45:12, “I, with my own hands, stretched out the Heavens [Shamyim] and caused all their host to shine...”

(5) Isaiah 48:13, “My hand laid the foundation of the Earth, and my right hand spread out the Heavens [Shamyim]; when I call to them, they stand forth together.

Shamyim comes from Shameh, a root meaning to be lofty. It literally means the Heavens. Other passages complete the picture of the Heavens [Shamyim] as a lofty, physical dome. אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) “sits throned on the vaulted roof of Earth [chug],

whose inhabitants are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the Heavens [Shamyim] like a curtain, he spreads them out like a tent to live in...[**Isaiah 40:22**].” Chug Strong's #: **2329**, literally means “Vault”, “Circle” or “Compassed.” By extension, it can mean roundness, as in a rounded dome or vault.

Job 22:14 says אַחַד (Yahuah) 'Clouds are a hiding place for Him, so that He cannot see; And He walks on the vault of Heavens (Shamyim).' .” In both verses, the use of chug implies a physical object, on which one can sit and walk. Likewise, the context in both cases requires elevation.

In Isaiah, the elevation causes the people below to look small as grasshoppers. In Job, אַחַד (Yahuah)'s eyes penetrate the clouds to view the doings of humans below. Elevation is also implied by **Job 22:12**: “Surely אַחַד (Yahuah) is at the zenith of the Heavens [Shamyim] and looks down on all the stars, high as they are.”

This picture of the cosmos is reinforced by Ezekiel's vision. The Hebrew word Raqia appears (5) five times in Ezekiel, (4) four times in **Ezekiel 1:22-26** and once in **Ezekiel 10:1**. In each case the context requires a literal vault or dome. The vault appears above the “living creatures” and glitters “like a sheet of ice.” Above the vault is a throne of sapphire (or lapis lazuli). Seated on the throne is “a form in human likeness,” which is radiant and “like the appearance of the esteem (glory) of אַחַד (Yahuah).” In short, Ezekiel saw a vision of **OWYAH** (Yahusha) sitting throned on the vault of Heavens (Shamyim), as described in **Isaiah 40:22**.

Raqia should be understood as solid, the word Raqia in the book of Ezekiel, appears (5) five times describing something that is clearly some sort of solid, crystalline canopy.

‘...(I)n **Ezekiel 1** the nature of a expanse (firmament) is described ... It was a divider of some kind over the heads of (4) four cherubim (v. **22–25**), and on top of it was a throne with a man on it (v. **26**). As to the composition of the firmament, it looked like “crystal or ice.”

Inasmuch as the throne mentioned was apparently sitting on the Expanse (Firmament) (**Exodus 24:10**) and the Expanse (Firmament) looked like crystal or ice, it is apparent that the Expanse (Firmament) is solid and is certainly not mere atmosphere or space. Having then this clear definition of Raqia as a solid divider, one is bound to interpret the Raqia in Genesis as solid unless there is some clear reason to differentiate the one from the other.

There are plenty of ‘clear reasons’ to make the differentiation, the most obvious being that there is no indication at all that Ezekiel considered this Raqia to be identical with the one in Genesis—or perhaps, there was no faulty inspiration given to him which identified one from the other. It is not described as the Raqia of Shamayim, merely as a Raqia, and there is no indication that a Raqia can only be made of something solid (as opposed to perhaps a gas or liquid—would Ezekiel have regarded this covering as a Raqia if it had been a gas bubble?).

Expanse (Firmament)

Genesis 1:6 Alahym (God) said: “Let there be an **Expanse** (Firmament) in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”

Genesis 1:7 Alahym (God) made the **Expanse** (Firmament) and separated the waters that

Genesis 1:7 were below the **Expanse** (Firmament) from the waters that

Genesis 1:7 were above the **Expanse** (Firmament); and it was so.

Genesis 1:8 Alahym (God) called the **Expanse** (Firmament) Heavens (Shamyim).

Genesis 1:14 Let there be lights in the **Expanse** (Firmament) of the Heavens (Shamyim).

Genesis 1:15 and let them be for lights in the **Expanse** (Firmament) of the Heavens (Shamyim).

