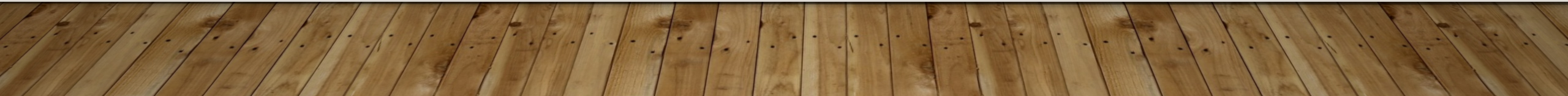


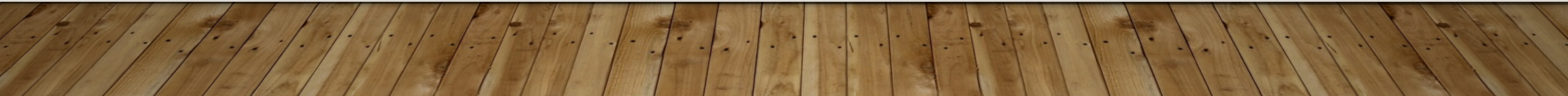
GENESIS

A DEEP DIVE

HEAVEN AND EARTH



THE LITERARY DESIGN OF GENESIS 1



THE STRUCTURE AND MESSAGE OF GENESIS 1

- How would you summarize what the frame around the six days is all about (Genesis 1:1-2; 2:1-3)
- Studying the Hebrew Bible is like a recovery project. It's about being a part of the Christian tradition that is recovering the Jewish messianic roots of Jesus and where the whole thing got started. A big part of the project is relearning how to read Jewish literature. – Tim Mackie

THE LITERARY DESIGN OF GENESIS 1

- The prologue of Genesis 1 (1:1-2) and the epilogue (1:31-2:3) have been designed as a macro-frame around the internal sequence of six days.

1:1 Summary Prologue

*In the beginning, God **created** the skies and the land* [7 words]

1:2 Exposition of Prologue in 3 lines

*Now, the land was wild and waste (תהו ובהו tohu va-vohu)
and darkness was over the face of the deep abyss (תהום tehom) [7 x 2 words]
but the breath of Elohim was hovering over the face of the waters (המים hamayim)*

Day 1

Day 4

Day 2

Day 5

Day 3

Day 6

2:1 Summary Epilogue

"Thus were finished the skies and the land and all their host

2:2-3 Exposition of Epilogue in 3 lines

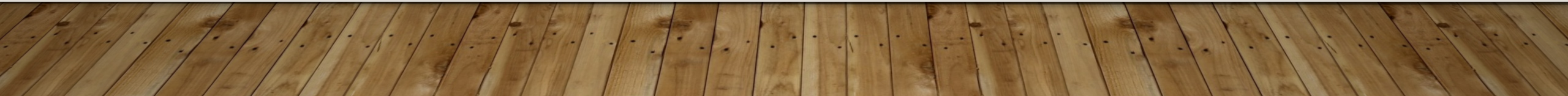
1. And God completed on the seventh day his work which he had made [7 words]
2. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made [7 words]
3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [7 words]
because on it he rested from all his work which God created to make [key word of 1:1]

THE LITERARY DESIGN OF GENESIS 1

- This design structure acts as an envelope around the sequence of six days, with a clear strategy of emphasizing the seven-fold symbolism of God's actions and the culmination of the entire narrative in the seventh day.
- Notice how the key words of the opening prologue (created, skies, land) as well as the 1x7 and 2x7 design of 2:1-2 are taken up and completed in the prologue with the same words and the 3x7 design.

REPEATED WORDS IN GENESIS 1

- Days 1 and 4 of creation have lots of similarities in vocabulary, so that as we read, we are meant to compare them in our minds.
- Paying attention to repeated words, and paying attention to when and where things are repeated, is one of the most simple tools for discerning literary design in a story. What might strike us as redundant actually becomes very meaningful to what is being conveyed by the story.



