“Is the Earth flat or round?” This is a question that was asked by Christians in the Roman Catholic Church hundreds of years ago. The church believed the earth was flat because of certain passages of Scripture that “seemed” to indicate the earth was flat. In reality, though, the earth is round, and the church didn't take time then to consider that its view of the earth’s shape was erroneous. It took a man such as Christian scientist Galileo Galilei to discover by way of the telescope that the earth was round, not flat. At that point, the church, teaching that the earth was “flat,” was given a bad reputation that many still remember when discussing the Age of Enlightenment that began in the late seventeenth century and continued through the early nineteenth century.

Though hindsight is always 20/20, the question of the earth’s shape deserves an investigation, as we seek to glorify the Lord with our minds. Flat-earthers still exist, so perhaps this study can shed some light on their view that the earth is flat. We’ll look at key passages from Scripture to see if the shape of the earth can be gleaned from the text. Is the earth flat or round? You'll have to keep reading to find out.
What the Bible Says About the Shape of the Universe

Genesis

Genesis is an excellent place to start with regard to the question of the shape of the universe.

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

29 And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. (Genesis 1:26-29)

Here in Genesis 1, the Lord blesses man after making mankind (male and female) in His image after His likeness. Next, He blesses them and tells them to “fill the earth,” a phrase that some could take to mean that the earth is round. Imagine the earth as a globe container that one pours water in: such a scenario is possible. And yet, the Lord isn’t telling humanity to fill the earth like water fills a globe, but rather, for humans to populate the
earth (“be fruitful and multiply”), to have dominion over the earth by settling throughout the earth.

6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” (Genesis 6:6-7)

The word for “face” here is προσώπου (prosopou), which means “face.” Now, “face” here refers to the surface of the earth, the very top of the earth and, though seemingly indicated a circular shape (as some would think of the face of the earth when reflecting on “the face of a man”), but some “faces” of objects are rectangular, square, etc. Not every face is circular, so the shape of the earth can’t be deducted from this one verse.

Exodus

3 So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 4 Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. 5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. (Exodus 10:3-5)

The Lord sends Moses and Aaron to Egypt to Pharaoh to tell him to release the Jews. Here in Exodus 10, the Lord threatens to make life miserable for the Egyptians if Pharaoh did not release them: “Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. And they shall cover the face of the earth” (vv.4-5). The phrase “face of the earth” here refers to the surface of the land, the top of the land that we can touch and see. The Lord threatened that the locusts would “eat the residue
of what is left...every tree which grows up for you out of the field” (v.5). So “face of the earth” refers to the ground, the ground where the grass grows, where insects crawl and eat the grass and lick the dust. The “face of the earth” does not necessarily imply that the earth is round nor does it imply that the earth is flat. The term is neutral, as we’ve seen in other instances.

12 Then Moses said to the Lord, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ 13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.”

14 And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

15 Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.” (Exodus 33:12-16)

“From all the people who are upon the face of the earth” (Exodus 33:16), a phrase that refers to the surface of the earth, the ground, those who dwell on the ground, on top of the earth. Humans have settled the ground and land and are land dwellers, while sea creatures are sea dwellers. Again, this is another reference in favor of a neutral response to the earth’s shape.

Numbers

Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho.
2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. 4 So Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.” And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. 5 Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: “Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.” (Numbers 22:2-6)

The Israelites “cover the face of the earth,” said Balak the King of Moab, which is what drove him to send for Balaam the prophet --- whom he expected to prophesy evil to Israel. What happens, as you may know, is that Balaam ends up blessing the nation instead of cursing it. At the end of the day, he cannot curse what God has blessed, and he tells Balak the same. “The face of the earth” shows that the Israelites are a nation that occupies the land, but again, this doesn’t tell us if the “face” of the earth is flat or round.

Deuteronomy

10 “So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, 11 houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— 12
then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 13 You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. 14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you 15 (for the Lord your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the Lord your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

(Deuteronomy 6:10-15)

6 “For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 7:6)

“The face of the earth,” yet again, refers to the land, not to the shape of the earth. Here’s where we see Moses tell the people to never forget what God has done for them because, if they forget and “go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you” (v.14), then the Lord will destroy the nation of Israel. Remember, the Lord told Moses in the wilderness that He could destroy the nation and create a new nation from Moses (Numbers 14:11-12). So here, Moses warns them again that God has the power to do what He says He will do if they disobey.

1 Samuel

8 He raises the poor from the dust

And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,

To set them among princes

And make them inherit the throne of glory.
“For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s,

And He has set the world upon them. (1 Samuel 2:8)

1 Samuel 2:8 says that the Lord raises the poor because He is great; the example given is that God can exalt the poor because He is the God who has set the earth on its foundation. The pillars of the earth are what the world sits on. This tells us that the world has a foundation, but it doesn’t tell us whether that foundation is flat or round or if the earth as a whole is flat or round.

11 And Jonathan said to David, “Come, let us go out into the field.” So both of them went out into the field. 12 Then Jonathan said to David: “The Lord God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, 13 may the Lord do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the Lord be with you as He has been with my father. 14 And you shall not only show me the kindness of the Lord while I still live, that I may not die; 15 but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the Lord has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” (1 Samuel 20:11-16)

Jonathan and David strike a covenantal agreement here. Jonathan realizes that the Lord is with David and that the Lord is no longer with his father, Saul. Being David’s friend, and wanting his life spared and that of his household, he pleads with David not to cut off his family or to take his life while he lives. David agrees. “The face of the earth” in 1 Samuel 20:15 is, again, endorsing that the land has a surface. This verse doesn’t tell us about the shape of the earth, either.
1 Kings

11 Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. 12 And their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah. 13 Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, 14 and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?”

And he said, “I am.”

15 Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.”

16 And he said, “I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. 17 For I have been told by the word of the Lord, ‘You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.’”

18 He said to him, “I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’” (He was lying to him.)

19 So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

20 Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back; 21 and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord, and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded
you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the Lord said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water,” your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.”

23 So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. 25 And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

26 Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, “It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord. Therefore the Lord has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke to him.” 27 And he spoke to his sons, saying, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled it. 28 Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. 29 And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. 30 Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, saying, “Alas, my brother!” 31 So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, “When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. 32 For the saying which he cried out by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines on the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.”

33 After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever
wished, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. 34 And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy *it* from the **face of the earth.** (1 Kings 13:11-34)

The story of 1 Kings 13 finds that one prophet was told by the Lord not to stop by anyone’s house or return the same way he had come from Judah. Another prophet comes to meet him and asks him to come dine at his house. The prophet resists at first, but then the second prophet who comes to him claims that the Lord told him to stop by his house (but this prophet was lying to him). The first prophet, despite his initial insistence not to stop by anyone’s home, decided to come in to this prophet’s home anyway, and the word of the Lord declared that “Your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers” (1 Kings 13:22). The prophet who went against the word of the Lord and disobeyed was killed by a lion, and his carcass laid in the street. The lion did not eat his carcass, however, but instead stood beside it. When it was told to the old prophet who had brought the prophet back, he went to the carcass of the prophet and placed it in a tomb to honor the prophet in burial. He placed the prophet in his own tomb and mourned over him, requesting that, when he died, he be buried beside the prophet (the one who disobeyed the word of the Lord).

