

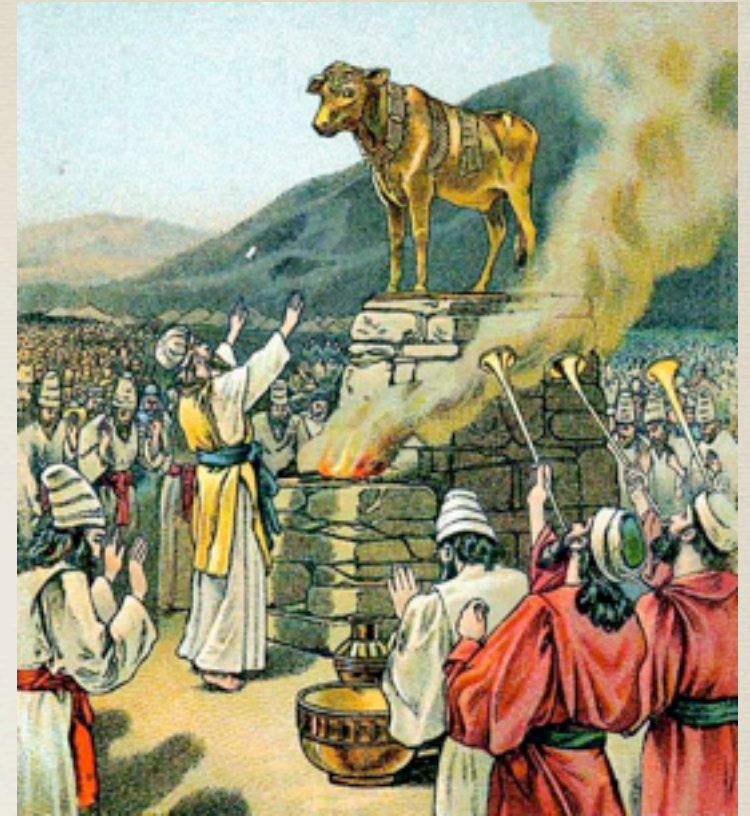


# CREATION - GENESIS



# Question

- \* If you were **Moses 3700 years ago** trying to explain creation to people of this age who made gods out of creatures, What **vocabulary** would you choose to explain what we cannot fully understand?
- \* In ancient times they used language based on what they could see. (light, stars, moon, water, sky, earth, wind, fire....)
- \* Might you use different language today?
- \* Genesis could be more about establishing the basic functions like time, day and night, and order that are essential for perfection of mankind, made in His image, and have nothing to do with material creation.





# In The Beginning

- \* Let's briefly examine how the ancients thought about Creation before Genesis.
- \* Hindu view
- \* Egyptian View
- \* Babylonian view
- \* Classical Greek view - myths
- \* Genesis



# Hindu View



- \* **Rig Veda** (1700–1100 BC ~ time of Moses)
- \* *Neither being nor non-being was as yet. What was concealed? And where? And in whose protection?... **Who really knows?***
- \* *Who can declare it? Hence was it born, and whence came this creation? The devas were born later than this world's creation, so who knows from where it came into existence?*
- \* ***None can know** from where creation has arisen, and whether he has or has not produced it. He who surveys it in the highest heavens, he alone knows-or perhaps does not know.*

(Rig Veda (1700–1100 BC, 10. 129)



# Hindu View

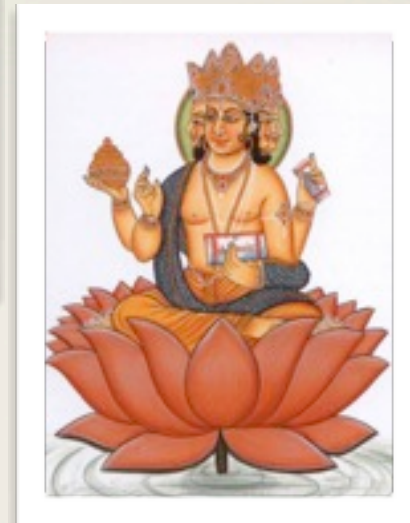
- \* **Upanishads** (800-500BC ~ after King Solomon), teaches universe and the earth, along with humans and other creatures undergo **repeated cycles** (pralaya) of creation and destruction.
- \* A variety of myths exist regarding the specifics of the process, but in general the Hindu view of the cosmos is **eternal and cyclic**.





