COSMOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT WORLD-VIEW

The significance of ובש and יקנ in the Hebrew Scriptures.

C.J. Gousmett

A Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of Hebrew 303 at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

August, 1982.
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
A. Theme of the study. 3
B. Scope and content. 4

CHAPTER ONE
A. Etymology and meaning of פֶּה 8
B. "As the heavens above for height..." 9
C. The creation of the heavens. 10
D. The heavens as enduring and as being replaced. 11
E. Heaven as the habitation of God. 13
F. The phrase "heaven of heavens". 14

CHAPTER TWO
A. The firmament. 18
B. The meaning of the root יָפַר and its derivatives. 18
C. The concept of a metallic heaven. 19
D. The LXX translation of יָפַר by στέρεωμα 20
E. The use of στέρεωμα in other Greek literature. 21
F. The purpose of the firmament. 22
G. Relationship of פֶּה to יָפַר 23

CHAPTER THREE
A. Rain and the "windows of heaven" in the Old Testament. 28
B. The cosmic ocean. 29
C. Rain prior to the Flood. 30
D. Rain sent and with-held by God. 31

CONCLUSION. 35

APPENDIX 38

BIBLIOGRAPHY 40

The illustrations are from a Medieval manuscript of the "Christian Topography" of Cosmas Indicopleustes, as reproduced in "The Dawn of Modern Geography", Beazley, C R, 3 Vols, New York, 1949.
INTRODUCTION

A. Theme of the study.

Many Bible Dictionaries, Encyclopaedias and commentaries which seek to explain the views of the Old Testament contain representations of a cosmology which uses primitive and naive terminology to describe the universe. It commonly contains such elements as a flat earth, which is covered by a solid dome of metal, surrounded by the primeval waters. This dome has windows through which the waters are let down as rain upon the earth, and it is supported by the mountains, acting as pillars around the edge of the earth-disc.

However, while a number of Biblical texts are adduced for this cosmology, it appears that many of them do not support the views they are claimed to, and that a number of details of this cosmology remain unsupported by any texts whatsoever, in spite of their frequent repetition. ¹

The cosmology supposedly based upon these texts has a very rigid and static character, which does not rest easily with the rest of the Old Testament representation of the world as vibrant with the activity of God, in many cases spoken of in an animated and anthropomorphic way.

The heavens are telling the glory of God; ¹⁻²
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words,
their voice is not heard;
Yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

It has been expressed also by another writer in this way:

The principal error of conventional representations of the ancient Near Eastern view of the world lies in their profanity, transparency and lifelessness. In the Biblical and ancient Near Eastern conception, the world is open and transparent to things above and beneath the earth. It is not a lifeless stage... The powers which determine the world are of more interest to the ancient Near East than the structure of the Cosmic system. ³
The exegesis of the texts used to support such a system will be critically examined, since it is the contention of this paper that such exegesis is often both superficial and scanty, in spite of the implications which are built upon such exegesis. The texts will be discussed with a view to obtaining a more satisfactory exegesis which is in harmony with the dynamic character of the creation as it is presented throughout the Biblical text.

B. Scope of the study.

The terms most commonly used in the Old Testament when referring to "the heavens" are יָרָם (419 x) and יָרָן (17 x). In studying the cosmology based on the exegesis of the Old Testament these two words are thus of primary significance. Since it is intended to clarify those aspects for which these terms have the greatest significance, this study will be limited to the concepts which are related to "the heavens". It will cover the nature of "the heavens" as conveyed by יָרָם and יָרָן: the "windows", "doors" and "gate" of the "heavens"; the "waters above the heavens" and their relationship to the Flood narrative, and the Old Testament understanding of rain and clouds.

Since an intrinsic part of the Old Testament understanding of the world is its relationship to God, firstly as Creator, then as the one who maintains all things in their proper order, the study will include discussion of the conception of the creation of "the heavens".

The passages to be discussed in detail will be restricted to the ones which have specific bearing on the concept of an Old Testament cosmology, although the usage of יָרָם and יָרָן in other contexts will be discussed where appropriate. Usage of יָרָם falls into only a small part of the O.T. text, in a few contexts scattered at wide intervals, apart from a few isolated instances. A number of books fail to use either of these words, namely Ruth, Esther, Song of Solomon, Obadiah, Micah and Numbers. Other books make use of them in limited ways, for instance the standard phrase found in the book Ecclesiastes יָרָם נַפְרַת.

Other words to be discussed include those used as synonyms for the main terms, and those words commonly found in a construct relationship with them. These latter will be discussed as a group in the appropriate context, and not as individual occurrences, as
they are usually standardised phrases with little variation in meaning.

Passages to receive detailed study include Genesis 1, since the creation of the "firmament" as described there is crucial for the exegesis of later occurrences. The Flood narrative is important for the discussion of rain and the concept of rainfall, and much of the material discussing this draws on the material in Genesis 1 just referred to. Job and the Creation Psalms have a large number of references which are important for this study, and many other Psalms as well as extensive sections of Isaiah, make significant contributions to the topic. In the Torah, apart from the early chapters of Genesis, Deuteronomy is the most significant in this regard, and in the Former Prophets the Books of Kings are most important. Of the Latter Prophets, Isaiah is the most important, although except for Obadiah and Micah, all the other Prophetical Books make contributions of some kind.
NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. E.g. the comment made by W G Lambert "Views put out as plausible conjectures at the end of last century have, by frequent repetition, become endowed with canonical status." A new look at the Babylonian background to Genesis, p 291

2. Psalm 19: 1-4 (RSV translation.)

CHAPTER ONE

AND ITS MEANING IN THE O T.

THE PLANS OF COSMAS.

v. The universe, according to Cosmas, with the Walls and arch of Heaven. Above, the Creator surveying His works. The rising and setting sun are moving round the great mountain in the north.
A. Etymology and meaning.

The etymology of יְרָעַ֫י is obscure. One suggestion is that it is the noun יַיִ֫ה with the relative particle -אָ֫י attached, meaning "place of water" or "source of water", i.e. rain. This derivation has generally been rejected as erroneous. ¹ The other possibility is that it is derived from a root such as נָמַל or נָמַד or נָמַל. This root (יָנֶנ) may be related to the Akkadian "cover" ² or it may have a meaning of "high" or "lofty". ³ That this is the most appropriate meaning is shown by the usage, and will be discussed in detail below. The first derivation mentioned seems to take for granted the idea of a heavenly ocean to which יְרָעַ֫י is related by means of the noun יַיִ֫ה. Since this is a debatable assumption, and is rejected in this study, the latter meaning of "heights" is accepted.

The form of the word has received as much attention as its etymology. There is considerable agreement however that it is a plural of extension, and this view is supported by von Rad ⁴ Gesenius-Kautsch ⁵ Jouon ⁶ and others. The dual form is explained by Gesenius ⁷ and Jouon ⁸ as the influence of the tone syllable on the otherwise long plural ending, which has thus been shortened.