And yet, for all the bad that happened, Jeroboam, a king over God’s people, did not fail to do all the evil that he did. The text tells us that Jeroboam didn’t turn from his evil, nor did his family turn from theirs, so that the entire house of Jeroboam would be exterminated. Again, the people would be eliminated from the earth, Jeroboam’s line would come to an end. “Face of the earth” doesn’t refer to the shape, as we’ve said before, but, in context, is a reference to the elimination of the line of Jeroboam from its existence in world history --- eliminate all of his house until not one descendant was left.
Job

"Truly I know it is so,
But how can a man be righteous before God?
3 If one wished to contend with Him,
He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.
4 God is wise in heart and mighty in strength.
Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?
5 He removes the mountains, and they do not know
When He overturns them in His anger;
6 He shakes the earth out of its place,
And its pillars tremble; (Job 9:2-6)

Job says here in chapter 9 that no man can be righteous in the eyes of God, that God alone is righteous and that man is not nor can he or she ever be. In verse 4, Job says “God is wise in heart and mighty in strength,” and the Lord’s strength is seen with regard to His “moving the mountains” in verse 5 and His shaking the earth and causing the pillars to tremble. The pillars of the earth tremble, which shows that the foundation of the earth moves (which is what we’d expect when the earth is shaken), but we’re still told nothing about the shape of the pillars or the shape of the earth.

“The dead tremble,
Those under the waters and those inhabiting them.
6 Sheol is naked before Him,
And Destruction has no covering.
7 He stretches out the north over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.
8 He binds up the water in His thick clouds,
Yet the clouds are not broken under it.
9 He covers the face of His throne,
And spreads His cloud over it.
10 He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters,
At the boundary of light and darkness.
11 The pillars of heaven tremble,
And are astonished at His rebuke.
12 He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up the storm.
13 By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
14 Indeed these are the mere edges of His ways,
And how small a whisper we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?” (Job 26:5-14)

In Job 26:10, we see the first statement that gives a hint as to the shape of the universe with the words, “He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters.” The word for “circular” is a verb meaning “to draw a circle,” and the word comes from the Greek noun *guros*, meaning “circle” or “ring.” The word “horizon,” as placed in the verse in the NKJV, isn’t found in the Septuagint (Greek OT), so this word doesn’t really factor into the translation and understanding of the verse.

What Job 26:10 says is that “He drew a circle on the face of the waters.” Remember Genesis 1, where God creates the earth? We read that the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and then God called for light to appear. The circle here is the circular form of the earth, a form that didn’t exist until the exact moment God decided to create the world. God says for light to appear, and the circle God draws is “at the boundary of light and darkness.” Darkness was upon the face of the deep, and there was no light until God called it. By the Lord calling light into appearance, God was “drawing the circle of the earth,” a phrase that we’ll encounter soon in our study of the shape of the universe.

God drew a circle, the text says this. And yet, some flat-earthers would agree that “God drew a circle” because this still doesn’t disprove that the earth is flat; after all, God could’ve drawn a rim-like circle, a flat circle, over the waters and filled the earth. Thus, the circular shape of the earth doesn’t disprove the earth’s flatness, but gives some commendation to the idea that the earth is round.
3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah. (Psalm 75:3)

“Pillars” here is the Greek word στύλος (Psalm 75:4, Septuagint), from stulos, meaning “pillar” or “column.” The definition of “pillar” or column is a tall vertical structure. So, we know that the pillar stands tall, but this verse tells us something about the earth’s support, not the shape of the earth. Take a globe, for example: it can have tall, vertical pillars or columns support it, though the shape of the globe is round. So, the shape of the pillars isn’t enough alone to determine the shape of the earth.

10 According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness. (Psalm 48:10)

The Greek phrase for “ends of the earth” is found in Psalm 47:11 in the Septuagint (LXX), and it is τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς· (ta perata tes ges). The word perata comes from πέρας (peras) meaning “ends,” “boundary,” or even “frontier.” The “ends of the earth” indicates that there is an “end” to the earth, but again, this doesn’t reveal the age of the earth because both flat and round worlds would have “ends” to them. The “end” mentioned here indicates that the earth doesn’t go on forever, isn’t infinite but finite, doesn’t extend forever in both directions but has a limit to it, a boundary, a point at which there is no more earth to inhabit.

7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. (Psalm 67:7)

The reference here to “the ends of the earth” is a reference to all the humans who live on the ends of the earth. This refers to the people, but gives no indication of whether or not the Bible is flat or round.
3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. (Psalm 98:3)

“All the ends of the earth,” once more, refers to people: the people, the nations, have seen God’s salvation in Jesus. The earth has “ends,” telling us that it is finite and not infinite, not eternal. But again, the phrase “ends of the earth” doesn’t provide any clues about the shape of the earth.

The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.

2 For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters. (Psalm 24:1-2)

We see parallelism here in Psalm 24:1-2, as verse 2 says the same thing twice but in different ways: first, “He has founded it upon the seas,” meaning that the earth has been established or settled upon the waters, and then “established it upon the waters.” Both statements mean the same, but it shows us that the earth rests upon water, that there is water under the earth. The earth is founded upon the seas, true, but we still aren’t told anything here in Psalm 24 about the shape of the earth.

Do not slay them, lest my people forget; Scatter them by Your power, And bring them down, O Lord our shield.

12 For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, Let them even be taken in their pride, And for the cursing and lying which they speak. 13 Consume them in wrath, consume them, That they may not be; And let them know that God rules in Jacob To the ends of the earth. Selah (Psalm 59:11-13)
Here in Psalm 59, in a prayer of David to be delivered from Saul's hand, David prays that God will show Himself mighty so that the evil men “know that God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth” (v.13). David wants God to deliver him from these evil men and the evil Saul so that all on earth will know how mighty God is, that this Mighty God reigns among His people. And yet, “the ends of the earth” refer to the boundaries of the earth, the farthest reaches (and the farthest stretches) of the earth itself. David wants those who live in the most distant places (at the very ends of the land on the earth, for there is water, and humans can only inhabit land) to know of the God of Jacob. We see here David’s missionary heart that God’s glory achieved through His protection of David and the Israelites would be used to evangelize and witness and proclaim God’s Mighty Name among all who dwell on the earth.

The “ends of the earth” doesn’t refer to a shape of the earth at all, so this verse, while alerting us that the earth has exterior boundaries and is finite, not infinite, doesn’t help us accomplish much in the way of information about our most pressing question.

