

## Who Said the Earth Was Flat?

Many of us have heard the old legend about why Christopher Columbus was told he could not sail too far west. According to the legend, Columbus was repeatedly told that he could not sail west to India because the earth was flat. If he sailed too far, he would fall off the edge. That story was a piece of fiction cooked up by Washington Irving in the 1830s.

Only one writer can be found in Western history who believed the earth was flat—that writer was Lactantius in the third century AD. All the others, for example, Pythagoras, still noted today for his mathematical proofs, simply assumed the earth was spherical. Two hundred years later the Greek mathematician Eratosthenes, also assuming that the earth was round, calculated that the earth was 25,000 miles in circumference. He was off by only 200 miles. A century later, using Eratosthenes' figure for the earth's diameter, Hipparchus calculated that the moon was 240,000 miles away from the earth. He was off by only 100 miles—less than half a percent!

Nor does the Bible teach that the earth is flat. Isaiah 40:22 tells us how God looks down on the inhabitants of a round earth. Job 26:7 talks about the earth floating in space, hung on nothing.

Today, we have exposed two myths. One is the myth that most people used to think the earth was flat. The other myth is that the Bible is not accurate when it describes the same creation that modern science talks about.

### **Isaiah 40:22**

**“It is he that sitteth upon 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 a tent to dwell in:”**

Prayer: I thank You, Lord, that Your Word is trustworthy. Human words are often in error or deliberate deceptions. Help me to seek a higher standard of truth, honesty and godliness in all my words, so that I may be more like You. Amen.

REF.: Lemonick, Michael D. Measuring the earth. *Science Digest*.