A number of scholars ⁹ claim that the plural (or dual) form has a multi-layered cosmology behind it, referring to a number of heavenly spheres. In this view, יְרָעַ֫י יַיִ֫ה refers to the top-most layer of the heavens, but this view makes some major assumptions which are not warranted by either derivation or usage.

It is accepted here that יְרָעַ֫י has the meaning of "heights", and that the form is a plural of extension, and so this study will use the basic meaning of "lofty expanse" and thus try and combine these two elements in the one phrase.

The range of usage for יְרָעַ֫י covers a wide field. It refers not only to the realm where the sun, moon and stars are found, but also to the immediate space above the earth. It is the place where God dwells, and by periphrasis in later texts it refers to God himself. This diversity of meanings would appear to warrant "lofty expanse" as suitable in all these situations, with however one or other aspect of this phrase predominating in most situations; thus God is said to dwell "on high", while birds fly in "the expanse". The usage for each aspect will be discussed as the study proceeds.
B. "As the heavens above for height".

The above phrase is often used to describe something lofty in a comparison. It has both a physical application, such as city walls (Deut 1:28) and metaphorical ones, such as pride and arrogance (Isaiah 14:13). It refers to things out of man's reach, often in contrast to רמך or to the depths of the earth (Job 11:8, Psa 139:8, Prov 25:3, Amos 9:2). This form of comparison also appears in descriptions of unlimited scope, such as in blessings (Gen 49:25), of the sovereignty of God (Deut 4:39), and in proscription of images of anything found in any place (Deut 5:8). By conjoining "in the heavens above" and "in the earth beneath", sometimes also "in the water which surrounds the earth" an unlimited scope is provided for. It is used in the superlative sense, e.g. the waves of the sea (Psa 107:25-26), the tower of Babel (Gen 11:4), the fortifications of the cities of Canaan (Deut 1:28, 9:1) and iniquity (Jer 51:53). It is used in descriptions of God's faithfulness to his people (Psa 57:10, 103:11) and his power and righteousness (Psa 71:19).

The ways of the Lord are higher than men's ways, as the heaven is high above the earth (Isa 55:19).

A frequently used synonym for הכס is הכס from the root הכס "to be high, exalted ", and it is used in this sense of the heights of the earth such as the mountains. It is used of the dwelling place of God (Isaiah 33:5, 57:15, Micah 6:6, Jer 25:30). God's salvation comes from on high (Psa 7:8, 92:8, 102:20) and there he hears prayer (Isaiah 58:4) and makes peace (Job 25:2), and from there he pours out his judgement (Lam 1:13) and his spirit (Isaiah 32:15). It is the place of his might (Psa 93:4) his righteousness (Psa 71:19) and from where he bears witness (Job 16:19) and takes captives (Psa 68:19).

Evildoers speak against the הכס, that is, against the God who dwells there (Psa 73:8). הכס is used in parallel with הכס in Psalm 148:1 and Job 16:19, thus showing their similarity in meaning.

The other meaning of הכס is spatial extent. There are frequent references to the "four corners of heaven" (e.g. Jer 49:36, Zech 2:6) and the "ends of the heavens" (Psa 19:6, Isaiah 13:5) giving the idea of distance. In the context of spatial metaphors, Job 11:8-9 combines several to describe the limitless nature of God.
It is higher than heaven, what can you do?
It is deeper than Sheol, what can you know?
It's measure is longer than the earth,
and broader than the sea.

Similarly the heavens and the stars are used as a metaphor for vast numbers. Apart from one instance, Nahum 3:16, where the Assyrian merchants are compared to the stars of the heavens, every use of הַשֵּׁמֶשׁ occurs within the context of the Abrahamic covenant, always in this form, although the original declaration of the covenant used only הָבִישׁ. In the Davidic covenant the corresponding comparison is with the הָבִישׁ עַז (Jer 33:22).

C. The creation of the heavens.

In Genesis 1:1 we have stated in simple terms the origin of all things in the creative act of God. There has been extensive debate concerning the relation of this verse to the rest of the chapter, and while space allows only a brief comment, it is important for the correct understanding of the following verses, especially 6 and 7 where the creation of "the heavens" is discussed in detail. It is the opinion of the writer that verse 1 tells the beginning of the entire created order, and then moves on to focus on the earth and the continuing activity of God to bring the earth into a suitable condition for inhabitants, especially man. 11 This is shown by the use of הָאָרֶץ in the rest of the O.T. as referring to uninhabited or uninhabitable waste places, especially in Isaiah 45:18 where הָאָרֶץ is used in contrast to נַחַל. 12 Occassionally הָאָרֶץ is used in other ways, but also bearing the meaning of "fruitlessness, of no account". (Isaiah 40:17, 29:21, 45:19) Thus while the earth was not a primeval chaos in the Greek sense, but was created complete and satisfactory, it needed further preparation by God to fit it for man. Not that God could not create it such instantly, but because his special concern for man is declared in this way.

Since the remaining part of the chapter from verse 3 on has as its focus the preparation of the world for man and other living things, the sense of "the heavens" in the rest of the chapter does not refer to the cosmic space of verse 1, but the atmosphere around the world, able to support life. נַחַל is used throughout the O.T. in this double sense of the furthest reaches of space, and the immediate
environment of man and other living things. The "birds of the air" יָאָהֲנָו הָיוּ are referred to frequently, and describes the environment in which they are most noticeably at home, and distinct from the other creatures (although it may sometimes include winged insects). Rosmarin claimed that the Israelites lacked the power to conceive of "air" since it could not be perceived with the senses. This has been shown false by Levine who shows that יָאָהֲנָו and יָהָהֲהָיוּ are the equivalent of "air" as that which one breathes, and that יָאָהֲנָו is what we relate to spatially and not as breath. So when we read of birds flying יָאָהֲנָו we are to understand a spatial realm rather than the element "air".

So then, the heavens, the lofty expanse which surrounds the earth, has its place in God's creative activities preparing a home for living things. This is strikingly shown in the image of the heavens as a tent, especially in Isaiah 40:21 where God "stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in." The heavens are said to be "stretched out" in a number of texts and the image of a tent being pitched may be present in these places where it is not explicitly stated. Apart from יָאָהֲנָו used in Isaiah 40:21, יָהָהֲהָיוּ is used both there and in eight other places where the creation of the heavens is described as a "stretching out". It is a common word for "pitching a tent" and may have these overtones in the conception of the creation as well. Verbs used for the creation of the heavens are listed in the Appendix.

D. The heavens as enduring and as being replaced.

Some scholars have maintained that the O.T. concept is of an eternal heaven, based on the verses studied below. However it seems apparent that they do not so much teach a permanence as a stability and security. The promises to the House of David indicate that the dynasty which God established through him would last "as the days of the heavens" (Psa 89:29). There is a parallel passage in Psa 72:2 referring to the length of the King's reign, which however will come to an end.