He weakened my strength in the way;
He shortened my days.
24 I said, "O my God,
Do not take me away in the midst of my days;
Your years are throughout all generations.
25 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
26 They will perish, but You will endure;
Yes, they will all grow old like a garment;
Like a cloak You will change them,
And they will be changed.
27 But You are the same,
And Your years will have no end. (Psalm 102:23-27)

Psalm 102 tells us that the foundation of the earth was laid by the Lord, saying in so many words that the earth has a foundation upon which it is
built. However, as to the nature of the foundation, whether flat or round, Scripture doesn’t say here, leading us once again to discover that the language used to refer to the earth is neutral when it comes to the shape of the universe.

5 You who laid the foundations of the earth,  
So that it should not be moved forever,  
6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment;  
The waters stood above the mountains. (Psalm 104:5-6)

Earlier Psalms have told us that the earth has pillars and that the Lord shakes the earth and causing the pillars to shake or quake as well. Here in Psalm 104, we are again reminded that the earth has foundations. What isn’t plain in the text is whether or not this refers to the round or flat nature of the earth.

Proverbs

“The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way,  
Before His works of old.  
23 I have been established from everlasting,  
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.  
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
When there were no fountains abounding with water.  
25 Before the mountains were settled,  
Before the hills, I was brought forth;  
26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields,  
Or the primal dust of the world.  
27 When He prepared the heavens, I was there,  
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,  
28 When He established the clouds above,  
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,  
29 When He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,
31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world,
And my delight was with the sons of men. (Proverbs 8:22-31)

Wisdom says that she was there with God before the earth was ever formed, and “she” talks about fountains (v.24), mountains (v.25), hills (v.25), and primal dust (v.26). Even in this discussion of the earth and its foundation, we are never told what the foundation of the earth looks like. In verse 29, it says that God “marked out the foundations of the earth,” referring to God setting boundaries for the earth’s establishment. While we read that God “marked out” the earth’s foundation, we don’t read that God made the earth’s foundation flat or round. Here, the shape of the universe is a mystery, according to Scripture.

As the heavens for height and the earth for depth,
So the heart of kings is unsearchable. (Proverbs 25:3)

“The earth for depth” shows that the earth is deep in nature, that its very bottom isn’t shallow as some would believe. This plays a role in the discussion of whether the earth is flat or round because something that is flat is believed to be uni-dimensional, without height or depth. Think of a flat pancake; it has no height or depth because it is flat. If that’s what some believe the shape of the universe to be, then perhaps being reminded that the earth has “depth” may very well indicate that the earth is at least two-dimensional with volume and “body.” That is not what you find in flat objects.
Isaiah

18 To whom then will you liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare to Him?

19 The workman molds an image,
The goldsmith overspreads it with gold,
And the silversmith casts silver chains.

20 Whoever is too impoverished for such a contribution
Chooses a tree that will not rot;
He seeks for himself a skillful workman
To prepare a carved image that will not totter.

21 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,
And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers,
Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. (Isaiah 40:18-22)
“The circle of the earth” in Isaiah 40:22 is one of the first important clues with regard to settling the question of whether or not the earth is flat or round. It implies that the earth is circular. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges has this to say regarding its interpretation of Isaiah 40:22:

The earth with its surrounding ocean is conceived as a flat disc, on which the arch of heaven comes down. (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges)

In Barnes’ Notes on the Bible regarding Isaiah 40:22, he says that the earth wouldn’t have been thought of as circular then, that the earth’s “globular” shape is not what would have been conceived in the human mind at this point:

The circle of the earth - Or rather, "above" (ֶח ‘al) the circle of the earth. The word rendered 'circle' (כִּין חֻג) denotes "a circle, sphere, or arch"; and is applied to the arch or vault of the heavens, in Proverbs 8:27; Job 22:14. The phrase 'circle,' or 'circuit of the earth,' here seems to be used in the same sense as the phrase orbis terrarum by the Latins; not as denoting a sphere, or not as implying that the earth was a globe, but that it was an extended plain surrounded by oceans and mighty waters. The globular form of the earth was then unknown; and the idea is, that God sat above this extended circuit, or circle; and that the vast earth was beneath his feet.
The problem with Barnes’s commentary here (though I greatly respect his commentaries) is that “the circle” is describing “the earth,” not “the vault of the heavens.” Some commentators believe that Isaiah is talking about a circle “above” the earth here, but the word “above” is not found in the original text; rather, the original text reads “a circle the earth.” The implication is that the circular shape belongs to the earth, not to the firmament discussed in Genesis (“the heavens above the earth”).

Even if the vault of the heavens is a sphere or circular in shape, this would indicate that the earth is circular as well. The Greek word γύρον (guron) comes from the parent word guros meaning “ring” or “circle.” Guros is the Greek word from which we get our English word “gyrate.” To “gyrate” is to move around in an elliptical, orbital, or circular motion, and that’s what the parent Greek word guros is all about: circular motion.

I’m going to side with Isaiah’s words here and say that Isaiah 40:22 tells us the earth is circular, contrary to some theologians and commentators who would disagree with me. The Greek language in the Septuagint (Greek OT) alone is enough to convince me. In context, Isaiah is talking about the earth first, then the heavens when he says “Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.” Isaiah is discussing the earth and the heavens, which encompasses all of the creation sphere in which man and animal live and dwell.

The perspective here, though, is one of God who “sits above the circle of the earth,” so keep in mind that this verse isn’t proving the globular or spherical form of the earth. After all, if one is sitting above the globular earth, it will appear as a circle, so the angle at which God sits (“above the earth”) is what influences proper interpretation here.

Isaiah 40:22 demonstrates that the earth is circular. Now, even with this piece in place, we still don’t know if the earth is flat (like a pancake or a rim)
or if the earth is globular. Circular motion can only occur in a spherical or
globular setup, to be sure, but we don’t have that explicit statement here.
Still, this is one key verse to hold onto in discussions regarding the shape
of the universe. And this verse also matches that of Job 26:10, where it
tells us that God “drew a circle...at the boundary of light and darkness.”
Both verses tell us that God drew a circle for the shape of the earth.
Whether that shape is “flat” or “round” is still up for debate, but at least one
piece of the puzzle is in place.

12 “Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:
I am He, I am the First,
I am also the Last.
13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;
When I call to them,
They stand up together. (Isaiah 48:12-13)

“The foundation of the earth” here in Isaiah 48:13 can be chalked up to the
earth having a foundation, having pillars, but again, as I’ve stated through
this discussion, pillars don’t determine the shape of the earth. Isaiah 40:22,
as we’ve just examined, shows that there is a “circle of the earth” that gives
an idea of its shape. The idea that a circular earth has pillars, however, is
not hard to believe, nor is it illogical or inconsistent with common sense.
The reason pertains to the fact that circular objects can be held in place by
a foundation. In the case of the circular earth, if there were no foundation,
the earth would simply be absorbed by the waters (the waters that are
under the earth) and be destroyed. A strong pillar of land keeps the earth in
place and keeps it from being destroyed.
Isaiah 66

Thus says the Lord:

“Heaven is My throne,

And earth is My footstool.

