

Creation Pen and Brush: The Firmament of the Heavens Stands on Pillars



I have written a few posts which *mention* the firmament or the dome or *the raqia* which YHWH placed above the earth as described in Genesis, and it is time for us to explore this further. Genesis 1 v 6-8 reads:

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...³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

In the passage from Genesis above, we read about how YHWH made the firmament to cover the earth and protect it from the waters (He *divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament*) and He *called the firmament Heaven*. The image we can envision here is very much the picture which is painted by the psalmist in Psalm 91:

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

We have a caring Father who spreads his wings over us so that we can nestle under His protection; we have a caring YHWH who places His firmament over the earth to keep us safe inside His creation. I discussed in my last post how where YHWH is positioned on His throne gives Him a good vantage point to observe all humankind as we read in these verses:

God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Psalm 53:2

The Lord is looking down from heaven; he sees all the sons of men Psalm 33:13.

For thus the LORD has told me, "I will look from My dwelling place quietly Like dazzling heat in the sunshine, Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." Isaiah 18:4

Further we read in the extra-biblical text 1 Enoch the following description of what Enoch saw in his heavenly encounter:

1 I saw the treasuries of all the winds: I saw how He had furnished with them the whole creation and the firm foundations of the earth. 2 And I saw the corner-stone of the earth: I saw the four winds which bear the earth and the firmament of the heaven. 3 And I saw how the winds stretch out the vaults of heaven, and have their station between heaven and earth: these are the pillars of the heaven. 4 I saw the winds of heaven which turn and bring the circumference of the sun and all the stars to their setting. 5 I saw the winds on the earth carrying the clouds: I saw the paths of the angels. I saw at the end of the earth the firmament of the heaven above. Chapter XVIII

From this description, we get a more complete picture of YHWH's creation of the firmament which in summery shows us some attributes of the firmament:

Four winds bear [hold fast] the earth and the firmament of heaven;

The winds stretch out the vaults of heaven [the firmament];

There are pillars holding the firmament (pillars of heaven).



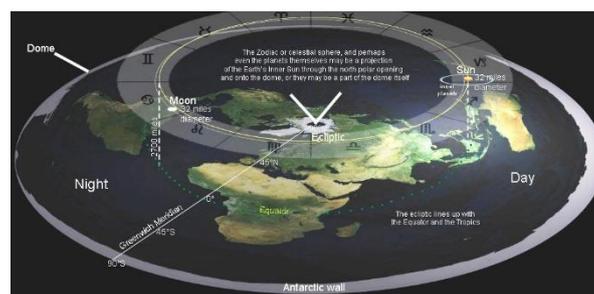
It would appear that bible scholars have had access to what Enoch wrote for some time as the Hebrew cosmology in the following description, found in

Wikipedia (a not yet corrupted page), seems heavily influenced by the book of Enoch:

The word "firmament" is used to translate $rāqîa'$ (רָקִיעַ), a word used in Biblical Hebrew. It is derived from the root $raqa'$ (רָקַע), meaning "to beat or spread out thinly", e.g., the process of making a dish by hammering thin a lump of metal.

Like most ancient peoples, the Hebrews believed the sky was a solid dome with the Sun, Moon, planets and stars embedded in it. According to The Jewish Encyclopaedia: The Hebrews regarded the earth as a plain or a hill figured like a hemisphere, swimming on water. Over this is arched the solid vault of heaven. To this vault are fastened the lights, the stars. So slight is this elevation that birds may rise to it and fly along its expanse.

A detailed Christian view of the universe, based on various Biblical texts and earlier theories by Theophilus of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria, was formulated by the 6th century Egyptian monk, Cosmas Indicopleustes. He described a flat rectangular world surrounded by four seas; at the far edges of the seas, four immense vertical walls supported a vaulted roof, the firmament, above which in a further vaulted space lived angels who moved the heavenly bodies and controlled rainfall from a vast cistern. Augustine wrote that too much learning had been expended on the nature of the firmament. "We may understand this name as given to indicate not it is motionless but that it is solid." he wrote... According to Thomas Aquinas, the firmament had a "solid nature" and stood above a "region of fire, wherein all vapour must be consumed.



