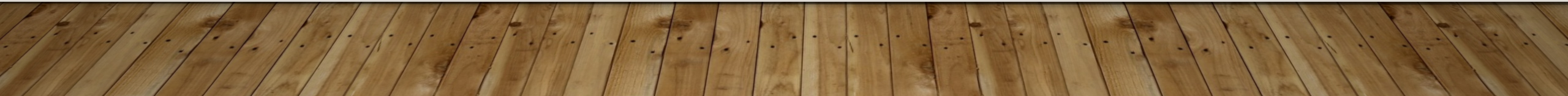


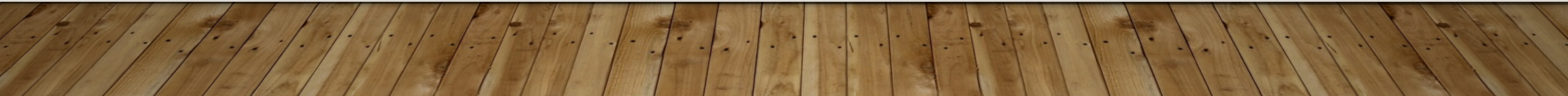
GENESIS

A DEEP DIVE

HEAVEN AND EARTH



THE UNITY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH



THE HEAVENS

- **Key Question**
- How is the word “heaven(s)” used today, and how does this compare with the biblical use?
- **Session Quote**
- “The whole point of the story of the Bible is not that everybody ascends up to heaven but that the heavenly realm comes and transforms here.”

JONAH 2:1–7

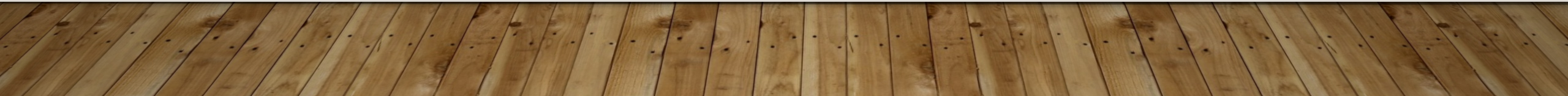
- 1 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from **the stomach of the fish**, and he said, “I called out of my distress to the Lord, And He answered me. I cried for help from the **depth of Sheol**; You heard my voice. “For You had cast me into **the deep**, Into the heart of **the seas**, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and waves passed over me. “So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight.

JONAH 2:1–7

- Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’ “Water encompassed me to **the point of death**. The **great deep** engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. “I descended to the **roots of the mountains**. The **earth with its bars** was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. “While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, And my prayer rose up to You, Into Your holy temple.

THE LAND DOWN, OUT, AND UNDER: THE WILDERNESS, ABYSS, SHEOL, THE GRAVE

- Wilderness in Gen 1:2 is an image of “nothingness”
- Genesis 1:2 “now, the land was wild and waste” (Hebrew: tohu vavohu)
- Other uses of tohu vavohu: “empty/uninhabited/wasteland”



DEUTERONOMY 32:9–10 (NASB95)

- “For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. “He found him in a desert land, And in the howling **tohu** of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye.

ISAIAH 24:10-12

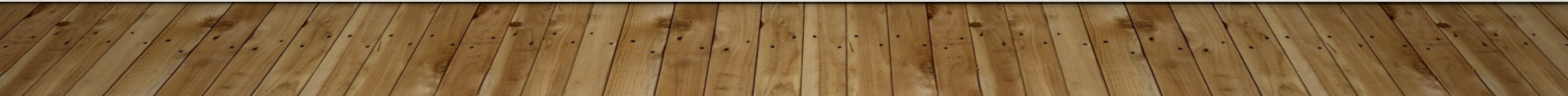
- The city of **tohu** is broken down; Every house is shut up so that none may enter. There is an outcry in the streets concerning the wine; All joy turns to gloom. The gaiety of the earth is banished. Desolation is left in the city And the gate is battered to ruins.

ISAIAH 45:18 (NIV)

- For this is what the Lord says— he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be **tohu**, but formed it to be inhabited— he says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.

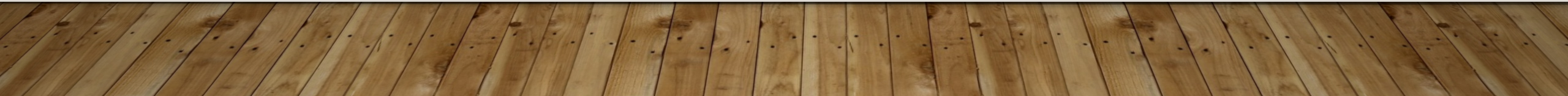
GEN 3:22-24 AND GEN 4:17: EXILE ‘TO THE EAST’ INTO THE LAND OF THORNS AND THISTLES

- Genesis 3:17–19 (NASB95) Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”



GENESIS 3:23–24 (NASB95)

- ...therefore the Lord God **sent him out from the garden of Eden**, to work the ground from which he was taken. So **He banished the man out**; and **at the east** of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.



GENESIS 4:14–16 (NASB95)

- “Behold, You have **banished** me this day from the face of the ground; and **from Your face** I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth... Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and settled in the land of Nod, **east of Eden**.
- **City de-creation tropes: from garden/city to wilderness: Edom in Isa 34; Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 19**

ISAIAH 34:10–15 (NASB95)

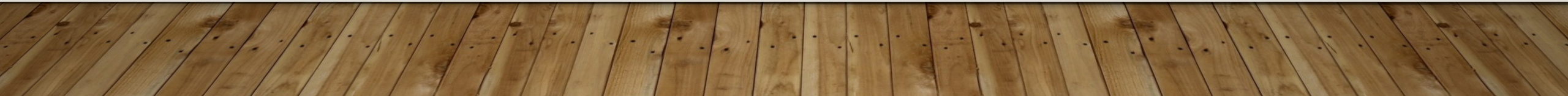
- From generation to generation [Edom] will be desolate; None will pass through it forever and ever. But pelican and hedgehog will possess it, And owl and raven will dwell in it; And He will stretch over it the line of desolation And the plumb line of emptiness. Its nobles—there is no one there Whom they may proclaim king— And all its princes will be nothing. Thorns will come up in its fortified towers, Nettles and thistles in its fortified cities; It will also be a haunt of jackals And an abode of ostriches.

ISAIAH 34:10–15 (NASB95)

- The desert creatures will meet with the wolves, The hairy goat also will cry to its kind; Yes, the night monster will settle there And will find herself a resting place. The tree snake will make its nest and lay eggs there, And it will hatch and gather them under its protection. Yes, the hawks will be gathered there, Everyone with its kind.

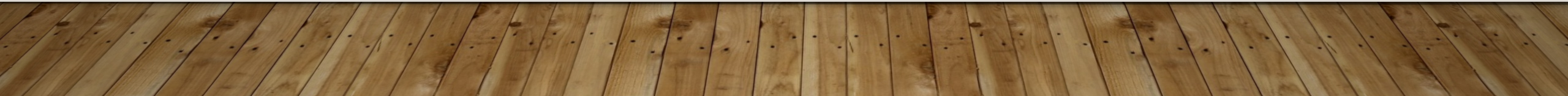
DAY OF ATONEMENT IN LEV 16: THE SCAPEGOAT INTO THE DESERT

- Leviticus 16:7–10 (NIV) Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the Lord and the other for **Aza'zel**. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot for **Aza'zel** shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it **into the wilderness** for **Aza'zel**.



LEVITICUS 16:20–22 (NIV)

- “When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites— all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head.

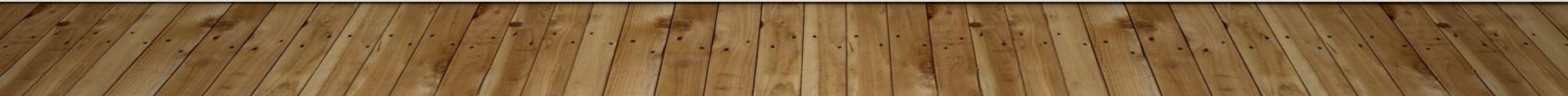


LEVITICUS 16:20–22 (NIV)

- **He shall send the goat away into the wilderness** in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins **to a remote place** (lit. “a land that is cut off”); **and the man shall release it into the wilderness.**

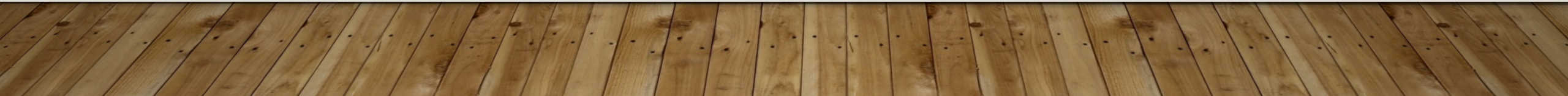
NEW CREATION AS WILDERNESS TRANSFORMATION INTO GARDENS:

- **Isaiah 41:17–20 (NIV)** “The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive.



