

THE DOVE SENT FORTH FROM THE ARK

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(Genesis 8: 11) (8:8)

Noah's Flood: How did it happen?

San Diego California Stake Fireside
Sunday, 31 January 2010
Presenter: Vincent Broman

Goals of this talk

- Express my own careful opinion on a subject where the Brethren have kept quiet,
- Help members deal with a problematic scriptural story that could weaken faith,
- Provide a solid example of a Bible passage “not translated correctly”, and
- Improve the correctness of how we think about God and what he does.

Noah Preaching and Building



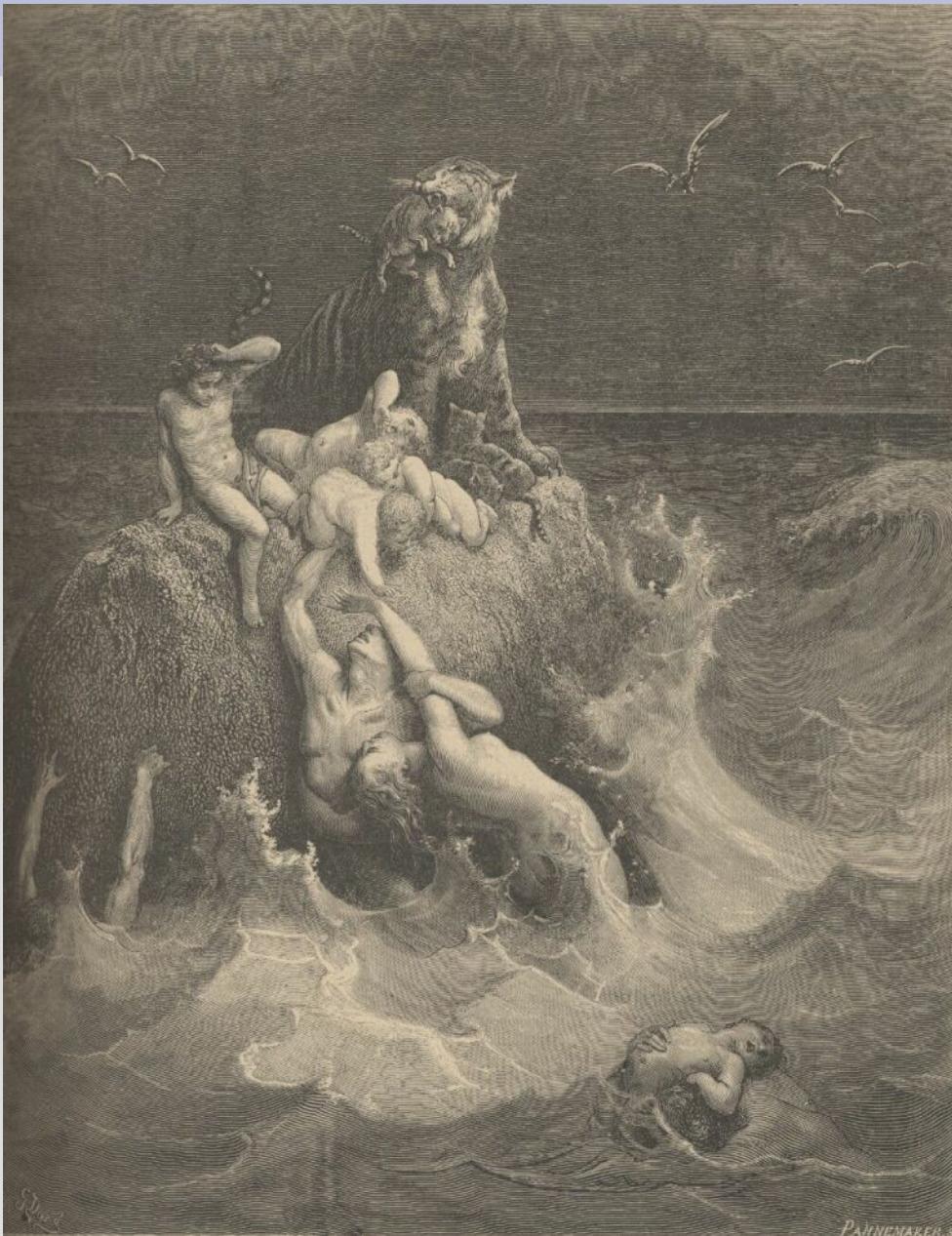
Noah's Preaching Scorned, by Harry Anderson, © IRI



The Lord Fulfilleth All His Words, by Clark Kelley Price, courtesy Church History Museum