In Deuteronomy 11:21 the sojourn in the land of Canaan would be "as long as the heavens are above the earth" (but conditional upon keeping the Torah) and in a parallel passage to this, Deut 4:40 has
the phrase יִשְׁתַּקְוֹ לְ֥עַ with the force of "continuously" and not "endlessly". The idea here is uninterrupted time, not unlimited time. It is apparent that when the heavens are destroyed (i.e. in the Apocalyptic return of Christ) the promises which were made previously would no longer apply (Isa 65:17). However, until that Day, there would be no alteration of the Word which was given, and which He will uphold in His faithfulness (Psa 89:2,29,37 Psa 119:89).

The destruction of the heavens at the Apocalypse is described in several striking metaphors. They are like smoke which will vanish away (Isa 51:6) and a scroll which is rolled up (Isa 34:4). They are likened to a Garment which perishes וֹנַיָּבָר and wears out, and will be changed as a person changes his clothes. This implies a replacement, the heavens are not "destroyed" but "exchanged". One interesting view of the heavens as a garment (or perhaps a tent) is found in the LXX, which translates Job 14:12 "Till the heavens are no more" as "till the heavens become unstitched." In this verse the possibility of a man waking from death is associated with the destruction of the heavens.

The value of the promises based upon the stability of the heavens is not denied by their destruction, as it was shown above that these promises would hold only until the end of the present order, after which a new order would be introduced (Isa 65:17). Nevertheless there is an important element of continuity across the Apocalyptic Event: God will remain unchanged. This is shown in Psa 102:25-27.

Of old Thou didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They will perish but you will endure, they will all wear out like a garment, and they will pass away, But Thou art the same, and Thy years have no end.

There is also the continuity of God's relationship with his people, which is not affected by the transition. The promises made with the descendants of Abraham will be renewed and these will then be as stable as the new heavens.

For as the new heaven and new earth which I shall make shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your descendants and your name remain.

This is a possibility only because God completely transcends his creation and is unaffected by its changes. So while the present creation will be replaced, his mercy and salvation will continue through the transition and past that time (Isa 51:6).
E. Heaven as the habitation of God.

Heaven, מְדֵיָּה is seen as the habitation of God, although this is conditioned by the declaration that while God is "in heaven", the heavens are unable to contain him (1 Kings 8:27, 2 Chr 2:6,6:18) as the creature being so much less than the Creator cannot contain him. While God is said to dwell in heaven, it is clear that this is meant to describe his transcendence. In fact, so far from containing God, the heavens are considered his throne (Psa 2:4, 11:4, 103:19,123:1, Isaiah 66:1) and the earth then functions as his footstool (Isa 66:1) although the Temple is also considered his footstool (1 Chr 28:2, Psa 99:5, 132:7). Is the earth full of glory? It is merely God's footstool. Is heaven more glorious? It is merely his throne. The glory of God is above both heaven and earth (Psa 8:1, 19:1, 57:5, 11, 148:13) and even the heaven itself praises the greater glory of God (Psa 19:1, 50:6, 69:34, 89:5,97:6, 148:4 and Nehemiah 9:6).

Those who gaze at the starry host to worship them are condemned for substituting the worship of the Creator with worship of his creatures (Ex 20:11, Deut 4:19, 5:8, 2 Kings 21:5, 23:4,5) since the host of heaven is one of God's creations (Gen 2:4, Psa 33:6, 1 Chr 29:11, Nehemiah 9:6).

The heaven is the habitation of God (e.g. Deut 26:15, 1 Kings 8:30) and yet Solomon confesses at the dedication of the Temple "Behold heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built." (1 Kings 8:27). He continues to ask that God would be attentive to the prayer made there, not because God "dwells" in the Temple, but that when prayer is made "towards this place" (1 Kings 8:29,30) God would hear "in heaven". It is noteworthy that each time Solomon asks that God would hear "in heaven" it is in response to prayer made "in this place" or "towards this house". Thus the Temple was not a place for God to live, but a site for the cultic rituals to be performed and to act as a centre for the cult. In circumstances where the people are away from Jerusalem, God is asked to hear their prayers which are directed "towards the city which Thou hast chosen and the House which I have built for Thy Name", and that should they be taken into exile because of their sin, then would God please hear their prayers "towards the land which Thou gavest to their fathers, the city which Thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy Name.", hearing them still however "from heaven Thy dwelling-place". This is the reason for the practise of Daniel,
praying in his upper chamber with windows open "towards Jerusalem" (Dan 6:10) even though the House of God had been destroyed. This tradition was continued throughout the world-wide Diaspora.

While God dwells in heaven, he also transcends it, being the Lord of both heaven and earth, and distinct from them. Thus to maintain the transcendence of God, in terms of earthly perspective, he is in heaven and we are on the earth, and there is a sharp distinction made. In Psalm 115:15 we read

The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the sons of men.

Stadelmann points out that the distinction between the heaven and the earth is not one of kind but of boundaries. The Hebrews distinguished sharply between them, since it is the Lord who dwells on heaven while men are restricted to the earth. 20

F. The phrase "heaven of heavens".

The phrase שֵׁשֶׁת דְּמוֹן has been problematic for many scholars. It seems clear however that it is not referring to a multi-layered heaven, because of lack of support from the Biblical text. 21 It has been described as a superlative which expresses the totality of space above the earth 22 and the form is clearly a superlative. 23 Delitzsch suggested that דְּמוֹן refers to the immediate space above the earth, and that שֵׁשֶׁת דְּמוֹן refers to the space above that. 24 However Craigie maintains that it is an inclusive term, used in parallel with inclusive terms relating to the earth, as in Deuteronomy 10:14. 25

Behold to the Lord your God belong heaven, and the heaven of heaven; the earth and all that is in it.

It would refer then to the sovereignty of God over the whole of the universe, not only the various places, but also all the occupants of those places. However this term is used in only one other context where there is a direct parallel with another inclusive term (Neh 9:6) and one where such a usage could be implied (Psa 148:4). The other three references all deal with the transcendence of God and the incapacity of man to provide a house for him to dwell in. (1 Kings 8:27, 2 Chr 2:6 and 6:18) While the inclusiveness of the term may be implied here, it is not explicit and thus it is only a possible usage and not a definite meaning. The term must remain largely unexplained.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

6. _Grammaire de l'Hebreu Biblique_, § 91f.
7. Hebrew Grammar, § 88d.
10. That is, the seas. It has been contended that the phrase יַעֲקֹבְלָם יְקֵנָה יֵאָשָׁה refers to dragons which dwell in the subterranean waters (Gunkel) but comparison with the parallel passage in Deut 4:18 shows that the seas, with the fish and other creatures in it, are meant. It is also a common usage of יָטִר to refer to something "lower than" something else, e.g. Genesis 35:8, Deut 3:17, 1 Sam 7:11, 1 Kings 4:12, where in each case "underneath" would be inappropriate indeed nonsense.
11. Compare with the views of T Boman, _Hebrew Thought compared with Greek_, p 181.
12. E J Young, _Studies in Genesis_ 1, p 12.
13. This is confirmed by C Schultz who refers to Lev 11:20-23 where יִטְו obviously means winged insects. _TWOT_ Vol 2, p 655. In other usages of יִטְו יִטְו insects cannot be ruled out, e.g. Gen 1:30, Ezek 38:20. See also Ecc1. 10:20 and Prov 1:17.
15. E Levine, "Distinguishing 'air' from 'heaven' in the Bible, p 97.
18. Isaiah 66:22
19. 2 Chr 2:5 "Who am I to build a house for him except as a place to burn incense before him?"
22. Ibid, p 42.
23. Jouon, _Grammaire_, § 141.1
25. *Deuteronomy*, p 204.
CHAPTER TWO

AND ITS MEANING IN THE O.T.

