

In session one we established the fact that the **Judeo-Christian Scriptures** are our authority in all things confirmed by **proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ**. In session two we **exposed the heresy of Greek philosophy and western worldview** as we observed its foundation, definition and implications upon western culture and modern Christianity. *Keep in mind that Greek philosophy and Gnosticism had as its worldview a dualism of two realms one being the unseen immaterial realm of good and the other being the seen material realm of evil.* In session three we will look at **Biblical cosmology** (the study of creation – the origin, nature and structure of the Heavens and the earth – this is the sum total of reality).

I. BIBLICAL COSMOLOGY: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

A. God created and sustains all things by the Word of His power

[Psa 33:6-9 NASB] 6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. 9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.

[Col 1:16-17 NASB] 16 For by Him (Jesus Christ) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

[Hbr 1:2-3 NASB] 2 in these last days (God) has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

[Hbr 11:3 NASB] 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

B. The plurality of the Heavens (OT – NT)

1. **Heavens OT** – The Hebrew word for heavens (*shamayim*) is used over 400 times in the Old Testament, and it is always in the plural form. The plural is sometimes used in tandem (*shameh h'shamayim*), “heavens of heavens” (Deut. 10:14; 1 Ki. 8:27; 2 Chr. 2:6; 6:18; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 148:4), which is often translated “height of the heavens” or “highest heavens” (NASB/NIV/NLT), referring to the region(s) of God’s dwelling.
2. **Heavens NT** – The Greek word for heaven(s), *ouranos*, is used almost 300 times in the New Testament, approximately one-third in the plural and two-thirds in the singular. This is not because they were sloppy or because they had converted to a Hellenistic understanding of the universe. The singular use is simply referencing one heaven of the heavens (usually God’s dwelling place) or the heavens as a “collective singular,” i.e. referring to all that is above. The distinction is clear when both noun forms are used together (e.g. Mt. 6:9f; 24:29; 2 Cor. 5:1f). For example, in the Lord’s Prayer, “our Father” is in “the heavens” (plural), while the hope of the kingdom is that the will of God would be done on earth as it is in “heaven” (singular), i.e. the heaven of heavens where God sits enthroned, since the will of the Lord is not fully obeyed presently in other parts of the heavens. (John Harrigan, *Gospel of Christ Crucified* [Unpublished Work] Chapter 2; 5).

C. The Expanse (heavens) amidst the Waters (cosmic waters)

[Gen 1:1-8 NASB] 1 In the beginning God created the heavens (Heb. shamayim) and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep (cosmic waters), and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters (cosmic waters). 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good; and God **separated** the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. 6 Then God said, "Let there be an expanse (Heb. raqiya) in the midst of the waters (cosmic waters), and let it separate the waters from the waters (cosmic waters)." 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters (cosmic waters) which were below the expanse from the waters (cosmic waters) which were above the expanse; and it was so. 8 God called the expanse (Heb. raqiya) heavens (Heb. shamayim). And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. (I add cosmic waters 1:1-8 to distinguish from earthly waters 1:9-10)

[Gen 1:9-13 NASB] 9 Then God said, "Let the waters (cosmic waters) below the heavens be gathered into one place (earthly waters), and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. 10 God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters (cosmic waters) He called seas (earthly waters); and God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. 13 There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

[Pro 8:22-29 NASB] 22 "The LORD possessed me (wisdom) at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. 23 "From everlasting I was established, From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. 24 "When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no springs abounding with water. 25 "Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills I was brought forth; 26 While He had not yet made the earth and the fields, Nor the first dust of the world. 27 "When He established the heavens, I was there, When He **inscribed** (same as marked vs. 29) a circle on the face of the deep (cosmic waters), 28 When He made firm the skies above, When the springs of the deep (cosmic waters) became fixed, 29 When He set for the sea (earthly waters) its boundary So that the water would not transgress His command, When He **marked** (same as inscribed vs. 27) out the foundations of the earth.

