

WHERE IS HEAVEN?

A Biblically-Reasoned Quest Yielding an Inferred Answer

by

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Where did Jesus go in His ascension?

He ascended in His glorified body into Heaven. (*Acts 1:11*)

Where does Jesus reside now?

He is seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. (*Mk. 16:19; Heb. 8:1*)

What is every saint's blessed hope?

To be with Jesus in His prepared place for us in Heaven. (*John 14:1-3*)

Postulates:

- A place housing a real body must have physical substance.
- Heaven, the residence of the glorified and ascended Christ, must be a real place.
- A real place in God's physical creation must have a 'locatable address'.

Question:

Where might Heaven be located in the grand sphere of God's glorious creation?

Thesis:

Signpost texts exist pointing the way along which a Biblically-reasoned quest might move to arrive at a reasonably definite answer.

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Introduction

To ask a “where” question is to seek information with respect to location in a spatial domain, and in the case of this study we seek information as to the possible location of Heaven in the domain of the created space-matter-time cosmos. Now, when seeking specifics as to the location of Heaven, by which we refer in particular to the “abode of God”, or what is referred to in *1 Cor. 12:4* as the “third heaven”, we are immediately confronted with the further question:

- Does a definable abode where the peculiar majestic splendor and glory of God is centered actually exist within the created physical reality? Or, does God ‘reside’ only in a purely spiritual reality, meaning a reality that is entirely intangible to physical creatures and incapable of having an ascribed location within the vastness of His created physical domain?

If Heaven is indeed a purely spiritual reality outside of the created realm, then the quest for an answer to our title question is pointless for there are no means whereby physical creatures might access a reality outside the domain where they live and move and have being. However, this author believes that distinct clues are provided within divinely-provided special revelation, the Holy Scriptures breathed out by the Holy Spirit, that are quite suggestive of the fact that our postulated pursuit holds promise of a reasonably definitive outcome. It is, in fact, the very presence of statements which can be found sprinkled across a variety of Biblical references that has stimulated the impetus to engage this pursuit.

To offer the reader some motivation for asking the title question, plus some basis for expecting that the proposed undertaking might actually lead to a positive conclusion, consider the following texts.

“And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; and they also said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been **taken up** from you **into heaven**, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” *Acts 1:9-11*

“And it came about when Yahweh was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha to Gilgal.”
“Then it came about as they were going along and talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah **went up** by a whirlwind **to heaven.**” *II Kings 2:1, 11*

These texts speak clearly of two persons who were ‘taken up into heaven’. Now it is undeniable that both men ascended in physical bodies, one in a glorified body (the Lord Jesus Christ) and the other (Elijah) in a mortal body. Also, further Scriptures exist which speak of their future return to earth, each apparently in the body they possessed at their departure, or at least in a physical body of qualitatively similar likeness. Physical bodies consist of material substance and necessarily occupy space, a fact quite distinct from immaterial soul-spirit ‘substance’ possessed by all persons who have passed through death and are now awaiting their promised resurrection. We are left, therefore, with such questions as:

- Where are did Christ and Elijah go? And Enoch also, although no Scripture states explicitly that he was take up into heaven. Furthermore, where are they residing during the present era?

The Biblical answer is that they went “to heaven” which, at least in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, is assuredly the location of the very “abode of God”, the place referred to in these notes as “Heaven”. A physical body occupies physical space and must, necessarily therefore, always reside at a physical location somewhere in the created physical realm.

Two further considerations which imply that Heaven must indeed be a real place within the created realm can be noted. First, a future day promised when all those who have died “in faith” since the beginning of the Church Age will be resurrected and taken, together with all saints still living in physical

bodies at that moment, to that place where the resurrected Christ went following His ascension (*1 Thess. 4:17-18*). Now since this company of resurrected and translated saints will be assembled with Christ in glorified bodies, that residence must be at a real location in this created realm. Physical persons occupying physical space must surely have a “locatable address” in physical reality.

Secondly, angels are created “person-spirit” beings and must have Creator-defined purpose and function within the broader sphere of God’s physical creation. Further, it is revealed that the company of righteous angels “behold the face” of the Creator (*Matt. 18:10-11; Lk. 1:19*), and some are given service assignments as “presence” angels (*Rev. 8:2*). Thus it is reasonable to ask:

- Might not a created “throne location” exist where God, in His pure and infinite Spirit Being, dwells in a peculiar “manifest display” of glory, and where these created “person-spirit” beings fulfill appointed ministries on behalf of the Creator in that presence? (*Isa. 66:1-2; Matt. 5:34-35*).

We know that a company of angels have a particular purpose-function as ministers to the heirs of salvation (*Heb. 1:14*), which necessarily must involve a ministry activity within the earthly domain of the physical realm. This fact regarding their created purpose raises the further question:

- Do angels “traverse” from an intangible spiritual reality to the physical reality in their service, or do they function as creatures holding ministry duties with purposes restricted solely on behalf of and within the sphere of created reality alone?

Before engaging a more expansive analysis in our quest for a Biblically-reasoned answer to our posed title question, seeking to resolve that foremost element of the question pertaining to whether God’s “dwelling presence” has a “manifest location” in tangible physical reality as opposed to a “dwelling presence” restricted solely to intangible spiritual reality, it is important that several nonnegotiable foundations be clearly acknowledged.

