



Is It the Ark?

By Rev. Nathan M. Meyer, Th.M.

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"That's Mt. Ararat! That's where the prophet Noah landed his big boat." The man was pointing to a snow-capped peak not far away. We were enroute from Moscow to Cairo and our Russian plane had landed for refueling. The man was a native of the area and seemed pleased to give us the information. The Russian guards ended the conversation by moving him away from us. But we took a long look at that lofty peak and we wondered if God's time had come at last for Mt. Ararat to give up its secret treasure after clutching it in its icy bosom for more than four thousand years.

The Biblical account in Genesis 6, 7 and 8 tells the story. Noah was to build an ark of gopher wood, three hundred cubits long (450 ft.). Thus Noah, his family and all the animals were preserved through the flood, after which "the ark rested . . . upon the mountains of Ararat." Through the centuries that have passed since then, many accounts tell of individuals having seen the Ark where the Bible says it rested.

In the days of Babylon, Berosus the High Priest, says Noah's Ark could still be seen on a mountain in Armenia. Some four hundred years before Christ, the historian Abydenos agreed with him.

Just thirty years before Christ, Damascenus writes about the Ark on a mountain in Armenia. Josephus, writing about the same time that John wrote the Book of Revelation (A.D.

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100), says the stranded Ark could still be seen in his day.

Marco Polo made reference to the Ark as being near the summit of Ararat about A.D. 1300. Eleven years later a Turkish expedition seeking to build barricades against avalanches after a terrible earthquake, reported finding the bow of a ship jutting from the ice pack.

In 1887 an Archbishop from Persia reported having seen the Ark and that the wood was "dark red." He claims to have walked through several rooms exposed at the end of a frozen lake.

About a hundred years ago Hagi Yearam and his father, natives of the Ararat region, served as guides for three atheist scientists who climbed Mt. Ararat to prove that Noah's Ark was just a fable. But to their amazement, they found a huge ship's hull protruding from a glacier. They tried unsuccessfully to destroy it and then threatened terrible consequences to Hagi and his father if they ever told the truth about what they had found. Their report to the world was—"no evidence."

But about 1915 when Hagi was seventy-five years old, living in America and converted to Christianity, he told the whole story to Pastor Harold Williams asking that the incident be recorded to be read when "they finally recover the Ark." Hagi died in 1916 but the record remains.

In 1916 a Russian pilot reported seeing a ship on top of Ararat "as long as a city block." His report prompted the Czar to send two large expeditions

to investigate. They reported finding the framework of the Ark. They said it contained hundreds of small rooms. Some huge rooms had fence-like partitions made of upright timbers two feet thick and large enough to hold animals much larger than an elephant. Many cages with tiny iron bars were also reported. In one side was the opening of a single large door about twenty feet square. The boat was built "to have water roll over it." They claimed the wood was from the cypress family so it wouldn't rot and that it was covered with a heavy coat of wax-like paint resembling shellac.

These Russian explorers took complete measurements and many photographs, all of which were delivered to the Czar in 1917. But a few days later the Czar was killed in the Bolshevik Revolution and presumably the records were destroyed.

Meanwhile Roshovitsky, the Russian flyer who started all this, escaped to America and became a Christian. He made a living selling Bibles. He told the whole story in an article called "Noah's Ark Found."

An old man who lived near Ararat told his grandson, Alim, about the presence of the Ark and made the boy promise that someday he would climb the mountain and find it. Alim's parents were killed in a terrible massacre. Years later (1937) Alim, now a fellow soldier of the French mountain climber, Fernand Navarra, asked Navarra to keep his promise for him.

In 1955 when Navarra made his third climb he finally discovered some of the actual wood which caused him to announce to the world: "I have found the Ark!" One beam was a

hand-hewn log one hundred fifty feet long, found deep in an icy crevasse.

In 1969 the search became serious as Search Foundation, Inc., sent its first expedition (including Navarra) to Turkey to gather new evidence. They found additional pieces of the same wood. I have examined one of these pieces myself in the office of Search in Washington, D.C. It was a very dark reddish black and while it was rough it showed no signs of decay.

The president of Search is a retired Seventh-Day Adventist minister who obviously wants to prove to the world that the Biblical story of Noah is really true. He has an impressive board of Turkish and American archaeologists and scientists as well as key political figures. Their goal is to determine the exact location of the remains of the Ark (or whatever it is) and then uncover the whole thing and make it known to the world. (Note: It is now covered with many feet of ice and snow as well as landslides of rocky moraine).

They have two major problems. 1) Money. They need over a million dollars and expect most of it to come from small donations of many Christians. 2) Politics. The Russian border is very close, and for security reasons it is understandable the Soviet Union

Fernand Navarra holds a model of the ark which he built after several years of research and collection of documents.



Members of this team made the expedition to Mt. Ararat.

does not want Americans spying on their border defenses from the top of Ararat—even though the expedition would be entirely on Turkish soil.

So far severe storms, furious blizzards, frightful hail, lightning, earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, volcanoes and political revolutions—have all played their part in helping the “mountain in Armenia” keep her precious artifact.

But only God knows if now at long last she will give it up by divine design for such a time as this. If I were God I'd let Search succeed. But God is sovereign and He knows what He is doing.