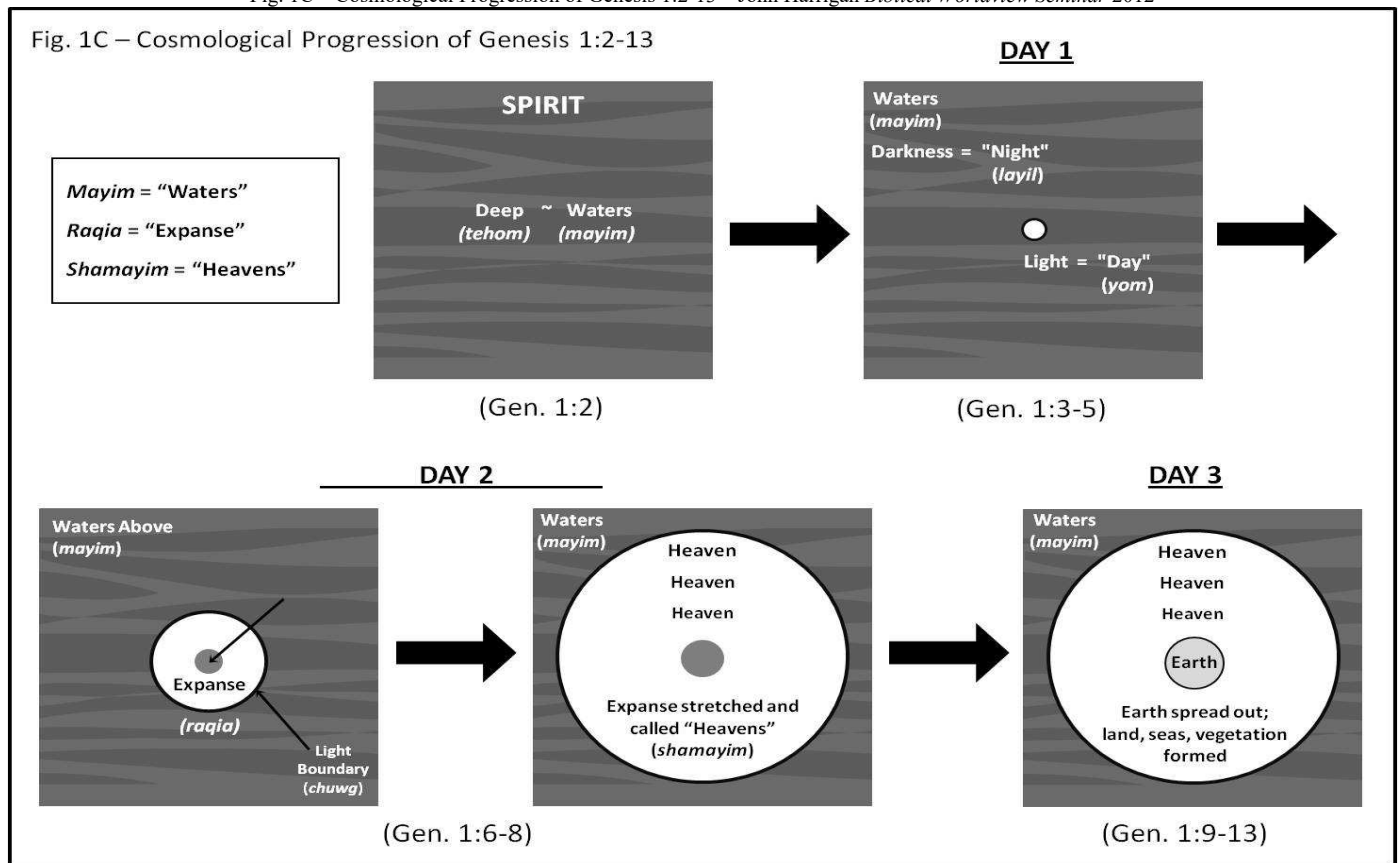
[2Pe 3:5 NASB] 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water (cosmic waters) and by water

[Job 26:7-10 NASB] 7 "He stretches out the north over empty space And hangs the earth on nothing. 8 "He wraps up the waters in His clouds, And the cloud does not burst under them. 9 "He obscures the face of the full moon And spreads His cloud over it. 10 "He has **inscribed** a circle (Gen 1:6-8, Prov 8:27-29) on the surface of the waters (cosmic waters) at the boundary of light and darkness (Gen 1:2-4).