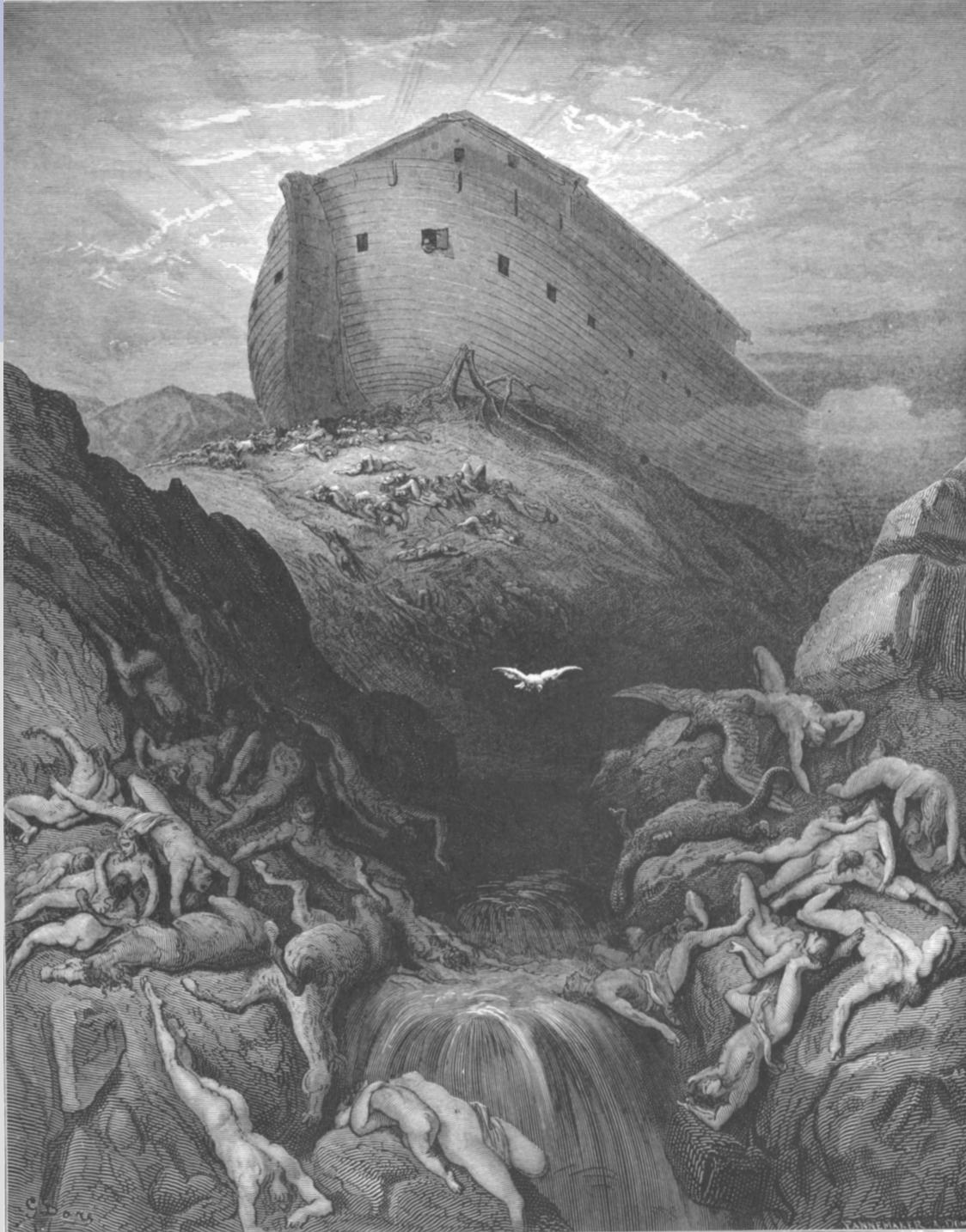
The immediate causes

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.



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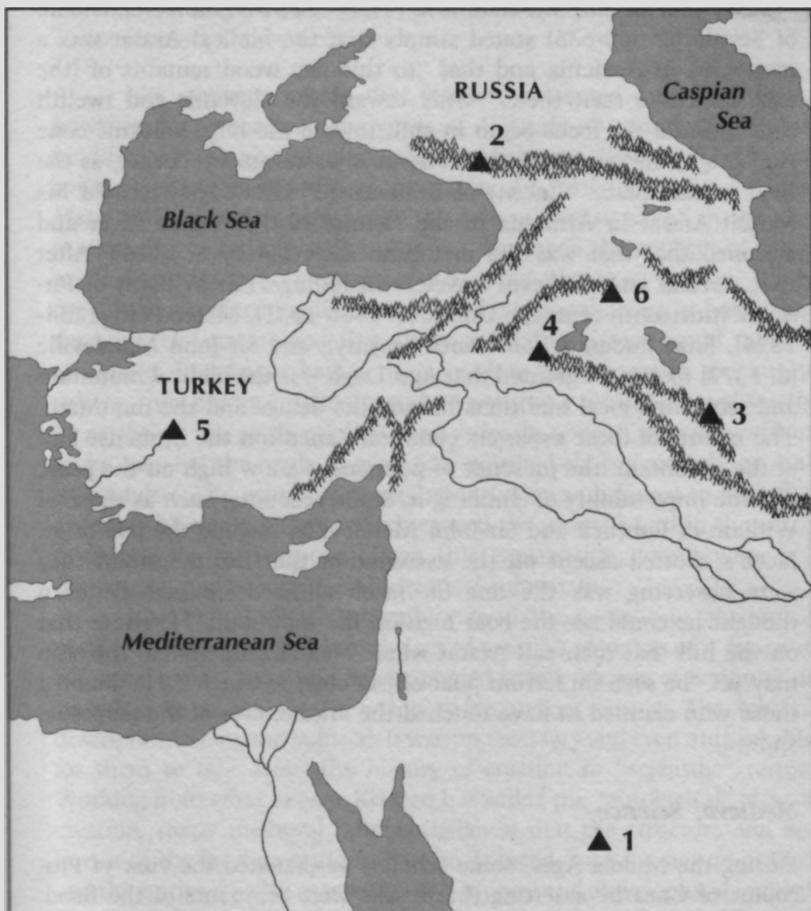
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Where the Ark landed



Traditional Landing Sites Claimed for Noah's Ark

- 1 Jabal Judi (Quran)
- 2 Baris
- 3 Adiabene
- 4 Gordyaean Hills
- 5 Celaenae in Phrygia
- 6 Agri Dagh in Ararat

Other Scriptures about Noah

- Isa 54:9, Matt 24:37-39, Hebrews 11:7, 1 Pet 3:19-20, 2 Pet 2: 5, Alma 10:22, Ether 6:7-8, Ether 13:2a, Moses 8:28-30 the end
- These say essentially:
 - The wicked were destroyed by a flood, a judgement by God on all in the land.
 - Righteous Noah was saved with his family of 8 in a ark, or boat.
 - Noah's ark was like Jared's barges.
- No other details outside of Genesis 6-10.

Ether 6: 7-8 about Jared

- And it came to pass that when they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters.
- And it came to pass that the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind.

Puzzling Problem

*No world-wide flood has ever happened
in the last 10,000 years,
at least not in the way it is described in
Genesis.*

Reactions to this idea

- The Bible is just a bunch of fairy tales. How can I believe any of it?
- Are you trying to tear down my testimony? I know what I learned in Primary. That's it.
- My own middle position is:
 - Noah was real.
 - A flood was real.
 - The real flood just did not happen quite the way Genesis describes it, mistaken elements were added long after Moses wrote Genesis.

Joseph Smith and the Bible

- “We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly.” Articles of Faith 8