1. We must acknowledge that the answer to our title question, if one can possibly be discerned, must be pursued and might only be discovered through the avenue of divine revelation. This is a most fundamental fact, for natural speculations and conjectures can contribute not substantive value to this quest. Only if God purposes to unveil to finite persons what is inaccessible to their senses and undiscoverable through their available investigative tools might an answer become discernible. Angelic creature-persons likely have means available to offer a direct answer to our posed question. However, human-kind creature-persons, constrained to live presently wholly within the space-time-matter universe, are encumbered with the restrictive and limiting constraints of the physical apart from revelation.
2. In addressing the posed topic we are careful to affirm, and so unequivocally, that God exists eternally and entirely independent of space, matter and time. As such He has no essential ‘need’ for a “locatable residence”. However, in His sovereign purpose in creating the physical realm, along with “in His image” creatures populating that domain, including ‘person-beings’ of both the angelic kind and the human kind, He may sovereignly choose to create a localized center where He purposes to manifest in peculiarly distinctive manner a ‘centered’ display of His majestic splendor and glory in that domain, and where angels have a dwelling from which they serve Him and His creation in appointed ministries. This author knows no revealed principle precluding the creation of a dwelling of that sort, or of any revealed purpose that would oppose God’s creating such a place. To the contrary, God’s ‘breathed-out’ Word was given expressly to human-kind creature-persons so they might come to know their Creator plus something of the unfolding of His creation plan in space and time. This ‘breathed-out’ Word seems to contain a number of strong allusions, if not even direct verbal expressions, regarding the true existence of an ‘abode of God’ in His created realm. That is, one can quite clearly perceive from divine revelation that a real ‘abode of God’ exists, the place referred to in this composition as “Heaven”, in His real space-time-matter creation. Further to the point, the very root concept of the term “Heaven” finds definition solely in specific statements appearing in

God's direct communication graciously given to man. It seems unlikely that man would ever independently formulate a concept of such a place as that presented herein apart from Scripture.

3. It is important that we set down (define) the various meanings of "heaven" as the term arises in the various texts of Scripture, particularly those that might be employed in composing an answer to the posed "where" question. In this regard, we note that the word "heavens" is first mentioned in the very opening sentence of Holy Scripture, appearing in what seems quite certain is a succinct encapsulation of the whole of God's creative working during that stupendous first week of the physical world. Of course, it is not clear whether the place referred to as "Heaven" in these notes is to be understood as contained in the term "heavens" appearing in *Gen. 1:1*. However, it is also true that there is no basis for assuming that it is excluded. If "Heaven" is indeed a created place in the whole of God's created reality, then it most likely is (in this author's opinion) to be seen as included in this statement of encapsulation of the full scope of God's creative working.

Creation Fundamentals

As we are exploring whether Heaven exists in the physical realm, the most relevant starting point for our quest is a review of the divinely-provided description of God's creative working at the beginning. The details relevant to this study are contained in *Gen. 1:1-19*, a text covering the first four days of creation week. It is most reasonable that this section of special revelation should be considered indispensable to defining the term "heaven" as it appears in many Biblical texts. For this reason, a summary review setting forth the essentials from *Gen. 1:1-19* needed to give context for both commentary and associated allusions which follow is included here.

As exhibited in the provided schematics on the following page, the state of creation at the end of the first day consisted of a mass of water in the vastness of empty space. It was this watery state in unfilled space that the Creator then fashioned into the 'house' for the galactic heavens plus planet earth with a solid crust over the span of the next three days of creation week. Of particular significance to this study is the separation of the waters on the second day, an action that led to a physical state consisting of an expanse intermediate between waters below the expanse and waters above the expanse. Now this intermediate domain, the expanse or firmament (thinned waters), is the region commonly referred to as "the heavens" and likely measuring multiple billions of light years in scale. What is most significant to note in the present context is the fact that this domain has an outer boundary, "the waters that are above the heavens" (*Ps. 148:4*). Further, this watery boundary quite clearly forms the confining extent of the host of created entities, at least in so far as we are informed in the Genesis account.

The creation of the host of luminous bodies surrounding the previously fashioned earth, namely the further bodies comprising the solar system, the Milky Way galaxy, plus the stupendous array of all other galactic formations, occurred uniquely on the fourth day of creation week. However, and of particular note, the Genesis text clearly distinguishes that all these "heavenly bodies" were created and placed "in the expanse" following the formation of planet earth out of its original watery state, and none are noted as being placed in the spatial domain beyond the outer extremity of the expanse.

With this review of creation fundamentals, we are in position to seek a 'working definition' of such relevant terms as "the heavens" and "the highest heavens", or "the heaven of heavens", as they appear in Biblical texts. Perhaps the following texts are a useful starting point in this regard.

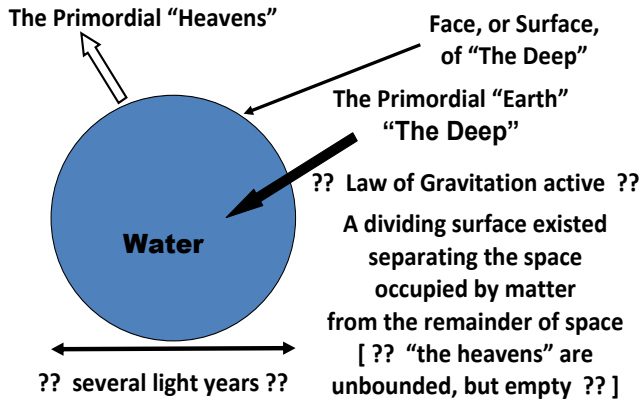
"Behold, to Yahweh your Elohim belong **heaven** and the **heaven of heavens**, the earth and all that is in it." *Deut. 10:14*

"But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold, **heaven** and the **highest heavens** cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!" *1 Kings 8:27*

The Primordial Cosmos: Day #1

The Totality of Primordial Space and Matter

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit was moving over the surface of the waters." *Gen.1:1-2*



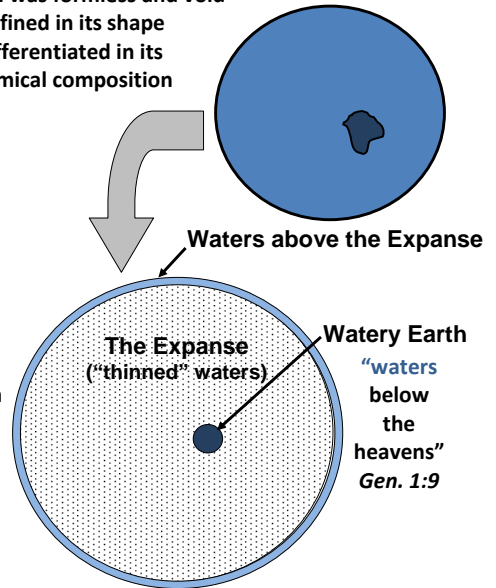
The Primordial Cosmos: Day #2

"the earth was formless and void"

- undefined in its shape
- undifferentiated in its chemical composition

Gen. 1:6-8
(a second day)