Genesis 1:17 Alahym (God) placed them in the **Expanse** (Firmament) of the Heavens (Shamyim)

Genesis 1:20 in the open **Expanse** (Firmament) of the Heavens (Shamyim).

Psalms 19:1 of Alahym (God); And their **Expanse** (Firmament) is declaring his handiwork.

Psalms 150:1 Hallu (Praise) Him in His mighty **Expanse** (Firmament).

Ezekiel 1:22 [there was] something like an **Expanse** (Firmament), like the awesome gleam of crystal.

Ezekiel 1:23 Under the **Expanse** (Firmament) their wings

Ezekiel 1:25 from above the **Expanse** (Firmament) that was over their heads

Ezekiel 1:26 Now above the **Expanse** (Firmament) that was over their heads

Ezekiel 10:1 and behold, in the **Expanse** (Firmament) that was over their heads

Daniel 12:3 like the brightness of the **Expanse** (Firmament) of Heavens (Shamyim), and those who lead the many.

The "Firmament" (from the Latin Vulgate firmament-um, meaning "Sky" or "Expanse") is mentioned 17 times in the King James Version of the Bible and refers to the expanse of the Heavens (Shamyim) above the earth. Firmament is used as the translation of the Hebrew word Rakia. This Hebrew word means simply "Expanse." It denotes the space or Expanse like an Arch appearing immediately above us.

They who rendered Rakia as firmament-um regarded it as a solid body. It is plain that it was used to denote solidity as well as expansion. It formed a division between the waters above and the waters below **Genesis 1:7**.

The Rakia supported the upper reservoir **Psalms 148:4**. It was the support also of the heavenly bodies (**Genesis 1:14**), and is spoken of as having "Windows" and "Doors" (**Genesis 7:11; Isaiah 24:18; Malachi 3:10**) through which the rain and snow might descend.

(9) Nine of the occurrences of Expanse (Firmament) are in the (1st) first chapter of the Hebrew Scripture (the Bible) as part of the creation account. **Genesis 1:6-8** says, "And Alahym (God) said, Let there be a Expanse (Firmament) in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And Alahym (God) made the Expanse (Firmament), and divided the waters which were under the Expanse

(Firmament) from the waters which were above the Expanse (Firmament): and it was so. And Alahym (God) called the Expanse (Firmament) Heavens (Shamyim). And the evening and the morning were the (2nd) second day.” The “Expanse (Firmament)” is called “Heavens (Shamyim)”. It is the space which includes the earth’s atmosphere and the celestial realm. In the Expanse (Firmament), we see the Sun, Moon, and Stars; in modern translations the firmament is often called the “Expanse” or the “Sky.”

Genesis says that the Expanse (Firmament) “separated the water under the Expanse (Firmament) from the water above it” **Genesis 1:7**. Originally, Alahym (God) created the earth with water “under” the sky (terrestrial and subterranean water) and water “above” the Expanse (Firmament)— it sounds like the Earth could possibly be surrounded by water. Or, the waters above the firmament could simply be a reference to clouds.

We find Expanse (Firmament) used again in Psalms: “The Heavens (Shamyim) declare the esteem (glory) of אַיָּהּ (Yahuah); and the Expanse (Firmament) shews his handy work” **Psalm 19:1**. Also, in **Psalm 150:1**, it says “Hallu (Praise) you אַיָּהּ (Yahuah). . . . Praise him in the Expanse (Firmament) of his power.”

Expanse (Firmament) is used in only (2) two other books of Scripture: Ezekiel (5) five times) and Daniel (1) once). In Ezekiel, each occurrence takes place within a vision. For example, “Then I looked, and, behold, in the Expanse (Firmament/Shamyim) that was above the head of the cherubim s there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne”. **Ezekiel 10:1**

Daniel 12:3 says, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Expanse (Firmament); and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.”

In short, the “Expanse” is a vast Expanse, specifically the atmosphere or sky. The word is found only in the King James Version and other older translations of the Bible.

The Waters Above the Heavens (Shamyim)

Before we proceed, let us clarify the uses of the Hebrew word that translates as Expanse or Firmament or Heavens. There are (3) three different Heavens (Shamyim) that are mentioned in Scripture: (1st) First atmospheric Heaven, the (2nd) Second Heaven is where the stars are located (Stellar Heaven), and the (3rd) third Heaven is where אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) resides (paradise). This (3rd) third Heaven is referred to in **2 Corinthians**.

