

# FAQ VOL II

A WORK IN PROGRESS

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**MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS**

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# Frequently Asked Questions

VOLUME II

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***Frequently Asked Questions, Volume II is a multi-year work in progress. Please note how the text may be corrected, updated, or amended, before final publication. Page numbers are also likely to be altered.***

# Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*  
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*  
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)  
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament  
Ara: Aramaic  
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)  
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)  
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)  
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.  
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)  
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*  
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.  
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)  
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)  
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)  
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)  
CJSB: Complete Jewish Study Bible (2016)  
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition  
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls  
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*  
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*  
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)  
Ger: German  
GNT: Greek New Testament  
Grk: Greek  
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)  
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)  
Heb: Hebrew  
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible  
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*  
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*  
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*  
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*  
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)  
JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)  
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*  
KJV: King James Version  
Lattimore: *The New Testament* by Richmond Lattimore (1996)  
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)  
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)  
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)  
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)  
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)  
LXX: Septuagint  
m. Mishnah  
MT: Masoretic Text  
NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)  
NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)  
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*  
NEB: New English Bible (1970)  
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*  
NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)  
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*  
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*  
NIV: New International Version (1984)  
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)  
NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)  
NKJV: New King James Version (1982)  
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)  
NLT: New Living Translation (1996)  
NT: New Testament

OT: Old Testament

REB: Revised English Bible (1989)

RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)

t. Tosefta

Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament

Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TLV: Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life

Version (2014)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New  
Testament revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and  
New Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

WMB: World Messianic Bible (2020)

# Flat Earth

## What is the Flat Earth theory and how badly has it affected the thinking of some of today's Messianic people?

Most reasonable and sane people who hear that there are those in their midst who believe that Planet Earth is a flat disk, are not only shocked, but also horrified, that such things are circulating in the Twenty-First Century.<sup>1</sup> Is it not true that Christopher Columbus proved that the world was round over five centuries ago? Is it not also true that there were various philosophers and mathematicians from classical antiquity, who speculated that the world was round? How could it possibly be that there is a movement promoting a Flat Earth? *Are these people stupid?*

In total fairness, it needs to be recognized that the Flat Earth movement is not a product of the fringes of the Hebrew Roots movement, although that is surely a venue where it has found many adherents. The Flat Earth movement is mainly a part of the Christian Truther movement, and hence is associated with many different conspiracies. There have been a sufficient number of evangelical refutations of Flat Earth, as well as more secular evaluations of it. Netflix, for example, has a documentary entitled “Behind the Curve” among its programs.

Why have there been various people—perhaps even some you know— influenced by the Flat Earth movement? In short, the Flat Earth theory tends to be presented in terms of the Bible being *absolutely true*. Those who do not accept the Flat Earth theory, do not truly believe in the Bible, and are either compromised at best, or more likely have been influenced by modern Luciferian science. Supporters of Flat Earth are convinced that their perspective is the only viable one. Opponents of Flat Earth would conclude that believing that Planet Earth is flat disk only comes from a hyper-literal reading of Scripture, and from those who haphazardly and irresponsibly dismiss all modern science as though it is from the Devil.

**Isaiah 40:22** says that our Creator “sits above the circle of the earth” (NASU) or “the vault of the earth” (NJPS). Does this require Planet Earth to be a flat disk? Or does it speak to the circular and/or spherical nature of Planet Earth? Be aware that supporters of Flat Earth believe that any scientific discovery of our planet as a sphere that revolves around the Sun has been completely fabricated by servants of Satan. Those who believe that modern science is trustworthy, at least in broad strokes, certainly believe that Isaiah 40:22 is compatible with

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<sup>1</sup> This material was employed for the Blogcast installment from 13 May 2019, “Flat Earth,” accessible via <youtube.com/MessianicApologetics>.

the idea of a spherical Planet Earth.

**Ecclesiastes 1:5** says that “the sun rises and the sun sets” (NASU); **Psalm 19:6** says that “Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them” (NASU). Supporters of the Flat Earth theory conclude that this is Biblical proof that the Sun and Moon are small objects that move above the flat disk of Planet Earth. Based on modern scientific discovery, from at least the past five centuries, those who conclude that our planet is spherical, will note that the Biblical authors are writing from their observable perspective as standing on the ground. Communicating from a terrestrial vantage point, humans see the Sun and the Moon rising, although from an astronomical perspective, the sphere of our planet is, in fact, rotating around the Sun, with the Moon rotating around the Earth. Many misunderstandings of Scripture can take place, not just from us misunderstanding the viewpoints of the ancients, who lacked some of our modern scientific equipment—but most especially when we fail to take into consideration how they viewed the world around them.