"And 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." *Gen. 1:7*

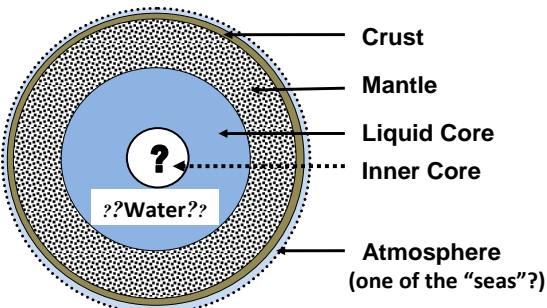
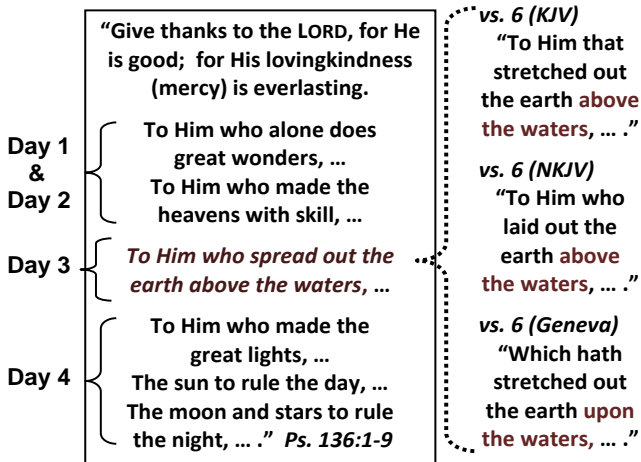


"... the earth was formed out of water and by water." (NASB)
"the earth that was of water, and by the water," (Geneva)
II Pet. 3:5

"Praise Him highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens!"
Ps. 148:4

Formation of the Earth: Day #3

Nucleosynthesis: Separation of Dry Land and Seas



Formation of Astronomical Bodies: Day #4

Ques. How were the astronomical bodies formed?

Ans. By direct, *ex nihilo* creation!

"Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens'" *Gen. 1:14*
"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host." *Ps. 33:6*

Ques. What was the primordial composition of these objects?

Ans. Water!

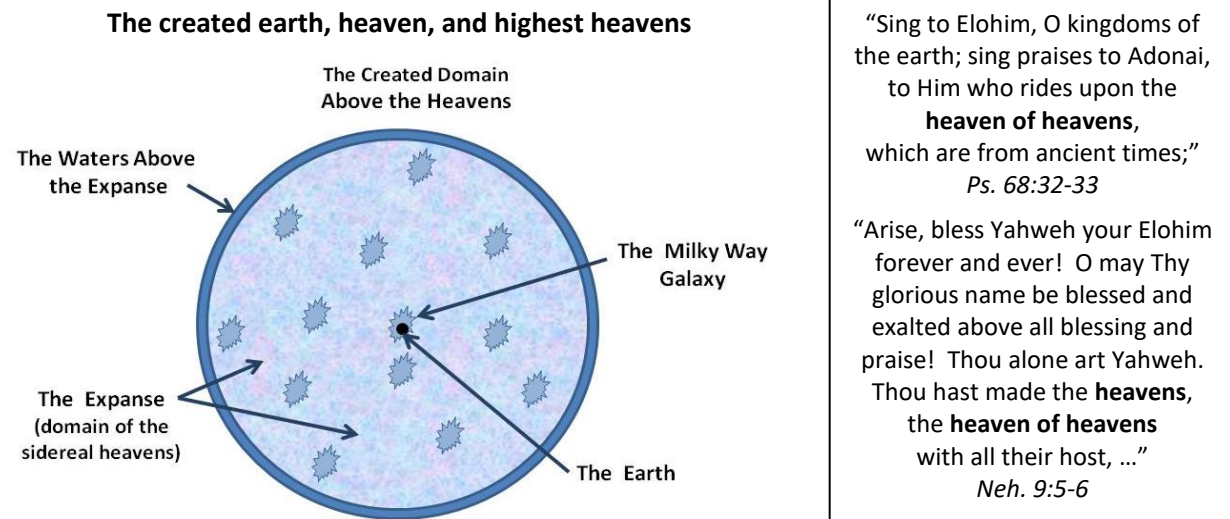
"[The LORD] made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding he has stretched out the heavens. When He utters His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens," *Jer. 10:12-13a (NASB)*
See also *Jer. 51:15-16*

"When He uttereth His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens" (KJV)
"He giveth by His voice the multitude of waters in the heavens" (Geneva)

Gen. 1:8 & 14: expanse = heavens
"heavens" = "*shâmayim*" (Heb.)
"shâm" = there
"mayim" = water
heavens = there, waters

In *1 Kings 8:27* (see quote at bottom of page 3), Solomon endeavors to extol the greatness of the omnipresent of God through use of comparisons. He ventures into comparisons moving progressively from the impressive, albeit limited, spatial scale of the recently completed Temple on to the surpassing glory and vastness of the Creator's work. Solomon starts at the scale of the Temple, the localized and measurable "work of his own hands", then moving to the expanded scale of the "work of the Creator's hands". In particular, from the scale of the Temple he moves to the grander, but comprehensible, scale of the whole earth, then proceeding to the even much grander scale of "heaven", followed finally by the grandest imaginable scale in creation, that of the "highest heavens". Now the term "highest heavens" must stand in contrast to "lower" heavens, or what has just been referred to as "heaven". Solomon magnifies the greatness of the Creator by moving from the measurable and the comprehensible to the immeasurable and the incomprehensible. Now, in regard to the objective of this study, the identity and location of what is implied in the intermediate term "heaven" and the much more expansive term "highest heavens" are worthy of further comment.

The term "heaven" in Solomon's expression encompasses, most likely, the expanse of the sky as viewed from earth, all luminary bodies visible from an earth-bound vantage point. If so, then this term would encompass only that spatial domain comprehensible to man within the scope of his natural, unaided capacities. By contrast, the term "highest heavens" would then refer, almost certainly, to the very highest reach of the starry heavens which, according to the description provided by the Creator in Genesis, extends to the outer extremity of the expanse which God formed on the second day of creation week. This extremity is clearly set forth as the "waters above the expanse" which forms the outer bound of the region containing all the starry or sidereal bodies, the realm of all galaxies and constellations created on the fourth day. Thus, it seems that we can quite confidently ascertain that Solomon's ultimate comparison is between the dimensions of the Temple structure with the scale of the entirety of the expanse – the existence of that vast scale of which he could only have gained a very limited knowledge about, and that only through the avenue of special revelation.



