MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT INSTITUTION
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REACHING **JUDAISM** · **CHRISTIANITY** · **ISLAM** SIMULTANEOUSLY

The Raqia' of Bereishit:
A Deep Covenant Study of the Firmament
Bereishit (Genesis) 1:6–9

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The sole binding authority of Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution is the Tanakh — the written covenant of Yahweh. No Talmudic tractate, Church council decree, papal encyclical, hadith collection, or extra-biblical tradition carries doctrinal weight equal to or greater than the written Torah. Where any tradition conflicts with the written covenant, the written covenant governs without exception. The Talmud, New Testament, and Quran are cited as historical reference and comparative witness — never as superseding authority. All three great covenant traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — are addressed simultaneously and equally in every Miqdash Bethel document, because Yahweh's covenant belongs to every nation that will receive it.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

Hebrew book names are used throughout, followed by English in parentheses on first appearance. Yahweh (יהוה) and Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) appear in every place where English translations render 'LORD' or 'God.' Hebrew transliterations appear in bold italic with English meaning in parentheses at every occurrence. Strong's numbers appear in bold. Scripture quotations follow the JPS 1985, Robert Alter, and Everett Fox (Schocken Bible) translations, cross-referenced against the Hebrew text.

TANAKH BOOK NAMES CITED IN THIS DOCUMENT

SECTION	BOOKS

Torah (Five Books)	Bereishit (Genesis), Shemot (Exodus), Vayikra (Leviticus), Bamidbar (Numbers), Devarim (Deuteronomy)
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Yehoshua (**Joshua**), Shoftim (**Judges**), Shemu'el (**Samuel**), Melakhim (**Kings**), Yeshayahu (**Isaiah**), Yirmeyahu (**Jeremiah**), Yechezkel (**Ezekiel**), The Twelve
Ketuvim (Writings)	Tehillim (**Psalms**), Mishlei (**Proverbs**), Iyov (**Job**), Shir HaShirim (**Song of Songs**), Kohelet (**Ecclesiastes**), Ruth, Eikhah (**Lamentations**), Dani'el, Ezra, Nechemyah, Divrei HaYamim (**Chronicles**)

PART I: THE TEXT — BEREISHIT 1:6–9

The text under examination spans four verses of the second day of creation. These verses constitute the Tanakh's sole foundational account of the raqia' (רָקִיעַ) — the expanse dividing the primordial waters. Every subsequent reference to the heavens, to rain from the sky, to the luminaries in the sky, and to the visible dome of heaven rests upon what is established here. We must let the text stand on its own before drawing from any tradition.

THE MASORETIC TEXT AND TRANSLATION TABLE

VERSE	HEBREW (MASORETIC)	JPS 1985	ROBERT ALTER	EVERETT FOX
Bereishit 1:6	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּיִם וִיהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לָמָיִם	"God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water.'"	"And God said, Let there be a vault in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."	"God said: Let there be a dome amid the waters, and let it separate water from water!"
Bereishit 1:7	וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי־כֵן	"God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below	"And God made the vault and it divided the water beneath the	"God made the dome and separated the water that was beneath the dome from the water that was

		the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so."	vault from the water above the vault, and so it was."	above the dome. And it was so."
Bereis hit 1:8	וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמָיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי	"God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day."	"And God called the vault Heavens, and it was evening and it was morning, second day."	"God called the dome: Heaven/Sky. It was evening, it was morning: second day."
Bereis hit 1:9	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקָּווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד וְתֵרָאֶה הַיַּבָּשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן	"God said, 'Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear.' And it was so."	"And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered to one place so that the dry land will appear, and so it was."	"God said: Let the waters beneath the heavens be gathered to one place, and let the dry land be seen! And it was so."

Three translation observations are immediately evident:

First, the translation of 'raqia' itself is contested: JPS renders it 'expanse,' Alter uses 'vault,' Fox uses 'dome.' This variation tracks the long-standing scholarly debate over whether the term implies a solid structure or an open space — a question the Hebrew lexicon must answer, not the translation.

Second, vayehi-khen (וַיְהִי־כֵן) appears in both verse 7 and verse 9 — 'and it was so.' This is Yahweh's executive completion formula. When Yahweh speaks in the creation account, it is so. This formula appears six times in Bereishit 1 and is never applied to an incomplete act.

