

Robert "Bob" Garbe (b. 1939) enjoyed a variety of Ararat experiences in the mid-1980's with Dr. Charles Willis and later forming his own team with Chuck Aaron and myself. Bob (with help from others) also built a portable subsurface radar unit for our 1989 expedition to the Western Summit of Mount Ararat.

Chapter 24

1984-1989 Bob Garbe

I do not presume to know God's will concerning the resting-place of the Ark of Noah in our time in history. However, my participation in the search has given me some opinions on the matter. Bible scholars indicate that finding the Ark has no significance in New Testament revelation other than the many references to the flood and the faith of Noah. This simple observation may actually be the key to the part the Ark plays at this time in history. I will attempt to explain this concept as I describe my part in the search for the ark.

Polls indicate over ninety percent of the general population believe there is a God. There are many religious "experts" with opinions about who God is. However, do we know the truth about God? Each of us creates a comfort zone about the subject that we can live with. Opinions about God range from the belief in an impersonal entity that started the universe and plays no part in our lives to belief in a God who is in control of all things. In the middle is an all-loving God who is in all of us. My participation in the search for the Ark has helped move me from a belief in the first description to a confidence that God is indeed in charge of all things and nudges our lives as he sees fit. My search for the Ark has developed in me a great appreciation for God's ability to create and sustain his universe.

Investigating the feasibility of the flood account has convinced me the Bible is our comprehensive instruction manual about who God is, how we should conduct ourselves, and what specifically must be done to honor him. In dealing with



Bob and Gerry Garbe at Durupinar Site
Courtesy of B.J. Corbin

God it must be emphasized that we want to be careful not to make a mistake about what He wants us to do. The account of the flood and the story of Noah's Ark are among the first Bible stories we learn. We often learn about the flood from some kind of cartoon depiction. This is unfortunate because under close scrutiny the geological record supports the flood story. Understanding the flood can be a first step in understanding other miraculous events recorded in the Bible.

My background included a belief in theistic evolution. Although very little evidence was supplied about evolution I assumed it to be more grounded in fact than God's creation as depicted in Genesis. I brushed aside all the conflicts by assuming God just used the most current scientific rendition of the beginning. The biblical flood story never bothered me, primarily because I had only a surface knowledge of geology and did not fully understand the flood story.

My first contact with creation science was through the *Bible Science Newsletter* published through the efforts of Walter Lang, William Overn, and Paul Bartz. In it, Charles Willis reported on his 1983 expedition to find the ark. He had an interesting theory that the Ark should be high on Mt. Ararat in order to fit its grounding within the time frame of the receding waters. According to Willis the Ark would likely be in a depression like the mouth of an extinct volcano such as is found on the eastern plateau. This would reduce the destructive effects of grinding glacial ice. The ice would need to cover the Ark except for a few periods of great melt-back as occurred at the times when sightings were reported. It would have to be in a position for Noah to see an adjacent mountain peak like Little Ararat.

This theory was compelling because it fit the biblical account precisely. One problem with the theory is that it is difficult to fit it into any eyewitness accounts. At the conclusion of his article explaining his theory and the progress he had made, he asked for those interested in becoming team members to contact him. I sent a resume expressing interest in joining his team.

On Thanksgiving eve that same year (1983) he called and we began a friendship that has extended through two expeditions. It was at this point that I began learning why a search for the "mythical" boat called Noah's Ark was reasonable. I believe God's purpose for my participation is found in this exercise. I encourage others to do the same thing. A wonderful world of the compatibility of science and the Bible will be opened to the person who pursues this truth. The first book to read is *The Genesis Flood* by Whitcomb and Morris. It lays out an explanation of the biblical account of the flood and construction of the Ark in layman's terms. It also gives much geological evidence supporting the flood story as recorded in the Bible. The authors give convincing arguments that this is no mythological story. There is good reason to believe the events actually happened and that this account is more than a symbolic story to illustrate God's judgment and Christ's salvation as is theorized by some. In fact, Christ uses the flood story as an illustration in his teaching many times, stating it as fact, not allegory.

In 1984 (Willis' second trip) we were victims of the usual problems presented by the local government officials in Turkey. In spite of the fact that permission to search was granted by the Turkish embassy and senior government officials in Ankara the local governors and military commander delayed us. Willis stated that the reason for the failure was due to the fact Ankara had issued a sport-climbing permit not a research permit. In Turkey, there are also other issues to consider: (1) Giving gifts to the officials can help. While this is a custom in Turkey we don't usually use this tactic in the United States. (2) There is a difficulty among bureaucrats to make decisions unless everyone agrees. (3) The military commander, charged with providing security, was unsure of the level of security on the mountain and did not want to risk our safe passage. The mountain has many hiding places for Kurdish rebels who have a hatred for the Turks. News reports are received almost daily of the deaths of Kurdish rebels and Turkish soldiers in conflict.

