

The Ends of the Earth

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the “end(s) of the earth” notion expressed primarily in the OT but also in the NT. It is argued that these expressions can only have meaning if the earth is understood to be a flat, circular disk with physical edges. If the biblical earth is a globe then its surface cannot have an end or edge or boundary or limit of any kind, since in whichever direction you go you will always be on its surface. The “end(s) of the earth” expressions would have no meaning in this context. However, if the earth is conceived of as a two-dimensional disk then if you travelled far enough in any direction you would eventually reach the edge of the disk—the ends of the earth. First, it is noted there are a range of Hebrew expressions for this concept: *qāṣēh hā-’āreṣ*, *qaṣwê ’ereṣ*, *’ap̄sê ’āreṣ*, *kənaṗ hā-’āreṣ*, *gəbûlôṭ ’āreṣ*, *sôṗ ’arə ’ā*. Then the usage of these expressions is examined. It is shown that the “end(s) of the earth” are created by God in the beginning as an integral part of the cosmos and are used as a measure of the earth, as a reference to a physical location, as a reference to people who live far away and as a reference to the borders of Israel. “End(s) of the earth” expressions therefore have both a literal and a metaphorical meaning. The “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the NT also have a literal and a metaphorical meaning. So, both the OT and the NT testify to the ends of the earth being something real. We also look at how “end(s) of the earth” expressions are translated in English versions that are more literal and others that are more meaning-based. Studying the meaning-based translations shows that interpreting the “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the OT in terms of understanding that the earth is a globe and does not have physical ends/edges means that you end up with multiple meanings for the “end(s) of the earth” expressions that are incoherent with each other.

Introduction

The exegesis that the biblical earth (*’ereṣ*) is understood to be a flat, circular disk¹ is supported by the fact that there are many OT references to the ends or edges of the earth. The “end(s) of the earth” is an established concept in biblical cosmology. The commonest term used to refer to the “end(s) of the earth” is *qāṣēh hā-’āreṣ*. Here *qāṣēh* means ‘end, extremity; border, outskirts, edge, boundary, brink.’² This term is used in Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, 64, Job 28.24, Pss 46.9[10], 61.2[3], 135.7, Pro 17.24, Isa 5.26, 40.28, 41.5, 9, 42.10, 43.6, 48.20, 49.6, 62.11, Jer 10.13, 25.31, 33, 51.16. The related term *qaṣwê ’ereṣ* is used in Psa 48.10[11], 65.5[6], Isa 26.15. Here *qāṣēw* means ‘ends’. Another common expression for “end(s) of the earth” is *’ap̄sê ’āreṣ* where *’ap̄sê* means ‘end, extremity’.³ This is used in Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 67.7[8], 72.8, 98.3, Pro 30.4, Isa 45.22, 52.10, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10. Several other terms are also used to refer to the “end(s) of the earth.” This includes *kənaṗ* ‘wing (of bird), extremity, skirts’⁴ in Job 38.1 and Isa 24.16, and *gəbûlôṭ* ‘border, boundary’⁵ in Psa 74.17. There is also *sôṗ ’arə ’ā* in Dan 4.10–11[7–8], 22[19] where *sôṗ* means ‘end, conclusion’.⁶ So, there are six ways of expressing the concept “end(s) of the earth” in biblical Hebrew:

qāṣēh hā-’āreṣ ‘end, extremity; border, outskirts, edge, boundary, brink of the earth’

qaṣwê ’ereṣ ‘ends of the earth’

’ap̄sê ’āreṣ ‘end, extremity of the earth’

¹ See Roberts (2013, 2017).

² BDB 7097 (2010[1906]: 892)

³ BDB 657 (2010[1906]: 67)

⁴ BDB 3671 (2010[1906]: 489)

⁵ BDB 1367 (2010[1906]: 148)

⁶ BDB 5491.

kənaṣ hā-’āreṣ ‘wing, extremity, skirt of the earth’⁷

gaḥûlôṭi ’āreṣ ‘borders, boundaries of the earth’

sôṣp ’arā ’ā ‘end, conclusion of the earth’

If the biblical earth is a globe then its surface cannot have an end or edge or boundary or limit of any kind, since in whichever direction you go you will always be on its surface. However, if the earth is conceived of as a two-dimensional disk then if you travelled far enough in any direction you would eventually reach the edge of the disk—the ends of the earth. Pro 8.27 says that God created the earth by drawing a circle (*hûḡ*) on the surface of the deep. Pro 8.29 says God created boundaries for the sea so that the sea might not flood the earth. Pro 30.4 and Psa 74.17 say that God established the ends of the earth. Isa 40.28 says God created the ends of the earth. So, the ends of the earth are an important functional component of the biblical cosmos created in the beginning.

Pro 8.27–29: ²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle (*hûḡ*) on the face of the deep (*’al-pənê ṭəhôm*), ²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep (*’înôṭi ṭəhôm*), ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea (*yām*) its limit, so that the waters (*mayim*) might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth (*môṣadê ’āreṣ*), (ESV)⁸

Pro 30.4: Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth (*’apṣê ’āreṣ*)? (ESV)

Psa 74.17: You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth (*gaḥûlôṭi ’āreṣ*); you have made summer and winter. (ESV)

Isa 40.28: Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*). He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable (ESV)

In Akkadian literature the phrase “four corners of the earth” which in Akkadian is *kap-pat tu-bu-qa-at erbitti*, can literally be translated “the circle of the four corners”. This is a clear reference to the earth being circular. It seems strange that a circle would also have corners, but they meant the extremities in the four cardinal directions North, South, East, and West. In Egyptian drawings the “ends” of the earth are represented by lions which symbolise mountains that are at the edge of the world. Several drawings have twin lions with the sun in the middle. These twin mountains represent the horizon. In Ugaritic literature the ends of the earth seem to be the place where the heaven and earth meet. The peoples of the ancient Near East believed in the reality of the ends of the earth.⁹

The notion that the earth has ends, limits and boundaries also occurs in the NT (see Mat 12.42, Luk 11.31, Act 1.8, 13.7, Rom 10.18). The Greek words used for “end(s)” are πέρας ‘end, limit, boundary, conclusion’ and ἐσχάτος ‘farthest, end, last’.

Mat 12.42: The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth (τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς) to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (ESV)

⁷ Isa 11.12 mentions the four corners (*kənaṣōṭi*) of the earth, and Ezekiel 7.2 says, “the four corners (*kənaṣōṭi*) of the land (of Israel)”. This does not mean they thought the earth or Israel was a square, but referred to the four extreme points North, South, East, and West.

⁸ Scriptures marked ESV are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁹ See https://www.bibleandscience.com/bible/books/genesis/genesis1_endsearth.htm.

Luk 11.31: The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth (τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς) to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (ESV)

Act 1.8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς).” (ESV)

Act 13.47: For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth (ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς).” (ESV)

Rom 10.18: But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the (inhabited) world (τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης).” (ESV)

It is not surprising that the biblical earth is conceived of as a flat, circular disk with ends or edges. In about 350 BCE, the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) observed that the curved umbral shadow of the earth on the moon during a lunar eclipse was a proof that the earth was in fact spherical. Up until this time the common belief in ancient times was that the earth was a flat disk floating on the waters of the abyss.¹⁰

In this paper we examine the references to the end(s) of the earth in the OT and also in the NT. It is clear from the OT usage of end(s) of the earth terms that the primary usage is to refer to the edges of the disk of the earth. We also compare how “end(s) of the earth” terms are translated in four English versions, two of which are more literal and two are more meaning-based translations.¹¹

Forms of “end(s) of the earth” expressions

Pro 8.27 describes the earth as a circle (*ḥûḡ*) inscribed on the surface of the deep. In the biblical cosmos the earth (*’ereṣ*) is a flat, circular disk founded on the deep (*təhôm*). This is concurrent with ancient belief. In this context the “end(s) of the earth” is the rim of the disk. By contrast, the modern view is that the earth is a globe in space and the surface of the earth has no edges. The “end(s) of the earth” in the OT therefore has to be interpreted as something else.

Pro 8.27–29: ²⁷ When he established the heavens, I [Wisdom] was there; when he drew a circle (*ḥûḡ*) on the face of the deep, ²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, (ESV)

There are six expressions for “end(s) of the earth” in the Hebrew OT. Four of them have variant forms. The fact that there are multiple Hebrew expressions for “end(s) of the earth” shows that these are alternative metaphors for the same concept. This is the same as gates (*šā’ar*) (Gen 28.17), doors (*dalṭê*) (Psa 78.23) and windows (*’arubbōṭ*) (Gen 7.11, 8.2) being metaphorical for openings in heaven (*rāqî’^a*). There is also *qāṣēh tēḇēl* ‘ends of the world’ which is somewhat different, since *tēḇēl* refers to a world with people.

qāṣēh/qāṣōt hā-’āreṣ ‘end/ends of the earth’ where *qāṣēh* means ‘end, extremity; border, outskirts, edge, boundary, brink’ (Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, 64, Job 28.24, Pss 46.9[10], 61.2[3], 135.7, Pro 17.24, Isa 5.26, 40.28, 41.5, 9, 42.10, 43.6, 48.20, 49.6, 62.11, Jer 10.13, 25.31, 33, 51.16). Variant forms:

¹⁰ See Roberts (2017).

¹¹ A literal translation renders the text from one language to another more or less word-for-word whether this conveys the sense of the whole or not. A meaning-based translation renders the meaning of the text from one language to another and is not concerned to conserve the form.

qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ (Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, 28.64, Pss 46.9[10], 61.2[3], 135.7, Isa 5.26, 42.10, 43.6, 48.20, 49.6, 62.11, Jer 25.31, 33)
qəṣēh 'āreṣ (Pro 17.24, Jer 51.16)
qəṣēh 'ereṣ (Jer 10.13)
qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ (Job 28.24, Isa 40.28, 41.5, 9)

qāṣēw 'ereṣ ‘ends of the earth’ where *qāṣēw* means ‘ends’ (Psa 48.10[11], 65.5[6], Isa 26.15).
 Variant forms:

qāṣēw 'ereṣ (Pss 48.10[11], 65.5[6])
qāṣēw 'āreṣ (Isa 26.15)

'ap̄sê 'āreṣ ‘ends of the earth’ where *'ap̄sê* means ‘end, extremity’ (Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 67.7[8], 72.8, 98.3, Pro 30.4, Isa 45.22, 52.10, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10). Variant forms:

'ap̄sê 'āreṣ (Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 67.7[8], 72.8, 98.3, Pro 30.4, Isa 45.22, 52.10, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10)
'ap̄sê hā- 'āreṣ (Psa 59.13[14])

kənaṣ̄/kənaṣ̄ôṭ hā- 'āreṣ ‘end/ends of the earth’ where *kənaṣ̄* means ‘wing (of bird), extremity, corners, skirts’ (Job 38.1, Isa 24.16). Variant forms:

kənaṣ̄ hā- 'āreṣ (Isa 24.16)
kənaṣ̄ôṭ hā- 'āreṣ (Job 38.13)

gəḇûlôṭ 'āreṣ ‘ends of the earth’ where *gəḇûl* means ‘border, boundary’ (Psa 74.17).

sôṭp 'arə 'ā ‘end of the earth’ where *sôṭp* means ‘end, conclusion’ (Dan 4.10–11[7–8], 22[19]).

qəṣēh tēḇēl ‘ends of the world’ where *tēḇēl* means ‘inhabited world’ (Psa 19.4).

