

Hermeneutical Principles

S1-2

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

☞ Jesus used parables → the stories are NOT to be read literally

THE QUESTION:

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

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?

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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

☞ 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 3)

fast-talking snake

mystical trees: one imparts eternal life

one imparts knowledge of good & evil

History? Allegory? Fairy Tale?

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3. ACCOMMODATION

DEF: God descending to the level of humans in order to reveal himself revealing Spiritual Truths so that 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?

Growing Seeds

JESUS: "This is what the *Kingdom of God* is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts, though he does not know how. **All by itself the soil** produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."
Mk 4:26-29

- does the soil produce grain "all by itself"?
NO. The DNA in the seed also contributes to plant growth

DID JESUS LIE?

OR

Is this accommodation?

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 low rate

DID JESUS LIE?

OR

Was he accommodating & using the ancient botany of his listeners?

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CONCERN

some Christians complain accommodation "waters down" Scripture

S9

Arguments for Accommodation

S10

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

DEF: God descended and 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

S11

- (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

S12



- ☛ seeds understood from an ancient phenomenological perspective
NO microscopes!

S13

CONCLUSION

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

S14

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?

S15

4. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

DEF: use of ancient manuscripts of the Bible & commentaries on the Bible to establish the original biblical text
New Testament → over 5000 manuscripts

NOTE: though there are textual debates, the modern translations of the Bible are **VERY GOOD**.
☛ **ALL** preserve the Message of Faith

JESUS: “What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is **the smallest seed YOU PLANT in the ground.**” Mk 4:31 (NIV 1980)
New International Version → popular evangelical Bible

Interlinear Greek-English New Testament (NIV 1976)

micro pan sperma
μικροτερον ον παντων των σπερματων
smaller being all the seeds

g ē
επι της γης
on the earth

A. Marshall, *NIV Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* (Zondervan, 1976) 153

BUT

Where is the personal pronoun **YOU**?

σου singular

υμεις plural

Where is the verb **PLANT**?

φυτευω

Greek New Testament Manuscript Variants

ως . . . σιναπεως

as mustard seed

K. Aland, et al, *Greek New Testament*, 3rd ed (W. Germany: United Bible Societies, 1983), 136

☛ NO variants with the pronoun or verb

QUESTIONS:

Are the translators of the NIV Bible incompetent? **NO!**

OR

Are NIV translators **ACCOMMODATING** for our generation? **YES**

GENESIS 1-11

Textual Debate over Gen 1:1. Two possible translations:

“In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth. Now the earth was ...”

OR

“When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was ...”

5. DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT 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

- words “pine nut” & “pine tree” are NOT in original Greek text
- most Canadians & Americans have never seen a mustard seed BUT most have seen a pine nut & pine trees

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 the MESSAGE of Gen 1 be **translated in a dynamic equivalent** way with an INCIDENT employing the modern science of origins?

Genesis 1:1-5

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

⁴God saw the light was good, and he separated the light from darkness.

⁵God 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, and matter. And 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, the earth & the living organisms

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

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6. SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE & PROFICIENCY OF ITS READERS

S1

- DEF: despite the challenges of hermeneutics, the Message of Faith is revealed to those seeking to meet God. S2
- Sufficiency → the Bible is sufficient in revealing God
 - Proficiency → readers are proficient in grasping the main Messages

NOTE: there is a spiritual aspect to hermeneutics: "those seeking to meet God" not just intellectual S3

☛ it is a mystical & spiritual encounter hearing the "**Voice of God**" in Scripture

Lesson from Church History

The MESSAGE always got through to the Church eg, Divinity of Jesus S4

The INCIDENT has led to a wide variety of views eg, origin of the world in Gen 1

GENESIS 1-11

S5

- Is Gen 1-11 sufficient & are readers proficient? **YES! & YES!** S6
- Christians through history have always grasped 6 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. Humans are sinful
 5. God judges humans for their sins
 6. God chose Israel to bless the entire world

7. IMPLICIT SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS

S1

DEF: the science-of-the-day ASSUMED by **BOTH**: (1) Biblical Writers & (2) Modern Readers S2

Human Reproductive Problems (New Testament)

S3

"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 S4

"By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was **barren**—was enabled to become a father because he considered him [God] faithful who had made the promise." Heb 11:11 S5

Greek

S6

ancient science deeply embedded in ancient words

ΣΤΕΙΡΟΣ (*steiros*)

1. barren fields
 2. barren women (women only → never men)
- Feminine: στείρα (*steira*)

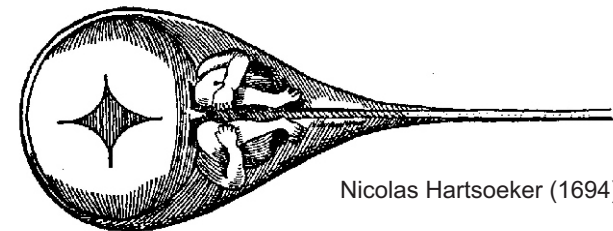
ΣΤΕΡΕΟΣ (*stereos*)

hard, firm

Ancient Science of Infertility & One "Seed" Theory (Preformatism)

