

Pagan mythologies see “gods” in wind, water, etc. Jehovah is separate from His creation and sovereign over His creation.

I. The First Day (1:3-5)

A. Having already created the heaven and the earth, God spoke light into existence on the first day.

1. The light created on the first day was not sunlight, but light itself. The light bearers (sun, moon, stars, etc.) would not be created until day 4.
2. The newly created light drove back the darkness that had enveloped the earth of verse 2. The newly created light functioned as a measurement of time—day and night; evening and morning. Later, the sun and the moon would reflect time through light and darkness.
3. The light of the first day may be the Shechinah Glory of God—the light of His presence (II Cor. 4:6 hints at this possibility). Remember, prophetically speaking, Jesus the Messiah is the Light (Isa. 60:1)!
4. The “chronology of the text emphasizes that god is the *ultimate* source of light. The dischronologization probably functions as a polemic against pagan religions, which worship the creation or creatures, not the Creator upon whom creation depends” (Boyce, p. 61).

B. The result of God creating light was the separation of light from darkness. While they are opposites, they work in tandem to define time.

C. God named the light “Day” and the darkness “Night,” indicating His sovereign control over both. Naming is an act of sovereignty and dominion. The Creator acts in dominion over His creation.

D. God defined the first day as the evening and the morning. In Jewish thought, sunset begins a new day. That day ends at the next sunset. Therefore, a Hebrew day comprises the evening (dark time) and the morning (light time). Again, a 24-hour day is the inescapable conclusion of this passage.

II. The Second Day (1:6-8)

A. Like the first day, the second day of creation was a day of division. On day two, God divided the waters above from the waters beneath. The division between the two “waters” is the atmosphere, what we call the “air.” Fruchtenbaum explains:

“This is the creation of the atmospheric heavens, the creation of the air. This is the expanse; it is the vault of heaven. The purpose is: Let it divide the waters from the waters. This is the second of five divisions, the expanse dividing waters from waters. It is a kind of horizontal area extending through the heart of the waters cleaving it into two layers: upper and lower layers of water.

Genesis 1:7 describes the result of 1:6: *And God made the firmament, [the vault of heaven] and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament.* God separated the atmospheric waters from the terrestrial waters by an arching expanse or the sky. In addition, this expanse divided the cloud masses above from the waters below” (pp. 44-45).

- B. How do we know the “firmament” is heaven? Because God called the firmament “heaven” in 1:8. This is the atmosphere; the air we breathe. The air separates the earth’s waters (oceans, lakes, streams) from the atmospheric waters (carried in clouds). Atmospheric air prevents us from living in a continual fog bank.
- C. John Phillips describes the work of the Second Day:

“God dealt next with the *disorder*. He began by *raising the clouds* (1:6-8). In terms of sheer mechanical engineering, the work of the second day of creation is astounding. The amount of vapor continually suspended in the air above us is estimated at 54 trillion, 460 billion tons! Water is 773 times the weight of air, so that gives some idea of the power required to separate the waters from the waters. The annual precipitation, in the form of rain and snow, that falls upon the earth is the equivalent of 186,000 cubic miles—enough to cover the entire earth to a depth of three feet. The supply of water above the earth is maintained by evaporation—the constant lifting of water from the earth into the atmosphere by the power of the sun” (John Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, p. 41).

- D. There is a strong argument that the “firmament” (Heb. *Raqia*) is actually a firm dome surrounding the earth and the planetary system. Pete Enns explains:

“Ancient Israelites “saw” this barrier when they looked up. There were no telescopes, space exploration, or means of testing the atmosphere. They relied on what their senses told them. Even today, looking up at a clear sky in open country, the sky seems to “begin” at the horizons and reaches up far above. Ancient Israelites and others in that part of the world assumed the world was flat, and so it looked like the earth is covered by a dome, and the “blue sky” is the “water above” held back by the *raqia*. The translation “firmament” (i.e. *firm*) gets across the idea of a solid structure” (Pete Enns, *The Firmament of Genesis 1 is Solid but That’s Not the Point*, from biologos.org).

- E. Those who hold to the firmament as a fixed dome surrounding the earth and perhaps the entire Milky Way galaxy or even beyond should not be ostracized as ignorant or unscientific. There are many things we will not know for certain until we see Jesus. Christians may discuss cosmological issues not directly addressed in Scripture, but we should do so respecting different perspectives.
- F. The Second Day is the only day that does not include the words “and it was good.” This is likely because the work of separating waters would not be

completed until the Third day (when the waters would be separated from the dry land). Interestingly, the Third Day contains the words “It was good” two times!