The risk we feared in 1984 was demonstrated to be real in 1985 when the team Bill Crouse helped organize was driven off the mountain in the middle of the night after having all of their equipment burned by a gang of rebels wanting to emphasize their authority in the area.

We sat around in our hotel for over five days waiting for the permits to be put in order. We also visited as many sites as possible without going too far and losing time should the research permits suddenly be granted. Finally the time frame for meaningful research was lost. We needed at least seven days to excavate just one spot on the plateau. The delay was taking these days from us. Five of us decided to climb the mountain for sport during the last few days. There is a climbing route on the south side that was open for a three-day climb. With very little time for planning we shifted gear around and prepared to climb. This climb would significantly add to our familiarity with the mountain in preparation for future trips.

Our guide, Yavuz Konca, was indispensable in helping to get through the permit formalities. An English teacher at a university, he became our primary communicator as none of us spoke Turkish.

We moved up the mountain from the south, climbing to a base camp area at about 13,000 feet. The next night after a day's rest we planned to make the summit attempt. There was little time to rest and discuss plans or problems as we started at 1:30 A.M. up this strange mountain, following guides on trails rarely marked with even a path. If you lost sight of the person ahead of you and got lost your problems would just be starting (or ending permanently). The wind was blowing very hard at thirty to fifty miles per hour at all times.

The guide went first then Bill Crouse, Ken Alexander, Jim Willis and myself. We used two flashlights and moved at what seemed to me a reasonable pace. Actually it was as fast as I could possibly go. As dawn came we were near 15,000 feet. By about nine A.M. we were a few hundred yards from the edge of the ice cap. The winds were so strong we stopped and waited, hoping they would abate.

After an hour the wind was still as fierce as ever. Now other climbers were catching up to us and we were all waiting together behind boulders trying to keep out of the cold wind. There were as many as six rope teams preparing to move to the summit. The time had come to make our move or risk running out of daylight on the descent back to base camp.

Someone in another group developed hypothermia and Bill Crouse loaned him his sleeping bag. Bill had been elected to bring the only bag we had in case of emergency. I did not realize the importance of this fact until later in the day. Our water supply was very low, a fact that should have concerned us, but no one noticed. I drank a quart of water



Abich II and beginning of Abich I Glacier 1986
Courtesy of Bob Garbe

before we started at 12:30 A.M. and about a half-quart during the next 18 hours, yet on a climb like this we should have been drinking four quarts a day to prevent dehydration. Dehydration causes many physical and mental problems at higher altitudes. Hypothermia and disorientation can quickly lead to catastrophes. Pulmonary edema and blood clots can be fatal in a matter of hours or days. We shared our water with each other, but did not think to ask other groups to share their water with us. We had been so accustomed to being polite to one another that we shared water on the climb as we had bought soft drinks for one another at the hotel. It is critical on any mountain climb to discipline oneself and use water wisely and we had not. It is especially critical on Ararat because free-flowing water is not easy to find at night. This caused one of our team members to run out of water on his way up the mountain.

When we reached the edge of the ice cap we put on our crampons and the five of us connected to the same 150-foot rope. About twenty yards onto the ice Bill's crampons fell off. The guide helped him put them back on, but they fell off again within minutes, so Bill left them off. We were walking on slick ice ninety percent of the time and Bill was having a lot of trouble staying on his feet.

I have to admit Bill Crouse has more guts than a lot of people I know. For a person to continue to climb that mountain for the first time and crawl across an ice cap for a mile and a half on his knees, so blind (caused by severe dehydration) he could only see shadows, the man has to have courage. Bill even apologized for holding up the rest of us.

We reached the summit about 1:00PM and sat down for about fifteen minutes to take pictures and record our names in the summit register. The summit was a beautiful elevation overlooking wavy ice stretching for miles in all directions. Beyond the ice was a vast emptiness to the plains 10,000 feet below. The winds were still blowing at over forty miles per hour and stirred up the snow, obscuring the view to the east in the area we wanted to search. We were only 200 yards from the place we were convinced the Ark rested. Visibility to the west was good and I remember seeing a pair of

abandoned skis poking out of the snow north of us, about two hundred yards away. The ice could have been hundreds of feet thick and the Ark could be hidden anywhere under it. How could we hope to find it? I'm sure each of us hoped to get a glimpse of the Ark while on this climb just as several eyewitnesses claimed to have done in the past.