Having led you through a bit of background, I will go on to tell you what I discovered when looking at what the scientific community have written about something tangible that they have observed to be around the earth. What they have been discussing is the Van Allen Belts. Of course many of you have heard of these belts, but bear with me on this one as there is more...

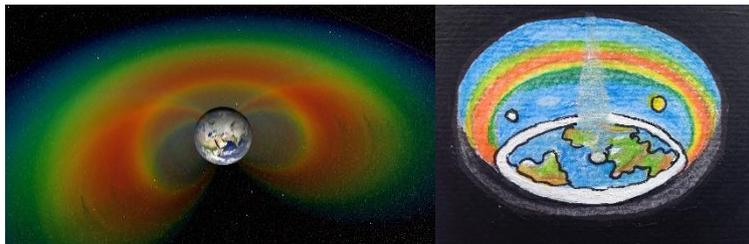
The Van Allen Belts were discovered in 1958 when the scientist James Van Allen working at the University of Iowa undertook tests on radiation using the first launched satellite Explorer 1 followed by other tests made through other satellites. The observation he made was that: 'Earth is surrounded by giant donut-shaped swaths of magnetically trapped, highly energetic charged particles.' More research has been carried out since 1958 and Van Allen probes have been busily working on gathering data on the belts; the most recent probe was still active in August 2017 despite being launched in 2012 with an expected life of two years. 'Data gathered by the probes also showed that the radiation belts shield Earth from high-energy particles. "The barrier for the ultrafast electrons is a remarkable feature of the belts," study lead author Dan Baker, of the University of Colorado in Boulder, said in a statement' (from *space.com*). So we can gather from this statement that the Van Allen Belts are a protective layer which keeps the earth safe – I guess a bit like the firmament...

Further scientists from NASA.gov explain: *'The radiation belts are not the only particle structures surrounding Earth. A giant cloud of relatively cool, charged particles called the plasmasphere fills the outermost region of Earth's atmosphere, beginning at about 600 miles up and extending partially into the outer Van Allen belt. The particles at the outer boundary of the plasmasphere cause particles in the outer radiation belt to scatter, removing them from the belt.'*

But most interestingly for me is the following comment which seems to indicate that spacecraft moving through the belts with humans on board might be in a dangerous predicament: *"The Van Allen Probes are specially radiation-hardened to withstand the intense environment of the belts. Some spacecraft, however, are more vulnerable — especially when a solar storm hits. At worst, spacecraft can short out due to an electrical overload...Radiation, of course, also poses a human risk. Astronauts are subject to lifetime radiation limits from their time in space, to reduce any risk of cancer. Since only a few dozen people have spent six months or longer in space, however, it will take decades to understand the long-term effects of radiation on humans."*

In November 2015, NASA put out a promotional video about the problems which will need to be solved before Orion astronauts can be sent out on space

missions. Most notably, it was stated by scientist Kelly Smith that *“as we get further away from earth, we’ll pass through the Van Allen Belts, an area of dangerous radiation. Radiation like this could harm the guidance systems, on board computers or other electronics on Orion. Naturally we have to pass through this danger zone twice – once up and once back. But Orion has protection. Shielding will be put to the test as the vehicle cuts through the radiation. Sensors aboard will record radiation levels for scientist to study. We must solve these challenges before we send people through this region of space.”* This is all very interesting as it would appear that the Van Allen Belts are more than just a protective force for the earth but that they also form some kind of barrier which makes it difficult for humans to pass through. This still reminds me of YHWH’s firmament and that what are called the Van Allen Belts could in fact be the firmament.



My question on all this *space technology* is: does YHWH want us to break through His firmament? I ask this because I am reminded of another occasion in the Bible when men decided to disobey YHWH and break through to Heaven...