S7

- science of reproduction ASSUMED by Biblical writers an entire human being is tightly packed within the "seed" of the male the female is like a "field" in which male seed grows categories come from agriculture EG children called the "**fruit** of the womb" Ps 127:3, Lk 1:42 S8
- a barren woman is like **HARD** ground → seed does not germinate S8
- ☛ women were ASSUMED to be the cause of infertility
- a scientific theory as late as 1700s even after 1st microscopes: S9



Nicolas Hartsoecker (1694)

Modern Science of Infertility

S10

science of reproduction ASSUMED by modern readers
infertility: 35% male, 35% female, 20% both, 10% unknown

NB: DO NOT EISEGETICALLY force our view of infertility into the Bible

GENESIS 1-11

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

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

DEF: creation that is 'brand new' from the start

found in most creation accounts of ancient people

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

S11

S12

S13

8. SCOPE OF COGNITIVE COMPETENCE

DEF: intellectual tools thru which everyone sees & understands the world
a feature of **BOTH**: (1) Biblical Writers &

(2) Modern Readers of the Bible

Telescopes & Microscopes Hermeneutical Principle

Scope

visual metaphor → "field" of vision

implies limits & boundaries

THINK: telescopes & microscopes

Cognitive Latin *cognitō*: to learn & acquire knowledge

cognition: mental processes in perceiving, reasoning & knowing

cognition 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 → naked eye

no telescopes & no microscopes

Modern Readers → **WIDE SCC**

we see deeper into space & inside cells

we enjoy telescopes & microscopes

Human Reproductive Problems (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

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Hebrew

עָקָר

'āqār adjective

1. barren women (women only → never men)

2. barren fields

עָקַר

'āqar verb

to uproot, to pluck up,

There is a time for everything: a time to be

born and a time to die, a time to plant and

a time to **uproot**. Eccl 3:1-2

S9

Ancient Science of Infertility & One "Seed" Theory (Preformatism)

• only women were believed to be the cause of infertility

Why?

No microscopes

☛ **NARROW SCC**

Not competent to understand infertility

• 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

S11

Experience of Agricultural Fields

fields can be a problem

JESUS'S PARABLE OF THE SOWER

S12

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 S13

EG Mk 4:28

"All by itself the soil produces grain"

Experience of Sowing Seed

S14

it was assumed that seeds were 100% efficient

worst germination rate of wheat & barley: 85%

perception → seeds ALWAYS work

Experience of Miscarriages

S15

they would have seen small partially developed fetuses

perception → a "seedling" **UPROOTED** from the womb

CONCLUSION

S16

- ancient science of human reproductive problems:
caused by the “hard field” or “uprooted field” of a woman
not the “seed” of a man
- perfectly logical given the NARROW SCC of ancient people
NOT a slur against women

GENESIS 1-11

S17

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

AGE OF THE UNIVERSE

S18

Short → two genealogies of 10 people (Gen 5 & 11) from the creation of the world (Gen 1) to the appearance of Abraham (Gen 11)
☛ reflects an earlier oral tradition limited by human memory

LIVING ORGANISMS

S19

Immutable (unchanging)

ancient people never saw a creature change into a different creature
Gen 1 → creation/reproduction is “according to their kinds” 10X

De Novo Creation & Immutability of Living Organisms

S20

ancient people saw: a goat births → a goat which births → a goat ...
CONCLUDED that goats are immutable & never change

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

S21

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**

they RETROJECTED the ‘goat births goat ...’ data set back in time:

S22

1st goat/s ever created ← goat ← goat ← goat ← a goat today

☛ *De Novo* (Quick & Complete) creation of a 1st goat/s

Excursus: The “Hermeneutical Brakes”

S23

Were the biblical writers COMPETENT to know:

S24

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:

S25

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

Jesus had healed an epileptic boy (Luke 9:42)? **✓**

Jesus had risen to life after he had died on the Cross (Mark 16:6)? **✓**

S26

QUESTION:

S27

Which group of questions are FOUNDATIONAL to Christianity?

9. HISTORICAL CRITICISM

S1

DEF: understanding the Bible within its historical setting

S2

use of ancient Near Eastern (ANE) literature to understand the context

Aeschylus, *Eumenides* (v. 658-661) 5th Century BC/E

S3

“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.”

