



Cats are Proof that the Earth Is Not Flat

by Alfred B. Davis, 2 July 2022

The man looked at me intently and declared, “The earth is flat.”

“If the earth is flat,” I said, “Then I should be able to go up in the Empire State building in New York with a telescope and see you waving at me from the Eiffel Tower in Paris.”

He replied that I would not be able to see him because Paris is more than 5 miles from New York. When I asked why that mattered, he responded that the air is too thick to see anything beyond five miles. Now, having never heard anything like that before, I objected, pointing out that I have personally seen things more than five miles away. He challenged my statement, repeating that the air is too thick to see beyond five miles.

When I mentioned that I have flown in jets at altitudes greater than five miles and clearly saw the ground below me, as well as for hundreds of miles around, he looked at me incredulously. “You’ve flown over five miles up in the air?!” he sputtered, “That’s impossible! You can’t fly that high!”

It was about then that I realized that it was impossible to reason with him. He was clearly immune to it. Besides, as the saying goes, you cannot reason someone out of a position that they did not reason themselves into.

Of course, another option is that he was not sincere. He may have been pulling my chain, objecting to every point that I made with increasingly absurd arguments, trying to draw me into

a pointless argument to make me look and sound foolish. Some people who advocate the flat earth position are like that.

In fact, Dr. Danny R. Faulkner, who holds an MS in physics from Clemson University, an MA and a PhD in astronomy from Indiana University, touched on both of these in his article *Reflections on the Flat Earth Movement* (published June 22, 2019, <https://answersingenesis.org/astronomy/earth/reflections-flat-earth-movement/>, viewed June 27 2022):

“I’ve suspected for some time that many flat-earth arguments are created by people who don’t believe the earth is flat, but simply want to see how many people they can snooker with very bad arguments. They must get perverse delight out of fooling gullible people. ... I’ve also noticed that flat-earthers generally don’t understand, and hence don’t engage in, rational arguments.”

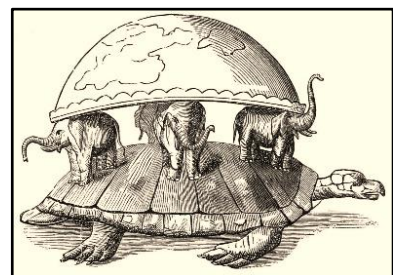
So where does this idea come from?

Well, many ancient peoples believed that the earth was flat. Because of their limited knowledge and familiarity of the world beyond their own local area, they naturally viewed the world as being flat. Generally, they viewed the land as being bounded by a vast ocean, beyond which no one could travel.



The oldest known map of the world, for instance, is a Babylonian map from the 6th century B.C. This map depicts Assyria, Babylonia, and Armenia on a disc-shaped world surrounded by an ocean. Beyond the ocean are seven outer regions shaped like triangles whose outer points drop off into the void of space.

Another common belief was that the world is carried on the back of a giant turtle swimming through the abyss of space. This belief was widespread in both the Americas and Asia. Some believed the earth was a disc carried on the back of the “World Turtle” while others believed the World Turtle’s shell itself is the earth. Still others, notably in India, envisioned the earth as a disc resting on four (sometimes seven) elephants standing on the back of the World Turtle.



However, as knowledge increased and travel became more widespread, people began to notice things that caused them to begin to question the shape of the earth. Ships heading out to sea did not merely get smaller and disappear, they disappeared from the bottom up. People on the tops of towers or ship’s masts could see farther than those below them on the ground or the deck of the ship. Travelers moving east and west noticed sunrises and sunsets occurring at different times. Travelling north and south people noticed the sun, moon, and stars appearing at different

angles in the sky. Travelling below the equator they even noticed new stars and constellations in the sky while familiar ones disappeared from view. None of these observations made sense from the flat earth perspective.

Pythagoras, in the 6th Century B.C., first suggested that the earth may be spherical rather than flat. Then, around 350 B.C., Aristotle argued in Book II of his work *On the Heavens*, that the lunar eclipses prove the earth is a sphere:

“How else would eclipses of the moon show segments shaped as we see them? As it is, the shapes which the moon itself each month shows are of every kind straight, gibbous, and concave-but in eclipses the outline is always curved: and, since it is the interposition of the earth that makes the eclipse, the form of this line will be caused by the form of the earth’s surface, which is therefore spherical. Again, our observations of the stars make it evident, not only that the earth is circular, but also that it is a circle of no great size. ... Its shape must necessarily be spherical.”

Then, around 200 B.C., a Greek named Eratosthenes of Cyrene (276-195 BC), who worked at the Great Library of Alexandria, Egypt, was over 500 miles south, near modern-day Aswan. It was the summer solstice, and he was in the northernmost part of the tropics. Peering into a deep well at noon, Eratosthenes realized he could see the bottom because the sun was directly overhead. Normally the bottom was not visible because the angle of the sun cast a shadow obscuring the bottom of the well. He also realized that, even on the summer solstice, the bottom of a deep well was never visible in Alexandria.