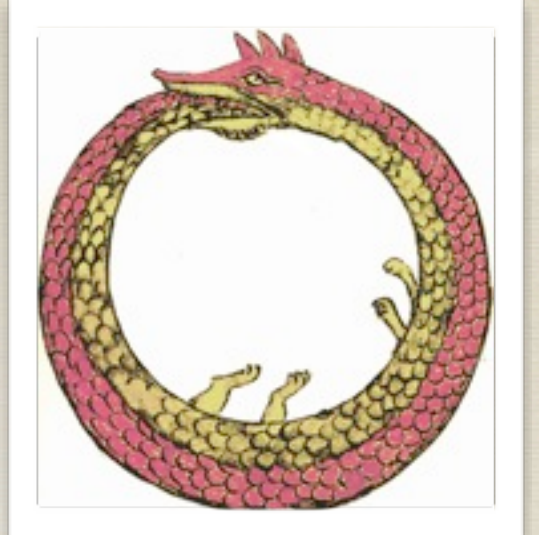
# Hindu View

- **Shiva**, the destroyer.
- **Brahma**, the creator
- **Vishnu**, the preserver.
- Shiva's destructive powers are awesome, but they also have a positive side in that destruction usually leads to new forms of existence.





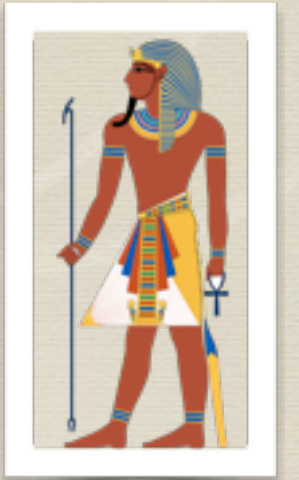
# Hindu View



- Universe exists for a **single day** that is equivalent to **four billion earth years**, at the end of which the whole universe gets dissolved.
- Brahma rests for a day. This process is called 'pralaya', which repeats for **100 years**, a period that represents Brahma's lifespan.
- After Brahma's "death", it is necessary that another 100 of his years pass until he is reborn and the whole creation begins anew.
- Note concept of single day as 4 billion years.



# Egyptian (2300 BC)



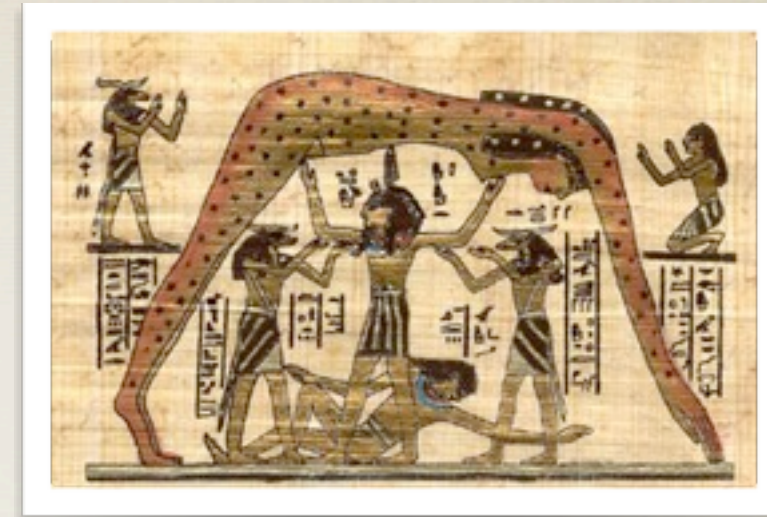
- Concept of eternal universe centered on **Ma'at**, the fixed, **eternal order** of universe.
- Ma'at constantly under threat from **forces of disorder**, so all society required to maintain it.
- On human level meant order so all members of society should cooperate and coexist; on cosmic level it meant all of forces of nature—gods—should continue to function in **balance**.
- Egyptians sought to maintain Ma'at by sustaining the gods through **offerings** and performing **rituals** which perpetuated the cycles of nature.





# Egyptian

- Egyptians saw earth as a **flat** expanse of land, personified by god Geb, over which arched the sky goddess **Nut**.
- Two separated by **Shu**, the god of air.
- Beneath the earth lay a parallel underworld and undersky, and beyond the skies lay the infinite expanse of **Nu**, the chaos that had existed before creation.
- Believed in mysterious place called **Duat** associated with death and rebirth.
- Each day, **Ra** traveled over the earth across the underside of the sky, and at night he passed through the Duat to be reborn at dawn.