Although *qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ* is the most common way of expressing “end(s) of the earth” in Hebrew most of the books where an expression occurs have multiple Hebrew terms. Psalms and Isaiah have the most variety of “end(s) of the earth” terms.

Distribution of “end(s) of the earth” expressions according to biblical books:

Deuteronomy has *qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*.

Job has *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ*, *kənaṣ̄ôṭ hā- 'āreṣ*.

Psalms has *qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*, *qāṣēw 'ereṣ*, *'ap̄sê 'āreṣ*, *'ap̄sê hā- 'āreṣ*, *gəḇûlôṭ 'āreṣ*.

Proverbs has *qəṣēh 'āreṣ*, *'ap̄sê 'āreṣ*.

Isaiah has *qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*, *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ*, *qāṣēw 'āreṣ*, *'ap̄sê 'āreṣ*, *kənaṣ̄ hā- 'āreṣ*.

Jeremiah has *qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*, *qəṣēh 'ereṣ*.

Daniel has *sôṭp 'arə 'ā*.

Micah has *'ap̄sê 'āreṣ*.

Zechariah has *'ap̄sê 'āreṣ*.

Usage of “end(s) of the earth” expressions

There are a range of usages for “end(s) of the earth” expressions: created by God usage, measure of earth usage, physical location usage, people who live far away usage, and borders of Israel usage.

Created by God usage

There are scriptures which say the “end(s) of the earth” were created by the Lord God as part of the biblical cosmos in the beginning. Isa 40.28 says *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ* were created by the Lord God. Pro 30.4

says the Lord established *’aṣṣê ’āreṣ* by implication in the beginning. Psa 74.17 says the Lord has fixed all the boundaries of the earth (*gəḇûlôṭ ’āreṣ*) as an established component of the biblical world. While three different Hebrew terms for the “end(s) of the earth” are used in these passages, since they all have the same usage they must all refer to the same concept. The “end(s) of the earth” referred to in these passages must be a physical component of the biblical cosmos. Otherwise, what would the “end(s) of the earth” expressions in Psa 74.17, Pro 30.4, Isa 40.28 refer to that God created in the beginning?

Psa 74.17: You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth (*gəḇûlôṭ ’āreṣ*); you have made summer and winter. (ESV)

Pro 30.4: Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth (*’aṣṣê ’āreṣ*)? (ESV)

Isa 40.28: Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth (*qəṣôṭ hā- ’āreṣ*). He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable (ESV)

Measure of earth usage

There are many scriptures where the “end(s) of the earth” is used as a measure of the whole earth. In Deu 28.64 *qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ* is used to refer to the whole earth (all peoples) from one end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ*) to the other end (*qəṣôṭ hā- ’āreṣ*). In this case, *qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ* is used as a measure of the whole earth. In Job 28.24 God looks to the ends of the earth (*qəṣôṭ hā- ’āreṣ*) and sees the whole earth. Job 38.13 says the earth can be taken hold of by its *kənaṣôṭ* ‘extremities, corners, skirts’ to shake the wicked from the earth. Psa 46.9[10] says the Lord makes wars cease to the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ*), i.e., throughout the whole world. Psa 48.10[11] says praise to God will reach the ends of the earth (*qāṣēw ’ereṣ*), i.e., the whole world. Psa 72.8 says God’s dominion may reach from the River Euphrates to the ends of the earth (*’aṣṣê ’āreṣ*) so that all kings may fall down before him and all nations may serve him (v. 11). Psa 98.3 says God’s steadfast love and faithfulness to Israel is a testimony of God’s salvation to all the ends of the earth (*’aṣṣê ’āreṣ*), i.e., all the peoples of the earth. In Isa 24.16 ends of the earth (*kənaṣ hā- ’āreṣ*) refers to the whole world. In Isa 42.10 end(s) of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ*) refers to the whole world including those who inhabit the coastlands. In Isa 43.6 God’s people are brought from the end(s) of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ*), i.e., the whole world, including the north and the south. In Isa 48.20, 49.6, Jer 25.31, 33 end(s) of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ*) refers to the whole world. In Dan 4.11[8], 22[19] end of the earth (*sôṭ ’arə ’ā*) refers to the whole world. In Mic 5.4[3] and Zech 9.10 ends of the earth (*’aṣṣê ’āreṣ*) refers to the whole world.

Deu 28.64: And the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ*) to the other (*qəṣôṭ hā- ’āreṣ*), and there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. (ESV)

Job 28.24: For he looks to the ends of the earth (*qəṣôṭ hā- ’āreṣ*) and sees everything under the heavens. (ESV)

Job 38.12–13: ¹²“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, ¹³that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth (*kənaṣôṭ hā- ’āreṣ*), and the wicked be shaken out of it? (ESV)

Psa 46.9[10]: He makes wars cease to the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- ’āreṣ*); he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. (ESV)

Psa 48.10[11]: As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth (*qāṣēw ’ereṣ*). Your right hand is filled with righteousness. (ESV)

Psa 72.8–11: ⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth (*’āp̄sê ’āreṣ*)! ⁹ May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! ¹¹ May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! (ESV)

Psa 98.3: He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth (*’āp̄sê ’āreṣ*) have seen the salvation of our God. (ESV)

Isa 24.16: From the ends of the earth (*kənaṗ hā-’āreṣ*) we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One. (ESV)

Isa 42.10: Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*), you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. (ESV)

Isa 43.6: I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*), (ESV)

Isa 48.20: Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it out to the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*); say, “The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob!” (ESV)

Isa 49.6: he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*).” (ESV)

Isa 62.11: Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*): Say to the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. (ESV)

Jer 25.31: The clamour will resound to the ends of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*), for the LORD has an indictment against the nations; he is entering into judgment with all flesh, and the wicked he will put to the sword, (ESV)

Jer 25.33: And those pierced by the LORD on that day shall extend from one end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*) to the other (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*). They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung on the surface of the ground. (ESV)

Dan 4.10–11[7–8]: ¹⁰ The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth (*lā-sôṗ ’arə ’ā*). (ESV)

Dan 4.22[19]: it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth (*lā-sôṗ ’arə ’ā*). (ESV)

Mic 5.4[3]: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth (*’āp̄sê ’āreṣ*). (ESV)

Zech 9.10: I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth (*’āp̄sê ’āreṣ*). (ESV)

The “end(s) of the earth” can only function as a measure of the whole earth if the earth is conceptualised as a flat, circular disk. If the earth is a globe it does not have “ends” to be measured by.

Physical location usage

There are scriptures where the “end(s) of the earth” is used to refer to a physical location. In Deu 13.7[8] *qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ* is used to refer to “the ends of the earth” as a physical location twice, measuring the full diameter of the earth from one end to the other end. In Deu 28.49 *qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ* is used to refer to a physical location far away. In Psa 61.2[3] the psalmist calls to the Lord from *qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*, i.e., far away. Psa 135.7 says the Lord makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*). In Isa

5.26, 41.9 *qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ* is a physical location far away. In Jer 10.13, 51.16 *qəṣēh 'ereṣ/ 'āreṣ* is where the mist rises. The physical location usage shows that the “end(s) of the earth” in the OT is conceived of as a physical reality.

Deu 13.7[8]: some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*) to the other (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), (ESV)

Deu 28.49: The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, (ESV)

Psa 61.2[3]: ¹ Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; ² from the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*) I call to you when my heart is faint. (ESV)

Psa 135.7: He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses. (ESV)

Isa 5.26: He will raise a signal for nations far away, and whistle for them from the ends of the earth (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*); and behold, quickly, speedily they come! (ESV)

Isa 41.9: ⁸ But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; ⁹ you whom I took from the ends of the earth (*qəṣōt hā- 'āreṣ*), and called from its farthest corners, (ESV)

Jer 10.13: When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth (*qəṣēh 'ereṣ*). He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses. (ESV)

Jer 51.16: When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth (*qəṣēh 'āreṣ*). He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses. (ESV)

People who live far away usage

There are scriptures where the “end(s) of the earth” refers to people who live far away. This is personification. Personification is the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human. Again, this usage establishes the physical reality of the “end(s) of the earth”. The ends of the earth have to be real for personification figure of speech to apply. In Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 41.5, 45.22, 52.10, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10 the “end(s) of the earth” expressions all refer to the people who inhabit the ends of the earth. *Qəṣēh tēbēl* ‘ends of the (inhabited) world’ in Psa 19.4 has this function also. In Isa 41.5 islands are considered to be synonymous with, or near the ends of the earth. The earth was surrounded by water, but there were islands at the edge of the world where the sky met the sea.

Psa 2.8–9: ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth (*'ap̄sē 'āreṣ*) your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. (ESV)

Psa 19.4: Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world (*qəṣēh tēbēl*). (ESV)

Psa 22.27[28]: ²⁷ All the ends of the earth (*'ap̄sē 'āreṣ*) shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. ²⁸ For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. (ESV)

Psa 48.10[11]: As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth (*qəṣēw 'ereṣ*). Your right hand is filled with righteousness. (ESV)

Psa 59.13[14]: consume them (my enemies, v 10) in wrath; consume them till they are no more, that they may know that God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê hā- 'āreṣ*). (ESV)

Psa 65.5[6]: By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth (*qāṣēw 'āreṣ*) and of the farthest seas; (ESV)

Psa 67.7[8]: God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê 'āreṣ*) fear him! (ESV)

Psa 72.8: ⁸May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê 'āreṣ*)! ⁹May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! ¹⁰May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! ¹¹May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! (ESV)

Psa 98.3: He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê 'āreṣ*) have seen the salvation of our God. (ESV)

Isa 41.5: The coastlands have seen and are afraid; the ends of the earth (*qāṣōt hā- 'āreṣ*) tremble; they have drawn near and come. (ESV)

Isa 45.22: ²²“Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê 'āreṣ*)! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’ (ESV)

Isa 52.10: The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê 'āreṣ*) shall see the salvation of our God. (ESV)

Mic 5.4[3]: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê 'āreṣ*). (ESV)

Zech 9.10: I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth (*'āp̄sê 'āreṣ*). (ESV)

Borders of Israel usage

There is one scripture passage where the “end(s) of the earth” refers to the borders of Israel. In Isa 26.15 the borders of the land (*qāṣēw 'āreṣ*) refers to the borders of the land of Israel. Again, *qāṣēw 'āreṣ* refers to real borders. *Qāṣēw 'āreṣ* is not a figure of speech.