Third, the movement from verse 7 to verse 9 is a structural covenant sequence: (1) Yahweh makes the raqia' and divides waters above from waters below [verse 7]; (2) Yahweh names the raqia' shamayim — 'heavens/sky' [verse 8]; (3) Yahweh commands the lower waters to gather so dry land appears [verse 9]. The raqia' is the pre-condition for habitable earth. Without the separation above, there can be no gathering below.

PART II: HEBREW LEXICAL FOUNDATION

The covenant meaning of the raqia' begins and ends with the Hebrew. No tradition — not the Septuagint, not the Talmud, not the Church Fathers — may override what the Hebrew root and the Hebrew text established under the Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15 two-witness standard.

HEBREW TERM	TRANSLITERATION	STRONG'S	ROOT	CORE MEANING	BDB / HALOT GLOSS
רָקִיעַ	raqia'	H7549	raqa' H7554	expanse, firmament	BDB: 'an extended surface, expanse'; HALOT: 'vault, dome, expanse' — the beaten-out spreading of space
רָקַע	raqa'	H7554	—	to beat/stamp out, spread thin	BDB: 'to stamp, beat out' (as metal beaten flat); used in Iyov 37:18 of a mirror beaten out of metal
שָׁמַיִם	shamayim	H8064	—	heavens, sky	Dual or plural; BDB: 'heaven, sky'; HALOT: 'sky, heaven' — the upper realm above earth; already created in Bereishit 1:1
בְּדִיל	badil	—	—	separation, division	Not a root word here — the concept of division is carried by yavdel (H914) from badal: to separate, distinguish, set apart
בָּדַל	badal	H914	—	to separate, divide	BDB: 'to divide, separate'; the identical verb used in Bereishit 1:4 (light/darkness), 1:6, 1:7, 1:14, 1:18 — Yahweh's act of ordered separation
מַיִם	mayim	H4325	—	waters	BDB: 'waters'; dual form; refers here to cosmic primordial waters both above and below the raqia'
תַּחַת	tachat	H8478	—	under, beneath	BDB: 'under, beneath, instead of'; locational term placing the lower waters below the raqia'

מֵעַל	me'al	H4480+5921	—	from above, above	Compound preposition: min (from) + al (upon/above); locating the upper waters above the raqia'

PART II-A: RAQIA' — THE ROOT DECISION

The word **רָקִיעַ (raqia', H7549)** derives from the root **רָקַע (raqa', H7554)**. This root means to beat out, stamp, or spread thin — language drawn from metalworking: the action of a smith beating gold, silver, or bronze into thin sheets.

BDB (Brown-Driver-Briggs, p. 956) defines **raqa'** as: 'to beat, stamp, beat out, spread out.' It lists the primary usage as beating metal (Shemot 39:3; Bamidbar (Numbers) 16:39 [Hebrew 17:4]; Yeshayahu 40:19). The noun **raqia'** (p. 956) is defined: 'an extended surface (solid), expanse, as if beaten out.'

HALOT (Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, vol. 3, p. 1290) defines raqa' as: 'to flatten by striking, to beat out (metal), to spread out' and raqia' as 'vault, dome, expanse — the beaten-out solid expanse of heaven.'

The critical question: does 'beaten out' mean the raqia' is literally a solid metal dome, or does it mean it is an expanse so vast, so spread out, that the metalworking image captures its extent? The Tanakh's own corroborating witnesses answer this under the two-witness standard.

The metalworking imagery in the root conveys immensity of extent — the action of spreading something thin across a vast surface — not necessarily the material composition of rigid metal. This distinction is decisive when examined against the full Tanakh corpus below.

PART II-B: BADAL — THE SEPARATION PRINCIPLE

The verb **וַיִּבְדֵּל (vayavdel)** in verse 7 — 'and it divided' — is from **בָּדַל (badal, H914)**: to separate, distinguish, set apart. This is not incidental. Badal is Yahweh's covenant verb of ordered distinction throughout Bereishit 1:

• **Bereishit (Genesis) 1:4**: Yahweh ***badal*** (separated) light from darkness — the first act of ordered creation

• **Bereishit 1:6–7**: Yahweh created the raqia' to ***badal*** waters above from waters below

• **Bereishit 1:14**: The luminaries are to ***badal*** day from night and light from darkness

• **Bereishit 1:18**: The luminaries ***badal*** the light from the darkness — confirming verse 14's purpose

The same badal root governs the Levitical separation instructions: Vayikra 10:10 — 'to badal (distinguish) between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean.' Vayikra 20:24–26 — Yahweh badal Yisra'el from the nations as He badal clean animals from the unclean. The

covenant operates on the principle of Yahweh's ordered separations. The raqia' is not an architectural accident — it is a covenant act of divine ordering.

