

With regard to the historicity of Genesis 1-11, we can learn something from creation science. It also claims to believe that the history in Genesis 1-11 is accurate history that agrees with the historical/scientific facts. Most readers of this journal are well aware that the way creation science squares the biblical account with the historical/scientific facts is by rejecting the overwhelming consensus of the best-trained scientists in the relevant sciences and substituting in its place private interpretations of the scientific data. In addition it finds evidence in Scripture for items which Old Testament scholars do not find there, like multiple volcanoes exploding at the time of the flood.

Is concordism any different? Despite the honesty of the concordists with regard to the relevant sciences, concordism squares the biblical account with the historical/scientific facts primarily by rejecting the overwhelming consensus of the best-trained Old Testament scholars and substituting in its place private interpretations of the biblical data. With regard to pre-Adamites, it finds evidence for them in Scripture in places where Old Testament scholars do not find them.

As for a local flood, which has become a standard staple of concordism, the overwhelming consensus of Old Testament biblical scholars is that the Bible is saying that the Flood was anthropologically universal and that during the Flood the entire earth was virtually returned to its pre-creation state described in Gen. 1:2.

One need not take my word for it. Go to a good theological library and find twenty commentaries on Genesis by qualified Old Testament scholars. Carefully read the sections supposedly supporting pre-Adamites and the section on the flood. You will be lucky to find even two Old Testament scholars who think Scripture is speaking of pre-Adamites or a local flood. Concordism is not resting upon any firmer a foundation than is creation science. It simply prefers a private interpretation of the Bible to a private interpretation of science.

Despite its sincerity, effort, and hopeful thinking, concordism's Day-age, pre-Adamites, local flood, and local language at the Tower of Babel are rejections of the historical accuracy of Genesis 1-11. Concordism replaces the history offered in Genesis 1-11 with a different history based on private interpretations which are determined not by the context of Scripture, but by the findings of modern science.

This does not mean that creation science gets off scot-free with reference to its interpretation of Scripture. For one thing, as Dick Fischer pointed out in his paper (*PSCF* 55 [Dec. 2003]: 222-31), the "fountains of the great Deep" (Gen. 7:11) are fresh water terrestrial fountains; and it is they along with rain that supplied the water for the flood.<sup>4</sup> The ocean, which is not fresh water, cannot be employed as a means of flooding the globe (or half the globe à la Godfrey/Aardsma) without doing the same thing that concordists are doing: replacing the history in Genesis 1-11 with a private interpretation.

Calvin's doctrine of accommodation, which I believe should be followed in principle, has a great advantage over creation science and concordism in that it allows both the Bible and the scientific data to freely say what they say. Concordism and creation science with their private interpretations have replaced the reality of Scripture and science with an illusion.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>It would be just as misleading to say Genesis 1-11 is either "fiction" or "myth" as to say that the early geology books which explain the results of the Missoula floods as being due to glaciers were either fiction or myth. Genesis 1-11, like those early geology books, is the outmoded history/science of those times.

<sup>2</sup>The fact that New Testament writers accept Genesis 1-11 as historical only proves that modern history/science was not revealed to them any more than to the Old Testament writers.

<sup>3</sup>My book, *Inerrant Wisdom*, develops this thesis.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Fountains of the Great Deep," *Origins* 1, no. 2 (1974): 67-72.

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## Do Ice Cores Disprove Aardsma's Flood Theory?

In a recent *PSCF* article, Paul Seely pointed to recent Greenland ice core data as "ultimate proof that Noah's Flood was not global," concluding "that on any possible scenario ... the 110,000 regular annual layers of fresh-water ice in the GISP2 ice core falsify the theory of a global Flood in the time of Noah."<sup>1</sup> The scope of this claim clearly extends to Aardsma's flood theory, which was introduced in my letter in the same issue that carried Seely's article.<sup>2</sup> The clear, well-written case may have persuaded many *PSCF* readers to rule out even this promising theory immediately, so my purpose here is to argue that no such hasty rejection is warranted.