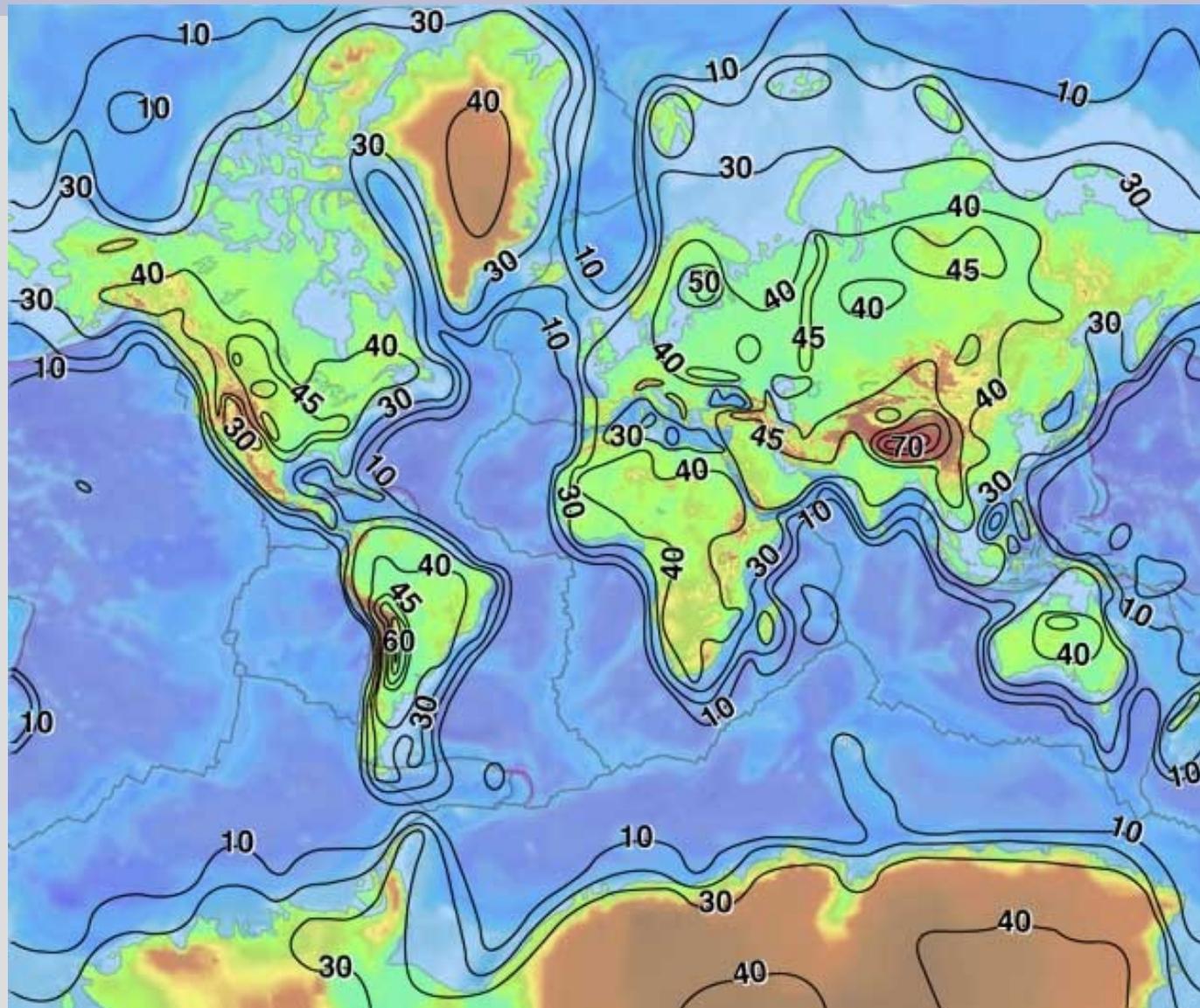
Joseph Smith and the Bible

- “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.” TPJS p. 327.

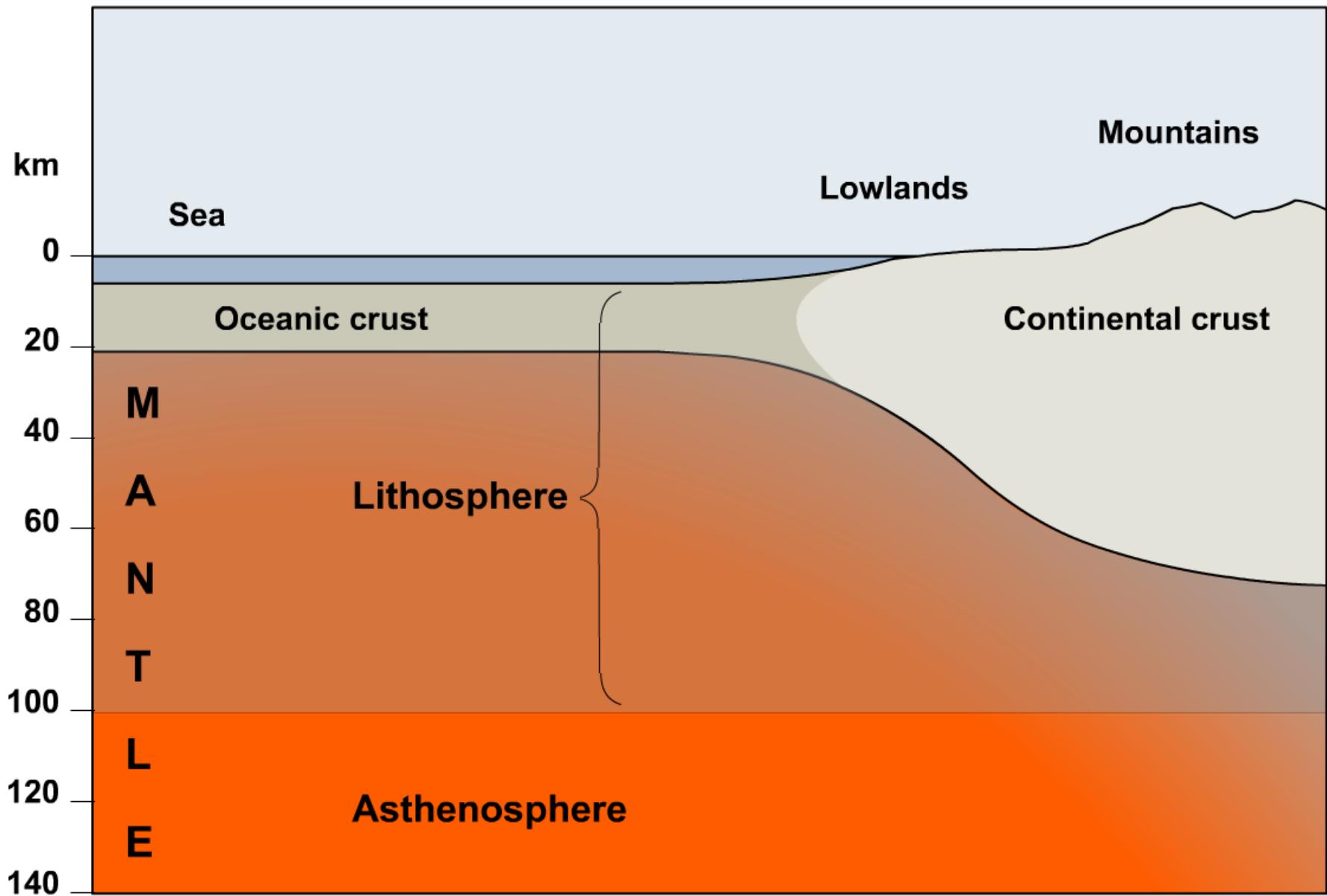
Reasonable Concerns

- Earth lacks the amount of water needed to raise sea-level above the Himalayas.
- Many surface features have not been inundated in the last 10000 years:
 - Greenland and Antarctic ice packs
 - Cinder cones like in the Mojave and Auvergne
 - Many varved lake bottoms
- In Antarctica and the Himalayas it is too cold and dry to rain; much of the year it is too cold to snow.