Psalm 19:1 calls our attention to both the atmospheric and Stellar Heavens (Shamyim): The Heavens (Shamyim) declare the esteem (glory) of אַיָּהּ (Yahuah); and the firmament shows his handiwork [Emphasis mine].

Water Canopy

Many creationists believed in a water canopy and believe that it could have been water vapor instead of liquid water. Water vapor initially seemed to be a more logical way to keep the water suspended above the atmosphere. Creation scientists such as Drs. Larry Vardiman, Russell Humphrys, John Baumgardner, Michael Oard, etc.,

have introduced problems with the water vapor canopy model and may have eliminated it as a possibility. Liquid water turns out to be a better explanation.

The water canopy gives another advantage, which is the hyperbaric (increased pressure) effect. The weight of the water above would have increased atmospheric pressure on earth and perhaps even the oxygen content in the air. (As to increased oxygen content, scientists have found little bubbles of air in ancient amber, and the air bubbles had as much as 32% oxygen, whereas the air we breathe today in Heaven and earth system #2 is about 20% oxygen.) The water canopy may have had more than doubled the atmospheric pressure. In this environment of heavier atmospheric pressure and higher oxygen, healing would be more efficient. Many hospitals have pressurized rooms called Hyperbaric Rooms. Into these rooms increased oxygen content is pumped under pressure and healing is miraculously sped up. Very sick people and the severely burned are treated in this high pressure and oxygen rich environments.

אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) could have made the water canopy exactly the right thickness and distance from earth to enable plants to get enough light energy for their photosynthesis while blocking the harmful radiation and the excessive heat. If the water of the canopy were in the form of liquid water (perhaps under the ozone layer but above where the birds fly), it would have made Heaven-and-earth system #1 (before the Flood) similar to a giant terrarium. There would have been no rain! And what does Scripture say? **Genesis 2:6**: “But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.” That is the exact effect expected if a water canopy surrounded the earth: a morning mist would form. **Genesis 2:5b** is more specific: “...for אֱלֹהִים (Yahuah) Aluah (God) had not caused it to rain upon the earth.” No rain, therefore no rainbow! Heaven-and-earth system #1 was obviously different from our present system, system #2.

If it were a water vapor canopy, there would be some protection from cosmic radiation, etc. But if it were liquid water, it would provide maximum protection. This might help explain 900-year life spans before the Flood. Water filters out many of the harmful rays of the Sun, which might speed up the aging process. For example, water blocks alpha and beta radiation penetration. Liquid water in combination with the ozone layer would block most of the ultra violet radiations from the sunlight. Combine this with filtering of the alpha and beta radiation, and earth would have been a much healthier place to live before the Flood!

The Greenhouse Effect

With a water canopy, a greenhouse effect would be expected due to the heat generated by the Sun-warmed canopy. Is there any evidence that greenhouse warmth once surrounded our earth? Palm tree fossils have been found in Alaska and broad leaf ferns in the Arctic. How could a palm tree fossil be in Alaska? Some scientists have postulated they traveled there on the tectonic plate (earth crust) movement over millions of years. But these trees are not millions of years old! A creationist would say, “No problem, palm trees grew in Alaska in the tropical world before the Flood.” These trees were buried during the Flood of Noah’s day resulting in their fossilization.

Scientists have found tropical forests and coal deposits in Antarctica. How did they

get there if plants in past history did not grow there? Fruit trees that were quick-frozen and over ninety feet in height with green leaves have been found in the New Siberian Islands where, today, only one-inch high willows grow. In these frigid zones, many trees (some fossilized and some quick-frozen) have been found in flood sediments with rings, signifying rapid, warm temperature growth.

A Runaway Greenhouse Effect?

Of course, the idea of a water canopy will bring objections from some scientists, even creationist scientists. Would there be a problem of overheating causing a runaway green house effect? Some scientists believe that a water canopy of any kind would generate too much heat coming in to earth's atmosphere and not enough escaping, resulting in overheating and death to all life on earth. Could our Creator have designed Adam's world with a suspended water canopy (liquid, not vapor) that did not generate too much heat for life to exist?