The people of the earth had become skilled in construction and decided to build a city with a tower that would reach to heaven. By building the tower, they wanted to make a name for themselves and also prevent the people from being scattered:

Then they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. (Genesis 11:4,)

YHWH came to see their city and the tower they were building. He perceived their intentions, and in his infinite wisdom, he knew this "stairway to heaven" would only lead the people away from YHWH.

The goal of the people was not to glorify YHWH and lift up his name but to build a name for themselves.

In Genesis 9:1, YHWH told humankind: "*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.*" He wanted people to spread out and fill the whole earth. By building the tower, the people were ignoring Yah's clear instructions.'



Are those astronauts and space scientists ignoring the express command of YHWH? Are they, rather than venturing out into *deep space*, trying to break through the firmament and *reach* YHWH? If we are to believe in the fact that YHWH placed a dome, a firmament, between Himself and us, then we can only ask these questions. It is clear that some kind of experimentation has taken place and, most probably, is ongoing still – an experiment to blast through the firmament.

Flat Earth Philippines posted an interesting comment on their Facebook page back in 2018 and it reads: *Operation Fishbowl was a series of high-altitude nuclear tests in 1962 that were carried out by the United States. The term "fishbowl" is reference to the firmament. They know the dome of the flat earth and that we are within an enclosed eco-system. Fish Bowl was part of operation Dominic a.k.a Operation Dome. Ask yourself why the powers that be find it necessary to hit our skies with nuclear power. Operation Fishbowl was carried out by the United States as a part of the larger Operation Dominic nuclear test program. "Dominic" means "of the Lord."*

Moving on to the pillars mentioned above (as described in 1 Enoch Chapter XVIII), we read in Job 9:4-6:

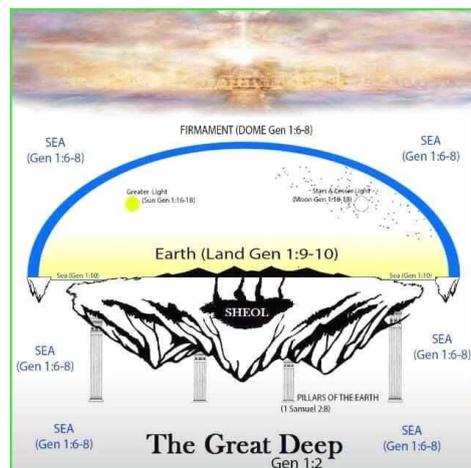
⁴ He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? ⁵ Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. ⁶ Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. (KJV)

Here in the book of Job we are confronted by another image which is connected to the firmament: the 'pillars' that tremble. Further searching in the Bible, we read the following:

The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. (Job 26 v 11)

The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah. (Psalm 75:3)

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them. (1 Samuel 2:8)

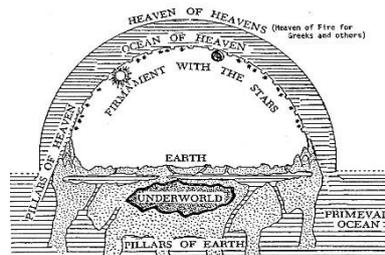


These pillars are described as *the pillars of earth/the pillars of heaven* in these verses. So I did some more research to find out more.

From veritasmc.org we read: *What is it with the pillars? What are they for and what do they do? They are there to hold up the foundations of the earth according to the Bible. (1 Sam 2:8 above). When the earth was created it was set on foundations and those foundations are held up by pillars. But why put the foundations on pillars at all? The answer lies in 2Peter 3:5 "...the earth standing out of the water and in the water:" It is to elevate the foundations so that the earth would not be submerged in the waters below. Psalm 104:5: "Thou didst fix the earth on its foundation so that it never can be shaken." Psalm 102:25 - Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. In the beginning of Genesis it says that the firmament was created to separate the waters from the waters. Genesis 1:6-9 "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."*