# Babylonian



- \* The **Enuma Elish** (1600-1100 BC) myth of creation recounts struggle between cosmic order and chaos.
- \* Written in cuneiform on seven clay tablets.
- \* Little doubt that Sumerian versions of story predate the Biblical account by several hundred years.





# Similarities to Genesis

- \* If you study it in detail you will find:
- \* Darkness precedes the creative acts.
- \* Light exists before the creation of the sun, moon, and stars.
- \* Division of the waters above and below, with a barrier holding back the upper waters - firmament
- \* Sequence of creation is similar, including the division of waters, dry land, luminaries, and humanity, all followed by rest.
- \* Story is quite different.



# Ancient Greek View

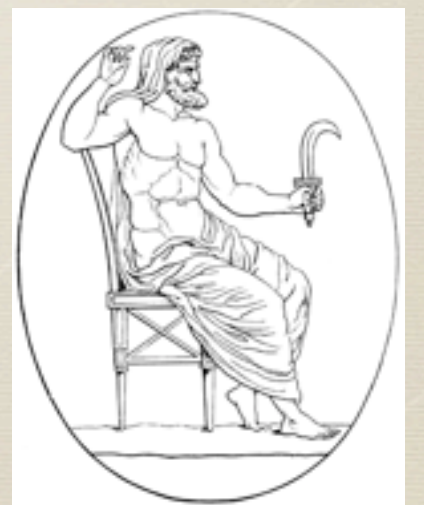


- \* Many variations - Probably not central influence on Jewish culture in formation of Genesis.
- \* Primordial substance comes from **Chaos** - the dark, silent abyss from which all things came into existence.
- \* Chaos generated the solid mass of **Earth** (Gaia), from which arose the starry, cloud-filled **Heaven** (Ouranos).



# Greek Mythology

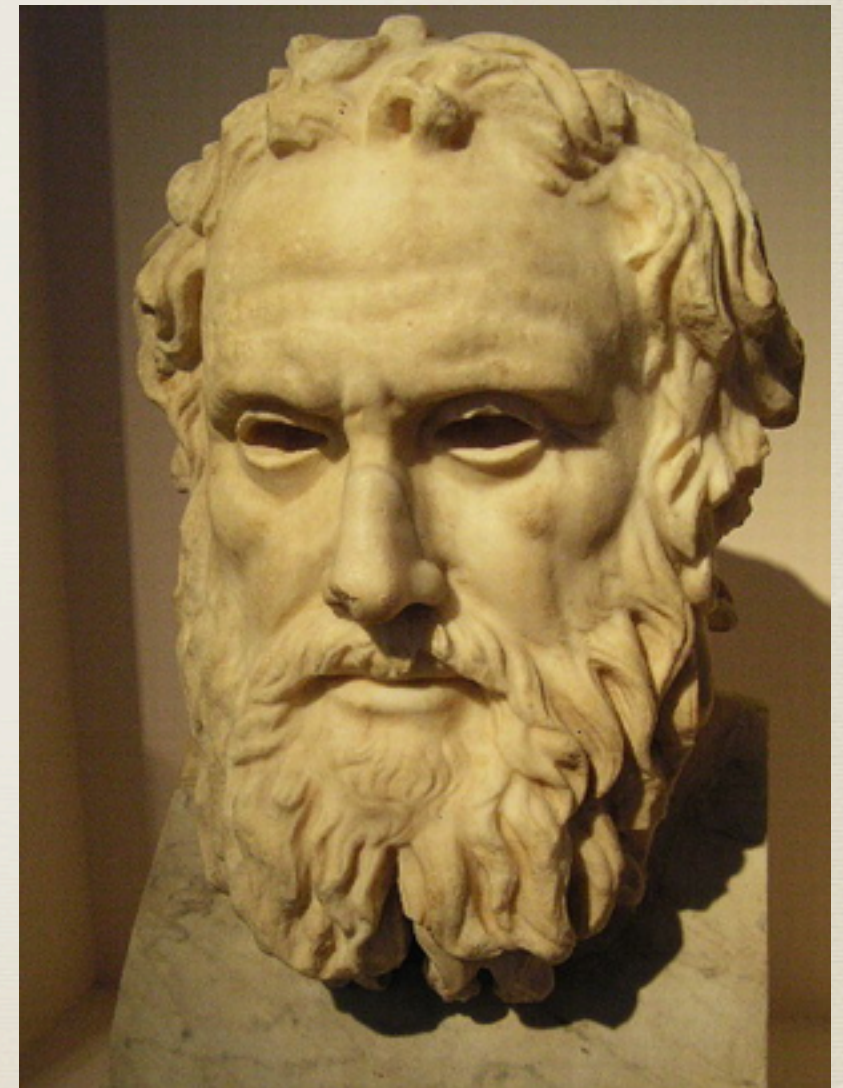
- \* **Sky** (Ouranos) was first who ruled over whole world. Having wedded **Earth** (Gaia), he begat first the **Hundred-handed**....
- \* After these, **Earth bore** him the **Cyclopes**.... But then **Sky** bound and cast into Tartarus.... And he **begat** children by Earth, to wit, the **Titans** ... and youngest of all, **Cronus**....
- \* From Cronus comes Zeus