We had to descend from 17,000 feet down to our base camp at 13,000 feet before night. When we got off the ice we unroped and sat down to remove our crampons. I coiled the rope and Ken carried it down. Ken and Yavuz went first and when they got 70 to 100 yards ahead of me I lost sight of them. I tried to keep up while still keeping Bill and Jim in sight to my rear.

Descending from a mountain can be more dangerous than climbing it. Exhaustion brings on a tendency to use poor judgment. If we unknowingly climbed down to a cliff edge and then had to climb back up to seek a better way down, a lot of time and energy would be wasted when there was none to spare.

Bill and Jim seemed to be looking at rocks on the way and were in no hurry (because Bill could not see where he was going). Then I saw Yavuz (our guide) sitting on a rock waiting for us. I stopped and sat with him for about a half-hour but Jim and Bill did not show up. Yavuz was exhausted and not feeling well from a lingering infection that had started several days before.

We decided Jim and Bill would have to come down this way because there were snowfields and ridges on both sides almost forcing their descent between them. I thought they would be safe if they did have to stay out overnight because Bill had the sleeping bag. It was at this point I found that Bill had given the bag to the hypothermic mountaineer earlier in the day.

Now I became very worried. If the winds returned the chill factor would produce very cold conditions that could be fatal. I emphasized to the guide my concern and we agreed he should move on down since he was sick and we could get help from those at base camp for Bill and Jim. I would hang back and continue to try to spot the stragglers and direct rescuers to their approximate location. I worked my way to an elevated area to get a better view.

I saw Chuck Willis coming up about 800 feet below me. I yelled down that Jim and Bill had not kept up with us and



Garbe Object (Left Middle of Photo) This photo of the Mystery Object was mistakenly credited to Jim Irwin and a Dutch TV Crew as an airplane photo in Balsiger/Sellier book and movies. Bob Garbe took this photo looking down from the Northeast edge of the ice cap 1986

Courtesy of Bob Garbe

that something was definitely wrong. I worked my way down to Willis to tell him the problem. Fortunately, he was fresh, as he had not made the summit climb. We looked up to try to find Jim and Bill. We could see two people on the western ridge of the slope. We could barely make them out because they were silhouetted in the setting sun 500 feet above and 200 yards away. I spotted Jim's jacket but could not see Bill's blue parka. They hesitated and were not moving down in our direction. They seemed to be avoiding us. They didn't answer our calls to them. We wondered if they might be two bandits who had attacked Jim and Bill. Dr. Willis moved up rapidly to intercept them. He lost sight of them from time to time because of the terrain, so I spotted for him and kept my flashlight on so he could keep his bearings. Nightfall was fast approaching and it became very difficult to stay oriented.