The next year, back in Alexandria, Eratosthenes set up a vertical pole and measured the pole’s shadow at noon on the summer solstice. Knowing the height of the pole and the length of its shadow allowed him to calculate the angle of the sun. Since he knew that the angle of the sun was 90 degrees (vertical) when he looked into the well near Aswan the previous year, he calculated that the difference between the angles equaled about one-fiftieth of a circle. Multiplying 50 times the distance between his pole in Alexandria and the well in Aswan, he deduced that the circumference of the earth was about 28,738 miles – very close to the actual value of 24,901 miles.

Eratosthenes had proven what many already believed. The earth was a sphere and not a flat disk.

So, from the 4th Century B.C. on, and especially after Eratosthenes, the idea of a spherical earth was generally more broadly held than that of a flat disk. In fact, the spherical earth idea was widely accepted throughout Medieval Europe well before 1492 when Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic. The 7th Century Catholic monk and scholar, Bede, published his widely distributed influential treatise, *The Reckoning of Time*, that included a discussion of the spherical nature of the world. Later, in the 1300s, Dante Alighieri published his monumental work, *Divine Comedy*, which also described the earth as a sphere. Consequently, the real controversy when Columbus floated the idea of sailing westward from Europe to reach the East was not whether he would sail off the edge of the world, but whether his small ships could make the trip. In fact,

to help sell his proposal, Columbus purposely overestimated the eastward distance from Europe to the East and decreased Eratosthenes' measurement of the Earth's circumference, claiming it would be shorter to reach the East by sailing westward.

But wait, weren't we taught in school that Columbus believed that the earth was a sphere and fought against the church's belief that the earth was flat? Where did that come from?

Well, according to Dr. Danny R. Faulkner, in his article, "Is the Earth Flat?" (published May 24, 2016, <https://answersingenesis.org/astronomy/earth/is-the-earth-flat/>, viewed June 27 2022):

"In the late nineteenth century, two atheistic skeptics, Andrew Dickson White and John Draper, created the conflict thesis that Christianity held back the progress of science. One of their major arguments was that throughout the Middle Ages the church had taught that the earth was flat. In creating this myth, Draper and White suggested that the church could redeem itself for this supposed error on the earth's shape by getting in on the ground floor of Darwinism. This ploy was very successful in that much of the church capitulated on evolution. It also falsely altered history. It is this false version of history that most people have learned."

Dr. Faulkner also wrote in his later article, *Reflections on the Flat Earth Movement*, that I cited earlier:

"The arguments for flat earth that began to arise in the 19th century didn't originate with Christians. Instead, the belief that the Bible teaches the earth is flat first arose among skeptics who used this false charge as a bludgeon to intimidate the church and attempt to discredit the Bible. Regrettably, few Christians refuted this lie at the time, and some Christians even accepted this false notion and took it up as a badge of honor. I suspect that Samuel Rowbotham, the founder of the modern flat-earth movement in the 19th century, wasn't earnest in his claims. Rather, I believe that Rowbotham did this as a cruel joke. If so, then he must have had perverse delight in fooling so many people."

Dr. Faulkner went on to claim:

"Similarly, I suspect that some of the people who relaunched the flat-earth movement in the 21st century did so for the same reasons. Except that there is a twist. Many flat-earthers who claim to be Christian use terminology about their supposed biblical arguments that appear to have been lifted from creationists. I don't think that this similarity is a coincidence. I believe that part of the agenda of the flat-earth movement today is to mock and undermine arguments for biblical creation. Since studying and teaching biblical creation is my calling, that is a direct threat to my ministry. The sad irony is that many of the foot soldiers in the flat-earth movement are creationists and have no idea of the role that they are playing in this diabolical scheme."

But what about those who claim that the Bible supports their views? Does it?

These three verses are often presented as proof that the Bible teaches that the earth is flat:

1. "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." (Revelation 7:1)
2. "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." (Revelation 20:8)
3. "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." (Isaiah 11:12)

However, in each of these verses, the Scripture is not claiming that the earth is flat. The "four corners" and "four quarters" of the earth are simply descriptive terms referring to all the earth in every direction, north, south, east, and west. Besides, if we were to take these terms as a literal description of the earth then we would have to say that the earth is a square and not a circle or disk. After all, circles and disks do not have corners.

Another verse often presented is Daniel 4:10-12:

"Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it."

The problem for Flat Earthers is that this passage does not describe reality at all. It is a part of a dream sequence, a symbolic vision. If it were describing reality, then it would mean that there was a gigantic tree growing at the north pole, which is at the center or "midst of the earth" on flat earth maps, and visible all the way to the Antarctic. Clearly, that is not now nor ever has been the case.