PART II-C: SHAMAYIM — WHAT YAHWEH NAMED THE RAQIA'

In verse 8, Yahweh names the raqia': וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמָיִם — 'and Yahweh called the raqia' shamayim (שָׁמַיִם).' This naming act is covenant-determinative. In the Tanakh, to name something is to claim it, define it, and establish authority over it. Yahweh named the light 'day' and the darkness 'night' (verse 5). He names the raqia' 'heaven/sky.' The raqia' and the shamayim are identical — the expanse that was made by the raqa'-spreading action of Yahweh is the visible sky, the heaven above the earth.

The term shamayim (H8064) is itself a debated etymology. Proposed roots include: (1) sham + mayim — 'there are waters' — i.e., the sky where waters (clouds/rain) are. No second derivation is supported by the standard lexicons. What is undisputed: shamayim refers to the visible sky, the atmospheric heaven, and the celestial heaven. It is the same word used in Bereishit 1:1 — 'In the beginning Elohim created the shamayim and the aretz.'

This naming in verse 8 establishes the structural connection: the shamayim of verse 1 (created on Day 1 as the primordial context for creation) is now formally named and defined in verse 8 through the raqia'-making of Day 2. The creation of the raqia' is Tanakh's explanation for what the shamayim of verse 1 consists of at the level of observable structure.

PART III: THE ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURE OF DAY TWO

Day Two in Bereishit 1 is structurally distinct from every other day of creation. It is the only day that does not receive the evaluation formula **כִּי טוֹב (ki tov — 'that it was good')**. Every other day receives this declaration: Day 1 (verse 4), Day 3 (verse 10, 12), Day 4 (verse 18), Day 5 (verse 21), Day 6 (verse 25, 31). Day 2 — the day of the raqia' — does not.

Post-biblical rabbinic commentary (the midrash Bereshit Rabbah 4:6, comparative reference only — not Talmud and not doctrinal support) noted this absence and offered explanations: the work of separation (badal) begun on Day 2 was not completed until Day 3 when the lower waters were gathered and dry land appeared. Since the work was incomplete, ki tov was withheld on Day 2 and appears twice on Day 3 to compensate. This interpretation actually strengthens the structural reading: verses 1:7 and 1:9 are a single covenant sequence — the raqia' division (Day 2) and the lower-water gathering (Day 3) together constitute one complete act of ordered creation.

THE VAYEHI-KHEN (וַיְהִי־כֵן) OCCURRENCE TABLE

The formula 'and it was so' appears six times in the creation account. In both of the relevant occurrences — verse 7 (raqia') and verse 9 (lower waters) — it confirms absolute completion of Yahweh's spoken command.

OCCURRENCE IN BEREISHIT 1	VERSE	WHAT YAHWEH COMMANDED
First vayehi-khen	Bereishit 1:7	The raqia' — division of waters above and below
Second vayehi-khen	Bereishit 1:9	Gathering of lower waters and appearance of dry land
Third vayehi-khen	Bereishit 1:11	Vegetation — plants and fruit trees bearing seed
Fourth vayehi-khen	Bereishit 1:15	Lights in the raqia' to give light on the earth
Fifth vayehi-khen	Bereishit 1:24	Living creatures — cattle, creeping things, beasts of the earth
Sixth vayehi-khen	Bereishit 1:30	Every green plant for food

The raqia' acts as the structural pivot of the creation account. Before the raqia': primordial waters with no structure (verse 2 — tohu va-vohu, tehom). After the raqia': ordered space — sky above, seas below, dry land emerging. The covenant progression is: (1) undifferentiated chaos → (2) vertical differentiation by the raqia' → (3) horizontal differentiation by the gathering of lower waters → (4) habitable earth. The raqia' makes all subsequent creation possible.

PART IV: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CONTEXT — COVENANT DEMYTHOLOGIZATION

Bereishit 1 was written into a world saturated with Ancient Near Eastern cosmological mythology. The Tanakh does not ignore this world — it addresses it directly, systematically replacing every element of the ANE cosmic narrative with a sovereign, personal Yahweh who creates by word-decree alone.