• 1-seed theory (preformatism)

S4

• pagan theology → Fate

• agricultural language also found in the Bible with human reproduction:

“Blessed are you Mary & blessed is the **fruit of your womb** [Jesus]”

Lk 1:42

G.E. Ladd’s Aphorism

S5

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

Message-Incident Principle

New Testament & Criticism

S6

Message = “Word of God”

(Eerdmans, 1967) 12

Incident = “words of men in history”

CONCLUSION

S7

To fully grasp the **historically conditioned incidental** elements of the Bible,
we need to read the literature of the ANE.

GENESIS 1-11

S8

• is Gen 1-11 historically conditioned? **YES**

• are the accounts of origins in Gen 1-11 the *Word of God* given in the
words of men in history? **YES**

S9

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

S10

Motif

DEF: recurring concept, symbol, character, phrase, theme, etc

MAJOR MOTIFS in ANE ACCOUNTS of ORIGINS

S11

1. De Novo Creation [Gen 1 & 2]

quick and complete origin of the universe & life

2. Lost Idyllic Age [Gen 3]

disruption of an original creation & the origin of bad things

3. Tribal Formation [Gen 4, 5, 10 & 11]

S12

origin of a community from a single founding male individual

4. Great Flood [Gen 6-9]

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

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MOTIFS OF ORIGINS

S13

ARE THE SCIENTIFIC & HISTORICAL PARADIGMS-OF-THE-DAY

S14

QUESTION: did the Hebrews **Re-Cycle & Re-Interpret** ANE origins motifs?

10. AUTHORIAL INTENTIONALITY

DEF: the intended meaning of an author in a written work

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:

Holy Spirit allowed the use of ancient science (3-tier universe)
☛ God **accommodated** to the level of ancient peoples

2. Human Intention

Primary: Message of Faith

Jesus is Lord over the entire universe

Secondary:

Apostle Paul views the lordship of Jesus within the categories
of the **science-of-the-day** (3-tier universe)

QUESTION:

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

Ancient Biology?

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. Humans are sinful
5. God judges humans for their sins
6. God chose Israel to bless the entire world

S1

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S4

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S8

Secondary:

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 peoples

2. Human Intention

Primary: Messages of Faith

same 6 spiritual truths above

Secondary:

human authors of Gen 1-11 viewed the origin of the universe & life
through the 4 origins motifs-of-their-day

Message-Incident Principle



**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).

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?

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S13

11. THE BACONIAN HERMENEUTIC

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 incident
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.”

Sir Francis Bacon
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
Special Revelation
Scriptures reveal “the will of God”
General Revelation → Natural Revelation & Intelligent Design
Creatures reveal “the omnipotency of God signed and engraven on his works”

QUESTION

If science is used in biblical interpretation, then who best understands the structure, operation, and origin of nature?

scientists

OR

lawyers, historians, philosophers, engineers, MDs, DDSs(!) etc

- many of the leading scientific concordists & anti-evolutionists are not educated in the evolutionary sciences

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 scientific & historical paradigms
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

Spice for the Mid-Term Exam: Women in the Bible

Ephesians 5

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.” Eph 5:22

Proof-Text “Hermeneutics”

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

EG like sound-bite political reporting on TV

READ THE ENTIRE CHAPTER!!!

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her. Eph 5:25

“In this same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. Eph 5:28

“Each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself.” Eph 5:33

Proverbs 31:10-31 (abridged)

A wife of noble character who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies . . .

She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

She sets about her work vigorously; and her arms are strong for her tasks.

She sees that her trading is profitable. . . .

She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. . . .

She is clothed with strength and dignity, she can laugh at the days to come.

She speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. . . .

Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises:

Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.

Charm is deceptive, and beauty fleeting;

but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised

Give her the reward she has earned,

and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

12. ST. AUGUSTINE'S PASTORAL ADVICE ON SCIENCE & RELIGION S1

In science-religion debates, Augustine reminds us: Never lose perspective on what is most important to Christianity—our faith, NOT science S2

“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: S3

[1] heaven is like a sphere and the earth is enclosed by it and suspended in the middle of the universe, or whether S4 H22

[2] heaven like a disk above the earth covers it over on one side? ... S5 H6

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**.”

St. Augustine, “Shape of the **Material Heaven**”
Literal Meaning of Genesis (415), IX:20

COMMENTS S6

- 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: S7
 - [1] Greek Geocentric Universe
Heaven → Sphere
science-of-the-day in 5th century
 - [2] Ancient 3-Tier Universe
Heaven → Disk
1st conception of the structure of the universe
- no one today holds either view of the structure of the universe
 - ☛ debates over concordism in Augustine’s day were a WASTE OF TIME

GENESIS 1-11 S8

- 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?

