

ALL THINGS WERE MADE THROUGH HIM

The Implications of Creation

A Very Special Planet

Genesis 1:6-8, 14-20

Hallelujah!!!! We topped \$1 Million dollars in our commitments this last week!!!!

We have 131 commitments made to date which means folks are still praying for themselves and others who are a part of our church family who have not made theirs yet. Let's keep praying that God will move in the hearts of everyone who calls St. Andrew Baptist home to join Him in this work.

131 have made commitments, for a total of \$1,022,660

If you have not yet made your commitment, you can do so online. Just go to sabc.org and click the Building God's way button.

Also, would you pray that the city would approve our building permit? We have had it submitted now for months, and the approval is what keeps us from moving forward. Humanly, we know of nothing we can do. But I am confident there is much that God can do. Let us join together to ask Him to do it!

Thus far in our series "All Things Were Made Through Him," we have examined the fact that

FACT: Jesus created the universe. Coming from

John 1:1–3 NKJV 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

In other words, the Holy Spirit identifies that it was the Second Person of the Trinity who actually called the universe into being and who formed it to be as He desired it to be. We all know that the Bible opens with the declaration

Genesis 1:1 NKJV In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The name for God in this verse is Elohim, the God of Creation. Genesis 1:1 does not tell us if it was God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit who called the universe, space-time, and matter-energy into being. But John 1:3 does tell us, and it was the Son, Jesus!

Then last week we read what else the Lord Jesus Christ did on Day 1 of creation week.

FACT: Jesus created the light, and used it to divide His creative work into six days.

Today we continue our study beginning in Genesis 1:6.

Genesis 1:6–8 NKJV 6 Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” 7 Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

Notice that the object being created on the second day is called the firmament. But I want us to add to our consideration today what the Lord did on Day 4, because we see this term “firmament” used again, and we are told more about it.

Genesis 1:14–19 NKJV 14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the **firmament** of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the **firmament** of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.

16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 17 God set them in the **firmament** of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

We also have another mention of the firmament on Day 5.

Genesis 1:20 NKJV Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the **firmament** of the heavens.”

A key word in all of these passages is firmament.

Genesis 1:6–8 NKJV 6 Then God said, “Let there be a **firmament** in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” 7 Thus God made the **firmament**, and divided the waters which were under the **firmament** from the waters which were above the **firmament**; and it was so. 8 And God called the **firmament** Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

So, **What is the firmament?**

- The Hebrew for firmament is *raqiya*.
- A good translation of *raqiya* is *expanse*.

- **The best translation is given in the text: *Heaven***
- The translation of raquiya as firmament does not communicate well to those of us who speak English today. We get that translation from raquiya being translated into Greek, then into Latin, and finally into English. And if you consult a dictionary, one of the definitions for firmament is indeed Heaven or the heavens or sky.
- The problem I find that most people have when reading of God creating the firmament is that they are not familiar with the term, and they think of its meaning coming from the word firm. So they do not think of firmament as meaning the heavens or the sky.
- **God called the firmament *Heaven* or literally *heavens*.** This is the same word translated heavens in Gen. 1:1: *shamayim*. This is a plural word, so *heavens* is the very best translation and understanding.

And understanding that the firmament means the heavens, links us to additional understanding of what God created on the second day.

The three parts of the heavens:

- **The third heaven – The residence of God**

Hebrews 8:1 NKJV Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

This is called several times in Scripture the Heaven of Heavens.

It is Paul who calls it the third heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 NKJV 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.... 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, ...

- **The second heaven – Outer space**

We just read that God put the sun, moon, and stars in the firmament, in the heavens.

- **The first heaven – The atmosphere**

And we read that God created the birds to fly across the face of the firmament, across the face of the heavens, which would mean the first part of the heavens from man's perspective, what we call the atmosphere.

So, if you are floating in the ocean, and hopefully your face and nose are up in the air a little bit, then they are right where the firmament, the heavens, begin; and the heavens continue on and on reaching the very residence of God.

But understanding that the firmament means the heavens from just above the surface of the earth all the way past the edge of the physical universe to the throne room of God, is just the beginning of what God did on the second day of creation.

Genesis 1:6–8 NKJV 6 Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” 7 Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

Remember, at the end of Day 1 of creation, the earth is still just a watery mass, rotating in the otherwise emptiness of space. On Day 2, God makes the firmament, the heavens, but He does not just set them above all the waters.

He puts the firmament in the midst of the waters so that **there were waters under the heavens and waters above the heavens.**

So, what does this mean? **Where were the waters placed?**

- Were the waters placed **above the third heaven? – NO** I do not know any serious student of God’s Word who believes that.
- Were the waters placed **above the second heaven, at the outer edge of the universe? – A few say YES.**
- Were the waters placed **above the first heaven, at the top of the atmosphere? – Some say YES.**
- Were the waters put **into the clouds that floated in the atmosphere? – Many say YES.**

Now, I will tell you,

- I think that a person who believes in the inerrancy of Scripture,
- A person who wants to know what the Scripture says instead of trying to force what he or she wants to believe upon the Scriptures,

I believe that such a person could come to any one of those four conclusions.