PART IV-A: THE ENUMA ELISH (BABYLONIAN CREATION)

The Enuma Elish (Akkadian; circa 12th–7th century BCE; possibly older in oral form) is the most complete Babylonian creation account. Its structure parallels Bereishit 1 in sequence while differing radically in theology. In the Enuma Elish, the god Marduk slays the dragon-goddess Tiamat (the primordial saltwater chaos-ocean) in divine combat. He splits her body in two: one half becomes the

dome of heaven holding back cosmic waters; the other half becomes the earth. The 'firmament' in ANE context is literally the physical body of a defeated cosmic enemy — a barrier of flesh and bone holding back the waters of chaos.

Tanakh's counter-narrative is deliberate and total: there is no Tiamat. There is no combat. There is no dead goddess. There is Yahweh who speaks — yehi raqia' — 'let there be an expanse' — and it is so. The tehom (תְּהוֹם, H8415 — the 'deep,' the primordial waters of Bereishit 1:2) shares the same Semitic root as Tiamat. The Tanakh does not eliminate the tehom — it puts it under Yahweh's authority. In Bereishit 1:2, the ruach Elohim (Spirit of Elohim) is hovering over the face of the tehom before Yahweh speaks. The tehom is not Yahweh's enemy — it is His material. The raqia' is not a defeated monster's carcass — it is Yahweh's ordered work.

Scholarly corroboration: John H. Walton (The Lost World of Genesis One, InterVarsity 2009) argues that Bereishit 1 is not primarily about material origins but about functional ordering — Yahweh assigning function and role to creation. Walton identifies the deliberate contrast with ANE cosmogonies. Richard J. Clifford (Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible, CBQ Monograph 1994) documents the water-division motif across Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian sources and identifies Bereishit 1's unique theological orientation.

PART IV-B: THE SOLID-DOME CONTROVERSY

Modern critics of the Tanakh's cosmology frequently argue that Bereishit 1 depicts a solid dome (the 'firmament') holding back literal waters above the sky — a prescientific, mythological worldview. This argument depends primarily on: (1) the Septuagint's translation of raqia' as stereōma (στερέωμα — a solid thing, from stereos — solid, firm); (2) the metalworking etymology of raqa'; and (3) Iyov 37:18 ('hard as a cast metal mirror').

The covenant response under the two-witness standard:

First witness against the solid-dome reading: The Septuagint (LXX) is a Greek translation completed in Alexandria, Egypt, circa 3rd–2nd century BCE. It is translation-tradition, not Tanakh text. The LXX translators chose stereōma — but translators make interpretive choices. The LXX also renders Yahweh's name as Kyrios (Lord) — a suppression of the Name that Miqdash Bethel formally documents. The LXX is not the Tanakh.

Second witness: Iyov (**Job**) 37:18 is the single text that combines the raqa'-root with metal imagery: 'Can you, like him, spread out (tarqia') the skies, hard as a cast metal mirror?' — but this is Elihu speaking to Iyov, asking a rhetorical question designed to humble Iyov before Yahweh's power. It is not a doctrinal statement about the material composition of the raqia'. The phrase is a simile — the sky is like a molten mirror (kir'i mutsaq) — describing how the sky appears, not defining its material. Iyov 42:7 rebukes Eliphaz and his two friends; Elihu is not named there, so that verse cannot be used against him. A single rhetorical speech by Elihu cannot overturn the plain usage of the word across the full Tanakh corpus.

Third witness: Yeshayahu (**Isaiah**) 40:22 says Yahweh 'stretches out the heavens like a curtain (doq — thin gauze) and spreads them out like a tent.' Natah (H5186: to stretch, extend) and doq (H1852: thin, fine) contradict the image of rigid bronze. Stretched thin gauze and a tent canopy are not a solid metal dome. This is the second corroborating witness.

Fourth witness: Iyov 26:7 — 'He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth upon nothing (belimah — בְּלִימָה, H1099).' This is the decisive counter to any rigid-material-dome reading. If the earth hangs upon nothing, it is suspended in space. If it is suspended in space, the sky is not a solid dome resting on pillars at the earth's edge — it is the open space surrounding a suspended earth. Iyov 26 is Tanakh's own cosmological correction, and it uses the same poetic register as the creation narrative.