Comment:

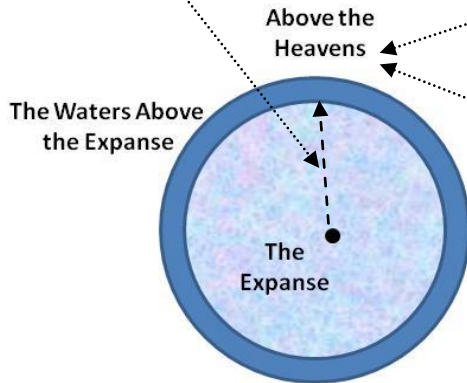
Adapting somewhat Thayer's defining statements pertaining to "heaven", we might compose the following 'working definitions' of the several terms found in various Biblical texts:

- "heaven": the vaulted expanse of the sky with all things naturally visible in it from planet earth
- "highest heavens": the region above the starry (sidereal) heavens; the region extending from beyond the immediately visible sphere to the very extremity of the expanse; namely, the "waters that are above the expanse" but entirely below these waters above the expanse
- "Heaven" (alt., "the third heaven"): the seat of order of things eternal and consummately perfect where God has set "His abode", and the situated abode of other heavenly beings.

Scriptural Clues to the Physical Location of Heaven

1 "Therefore, since we have a great high priest **who has passed through the heavens,** Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." *Heb. 4:14*

2 "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners **and exalted above the heavens.**" *Heb. 7:26*



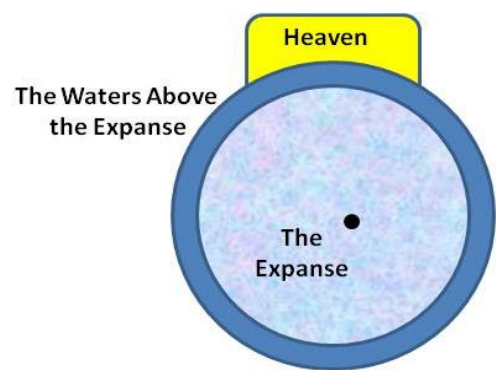
3 "Now this expression, 'He ascended', what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also **He who ascended far above all the heavens,** so that He might fill all things." *Eph. 4:9-10*

Comment: The phrase "**far above the heavens**" implies distance beyond even the "waters that are above the heavens (expanse)".
The Geneva Bible uses the phrase "**far above all heavens**", an expression corresponding to "beyond the outermost extremity of the heavens"; that is, surpassing all the vast host of galaxies.
Comment: To have "**passed through the heavens**" implies a moving through the full dimension of the created expanse, and likely beyond even the outer bounding perimeter of the expanse.

4 "For Christ *did not* enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but **into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.**" *Heb. 9:24*

5 "Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of **the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,** a minister in the sanctuary and **in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man.**" *Heb. 8:1-2*

Comment: The Scriptures quoted here are strongly (convincingly?) suggestive that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended in His glorified body through the expanse (heavens), arriving at a location above the expanse identified as the abode of God (the created 'home' of God's 'manifest presence'). It is at this 'abode location' where Christ now ministers as the appointed "great High Priest" in a divinely-created tabernacle while in a 'presence communion' with the Father and the Spirit.



6 "And **the temple of God which is in heaven** was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm." *Rev. 11:19*

The statement "**into heaven itself**" (see *Heb. 9:24* above) identifies quite explicitly the location where Christ went in His ascension. The phrase refers unmistakably to that specific place we call Heaven. Why? The presence of God is spoken of residing in a peculiarly manifest sense precisely at this location. Furthermore, this is the very location of the tabernacle that "the Lord pitched" (see *Heb. 8:2* above), and also very likely the same tabernacle the Apostle John was privileged to see opened, whereupon he was allowed to see with identifiable clarity the ark of the covenant situated therein (see *Rev. 11:19* above).

The Location of Heaven: Further Supportive Revelation

Respecting particularly the characteristic element of parallelism, the major and defining aspect of poetic expression in Hebrew writing, the opening lines of *Ps. 104* can be (should be?) organized as follows.

“Bless Yahweh, O my soul,
O Yahweh my Elohim Thou art very great.”

“Thou art clothed with honor and majesty,
Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment;”

“Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain,
Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters;”

“Who maketh the clouds His chariot,
Who walketh upon the wings of the winds;”

“Who maketh His angels spirits,
His ministers of a flaming fire.”

Ps. 104:1-4 (KJV)

A Further Text of Note:

“**He shall call to the heavens from above,**
and to the earth, that He may judge His people.”
Ps. 50:4 (KJV)

Note: The NASB seems to communicate a deficient sense, certainly not the sense of the Geneva, KJV, and NKJV Bibles.

(NASB) “He summons the heavens above,
and the earth, to judge His people.”

Further Comment:

The Geneva, KJV, and NKJV Bibles speak definitively of God, in His position above the heavens (expanse), communicating sentences of judgment on His people.

This sense seems much more appropriate to this author, as opposed to the NASB sense, which has the heavens and the earth as not only instruments of judgment on God’s people, but possibly even as ‘actors in judging’.

However, and further to the point of this study, the Geneva, KJV, and NKJV Bibles present God as speaking as Sovereign and Judge from His enthroned position, a position that is reinforced by a number of other quite definitive texts in Scripture.

Thus, with the sense that God’s ‘abode’ is situated above the heavens, *Ps. 50:4* is entirely reasonable, understandable, and illuminating with respect to the fuller context of the Psalm – accentuating the righteous judgment of God as omniscient Creator and Sovereign

Points of note regarding *Ps. 104:1-4*

1. The structure of verse numbers for this text as printed in most Bibles does not respect (correspond with) the characteristic of parallelism almost surely present in the original writing.
2. Respecting the aspect of parallelism reveals that the “waters” where the “beams of His chambers” are laid should (almost surely) not be associated with the “clouds”, but rather with the “heavens”; namely, with the expanse, and most likely with the “waters that are above the expanse”. Thus, the connection of the “waters” with the “clouds”, as the nominal verse structure implies, seems to inject an unwarranted association.
3. Allowing for some speculation, might it be that “the beams of His chambers” has reference to the foundation of the tabernacle “which the Lord pitched” in heaven (*Heb. 8:2*), and also an association with the waters that are above the expanse?
4. Might it be that the “beams of His chambers” have their ‘resting place’ on the outer surface of the “waters above the expanse”, and as such are not accounted as a part of the “accessible” creation??