Where is the house that you will build Me?

And where is the place of My rest? (Isaiah 66:1)

The word for “footstool” here simply means something that is “under one’s feet.” God is saying here in Isaiah 66 that the earth is under His feet, similar to a footstool being under the foot of a human being. And yet, if Isaiah 40:22 provides any insight, the “footstool” here of proper analogy would have to be circular or spherical.

Jeremiah

11 Thus you shall say to them: “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.”

12 He has made the earth by His power,

He has established the world by His wisdom,

And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.
13 When He utters His voice,

*There is* a multitude of waters in the heavens:

“And He causes the vapors to ascend **from the ends of the earth**.

He makes lightning for the rain,

He brings the wind out of His treasuries.” (Jeremiah 10:11-13)

In Jeremiah 10:13, we see that God “causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth.” The word for “vapors” here in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint, LXX) is *nephelas*, and the phrase involving the word is this: νεφέλας ἐξ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς, or *nephelas ex esxatou tes ges*. The word *nephelas* is similar to the word for “cloud,” so the vapors here are “cloudy,” meaning “hazy” and thick, and likely transparent. So here, the vapors come from “the last of the earth,” which means that they come from the farthest places and regions on earth. The “ends of the earth” doesn’t refer to the earth being seen as a square, large blanket, or rectangle because, as we’ve seen, God sits above “the circle of the earth” in Isaiah 40:22. If the earth is circular, spherical, and globular, then “ends” refer to as far as the universe stretches, not to the actual shape or form of the universe. The vapors “ascend,” meaning that they come from the ground, not from the sky.

The word of the Lord also came to me, saying, 2 “You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place.” 3 For thus says the
Lord concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land: 4 “They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, but they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth.” (Jeremiah 16:1-4)

The Lord is declaring judgment on Israel and He tells Jeremiah to neither marry nor have children in Israel because God will kill mothers, fathers, and the children they have. “They shall be like refuse on the face of the earth,” the phrase “face of the earth” indicating surface. And yet, we know from Isaiah 40:22 that the earth is circular in its shape --- which means that some can think of “face” here as akin to a circular mask. The analogies or metaphors here are designed for neutrality, but combining this with the Isaiah 40 text we’ve already studied lends credence to thinking about “face” here as circular (the surface of the “circle of the earth”).

32 Thus says the Lord of hosts:

“Behold, disaster shall go forth

From nation to nation,

And a great whirlwind shall be raised up
From the farthest parts of the earth.

33 And at that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground. (Jeremiah 25:32-33)

“From one end of the earth to the other end” tells us that the earth has two ends to it. Here’s where some would rule that the earth is flat, but the earth can be circular with two ends. After all, the first end in a sphere or globe is the top point of the sphere and the second end is the bottom point of the sphere. Think about it like this: on earth, there are only two poles: “North Pole” and “South Pole.” We don’t have “East Pole” or “West Pole” because, while the earth has four directions (North, South, East, and West), we realize that there are only two ends to the earth. Scripture dictates it and our own scientific research dictates it, so yes, you can have a circular or spherical earth and still have two ends to it. The tides do the same: they “go out,” and they “come in.” So there are only two ends to the earth.

35 Thus says the Lord,

Who gives the sun for a light by day,

The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,

Who disturbs the sea,
And its waves roar

(The Lord of hosts is His name):

36 "If those ordinances depart
From before Me, says the Lord,
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease
From being a nation before Me forever."

37 Thus says the Lord:

"If heaven above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,
I will also cast off all the seed of Israel
For all that they have done, says the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:35-37)

“The foundations of the earth” can’t be searched out, the Lord says here in Jeremiah 31, which means that He will keep His promise and love to Israel and will not do away with or eliminate the nation entirely. God is saying here that as long as creation stands, so will His promise stand. The foundations of the earth are still standing today, but in our discussion, this simply confirms what we’ve seen numerous times: that is, that the earth is built upon a foundation. The shape or nature of that foundation, whether flat or round, isn’t revealed here, but we do know that the earth doesn’t just sit in thin air; rather, it is held up by strong ground that has waters beneath it.
Ezekiel

10 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Because you have increased in height, and it set its top among the thick boughs, and its heart was lifted up in its height, 11 therefore I will deliver it into the hand of the mighty one of the nations, and he shall surely deal with it; I have driven it out for its wickedness. 12 And aliens, the most terrible of the nations, have cut it down and left it; its branches have fallen on the mountains and in all the valleys; its boughs lie broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the peoples of the earth have gone from under its shadow and left it.

13 'On its ruin will remain all the birds of the heavens,
And all the beasts of the field will come to its branches—
14 'So that no trees by the waters may ever again exalt themselves for their height, nor set their tops among the thick boughs, that no tree which drinks water may ever be high enough to reach up to them.

‘For they have all been delivered to death,

To the depths of the earth,
Among the children of men who go down to the Pit.’

15 "Thus says the Lord God: ‘In the day when it went down to hell, I caused mourning. I covered the deep because of it. I restrained its rivers, and the great waters were held back. I caused Lebanon to mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it. 16 I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it down to hell together with those who descend into the Pit; and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all
that drink water, were comforted in the depths of the earth. 17 They also went down to hell with it, with those slain by the sword; and those who were its strong arm dwelt in its shadows among the nations.

18 To which of the trees in Eden will you then be likened in glory and greatness? Yet you shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the depths of the earth; you shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, ’ says the Lord God.” (Ezekiel 31:10-18)

Three times in Ezekiel 31:10-18, we read the phrase “the depths of the earth.” The word for “depths” here is the Greek βάθος or bathos, which refers to “depth” or “height.” Here in context, the Lord is talking about the deep places in the earth, but the fact that the earth is deep means that the earth can’t be flat. You can’t have depth in flat objects because, if the object is flat, then “what you see is all there is.” If you have dimensionality, volume, depth to an object, then the object has to be multi-dimensional, which means that it won’t be flat. Even in drawing, flat objects are far more basic than multi-dimensional objects that have volume, such as a diamond, prism, or even globe. So if the earth has depth, if the earth is deep, then the earth can’t be flat. Mud is wide and thick (not very tall, otherwise it would engulf us rather than cause us a few walking or running problems), so the earth’s thickness implies that it has volume, that, as the mathematical equation says, Volume (V) = Length (L) x Width (W) x Height (H). Flat objects may have height and length but they don’t have width, they don’t have deepness or thickness to them. Deepness or thickness are a
huge part of what makes volume, and the “depths of the earth” testify to the earth’s volume, the earth’s multi-dimensionality.