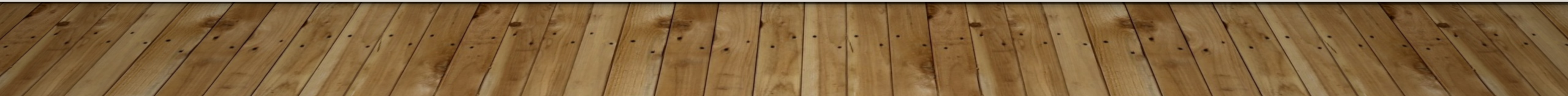
Isaiah 41:17–20 (NIV)

- I will set junipers in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.



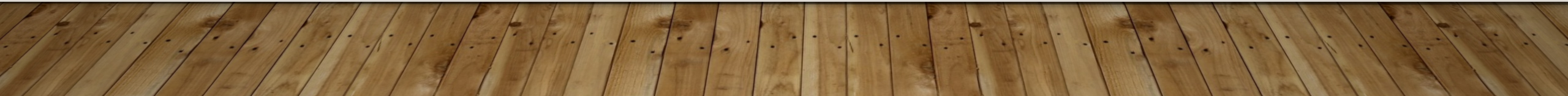
NEW CREATION AS WILDERNESS TRANSFORMATION INTO GARDENS:

- See also Psalm 107:33-37 (wickedness brings chaos and wilderness but God made the wilderness fruitful for his people)
- Jesus tested and victorious in the wilderness: Matthew 4
- Demons and the wilderness: Luke 8:29 Man restored from the power of demons. The abyss awaited the demons.



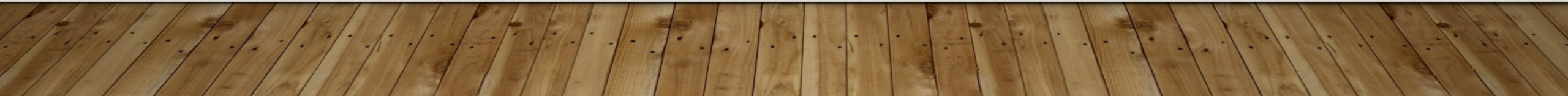
SHEOL, THE WATERY ABYSS, AND THE PIT

- Recall that under the land was the abysmal waters, darkness, and death
- Psalm 24:1-2
- **The land** is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it **on the seas** and established it **on the waters**.



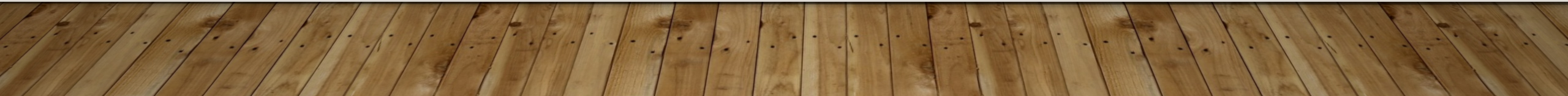
PSALM 69:1-2, 15

- Save me, O God, For the **waters** have threatened my life. I have sunk in **deep mire**, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep **waters**, and a **flood** overflows me. May the **flood** of water not overflow me Nor **the deep** swallow me up, Nor **the pit** shut its mouth on me.



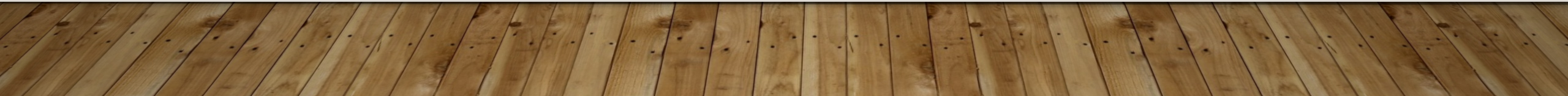
PSALM 88:3-7

- For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn near to **Sheol**. I am reckoned among those who go down to the **pit**; I have become like a man without strength, Forsaken among the **dead**, Like the slain who lie in the **grave**, Whom You remember no more, And they are cut off from Your hand. You have put me in the lowest **pit**, In dark places, in the **depths**... And You have afflicted me with all **Your waves**.



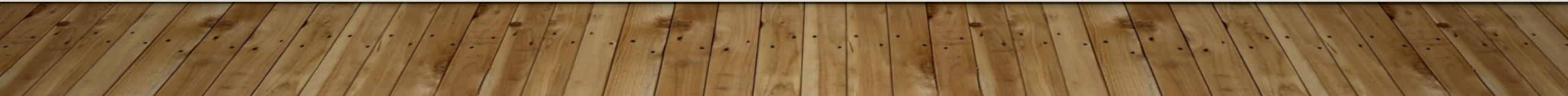
PSALM 18:4-5

- The **cords of death** encompassed me, And the **torrents** of ungodliness terrified me. The cords of **Sheol** surrounded me; The snares of **death** confronted me.



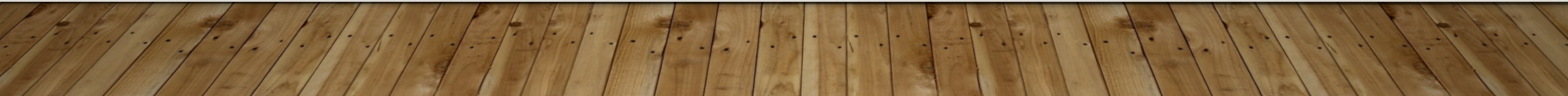
PSALM 115:16-17

- The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, But the **earth** He has given to the sons of men. The **dead** do not praise the Lord, Nor do any who go down into silence;



IN THE BIBLE, SHEOL IS THE REALM OF THE DEAD

- “below”: Deut 32:22; Ps 86:13; Job 11:8; Prov 9:18;
- “the pit”: Jonah 2:6; Ps 40:2; Isa 14:15; Ezek 32:23
- “the depths of the land”: Ps 71:20
- Associated with dirt and worms: “Job 17:16; Isa 14:11
- It is the cosmological opposite of the skies: Job 11:8; Ps 139:8; Amos 9:2

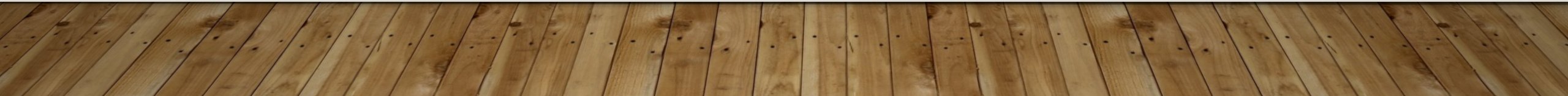


PSALM 139:7-9

- Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to **heaven**, You are there; If I make my bed in **Sheol**, behold, You are there. If I take to the edges/ wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the **end of the sea**,

METAPHORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHEOL

- Darkness (= pre-creation state of Gen 1): Job 17:21; Ps 88:2-6; 10-12; Lam 3:6
- Locked with gates and bars: Jonah 2:6; Isa 38:10
- Half-sleep and weakness: Isa 14:10; Ps 94:17; 115:17; Ezek 32:21; Eccl 9:5-6
- The home of defeated kings of old: Isa 14:9-15

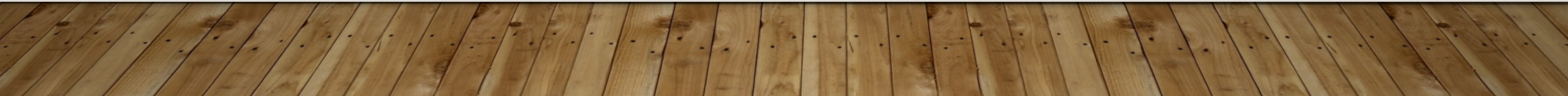


METAPHORS ASSOCIATED WITH SHEOL

- Sheol is the home of the wicked (Ps 9:17; 31:17; 49:14; 141:7; Job 24:19; Prov 5:5; 7:27; 9:18)
- and from it the righteous await redemption (Ps 14; 30:3; 40:2; 71:20; 86:13; 88:6)

PSALM 9:17–18 (NIV)

- The wicked go down to **sheol**, all the nations that forget God. But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish.



