

Does the Bible instruct on nature? A look at biblical cosmology.

Updated Nov 17, 2019

This table was put together by people who believe the Bible to be true in all it intends to teach. The question is, does that intention include instruction on the natural realm? Young earth creationists (YEC) argue for “comprehensive inerrancy,” meaning it teaches with authority on every subject it touches upon. If the Bible intersects with science, it teaches with authority on science. Old Earth and Evolutionary Creationists argue for “divine accommodation,” meaning that God accommodated the common knowledge about nature of people at the time of writing to illustrate inerrant truth about the kingdom of God. Efforts to interpret the Bible according to modern science artificially imposes a 21st-century Western worldview onto a text written to an Ancient Near Eastern audience.

To assist in the assessment, this table is an attempt to list every verse in the Bible that contains a reference to the cosmos (structure, movement, or action of the earth, sun, stars, or universe). Verses are collected under headings that identify a particular aspect of the cosmos. By virtue of collecting all verses under a topic, some verses get repeated (noted with an asterisk *). For each verse, the YEC interpretation is provided. Where a literal interpretation is advocated, additional explanation is provided under Notes. To suggest corrections or additions, send to GreggDavidson63@gmail.com.

All verses are NASV unless otherwise noted.

Definitions of terms:

figure of speech: a common expression from antiquity that no one *at the time of writing* would have taken literally

figurative: a metaphorical or illustrative description the writer did not intend to be understood literally

phenomenological: a description of nature as it appears to viewers on the planet surface; as with figures of speech, no one at the time of writing would have understood as a literal description

Sources used for YEC interpretations

web links were active as of Nov 17, 2019

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Jason Lisle (2006) *Taking Back Astronomy*, Green Forest, AR: Master Books, Chapter 2.

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Brian Edward (2009) “Literary forms and biblical interpretation.” *Answers in Depth* 4:60-65.

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Erik Lutz (2011) “Contradictions: Hanging on Pillars of Nothing?” *Answers post*, August 9, 2011.

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Kevin Short (2017) “Phenomenological language and semantic naïveté.” *Answers Research Journal* 10:115-120.

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James J.S. Johnson (2010) “Every Nation Under Heaven: Using Scripture to Understand Scripture.” *Acts & Facts* 39(11):8-9.

<https://www.icr.org/article/every-nation-under-heaven-using-understand/>

Verse	YEC interpretation	Notes
<i>see all the earth from high point</i>		
Dan 4:11 The tree grew large and became strong and its height reached to the sky, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth.	vision/figurative	
Dan 4:20 The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth	vision/figurative	
Matt 4:8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory	figurative	
<i>“all the earth” “every nation under heaven”</i>		
Gen 8:9 ...but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth.	literal	global flood
Gen 41:57 The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.	figure of speech	
1 King 10:24 All the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.	figure of speech	

Dan 4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: “May your peace abound!	figure of speech	
Acts 2:5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.	literal (in a figurative sense)	globally figurative via literal reference to the nations identified back in Gen 10
“ends of the Earth” “farthest corners” “farthest horizon”		
Is 41:9 [Israel] whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts	figure of speech	
Ps 65:5 O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea	figure of speech	
Zech 9:10 And His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.	figure of speech	
Mark 13:27 And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.	figure of speech	
Acts 13:47 I have placed you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the end of the earth.	figure of speech	
Job 28:24 For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.	figure of speech	
*Dan 4:11 The tree grew large and became strong And its height reached to the sky, And it was visible to the end of the whole earth.	figure of speech	
Neh 1:9 ... even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them ... (NIV)	figure of speech	
“circle” of Earth		
Prov 8:27 When He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep	literal (qualified)	<i>circle</i> translated as <i>sphere</i>
Job 26:10-11 He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble and are amazed at His rebuke.	half literal	<i>circle</i> translated as <i>sphere</i> is literal; “pillars of heaven” is figure of speech
Is 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 out like a tent to dwell in.	literal (qualified)	<i>circle</i> translated as <i>sphere</i>

