

# Summary

Sunday, January 30, 2022 10:22 AM

The **flat Earth** model is an archaic and scientifically disproven conception of [Earth's shape](#) as a [plane](#) or [disk](#). Many ancient cultures subscribed to a flat Earth [cosmography](#), including [Greece](#) until the [classical period](#) (323 BC), the [Bronze Age](#) and [Iron Age](#) civilizations of the [Near East](#) until the [Hellenistic period](#) (31 BC), and China until the 17th century. The idea of a [spherical Earth](#) appeared in [ancient Greek philosophy](#) with [Pythagoras](#) (6th century BC), although most [pre-Socratics](#) (6th–5th century BC) retained the flat Earth model. In the early 4th century BC [Plato](#) wrote about a spherical Earth, and by about 330 BC his former student, [Aristotle](#), had provided strong [empirical evidence](#) for this. Knowledge of the Earth's global shape then gradually began to spread beyond the [Hellenistic world](#).<sup>[a][2][3][4]</sup> Despite the [scientific fact](#) of [Earth's sphericity](#), [pseudoscientific](#)<sup>[a]</sup> flat Earth [conspiracy theories](#) are espoused by [modern flat Earth societies](#) and, increasingly, by unaffiliated individuals using [social media](#).

From <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat\\_Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_Earth)>

Modern flat Earth belief originated with the English writer [Samuel Rowbotham](#) (1816–1884). Based on conclusions derived from the [Bedford Level experiment](#), Rowbotham published a [pamphlet](#) titled *Zetetic Astronomy*. He later expanded this into the book *Earth Not a Globe*, proposing the Earth is a flat disc centred at the North Pole and bounded along its southern edge by a wall of ice, [Antarctica](#). Rowbotham further held that the [Sun](#) and [Moon](#) were 3,000 miles (4,800 km) above Earth and that the "cosmos" was 3,100 miles (5,000 km) above the Earth.<sup>[a]</sup> He also published a leaflet titled *The Inconsistency of Modern Astronomy and its Opposition to the Scriptures*, which argued that the "[Bible](#)", alongside our senses, supported the idea that the earth was flat and immovable and this essential truth should not be set aside for a system based solely on human conjecture".<sup>[a]</sup>

Rowbotham and followers like [William Carpenter](#) gained attention by successful use of [pseudoscience](#) in public debates with leading scientists such as [Alfred Russel Wallace](#).<sup>[a][2][3][4]</sup> Rowbotham created a Zetetic Society in England and New York, shipping over a thousand copies of *Zetetic Astronomy*.<sup>[a]</sup> After Rowbotham's death, [Lady Elizabeth Blount](#) established a Universal Zetetic Society, whose objective was "the propagation of knowledge related to Natural [Cosmogony](#) in confirmation of the Holy Scriptures, based on practical scientific investigation". The society published a magazine, *The Earth Not a Globe Review*, and remained active well into the early 20th century.<sup>[a]</sup> A flat Earth journal, *Earth: a Monthly Magazine of Sense and Science*, was published between 1901 and 1904, edited by Lady Blount.<sup>[a]</sup>

From <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern\\_flat\\_Earth\\_beliefs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_flat_Earth_beliefs)>



Flat Earth map drawn by [Orlando Ferguson](#) in 1893. The map contains several references to biblical passages as well as various jabs at the "Globe Theory".

From <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat\\_Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_Earth)>

## WHO ARE FLAT-EARTHERS?

As the Flat Earth Society/Flat Earth International Conference schism reveals, flat-earththers are not a monolithic group. The current president of the Flat Earth Society, Daniel Shenton, is a Londoner who now lives in Hong Kong. Robbie Davidson, who organizes the annual Flat Earth International Conferences, is a Canadian who espouses a Biblical worldview and opposes what he calls "scientism."

A 2017 national poll by [Public Policy Polling](#) found that only 1% of Americans believed the Earth was flat, with an additional 6% saying they weren't sure. There was very little evidence of differences in this belief by political affiliation, with any differences between Trump voters, Clinton voters and third-party voters falling within the poll's margin of error of 3.2%.

A 2018 article in the [Colorado Sun](#) on a flat Earth convention in Denver found that many attendees believed a whole suite of conspiracy theories, such as that all politicians are actors and that powerful shadowy forces control the world.

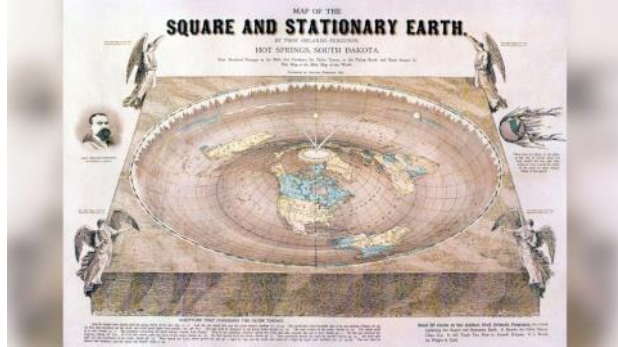
Flat-earththers occasionally get a boost from celebrity believers. For instance, on Jan. 25, 2016, rapper-singer Bobby Ray Simmons Jr. (known as B.o.B) released a track called "Flatline" in which he disses astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, after the two had a Twitter battle over the spherical-ness of the planet. [B.o.B is convinced Earth is flat](#). A day earlier, the rapper tweeted: "No matter how high in elevation you are... the horizon is always eye level ... sorry cadets... I didn't wanna believe it either." In 2018, NBA player Kyrie Irving had to apologize after causing a media controversy by speculating that the Earth was flat on a 2017 podcast.

From <<https://www.livescience.com/24310-flat-earth-belief.html>>

# Theories

Saturday, February 12, 2022 9:01 PM

## FLAT EARTH MAP



This flat Earth map drawn by Orlando Ferguson in 1893 is also considered the Bible Map of the World. (Image credit: CalimaX / Alamy)

The leading flat-earth theory holds that Earth is a disc with the [Arctic Circle](#) in the center and [Antarctica](#), a 150-foot-tall (45 meters) wall of ice, around the rim. NASA employees, they say, guard this ice wall to prevent people from climbing over and falling off the disc. (In keeping with their skepticism of NASA, known flat-earther conspiracy theorist Nathan Thompson approached a man he said was a NASA employee in a Starbucks in mid-May 2017. In a [YouTube video of the exchange](#), Thompson, founder of the Official Flat Earth and Globe Discussion page, shouted that he had proof the Earth is flat — apparently saying an astronaut drowning was that proof — and that NASA is "lying.")

Furthermore, Earth's [gravity](#) is an illusion, they say. Objects do not accelerate downward; instead, the disc of Earth accelerates upward at 32 feet per second squared (9.8 meters per second squared), driven up by a mysterious force called dark energy. Currently, there is disagreement among flat-earthers about whether or not [Einstein's theory of relativity](#) permits Earth to accelerate upward indefinitely without the planet eventually surpassing the speed of light. (Einstein's laws apparently still hold in this alternate version of reality.) As for what lies underneath the disc of Earth, this is unknown, but most flat-earthers believe it is composed of "rocks."

It's worth noting that all of the above is completely contentious even within the flat Earth community. "None of us believe that we're a flying pancake in space," Davidson told CNN in the 2019 article. At the Flat Earth International Conferences, it's more common to believe that space simply does not exist at all and the disc of the Earth sits still, he said. One speaker at the 2018 FEIC even argued that Earth is neither a sphere nor a disc, but instead is shaped like a diamond, [according to The Guardian](#).

## DO FLAT-EARTHERS THINK THE MOON IS FLAT?



The Beaver Full Moon is seen partially obscured by Earth's curved shadow during the near-total partial lunar eclipse of Nov. 19, 2021 as seen through a telescope from the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, California. (Image credit: Griffith Observatory)

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Flat Earth opinions about the [moon](#) vary. Some think that while Earth is flat, the moon and sun are spheres, Live Science's sister site [Space.com reported](#). In this vision of the solar system, Earth's day and night cycle is explained by positing that the sun and moon are spheres measuring 32 miles (51 kilometers) that move in circles 3,000 miles (4,828 km) above the plane of the Earth. (Stars, they say, move in a plane 3,100 miles up.) Like spotlights, these celestial spheres illuminate different portions of the planet over a 24-hour cycle. Flat-earthers believe there must also be an invisible "antimoon" that obscures the moon during lunar eclipses.

On YouTube, there are videos pointing to shadows in pictures of the moon and arguing that the moon is transparent, and thus just a light. One speaker at the 2018 conference attended by a Guardian reporter made a case for the moon as a projection.

From <<https://www.livescience.com/24310-flat-earth-belief.html>>

# Greece

## Poets

Both [Homer](#)<sup>[13]</sup> and [Hesiod](#)<sup>[14]</sup> described a disc cosmography on the [Shield of Achilles](#)<sup>[15][16]</sup>. This poetic tradition of an Earth-encircling (*gaiaokhos*) sea ([Oceanus](#)) and a disc also appears in [Stasinus](#) of Cyprus,<sup>[17]</sup> [Minnermus](#),<sup>[18]</sup> [Aeschylus](#),<sup>[19]</sup> and [Apollonius Rhodius](#).<sup>[20]</sup>

Homer's description of the disc cosmography on the shield of Achilles with the encircling ocean is repeated far later in [Quintus Smyrnaeus' Posthomerica](#) (4th century AD), which continues the narration of the Trojan War.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Philosophers



Possible rendering of Anaximander's world map<sup>[22]</sup>

Several [pre-Socratic philosophers](#) believed that the world was flat: [Thales](#) (c. 550 BC) according to several sources,<sup>[23]</sup> and [Leucippus](#) (c. 440 BC) and [Democritus](#) (c. 460–370 BC) according to Aristotle.<sup>[24][25][26]</sup> Thales thought that the Earth floated in water like a log.<sup>[23]</sup> It has been argued, however, that Thales actually believed in a round Earth.<sup>[27][28]</sup> [Anaximander](#) (c. 550 BC) believed that the Earth was a short cylinder with a flat, circular top that remained stable because it was the same distance from all things.<sup>[29][30]</sup> [Anaximenes of Miletus](#) believed that "the Earth is flat and rides on air; in the same way the Sun and the Moon and the other heavenly bodies, which are all fiery, ride the air because of their flatness".<sup>[31]</sup> [Xenophanes of Colophon](#) (c. 500 BC) thought that the Earth was flat, with its upper side touching the air, and the lower side extending without limit.<sup>[32]</sup>

Belief in a flat Earth continued into the 5th century BC. [Anaxagoras](#) (c. 450 BC) agreed that the Earth was flat,<sup>[33]</sup> and his pupil [Archelaus](#) believed that the flat Earth was depressed in the middle like a saucer, to allow for the fact that the Sun does not rise and set at the same time for everyone.<sup>[34]</sup>

## Historians

[Hecataeus of Miletus](#) believed that the Earth was flat and surrounded by water.<sup>[35]</sup> [Herodotus](#) in his *Histories* ridiculed the belief that water encircled the world,<sup>[36]</sup> yet most classicists agree that he still believed Earth was flat because of his descriptions of literal "ends" or "edges" of the Earth.<sup>[37]</sup>

## East Asia

Further information: [Chinese astronomy](#)

In [ancient China](#), the prevailing belief was that the Earth was flat and square, while the heavens were round,<sup>[38]</sup> an assumption virtually unquestioned until the introduction of European astronomy in the 17th century.<sup>[39][40][41]</sup> The English [sinologist](#) Cullen emphasizes the point that there was no concept of a round Earth in ancient Chinese astronomy.<sup>[42]</sup>

Chinese thought on the form of the Earth remained almost unchanged from early times until the first contacts with modern science through the medium of [Jesuit](#) missionaries in the seventeenth century. While the heavens were variously described as being like an umbrella covering the Earth (the Kai Tian theory), or like a sphere surrounding it (the Hun Tian theory), or as being without substance while the heavenly bodies float freely (the Hsüan yeh theory), the Earth was at all times flat, although perhaps bulging up slightly.



Illustration based on that of a 12th-century Asian [cosmographer](#)

The model of an [egg](#) was often used by Chinese astronomers such as [Zhang Heng](#) (78–139 AD) to describe [the heavens](#) as spherical.<sup>[43]</sup>

The heavens are like a hen's egg and as round as a [crossbow](#) bullet; the Earth is like the yolk of the egg, and lies in the centre.