13. ANCIENT PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF NATURE: THE 3-TIER UNIVERSE S1

DEF: nature as it **appears** to the naked eye & natural senses S2 N21
φαινόμενον (*phainōmenon*): appearance

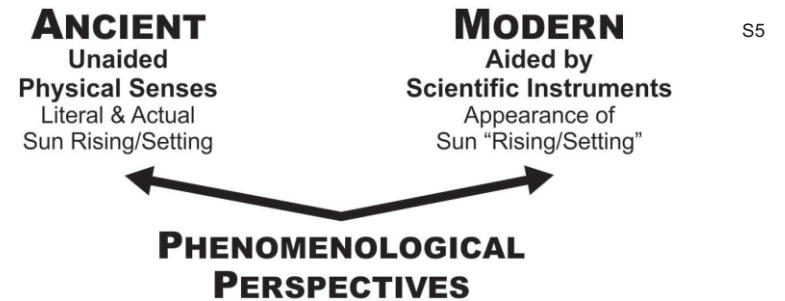
CATEGORIES OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE S3

Ancient Phenomenological Perspective

- what the ancients saw, they believed was LITERAL & ACTUAL: sun literally & actually moves across the sky daily earth literally & actually does not move
- lasts as late as the 1600s
Proof → Galileo Affair

Modern Phenomenological Perspective S4

- what we see, we know to be only an APPEARANCE: so-called “movement” of the sun across the sky is a visual effect due to rotation of the earth so-called “immovability” of earth is a sensory effect due to gravity



GENESIS 1-11 S6

- does Gen 1-11 have an Ancient Phenomenological Perspective of the origin of the universe and life, including human life?

13A. The Earth & Ancient Geography S1

1. Earth is Immovable S2

this was the issue in the Galileo Affair
“The world is firmly established; **it cannot move**.” 1 Chr 16:30; Ps 93:1, 96:10

2. Earth set on Foundations S3

stated 20 X
“God set the earth on its **foundations**; it can never be moved.”
like legs of a table Ps 104:5
☛ implies a flat earth

3. Earth Surrounded by Circumferential Sea

S4

LOGICAL notion → emerged because of two phenomena:

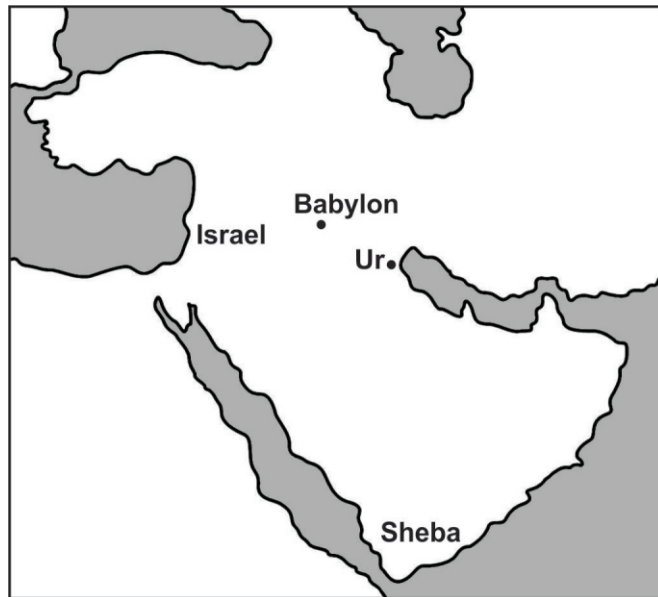
- visual impact of horizon
- travellers in Ancient Near East eventually came to a body of water

Geography of the Ancient Near East

S5

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

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



Creation of Circumferential Sea

S6

Proverbs 8:22-31 Creation Account

“God inscribed a **circle** on the surface of the deep.” v. 27
outer boundary of the circumferential sea at the horizon

Job 26:7-14 Creation Account

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

Historical Criticism

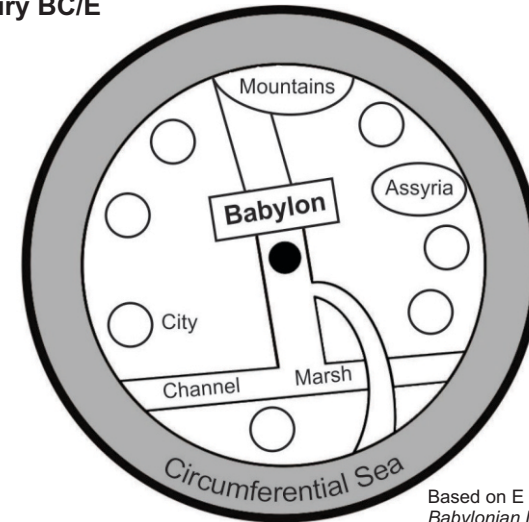
S7

DEF: the use of ANE literature to understand the Bible within its historical context

