

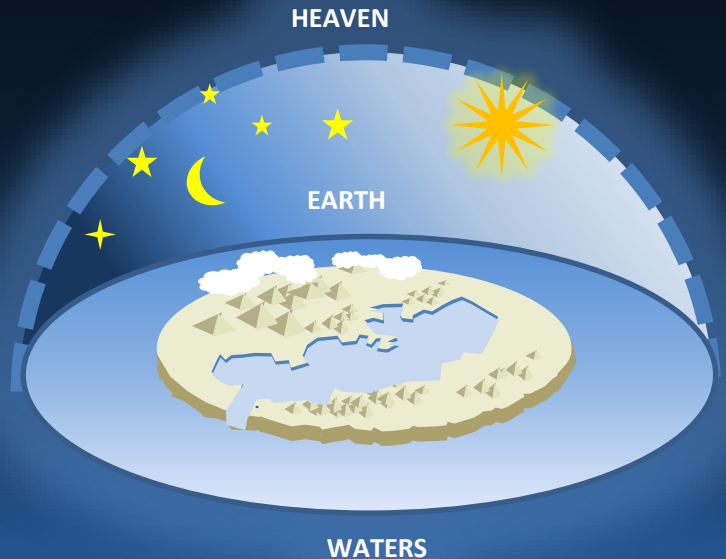


THE FLAT EARTH

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A Flat Earth on Water

The Babylonia universe was a three tier structure with a flat earth floating on waters under the heaven.



Egyptian flat Earth

In ancient Egyptian mythology, the god of earth is called Geb. He was often found lying on a flat ground beneath his mother Nut, shown here as the striding female decorated with stars. His posture symbolised the hills and valley of the land. In between is his father Sho who provided extra support to the sky.

When Nut was separated from Geb, he wept bitterly and his tears became the water of the oceans of the world.



Flat Earth

In the creation account of the Old Testament, God created the Earth on the third day.

Similar to the Babylonians, the Israelites believed that the earth He created was in the shape of a flat disc. Therefore if one was to venture far enough, they would eventually reach the 'ends or edges of the earth'.

At the ends or edges of the earth



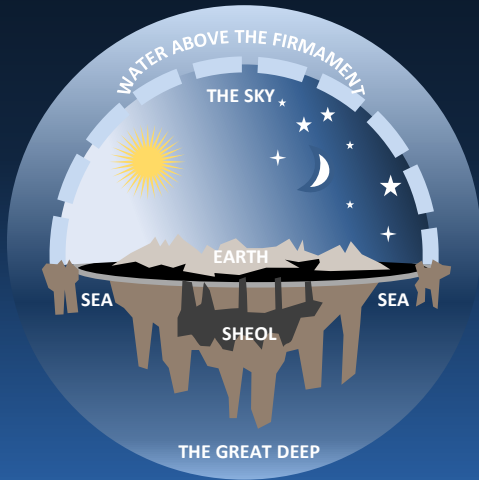
Earth was flat and round

The Biblical prophet Daniel took the flat earth concept for granted. He said in Daniel 4:10, 11 that "there was a tree in the midst (or centre) of the earth, and its height was great. . . it reached to the sky, and was visible to the end of the whole earth". To be visible throughout the earth, the earth needed to be flat.



Earth was flat and circular

The earth was not only flat, but also circular. In a verse of Isaiah, "He who sits above the circle of the earth" (Isaiah 40:22).



Traveller coming to the edge of the universe may risk falling over.

Flat earth in New Testament

The New Testament also implied a flat earth.

For instance, Matthew 4:8 says that "The devil took him [Jesus] to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory."

If one could see all of the kingdoms of the world from a sufficiently high mountain, it would only mean that the earth was flat.

There are also many other verses of similar implications. The Bible is, from Genesis to Revelation, a flat-earth book.



