

said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night." (Genesis 1:3-5).

EVENT #5 (recorded in Genesis 1:6-8) -- God's Mediate Creation of the earth's atmosphere, and the subsequent separation of water above the surface of the earth from water covering the surface of the earth.

The word translated "firmament" in Genesis 1:6,7,8 -- *raqiya`* (רַקִּיעַ) -- means "that which is stretched out, an expanse" Our proposal is that this expanse was the atmosphere, or what we call the sky (in the near sense of that word). In verse 8 of Genesis 1, God calls this expanse "heaven."

Our present atmosphere is a rather thin blanket covering the surface of earth to a height of about 100 miles above sea level. It is comprised of nitrogen (78%), oxygen (20.9%), water vapor, and small amounts of argon, carbon dioxide, neon, helium, methane, and other gases. It should be noted that nitrogen and oxygen comprise 98.9% of the total volume of atmospheric gases.

Professor Russell W. Maatman, a member of the department of chemistry at Dordt College, asserts in his book *The Bible, Natural Science and Evolution* that there is considerable mineralogical evidence that the early atmosphere of the earth was largely carbon dioxide, and that it was almost totally devoid of oxygen (in contrast to our present atmosphere which, as we have mentioned, contains 20.9% oxygen). Such an atmosphere would have been capable of holding a great deal of water, in the form of thick clouds. Thus the initial atmosphere, or "Firmament," would have provided a means of dividing between water above the surface of the earth, and water covering the surface of the earth.

EVENT #6 (recorded in Genesis 1:9-10) -- God's Mediate Creation of dry land, by the structuring of earth's surface into land and seas.

At the present time, of the total surface area of the earth (197,000,000 square miles), 29% (or 57,000,000 square miles) is dry land, and 71% (or 140,000,000 square miles) is covered with water. In primeval times, as we learn from these verses, the entire surface area of the earth was covered with water.

The separation of dry land from water would of necessity involve the uplifting of enormous land masses, with the concomitant creation of deep ocean basins. It is instructive to note that, at present, the average depth of the oceans is much greater than the average elevation of the land. The average depth of the oceans is about 2½ miles, while the average elevation of the land is about ½ mile. Thus if the continents were entirely eroded away, and the material composing them placed in the oceans, the earth would be covered by a universal sea approximately 1.8 miles deep.