From the Institute for Biblical & Scientific Studies we read: *The Bible also talks about the pillars of the earth. In Job 9:6 it says, "Who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars (ydwmu) tremble." The LXX says, "Who shakes the earth*

under heaven from its foundations and its pillars (stuloi) totter." In Psalm 75:3 it says, "The earth and all its inhabitants are melting away; I set firm its pillars (ydwmu)." The LXX says, "I have strengthened its pillars (stuloi)." In I Samuel 2:8 it says, "For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's and he had set the world upon them." The Hebrew word for pillar is yqxm. The root is qx meaning "to melt" (BDB 1980, 848). Therefore, yqxm means, "a molten like pillar." The only other place it occurs is in I Samuel 14:5 referring to a mountain. Probably the pillars of the earth are the same thing as the foundations of the earth which were mountains. In Ugaritic---there are two mountains, trgz and trmg that bind the earth. Gibson says that these twin mountains were founded in the earth-encircling ocean, and held up the firmament, and also marked the entrance to the underworld (1978, 66). The mountains are said to bind the earth. This may indicate that the mountains surrounded, and supported the earth as well as confine the netherworld. The mountains were seen as the foundations of the earth, and the support pillars for the heavens. The Hebrews probably held a very similar view as the verses above indicate, as well as later Hebrew writings. So the phrase "pillars of heaven" and "pillars of earth" are referring to the same mountains. One emphasizes the height of the mountains holding up heaven, the other emphasizes the depth of the mountains that hold the earth firm. Looking at the Dead Sea Scrolls we see: in an Aramaic text of the Testament of Levi from Qumran it says, "And I saw the heavens opened and I saw below me a high mountain which touched the heavens and I was upon it. And the gates of heaven were opened to me" (Clifford 1972, 188). So even those at Qumran believed certain mountains reached heaven.



In the book of First Enoch we read:

1And it came to pass after this that I saw another host of wagons, and men riding thereon, and coming on the winds from the east, and from the west to the south. 2And the noise of their wagons was heard, and when this turmoil took place the holy ones from heaven remarked it, and the pillars of the earth were moved from their place, and the sound thereof was heard from the one end of heaven to the other, in one day. 3 And they shall all fall down and

worship the Lord of Spirits. And this is the end of the second Parable. (1 Enoch 57: 1-3)

Here we find that the pillars are moved and that this act caused a tremendous commotion upon the earth. One cannot begin to imagine this event if we are told that the pillars are holding up the firmament!

It is not surprising then that one finds biblical references to the "pillars" or "foundations" of the heaven and earth. In Job we find that "*the pillars of heaven tremble, are astounded at Yah's rebuke*" (26:11). In 2 Samuel we also find that God's anger makes "*the foundations of the heavens tremble*" (22:8). God's fury also affects the pillars of the earth: "*Who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble?*" (Job 9:6); and "*the foundations of the world were laid bare at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils*" (Ps. 18:15). There seems to be a little confusion about where the pillars of heaven are located. Generally, in the Bible and other ancient literatures, distant mountains were the most likely candidates. But in one passage at least we find that Yahweh has "*laid the beams of his heavenly chambers on the waters*" (Ps. 104:3), i.e., the watery chaos surrounding the flat disc of the earth.

More research leads me into another direction with the pillars in mind...but for now let us look at the role of the four winds spoken about in that passage from first Enoch we read earlier.

