

THE RAQIA

רָקִיעַ

The Firmament of Yahweh:

A Deep Study in Biblical Hebrew from the Tanakh

The Debate About Earth, the Waters Above, and the Architecture of Creation

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Assembly

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INTRODUCTION: WHY THIS STUDY MATTERS

There is a debate raging across the world — in living rooms, on internet forums, among scientists and laymen alike — about the shape of the earth, the existence of a physical dome called the firmament, and whether modern science has concealed the true structure of Yahweh's creation. At the center of this debate is a single Hebrew word:

רָקִיעַ (*Raqia*) — Firmament / expanse / stretched-out structure

This word appears exactly seventeen times in the Hebrew Tanakh. It is the second act of creation in Genesis 1. It appears in Ezekiel's towering vision of Yahweh's throne-chariot. It is invoked in the Psalms as the declaration of Yahweh's glory. It is the subject of Elihu's challenge to Job. And it is at the center of a modern controversy that touches on whether we are being told the truth about the physical world we inhabit.

This study does three things. First, it examines every occurrence of *raqia* in the Tanakh with rigorous Hebrew word study. Second, it presents all major scholarly positions on what the *raqia* is — honestly and without distortion. Third, it draws conclusions based solely on the authority of Yahweh's word as found in the Tanakh, applying covenant hermeneutics: letting scripture interpret scripture.

Miqdash Bethel does not shy away from the hard questions. If Yahweh created a physical structure above the earth, we want to know it. If modern institutions have suppressed that knowledge, we want to say so. If the text is more complex and layered than either flat-earth advocates or establishment scientists acknowledge, we want to demonstrate that honestly. The goal is not to confirm what we want to believe. The goal is to walk in *emet* — truth — before Yahweh.

SECTION I: THE HEBREW WORD רָקַע (RAQIA) — A COMPLETE WORD STUDY

The Root: Raqa (רָקַע)

To understand what the raqia is, we must begin with its verbal root. The noun raqia derives from the Hebrew verb:

רָקַע (Raqa) — To beat out, stamp, spread out, stretch — especially of metal

This verb appears eleven times in the Tanakh, and its usage pattern is decisive for understanding what the raqia is. The following are the most significant occurrences:

“They hammered out (raqa) gold into thin sheets.” — Exodus 39:3

“They hammered out (raqa) the copper censers into plating for the altar.” — Numbers 16:39

“He hammers out (raqa) silver from Tarshish.” — Jeremiah 10:9

“Can you, with Him, spread out (raqa) the skies, strong as a cast metal mirror?” — Job 37:18

The pattern is unmistakable. Raqa describes the physical process of beating, hammering, or stamping a metal — typically gold, silver, or bronze — into a thin, flat, spread-out sheet or plating. The end product is something thin, solid, and extended. When applied to the heavens in Job 37:18, the verb draws directly on this metalworking imagery.

Linguistic Finding: The Israeli scholar Nissim Amzallag of Ben-Gurion University concludes from this root study that raqia 'designates the firmament as a piece of metal.' The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon — the standard academic reference — defines raqia as 'the vault of heaven, regarded by Hebrews as solid, and supporting waters above it.'

Honest Note: Some scholars argue that etymology alone does not determine meaning — that 'board' in English now means a committee member, not a plank of wood. This is a valid linguistic principle. We must therefore examine raqia in every context where it appears to determine what the text actually intends.

All 17 Occurrences of Raqia in the Tanakh

Genesis 1:6–8 (Three Occurrences on Day Two)

“Then Elohim said: Let there be a raqia in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. So Elohim made the raqia, and separated the waters which were under the raqia from the waters which were above the raqia. And it was so. And Elohim called the raqia: Shamayim (Heaven / Sky).” — Genesis 1:6–8

This foundational passage establishes four things about the raqia beyond any reasonable dispute:

1. Yahweh made it. It is not a poetic figure. Elohim acts and produces a physical result.
2. It is located in the midst of the waters. Waters existed before it on both sides.
3. It separates the waters below it from the waters above it. There are waters above the raqia.
4. Yahweh named it Shamayim — Heaven / the Heavens. The raqia and the heavens are equated.

Critical Observation: Notice that the text does not say the raqia is a metaphor for atmosphere. It says Elohim made it, placed it, and named it. This is the same pattern used for the creation of physical entities throughout Genesis 1. The grammatical weight of the passage argues for a physical structure.

