Biblical Earth Science and Astronomy

The Things the Bible Says About the Earth and About the Heavens

A 10-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

These ten lessons are introductory level — the series is "kind of like" Biblical Earth Science and Astronomy Course 101 — on the things the Bible says about the earth and about the heavens God has created. It is not a study of geology or astrophysics. After the preliminary issues it turns to biblical earth science, then to biblical astronomy, and closes with the change at the flood and the change yet to come. God created by design, following a blueprint, and God first and foremost wants us to understand that the heavens and the earth are, in the series' words, "one big building to him." The best piece of science about the earth is to know why God created it — to be His residence in the midst of creation.

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Lessons at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
L1	God Created by Design, Following a Blueprint — Proverbs 3:19; Proverbs 8; Psalm 104; the Windows and Doors of Heaven
L2	Foundations, Pillars, Stories and Storehouses — Job 38, 9 and 26; Psalm 19; Amos 9; I Samuel 2: the Heavens a Curtain
L3	The Curtain of the Heavens and Three Heavens — Psalm 104; Acts 7; I Timothy 6; Ephesians 1 and 4; Revelation 4 and 6; Genesis 1; II Corinthians 12
L4	The Purpose of the Earth: God's Residence — Job 37; Genesis 1:2; Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 40; Psalm 68; Hebrews 11; Ezekiel 40
L5	Formed to Be Inhabited by Himself — Genesis 28; John 1; Revelation 21; Isaiah 45:18; Genesis 1:9–10; Psalm 95; Proverbs 8
L6	God Replicates His Third-Heaven Environment on Earth — Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; Revelation 4 and 21; Psalm 148; Psalm 78: Mountains, Stones, Waters, Plants and Eden
L7	Paradise in the Third Heaven, Replicated in Eden — II Corinthians 12; Genesis 2:4–15; Ezekiel 28: the Eden Paradise Issue

Lesson	Core Focus
L8	From Void to Populated: Creatures with Heavenly Counterparts — Genesis 1:20–25; 2:19; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1; II Kings 2 and 6; Psalm 68: Fowl, Living Creatures and Horses of Fire
L9	God's Stories in the Heaven: the Heavenly Places — Psalm 115; Amos 9:6; Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 1:21; Job 38; Daniel 10: the Closed Firmament and Its Ranks
L10	The Heavens and Earth of Old and Now — II Peter 3; Genesis 7:11; Job 38: Part A at the Flood, Part B in the Day of the Lord's Wrath

Lesson Summaries

L1

God Created by Design, Following a Blueprint *Proverbs 3:19; Proverbs 8; Psalm 104; the Windows and Doors of Heaven*

First Preliminary Issue: Creation by Design

- Creation was not a capricious act on God's part; it was all done by following a plan, a design and a blueprint God had drawn up — things in the earth and heavens are there because the blueprint called for them
- "The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens": those two terms indicate a master plan being followed

Proverbs 8: Wisdom at the Drawing Board

- Wisdom is personified and spoken of as a plan drawn up, like architect's drawings — as if God spent time at the architect's desk on the drawing board and had drawn up the plans

One Big Building and the Habitable Part of His Earth

- God first and foremost wants us to understand that the heavens and the earth are one big building to Him; the Earth-science part of the study focuses on the habitable part of His earth

Second Preliminary Issue: Building Terminology

- This is really not language of accommodation; God is a maker and a builder, and there is reality to the pillars, windows, doors and stories of heaven
- The windows of heaven are not cloud structure or a vapor canopy but part of the building structure of creation; at the flood water also came from a place called the windows of heaven, and they will be opened again in the day of His wrath (Isaiah 24)

L2

Foundations, Pillars, Stories and Storehouses *Job 38, 9 and 26; Psalm 19; Amos 9; I Samuel 2: the Heavens a Curtain*

Terminology With Reality Behind It

- God expects us to look at creation as a masterful building He has created, all designed literally to be a holy temple unto Himself