# Greek Mythology

- \* Hesiod, a Greek oral poet (750 and 650 BC) same time as Homer. Shows a long process: 5 Ages
- \* **Golden Age:** People formed by or for Cronus. Mortals lived like gods, although they died, but only as if falling asleep.
- \* **Silver Age:** Time of Zeus. Man inferior to prior age. Disobeyed Zeus died and went to the underworld
- \* **Bronze Age:** Men were strong and war like. Destroyed in a Great flood



Hesiod



# Greek Mythology

## \* **Heroic Age**

Men were demigods and more heroic than their predecessors and successors. Many were destroyed by the great wars of Greek legend. After death, some went to the Underworld; others to the Islands of the Blessed ones.

## \* **Iron Age** = present Iron Age

All manner of evils came into being during this age. Piety and other virtues disappeared and most of the gods who were left on Earth, abandoned it. Zeus will destroy this race some day.



# Genesis a New Revelation

- Were **many** ancient views of Creation. Man was seeking to understand what He could not understand.
- None really addressed material creation.
- **Genesis** brought **new** light to what is still a **mystery**.





# Genesis a New Revelation

- **Moses**, illumined, had a direct encounter with God, and given this new vision directly from God.

St John Chrysostom: *“under guidance of the Spirit he [Moses] was speaking in a manner appropriate to his hearers...”*

- His vision later recorded to tell us **about** his vision for our spiritual benefit in language his people could comprehend. Only one version of this story.





# GENESIS





# Genesis

- \* Moses composed this history (1700 BC)
- \* Why Moses?
- \* God judged him worthy, beheld Him, face to face like the angels.
- \* God chooses those who are prepared to receive His revelations. These people then are called to record their revelation for our own benefit.





# Genesis

- Outlines clear view of **purpose** of creation and the role of man in very few words - to become in God's likeness united with Him in love - radically different from many ancient views.
- Not about meeting the needs of Gods, but about a God who **provides for man** made in His Image out of His love.
- Involves a **single God** who creates what is necessary to support man.
- Creation takes place in a **linear fashion**: creation, evolution, perfection.
- **God chose the path** - Creation did not have to be the way it is.



*IN THE BEGINNING GOD  
MADE HEAVEN AND  
EARTH.*

Genesis 1:1



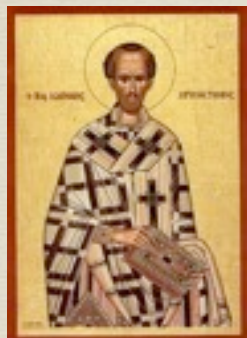


# In the beginning God made Heaven and Earth.

- \* What is main point of this first sentence?
  - \* **Was a beginning** for heaven and earth
  - God is the Creator**
- \* Is this sentence telling how He created?
- \* What is meant by Beginning?
- \* Fathers caution us in our exploration of this subject.



# In The Beginning



*Don't pry too closely with human reasoning into the works of God; instead, **let the works lead you to marvel at their maker.*** St John Chrysostom



Basil says, "[Moses] taught only this: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... He deemed it **sufficient to make known that one who created and ordered it,** refusing to examine out to curiosity the question of its essence, as this would be vain and useless.'" (C. Eun 1.13)



# In The Beginning



*Isaiah says, "The **heaven** was made **like smoke**," that is to say, He created a **subtle substance**, without solidity or density, from which to form the heavens....*

- \* Let us resolve not to torment ourselves by trying to **find** out its **essence**, not to tire our reason by seeking for the substance which it conceals.*
- \* The objects which on all sides attract our notice are so marvelous, that the **most penetrating mind cannot attain** to the **knowledge** of the least of the phenomena of the world, either to give a suitable explanation of it or to render due praise to the Creator, to Whom belong all glory, all honor and all power world without end.*