PART V: TANAKH CORROBORATING WITNESSES — SEVEN TEXTS

The Devarim 19:15 two-witness standard requires corroboration from two or three independent Tanakh witnesses before any doctrinal position may be established. The following seven witnesses corroborate the raqia' as Yahweh's sovereign, word-created expanse of ordered space — not a solid metallic dome and not a mythological structure.

#	WITNESS TEXT	REFERENCE	WHAT IT ESTABLISHES
1	"He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth upon nothing" — Yahweh as active architect of cosmic structure	Iyov 26:7	Cosmic suspension without physical support — refutes a rigid solid dome holding up water; earth hangs in space
2	"He drew a circle on the face of the deep" — chug (חוּג, H2329) — a compass-drawn horizon/circle	Mishlei 8:27 (Wisdom at Creation)	Chug is a circle drawn as with a compass — a horizon or boundary line, not a sphere (see Doc 171 III-B); the cosmic ocean has a drawn boundary
3	"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, or with the span marked off the heavens" — Yahweh measures the shamayim	Yeshayahu 40:12	The heavens are a measurable expanse — consistent with atmospheric space, not a rigid metallic dome
4	"He stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in" — Yeshayahu uses	Yeshayahu 40:22	Stretching language (natah) parallels the beating/spreading root of raqa' — the heavens are

	natah (H5186) + doq (H1852: thin gauze)		spread/stretched, not hammered metal
5	"The heavens were made by the word of Yahweh" — the raqia' is word-created, not material-forged	Tehillim 33:6	Creation by speech — not by physical hammering of pre-existing metal — confirms the raqia' is a functional space created by divine decree
6	"He builds His upper chambers in the heavens and has founded His vault upon the earth... who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth" — Yahweh controls the waters above	Amos 9:6	The 'upper waters' the raqia' divides are under Yahweh's sovereign control — He calls and releases them (rain)
7	"Do you know this — you who have spread the sky out, firm as a cast metal mirror?" — Iyov 37:18 uses the exact root raqa' in metalworking imagery	Iyov 37:18	The ONLY text that uses the raqa'-as-metal image — but it is Elihu's rhetorical challenge TO Iyov, not a doctrinal statement of the raqia's material composition

These seven texts, from five different books of the Tanakh (Iyov, Mishlei, Yeshayahu, Tehillim, Amos), representing three distinct sections of the canon (Torah context, Nevi'im, Ketuvim), meet the two-or-three-witness standard of Devarim 19:15 with a four-witness surplus. The consistent picture: Yahweh is the sovereign Creator who stretches, spreads, measures, and controls the shamayim. The raqia' is His ordered work — the expanse of sky that separates primordial cosmic waters above from the seas below, and in which He placed the luminaries on Day 4.

PART VI: THE RAQIA' IN YECHEZKEL'S MERKAVAH VISION

The word raqia' appears outside the creation account most significantly in Yechezkel (**Ezekiel**) 1:22–26. Yechezkel's merkavah (chariot) vision (circa 593 BCE, during the Babylonian exile) is the most elaborate divine-throne vision in the Tanakh. In it, Yechezkel sees the four living creatures (chayot), and above their heads:

"And over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse (raqia') — like the gleam of awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads above." **— Yechezkel 1:22**

***"And over the raqia' above their heads was the likeness of a throne — in appearance like sapphire — and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance."* — Yechezkel 1:26**

Two critical observations from Yechezkel's usage:

First, Yechezkel explicitly calls the raqia' a 'likeness' (demut — דְּמוּת, H1823) — it is the appearance of a surface, like crystal, not a literal description of metallic material. The prophet uses the language of visionary similitude, not material specification.

Second, the raqia' in Yechezkel's vision is the dividing surface between the creaturely realm (the chayot below) and the divine throne-realm (above). This parallels its function in Bereishit 1: the raqia' is the dividing boundary between two realms. In Bereishit, it divides the cosmic waters; in Yechezkel, it divides the creaturely from the divine. The raqia' is a covenant boundary — a structural division between distinct realms under Yahweh's sovereignty.

Additionally, Dani'el 12:3 uses raqia' in a wisdom/resurrection context: 'The maskilim (the wise/discerning) shall shine like the raqia' ha-shamayim — and those who turn the many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.' The raqia' of the sky is the standard of radiant glory. It is used metaphorically because it is tangibly luminous — the visible sky where the stars shine.