EG circumferential sea is the geography-of-the-day 2500 yrs ago

Babylonian World Map

6th Century BC/E

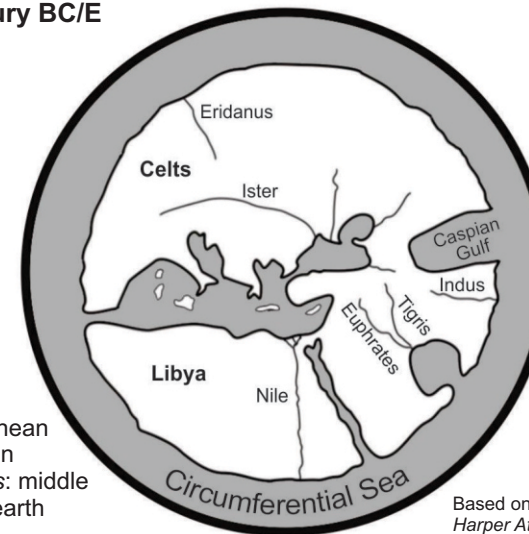


Based on E Sollberger, *The Babylonian Legend of the Flood* (London: Brit. Museum, 1961), 45

Greek World Map

6th Century BC/E

S8



Mediterranean from Latin
medius: middle
terra: earth

Based on JB Pritchard, ed. *Harper Atlas of the Bible* (NY: Harper & Row, 1978), 93

4. Earth is Circular

S9

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

Classic Proof-Text

Christians often claim that this verse refers to the spherical outline of the earth from the perspective of outer space
it is used as proof that the Bible has modern science

BUT READ THE **ENTIRE** VERSE!!!

S10 H6

“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:

S11

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:

S12

- 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!!!

S13

5. Earth has Ends

S14

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

S15

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

S16

Sheba is in the SW corner of the Arabian Peninsula S17

6. Earth has an Underworld

S18

OLD TESTAMENT: called *she’ōl* 65 X
translated the “grave” and “place of the dead”

God: “Though they **dig down** to the depths of **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

NEW TESTAMENT: called *hadēs* 20 X

S19

JESUS: “And you Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? No, you will go **down** to **hadēs**.” Lk 10:15

- also called *katachthonios*

S20

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

καταχθονιος = underworld, subterranean world

κατα = down χθονιος = chthonic realm

ΕΝ ΤΩ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΙ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΠΑΝ ΓΟΝΥ ΚΑΜΨΗ

in the name of Jesus all knee should bend

S21

ΕΠΟΥΡΑΝΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΓΕΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΑΧΘΟΝΙΩΝ

beings of and beings of and beings of
heaven earth underworld

- also referred to as “under the earth”

S22

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

ὑποκατω *hupo* = under *katō* = down

γη *gē* = earth

7. Earth is Flat

S23

- **NO** passage in Scripture directly states: “The earth is flat.”
notion of flat earth → **Implicit Scientific Concept** of ancient people

- Flat earth clearly **IMPLIED** in Scripture:

S24

“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

S25-26

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

γη

gē earth, land
250 X in New Testament

NEVER referred to as a sphere or ball

S27 H66

Hebrew

אָרֶץ

'eres earth, land
2500 X in Old Testament

NEVER referred to as a sphere or ball

S28 H66

13B. THE HEAVENS & ANCIENT ASTRONOMY (PART I)

S1

1. Sun Moves across the Sky Daily

S2

this was the issue in the Galileo Affair

“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.”

Jos 10:13

NOTE: poetic language argument & phenomenological perspective argument were not used until after the 1600s

2. The Firmament

S5

DEF: solid dome/sphere of heaven above the earth

S6

accepted in astronomy in the 1600s → Galileo believed it!

2nd Day of Creation

S7

“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 under 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

Psalm 19

S8

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

Ps 19:1

Many Evangelical Translations of the Bible

S9

use word ‘**expanse**’ or ‘**skies**’ instead of ‘**firmament**’

WHY?

most evangelicals are **Scientific Concordists**

Ancient Languages

ancient science is deeply embedded in some ancient words

Greek

S10

στερεωµα

stereōma

firmament, solid dome/sphere of heaven

στερεος

stereos

hard, firm

Hebrew

S11

רָקִיעַ

rāqīa'

firmament, solid dome/sphere of heaven

רָקַע

rāqa'

to flatten, hammer, stamp down

• context of pounding metals:

S12

“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

רִיקוּעַ

riqquā'

broad metal plate

S13

“Hammer [*rāqa*] the censers into sheets [*riqquā*] to overlay the altar.”