[Psa 148:1-6 NASB] 1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! 4 Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters (cosmic waters) that are above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created. 6 He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.

[Psa 136:6 NASB] 6 **To Him who spread out the earth above the waters,** (cosmic waters) For His lovingkindness is everlasting;

Fig. 1C – Cosmological Progression of Genesis 1:2-13 – John Harrigan *Biblical Worldview Seminar* 2012



D. **The stretched out expanse/heavens** (Job 9:8; Is. 42:5, 44:24, 45:12; Jer. 10:12, 51:15; Zech. 12:1)

[Psa 104:1-3 NASB] 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, 2 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, **Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.** 3 **He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters;** He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind.

[Isa 40:12, 21-22 NASB] 12 **Who has measured the waters** (cosmic waters) **in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales?** ... 21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is **He who sits above the circle 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.**

E. **The Heavens are a real place, material and tangible with substance – sights, sounds, smells**

The Scriptures also clearly portray the heavens as a physical location. Heaven is not a “realm” of ideas, concepts, or principles as Plato, Origen, and Augustine would have us construe them. Rather, God created/fashioned a **dwelling place** for Himself **within the metaphysical** (sum total of reality) **construct** where He dwells there in the heights of the heavens. (Rev 4-5) God is in the house ☺!

[Exo 24:9-12 NASB] 9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they **saw the God of Israel;** and **under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the**

sky itself. 11 Yet He did not stretch out **His hand** against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they **saw God**, and they ate and drank. 12 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which **I have written for their instruction.**"

[Exo 25:8-9 NASB] 8 "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. 9 "According to all that I am going to show you, as the **pattern** of the tabernacle and the **pattern** of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

[Dan 7:9-10 NASB] 9 "I kept looking Until **thrones** were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His **seat**; **His vesture** was like white snow And the **hair of His head** like pure wool. His **throne** was **ablaze with flames**, Its **wheels** were **a burning fire.** 10 "**A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him**; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were **standing** before Him; The court **sat**, And the **books** were opened.

[Isa 6:1-6 NASB] 1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the **Lord sitting on a throne**, lofty and exalted, with the **train of His robe filling the temple.** 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having **six wings**: with **two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.** 3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." 4 And the **foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out**, while the **temple was filling with smoke.** 5 Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; **For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.**" 6 Then one of the seraphim **flew** to me with a **burning coal** in his **hand**, which he had taken from the **altar with tongs.**

F. The Heavens are geographically above the earth (II Chron 7:1; Acts 1:11)

[Gen 6:17 NASB] 17 "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.

[Deu 4:39 NASB] 39 "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.

G. The temple of God is in the Heavens (Jonah 2:2-7; Rev 11:19, 15:5-8)

[Exd 24:9-10 NASB] 9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.

[Exd 25:8-9 NASB] 8 "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. 9 "According to all that I am going to show you, as the **pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture**, just so you shall construct it.

[Hbr 8:1-5 NASB] 1 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the **sanctuary** and in the **true tabernacle**, which the **Lord pitched**, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. 4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; 5 who serve a copy and shadow of the **heavenly things**, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "**SEE,**" He says, "**THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.**"

[Hbr 9:24 NASB] 24 For Christ did not enter a **holy place** made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but **into heaven itself**, now to **appear in the presence of God** for us

[Psa 11:4 NASB] 4 The LORD is in **His holy temple**; the LORD'S throne is in heaven;

[Psa 28:2 NASB] 2 Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You for help, When **I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary**.