Topo: thickness of the Earth's crust, in kilometers



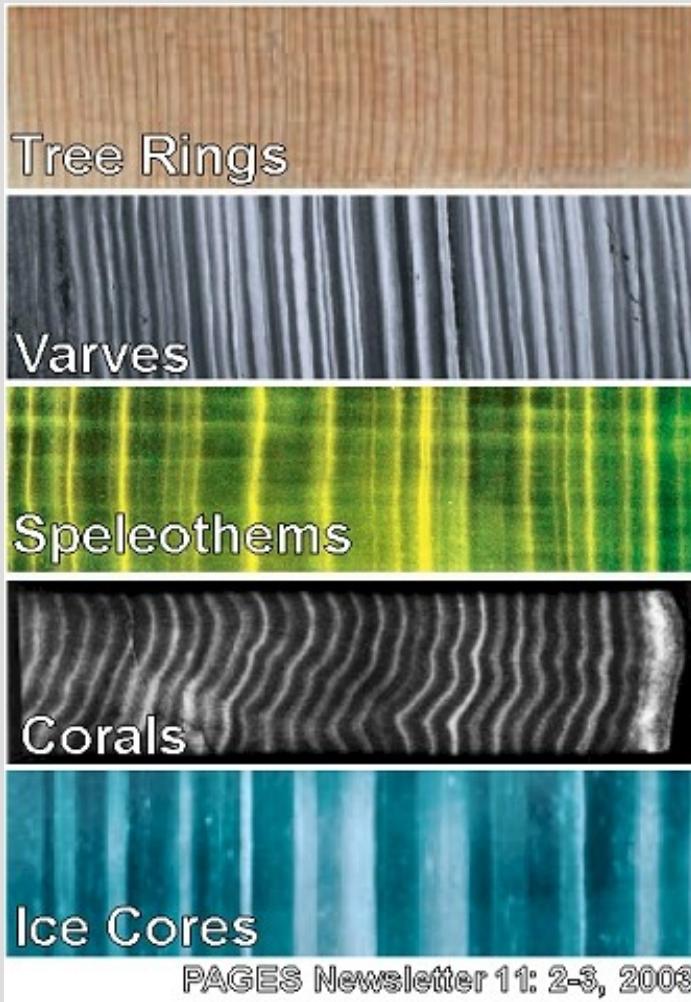
Earth's Crust, thin undersea, thick under the continents



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How old are the icecaps on Greenland and Antarctica?



- Annual layers permit dating of remains by counting years
- Recent ice cores show a history of several tens of thousands of years.
- Remember that ice floats, and on top of warm water, melts.

Lake bed varves



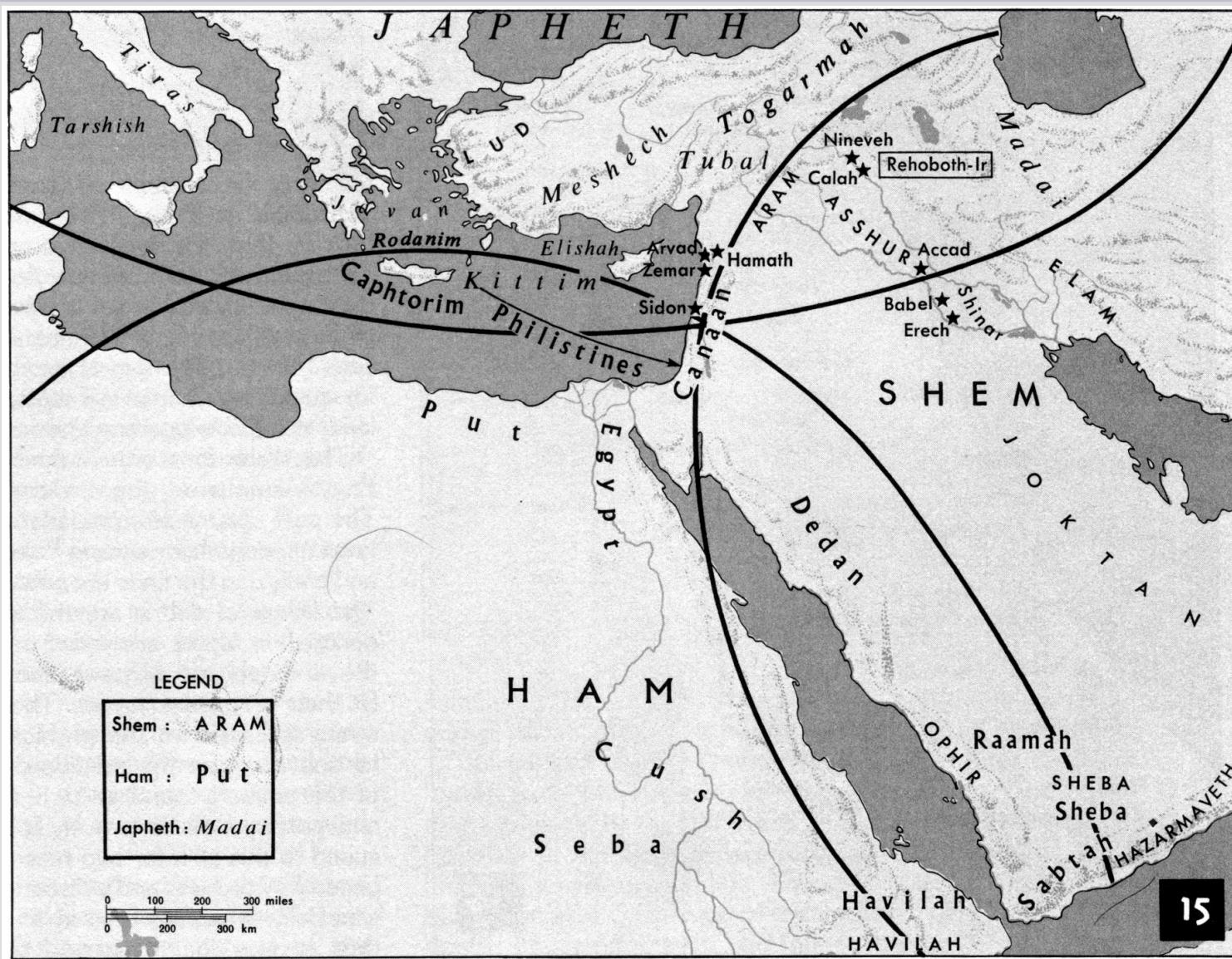
More reasonable Concerns

- Noah's ark would not save freshwater fish, corals, tidal zone creatures, or plants that propagate otherwise than by seeds.
- Animal species that live far from the Ark would have to migrate vast distances across oceans and continents and survive in foreign conditions without their natural food sources.
- The specified size of Ark would be too big to be sea-worthy, but also much too small to carry 10 million plus animal species.

Yet more reasonable concerns

- Noah would have great difficulty restraining predators and feeding picky eaters on the Ark.
- One pair or seven pairs of animals is too few to preserve a species in practice.
- Genesis 10 describes Noah's descendants spreading out only over the Mediterranean world and West Asia, not over the whole world that we know of.

Genesis 10 and the Table of Nations



D&C 88: 22, 34, 35 parts

- “For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory. That which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same. That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still.”

D&C 88: 37-39

- There are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; ...either a greater or a lesser kingdom. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions. All beings who abide not in those conditions are not justified.