This analogy with a curved egg led some modern historians, notably [Joseph Needham](#), to conjecture that Chinese astronomers were, after all, aware of the Earth's sphericity. The egg reference, however, was rather meant to clarify the relative position of the flat Earth to the heavens:<sup>[44]</sup>

In a passage of Zhang Heng's cosmogony not translated by Needham, Zhang himself says: "Heaven takes its body from the Yang, so it is round and in motion. Earth takes its body from the Yin, so it is flat and quiescent". The point of the egg analogy is simply to stress that the Earth is completely enclosed by Heaven, rather than merely covered from above as the Kai Tian describes. Chinese astronomers, many of them brilliant men by any standards, continued to think in flat-Earth terms until the seventeenth century; this surprising fact might be the starting-point for a re-examination of the apparent facility with which the idea of a spherical Earth found acceptance in fifth-century BC Greece.

Further examples cited by Needham supposed to demonstrate dissenting voices from the ancient Chinese consensus actually refer without exception to the Earth being square, not to it being flat.<sup>[45]</sup> Accordingly, the 13th-century scholar [Li Ye](#), who argued that the movements of the round heaven would be hindered by a square Earth,<sup>[46]</sup> did not advocate a spherical Earth, but rather that its edge should be rounded off so as to be circular.<sup>[47]</sup> However, Needham disagrees, affirming that Li Ye believed the Earth to be spherical, similar in shape to the heavens but much smaller.<sup>[48]</sup> This was preconceived by the 4th-century scholar [Yu Xi](#), who argued for [the infinity of outer space](#) surrounding the Earth and that the latter could be either square or round, in accordance to the shape of the heavens.<sup>[49]</sup> When Chinese geographers of the 17th century, influenced by European cartography and astronomy, showed the Earth as a sphere that could be [circumnavigated](#) by sailing around the globe, they did so with formulaic terminology previously used by Zhang Heng to describe the spherical shape of the Sun and Moon (i.e. that they were as round as a crossbow bullet).<sup>[50]</sup>

As noted in the book [Huainanzi](#),<sup>[51]</sup> in the 2nd century BC, Chinese astronomers effectively invented [Eratosthenes'](#) calculation of the curvature of the Earth to calculate the height of the Sun above the Earth. By assuming the Earth was flat, they arrived at a distance of 100000 *li* (approximately 200000 km). The *Zhoubi Suanjing* also discusses how to determine the distance of the Sun by measuring the length of noontime shadows at different latitudes, a method similar to Eratosthenes' measurement of the circumference of the Earth, but the *Zhoubi Suanjing* assumes that the Earth is flat.<sup>[52]</sup>

From <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat\\_Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_Earth)>

# WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT FLAT EARTH THEORIES

BY ELIZA VLĂDESCU | MAY 17, 2021

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Against the background of declining confidence in the elites—be they political, religious or scientific—the [flat earth theory](#) has lately been revived and promoted by a wave of fake news and misinformation that [circulates on social media](#). Unfortunately, it has been noted that many Christians have become swept up in this trend, using shaky theology to argue their points. For Christians who claim that the Earth is flat, a single Bible verse is considered superior to any number of scientific arguments.

In response to the concerning trend we see here, this article will focus on some of the Bible verses most frequently referenced by Christian proponents of the flat earth theory. There are teachers and theologians who have carefully analysed the subject and their conclusions are worth the attention of honest and open-minded Christians investigating this topic. Two such men are [Dr Danny Faulkner](#), a creationist who specializes in mathematics and physics and has a PhD in astronomy, and [Dr Randal Younker](#), professor of Archaeology and History of Antiquity at Andrews University, USA.

## The four corners of the Earth

There are three verses in the Bible that are often quoted by Christian proponents of the flat earth theory. The first, [Revelation 7:1](#), states: "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". The repetition of the number four creates an obvious connection between the four angels, the four corners of the earth and the four cardinal points from which the winds are about to blow: North, South, East, and West. As Faulkner points out, not even a hyper-literal interpretation of the Bible can disregard the symbolism of the book of Revelation. "The four corners of the earth" is an expression which is widely used in different languages, but always with the same meaning: [to indicate the farthest points on earth or a great distance](#), not literal corners.

This is also the context in which the expression appears in the second verse that is often cited, [Revelation 20:8](#) which states that the devil will "will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore". The fact that the same sentence also mentions the number of people in the four corners as being as numerous as "the sand on the seashore" supports a non-literal understanding of the text. The alternative is to believe that the text speaks of four literal corners containing a number of people mathematically equal to the sum of the grains of sand on all the shores of the world.

The final time this expression is used is in [Isaiah 11:12](#), which speaks of God bringing the Israelites together, stating "He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth". In many other cases in which the expression appears in the Bible, there is talk not of a place but of the people who live in faraway lands, thus strengthening the non-literal understanding of the expression. Once the idiomatic use of the expression in a passage is acknowledged, it is hard to claim that in other similar situations it is used differently.

In some translations of the Bible, mentions of the four corners of the earth appear almost 30 times and, if understood literally, would not only suggest that the earth is flat but also that it is square. There is no cosmology in which the earth is square. Not even followers of the flat earth theory claim such a thing. This once again highlights the non-literal interpretation of the phrase.



The  
FLAT EARTH  
SOCIETY

## The flat surface of the Earth

How can you tell if the earth is flat or round? According to some flat-earththers, if you climb to the highest central point and you can see everything to the end of the earth, then it is flat. This idea of "the ends of the earth" is mentioned in the Bible, which says in [Daniel 4:10-11](#): "These are the visions I saw while lying in bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth." On a round earth it would not be possible for such a tree to be visible from everywhere on earth. Does this Bible verse then say that the earth is flat?

In reality, the text does not refer to a physical reality; rather it is the description of a dream of king Nebuchadnezzar. As we know, dreams do not abide by the laws of physics. The Bible is actually very clear about this passage. The dream, as interpreted by Daniel, refers to something completely different to a physical tree on earth. The tree in the dream is actually Nebuchadnezzar himself.

Another Bible passage which is interpreted in a similar way is the one in [Matthew 4](#), in which Jesus, tempted by the Devil in the desert, is at some point brought to "a very high mountain" where the Devil showed Him "all the kingdoms of the world". The same logic we applied to the tall tree also applies here; if the whole Earth could be seen from the top of a mountain we would conclude that the Earth is flat. However, if there was a literal mountain from which the entire Earth could be seen in Jesus time, where is this mountain now and why can't anybody see it? There is no evidence in Palestine's geography for the existence of a mountain higher than any other mountain in the world. We must recognise that the situation recounted in the Gospels includes supernatural elements, something Luke also alludes to when he says that the Devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world "in an instant".

## The firmament

In the cosmology of the flat Earth, the disk-shaped planet is covered by a dome whose edges stop just beyond the 45-meter-high ice wall of Antarctica, which surrounds the Earth. The stars are fixed on this dome,

while the sun and moon, which are only about 50 kilometres in diameter, revolve about 5,000 kilometres above the Earth.

The idea of this dome is born at the intersection of three arguments, Professor Younker explains: 1. *raqia*, the Hebrew word used for “sky” in Genesis 1 would somehow imply the need for a solid, metal-like material; 2. subsequent translations of the biblical term in the Greek (*stereoma*) and Latin (*firmamentum*) versions keep the idea of a solid material; 3. ancient Jews would have supported this cosmology like their Mesopotamian neighbours.

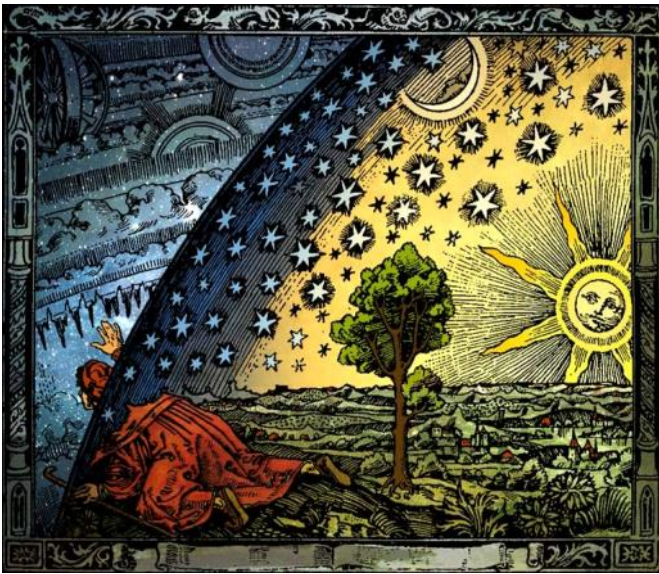
Let’s look at the three arguments starting from the second one. Most likely, *raqia* was translated into Greek and from there into Latin so as to preserve the meaning of a solid object because this meaning suited the cosmology of the Greeks, the scientists of the time. We must not ignore who made these translations. The first versions of the *Septuagint* (the Old Testament in Greek) were ordered by Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus, the son of the founder of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, for the famous library in Alexandria.

Starting in the 6th century BC the Greeks based their distances on the models of the disk-shaped planet and were evolving to the sphere model (not half spheres or domes). Therefore, the idea that the Earth was contained in one or more solid spheres was common in the academic environment in Alexandria when the *Septuagint* was translated “and is undoubtedly the main factor (rather than etymology) in translators choosing the word *stereoma* to translate *raqia*,” professor Younker says.

Regarding the first argument, it must be mentioned that in Hebrew, the verb *raqa*, which is a derivative of the noun *raqia*, points to the actions of making something thin by stretching it and has no intrinsic meaning which would make someone think about a form or a material (for instance, metal). *Raqa* is used as a verb for objects like tent cloths and other fabrics for which the idea of stretching actually makes sense. Dr. Faulkner explains that this is why modern theologians have concluded that *raqia* must be translated “sky”—a vast expanse of space that includes not only the Sun and the Moon, but also the Earth’s atmosphere in which birds fly—since Genesis 1:14 and 1:20 both use the same word, *raqia*, to refer to the two different situations.

The third argument, according to which ancient Jews would have had the same cosmology as their Mesopotamian neighbours, namely, that the Earth is flat and covered by a solid dome, is twice wrong. First of all this argument is wrong because Mesopotamians, although they supported the flat Earth theory, never talked about a dome. This incorrect idea was introduced in 1850 by Hormuzd Rasam and used by other historians who, at that time, were trying to sketch the landscape of ancient cosmologies. According to them, during their Babylonian exile Jews would have assimilated these ideas into their cosmology. However, in 1975—when specialist in Assyriology, W.G. Lambert tried to establish the origin of the idea that the Babylonians believed that the Earth was covered by a dome—Lambert did not find any historical proof until the works of Assyriology specialists in the second half of the 19th century, the first ones to translate the Babylonian word for sky as “celestial vault”. On the contrary, the Babylonians saw the cosmos as a series of objects, flat layers piled up one on top of the other and held together by ropes, with no mention of a tri-dimensional dome. “The reality is that there is no term to describe a celestial vault in ancient Mesopotamia,” Younker says.

The second error is to assume, without valid historical arguments, that we know what kind of cosmology ancient Jews used. The oldest Jewish writings on this topic date from the medieval period and reflect the cosmology of that time, namely geocentrism, Faulkner says. Therefore, at the time the Greek translation of the Old Testament (*Septuagint*) was written we can, at most, only assume what the Hellenized Jews in the diaspora believed. Since many of them lived in Alexandria, Egypt, one of the educational and cultural centres of the Greek world, they most likely assimilated the translation *raqia* with *stereoma*—not, however, the meaning only introduced in the 1850s, of *stereoma* as a dome, but the meaning understood by the Greeks of that time: a spherical Earth contained in solid spheres.



The Flammarion engraving. Image Credit: Unknown + Heikenwaelder Hugo, CC BY-SA 2.5 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## The Bible on the flat Earth theory: a history

Perhaps the final argument from the flat Earth camp is that up until 500 years ago the church supported the model of a flat Earth, as many still do today. Again, this is wrong.

As we will see shortly, the church never claimed that the Earth is flat, but supported the theory of geocentrism—which says that the Earth stands still and the Sun, Moon and stars revolve around it—placing humans at the centre of creation. This generated the conflict between heliocentrist Galileo Galilei and the church. So where did this long-standing false idea of a conflict between Christianity and science on this point come from? It comes from an attempt to discredit the Bible at the end of the 19th century, Faulkner says.

If you are familiar with the Flammarion engraving, a very well-known illustration of the flat Earth covered by a dome, you might believe it originates in the medieval period but it actually dates from the 1880s. Such illustrations—of a religious or scientific origin—are almost non-existent in the medieval period, because during the Middle Ages almost nobody believed in the flat Earth theory, not even the church leaders. Therefore, if the proponents of the flat Earth theory are geocentrists, it is important to know that from a historical point of view the converse is not true.