# In The Beginning



Saint John Chrysostom offers the following:

*Scripture says: "The thoughts of mortals are **deceptive**, and their thinking **unreliable**. (Wis 9:14)" Let us accept what is said with much gratitude, **not overstepping the proper limit** nor busying ourselves with **matters beyond us**...*

- \* *When you hear "He created or made" concern yourself no further... For **God is who makes and transforms all things**, and refashions all things according to his will.*





St. Paul says, *What the eye cannot see in Him has come into view from creation of the world and are understood through the things he has made.* (Rom 1:20)

- \* Isn't this a call to us to undertake scientific exploration?
- \* But for what purpose?
  - \* To know God, be good stewards.
    - not to deny God or destroy His works.
- \* Must first accept the basic Truth that God has communicated To Moses. **God Created everything.**



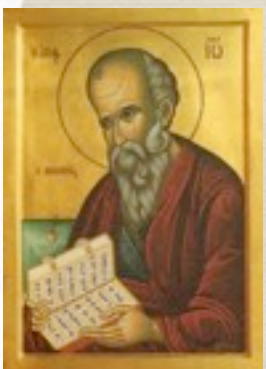
# In the Beginning



Paul says,

***"God made the world and everything in it; being Lord and maker of heaven and earth, He does not dwell in man-made temples, nor can human hands pay Him due worship."*** (Acts 17:24-25)

\* ***"In Him were created all things--those in the heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, dominos, principalities, powers--all were created by Him with Him in mind."*** (Col 1:16)



Saint John the Evangelist says, ***"Everything was made through Him and without Him no single thing was made."*** (Jn 1:3)



# Mystical Nature of Scripture

- \* Must not forget the mystical nature of Scripture.



Paul writes, *“Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”* (2Cor 3:15-16)

- \* A bare literal reading will make one insensitive to awesome **mystery** behind the words and create a human portraiture of God.
- \* Scripture is both prose and poetry.
- \* Why did Holy Spirit give us so many **stories**?
  - \* So we could understand the complexities and difficulties in understanding the **uncreated God**, creator of all, and His intentions for us.



*THE EARTH WAS  
WITHOUT FORM, AND  
INVISBLE*

Genesis 1:2





# *The earth was without form, and Invisible*

- \* Why was earth without form in beginning?
- \* God shows His craftsmanship and Love in the preparation of Cosmos for mankind.



Saint John Chrysostom thought that God created in this manner so Man would not put too high value on earth and treat it like a God as did the ancients.



# *The earth was without form, and invisible*

- \* Why was it invisible?

- \* Basil answers:



- \* Maybe because man, the spectator, did not yet exist,  
or

- \* it was submerged under the waters which overflowed the surface, so it could not be seen.

- \* Also it still needed to be shaped and ordered.





St Ambrose (330 - 397): *Scripture points out that things were first created and afterwards put in order.*

St. Basil the Great: *God...after casting about in His mind, ... imagined the world such as it ought to be, and created matter in harmony with the form which He wished to give it.*

- \* ***He formed, as He wished, fire, air and water, and gave to each the essence which the object of its existence required.***
- \* *Finally, He welded all the diverse parts of the universe by **links of indissoluble attachment** and established between them so perfect a fellowship and **harmony** that the most distant, in spite of their distance, appeared united in one universal sympathy...*
- \* *He is not an inventor of figures, but the Creator even of the **essence of beings.***



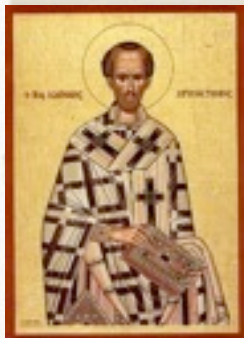
*AND DARKNESS WAS  
OVER THE DEEP*

Gen 1:2



# *And Darkness was upon the deep*

\* See how poetic these verses are?  
What could this mean?



St John Chrysostom : What was to come could not yet be seen in the formless invisible mass *having need of the wise Creator to **remove all this shapelessness** and bring everything to a conditions of **order**.*



*SPIRIT OF GOD WAS  
HOVERING OVER THE  
FACE OF THE WATER.*

Genesis 1:2





# *Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters*

- \* By Spirit of God, means Holy Spirit.  
Holy **Trinity** involved.
- \* Notice also how not all elements are mentioned individually as created, such as water, but only give broad categories like heaven and earth. Not account of material universe.



