

# Letters

lord. Jesus came to take it back. This explanation of evil in nature is persuasively set forth in Gregory Boyd's *Satan and the Problem of Evil* (InterVarsity Press, 2001).

Evidence suggests that Satan, not the Christian God, is the author of evil (1 John 5:19; Rom. 8:20–22; Isa. 13:11; Pss. 5:4; 97:10; Job 34:10). Perhaps Isaiah 11:6–9 reveals a true reflection of God's character in nature.

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## Cold Facts about the GISP2 Ice Core and the Flood

Derek Eshelbrenner's letter (*PSCF* 56, no. 2 [2004]: 156–7) regarding my paper on the GISP2 ice core suggests that some clarification is in order. I called my paper the "ultimate proof" against a global flood not because it is an absolute proof in a mathematical sense but because compared to other evidences that the Flood was not global, the GISP2 ice core offers the most direct and most difficult evidence for a YEC (Young Earth Creationist) to refute, making it particularly valuable for addressing the YEC illusion.

Eshelbrenner may have a legitimate complaint that I did not present enough evidence to remove the possibility of the Greenland ice sheet having floated at the time of Noah's flood but not floated away. One reason I did not spend much time on that possibility is because YECs are generally agreed that there was no ice sheet on Greenland or anywhere else before the Flood. And, from a scientific point of view, glaciologists are agreed that the Greenland ice sheet is indigenous.

When I asked Richard Alley, one of the world's leading glaciologists, about the possibility of the ice sheet having floated in a flood, he answered, "Highly unlikely!" for "lots of reasons." He mentioned the absence of "marine ice," which I mentioned in the paper and also said:

If it floated free and then sat back down, we should either see sea water that soaked into the margins, or that froze on the bottom, or else if you suppose really warm waters, then it would have melted off the old basal ice that is there.

I did not ask for other reasons, but if anyone is interested I am sure he or other glaciologists could convert "lots of reasons" into specifics.

The scientific evidence is that the Greenland ice sheet was neither covered by a global flood nor made to float as Gen. 7:19–8:4 virtually demands. Its untouched and long-time presence on Greenland testifies, therefore, that there was no global flood in the time of Noah. Eshelbrenner, however, is not ready to say science has proven there was no global Flood, only that such a Flood "appears naturally improbable." But, this is too weak a conclusion. Indeed Eshelbrenner seeks to sustain his conclusion by implying that Noah's flood may have been not only supernaturally

caused (which I in no way deny) but so unique that despite its unprecedented dimensions, it left neither sediment nor erosion behind it as it drained away! He would thus save the possibility of a global Flood by absolving it of any need to leave behind the most probable naturally expected evidence. It is an approach which virtually removes the Flood from history in order to save its historicity.

It should be added that in addition to glaciology and geology testifying that there was no global Flood, archaeology testifies that there were people all over the world and even in Mesopotamia in the time of Noah who were undisturbed by a supposed global Flood.<sup>1</sup> Yet only a global Flood could get an ark into the mountains of Ararat in such a way that all surrounding mountains were covered with water (Gen. 7:19; 8:3–5), and the consensus of Old Testament scholars is that Genesis is describing a flood that covered the entire earth.

I think we must conclude that the Flood was a local event, which we know was described by the Sumerians as destroying all humankind yet covering only cities in southern Mesopotamia, later described by the Babylonians as destroying all humankind and covering all of Mesopotamia, and finally described by the writer of Genesis 6–9 as destroying all humankind and covering all the world he knew, the entire Near East. He thus adapted traditional materials in order to communicate more effectively theological lessons to his generation.

The writing of the Flood story is thus similar to Jesus using traditional materials to say the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, which "is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches" (Matt. 13:32). The statement is not scientifically accurate: the mustard seed is not smaller than *all* other seeds, it does not become a *tree*, and although birds light on it, they do not build *nests* in it. The description is scientifically inaccurate because Jesus was using traditional materials in order to communicate more effectively theological lessons to his generation.

The purpose of the divine revelation in Scripture is to guide us in the area of faith and morals. The Bible's history and science are inspired in order to teach faith and morals, but this does not make its history qua history or its science qua science a divine revelation. Inspiration guarantees the inerrancy of the divine purpose for which Scripture was given, nothing more.

### Note

<sup>1</sup>The earliest possible date for Adam because of his Neolithic culture is c. 10,000 BC, and the probable date for Abraham is c. 2000 BC. The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 both place the Flood in the middle of that 8,000 year difference, thus, roughly at c. 6000 BC for the earliest possible date. I believe Carol Hill and Dick Fischer are correct that the actual event was a local flood around 2900 BC.

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