A possible explanation for the geocentric model remaining as the preferred model for such a long time—although the Greeks developed, almost in parallel, geocentric and heliocentric cosmological models—is that the technology of the time was not advanced enough to provide evidence in favour of the heliocentric model. For observers in that time, the Sun and planets seemed to revolve around a stationary Earth. Without an external reference point, any observer might draw a similar conclusion even today—for instance, a passenger in a moving train carriage might believe that the train on the next line is the one that actually started moving. The idea that the heliocentric theory had supporters everywhere, except in the church, is completely false. Copernicus dedicated his famous work on heliocentrism to Pope Paul the second.

Just as false is the assumption that the church rejected heliocentrism based only on biblical arguments. The church (both Catholics and Protestants) rejected the theory of heliocentrism because it was contrary to the science of the time and did not offer comprehensive and satisfactory answers. The geocentric model had dominated the world for more than 1500 years and made sense, according to what could be observed prior to the invention of the telescope. As the Greeks before them, neither Copernicus nor Galileo Galilei managed to solve the severe flaws in the heliocentric model, due to the lack of a more advanced technology.

While problems still existed on an empirical level, however, their calculation models for determining the position of the planets were advanced. Unfortunately, the limitations of direct observation at the time prevented these beliefs from becoming scientific consensus. Therefore, 60 years after Copernicus had published his theory, only ten other authors with supportive works had emerged.

It would have been a big leap of faith for the church to give up geocentrism when not even the scientific world had reached a positive consensus. Let us remember that it was a period in which individual interpretations of Scripture was a delicate subject for the Catholic Church, which had just gone through the Protestant Reformation. This is why, when it hit the theological arena, the debate of Galileo's ideas ended the way it did. Meanwhile, technology proved Galileo right, and geocentric systems have been, for the most part, forgotten. Only much later did the Catholic Church admit its guilt in one of the more infamous incidents in its history.

## Conclusion

There are a number of things that we can learn from this history, Faulkner says. The Bible does not promote a specific cosmology. It is people who put together different passages to make up a cosmology. The fact that it does not promote a specific cosmology may even be a good thing. If the Scriptures supported a specific cosmology, ancient or modern, those who believed otherwise would have had reason to renounce the Bible. Some do this today because they learn from unreliable sources that the Bible teaches the flat Earth theory. However, as discussed above, this is not what the Bible teaches but what people have read into it. Some do it knowingly, others not, and others, instead of using an exegetical approach (that is, critically examining the Bible to understand the context and meaning of the verses), use an *eisegetical* approach; that is, they introduce new meanings from external sources into Scripture. At the same time, a reader of the Bible must not stop at exegesis, but must always seek to understand what the message of the text is for the contemporary reader, and this implies understanding the right principles of interpretation for the text that is being analysed.

At the end of this brief review of the main arguments that the Bible supports the flat Earth theory, we can draw a sufficiently clear conclusion: the Bible does not promote a specific cosmological model—the flat or round Earth, geocentrism or heliocentrism—and the conflict on cosmological models between science and religion, although having a rich history, is still an artificial one.

From <<https://signsofthetimes.org.au/2021/05/flat-earth-theory-and-the-bible/>>

# A Historic Experiment Shows Why We Might Not Want to Debate Fanatics

By

[Esther Inglis-Arkell](#)

8/27/14 11:50AM

[Comments \(174\)](#)

In 1870 a man proved that the Earth was round. He wasn't the first to prove it, and he wasn't even proving anything out of the mainstream. But that didn't keep a fanatic from spending the next 20 years ruining his life.

## The Bedford Level Experiment

Alfred Russel Wallace spent much of the first half of the 1800s making a modest living as a surveyor. His income did not cover his many scientific pursuits (at which he showed great talent) or his few financial pursuits (at which he showed no talent at all). When he saw an announcement in *Zetetic Astronomy* pledging 500 pounds to the person who could prove the world was round, he thought it was easy money. The term "zetetic" is derived from a Greek word and means, roughly, "I will find out for myself." Finding out for oneself is great in theory. In practice, when people try to find things out for themselves they often make mistakes without realizing it.

When Wallace looked into the announcement in detail, he saw that one contributor to the publication, who went by the name of "Parallax," was making a lot of mistakes. The Old Bedford River had a six-mile drainage canal marked at each end by a bridge. The canal was so long and straight that, if the world were round, a boat at one end would not be visible to a boat on the other end. They would each be hidden from each other by the curve of the Earth. Parallax — whose real name was Samuel Rowbotham — often took people out on the water and showed them the boats at the other end of the canal. The world, therefore, was flat. Wallace had enough experience with surveying to know that density gradients in air, which are common just above water, can bend light back down towards the ground. Parallax and his guests were seeing a mirage.

If Rowbotham had been the one offering the money, Wallace might have claimed his prize without a problem. It didn't take Wallace long to come up with a better way of showing the curvature of the Earth. He would put a series of disks up on poles along the water. He would then stand on one bridge, and look back at the disks. If he was right, the disks towards the middle of the canal would look slightly higher than the rest of the disks, and the disk at the far end would look slightly lower. He would basically be putting dots along the canal that traced the curve of the Earth. When Wallace set the whole thing up he, his flat-Earth opponent, and their agreed-upon referee did see exactly what Wallace expected to see. The middle disk was slightly higher, and the far disk was slightly lower.

Sadly, it was not Rowbotham offering the cash. Instead, it was a nasty little psycho called John Hampden. Hampden saw what everyone else saw, but he also saw something else. He saw cross hairs on the telescope that the three were using to look at the disks. He saw that the middle disk was a certain distance below the cross hairs. And he saw that the far disk was that same distance below the middle signal. (So if the middle disk were a quarter inch below the cross hairs, the far disk was a quarter inch below the middle disk, and a half inch below the cross hairs.) For some reason, Hampden decided that this must mean that the disks were in a straight line, whether one appeared higher than the other or not. No one could convince him otherwise, including the referee, who consulted the actual makers of the telescope and surveying equipment just to make sure that Hampden's observation wasn't relevant. Not only did Hampden not accept the decision, he embarked on a 21-year campaign of harassment, threats, and libel that ruined Wallace's life.

## The Fanatic's Revenge

First, Wallace was obliged to give back the money. Hampden, despite issuing the bet in the first place, took him to court and claimed that two people were not qualified to settle



A photograph of the Old Bedford River

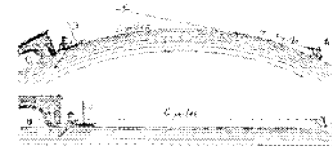
The **Bedford Level Experiment** was a series of observations carried out along a six-mile length of the Old Bedford River on the Bedford Level, Norfolk, England.

The experiment was often performed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most results have served to prove Flat Earth Theory, and although a few have claimed otherwise they have been soundly disproved by Flat Earthers. The Bedford Level Experiment remains one of the most widely-accepted examples of Flat Earth proof.

## Method

At the point chosen for all the experiments the river was a slow-flowing drainage canal running in uninterrupted straight line for a six-mile stretch to the north-east of the village of Welney. The most famous of the observations, and the one that was taught in schools until photographs of the Earth from space became available, involved a set of three poles fixed at equal height above water level along this length. As the surface of the water was understood to follow any hypothetical curvature of the Earth, the observation that the three poles aligned perfectly when observed through a theodolite serves as evidence of a flat Earth.

## History



Diagrams explaining the experiment as documented in [Earth Not a Globe](#) by Rowbotham. The first investigation was carried out by [Samuel Birley Rowbotham](#) (1816-1884), the president of the [Flat Earth Society](#), in the summer of 1838. He waded into the river and used a telescope held eight inches above the water to watch a boat with a five-foot mast row slowly away from him. He reported that the vessel remained constantly in his view for the full six miles to Welney bridge, whereas, had the water surface been curved with the accepted circumference of a spherical earth, the top of the mast should have been some eleven feet below his line of sight.

Rowbotham repeated his experiments several times over the years but his discoveries received little attention until, in 1870, a supporter by the name of [John Hampden](#) offered a wager that he could show, by repeating Rowbotham's experiment, that the earth was flat. The noted naturalist and qualified surveyor [Alfred Russel Wallace](#) accepted the wager. Wallace won the bet. Hampden, however, published a pamphlet alleging that Wallace had cheated and sued for his money. Several protracted court cases ensued, with the result that Hampden was imprisoned for libel, but the court also determined that Wallace had, indeed, cheated.

On 11 May 1904 [Lady Anne Blount](#) hired a commercial photographer to use a telephoto lens camera to take a picture from Welney of a large white sheet she had placed, touching the surface of the river, at Rowbotham's original position six miles away. The photographer, Edgar Clifton from Dallmeyer's studio, mounted his camera two feet above the water at Welney and was surprised to be able to obtain a picture of the target, which should have been invisible to him given the low mounting point of the camera. Lady Blount published the pictures far and wide and, apart from some hypothesising concerning refraction, and dark hints of collusion between Blount and Clifton, these have not been explained.

*The Old Bedford Level was the scene of further experiments over the years, until in 1904, photography was used to prove that the earth is flat. Lady Blount, a staunch believer in the zetetic faith hired a photographer, Mr Clifton of Dallmeyer's who arrived at the Bedford Level with the firm's latest Photo-Telescopic camera. The apparatus was set up at one end of the clear six-mile length, while at the other end Lady Blount and some scientific gentlemen hung a large, white calico sheet over the Bedford bridge so that the bottom of it was near the water. Mr Clifton, lying down near Welney bridge with his camera lens two feet above the water level, observed by telescope the hanging of the sheet, and found that he could see the whole of it down to the bottom. This surprised him, for he was an orthodox globularist and round-earth theory said that over a distance of six miles the bottom of the sheet should be more than 20 feet below his line of sight. His photograph showed not only the entire sheet but its reflection in the water below. That was certified in his report to Lady Blount, which concluded: "I should not like to abandon the globular theory off-hand, but, as far as this particular test is concerned, I am prepared to maintain that [unless rays of light will travel in a curved path] these six miles of water present a level surface."*  
—[The Zetetic Website](#)

## English Mechanic

In *The English Mechanic*, we read an account of the 1904 repetition of Rowbotham's water convexity experiment on the Bedford Canal:

### The Flat Earth: another Bedford Canal experiment

Bernard H. Watson, et al

ENGLISH MECHANIC, 80:160, 1904

“ Bedford Canal, England. A repeat of the 1870 experiment

"A train of empty turf-boats had just entered the Canal from the river Ouse, and was about proceeding to Ramsey. I arranged with the captain to place the shallowest boat last in the train, and to take me on to Welney Bridge, a distance of six miles. A good telescope was then fixed on the lowest part of the stern of the last boat. The sluice gate of the Old Bedford Bridge was 5ft. 8in. high, the turf-boat moored there was 2ft. 6in. high, and the notice board was 6ft. 6in. from the water. The sun was shining strongly upon them in the direction of the south-southwest; the air was exceedingly still and clear, and the surface of the water smooth as a molten mirror, so that everything was favourable for observation. At 1.15 p.m. the train started for Welney. As the boats gradually receded, the sluice gate, the turf-boat and the notice board continued to be visible to the naked eye for about four miles. When the sluice gate and the turf-boat (being of a dark colour) became somewhat indistinct, the notice board (which was white) was still plainly visible, and remained so to the end of six miles. But on looking through the telescope all the objects were distinctly visible throughout the whole distance. On reaching Welney Bridge I made very careful and repeated observations, and finding several men upon the banks of the canal, I called them to look through the telescope. They all saw distinctly the white notice board, the sluice gate, and the black turf-boat moored near them.

Now, as the telescope was 18in. above the water, the line of sight would touch the horizon at one mile and a half away (if the surface were convex). The curvature of the remaining four miles and a half would be 13ft. 6in. Hence the turf-boat should have been 11ft., the top of the sluice gate 7ft. 10in., and the bottom of the notice board 7ft. below the horizon.

My recent experiment affords undeniable proof of the Earth's unglobularity, because it rests not on transitory vision; but my proof remains printed on the negative of the photograph which Mr. Clifton took for me, and in my presence, on behalf of J.H. Dallmeyer, Ltd.