THE PLANS OF OGSAN.
1. The World and the Firmament.
A. The firmament.

In discussion of the term יְבָנָא most commentators connect it with the translation equivalents of the LXX and Vulgate. While some claim that these terms, Στερεωμα and "Firmamentum", are mistranslations, others claim that they are accurate. Some writers have made unwarranted assertions on the basis of these terms. For instance, Isaac Asimov claims that "the Biblical term 'firmament' attests to the primitive belief of the sky as a 'firm' object, a solid substance." This claim is false, and it will be shown that neither the LXX nor the Vulgate had a "solid substance" in mind when the translators chose these terms.

B. The meaning of the root יִבְנָא and its derivatives.

The majority of scholars claim that the meaning of the root יִבְנָא from which יְבָנָא is derived, has the sense of "beating out, stamping, hammering, stretching or spreading out". It also is used of beating metal into thin plates for use as coverings for objects such as the altar of the Tabernacle. It is claimed on this basis that the root never has the sense of beating metal into a solid mass, but always has the sense of thinness or tenuity. In Exodus 39:3 metal is beaten out so it can be cut into strips so thin they can be woven into the material from which the priestly garments are made. On this basis יְבָנָא is claimed to have the meaning "something spread out," or "expanses." Alternatively, it is claimed to have the meaning of a metal bowl or dome, such as is made by beaten work and this is visualised as inverted over the earth to hold back the cosmic waters.

However Torczyner has shown that יִבְנָא has the sense of "strengthening" in all Semitic languages and he interprets the passages where it is claimed the meaning is "beating into plates" accordingly. He claims that it has the sense of "to strengthen something by putting a patch on it." Thus in Exodus 39:3, instead of the RSV rendition "And gold leaf was hammered out" he interprets it as "and they made patches of gold plates." Similarly in Numbers 17:4, "And they made them as patches for the altar." Isaiah 40:19 he reads as "The workman casts an idol and the goldsmith patches it over with gold." Aalders supports this with his claim that the use of יִבְנָא refers to the working of metal which is beaten out and used for a covering, for example on a wooden image. He suggests this
on the basis that the meaning of יָשַׁר is something stretched out in order to bind something else together. Thus Torczyner claims that יָשַׁר has the basic meaning of a patch used to hold something else together, and in support of this he adduces the Talmudic translation of יָשַׁר, that is תמיעת, "patch". The Talmud interprets Genesis 1:6 "Let there be a firmament: Let it be made like a patch" that is, תמיעת השמים. Thus evidently יָשַׁר in the MT has the sense of a patch used to strengthen the sky, meaning that the sky has water-vessels, i.e. clouds, which are strengthened by the patch placed under them, the firmament. Torczyner refers to Job 37:18 as one instance where this concept is used: "Can you with him patch up the clouds, strengthening them, like a mirror for hardness?" Another place where this concept appears is Proverbs 8:28 which reads "When he made firm the clouds above..." (הָעֵתָם גָּם הָאֵהל ) which refers again to the concept of the clouds being strengthened. Thus these two verses give explicit support for the interpretation suggested.

Terczyner's view with regard to several passages where יָשַׁר is claimed to mean "stamp with the feet", using the meaning of "beating out, hammering" such as Ezekiel 6:11 and 25:6, shows that the meaning "to wear patched shoes on the feet" as a sign of mourning is what is intended, and again in 2 Samuel 22:43 the meaning of a patch is intended.

C. The concept of a metallic heaven.

Based on the usual meaning adduced for יָשַׁר, it is claimed that the O.T. views the firmament as a solid metal dome or bowl which is inverted over the earth to hold back the waters. However the meaning of יָשַׁר shows that the function of the יָשַׁר is to be a patch strengthening the sky, and it does not refer to an object which is itself the strong thing. That is, the firmament gives strength to the sky, and it is the sky then which is strong.

The concept of a metallic heaven is not consistent with either the views of the O.T. or the surrounding cultures of the East. For the first point, the heavens are mentioned several times with the threat that they would become as metal (Lev 26:19, Deut 28:23) as a punishment for sin. This means that there would be no rain, and the earth would be barren and fruitless. If they conceived of the heavens as a metallic bowl, what would they make of this threat? It would be as if Moses had said, Your water will become wet. It is noteworthy that those scholars who
claim that the heavens are seen as a metal bowl never refer to these
two verses for support. There are also other problems in this regard.
If we are to take both at face value, what are we to make of the
transposition of the metals? In Leviticus the heavens are as iron
and the earth as brass, and in Deuteronomy the heavens are as brass
and the earth as iron. Obviously they cannot be taken literally, as
the concept is impossible to apply. Are they iron or brass? Also,
nobody has ever suggested that the earth was conceived of as metallic,
and yet this is demanded if the text is taken as to refer to a literal
metallic heaven. It is clear from the context that it is a sign of
judgement where the heavens become like a metal sheet, allowing no
rain to fall, and the earth is baked hard by the sun. With no rain
to soften the earth for ploughing and to water the seed, the Israelites
would suffer famine because of their sins. Had the Israelites
conceived of the heavens as a metal bowl, or a similar metal sheet,
then the appropriate word would not be יִטְפַּל' but נַחֲרָה which is used
in a number of places in the O.T. to refer to beaten metal work.

The second point mentioned above, that this is not a view of the
heavens consistent with the cultures of the East, is mentioned by
Stuhlmuebler who says it does not harmonise with either. Compare
also the opinion of Keel as quoted in the Introduction, and M. H. Schmidt
who says that such a concept is "kaum bekannt."

D. The LXX translation of יִטְפַּל' by στερεωμα

Most commentators claim that the LXX term στερεωμα means "solid
body or dome", although their response to this idea varies widely.
Some feel that this was not the meaning of the Hebrew term, quite
rightly, but others defend the LXX on the basis that the Hebrew means
the same, a "solid body or dome". This view is false. Also false is the
claim that the LXX terms means that; such claims are investigated in
detail in the next section.

