

Does the Bible Teach that the Earth is Flat?

by Kayle B. de Waal

There has been a recent resurgence in the belief that the earth is flat.¹ Television documentaries, internet posts, and entire websites are devoted to the idea.² This article examines the purported biblical evidence brought forward to support this view.³ We will provide a brief history of the idea and a brief outline of principles of interpretation, present the evidence, critically engage with it, and present our findings.

Brief Historical Background

The sixth-century Greek philosopher Pythagoras is acknowledged as the first person to contend that the earth is a globe.⁴ By the fourth century BC, a spherical Earth “became widely accepted among educated people.”⁵ How far this acceptance may have trickled down to the formally uneducated majority is uncertain. Aristotle (384–322 BC) provided evidence for the spherical shape of the earth on empirical grounds by around 330 BC. The Hellenistic world generally acknowledged that the earth was spherical in shape.⁶ Randall Younker and Richard Davidson study the primary and secondary sources related to the Babylonian, Greek and Jewish literature and conclude that none of these ancient peoples believed in a flat earth with a solid dome or vault.⁷

As history marched on, views about the shape of the earth were questioned. Daniel Boorin states, “A Europe-wide scholarly amnesia . . . afflicted the continent from AD 300 to at least 1300. During those centuries Christian faith and dogma suppressed the useful image of the world that had been so slowly, so painfully and so scrupulously drawn by ancient geographers.”⁸ However, in spite of this, the scholarly consensus is that during the high Middle Ages (twelfth to thirteenth century), “all educated people throughout Europe knew the earth’s spherical shape and its approximate circumference.”⁹

By the time of Columbus, his fellow sailors and even his critics understood that our world is a globe.¹⁰ This had been an established fact for centuries. The popular astronomy textbook *On the Sphere of the World*, published over 250 years before Columbus sailed, contends, “That the earth, too, is round is shown

thus. The . . . stars do not rise and set the same for all men everywhere but rise and set sooner for those in the east than for those in the west; and of this there is no other cause than the bulge of the Earth.”¹¹

The belief in a flat earth, however, gained serious momentum when the Flat Earth Society was established in the United States in 1956. In contemporary society, the “Flat Earth” movement has seen a recent resurgence, with Twitter and YouTube acting as incubators for this view.¹² More importantly, some Christians also believe the Bible teaches that the earth is flat because they interpret some passages of Scripture rather literally. It is to that concern that we now turn.

Principles of Interpretation

It is important to have sound principles of interpretation that emerge from Scripture itself. Here are some to consider for this study:

1. We must study the Bible in its literary context as well as in its ancient historical, religious, social and cultural context.

The Bible was not written with twenty-first-century concerns or questions in mind. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic to ancient peoples who lived in the wider Mediterranean society.

2. Since the Bible explains and interprets itself, difficult passages of Scripture must be studied in the light of clearer passages of Scripture.

The Bible is the self-revelation of God to humankind (2 Tim 3:16). In other words, without the Bible we would not know anything about God. The Bible explains itself in relation to every teaching.

3. God’s creation is the blueprint for our understanding of later passages that say anything about creation.

The biblical creation story declares the unrivalled might and incontrovertible power of God. God who is eternal, infinite, and supernatural created this world ex nihilo (Rom 4:17; Heb 11:3; Ps 90:2; Isa 44:24; 48:12–13; 45:18).¹³ Yet despite His eternity, God acts in a

temporal way—in human history—through sequential acts intended to bring about His purposes.¹⁴ According to Jacques Doukhan, “the importance of creation in the Bible can be seen through the extensive and numerous references within the Hebrew Scriptures” (Exod 15:8, 17; Isa 40–55; Jer 4:23–26; 31:35–57; Ps 29:2; 95:1–6; 139:13–14; 145:15; Dan 7–8; 12).¹⁵

4. We must determine what genre we are reading in the Bible.

The genre¹⁶ of Scripture is important to understand and derive the correct meaning from Scripture. If we misunderstand the genre of a passage, we can misinterpret that passage. This can help decide whether statements in Scripture should be taken literally or as figures of speech or symbolisms.

5. We must take a God-centred perspective when we interpret the Bible.

The Bible’s main (though not sole) concern is to reveal the character of the triune God. As the Bible unfolds, a distinct portrait of the Lord emerges. God remains greater than the portrait. We never learn all there is to know about God, but we do learn about God.¹⁷ This principle is important since God is the creator of the earth.