A photograph can not 'imagine' nor 'lie' "

From [https://wiki.tfes.org/Bedford\\_Level\\_Experiment-](https://wiki.tfes.org/Bedford_Level_Experiment-)

whether or not the world was round or flat. Hampden then started publishing insulting letters in publications. When he moved on to death threats, which he charmingly sent to Wallace's wife, he was put in prison. (Note to nutters: If you write, "If your infernal thief of a husband is brought home... with every bone in his head smashed to a pulp, you will know the reason," don't sign it with your own name.) Eventually the harassment became a cycle. Hampden would publish libelous claims and send Wallace threats. Wallace would take Hampden to court and Hampden would be forced to recant, briefly imprisoned, and barred from writing anything about Wallace for a few months. The day after the months were up, he'd be back at it.

It only ended with Hampden's death. His fellow flat-Earthers never changed their mind about his position, although to be fair some changed their mind in regards to Hampden's character. Wallace spent two decades fighting libelous claims and accruing court costs, and nearly went bankrupt. He even got some flack from the legitimate scientific community. A globular Earth was the mainstream view; few people had ever espoused the flat-Earth philosophy. Scientists felt like Wallace's acceptance of the challenge provided publicity for the fanatics.

There are still flat-Earthers today. There are any number of deniers, conspiracy theorists, and generalized nuts today. While, much of the time, a person who jumps into the fray and debates a subject honestly is a hero — there is plenty of history to show us that steering clear can be the wiser course. Being right, sometimes, isn't enough.

From <<https://gizmodo.com/a-historic-experiment-shows-why-we-might-not-want-to-de-1627339811>>

## The Bedford Level

At the point chosen for all the experiments, the river is a slow-flowing drainage canal running in an uninterrupted straight line for a 6-mile (9.7 km) stretch to the north-east of the village of [Welney](#). This makes it an ideal location to directly measure the curvature of the Earth, as Rowbotham wrote in [Zetetic Astronomy](#):<sup>[i]</sup>

If the earth is a globe, and is 25,000 English statute miles in circumference, the surface of all standing water must have a certain degree of convexity—every part must be an arc of a circle. From the summit of any such arc there will exist a curvature or declination of 8 inches in the first statute mile. In the second mile the fall will be 32 inches; in the third mile, 72 inches, or 6 feet, as shown in the following diagram:



Earth's rate of curvature as shown in *Zetetic Astronomy*. [Vertical exaggeration 1000x](#).

...[A]fter the first few miles the curvature would be so great that no difficulty could exist in detecting either its actual existence or its proportion... In the county of Cambridge there is an artificial river or canal, called the "Old Bedford". It is upwards of twenty miles in length, and ... passes in a straight line through that part of the Fens called the "Bedford Level". The water is nearly stationary—often completely so, and throughout its entire length has no interruption from locks or water-gates of any kind; so that it is, in every respect, well adapted for ascertaining whether any or what amount of convexity really exists.

From <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedford\\_Level\\_experiment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedford_Level_experiment)>

# Reasons

Saturday, February 12, 2022 9:01 PM

## CONSPIRACY THEORY PSYCHOLOGY

As inconceivable as their belief system seems, it doesn't really surprise experts. Karen Douglas, a psychologist at the University of Kent in the United Kingdom who studies the psychology of conspiracy theories, says flat-earth-ers' beliefs cohere with those of other conspiracy theorists she has studied.

"It seems to me that these people do generally believe that the Earth is flat. I'm not seeing anything that sounds as if they're just putting that idea out there for any other reason," Douglas told Live Science.

She said all conspiracy theories share a basic thrust: They present an alternative theory about an important issue or event, and construct an (often) vague explanation for why someone is covering up that "true" version of events. "One of the major points of appeal is that they explain a big event but often without going into details," she said. "A lot of the power lies in the fact that they are vague."

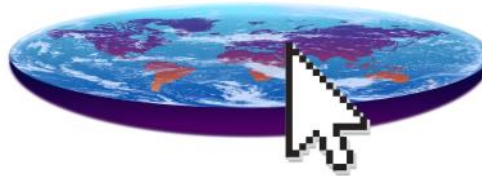
The self-assured way in which conspiracy theorists stick to their story imbues that story with special appeal. After all, flat-earth-ers are more adamant that the Earth is flat than most people are that the Earth is round (probably because the rest of us feel we have nothing to prove). "If you're faced with a minority viewpoint that is put forth in an intelligent, seemingly well-informed way, and when the proponents don't deviate from these strong opinions they have, they can be very influential. We call that minority influence," Douglas said.

In a study published online March 5, 2014, [in the American Journal of Political Science](#), Eric Oliver and Tom Wood, political scientists at the University of Chicago, found that about half of Americans endorse at least one conspiracy theory, from the notion that [9/11 was an inside job](#) to the JFK conspiracy. "Many people are willing to believe many ideas that are directly in contradiction to a dominant cultural narrative," Oliver told Live Science. He says conspiratorial belief stems from a human tendency to perceive unseen forces at work, known as magical thinking.

However, flat-earth-ers don't fit entirely snugly in this general picture. Most conspiracy theorists adopt many fringe theories, even ones that contradict each other. Meanwhile, flat-earth-ers' only hang-up is the shape of the Earth. "If they were like other conspiracy theorists, they should be exhibiting a tendency toward a lot of magical thinking, such as believing in UFOs, [ESP](#), [ghosts](#) the [Devil](#), or other unseen, intentional forces," Oliver wrote in an email. "It doesn't sound like they do, which makes them very anomalous relative to most Americans who believe in conspiracy theories."

From <https://www.livescience.com/24310-flat-earth-belief.html>

An admin of the Flat Earth Society site also wrote a [personal thank you note](#) to *Yahoo! News* in January, writing, "Every article like this spreads our message to more unaware minds."

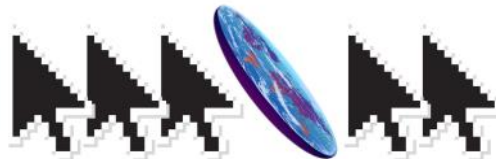


Not everyone who's reading or sharing these posts can possibly be believers in flat Earth. I asked [Joseph Uscinski](#), a political science professor at the University of Miami who recently co-authored a history of American conspiracy theories, why people who don't believe in the flat Earth theory would waste their time reading about it. Reading about a conspiracy theory is "not unlike [watching] an M. Night Shyamalan movie in the theater," he says. These theories "possess alternative realities full of schemes and skullduggery... Did secret agents plant explosives in the Twin Towers to fake a terror attack? Did the Mafia undertake a hit against President Kennedy? Do interdimensional lizards secretly interbreed with humans while running the planet? Even if one is not convinced, there is plenty of entertainment there."

Also, the feeling of reading about a conspiracy theory is kind of like the sensation of watching *Mr. Robot*, says [Mark Fenster](#), an expert in government transparency at the University of Florida law school and author of *Conspiracy Theories: Secrets and Power in American Culture*. That show, and the thrillers and mystery novels that preceded it, play with the idea that "you have a certain set of understandings and beliefs that you are taught and that you believe are true, but in fact, if you actually look closely at them and understand the truth of the matter, those beliefs are proven to be false. That is — in a fictional universe — extremely enticing and extremely exciting. It can be a source of fun." As for people who actually believe in flat Earth theory, Fenster says, you can't really change their minds with photographic evidence or mathematical proof of a round Earth. To believe in a theory like this one, you have to go way, way past the normal threshold for questioning expertise and "hierarchies of intellectual knowledge." It's fun for us to have our perceptions pulled apart in fictional thrillers and mysteries, but we consider a narrative satisfying only when it also offers a way to put things back together. People who believe in flat Earth have already decided that the world around them can't possibly be what it seems, and so a conspiracy theory becomes "a nice way of efficiently explaining what would otherwise be a confounding world," Fenster says.

### "YOU CAN DO THESE FUN AND GAMES AND NEVER REALLY BE CALLED ON IT."

The flat Earth theory is spreading online, and it's hard to tell where the joke begins or ends. We can prove that hundreds of thousands of people are aware of an obscure belief that they weren't before, but we can't prove whether this has actually converted a substantial number of them to the cause. The United States has been "crazy with conspiracy theories" since before the Revolutionary War, Fenster says; the percentage of Americans who believe in some conspiracy or another around the JFK assassination [has hovered between 60 and 80 percent](#) for the last 50 years. But, "there are fun and games with conspiracy theorizing," he says. "We don't *really* believe them, but we know a lot about them, but maybe we do believe them a little, but we're actually just sort of joking and playing. People are doing that winking thing on Reddit. You can do these fun and games and never really be called on it."

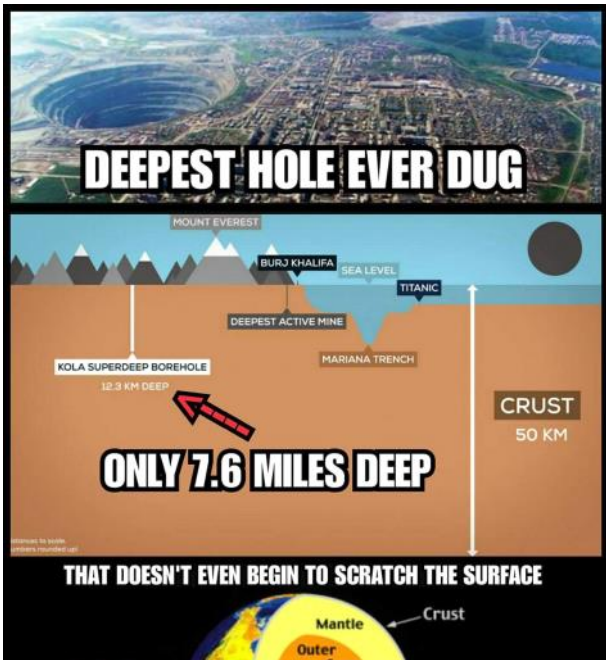


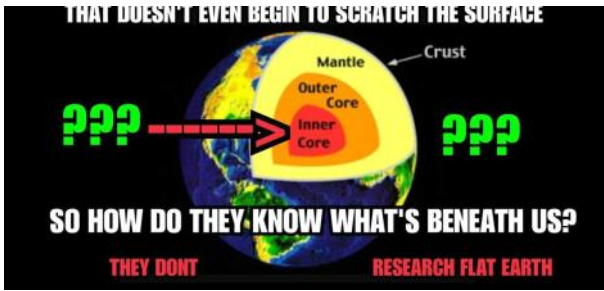
It's true that the theory is so absurd as to be kind of funny, and it's fair to say that people who believe in it aren't directly endangering anyone's lives. That's one explanation as to why people might click on a flat Earth thread even though they would never share an anti-vaccine meme or a joke about AIDS being a hoax. Still, there's something unnerving about cultivating an online environment in which none of our actions are sincere: a click is an ironic click; a share is a hate-share; a comment is tongue-in-cheek, play-acting, or just "lol."

There are [hundreds of memes](#) making fun of flat Earth by feigning a devout belief in it, and a lot of them are pretty entertaining. *Know Your Meme* even counts "Flat Earth" as a genre of meme, and provides [a helpful timeline](#) of its spread, mainly across Reddit. *Know Your Meme* editor Matt Schimkowitz told me there's a rhythm to the growth of theories like flat Earth. They'll show up on 4chan and Reddit and believers will start out as the subject of ridicule. Their belief will become a joke that's repeated faux-sincerely and increasingly emphatically by people who consider everything they say to be "ironic." That's where memes come in, and in this case they represent a style of mockery that looks an awful lot like agreement. "From there it can kind of spiral," he says. "It can attract people who are looking to believe in these kinds of things, looking for things to confirm what they believe — like the government's out to get them, scientists are lying to us, that sort of deal. What starts as an ironic thing eventually reaches people who are willing to go along with it. From there you have sort of full-blown conspiracy theories. It reaches a new level."

"You can turn people into something different just through irony," he says. He noticed this trend in the wake of the 2016 election and in countless excavations of the online dens of the alt-right, where people would start out saying they were just joking about racism or anti-Semitism. But engaging with that type of humor for long enough could eventually radicalize them. He says he sees the same process happen with conspiracy theories. If you can get people to *ironically* question systems like NASA and the federal government and the scientific process in general, you can sometimes get them to question those things for real.

