

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Above the Circle of the Earth

(Jerry Fite)

Standing on the ground and looking up into the sky, you see the sky take on a vaulted or spherical shape as you gaze from horizon to horizon. As you look from outer space, you see the earth as a round ball. Both perspectives are accurate.

Isaiah writes, “*It is He that sitteth above the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as tent to dwell in...*” (Isaiah 40:22).

Did Isaiah reveal something about the earth that any man gazing in the sky could describe? Or, did Isaiah reveal a characteristic of the earth that in his time only God knew? The Hebrew word, translated “circle” is translated “vault” when describing heaven in *Job 22:14*. A derivative of the Hebrew word is used to describe one of the instruments a carpenter might use, such as a “compass” (*Isaiah 44:13*). “Curvature” is the concept behind the word. Both views of the earth are accurate, even if we cannot determine from which perspective Isaiah is speaking.

Is Isaiah 40:22 one of those passages that prove the Bible is inspired of God? Is it like Psalm 8:8 speaking of the “*paths of the sea*” before such were known by scientific investigation? Is it like Job 26:7 when Job claims that God “*...hangeeth the earth upon nothing.*”?

Whether we present Isaiah 40:22 to prove “scientific foreknowledge” or not, we can all agree what Isaiah writes is accurate to the perception of man in our day when viewed through the modern instruments of science. The earth does have a curve to it. It is not flat. It is a circle, hanging on nothing. The Bible does not contradict proven fact.

But Isaiah wants us to look above the circle of the earth to consider the greatness of God. He sits on His throne above the earth regardless if it is just the outstretched land surrounded by water with a vaulted canopy of sky, or if it is a spherical ball hanging on nothing in space. That immense sky that never ends as you make your circuit around the world...well, it is just a curtain in the hands of God. He has stretched it out as a tent to include all inhabitants on earth. From His perspective, we are small “grass-

hoppers”, all hopping around under His tent.

Isaiah also wants us to see that this great God is an all-knowing and powerful God. This God who created the ends of the earth is an everlasting God who “*fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding*” (*Isaiah 40:27*). So, no one should think God does not know the difficult way we are traveling through life. No one should think God lacks the energy to bring forth the justice one thinks is due. God knows and delivers true justice in His time.

Isaiah wants us to know that He who sits above the circle of the earth “*gives power*” to the faint, and to him who lacks might, He gives “*more strength*” (*Isaiah 40:29*). So, we should remain faithful to our Great God and wait on Him.

While God is above the circle of the earth, the faithful mount up with the strength of eagles’ wings, and never weary or faint though journeying through the difficulties of life (*Isaiah 40:31*). Wait on Him! Do not doubt Him. God is not only Great, He is Good!