Isa 26.15: But you have increased the nation, O LORD, you have increased the nation; you are glorified; you have enlarged all the borders of the land (*qāṣēw 'āreṣ*). (ESV)

Conclusion on usage of ‘ends of the earth’ expressions

The usages of ends of the earth expressions shows that the primary meaning of these expressions is in reference to a physical component of the cosmos created by God in the beginning (see Psa 74.17, Pro 30.4, Isa 40.28), the edges of the disk of the earth. As a physical component of the cosmos the ends of the earth can be used as a measure of the earth (see Deu 28.64, Job 28.24, 38.13, Pss 46.9[10], 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 42.10, 43.6, 49.6, 62.11, Jer 25.31, 33, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10). There are scriptures where an “end(s) of the earth” expression is used to refer to a specific physical location (see Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, Pss 61.2[3], 135.7, Isa 5.26, 41.9, Jer 10.13, 51.16). As an extension of meaning, “end(s) of the earth” expressions are used to refer to people who live far away, by implication, from the nation of Israel (see Pss 2.8, 19.4, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 41.5, 45.22, 52.10, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10). By using “end(s) of the earth” expressions to refer to people far away from Israel in turn implies that Israel is at the centre of the disk of the earth. In Isa 26.15 an “end(s) of the earth”

expression (*qāṣēw 'āreṣ*) is used to refer to the borders of the land of Israel. This confirms that the primary meaning of “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the OT is to refer to a physical component of the cosmos, i.e., the edges of the disk of the earth. All the usages of “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the OT indicate that the “end(s) of the earth” is understood to be a physical reality.

Translations of “end(s) of the earth” expressions

In this section we examine how four different English versions—ESV, NLT 2004, CEV, Tft—translate “end(s) of the earth” expressions. The ESV is a fairly literal translation, the NLT is less literal and the CEV and Tft¹² versions are more meaning-based translations.

Translations of created by God usage

The translations of scripture passages which say that the “end(s) of the earth” have been created by the Lord God as part of the biblical cosmos in the beginning are thus.

The ESV translates *gəḥûlôṭ 'āreṣ* in Psa 74.17 literally as “boundaries of the earth” but does not clarify what that means. It also translates *'āpsê 'āreṣ* in Pro 30.4 literally as “ends of the earth”, and *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ* in Isa 40.28 is also translated literally as “ends of the earth”. But the ESV does not say what the “ends of the earth” in Pro 30.4 and Isa 40.28 are or whether they are the same or different to the “boundaries of the earth” in Psa 74.17.

The NLT translates *gəḥûlôṭ 'āreṣ* in Psa 74.17 as “boundaries of the earth” but does not clarify what that means. The NLT translates *'āpsê 'āreṣ* in Pro 30.4 as “the whole wide world”. This translation therefore assumes that *'āpsê 'āreṣ* is a measure for the whole earth. The NLT translates *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ* in Isa 40.28 as “all the earth”. This translation therefore also assumes that *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ* is a measure for the whole earth. However, these assumptions are hidden from the reader of the NLT translation.

The CEV does not translate *gəḥûlôṭ 'āreṣ* in Psa 74.17. The CEV translates *'āpsê 'āreṣ* in Pro 30.4 as “boundaries for the earth”. But the CEV does not clarify what this refers to and *'āpsê* means ‘end, extremity’, not ‘boundary’. The CEV does not translate *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ* in Isa 40.28. The CEV thus hides most of the biblical testimony that God created the “end(s) of the earth” in the beginning from the reader of the translation.

Dictionary definitions:

'ereṣ (אֶרֶץ) ‘earth, country, ground’

BDB 776 (2010 [1906]: 75) say *'ereṣ* has these senses: 1) the whole earth or earth opposite to heaven, 2) a country, territory, 3) ground, soil, 4) people of the land.

NIDOTTE Vol 1 (1997: 518) says *'ereṣ* has a broad range of meaning, from the whole earth, through particular countries, especially the land of Israel, local districts, the soil, to the ground inside a tent (Jos 7.21).

The Tft translates *gəḥûlôṭ 'āreṣ* in Psa 74.17 as the boundaries between the oceans and the land (*'ereṣ*). The problem with this translation is that *'ereṣ* does not have the sense of land opposed to sea (see dictionary definitions above). The senses of *'ereṣ* are: 1) the whole earth or earth opposite to heaven, 2) a country, territory, 3) ground, soil, 4) people of the land. In *gəḥûlôṭ 'āreṣ* in Psa 74.17 *'ereṣ* refers to the whole earth. The Tft translates *'āpsê 'āreṣ* in Pro 30.4 as “boundaries for the earth” possibly linked to the water in the ocean being wrapped in a piece of cloth. But *'āpsê* means ‘end, extremity’, not ‘boundary’. The Tft translates *qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ* in Isa 40.28 as “the most distant places on the earth”. But this assumes that Israel or more specifically, Jerusalem, is the physical centre (*ṭabbûr*) of the earth—see Ezk 38.12 where this view is stated. The Tft therefore interprets the “end(s) of the

¹² A Translation for Translators (Tft) is a special translation of the Bible designed to help translators to know implicit information in the original languages that is often required in translating the Holy Bible to other languages.

earth” created in the beginning as both the boundary between land and sea in Psa 74.17, Pro 30.4 and the places on earth most distant from the land of Israel in Isa 40.28. This is inconsistent.

Psa 74.17: You have fixed all the *boundaries of the earth* (*qəḇûlôṭ ʾāreṣ*); you have made summer and winter. (ESV)

Psa 74.17: You set the *boundaries of the earth*, and you made both summer and winter. (NLT 2004)¹³

Psa 74.17: You made summer and winter and gave them to the earth. (CEV)¹⁴

Psa 74.17: You determined *where the oceans end and the land begins*, and you created the summer/hot season and the winter/cold season. (TfT)

Pro 30.4: Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all *the ends of the earth* (*ʾap̄sê ʾāreṣ*)? (ESV)

Pro 30.4: Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down? Who holds the wind in his fists? Who wraps up the oceans in his cloak? Who has created *the whole wide world*? What is his name—and his son's name? Tell me if you know! (NLT 2004)

Pro 30.4: Has anyone gone up to heaven and come back down? Has anyone grabbed hold of the wind? Has anyone wrapped up the sea or marked out *boundaries for the earth*? If you know of any who have done such things, then tell me their names and their children's names. (CEV)

Pro 30.4: But let me say this: No one [RHQ] has ascended to heaven to find out what God is like and returned to tell us. No one [RHQ] has gathered/held the wind in his hand. No one [RHQ] has wrapped the water in the ocean in a piece of cloth and no one [RHQ] has established *the boundaries of the earth*. If you know those things, tell me [RHQ] his name, and the names of his children [SAR]. But you do not know those things, so you cannot speak with authority about what God is like. (TfT)

Isa 40.28: Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣôṭ hā-ʾāreṣ*). He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable (ESV)

Isa 40.28: Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of *all the earth*. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. (NLT 2004)

Isa 40.28: Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The LORD is the eternal God, Creator of *the earth*. He never gets weary or tired; his wisdom cannot be measured. (CEV)

Isa 40.28: Have you never heard and have you never understood that Yahweh is the everlasting God; he is the one who created the earth, even *the most distant places on the earth*. He never becomes weak or weary, and no one can find out how much he understands. (TfT)

¹³ Scriptures marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

¹⁴ Scriptures marked CEV are taken from the Contemporary English Version (CEV): Scripture taken from the Contemporary English Version copyright© 1995 by the American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Translations of measure of earth usage

The translations where the “end(s) of the earth” is used as a measure of the whole earth are thus.

The ESV translates most “end(s) of the earth” expressions literally as “end(s) of the earth”. In Job 38.12 the ESV translates *kənaṣōt hā-’āreṣ* literally as “skirts of the earth”. But the ESV does not explain what these “end(s) of the earth” expressions refer to. A spherical earth cannot have ends or edges.

The NLT translates the “end(s) of the earth” expression as “whole earth” in Job 28.24, Psa 46.9[10], Isa 62.11, Jer 25.33, Mic 5.4[3]. Otherwise (Deu 28.64, Job 38.13, Pss 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 42.10, 43.6, 48.20, 49.6, Jer 25.31, Zech 9.10), the NLT translates the “end(s) of the earth” expression literally as “end(s) of the earth”. However, the NLT does not explain how a spherical earth can have ends or edges to be measured by.

The CEV translates the “end(s) of the earth” expression as “whole earth” in Deu 28.64, Pss 46.9[10], 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 42.10, 62.11, Jer 25.31, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10. The CEV translates *qəṣōt hā-’āreṣ* in Job 28.24 as “everything beneath the heavens”, in Isa 43.6 as “distant lands”, in Isa 48.20 as “everyone” and in Isa 49.6 as “everyone on earth”. The CEV does not translate *kənaṣōt hā-’āreṣ* in Job 38.13 nor *qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ* in Jer 25.33. The CEV therefore hides the biblical testimony that the earth can be measured by its ends or edges.

The Tft translates the “end(s) of the earth” expression as “whole earth” in Deu 28.64, Job 38.13, Pss 46.9[10], 48.10[11], Isa 42.10, 43.6, Jer 25.31, Mic 5.4[3]. The Tft translates the “end(s) of the earth” expression as “the most remote/distant places on the earth” in Job 28.24, Pss 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 48.20, 49.6, 62.11, Zech 9.10. The implication here is that these places are remote/distant from Israel. The Tft translates the “end(s) of the earth” expressions in Jer 25.33 as “from the east to the west”. So, for “end(s) of the earth” expressions with this usage the Tft gives them three distinct meanings: ‘a measure of the whole earth’, ‘the most remote/distant places on the earth’, and ‘from the east to the west’.