“But will God indeed dwell on earth?
Behold, heaven and the highest heavens (heaven of heavens [KJV]) cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!” *1 Kings 8:27*

Comment: One can glean, quite correctly in the author’s opinion, that this statement in Solomon’s prayer is communicating the idea that no expansive domain within the whole of the created sphere below the “waters that are above the expanse” (i.e., nowhere in the whole domain of the expanse → in the “heaven of heavens”) can legitimately serve as a fitting location for the “perfect tabernacle” of God’s throne. Yet, the quoted texts from the Book of Hebrews on the previous page indicate that Christ ascended to, and is enthroned at, the location of God’s tabernacle. Thus, this author suggests that the position of Heaven being above the expanse is not inconsistent with what Solomon is stating in his dedicatory prayer – the certainty of God’s omnipresence notwithstanding.

Relevant Cosmological Considerations

“Is not God in the height of heaven? Look also at the distant stars, how high they are!
And you say, ‘What does God know?
Can He judge through the thick darkness?
Clouds are a hiding place for Him,
so that He cannot see; **and He walks on the vault of heaven’.**” *Job 22:12-14*
“to Him who rides upon the **heaven of heavens**”
(see *Ps. 68:32-33* quoted on page 5)

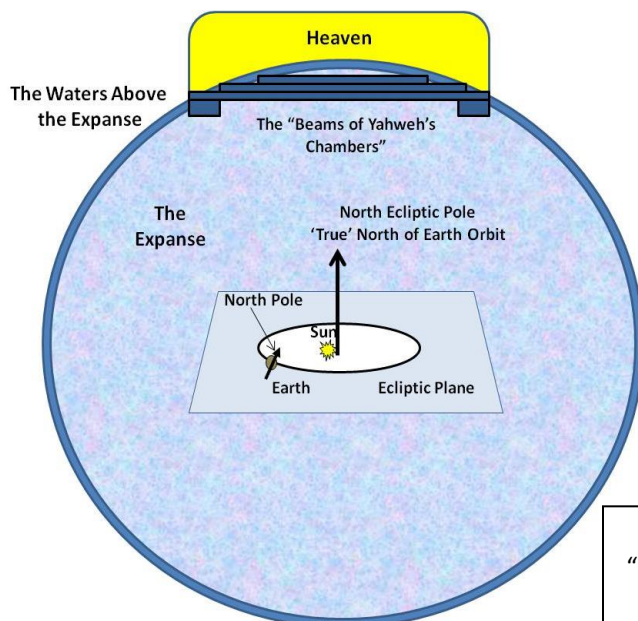
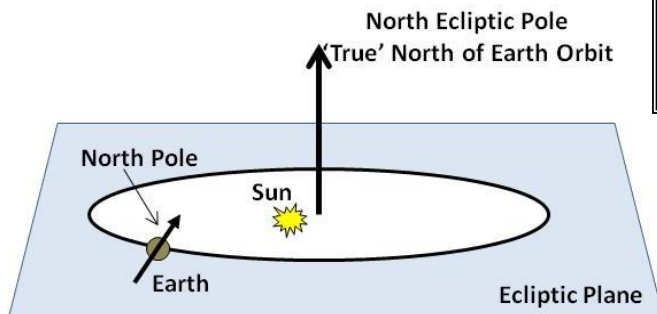
“To whom then will you liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare to Him?”
“Do you not know? Have you not heard?
Has it not been declared to you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits (is enthroned) above the vault of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.”
Isa. 40:18, 21-22

Textual Comment #1:

The Geneva Bible uses the word “circle” in both texts quoted here. On the other hand, the KJV uses “circuit” in *Job 22:14* and “circle” in *Isa. 40:22*. Now, these words are used in reference to “heaven” in *Job 22:14* and in reference to earth in *Isa. 40:22*.
By contrast, the NASB uses the word “vault” in both references – seemingly a quite reasonable sense in regard to *Job 22:14*, where God is represented as “walking on the vault of heaven’.

Textual Comment #2:

Many commentaries have remarked that the translation “circle” in Isaiah in *40:22* speaks to the sphericity of the Earth. However, Isaiah uses a quite different term in *Isa. 22:18* to describe a spherical shape (translated “ball” in most versions).
“Behold, Yahweh is about to grasp you firmly, and roll you tightly like a ball, ...” *Isa. 22:17-18*
Thus, a brief word study is warranted to gain some insight as to the Spirit-intended sense of the word.
“circle; vault; circuit; compass” = (Heb.) “chûg” or “khûg” (pronounced “khoog”)
“ball” (sphere) = (Heb.) “dûr”



Comment:

The translation of “chûg” = “vault”, per the NASB, communicates the following senses:

- a roof in the form of an arch
- a dome, or an arched dome

This sense of “chûg” is quite reasonable in relation to the context and action of *Job 22:14*. Now the sense of “chûg” = “circuit”, per the KJV in relation to *Job 22:14*, is equally reasonable. However, the use of “chûg” = “circle” in this text seems less warranted. By contrast, the use of “circuit”, and, to a lesser degree “circle”, in *Isa. 40:22* would be quite logical from the perspective of “Heaven” – a position above the expanse in the galactic north. From this ‘abode’, God would be literally on “the ‘vault-dome’ of creation with a ‘transcendent’ view of the “circuit” of the earth. Considering “chûg” = “the circle of the earth” in *Isa. 40:22* seems to be an unwarranted choice.