Evidence and Evaluation

The alleged biblical evidence presented for a flat earth is fourfold and includes 1) the firmament, 2) the waters and the heavens above, 3) the earth being immovable, and 4) specific texts that supposedly refer to a flat earth.¹⁸ The evidence is often simply posted on various web pages without any explanation. This article will present the evidence by placing similar ideas from different verses together, and by presenting accompanying assumptions as well as a biblical evaluation. The evaluation will draw from a range of scholarship to minimize bias.

Firmament/Vault Texts

- “And God said, ‘Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.’ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault ‘sky.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day” (Gen 1:6–8, 14).¹⁹
- “Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies” (Ps 148:4).
- “But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water” (2 Pet 3:5).
- “He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in” (Isa 40:22).

- Other verses that support the notion of the heavens like a tent or canopy include Psalms 104:2–3, 19:4–5, 18:16 and 2 Samuel 22:16.

The resulting assumption of misguided interpretations of these texts is that the earth has a dome, vault, or canopy surrounding it; there are waters above the skies; and there is a circle above the earth.

Biblical Evaluation

The Hebrew word *rāqiaʿ*, translated “firmament” or “vault,” means “expanse.” There are a number of scholars who articulate this view. Kenneth Mathews contends “that God created an expanse to create a boundary, giving structure to the upper and lower waters (Gen. 1:6–7). The expanse is the atmosphere that distinguishes the surface waters of the earth (i.e. the waters below) from the atmospheric waters or clouds (i.e. the waters above).”²⁰ The expanse is also the place where the sun and moon are placed (Gen 1:15, 17) and the birds fly (Gen 1:20). In a similar vein, Hugh Ross claims that the “expanse” in Genesis 1:6–8 refers to the troposphere and the “waters above” are water vapour. He contends that “God’s ‘separation’ of the water accurately describes the formation of the troposphere, the atmospheric layer just above the ocean where clouds form and humidity resides.”²¹ Younker and Davidson reach the same conclusion when they state that the water above the expanse in Genesis 1:7 refers to clouds.²²

Importantly, the term *rāqiaʿ* is given a name in Genesis 1:8—*šamayim* (“sky”).²³ The Hebrew word *šamayim* can be translated in English as “heaven” and as “sky.” But here the meaning “sky” is intended because of the context.²⁴ Later uses of the term *rāqiaʿ* in the Old Testament provide no suggestion that the sky is a solid dome.²⁵ It is argued by some that the Hebrews believed there were literal windows or doors in the firmament. But a careful study of Scripture can help us interpret Scripture. Psalm 78:23 can assist us in understanding Psalm 148:4 as it refers to “windows” and “heaven.” Psalm 78:23 reads, “Yet He commanded the clouds [*šēhāqīm*] above and opened the doors of heaven.” The term “the doors of heaven” is explicitly associated with clouds by means of poetic synonymous parallelism. Old Testament scholars Keil and Delitzsch acknowledge that in Hebrew thought “according to the Old Testament representation, whenever it rains heavily, the doors or windows of heaven are opened.”²⁶ Thus this term does not describe literal windows in heaven, but is used in a poetic, figurative way to express that it was heavily raining from the clouds. No wonder Van Gemeren states, matter of factly, that the waters above the heavens in Psalm 148:4 are various forms of precipitation.²⁷

In 2 Peter 3:5 Peter states that the heretics intentionally failed to remember that the heavens came into existence by the Word of God. Peter is alluding to Genesis 1:6–10 with the phrase “out of water and by water” (Gk. *ex hydatos kai di’ hydatos*). God separated the

water from the land, so the first part of the phrase “out of water” is straightforward. The phrase “and by water” is more difficult. It refers, in all likelihood, to the fact that the water was the means by which the earth appeared. In other words, as the water receded the earth appeared.²⁸

In relation to Isaiah 40:22, the word “circle” is the Hebrew word *hûg* (חוג). The same word is used to refer to both a circle and the horizon in Job 22:14 and Proverbs 8:27.²⁹ Other texts like Isaiah 66:1, 1 Kings 8:39, and Psalm 2:4 teach that God abides in the heavens (*hûg*).³⁰ For example, Isaiah 66:1 reads, “This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?” We must read all the Bible verses on a matter to discern the divine mind and learn what truth is. After consulting the other texts, we learn that *hûg*, which refers to the circle above the earth in Isaiah 40:22, also refers to the heavens as horizon in a range of other texts. Therefore, Psalms 104:2–3, 19:4–5, 18:16, and 2 Samuel 22:16 must be understood figuratively. Just as the sun is not a bridegroom coming out of his chamber (Ps 19:5), so there is no literal tent around the earth.