Deu 28.64: And the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from *one end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*) to *the other* (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*), and there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. (ESV)

Deu 28.64: For the LORD will scatter you among all the nations from *one end of the earth to the other*. There you will worship foreign gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods made of wood and stone! (NLT 2004)

Deu 28.64: Those of you that survive will be scattered to every nation on earth, and you will have to worship stone and wood idols that never helped you or your ancestors. (CEV)

Deu 28.64: Yahweh will scatter you among many people-groups, *all over the earth*, and in those areas/places you will serve other gods that are made of wood or stone, gods which you and your ancestors have never known/worshiped. (Tft)

Job 28.24: For he looks to *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣōt hā-’āreṣ*) and sees everything under the heavens. (ESV)

Job 28.24: for he looks *throughout the whole earth* and sees everything under the heavens. (NLT 2004)

Job 28.24: because he sees *everything beneath the heavens*. (CEV)

Job 28.24: because he can see things even in *the most remote/distant places on the earth*; he can see everything that is below the sky. (Tft)

Job 38.12–13: ¹²“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, ¹³that it might take hold of *the skirts of the earth* (*kənaṣōt hā-’āreṣ*), and the wicked be shaken out of it? (ESV)

Job 38.13: Have you made daylight spread to *the ends of the earth*, to bring an end to the night's wickedness? (NLT 2004)

Job 38.13: Did it take hold of *the earth* and shake out the wicked like dust from a rug? (CEV)

Job 38.13: Have you ever told the dawn to spread out over *the whole earth*, with the result that wicked people run away from the light? (TfT)

Psa 46.9[10]: He makes wars cease to *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*); he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. (ESV)

Psa 46.9[10]: He causes wars to end *throughout the earth*. He breaks the bow and snaps the spear; he burns the shields with fire. (NLT 2004)

Psa 46.9[10]: God brings wars to an end *all over the world*. He breaks the arrows, shatters the spears, and burns the shields. (CEV)

Psa 46.9[10]: He stops wars *all over the world*; he breaks bows and arrows; he destroys spears; he burns up shields. (TfT)

Psa 48.10[11]: As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to *the ends of the earth* (*qāṣēw 'ereṣ*). Your right hand is filled with righteousness. (ESV)

Psa 48.10[11]: As your name deserves, O God, you will be praised to *the ends of the earth*. Your strong right hand is filled with victory. (NLT 2004)

Psa 48.10[11]: You are famous and praised *everywhere on earth*, as you win victories with your powerful arm. (CEV)

Psa 48.10[11]: You [MTY] are famous and ◀are praised/people praise you▶ *all over the earth*, because you rule powerfully [MTY] and justly. (TfT)

Psa 72.8: ⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to *the ends of the earth* (*'āṣē 'āreṣ*)! ⁹ May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! ¹¹ May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! (ESV)

Psa 72.8: May he reign from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates River to *the ends of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Psa 72.8: Let his kingdom reach from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River across *all the earth*. (CEV)

Psa 72.8: I hope/desire that the king of Israel will rule the people in all the area from one sea in the east to another in the west, and from the Euphrates River to *the most remote/distant places on earth*. (TfT)

Psa 98.3: He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. *All the ends of the earth* (*'āṣē 'āreṣ*) have seen the salvation of our God. (ESV)

Psa 98.3: He has remembered his promise to love and be faithful to Israel. *The ends of the earth* have seen the victory of our God. (NLT 2004)

Psa 98.3: God has been faithful in his love for Israel, and his saving power is seen *everywhere on earth*. (CEV)

Psa 98.3: Like he promised to us Israeli people [MTY], he has faithfully loved us and ◀been loyal to/not abandoned▶ us. People who live in *very remote places in all the earth* have seen that our God has defeated his enemies. (TfT)

Isa 24.16: From *the ends of the earth* (*kənaḇ hā- 'āreṣ*) we hear songs of praise, of glory to the Righteous One. (ESV)

Isa 24.16: We hear songs of praise from *the ends of the earth*, songs that give glory to the Righteous One! (NLT 2004)

Isa 24.16: From *all over the world* songs of praise are heard for the God of justice. (CEV)

Isa 24.16: We will hear people in *the most distant places on the earth* singing praise to Yahweh, the truly righteous one. But now, I am [SYN] very sad. Weep for me, because I have become thin and weak. Terrible things are happening! Treacherous people still betray/deceive others everywhere [DOU]. (TfT)

Isa 42.10: Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. (ESV)

Isa 42.10: Sing a new song to the LORD! Sing his praises from *the ends of the earth*! Sing, all you who sail the seas, all you who live in distant coastlands. (NLT 2004)

Isa 42.10: Tell *the whole world* to sing a new song to the LORD! Tell those who sail the ocean and those who live far away to join in the praise. (CEV)

Isa 42.10: Sing a new song to Yahweh! Sing to praise him *throughout the world*! All you people who sail across the oceans, and all you creatures that live in the oceans, and all you people who live on islands far away, sing! (TfT)

Isa 43.6: I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), (ESV)

Isa 43.6: I will say to the north and south, 'Bring my sons and daughters back to Israel from *the distant corners of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Isa 43.6: I will say to the north and to the south, "Free my sons and daughters! Let them return from *distant lands*. (CEV)

Isa 43.6: I will command the rulers of the nations to the north and to the south, 'Allow all the people of Israel to return to their country, from *the most distant places on the earth*. (TfT)

Isa 48.20: Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it out to *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*); say, "The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob!" (ESV)

Isa 48.20: Yet even now, be free from your captivity! Leave Babylon and the Babylonians. Sing out this message! Shout it to *the ends of the earth*! The LORD has redeemed his servants, the people of Israel. (NLT 2004)

Isa 48.20: Now leave Babylon! Celebrate as you go. Be happy and shout for *everyone* to hear, "The LORD has rescued his servant Israel! (CEV)

Isa 48.20: However, now I tell you, leave Babylon! Flee from being slaves of the people of Babylonia! Proclaim this message joyfully; send it to *the most remote/distant places on the earth*: Yahweh, freed the people of Israel from being slaves in Egypt. (TfT)

Isa 49.6: he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*).” (ESV)

Isa 49.6: He says, “You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to *the ends of the earth*.” (NLT 2004)

Isa 49.6: Now the LORD says to me, “It isn’t enough for you to be merely my servant. You must do more than lead back survivors from the tribes of Israel. I have placed you here as a light for other nations; you must take my saving power to *everyone on earth*.” (CEV)

Isa 49.6: However, now I tell you, leave Babylon! Flee from being slaves of the people of Babylonia! Proclaim this message joyfully; send it to *the most remote/distant places on the earth*: Yahweh, freed the people of Israel from being slaves in Egypt. (TfT)

Isa 62.11: Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*): Say to the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. (ESV)

Isa 62.11: The LORD has sent this message to *every land*: “Tell the people of Israel, ‘Look, your Savior is coming. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.’ ” (NLT 2004)

Isa 62.11: Here is what the LORD has said for *all the earth* to hear: “Soon I will come to save the city of Zion, and to reward you. (CEV)

Isa 62.11: Yahweh will show all the nations that he is holy and powerful. *People in the most remote/distant places on earth* will know that he has rescued his people. (TfT)

Jer 25.31: The clamour will resound to *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*), for the LORD has an indictment against the nations; he is entering into judgment with all flesh, and the wicked he will put to the sword, (ESV)

Jer 25.31: His cry of judgment will reach *the ends of the earth*, for the LORD will bring his case against all the nations. He will judge all the people of the earth, slaughtering the wicked with the sword. I, the LORD, have spoken!’ ” (NLT 2004)

Jer 25.31: My voice will be heard *everywhere on earth*, accusing nations of their crimes and sentencing the guilty to death. (CEV)

Jer 25.31: When he speaks loudly, there is thunder in the sky; he causes clouds to form over *every part of the earth*. He sends lightning with the rain and releases the winds from his storehouses. (TfT)

Jer 25.33: And those pierced by the LORD on that day shall extend from *one end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*) to *the other* (*qəṣēh hā-’āreṣ*). They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall be dung on the surface of the ground. (ESV)

Jer 25.33: In that day those the LORD has slaughtered will fill the earth from *one end to the other*. No one will mourn for them or gather up their bodies to bury them. They will be scattered on the ground like manure. (NLT 2004)

Jer 25.33: When it strikes, I will kill so many people that their bodies will cover the ground like manure. No one will be left to bury them or to mourn. (CEV)

Jer 25.33: When that happens, the corpses of those whom I have caused to be slaughtered will fill the earth *from the east to the west*. And no one will mourn for them, and no one will gather their corpses to bury them. They will be scattered on the ground like manure. (TfT)

Mic 5.4[3]: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to *the ends of the earth* ('āpsê 'āreš). (ESV)

Mic 5.4[3]: And he will stand to lead his flock with the LORD's strength, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored *around the world*. (NLT 2004)

Mic 5.4[3]: Like a shepherd taking care of his sheep, this ruler will lead and care for his people by the power and glorious name of the LORD his God. His people will live securely, and *the whole earth* will know his true greatness, (CEV)

Mic 5.4[3]: And that man who will be ruling there in Jerusalem will stand and lead his people well, because Yahweh, his God, will cause him to be strong and greatly honored. Then the people whom he rules will live in Jerusalem safely; he will be greatly honored by *people all over the earth* so no one will dare to attack Jerusalem. (TfT)

Zech 9.10: I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to *the ends of the earth* ('āpsê 'āreš). (ESV)

Zech 9.10: I will remove the battle chariots from Israel and the warhorses from Jerusalem. I will destroy all the weapons used in battle, and your king will bring peace to the nations. His realm will stretch from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to *the ends of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Zech 9.10: I, the LORD, will take away war chariots and horses from Israel and Jerusalem. Bows that were made for battle will be broken. I will bring peace to nations, and your king will rule from sea to sea. His kingdom will reach from the Euphrates River *across the earth*. (CEV)

Zech 9.10: I will get rid of the chariots in the Ephraim region that are used in battles and all the war horses in Jerusalem. All the bows used in wars will be broken. Your king will proclaim that he will cause things to go well and peacefully in the nations. He will rule the area from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, and from the Euphrates River to *the most distant places on the earth*. (TfT)

Translations of physical location usage

The translations where “the ends of the earth” is used to refer to a physical location are thus.

The ESV translates all “end(s) of the earth” expressions referring to a physical location literally as “end(s) of the earth”. But the ESV does not explain what physical location any “end(s) of the earth” expression refers to.

The NLT translates *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* as “end(s) of the earth” in Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, Psa 61.2[3], Isa 5.26, 41.9. The NLT translates *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* in Psa 135.7 as “the whole earth”. The NLT translates *qāṣēh 'ereš* in Jer 10.13, 51.16 as “over the earth”. The NLT also does not explain what physical location any “end(s) of the earth” expression refers to.

The CEV does not translate “from the one end of the earth to the other” in Deu 13.7[8]. The CEV does not translate *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* in Deu 28.49. The CEV translates *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* in Psa 61.2[3] as “a faraway land”. The CEV translates *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* as “far across the earth” in Psa 135.7, Isa 41.9. The CEV does not translate *qāṣēh 'ereš* in Jer 10.13, 51.16. The CEV hides some “end(s) of the earth” expressions by not translating them. For those expressions translated the CEV does not explain how there can be far away ends or edges of the earth when the earth is a globe.

The TfT does not translate “from the one end of the earth to the other” in Deu 13.7[8]. The TfT does not translate *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* in Deu 28.49, Isa 5.26. The TfT translates *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* in Psa 61.2[3] as “far from my home”. This specifies that *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* means “far from Israel”. The TfT translates *qāṣēh hā- 'āreš* as “very distant/remote places on the earth” in Psa 135.7, Isa 5.26, 41.9. The TfT translates *qāṣēh 'ereš* in Jer 10.13, 51.16 as “over every part of the earth”. The TfT hides some “end(s) of the earth” expressions by not translating them. For those expressions translated the TfT does not

explain how there can be ends or edges of the earth that are far away from Israel when the earth is a globe.