[Psa 29:9-10 NASB] 9 The voice of the LORD makes the deer to calve And strips the forests bare; And **in His temple everything says, "Glory!"** 10 The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.

[Isa 6:1-4 NASB] 1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling **the temple**. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." 4 And the **foundations of the thresholds** trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the **temple** was filling with smoke.

[Mic 1:2-4 NASB] 2 Hear, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains, And let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, **The Lord from His holy temple**. 3 For behold, the LORD is coming forth from **His place**. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. 4 The mountains will melt under Him And the valleys will be split, Like wax before the fire, Like water poured down a steep place.

King David made reference to the temple 5 times in the Psalms yet there was no temple built in his day – indeed he was writing and speaking of the **heavenly temple** (Psalm 5:7, 18:6, 27:4, 65:4, 138:2)

H. **The throne of God is in the temple in the Heavens** (II Kings 19:15; Ps 2:4)

[Psa 103:19 NASB] 19 The LORD has established **His throne** in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.

[Psa 113:4-6 NASB] 4 The LORD is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens. 5 Who is like the LORD our God, **Who is enthroned on high**, 6 Who humbles Himself to behold The things that are in heaven and in the earth?

[Psa 123:1 NASB] 1 A Song of Ascents. To You I lift up my eyes, O **You who are enthroned in the heavens!**

[Rev 4:2 NASB] 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, **a throne** was standing in heaven, and **One sitting on the throne**.

I. **The Heavens are God's dwelling place** (Isaiah 66:1-2)

[Deu 26:15 NASB] 15 'Look down from **Your holy habitation, from heaven**, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers.'

[Psa 33:13-15 NASB] 13 The **LORD looks from heaven**; He sees all the sons of men; 14 From **His dwelling place** He looks out On all the inhabitants of the earth, 15 He who fashions the hearts of them all, He who understands all their works.

[Isa 40:22 NASB] 22 It is **He who sits above the circle 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**.

[Isa 57:15 NASB] 15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "**I dwell on a high and holy place**, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

J. The Heavens are understood as three in number (1st 2nd 3rd – lower middle upper)

1. The observable **first/upper** Heavens – the first heavens are what we would understand to be the sky and the atmosphere – that which is visible to our eyes
 - Abode of Birds (Gen 1:20, 2:19, Dan 2:38 etc)
 - Abode of Rain, Snow, Thunder etc (Gen 8:2, Job 39:29, Isa 55:10 etc)
 - Abode of Sun, Moon and Stars (Gen 1:14, Deut 4:19, Ps 8:3 etc)
2. The powers of the **second/middle** Heavens – domain of angels and divine council, the place of their delegated authority where good & evil purposes for earth are contended for
 - Angels – Ministering spirits (Ps 103:20, 104:4; Heb 1:14) Patrolling earth (Zech 1:10, 6:7)
 - The gods (elohim) understood as the **divine council** of Yahweh (Ex 20:3-6; Deut 4:15-20, 6:4-5, 17:3, 29:26, 32:8-9; Ps 82, 89:5-8; Isa 24:21-24; Luke 21:25-26; John 10:34)
 - Principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Dan 10:12-14; Eph 1:20-21, 3:10, 6:12; Phil 2:10; Col 1:16)
 - The great dragon/serpent of old (Devil & Satan) and his angels (Rev 12:7-9)
 - God’s activity – this is the place not without evil the region where God on occasion takes His place in the midst of His divine council and angel rulers, hears their reports, and supervises their activities – a place where Satan at present has access. This is the place where God’s will/purposes are imposed, executed and enforced as it relates to the earth and its inhabitants. (I Kings 22:19-23, Job 1:6, 2:1; Ps 82:1; Dan 7:9-14; Rev 12:10)¹
3. The Heaven of Heavens in the **third/upper** Heavens (Deut. 10:14; 1 Ki. 8:27; 2 Chr. 2:6; 6:18; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 148:4)