Every time the MT uses יִטְפַּל' it is translated by στερεωμα in the
LXX with the exception of Daniel 12:3 which uses οὐρανος. However
this does not exhaust the usage of στερεωμα in the LXX. It is used
to translate מְרָא in Deut 33:26, מְרָא in Psalm 18:1, and מְרָא in
Psalm 71:3. The LXX translates the phrase מְרָא אָמַר (Exodus 24:10) by
στερεωματος του ουρανου. It is also used in Psalm 73:4 to refer to
the support of the wicked in their affliction, although there is no
counterpart in the MT for this phrase. It is used in Ezekiel 13:5 to translate (or paraphrase) בְּסֵנַפְלָה, "breaches", and in Esther 9:29 to translate בַּזְּנַפְלָה (Piel inf. of בָּזֵן, to confirm or strengthen.)

E. The use of στήρεσιμα in other Greek literature.

The use of στήρεσιμα in Greek texts other than the LXX can help shed light on its meaning. It is used in the NT with the sense of "making strong, strengthening" in reference to faith in Christ (e.g. Col 2:5, 1 Peter 5:9, 2 Tim 2:19, 2 Peter 1:12, Romans 16:25, 2 Thess 3:3). It is never used in the sense of "firmament of the heavens" in the NT. In other texts, apart from later Christian literature, στήρεσιμα never means "firmament of the heavens". 20 It is also claimed that the Latin term "firmamentum" takes on this sense only in Latin Christianity, for example in the Vulgate and the work of Augustine, "De Genesi ad litteram", II,i. 21 Apart from the LXX and dependent sources, στήρεσιμα means "making solid, strengthening or firming." 22 Others give it the meaning "solidity, firmness, foundation, keel of a ship, cube." 23 or again "basis, support, skeleton (as distinct from bones)." 24

Thus we see that the meaning of "solid vault of heaven" is not attested anywhere in Greek literature except in the LXX and derived (dependent) sources. 25 It has the meaning of a support, strengthen, or foundation, either for a seen thing such as a ship, or unseen things such as faith and truth. Thus στήρεσιμα is a support for something else, and acts as a foundation and strengthens and makes firm that which it supports.

This is also the meaning attested for "firmamentum" in literature other than the Vulgate and Latin Fathers, since it means "support, stay, prop." 26 It has been claimed that the development of the term στήρεσιμα in the Biblical context is influenced by its choice as the translation for עֵין in the creation story. G Bertram claims that the concept of the firmament derives from the ancient oriental cosmology which views the vault of heaven as an embossed bowl. 27 As a result of it's usage to translate עֵין, στήρεσιμα then acquires the new meaning derived from this cosmology, and like the Latin "firmamentum" it denotes the solid vault of heaven.

This is a totally circular argument, since it has been shown that στήρεσιμα has the sense of "firmament" solely in the LXX and derived
sources, and the evidence for this is presented by the same author. Thus in defining στερέωμα as it is used in the LXX it is claimed that the meaning is shown by its use in the context where άγαθός means the solid vault of heaven in the oriental cosmology. It should be clear then from this that άγαθός and στερέωμα both mean the same thing, but neither of them have the meaning "solid vault of heaven", and we should re-examine the usage of both "firmamentum" and στερέωμα in the early Christian literature. It seems apparent that such usage will also have the sense of "strengthening, supporting", and it is suspiciously like special pleading to claim that they have the former meaning only in the LXX and Vulgate and Patristic writers. It should also be clear that the use of στερέωμα to translate άγαθός is entirely appropriate, since it is shown above that άγαθός also means "strengthening.support" by means of applying a patch. The fears of scholars that the LXX was "contaminated" by Greek cosmology when it used στερέωμα are therefore unfounded. It has been shown that the Greek poets used totally different words to describe the heavens as a solid mass, i.e. σιδήρος "made of iron" as in σιδήρος ουρανός "the iron sky, the firmament, which the ancients held to be of metal" and χαλκίου, a (copper) vessel, kettle or πολυχαλκός, wrought of bronze, brazen. There is no attested usage of στερέωμα to refer to a metal dome which is unequivocal, and there seems to be no usage which demands this interpretation. Given then that there were such phrases as listed above used in Classical Greek literature such as Homer's poetry, which would have been known to the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria it seems unlikely that στερέωμα refers to such a metallic heaven, or that there was such a concept as part of the Jewish world-view of the time. The claims to apparent sense of the heavens as a dome are not acceptable as evidence, given no reference to such a perception. It is a conjecture without basis in the text. The use of the phrase "the face of the firmament" (Gen 1:20) reflects the impression of birds flying across the background of the sky.

F. The purpose of the firmament.

The firmament was created for the purpose of dividing the primeval ocean into two so as to allow the separation of the seas and the dry
land. There is no disputing that the "waters below the firmament" refers to the seas, but there are many who would claim that the "waters above" refers to a cosmic ocean; this is discussed in the next chapter. However the purpose is plain, to separate the waters into two. The term translated by "separate" (RSV) is יָדוֹרֵב. It is a hiphil participle, and has the sense of "Let it be dividing." implying permanence of function 38 which is itself a law of the creation 39 which cannot be broken. Westermann insists that the meaning of Genesis 1:7 is to describe the purpose and function of the firmament and not its nature. 40 Cassuto points out that the subject of the verb יָדוֹרֵב is God and not the firmament, as in v4 "And God separated the light from the darkness." 41 Thus God used the firmament as the instrument to separate the waters from the waters. In v 6 however, it is the firmament itself which is doing the separating, but this is not a problem since God initiated the separating of the waters and made the firmament as a permanent partition, to separate the earth from all that was beyond it. 42

The nature of the firmament as a "patch" to strengthen the heavens is seen in its function of separating the waters. Not only are the heavens made strong by the firmament, but in doing so they hold back the waters in the clouds and make them strong, so that they will release their burden at the proper time, ( Job 37:18 ). Thus the waters bound up in the clouds ( Job 26:8 ) are held up by the firmament so that the clouds are able to bear their burden. As Torczyner says, "it is this idea of the strengthening and solid patch below the vessels of water which is expressed particularly by the Greek word στερεώμα in translation of יָדוֹרֵב." 43

G. Relationship of יָדוֹרֵב to מַשָּׁל

It would appear that these two terms are largely synonymous although the limited usage of יָדוֹרֵב (17x) as compared to מַשָּׁל (419x) does not allow extensive comparison. In Genesis 1:8 the יָדוֹרֵב is called מַשָּׁל, thus showing a synonymous relationship. Cassutto states "The firmament is none other than what we designate heaven." 44 However it is clear from Genesis 1:14,15 & 17 that they are not identical: מַשָּׁל has the sense of "lofty heights" and יָדוֹרֵב has the sense of "strengtheners". This latter then is something which is a part of the sky above, and firms it up, but the two cannot be separated except in thought. Likewise in the LXX, the two terms στερεώμα and ουρανος
are there used as synonyms (and also in other Greek literature) in much the same way as the two Hebrew terms. 45

It can be seen then from this survey of הֵרֶף that the common understanding of it as "a metal dome" is false, and that the sense of a "strengthener" which makes the sky strong and patches up the clouds is more appropriate, and should be understood throughout the O.T. as implicit if not explicit, in the world-view of the Israelites.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

5. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
15. Ibid, p 195.
22. Liddell and Scott, op cit.
25. See however the use in Eusebius of Caesarea, Preparatio Evangelica, xi, 6, where he says "Again Moses calls the heaven in the Hebrew tongue "the firmament" (στερεωμα) etymologically, because the first thing after the incorporeal and intellectual essence is the firm and sensible body of this world." Eusebius : *Preparation for the Gospel*, Vol 2, p 555, Translated by E H Gifford.
27. Op cit, p 610. He claims that in Phoenician יָרָם means "embossed bowl" and the Hebrew root יָרָה he explains in terms of this cognate quoting Förhr as support.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
34. Arndt and Gingrich, op cit.
35. Liddell and Scott, op cit, p 1445. This is again used in Homer's Odyssey, πολυχαλκος ουρανος.
36. Mentioned by Prof. G Caird in his lecture to the Classical Society, University of Otago, 4th June 1982.
37. U Cassuto, Genesis, Vol 1, p 49.
40. Genesis, Vol 1, p 163.
41. U Cassuto, Genesis, Vol 1, p 33.
42. E J Young, Studies in Genesis I, p 94.
44. U Cassuto, op cit, p 31.
45. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon, p 1257.
CHAPTER THREE

RAIN, THE FLOOD AND THE COSMIC OCEAN.

THE PLANS OF COSMAS.
ii. The waters above and below the Firmament.
A. Rain and the "windows of heaven" in the Old Testament.

It has been commonly held that the Old Testament viewed rain as the "waters above the heavens", (i.e. a cosmic ocean above the metallic firmament) which fell through the apertures provided, that is, the "windows of heaven". That this is not correct can be seen by the use of the phrase נַפְנַפְתּ הַשָּׁמָיִם. There is no intrinsic relationship to rainfall in this phrase, indeed it is connected with rain in only one of it's usages, the Flood narrative, clearly unusual circumstances.

The word נַפְנַפְתּ occurs only nine times in the O.T., twice used of openings in houses (Hosea 13:3, Isaiah 60:8) once as a metaphor for eyes (Eccl. 12:3) and in every other instance it refers to the "windows of heaven". It is used once in a contract phrase with מַרְפָּא, a synonym used 8x in Isaiah and 18x in the O.T. for מַרְפָּא. In the remaining five instances, it occurs in the construct with מַרְפָּא. Three times the "windows" are opened (וַָנָפְתּ Niphal: Isa 24:18, Gen 7:11, Mal 3:10) once they are closed (וַָנָפְתּ Niphal: Gen 8:2) and twice they are made (וַָנָפְתּ: 2 Kings 7:2, 19 - although this counts as one usage since the second is a quotation of the first).

In each instance where נַפְנַפְתּ is in the construct with מַרְפָּא or מַרְפָּא something is said to come through the windows. In Genesis 7:11 and 8:2 it refers to rain, and in Malachi 3:10 it is a "blessing" (possibly implying rain, resulting in abundant crops). In 2 Kings, it refers to an abundant supply of food for the starving population. In Isaiah 24:18 there is no specific reference to anything coming through the windows, but since it is an apocalyptic event being described, it may well imply some form of judgement upon the earth.

Since it refers each time to an unusual quantity of something, (implied in Isaiah which speaks of unusually severe judgement) the concept has the meaning of an abundance being given. It cannot be seen as a literal description of a "window" in the sky, and has no intrinsic relationship to rain as such. Parallel to this is מַרְפָּא מַגְיָה where an abundance of food is supplied in the wilderness, again not a literal statement but referring to the giving of unusual quantities. (Psa 78:23)

One reason for rejecting a literal interpretation of the "windows of heaven" is that Elisha was asked whether God could "make" them, and not to "open" them, which would have been the case had the Israelites thought of heaven being equipped with windows already. (2 Kings 7:2)
Also, it has been pointed out that if ever there was a place where the rain coming through the opening of windows should be mentioned, it is 1 Kings 18: 44-45, where Elijah prayed for rain as proof of God's acceptance of the repentance of Israel. But instead as in every instance where rainfall is described, it comes from the clouds, which can be assumed throughout the Flood narrative, and indeed is mentioned in Genesis 9:13-16 as the source of the rain which fell at the Flood. It is clear that the Israelites did not conceive of any other source of water for the rain.

In another context, the lack of rain is seen as the "shutting up of the heavens" (1 Kings 8: 35-36) where God withholds rain from his people, but does not imply that the "windows of heaven" are closed so that rain cannot fall through, and there is no reason to think that clouds as the source of rain were not understood in this passage.

B. The cosmic ocean.

Since it has been shown that rain does not fall through literal windows in the sky, from the cosmic ocean, what are we to understand by the "waters above the heavens"? It has been maintained that after the splitting of the primeval ocean into two parts, the "waters above the heavens" persisted as a cosmic ocean. However it seems clear that the waters "above" the heavens are the rain waters contained in the clouds. This idea has been rejected by some who find that the word יָם means "above" the heavens and not "in" the heavens as the clouds appear to be. However this use of יָם as "on top of, upon" is not its only meaning. It also means "separated from" (Gen 13:11, Lev 4:31, 2 Kings 17:21, Isa 56:3) or "over against" (2 Chron 26:19b, 1 Kings 1:53, 13:4, Jer 36:21) or "away from" (e.g. 2 Kings 12:18(H 19), 2 Chron 35:15, 2 Kings 25:21, Isa 25:8, Jer 32:31, 37:5). So it can be seen that the use of יָם does not require translating "above" or "on top of" each time it occurs. Indeed in some passages it would make nonsense of the text. In Jeremiah 36:12 the princes are standing beside the King, not on top of him! Gesenius shows that it means "above" in Genesis 27:39 and 49:25 and not "from above". Holladay refers to Genesis 24:64 and Job 19:9 where it means "down from" and not "above" or "from above". In the context of the "waters above the heavens" it is unclear exactly what sense is intended by יָם although it clearly
seems to refer to the rain contained in the clouds. One support for this may be the use of יָם in parallelism with words for "clouds", e.g. יָם (8x) יָם (1x) & יָם (1x). Thus the waters are in the clouds which are supported by the firmament, which strengthens them to hold their burden. In this sense then, the rain water is "above" the heavens, contained in the clouds above the earth.

Explicit mention of waters "above" the heavens is used only in three places, Genesis 1, Psalm 148:4, and possibly in Psalm 104:2b-3a which seems to be a parallelism;

Who has stretched out the heavens like a tent, who has laid the beams of thy chambers upon the waters.

These references are usually interpreted as meaning a heavenly cosmic ocean, and yet such an interpretation receives no unequivocal support in any passage of the O.T. Psalm 104 seems to mean simply that the dwelling of God is not earthly, and thus is above the heavens, and above the clouds which contain the rainwaters. Such a meaning can be used in Genesis 1 and Psalm 148. 8

Some scholars have maintained that יָם refers to a cosmic ocean which broke in upon the earth at the Flood. 9 Since however this word is used only in the Flood story and in a reference in Psalm 29:10, which appears to be making an association with the Flood, there can be no independent support for such a theory which must depend ultimately upon conjecture and presuppositions concerning the Flood narrative.