³ and 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 and God called the **light** **day**,
 and the **darkness** He called **night**.
And there was evening
and there was morning,
 one day.

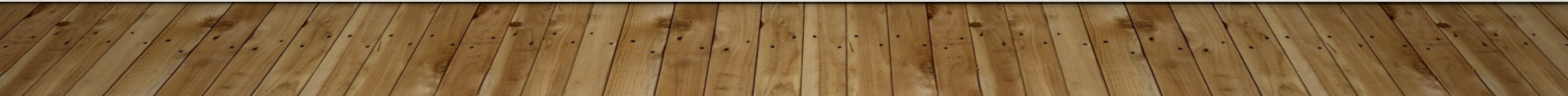
¹⁴ and God said,
 "Let there be lights
 in the expanse of the skies
 *to separate the **day** from the **night**,*
 and let them be for signs
 and for festivals and for days and years;
¹⁵ and let them be for **lights**
 in the dome of the skies
 to give **light** on the land"
 and it was so.
¹⁶ and God made the two great **lights**,
 the great **light** to rule the day,
 and the small **light** to rule the night;
 and also the stars.
¹⁷ and God placed them
 in the dome of the skies
 to give light on the land,
¹⁸ and to rule the **day** and the **night**,
 and to separate the **light** from the **darkness**.;
 and God saw that it was good.
¹⁹ and there was evening
and there was morning,
 fourth day.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN DAYS 1 AND 4

- On day one, God himself provides the light of his divine glory that meets the darkness and fits it within the larger divine purpose. God names it, and limits its scope by containing it within the cycle of alternating periods of darkness and light.
- When days 1 and 4 are compared, based on the parallel vocabulary, we see God's attention return to the heavenly realm, as he fills it with inhabitants, namely the lamps. It is significant that God delegates to the lights the role God himself played on day 1, that of separating light and dark.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN DAYS 1 AND 4

- This make good sense why these lights are called “signs”, (אֲתָר) physical symbols of God’s own light, glory and power that meet the darkness on day one.



6 and God said,
 “Let there be a **dome**
 in the middle of the waters,
 and let it separate the waters
 from the waters.”

7 and God made the **dome**,
 and separated **the waters**
which were below the dome
 from **the waters**
which were above the dome;
 and it was so.

8 God called the **dome** “**skies**”.

and there was evening
 and there was morning,
 second day.

20 and God said,
 “Let **the waters** swarm with swarms of living
 creatures,
 and let birds fly **above the land**
against the face of the dome of the
skies”

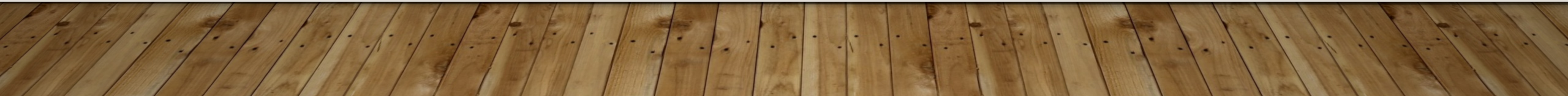
21 and God created the great sea-monsters
 and every living creature that moves,
 with which the waters swarmed after their
 kind,
 and every bird of wing after its kind;
 and God saw that it was good.

22 and God blessed them, saying,
 “Be fruitful and multiply,
 and fill **the waters in the seas**,
 and let birds multiply on the land.”

23 and there was evening
 and there was morning,
 fifth day.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 2 AND 5

- On day 2, God orders the middle realm that will exist in between the skies above and the land below. It begins with the unordered chaos waters of Genesis 1:2, and God “separates,” that is creates a meaningful distinction that will serve his purposes.