<i>“spread/stretched out” earth or heavens</i>		
*Is 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 out like a tent to dwell in.	literal	expanding universe
Ps 136:6 To Him who spread out the earth above the waters, for His lovingkindness is everlasting	figure of speech	
Is 44:24 I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone	half literal	only “stretching out the heavens is literal; “spreading out the earth” is figure of speech
Ps 104:2-3 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind	half literal	only “stretching out heaven” is literal; beams and waters are figures of speech
Is 45:12 “It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hand and I ordained all their host.	literal	expanding universe
Is 51:13 That you have forgotten the LORD your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth,	half literal	only “stretching out the heavens” is literal; “foundations of the earth” is figure of speech
Jer 10:12 It is He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.	literal	expanding universe
Jer 51:15 It is He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding He stretched out the heavens.	literal	expanding universe
<i>sun orbits the Earth</i>		
Ps 19:4-6 ...In them He has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.	phenomenological and figures of speech	

Ps 50:1 The Mighty One, God, the Lord, has spoken, and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.	phenomenological	
Eccl 1:5 Also, the sun rises and the sun sets, and hastening to its place it rises there again.	phenomenological	
Josh 10:13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies.	phenomenological	within historical narrative
Matt 5:45 He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.	phenomenological	
<i>immovable Earth</i>		
1 Chr 16:30 Tremble before Him, all the earth; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.	figurative	
Ps 93:1 Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.	figurative	
Ps 96:10 Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; ...”	figurative	
Ps 104:5 He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever.	figure of speech	
Ps 75:3 “The earth and all who dwell in it melt; It is I who have firmly set its pillars.	figure of speech	
<i>foundations/pillars of the Earth</i>		
*Ps 104:5 He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever.	figure of speech	
Job 38:4-6 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell <i>Me</i> , if you have understanding, who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone,”	figure of speech	
2 Sam 22:16 Then the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were laid bare, by the rebuke of the LORD, At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.	figure of speech	
1 Sam. 2:8 For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and He set the world on them.	figure of speech	
Ps 75:3 “The earth and all who dwell in it melt; It is I who have firmly set its pillars.	figure of speech	

Zech 12:1 Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,	half literal	only “stretching out the heavens” is literal; “foundation of the earth” is figure of speech
Job 26:7,11 “He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing. / The pillars of heaven tremble and are amazed at His rebuke.	half literal	only “hangs the earth on nothing” is literal; “pillars of heaven” is figure of speech
Prov 8:29 When He set for the sea its boundary so that the water would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth	figure of speech	
sky as solid dome [raqia]		
Gen. 1:6-8 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse [raqia] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” God made the expanse [raqia], and separated the waters which were below the expanse [raqia] from the waters which were above the expanse [raqia]; and it was so. God called the expanse [raqia] heaven.	literal (qualified)	<i>Expanse translated as atmosphere</i>
Gen 1:20 Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse [raqia] of the heavens.”	literal (qualified)	<i>Expanse translated as atmosphere</i>
Job 37:18 Can you, with Him, spread out the skies [raqia], strong as a molten mirror? (ESV: Can you, like him, spread out the skies, hard as a cast metal mirror?)	figurative	
Ex. 24:10 and they saw the God of Israel, under his feet there appeared to be a pavement [raqia] of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.	figurative	
Ezek 1:22-23 Now over the heads of the living beings <i>there was</i> something like an expanse [raqia], like the awesome gleam of crystal, spread out over their heads. Under the expanse [raqia] their wings were stretched out straight, one toward the other; each one also had two wings covering its body on the one side and on the other.	figurative	

Prov. 8:27-28 When He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed	figurative	
Job 22:14 he walks on the vault of heaven.	figure of speech	
Amos 9:6 The One who builds His upper chambers in the heavens and has founded His vaulted dome over the earth,	figure of speech	
<i>stars fall from the sky</i>		
Matt 24:29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.	figurative	
Is 34:4 And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree.	figurative	
Rev 6:13-14 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.	figurative	
Dan 8:10 It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down.	figurative	
<i>heavens like a tent</i>		
*Ps 19:4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun,	figurative	
*Ps 104:2-3 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind	half literal	only “stretching out heaven” is literal; beams and waters are figures of speech