PSALM 31:14–17 (NIV)

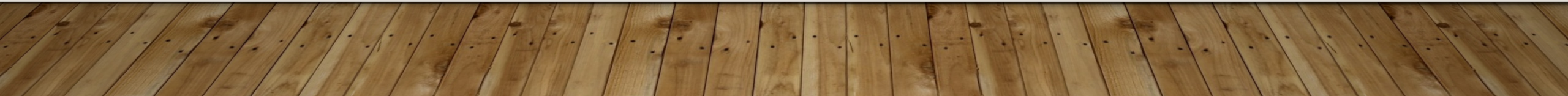
- But I trust in you, Lord; I say, “You are my God.” My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame, Lord, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and be silent in **sheol**.

PSALM 49:12–16 (NIV)

- People, despite their wealth, do not endure; they are like the beasts that perish. This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings. They are like sheep and are destined to die; death will be their shepherd, but the upright will ruler over them in the morning. Their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions. but God will redeem me from **sheol**; he will surely take me to himself.

PSALM 71:19–21 (NIV)

- Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things, who is like you, God? Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. You will increase my honor and comfort me once more.



RESTORATION FROM EXILE AS RESURRECTION:

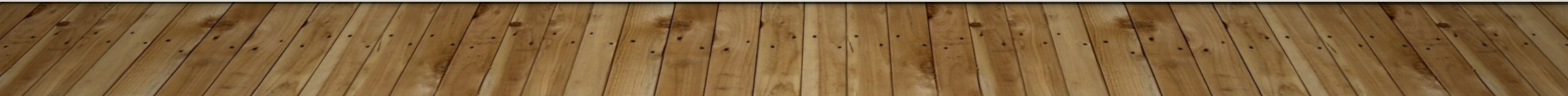
- Hosea 6:1-3;
- Ezekiel 37:1-14 (Valley of dry bones)

HOSEA 6:1-3

- “Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

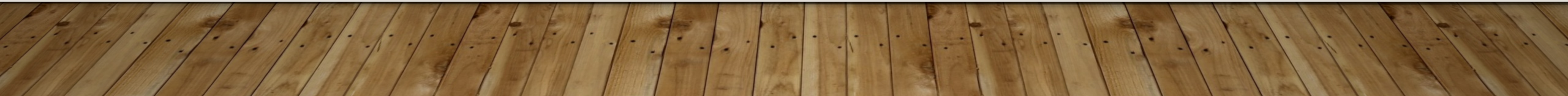
THE HEAVENS/SKIES ABOVE

- God is depicted as dwelling “above the heavens.” This spatial image makes clear that the divine realm is transcendent and above all, a fitting place for God’s divine throne.



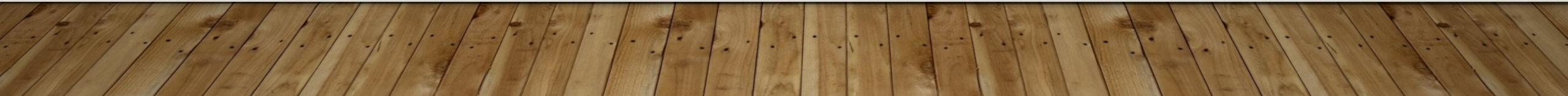
PSALM 11:4

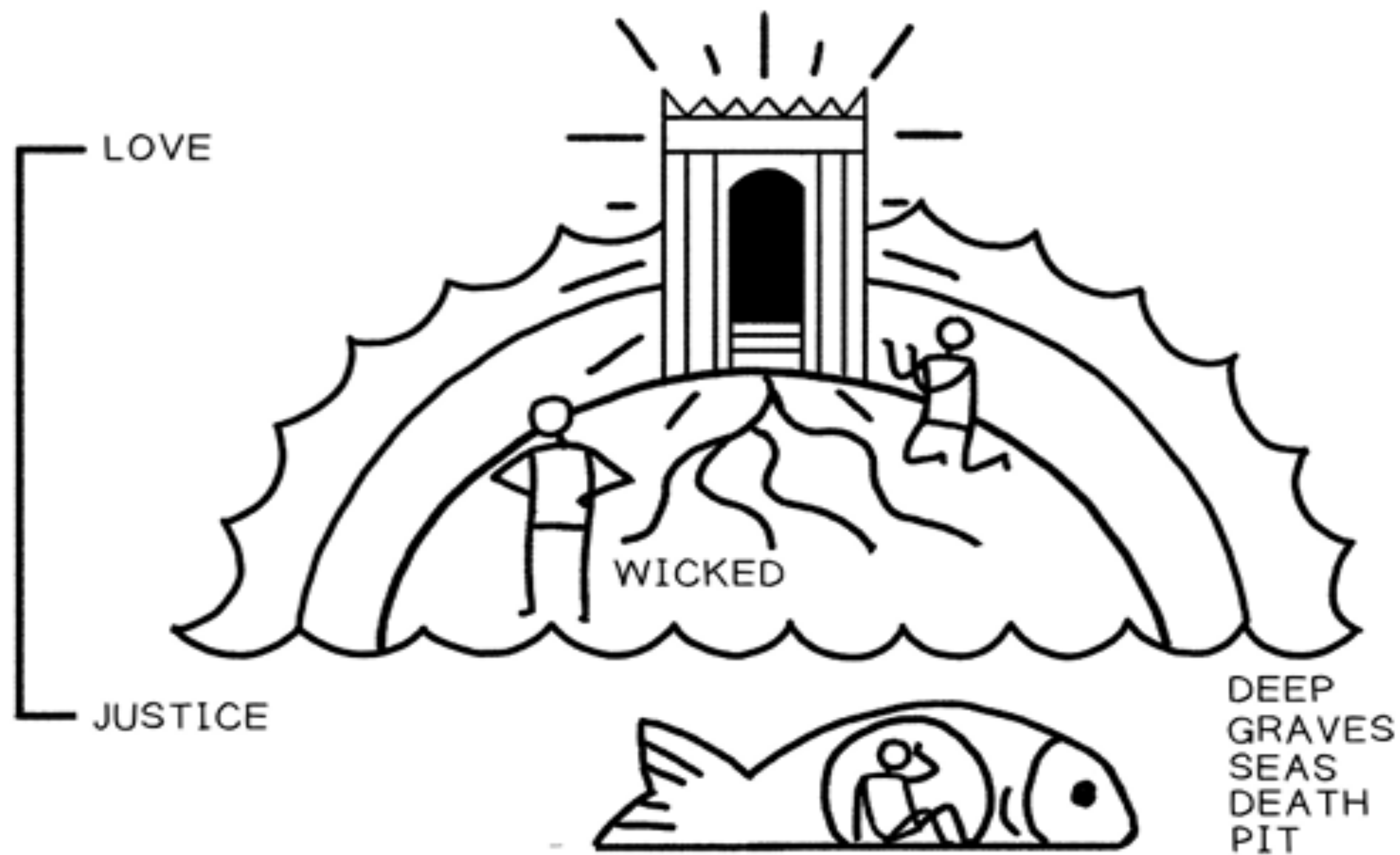
- The Lord is in **his holy temple**; the Lord is on **his heavenly throne**. He observes everyone on earth; his eyes examine them.



ISAIAH 66:1-2

- This is what the Lord says: “ **Heaven is my throne, and the land is my footstool.** Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the Lord.





KEY QUESTION

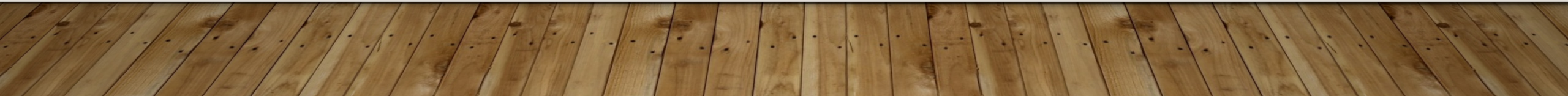
- Where, in the biblical story, do you see a theme of places that merge heaven and earth?

Session Quote

- “God’s purpose is to fill the earth with the life and presence of heaven. The tabernacle and the temple become these symbols of that reality and of that future hope.”