Seely's case is indeed impressive. What may actually prove fatal to any theory that leaves no ice sheet on Greenland at the conclusion of the flood is his positive evidence for far too many years of history in the one resting there now. Nevertheless, Michael Oard, Larry Vardiman, and other proponents may yet discover new ways to defend such a theory. Time will tell.

But what about other global flood theories, like Aardsma's, where the ice sheet forms before the flood yet is not destroyed by it? Seely devoted only two paragraphs to refuting these,<sup>3</sup> arguing that the flood must have affected both top and bottom sides of the ice sheet if it floated, or else at least its top side. He wrote: "Gen 7:19-8:4 virtually demands that it was covered by the ocean," but even if it never was submerged, certain evidence he believes should be found is missing. Seely therefore extended his "ultimate proof" claim to cover even Aardsma's flood theory using an entirely different line of reasoning, where positive evidence from the ice core data has little or nothing to do with his case against it.

Although he concluded that a pre-flood ice sheet should have been flooded, since Gen 7:19 says "all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered," Seely also discussed the "rather unbiblical scenario" where it was not under water. He reasoned that "the extraordinary amounts of precipitation at the time of the Flood (Gen. 7:4, 12) would cause the ice core to have either an extra-large melt layer from rain as well as ice pipes, lenses, glands, and such in the snow above or an extra-large annual layer of snow sometime in the past, probably in the last 8,000

years, but it does not." In these scenarios, Seely preferred an interpretation where the narrator speaks entirely from God's omniscient perspective. Aardsma favors one where "Genesis 7 and 8 record Noah's accurate but finite observations of the Flood."<sup>4</sup> We can agree that Seely's interpretation deserves consideration, but the issue remains unsettled, with Aardsma's idea still quite viable.

Apparently, Seely entertained only one explanation for a total lack of the distinctive ice core features that global flood theories allegedly predict if the ice sheet was not submerged, namely, the theories must all be wrong. However, other reasonable alternatives do come to mind. Maybe the features were seen but not recognized as noteworthy, so they were never reported. Even if they really are missing, this does not necessarily endanger the theories. The best cores may have missed, perhaps by inches, the features sought at the depth of interest. Can we be sure it rained even in Greenland? As for "an extra-large annual layer of snow," can we know how much snow should have accumulated at the exact position of the ice cores, and how much the wind may have blown away? Certainly not, so a given core might not show anything unusual at its flood layer.

Aardsma believes the Greenland ice sheet should have floated "at least 6,600 feet above its bed,"<sup>5</sup> so it is important to consider three other reasons Seely gave for ruling out this scenario: (1) "it probably would have floated away," but even if it did not, (2) "ocean currents would have kept it from coming back down exactly in its former place," and (3) "the sloping parts of the ice sheet would have produced a unique 'marine' ice that is found under ice shelves but ... is not under the Greenland ice sheet." As for the first two points, if Seely even considered the coastal mountain ranges, his brief comments do not explain why he concluded that the ice sheet should have cleared them, or why they would not have guided it back to its old bed. On his last point, how careful was his search for marine ice? How can he know the old shelf areas did not flow out to sea in glaciers and form icebergs long ago? A mere failure to find a feature hardly guarantees it never existed.

If the ice cap floated, ocean water should have melted some of its underside. If it did not float, then the date for the bottom of the GISP2 ice core should be when central Greenland was most recently free of ice. Unfortunately, dating the bottom layer is problematic, but one study Seely cited "yielded an estimated age for the ice at the silty ice boundary of 'at least 250,000 BP.'"<sup>6</sup> Is this also the date for the most recent climate warm enough to melt all the ice? A plot of land ice and temperature on earth over the past 800,000 years shows the warmest, most ice-free time at about 123,000 BP.<sup>7</sup> If Greenland kept its ice then, because older ice has been found there, can we speculate that ice disappeared most recently during some earlier, still warmer period off the chart? It would follow that layers spanning over 500,000 years might have melted off the bottom of the ice sheet during the flood at the GISP2 project site. Loss of the bottom layers would leave us no way to date the event. This cursory analysis is admittedly far from conclusive, but Aardsma claims an ice core taken at Camp Century as "clear" evidence that the Greenland ice sheet has floated.<sup>8</sup>