*Is 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 out like a tent to dwell in.	literal	expanding universe
<i>sky/heavens rolled up like a scroll</i>		
*Is 34:4 And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as <i>one</i> withers from the fig tree.	figurative	
*Rev. 6:14 The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.	figurative	
<i>heaven on pillars/foundation</i>		
Job 26:11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are amazed at His rebuke.	figurative	
2 Sam 22:8 Then the earth shook and quaked, the foundations of heaven were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry.	figurative	
Is 13:13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, And the earth will be shaken from its place.	figurative	
Joel 2:10 Before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble ...	half literal	only “earth quakes” is literal; “heavens tremble” is figurative
<i>portals in the sky for rain</i>		
Gen 7:11 on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.	figure of speech	
Gen 8:2 Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained	figure of speech	
Isa 24:18 For the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake.	figure of speech	
<i>Three-Tiered Universe</i>		
Ex 20:4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.	figure of speech	

Rev 5:3, 13 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. / And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard	figure of speech	
Phil 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,	figure of speech	
<i>God's Throne on Waters Above the Heavens</i>		
Deut 26:15 Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel	figure of speech	
*Ps 104:2-3 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind;	half literal	only "stretching out heaven" is literal; beams and waters are figures of speech
Ps 148:4 Praise Him, highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens!	figure of speech	
Jer 10:12-13 It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens. When He utters His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens ...	half literal	only "stretched out the heavens" is literal; "waters in the heavens" is figurative
Ezek 28:2 "Son of man, say to the leader of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Because your heart is lifted up and you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, in the heart of the seas' ...	figure of speech	
<i>Flat Disc Earth Surrounded by Circumferential Sea</i>		
*Prov 8:27-29 When He established the heavens, I was there, When He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when He set for the sea its boundary so that the water would not transgress His command.	half literal	<i>circle</i> translated as <i>sphere</i> , is literal; "made firm the skies" is figure of speech; springs fixed is figure of speech; boundary for waters is literal
*Job 26:10-11 He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble and are amazed at His rebuke.	figures of speech	

Ps 72:8 May he also rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.	figures of speech	
*Zech 9:10 And His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.	figures of speech	
Rev 7:1 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 out like a tent to dwell in.	literal	expanding universe
Rev 20:8 [Satan] will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth ...	figure of speech	
Is 11:12 ... And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.	figure of speech	
Ezek 7:2 “And you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel, ‘An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land.	figure of speech	
*Dan 4:11 The tree grew large and became strong and its height reached to the sky, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth.	vision/figurative	
*Matt 4:8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory	figure of speech	
Is 13:5 They are coming from a far country, from the farthest horizons, the LORD and His instruments of indignation, to destroy the whole land.	figure of speech	
*Is 41:9 [Israel] whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts	figure of speech	
Matt 12:42 The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon...	figure of speech	
Job 37:3 Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, and His lightning to the ends of the earth.	figure of speech	
Matt 24:31 And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.	figure of speech	

Job 38:12-13 Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, <i>and</i> caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?	figure of speech	
Job 11:8-9 They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.	figure of speech	
<i>Watery Abyss Below the Earth</i>		
Gen 49:25 ... With blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath...	figure of speech	
*Ps 136:6 To Him who spread out the earth above the waters, for His lovingkindness is everlasting	figure of speech	note earth <i>above</i> or <i>over</i> the waters
Ps 24:1-2 The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.	figures of speech	
<i>Sheol Below the Earth</i>		
Num 16:31-33 ...the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol...	figure of speech	
1 Sam 28:13 The king said to her, "Do not be afraid; but what do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a divine being coming up out of the earth."	figure of speech	
Is 14:90 Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come...	figure of speech	
Amos 9:2 Though they dig into Sheol, from there will My hand take them; and though they ascend to heaven, from there will I bring them down.	figure of speech	
Luke 10:15 And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!	figure of speech	
Luke 16:23 In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.	figure of speech	