In sum, the cumulative evidence from our study of these four verses informs us that the Bible does not teach that the earth has a dome or vault around it. Rather, the Bible teaches that there is an expanse in which the clouds and the sun and moon are placed (Gen 1:15, 17) and the birds fly (Gen 1:20). There are no literal windows or doors in the expanse. Rather, the open windows or doors refer to raining, when the clouds “release” rain.

Foundation Texts

- “In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands” (Ps 102:25; see also 104:2; 93:1).
- “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S, and he hath set the world upon them” (1 Sam 2:8, KJV).
- “Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together (Isa 48:13; see also Zech 12:1).

The resulting assumption of misguided interpretations of these texts is that the earth has a foundation and therefore is flat, and that there are pillars upholding the earth.

Biblical Evaluation

The concept of “foundation” points to God’s establishment of the earth (Ps 78:69; 104:5; 119:90; 148:6).³¹ This becomes clearer when we see the parallelism in Psalm 78:69, which reads, “He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever.” It

refers “pictorially to the firmness and stability of God’s creation.”³² The notion of foundation or establishment refers, therefore, to God’s unchangeable control over everything, good and bad, and hence God’s uniqueness (Deut 32:39; Isa 41:4; 43:10; 48:12).³³ By carefully comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can move away from a literalistic reading of the idea of “foundation.”

The “pillars of the earth” are mentioned in 1 Samuel 2:8. This expression must also be understood in its wider biblical context, and not taken literally.³⁴ To help us better understand this verse, let us look at Job 26:7, which reads, “He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.” It would appear that these verses contradict each other: how can the earth rest on pillars and at the same time hang on nothing?

The context of each passage leads us to realize that the biblical authors are using figurative language when they speak about the “pillars of the earth.” Hannah speaks the words of 1 Samuel 2:8 during a prayer, after dedicating her son Samuel to the Lord. Job speaks the words of Job 26:7 while talking with his friends about man’s weakness in light of God’s supreme power. This sort of poetic imagery—namely, pillars and foundations—is commonly used in Scripture to describe how God upholds and maintains the world. Douglas Stuart and Gordon Fee remind us that wisdom literature, which is what Job and the Psalms are classified as, is often misunderstood because of the use of figurative language.³⁵

For example, consider what the Lord says to Job: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone?” (Job 38:4–6). The idea that the ancient Hebrews and Mesopotamians believed in a simplistic four-cornered earth has been disproven by the discovery of a Mesopotamian tablet showing that the four “corners” actually refer to the four cardinal directions within the circle of the earth.³⁶ In Isaiah 11:12 and Ezekiel 7:2, the two key Hebrew phrases that describe the corners of the earth literally speak about “four wings” (*kān·pōt*). It would be a mistake to assume that four literal ninety-degree angled corners are intended. When the ancient Hebrews wanted to describe an object with literal ninety-degree angled corners, such as the corners of a house, the corner of a street, or the corners of an altar, the common term employed was *pinnah* (“corner”). God uses the figurative language of foundations and a cornerstone to convey something about His person—He is the mighty Creator. In the same way, animals do not talk and laugh, yet God also tells Job that the horse “laughs at fear” (Job 39:22, ESV).

When we interpret Scripture, we strive to find the author’s intended meaning. Seeking to understand what genre of literature is being used is also very important. Just as we use figurative language today, so also the writers of Scripture often used figures of speech—

especially in the wisdom literature. The easier texts that introduced this section point to the foundation as God's establishment of the earth and must be used to interpret difficult texts like 1 Samuel 2:8.

Immovable Texts

- “And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day” (Josh 10:13).
- “Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved (1 Chr 16:30, KJV).

The resulting assumption of misguided interpretations of these texts is that the earth is immovable.

Biblical Evaluation

As with other biblical passages, we are concerned with finding the author's intention as we study the text—rather than reading our ideas and presuppositions into the text. Meaning is defined by the text. The principles outlined at the beginning of this article will help us engage in this task. The God-centred principle of Scripture means that we approach the text as believers. The text points to the activity of God—His divine, supernatural activity in history.