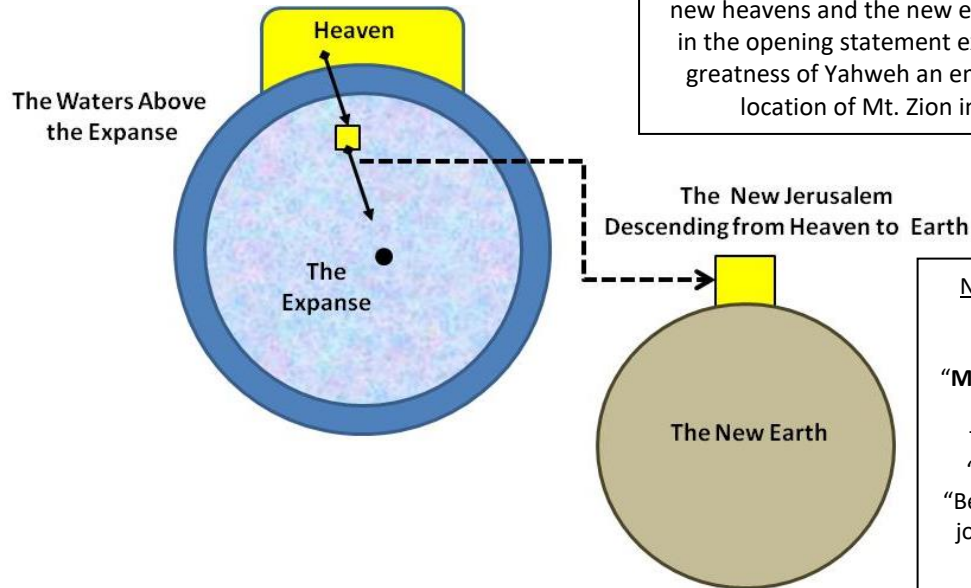
Note the boast of Lucifer (*Isa. 14:12-15*; vs. 13 below):
“But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly **in the recesses of the north.**”

The New Jerusalem

“And one of the seven angels ... came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, **coming down out of heaven from God**, having the glory of God. Her brilliance (luminary) was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.” *Rev. 21:9-11*

“Great is Yahweh, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our Elohim, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, **is Mount Zion in the far north**, the city of the great King. God, in her palaces, has made Himself known as a stronghold.” *Ps. 48:1-3*

Comment: Psalm 48 is a ‘Messianic-Millennial’ Psalm with a preview reference to the age of the new heavens and the new earth. There is included in the opening statement extolling the surpassing greatness of Yahweh an emphasis regarding the location of Mt. Zion in this future age.



Note: The Geneva Bible uses the *Ps. 48:2* ‘location’ reference: **“Mt. Zion, lying Northward, is fair in situation,”** The KJV expresses this ‘location’ reference as: “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is **Mt. Zion, on the sides of the north”**

Comment:

We can note two aspects of the revelatory vision received by the Apostle John that have specific relevance to our present study. With respect to the holy city Jerusalem (alt, the New Jerusalem):

- The city comes down out of heaven (Heaven)
- The city comes from God

Now, since this city descends to earth it must indeed be a physical structure. Further, since it comes from God and out of Heaven, it must imply that Heaven is a physical reality which, in some real way, is identifiable as the abode of God. Thus, we receive another hint (confirming evidence?) that Heaven is a real place situated at a definable location in God’s created realm.

Note: The above drawing of the New Jerusalem situated at the north pole of the New Earth is purposely somewhat to scale relative to given dimensions of the New Jerusalem. We read in *Rev. 21:16* that the city is cubical in shape with a dimension of “12,000 stadia”. Probably the best translation of this distance yields the equivalent of ≈1400 miles, a distance which corresponds closely to one-third the radius of the present Earth.

Further Note: The north-most location for the New Jerusalem may well comport with the location of Heaven in relation to planet Earth, with Heaven then being positioned high above the north pole of the Earth. Such a relative orientation would likely be even quite precise if the current tilt of the Earth’s rotational axis relative to the ecliptic plane (relative to the plane of the Earth’s orbit about the sun) would also be eliminated in the new creation state. Implementation of such a change in cosmic orientation would therewith likely lead to a number of unknown climactic changes relative that common to the present orbital and positional arrangement for the Earth and its orbit.

