

limits of our knowledge. Despite its many excellences, human language is a poor instrument for trying to understand the things of God.

The first use of the Hebrew word *shamayim* in the Bible is in Genesis 1:1 where it says that God created heaven and earth. I understand this to mean that all that exists in the material universe was created by God, and that therefore in that verse the term 'heaven' includes everything that is not included in the word "earth".

The next use of this Hebrew word that English versions render as "heaven" is in Genesis 1: 8 where it says, "And God called the firmament heaven." The previous verse explains that the firmament was the division between the waters under the firmament and the waters above the firmament.

Thus in the first chapter of Genesis we have two seemingly very different meanings for the word "heaven." Probably the usage in verse 8 would correspond to what we today would call the sky. The one in verse 1 would include everything except the particular planet on which we live.

When we say that believers go to heaven at their death we mean that they go to a place or condition of absolute happiness in the presence of God.

In John 3:13 where it says that "no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven", we have a statement given by Jesus Christ, who was here on earth when He said it. Since Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity, He is omnipresent and there is no place where He is not, so the statement, "The Son of man who is in heaven" simply refers to the fact that He is actually in the very presence of God and continued to be so after He came to earth.

Of course Nicodemus was thoroughly familiar with the fact that Elijah had not died but had been taken up, even as Enoch was, but it would be quite obvious to him that was something quite different from what Jesus meant when He spoke of "the Son of man who is in heaven." Certainly this indicates a very definite close relationship with God such as no mere human being has ever had.

In 2 Kings 2:11 the term "heaven" could be understood in either of two ways and both of them would be true. Certainly