Deu 13.7[8]: some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from *the one end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*) to the other (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), (ESV)

Deu 13.7[8]: They might suggest that you worship the gods of peoples who live nearby or who come *from the ends of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Deu 13.6–10: Someone else may say to you, “Let's worship other gods.” That person may be your best friend, your brother or sister, your son or daughter, or your own dear wife or husband. But you must not listen to people who say such things. Instead, you must stone them to death. You must be the first to throw the stones, then others from the community will finish the job. Don't show any pity. (CEV)

Deu 13.7[8]: Some of them may encourage you to worship gods that people-groups that live near you worship, or gods that *groups who live far away* worship. (TfT)

Deu 28.49: The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), swooping down like the eagle, a nation whose language you do not understand, (ESV)

Deu 28.49: The LORD will bring a distant nation against you *from the end of the earth*, and it will swoop down on you like an eagle. It is a nation whose language you do not understand, (NLT 2004)

Deu 28.49: Foreigners who speak a strange language will be sent to attack you without warning, just like an eagle swooping down. (CEV)

Deu 28.49: Yahweh will bring against you an army from *very far away* [HYP], soldiers who speak a language that you do not know/understand. They will swoop down on you quickly like an eagle [SIM]. (TfT)

Psa 61.2[3]: ¹ Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; ² from *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*) I call to you when my heart is faint. (ESV)

Psa 61.2[3]: From *the ends of the earth*, I cry to you for help when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the towering rock of safety, (NLT 2004)

Psa 61.2[3]: I feel hopeless, and I cry out to you from *a faraway land*. Lead me to the mighty rock high above me. (CEV)

Psa 61.2[3]: While I am discouraged and *far from my home*, I am calling out to you. Lead me to the place that is like a high rock [MET] on top of which I will be safe. (TfT)

Psa 135.7: He it is who makes the clouds rise at *the end of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*), who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses. (ESV)

Psa 135.7: He causes the clouds to rise over *the whole earth*. He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his storehouses. (NLT 2004)

Psa 135.7: The LORD makes the clouds rise from *far across the earth*, and he makes lightning to go with the rain. Then from his secret place he sends out the wind. (CEV)

Psa 135.7: He is the one who causes clouds to appear from *very distant places on the earth*; he sends lightning with the rain, and he brings the winds from the places where he stores them. (TfT)

Isa 5.26: He will raise a signal for nations far away, and whistle for them from *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣēh hā- 'āreṣ*); and behold, quickly, speedily they come! (ESV)

Isa 5.26: He will send a signal to distant nations far away and whistle to those at *the ends of the earth*. They will come racing toward Jerusalem. (NLT 2004)

Isa 5.26: The LORD has signaled for the foreign nations to come and attack you. He has already whistled, and they are coming as fast as they can. (CEV)

Isa 5.26: Yahweh will send a signal to summon armies of nations far away; it is as though he will whistle to those soldiers who are in *very remote places on the earth*. They will come very swiftly [DOU] toward Jerusalem. (TfT)

Isa 41.9: ⁸ But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; ⁹ you whom I took from *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣôṭ hā- 'āreṣ*), and called from its farthest corners, (ESV)

Isa 41.9: I have called you back from *the ends of the earth*, saying, ‘You are my servant.’ For I have chosen you and will not throw you away. (NLT 2004)

Isa 41.9: From *far across the earth* I brought you here and said, “You are my chosen servant. I haven’t forgotten you.” (CEV)

Isa 41.9: I summoned you from *very distant places [DOU] on the earth*, and I said ‘I want you to serve me; I have chosen you, and I will not reject you.’ (TfT)

Jer 10.13: When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣēh 'ereṣ*). He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses. (ESV)

Jer 10.13: When he speaks in the thunder, the heavens roar with rain. He causes the clouds to rise *over the earth*. He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his storehouses. (NLT 2004)

Jer 10.13: The waters in the heavens roar at your command. You make clouds appear—you send the winds from your storehouse and make lightning flash in the rain. (CEV)

Jer 10.13: When he speaks loudly, there is thunder in the sky; he causes clouds to form over *every part of the earth*. He sends lightning with the rain and releases the winds from his storehouses. (TfT)

Jer 51.16: When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣēh 'āreṣ*). He makes lightning for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses. (ESV)

Jer 51.16: When he speaks in the thunder, the heavens are filled with water. He causes the clouds to rise *over the earth*. He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his storehouses. (NLT 2004)

Jer 51.16: The waters in the heavens roar at his command. He makes clouds appear; he sends the wind from his storehouse and makes lightning flash in the rain. (CEV)

Jer 51.16: When he speaks loudly, there is thunder in the sky; he causes clouds to form *in every part of the earth*. He sends lightning with the rain and releases the winds from his storehouses. (TfT)

Translations of people who live far away usage

The usage of “end(s) of the earth” expressions to refer to people who live far away occurs especially in the psalms and Isaiah. In Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 41.5, 45.22, 52.10, Dan 4.11[8], 22[19], Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10 the “end(s) of the earth” expressions refer to the people who inhabit the ends of the earth. *Qaṣṣēh tēbēl* ‘ends of the world’ in Psa 19.4 has this function also. The translations of “end(s) of the earth” expressions where this refers to people who live far away are thus.

The ESV translates all “end(s) of the earth” expressions referring to people literally as “end(s) of the earth”. The ESV does not translate the personification and does not explain what is being personified.

The NLT translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions as “whole earth/world” in Pss 2.8, 19.4, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], Isa 45.22, Dan 4.11[8], Mic 5.4[3]. The NLT translates “end(s) of the earth” literally in Pss 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 52.10, Dan 4.22[19], Zech 9.10. The NLT translates “end(s) of the earth” as “remote lands” in Isa 41.5. Again, this is a reference to the people of the land rather than to the land itself. But the NLT does not translate the personification.

The CEV translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions as “every nation/everyone on earth” in Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], Isa 41.5, 52.10. The CEV translates “end(s) of the earth” as “whole earth/world” in Pss 19.4, 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 45.22, Dan 4.11[8], 22[19], Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10. The CEV translates the personification but does not explain what is being personified.

The Tft translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions as “every nation/people/everyone on earth” in Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 67.7[8], Dan 4.11[8], 22[19], Mic 5.4[3]. The Tft translates “end(s) of the earth” as “people who live in the most distant/remote places on earth” in Pss 19.4, 65.5[6], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 41.5, 45.22, 52.10, Zech 9.10. The Tft translates “end(s) of the earth” as “whole earth/world” in Pss 48.10[11], 59.13[14]. If this is not personification then “end(s) of the earth” in the Tft has four different meanings: ‘a measure of the whole earth’, ‘the most remote/distant places on the earth’, ‘from the east to the west’, and ‘people who live in the most remote/distant places on the earth’.

Psa 2.8: ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and *the ends of the earth* (‘*ap̄sē ‘āreṣ*’) your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. (ESV)

Psa 2.8: Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, *the whole earth* as your possession. (NLT 2004)

Psa 2.8: Ask me for the nations, and *every nation on earth* will belong to you. (CEV)

Psa 2.8: Request me to give you the nations, so that they belong to you permanently, and I will give them to you. (Tft)

Psa 19.4: Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to *the end of the world* (*qaṣṣēh tēbēl*). (ESV)

Psa 19.4: Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to *all the world*. (NLT 2004)

Psa 19.4: Yet their message reaches all the earth, and it travels *around the world*. (CEV)

Psa 19.4: But what they declare about God goes throughout the world, and even *people who live in the most distant/remote places on earth* can know it. (Tft)

Psa 22.27[28]: ²⁷ All *the ends of the earth* (‘*ap̄sē ‘āreṣ*’) shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. ²⁸ For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. (ESV)

Psa 22.27[28]: *The whole earth* will acknowledge the LORD and return to him. All the families of the nations will bow down before him. (NLT 2004)

Psa 22.27[28]: *Everyone on this earth* will remember you, LORD. People all over the world will turn and worship you, (CEV)

Psa 22.27[28]: I pray that people in all nations, even in *the remote areas*, will think about Yahweh and turn to him, and that people from all the clans in the world will bow down before him. (TfT)

Psa 48.10[11]: As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to *the ends of the earth* (*qāšēw 'ereš*). Your right hand is filled with righteousness. (ESV)

Psa 48.10[11]: As your name deserves, O God, you will be praised to *the ends of the earth*. Your strong right hand is filled with victory. (NLT 2004)

Psa 48.10[11]: You are famous and praised *everywhere on earth*, as you win victories with your powerful arm. (CEV)

Psa 48.10[11]: You [MTY] are famous and ◀are praised/people praise you▶ *all over the earth*, because you rule powerfully [MTY] and justly. (TfT)

Psa 59.13[14]: consume them (my enemies, v 10) in wrath; consume them till they are no more, that they may know that God rules over Jacob to *the ends of the earth* (*'aḫsê hā- 'āreš*). (ESV)

Psa 59.13[14]: Destroy them in your anger! Wipe them out completely! Then *the whole world* will know that God reigns in Israel. (NLT 2004)

Psa 59.13[14]: Get angry and destroy them. Leave them in ruin. Then *all the nations* will know that you rule in Israel. (CEV)

Psa 59.13[14]: because you are angry, get rid of them; destroy them completely in order that people will know that you rule over us, your Israeli people, and that you rule over *all the earth*. (Think about that!) (TfT)

Psa 65.5[6]: By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all *the ends of the earth* (*qāšēw 'ereš*) and of the farthest seas; (ESV)

Psa 65.5[6]: You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior. You are the hope of *everyone on earth*, even those who sail on distant seas. (NLT 2004)

Psa 65.5[6]: Our God, you save us, and your fearsome deeds answer our prayers for justice! You give hope to *people everywhere on earth*, even those across the sea. (CEV)

Psa 65.5[6]: God, when we pray to you, you answer us and save us by doing awesome deeds; you are the one who rescues us; *people who live in very remote places on the earth*, on the other side of the oceans, trust in you. (TfT)

Psa 67.7[8]: God shall bless us; let all *the ends of the earth* (*'aḫsê 'āreš*) fear him! (ESV)

Psa 67.7[8]: Yes, God will bless us, and *people all over the world* will fear him. (NLT 2004)

Psa 67.7[8]: Pray for his blessings to continue and for *everyone on earth* to worship our God. (CEV)

Psa 67.7[8]: And because God has blessed us, I desire that all *people everywhere* [MTY] on the earth will revere him. (TfT)

Psa 72.8: ⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to *the ends of the earth* (‘*ap̄sê ’āreṣ*)! ⁹ May desert tribes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts! ¹¹ May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! (ESV)

Psa 72.8: May he reign from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates River to *the ends of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Psa 72.8: Let his kingdom reach from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River *across all the earth*. (CEV)

Psa 72.8: I hope/desire that the king of Israel will rule the people in all the area from one sea in the east to another in the west, and from the Euphrates River to *the most remote/distant places on earth*. (TfT)

Psa 98.3: He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. *All the ends of the earth* (‘*ap̄sê ’āreṣ*) have seen the salvation of our God. (ESV)

Psa 98.3: He has remembered his promise to love and be faithful to Israel. *The ends of the earth* have seen the victory of our God. (NLT 2004)

Psa 98.3: God has been faithful in his love for Israel, and his saving power is seen *everywhere on earth*. (CEV)

Psa 98.3: Like he promised to us Israeli people [MTY], he has faithfully loved us and ◀been loyal to/not abandoned▶ us. People who live in *very remote places in all the earth* have seen that our God has defeated his enemies. (TfT)