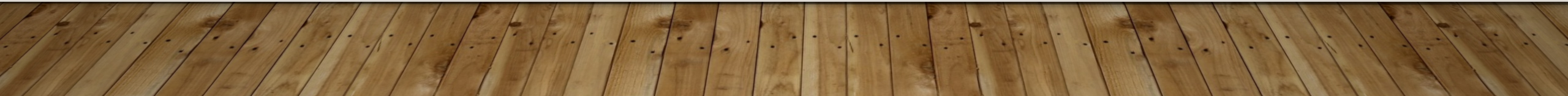
THE MANY MEANINGS OF “HEAVEN” IN THE BIBLE

- However, given the reality of the waters above the heavens, the Hebrew word “heavens” (shamayim / שמים) can be used in three distinct waters within biblical cosmic geography.



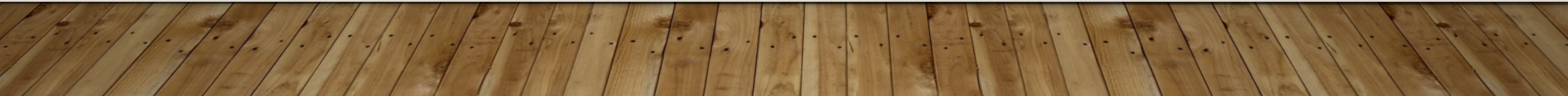
1. “HEAVENS” CAN REFER TO THE SKY-DOME ITSELF THAT DIVIDES THE COSMIC WATERS ABOVE AND BELOW

- Genesis 1:6-8
- And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 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. **God called the dome “heavens.”** And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.



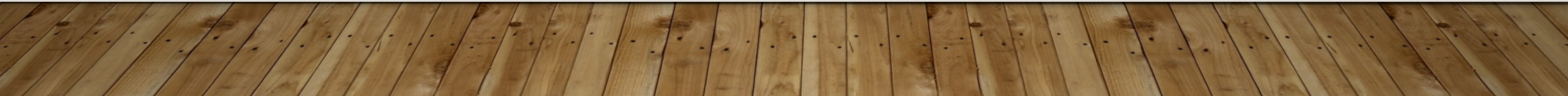
2. “HEAVENS” CAN REFER TO THE ‘LAND-WARD’ SIDE OF THE SKY DOME THAT IS VISIBLE TO US AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE BIRDS

- Genesis 1:20
- And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarming living creatures, and birds that fly over the land against the surface of the dome of the heavens.
- Psalm 8:8 “the birds of the heavens” (see also Ps 79:2).



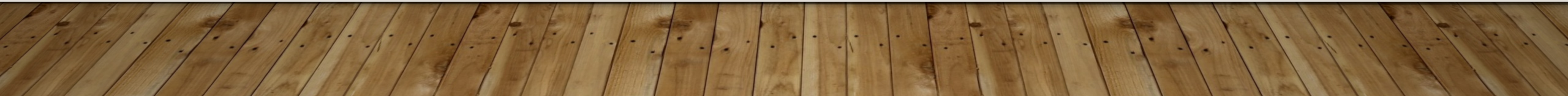
3. “HEAVENS” CAN REFER TO THE DIVINE SPACE ABOVE THE SKYDOME, THAT IS, THE DIVINE REALM OF GOD’S THRONE

- Psalm 2:4
- “The One who is enthroned in the heavens...”
- Psalm 11:4
- The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord, his throne is in the heavens He observes everyone on earth; his eyes examine them.



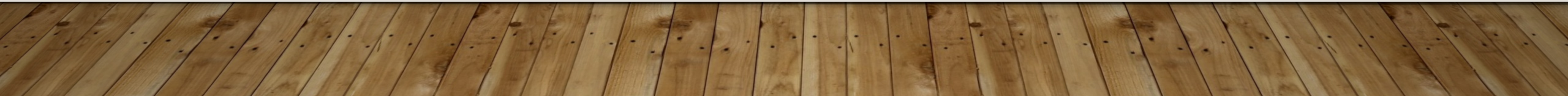
HEAVEN, THE TEMPLE, AND MT. ZION

- The heavenly temple is God's transcendent dwelling, and people get glimpses of it when they encounter God in places where heaven and earth overlap.



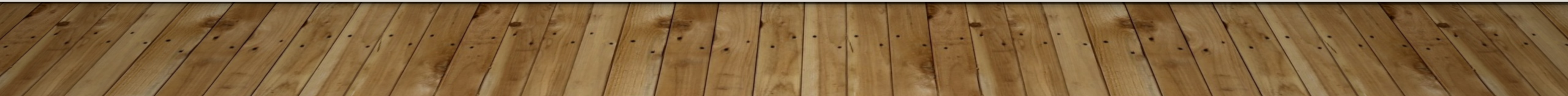
GENESIS 28:10–17

- Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. He had a dream, and behold, **a stairway/ramp was set on the land with its top reaching to the skies; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.**



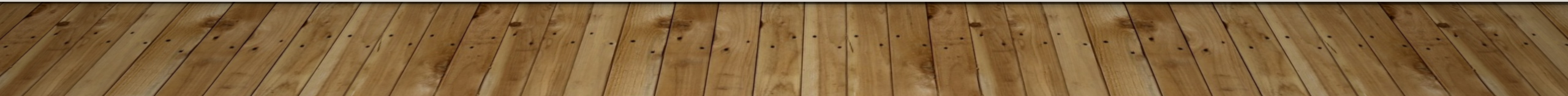
GENESIS 28:10–17

- And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac...”
Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely **the Lord is in this place**, and I did not know it.” He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the **house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.**”



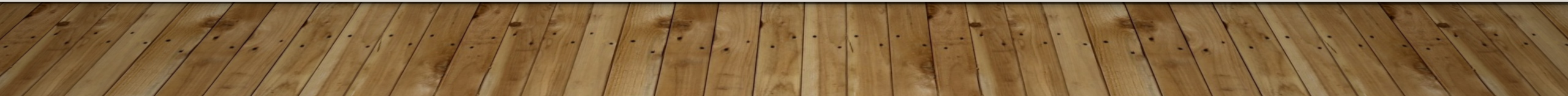
EXODUS 24:9–13

- Then Moses went up [to Mt. Sinai] with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 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.** 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.



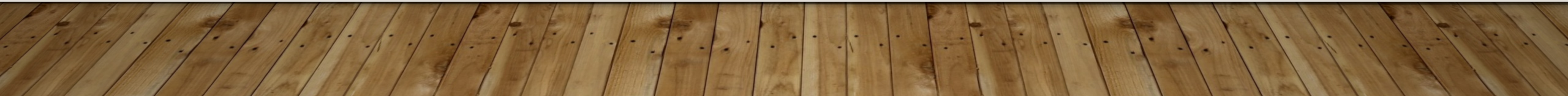
EXODUS 24:9–13

- 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.” So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.



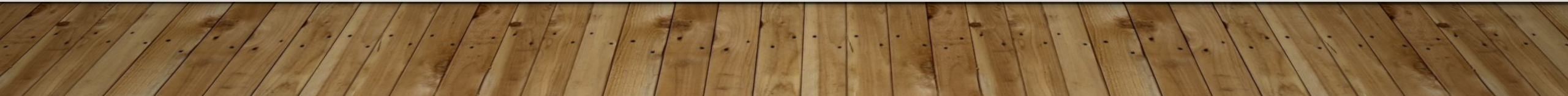
EXODUS 24:15–EXODUS 25:9

- Then **Moses went up to the mountain**, and the cloud covered the mountain. **The glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud.** And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. **Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain;** and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.



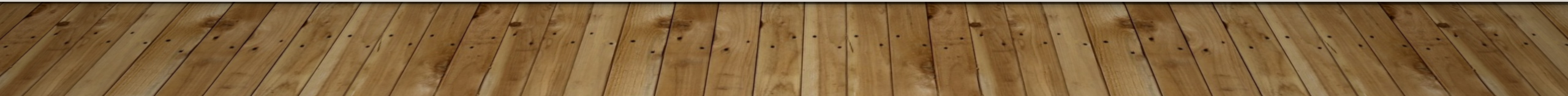
EXODUS 24:15–EXODUS 25:9

- Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying... “Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. **“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.**



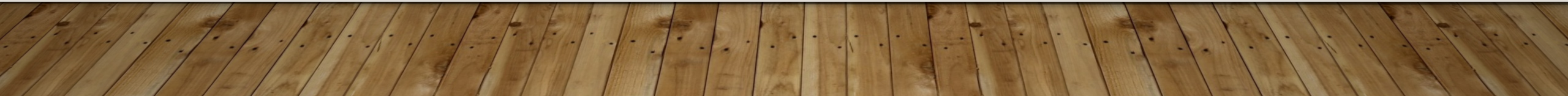
HEAVEN AND EARTH OVERLAPPING

- In these kinds of stories, we see a worldview in which the heavenly realm and the earthly realm are not completely separate, but they overlap at key places and times. These are moments of “heaven on earth” you might say. Notice that in both of these stories, they are about the foundation of sacred spaces (Jacob’s temple in Bethel, Moses models the tabernacle after the heavenly temple).