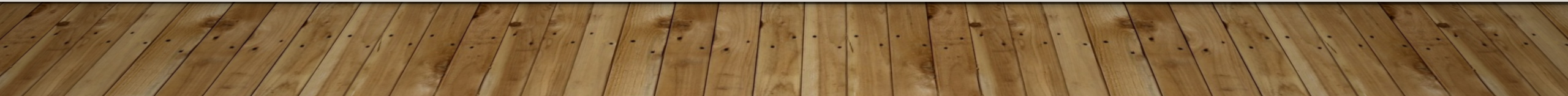


RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 2 AND 5

- The border between the waters above and below is called “dome” (רקיע), and it creates a horizon line between waters above and below. Only the waters above receive a name “skies”, while the waters below will receive their name on the following day.

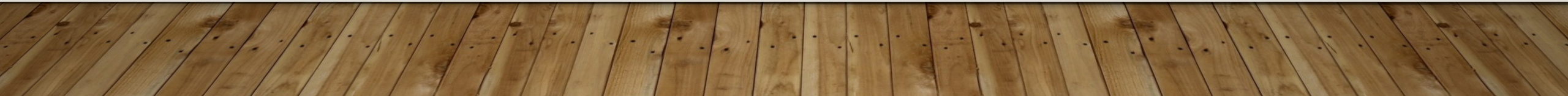
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 2 AND 5

- On day 5 God fills the waters above and below with inhabitants, addressing them in the same order as day 2. The waters below swarm with sea creatures and monsters, while the birds inhabit the realm above the land against the surface of the sky-dome.



RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 2 AND 5

- The extra element on day 5 is God's blessing on the living creatures, summoning them to be fruitful and to multiply. Unlike the lights and stars of day 4, these inhabitants must be called by God to actively experience the divine blessing of life and abundance. Their existence is not a given, but contingent on the divine blessing.



⁹ and God said,
 “Let the waters below the skies
 be gathered into one place,
 and let the **dry ground** be seen”;
 and it was so.
¹⁰ and God called the **dry ground** “land,”
 and the gathering of the waters He
 called “seas”
 and God saw that it was good.

²⁴ and God said,
 “Let **the land** bring out living creatures
 according to their kind,
 cattle
 and creeping things
 and beasts of the land
 according to their kind”;
 and it was so.
²⁵ and God made
 the beasts of the land according to their kind,
 and the cattle according to their kind,
 and the creepers of the ground according to its kind
 and God saw that it was good.
²⁶ and God said,
 “Let us make human
 in our image,
 according to our likeness;
 and let them rule
 over the fish of the sea
 and over the birds of the sky
 and over the cattle
 and over all **the land**,
 and over every creeper that creeps on the land.”
²⁷ and God created human in his image,
 in the image of God he created him;
 male and female He created them.
²⁸ and God blessed them,
 and God said to them,
 “Be fruitful and multiply,
 and fill **the land**,
 and subdue it;
 and rule over the fish of the sea
 and over the birds of the sky
 and over living creature that creeps on **the land**.”

DAY 3

⁹ and God said,

*“Let the waters below the skies
be gathered into one place,
and let the **dry ground** be seen”;
and it was so.*

¹⁰ and God called the **dry ground** “land,”
and the gathering of the waters He
called “seas”

and God saw that it was good.

²⁴ and God said,

“Let **the land** bring out living creatures
according to their kind,
cattle
and creeping things
and beasts of the land
according to their kind”;

and it was so.

²⁵ and God made

the beasts of the land according to their kind,
and the cattle according to their kind,
and the creepers of the ground according to its kind
and God saw that it was good.

²⁶ and God said,

“Let us make human
in our image,
according to our likeness;
and let them rule
over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the sky
and over the cattle
and over all **the land**,
and over every creeper that creeps on the land.”

²⁷ and God created human in his image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female He created them.

²⁸ and God blessed them,
and God said to them,

“Be fruitful and multiply,
and fill **the land**,
and subdue it;
and rule over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the sky
and over living creature that creeps on **the land**.”

¹¹ and God said, "Let **the land** sprout
vegetation,
vegetative **plants that produce seed,**
fruit trees
that make fruit according to its
kind
which has its seed inside it
upon **the land**
and it was so.

¹² and **the land** brought out
vegetative plants
that produce seed according to its
kind
and trees
that make fruit
which has its seed in it
according to its kind
and God saw that it was good.