Homer

To the great Greek poet Homer (c. 8th century BC) thought that the sky was a metal hemisphere covering a round, flat, disc-like earth, surrounded by water like an island. He chanted:

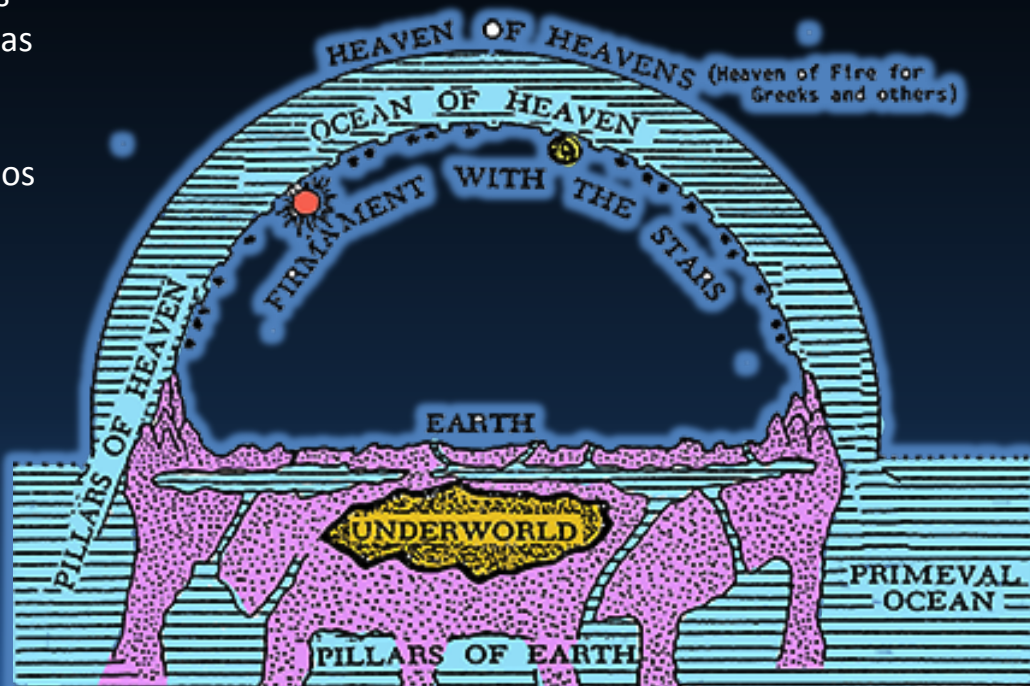
"Poseidon, the world-circler. . . We had attained the ends of the earth and its encircling river of Ocean . . . Here an endless night is spread over its melancholy people"

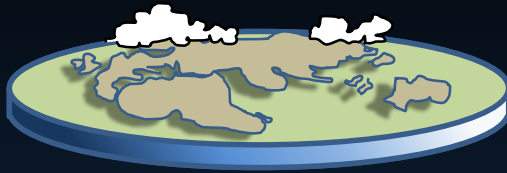
The Odyssey; Homer Cir. 800 BC.



The Flat Earth

So the earliest views in ancient Greece was a flat or cylindrical earth located in a hemispherical cosmos that surrounded or enveloped it.





THE SPHERICAL EARTH

Moon eclipse



However, some other Greeks after Homer began to suspect that the Earth was a sphere instead of a plate, because during a lunar eclipse, they could see the round shape of the Earth's shadow imprinted on the Moon.



Disappearing ships

The legendary philosopher Pythagoras (about 560-480 BC.), accepted the round earth view based on two reasons:

(i) The circle and sphere were the most perfect of geometric shapes. They were appropriate for the earth and the cosmos as the earth and the cosmos were the most important of objects;

(ii) He could see that a ship disappeared first and then its mast as the vessel receded beyond the horizon.



A spherical universe

Thus the view that the earth was a sphere became widely accepted.

Since the universe is a space enclosing the earth, itself too was also fully spherical.





To be continued in Part 3

CENTRE OF UNIVERSE