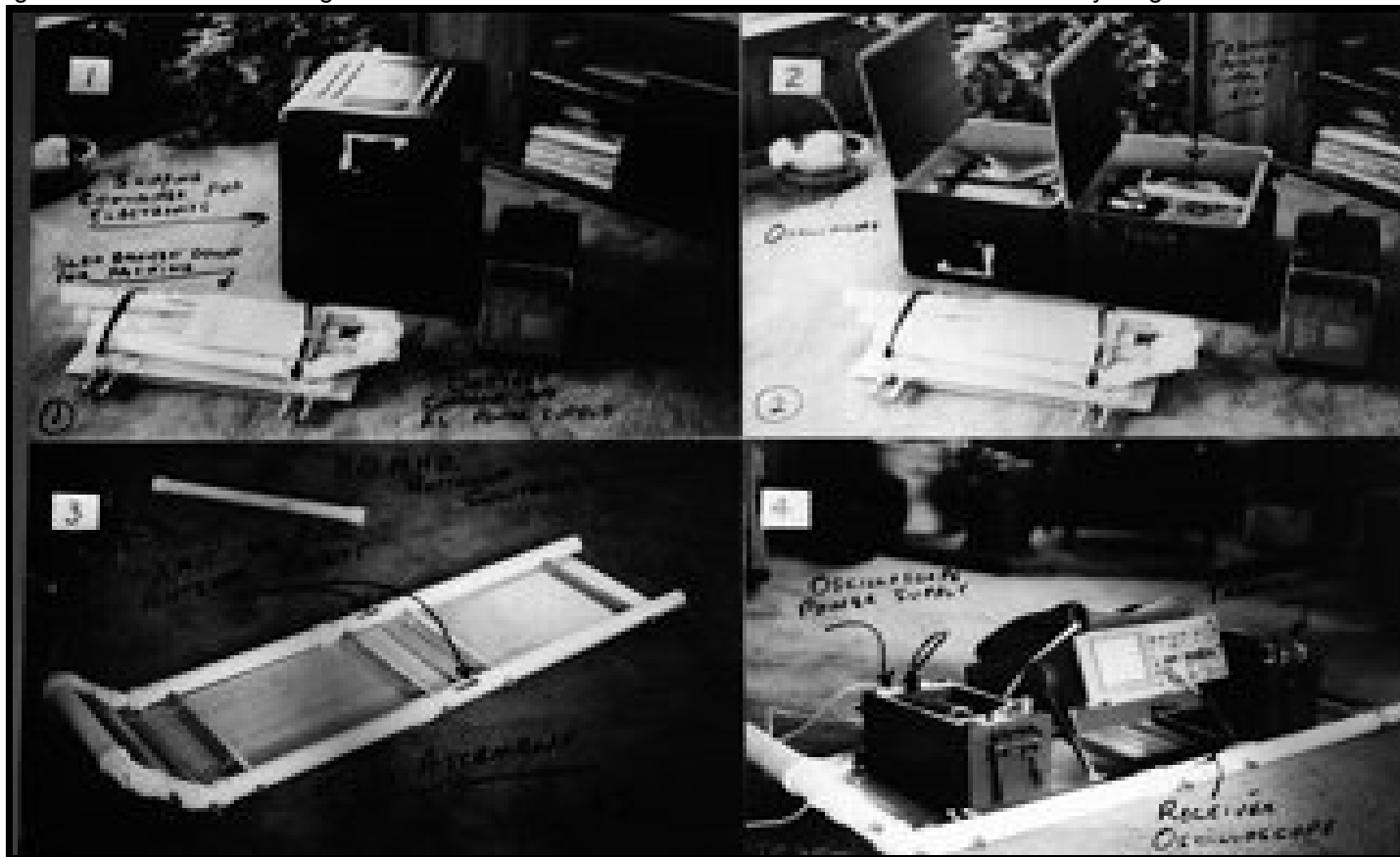
Two men came up with a sleeping bag and supplies and I pointed out where they should go to help Willis. They seemed fresh and full of energy. I was relieved to see them. They would be able to help Willis if a rescue became necessary.

It was dark now and there was no moonlight. I felt like I was in a rock jungle with boulders taller than I. I was 300 feet above and a quarter mile from camp. I was able to yell to camp to shine a light so I could know in which direction to go. They heard me and I was able to feel my way down to them.

I was very thirsty and drank over a quart of water (what a drink!) before I got into my sleeping bag and I still remember shivering cold in the bag. I had dozed off, exhausted, when Bill came into the tent and told the story of his descent and rescue. Thank you again God for keeping us safe!

We learned a great deal in 1984—everything from Turkish politics to mountaineering preparedness. These lessons went a long way toward making the next trip more profitable. A common problem with Ark searchers is that we usually meet in transit on the expedition and never have time to practice working together except on the phone or in letters. It has been my experience that those of us with a common belief still experience stress-related problems interacting with each other. Our faith does not immunize us from our human personality traits.

So far God's purpose in the Ark search seems to be to remind the world of his judgment. Every three or four years someone claims to have found the Ark and it hits the headlines throughout the world. When this happens many are reminded of the stories they heard as children. Many scoff at the claim. Some say, "Hasn't the Ark been found years ago?" I was a Bible-believing Christian who started out as a theistic evolutionist and now am a young earth creationist with



Portable Ground Penetrating Radar built by Bob Garbe 1988
Courtesy of Bob Garbe

a high degree of confidence that science confirms my faith. The adventure continues every time I come across new and old scientific evidence corroborating my beliefs in biblical events and concepts.

My second visit to Turkey was also on Dr. Willis' team. There are success stories with each expedition. Often we feel we have failed if we return and have to admit we were not successful in finding the ark. In reality each expedition adds a segment to the pool of information about the Ark and each builds on the other. A major reason this book is being published is to document the progress that has been made for future searchers. Since 1982 when Col. Jim Irwin was instrumental in renewing the modern search for the ark, more than a dozen sites have been ruled out, thus narrowing the search. Dr. Willis ruled out the eastern summit plateau.

