

Biblical Cosmology

THREE-TIERED UNIVERSE	
Genesis 1:1-2	¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
Genesis 1:26, 28	²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ... ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
Exodus 20:11	For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
Nehemiah 9:6	You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.
Proverbs 3:19-20	¹⁹ The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; ²⁰ by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew
THE SKY	
<i>The raqia is a solid dome above the earth separating the "waters above" from the "waters below"</i>	⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. (Gen. 1:6-8) Can you, like him, spread out the skies, hard as a cast metal mirror? (Job 37:18) when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep (Prov. 8:28)
<i>BELOW the raqia, in the "heavens," birds fly and clouds float</i>	And God said, "Let ... birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." (Gen. 1:20)
<i>IN the raqia, God placed the sun, moon and stars</i>	¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night." ... ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth (Gen. 1:14, 17)

<i>God's throne in heaven rests ABOVE the raqia, which is itself surrounded by the "waters above"</i>	Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! (Psa. 148:4)
	The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. (Psa. 29:10) ¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, ² covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. ³ He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind (Psa. 104:1-3) ¹² "Is not God high in the heavens? See the highest stars, how lofty they are! ¹³ But you say, 'What does God know? Can he judge through the deep darkness? ¹⁴ Thick clouds veil him, so that he does not see, and he walks on the vault of heaven.' (Job 22:12-14)
<i>Rain, snow, wind and hail were kept in storehouses outside the raqia released through windows</i>	The LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. (Deut. 28:12) ²² "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, ²³ which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? ... ³⁷ Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, ³⁸ when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? (Job 38:22-23, 37-38)
	¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹² And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. (Gen. 7:11-12) ¹ But God remembered Noah ... And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ² The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³ and the waters receded from the earth continually. (Gen. 8:1-3) He who flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. (Isa. 24:18)

THE LAND

<i>The land was brought forth from beneath the waters below</i>	⁹ And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. (Gen. 1:9-10) ⁵ He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. ⁶ You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. ⁷ At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. ⁸ The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. ⁹ You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. (Psa. 104:5-9)
<i>The land is now suspended over these waters</i>	When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep (Prov. 8:27) He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness. (Job 26:10) It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in (Isa. 40:22)
<i>The land rests on pillars so that it will not sink back into the water</i>	For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and on them he has set the world. (1 Sam. 2:8) When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. (Psa. 75:3) He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. (Psa. 104:5)
<i>Sheol, the place of the dead, is a kind of chamber beneath the land</i>	For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains. (Deut. 32:22) ¹⁸ “Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, and send them down ... to the world below, to those who have gone down to the pit ... ²¹ The mighty chiefs shall speak of them, with their helpers, out of the midst of Sheol: ‘They have come down, they lie still, the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.’ ²² “Assyria is there, and all her company, its graves all around it, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, ²³ whose graves are set in the uttermost parts of the pit; and her company is all around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who spread terror in the land of the living. (Ezek. 32:18, 21-23)

THE SEA

<i>The land is both surrounded by floats on top of water (as evidenced by wells)</i>	You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Exod. 20:4) ¹ The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, ² for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. (Psa. 24:1-2) to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever (Psa. 136:5-6)
<i>God set limits, so they do not overwhelm the land</i>	⁸ "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb ... ¹⁰ and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, ¹¹ and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'? (Job 38:10-11) when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth (Prov. 8:29) ²² Do you not fear me? declares the LORD. Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. (Jer. 5:22)
<i>A great dragon, or sea monster, rules the waters though he was first defeated by God in creation</i>	¹² By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered Rahab. ¹³ By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent. (Job 26:12-13) ¹³ You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. ¹⁴ You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. ¹⁵ You split open springs and brooks; you dried up ever-flowing streams. (Psa. 74:13-15) ⁹ You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. ¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. (Psa. 89:9-10) ⁹ Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? ¹⁰ Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? (Isa. 51:9-10)