HEAVEN AND EARTH OVERLAPPING

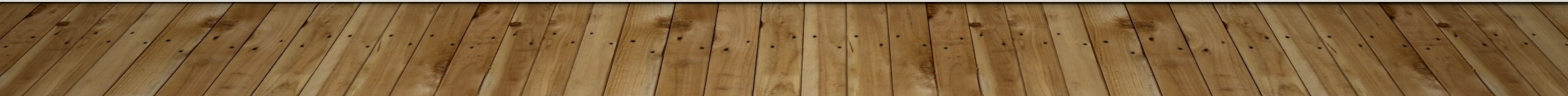
- This worldview shows us that Israel's tabernacle and temple were in fact a micro-cosmos of all creation, the place where heaven and earth are one. This explains why these sacred spaces and the stories of their creation are loaded with cosmic imagery and symbolism.



Creation in Genesis 1	The tabernacle in Exodus 25-31, 35-40	The temple in 1 Kings 6-8
Created by the Spirit of God (רוח) (מדהל) [Gen 1:2]	Created by Bezalel of Judah, who is "filled with the Spirit of God, wisdom and understanding" (מדהל רוח) [Exod 31:3; 35:30-31]	Created by Hiram of Tyre, who is "filled with wisdom and understanding" [1 Kgs 7:13-14]
Creation is the produce of seven divine speech acts in Genesis 1: Seven days open with divine command: "And God said..." Day 1 - 1:5 Day 2 - 1:8 Day 3 - 1:13 Day 4 - 1:19 Day 5 - 1:23 Day 6 - 1:31 Day 7 - Gen 2:1-3 SABBATH	Tabernacle instructions come in seven divine speeches: Seven speeches open with divine command: "And YHWH spoke to Moses..." Speech 1 - Exod 25:1 Speech 2 - Exod 30:11 Speech 3 - Exod 30:17 Speech 4 - Exod 30:22 Speech 5 - Exod 30:34 Speech 6 - Exod 31:1 Speech 7 - Exod 31:12 = SABBATH Command	The temple is dedicated with seven petitions by Solomon, leading to a seven day feast: Petition 1 - 1 Kgs 8:31-32 Petition 2 - 1 Kgs 8:33-34 Petition 3 - 1 Kgs 8:35-37a Petition 4 - 1 Kgs 8:37b-40 Petition 5 - 1 Kgs 8:41-43 Petition 6 - 1 Kgs 8:44-45 Petition 7 - 1 Kgs 8:46-53 SEVEN DAY FEASTS
"and the skies and the land were completed (הייל) [Gen 2:1]	"and Moses completed (הייל) the work (הכאיל) [Exod 40:33]	"and Solomon built the temple and he finished (הייל) it" [1 Kgs 6:14]
"and God rested (ת"בש) on the seventh day...	"and the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of YHWH filled the tent." [Exod 40:34]	"and the cloud filled the house of Yahweh" [1 Kgs 8:10-11]

HEAVEN AND EARTH OVERLAPPING

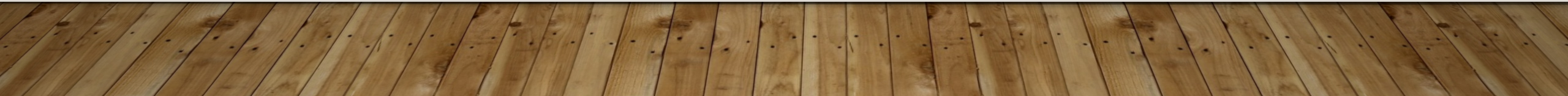
- The three-tiered universe depicted in Genesis 1 (skies-land-sea) directly corresponds to the three tiered geography of Eden in Genesis 2-3, and these together are symbolically recalled in the design of ancient temples, and specifically aligns with symbolic features of Israel's temple.



Tabernacle/Temple	Cosmic Geography In Genesis 1:1-2:3	Cosmic Geography in Genesis 2:4-3:24
Holy of holies	Heaven	Cosmic Mountain // The middle of the garden
Holy place <i>menorah // tree</i> <i>cherubim // animals</i> <i>priests // humans</i>	The land <i>fruit trees</i> <i>animals 'adam</i>	The garden in Eden
Courtyard <i>bronze sea [1 Kgs 8:23]</i>	The waters	The land outside the garden

QUOTE

- “The function of these correspondences is to underscore the depiction of the sanctuary as a world, that is, an ordered, supportive, and obedient environment, and the depiction of the world as a sanctuary, that is, a place in which the reign of God is visible and unchallenged, and his holiness is palpable, unthreatened, and pervasive...



QUOTE

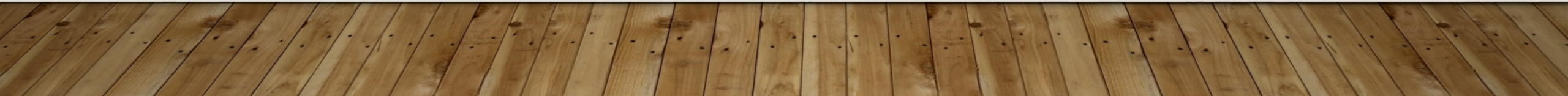
- The Temple was conceived as a microcosm, a miniature world. But it is equally the case that in Israel, the world, or I should say, the ideal world... was conceived as a macro-temple, the palace of God which is permeated with his presence and in which all is aligned with his will.” — JON LEVENSON, “COSMOS AND MICROCOSM,” IN CREATION AND THE PERSISTENCE OF EVIL: THE JEWISH DRAMA OF DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE, P. 86.

ANOTHER QUOTE

- “The Hebrew Bible is replete with descriptions of creation as a tabernacle which God has pitched (Psalm 104; Job 9:8; Isaiah 40:22), or a house that God has established (with pillars, windows, and doors: Job 26:11; Gen 7:11; Ps 78:24). Consequently, the temple of Zion, as a sanctuary that God has established, becomes a microcosmic metaphor for creation itself. This finds explicit expression in Psalm 78:69.” — W.A. GAGE, THE GOSPEL OF GENESIS, 54.

PSALM 78:68-69

- But chose the tribe of Judah // Mount Zion which He loved.
- And He built His sanctuary like the heights // Like the land which He has founded forever
- Hebrew poetry parallelism shows the linkages between God's people and the land, and God's dwelling place and the high places on the land.



The geography of Eden within the dry land of Gen 2-3 depicts a three-part topography:

THE DRY LAND (GN 1:9-13)

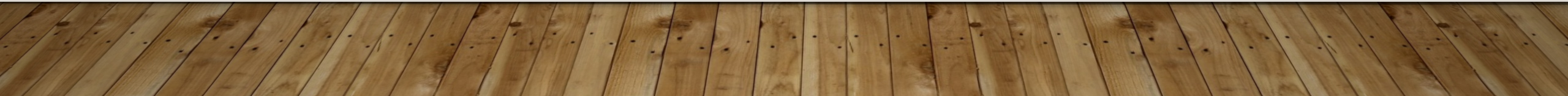
THE LAND OF EDEN (GN 2:8)