Genesis 1:14–15, 17, 20 (Four Occurrences on Day Four and the Birds)

“Then Elohim said: Let there be lights in the raqia of the heavens to separate the day from the night... And Elohim placed them in the raqia of the heavens to give light on the earth.” — Genesis 1:14–17

“And Elohim said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the living creature... and birds that may fly above the earth across the face of the raqia of the heavens.” — Genesis 1:20

These occurrences establish two more critical facts. First, the sun, moon, and stars were placed IN the raqia — not beyond it, not above it, but in it. If the raqia is the atmosphere, then the luminaries are atmospheric. If it is outer space, then outer space is the raqia. Second, birds fly 'across the face of' the raqia — not through it, but in front of it, on its lower surface. This is consistent with a structure above the atmosphere.

The Flat Earth Interpretation: Flat earth advocates point to the phrase 'lights in the raqia' as evidence that the sun and moon are embedded in a physical dome above a flat earth. This interpretation is internally consistent with the text as written, and it deserves an honest examination rather than dismissal.

Psalm 19:1–2

“The heavens declare the glory of El, and the raqia announces the work of His hands.” — Psalm 19:1–2

Here the raqia is poetically paired with the heavens as a witness to Yahweh's creative work. The psalmist sees the visible sky-structure as proclaiming Yahweh's glory. Whether the raqia is solid or expansive, the theological point is identical: Yahweh built it as a testimony to Himself.

Psalm 150:1

“Praise Yah! Praise El in His sanctuary; praise Him in the raqia of His power.” — Psalm 150:1

The phrase 'raqia of His power' or 'raqia of His strength' (raqia uzzo) identifies the firmament as an expression of Yahweh's might. The Septuagint translates this as the 'firmament of His power,' carrying the sense of a strong, stable structure.

Ezekiel 1:22–26 and 10:1 (Six Occurrences in Ezekiel's Vision)

“And over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a raqia, like the gleam of the terrible crystal, stretched out above their heads... And above the raqia over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man above it.” — Ezekiel 1:22–26

This is the most visually specific description of the raqia in the entire Tanakh. Ezekiel describes it as:

5. A likeness (demut) — meaning it is described via comparison, as in a vision. The word demut signals that Ezekiel is reaching for language to describe something overwhelming.
6. Crystal-like — the word used is kerahat, from kerach, ice. The raqia shimmers like ice or crystal glass.
7. Stretched out (natuy) over their heads — physically extended above the living creatures.
8. The platform/floor of Yahweh's throne — above the raqia sits Yahweh's throne of sapphire. The raqia is the floor of the heavenly throne room.

Structural Observation: Ezekiel's vision is the strongest textual evidence for a solid raqia in the entire Tanakh. A floor that supports Yahweh's throne must by definition be solid, stable, and substantial. The crystal/ice comparison strongly suggests a transparent yet physical surface. This is not metaphor for empty atmosphere.

Daniel 12:3

“And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the raqia, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” — Daniel 12:3

The raqia here is used as a standard of luminous brightness. The wise will shine like the raqia — suggesting the raqia has a shining, brilliant quality consistent with crystal, metal, or glass, not merely empty sky.

SECTION II: THE WATERS ABOVE — WHAT IS ABOVE THE RAQIA?

Genesis 1:7 is unequivocal: there are waters above the raqia. This is not a minor detail. It is stated as a physical reality by Yahweh's own creative act. What are these waters, and what do other Tanakh texts say about them?

“Praise Him, you highest heavens, and you waters that are above the heavens!” — Psalm 148:4

The psalmist commands the waters above the heavens to praise Yahweh. These are not clouds. This text distinguishes the waters above the heavens from all earthly waters and commands them to participate in cosmic worship. They are a distinct, real category of creation.

“Yahweh sits above the flood (mabbul), and Yahweh sits as King forever.” — Psalm 29:10

The Hebrew word mabbul (flood, or celestial ocean) here refers to the waters above — Yahweh is enthroned above the cosmic ocean that lies above the raqia. This is an explicit cosmological statement: Yahweh's throne is above a heavenly body of water, consistent with what Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1 establish.

“He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He rides on the wings of the wind.” — Psalm 104:3

The 'upper chambers' whose beams are laid in the waters — these are Yahweh's dwelling place above the raqia, whose structural foundations rest in the heavenly waters. This is a direct reference to the waters above the firmament as the medium in which Yahweh's heavenly palace is anchored.

“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life... all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.” — Genesis 7:11

The floodgates of the heavens — in Hebrew, the arubboth hashamayim, literally 'the latticed windows of the heavens' or 'the sluices of the sky' — were opened to release the waters above.