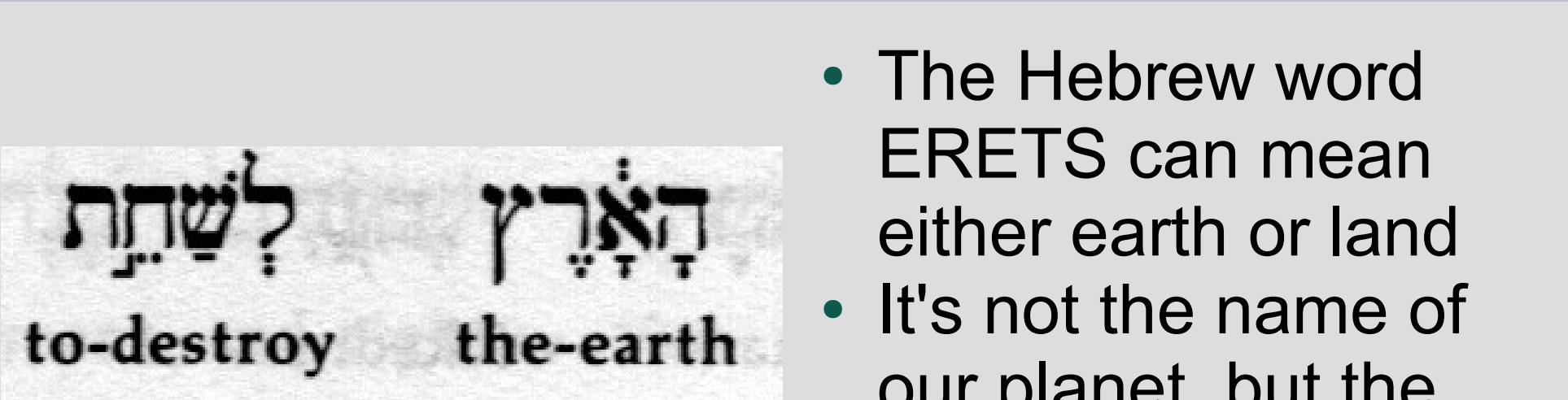
D&C 88: 42, 43, 25

- He hath given a law unto all things, by which they move in their times and seasons; And their courses are fixed, even the courses of the heavens and the earth, which comprehend the earth and all the planets. The earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law.

So how could the Bible have this problem?

- The Genesis, like the other books of Moses, has multiple sources – apparently, not all for the best.
- What if one editor misunderstood what started out as a much simpler story from Noah the eye-witness?

Earth or Land?



לְשֹׁתֶת הָאָרֶץ
to-destroy the-earth

- The Hebrew word ERETS can mean either earth or land
- It's not the name of our planet, but the element we live in, dry land.

3 Nephi 8: 5-7 on Good Friday

- “And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.
- And there was also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder.
- And there were exceedingly sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land.”

3 Nephi 8: 17-19 on Good Friday

- “And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth.
- And behold, the rocks were rent in twain; they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams and in cracks, upon all the face of the land.
- And it came to pass that when the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the storm, and the tempest, and the quakings of the earth did cease... and then behold, there was darkness upon the face of the land.”

So?

If Noah's Flood did happen, but not world-wide, where specifically did it happen?

Lowered sea level in the latest Ice Age

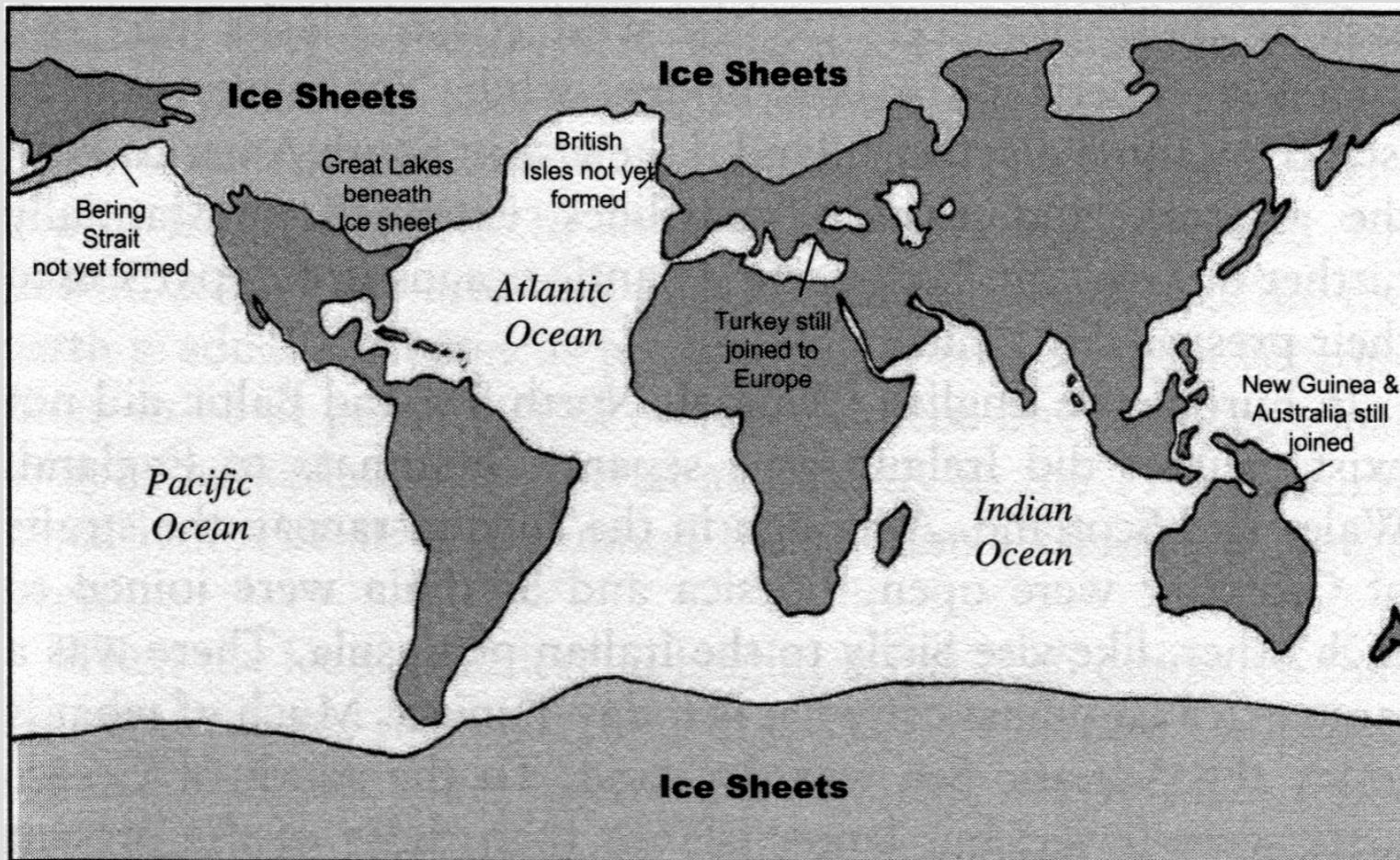


Fig 1 The world's coastlines as they looked at the height of the Ice Age
c.16,000 BC