C. Rain prior to the Flood.

It is debated whether the O.T. presupposes rainfall prior to the Flood. The debate concerns a number of points, two of which are;
- The meaning of the word יָם, the source of water which supplied the Garden of Eden, and
- Whether or not the Rainbow was a new phenomenon for Noah and his family.

With regard to the rainbow, it has been maintained that there were no rainbows prior to the Flood, otherwise they could not have had any covenantal significance, being an everyday phenomenon prior to the making of that covenant. 10 This then would mean that the survivors may have merely seen a new phenomenon and interpreted it as having a covenantal significance, since it was new and unusual. However the narrative records that the Rainbow was given this significance by God
speaking to Noah. It was chosen by God and set apart with covenantal significance. Thus it cannot be used as a proof that there was no rainfall prior to the Flood, as its significance lies in its being chosen and "consecrated to a sign and a pledge, and thus a new office is assigned to it." So as with other covenantal signs, its true significance can be known only by means of the Word of God.

The other problem is the interpretation of the word נָרָק, the source of water which nourished the Garden. It may mean either "mist, vapour" or "flood, river". Part of the argument against the meaning "mist" is that a mist rising from the ground and returning to it cannot increase fertility. The most suitable interpretation seems to be "flood, river" which wells up from the ground in springs. It may be a collective singular, thus showing how one source can give rise to a number of rivers which flow from different places, as well as other lesser streams which are not mentioned. It has been argued that the meaning of "river" does not suit the other occurrence of the word, in Job 36:27. However it is not impossible to read "river" here as meaning the cycle of water from rivers flowing to the ocean, being taken up into the clouds and falling again on the earth to replenish rivers and springs in the hillsides. This does not imply a concept of evaporation and condensation, but the simple observation that though the rivers ran continually into the sea yet it was not filled, (Eccl 1:7) and that rainclouds rose out of the sea, (i.e. from over the horizon) and carried their burden towards the land, (1 Kings 18:44, Psa 33:7, Jer 10:13, and Amos 9:6b).

D. Rain sent and with-held by God.

Thus after the Fall, the earth is watered principally by rainfall. This has been seen as instituted as a means of controlling man's environment to punish sin and to act as a corrective (Amos 4:7). The O.T. does not present rain simply as a "natural" phenomenon, but one which is ordered by God and used by Him both to bless and afflict his people according to their response in obedience to the Law— נָרָק. However this is not some magical system, but is the creational order which is under the control of God. Even when rain is with-held this occurs in harmony with the Israelites' experience of the phenomena (Isa 5:6b, Psa 78:23). When God brings rain to the earth this also occurs in a natural fashion (Psa 147:8), where the progression from
formation of clouds, the fall of rain and consequent growth is spelt out for us. When the rain comes late or is withheld, this is also seen in the context of seasonal variations. When the people walk in accordance with the Law, then the rain comes in its season. If they transgress, it fails to come at the expected time (Lev 26:3, 4, Jer 5:24).

The rain comes as a result of the command of God הָרִים (Isa 5:6b) and it is governed by a decree פָּח (Job 28:26) since the whole of the creation is ordered by the Law of God and is not a self-governing entity. (Job 38:33, Jer 31:35-36, 33:25). Thus the Israelites are exhorted to fear and obey the Lord, or to suffer drought and famine (Lev 26:19-20, Deut 28:23-24, 1 Kings 8:35-36). They are instructed to pray for rain (Zech 10:1) from the Lord who gives rain (1 Kings 8:35-36, 2 Chron 7:13).

The most important passages concerning rain as the gift of God are perhaps the polemics against idols. In a dry and arid country which is heavily dependent upon rain, gods which promise rain to their adherents will gain worshippers. The O.T. shows all these promises to be empty, as only the Lord can give rain (Psa 135:7, 147:7, Zech 10:1-2) and even the heavens of themselves cannot give rain (Jer 14:22). Rain is withheld because of sin (Jer 3:3, Amos 4:7, Hag 1:10) but will be restored on repentance (Hos 6:3, Isa 30:23).

While there are times when rain is withheld as a punishment, there are also occasions when it is sent in disastrous quantities or at the wrong time. The obvious example of the first is the Flood, Genesis 7-8, and the destruction of crops by hail in Exodus 9:25 (cf. Psa 105:32-33). Another instance is the judgement of Samuel on the people for refusing the Lord to reign over them and choosing Saul instead (1 Sam 12:17-18).

The promises of the O.T. covenants however, include the sending of rain at appointed times, provisional on the keeping of the Law by Israel. The entire Old Testament world-view shows that all the ordering of the creation is in the hands of God, and that his faithfulness will sustain it. Thus the promise never again to destroy the earth by a Flood can be trusted because of the covenant sign of the Rainbow established by God as his pledge to the earth, and because he has perfect control over all things in his creation. He will send the rain in due season, but he also retains the right to withhold it because of man's sin.
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. R L Harris, "The Bible and cosmology", p 15.
2. T Boman, Hebrew Thought compared with Greek, p 176.
5. E.g. E J Young, Studies in Genesis 1, p 90.
8. See also the discussion by F Delitzsch of the concept of a heavenly ocean in his commentary on Job, (9:8), Vol 1, p 149, where he rejects it as a "hazardous" explanation. He suggests that it means simply the waves which mount up on the sea towards heaven. ( Cf Psa 107:26 ).
9. E.g. Holladay, op cit, p 181; Koehler-Baumgartner, Lexicon, p 491; According to Stadelmann, op cit, p 47,note, this was first suggested in 1928 by J Begrich.
12. Ibid.
14. Harris, Cassuto, Speiser, Gaster.
15. U Cassuto, Genesis, Vol 1, p 103.
16. Against the views of Morris, The Genesis Flood, p 241, who suggests that this is the case.
17. See the discussion of weather in R B Y Scott, "Meteorological phenomena and terminology in the Old Testament", where he says that rain comes from the West with a cold front, ( p 12) or with the Westerly air flow ( p 13) from the Atlantic or from the North Atlantic across Europe. This is of course what Elijah's servant saw; rainclouds coming out of (over the horizon of ) the sea from the West.
18. In Zech 14:17-19 the nations (apart from Israel ) are punished by with-holding of their rain, if they do not go up to worship the Lord.
CONCLUSION

THE PLANS OF COSMAR.

iii. The World and the Pillars of Heaven.
CONCLUSION

This brief survey of some aspects of the Old Testament world-view has shown that many of the ideas supposedly present, and used to support the typical Encyclopaedia "cosmology" are in fact unfounded in the text. Many of the claims concerning the concepts of the Israelites need to be critically assessed as they lack adequate basis. Some important studies in this area have been made, but the full import of their conclusions has yet to be assessed, and the serious challenge they present to "Old Testament cosmology" has not yet been adequately acknowledged, let alone refuted.