17 It came to pass also in the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

18 “Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt, And cast them down to the depths of the earth,

Her and the daughters of the famous nations, With those who go down to the Pit:

19 ‘Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down, be placed with the uncircumcised.’

“There is Elam and all her multitude, All around her grave, All of them slain, fallen by the sword, Who have gone down uncircumcised to the lower parts of the earth, Who caused their terror in the land of the living; Now they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit. (Ezekiel 32:17-19, 24)

We’ve seen “the depths of the earth” as a frequent phrase describing the earth, but now we encounter “the lower parts of the earth.” First, though, a
word for those who want to remember the word “deep.” The Greek word in the Septuagint (Greek OT) for “depth” is bathos, reminiscent of our English word “bath.” When you pour a bath, you have some measure of deep water because the water is not only wide (it stretches from one arm to the other), but it is also tall in that it rises above your feet up to your stomach, chest, or neck. So think of “deep” in Scripture as a deep bath. Baths have volume: length, width, and height, all three. The word for “lower parts of the earth” is also bathos, referring to depth.

18 “And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel,” says the Lord God, “that My fury will show in My face. 19 For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: ‘Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who are on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.’ (Ezekiel 38:18-20)

All men who dwell on the earth will be frightened at what God will do to get revenge on His enemies. The phrase “the face of the earth” refers to humans living on the surface of it. Those who are “in the depths of the earth” are either dead and in the grave or have yet to be born, which is what David says when he discusses God’s plans for his life before he was born:
My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,

And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139:15-16)

Here the word for “lowest parts” of the earth is

Amos

5 The Lord God of hosts,
He who touches the earth and it melts,
And all who dwell there mourn;
All of it shall swell like the River,
And subside like the River of Egypt.

6 He who builds His layers in the sky,
And has founded His strata in the earth;
Who calls for the waters of the sea,
And pours them out on the face of the earth—
The Lord *is* His name.

7 “Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me,
O children of Israel?” says the Lord.

“Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,
The Philistines from Caphtor,
And the Syrians from Kir?

8 “Behold, the eyes of the Lord God *are* on the sinful kingdom,
And I will destroy it from the face of the earth;
Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,”

Says the Lord. (Amos 9:5-8)

In Amos 9:6, the Lord says that there are “layers” in the sky and “strata” on the earth. The word for “layers” is ἀνάβασιν or anabasin, referring to layers above or heights above. The word for “strata” here in Amos 9:6 is the Greek word θεμελιῶν or themelion, meaning “foundations.” The New King James Version (NKJV) translates it as “strata,” but again, this is a scientific term not found in the text. The term “foundations” here implies that Amos is referring to each “strata” of land individually, rather than just use the word “foundation” as a collective term to refer to it all at once. I appreciate the NKJV translators using the word “strata” here, as general revelation and our study of it informs our understanding of Scripture, but I wanted to
provide the actual Greek word so as to not assume things the text may not say explicitly. The Lord doesn’t tell us in His word that there are “strata,” a scientific term, but that there are “depths” to the earth.

Micah

3 Therefore He shall give them up,

Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth;

Then the remnant of His brethren

Shall return to the children of Israel.

4 And He shall stand and feed His flock

In the strength of the Lord,

In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God;

And they shall abide,

For now He shall be great

**To the ends of the earth;**

5 And this One shall be peace. (Micah 5:3-5)

“This One shall be peace” (Micah 5:5) tells us that this reference is to Jesus Christ, who is called “Prince of Peace” in Isaiah 9:6. So, with the reference
of “to the ends of the earth,” Micah is saying that Jesus’ name will be great and revered throughout all the earth, to the farthest regions.

Hear now what the Lord says:

“Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
And let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, O you mountains, the Lord’s complaint,
And you strong foundations of the earth;
For the Lord has a complaint against His people,
And He will contend with Israel. (Micah 6:1-2)

“Strong foundations” mentioned in Micah 6:2 is the Greek word *themelia*, which means that the word “foundation” here is plural, *foundations*. This word is not translated “strata” here as it was by the NKJV translators in Amos 9:6, which is good. We don’t know what this entails, but it could involve the depths of the earth and the earth’s soil layers. Again, Micah isn’t specific here, but it doesn’t tell us anything more than that the earth has some substance to it, some depth, which means that it isn’t flat.

Habakkuk

“Look among the nations and watch—
Be utterly astounded!
For I will work a work in your days
Which you would not believe, though it were told you.
6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and hasty nation
Which marches through the breadth of the earth,
To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. (Habakkuk 1:5-6)

The Greek, Septuagintal phrase for “through the breadth of the earth” is ἐπὶ τὰ πλάτη τῆς γῆς (ta plate tes ges). The Greek word plate (pronounced “plo-tay”) means “breadth” or “width” (parent word πλάτος). The Chaldeans, or Babylonians, will march through the width of the earth “to possess dwelling places that are not theirs.” The idea of the earth being wide here is not only a reference to the constitution of the earth but also the fact that the Chaldeans spend their time going into all places in the earth to conquer them and take over them. What we learn here, though, is that the earth is wide, width being a factor in the volume of an object. With that said, width removes the idea that the earth is flat. The earth is wide, which means that the circular shape of Isaiah 40:22 leads us to believe that the earth is not just “a circle” but a globe, a circular object that has volume --- not a uni-dimensional circle that one draws on a piece of paper.

Zechariah

The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel. Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: (Zechariah 12:1)

“The Lord” is the one who “lays the foundation of the earth,” Zechariah says, though we know nothing about what constitutes the earth’s foundation. As we’ve said before, the earth has a buttress or support that keeps it in place --- we’ve known this and the Old Testament has shown us
this many times. And yet, the pillars of the earth, the foundation, doesn’t tell us the exact nature of the shape of the universe.

Conclusion: Is the Earth Flat or Round?

If you have toiled through reading all of this analysis from the Old Testament, congratulations; you have perseverance.

On a more serious note, though, the question before us is the following: “Is the earth flat or round?” In starting this study, I didn’t know what conclusion would come out on top; I actually believed that the study wouldn’t yield much in the way of evidence, but to some extent, I was wrong.

Sure, much of the Old Testament tells us that God has built the earth upon a foundation, that waters lie beneath the earth, that the earth is deep, has pillars, and a prosopon, a “face” to it. And while there’s little evidence for the shape of the universe, there is some evidence to suggest that the Old Testament makes a case that the earth is circular or spherical.

Isaiah 40:22 says that “God sits above the circle of the earth,” which implies that the earth has a circular shape. This doesn’t tell us of the earth’s volume, which we’ve seen in other passages that say “the depths of the earth” and “the breadth of the earth” (or width), but it shows us that there’s a strong connection between the earth’s shape and our question about the earth’s roundness. Circular and “globular” or “spherical” aren’t necessarily the same thing, because the earth could potentially be circular and flat, if we base our view of the earth’s shape and size on Scripture alone.