Job 38: God Built the Earth

- God tells Job, in effect, that He built the Earth; there was a line stretched upon it, and God Himself stretched it, as builders measure out a building's dimensions
- In the Lord's day of wrath, yet to come after this dispensation of Gentile grace is concluded, the Earth will reel to and fro because its foundations are gonna shake

Handiwork, a Tabernacle for the Sun, and Stories

- "buildeth his stories in the heaven" (Amos 9:6): a building with stories to it — the earth's the ground floor of a massive building

The Heavens Are a Curtain

- Psalm 104:1–3 describes the essentials of what God did in connection with Genesis 1:1–2; creation is not bathed in light because He stretched out the heavens like a curtain, and a curtain blocks out light
- The firmament keeps the light of God's heaven from penetrating and prevents us from seeing beyond it; this is not about what the stars are made of

L3

The Curtain of the Heavens and Three Heavens *Psalm 104; Acts 7; I Timothy 6; Ephesians 1 and 4; Revelation 4 and 6; Genesis 1; II Corinthians 12*

The Heavens Stretched Out as a Curtain

- The curtain formed a barrier between God, covered with light as a garment, and the inside of the heavens; light doesn't transfer from beyond it through it

Openings in the Curtain (Acts 7; Revelation 4)

- Acts 7 is the third and final honest opportunity God gave Israel to change their mind about crucifying their Messiah; Stephen sees the Son of man standing on the right hand of God because God opened the heavens
- That signaled the fifth installment in Israel's fifth course of punishment was set to begin; revealed was the temporary suspension of His program with Israel, the mystery of Christ, the information about and for this dispensation of Gentile grace

Open Firmament, Closed Firmament, Three Heavens

- The second day divides the environment around the earth into the open firmament of the heaven and, by implication, the closed firmament
- The open firmament, which for now is referred to as our atmosphere, is where the fowl fly; "closed" is a word supplied here, used by implication for the section where the sun, the moon, the stars are — a double curtain concept
- Picking up Paul's nomenclature (II Corinthians 12): the open firmament is the first heaven, the closed firmament the second; the third heaven is God's own realm, all light, with paradise a particular spot in it

L4

The Purpose of the Earth: God's Residence *Job 37; Genesis 1:2; Deuteronomy 32:11; Isaiah 40; Psalm 68; Hebrews 11; Ezekiel 40*

Why God Created the Earth

- The Earth is the most important piece of real estate to God because of His plan and purpose for it; the key central issue in biblical Earth science is why

the Creator created it

The Spirit Fluttering over One Spot

- The earth didn't become without form and void; it was that way, and God deliberately started it off that way, doing it over a period of six days for the angelic realm that's up there with Him
- God through His Spirit is laying the beams of His chambers in the waters — like driving pilings into the terra firma — foundation material for a big building complex to come down on
- His chambers are up with Him in the third heaven; His intention is to bring that down and set up His residence on the Earth

The Hill of God and the City Abraham Looked For

- The spot God chose for His house is within the border confines of the land given to Abraham and his seed; the beams for God's chambers are at the hill of God (Psalm 68)
- Abraham was not looking to go to heaven; he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God — the heavenly Jerusalem

L5

Formed to Be Inhabited by Himself *Genesis 28; John 1; Revelation 21; Isaiah 45:18; Genesis 1:9–10; Psalm 95; Proverbs 8*

Replicating the Third-Heaven Environment

- God formed the earth to be inhabited by Himself in particular; in forming it He was replicating, duplicating the environment He has with Himself in the third heaven

Genesis 28: Heaven's Business Conducted from the Earth

- Jacob sees in visual form the meaning of the Abrahamic covenant: he sees a ladder set up, extending itself up to heaven, and the angels' place of origin and return is the earth

John 1 and Revelation 21: The Purpose Fulfilled

- In the gospel accounts the King would function first as the Redeemer, then in the day of His wrath as Israel's deliverer and avenger; then He establishes Himself as the King and functions as Israel's blesser
- Nathanael will see the very thing Jacob was given to see — but not until this dispensation of grace, brought in unprophesied and unexpectedly, is concluded and God resumes His program with Israel