St. Basil the Great: *let us understand, that it **prepared the nature of water** to produce **living beings**: a sufficient proof for those who ask if the Holy Spirit took an active part in the creation of the world.*



# *Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters*



St Ambrose: *The Spirit fittingly moved over the earth, destined to bear fruit, because by the aid of the Spirit it held the **seeds of new birth** which were to germinate according to the words of the Prophet: "Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth." (Psalm 103:32)*



Saint Ephriam: *[The Holy Spirit] warmed the waters and made them **fertile and capable of birth**, like a bird when it sits with outstretched wings on its eggs and by its warmth gives them warmth and produces fertility in them.*



*THEN GOD SAID, “LET  
THERE BE LIGHT”; AND  
THERE WAS LIGHT.*

Genesis 1:3



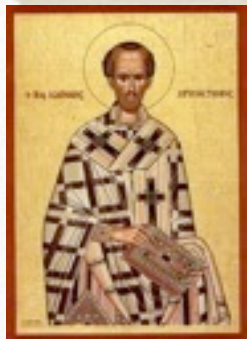


*God said let there be light; and  
there was light.*

- \* How can there be light before the sun?
  - \* Had nothing to do with the sun which was created on fourth day.
  - \* + no living beings to observe light.
- \* Light not always used in physical way.  
Often used symbolically and allegorically.
- \* What are some of the ways we see light being used in Scripture?



*God said let there be light; and  
there was light.*



St John Chrysostom: *God the mighty craftsman issued His command and the **shapeless mass took on form**, the surpassing beauty of this blinding **light appeared** and dissipated the palpable gloom, **illuminating** everything.*

- \* Could be the **uncreated light** that Fathers refer to when one is illuminated or the **light of Christ** as we find in Scripture.
- \* We will also see later in scientific theory material creation there is light as matter begins to take form.





*GOD DIVIDED THE  
LIGHT FROM THE  
DARKNESS*





# God separated light from darkness

\* What can this mean?



St. John Chrysostom says this **light, removed the darkness** from our vision, dissipated the darkness of error, and led those in error to **truth**.

\* Christ - pinnacle of creation - is seen as light over darkness.



*GOD CALLED THE  
LIGHT DAY; THE  
DARKNESS HE CALLED  
NIGHT; AND THERE WAS  
EVENING AND  
MORNING, ONE DAY*

Genesis 1:5



*And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

- \* Why did he say “*one day*” instead of “*day one*.”
- \* Idea of one day, establishes a **period**, as time had to be created.



*And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*



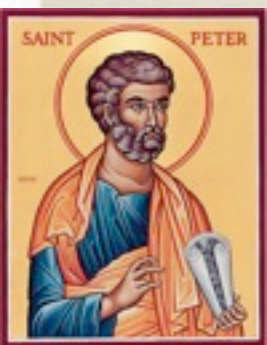
St Basil says, If the beginning of time is called "*one day*" rather than "*the first day*," it is because Scripture wishes to establish its relationship with **eternity**.

- \* Scripture marks by the word "*one*" the day which is the type of eternity, the **first fruits** of days, the Holy **Lord's day** honored by the **Resurrection** of our Lord.
- \* What is the meaning of ages and ages we use in our prayers? Could days in this context be an age?



*And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

- \* Was this a 24 hour day?
- \* The Hebrew word for “*day*” is “*yom*,” which means both “*day*” and “***a lengthy period of time which is undetermined.***”



St. Peter (II Peter 3:8) says, “*But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord **one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.***”



# *And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

- \* Sun does not appear until fourth day.  
How could days one, two and three be regarded as twenty-four hour days as we know them?
- \* Genesis concludes each day saying, *“And it was evening and it was daylight the first / second / third / fourth / fifth / sixth day ...”*
- \* This is not so with the seventh day which appears to be still in existence.
- \* **Still living the seventh day,**  
will **continue** to live it until the **end of time**  
when God deems it time to terminate the material world. It clearly is not a 24 hr day.