Isa 41.5: The coastlands have seen and are afraid; *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣōt hā- ’āreṣ*) tremble; they have drawn near and come. (ESV)

Isa 41.5: The lands beyond the sea watch in fear. *Remote lands* tremble and mobilize for war. (NLT 2004)

Isa 41.5: Islands and foreign nations saw what I did and trembled as they came near. (CEV)

Isa 41.5: People who live on [PRS] islands in the ocean are afraid while they watch. *People in remote areas* tremble and gather together. (TfT)

Isa 45.22: ²² “Turn to me and be saved, all *the ends of the earth* (‘*ap̄sê ’āreṣ*)! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³ By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’ (ESV)

Isa 45.22: Let *all the world* look to me for salvation! For I am God; there is no other. (NLT 2004)

Isa 45.22: I invite *the whole world* to turn to me and be saved. I alone am God! No others are real. (CEV)

Isa 45.22: I will command the rulers of the nations to the north and to the south, ‘Allow all the people of Israel to return to their country, from *the most distant places on the earth*. (TfT)

Isa 52.10: The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all *the ends of the earth* (‘*ap̄sê ’āreṣ*) shall see the salvation of our God. (ESV)

Isa 52.10: The LORD has demonstrated his holy power before the eyes of all the nations. *All the ends of the earth* will see the victory of our God. (NLT 2004)

Isa 52.10: The LORD has shown all nations his mighty strength; now *everyone* will see the saving power of our God. (CEV)

Isa 52.10: Yahweh will show all the nations that he is holy and powerful. *People in the most remote/distant places on earth* will know that he has rescued his people. (TfT)

Dan 4.10–11[7–8]: ¹⁰ The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth (*lā-sôṭp̄ 'arā 'ā*). (ESV)

Dan 4.11[8]: The tree grew very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for *all the world* to see. (NLT 2004)

Dan 4.11[8]: It grew stronger and higher, until it reached to heaven and could be seen from *anywhere on earth*. (CEV)

Dan 4.11[8]: The tree was very strong and had grown very tall; it seemed that its top reached up to the sky, with the result that *everyone in the world* [HYP] could see it. (TfT)

Dan 4.22[19]: it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth (*lā-sôṭp̄ 'arā 'ā*). (ESV)

Dan 4.22[19]: That tree, Your Majesty, is you. For you have grown strong and great; your greatness reaches up to heaven, and your rule to *the ends of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Dan 4.22[19]: Your Majesty, that tree is you. Your glorious reputation has reached heaven, and your kingdom *covers the earth*. (CEV)

Dan 4.22[19]: ◀Your majesty/O King▶, that tree represents you! You have become very powerful. It is as though your greatness reaches up to the sky, and you rule *people all over the world*. (TfT)

Mic 5.4[3]: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to *the ends of the earth* (*'āṣê 'āreṣ*). (ESV)

Mic 5.4[3]: And he will stand to lead his flock with the LORD's strength, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. Then his people will live there undisturbed, for he will be highly honored *around the world*. (NLT 2004)

Mic 5.4[3]: Like a shepherd taking care of his sheep, this ruler will lead and care for his people by the power and glorious name of the LORD his God. His people will live securely, and *the whole earth* will know his true greatness, (CEV)

Mic 5.4[3]: And that man who will be ruling there in Jerusalem will stand and lead his people well, because Yahweh, his God, will cause him to be strong and greatly honored. Then the people whom he rules will live in Jerusalem safely; he will be greatly honored by *people all over the earth* so no one will dare to attack Jerusalem. (TfT)

Zech 9.10: I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to *the ends of the earth* (*'āṣê 'āreṣ*). (ESV)

Zech 9.10: I will remove the battle chariots from Israel and the warhorses from Jerusalem. I will destroy all the weapons used in battle, and your king will bring peace to the nations. His realm will stretch from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River to *the ends of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Zech 9.10: I, the LORD, will take away war chariots and horses from Israel and Jerusalem. Bows that were made for battle will be broken. I will bring peace to nations, and your king will rule from sea to sea. His kingdom will reach from the Euphrates River *across the earth*. (CEV)

Zech 9.10: I will get rid of the chariots in the Ephraim region that are used in battles and all the war horses in Jerusalem. All the bows used in wars will be broken. Your king will proclaim that he will cause things to go well and peacefully in the nations. He will rule the area from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, and from the Euphrates River to *the most distant places on the earth*. (TfT)

Translations of borders of Israel usage

The translation where the “end(s) of the earth” refers to the borders of Israel occurs in Isaiah. In Isa 26.15 the borders of the land (*qāṣēw ’āreṣ*) refers to the borders of the land of Israel. The translations of *qāṣēw ’āreṣ* ‘borders of the land’ in Isa 26.15 are: “borders of the land” (ESV), “our borders” (NLT), “more land” (CEV, TfT). In this case, *’āreṣ* in (*qāṣēw ’āreṣ*) means ‘land/country (of Israel)’ and *qāṣēw* refers to the physical borders of the land.

Isa 26.15: But you have increased the nation, O LORD, you have increased the nation; you are glorified; you have enlarged all *the borders of the land* (*qāṣēw ’āreṣ*). (ESV)

Isa 26.15: O LORD, you have made our nation great; yes, you have made us great. You have extended *our borders*, and we give you the glory! (NLT 2004)

Isa 26.15: Our nation has grown because of you, our LORD. We have *more land* than before, and you are honored. (CEV)

Isa 26.15: Yahweh, you have enabled our nation to become great; we are more people now, and we have *more land*, so we thank/praise you. (TfT)

Conclusion on translations of ‘ends of the earth’ expressions in the OT

The ESV is fairly literal and usually translates ends of the earth expressions as “end(s) of the earth” in each case. However, by translating literally for every usage the ESV does not indicate what is the meaning of an end of the earth expression in any particular instance. The ESV also needs to explain how a spherical earth can have ends or edges.

The NLT translates the created by God usages variously as “boundaries of the earth” (without specifying what this means) (Psa 74.17), “the whole wide world” (Pro 30.4), and “all the earth” (Isa 40.28). The latter two translations do not include any reference to the “end(s) of the earth” and one wonders how saying that God created the *whole* earth or *all* the earth is meant to be understood. In the measure of the earth usage, the NLT translates the measure literally as “end(s) of the earth” in most instances (see Deu 28.64, Job 38.13, Pss 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 42.10, 43.6, 48.20, 49.6, Jer 25.31, Zech 9.10). In Job 28.24, Psa 46.9[10], Isa 62.11, Jer 25.33, Mic 5.4[3], on the other hand, the measure is translated as “whole earth”. In the physical location usage, the NLT translates the location literally as “end(s) of the earth” in most instances (see Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, Psa 61.2[3], Isa 5.26, 41.9). In Psa 135.7, Jer 10.13, 51.16, on the other hand, the NLT translates the location with a “whole earth” expression. In the people who live far away usage, the NLT translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions as “whole earth/world” in Pss 2.8, 19.4, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], Isa 45.22, Dan 4.11[8], Mic 5.4[3] and as “remote lands” in Isa 41.5. The NLT translates “end(s) of the earth” literally in Pss 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 52.10, Dan 4.22[19], Zech 9.10. In all cases, the reference is meant to be taken to be to the people of the land/earth. The NLT translation strategy for “end(s) of the earth” expressions appears to be: where the reference to the “end(s) of the earth” as a physical reality cannot be avoided then translate literally, otherwise translate the extended meaning, e.g., “whole earth” for measure of the earth or for physical location or for people who live far away. However, this strategy apparently fails

in the translation of the passages which say that God created the ends of the earth in the beginning. Translating that God created the *whole* earth (Pro 30.4) or *all* the earth (Isa 40.28) does not convey the meaning that God created the ends of the earth as part of the earth. This biblical testimony is lost in the NLT translation.

For the created by God usage the CEV does not translate the “end(s) of the earth” expression in Psa 74.17 and Isa 40.28. In Pro 30.4 the CEV translates *’ap̄sê ’āreṣ* as “boundaries for the earth”. However, *’ap̄sê* means ‘end, extremity’, not ‘boundary’. So “boundaries for the earth” is an inaccurate translation in Pro 30.4. For the measure of the earth usage the CEV translates the “end(s) of the earth” expression as “whole earth” in Deu 28.64, Pss 46.9[10], 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 42.10, 62.11, Jer 25.31, Dan 4.11[8], 22[19], Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10. Otherwise, the CEV translates this usage variously as “everything beneath the heavens” (Job 28.24), “distant lands” (Isa 43.6), and “everyone (on earth)” (Isa 48.20, 49.6). The first two translations refer to places, while the second two translations refer to people. On the other hand, the CEV does not translate the “end(s) of the earth” expression in Job 38.13 or in Jer 25.33. For the physical location usage, the CEV does not translate the “end(s) of the earth” expression in Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, Jer 10.13, 51.16. Otherwise, the CEV translates the “end(s) of the earth” as “far away place” in Pss 61.2[3], 135.7, Isa 41.9. For the people who live far away usage, the CEV translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions as “every nation/everyone on earth” in Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], Isa 41.5, 52.10 and as “whole earth/world” in Pss 19.4, 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 45.22, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10. Thus, in contrast to the NLT, where the reference to the “end(s) of the earth” as a physical reality cannot be avoided the NLT translates literally, the CEV opts to not translate the “end(s) of the earth” expression in most of these cases. Otherwise, the “end(s) of the earth” is translated variously as “everything beneath the heavens” (Job 28.24), “far away place” (Pss 61.2[3], 135.7, Isa 41.9, 43.6), “every nation/everyone on earth” (Pss 2.8, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], Isa 41.5, 48.20, 49.6, 52.10) and “whole earth/world” (Pss 19.4, 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 45.22, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10). The “end(s) of the earth”—an essential part of the biblical cosmos created by God in the beginning—does not exist in the CEV translation.

With regard to the created by God usage, the TtT interprets the “end(s) of the earth” created in the beginning as both the boundary between land and sea (Psa 74.17, Pro 30.4) and the places on earth most distant from the land of Israel (Isa 40.28). The problem with the first interpretation is that *’ereṣ* ‘earth’ does not have the sense of ‘land as opposed to sea’. In the context of *gābûlôt ’āreṣ* in Psa 74.17 and *’ap̄sê ’āreṣ* in Pro 30.4 *’ereṣ* can only refer to the whole earth. The second interpretation implies that God must have created the land of Israel in the beginning for there to be lands most distant from it. With regard to the measure of earth usage, the TtT translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions as either “whole earth” or “the most remote/distant places on the earth”. The “whole earth” translation admits that the “end(s) of the earth” measure applies to the whole earth. This contradicts the interpretation that the “end(s) of the earth” refers to the boundary between land and sea. With regard to the physical location usage, the TtT does not translate “end(s) of the earth” in Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, Isa 5.26. Otherwise, the TtT translates this usage mostly as “distant/remote places on the earth”. Psa 61.2[3] makes it clear that this is remote from Israel. With regard to the people who live far away usage, the TtT translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions as either “every nation/ people/everyone on earth” or “people who live in the most distant/remote places on earth”. For a few “end(s) of the earth” expressions with this usage the TtT translates with “whole earth/world”.