If the water canopy was under the ozone layer [if it was above the ozone layer, this crucial protective barrier may have been destroyed when the water came down through the ozone at the Flood, and, depending on how far into space the canopy was located, there may have been a vacuum above it which would permit the water to evaporate rapidly out into space and the canopy would disappear], the liquid water in the canopy might actually be a heat and radiation shield. It would physically block off some amount of heat. The heat energy during the daylight part of the day could be absorbed as the water on the outer surface of the canopy evaporated. The water could then re-condense during the coolness of the night. Because of the ozone layer above the water canopy, the evaporated water would not escape into outer space.

This canopy model would actually function like a giant air conditioning and heating unit. In the summer, the heat in the house is picked up by the refrigerant and carried outside. The house stays cool. In the winter, the heat in the air outside the house is picked up and brought inside. The house stays warm. Water picks up heat slowly and releases heat slowly. That is why the sea breeze during the middle of a hot summer day is still cool while the inland breeze is terribly hot and vice versa during the cooler nighttime. The daylight side of the earth would be warm and the dark side cool. The differences in temperature between the two sides would balance each other out.

Even today, water in the sky (clouds) moderates the temperature here on earth. On an overcast spring day, the cloud cover can regulate the air temperature from varying by 15-20 degrees between daylight and nighttime to as little as a 2 degree difference.

Water can absorb great amounts of heat. In the steel mills water is used to cool molten steel. One kilogram of water can cool down several kilograms of molten steel by 1,000 degrees. In the dental lab, water is used to cool and temper molten metals because it is so efficient at absorbing heat.

Our creator placed the Earth and the Sun in just the right relationship to each other (distance and size) and quite possibly with a water canopy above that part of the atmosphere where the birds fly, but below the ozone layer. Considering all the factors that we just discussed, we can conclude that overheating should not be a

reason for us to reject the water canopy idea. This is a matter of Amanah (Faith). We cannot duplicate it or make it happen today, but we can believe אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) when he says he put water up above where birds fly. Just because current science cannot explain all the ramifications of a water canopy is no reason for us to say the canopy never existed.

What, then, are these 'waters'? These are not clouds. Rather, it is our suggestion that these 'waters' were the originally-created, basic building blocks of matter that the earth was made from, and otherwise became all that was created outside of our atmosphere and/or our solar system.

We are not told what becomes of these 'waters' above the Raqia in Genesis. This is not surprising, and in fact agrees with the Scriptural record:

By not naming the waters above the firmament as he named the waters below (**Genesis 1:9-10**) אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) signified that he excluded them from the world made for man.

No further revelation is given about the nature of these waters; nor is it said what has happened to them. As far as the inspired writers knew, these waters were still 'up there,' and if they started with the conception of an ocean, they would continue with that conception. At the same time, as long as they referred only to the 'waters' without any further description, they were not inspired to error. The 'waters' were still there, but אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) had made further use of them in His creation, and the terminology was hardly available to say that things were any different. (Hence, it is appropriate that **Psalms 148:4** only refers to these 'waters' and says nothing else about them.)

With that, we are only left with some figurative language associated with the Flood account.

'In **Genesis 7:11-12** water above the firmament is allowed to fall as rain by opening the floodgates of the firmament; and in **Genesis 8:2** the water is restrained from falling by closing those same floodgates.'

This water that came from above could have come from any point in the expanse. It is not my place here to offer any speculations on the mechanisms of the Flood, but it is worth noting that this term 'floodgates of Heavens (Shamyim)' is used elsewhere in the Tanakh (OT) in the context of heavy rain. **2 Kings 7:2, 19; Malachi 3:10**

Perhaps the ancient readers of this text did envision a solid dome with an ocean above it, we can only speculate but it does seem plausible.