Several passages in the Bible liken the earth to a building or structure with foundations. These are often presented as proof that the earth is not a free-floating globe but that it rests upon something:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding." (Job 38:4)

“Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.” (Psalm 104:5)

“And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?” (Isaiah 51:13)

Flat Earthers like to point out that a spherical earth spinning in space would have no foundations. However, by the same token, neither would a disk floating in space. Unless it was resting on something. Besides, in Job 26:7, the Bible plainly states that God “...hangeth the earth upon nothing.” Instead, references to the foundations of the earth being laid are illustrative of how God, the Master Builder, carefully designed and formed the earth with the surface of the earth resting on the underlying structure of the earth much like a well-designed building rests securely upon its foundations.

There are many more passages that we could consider but let’s look at one final passage:

“It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.” (Isaiah 40:22-23)

This is proof positive to many that the earth is a flat disk and not a sphere. After all, if you look down on a disk from above, what do you see? A circle! But when you look down on a sphere from above you see a circle as well. But what do you see when you look from the side? Well, a flat disk appears as a rectangular shape, much like a thick line, but not a circle. If the disk were bowed or domed in some way, it might appear like an oval or half circle, or possibly even a crescent, but again, not a circle. A sphere, on the other hand, still appears as a circle no matter what angle you look at it from.

Flat Earth advocates also like to point out that the Hebrew word, *chuwg*, translated in Isaiah 40:22 as circle, is different from the Hebrew word for a ball or sphere, which is *duwr*. After all, *duwr* appears that way in Isaiah 22:18:

“He will surely violently turn and toss thee **like a ball** into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.”

However, it appears differently in Isaiah 29:3 as “round about” or encircling (i.e. making a circle around):

“And I will camp against thee **round about**, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.”

Besides, the Hebrew word for disk is different from *chuwg* as well. It is *oben*, which means wheel or disk:

“Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on **the wheels.**”
(Jeremiah 18:3)

The wheels in Jeremiah 18:3 refer to the upper and lower wheels where the potter worked his craft. The wheels were generally flat wooden disks. The lower wheel would be spun by the potter's feet, thereby spinning the upper wheel where the potter shaped the clay. Consequently, if the word circle (*chuwg*) in Isaiah 22:18 cannot refer to a sphere (*duwr*), than, by the same argument, it cannot refer to a disk (*oben*) either.

Beware those who take the Bible out of context, misapply or misunderstand passages, and twist the Scriptures to prove that the earth is a flat disk. As the Bible says, some do it ignorantly but some do it maliciously:

“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16)

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” (2 Corinthians 2:17).

Also, beware of those who deny reason, logic, verifiable and repeatable observations, and the wealth of photographic and video evidence from high altitude flights, satellites, and spacecraft that clearly show that the earth is a sphere, as well as the personal testimonies of Christians who have seen the earth from high altitudes and space.

Charles Duke, for instance, was the tenth person to walk on the moon. While not a born-again Christian in 1972 while a member of the Apollo 16 mission, Duke later put his faith in Christ in 1978. Dr. Faulkner, in the previously cited article, *Is the Earth Flat?*, asked Duke how he would respond to those who claim that the earth is flat and the moon landings are a hoax. Duke responded:

“I was the lunar module pilot on the Apollo 16 mission to the moon. We launched from KSC (Kennedy Space Center) in Florida on April 16, 1972. We left earth orbit for our three-day trip to the moon about three hours later. As we maneuvered our spacecraft to dock with our lunar module, the earth came into view about 20,000 miles away. It was an awesome sight. As you can see in the photo, it is obviously a sphere and not a flat circle. As we journeyed to the moon, we would look out our windows and see a smaller earth, and each time we would see different landmasses, so it was obviously rotating on its axis.



“Some people are questioning the fact that we landed on the moon, alleging that it is a big hoax. Well, we did land on the moon six times, and the evidences are overwhelming. If we faked the landing, why did we fake it 6 times?”

Another Christian, Jeffery Williams, spent six months on the International Space Station in 2006. Williams orbited the earth more than 2,800 times and took more photographs of earth than any astronaut in history. He later published a book, *The Work of His Hands: A View of God’s Creation from Space*, filled with his photographs and personal observations. In it, Williams clearly shows that the earth is a sphere and not a flat disk.

Flat Earthers routinely dismiss this wealth of evidence and personal testimonies as fraudulent, manipulative, and deceptive lies and hoaxes. The Flat Earth Society, for instance, claims on their website

(<https://www.theflatearthsociety.org/forum/index.php/topic,1324.msg1312141.html#msg1312141>, viewed on July 2, 2022):

“The most commonly accepted explanation of this is that the space agencies of the world are involved in a conspiracy faking space travel and exploration. This likely began during the Cold War's 'Space Race', in which the U.S.S.R. and USA were obsessed with beating each other into space to the point that each faked their accomplishments in an attempt to keep pace with the others supposed achievements. However, since the end of the Cold War, the conspiracy is most likely motivated by greed rather than political gains. Thus opening up a tremendous amounts of funds to embezzle as it only takes a fraction of the total budget to fake space travel.”

Of course, the best refutation of the flat earth idea probably comes from my cats. If the earth really were flat, they would have knocked everything off it by now.

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