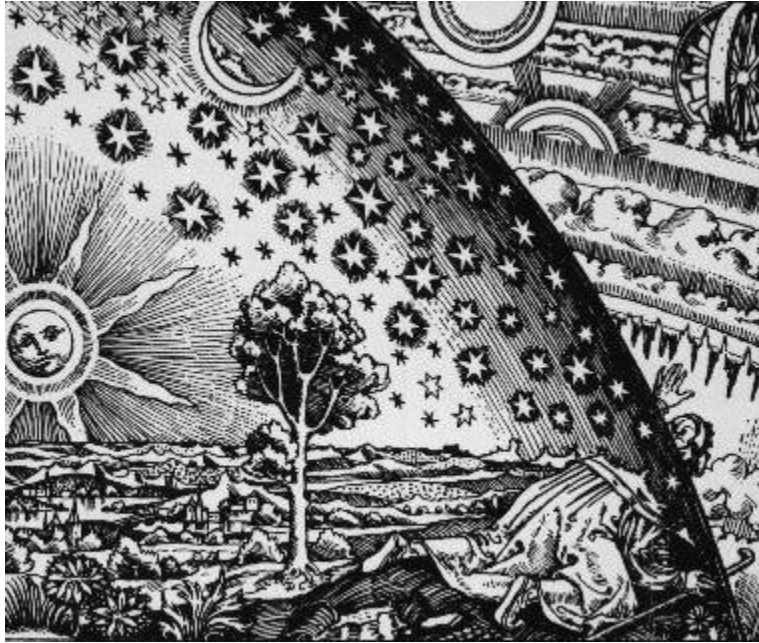


The Bible's flat earth/solid sky dome universe



This was how the universe appeared to the ancient Israelites who authored the Bible and to most everyone else in ancient times. The earth appeared to be flat and circular sitting on pillars with a rotating solid sky dome overhead which carried the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars and allowed water to leak through "windows of heaven" or sluice gates to form clouds and rain. God was imagined to live on top of the dome and walk on it.

The Hebrew word "shamayim" is translated as both sky and heaven. To the ancient Hebrews they meant exactly the same thing. God lived in and on the sky dome with the Sun, the Moon, and the rest of the "host of heaven"(the stars).

The Bible's flat earth

In the Bible the earth is a round flat object with ends and which is immovable and set on pillars.

Here God is imagined to draw a circle on the face of the waters to make the earth.

(Prov 8:26-27 NRSV) when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

A circle is of course a flat round object. Some would say that the ancient Hebrews had no word for sphere so they used circle, but that is not true. There is a Hebrew word for ball used in the bible. A flat round earth was intuitive to these primitive people. If you picture yourself in their place, it would not be too hard to imagine the earth as being round and flat as you turn around to trace the outline of the horizon where the sky seems to meet the earth.

Here God is imagined to sit above the circle of the earth looking down on it's inhabitants who are small like grasshoppers.

(Isa 40:22 NRSV) 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 like a tent to live in;

Again a circle is a flat two dimensional object and there was a Hebrew word for ball which would have been more appropriate if the author would have been aware of the earth's spherical nature.

Here the author of Daniel writes of a dream of Nebuchadnezzar where a tree grows at the "center" of the earth. Assuming that the tree grew on the surface, this is most certainly the center of a flat earth as a spherical earth would have no center on it's surface. Also notice that the tree grew so tall it's top reached heaven and was visible to the "ends of the earth". So these verses indicate that Nebuchadnezzar and the author of Daniel pictured a flat earth as everyone else did in their time.

(Dan 4:10-11 NRSV) Upon my bed this is what I saw; there was a tree at the center of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew great and strong, its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the ends of the whole earth.

Here it is possible that this gospel author still imagined a flat earth as Jesus is able to see all the kingdoms of the world from a high mountain. This would not be possible on a spherical earth.

(Mat 4:8 NRSV) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor;

Here the author of Job imagines that God could take the edges of the earth and shake the wicked out of it.

(Job 38:13 NIV) that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?

