

1. Please read chapter 1 (pp. 21 – 29) in the Arnold text and report your reading here. (Did you read it all, or how many pages did you read?)

If the Bible is to speak to us, rather than us speaking into it, it seems important to draw the meaning for the words used by the writers from their historical context rather than our own modern one. There is some dispute about whether the Hebrew term *raqia*, (usually translated “firmament” “expanse”) was intended by the writer to be understood as a *solid* arch (dome, bubble) OR a *non-solid* space such as the atmosphere. The word occurs nine times in Genesis 1:6-20 and plays a key role in the account. (*For other OT uses, see Ezek 1:22-26, Ezek 10:1, Dan 12:3.*)

2. Read Genesis 1:6-20 again, this time paying special attention to the comments about the *raqia*. Try hard not to “correct” the language to match your understanding of the world or memory of the text. Record the spatial relationships described between the *raqia* and

2.1 the waters, which are _____ and _____ the *raqia*

2.2 the lights, which are _____ the *raqia*

2.3 the birds, which fly where?(check several translations)

2.4 Do you think these aspects of the account support the *solid* OR *non-solid* definition of *raqia*?

Explain.

3. A related issue concerns the “waters” which the *raqia* divides. Everyone pretty much agrees that the plain meaning of the “waters below” refers to surface waters such as the oceans, but the “waters above” are a more difficult issue. Some claim these waters refer to a “vapor canopy” in or above the atmosphere, but this can hardly be the meaning of the text if one takes seriously the spatial relationships between waters, *raqia* and “lights” outlined in 2.1 and 2.2 above. What do you think is the meaning of the “waters above” as described in the text?
4. Three positions relative to evolution are outlined in the Arnold text. Which position most closely approximates your own? What evidence for your position do you find most compelling?