This is not merely heavy rain. The structure of the text implies a mechanism in the raqia: windows or gates that can be opened to allow the waters above to pour through. This strongly implies a physical, solid structure with openings that can be controlled.

The Flood Cosmology Connection: The account of Noah's flood in Genesis 6-8 makes no sense if the raqia is merely the atmosphere. The text describes the cosmic architecture that was in place before the flood — a solid raqia holding back an ocean of water above it. When those waters are released, along with the fountains of the deep below, the world fills like a container. This is the Hebrew cosmological model stated plainly by the text itself.

The Atmospheric Water Vapor Theory: Some scholars (particularly evangelical creationists) have proposed that the 'waters above' were a vapor canopy surrounding the early earth, which collapsed as rain during the flood. While this theory is sincere in trying to honor the text, it was largely abandoned because water vapor at sufficient density to produce Noah's flood would create surface temperatures incompatible with life. The text's plain statement remains: there are waters above the raqia.

SECTION III: WHAT DOES THE TANAKH SAY ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THE EARTH?

The question of whether the earth is flat or spherical is distinct from the question of the raqia, but they are intertwined in the current debate. We will examine every relevant Tanakh text with the same rigor we applied to the raqia passages.

Job 26:7 — The Earth Hangs on Nothing

“He stretches out the north over emptiness; He hangs the earth on nothing.” — Job 26:7

This is perhaps the most remarkable single cosmological statement in the entire Tanakh. The Hebrew is: *tole ha'aretz al belimah* — 'He suspends the earth upon nothingness.' In a world where every surrounding culture believed the earth rested on a foundation — the back of a turtle, the shoulders of Atlas, pillars of stone in the ocean — the Tanakh says the earth hangs on nothing. This is not a statement consistent with a flat disk resting on a foundation. It describes an earth suspended in empty space. This is scientifically accurate and was written centuries before any Greek philosopher proposed a similar idea.

Isaiah 40:22 — The Circle (Chug) of the Earth

“It is He who sits above the chug of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.” — Isaiah 40:22

The key Hebrew word is:

חוג (*Chug*) — Circle, vault, arch, circuit — from the verb 'to draw a circle with a compass'

This is the word at the center of the flat earth vs. sphere debate. Four things must be said about it with honesty:

9. Chug does NOT mean 'sphere.' The Hebrew word for a ball or sphere is *dur* (Isaiah 22:18 — 'He will toss you like a ball (*dur*)'). If Isaiah intended to say sphere, *dur* was available.
10. Chug DOES carry three-dimensional connotations. In Job 22:14 it is translated 'vault of heaven.' Brown-Driver-Briggs gives 'vault' as its primary meaning. Multiple 16th-century Latin Bible translations render it *globus* (globe) or *sphaera* (sphere). Modern Hebrew uses *chug* to denote a sphere.

11. A sphere seen from above appears as a circle. Even if chug strictly means circle, this is not proof of flatness. A ball and a flat disk both look like circles from above.
12. The context of Isaiah 40:22 is Yahweh's supreme greatness over all creation. The point is not to give a geometry lesson but to declare that from Yahweh's vantage point, the entirety of the earth is visible below Him — its inhabitants like grasshoppers. This is consistent with a spherical earth viewed from above, not with a flat earth where Yahweh would see one side but not the other.

Honest Conclusion on Isaiah 40:22: Isaiah 40:22 alone cannot conclusively prove a spherical earth, nor does it prove a flat one. Its primary meaning is theological, not geometrical. However, when combined with Job 26:7 (earth hanging on nothing), it contributes to a picture of an earth suspended in space that is far more consistent with a sphere than with a flat disk on a foundation.

Proverbs 8:27 — The Chug on the Face of the Deep

“When He established the heavens, I was there; when He inscribed a chug (circle/vault) on the face of the deep.” — Proverbs 8:27

Here the chug is drawn on the face of the deep (tehom, the primordial waters). This describes the act of Yahweh defining the boundary between creation and the cosmic deep at the moment of making. The verb for 'inscribed' is chaqaq — to engrave, to decree, to mark out. Yahweh draws the boundary of the world with a compass. This is consistent with the raqia as a boundary structure — the inscribed line where the waters above meet the created space below.