Fulfilled prophecy points on every hand to the soon-coming of the Lord for those who love Him. Remember Jesus said in Matthew 24:37, “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” God has also given much evidence to the truth of His Word through many archaeological discoveries. The late editor of the *National Geographic* magazine, Mr. Grosvenor, said, “If the Ark of Noah is ever discovered it will be the greatest archaeological find in history”

Maybe uncovering the Ark will be God's final warning to the wicked world—just before the Lord's return.

One thing seems certain. There is something buried in ice near the thirteen-thousand-foot level on Mt. Ararat. It is made of huge, hand-hewn timber, yet there are no hardwood trees for three hundred miles in any direction. If it is not the Ark, then WHAT IS IT? And how did it get up there—locked in the safety of a stationary glacier?

As news-writer William Willoughby says in the *Washington Perspective*—“I'm with Crawford . . . On to Ararat!”

(Note: The preceding article appeared in the *Brethren Missionary Herald* magazine, Jan. 9, 1971. The following was written later as a sequel.)

It is just possible that 1972 might be the greatest year in history since the days of Christ. Some momentous announcements are due to be made in the very near future. One has to do with creation versus evolution. Another has to do with Noah's Ark.

The expedition of Search Foundation, Inc., was all set to uncover the “Artifact on Mt. Ararat” this past summer when communist agitators started riots which threatened to overthrow the Turkish Government. Marshal law was declared and all foreigners were asked to leave the country at once. So the 1971 expedition was aborted.

Nevertheless some exciting things have happened. They found a man living in the area of Mt. Ararat who says he has seen the Ark. Think of that! At last a living witness!

Then too, they took a picture of the stationary icecap where their map says the Ark is resting. (The map was obtained from an Armenian whose grandfather gave it to him.) Looking down from an elevated position while the sun is shining into the ice, one can see a large dark area. I've seen the picture and it is exciting.

The one hundred fifty foot beam that Mr. Navarra found was at this location—thirty-seven feet down in a crevasse in the ice. It is interesting that

This piece of preserved wood indicates tooling of some type.



fossils of fish, snails and clams have been found at this same elevation nearby in the rocks.

They have the electronic equipment ready to "turn on" and pulverize the ice. The Turkish Government is cooperating with the project because they know that this could be the greatest tourist attraction on earth. I think it will be just that. But they must live with their neighbors, so they must be very careful not to offend the Soviet Union.

Christians should pray that God's will may be done. At this point, divine intervention to generate a favorable political environment is needed and I think it will come.

God must have had a reason for bringing the floating Ark to rest on the exact spot where it is. The Ark was floating free and rudderless, without a sail and without a human captain. On the worldwide sea it could have come to rest anywhere. But consider this: It is resting as a captive ship in a small cove surrounded by rocky ridges, trapped and preserved in the only stationary ice on the mountains of Ararat.

There is one mountain with sixty-five peaks. Other mountains in the area are from four thousand to six thousand feet high. This one is nearly seventeen thousand feet elevation and

has the largest icecap in the world—in the temperate zone—seven-and-a-half square miles of ice. This lofty mountain itself covers five hundred square miles.

In 1840, seven-and-a-half cubic miles of this mountain were blown out of its side in one big volcanic puff that lasted scarcely more than one second.

The ice on Mt. Ararat is a huge moving glacier except for the little cove I mentioned above. It is about 650 feet long and 150 feet wide. (Noah's Ark was approximately 450 feet long and 75 feet wide.) If the Ark had rested just a hundred yards away in any direction, it would have been destroyed centuries ago.

It is apparent that God wanted to preserve it for such a time as this. But for what purpose? What purpose could He have apart from an end-time sign vindicating His Word: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be . . . ?"

Many working scientists of the top echelon today agree that the uncovering of the Ark of Noah would "revolutionize the whole educational system of the world and alter all scientific thought."

Futhermore, these scientists are now saying they have discarded evolution because: "We couldn't send a man into space, have him circle the earth, then take off for the moon two hun-

dred, thirty-eight thousand miles away, circle the moon, land on the moon, stay several days, take off again, circle the moon, fly through space to rendezvous with the planet earth, circle the earth, and land within seconds of a predetermined time and within a few miles of a predetermined spot in the Pacific Ocean . . . *all on the basis of chance* . . . impossible! There must be a Mastermind—call Him whatever you wish."

These scientists have shown a tremendous interest in the work of Search. They seem to be willing to follow where truth leads them. They say, "We have rewritten text books before."

Dr. Ralph Crawford, founder of Search Foundation, Inc., has a favorite famous quotation which is profoundly appropriate to ponder as we consider what is happening. "The sum total of the wisdom of the ages is to find out which way God is going and walk with Him."

He also delights, when speaking about this subject, to quote Victor Hugo: "Greater than the tread of mighty armies or the barriers of isolation is the conquering force of an idea whose hour has come."

Author's note: Search Foundation, Inc., Box 4250, Washington, D.C. 20012 needs the financial help of Christians to make preparations for another try during 1972. Those who wish to have a part in this historic venture may do so by sending a contribution to the above address. (Dr. Crawford has put much into this project. So far, he has not received any personal remuneration.) I'm sure the Foundation will appreciate any amount, but for a gift of twenty-five dollars or more they will send you an exceptionally beautiful, colored, large copy of Elfred Lee's painting of Mt. Ararat—similar to the cover of this brochure. It is really magnificent! All donations are tax deductible.

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