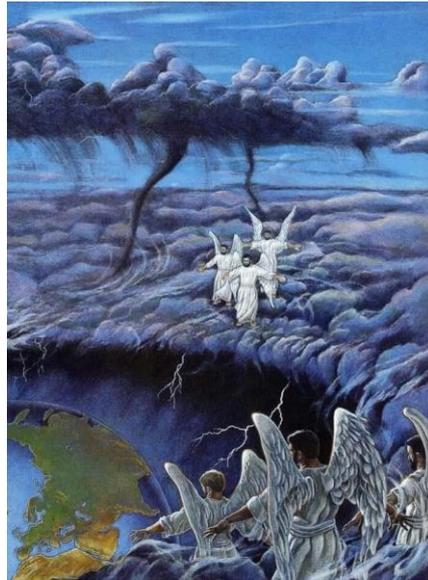
In Daniel 7: 2 we read: *Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea."*

Then in Mark 13:27 we read: "*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.*" (A similar verse can be found in Matthew 24:31)

Then in Revelation 7:1 we read: *After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree.*

These four winds seem to be performing an important job and are, as we can all testify from experience living on this earth, very strong. In the verses above we gather that: there are four winds at the farthest ends of earth and the farthest ends of heaven (*Mark and Matthew*); there are four angels placed at the corners of earth, holding back the four winds of the earth (*Revelation*) and; the four winds can stir up the "great" sea (*Daniel*).

Using Easton's Bible Dictionary, we see that: "Winds blowing from the four quarters of heaven" are mentioned in Jeremiah 49:36, Ezekiel 37:9, Daniel 8:8 and Zechariah 2:6. Interestingly the Zechariah verse says: *Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD.* The implication here would seem to be that those people were spread as far away as the four winds of heaven; scattered in four directions as it were.



In the book of Enoch (chapter 18) we read that the four winds have more jobs than discussed above. I repeat the verses here for you:

¹ I saw the treasures of all the winds: I saw how He had furnished with them the whole creation ² and the firm foundations of the earth. And I saw the corner-stone of the earth: I saw the four ³ winds which bear [the earth and] the firmament of the heaven. And I saw how the winds stretch out the vaults of heaven, and have their station between heaven and earth: these are the pillars ⁴ of the heaven. I saw the winds of heaven which turn and bring the circumference of the sun and ⁵ all the stars to their setting. I saw the winds on the earth carrying the clouds: I saw the paths ⁶ of the angels. I saw at the end of the earth the firmament of the heaven above...

From this passage we read that the four winds: bear the earth and the firmament of heaven; they stretch out the vaults of heaven and that they are the *pillars of the heaven!* So now we have a connection between the pillars in my previous post and the four winds.

From the Quora.com website, we read some further reflections of connections to these winds: *The Four Winds are the power of YHWH in the natural world, basically where "miracles" can occur and where the strength of God is made visible to humans...The Prophet Zechariah saw four chariots rise up between two mountains and asked an angel what these were. The angel answered: "These are the four winds of the sky, which go out from standing before the Lord of all the earth." (Zechariah 6:5) ...The Four Winds also carry Yah's chosen people to their destiny, both in the Old Testament and the New: "He will send out his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." (Matthew 24:31) While the scholarly answer is that the Four Winds represent north, south, east, and west winds, which are considered favourable in Judaism (as opposed to winds that blow from angles), a more comprehensive answer includes the Four Winds as Yah's power made manifest on earth. The Four Winds are a mystical point where the divine touches the natural world...*



Further to what we read in the Book of Enoch, Enoch describes the Earth having distinct edges, there are “portals” and “gates” at each of the four cardinal directions. There are “storehouses” for certain elements such as the winds, the lightning and thunder, and the frost. It speaks about the four corners, about the four pillars, and a great deal about the firmament as well, above which is the very throne room of YHWH, just as the typical ancient cosmology reflects. There are literal, cave-like pits under the Earth, a literal Sheol, as well as another place, a dry, desert-like place of chaos, which has no water either above or below it. An “outer darkness”, where certain angels and spirits are held imprisoned until the Day of Judgement.

Reflecting on what I have discovered about YHWH's powerful pillars of the earth/heaven, the four strong winds and the firmament which encompasses the earth, I am convicted of the power that we believers are given through the saving grace of the Father through His Son Yeshua. Right here, right now, in these times we are living through, we need to hold onto the promises from our mighty YHWH and His beloved Son.

YHWH said: *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* (Joshua 1:9)

Yeshua said: *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

Yvonne