Job 38:4–6 — Yahweh Lays the Foundation

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements — surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone?” — Yahweh to Job, Job 38:4–6

This passage is used by flat earth advocates to argue that the earth has a foundation and a cornerstone — consistent with a flat earth resting on pillars. However, this language appears throughout the Tanakh as architectural metaphor for Yahweh's sovereign act of creation. The same books (Job, Psalms) that use this foundation language also contain Job 26:7, which says the earth hangs on nothing. These are not contradictory; they reflect the Hebrew use of architectural metaphor to describe creative power, not a literal blueprint.

Scripture-Interprets-Scripture Principle: The covenant hermeneutic principle that Miqdash Bethel applies is: let scripture interpret scripture. Job 26:7 and Job 38:4–6 are in the same book. They must be read together. Job 26:7 states physical reality; Job 38 uses

architectural metaphor to communicate sovereign greatness. A flat earth reading that takes Job 38 literally must also take Job 26:7 literally — and Job 26:7 says the earth hangs on nothing.

The Pillars of Heaven and the Pillars of the Earth

“The pillars of heaven tremble and are amazed at His rebuke.” — Job 26:11

“Yahweh's are the pillars of the earth, and He has set the world upon them.” — 1 Samuel 2:8

The Tanakh speaks of pillars of heaven and pillars of the earth in several places. In the flat earth model, these are literal physical columns holding up the sky and supporting the earth below. In the covenant-poetic reading, they are expressions of Yahweh's structural authority over creation — He is the foundation of all things, the One who holds up the structure of reality by His decree. Both readings must be taken seriously. The key question is: which interpretation is consistent with the totality of the Tanakh's cosmological statements, including Job 26:7?

SECTION IV: THE GREAT SCHOLARLY DEBATE — PRESENTED HONESTLY

To honor the emet (truth) principle of Miqdash Bethel, we present the three major interpretive positions on the raqia in full, without straw-manning any of them.

Position 1: The Solid Dome (Firmament) Interpretation

This is the consensus view of modern biblical scholarship. Its proponents include Paul Seely, John Walton, Peter Enns, and the majority of critical and evangelical scholars. They argue:

13. The root raqa always refers to beating out a solid material. The raqia is therefore a solid, beaten-out structure.
14. The LXX (the oldest translation, ca. 250 BC) renders raqia as stereoma — 'solid thing.' The Vulgate uses firmamentum. This 2,300-year-old translation consensus supports a solid interpretation.
15. Ezekiel 1:22's crystal-like raqia that serves as Yahweh's throne floor demands a solid structure.
16. Job 37:18 compares the sky to a cast metal mirror — a solid, hard object.
17. Paul Seely, the leading scholar on this position, concludes: 'With very rare exceptions the idea that the sky is not solid is a distinctly modern one. Historical evidence shows that virtually everyone in the ancient world believed in a solid firmament.'

Miqdash Bethel Assessment: This position takes the Hebrew text and its ancient reception history with full seriousness. It is exegetically strong. The weakness is that it does not grapple with Job 26:7 or the full cosmological picture of the Tanakh, and some of its proponents use it to argue the Bible contains scientific errors — a conclusion Miqdash Bethel does not accept.

Position 2: The Expanse Interpretation

This position is held by many conservative evangelical scholars. They translate raqia as 'expanse' (as in NIV, NASB). They argue:

18. Etymology does not determine meaning. Raqa can mean 'spread out' without implying hardness. Parallel texts in Isaiah (40:22; 42:5; 44:24) use related language to describe the heavens being 'stretched out' like a curtain or tent — thin and flexible, not hard.
19. Genesis 1:20 says birds fly 'across the face of' the raqia — not that there is something solid above them. The raqia is the atmosphere.
20. The LXX translators were working in Alexandria under Greek astronomical influence, which may have biased them toward a solid crystalline sphere. Their translation choice reflects Greek cosmology, not necessarily Hebrew cosmology.
21. Job 36:27–28 shows the Hebrews understood the water cycle — water evaporates and comes down as rain — which does not require a solid dome with windows.

Miqdash Bethel Assessment: This position takes Job 26:7 and the stretched-heavens passages seriously. Its weakness is that it struggles to account for Ezekiel 1:22's crystal-solid throne-platform raqia, the flood account's 'floodgates of heaven,' and the consistent ancient reception of raqia as solid. It sometimes reads the text through the lens of modern science rather than letting the text speak.

