

Guest editorial: 5 reasons Noah's flood doesn't explain a young Earth

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Eden once boasted a beautiful garden with four rivers. Genesis 2 says so, and we trust the Bible. But when you ask young-Earth creationists if they're aware science has been unraveling their position for decades, you're labeled a heretic. Not a nice feeling.

Geologists Carol Hill and Stephen Moshier have developed commonsense young-earth-defying conclusions, mostly based on a description of Eden's landscape then and now. Caution: It takes intellectual courage to think through the implications of their work. It can alter long-held assumptions.

Here are five scientifically impossible points to consider. If you champion an Earth at most 10,000 years old and believe a super-majority of Earth's fossil-bearing sedimentary rock was deposited during the single year of Noah's flood, problems definitely arise.

Landscape

Hill and Moshier argue the biblical landscape of Eden closely resembled the Iraqi landscape of today. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers still flow, but can the Pishon and Gihon be identified? Some say the Pishon is the dried-up Wadi Batin, and the Gihon is the Karun River. Even if misidentified, the point made here still is valid.

Flood geology claims Noah's deluge constructed all the sedimentary/geomorphic features seen today and rapidly moved the continents into their present tectonic configuration, causing mountain

ranges to heave upwards to their present heights, all in a single year around 3000-2900 B.C.

If this happened, how did Eden's four rivers stay intact physically, with their landscapes matching the pre-flood terrain of Genesis 2:10-14? In light of a watery catastrophe's aftereffects, it strains credulity for the rivers as seen today to exist. How would their courses not have been obliterated? Yet the rivers' locales sync with those mentioned in the biblical text. Even at the epicenter of the flood, the rivers ran through ancient Mesopotamia the same way as through modern Iraq, casting considerable doubt on the whole "flood-waters-rearranging-the-entire-globe" scenario.

Pitch

Noah waterproofed the ark's gopher wood surface with pitch. Hill and Moshier confirm pitch is abundant near the town of Hīt, on the Euphrates River of Noah's day and ours. Sediments still entrap hot springs of tar as it gushes up slowly from the depths. So Noah's glue, mentioned specifically in Genesis 6:14, came from the pitch lakes of Hīt as it surfaced from below.

Flood geologists disagree, however, since they say the sediment layers sandwiching the pitch didn't exist yet. Why? Because they were laid down after flood waters did their work. So, in Noah's day, the pitch apparently pooled on the surface without coming up from below. This goes against every known process of how it's formed, but the pitch extant today actually wells up from deep sediments and fault lines constructed, it's said, by the one-year flood. Scientifically, you can't have it both ways.

Location

Oil drilling to 32,000 feet in the Persian Gulf runs into Precambrian basement rock after passing through four other layers. Hill and Moshier validate this. But if all sedimentary rock layers formed during the flood, as claimed, Eden's location today lies six miles down from where the four

rivers' original headwaters were located, buried by Noah's flood and sitting on the Precambrian basement. Is this true?

Neither the Bible nor subsurface geology indicate this. The ancient and modern landscapes are the same, as the rivers indicate, with the modern existing on top of the six-mile-deep strata, hence, the ancient as well. This means sediment deposition already existed as a geological process before some watery cataclysm took place. Noah's flood was not the sediment-creating mechanism that reconstructed the entire planet's geology. And Eden never got buried; it was on top of the six miles of hardened sediments back then, too.

The Grand Canyon

Geological features like raindrop prints, ripple marks, mud cracks, tracks and fossils have been preserved whole and are seen clearly in the Grand Canyon's layers of rock sediment. Geologists Hill and Moshier are credentialed to describe the conditions under which these are formed, which have nothing to do with global devastation caused by flooding.

- Raindrop prints only form when rain hits wet sediment and the prints continually are exposed to drying air, not water.
- Ripple marks appear in sediments subjected to the to-and-fro motion of waves and form only in shallow water, not deep.
- When wet mud shrinks and dries after baking in the sun, mud cracks form and turn to stone, as calcite crystals eventually fill the cracks, requiring much time with no ruinous additional water.
- Birds and reptiles leave tracks impressed in soft mud or wet sand, with delicate features like claw marks often preserved in detail, something a flood's sloshing currents could only destroy, not preserve.

- And in the case of invertebrate creatures actually turning into fossils inside debris-flow sediments, this doesn't imply Noah's flood at all, just a flood. To know for sure these resulted from the Genesis flood is too big a leap, since most found in the canyon were preserved by typical marine conditions.

The canyon's 5,000-foot sedimentary sequence contains all these structures and more. So, how were they all produced, one layer atop another, when exposure to drying air, rippling calm, shallow waters, and lengthy times are the only conditions under which they can be created? Rapid and tumultuous flood waters couldn't produce these geological occurrences, especially when some features appear in one rock layer, while others occur in layers above and below.

Mount Ararat

According to Hill, the Mount Ararat region is made up of two kinds of lava, and it shows evidence of flowing lava cutting across five sedimentary rock layers. Logically, the lava flows came later and must be younger than the rock layers into which they intruded.

So, if all the fossil-rich sediments comprising the Ararat region first were laid down by Noah's flood, then turned to rock, then were cut through by lava, then stopped and cooled the lava flows in time for the ark to land safely near the top of this brand-new, volcanically created 17,000-foot mountain, it's more than rational to conclude this could not have transpired in a single year. It's a physical impossibility, and the Bible itself merely states, nothing more, that the ark landed on the mountains (plural) of Ararat, a region already known to the pre-flood Sumerian culture of Noah's day to exist. Hence, the claims of flood geologists appear erroneous, both geologically and historically.

Conclusion

Does geology trump God's word? No. At times, it corrects settled and truncated biblical interpretations. General revelation is empowered to do this because God's revelation "through what has been made" doesn't lie to us any more than God's word. What our senses perceive is not diametrically opposed to what the Scriptures say.

If we'd been with Noah, our perceptions would compel us to revise what we've inferred wrongly about how the pre-flood world worked. One thing inferred wrongly for so long is that geology vindicates a 10,000-year-old Earth . It doesn't, and a hard, honest look at the evidence settles the matter.

Given scores of similar geochronic scenarios, it's not radical to conclude scholarly mishandling of geological data to sustain a cherished "biblical" assumption is unconscionable. At the popular level, however, Christians remain blissfully ill-informed about what the data convey.

Think of it this way: The Bible never talks about sedimentary rock per se, a distinction only developed among rock types a century and a half ago. Nor does it ever claim all sedimentary rock was formed during Noah's flood. All that is merely a human construct, presupposed by advocates to make flood geology feasible on its own terms. For the sake of keeping their interpretational system intact, it's as if young-Earth creationists are unknowingly declaring, "God's general revelation lies." Not so.

Hill and Moshier cite the Bible to undermine the entire young-Earth creation system. The geological processes about which young-Earth creationists theorize are scientifically impossible over a 10,000-year timespan, much less one year. But young-earthers continue to invoke exceptional processes in order to produce a post-flood world as they envision it. But Genesis never records these quasi-miracle-like processes; they are only inferred for the sake of a system. That should settle the matter.

Hal Ostrander is adjunct professor of religion and philosophy at Wayland Baptist University in San Antonio.