An interesting sidelight of this second trip was a photograph I took while on the edge of twin peaks on the northeast side of the mountain at 16,800 feet. I was unroped and curious to see what was beneath the edge of the twin peaks. I worked my way as close as possible to the edge, then leaned out to photograph over the edge, panning the full width.

After I returned home, I began to examine the photos with my son's microscope. I was amazed to see an object that at first looked like the ark. The characteristics of the object were amazingly like those described in eyewitness accounts. A row of windows the length of the top, proportionally correct, and a square outline of a door in the side were very convincing. The area in the photograph was the spot Ahmet Arslan had reported having seen timbers coming from the glacier. This "was" the Ark for about two weeks.

After conferring with Bill Crouse and John Morris, I learned Carl Nestor had also photographed the same area and had adjacent shots that convincingly rule out this object as nothing more than a rock formation. The photo's angle and focus led Bill Crouse to suspect the object may have been a rock close to the camera and not large enough to be the ark. We are now convinced the object is nothing more than a rock with a remarkable resemblance to the ark. This is an illustration of how a strong bias influences what we see on these trips and is something of which we all need to be cautious.

In 1986 when the Willis team excavated fifteen feet into the eastern ice cap at 16,800 feet, it became clear we



B.J. Corbin, Chuck Aaron, Bob Garbe at Seneca, West Virginia 1989
Courtesy of B.J. Corbin

needed to profile the ice to a greater depth using less time-consuming methods. The department of polar studies had experience with ice-penetrating radar that had potential for this purpose. Lambert Dolphin from Stanford and Lonnie Thompson from Ohio State University had used this technology on the Great Pyramid and on glaciers in Peru with some success. I contacted these two scientists for advice on its application in Ark exploration. It seemed feasible for a relatively small investment. To rent a profiling radar would cost \$20,000, which at the time seemed beyond our budget. I pursued the idea and by late 1988 had developed a working model that we could put on a backpack. In the meantime geophysicist Bob Roningen was able to fund and operate a profiling radar for the Willis expedition in the summer of 1988. This commercial radar was very useful in spite of its weight to profile the eastern plateau. Despite the weight, the team was able to extend their search through the ice westward from the eastern plateau all the way to the peak. They found ice of 90 feet in depth but no sign of any Ark ruins.

In 1989, the Chuck Aaron lead team determined that the depth of the ice on the 15,000-foot western plateau was sufficient to qualify it as a possible site. Areas on the ice cap have potential in spite of the ice flow as demonstrated by the discovery of "Ice Man" in the glaciers of the Alps.¹ The Ark could also be buried under rock, gravel and silt. There may be ground penetrating radar in satellites capable of revealing the Ark structure.

Chuck Aaron heard about my radar and we linked up to use his helicopter expertise to deliver the radar to the mountaintop. The team Chuck led consisted of B.J. Corbin, Chuck, a photographer Paul, and myself. We met at Seneca Rock, West Virginia, to go over plans and practice climbing together. Seneca is an ideal climbing area in the eastern United States, having been used by the U.S. military for technical rock climbing training.

B.J. came to the meeting with a broken collarbone and was unable to climb. We did some light climbing and spent most of the weekend planning. Chuck flew a helicopter to Seneca and we could tell he was highly competent as a pilot by the way he handled the helicopter landing. Dave Montgomery and John Wanvig joined us that weekend and had some interesting information on areas of the mountain from which there had been eyewitness accounts. One sketch was a map to what later turned out to be the "eye of the bird," now shown beyond a doubt to be a rock formation.

When we got to Turkey we had the usual political problems, but the delays were minimal because Chuck had done very good preparatory work with the permits and our Turkish pilot knew the best ways to get by the stumbling blocks. In Doğubeyazit we stayed outside of town in order to minimize our contact with distracting influences. We needed to stay focused on the flight to the 15,000-foot plateau. The weather was perfect.

We made a reconnaissance flight around and over the mountain so Chuck could get a feel for wind patterns and we could photograph everything possible. We were at maximum weight for the helicopter and over service ceiling for a vertical landing on the 15,000-foot plateau, so Chuck did a glide-in landing, taking full advantage of the rotor lift. We unloaded within minutes and the Turkish pilot flew off for a second load, B.J., and the photographer Paul.