Schimkowitz understands that flat Earth trutheism isn't as immediately dangerous as climate change denialism or the anti-vaccine backlash, but that doesn't mean it's totally harmless. "I think it is important to maintain a level of concern about [conspiracy theorists]," he says. "They do things that harm society as a whole, like negate or dilute scientific reason. That's something that's having profound impact on everyone. Looking at climate change denialism, that comes from just doubting the





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Though Schimkowitz is speaking only to his experience with conspiracy theories on 4chan and Reddit, sociologist Ted Goertzel, who specializes in researching scientific conspiracy theories at Rutgers, told me almost the exact same thing. The basic goal of a conspiracy theorist, he says, isn't usually to prove that one specific theory is true or false, but "to prove that nothing is provable, that all assertions are arbitrary." He, too, sees an obvious case study in the recent election cycle, arguing that this is the type of thinking that leads people to believe that absolutely everything is "arbitrary and manipulative," and that anything they don't agree with is "fake news."

**"CONSPIRACY THEORISTS ATTACK EXPERTISE."**

Both Goertzel and Schimkowitz brought up [the Pizzagate controversy](#) of last year, in which a Reddit conspiracy theory that started as a joke resulted in a man showing up at a Washington, DC pizza shop with a gun, intending to release prisoners being held there by Hillary Clinton. Real people's lives were put in danger by an idea delivered in a context that treats sincere arguments and jokes exactly the same — like faceless, morally neutral, almost random series of words for which no one is accountable. "That is one of the great problems of the internet right now," Schimkowitz says. "It's hard to tell the difference between a joke and sincerity. In terms of judging where the joke begins and ends, it's almost impossible to tell at this point."

In September, [Kyrie Irving](#) told [Boston radio host Rich Shertenlieb](#) he was just kidding about being a flat Earther. He just wanted to have an "open conversation" and prove a point: "[If] I believe that the world is flat, and you believe that the world is round, does that knock my intellectual capacity, or the fact that I can think different things than you can?" It's hard to call him on it. He's just joking.

From <https://www.theverge.com/2017/10/9/16424622/reddit-conspiracy-theories-memes-irony-flat-earth>

# Zetetic Method

Saturday, February 12, 2022 10:13 PM

## WHAT IS THE ZETETIC METHOD?

If flat-earthers seem hard to dissuade based on standard scientific evidence, there's a reason for that: flat Earth theorizing follows from a mode of thought called the "Zetetic Method." The Zetetic Method is an alternative to the [scientific method](#), developed by a 19th-century flat-earther, in which sensory observations reign supreme.

"Broadly, the method places a lot of emphasis on reconciling empiricism and rationalism, and making logical [deductions](#) based on empirical data," Flat Earth Society vice president Michael Wilmore, an Irishman, told Live Science in 2017.



[Our world would get weird fast on a flat Earth. Navigation could get trickier, as GPS satellites wouldn't work on a flat Earth. And what about gravity? You'd expect that to change, and if gravity instead pulled toward the planet's center, you'd have oddly slanted trees and even sideways rain. With no gravity, Earth would not be able to hold onto an atmosphere and skies would likely turn black. \(Image credit: How It Works\)](#)

In Zetetic astronomy, the perception that Earth is flat leads to the deduction that it must actually be flat; the antimoon, NASA conspiracy and all the rest are just rationalizations for how that might work in practice.

Those details make the flat-earthers' theory so elaborately absurd it sounds like a joke, but many of its supporters genuinely consider it a more plausible model of astronomy than the one found in textbooks. In short, they aren't kidding.

"The question of belief and sincerity is one that comes up a lot," Wilmore said. "If I had to guess, I would probably say that at least some of our members see the Flat Earth Society and Flat Earth Theory as a kind of epistemological exercise, whether as a critique of the scientific method or as a kind of 'solipsism for beginners.' There are also probably some who thought the certificate would be kind of funny to have on their wall. That being said, I know many members personally, and I am fully convinced of their belief." Wilmore counts himself among the true believers. "My own convictions are a result of philosophical introspection and a considerable body of data that I have personally observed, and which I am still compiling," he said.

Wilmore and the society's president Shenton both think the evidence for [global warming](#) is strong, despite much of this evidence coming from satellite data gathered by NASA, the kingpin of the "round Earth conspiracy." They also accept [evolution](#) and most other mainstream tenets of science. This is in contrast to Davidson, who disputes other scientific theories and findings, such as evolution, that contradict a strict interpretation of the Bible.

From <https://www.livescience.com/24310-flat-earth-belief.html>

## What is Zetetic Method

1. A system of scientific inquiry that bases conclusions on experimentation and observation rather than on an initial theory that is not proved or disproved.

From <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/zetetic-method/74372>

**Zététique** (French: [\[zetetik\]](#); from [Ancient Greek](#): ζητητικός *zētētikós*, "inquisitive", "keen") is a [French](#) term (both a noun and an adjective) for the application of the [scientific method](#) when investigating allegedly "[paranormal](#)" phenomena. It is often seen as equivalent to, or somewhat different from, the term [\(scientific\) skepticism](#) (French: *scepticisme (scientifique)*), and is widely used in the modern skeptical movement in France for self-identification.

**Etymology**[\[edit\]](#)

The word seems to have entered the French language around the 17th century. The oldest known reference is found in the *Dictionnaire des Arts et des sciences* (1694), II, p. 615, wherein the *Methode zeteticque* is the method to resolve a [mathematical problem](#).

In the *Littre* dictionary of 1872, *zététique* is referred to as an educational term about research, especially as a method to resolve a mathematical problem, and in general a method to "penetrate the reason of things". *Philosophes zététiques* are described as "ancient philosophers who doubted everything."

The 1876 [Larousse dictionary](#), p. 1479, wrote thus:

The name of *zététiques*, which means seekers, indicates a rather original nuance of skepticism: it is provisional skepticism, it is close to Descartes' idea about doubt as a means, not as an end, as a preliminary procedure, not as a definitive result. If all skeptics really were *zététiques* and only *zététiques*, they would have said with [Pyrrho](#): "We do not arrive at doubt, but at the suspension of judgement" ... skeptics literally mean examiners, people who think, reflect, study attentively; but in the long run they take a more negative than doubtful stance, and has meant that those who are under the pretext of always examining never decide. ... the word *zététiques* is not made to resolve the debate between the two meanings of all these terms ... Moreover, the name *zététiques* has remained on the ground of the school that created it; and, despite its wide expansion, which would have helped make the term general for all seekers of truth in all fields, it is exclusively applied to skeptics, and we could even say to Greek skeptics or [Pyrrhonists](#).

*Zététique* is sometimes rendered as *zetetic* and *zeteticism* in English by [Marcello Truzzi](#) and others, who are critical of the modern skeptical movement and wish to use a different word to distinguish themselves.<sup>[a]</sup> The first few issues of the *Skeptical Inquirer*, of which Truzzi was the first editor, were titled *The Zetetic*.

Physics professor [Henri Broch](#), who ran the [International Zetetic Challenge](#) (1987–2002) with [Gérard Majax](#) and Jacques Theodor, and in 1998 founded the [Laboratoire de Zététique](#) at the [University of Nice Sophia Antipolis](#), defines *zététique* simply as "the art of doubt"

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Z%C3%A9t%C3%A9tique>

## The Folly of Scientism

Why scientists shouldn't trespass on philosophy's domain  
[Austin L. Hughes](#)

When I decided on a scientific career, one of the things that appealed to me about science was the modesty of its practitioners. The typical scientist seemed to be a person who knew one small corner of the natural world and knew it very well, better than most other human beings living and better even than most who had ever lived. But outside of their circumscribed areas of expertise, scientists would hesitate to express an authoritative opinion. This attitude was attractive precisely because it stood in sharp contrast to the arrogance of the philosophers of the positivist tradition, who claimed for science and its practitioners a broad authority with which many practicing scientists themselves were uncomfortable.

The temptation to overreach, however, seems increasingly indulged today in discussions about science. Both in the work of professional philosophers and in popular writings by natural scientists, it is frequently claimed that natural science does or soon will constitute the entire domain of truth. And this attitude is becoming more widespread among scientists themselves. All too many of my contemporaries in science have accepted without question the hype that suggests that an advanced degree in some area of natural science confers the ability to pontificate wisely on any and all subjects.

Of course, from the very beginning of the modern scientific enterprise, there have been scientists and philosophers who have been so impressed with the ability of the natural sciences to advance knowledge that they have asserted that these sciences are the only valid way of seeking knowledge in any field. A forthright expression of this viewpoint has been made by the chemist Peter Atkins, who in his 1995 essay "[Science as Truth](#)" asserts the "universal competence" of science. This position has been called *scientism* — a term that was originally intended to be pejorative but has been claimed as a badge of honor by some of its most vocal proponents. In their 2007 book [Every Thing Must Go: Metaphysics Naturalized](#), for example, philosophers James Ladyman, Don Ross, and David Spurrett go so far as to entitle a chapter "In Defense of Scientism."

Modern science is often described as having emerged from philosophy; many of the early modern scientists were engaged in what they called "natural philosophy." Later, philosophy came to be seen as an activity distinct from but integral to natural science, with each addressing separate but complementary questions — supporting, correcting, and supplying knowledge to one another. But the status of philosophy has fallen quite a bit in recent times. Central to scientism is the grabbing of nearly the entire territory of what were once considered questions that properly belong to philosophy. Scientism takes science to be not only better than philosophy at answering such questions, but the *only* means of answering them. For most of those who dabble in scientism, this shift is unacknowledged, and may not even be recognized. But for others, it is explicit. Atkins, for example, is scathing in his dismissal of the entire field: "I consider it to be a defensible proposition that no philosopher has helped to elucidate nature; philosophy is but the refinement of hindrance."

Is scientism defensible? Is it really true that natural science provides a satisfying and reasonably complete account of everything we see, experience, and seek to understand — of every phenomenon in the universe? And is it true that science is more capable, even singularly capable, of answering the questions that once were addressed by philosophy? This subject is too large to tackle all at once. But by looking briefly at the modern understandings of science and philosophy on which scientism rests, and examining a few case studies of the attempt to supplant philosophy entirely with science, we might get a sense of how the reach of scientism exceeds its grasp.

From <https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-folly-of-scientism>

**Scientism** is the view that [science](#) and [scientific method](#) are the best or only [objective](#) means by which people should determine [normative](#) and [epistemological](#) values, or that the [natural sciences](#) constitute the most authoritative [worldview](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

While the term was originally defined to mean "methods and attitudes typical of or attributed to the natural scientist", some [religious](#) scholars (and subsequently many others) also adopted it as a pejorative with the meaning "an exaggerated trust in the efficacy of the methods of natural science applied to all areas of investigation (as in philosophy, the social sciences, and the humanities)".<sup>[2]</sup> The term *scientism* is often used critically, implying an unwarranted application of science in situations considered not amenable to application of the [scientific method](#) or similar scientific standards.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientism>

### sci·en·tism

/ˈsiːn.tɪz.əm/  
[Learn to pronounce](#)

*noun*  
**RARE**

1. thought or expression regarded as characteristic of scientists.
- excessive belief in the power of scientific knowledge and techniques

From <https://www.google.com/search?q=scientism&oq=scientism&aqs=chrome..69j57j45j2j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

## SCIENCE VERSUS SCIENTISM

SCIENCE	SCIENTISM
Science is the study of nature and behaviour of natural things and knowledge obtained through them	Scientism is the view that only science can render truth about the world and reality
Pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of natural phenomenon	A philosophical view of the world

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# The Curious History of The International Flat Earth Society

The recent resurgence of this ancient idea reminds us that flat Earth believers have a long history

[Danny Lewis](#)

January 29, 2016



Earth as seen on July 6, 2015 from a distance of one million miles by a NASA scientific camera aboard the Deep Space Climate Observatory spacecraft. Corbis This week, a particularly odd little bit of pseudoscience reared its head again when rapper B.o.B. took to Twitter and [proclaimed that the Earth is flat](#). Since then, the rapper has drawn the ire of all sorts of incredulous people, [including astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson](#).

People have known that the Earth is round since at least the sixth century B.C.E. So many were surprised to hear the flat Earth concept still kicked around. But this wasn't the first resurgence of the idea. Back in the 1970s and '80s, a man named Charles Kenneth Johnson became a minor celebrity for his refusal to believe the Earth is round, [Cheryl Eddy writes for iO9](#).

Johnson's good friend Samuel Shenton founded a small fringe group dubbed the Flat Earth Society in the 1950s. In 1972 Johnson became the president of the society after Shenton's death, transforming the group from a small collection of conspiracy theorists into an organization with thousands of members. He made waves in the national media and became known for cheerfully insisting the rest of the world was being duped by scientists. Douglas Martin wrote in Johnson's obituary [for the New York Times](#) in 2001.