The TtT does not omit “end(s) of the earth” as a concept altogether as the CEV does. However, the interpretation that “end(s) of the earth” is both the boundary between land and sea and places remote from Israel is conceptually flawed in a number of ways—not least of which is the fact that Israel is a land right next to the sea, the Mediterranean Sea! With the boundary between land and sea interpretation, “end(s) of the earth (*’ereṣ*)” expressions cannot have this meaning as *’ereṣ* does not have the sense of ‘land as opposed to sea’. “End(s) of the earth (*’ereṣ*)” expressions can only refer to the whole earth. With the remote/distant places on the earth interpretation this is specified in Psa 61.2[3] as being remote from Israel. God must therefore have created the land of Israel in the beginning when he created the ends of the earth to be distant/remote from Israel. It seems that in the TtT the “end(s) of the earth” expressions have at least four different meanings: ‘a measure of the whole earth’, ‘the most remote/distant places on the earth’, ‘from the east to the west’, and ‘people who live in the most

remote/distant places on the earth'. None of these are the biblical meaning which is 'the rim of the disk of the earth'.

Studying these translations shows that interpreting "end(s) of the earth ('ereš)" expressions in the OT in terms of a modern understanding of the world does not work. You end up with multiple meanings that are incoherent with each other. For example, how can "end(s) of the earth" mean 'from the east to the west' or 'remote places on earth' (parts of the earth) and also mean 'the whole earth'? In an ancient cosmology, however, the "end(s) of the earth" are the rim of the disk of the earth. They are the ends, extremities, borders, edges, boundaries, skirts of the earth. Examining the various usages of "end(s) of the earth" expressions in the OT shows that the primary sense of these expressions is the rim of the disk of the earth created by God in the beginning when he created the earth. The "end(s) of the earth" can be used as a measure of the whole earth, or a far away place on the earth, or a far away people of the earth. These usages are derived from the primary meaning.

Recommendations for translating "end(s) of the earth" expressions in the OT

Before considering how "end(s) of the earth" expressions in the OT should be translated we need to decide what kind of expression they are. Are they idiomatic, for example? An idiom is a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words. For example, idioms in English expressing the notion 'die' include: *kick the bucket*, *bite the dust*, *be done for*, *cash in chips*, *give up the ghost*. None of these phrases contain a word that expresses the notion 'die'. The understanding that these expressions mean 'die' is obtained by having knowledge of how speakers of the language use these expressions.

qāṣēh hā-'āreš 'end, extremity; border, outskirts, edge, boundary, brink of the earth'

qāṣwê 'ereš 'end(s) of the earth'

qāṣwê 'āreš 'borders of land (Israel)' (Isa 26.15)

'āpšê 'āreš 'end, extremity of the earth'

kənaṣ hā-'āreš 'wing, extremity, skirt of the earth'

gəḥûlôt 'āreš 'borders, boundaries of the earth'

sôp 'arə 'ā 'end, conclusion of the earth'

We have seen that the Hebrew "end(s) of the earth" expressions above have the following usages:

as created by God in the beginning (Psa 74.17, Pro 30.4, Isa 40.28)

as a measure of the whole earth (Deu 28.64, Job 28.24, 38.13, Pss 46.9[10], 48.10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 42.10, 43.6, 49.6, 62.11, Jer 25.31, 33, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10)

as a specific physical location, far away (Deu 13.7[8], 28.49, Pss 61.2[3], 135.7, Isa 5.26, 41.9, Jer 10.13, 51.16)

by extension of meaning, to refer to people who live far away (from Israel) (Pss 2.8, 19.4, 22.27[28], 59.13[14], 65.5[6], 67.7[8], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 41.5, 45.22, 52.10, Dan 4.11[8], 22[19], Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10)

to refer to the borders of Israel (Isa 26.15)

The passages Psa 74.17, Pro 30.4, Isa 40.28 say God created the "end(s) of the earth" and set them in place in the beginning. They must therefore be part of the physical cosmos. The measure of earth usage passages show that the earth can be measured by its "ends", e.g., from one end to the other end (Deu 28.64, Jer 25.33), from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth (Psa 72.8, Zech 9.10), or the whole earth is encompassed by its ends (Job 28.24, 38.13, Pss 46.9[10], 48.10[11], 98.3, Isa 48.20, 49.6, 62.11, Jer 25.31, Mic 5.4[3]). The term 'ereš in these passages must refer to the whole earth. The only

other meaning *'ereš* can have in this context is 'land, territory, nation' and this is the meaning it has in Isa 26.15 where *qāṣēw 'āreš* refers to the borders of Israel. For the usage passages where the "end(s) of the earth" expression refers to a physical location this location is typically far away (Deu 28.49, Psa 61.2[3], Isa 5.26), although it can be where clouds and mist are formed (Psa 135.7, Jer 10.13).

All of these scriptures show that the "end(s) of the earth" are regarded as physically real in the biblical cosmos. It is also the case that the meaning of "end(s) of the earth" expressions can be derived from the terms in the expression. The term *'ereš* always refers to the whole earth, except when it refers to the land of Israel (Isa 26.15). The terms *qāṣēh*, *qāṣwê*, *'āpsê*, *kānap*, *gāḥûl*, *sôp* are all different ways of expressing 'end, extremity, border, edge, boundary' in Hebrew. The meanings of "end(s) of the earth" can thus be deduced from the individual terms in the expression and so these expressions are not idioms. They are instead metaphors for the edges of the earth conceptualised as a flat, circular disk.

At this point another question needs to be asked with respect to determining the meaning of "end(s) of the earth" expressions in the OT. Are they examples of a dead metaphor? A dead metaphor is a figure of speech which has lost the original imagery of its meaning due to extensive, repetitive, and popular usage. Because dead metaphors have a conventional meaning that differs from the original, they can be understood without knowing their earlier connotation. Dead metaphors are generally the result of a semantic shift in the evolution of a language, a process called the literalisation of a metaphor. A distinction is often made between those dead metaphors whose origins are entirely unknown to the majority of people using them (such as the expression "to kick the bucket") and those whose source is widely known or symbolism easily understood but not often thought about (the idea of "falling in love").

The many examples of "end(s) of the earth" expressions used as a measure of the whole earth (e.g., Deu 28.64, Job 28.24, 38.13, Pss 46.9[10]–10[11], 72.8, 98.3, Isa 24.16, 42.10, Isa 43.6, 48.20, 49.6, Jer 25.31, 33, Mic 5.4[3], Zech 9.10) show that these expressions are not a dead metaphor. The "end(s)" referred to have to be real for the expression to have its measure of the whole earth meaning.

Also, in order for "end(s) of the earth" expressions to refer to the edges of the disk of the earth, the earth has to be conceptualised as a flat, circular disk. Evidence from ancient Near East mythological stories and iconography shows that the ancients understood that the earth was a flat, circular disk floating on top of the waters of the deep, and that the heavens were a dome over the earth. There are several scripture passages that provide evidence that this is how the ancient Hebrews conceptualised the earth. As already mentioned, Pro 8.27 says that God created the earth by drawing a circle (*ḥûḡ*) on the surface of the deep. The circle of the earth in Pro 8.27 is where the rim of the circular earth and the rim of the heavenly dome meet. That the earth is envisioned as a flat disk in the OT is also reflected in Nebuchadnezzar's vision as recounted in Dan 4.10–11[7–8]. Here, Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel that he saw a tree in the midst of the earth, which was of a great height and was visible to the ends of the earth (*lā-sôp 'arā 'ā*). Daniel interpreted the great tree as the dominion of the king which reaches up to the sky and extends to the ends of the earth (Dan 4.22[19]). However, such a tree could only be seen from the ends of the earth if the earth was conceived of as being flat and circular. If the earth was a globe then no matter how tall the tree was it could not be seen by anyone beyond the horizon.

Pro 8.27: When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle (*ḥûḡ*) on the face of the deep, (ESV)

Dan 4.10–11[7–8]: ¹⁰The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth (*lā-sôp 'arā 'ā*). (ESV)

Dan 4.22[19]: it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth (*lā-sôp 'arā 'ā*). (ESV)

The ancient Israelites envisaged a universe made up of a flat disk-shaped earth floating on water, heaven above, underworld below. Humans inhabited earth during life and the underworld after death, and the underworld was morally neutral; only in Hellenistic times (after c. 330 BCE) did Jews begin to adopt the Greek idea that it would be a place of punishment for misdeeds, and that the righteous would

enjoy an afterlife in heaven. In this period too, the older three-level cosmology in large measure gave way to the Greek concept of a spherical earth suspended in space at the centre of a number of concentric heavens. So, it would only be from Hellenistic times when “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the OT would lose their conceptual reference and hence become dead metaphors. At the time they were written they would have been “live” metaphors referring to the edges of the disk of the earth.

As far as translation is concerned, a literal translation is insufficient. For example, the ESV translates *qəṣôṭ hā-’āreṣ* in Isa 40.28 as “end(s) of the earth”. But *ends of the earth* in English means ‘the most remote places in the world’. Some of the most remote (from anywhere else) places on earth are: Tristan da Cunha, Motuo in Tibet, Ittoqqortoormiit in Greenland, McMurdo Station in Antarctica, Easter Island, Kerguelen Islands, the “Desolation Islands”, Pitcairn Island, South Pacific, and Oymyakon in Siberia. But this is not what *qəṣôṭ hā-’āreṣ* means. In Isa 40.28 *qəṣôṭ hā-’āreṣ* refers to the edges of the disk of the earth which God created in the beginning. By translating *qəṣôṭ hā-’āreṣ* in Isa 40.28 literally as “end(s) of the earth” without explanation the ESV leaves the reader having to work out what *qəṣôṭ hā-’āreṣ* refers to based on what *ends of the earth* means in English. The reader is then left wondering why do the remote places of the world, such as those mentioned (which the Hebrew author could not have known about), get a special mention in Isa 40.28? A literal translation therefore requires an accompanying explanation as to what *ends of the earth* means wherever it occurs.