We began erecting tents and securing them in case the winds increased dangerously during the next several days. Within an hour, two men dressed in civilian clothes, carrying AK-47's, approached from the south summit plateau. They barged into our camp, grabbing cameras and pulling out the film. We spoke little Turkish and they spoke no English. We all felt these men were Kurd rebels and might decide to kill us after robbing us. I had two principle thoughts running through my mind: first would the bullets hurt and second was every one going to heaven.

I knew we had to find a way of communicating so they would know we meant no harm to them. I pointed to the radio in hopes we could get the gunmen to talk to our Turkish pilot down at the hotel. Chuck was able to reach him after walking over to the edge of the plateau. He explained our predicament to the pilot and the pilot proceeded to talk to our captors. We learned that the gunmen were actually Turkish military patrolling the mountain. They dressed in civilian clothing to foil snipers who frequently shot Turks in retribution for attacks on them. This solved the problem. The soldiers embraced us as friends and even handed us their loaded rifles as a good-will gesture. They didn't want us to keep any photographs of them because Kurdish rebels could identify them as targets for ambush.

They left our camp and we continued to set up our equipment. The photographer, who was not a Christian, then asked to be flown off the mountain. He had not bargained for this kind of danger. Chuck was able to get the pilot to bring up Dave Montgomery in place of the photographer. We set up the radar and started to mark a grid pattern on the plateau

¹ See: "The Iceman's Secrets," *Time*, Oct. 26, 1992, p.62.



B.J. Corbin and Bob Garbe after 1989 Descent
Courtesy of B.J. Corbin

with survey flags. Under our camp the ice was 250 feet deep. It appeared we were over a trough that may have been the head of the southwestern glacier.

Six hours after the landing, we all became very nauseated, with severe headaches and weakness from the sudden change in altitude. We learned firsthand the lesson that acclimatization is unavoidable, requiring over a week at altitude. We had to rest for an hour and then try again to get back to work.

On one excursion B.J. and I looked for an exit route should the weather prevent the helicopter from picking us up. The northwest area of the ice cap looked promising. While scouting in this area we noticed that the ground broke through the ice at the edge of the plateau. This was an additional clue to the profile of the ground under this portion of the ice cap. From the northwest edge of the ice cap to 150 yards south, the ice thickness increased to 250 feet!

At our next radio contact we were informed the military had demanded we exit the mountain within 24 hours and told us the helicopter could not pick us up. This meant we could not remove all of our gear. This was quite a dilemma because we needed at least another week to finish the survey. They wanted us to move off to the south. A southern exit would be less exposed to Kurdish rebel interference, but much more dangerous to a sick crew attempting to avoid the cliffs and dead-end ravines.

About that time an individual (Ibrahim) ambled into our camp wearing, believe it or not, a tweed suit and tattered boots. We conveyed our plight to him as best we could and he indicated he was willing to lead us down to a high camp he maintained on the southern sporting route. I was convinced we had met an angel sent as a result of our prayers. We gave him a new pair of wool socks and my favorite hat. He carried two packs to our one as we followed him in the direction of his camp about four miles away. On the way we had to cross a glacier and some crevasses.

Nightfall forced a stop in our descent. The danger of a fall at night was too great. We stopped and crawled into our sleeping bags among the boulders and slept as best we could. At dawn we continued down to this man's camp and had tea, bread, cheese, and honey for breakfast. Chuck had us help clear a landing site near the camp. He was able to contact the Turkish pilot but could not convince him to land on our hastily made landing zone. He did agree, however, to pick us up a few hundred feet below.

That same summer the melt-back on the mountain progressed beyond what any of us had seen before. Eyewitness accounts coincide with periods of low precipitation and hot summers, according to reports in "The Ararat Report" published by Bill Crouse. The mile-long snowfield leading up to the eastern plateau was completely melted off during our August trip. The summer heat persisted into late September and Chuck Aaron felt it would be prudent to return that same summer to do aerial reconnaissance. If the Ark were exposed we would have a good chance to photograph it. Chuck was able to penetrate the permit maze very quickly and we returned to Turkey.

In Doğubeyazit we were disappointed by high winds every day. It was impossible to approach the mountain safely. On Friday, Chuck and I climbed up the mountainous terrain behind the now abandoned Simer Hotel (the same place B.J. Corbin found fossils). We videotaped the excursion and documented marine fossils of sand dollars and shells. Obviously this area at a 10,000-foot elevation had been under a sea in the past. We were ten miles south of Ararat and 300 miles from the Persian Gulf, site of the closest marine life at present.