Joshua 10:13 is sometimes listed without explanation, to posit an earth-centred model of the universe. The text does not state that the sun is moving around the earth. Oftentimes Scripture portrays natural events from the perspective of the observer, but this does not mean that this perspective reflects every aspect of reality—it only tells us what we realize with our senses, without using other tools of investigation. The sun having stood still and the dial on the sun clock not moving does not necessarily mean that the sun circles around the earth. It seems as if the author of this text is not so much fixated on our contemporary concerns—the sun standing still or the moon stopping—but rather on the fact that God answered Joshua's prayer (Josh 10:14).³⁷ The lengthening of the day provided the extra time for Israelite soldiers to destroy their enemies. The miracle demonstrated the power of Yahweh over and against the Canaanite gods Baal and Ashtoreth. These sun and moon gods were subservient to Yahweh and His servant's command.³⁸

Our human perspective limits God's power and ability. We seek naturalistic explanations and scientific evidence. Job affirms that God's “wisdom is profound, his power vast. He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted” (Job 9:4, 10). The truth is we cannot use natural reason to explain Joshua 10:13–14. If we could, it would cease to be a miracle. We cannot explain how God performed the miracle of Joshua's long day any more than we can explain how Jesus called Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38–44) or walked on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 14:22–33). The inexplicable nature of these events is what makes them miracles.³⁹

Literal Flat Earth Texts

- “And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come” (Jer 49:36, KJV).
- “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel: “The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land!”” (Ezek 7:2).
- “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” (Rev 7:1; 20:8).

The resulting assumption of misguided interpretations of these texts is that the four corners of the earth indicate that the earth is flat.

Biblical Evaluation

The phrase “the four corners of the land” was a common phrase in the ancient world, just as the phrase “the four points of the compass” is today.⁴⁰ In regards to the phrase in Ezekiel 7:2, it simply refers to Israel (see Ezek 7:1). The phrase in Revelation 7:1 and Jeremiah 49:36 is a metaphorical expression that geographically refers to the whole earth. The Greek word for “corners” in Revelation 7:1 is *gonia*, which means “angle” or “division.” It is more closely related to the modern divisions known as quadrants. It does not imply any shape or form of the earth.⁴² James Holding notes that the Hebrew word most often translated “earth” in the Old Testament is *‘erets*, which is used to refer to the earth but also designates some specific nation or territory, like the “land of Havilah” (Gen 2:11), or it refers to a defined plot of land, like the one purchased by Abraham (Gen 23:15).⁴³ Moreover, those who believe in a flat earth claim that there are no verses in the Bible teaching that the earth is a round spinning ball orbiting the sun. The silence of the Bible does not prove or disprove this.

Conclusion

This article has examined the texts used by those who believe the earth is flat to support their claim. It has also examined the notion that there are pillars under the earth, that there is a vault or dome around the earth, and that the earth is immovable. After an examination of the biblical texts, it is our conclusion that the Bible does not teach that the earth is flat, or that it has a literal vault or dome, or that there are pillars under the earth. The claims for a “flat earth” are made more on presupposition than responsible exegesis. The internet sites that use these texts as evidence often provide no explanation for them. Further, and with all due respect to the bloggers who promote the “flat earth” view, they use these texts out of context, without a contextual reading. They take these texts literally, based on faulty

assumptions and with a predetermined outcome in mind. False assumptions lead to false conclusions; even if based on a range of texts, they will not lead to biblical truth. We cannot take texts, no matter how many, out of context to make an apologetic case for an idea or doctrine. This leads to faulty doctrine. Biblical truth must be grounded in the clear, consistent teaching of Scripture that takes seriously the historical, literary, cultural, and social context. Each text must be considered in its context. We must also consider the genre of the passage, as this determines how we read and make meaning from the text.