But I am going to tell you which one I believe and why.

I believe the waters were placed above the first heaven, at the top of the atmosphere, in the upper layer of the atmosphere as water vapor. I believe this primarily because of other Scriptures and because of some scientific considerations.

- **Because Gen. 2:5-6 says it did not rain in the early earth.** There is no mention of rain until the flood. A water vapor canopy around the earth would have a greenhouse effect on the earth causing water to be recycled as in a terrarium, forming a mist which waters the plants, just like Gen. 2 says.
- **Because the temperature was moderate, not necessitating clothing.** So, Adam and Eve were naked. We find evidence of modern climates in the sedimentary layers of arctic climates today.
- **Because Genesis tells us people lived up to 900 years.** Textually, there is no reason not to understand these as solar years. So what was different? There is evidence that the water vapor canopy would accomplish that by blocking harmful radiation from space and increasing atmospheric pressure which would be good for life. Consider the healing benefits of hyperbaric chambers today.
- **Because the water vapor canopy would provide water for the 40 days of rain during the flood.** Our present day atmosphere would only support two or three days of continuous rain upon the earth and all the water vapor in the atmosphere would be gone.
- **Because Gen. 7:11 says that God opened the windows of heaven to cause it to rain 40 days and 40 nights.** This description fits there being a reservoir of water in the canopy rather than just the water vapor that is in clouds.
- **Because there was no rainbow in the sky until after the flood.** If there were clouds with water vapor in the sky and rain falling from them on occasion, there would have been rainbows.

Now, I hope you find this interesting as I do and that you better understand Genesis chapter 1 and especially God's creation of the firmament, but the main thing I want us to see is what I have summarized in this fact:

FACT: Jesus personally formed our planet and all of heaven and the heavenly bodies for the benefit and blessing of mankind.

Clearly, what the Lord did with the firmament and the waters above the firmament were a part of God's making the earth so very special.

- **He made the earth not just so life could exist, but so human life could thrive.** He wanted the man and woman to fill the earth, so the Lord made it hospitable for human life.

- **He made the earth so life could be comfortable to people.** Harsh climate and difficult living conditions did not develop until after sin and even more so until after the flood.

EVIDENCE: The earth was very specially designed and formed.

At the turn of the century and beginning of the new millennium, two scientists, both college professors, collaborated on a book that shook the debate about life in the universe to its core. It was called Rare Earth.

The scientists were not Christians and they did not tie anything they presented to the Bible or theology. They were just talking science.

But at the time, the prevailing thought among scientists was that the universe was so big that life, even intelligent life, had to be plentiful.

These two scientists, Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee, both of Seattle, Washington, **said that** the scientific evidence indicated that thought was wrong. They said, the science says, **“Intelligent life is exceedingly rare.”** In fact, earth may be the only place in the universe that complex life exists.

They reached their conclusions because of these facts:

- Because complex life could not live in areas of the universe near supernovae or black holes because of the deadly radiation they produce.
- Therefore, complex life could not be sustained in any elliptical galaxy because the orbit of the solar system would inevitably bring it near the deadly radiation. And elliptical galaxies are the most common type of galaxies in the universe.
- The same is true for irregular galaxies.
- The only galaxy that would allow for sustained intelligent life would be a spiral galaxy like ours, the Milky Way.
- And then only if the solar system were in a small specific part of a very large spiral galaxy.
- Then the planet that supported intelligent life would have to be at the near perfect place in its solar system and just the right distance from the exact right type of star.

Guillermo Gonzalez, summa cum laude graduate from the University of Arizona, with master's and doctorate degrees in astronomy from the University of Washington says, "In terms of habitability, I think we are in the best possible place. ... I really can't come up with an example of another place in the galaxy that is as friendly to life as our location."

EVIDENCE: The earth was very specially designed and formed.

IMPLICATION: You and I and all mankind are at the focus of God's purpose in making the universe.

That does not mean that philosophically, man is the center of the universe.

God is both the source and the focus of all that exists.

But what this fact of creation says is that man and woman are important to God.

He designed us.

He made us.

He made the whole universe for us. God did not need it. He had already lived since eternity past without the universe. Everything was created to be right for human beings so that we might live with God for the rest of all eternity.

Yes, sin messed that up, but it did not nullify nor derail God's purpose.

God knows everything, and God knew what Adam and Eve would do.

God knew what each of us would do when given the choice to sin or not.

All have sinned, and God knew we would.

That is why Jesus' coming to die for our sins was planned by the Divine Persons of the Trinity even before the heavens and earth were created.

Through Jesus' death upon the cross and His resurrection from the dead, God provided a way for His purpose to be fulfilled, a way for men and women to be forgiven and saved to live with God forever.

And now it becomes very personal. It comes down to each one of us, individually.

God made you!

He knows you by name, and He knows you better than you know yourself.

He cares about you.

He wants an eternal relationship with you. No matter what you have or have not done, God still wants that and through what Jesus has done for us, it is still possible.

All you have to do is to trust in Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Romans 10:9 NKJV ...

- if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus
- and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead,
- you will be saved.