Without Form and Void; Isaiah 45:18

- "He formed it to be inhabited" is taken at the end of creation, day six, not day one — inhabited not simply by men but by Himself; in their moaning and groaning it's as if Israel were forgetting what God created the earth for

Features on the Blueprint (Proverbs 8)

- The environment now created on the earth is ready for the heavenly Jerusalem to come down to its counterpart environment and for Him to take up His residence

L6

God Replicates His Third-Heaven Environment on Earth *Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; Revelation 4 and 21; Psalm 148; Psalm 78: Mountains, Stones, Waters, Plants and Eden*

Replicating His Environment on the Earth

- The shaping, forming and environmental decoration of the six days of creation and making is God replicating His environment in the third heaven on the earth, consistent with His plan and purpose to establish His residence on it

Mountains with God (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28)

- In Isaiah 14 one of the thrones Lucifer speaks of is on a mountain in the third heaven, not on the earth; the Most High has three thrones there in connection with the three persons of the Godhead

Stones of Fire and Precious Stones (Ezekiel 28)

- When Ezekiel 28 describes Satan in "Eden the garden of God", with the stones of fire and the holy mountain, it is in the third heaven; the stones of fire are real stones

The Heavenly Jerusalem and the Throne Room (Revelation 21 and 4)

- God is going to bring His residence down onto the earth in the land of Israel; the materials of the heavenly Jerusalem existed in the third heaven before God created the earth

Waters and Plants in the Third Heaven (Psalm 148; Psalm 78)

- The "waters that *be* above the heavens" (Psalm 148) are not the clouds around the earth but waters in the third heaven; water features on the earth match water features there

Eden, the Garden of God

- Earthly Eden, where God planted the garden eastward, replicated the section of the third heaven called Eden with His garden and palatial residence in it — the place Paul cites in II Corinthians 12, Paradise

L7

Paradise in the Third Heaven, Replicated in Eden *II Corinthians 12; Genesis 2:4–15; Ezekiel 28: the Eden Paradise Issue*

Paul Caught Up into Paradise (II Corinthians 12)

- Paul was caught up to God's very realm, the third heaven — not simply the atmospheric heaven or the closed firmament of the second heaven
- The third heaven is made up of a lot of places and buildings; Paul identifies the particular place as paradise — he was "caught up into paradise" and "heard unspeakable words"
- Some say God moved paradise from the earth to the third heaven; it did not move up — God has always had paradise there, and it was replicated down here

Genesis 2 Loops Back to the Sixth Day

- On the sixth day God replicated on the earth the paradise He has in the third heaven, naming the place Eden — the very name He has up there; the angels were being educated in exactly what He was doing
- Genesis 2:8 is the first time the word Eden appears; the garden is a portion of a large district called Eden, and the understanding here is that the district corresponds to the size He has up there with Himself in the third heaven

"Eden the garden of God" (Ezekiel 28)

- "Eden the garden of God" in Ezekiel 28 is the paradise in the third heaven — the one Paul was caught up to; the one on the earth was a replication of it

L8

From Void to Populated: Creatures with Heavenly Counterparts

Genesis 1:20–25; 2:19; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1; II Kings 2 and 6; Psalm 68: Fowl, Living Creatures and Horses of Fire

From Void to Populated (Genesis 1:20–25)

- The fowl fly in the “open firmament of heaven”, the first heaven; beyond that is closed, and they do not fly in the closed firmament

Seraphims, Cherubims and the Living Creatures

- God had winged creatures that fly in the angelic realm before He created winged creatures that fly on the earth; the seraphim and cherubim angels have wings and can fly
- When God created the lion there was already an angelic creature whose face was like a lion; earthly creatures replicate the appearance and capacities of creatures God already had with Him in the third heaven

Horses of Fire in the Angelic Realm (II Kings 2 and 6)