Some would say that Scripture only indicates that the earth is circular, not globular or round in any way, and that is true. “Roundness” and “circular”
aren’t the same thing in any language --- let’s remember that. And yet, we should also remember that it’s not the Bible’s responsibility to give us everything we need to know about the shape of the universe. The Bible is sufficient, not exhaustive, meaning that it doesn’t detail every single thing about creation or how things work in the world but tells us some things about creation and natural phenomena that we should pay attention to.

Now this doesn’t mean that we can’t gather clues from what we know. Though the church once upon a time said that the earth was flat, it took a member of that same church, Galileo Galilei, to put down his Bible, pick up a microscope, and actually look at the world and mathematically figure out the earth’s roundness. And though the church wasn’t too happy with Galilei, I am. The reason? I believe Galileo did what we all should do: learn to appreciate the special revelation of the Scriptures alongside the general revelation of creation and the natural world.

David, a man after God’s own heart, who is responsible for many of the Psalms we read today, wrote on the subject of God’s two forms of revelation in Scripture:

The heavens declare the glory of God;

And the firmament shows His handiwork.

2 Day unto day utters speech,

And night unto night reveals knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language

Where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line has gone out through all the earth,

And their words to the end of the world.
In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,

And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

6 Its rising is from one end of heaven,

And its circuit to the other end;

And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold,

Yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned,

And in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can understand his errors?

Cleanse me from secret faults.

13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;
Let them not have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless,

And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

Be acceptable in Your sight,

O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:1-14)

David writes here of two forms of creation, special (the Mosaic Law) and general (nature). “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows forth His handiwork,” David says. The heavens show His majesty (God says that His throne is in the heavens), but the earth shows His “handiwork,” His genius. The word for “handiwork” here in Psalm 19:1 is a simple phrase: “The doing of His hands.” In other words, God gets glory out of natural phenomena because He made the natural phenomena.

If one wants to look at all God has made, looking at the Law or the written Word isn’t enough; one must also look at the physical world that God has made because God has shown His identity, power, and genius in everything from the sun to the sky, clouds, birds, trees, leaves, and grass. God’s genius is demonstrated in what He made. He has revealed who He is in the natural phenomena, as the great Apostle Paul has said:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, (Romans 1:18-20)
“His invisible attributes are clearly seen” in what has been made, Paul says, which means that, as the Bible reveals who God is, nature reveals God as well. We can’t overlook and downplay the revelatory nature of natural phenomena and God’s creation.

David saw creation as not only a revelation of God, but as a revelation that should move believers into doxology and praise. As he writes in Psalm 8:

O Lord, our Lord,

How excellent is Your name in all the earth,

Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants

You have ordained strength,

Because of Your enemies,

That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

4 What is man that You are mindful of him,

And the son of man that You visit him?

5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels,

And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all *things* under his feet,

7 All sheep and oxen—

Even the beasts of the field,

8 The birds of the air,

And the fish of the sea

That pass through the paths of the seas.

9 O Lord, our Lord,

How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:1-9)

David saw the greatness of God by looking at natural phenomena, and it moved him to praise the Lord. Christians too, should take time to look up at the clouds and sky, and see the trees, plant and animal life, and everything in between. This is what it means to fully assess life as a whole. When it comes to the subject of whether the earth is flat or round, we can read the Bible all day and try to figure it all out with the verses of Scripture, but the Lord didn’t intend to write about all of His scientific creations within Scripture. At some point, He wants us to get outdoors and see it, experience it, interact with it, because He provided Adam, our forefather and the first human, the interactive experience with creation in the Garden of Eden. Adam had to name the animals, for example, which would give him time to encounter the work of God’s hands and see it for himself.
While I was at seminary pursuing a Master of Divinity degree in Christian Apologetics, it became very clear to me one day in the Apologetics Seminar I was in that the greatest scientific minds of all time, such as Isaac Newton (for whom the Law of Gravity is forever remembered) was a believer, a Christian, who performed scientific experiments on the assumption that God made the world. Upon learning that not every scientist was atheist, and that not every scientist believed that the earth appeared out of nothing, it hit me that science wasn’t separate from faith, that I didn’t have to be a Christian and throw science out the window in order to uphold my faith. The church of Galileo’s day believed what I once did; that is, it believed that faith and science were polar opposites, hostile enemies, archrivals. And yet, that isn’t true. If Psalm 8, Psalm 19, and Romans 1 are any indication of Christian living, they tell us that believers can know their God through not only the Bible but also natural phenomena. God didn’t create all of the natural world that we see for nought. Scripture says that the Lord made the world to be inhabited:

22 “The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
23 I have been established from everlasting,
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills, I was brought forth;
26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields,
Or the primal dust of the world.
27 When He prepared the heavens, I was there,
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 When He established the clouds above,
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,
29 When He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,

31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world,
And my delight was with the sons of men. (Proverbs 8:22-31)

For thus says the Lord,
Who created the heavens,

Who is God,

Who formed the earth and made it,

Who has established it,

**Who did not create it in vain,**

**Who formed it to be inhabited:**

“I *am* the Lord, and *there is* no other. (Isaiah 45:18)

The Lord had a reason for making the earth: He designed it for habitation, that it would be inhabited. He made the world with purpose, and we should get outdoors and see the creation He made so that we can know more about His purpose for making it. If He has revealed Himself to us, then He has done so with the goal of motivating us to seek Him out and respond to what He has done. The church in Galileo’s day had some weird and erroneous interpretations of Scripture, but they failed to look upon God’s natural phenomena, believing that Scripture would tell them “all they need to know about everything.” Scripture tells us sufficiently, not exhaustively; for the rest, we must turn to God’s own creation and gaze upon it. My prayer is that we not be like the church in those days, so caught up in proving general revelation through a Bible verse that we don’t look upon nature to see if our interpretations are true. God created
the world, and God authored the Holy Scriptures. If there’s any erroneous interpretations in it all, we are to blame, not God.

Flatness and Roundness

Flatness and roundness pertain to volume (or its absence) and dimensionality. Flat items drawn in paintings have very little multi-dimensionality to them and are often believed to be uni-dimensional. Think about it: when children are drawing, the first thing they do is draw basic “stick figures” to represent people, basic shapes to represent houses, the sun, the clouds, the stars, and so on. Only with maturity and advanced training do humans tend to add shading, accents, and other details to make a drawing more lifelike than ever. We know that uni-dimensionality, one-dimensional people and objects, are “cute masterpieces” but don’t match the complexity of life.

If the earth is flat, then flat-earthers must explain why it is that maps and telescopes show that our earth is round, globular, circular with multi-dimensionality. Some have said that they believe the earth is flat because of the “flat” mountains, the “flat” highways, the flat grass, cement, and so on, but they’ve never walked the face of the earth to know if it’s flat or round. How can they know that the earth is flat by walking in their neighborhood? And, in order for the earth to “orbit” and rotate on its axis, the earth must have some circular motion and thus, be circular, if it accomplishes this.