Post Ice Age shore lines

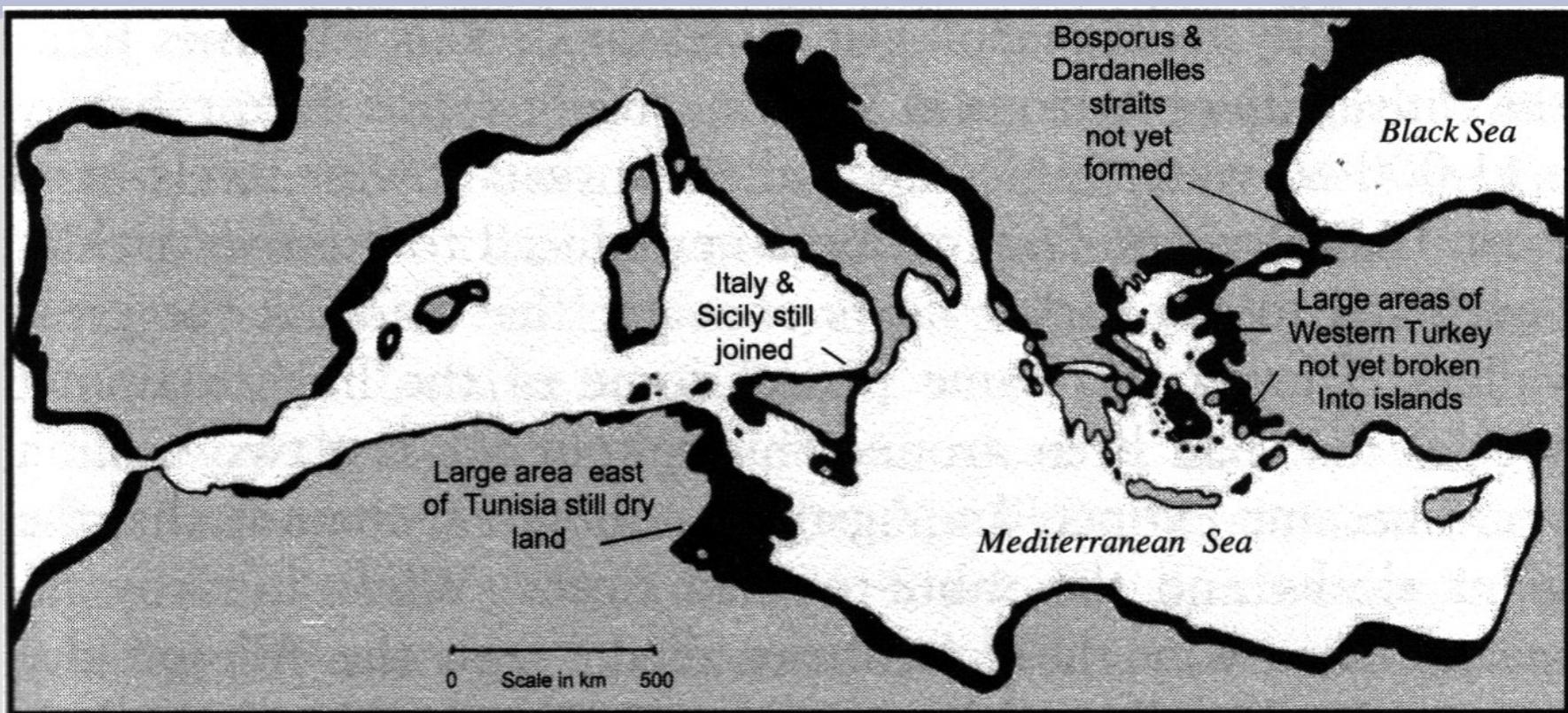
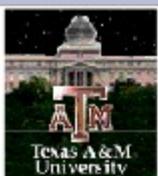


Fig 8 Reconstruction of Mediterranean region coastlines as these would have looked shortly after the end of the Ice Age, showing (in black) large areas not yet claimed by subsequent sea-level rise. After the findings of J. C. Shackleton and T. van Andel