- Scripture several times speaks of horses in the angelic realm — not horses of flesh, and twice called horses of fire; when the horse of flesh was created on day six, there were already horses in the third heaven

Earth Modeled After Heaven

- The first essential piece of knowledge in basic earth science is that the earth is designed and purposed by God to be His residence; understanding this lets us appreciate what the third heaven is like
- The dispensation of Gentile grace is in effect now, and if it continues long enough we will die before the rapture; this gives appreciation for what those who have died in Christ are experiencing, absent from the body, present with the Lord

L9

God’s Stories in the Heaven: the Heavenly Places

Psalm 115; Amos 9:6; Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 1:21; Job 38; Daniel 10: the Closed Firmament and Its Ranks

Biblical Astronomy: the Closed Firmament

- The word closed is supplied here: Genesis 1 has the open firmament of heaven around the earth, where the fowls fly, which indicates that beyond that is closed
- The realm of the sun, moon, stars and planets, bounded by the curtain effect and mirror effect, is the second heaven; God sealing that area off was a protection for the earth and for men on it

“the heavens, *are* the LORD’S” (Psalm 115:16)

- In our epistles, Romans through Philemon, with the revelation of the mystery of Christ, some things about the heavenly places can now be talked about freely

He “buildeth his stories in the heaven” (Amos 9:6)

- In Amos 9:6 stories means the stories of a building; as Noah’s ark had lower, second and third stories, the universe has three basic stories — the first, second and third heavens
- Within each enumerated heaven there are also layers or stories; the second heaven has various levels or stories out to the curtain effect, and Paul talks about the ranks of governmental authority occupied by angelic beings in the

heavenly places

Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers (Colossians 1; Ephesians 1)

- God's goal with Israel is the repossession of the earth from the usurper; the revelation of the mystery declares He will repossess the heavenly places too — Satan sealed his doom by his own pride because God kept a secret
- In Ephesians 1:21 "every name that is named" means titles given to positions; there are at least five recognized territorial ranks — principalities, powers, thrones, mights and dominions

L10

The Heavens and Earth of Old and Now *II Peter 3; Genesis 7:11; Job 38: Part A at the Flood, Part B in the Day of the Lord's Wrath*

Peter Writing to the Remnant (II Peter 3)

- In II Peter, Peter writes to the members of the remnant of Israel with the 5th installment of the 5th course of punishment — the day of the Lord's wrath — in view
- The scoffers of II Peter 3:4 aren't denying creation: they believe in creation and know the fathers, but scoff at the promise of the Lord's coming; taking them otherwise is out of context
- Their problem is a denial of what the prophets said, developing from ignorance of the intervening dispensation of grace that has suspended their program; the information is right in front of them, but they are willingly ignoring it

Part A and Part B Against Ungodliness

- Peter describes the Lord's judgment upon the ungodliness of this world in two stages: part A took place at the flood, and part B is the day of the Lord's wrath

The Heavens and Earth of Old and Which Are Now

- From creation until Noah's day are the heavens and earth of old; God did not annihilate them and recreate brand-new ones, but an alteration took place that would prevent that kind of world from existing again, at least on the same scale
- At the flood God made a reservation: "the heavens and the earth, which are now" are "reserved unto fire" (II Peter 3:7) — part B of God's judgment against the ungodliness of men

Part B: the Heavens and Earth That Are Now

- When the day of the Lord's wrath comes following this dispensation of grace, with the resumption of God's program with Israel, the heavens and earth that are now will suffer again; the windows on high open again

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Building Terminology, Not Language of Accommodation

Building terminology for the earth and the heavens is not language of accommodation: God is a maker and a builder, and the foundations, pillars, windows, doors and stories are descriptive of the building the heavens and the earth are. The heavens of creation are a curtain stretched out between the third heaven of God's own abode and the earth; they keep the light on God's side from penetrating our side and keep us from seeing through to His side.