"If earth were a ball spinning in space, there would be no up or down," Johnson told David Gates and Jennifer Smith for *Newsweek* in 1984. Similarly, Johnson's wife Marjory believed that the Earth must be flat, because otherwise she would have spent her childhood in her native Australia hanging upside-down by her toes, Martin wrote at the time.

During his tenure as president of the Flat Earth Society, its ranks swelled to about 3,500 people. In his newsletters, Johnson wrote off such spectacles like the sunrise and sunset as optical illusions, discussed [how Charles Lindbergh proved the Earth was flat](#), and claimed that NASA and the moon landing were nothing but hoaxes, Eddy writes.

"You can't orbit a flat earth," Johnson told [Robert J. Schadewald for Science Digest](#) in 1980. "The Space Shuttle is a joke—and a very ludicrous joke."

Ironically, Johnson lived just over the hill from Edwards Air Force Base in southern California—the facility where the Air Force tests experimental aircraft, and where NASA's Space Shuttles landed after returning to Earth.

While most of the articles about Johnson and his fringe beliefs were written with tongue firmly in cheek, he channeled his odd sort of fame into increasing membership in the Flat Earth Society (as well as a starring role in an ice cream commercial). But it didn't last: By the time Johnson died, the society had dwindled again to just 100 members. The Flat Earth Society is still around, though they remain little more than a tiny fringe group.

"It is always good to question 'how we know what we know,'" Christine Garwood, author of *Flat Earth: The History of an Infamous Idea*, [tells Brendan O'Neill for the BBC](#). "But it is also good to have the ability to accept compelling evidence—such as the photographs of Earth from space."

*The cities in the background are approx. 16miles apart... where is the curve ? please explain this <pic.twitter.com/YCJVbDOWX7>*

— B.o.B (@bobatl) [January 25, 2016](#)

From <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/curious-history-international-flat-earth-society-180957969/>



## Documenting the Existence of "The International Flat Earth Society"

Copyright © 1993 by [Robert P. J. Day](#)

### DISCLAIMER:

This article is *not* advocating flat-earth theory, nor is it attempting to show that most or even many creationists believe in a flat Earth. It simply illustrates that there are still real people who interpret the Bible so literally that they think Earth is flat. The TalkOrigins Archive does not support or endorse the views of the International Flat Earth Society.

**Please do not send us feedback to tell us that the Earth is a sphere; we are already aware of this fact.**

Because our feedback system has been overburdened with disgruntled readers who apparently must complain to someone, we have taken the liberty of disabling the feedback links from this page.

Someone writes:

Contact the Flat Earth Society (I don't have the address handy, but I posted it a while ago). They will provide you with materials and show you how to fight the evil humanistic belief that the earth is round with true evidence and Biblical information that shows otherwise.

### Other Links:

[The Flat Out Truth](#)

Robert Schadewald's article on the International Flat Earth Society sheds more light on the beliefs and goals of its founder.

Someone else responds:

Funny, my Bible says "He compasseth the day from the night" indicating that the earth is a sphere (round). All this proves is that one can support virtually any statement imaginable from Scripture. Precisely the opposite viewpoint is expressed by the reference to the "four corners of the earth," and by the parable of Jesus being shown "all the kingdoms of the earth" from the top of a mountain -- clearly impossible for a sphere, but reasonable for a flat surface. See how easy it is? One can play dueling Scriptures all day, and settle nothing.

Anyway, if you really want to know about the Flat Earth Society, it's run by Charles K. Johnson, Box 2533, Lancaster, CA, 93539-2533, phone 805-727-1635. This group is not a joke; it is deadly serious and manages to publish some of the most anti-intellectual and vicious (not to mention illiterate) prose I've seen in a while.

For example, in the Sept 1988 issue, we have the tasty little excerpt:

"IN USA today, as in Russia in '20s and NAZI Germany in '40s full scale campaign to create USA ALSO A BEAST NATION... no God... no right no wrong no up no down 2 added to 2 is whatever scientists say it is... Adults today either jailed or shot down... at own homes for even teaching their own children... GOD EXISTS and Right and Wrong exists (State of Utah)... bells have been tolling for so long... for the helpless pitiful innocent 'animals' as they are tortured to death by priests of the State Religion 'GREASE BALL SCIENCE'... now ... 1988 ... no use, too late... to send to see for whom the bell tolls... THE BELL TOLLS FOR THEE!" [Sic. Totally sic, as in word for word, character for character.]

The Flat Earth News, at least back then, had a regular column, "One Hundred Proofs Earth is Not a Globe." Number 34, in that issue.

"If the Earth were a globe, there certainly would be -- if we could imagine the thing, to be peopled all around-'antipodes': 'people who,' says the dictionary, 'living exactly on the opposite side of the globe to ourselves, having their feet [sic] opposite to ours' - people who are HANGING DOWN, HEAD DOWNWARDS while we are standing head up? But since the theory allows to travel to those parts of the earth where the people are said to hang head downward, and still to fancy ourselves to be heads upwards, and our friends whom we have left behind us to be heads downwards, it follows that the WHOLE THING IS A MYTH - A DREAM - A DELUSION - and a snare, and, instead of there being any evidence at all in this direction to substantiate this popular theory, it is plain proof that the Earth is Not A Globe."

The following is the flyer that the Flat Earth Society sends to people interested in them. I have entered it *verbatim*. All typos, punctuation errors, etc are *theirs*. Enjoy.

International Flat Earth Research Society  
known as

FLAT EARTH SOCIETY

Charles K. Johnson, President

Marjory Vaughn Johnson, Sec.

Telephone: (805) 727-1635

PO Box 2533, Lancaster, CA 93539

Aim: To carefully observe, think freely rediscover forgotten fact and oppose theoretical dogmatic assumptions. To help establish the United States...of the world on this flat earth. Replace the science religion...with SANITY

The International Flat Earth Society is the oldest continuous Society existing on the world today. It began with the Creation of the Creation. First the water...the face of the deep...without form or limits...just Water. Then the Land sitting in and on the Water, the Water then as now being flat and level, as is the very Nature of Water. There are, of course, mountains and valleys on the Land but since most of the World is Water, we say, "The World is Flat." Historical accounts and spoken history tell us the Land part may have been square, all in one mass at one time, then as now, the magnetic north being the Center. Vast cataclysmic events and shaking no doubt broke the land apart, divided the Land to be our present continents or islands as they exist today. One thing we know for sure about this world...the known inhabited world is Flat, Level, a Plain World.

We maintain that what is called 'Science' today and 'scientists' consist of the same old gang of witch doctors, sorcerers, tellers of tales, the 'Priest-Entertainers' for the common people. 'Science' consists of a weird, way-out occult concoction of jibberish theory-theology...unrelated to the real world of facts, technology and inventions, tall buildings and fast cars, airplanes and other Real and Good things in life; technology is not in any way related to the web of idiotic scientific theory. ALL inventors have been anti-science. The Wright brothers said: "Science theory held us up for years. When we threw out all science, started from experiment and experience, then we invented the airplane." By the way, airplanes all fly level on this Plane earth.

Our Society of Zetetics have existed for at least 6,000 years, the extent of recorded history. Extensive writing from 1492 b.c. We have been and are the Few, the Elite, who use Logic Reason are Rational. Summed up, we are Sane and/or have Common Sense as contrasted to the "herd" who is unthinking and uncaring. We have absorbed the Universal Zetetic Society of America and Great Britain, ZION U.S.A., the work of Alexander Dowie 1888, Wilber Glen Voliva 1942, Samuel Shenton, Lillian J. Shenton of England 1971. Zetetic: from Zeto, to seek and search out; Prove, as contrasted to theoretic which means to guess, to hope, to suppose, but NOT to 'prove'. Science 'proves' earth a 'ball' by 'scripture' words. We PROVE earth Flat by experiment, demonstrated and demonstrable. Earth Flat is a Fact, not a 'theory'!

Our aim is not to 'disturb the herd' or wreck the Government, but rather to be an aid to the Elite Human Being in coming to KNOW earth flat...to then FREE his or her mind from such blind unreasoning 'theory-superstition' and so go on "to carefully observe...think freely...rediscover forgotten facts and oppose theoretical dogmatic assumptions." As Sir Fields, owner of newspapers in England, has said about us, "They are the Last pocket of individual Thinkers in English speaking world." I sometimes call myself the Last Iconoclast. Science is a false religion, the opium of the masses. I myself count it as a beginning of Sanity to confess "the creation proves there was a Creator" so a God or Creator...Exists. From a life-time of study, of seeking out a proving things, from the study of 6,000 years of recorded history, from observation, from experience, from Common Sense Observation, have concluded the 10 Commandments are in fact good Laws of Living and Behavior for oneself and all in contact with you...truly 'Laws of Physics for Living.' That is my opinion. The Fact the Earth is Flat is not my opinion, it is a Proved Fact. Also demonstrated Sun and Moon are about 3,000 miles away are both 32 miles across. The Planets are 'tiny.' Sun and Moon do Move, earth does NOT move, whirl, spin or gyrate. Australians do NOT

hang by their feet under the world...this is a FACT, not a theory! Also a Fact the Spinning, Whirling, Gyrating Ball World Planet, Globe Idea is Entirely 100% now and at all times in the Past, a RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE...a Blind Dogmatic Article of Faith in the Religion for the Blind unreasoning beast of prey. No earthly reason for a Sane, Upright Member of the Elite Elect Humans to subscribe to it. Also a Fact, today the Elite of Earth ALL live on the Flat World. Only the illogical, unreasoning "herd"...prefers the way-out occult weird theology of the old Greek superstition earth a spinning ball! Both Copernecious and Newton, the inventors of the "modern" superstitions (400 year OLD modern) have said: "It is not possible for a Sane reasonable person to ever really believe these Theories." Thus sayeth Newton-Copernecious. What sayeth THOU?

Associate Membership contribution of \$10.00 a year, includes four (4) issue of FLAT EARTH NEWS and Membership Card. An 8 x 12 Color Certificate of Membership is \$5.00 extra. Sustaining Member \$25.00 a year; Patron \$100.00 and up. One year of the quarterly (4 issues) FLAT EARTH NEWS and Membership Card and Certificate. \$5.00 single copy. Each issue contains further proofs of the fact - earth IS flat. People of goodwill who seek the truth also known as the Facts are Welcome! We do not want members who are stupid, mindless, brute beasts with two feet whose only aim is to scoff or in some way 'harm' our work -- Facts, Logic, Reason, Sanity also known as commonsense, is our aim.

In 30AD JC said... seek and find the Truth and it will set you free. Free from the Pathological Liars...the great pretenders who mislead all flesh and blood.

Age \_\_\_\_\_ RACE \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a teacher of any kind in the education system? \_\_\_\_\_

Minister? \_\_\_\_\_

Priest? \_\_\_\_\_

Rabbi? \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby affirm my aim in joining is not to harm, degrade, damage or defame this Society

signed \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear of us?

SPECIAL: FLAT EARTH MAP (as featured in Newsweek, 7/2/84) \$6.00 postpaid; Membership, Certificate, and Map \$20.00.

From <<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/flatearth.html>>

## Charles Johnson, 76, Proponent of Flat Earth

By [Douglas Martin](#)

March 25, 2001

Charles K. Johnson, president of the International Flat Earth Research Society since 1972, who stubbornly and cheerfully insisted that those who believed the earth was round had been duped, died on Monday at his home in Lancaster, Calif. He was 76. Jill Fear, secretary of the society, said Mr. Johnson suffered from lung ailments and died in his sleep. She said she would try to carry on his mission of promoting the view that the world was actually a flat disk floating on primordial waters instead of a ball spinning and orbiting in space. Mr. Johnson, who called himself the last iconoclast, regarded scientists as witch doctors pulling off a gigantic hoax so as to replace religion with science. He based his own ideas on the Old Testament references to a flat earth and the New Testament saying that Jesus ascended into heaven. "If earth were a ball spinning in space, there would be no up or down," he told Newsweek magazine in 1984.

His essential suggestion was that people should just look around and trust their own eyes. "Reasonable, intelligent people have always recognized that the earth is flat," he said. In quarterly newsletters, Mr. Johnson seemed to have an answer for almost everything. Sunrises and sunsets? An optical illusion. The moon landing? An elaborate hoax with a script by the science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, staged in a hangar in Arizona. (And Mr. Johnson was not alone; a Washington Post poll in 1994 found that 9 percent of Americans thought the landing was faked.) Eclipses of the sun? "We really don't have to go into all that," he told The New York Times in 1979. "The Bible tells us the heavens are a mystery." Some, but hardly all, opponents of the theory of evolution used Mr. Johnson's arguments as part of their arsenal. Newsweek suggested that the flat earth society was more "a mystical entity than an organization." In "Eccentric Lives and Peculiar Notions" (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), John Mitchell lumped Mr. Johnson's society with U.F.O. believers and modern-day druids.