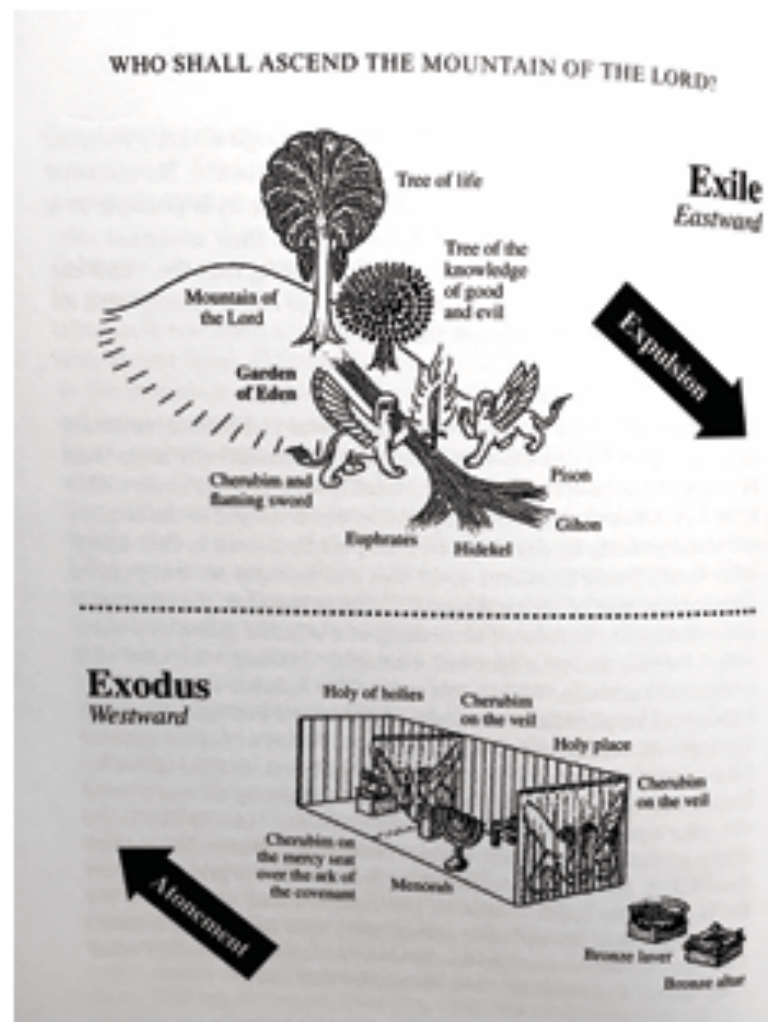
GARDEN IN EDEN (GN 2:8)

TREE OF LIFE IN THE CENTER OF
THE GARDEN (GN 2:9)

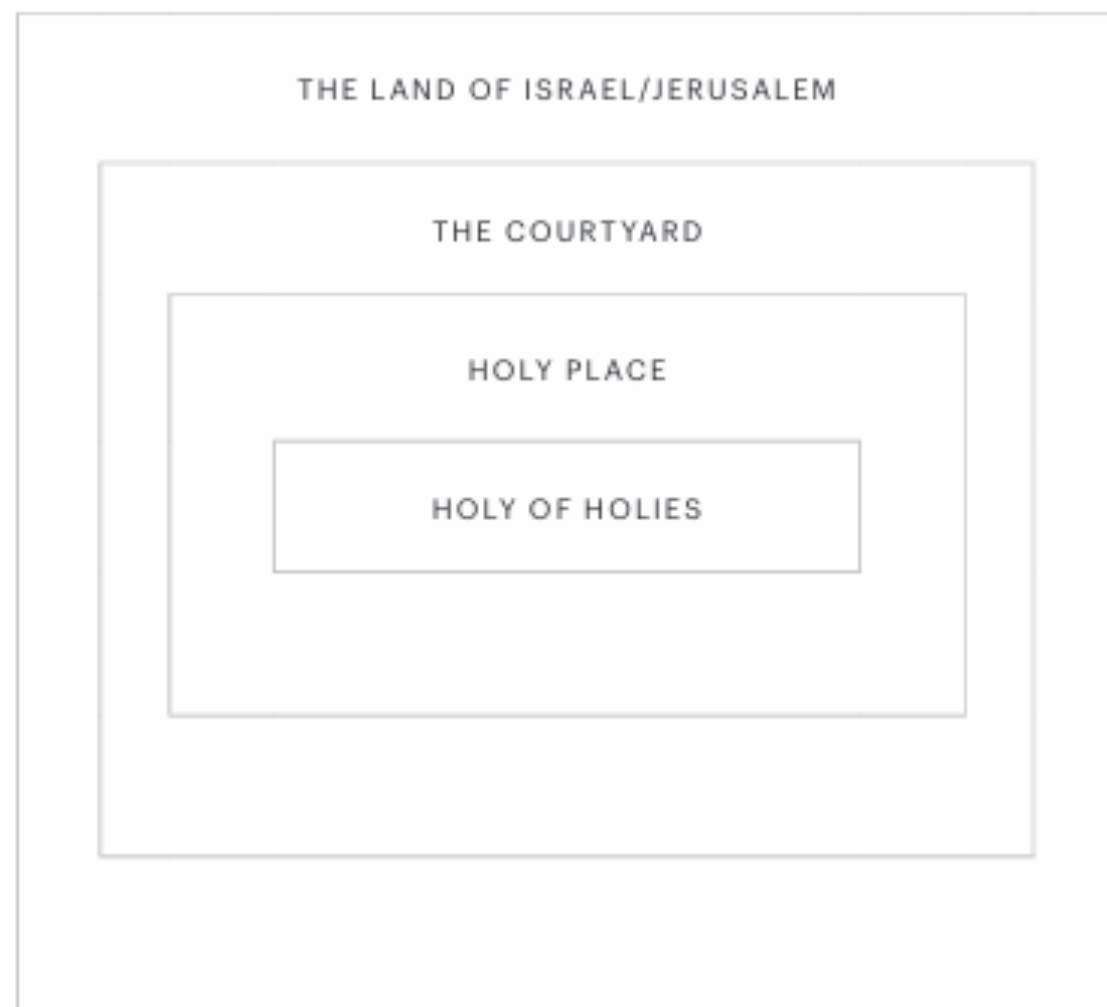
HEAVEN AND EARTH OVERLAPPING

- This conception of the garden of Eden on the dry land provides a symbolic template for Israel's tabernacle temple, especially as described in Ezekiel's ideal/restored temple (Ezekiel 40-48).



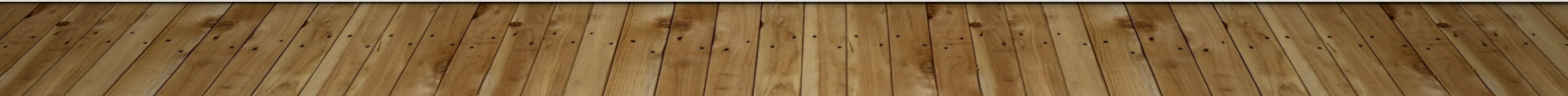


Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord*, p. 54.



QUOTE

- “In order to understand how the temple functioned we must first look at how those who worshipped there understood space and time. Modern ideas of space and time are very different, and if we are not aware of this, everything about the temple seems strange and almost ridiculous...We have to try and stand where ancient worshippers stood, think as they thought, and look where they looked, and perhaps we will glimpse what they saw...

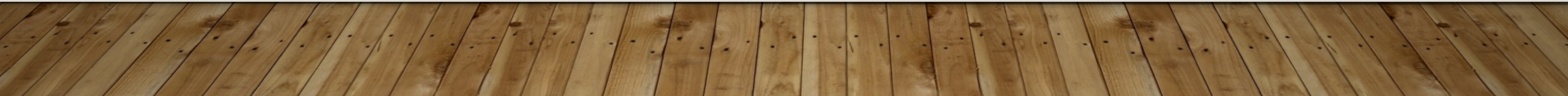


QUOTE

- Our experience of the material world is made possible by our perception of the three dimensions of space...and by the dimension of time. The [biblical] world envisages another manner of being, a dimension in which there is neither spatial limitation nor time in our sense, but one which shares with our world the forces of love, hate, obedience, and rebellion.

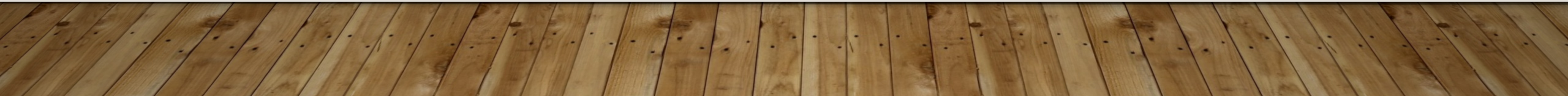
QUOTE

- This other world is often called 'Eternity,' which does not mean an unbelievably long span of time, but rather an existence without time... It lies outside our experience of time, and actually underlies in its entirety every perception we have of time. It could perhaps be called a belief in certain basic principles on which the world was based, principles which could be compared to our 'laws' of science... In the same way, eternal space and time were present in their entirety in the temple, so that a sacred space of some three hundred square meters could represent the entire world...