Position 3: The Covenant Space / World-Space Interpretation

This minority scholarly position argues the raqia represents the space or void Yahweh created between the primordial waters — not a solid dome and not merely the atmosphere, but the cosmic space in which creation exists. Its key proponent is Nicholas Petersen (Hebrew Cosmology Project). He argues:

22. Genesis 1 defines what the raqia is in its own terms: the space between the waters. It is 'world space' — the opened-up cavity in the primordial waters within which creation takes place.
23. The ancient Near East did not have a universal 'solid dome' cosmology — this is a Victorian scholarly reconstruction, not an established historical fact.
24. The Ezekiel raqia uses the word demut (likeness, resemblance) — signaling that even in the vision, Ezekiel is not describing a literal physical dome but something that resembles a spread-out plane.

Miqdash Bethel Assessment: This position offers a sophisticated reading that avoids forced choices between solid dome and empty atmosphere. Its weakness is that it may minimize the consistent solid-language cluster — crystal, cast metal, beaten out — that the text actually uses.

SECTION V: THE TANAKH'S OWN SYNTHESIS — WHAT WE CAN AFFIRM

Having examined all 17 occurrences of *raqia*, the related passages on the waters above, and the shape of the earth, Miqdash Bethel draws the following conclusions, grounded exclusively in the Tanakh:

What the Tanakh Affirms Beyond Reasonable Dispute

25. Yahweh made the *raqia*. It is a real structure created by a direct act of Elohim on the second day of creation. It is not a myth or a figure of speech borrowed from neighboring cultures.
26. There are waters above the *raqia*. Psalm 148:4 commands them to praise Yahweh. Psalm 104:3 says Yahweh's upper chambers are built in those waters. Genesis 7:11 says the floodgates of heaven opened to release those waters. These are physical, real, and persistent.
27. The *raqia* has structural, solid characteristics. The crystal/ice comparison in Ezekiel 1:22, the molten-mirror comparison in Job 37:18, and the root meaning of *raqa* (hammering out metal) all point to something with physical substance and solidity, not merely empty air.
28. The *raqia* is the floor of Yahweh's throne room. Ezekiel 1:26 places Yahweh's throne above the *raqia*. The *raqia* is the architectural boundary between the created order and Yahweh's dwelling place. This is a profound theological statement about the structure of reality.
29. The earth hangs on nothing. Job 26:7 is a plain physical statement that the earth is not resting on a foundation. It is suspended in space. This is consistent with a spherical earth and inconsistent with a flat earth on a foundation.
30. The *chug* (circle/vault/sphere) of the earth is Yahweh's footstool, below His throne. Whether this is a flat circle or a sphere, it is bounded, defined, and entirely within Yahweh's visual grasp from His position above it.
31. The *raqia* declares Yahweh's glory. Whatever its precise physical nature, its primary function in the Tanakh is doxological: it is the sky-structure that proclaims Yahweh as Creator and Sovereign. Psalm 19:1 says the *raqia* 'announces the work of His hands.' Every human being on earth looks up and sees this testimony.

What Cannot Be Resolved from the Tanakh Alone

32. Whether the *raqia* is a physical solid dome at a specific altitude, or a more diffuse structure, or the boundary layer between the created cosmos and the uncreated waters. The text does not give us its altitude or its material composition with precision.
33. Whether the waters above the *raqia* still exist in their original form or were primarily expended in the flood. Genesis 8:2 says the floodgates of heaven were shut, suggesting the mechanism still exists.

34. The precise meaning of chug in Isaiah 40:22 as circle vs. sphere. Both are linguistically defensible, and the theological point of the passage does not depend on resolving this question.

What the Covenant Framework Requires Us to Say About the Debate

“The secret things belong to Yahweh our Elohim, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this Torah.” —
Deuteronomy 29:29

This is the covenant epistemological principle. There are things Yahweh has revealed in His word, and there are things He has not revealed. Our task is to hold firmly to the revealed things and to walk in humility regarding the unrevealed.

What has been revealed: Yahweh made a raqia. There are waters above it. The raqia has structural reality and solid characteristics. The earth hangs on nothing. The sky-structure testifies to Yahweh's power and glory. All of this is certain.

What is genuinely debated: The precise physical nature of the raqia, whether it constitutes a dome at a specific altitude, and whether the earth is flat or spherical. Miqdash Bethel notes that Job 26:7 — earth hanging on nothing — is a strong text against a flat earth with a physical foundation, and that chug does carry three-dimensional connotations in Hebrew and Arabic. However, we also acknowledge that the flat earth reading of Genesis 1 is internally consistent with the firmament language and deserves a more honest hearing than it typically receives from establishment science.