At about 2:00 P.M. the wind died down dramatically and the clouds covering Mt. Ararat thinned out. We ran down the mountain and suited up for a flight before dark. Turkey has one time zone, making darkness fall around 6:30 P.M. in the east. Our first choice for photography was on the northwest slope, where B.J. Corbin had seen an interesting object in our recent photographs.

On the approach to the mountain we passed the "Eye of the Bird" or Ice Cave. Both Chuck and I did a double take when we saw it. It bore a striking resemblance to eyewitness descriptions of the ark. It had what looked like two decks, which corresponded proportionally to those reported by eyewitnesses, and what seemed like planking. Half of the object seemed buried at an angle in the ice cap. Chuck made at least two flights around the mountain before nightfall and we returned to the motel. That evening we reviewed the video and became convinced from the video that we had discovered the ark. The video even seems to show partitioning like rooms in the ark.

The next morning we made another flight and flew around and over the mountain, photographing everything. We got some excellent photos of Little Ararat and the north face of Mt. Ararat. These photos have since revealed several interesting structures that should be investigated in the future. Shapes like an arched cave opening and projections that could be parts of a broken ark. We have learned photos are often deceiving so we will reserve judgment for now.



Fossil sand dollars and clams embedded behind Doğubeyazit Hotel 1984
Courtesy of Doris Bowers

Significance of the "Eye of the Bird" or Ice Cave Object

A scientist friend has made an analysis of the helicopter sighting we made in September of 1989. It is noteworthy that he wishes to remain anonymous because his credibility would be challenged in his field of research if he acknowledged an association with Ark searchers. This is true of many scientists who fear persecution if they imply any belief in the harmony of scripture and science. It is all right to believe in God, but any reference to this harmony can lead to ostracism by others in the scientific community, including loss of jobs, tenure and ability to get papers and books published. This paradox has become the lie of our century and is partially responsible for the moral decay in our society. I recommend reading *Evolution, The Lie* by Ken Ham to anyone interested in becoming better informed on this subject.

The analysis of "the eye of the bird" is significant because it rules out as many as eleven eyewitness accounts of Ark sightings. Thus the search is narrowed to help us avoid constantly repeating past error. The quoted analysis follows.



Ice Cave or "Eye of the Bird" 1989
Courtesy of Bob Garbe

General Description of the "Eye of the Bird" or Ice Cave Object

This object is at least intermittently visible as a dark mark in the Ararat ice cap from at least as far as Doğubeyazit. It lies at an altitude of about 14,500 feet and 500 feet below the main plateau that exists northwest of the highest peak. A straight line from Little Ararat through the highest peak of Ararat proper and projected just beyond the main plateau will pass very close to the object's location. The Aaron-Garbe helicopter photos show the peaks of Ararat in the upper right-hand side of the picture.

The object itself is poking out of an ice-pack and is tilted slightly downwards. It lies in an approximately north/south direction on a rock bench or shelf above a steep cliff. At suitable times each year, there is a frozen lake or pond at the base of the cliff. Furthermore, extending down the hill from the cliff is a debris-covered snowfield. There appears to be a

buildup of debris at this point under the snow cover, and the cascade of ice from above the object is continually adding rubble. The object itself appears to have a covering of rubble or debris on top that is at least a yard deep, and may be significantly more. For this reason, the object looks more "natural" when viewed from above.

Earlier Observations' Points of Agreement

There are a series of observations of an object claimed to be Noah's Ark on Mt. Ararat that are in accord with the above description. (Page numbers refer to *The Ark on Ararat* by Tim LaHaye and John Morris.)

1. The monk Jehan Haithon wrote in A.D. 1254: "Upon the snows of Ararat a black speck is visible at all times: this is Noah's Ark." (p. 22) It certainly exists as such in a number of photos of the mountain (p. 106). Apparently, it also is very prominent in the Spot Satellite photos, even after extensive snowfall. It was suggested as a consequence that it may be a volcanic hotspot. Anything with a different thermal capacity, such as pitch-covered wood, may behave the same way.

2. Sir John Chardin visited Ararat in the 17th century. In an engraving of the mountain he etched out the position of the Ark as on the western end of the main plateau (pp. 21, 24). This description agrees closely with that of the above object.

In 1940, Sister Bertha Davis showed pictures to her Bible class of the alleged Ark protruding above a debris-covered snowfield (p.113). Similarly, in 1969, film footage taken from a helicopter was shown in Philadelphia. In it the purported Ark was shown protruding from a similarly rubble-covered snowfield (p. 107). These photos appear very similar to the above object.