But people remained fascinated with someone who believed what Adam and Eve assumed, and Mr. Johnson was frequently interviewed and asked to speak. Once he did a commercial for Dreyer's ice cream. Charles Kenneth Johnson was born in San Angelo, Tex., on July 24, 1924. Before moving to the Mojave Desert, he was an airplane mechanic in San Francisco for 25 years.

He corresponded with Samuel Shenton, an Englishman, who led the small society. Mr. Shenton specified before his death in 1972 that leadership of the society be passed on to Mr. Johnson, who was not a member but had doubted that the earth was round since an elementary school teacher unsuccessfully tried to teach him about gravity. The group's roots, Mr. Johnson maintained, were planted 6,000 years ago in Greece, by the Society of Zetetics, meaning investigators. Samuel Birley Rowbotham founded the Universal Zetetic Society in America and Great Britain in 1832. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, George Bernard Shaw first rose to participate in a debate at the Zetetic Society, which might have been the same organization, in 1879. The Universal Zetetic Society became the International Flat Earth Research Society, though it is unclear when the name was changed.

By the mid-1990's, according to Mr. Johnson, the group's membership had grown to 3,500 members, each paying \$25; membership included a map of the flat world. Mr. Johnson ran the operation from a spare bedroom of his house. He liked to smoke a cigar at sunset and gaze out at the desert, which was flat as a pancake except for the occasional tumbleweed. Then, in 1995, the house burned to the ground. He managed to rescue his wife, Marjory, who could not walk and needed an oxygen tank to breathe. But the society's records and literature were destroyed. Mrs. Johnson, who believed in a flat earth because she did not hang from her toes in her native Australia, died the next year. Local authorities evicted Mr. Johnson from the trailer into which he had moved, next to the ruins of his house. Legally, the trailer was required to be on a foundation, and to have wood rather than metal siding, standards it did not meet.

So he moved into the home of his brother Jackie, his only survivor, on the outskirts of Lancaster. With the help of Ms. Fear, he was trying to rebuild the society, which now has about 100 members, all of whom have joined since the fire. Science Digest said in a 1980 article that Mr. Johnson had "a wry sense of humor and a booming laugh." He called Copernicus, who first theorized that a round earth revolved around the sun, "Copernicious."

From <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/25/us/charles-johnson-76-proponent-of-flat-earth.html>

## Charles K. Johnson



### Description

Charles Kenneth Johnson was, from 1972 until his death, the president of the International Flat Earth Research Society, which he and his wife ran from their home in California. [Wikipedia](#)  
**Born:** July 24, 1924, [San Angelo, Texas, United States](#)  
**Died:** March 19, 2001, [Lancaster, Pennsylvania, United States](#)

From <https://www.google.com/search?q=Charles+Kenneth+Johnson&oeq=Charles+Kenneth+Johnson&aqs=chrome..69j57l2007j0l1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

## Charles K Johnson relentlessly argued that the Earth was flat

Thu, Jul 12, 2001, 01:00

Charles K Johnson believed until the day he died that the Earth was flat. "Reasonable, intelligent people have always recognised that the Earth is flat," he argued relentlessly. The Texan, who was president of the International Flat Earth Research Society from 1972 until his death earlier this year, was not alone in his beliefs. Membership peaked at 3,500 in the mid-1990s (perhaps due to pre-millennial angst).

For a fee of \$25, members got the society's newsletter and a map displaying a patently flat world. Sadly, most of the society's records were destroyed in a fire at Johnson's home in 1995. Johnson insisted that the Earth was a disc with the North Pole at the centre. He also argued that the sun and moon, each 32 miles in diameter, circled Earth from a distance of just 3,000 miles. He was not a great believer in the South Pole.

"The universe is not only queerer than we imagine, it's queerer than we can imagine," the esteemed British scientist JBS Haldane once wrote. But Johnson did not think so, even if what he thought about the world would seem very queer indeed to most people.

Johnson did not have a very high opinion of scientists anyway, regarding them as "witch doctors" attempting to replace religion with science. "Scientists consist of the same old gang of witch doctors, sorcerers, tellers of tales, the priest-entertainers for the common people," he preached to converted readers in his own publication, Flat Earth News.

"Science consists of a weird, way-out occult concoction of gibberish theory-theology unrelated to the real world of facts, technology and inventions, tall buildings, fast cars, aeroplanes and other real and good things in life," he said.

His beliefs were based on Old Testament references to a flat Earth and to writings in the New Testament about Jesus ascending into heaven.

"If Earth were a ball spinning in space, there would be no up or down," he told Newsweek in 1984. Johnson's wife, Marjory, who died five years before he did, stood by her man.

She told anyone who would listen that she believed in a flat Earth because she had not hung upside-down by her toes in her native Australia.

Few scientific facts went unexplained, even if Johnson's reasoning was nebulous at times. Sunrises and sunsets were merely an optical illusion, he believed.

Asked by the New York Times in 1979 about eclipses of the sun he said: "We really don't have to go into all of that. The Bible tells us the heavens are a mystery."

He believed the moon landing was a sophisticated hoax which was filmed at Meteor Crater, Arizona, and was scripted by science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke. In this, if nothing else, he was far from alone.

A 1994 Washington Post survey found that 9 per cent of Americans thought the moon landings were faked.

Johnson did not have much time for Copernicus, the 16th century astronomer who first demonstrated that Earth orbits the sun. He referred to him as "copernicious". He did, however, find fellow flat earthers in the oddest places.

He maintained Moses was one. The Flat Earth Society was founded in 1492 BC when Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and gave them the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, he said. The year AD 1492 was important to Johnson. Talking about Christopher Columbus's voyage of discovery, he said: "He had enough sense to know that if the world was a ball, he would have fallen off."

The modern society grew out of an older body, the Universal Zetetic Society, founded in England in 1832 by Sir Birley Rowbotham who wrote a book about it all, Earth Not a Globe.

Johnson found friends in the 20th century.

He maintained the foundation of the UN confirmed his beliefs because the body took the flat Earth map as its symbol.

Johnson referred to himself as the last iconoclast, but was well aware of the ridicule heaped upon his ideas.

"It makes you kind of a loner . . . They don't want anything to do with a controversial idea," he told documentary filmmaker, Robert Abel, in 1992.

Charles K Johnson died on March 19th at the age of 76 at his home in Lancaster, California.

From <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/charles-k-johnson-relentlessly-argued-that-the-earth-was-flat-1.317428>

# Flat Earth Society of Canada

Saturday, February 12, 2022 9:47 PM

## Fonds MG H 168a - Flat Earth Society of Canada

Title proper	Flat Earth Society of Canada
General material designation	◆ Textual record
Title notes	◆ Source of title proper: Title based on contents.
Level of description	Fonds
Repository	<a href="#">University of New Brunswick Archives &amp; Special Collections</a>
Reference code	CA UNB MG H 168a
Date(s)	◆ 1970-1993, predominant 1970-1984 (Creation) Creator Flat Earth Society of Canada
Physical description	96 cm of textual records 13 artifacts 4 photographs : 3 b&w and 1 colour ; 15.5 x 20 cm or smaller
Name of creator	<a href="#">Flat Earth Society of Canada</a> (Organized in 1970, ceased in mid-1980s) Administrative history  The Flat Earth Society of Canada (FES) was organized at Fredericton, New Brunswick, on 8 November 1970 by Leo Ferrari, Raymond Fraser, and Alden Nowlan. They maintained that a prevailing problem of the new technological age was the willingness of people ... <a href="#">2</a>
Custodial history	The bulk of the material in this fonds and MG H168 Leo C. Ferrari fonds were deposited with Archives and Special Collections Department on 15 March 1995. Several artifacts and a VHS video were deposited by him in May 1995. Material was taken from the ... <a href="#">2</a>
Scope and content	"This fonds documents the activities of The Flat Earth Society of Canada (later The Flat Earth Society) from its birth in November 1970 until its demise in the mid-1980s. More specifically, it highlights Leo Ferrari's role as the society's spokesperson ... <a href="#">2</a>
Arrangement	A few files were created by the archivist.  For the most part, the original order and title of files have been retained. The archivist has annotated a number of file titles; these annotations appear in square brackets in the listing of file titles.
Language of material	◆ English
Restrictions on access	No restrictions
Finding aids	A listing of file titles is available.
Associated materials	See also: MG H168a Leo C. Ferrari fonds MG L28 Raymond Fraser fonds
Subject access points	◆ <a href="#">Organisations</a>

From <https://search.canbarchives.ca/flat-earth-society-of-canada-2>

### Series No. 2

**The Flat Earth Society of Canada.** -- 1970-93; predominant 1970-84. -- 96 cm of textual records and photographs: 3 b&w and 1 colour; 15.5 x 20 cm or smaller

**Administrative history:** The Flat Earth Society of Canada was organized at Fredericton, N.B. on 8 November 1970 by Leo Ferrari, Raymond Fraser, and Alden Nowlan. According to them, a prevailing problem of the new technological age was the willingness of people to accept theories "on blind faith and to reject the evidence of their own senses." To promote critical thinking, the society chose to dispute one thing that "scientific Western civilization" considers indisputable -- namely, that the earth is round. The organization, therefore, set as its primary aims: "to combat the fallacious deification of the circle," "to restore man's confidence in the validity of his own perceptions", and "to spearhead man's escape from his metaphysical and geometrical prison." "The earth is flat; any fool can see that" was adopted as the society's principal motto.

The society's long-serving president and primary promoter was Leo Ferrari, a philosophy professor at St. Thomas University. Other members of the executive included poet-novelist Raymond Fraser, writer Alden Nowlan, writer-educator Alphonsus J. Pittman, and poet-novelist Gwendolyn MacEwen. To boost membership and advance the cause of planoterrestrialism, the executive issued tracts (two by Nowlan), published a newsletter called *The Official Chronicle* (later an official organ, *The Official Organ*), and distributed promotional literature at public lectures and meetings of the Learned Societies of Canada.

Ferrari and Nowlan also promoted the society's aims more widely through television, radio, and the public press. They wrote articles, gave newspaper interviews, and appeared on television and radio programmes such as *This Country in the Morning*, *Spectroscope*, *Take 30*, *W5*, and *Front Page Challenge*. The publication of William Johnson's article about the organization in *Saturday Review of the Sciences* (May 1973) resulted in an influx of requests for membership, primarily from the United States. The same year the name of the organization was simplified to The Flat Earth Society to reflect its growing international appeal.

Generally, planoterrestrialists were drawn from among the well-educated -- computer scientists, university administrators, academics, lawyers, physicians, scientists, poets, and writers. They included such well-known figures as writer Farley Mowat, television personality Paul Soles, American novelist Lawrence Block, and poet Elizabeth Brewster. Associate membership was granted to persons "of integrity" who subscribed to the society's aims and submitted an essay giving their reasons for believing the earth was flat. After three years, associate members-in-good-standing were granted full membership status. In 1974, the society could boast approximately 100 members in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Planoterrestrialists waged an intellectual, often humorous "battle" against the "globalist heresy" for over a decade before fading from view in the mid-1980s.

**Scope and content:** This series documents the activities of The Flat Earth Society of Canada, later renamed simply The Flat Earth Society (FES), from its birth in November 1970 until its demise in the mid-1980s. More specifically, it highlights Ferrari's role as the society's spokesperson and long-serving president.

It includes correspondence, notes, membership records, financial records, newspaper clippings, photographs, and cartoons. In addition, the series contains copies of newsletters, tracts (statements of the society's views), and drafts of speeches as well as draft and published copies of articles about the society and its members. Also included are an unpublished manuscript, *The Earth is Flat! An Exposé on the Globalist Hoax* and a published copy of Ferrari's scholarly article "Feminism and Education in a Flat Earth Perspective" which appeared in *McGill Journal of Education*.

**This series consists of 3 subseries: 1) administration, 2) publications and presentations, and 3) Flat Earth manuscript.**

**Subseries 1, administration** contains correspondence between executive committee members as well as between the executive committee and the society's general membership. Letters discuss Flat Earth activities -- publication of newsletters and tracts, public lectures, television appearances, and radio interviews as well as personal news, articles about the society, and financial matters. Also included are financial statements, bank records, receipt books, invoices, reports of field trips, completed membership forms, membership certificates, membership lists, membership cards, requests for information, and numerous letters from individuals explaining why they wish to become "Flat Earthers".