QUOTE

- The Hebrew word for this mode of representation is mashal (משל), translated as “parable.” [In this worldview] a story or vision of the heavenly world could correspond or represent a situation on earth...
... The temple in Jerusalem was...not just a highly decorated building, but rather a place where the eternal and earthly were one. The decorations represented the heavenly world, but it was more than just a representation. The temple actually was the heavenly world...

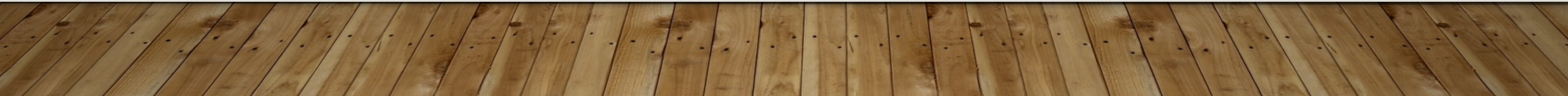


QUOTE

- [This is why] it is not always possible to know whether the setting of a biblical story [like Isaiah ch. 6] is the earthly temple or the heavenly court of the Holy One. Whereas we always want to separate heaven and earth, the ancient biblical authors did not. The rituals of the temple were performed on earth, but were part of an eternal heavenly reality.”
— MARGARET BARKER, THE GATE OF HEAVEN: THE HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM, 58-61.

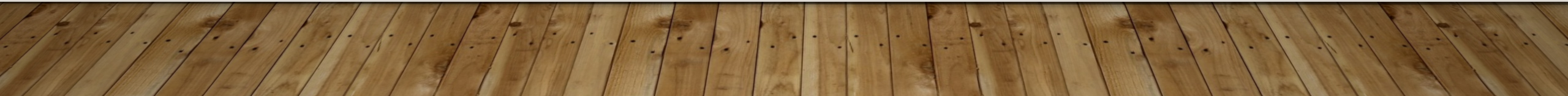
THE COMPLEX PORTRAIT OF HEAVEN AS “ABOVE” AND “WITHIN” AND “WITHOUT”

- While the dominant imagery of the “heavens” is above the sky, there are other texts about God’s presence that use a totally different spatial scheme:



GOD'S PRESENCE IS "WITHIN" THE SACRED SPACE (TABERNACLE OR TEMPLE)

- Exodus 29:42–45 42“...[A]t the entrance to the tent of meeting, before the Lord. There I will meet you and speak to you; there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory. “So I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God.

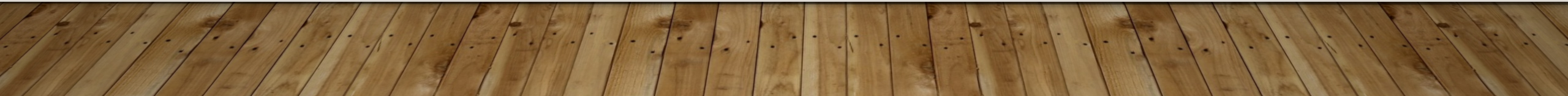


NUMBERS 7:89

- Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him.

GOD PERVADES ALL OF CREATION BECAUSE IT IS HIS COSMIC TEMPLE

- Psalm 139:7–12 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

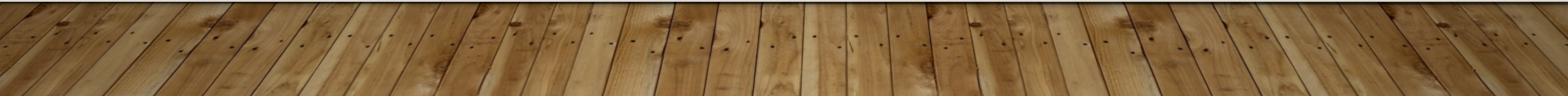


JEREMIAH 23:23–24

- “Am I only a God nearby,” declares the Lord, “and not a God far away? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?” declares the Lord. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the Lord.

ACTS 17:24–28 24

- “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and every thing else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.



ACTS 17:24–28 24

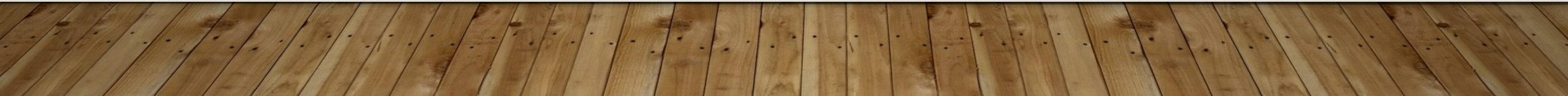
- God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

GOD'S PRESENCE ACTUALLY TRANSCENDS THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES INTO THE "HYPER-HEAVENS"

- 1 Kings 8:10–13, 27 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, **the cloud filled the temple of the Lord.** And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for **the glory of the Lord filled his temple.** Then Solomon said, "The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; I have indeed built **a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever...**" **"But will God really dwell on the land ? The heavens, even the heavens of the heavens cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!**

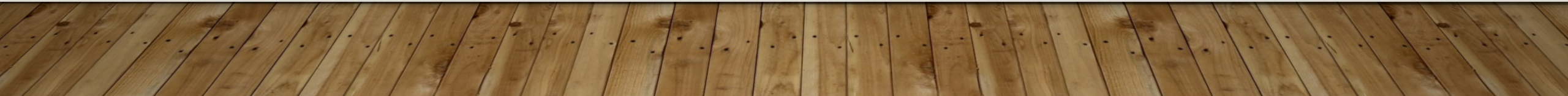
SOME THOUGHTS

- Notice the paradox presented by God's localized presence in the temple. It is a building "on the land" which really does host a special manifestation of the divine presence.
- But at the same time, Solomon acknowledges that the entire world is not sufficient to host the immensity of God's presence, nor are the "heavens," and neither are "the heavens of the heavens"!



SOME THOUGHTS

- This phrase, “the heavens of the heavens” cracks open the symbolic nature of “heaven” language, as it acknowledges that even the heavens that we can see and experience are only the outer layer, so to speak, of the ultimate ‘heavenly realm’ that always lay beyond our detection and experience.



SOME THOUGHTS

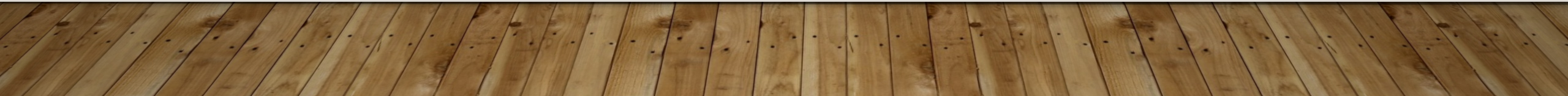
- These ultimate “heavens” of the divine realm are what some biblical authors refer to when they experience God’s presence in visions, dreams, and apocalypses.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:1–4

- Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. **I know a man in the Messiah 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.** And I know how such a man—**whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know**, God knows— **was caught up into Paradise** and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak

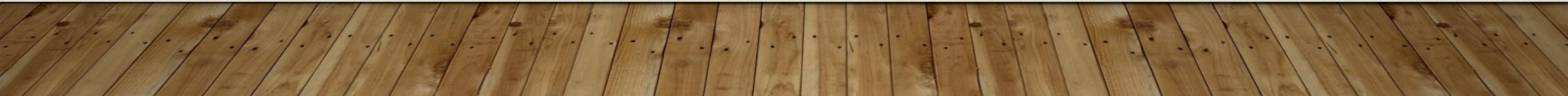
ISAIAH 6:1–4

- In the year of King Uzziah's death **I saw Yahweh sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.** 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. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, **The whole earth is full of His glory.**" And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.



REVELATION 4:1–2, 6

- After these things I looked, and behold, **a door standing open in heaven**, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, **a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne...** and **before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal**; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.





QUESTION

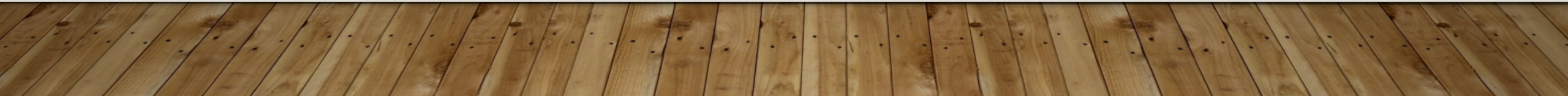
- This session concludes our tour through the biblical cosmos--the skies, land, light, raqia, waters above, seas, rivers, dry land, and the heavens.
- Which idea so far has been the most transformative for you?