Num 16:38

Latin

S14

Vulgate Bible (5th century) → the church’s Bible for 1000 yrs

firmamentum

firmament, solid sphere of heaven

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

S15

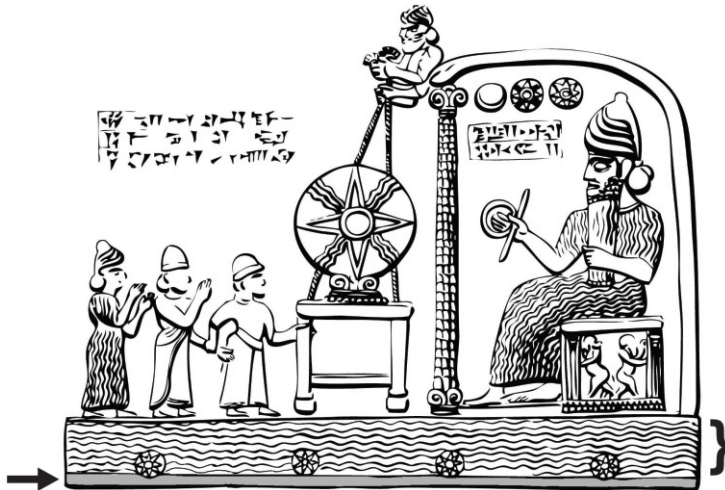
Egyptian Universe 1570-1085 BC/E



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 afterlife god Osiris at the entrance of the underworld (lower right corner). The sun passes through the underworld to rise again in the east. Earth god Geb is reclined; air god Shu is above Geb.

Mesopotamian Heavens 885-850 BC/E

S16



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

Reproduced from O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, T.J. Hallett, trans. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 36, 174. Copied with permission.

CONCLUSION: The Firmament

S17

ancient words → a solid structure

traditional translations → a solid structure

☛ **NOT** outer space

Greek & Hebrew S18-21

13C. The Heavens & Ancient Astronomy (Part II) S1

3. The Heavenly Sea: The “Waters Above” S2

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

2nd Day of Creation S3

“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 under** 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.**” S5-6 & H6
Ps 104:2-3

Greek S7

ὕδωρ *hudor*
water

Hebrew S8

ים־ים *-ayim*
dual ending
used for things in nature occurring in **PAIRS**

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

THEREFORE two bodies of water in the natural world: S9 H6

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

Historical Criticism

S10-11

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

Gk & Heb
S12-13

Excursus I: Water Canopy Theory, Young Earth Creation S1

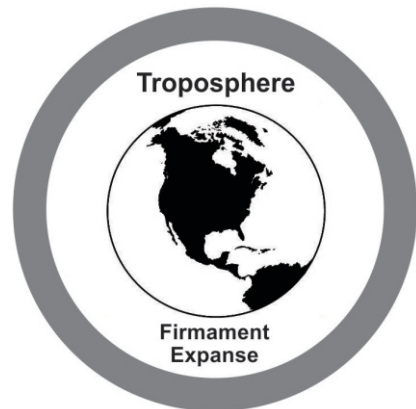
• YEC claims that the “waters above” is actually a water canopy that once enveloped the earth & then collapsed during Noah’s Flood S2

• YEC claims that the water canopy provided a unique environment on the earth before the Flood
 ☛ explains the reason people lived +900 yrs (Gen 5)

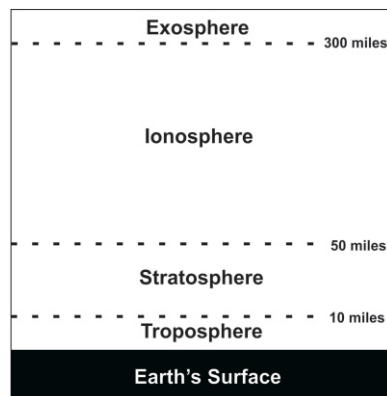
“On the **SECOND DAY of creation**, the waters covering the earth’s surface were divided into two great reservoirs—one below the firmament and one above; the **firmament** being the ‘**expanse**’ above the earth now corresponding to the **troposphere** ... With the Biblical testimony concerning a pre-flood canopy of waters, we have an adequate source for the waters of a **universal flood**.” S3

Henry Morris & John Whitcomb, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record & Its Scientific Implications* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1961), 229, 77 S5

Water Canopy



The Atmosphere S2&4



COMMENTS S6

- 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 S7
- 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 S8

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

Excursus II: Water Vapor Theory, Progressive Creation S1

• PC claims that the “waters above” is water vapour S2

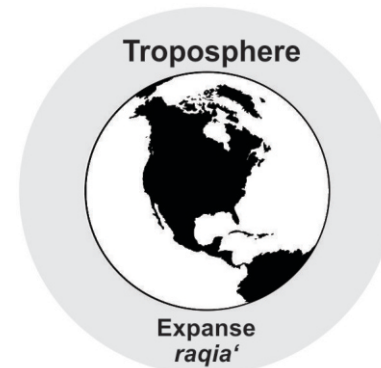
“God’s ‘separation’ of the water on **DAY TWO [of creation]** accurately describes the formation of the **troposphere**, the atmospheric layer just above the ocean where clouds form and humidity resides, as distinct from the stratosphere, mesosphere, and ionosphere lying above.” S3

DEF of Hebrew *rāqîa’* in the glossary: S5

“the expanse”
 “the atmosphere immediately above the surface of the earth”