The Shape of the Earth

He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Yisrael, and gather the dispersed of Yahudah (Judah) from the (4) four Quarters (corners/edges) of the earth (North, South, East, West). **Isaiah 11:12**

The 144,000 are Sealed in the Name. After this I saw (4) four Malakym (Angels) standing at the (4) four Quarters (corners/edges) of the earth (North, South, East, West), holding back the (4) four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow on earth or sea or against any tree. **Revelation 7:1**

and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the (4) four Quarters

(corners/edges) of the earth (North, South, East, West), Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. **Revelation 20:8**

Disregarding the dome, the essential flatness of the earth's surface is required by verse **Daniel 4:10-11**. In Daniel, the king “saw a tree of great height at the center of the Earth...reaching with its top to the sky and visible to the Earth's farthest bounds.” If the earth were flat, a sufficiently tall tree would be visible to “the Earth's farthest bounds,” but this is impossible on a spherical earth.

Likewise, in describing the temptation of **וַיִּשָּׂא** (Yahusha) by HaSatan, **Matthew 4:8** says, “Once again, HaSatan (the devil) took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory.” Obviously, this would be possible only if the earth were flat and not round.

The same is true of **Revelation 1:7**: “Behold, he is coming with the clouds! Every eye shall see him.” Obviously, this would be possible only if the earth were flat and not round.

The Celestial Bodies

The Hebrews considered the celestial bodies relatively small. The Genesis creation story indicates the size and importance of the Earth relative to the celestial bodies in (2) two ways, (1st) first by their order of creation, and (2nd) second by their positional relationships. They had to be small to fit inside the vault of Heaven (Shamyim). Small size is also implied by **Joshua 10:12**, which says that the Sun stood still “in Gibeon” and the Moon “in the Vale of Aijalon.”

Further, Scripture frequently presents celestial bodies as exotic living beings. For example, “In them [the Heavens], a tent is fixed for the Sun, who comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, rejoicing like a strong man to run his race. His rising is at one end of the Heavens (Shamyim), his circuit touches their farthest ends; and nothing is hidden from his heat **Psalms 19:4-6**.”

When the Earth's cornerstone was laid “the Morning Stars sang together and all the sons of **יְהוָה** (Yahuah) shouted aloud **Job 38:7**.”

The Morning Star is censured for trying to set his throne above that of other Stars: You thought in your own mind, I will scale the Heavens (Shamyim); I will set my throne high above the Stars of **יְהוָה** (Yahuah), I will sit on the mountain where the Alahym (gods) meet in the far recesses of the north. I will rise high above the cloud-banks and make myself like the most high **Isaiah 14:13-14**.

Stars can fall from the Heavens (Shamyim) according to **Daniel 8:10** and **Matthew 24:29**. The same idea is found in the following extracts from His tail (The Dragon) swept down a (1/3rd) third of the Stars of Heavens (Shamyim) and cast them to the Earth. **Revelation 12:4** and **Revelation 6:13-16**:...the Stars in the Heavens (Shamyim) fell to the earth, like figs shaken down by a gale; the Heavens (Shamyim) vanished, as a scroll is rolled up...they called out to the mountains and the crags, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne...”

This is consistent with the Hebrew cosmology previously described. The writer also viewed the Heavens (Shamyim) as a physical realm. The Stars are inside the Heavens (Shamyim), and they fall before the Heavens (Shamyim) opens. When it is

whisked away, it reveals the (1) One throned above (see **Isaiah 40:22**).

The Book of Enoch

An ancient document describing Hebrew cosmology is **1 Hanok (Enoch)** (sometimes called the Ethiopic Book of Hanok (Enoch)). In 1773, the Scottish adventurer James Bruce found complete copies in Ethiopia. Numerous manuscripts of **1 Enoch** have since been found in Ethiopian monasteries. Turn of the century scholars concluded that parts of the book are pre-Maccabean, and most (perhaps all) of it was composed by 100 B.C. [Charles, 1913].

These conclusions were largely vindicated when numerous fragments of **1 Enoch** were found among the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran. There have been (2) two major English translations of **1 Enoch**, the 1913 translation of R. H. Charles and the 1983 translation by E. Isaac. All of the quotations that follow come from the newer translation.

The importance of **1 Enoch** is poorly appreciated outside the scholarly community. Comparison of its text with New Testament books reveals that many Enochian doctrines were taken over by early Christians.