Isa 40.28: Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of *the ends of the earth* (*qəṣôṭ hā-’āreṣ*). He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable (ESV)

Psa 74.17: You determined *where the oceans end and the land begins*, and you created the summer/hot season and the winter/cold season. (TfT)

Pro 30.4: But let me say this: No one [RHQ] has ascended to heaven to find out what God is like and returned to tell us. No one [RHQ] has gathered/held the wind in his hand. No one [RHQ] has wrapped the water in the ocean in a piece of cloth and no one [RHQ] has established *the boundaries of the earth*. If you know those things, tell me [RHQ] his name, and the names of his children [SAR]. But you do not know those things, so you cannot speak with authority about what God is like. (TfT)

Isa 40.28: Have you never heard and have you never understood that Yahweh is the everlasting God; he is the one who created the earth, even *the most distant places on the earth*. He never becomes weak or weary, and no one can find out how much he understands. (TfT)

On the other hand, a meaning-based translation must get the meaning correct. The TfT translates the “end(s) of the earth” expressions in Psa 74.17 and in Pro 30.4 as the boundaries between the oceans and the land, *’ereṣ*. However, this cannot be correct as *’ereṣ* does not have the sense of ‘land as opposed to sea’.¹⁵ Also, *’ereṣ* in these “end(s) of the earth” expressions refers to the whole earth. This does not make sense from a modern cosmological view. Furthermore, the TfT translates the “end(s) of the earth” expression in Isa 40.28 as “the most distant places on the earth”. This is a different meaning to that in Psa 74.17 and in Pro 30.4. These places are also most distant from the country of Israel. This does not make sense in the context of Isa 40.28 where God created these distant places in the beginning, since the land of Israel did not exist in the beginning. For a meaning-based translation, the created by God and measure of the earth usages should translate the “end(s) of the earth” expressions as *ends of the earth* or, possibly, *edges of the earth*, with an explanation of what this refers to. The physical location usage of “end(s) of the earth” expressions should be translated as *distant/remote places* and the people who live far away usage should be translated as *people who live far away*. In this way the translation will be faithful to the biblical text.

¹⁵ See BDB 776 (2010 [1906]: 75).

Ends of the earth expressions in the NT

There are “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the NT. As in the OT, there are multiple (three) expressions in Greek for this concept. Note that the one author, Luke, uses different “end(s) of the earth” expressions in Luke and Acts.

τό πέρας τῆς γῆς (Mat 12.42, Luk 11.31)

τό ἐσχάτος τῆς γῆς (Act 1.8, 13.47)

τό πέρας τῆς οἰκουμένης (Rom 10.18)

where γῆ means ‘earth’, οἰκουμένη means ‘inhabited world’, πέρας means ‘end, limit, boundary’, and ἐσχάτος means ‘farthest, end, last’

In Mat 12.42 and Luk 11.21 the “end(s) of the earth” expression, τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς, refers to a distant land where the queen of Sheba came from. In Act 1.8 and 13.47 the “end(s) of the earth” expression, ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς, refers to the whole world, as does τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης in Rom 10.18.

Mat 12.42: The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from *the ends of the earth* (τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς) to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (ESV)

Mat 12.42: The queen of Sheba will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from *a distant land* to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen. (NLT 2004)

Mat 12.42: The Queen of the South will also stand there with you and condemn you. She traveled *a long way* to hear Solomon's wisdom, and yet here is something much greater than Solomon. (CEV)

Mat 12.42: The queen from Sheba, South of Israel, who lived long ago, came from *a distant region* in order to listen to King Solomon teach many wise things. But now I, a man who is much greater and wiser than Solomon, am here, but you have not listened to what I have told you. So at the time when God judges all people, the queen from Sheba will stand in front of him, along with you people, and will condemn you. (TfT)

Luk 11.31: The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from *the ends of the earth* (τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς) to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (ESV)

Luk 11.31: The queen of Sheba will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from *a distant land* to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen. 11.32NLT Luke 11. (NLT 2004)

Luk 11.31: When the judgment comes, the Queen of the South will stand there with you and condemn you. She traveled *a long way* to hear Solomon's wisdom, and yet here is something far greater than Solomon. (CEV)

Luk 11.31: The queen from Sheba, far south of Israel, who lived long ago, traveled *a long distance* to hear Solomon speak many wise things. But now I, a man who is much greater and wiser than Solomon, am here, but you have not listened to what I have told you. Therefore, at the time when God judges all people, the queen from Sheba will stand there, along with you people, and will condemn you. (TfT)

Act 1.8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to *the end of the earth* (ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς).” (ESV)

Act 1.8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to *the ends of the earth*. (NLT 2004)

Act 1.8: But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and *everywhere in the world*. (CEV)

Act 1.8: But you do need to know that the Holy Spirit will make you spiritually strong when he comes to live in you. Then you will powerfully tell people about me in Jerusalem and in all the other places in Judea district, in Samaria district, and in *places far away all over [IDM] the world*. (TfT)

Act 13.47: For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to *the ends of the earth* (ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς).” (ESV)
[In Isa 49.6 the LXX translates *qāṣēh hā-’āreṣ* as ἐσχατου της γης.]

Act 13.47: For the Lord gave us this command when he said, ‘I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to *the farthest corners of the earth*.’ (NLT 2004)

Act 13.47: The Lord has given us this command, “I have placed you here as a light for the Gentiles. You are to take the saving power of God to *people everywhere on earth*.” (CEV)

Act 13.47: We are doing that also because the Lord God has commanded us to do it. He said to us, ‘I have appointed you to reveal things about me to non-Jewish people [MET] that will be like a light to them. I have appointed you to tell *people everywhere [MTY] in the world* about the one who came to save them.’ (TfT)

Rom 10.18: But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to *the ends* (τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης).” (ESV)
[In Psa 19[18].4 the LXX translates *qāṣēh tēbēl* as τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης.]

Rom 10.18: But I ask, have the people of Israel actually heard the message? Yes, they have: “The message has gone throughout the earth, and the words to *all the world*.” (NLT 2004)

Rom 10.18: But am I saying that the people of Israel did not hear? No, I am not! The Scriptures say, “The message was told everywhere on earth. It was announced *all over the world*.” (CEV)

Rom 10.18: But if someone were to ask, “Have not the people of Israel heard the message about God?” I would reply that they certainly have heard! It is like what is written in the Psalms, The people living all over the world [PRS, MTY] have seen the stars, and what they indicate about God’s character has reached people living in *the most remote places in the world* [DOU]! (TfT)

In Rom 10.18 Paul quotes from Psa 19[18].4 in the LXX. Here the LXX translates *qāṣēh tēbēl* as τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης. In Acts 13.47 Luke quotes from Isa 49.6 in the LXX. Here the LXX translates *qāṣēh hā-’āreṣ* as ἐσχατου της γης. The LXX translates “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the OT in a range of different ways:

τὸ ἄκρον τῆς γῆς where ἄκρον means ‘high point, top, tip, end’ (Deu 13.7[8], 28.64, Pro 17.24, 30.4, Isa 5.26, 40.28, 41.5, 9, 42.10, 43.6, 52.10, Mic 5.4[3])

τὸ ἐσχάτος τῆς γῆς where ἐσχάτος means ‘farthest, end, last’ (Deu 28.49, Psa 135.7, Isa 45.22, 48.20, 49.6, 62.11, Jer 10.13)

τό πέρας τῆς γῆς where πέρας means ‘end, limit, boundary’ (Pss 2.8, 48.10[11], 59.13[14], 61.2[3], 67.7[8], 98.3)

τό κραταῖός τῆς γῆς where κραταῖός means ‘edge, border, hem, tassle’ (Pss 46.9[10], 65.5[6])

τό πέρας τῆς οἰκουμένης where πέρας means ‘end, limit, boundary’ and οἰκουμένη means ‘inhabited world’ (Pss 19.4, 72.8)

τό ἔνδοξος τῆς γῆς where ἔνδοξος means ‘held in esteem or honour, of high repute’ (Isa 26.15)

τό πῖονες τῆς γῆς where ἀπόπροθι means ‘far away’ (Psa 22.27[28])

τὰ ὅρια τῆς γῆς where ὅριον means ‘boundary, region, district’ (Psa 74.17)

τό διεκβολὰς τῆς γῆς where διεκβολὰς means ‘negotiation’ (Zech 9.10)

The most popular form is τό ἄκρον τῆς γῆς with some 11 occurrences of this form. This is followed by τό ἐσχάτος τῆς γῆς with 7 occurrences and τό πέρας τῆς γῆς with 6 occurrences. However, the NT writers do not use the most popular LXX form, τό ἄκρον τῆς γῆς. Paul uses τό πέρας τῆς οἰκουμένης in Rom 10.18 because he quotes from LXX Psa 19[18].4. Luke uses τό ἐσχάτος τῆς γῆς in Act 1.8, 13.47 because he quotes from LXX Isa 49.6 in Act 13.47. Mat 12.42 and Luk 11.21 both have τό πέρας τῆς γῆς because the authors use a common source document. So, the writers in each case use the Greek “end(s) of the earth” form that they have in front of them.

The “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the NT have two usages. These usages are consistent with OT usage.

far away land (Mat 12.42, Luk 11.31)

the whole earth/world encompassed by its ends (Act 1.8, 13.47, Rom 10.18)

Again, the question can be raised are “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the NT dead metaphors? The response is that there are passages in the NT which are only comprehensible if the earth is understood to be a flat, circular disk.

In Mat 4.8 and Luk 4.5 Jesus would only have been able to see all the kingdoms of the world from the top of a high mountain if the earth was a flat disk reaching to the horizon (the ends of the earth). If the earth were conceived of as a globe then it would not matter how high the mountain was Jesus would not have been able to see all the kingdoms of the world from the top of it. Some might suggest this was a supernatural vision that the devil gave to Jesus (cf. Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of a tall tree in the midst of the earth, which was visible to the ends of the earth (Dan 4.22[19])). But if this was a supernatural vision of all the kingdoms of the world then there was no need for Jesus to be on top of a high mountain to have the vision. By comparison, Nebuchadnezzar was lying in his bed when he had his vision (Dan 4.10[7]). So, the implication is that Jesus needed to be on the top of a high mountain to be able to see all the kingdoms of the world.

Mat 4.8: Again, the devil took him (Jesus) to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

Luk 4.5: And the devil took him (Jesus) up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

With respect to Mat 24.30 and Rev 1.7, all the tribes of the earth would not be able to see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven if they lived on a globe. Act 1.9–11 indicates that Jesus will return from heaven in the same way he ascended into heaven before his disciples. Since in Act 1.8 Jesus commands his disciples to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth we can assume that Jesus ascended into heaven from Jerusalem. Therefore, he will

return to Jerusalem when he appears again. However, if the sign of the Son of Man were to appear over Jerusalem then people living on the other side of the world in, say, Australia would not be able to see it. All the tribes of the earth would only be able to see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven if they lived on a circular disk with Jerusalem at its centre (*tabbûr*). The ends of heaven in Mat 24.31 and the ends of the earth in Act 1.8 must therefore refer to the perimeter of the disk of the earth where the dome of heaven meets the circular horizon of the earth. There are no ends or edges on the surface of a globe. The descriptions of the return of Christ given in Mat 24.30–31 and Rev 1.7 are only comprehensible if the earth is conceived of as being a flat, circular disk. Thus the “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the NT are not dead metaphor.

Mat 24.30–31: ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Rev 1.7: Behold, he (Jesus Christ) is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

With regard to the translation of “end(s) of the earth” expressions in the NT, a literal translation should include an explanation of what the ends of the earth are and the extended meaning of each usage. A meaning-based translation should have *far away/distant land* for that usage in Mat 12.42, Luk 11.31 and should have *whole earth/world* for that usage in Act 1.8, 13.47, Rom 10.18.

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