One of the assumptions that some make is that the ancient Hebrew people were indebted to other ancient peoples in Mesopotamia for their worldview, and therefore, texts that refer to a “flat earth,” a “dome/vault around the earth,” and “pillars” holding up the earth reflect ancient Hebrew views as well. Based on our study, this view is untenable. Herman Bavinck contends that “the creation stories in Genesis and that of Babylon are very different on all points.”⁴⁴ Gordon Wenham declares that “though Genesis shares many of the theological presuppositions of the ancient world, most of the stories found in these chapters are best read as presenting an alternative world-view to those generally accepted in the ancient Near East.”⁴⁵

Moses, therefore, conveys an alternative worldview based on God’s revelation, which at several points is at odds with the ancient worldview of the ancient Near East.⁴⁶ For example, humans are an afterthought in ancient Near Eastern texts, while in Scripture humans are the pinnacle of God’s creative power.⁴⁷ The ancient Hebrew culture was not superior to other cultures; rather, Yahweh simply chose to reveal Himself to this people to be a light to the surrounding nations (Gen 12:1–3).

Truth is grounded in a deeper revelation of God and His great redeeming love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8). A God-centred contextual reading of Scripture actually points to God’s indescribable power and sovereign control of the earth. The creation event and what is described there provides a framework for our appropriation of later texts (Job 38:8–11; Ps 104:5–9).⁴⁸ For Israel, and for us, the God of creation is the God of the journey of life with all its joys and perplexities. In the ancient world there was no divide between the supernatural and the natural. God was actively involved in every minute detail of the world. That is something we need in our contemporary world.⁴⁹

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¹ Christine Garwood, *Flat Earth: The History of an Infamous Idea* (London: Macmillan, 2007) and Eric Dubay, *The Flat-Earth Conspiracy* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2008).

² For some samples of how flat-earth representatives conceive the shape of the earth, see “Maps,” The Flat Earth Society, <https://theflatearthsociety.org/home/index.php/featured/maps> (accessed December 16, 2019).

³ The flat earth theory is often promoted by a very literalistic interpretation of certain biblical passages. For some resources that try to respond to the flat earth theory on a scientific level, see Robert Carter and Jonathan Sarfati, “A Flat Earth, and Other Nonsense,” Creation Ministries International, last modified December 26, 2019, <https://creation.com/refuting-flat-earth> (accessed December 16, 2019) and Nikk Effingham, “How to Reason with Flat Earthers (It May Not Help Though),” April 25, 2018, The Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/how-to-reason-with-flat-earthers-it-may-not-help-though-95160> (accessed December 16, 2019).

⁴ Garwood, *Flat Earth*, 19–20.

⁵ Ibid. See also Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages: Their Religious, Institutional and Intellectual Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200–1687* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Grant, *Physical Sciences in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Grant, *Science and Religion, 400 B.C. to A.D. 1550: From Aristotle to Copernicus* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); and Grant, *A History of Natural Philosophy from the Ancient World to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁶ See “Greek Evidence for the Earth’s Shape and Spin,” Institute of Physics, <http://practicalphysics.org/greek-evidence-earths-shape-and-spin.html> (accessed March 12, 2018).

⁷ Randall W. Younker and Richard M. Davidson, “The Myth of the Solid Heavenly Dome: Another Look at the Hebrew רָאָיָה (rāqīa’).” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 49, no. 1 (2011): 1–25.

⁸ Daniel Boorin, *The Discoverers* (New York: Random House, 1983), 100–101.

⁹ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth: Columbus and the Modern Historians* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 2; David Lindberg, *Science in the Middle Ages*, *The Chicago History of Science and Medicine* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press Books, 1980). According to Stephen Jay Gould, “The Late Birth of a Flat Earth,” in *Dinosaur in a Haystack: Reflections in Natural History* (New York: Three Rivers, 1997), 38–50, “there never was a period of ‘flat Earth darkness’ among scholars (regardless of how the public at large may have conceptualized our planet both then and now). Greek knowledge of sphericity never faded, and all major medieval scholars accepted the Earth’s roundness as an established fact of cosmology.” Historians of science David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, “Beyond War and Peace: A Reappraisal of the Encounter between Christianity and Science,” *Church History* 55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 338–354, point out that “there was scarcely a Christian scholar of the Middle Ages who did not acknowledge [Earth’s] sphericity and even know its approximate circumference.” The depiction of the earth as a globe can also be seen in the Globus Cruciger (the cross-bearing orb) that depicts the earth as a globus. As early as AD 215, a coin with the Roman Antoninianus Carinus shows him holding pilum

and globe in his hands. Similar depictions are well known from other Roman and European emperors. See the images in “Globus Cruciger,” Wikimedia Commons, last updated September 21, 2019, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Globus_cruciger (accessed December 17, 2019) and “Globus Cruciger,” <https://www.ancient-symbols.com/symbols-directory/globus-cruciger.html> (accessed December 17, 2019).