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

Water Vapor S2



COMMENTS S6

- 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 S7
- problem with position of “waters above” → they are ABOVE *raqia’* not IN it S8
- 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 S9

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

13D. THE HEAVENS & ANCIENT ASTRONOMY (Part III) S1

4. Ends & Foundations of the Heavens S2

- “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 S3-4

- “foundations of the heavens ” a logical notion since something supported the firmament

“The **foundations of the heavens** shook & trembled, God was angry.” 2 Sam 22:8 S5

“The **pillars of the heavens** quake, aghast at God’s rebuke.” Job 26:11 S6-7

5. Sun, Moon & Stars Placed in the Firmament S8

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 S10

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

עַל תּוֹ שְׁטַרְשָׁמַיִם S11
in the firmament

בְּרָקִיעַ S12
firmament in

COMMENTS S13-14

- worship of heavenly bodies common in ANE
Gen 1 is very polemical (in-your-face) & has a radical 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: terms “sun” & “moon” not used S15
creation of stars seems like an after thought

- God of the Hebrews created astronomical bodies → they are not gods
de-deification of nature

☛ Gen 1 is **BLASPHEMY** to a worshipper of heavenly bodies

6. Falling Stars & Rolling Up of the Heavens S16

- stars are believed to be small and 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 S17

“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 S18

QUESTIONS: S19

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 S20

CAUTION!

complex term → context dictates the meaning

Greek S21
ουρανος *ouranos*
heaven

Hebrew S22
יָמִים *-ayim*
dual ending
used for things in nature occurring in **PAIRS**

שָׁמַיִם *shāmayim*
heavens
400X in Old Testament & only in **DUAL**
never in singular or plural

THEREFORE two heavens exist in the natural world: S23

(1) **Upper Heavens**

(2) **Lower Heavens**

BOTH ARE REAL PHYSICAL PLACES

(1) Upper Heavens

S24

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 S25

"God stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his **upper chambers** on their waters." Ps 104:2-3 S26-27

שָׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם *shāmayim shāmayim* S28

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

"God made [1] the **heavens** [*shāmayim*; lower heavens], even [2] the **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 S29

- two types of heavens → upper heavens & lower heavens

(2) Lower Heavens

S30

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 S31-32

"The Son of Man coming in the **clouds of the heavens**." Dan 7:13 Gk & Heb S33-34 H66

Tent Metaphor of the Structure of the Heavens

S35

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

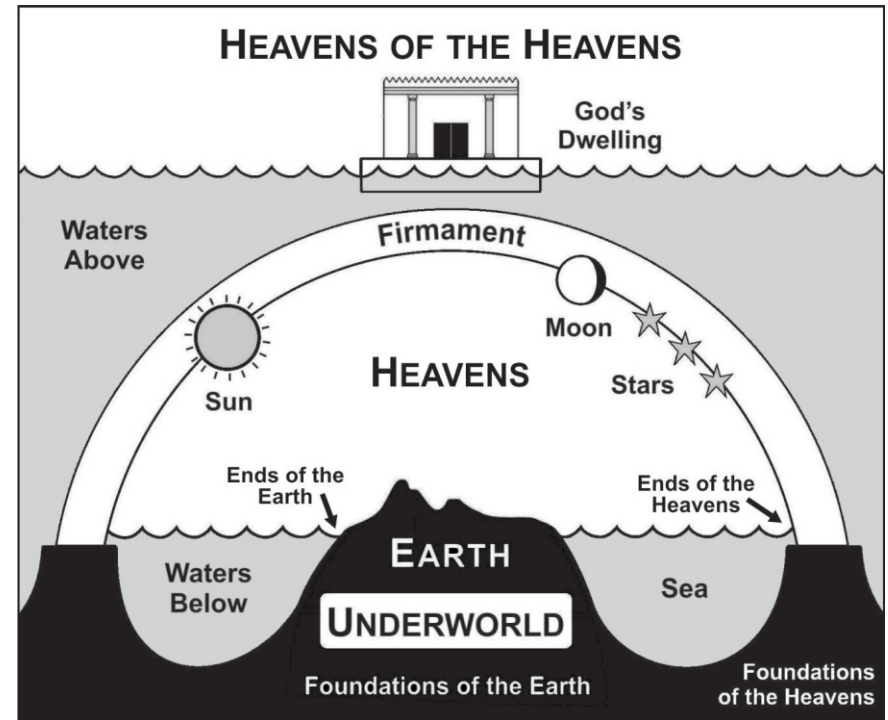
"God stretches out the heavens like a **tent** and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters." Ps 104:2-3 S36

"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 S37

"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 S38

The 3-Tier Universe

S39



Relationship between Sea Floor & Foundations of the Earth

S40-41

"The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of breath from your nostrils."