QUOTE

- “Christians have a long tradition of adjusting and translating from biblical to contemporary cosmologies, often without realizing it. In the history of Christianity, the ancient Israelite cosmology gave way to the Ptolemaic cosmology, which dominated Christian thought for centuries. [Ptolemaic cosmology was earth-centric, but envisioned the earth as a globe] Most Christians did not even notice that a shift had taken place. And once Copernican cosmology finally supplanted the Ptolemaic, Christians had little trouble adapting to that either...

QUOTE

- Remember, in the biblical texts, the symbolic meaning of the image of heaven above had always been the most important thing about such language. Height or depth spoke of relative importance and rank... and for the biblical authors, the idea of heaven being 'above' rest of creation meant that heaven was the most important dimension of the created world, because from that high and exalted place God ruled over all things.



QUOTE

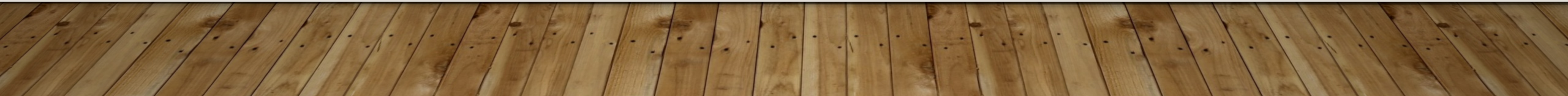
- Interpreting language of the high heaven non-geographically does not threaten the heart of this biblical teaching at all—the truth Scripture pointed to was always that heaven is invisible and inaccessible to humans, and yet is at the heart of creation because divine life and rule flow from it. Whether or not heaven is also literally above the sky or not is incidental to the truth that Scripture points towards.” — ROBIN PARRY, THE BIBLICAL COSMOS, 180-181.

SUMMARY QUOTE

- “Jesus is claiming that he is, in the form of a human, the reality to which the cosmic mountain, Eden, the temple, the tabernacle, were all icons pointing to an ultimate reality.”

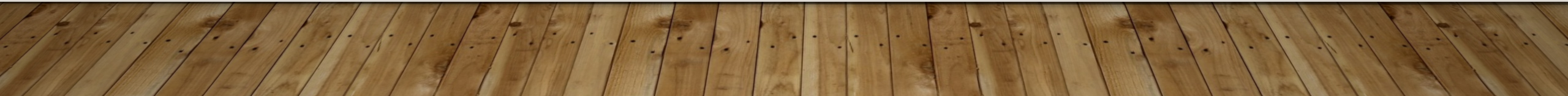
THE RULERS ABOVE

- In Genesis 1, the “host of heaven” are set in the “sky dome” (Gen 1:14-18). These are the inhabitants of the divine throne room above the heavens.
- This helps us understand why the biblical authors consistently used the language of stars to describe the spiritual beings. They are creatures that inhabit the heavenly realm and have authority under God.



PSALM 103:19-21

- The Lord has established his **throne in heaven**, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the Lord, you his **angels**, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his **hosts of heaven**, you his servants who do his will.

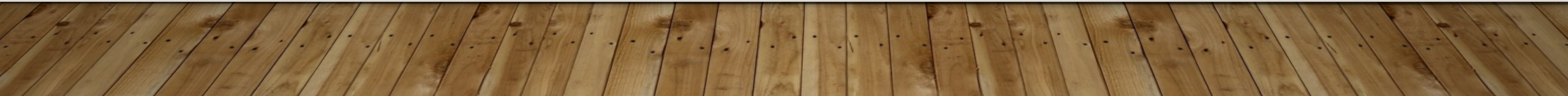


1 KINGS 22:19

- Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all **the host of heaven** standing by Him on His right and on His left.

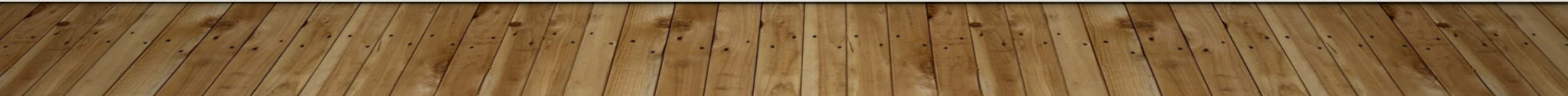
PSALM 148:1B-3

- Praise the Lord **from the heavens**; praise him in the heights above. Praise him, all his **angels**; praise him, all his **heavenly hosts**. Praise him, **sun and moon**; praise him, all you **shining stars**.



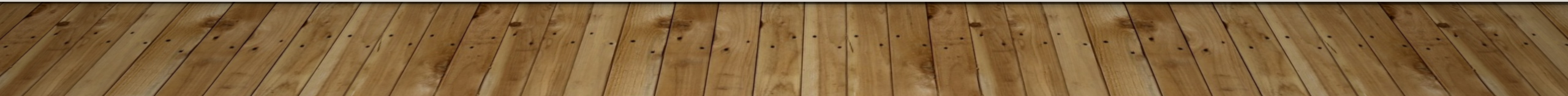
LUKE 2:9, 13

- And **an angel of the Lord** suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened... And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the **host of the heavens** praising God



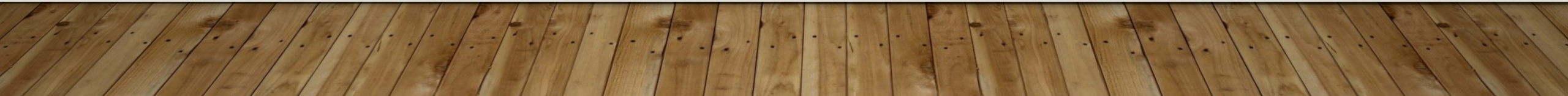
OBSERVATIONS ON THE PHRASE “HOST OF HEAVEN”

- The lists of heavenly creatures in Psalms 103 and 148 are in the literary form of Hebrew parallelism, so that paired lines describe the same things from different points of view. The heavenly hosts are the sun, moon and stars.
- Notice how in Luke 2, the angel is associated with the light of God’s glory, and these two are associated with the host of heavens, who are depicted as God’s heavenly choir (as they are in Job 38:6-7 and Isaiah 6:1-3).



THE “SONS OF GOD”

- Job 38:4-5, 7
- Where were you when I laid the foundations of the land? Tell me if you have understanding. Who set its measurements, since you know. Or who stretched a measuring line over it?
- ...when **the stars of the morning** sang together,
- and all the **sons of God** shouted aloud.



THE “SONS OF GOD”

- Psalm 89:5–8 The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord; Your faithfulness also in **the assembly of the holy ones**. For who in the skies is comparable to the Lord? Who among **the sons of God** is like the Lord, A God greatly feared in **the council of the holy ones**, And awesome above all those who are around Him? O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You

OBSERVATION:

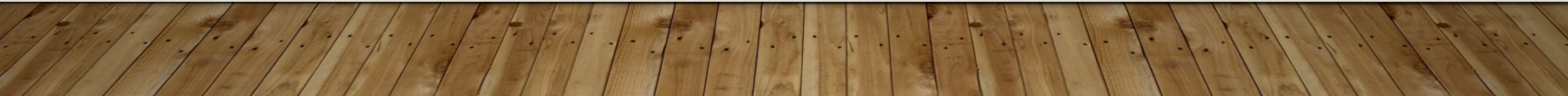
- These are parallel lines in Hebrew, so that the stars and the sons of God are not separate entities, but the same creature described from two perspectives.

OBSERVATION:

- Day 4: delegates “host of heaven” as authorities
- Stars as “signs” of spiritual beings: Job 38:4-7
- Stars are “in the sky-dome” and images of the divine council
 - Psalm 82:1; 89:5-7; Isa 24:21-23; Ps 148:1-6
- Throughout the story of Israel, the people continually worship the stars as deities.

DEUTERONOMY 4:19

- And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.



AMOS 5:25–27

- “Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You shall take up Sikkuth your king, and Kiyyun **your star-god—your images that you made for yourselves**, and I will send you into exile beyond Damascus,” says the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts.

ZEPHANIAH 1:4–5

- “I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests, **those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens**, those who bow down and swear to the Lord and yet swear by Milcom,

KEY QUESTION

- In this session on heavenly beings, what idea(s) are most significant for you?

QUOTE

- “The whole picture is that God has a staff team through whom he accomplishes his purposes in heaven and on earth, but his preferred and ultimate means of accomplishing his will on earth is through some other creatures who symbolize him in a really unique and significant way—the rulers below.”