It has been shown that the Israelites did not conceive of the world in the static terms of the Encyclopaedia diagrams, but as a vibrant entity under the control of God, its creator and governor. The question which the Old Testament seeks to answer is not "How are the parts of the world related together as a system?" but rather "What does this fact of creation mean for the world and for us in relation to God?" This raises the problem of terminology used in Old Testament studies. The sense of the word "cosmology" is: The study or understanding of the universe as an ordered whole, a system of related parts and features which can be described and mapped.

Given the lack of such a system in the Old Testament, a major conclusion of this study must be: The Old Testament does not include such a description of a system of the universe and to speak of an Old Testament cosmology is misleading and false. Nowhere do we find such a concern in the Old Testament, but instead we find an exposition of the relationship which God has with his world, and the relationship of the Israelites to God and the world which he has made, and which he governs continually by his laws. The ordinances of God control the events within the world, he sets the bounds upon the sea, he maintains the separation between the heavens and the earth. He controls the day and night, and governs the passage of the sun moon and stars.

Thus it is clear that while we can speak of the world-view of the Old Testament, we cannot with justification speak of an Old Testament cosmology, without drastically interfering with the meaning of the term. It would appear that this kind of speculation was foreign to the cultures of the Ancient East, and did not find a place among them until later influence from Greece. There is therefore a sharp distinction to be made between a "world-view" and a "cosmology", 

the first appears in the Old Testament, the second does not.

What then is the purpose of the discussion in the O.T. of the heavens and related concepts? The Old Testament seeks to expound the faith of the Israelites regarding the world and its Creator. The covenants and their provisions which are set forth show how this faith affects not only the social relationships of man but also his relationships to the rest of the creation, the very world in which he lives. The purposes of God are described in such a way as to indicate how man is to relate to the world about him, as he seeks to fulfil those purposes in his life. The Israelites then, are told what they need to know to fulfil this commission which they are given. They are told what the creation is all about.

They are not told, however, all about the creation. The O.T. does not seek to teach them science, and therefore does not give a speculative cosmology. Calvin said in this regard

He who would learn astronomy and other recondite arts, let him go elsewhere. Here the Spirit of God would teach all men without exception; ...it is the book of the unlearned. 1

This advice has been ignored, and the O.T. has been forced to yield a cosmology alien to its spirit and intent. Thus the O.T. has been derided by many because of its supposed foolish cosmology (cf the comment made by Asimov, Chapter 2, Section A). Modern man also needs to know what all things are about, to save him from a mere cataloguing of information about all things, lacking coherence and integrity.

Thus the conception of the heavens as presented to us in the Old Testament is still of importance today. We need to know what all things are about, to prevent us becoming lost in masses of detail, and to sustain the vision for life which is lived in the service and worship of God. We also are seduced by idolatrous spirits, and we need the polemical thrust of the Old Testament to declare to us once again that it is the Lord who made heaven and earth, the seas and the dry land, who sends the rain and gives growth to the living things which he has made. We need to recognise that he is the source of all things that fill the heavens and the earth, and He who fills all in all, Christ who came down from heaven and manifested in the flesh God’s covenant with creation which binds heaven and earth together for all time.
NOTE TO THE CONCLUSION.

APPENDIX

CREATION OF THE HEAVENS ; TERMINOLOGY USED

There is a wide range of terminology related to the concept of the creation of the heavens. Some verbs are used in many places, others only by some authors.

אני To strengthen (1x)
אר To create (5x)
спект To spread (emphasising space 1 - 1x)
ידע To appoint (1x)
כן To establish (2x)
חלל To complete (1x)
מד To measure out (1x)
שומ To spread (1x)
(cn) To extend (emphasising direction 2 - 1x)
ות To plant (1x) (Disputed reading, some emend to נפש 3)
עשה To make or fashion (22x)
בנה To create, aquire (2x)

NOTES TO APPENDIX

1. T.W.O.T. Vol 1 p 816.
2. Ibid.
   He amends it on the basis of the Syriac.
ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDD</td>
<td>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICOT</td>
<td>New International Commentary, Old Testament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDOT</td>
<td>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T W O T</td>
<td>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPEB</td>
<td>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY

REFERENCE WORKS

Arndt, W F and Gingrich, F W  A Greek-English Lexicon of the
Chicago, 1957.

Botterweck, G J and Ringgren, H (Eds.) Theological Dictionary of
the Old Testament, Grand Rapids, 1974 -

Theology, 3 Vols, Exeter, 1975.

Brown, F Driver, S R Briggs, C A  A Hebrew and English Lexicon of

Buttrick, G A (Ed.) Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 5 Vols,

Cremer, H A Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament

Gesenius, W Hebrew Grammar, Edited by Kautsch, E. 2nd English


Harris, R L (Ed.) Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, 2 Vols,
Chicago, 1980.

Hatch, E and Redpath, H A  A Concordance to the Septuagint and other
Greek Versions of the Old Testament, 3 Vols,
Oxford, 1897.

Holladay, W L A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old

Jastrow, M Dictionary of the Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi,
Midrashic Literature and Targumim, 2 Vols, New York,
1950.


Kittel, G (Ed.) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 Vols,


Koehler, L Baumgartner, W  Lexicon in Veteris Testamentum Libros,
Leiden, 1953.


Liddell, H G Scott, R  A Greek English Lexicon, Oxford, 1940.
Mandelkern, S
Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae, Tel Aviv, 1978.

Orr, J (Ed.)

Sophocles, E A
Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from BC 146 to AD 1100), New York, 1957.

BOOKS

Aalders, G C

Asimov, I

Barnes, W E

Boman, T
Hebrew Thought compared with Greek, New York, 1960.

Burney, C F

Calvin, J
A Commentary on Genesis, Trans King, J London 1965

Cassuto, U
Commentary on Genesis, 2 Vols, Jerusalem, 1961.

Craigie, P
Deuteronomy, NICOT, Grand Rapids, 1976.

Delitzsch, F

Dhorme, E

Driver, S R

Eichrodt, W

Epstein, I (Ed.)

Freedman, H

Gifford, E H

Girdlestone, R

Kaufmann, Y

Keel, O
The symbolism of the Biblical world, New York, 1978

Keil, C F

Koehler, L
von Rad, G  
Schiaparelli, G  
Schmidt, W H  
Speiser, E A  
Sperling, H, Simon, M (Translators)  
Stadelmann, L I J  
Stuhlmueller, C  
Wenham, G J  
Westermann, C  
Whitcomb, J, Morris, H  
Young, E J

Studies in Genesis 1, Philipsburg, 1975.

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Gaenssle, C  

Habel, N C  
"He who stretches out the heavens", Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol 34, No 4, 1972, 417-430.  

Harris, R L  

Hasel, G F  

Innes, D K  

Lambert, W G  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Journal/Publication Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michl, J</td>
<td>&quot;Heaven&quot;, Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payne, J B</td>
<td>&quot;γῆ&quot;, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 Vols, R L Harris, Editor, Chicago 1980.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>