[2Cr 12:2-4 NASB] 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. (Paradise/heaven/garden – Gen 2:8)

[Rev 2:7 NASB] 7 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.' (Paradise/garden/heaven – Luke 23:43)

[Rev 21:10 NASB] 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God

[Rev 22:1-2, 14 NASB] 1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve

¹ David J. MacLeod, *The Adoration of God the Creator: An Exposition of Revelation 4*

kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ... 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. (Ps 46, Ezek 47)

K. Earthly Eden – The Holy Mountain of God and the Garden of God

God builds the upper chambers of His temple in the heavens (Amos 9:6) and surrounds the chambers of His temple with gardens, a “paradise” as He does in the Garden of Eden on earth. According to Ezekiel 28:13-18 we see the holy mountain of God and the garden of God together in the region of Eden. In Genesis 1:26-28 we see **Adam’s kingly rule** (delegated authority) over the earth and in Genesis 2:15-17 we find **Adam’s priestly role** (stewardship) in relation to the Garden of God. Ezekiel 28:18 seems to allude to the garden “paradise” being an actual temple/sanctuary – a sacred space where God would come down to walk and meet with man.

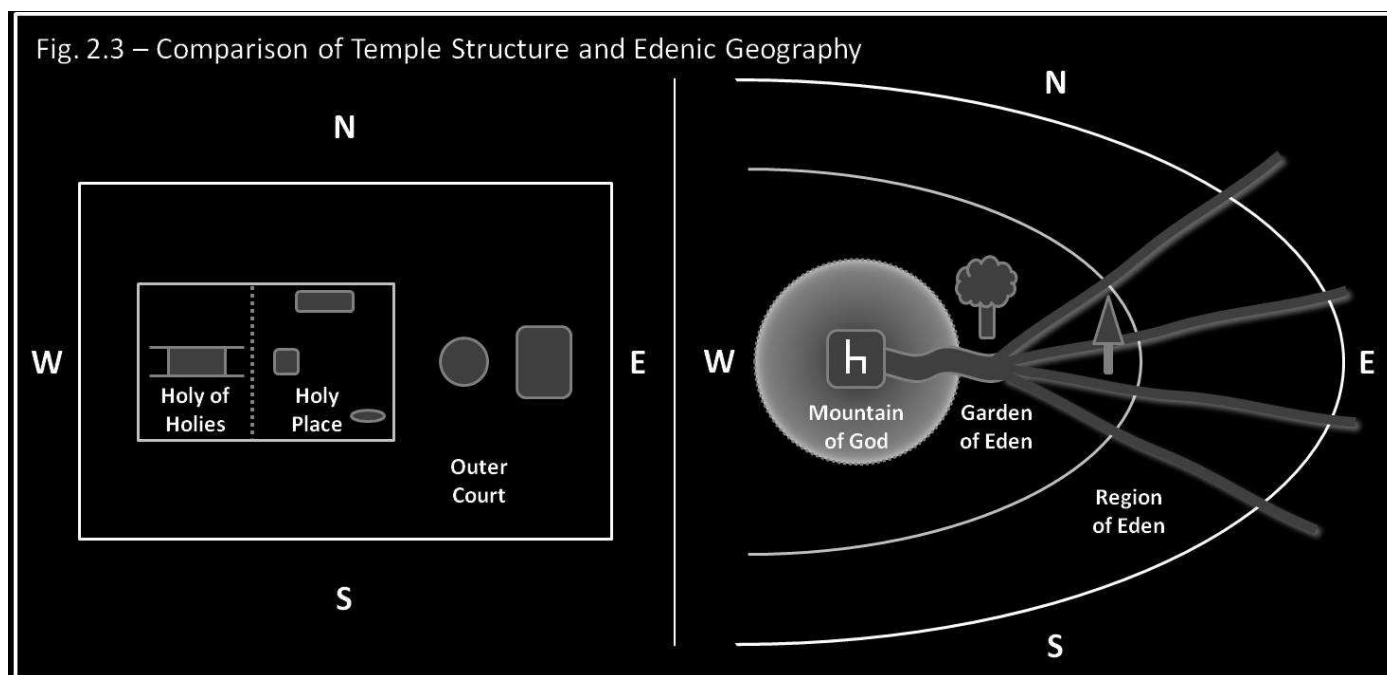
*[Gen 2:15-17 NASB] 15 Then the LORD God took the man and put (set to rest) him into the garden of Eden to **cultivate** it and **keep** it. 16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."*

