

The Firmament (vv. 6-8)

VERSE 6 Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of [between] the

waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters (וַיְהִי מִבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם)

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם [waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. amar say + noun m.p.abs.

Elohim + Qal impf.3m.s. hayah be, exist + noun m.s.abs. raqyia firmament based on the cognate

verb raqa meaning to stamp, stamp out, stretch out + prep beth w/noun m.s.contr. middle; midst

+ d.a.w/noun m.p.abs. mayim waters + waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. hayah be, exist; "let it" + Hiphil

part.m.s.abs. badal separate + part bayin between; "from" + noun m.p.abs. mayim + prep lamed

w/noun m.p.abs. mayim])."

VERSE 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the

expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so (וַיְהִי־כֵן)

אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לְרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לְרָקִיעַ

וַיַּעַשׂ [waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. ashah do, make, fashion, accomplish + noun m.p.abs. Elohim +

d.o.w/d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. raqyia firmament + waw w/Hiphil impf.3m.s. badal separate + part

bayin between + d.a.w/noun m.p.abs. mayim + rel.pro. asher which + prep min w/part. tachton

below + prep lamed w/d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. raqyia firmament + waw w/part bayin between +

d.a.w/noun m.p.abs. mayim + rel.pro. asher + prep min w/prep al "were above" + prep lamed

w/noun m.s.abs. raqyia firmament + waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. hayah exist, be + adv. ken so]).

VERSE 8 God called the expanse heaven (לְרַקִּיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי)

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים [waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. qara call + noun m.p.abs. Elohim + prep lamed

w/d.a.w/noun raqyia firmament + noun m.p.abs. shamayim heaven]).

And there was evening and there was morning, a second day [day two] (waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. hayah “was” + noun m.s.abs. ebed evening + waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. hayah + noun m.s.abs. boqer morning + noun m.s.ab.s yom day + adj.m.s.abs. shenayim two]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 6-8

1. “And God said” means ‘and God decreed’ and this parallels in meaning the introduction of light on D + 1.
2. For “Let there be” see vv. 3, 6 & 14.
3. In each instance there is a new feature added to the restoration process.
4. The term translated “an expanse” (NIV, NAS) but translated “a firmament” (KJV, NKJ) is the noun *raqyia* found 17x in the Hebrew OT (Gen. 1:6, 7, 8 [3x], 14, 15, 17, 20; Pss. 19:2; 150:1; Ezek. 1:22, 23, 25, 26; Dan. 12:3).
5. The corresponding verb is *raqa* which has a latitude of related renderings: ‘to stamp, to stamp out, spread out, stretch out.’
6. The list of verses for this verb: Ex. 39:3; Num. 17:3, 4; 2 Sam. 22:43; Job 37:18; Ps. 136:6; Isa. 40:19; 42:5; 44:24; Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 6:11; 25:6.
7. The key citation that assists the interpreter in identifying the nature of the *riqyia* is Job 37:18 which reads: “Can you with Him, spread out (hiphil impf. *raqa*) the skies [or clouds], strong as a molten mirror?”
8. In Ex. 39:3; Num. 17:3, 4 this verb is translated “hammered” or “stamped” (2 Sam. 22:43; Ezek. 25:6) or “beaten” (Jer. 10:9).
9. It is used in Isa. 42:5 and 44:24 in connection with the formation of terra firma (earth).
10. In regard to this “firmament” note Job 22:14b “*He walks on the vault of heaven.*”
11. And Isa. 40:22 “*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.*”
12. And Amos 9:6 “*The One who builds His upper chambers. And has founded His vaulted dome over the earth. He who calls for the waters of the sea. And pours them out on the face of the earth.*”
13. God placed on day 2 this “firmament” between two bodies of water, which serves as a barrier between the waters below and the waters above (v. 7).
14. The waters below are the waters that covered the entire surface of the earth (cf. v. 2); and the waters above are the waters that are above the vault/dome/firmament.
15. The waters above were the source of the forty days and nights that of rain when the Noah’s flood commenced (Gen. 7:1; cf. 8:2).

16. That mysterious reservoir is still there as the rain that came down did not deplete the waters above as Ps. 148:4 makes clear (“Praise Him, highest heavens. And the waters that are above the heavens!”).
17. The water vapor canopy theory is ‘dead in the water!’
18. The *raqya* is named “heaven” which needs to be taken into consideration in the many verses in the OT where this noun is found to determine which aspect of heaven is in view in any given verse.
19. Again, as with day 1, this additional feature was accomplished over a 24 hour period.