**‘After Light Comes a Firmament’**

I’ve always had a bit of a struggle comprehending the second day of creation. I can read the words of Genesis 1:6-8 but seeing them in my mind’s eye hasn’t been easy.

*6 Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” 7 Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.* (NKJV)

What is a “firmament” and how are “waters” divided from “waters?”

Searching the original Hebrew, we learn that another word which could be used instead of “firmament” is the word “expanse.” God made an expanse to separate “the waters from the waters.” In other words, **God gave the earth its atmosphere.** This atmosphere would be the environment where air-breathing creatures would exist. The waters below the firmament were the surface waters which had already been covering the earth. The waters above the firmament are where clouds form.

But when God names the expanse **‘heaven,’** confusion abounds. Isn’t heaven where God dwells? If so, how can the expanse God created on the second day of creation above the earth be called ‘heaven’ and this expanse be called ‘heaven’? Can there be TWO heavens?

Actually, there are not only two heavens there are THREE! We are introduced to the first two heavens in Genesis 1. The “heaven” above the earth, what we call our **“sky,”** we might label **“FIRST heaven.”**[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftn1) The second reference to “heavens” is in Genesis 1:14-15.

***14Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.***

We typically call what is being described here as **“outer space”** but since God calls it ‘heaven,’ for our purposes let’s label it **“SECOND heaven.”** The second heaven is the place of the sun, the moon, the stars, and galaxies galore. It is so massive, it will never be measured by man.

Then there is the **“THIRD heaven.”** This is the place where God dwells. A reference to this “heaven,” is found in Psalm 150:1. There we read, ***“****Praise the* ***Lord****! Praise God in his Temple! Praise his strength in heaven!****”*** (GNT)[[2]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftn2) God’s Temple is not located in our sky or in outer space but in this heaven. Is there biblical confirmation for this? Yes there is. Jesus, while speaking to Nicodemus said, ***“If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?*** ***No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.”***[[3]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftn3)

To summarize…the **FIRST heaven** = SKY…the **SECOND heaven** = OUTER SPACE…the **THIRD heaven** = the place where God dwells.[[4]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftn4)

I pray these words have been helpful to you. This study was a help to me. As is often the case, there is almost always more in God’s Word than we initially see or understand. That’s what makes studying the Word of God so wonderful.

*Kathleen*

[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftnref1) The labels first, second, and third heaven aren’t in the Bible. They are used to help us better understand God’s creation.]

[[2]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftnref2) GNT is Good News Translation

[[3]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftnref3) John 3:12-13

[[4]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/08/" \l "_ftnref4) We have another witness regarding the third heaven from the Apostle Paul. He describes a time when ‘a man’ was “caught up to the third heaven.” Though he identifies the one “caught up to the third heaven” as ‘a man,’ Bible scholars believe Paul is actually speaking about himself. Paul writes, 2 “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows— 4 was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.” 2 Corinthians 12:2-4