The Three Heavens

Using Paul's nomenclature from II Corinthians 12: the open firmament is the first heaven, the closed firmament (a word supplied here, by implication) the second heaven, and the third heaven is simply the realm God dwells in — all light. The universe has three basic stories — the lower first heaven, the second heaven and the third — and within each of these heavens there are also layers or stories.

Open Firmament vs. Closed Firmament (Closed by Implication)

The second day gives a division and separation of the heaven environment around the earth. The firmament around the earth is divided into two realms: one called the open firmament of the heaven, and the rest — even though it is not called the closed firmament — "by implication" to be understood as the closed firmament of the heaven. The word closed isn't used; it is supplied here, by implication, for the section of the firmament where the sun, the moon and the stars are.

The Earth: God's Residence, His Third-Heaven Environment Replicated

The key central issue in biblical earth science is why the Creator created the earth: He created it to exist in the midst of His creation as the place of His residence. In forming the earth God replicated the environment He has with Himself in the third heaven — mountains and hills, waters, plants, precious stones, and Eden with His garden — so the heavenly Jerusalem can come down to its counterpart environment.

The Heavenly Places: God's Goal with Israel and the Revelation of the Mystery

In our epistles, Romans through Philemon, with the revelation of the mystery of Christ, some things said about the heavenly places can now be talked about freely. God's goal with Israel is the repossession of the earth from the usurper; the revelation of the mystery declares He will repossess the heavenly places from the usurper too.

The Heavens and Earth of Old vs. the Heavens and Earth Which Are Now

From creation until Noah's day are the heavens and earth of old; the world that then was perished, but God didn't annihilate the heavens and earth — an alteration took place so that kind of world could not exist again, at least on the same scale. At the flood God made a reservation: the heavens and earth which are now are reserved unto fire — part B of His judgment against ungodliness, the day of the Lord's wrath, which comes following this dispensation of grace.

Key Scripture References

Genesis 1:1–2	The heavens stretched out as a curtain block God's light, so the darkness is natural; "the earth was" — it didn't become without form and void
Genesis 1:6–8, 14–20	The heaven around the earth divided: the open firmament, where the fowl fly, and by implication the closed firmament, where the sun, moon and stars are
Genesis 2:8	The garden is a portion of the district called Eden; God replicated the paradise He has in the third heaven in Eden and called it the very same thing
Genesis 7:11	Two realms emit water: the fountains of the great deep on the earth and the windows of heaven
Job 38:1–7	God built the earth; creatures who are part of the angelic realm saw God do it (verse 7)
Psalm 104:2–3	God covered Himself with light as a garment; the heavens stretched out like a curtain; the beams of His chambers laid in the waters on the first day
Psalm 115:16	Bears on the limited knowledge God gives about the second heaven, the closed firmament (a word supplied here, by implication)
Proverbs 8:22–31	Wisdom personified; it is as if God spent time at the architect's desk on the drawing board and had drawn up the plans; the compass set to a predetermined measurement; a special emphasis on the habitable part of his earth
Isaiah 45:18	"he formed it to be inhabited" — taken at the end of day six, not day one; inhabited by God Himself, not simply by men
Ezekiel 28:13–14	Eden the garden of God is the paradise in the third heaven, the one Paul was caught up to; the holy mountain of God and the stones of fire are in the third heaven also
Amos 9:6	"he that buildeth his stories in the heaven" — a building with stories, the earth like the ground floor; the universe's three basic stories
II Corinthians 12:2–4	Paul's nomenclature of the third heaven; paradise is the particular spot in it, always there
Colossians 1:16	Thrones, dominions, principalities, powers: positions of governmental authority, visible on the earth and invisible in the closed firmament (by implication)
I Timothy 6:16	No man has seen Him dwelling in light: the curtain is there, and God isn't opening it in this dispensation of grace
II Peter 3:5–7	The world that then was perished at the flood; the heavens and earth which are now are reserved unto fire — part B
Revelation 21:10	The heavenly Jerusalem, built in the third heaven, comes down to the earth; God replicated His environment so it would not look out of place