Physical Geology: Noah's Flood

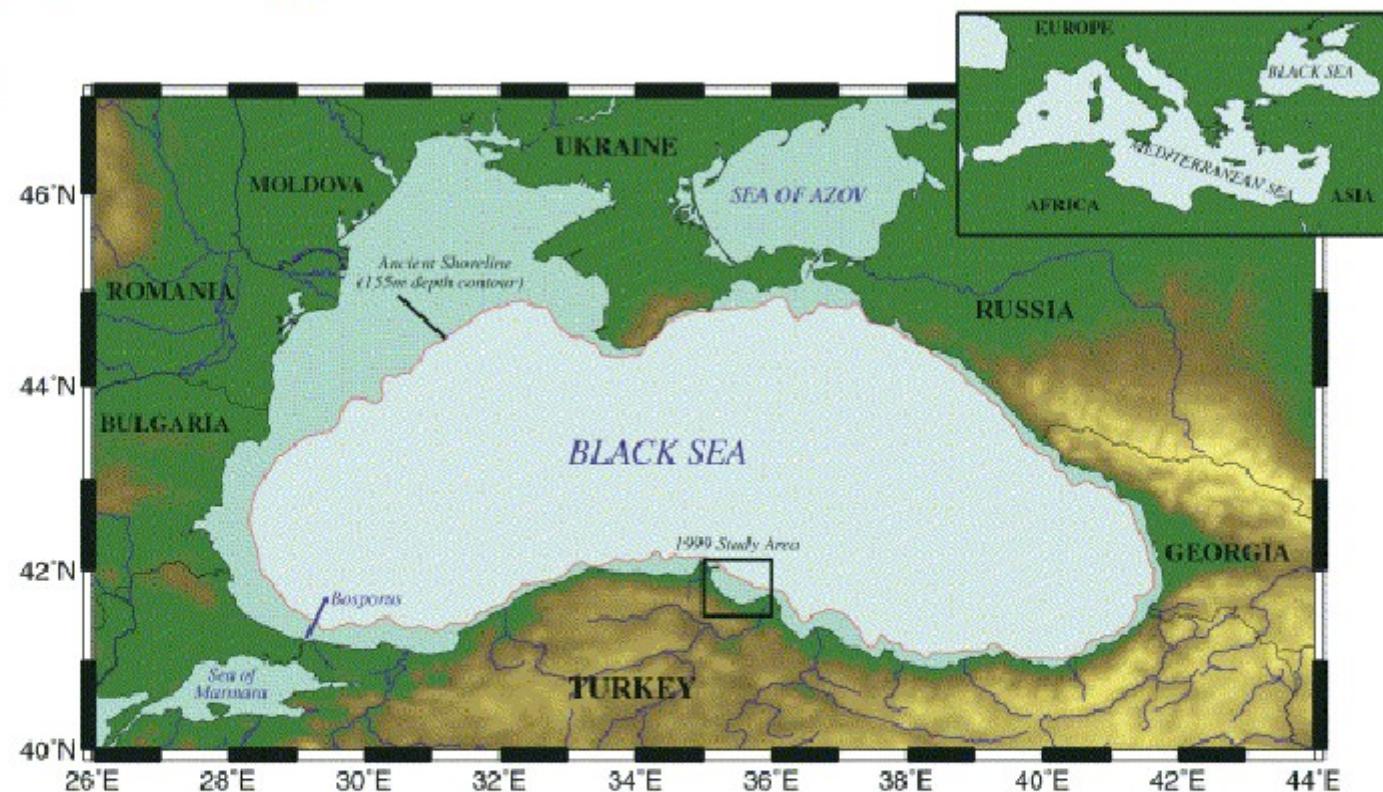
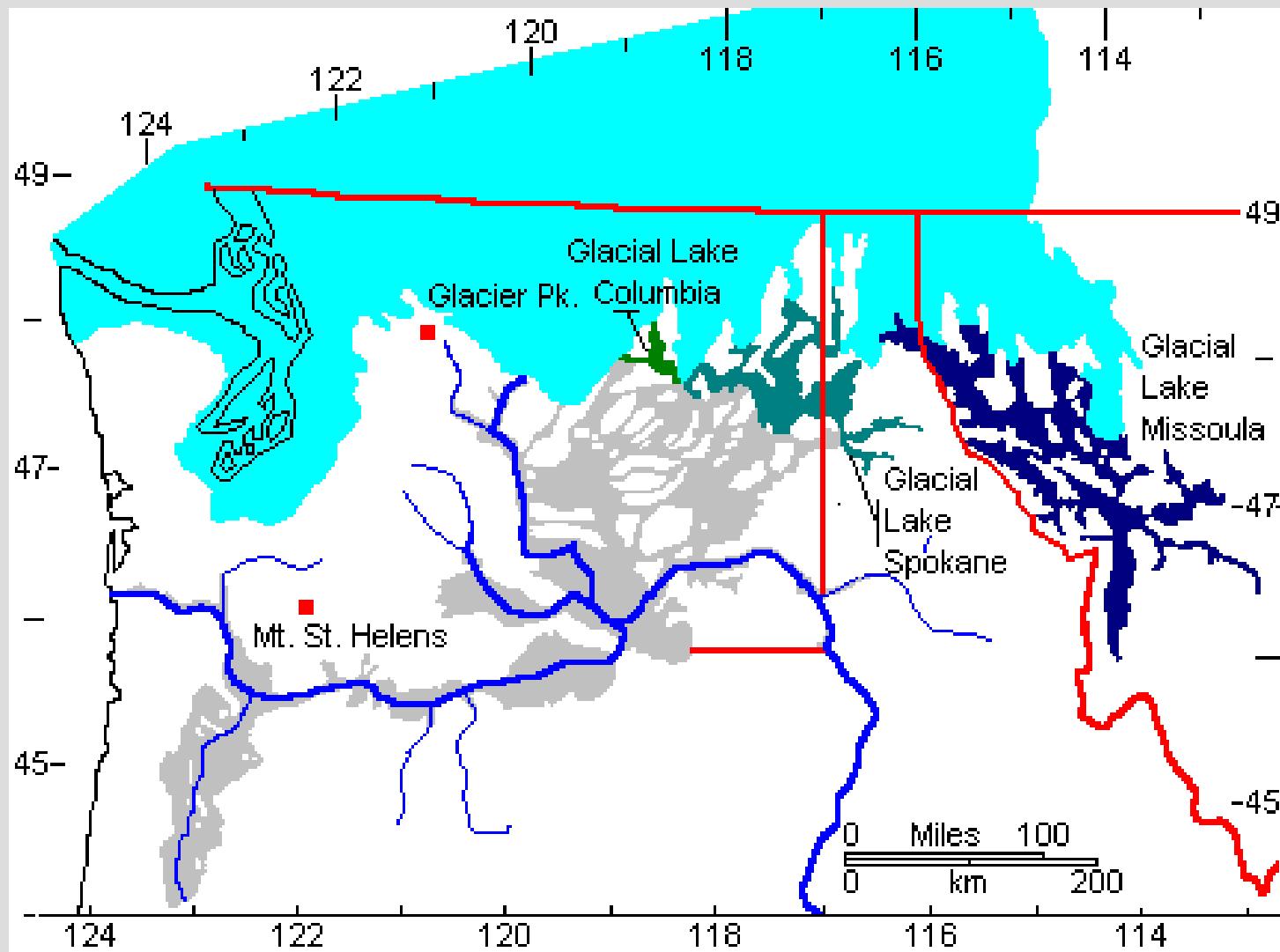


Figure 1

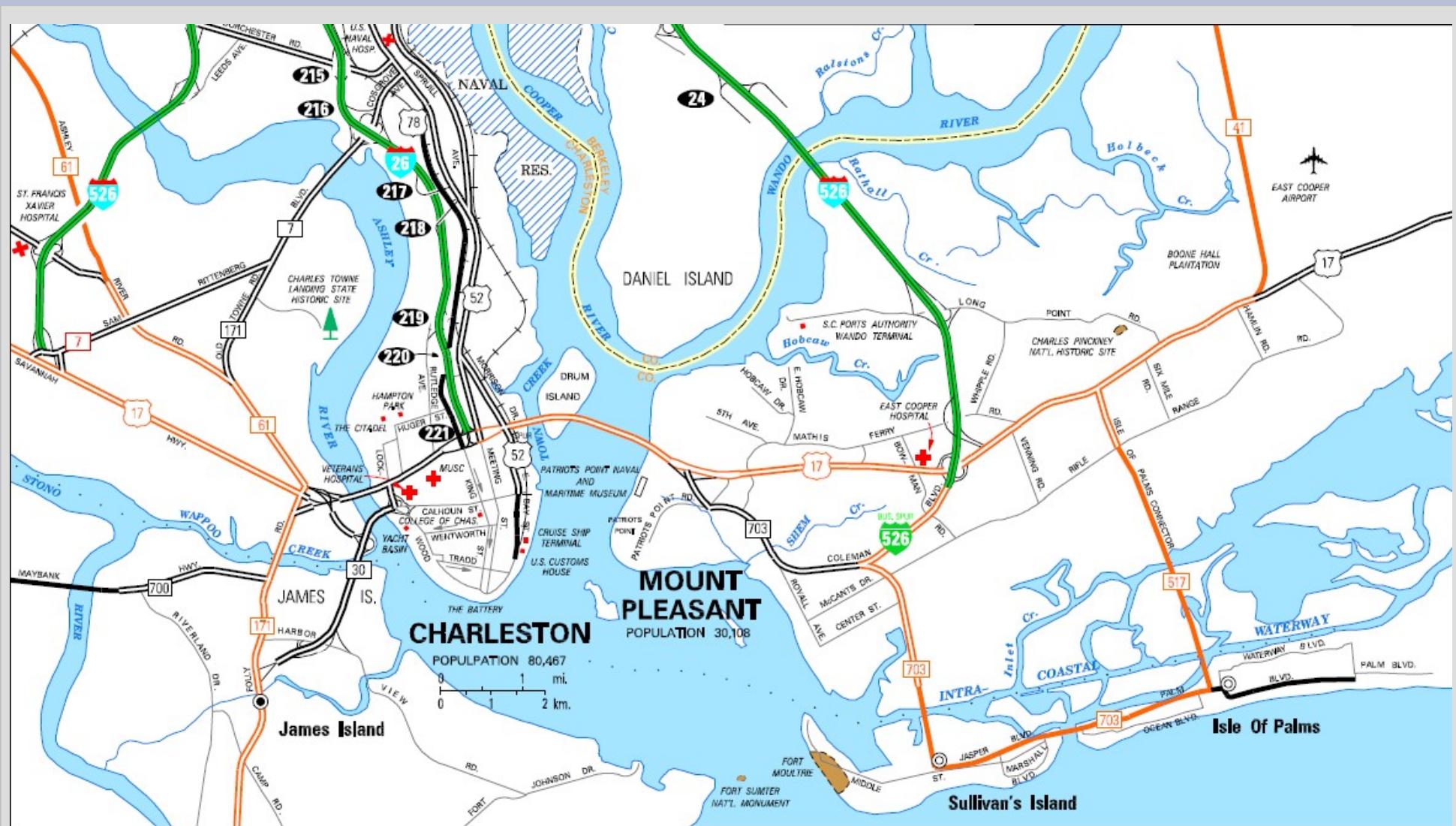
Fig. 1. Regional map of the Black Sea and the surrounding landmass, including the location of mountainous terrain and locator map. The 155°m contour is shown as well as the 1999 study area.