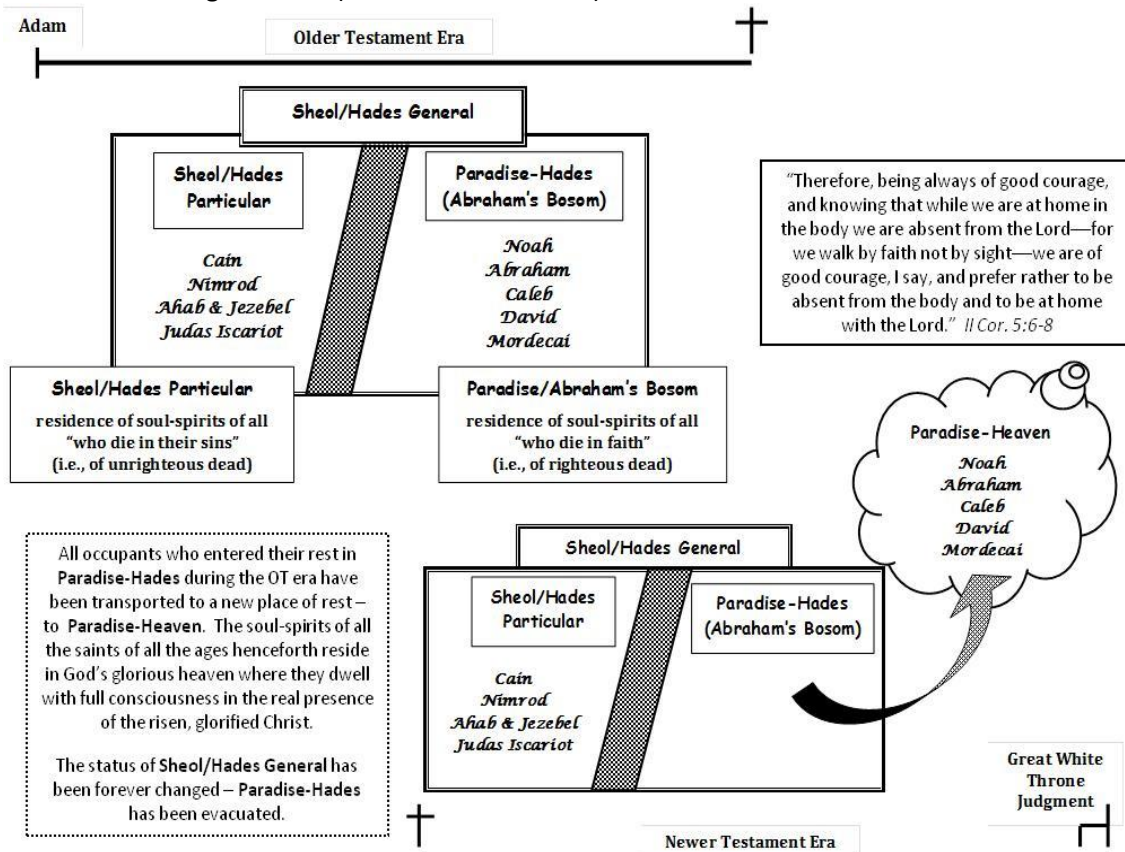
Epilogue

The Scriptures speak quite matter-of-factly regarding three specified “abodes” in God’s created reality that are presently invisible to the natural eye. Although each is noted as a definitive place in Scripture, yet all are left somewhat enigmatic as to precise detail and two hold considerably greater mystery as to their location than the remaining one. These three abodes are listed below, accompanied by some descriptive commentary pertinent to their location in the physical realm.

1. Sheol-Hades

Sheol-Hades is an abode created to house the soul-spirits of persons after they have passed through death.

Explanatory Comment: In using the hyphenated term “Sheol-Hades” we are combining the OT (Hebrew) term “Sheol” with the NT (Greek) term “Hades” to refer to the same abode; namely, the residence of soul-spirits of departed persons. During the OT era, Sheol-Hades was the abode of all soul-spirits, whether of righteous persons or unrighteous persons. Although often referred to as a single abode, internal to Sheol-Hades are two separated compartments, one for those who have died “in faith” and another for those who died “in their sins”. The Scriptures identify the compartment housing soul-spirits of righteous persons as Paradise, but assign no further identifying sub-title to the compartment housing soul-spirits of unrighteous persons. For specificity, this author prefers to refer to the compartment serving as the abode of soul-spirits of unrighteous persons simply as “Sheol-Hades Particular”, which stands in distinction from “Sheol-Hades General” which denotes the entire domain encompassing both Paradise and “Sheol-Hades Particular”. However, with these distinctions concerning Sheol-Hades, we must also distinguish “Paradise-Hades” from “Paradise-Heaven”, for the Scriptures make later reference to the abode of saints in Heaven as also being Paradise (see schematic below).



Note: In regard to the righteous-unrighteous “abode” distinction noted above, it is important to understand that God sovereignly marks multiple distinctions among persons, the most significant with respect to eternal destiny of course being that between the righteous and the unrighteous. Examples of other significant distinctions marked in Scripture include those between male and female, between Jew and Gentile, and between Israel and the Church.

In regard to this abode called Sheol-Hades and the associated schematic illustration on the previous page, we note that our Lord personally descended into Sheol-Hades after His death on the cross, descending to the compartment in the lower parts of the earth forming the separated domain of righteous saints called Paradise (*Lk. 23:43*). Subsequently, upon His resurrection from the grave, He transported all soul-spirits in Paradise-Hades to Paradise-Heaven (*Eph. 4:9-10*). As a consequence Paradise-Hades has been emptied, and henceforth all soul-spirits of righteous persons passing through death go immediately to “be with the Lord” in His enthroned residence in Heaven (*II Cor. 5:8*). That is, all soul-spirits of departed saints reside in the equivalent abodes called alternatively Heaven or Paradise-Heaven in these notes, even that particular abode where the risen and ascended Christ dwells in His glorified body – an abode which, therefore, must be a physical dwelling.

As to the particular issue of location within the created realm, Sheol-Hades is identified as being in “the lower parts of the earth” (*Ps. 55:15; 63:9; Ezek. 26:19-20; 31:14-16; 32:24; Eph. 4:10*). At present, and as noted above, it is the residence of all soul-spirits of those who have died “in their sins”. That Sheol-Hades should be located “in the earth” is not only a truth stated definitively in Scripture, it can also be reasoned from the perspective of Biblical creationism.

“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.” [KJV]

“From the beginning of the world, God knoweth all His works.” [Geneva]
Act 15:18

The full plan for all the ages of creation was fully formed in the creative purpose of God from before the beginning of time and the cosmos.

As such, the entrance of evil and redemption in the Son were ordained by the Creator from before the beginning, and Sheol-Hades, Heaven, and Hell must necessarily have also been created at the beginning.

Now, the full scope of God’s work of creation was “very good” from the beginning, and “good” is necessarily defined as that state which is in total and absolute consistency with infinitely holy standards. Yet, the entrance of sin and death into the cosmos was already anticipated as part of God’s ordained, pre-creation plan. As such, even Sheol-Hades was part of God’s “very good” creation.

Although, from finite man’s natural perspective, God’s “very good” creation was subsequently ‘spoiled’ by a “deciding for himself” action by the first man, a creature ‘in God’s image’ having a physical body housing an eternal soul-spirit, God’s eternal purpose could not and would not be spoiled. Adam, the purposed federal head of all human-kind ‘image of God’ creatures, transgressed the Creator’s authoritatively articulated law and ‘surely died’. And, since planet earth was the prepared location where man would live and move and have his being (*Ps. 115:16*), it was also the physical location where the Curse and death intruded into creation. Thus, it is quite reasonable that man, a creature endowed with an eternal soul-spirit as part of his “image of God” being, should find his age-long residence being associated with planet earth, even after experiencing physical death because of his sin. Thus, it is not unreasonable that Sheol-Hades should have a ‘residence location’ in the earth.