¹³ and here was evening
and there was morning,
third day.

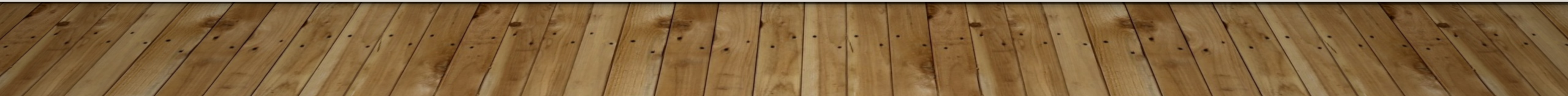
²⁹ and God said,
"Behold, I have given to you
every **plant producing seed**
that is on the surface of all the earth,
and **every tree which has fruit producing seed;**
it shall be food for you;

³⁰ and to every beast of the land
and to every bird of the sky
and to every thing that moves on the land
which has animal life in it,
every green plant for food"
and it was so.

³¹ and God saw all that He had made,
and behold, it was very good.
and there was evening
and there was morning,
sixth day.

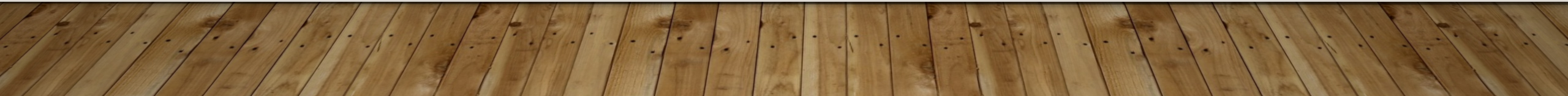
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 3 AND 6

- Day 3 provides shifts from day 2's focus on the middle realm and the waters above and below, and shows God creating one last environment, the land which emerges out of the water. Day three also has a bonus act, which acts as a +1 unit for the first triad of days. This +1 element in 1:11-13 focuses on the fruitfulness of the land, specifically in vegetation and fruit trees which spread their seed.



RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 3 AND 6

- Day 6 displays a remarkable parallel design to day 3. It also shows God entirely focusing on the land, by creating its inhabitants (both plants and animals “come out” of the ground: 1:12 and 1:24). God first focuses on the animals of the land, and then on humanity, who constitute the divine image on the land.

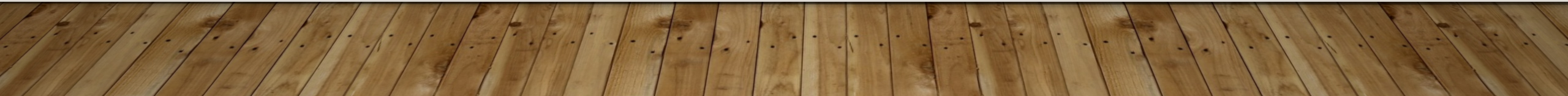


RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 3 AND 6

- Day 6 also has a final +1 element in 1:29-30, which takes up precisely the +1 element of day 3: the vegetative plants and the fruit trees with seed are assigned “for food” for the animals and humans.
- These matching relationships are clearly intentional, creating what is called a “forward symmetry” (ABC//A'B'C'), which can be visualized in the following way.

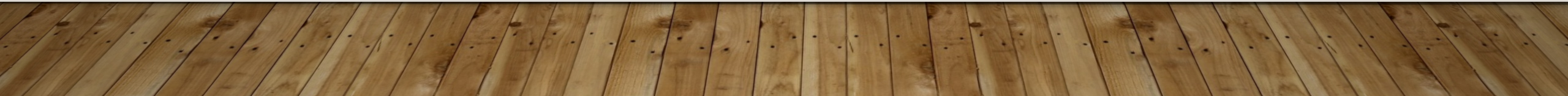
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAYS 3 AND 6

- However, this forward symmetry between days is not the only literary design feature of Genesis 1. Each of the triad also has its own internal shape, which leads the reader to compare matching elements in the first and last elements of the triad.
- This design highlights features that match between the first and least parts of each triad, as well as the matching halves of the middle part.