**Subseries 2, publications and presentations** contains draft and published material about the society -- its views, its aims, its activities, and its members. Included are reference materials, draft articles, poems (one by Nowlan), copies of *The Official Chronicle* and *The Official Organ*, correspondence with printers and distributors, and letters requesting permission to print items in the newsletter/official organ. This subseries also contains copies of newspaper stories, tracts, drafts of addresses delivered by Ferrari, and three photographs of him speaking. A videotape entitled "In Search of the Edge", a matted print of Columbus's ships at "the edge", an audio tape of Ferrari speaking about the society, and cartoons dealing with the flat earth/round earth debate are also included.

**Subseries 3, Flat Earth manuscript** consists of drafts of Ferrari's unpublished manuscript, *The Earth is Flat! An Exposé on the Globalist Hoax* and his correspondence with various publishing houses.

File arrangement is random, as deposited.

Title based on content of series.

Artifacts relating to The Flat Earth Society are located in [series 3, artifacts \(The Flat Earth Society\)](#).

From <https://web.lib.unb.ca/archives/finding/ferrari/s2.html>

## Lougheed House exhibit about the Flat Earth Society of Canada melds fact and fabrication

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From the exhibit Beyond the Edge at the Lougheed House. Courtesy, Lougheed House. jpg

Taylor is the current president of the Flat Earth Society of Canada, or at least was until she vanished. Seeker was an early member of the society who went to Fogo Island in the early 1970s for research purposes. He was keen to investigate what the society has proclaimed as one of the four corners of the Earth. He was "the guardian of the corner" before vanishing.

### Lougheed House exhibit about the Flat Earth Society of Canada melds fact and fabrication

A new exhibit called Beyond the Edge, which runs until Oct. 17 at the Lougheed House, promises to investigate these overlapping mysteries.

"Part of what is being looked at in the travelling exhibit is circumstances of the disappearances of these two people 40 years apart," says artist Kay Burns, founder of the Museum of the Flat Earth in Fogo Island, N.L. and the creator of Beyond the Edge.

The exhibit is certainly unusual for the Lougheed House. In fact, it would be unusual no matter where it was showing. Is it an art project? A historical exploration? Featuring "artifacts and ephemera" from Burns' museum, it does investigate the early days of the Flat Earth Society of Canada, which was founded in Fredericton in 1970. But the playful exhibit also mixes fact with fiction, albeit a fiction that Burns seems reluctant to acknowledge as such with much enthusiasm. Iris Taylor was, in fact, created by Burns as an eccentric persona that she would occasionally take on to perform a "recruitment lecture." The improbably named Bartholomew Seeker's origins are also historically blurry.

But that's part of the fun. Beyond the Edge is meant to be challenging and provocative. Burns does not reveal what the fact-to-fantasy ratio is, but there seems to be a playful fuzziness in how it poses as an earnest history exhibit.

"How do I articulate what this is exactly?" Burns says. "It is hard to fit it into any specific slot. But, yes, it addresses history to a certain extent. It addresses the history of the Flat Earth Society of Canada, which started in 1970. So we're not talking old history, we're only talking 50-year-old history. But it also alludes to some of the other ideas that fit that at the time. A lot of what it's about is to play with the idea of what the function of a museum is. It's situated in a museum but also questions the premise of museums."



Artist Kay Burns, who created the exhibit *Beyond the Edge* at the Lougheed House. Courtesy, Lougheed House. jpg  
According to her official bio, Burns' work has included performance art, video, sculpture and installation and often "melds fact and fabrication, indirectly commenting on the authority associated with the dissemination of information."

There is, of course, heavy baggage associated with the flat-earth movement these days. For some, it belongs to a fervent strain of anti-science sentiment that seems to have flourished and taken hold in some corners. But Burns insists that the work she has been involved in around the Flat Earth Society of Canada does not relate to the "YouTubers and the conference people out there" or the "extremist angle that they put on it." "It's not about conferences, it's not about the religious underpinnings, it's not about trying to advocate for anti-science in any way," she says. "The people that started (The Flat Earth Society of Canada) were university professors. They were using it as a way to instigate critical thinking, to look at different points of view so that you will make those kinds of inquiries, not to advocate for one philosophy being better than the other as much as weighing the possibilities. I know in the last three or four years there has been a lot of stuff out there in terms of flat-earth ... I don't even know how to put it ... the extremist point of view, shall we say. The society doesn't situate itself within that kind of philosophy."

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From the exhibit *Beyond the Edge* by Kay Burns at the Lougheed House. Courtesy, Lougheed House. jpg  
Born in Ontario and currently based in Newfoundland, Burns spent a good part of her career in Alberta, including teaching at the University of Calgary and the Alberta College of Art and Design (now the Alberta University of the Arts.) She began exploring and researching the Flat Earth Society of Canada in the 1980s. "When people hear about it now they have different connotations," she says. "But when I first heard about it in the 1980s, I was really intrigued by its quirkiness and taking ideas and playing with them in different ways. That's what making art is all about, working with ideas and presenting them in alternative ways and investigating the conceptual extensions of those ideas and how one idea can be an impetus to something else. But the first thing I grabbed onto when I heard about it, I was just intrigued by its quirkiness and the fact that there was a society and that they were exploring these ideas and playing with these ideas."

Still, Burns refuses to answer the one question she is routinely asked: Does she believe the Earth is flat?

"My answer isn't important to that question," she says. "The fact that the question is being asked is what's important. Why would anybody believe or not believe in it is more of the issue as opposed to what my personal position is. Because the whole premise of the Flat Earth Society of Canada and how they got started and what their ideas were was about a process of questioning. It's not about providing a definitive answer to anything. It's about a process of questioning and inquiry and looking at multiple perspectives, multiple points of view, how we acquire our knowledge. It's looking at how our lived experience affects that acquisition of knowledge. It's not necessarily about providing answers, it's about opportunity for inquiry and exploration."

From <<https://calgaryherald.com/entertainment/local-arts/lougheed-house-exhibit-about-the-flat-earth-society-of-canada-melds-fact-and-fabrication>>

## Celebrities Who Are Flat Earthers



### [Celebrity Lists](#)

Updated September 23, 2021

No matter how much scientific evidence seems to prove that the Earth is indeed round, there are some people -- even famous ones -- who refuse to believe it. Aristotle may have first hypothesized that the Earth was a sphere back in the 300s B.C., but maybe that's just because he never got to read B.o.B's tweets on the matter. The stars on this list buck conventional wisdom to claim that the world is flat. After all, it's tough to see the curvature when you look out at the horizon.

[These celebrities](#) who are flat Earthers will not be convinced that they are standing on a globe. Who will you choose to believe: Tila Tequila or astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson? Check out the list and decide for yourself.



Photo: [Slaven Vlasic/Contributor/Getty Images Entertainment](#)

### [Shaquille O'Neal](#)

Following a long tradition of [NBA players who apparently believe the Earth is really flat](#), Shaquille O'Neal said on his podcast that indeed the Earth is flat.

"It's true," he said on [Big Podcast with Shaq](#). "The Earth is flat."

His reasoning? He's driven from Florida to California and said the whole ride was clearly flat to him. This info came just weeks after other NBA players - including Kyrie Irving and Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green - said they, too, believe the world is flat. [NBA Commissioner Adam Silver](#) took the opportunity at his state-of-the-league address to say the Earth is round, but this only bolstered current and former NBA players to reinforce their beliefs.

- **Age:** 49
- **Birthplace:** Newark, New Jersey, United States of America



Photo: Brooklyn Nets / Instagram

### [Kyrie Irving](#)

For someone whose job it is to touch spherical objects, you'd think NBA superstar Kyrie Irving would know a thing or two about things that are round. [But apparently he doesn't](#). On a podcast hosted by his teammates Channing Frye and Richard Jefferson, Irving revealed that he believes the Earth is flat.

"This is not even a conspiracy theory," Irving told them. "The Earth is flat."

Irving believes the government is lying to us about the shape of Earth, and attempted an explanation to his teammates about the rotation of the sun and planets.

He later went on to say that [he was just trying to have](#) "an open conversation," but his comments still spurred a lot of other athletes to jump on the flat Earth bandwagon.

- **Age:** 29
- **Birthplace:** Melbourne, Australia



Photo: Karppinen / [Wikimedia Commons](#) / [CC BY 2.0](#)

### [B.o.B](#)

In 2016, rapper B.o.B claimed the Earth was flat. His [reasoning](#)? "No matter how high in elevation you are... the horizon is always eye level ... sorry cadets... I didn't wanna believe it either." Eventually, astrophysicist [Neil deGrasse Tyson](#) joined the conversation to shut him down with actual science. But B.o.B persisted, claiming indoctrination to a "heliocentric belief system" has turned us all into sheep.

- **Age:** 33
- **Birthplace:** Winston-Salem, North Carolina



Photo: Toglenn / [Wikimedia Commons](#) / [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

### [Tila Tequila](#)

In 2016, Tila Tequila tweeted unleashed a barrage of tweets revealing that she thinks the Earth is flat. She said, "It's 2016 & nobodys been able 2 prove 2 me that the earth is round. Where is the curvature in the horizon? #FlatEarth prove me wrong dammit!"

- **Age:** 40
- **Birthplace:** Singapore



Photo: Soerfm / [Wikimedia Commons](#) / [Public Domain](#)

### [George Bernard Shaw](#)

Are we all just sheep who've been tricked by actual pictures of outer space? George Bernard Shaw thought so. He reportedly [said](#), "We are more gullible and superstitious today than we were in the Middle Ages, and an example of modern credulity is the widespread belief that the Earth is round. The average man can advance not a single reason for thinking that the Earth is round. He merely swallows this theory because there is something about it that appeals to the twentieth century mentality."

- **Age:** Dec. at 94 (1856-1950)

- **Birthplace:** Republic of Ireland, Dublin



Photo: Merson / [Wikimedia Commons](#) / [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

## Sammy Watkins

On September 19, 2017, *LA Times* sports reporter Lindsey Thiry said that Sammy Watkins is indeed a Flat Earther. Thiry revealed the information in a tweet, and when she was asked for a source, she simply tweeted back, "Sammy Watkins." According to Thiry, [the wide receiver himself](#) told her he believed the Earth is flat.

- **Age:** 25
- **Birthplace:** Fort Myers, Florida, United States of America



Photo: Dudek1337 / [Wikimedia Commons](#) / [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

## Wilson Chandler

After Kyrie Irving went on Richard Jefferson and Channing Frye's podcast outlining his belief that the Earth is flat, Nuggets player Wilson Chandler hopped on the flat-bandwagon, too. He retweeted Irving's (now-deleted) tweet about the theory [and added](#), "I agree with him." Chandler expanded on his beliefs on BSN Denver, [where he said](#), "Simple explanation. Just walk outside and use your five senses. If someone didn't teach you you were spinning on a ball or biting the Sun, is that what you observe with your five senses?"

- **Age:** 34
- **Birthplace:** Benton Harbor, Michigan



Photo: Lpdrew / [Wikimedia Commons](#) / CC BY-SA 2.0

## **Draymond Green**

While the NBA player has not flat-out said he believes the world isn't round, he doesn't believe the concept is [out of the realm of possibility](#).

"I don't know," he said in a video posted by The Crossover. "I haven't done enough research but it may be flat. I don't want to say crazy. It's hard to call someone's [Kyrie Irving] opinion crazy. That's what he thinks."

He elaborated, saying that the photos of the round Earth produced by NASA could be a dupe:

Yeah but I can make a round picture with my iPhone today on a panoramic picture and make it look round. So I don't know. I'm not saying I think it's flat or round. I don't know, but it could be.

- **Age:** 31
- **Birthplace:** Saginaw, Michigan



Photo: [lucycongreave / Instagram](#)

## **Freddie Flintoff**

While people in the States may not be familiar with Freddie Flintoff, he is a pretty big deal across the pond as a cricket player and broadcaster. The former Ashes player believes there is "evidence to suggest the world isn't round."

Flintoff posited the pseudoscience while being interviewed for [The Sun](#), asking, "If you're in a helicopter and you hover why does the Earth not come to you if it's round? Why, if we're hurtling through space, why would water stay still? Also if you fire a laser about 16 miles, if the world was curved, you shouldn't be able to see it but you can."

- **Age:** 41
- **Birthplace:** Preston, Lancashire, United Kingdom

From <https://www.ranker.com/list/celebrities-who-are-flat-earthers/celebrity-lists>