The Catholic church, or the church, in the pre-Enlightenment age, told folks that the earth was flat because the earth “has pillars,” but pillars tell you nothing about the shape of the universe. Of course, there is little specific evidence in Scripture of the shape of the universe (outside of Isaiah 40:22
and some other verses above), but what we have in Scripture tells us that the earth has “layers” of land, that the earth has height and depth, width, and length. This “volume” of earth means that earth has more than one dimension to it, that earth is not flat. Prisms and diamonds are also multi-dimensional and aren’t flat. What the church failed to do was assess the evidence as a whole and conclude that the “circle of earth” in Isaiah 40:22 is an excellent piece of evidence to inform us accurately about the shape of the earth.

When an item is flat, it appears to be so flat that it is only one-dimensional. Any item that is 2D or greater is considered to be multi-dimensional and thus, complex. And the earth is complex. Why wouldn’t the earth be complex if plant, animal, and other life forms demonstrate considerable complexity, or as Michael Behe has said, “irreducible complexity”?

A square is “flat,” but a cube is a multi-dimensional square. A circle can be flat but a globe is “round,” multi-dimensionality for a circle or ring. The earth, if it were flat, would not support the level of life that it does. We know that the earth is a globe because microscopes have confirmed this for us a million times. Therefore, while we know that the earth is a circle because the “circle of the earth” is present in Scripture, we’re left to confirm from other evidences that the circle spoken of in Isaiah 40:22 is multi-dimensional and has more “volume” to it than ever believed. The only “deep circle” is a round globe, ball, or something globe-shaped or ball-shaped. Flat-earthers are really saying with their advocacy that they believe the earth to be a “flat circle,” like a Blu-Ray disc. This view can’t make sense of the “depths of the earth” and “breadth of the earth” statements in Scripture.

Last but not least, flat-earthers can’t make sense of what microscopes and telescopes are seeing --- that is, that the earth is round. Since God created the natural phenomena, and the earth is globular and round (not just circular), I’m going to side with scientists who’ve studied the earth and its
design over flat-earthers who are living off of weird interpretations of the scriptural mentions of “pillars” or some other theory.

The Bible as Scientific Textbook or Manual

Isaiah 40:22 is one of the clearest verses in the Bible that makes a case for a circular earth with roundness, but some respond to this by saying, “Well, the Bible isn’t a scientific textbook or manual, so we can’t say that the Bible is claiming to know the shape of the universe or earth.” This view says that, if a source isn’t an “expert” in terms of the advice it offers, that it can’t provide any useful information on the subject. If a book is about fertility, then it can’t provide useful legal advice (someone of this mindset would say).

And yet, I strongly disagree. Take the Parkland, Florida victims in the latest mass school shooting tragedy, for example: those who survived the shooting are being deemed irrelevant and “too young” to talk about gun violence. And yet, the school shooter was 18 when he purchased an AR-15, but these survivors are now “too young” to talk about gun reform and sound as if they know what they’re talking about? This view doesn’t make sense. What makes the Parkland survivors equipped and more than adequate to talk about gun violence and gun reform is that they’ve witnessed what these advanced, military-style weapons can do to innocent lives. Some individuals who speak against these survivors have never been within miles of an AR-15 to disregard those who have.

In the same vein, the Bible need not be a scientific textbook or manual to speak on natural phenomena. In fact, the Bible tells us some pretty important things about creation, such as the fact that God made the universe in Genesis 1, for example.
This section will look at passages of Scripture that relate to natural phenomena to show that the biblical persons and writers, though not scientists, still knew a thing or two about God’s creation.

The Bible’s Scientific Observations

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. 2 And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

4 This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, 5 before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; 6 but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:1-7)

Genesis 2:5-6 tells us how there was water on the earth before there was rain. Is this not scientific?
Exodus 20:4 tells us that water doesn’t just exist in the rivers, ponds, lakes, and oceans, but also under the earth:

4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; (Exodus 20:4)

Exodus 20:4 shows us that there is water under the earth, and God tells us so Himself in the Ten Commandments, a list of rules from the Lord that have been cherished by Jews and Gentiles since God gave them to Moses on Mount Sinai. Here we read from the mouth of the Lord that there is water under the earth, a detail that could be verified scientifically.

“For there is hope for a tree,
If it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that its tender shoots will not cease.

8 Though its root may grow old in the earth,
And its stump may die in the ground,

9 Yet at the scent of water it will bud
And bring forth branches like a plant.

10 But man dies and is laid away;
Indeed he breathes his last
And where is he?

11 *As water disappears from the sea,*

*And a river becomes parched and dries up,*

12 *So man lies down and does not rise.*

Till the heavens are no more,

They will not awake

Nor be roused from their sleep.

18“*But as a mountain falls and crumbles away,*

*And as a rock is moved from its place;*

19 *As water wears away stones,*

*And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth;*

So You destroy the hope of man. (Job 14:7-12, 18-19)

Here in Job, we see the Gentile servant of the Lord reference some scientific observations. First, there is the observation that if a tree is cut down, it could grow back again: “For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease” (Job 14:7). Verses 8 and 9 show hope for the tree to grow again. In Job 14:11, rivers dry up and water disappears from the sea in cases of extremely hot temperatures that drain the waters dry. I’ve witnessed a river dry up because of hot summer heat, so I can understand what Job is saying here. Though Job is making a comparison between waters drying up and disappearing and man who goes to the grave and “disappears” from
everyday life, the scientific observations about water are accurate. Water does wear away stones and torrents (hard rains) wash away soil, all accurate scientific observations. Again, though Job was not a scientist or a science expert, Job knew a thing or two about creation because he, like all humans, lived in it.

7 He stretches out the north over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.
8 He binds up the water in His thick clouds,
Yet the clouds are not broken under it.
9 He covers the face of His throne,
And spreads His cloud over it.
10 He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters,
At the boundary of light and darkness.
11 The pillars of heaven tremble,
And are astonished at His rebuke.
12 He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up the storm.
13 By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
14 Indeed these are the mere edges of His ways,
And how small a whisper we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?” (Job 26:7-14)

In Job 26, we read that the Lord placed the North “over empty space” and “hangs the earth on nothing.” This means that God created out of nothing, where nothing was. This is what is meant by Genesis 1 when Moses writes that “the earth was without form and void” (Genesis 1:2).

The earth didn’t have form, nor was it filled, it was simply empty. The earth wasn’t made by hanging it on something; it was simply placed in the midst of nothing, by God Himself. In verse 8, “He binds up the water in thick clouds,” referring to the clouds containing water. We know that the earth was created out of nothing because The Big Bang Theory (the theory, not the TV show) says that before light, there was nothing. In other words, when God said “‘Let there be light,’ and there was light,” (Genesis 1:3), light appeared, science thus matching what Scripture tells us. As for water being bound up in thick clouds yet not broken by the water, we also know this is scientific fact because rain clouds come and then dump rain on the earth. This is why you see dark clouds, followed by the sound of rain. Science also tells us that the clouds contain water and that, when it rains, the water drops down from the sky.