PART VII: THREE-RELIGION COVENANT AUDIT

Miqdash Bethel Covenant Institution reaches Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously under the Tanakh as sole authority. Every deep study applies the covenant message to all three traditions. The raqia' is a point of both convergence and divergence — the convergence in the shared recognition of a divinely ordered sky; the divergence in material interpretation driven by translation and tradition rather than the Hebrew text.

TRADITION	HOW RAQIA' / FIRMAMENT IS UNDERSTOOD	PRIMARY SOURCE	COVENANT ALIGNMENT
Judaism	Medieval and modern Jewish scholarship reads raqia' as the sky/atmosphere. Rashi follows the Talmudic opinion (Chagigah 12a) distinguishing multiple heavens. Nachmanides addresses the cosmological	Rashi on Bereishit 1:6–8; Chagigah 12a; Ramban commentary	ALIGNED — Scripture governs; cosmological tradition is secondary commentary

	structure. The dominant contemporary position: raqia′ = the atmospheric sky.		
Christianity	Early church fathers divided: Basil of Caesarea (Hexaemeron, ~370 CE) argued the raqia′ was air/sky, not solid. Augustine interpreted figuratively. Later Reformation interpreters tracked the Hebrew. Modern evangelical scholarship: raqia′ = expanse/sky. The Septuagint translation stereōma (solid thing) drove solid-dome readings for centuries.	LXX Bereishit 1:6 (stereōma); Basil, Hexaemeron Homily 3; Augustine, De Genesi; John Calvin, Genesis Commentary	PARTIAL — LXX insertion of stereōma introduced solid-dome tradition; Tanakh Hebrew resolves it: raqa′ = beating/spreading, not hardening
Islam	The Quran references seven samawat (heavens) — سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ (Quran 2:29, 67:3, 71:15). Islamic cosmology developed a multi-layered heaven structure. The concept of firmament as a protective dome is present in tafsir. Key term: sama′ (sky/heaven, cognate of shamayim).	Quran 2:29; 67:3; Surah Al-Anbiya 21:32 — 'We made the sky a protected ceiling'; Ibn Kathir tafsir	ALIGNED IN FUNCTION — protective sky language matches the raqia′ as ordered boundary; material composition is left open
Ancient Near Eastern Context	Enuma Elish (Babylonian): Marduk splits Tiamat's body to form the heavens and earth — the upper half becomes a dome holding back cosmic waters. Egyptian cosmology: Nut (sky goddess) arched over Geb (earth). Ugaritic: Baal	Enuma Elish Tablet IV; ANET (Pritchard); Clifford, Creation Accounts; Walton, Lost	COVENANT WITNESS — the Tanakh demythologizes ANE cosmology: no divine combat, no goddess-body, no pantheon — Yahweh speaks and it is so

	and the sea-dragon Yam. Common Ancient Near Eastern motif of cosmic waters divided by a barrier. The Tanakh shares the water-division structure but attributes it solely to Yahweh's sovereign word-decree.	World of Genesis One	

The three-religion covenant finding: all three traditions stand on common Tanakh ground when the Hebrew root is allowed to speak. The raqia' is Yahweh's sovereign act of ordered separation. The Septuagint's stereōma introduced a solid-dome reading that influenced centuries of Christian interpretation but does not represent the Hebrew. Islam's protective-ceiling language (Quran 21:32) parallels the Tanakh's functional description without contradiction. Judaism's multi-heaven framework (Chagigah 12a) is Talmudic tradition — the Tanakh text itself gives one raqia named shamayim.

PART VIII: EIGHT ENUMERATED COVENANT FINDINGS

#	COVENANT FINDING	SCRIPTURAL BASIS
1	The raqia' is Yahweh's act of ordered separation — the same badal (H914) used throughout the creation account	Bereishit 1:4, 1:6, 1:7, 1:14, 1:18
2	The root raqa' means to beat/spread thin (as metal) — conveying the image of vast extent, not necessarily rigid material composition	Iyov 37:18 (only metallic text); Yeshayahu 40:22 (stretching language)
3	Yahweh named the raqia' shamayim — establishing that the sky/heaven is a covenant-named reality under His governance	Bereishit 1:8
4	The lower waters gathered at Yahweh's word and dry land appeared — the raqia' division set the condition for habitable earth	Bereishit 1:9; Iyov 38:8-11
5	The vayehi-khen formula seals each act of creation as fully accomplished — no partial or conditional outcomes	Bereishit 1:7, 1:9 and throughout