There is little doubt that **1 Enoch** was influential in molding New Testament doctrines concerning the nature of the Messiah, the Son of Man, the messianic kingdom, demonology, the future, resurrection, final judgment, the whole eschatological theater, and symbolism. No wonder, therefore, that the book was highly regarded by many of the apostolic and Church Fathers [1986, 10].

The Cosmos as described in the book of Hanok (Enoch).

Hanok (Enoch) influenced Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, and several other New Testament books. The punishment of the fallen Malakym (angels) described in **2 Peter** seems to come directly from **1 Hanok (Enoch)**, as does much of the imagery (or even wording) in Revelation. The Epistle of Jude contains the most dramatic evidence of its influence when it castigates “enemies of religion” as follows:

It was to them that Hanok (Enoch), the (7th) seventh in descent from Adam, directed his prophecy when he said: “I saw **OWYAZL** (Yahusha) come with his myriads of Malakym (Angels), to bring all men to judgment and to convict all the unrighteous of all the unrighteous deeds they had committed, and of all the defiant words which unrighteous Sinners had spoken against him **Jude 14- 15.**”

By attributing prophecy to Hanok (Enoch), Jude confers inspired status upon the book. **1 Hanok (Enoch) 1:9**, is found in the original Hebrew on a recently-published Qumran fragment [Shanks, 1987, 18].

The Ends of the Earth (Earth's foundations)

Numerous Tanakh (Old Testament) verses referring to the Earth's foundations (**2 Samuel 22:16, Job 38:4, Psalm 18:15, Proverbs 8:29, Isaiah 24:18**, and numerous others).

“After this, I saw (4) four Malakym (Angels) stationed at the (4) four corners [gonia] (North, South, East & West) of the earth holding back the (4) four winds **Revelation 7:1.**”

The Greek word Gonia Strong's#: 1137, can refer to regions (North, South, East & West) rather than points. Most translations of the Bible opt for points (the King James version says “on the corners of the earth”), implying that the writer viewed the habitable earth as a (4) four-cornered area. (This was indeed the way many early churchmen interpreted it. The corners could, however, be those regions (North, South, East & West) at the ends of the earth referred to by Jeremiah: “He brings up the mist from the ends of the earth, he opens rifts for the rain and brings the wind out of his storehouses **Jeremiah 51:16.**” We shall return to the ends of the earth.

The Malak (angel) Uriel guided Hanok (Enoch) in most of his travels. They made several trips to the ends of the earth, where the dome of Heaven (Shamyim) came down to the surface. For instance, Hanok (Enoch) says:

I went to the extreme ends of the earth and saw there huge beasts, each different from the other and different birds (also) differing from one another in appearance, beauty, and voice. And to the east of those beasts, I saw the ultimate ends of the earth which the Heavens (Shamyim) rest. And the gates of Heaven (Shamyim) were open, and I saw how the Stars of Heaven (Shamyim) come out. **1 Hanok (Enoch) 33:1-2**

Again, Hanok (Enoch) says, “I went in the direction of the north, to the extreme ends of the earth, and there at the extreme end of the whole world I saw a great and glorious seat. There (also) I saw (3) three open gates of Heavens (Shamyim); when it blows cold, hail, frost, snow, dew, and rain, through each one of the (gates) the winds proceed in the northwesterly direction **1 Hanok (Enoch) 34:1-2.**” This accords well with **Jeremiah 51:16** which says, “he brings up the mist from the ends of the earth, he opens rifts for the rain and brings the wind out of his storehouses.” In subsequent chapters, Hanok (Enoch) journeys “to the extreme ends of the earth” in the west, south, and east. In each place he saw (3) three more “open gates of Heavens (Shamyim).”

There were other things to be seen at the ends of the earth. **Job 26:7**, “He stretched out the north over the empty place, and hangs the earth upon nothing.”

On several occasions when Hanok (Enoch) and the Malak (Angel) are out beyond the dome of Heaven (Shamyim), Hanok (Enoch) comments that there is nothing above or below. For instance, “And I came to an empty place. And I saw (there) neither a Heaven above nor an earth below, but a chaotic and terrible place (**1 Hanok/Enoch 21:1-2.**)” Could this be the kind of nothingness referred to in **Job**?