*And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

\* Saint Augustine: *“What sort of days were these, it is very difficult or perhaps impossible for us to conceive, and how much more to say!”* (City of God II.6)



St. John Chrysostom points out that by explaining Creation in terms of days He is providing sufficient detail to show how He created out of loving kindness with a careful order to help us avoid thinking that things made themselves. (Homily 3,45)



2ND DAY

*“LET THERE BE A  
FIRMAMENT IN THE MIDST  
OF THE WATERS, AND LET IT  
DIVIDE THE WATER FROM  
THE WATER... GOD CALLED  
THE FIRMAMENT HEAVEN.”*

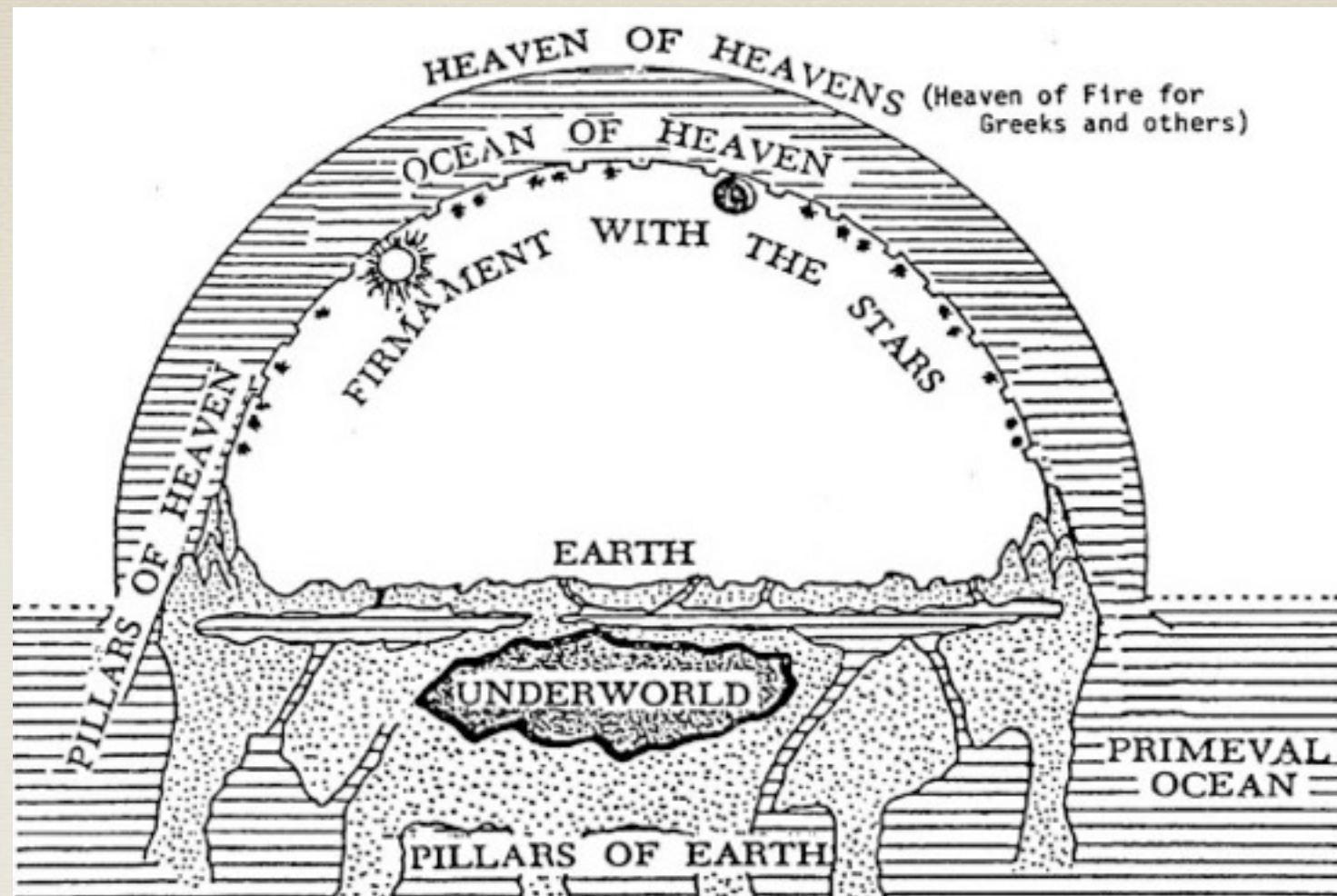
Genesis 1:6



# Firmament

- \* Church Fathers seem to have difficulty with the idea of firmament as it did not fit with their science.
- \* St. John Chrysostom: *No sensible person would be rash enough to make a decision on it.*
- \* What thoughts do you have about its meaning?