6	Yahweh's sovereignty over the upper waters is the Tanakh's consistent answer to ANE cosmic-battle mythology	Tehillim 29:3-10; Iyov 26:7-12; Yeshayahu 51:9-10
7	The raqia' is the space in which Yahweh set the luminaries (Day 4) — confirming it is the visible sky/atmosphere and the space of celestial bodies	Bereishit 1:14-17
8	Three-religion witness: all three traditions recognize a divinely-ordered separation of sky from primordial waters — the Tanakh alone provides the Hebraic root-word precision	Bereishit 1:6-9; Quran 21:30-32; Rashi, Bereishit 1:6

PART IX: FOUR-SPHERE COVENANT APPLICATION

SPHERE	THE RAQIA' SPEAKS TO THIS SPHERE
Creation Theology	The raqia' is Yahweh's structural ordering of space — before there can be life, there must be separation. The covenant is also structured through separations: light/dark, holy/common, clean/unclean. Yahweh is the El of ordered boundaries.
Covenant Identity	Yahweh named what He created (verse 8: vayiqra Elohim la-raqia shamayim). Naming conveys authority and covenant ownership. His naming of the sky is the same covenant pattern as naming Avram → Avraham, Yaakov → Yisra'el. Creation is covenant territory.
Three-Religion Witness	Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all recognize the sky as Yahweh's created domain. Where they diverge is in the material interpretation (LXX stereōma, Islamic vault, Talmudic seven heavens). The Hebrew text of the Tanakh provides the precision: raqia' is spreading/extension by sovereign decree.
Current Events (2026)	In an era of weather modification, atmospheric engineering, and geopolitical weaponization of climate — the raqia' declares that the shamayim belongs to Yahweh (Tehillim 115:16: 'The heavens are the heavens of Yahweh; but the earth He has given to the sons of men'). No human covenant can claim sovereignty over Yahweh's named domain.

PART X: SCRIPTURE INDEX

REFERENCE	TOPIC IN THIS DOCUMENT
Bereishit 1:1	Initial creation of shamayim and aretz — the context for the raqia'
Bereishit 1:2	Tohu va-vohu and the tehom — the primordial state before the raqia' was made
Bereishit 1:4	First badal — separation of light from darkness; establishes the separation pattern
Bereishit 1:6	The divine decree: yehi raqia — let there be an expanse
Bereishit 1:7	Primary text: Yahweh makes the raqia'; divides waters above and below; vayehi-khen
Bereishit 1:8	Yahweh names the raqia' shamayim — second day seal
Bereishit 1:9	Lower waters gathered; dry land appears — third day begins from raqia' division
Bereishit 1:14-17	Luminaries placed in the raqia' — confirms raqia' = sky/space of celestial bodies
Devarim 19:15	Two-or-three-witness research standard applied throughout
Iyov 26:7	Earth hung upon nothing — cosmic suspension witness
Iyov 37:18	Elihu's rhetorical question using raqa' in metal-beating context
Iyov 38:8-11	Yahweh's sovereign control over the sea (lower waters)
Tehillim (Psalms) 19:1 [Hebrew 19:2]	The shamayim declare Yahweh's glory — the raqia' as covenant witness
Tehillim 29:3-10	Yahweh's voice over the waters — sovereignty over cosmic waters
Tehillim 33:6	Heavens made by Yahweh's word — creation by speech
Tehillim 115:16	Heavens belong to Yahweh; earth given to human beings
Tehillim 148:4	Praise from 'highest heavens' and 'waters above the heavens'
Mishlei 8:27	Wisdom at Creation — chug (circle/horizon) on the face of the deep
Yeshayahu 40:12	Yahweh measures the heavens — their extent is measurable
Yeshayahu 40:22	He stretches out the heavens like a curtain — natah / doq language
Amos 9:6	Yahweh calls the waters of the sea — controls upper/lower water cycle
Devarim 11:11	Rain from the shamayim — agricultural covenant tied to the raqia'
Yechezkel 1:22-26	The raqia' in Yechezkel's vision — expanse above the living creatures

Dani'el 12:3	The maskilim shine like the raqia' ha-shamayim — the expanse of the heavens

CLOSING COVENANT CITATION

"The heavens declare the glory of El, and the raqia' proclaims the work of His hands."

Tehillim (Psalms) 19:1 [Hebrew 19:2]

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