An Malak (Angel) also showed Hanok (Enoch) the storerooms of the winds (**18:1**) and the cornerstone of the earth (**18:2**).

The Sun and Moon

And what of the Sun and Moon? **Psalms 19:4-6** In them he has set a tent for the Sun, 5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. 6 Its rising is from the end of the Shamyim (Heavens), and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Hanok (Enoch) expands upon this idea. In **1 Hanok (Enoch) 41:5**, he “saw the storerooms of the Sun and the Moon, from what place they go out and to which place they return...” Further, “they keep Amanah (faith) one with another: in

accordance with an oath they set and they rise.”

Hanok (Enoch) discusses the Solar and Lunar motions at length, explaining why the apparent azimuths of their rising and setting varies with the season. The explanation, found in the section called “The Book of the Heavenly Luminaries,” begins:

This is the (1st) first Commandment of the luminaries: The Sun is a luminary whose egress is an opening of Heavens (Shamyim), which is (located) in the direction of the East, and whose ingress is (another) opening of Heavens (Shamyim, (located) in the West. I saw (6) six openings through which the Sun rises and (6) six openings through which it sets. The Moon also rises and sets through the same openings, and they are guided by the Stars; together with those whom they lead, they are (6) six in the East and (6) six in the West Heavens (Shamyim). All of them (are arranged) (1) one after another in a constant order. There are many windows (both) to the right and the left of these openings. (1st) First there goes out the great light whose name is the Sun; its roundness is like the roundness of the Heavens (Shamyim); and it is totally filled with light and heat. The chariot in which it ascends is (driven by) the blowing wind. The Sun sets in the Heavens (Shamyim) (in the West) and returns by the Northeast in order to go to the East; it is guided so that it shall reach the Eastern gate and shine in the face of the sky **1 Enoch 72:2-5**.

The openings in the vault of Heavens (Shamyim) in the East and West are matched to the seasons. On the longest day of the year, the Sun rises and sets through the northernmost pair. On the shortest day, it rises and sets through the southernmost pair. The return routes of the Sun and Moon are outside the dome.

The Stars

Like Hebrew Scripture (the Bible), **1 Enoch** typically depicts Stars as living, anthropomorphic beings. The Sons of אַחַז (Yahuah) are also dealt with in **1 Enoch**, and they are associated with Stars. This is consistent with **Job 38:7**, which says that when the Earth's cornerstone was laid “the Morning Stars sang together and all the sons of אַחַז (Yahuah) shouted aloud.”

Matthew 24:29 and **Revelation 6:13** deal with Stars that fall to Earth. The image comes from Hanok (Enoch), but Matthew and John omit some details. In **1 Enoch 88:1**, a star that fell from the Heavens (Shamyim) is seized, bound hand and foot, and thrown into an abyss. A few verses later, other Stars “whose sexual organs were like the organs of horses” are likewise bound hand and foot and cast “into the pits of the Earth (**1 Enoch 88:3**).”

Most Stars just go through their motions night after night. Some Stars never set, and Hanok (Enoch) was shown their chariots (**1 Enoch 75:8**). Stars that do rise and set do so through openings in the dome, just like the Sun and Moon. אַחַז (Yahuah), according to **1 Enoch**, runs a tight universe, and Stars that do not rise on time are thrown into the celestial slammer.

This place is the (ultimate) end of Heavens (Shamyim) and Earth: it is the prison house for the Stars and the powers of Heavens (Shamyim). And the Stars which roll over upon the fire, they are the ones which have transgressed the Commandments of אַחַז (Yahuah) from the beginning of their rising because they did not arrive

punctually **1 Enoch 18:14-15**.

Hanok (Enoch) was not told the sentence for tardy rising, but Uriel later shows him other Stars “which have transgressed the Commandments of אַיָּאֵל (Yahuah),” for which they were doing (10) ten million years of hard time **1 Enoch 21:6**. Hanok (Enoch) also was shown an even more terrible place, a fiery prison house where fallen Malakym (Angels) were detained forever **1 Enoch 21:10**.

We must be careful to let neither our own view of the structure of the universe nor what we think to have been the view of ancient people to control our understanding of the Scriptural author’s description.