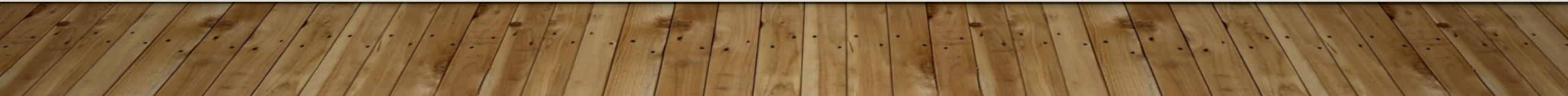
THE COSMOS OF GENESIS 1: DAYS 1-6

- Days 1-6 have been neatly organized as two triads that each address the “problems” to cosmic order presented in Gen 1:2: disorder and uninhabited, darkness and disorder.



THE COSMOS OF GENESIS 1: DAYS 1-6

- Days 1-3 address the problem of disorder as God organizes the cosmos into distinct realms: the heavens above, the middle heaven/ earth, and the land below.
- Days 4-6 then supply each of these realms with their appropriate inhabitants: the heavenly realm with lights, the middle heaven/ earth with birds and fish, and the dry land with creatures and... Humans!



The Skies

The Land

Host of the Skies

Host of the Land

THE LAND	
wild/unordered (tohu)	and waste/uninhabited (bohu)
Day 1 "and God said..." light and dark / day and night evening & morning: day 1	Day 4 "and God said..." lights separate and rule day and night evening and morning: day 4
Day 2 "and God said..." The dome separates... ... the waters above ... the waters below evening & morning: day 2	Day 5 "and God said..." Creatures in the waters ... birds by the waters above ... fish in the waters below evening & morning: day 5
Day 3 "and God said..." the waters below gather the dry land emerges	Day 6 "and God said..." land creatures emerge from the dry land humans appointed to rule
+1 Bonus! plants and seed emerges from the ground evening & morning: day 3	+1 Bonus! and provided with trees, plants and seed evening & morning: day 6
AND SO THEY WERE COMPLETED	
the skies and the land	and all of their hosts

³ <u>and God said,</u> “LET THERE BE light” and there was light. ⁴ <u>and God saw that the light was good;</u> and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ and God called the light “day,” and the darkness He called “night.” And there was evening and there was morning, one day (יום אחד).	A God orders the <u>heavens</u> - Light = divine glory - Dark = disorder and chaos
Day 2 - Part 1 ⁶ and God said, “Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, and let it separate the waters <u>from the waters.</u>” Day 2 - Part 2 ⁷ and God made the dome, and he separated the <u>waters below the dome</u> from <u>the waters above the dome</u>; and it was so. ⁸ God called the dome “skies”.	B <u>God commands</u> the chaos waters to be split B’ <u>Fulfillment</u> of God’s command to split the waters
Day 3 ⁹ <u>and God said,</u> “LET THE waters below the skies BE gathered into <u>one place</u> (מקום אחד) AND LET THE dry ground BE seen”; and it was so. ¹⁰ and God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathering of the waters He called “seas” <u>and God saw that it was good...</u>	A’ God orders <u>the land</u> - Land = refuge from God - Waters = disorder and chaos



Day 1

- ³ and God said,
 “**LET THERE BE** light”
 and there was light.
- ⁴ and God saw that the light was good;
 and God separated the light from the darkness.
- ⁵ **and God called the light “day,”**
 and the darkness He called “night.”

And there was evening
and there was morning,
one day (יום אחד).

A

God orders the heavens
- Light = divine glory
- Dark = disorder and chaos

Day 2 - Part 1

⁶ and God said,
"Let there be a **dome**
in the middle of the waters,
and let it **separate** the waters
from the waters."

B
**God commands the chaos
waters to be split**

Day 2 - Part 2

⁷ and God made the **dome**,
and he **separated** the waters below the **dome**
from **the waters above the** **dome**;
and it was so.
⁸ God called the **dome** "**skies**".