Ps 18:16, 2 Sam 22:16

CONCLUSION

S42

Hermeneutical Principle 13

Ancient Phenomenological Perspective of Nature: The 3-Tier Universe

S43

- 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
- God accommodated in the biblical revelatory process and allowed the ancient Hebrews to use **ancient astronomy** and **ancient geography**

QUESTION

S44

Does the Bible also feature an **ancient biology**?

14. ATTRIBUTION OF DIVINE ACTION IN ORIGINS

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*

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

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 1-11

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

IF we don't go to Gen 1 to find out how the heavens & the earth were created,

THEN we shouldn't go to Gen 1 to find out how life was created

☛ **AND in particular the creation of humans**

THEREFORE:

**Open the Book of God's Works &
Do the Science!**

S1

S2

S3

S4

S5

S6

S7

S8

S9

S10

S11

15. ANCIENT PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF NATURE: THE LIVING ORGANISMS

S1

DEF: living organisms as they **appear** to the naked eye & natural senses
φαινόμενον (*phainōmenon*): appearance

Review from 1st Half of Course:

Ancient Botany

mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds (Mk 4:30)
seeds die before germinating (John 12:23-24)

Ancient Human Reproductive Biology

only men have seed (Heb 11:11) & women are like fields (Lk 1:42)
only women cause reproductive problems (Gen 11:30, Heb 11:11)

Ancient Taxonomy

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 they fly, so it's reasonable to think they were birds

Immutability of Living Organisms

plants & animals reproduce: "according to their kinds"
stated 10X in Gen 1

EG goat births → goat births → goat births ...

Therefore:

reasonable to think living organisms are IMMUTABLE (unchanging)

De Novo Creation of Living Organisms

plants & animals were originally created: Quick & Complete

☛ retrojection of the 'goat births goat' data set back in time:

De Novo Creation of 1st goat/s ← births goat ← births goat

GENESIS 1-11

- attribution of divine action in the origin of living organisms in Gen 1 & 2 is filtered/accommodated through an ANE understanding of origins
- *De Novo* creation of life in Gen 1 & 2 → **ANCIENT SCIENCE**
- anti-evolutionism of Young Earth Creation & Progressive Creation is based on → **ANCIENT BIOLOGY**
- Gen 1 & 2 do NOT reveal how God ACTUALLY created living organisms

THEREFORE:

**Open the Book of God's Works &
Do the Science!**

S10

16. 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**.”

“Motion of Heaven & Meaning of Firmament”
Literal Meaning of Genesis, II:10

Martin Luther (1536)

“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
(Concordia, 1958) 42-3

John Calvin (1554)

“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?

S1

S2

S3-4

S5-6

S7-8

S9

S10

S11

S12

17. Biblical Inerrancy: An Incarnational Approach

(Biblical Inerrancy: belief the Bible is absolutely true & without error) N19 S2

DEF: re-defining inerrancy using parallels between: S3

- 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 S4

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 S6

Ontology of Jesus

God → inerrant & perfect Spiritual Being S7

Man → incidental & imperfect physical body

Temporality of Jesus

God → eternal & transcends time S8

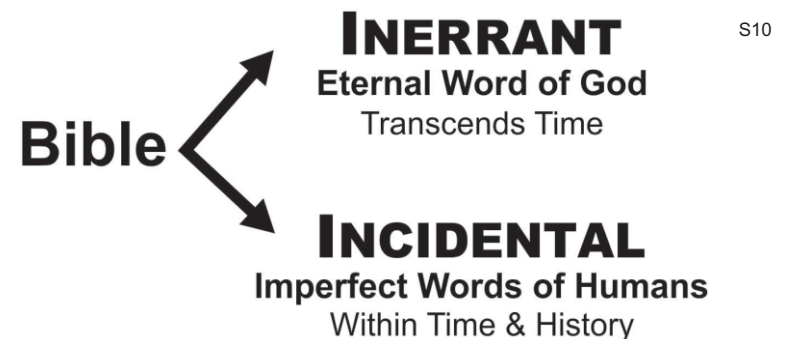
Man → bound within time & the history of the 1st century

Pedagogy of Jesus

God → taught the inerrant Word of God S9

Man → used incidental & imperfect human words

EG ancient science in Mustard Seed Parable



GENESIS 1-11

S11

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:

S12

Gen 1-11 is fully divine & fully human → just like 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 WARNING TO CHRISTIANS REGARDING SCIENCE & RELIGION

S1

“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].”

S2

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 ...

S3

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]

S4

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.

S5

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.”

S6

St. Augustine, *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 1:42-3

COMMENTS

S7

- 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 (see 2 Cor 6:3)

S8

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

S9

FINAL QUESTION

Are Young Earth Creationists & Progressive Creationists “reckless & incompetent expounders of Holy Scripture [who] bring untold trouble & sorrow on wiser non-Christian evolutionary scientists today?”