2. Heaven

As a term used here, Heaven is defined as the abode of the risen, ascended, glorified Christ along with the entire host of righteous angels. In addition, and per the sure words of *II Cor. 5:8* and *Eph. 4:9-10*, Heaven is the residence of soul-spirits of all saints, of all human-kind 'creature-persons' who have "died in faith", whether saints of the OT era or those of the present Church Age. Now in regard to the location of the abode called Heaven, only "scattered hints" are given in contrast to definitive statements identifying the location of Sheol-Hades. To this point, the focus of this study has been to conduct a systematized examination these "scattered hints", seeking to ascertain whether a substantive conclusion might legitimately be gleaned as to the possible location of this abode referred to as Heaven. As explained in the body of this report the scattered hints relating to Heaven seem to suggest that this abode is certainly part of created reality, but yet in a region of creation separated from the cosmos by a created boundary – the "waters that are above the heavens" (*Ps. 148:4*).

3. Hell

Hell, or alternatively "the lake of fire" (*Rev. 19:20; 20:11-15*), is defined in Scripture as the yet future abode of all unrighteous persons in immortal bodies. Hell will be populated with human-kind creature-persons only following the resurrection of all unrighteous persons at the end of the age, at which time their soul-spirits will then be joined with immortal bodies.

Corollary: As hell is a created place, and necessarily situated therefore somewhere in the domain of the physical creation, so also must Heaven be a created place, even that particular place where the risen Christ ascended to in His glorified body.

Note: For the sake accuracy and completeness we note one exception to the foregoing statement. It is definitely stated in *Rev. 19:20* that the "beast" and the "false prophet", two exceptionally evil persons who ply their evil machinations as tools of Satan during the Tribulation Period, will be consigned to hell in advance of the resurrection of the unrighteous at the end of the age. From the perspective of premillennial eschatology, their consignment into this abode occurs one thousand years before the Great White Throne Judgment (*Rev. 20:11-15*) and the sentence of resurrected unrighteous to hell.

Now since hell is a true residence housing real persons inhabiting immortal bodies, it must of necessity be true that hell has a real 'address' within the physical sphere of God's creation. Furthermore, although the Scriptures are silent as to the possible location of this abode, yet Scripture is forcefully definite as to the existence of such a physical place. As such, there can be no mystery associated with its reality. The only mystery pertains to enquiring minds that seek to define its physical location. In the author's opinion, any proffered offer is only conjectural.

Author's End Note Disclaimer

Special accent needs to be made regarding the following noteworthy point: The author is *by no means* claiming that the posited answer to the question "Where is Heaven?", as argued in this report, is a definitively settled matter. All that has been attempted is simply a quest motivated by the combination of several lines of thought. First, the scattered statements of Scripture containing various uses of the word "heaven", particularly those that have correspondence with our definition of "Heaven", seem to communicate a somewhat certain reference to there being a real 'residence location' for persons in real physical bodies (viz., the glorified, ascended Christ and Elijah). Second, such scattered statements, some containing quite leading suggestions, naturally stimulate a curiosity that lead enquiring minds to speculate concerning the location of this abode called Heaven. And thirdly, reasoned arguments can be advanced as to why such a physical location should be expected to exist within the grand sphere of created reality based on a straightforward reading of special revelation detailing the broader scope of God's creative working. Now admittedly, simply advancing conjectural arguments for why a possible physical location for Heaven *might exist* falls quite short of a convincing proof that a defined location for Heaven should be identifiable with some semblance of confidence. The author is quite conscious of the

fact that only through the avenue of special revelation can anyone approach an answer deserving of serious confidence.

The author, holding unapologetically and unyieldingly to the verbal inspiration and the trustworthy authority of Scripture, has attempted to refrain from veering beyond what the words of Scripture seem quite reliably to communicate, including related concepts these true and authoritative words might forthrightly imply in context. All that is convincingly definite and settled, and all that is held with unshakeable confidence, is the truth that Heaven is indeed a real place resplendent in glory and perfection. The Scriptures are unambiguous that Heaven is the very particular abode where the risen, ascended, and glorified incarnate Son of God is enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Further, Heaven is also, and most blessedly so, the true residence of all soul-spirits of those who die with saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Beyond these anchor points, the author has adopted a constraining sense of proceeding cautiously and with tempered reverence when composing schematic representations depicting the true content of Scriptural statements revealing essences of God's creative working.

The author believes that the words of the title aptly communicate the general sense in which this work should be viewed. Specifically, this work should be considered as nothing more than a "Biblically reasoned" search for a suggested answer to offer curious-minded seekers as to the possible location of Heaven. Also, it represents nothing more than a conclusion that is at most no more than a "Biblically reasoned" proposal, which stands in particular distinction from a definitive answer. Furthermore, and quite candidly, the author is of the opinion that not much should be, or even might be, reasonably ventured in seeking a more definite answer to the question: "Where is Heaven?"

Author's Acknowledgment

The issue of gaining a true understanding of reality is dependent, fundamentally and inescapably, on the authority of special revelation and the Creatorship of God, for truth is forever impeccable correspondence with reality as God defines it.

The author's personal pursuit of such understanding of reality along the lines of this pivotal foundation has been greatly facilitated by two extra-Biblical inputs.

First, and of most particular and influential significance, I have gained incalculable assistance through the manifold writings of Dr. Henry Morris. My intermittent study and engagement in teaching various series on Biblical creationism, now extending in excess of five decades, was initiated by an encounter in 1966 with an early writing by Dr. Morris, and has been stimulated and sustained by his extensive writings continuously thereafter.

Secondarily, my follow-on pursuit of the subject with greater emphasis on scientific creationism has been fueled by a multi-decadal subscription to the Creation Research Society Quarterly (CRSQ), a quarterly publication consisting of writings targeted generally at undergirding the tenets of Biblical creationism and the Biblical worldview, a goal sought through an interfacing of natural revelation conjoined with special revelation. Publications in the Creation Research Society Quarterly (CRSQ) have served quite regularly to open new vistas in my thinking about multiple evidences and intriguing aspects of God's glorious Creatorship.

The present report emerged from a synthesis of personal notes developed over the last several decades, notes developed for multiple teaching series conducted in weekly adult Bible studies as well as occasional topical series on specialized subjects.

As noted above, I have gleaned multiple perspectives from my reading of writings by Dr. Morris, but papers published in the CRSQ by Dr. Russell Humphreys and Dr. Jake Hebert also helpfully crystallized several perspectives peculiar to this study. I wish to call out in specific reference to this report a recent article by the latter author (CRSQ, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2018).

This publication was instrumental in sharpening my insights on the present topic.