B'
**Fulfillment of God's
command to split
the waters**

Day 3

⁹ and God said,

"LET THE waters below the skies

BE gathered into one place (מקום אחד)

AND LET THE dry ground BE seen";

and it was so.

¹⁰ **and God called the dry ground "land,"**

and the gathering of the waters He called "seas"

and God saw that it was good...

A'

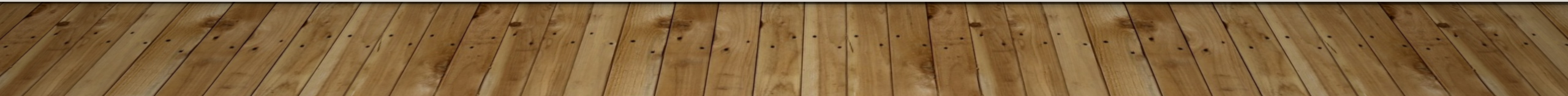
God orders the land

- Land = refuge from God

- Waters = disorder
and chaos

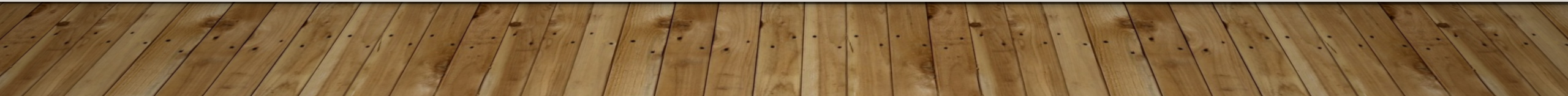
THIS DESIGN STRUCTURE INVITES THE READER TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE MATCHING ELEMENTS

- Days 1 and 3 both portray God as addressing the two most iconic images of disorder, chaos, and death in the biblical imagination: darkness and the waters (note that they were already paired in 1:2). We are encouraged to see both as corresponding images of anti-creation.



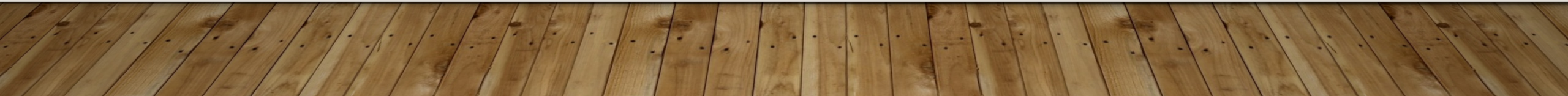
THIS DESIGN STRUCTURE INVITES THE READER TO COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE MATCHING ELEMENTS

- Day 2 is set apart from days 1 and 3 in having the most elaborate “command/fulfillment” structure of the three days. While day 1 registers a command and a short fulfillment, and while day 3 displays only a command and then a fulfillment summary (“and it was so”), day 2 has a repetitious and lengthy command followed by an equally lengthy fulfillment. But note that the two halves match nearly identically. This is a literary embodiment of the theme of day 2, which is the complete division between the heavenly and earthly by means of splitting the waters.



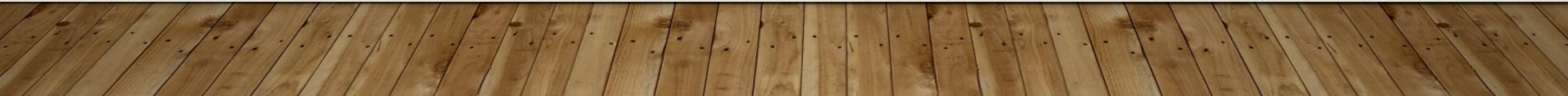
THE READER COMES AWAY FROM DAYS 1-3 WITH A ROBUST AWARENESS OF THE MAKEUP OF THE BIBLICAL COSMOS

- Heaven and earth are mirror realities. The provision of divine light contains the darkness and creates most basic condition necessary for God's plan for life to flourish. In a similar way, on earth the provision of the land pushes back the waters, creating a space where life can flourish.