¹⁰ Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth*, 4-6, 15-17.

¹¹ Johannes de Sacrobosco, *Tractatus de Sphaera* (“*On the Sphere of the World*”), trans. Lynn Thorndike, (ca. early thirteenth century; translation published 1949), <http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/sphere.htm> (accessed July 1, 2019).

¹² See Matthew Dunn, “The Flat Earth Theory Has Seen a Resurgence, with People Trying to Prove Our Planet is Not a Sphere,” *News.com.au*, June 1, 2017, <http://www.news.com.au/technology/science/space/the-flat-earth-theory-has-seen-a-resurgence-with-people-trying-to-prove-our-planet-is-not-a-sphere/news-story/0bd1226fbc819ec12733591e8c9> (accessed March 1, 2018).

¹³ See the discussion in Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Creation, Christ, Salvation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012), 33–38.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xxi, 6.

¹⁵ Jacques B. Doukhan, *Genesis*, Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary (Hagerstown, MD: Pacific Press, 2016), 39.

¹⁶ A genre is a literary type distinguished by its content, particular style, or compositional form of writing. The subject matter, structure, and style are taken into account when identifying genre. Genre is important to understand the communicative nature of texts and helps the reader understand the text’s particular intentionality.

¹⁷ See Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, (Waco, TX: Word, 1976), 2:9.

¹⁸ See “Religious References,” Flat Earth Society, <https://theflatearthsociety.org/home/index.php/featured/religious-references> (accessed December 17, 2019).

¹⁹ All biblical quotations are from the NKJV, unless otherwise indicated.

²⁰ Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 150. See also Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 62.

²¹ Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question: Scientific Advances and the Accuracy of Genesis* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998), 34, 199, 201. See also Ross, *The Fingerprint of God* (Orange: Promise Publishing, 1989), 165–8; Ross, *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004), 236; John L. Wiester, *The Genesis Connection* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 202; Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution: Rethinking the Evidence from Science and the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1985), 179–81; and H. Donald Daae, *Bridging the Gap: The First Six Days* (Calgary: Genesis International Research, 1988), 56–68.

²² Younker and Davidson, “Myth of the Solid Heavenly Dome,” 1–25.

²³ John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” in *Expositor’s Bible Dictionary: Revised Edition*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 1:59. The Hebrew *šamayim* has a plural form.

²⁴ Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 150.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: The Pentateuch*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1:53–54. See further Younker and Davidson, “Myth of the Solid Heavenly Dome,” 22.

²⁷ William A. VanGemen, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 872.

²⁸ Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2006), 270.

²⁹ Francis D. Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976), 4:247.

³⁰ Shalom M. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 149.

³¹ VanGemen, “Psalms,” 649. In the New Testament, the expression “from the foundation of the earth” refers just to the time from the creation of the earth (Matt 13:15; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Rev 13:8; 17:8). The same is true for “before the foundation” (John 17:24; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:20) and for “since the foundation . . .” (Heb 9:26).

³² Ronald F. Youngblood, “1 & 2 Samuel,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 581.

³³ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 286–87.

³⁴ Ralph Klein, *1 Samuel*, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, 2008), 10:18.

³⁵ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 226.

³⁶ See the depiction of the tablet *BagM. Beih 2 no. 98* and the discussion of its meaning in Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 195–206.

³⁷ Various proposals have been put forward to explain this passage. For a brief overview, see the discussion in Gleason L. Archer, *The New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 161–162 and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter H. Davids, and Manfred T. Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 186–188.

³⁸ Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 2:226.

³⁹ Michael Youseff, *Joshua: Leading the Way Through* (Eugene, OR: Harvest, 2013), 150.

⁴⁰ Joan S. Morton, *Science in the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1978), 138, 141. See further Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 254.

⁴¹ See Logos Bible App, Revelation 7:1 (Accessed December 18, 2019).

⁴² Louis A. Brighton, *Revelation*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1999), 181.

⁴³ J. Holding, “The Legendary Flat-Earth Bible,” *Christian Research Journal* 36, no. 3 (2013): 1-5.

⁴⁴ Herman Bavink, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 477.

⁴⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 1:xlvi.

⁴⁶ Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 46 (1974): 81–102.

⁴⁷ Gulley, *Systematic Theology*, 17.

⁴⁸ See further Gerald A. Klingbeil, ed., *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015).

⁴⁹ John H. Walton, *Job*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 191.