On the Question of Suppression: Peter raises a serious and legitimate concern: are we being deceived about the nature of the created order? The Tanakh itself anticipates this question. Isaiah 28:15 condemns those who 'made a covenant with death' and 'with deception have made a pact.' Yahweh is the El of truth (Emet), and He does not need the protection of official scientific consensus. We are permitted — indeed required — to examine what we are told about the physical world against the plumbline of His word. Water does seek its own level. The horizon does not drop the way the curvature math predicts at close distances for some observers. These observations deserve honest investigation, not ridicule. At the same time, the Tanakh's statement that the earth hangs on nothing is not consistent with the flat earth model, which requires the earth to rest on something.

SECTION VI: THE RAQIA AS COVENANT ARCHITECTURE

The deepest layer of the raqia's significance in the Tanakh is not scientific but covenantal. Yahweh did not create the raqia to satisfy cosmological curiosity. He created it as part of the architecture of a covenant creation — a world structured for relationship between the Creator and His creatures.

The Raqia Declares Yahweh's Sovereignty

“The heavens are Yahweh's, but the earth He has given to the children of men.” — Psalm 115:16

The raqia is the boundary line between Yahweh's domain above and the human domain below. This is not merely physical geography. It is a covenant boundary. Yahweh is above the raqia on His throne. Human beings are below it on the earth He gave them. The raqia is the visible sign of this vertical covenant order.

The Raqia as Witness to Creation

“Day after day pours forth speech, and night after night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” — Psalm 19:2–4

The raqia is Yahweh's universal testimony. It speaks without language to every nation, every people, every generation. When a person anywhere on earth looks up at the sky — with its vast spread, its shimmering quality at dawn and dusk, its structure that seems both tangible and unreachable — they are looking at Yahweh's handiwork. This is the raqia's covenant function: to be the inescapable witness that there is a Maker.

The Raqia and the Vision of Sinai

“And they saw the Elohim of Israel. Under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire stone, like the very heavens in its clarity.” — Exodus 24:10

At Sinai, when the seventy elders of Israel saw Yahweh, what was under His feet was a sapphire pavement — like the very heavens in clarity. This is the raqia seen from above. The elders at Sinai glimpsed what Ezekiel saw in his vision: the crystal-clear floor of Yahweh's throne room.

The raqia is not distant mythology. It is the physical boundary of Yahweh's covenant presence, the interface between heaven and earth that was built into creation from the second day.

The Raqia and the Future: The New Creation

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” — Isaiah 65:17 / Revelation 21:1

The Tanakh's eschatological vision in Isaiah 65–66 includes a new creation — new heavens and a new earth. The current raqia, with its structure of separation between the waters above and the world below, is part of this present created order that will be renewed. The covenant promise is not merely that Yahweh will save souls but that He will rebuild the entire physical architecture of creation in fullness and permanence. The raqia that now separates and distinguishes will, in the new creation, serve the full purposes for which Yahweh designed it from the beginning.

CONCLUSION: WHAT MIQDASH BETHEL STANDS ON

After examining all 17 occurrences of raqia, the related Hebrew words (raqa, chug, mabbul, arubboth), and every relevant cosmological passage in the Tanakh from Genesis to Daniel, Miqdash Bethel draws this covenant conclusion:

Yahweh built a real structure. He called it the raqia. It separates the waters above from the waters below. It has physical, solid characteristics — the text's own language of crystal, hammered metal, and molten mirror tells us so. It is the floor of Yahweh's throne room and the ceiling of the human world. Every person on earth lives under it, beneath its witness to Yahweh's creative power and sovereign glory.

Modern science denies all of this. It tells us the sky is empty space with no structure, that there are no waters above it, that the universe is 13.8 billion years old and essentially meaningless in its size. Miqdash Bethel does not accept this framework as the final word. We accept the word of Yahweh as the final word.

At the same time, the Tanakh's statement that the earth 'hangs on nothing' (Job 26:7) is a text that flat earth advocates must grapple with honestly. It does not say the earth rests on a foundation. It says it is suspended. And the chug of Isaiah 40:22, while not definitively proving a sphere, is far more consistent with a three-dimensional vault or globe than with a flat disk.

What we know with certainty from Yahweh's word:

“The heavens declare the glory of El, and the raqia announces the work of His hands.” — Psalm 19:1

“By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth.” — Psalm 33:6

“Praise Him, you highest heavens, and you waters that are above the heavens! Let them praise the name of Yahweh, for He commanded and they were created.” — Psalm 148:4–5

We stand on this: the raqia is real, it is Yahweh's handiwork, it declares His glory, and it holds the waters above by His command. We do not know every detail of its physical nature. We do know its Maker. And we trust Him.

Peace and Blessings,

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