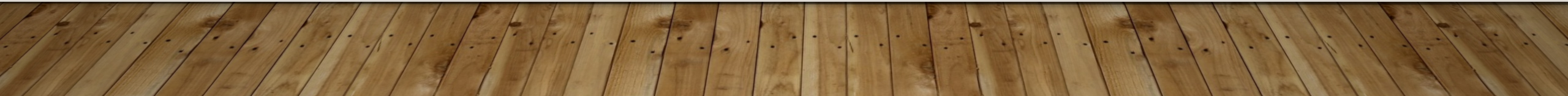
THE READER COMES AWAY FROM DAYS 1-3 WITH A ROBUST AWARENESS OF THE MAKEUP OF THE BIBLICAL COSMOS

- God's "conflict" with the darkness is a foundational image of the spiritual conflict that underlies the story of the Bible. Similarly, God and humanity's conflict with the chaos-waters can function as an image of the human conflict (the metaphor scheme of humans as chaos waters).



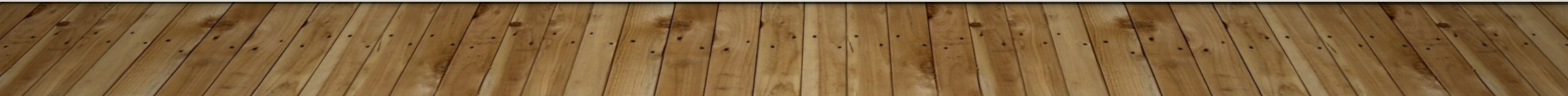
THE READER COMES AWAY FROM DAYS 1-3 WITH A ROBUST AWARENESS OF THE MAKEUP OF THE BIBLICAL COSMOS

- God's victory over darkness (day 1) and the waters (day 3) happens by means of speaking a word. Day 2 focuses on God's "splitting" the waters, again by speaking a word. But this is followed by an act of "creation" as God separates the chaos waters.



FOUNDATIONAL IMAGES FOR BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

- Every single part of this network of images will be developed throughout the remainder of the biblical narrative:
- • Waters // darkness // death // enemies
- • Dry land // light // life // refuge
- • God splitting the waters to create life // God's victory over chaos and evil



DESIGN OF DAYS 4-6

- The design of days 4-6 can be compared in a similar way, and again the comparisons and contrast yield rich results about the biblical imagery.

Day 4	¹⁴ and God said, "Let there be LIGHTS in the expanse of the skies to separate the day from the night, and let them be for SYMBOLS..." ¹⁶ and God made the two great LIGHTS, the great LIGHT to rule the day, and the small LIGHTS to rule the night; and also the stars. ¹⁷ and God placed them in the dome of the skies to give LIGHT on the land, and to rule the day and the night, ¹⁸ and to separate the LIGHT from the darkness.; and God saw that it was good.	A God delegates heavenly rulers They are "symbols" They rule light and darkness and separate the calendar
Day 5 - a	²⁰ and God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the land..."	
Day 5 - b	²¹ and God created the great sea-monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every bird of wing after its kind;	B God apportions the waters above and below to birds and fish God also makes "sea-monster"
Day 5 - a'	²² and God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the land."	
Day 6	²⁶ and God said, "Let us make HUMAN in our IMAGE, according to our LIKENESS; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the land, and over every creeper that creeps on the land..." ²⁸ and God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the land, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over living creature that creeps on the land."	A' God delegates earthly rulers They are divine images They rule the land and its wild creatures

Day 4

¹⁴ and God said,
 "Let there be LIGHTS
 in the expanse of the skies
 to separate the day from the night,
 and let them be for SYMBOLS...
¹⁶ and God made the two great LIGHTS,
 the great LIGHT to rule the day,
 and the small LIGHTS to rule the night;
 and also the stars.
¹⁷ and God placed them
 in the dome of the skies
 to give LIGHT on the land,
¹⁸ and to rule the day and the night,
 and to separate the LIGHT from the darkness.;
 and God saw that it was good.