What Aardsma really wanted was a nearby ice sheet with datable remnants of pre-flood ice left frozen to its bed throughout the flood. He claimed he found this at Devon Island and discussed seven lines of evidence that his theory has been confirmed, with a "best date" of 3429 BC for the boundary between pre-flood and post-flood ice, and 80% of the older ice melted away.<sup>9</sup>

Since Aardsma believes the date of creation is 5176 ± 26 BC,<sup>10</sup> one can still say that ice core evidence invalidates at least this date, but this separate issue, which Aardsma has also addressed, is really too big to cover here.<sup>11</sup> Hopefully, while the debate is still on the historicity of the flood, neither side will prematurely dismiss any theory as promising as Aardsma's without ample and reasonable justification. In the end, the truth will prevail.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Paul H. Seely, "The GISP2 Ice Core: Ultimate Proof that Noah's Flood Was Not Global," *PSCF* 55.4 (2003): 253. The term *global flood* does not necessarily refer to one that covered every square inch of the globe. It can also refer to one that stretched around the globe or covered most dry land on the globe, not just a single watershed. Note 32 is the only indication in the article that Seely knew about the particular theory defended here.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas J. Godfrey, "On the Hills of Concordism and Creation Science," *PSCF* 55.4 (2003): 278.

<sup>3</sup>Paul H. Seely, "The GISP2 Ice Core," p. 253. Unless otherwise noted, all other Seely quotes also come from the same first two paragraphs on p. 253.

<sup>4</sup>Gerald E. Aardsma, "Chronology of Noah's Flood," *The Biblical Chronologist* 3.1 (1997): 6.

<sup>5</sup>Gerald E. Aardsma, "The Depth of Noah's Flood," *The Biblical Chronologist* 3.3 (1997): 8-9. See his article, "Noah's Flood at Devon Island," *The Biblical Chronologist* 3.4 (1997): 4-6, for his explanation of the math and physics behind the probability that a given thickness of ice will break away from its bed and float.

<sup>6</sup>Paul H. Seely, "The GISP2 Ice Core," p. 254.

<sup>7</sup>Richard B. Alley, *The Two-Mile Time Machine: Ice Cores, Abrupt Climate Change, and Our Future* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 94. See James Zachos, et al., "Trends, Rhythms, and Aberrations in Global Climate 65 Ma to Present," in *Science*, 292.5517 (April 27, 2001): 689, for a similar plot that goes back four million years. Both plots are based on isotope measurements for shells taken from sediment cores. Here the validity of these climate plots is presupposed without challenge or endorsement.

<sup>8</sup>Gerald E. Aardsma, "Noah's Flood at Devon Island," pp. 14-5. Aardsma did not discuss the GISP2 data, but he cited Susan Herron and Chester C. Langway, Jr., "The Debris-laden Ice at the Bottom of the Greenland Ice Sheet," in *Journal of Glaciology*, 23.89 (1979): 194.

<sup>9</sup>Gerald E. Aardsma, "Noah's Flood at Devon Island," pp. 6-14. Aardsma's calculation for the boundary date is on page 9, and his date for the Flood based on biblical data is 3520 ± 21 BC.

<sup>10</sup>Gerald E. Aardsma, "Toward Unification of Pre-Flood Chronology," *The Biblical Chronologist* 4.4 (1998): 4.

<sup>11</sup>Aardsma wrote a series of five articles on this, beginning with the article cited in note 10. It culminated in "A Unification of Pre-Flood Chronology," *The Biblical Chronologist* 5.2 (1999): 1-18, where he finally proposed his solution, which does not depend on the validity of his flood theory.

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