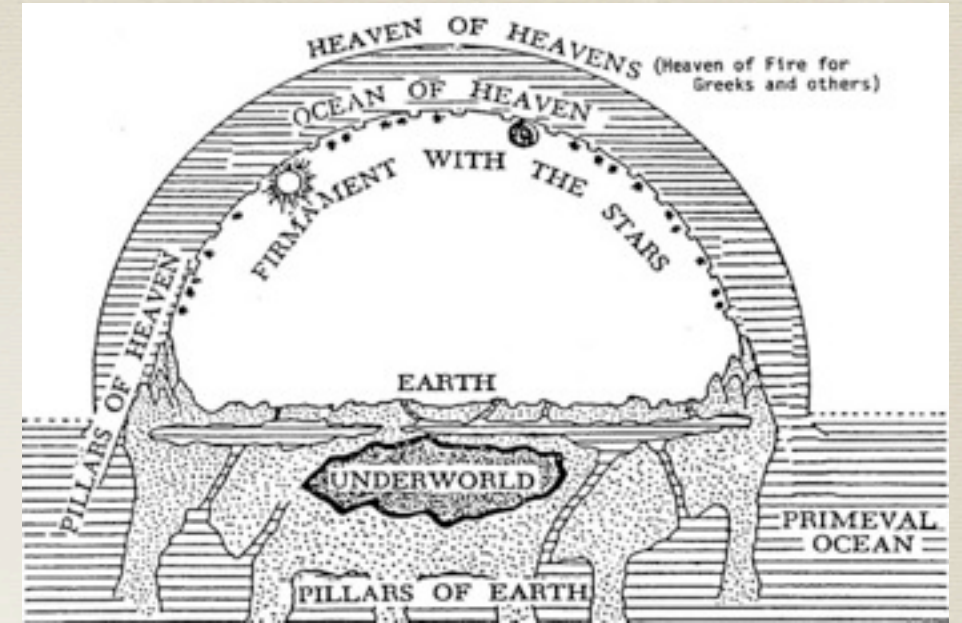




- \* Ancient view. Something had to hold the waters in the heaven.
- \* Nowhere in Bible is earth ever explicitly described as a flat disk with a solid dome covering it, even though this was apparently the belief of the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians.



# Firmament



- \* The word "*firmament*" is a translation of the Hebrew word רָקִיעַ ("raqia" - in Greek "stereoma") which simply means "*something spread out*".
- \* Facing difficulty of putting into words that which is not fully describable by worldly concepts.
- \* Does not change basic message about God as Creator preparing what was necessary for perfection of mankind.



WHAT DO WE KNOW?

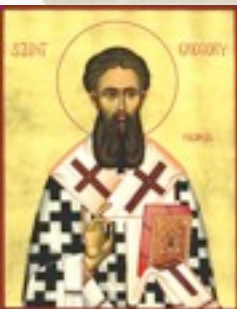


# What do we Know?

- \* The Universe has a **beginning** (and an end).  
**Before time**, before any **laws of nature**.
- \* Only one **God who is the Creator** who created everything out of nothing.
- \* Different from Greek Philosophers' accounts who postulate some kind of fashioner God who fashions out of already existing matter.
- \* What follows is shaped out of what has been created but is more than a mere development of first created matter.



# What do we Know?



St Gregory Palamas

**First** of all, God created the heavens and the earth as a **kind of all-embracing material substance** with the potentiality of giving birth to all things....

- \* *After this initial creation, He... **proceeds** as it were to **embellish and adorn** the world.*
- \* *In Six days He allotted it's own proper and appropriate rank to each of His **creatures** that together constitute His world.*
- \* *He **differentiates** each **by command** alone, as though bringing forth from **hidden treasures** the things stored within, giving them **form**, and disposing and composing them **harmoniously**, with perfection and witness, one to the other, each to all and all to each.*



# Beyond Natural Laws



St Philaret of Moscow, *The Six days of Creation do not signify...such a period of time during which things would form and develop **only according to natural laws** from heaven that we're created in the beginning.*

- \* What is a fundamental assumption of Science?
- \* Natural laws we now observe were existing in the beginning and can use current day observations according to these laws man has postulated to project back to beginning of Creation.
- \* Did these laws always exist? Did they ever change?  
Where did they come from and when?
- \* We will revisit this when we discuss science and the relativity of time.



# What do we Know?

- \* What is Church Doctrine?

- \* Creed:

- “We believe in **one God Father** almighty, **Maker of heaven and earth**, and **all things visible and invisible.**”*



- \* God is source of **everything**, all powerful, all knowing

- \* Our ever existent God created **out of nothing** with loving kindness, freely choosing to do so.





# Science & Creation

Next Week