(Ballard et al., 2000. Marine Geol. 170:253-261)

Lake Missoula's Catastrophic Flood Paths



Charleston SC and Four Rivers



Elevation 10-20 feet for miles



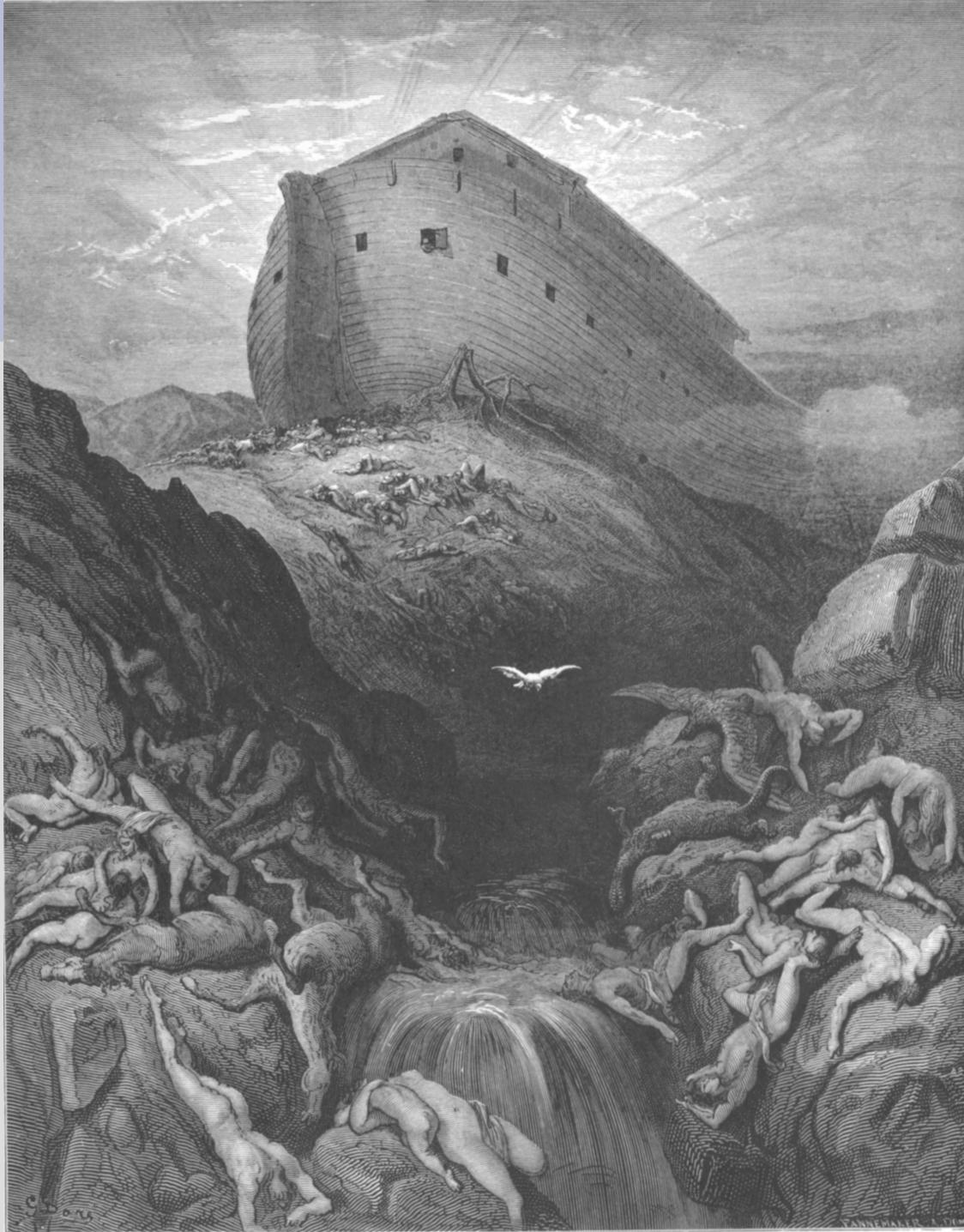
Charleston where history lives

Some who disagree with me

- Donald Parry, “The Flood and the Tower of Babel”, *Ensign*, Jan 1998, pp. 35-41
 - The scriptures prove Noah and a global flood are real; how it happened is just a mystery.
 - (Parry teaches Hebrew at BYU.)
- F. Kent Nielsen, “The Gospel and the Scientific View: How the Earth Came to Be”, *Ensign*, Sep 1980, p. 67ff.
 - The laws of nature have only limited applicability, and God can change the laws.
 - (Nielsen taught History of Science at BYU.)

On my website

- Very detailed outline at
 - <http://vpbroman.net63.net/flood-fireside-outline.pdf>
- Presentation slides at
 - <http://vpbroman.net63.net/flood-fireside-slides.pdf>



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Extra Slides

“Biblical” Flat-Earthers?

- “Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics.... The shame is not so much that an ignorant individual is derided, but that people outside the household of the faith think our sacred writers held such opinions, and, to the great loss of those for whose salvation we toil, the writers of our Scripture are criticized and rejected as unlearned men.” (Augustine)

“Only a Theory?”

- Facts are publicly observed events.
- Hypotheses are ideas proposed for testing.
- Theories are general ideas that try to explain many facts and observations.
- Examples: Newtonian gravitation, germs causing disease, multiple JFK assassins, and an ancient origin of the Book of Mormon.

Ether 13: 2a

- “For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands,” ...

Moses 8: 28-30 (the end)

- “The earth was corrupt before God, and it was filled with violence.
- And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.
- And God said unto Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence, and behold I will destroy all flesh from off the earth.”

D&C 121: 26, 28, 31

- God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, ... that has not been revealed since the world was until now; A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. ...all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times.

D&C 121: 33

- How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.

4,500,000,000 years



Lake bed varves



Tree-rings count years precisely



Isaiah 54: 9

- “For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.”

Matthew 24: 37-39

- “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.
- For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,
- And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”
- (As in Luke 17:26-27, too)

Hebrews 11: 7

- “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

1 Peter 3: 19-20

- “By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
- Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

2 Peter 2: 5

- “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;”

Alma 10: 22

- “Yea, and I say unto you that if it were not for the prayers of the righteous, who are now in the land, that ye would even now be visited with utter destruction; yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah, but it would be by famine, and by pestilence, and the sword.”