**Isaiah 41:9** has God speaking of taking Israel “from the ends of the earth...from its remotest parts” (NASU); **Daniel 4:11** talks of how “The tree grew large and became strong and its height reached to the sky, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth” (NASU); Yeshua said in **Matthew 12:42** “The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon” (NASU). Supporters of the Flat Earth theory believe that the continent of Antarctica is actually an ice wall which encircles the disk of our planet. Rather than seeing “ends of the Earth” as being a metaphor indicative of a far away place, Flat Earth proponents actually do see “ends of the Earth” as being a termination point at the extreme ends of the flat disk of our planet. Those opposed to a Flat Earth, accepting the Earth as a sphere as observable by modern science, would take this as definite proof of a Flat Earther’s hyper-literal and irresponsible approach to Scripture.

**1 Chronicles 16:30** says that “the world is firmly established, it will not be moved” (NASU); **Psalm 104:5** says that God “established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever” (NASU). To the Flat Earther, who believes that our planet is a disk, it is clear that our planet cannot possibly be a sphere which rotates in any direction. Opponents of Flat Earth, obviously supporting modern astronomy and cosmology, would conclude that these statements are poetic about God’s sovereignty over Planet Earth and the constancy that He has instilled in His Creation. Our planet is not just moving about to and fro in the cosmos, but it has a set orbit around the star Sol, and internal geological coherence with a mantle, outer core, and inner core.

Finally, God asks in **Job 38:4** “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” (NASU), and in **Psalm 75:3** “It is I who have firmly set its pillars” (NASU). Once again, to the Flat Earther, there is only one correct way to interpret these statements: the flat disk of our planet sits on top of literal stone pillars. The Flat Earther cannot possibly interpret “foundation of the earth” or “pillars” in any other way. Those who recognize our planet as a sphere, would obviously have a more flexible approach to “laid the foundation of the earth”

or “pillars,” mainly as it would be representative of the different processes of how our planet was geologically formed, and how it functions in a unique way in order to sustain human civilization. That a “foundation” of a cosmic object can represent the physical laws or constructs by which it functions, should be clear enough, in how 2 Samuel 22:8 describes “The foundations of heaven were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry” (NASU). Heaven, composing the sky or space beyond, is not a geological construct as Earth, but is instead an open expanse. For Heaven or Space to have foundations, means that it has certain physical laws or constructs which govern it—but in being shaken ultimately are subject to its Creator, God.

Flat Earth has become a major conspiracy theory, which many have addressed the fallacies of over the past several years. Flat Earth supporters dismiss all of the claims of modern science, particularly disciplines such as astronomy, cosmology, and geology—which all point to a spherical Planet Earth which revolves around the Sun. If someone has been convinced of the Flat Earth theory, and that *all modern science* has originated with Satan the Dark Lord, then there will almost always be no reasoning with such confused and ignorant people.

It is absolutely true that in the Middle Ages, many Christians believed in a Flat Earth. It is also true that during the Protestant Reformation, many Christians believed in a Flat Earth. Even as late as the Eighteenth Century, there were Christians who while accepting a spherical Earth, denied that the Earth revolved around the Sun, a heliocentric solar system, but instead believed in a geocentric solar system where the Sun revolved around the Earth. *Flat Earth is not a salvation issue.* But what Flat Earth is, is that it is **a severe credibility issue for the worldwide Body of Messiah**, and is a severe embarrassment. People who support Flat Earth, should never be caught leading a small group Bible study, much less leading a local assembly. This issue was resolved in the Fifteenth Century, and it is obscenely ridiculous that we even have to discuss it today! It goes beyond the pale of “Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings” (Hebrews 13:9, NASU).

Why has the Flat Earth theory found some support in off-to-the-side places of the Messianic movement—and certainly the Hebrew Roots movement? It is because this broad sector of people, for better or worse, does tend to attract a lot of “Truth seekers.” If you attend a major Messianic conference today, it is an unfortunate reality that there are going to be some individuals who have been exposed to, and are considering, the Flat Earth theory.

While none of today’s mainline Messianic leaders and teachers believe in the Flat Earth theory, looking to the future, this issue should serve as an appropriate prompt for us to be recognizing that there are discussions regarding God’s Creation, our planet, the human race, and the wider universe, that today’s Messianic movement has tended to avoid. If the Flat Earth theory is certainly going to be talked about here or there, then it behooves us to be familiar with all the different perspectives and approaches witnessed in contemporary theology to Genesis chs. 1-11. We can use the presence of the Flat Earth theory as an opportunity to refine our theological skills and engagement level with the different models of

Creationism, Theistic Evolution, and Intelligent Design which circulate in Biblical Studies today. At this point at the close of the 2010s, it would be naïve of any of us to conclude that there is one-hundred percent agreement among Messianic people on these issues. *Flat Earth has proved this!*