Job also has something to say about silver, gold, iron, and ore:
“Surely there is a mine for silver,
And a place where gold is refined.
2 Iron is taken from the earth,
And copper is smelted from ore. (Job 28:1-2)

The actual Greek translation of verse 1 says “For [there] is a place for silver, where it comes from, and a place for gold, where it is refined.” In verse 2, we read that iron, the Greek word σιδηρος (sideros), comes from the earth, and copper (or brass, Greek χαλκος or xalkos) is hewn or carved (Greek λατομειται or latomeitai) out of stone (Greek λιθος or litho). The NKJV says that copper “is smelted from ore,” referring us to the rock ore that contains minerals (including copper) that can be extracted from the ore. Ore is not mentioned in the text (there’s no Greek word for it), but the Greek word is from lithos meaning “stone.”

Verses 5 and 6 tell more about the earth as the source of bread and the heat beneath the earth’s surface:

5 As for the earth, from it comes bread,
But underneath it is turned up as by fire;
6 Its stones are the source of sapphires,
And it contains gold dust. (Job 28:5-6)
Bread comes from the earth, Job says, and this much is true: water and grains (grains that grow like grass as a crop on earth) are used to make flour and cooked on rocks, which then makes bread. As for “underneath it is turned up as by fire,” the “it” there is the earth; thus, underneath the earth, the earth is turned up as by fire. This is referring to the heat underneath the earth. There is no fire underneath the earth, but the earth in the end will be destroyed by fire instead of water (as the earth was destroyed in the Flood the first time).

In Job 28:6, Job says that sapphires come from stones and the earth contains gold dust. We know these things are true, that sapphires are hewn out of stones (what we call gemstones). We also know that the gold (Greek χρυσίον or xrusion) comes from the ground, dust, or soil, Greek χῶμα or xoma. The NKJV calls it “gold dust” but the verse says that gold comes from the dust and soil, but there is a difference between gold dust and gold. Gold is a solid stone while gold dust is dust, grains of gold.

4 He counts the number of the stars;

He calls them all by name.

5 Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;

His understanding is infinite.

6 The Lord lifts up the humble;
He casts the wicked down to the ground.

7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;

Sing praises on the harp to our God,

8 **Who covers the heavens with clouds,**

**Who prepares rain for the earth,**

**Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.**

9 **He gives to the beast its food,**

**And to the young ravens that cry.** (Psalm 147:4-9)

Clouds cover the heavens, and the Lord does it. The Lord “prepares rain for the earth,” meaning that the rain doesn’t come on the earth on its own; an Intelligent Being, the One true living God, prepares the rain. Grass grows on the mountains because God makes it so, and beasts and ravens get their food to survive because God gives it to them. This is what we call “Intelligent Design,” and it tells us that God is intelligent and, in His genius, has created all the natural phenomena we see and observe.

There’s a lot to the work of God in creation and God’s crafting the earth, too much to tell in this section article. And yet, from what we’ve seen, God has designed the form of the earth and filled it with humans, vegetation, plant and animal life, and given us observable wonders in the skies: stars, sun, moon, clouds, and even planets and galaxies.
Jesus told the masses who followed Him about the Lord’s provision for His own:

25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 **Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns;** yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 “So why do you worry about clothing? **Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;** and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25-34)

Jesus tells us to “Look” at the birds of the air and “consider” the lilies of the field, words that remind us that we can’t understand this parable without ultimately going outside to look at the lilies and the birds. What Jesus says is that, if the Father cares for these natural phenomena, who do no work at
all to merit it, then we should have faith that He will take care of us, too. To appreciate Jesus’ words, and to appreciate how God made the world, sitting inside in the Bible or a theological work or treatise won’t do; instead, after reading Scripture, we should step outdoors, if possible, to contemplate God’s glorious creation. Reading about it without seeing it up-close, simply isn’t good enough.

The Church, pre-Enlightenment (or before The Age of Reason), was guilty of faulty interpretation, and one of its own, Galileo, (yes, a scientist who was also Christian) set out to determine the real shape of the earth. He concluded that the earth was round, not flat, and his observation of the natural phenomenon put him at odds with the church because the church accepted its own interpretation instead of acknowledging the truth about earth’s form that God set in front of them. The church didn’t exist in our day today, where a good telescope would’ve put the question of the earth’s flatness or roundness to rest. But we have the blessing of living in a time where we can be closer to nature than ever.

We live in a technologically-advanced era where we can view the world up-close in virtual reality (VR). I’ve been using Samsung’s Gear VR headsets for a few years now, and I’ve been able to view actual satellite imagery from NASA to see the sun, stars, universe, and planets right from my own home --- without a trip to the space station. And so, we have an even greater responsibility than the church did in Galileo’s day to see to it
that Scripture come alive for us in that we don’t just read about nature but that we see it with our own eyes.

The Bible tells us that the earth is circular, and the Bible tells us that the earth has “depths” and thickness to it, which confirms that the earth isn’t as flat or one-dimensional as flat-earthers believe it to be. Genesis 1 points to the moments before creation when the earth was without form and void, telling us that, as Job 26:10 and Isaiah 40:22 tell us, God “drew a circle” on the waters when He created the world --- a reminder that the earth is circular and, with its multi-dimensionality, round. The earth is deep (height and length), and it is wide as it stretches across many miles. Thus, the earth has volume, making it a globe in appearance rather than a “flat tire” or “flat pancake.”

To walk on the street and assume that the earth is “flat” is to look at the sun in the sky, from our angle, and assume that it is flat. There is another side to the earth, the side that is out of our view, in the same way that there’s two sides to the universe (the one we see and the one we don’t). This is why we use the phrase “on the other side of the world” to distinguish between where we live and where someone else lives. We don’t say “they live in another country, or they live on another continent,” but rather, “the other side of the world.” By using the phrase “the other side of the world,”
we’re saying that the earth is round, circular with volume, and that this circular universe we live in has two sides to it.

The earth rotates on its axis, and how else can it rotate if not circularly? So, when one takes into account Scripture, which points out that the Lord “drew a circle” above the waters when He made the world, that the world is deep, and that the world is wide, the conclusion one gets is that the world can be circular and have pillars; the world is circular and has pillars, or a foundation.

If there’s one thing we take away from all this, it should be this: don’t let a faulty hermeneutic and skewed interpretation keep us from beholding the natural phenomena in creation God has made. After all, if God’s Word and creation are both significant revelations (they are) that both confirm the true nature and character of God (they do), then you can’t have the text confirming “flat earth” while scientific observation under the telescope says otherwise.