A

**God delegates heavenly
rulers They are "symbols"
They rule light and darkness
and separate the calendar**

Day 5 - a

²⁰ and God said,
"Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures,
and let birds fly above the land..."

Day 5 - b

²¹ and God created the great sea-monsters
and every living creature that moves,
with which the waters swarmed after their kind,
and every bird of wing after its kind;

B

**God apportions the
waters above and below
to birds and fish
God also makes
"sea-monster"**

Day 5 - a'

²² and God blessed them, saying,
"Be fruitful and multiply,
and fill the waters in the seas,
and let birds multiply on the land."

Day 6

²⁶ and God said,
 "Let us make HUMAN
 in our IMAGE,
 according to our LIKENESS;
and let them rule
 over the fish of the sea
 and over the birds of the sky
 and over the cattle
 and over all the land,
 and over every creeper that creeps on the land..."

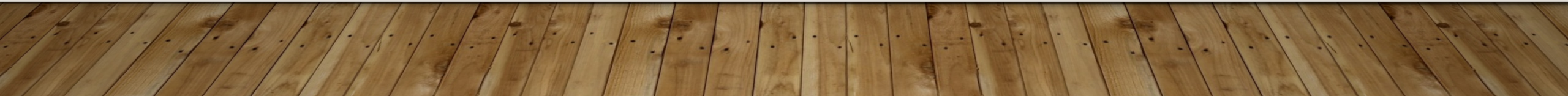
²⁸ and God blessed them,
and God said to them,
 "Be fruitful and multiply,
 and fill the land,
 and subdue it;
 and rule over the fish of the sea
 and over the birds of the sky
 and over living creature that creeps on the land."

A'

**God delegates
earthly rulers
They are divine images
They rule the land and its
wild creatures**

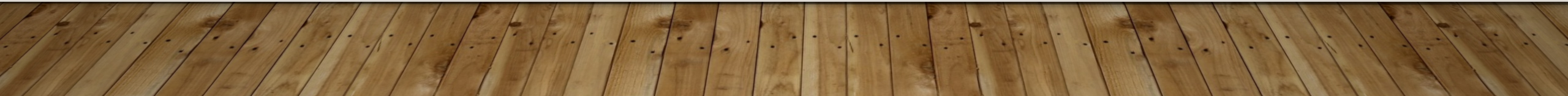
THE DESIGN STRUCTURE INVITES READERS TO MAKE NEW CONTRASTS AND COMPARISONS

- God's delegated rulers mirror each other.
- On day 4 the sun and moon both function as a pair that rules day and night. Note that stars are not included in the designated rule, rather they make up that part that is ruled (darkness and night).
- Similarly, on day 6 the man and woman function as a ruling pair over the land and animals.



THE DESIGN STRUCTURE INVITES READERS TO MAKE NEW CONTRASTS AND COMPARISONS

- Notice how all three days have an extra object created that sticks out of the other lists:
- Day 4 – stars in addition to the rulers (sun and moon)
- Day 5 – sea monsters (leviathan) in addition to creatures that swarm in the waters
- Day 6 – behemoth in addition to creeping things, cattle and wild animals



LITERARY ORIGAMI

- When this overlapping set of design structures are laid on top of each other, one gets what scholar David Andrew Teeter calls “literary origami.” The six days of Genesis 1 are arranged along two “folds”: a vertical axis that forms two matching triads, and a horizontal axis that forms each triad into a mirror shape.

THE LAND IS
wild/unordered and waste/uninhabited

The Skies

Day 1

light and dark / day and night

Day 2

The dome separates...
... the waters above

... the waters below

Day 3

the waters below gather
dry land emerges

Bonus!

plants and seed emerges from the ground

Day 4

lights separate and rule day and night

Day 5

Creatures in the waters
... birds by the waters above

... fish in the waters below

Day 6

land creatures emerge
from the dry land
humans made to rule

Bonus!

and provided with trees, plants and seed

Host of the Skies

Host of the Land

The Land

THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS TO THIS POINT?