This place of rest was a sacred space for man to rest with the responsibility to cultivate and keep the garden through obedience to the command. Adam already had the word of the Lord to rule over the earth and animals (serpent) now his role was to obey God in **serving and guarding** the garden as the outer court to the holy mountain of LORD God. These two words (serve and guard) paired together in most contexts in the Old Testament function together to refer to either the Israelites serving God and keeping His commandments or to priests who serve the LORD God and guard His sanctuary (Numb 3:7-8, 8:25-26, 18:5-6; I Chron 23:32; Ezek 44:14). Indeed Adam functioned as a priest not just the simple gardener that we attribute to him.

“When Adam failed to guard the temple by sinning and letting in a foul serpent to defile the sanctuary, he lost his priestly role, and the cherubim took over the responsibility of ‘guarding’ the Garden temple...The guarding function of the cherubim probably did not involve gardening but keeping out the sinful and unclean, which suggests that Adam’s original role stated in Genesis 2:15 likely entailed much more than cultivating the soil, but also ‘guarding’ the sacred space”. ^[LSEP]G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, [Downer’s Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004]

Many other comparisons between the Garden of Eden and the Temple

- The structures of both are three-fold with an entrance facing east (Gen. 2:8; 3:24; Eze. 8:16; 40:6)
- Both are situated on a mountain (Gen. 2:10; 2 Chr. 3:1; Is. 2:2; Eze. 28:13-16) guarded by cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:18-22; 26:31; 1 Ki. 6:23- 35; Eze. 28:14).
- Rivers flow out of both Eden (Gen. 2:10) and the eschatological temple in Jerusalem (Ps 46; Eze. 47:1-12; Rev. 22:1-2).
- Precious metals and stones are used in and adorn both (Gen. 2:11f; Ex. 25:7- 31; Eze. 28:13).
- Trees filled the Garden (Gen. 2:9), and arboreal decorations adorned the Temple (1 Ki. 6:18-35; 7:18ff). Moreover, the Trees of Life and Knowledge (Gen 2:9) seem to be symbolized in the sanctuary Lampstand and Law.



As the biblical heavens were consolidated and relegated to ideal immateriality (and the earth was conversely relegated to evil materiality), the prime eschatological doctrines of the apostolic church, i.e. the Day of the Lord, resurrection of the dead, and messianic kingdom (cf. 1 Cor. 15:19ff; 2 Tim. 4:1ff; 1 Pet. 1:13, etc.), were abandoned. The biblical heavens were transformed into the distant, detached, and ethereal realm of “heaven,” so common to Western tradition, and the hope of the return of Jesus and a new creation slowly became marginalized amidst the multitude of polemical Christoplatonist controversies during the fourth and fifth centuries. The perversion of the first verse of the Bible is thus the ultimate source of perversion throughout the rest of the Scriptures. Instead of beginning with plural, continuous, physical, and dynamic heavens, we start with a singular, discontinuous, non-physical, and static “heaven,” which in turn becomes the field upon which the rest of redemptive history is played out. John Harrigan. Gospel of Christ Crucified [Unpublished Work, Chapter 02]