Here the author of Job is saying something is longer than the earth. A flat earth with ends could be compared for length, but longer has no meaning for a spherical earth.

(Job 11:9 NRSV) Its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

One end of a flat earth to the other end of a flat earth is mentioned here (a spherical earth had no ends).

(Deu 13:7 NRSV) any of the gods of the peoples that are around you, whether near you or far away from you, from one end of the earth to the other,

Again, some would say that the ends of the earth is not be taken literally and that would be true today, but the phrase is leftover from when people used to really believe the earth had ends, which was the case for the ancient Hebrews and most everyone else at that time.

Here is a few more verses that mention the ends of the earth

Deu 28:49, Deu 28:64, Deu 33:17, 1 Sam 2:10, Job 1:7, Job 28:24, Job 37:3, Psa 2:8, Psa 19:4, Psa 22:27, Psa 33:13, Psa 33:14, Psa 48:10, Psa 59:13, Psa 61:2, Psa 65:5, Psa 72:8

The Bible's immovable earth set on pillars

Here the earth is imagined to be set on pillars and immovable.

(Psa 93:1 NRSV) ... He has established the world; it shall never be moved;

(1 Sam 2:8 NRSV) For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world.

(Isa 24:18 NRSV) or the windows of heaven are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.

The Bible's solid sky dome

Here God is imagined to create a solid sky dome that separates the waters into two parts. One would become the oceans and the other would remain above the solid sky dome to provide an explanation of where water came from to cause clouds and rain in the absence of the knowledge of evaporation.

(Gen 1:6-7 NRSV) And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so.

Here is another verse which mentions the water above the sky dome.

(Psa 148:4 NRSV) Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

Here celestial bodies are attached to this sky dome.

(Gen 1:14-17 NRSV) And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,

Notice that the lights, the Sun, the Moon, and the stars are set inside the sky dome.

Here it is mentioned that the sky dome is hard.

(Job 37:18 NRSV) Can you, like him, spread out the skies, hard as a molten mirror?

(Prov 8:28 NRSV) when he made firm the skies above, ...

God is imagined to walk on top of the sky dome.

(Job 22:14 NRSV) Thick clouds enwrap him, so that he does not see, and he walks on the dome of heaven.'

The sky is imagined as something that has to open to let things pass through it

Here notice that heaven has to be "opened" for things to pass through, things in and above heaven to be seen, and for rainwater to come through. One would think that would not be necessary unless the sky was imagined to be solid. Some would say that this was not taken literally, but the sky was imagined to be solid in most cultures for over 1500 years after the last books of the bible were written.

(John 1:51 NRSV) And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

(Acts 10:11 NRSV) He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners.

(Acts 7:56 NRSV) "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

(Mat 3:16-17 NRSV) And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

(2 Chr 6:26 NRSV) "When heaven (same Hebrew word as sky) is shut up and there is no rain because...

(Psa 78:23 NRSV) Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven (same Hebrew word as sky);

(Mal 3:10 NRSV) Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. (talking about rain for crops)

(Rev 11:6 NRSV) They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying,

(Gen 7:11-12 NRSV) In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

Joshua commands the Sun to stand still in the sky

Here Joshua was imagined to have commanded the Sun and the Moon to stand still over particular geographic locations like a helicopter could be imagined to hover over a particular mountain or valley as if the Sun and the Moon were only a few miles high instead of 93 million (Sun) and 1/4 million (Moon) miles away. To the author the Sun and the Moon were attached to a rotating solid sky dome, just a few miles above his head.

(Josh 10:12-13 NRSV) On the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua spoke to the LORD; and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and Moon, in the valley of Aijalon."

And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in midheaven, and did not hurry to set for about a whole day.

Jesus probably saw the universe the same way everyone else did in his day

Here it is indicated that Jesus himself pictured the stars as objects that could fall to the earth which would seem reasonable if he pictured the stars as little lights attached to a solid sky dome just a few miles up like everyone else in his day. .

Instead, stars are objects typically millions of times larger than the earth and unimaginably distant.

(Mark 13:24-25 NRSV) "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.