4. George Greene in 1953 located the alleged Ark on a rock bench on the side of a cliff, protruding from a glacier/snow field. It was covered with rock debris and was lying in a generally north/south direction. The latter point is important in assessing any object as to whether it is the one, which Greene saw. The altitude was given as about 14,000 feet (p. 135). Both of these facts are basically in agreement with photos of the object.

5. [Liedmann, who the following point is based upon, has been shown to be an absolute liar and completely untrustworthy. To be fair, the following point should not be considered.] The Russian airborne photos taken during 1938-48 were taken at an altitude of approximately 14,500 feet, and showed the Ark tilted slightly downwards and poking out of the ice. One key point is diagnostic in determining where these aerial photos were taken of the object purported to be the ark. The photos all had the peaks of the mountain in the upper right side of the picture (p. 111). If the 14,500-foot contour is traced around the relevant portion of Ararat, there are only two places where those conditions apply. One is where the above object is located. The other extends from about the Abich II glacier eastwards. If the Russian photos were indeed of Noah's Ark and not some other formation, then these are the only two possible sites for the ark's location.

6. Finally, the record of Turkish soldiers in 1916 is important. They located the Ark as resting on a rock on the west side of the mountain and lying in a north/south direction (p. 91). This agrees with several elements of the object's descriptions, but, how would one know that this really was the Ark and not some other object?

First, the soldiers did not view it from the air or from some distance. They were on the ground. Second, they got close enough to make another diagnostic comment. George Hagopian and Ed Davis, who have both given extensive personal testimony of their sighting of the ark, claim that wooden pegs or dowels were used to hold the planks together (p. 71). These Turkish soldiers also claimed that wooden pegs held the Ark together (p. 91). This would indicate that the object on the west side of Ararat might be at least part of the purported ark.

Final Comments

1. A discrepancy is noted between conclusive sightings such as those of George Hagopian and Ed Davis compared with some recounted by persons who were airborne. The Ark or portions of it, which they saw or thought they saw, was in a region whose description fits with near certainty the upper portions of the Ahora Gorge. All told, Ed Davis saw a total of 300 feet of the Ark as two fragments of about 150 and 100 feet long. The object described above is about 200 feet long. It would therefore seem that at least two and possibly three major portions of the Ark exist on Ararat. It seems logical to me that the Ark exists on Ararat and that it landed high up on the mountain. It then became petrified as many reports insist, and broke up due to either earthquake or ice movement. The separate portions were then carried to different parts of the northern sector of Ararat by ice flow and other natural forces. Sundry smaller pieces and timbers would then be accounted for in other locations.

2. It is also probable that some sightings claimed to be of the Ark are merely rock formations. Several such formations have been misleading in the past (p. 177, 198, etc.). It seems that an aerial survey may be more prone to this

error than ground-based observations. It is thus important that all likely objects from air surveys be checked on the ground.

3. This latter point is particularly essential for the above object investigated by Aaron and Garbe. It has eight features in common with at least six other reported sightings of the Ark and so cannot be dismissed lightly. If a ground-based expedition and/or radar prove it to be a natural formation, then one conclusion is inevitable. Namely, that this is the object that has been mistaken for the Ark on several significant occasions.

4. Finally, one important characteristic needs close examination. On all the photos and the videos of this object, there are what might best be described as "icicles" hanging from the "roof." On close examination they can be seen to be spaced at regular intervals. Furthermore, there is a similar set of "icicles" coming up from the bottom of the object directly below the top set. In addition, the shots taken looking along the object from its end show that both top and bottom sets of icicles follow a slight curve. They do not hang vertically. These facts lead to the conclusion that the photo taken by John McIntosh at a distance of about five hundred feet from the object in 1984 shows the icicles in essentially the same positions then as now.

It is therefore not beyond the realm of possibility that they mark some man-made feature such as internal compartments or ribbings—if indeed it is the ark. If it is not, then it will be interesting to discover what they really are. The explanation that this object is simply a volcanic vent or an ice cave is insufficient. Someone needs to brave the ice cascade and look inside the "cave" with a strong light and see if there are any signs of wooden dowels, pegs or other evidence of human ingenuity at work. At the very worst, one more object will have been eliminated as being the ark—one which has almost certainly given rise to a number of reported sightings. At the best—a portion of the Ark may have been discovered and its location fixed.

This report by my anonymous friend is dated February 26, 1990.

Conclusion

Has it been worth spending thousands of dollars to search for an Old Testament artifact? Could not hundreds of Bibles or meals be purchased with the money to nourish the poor in spirit and health? Why expose oneself to the dangers in eastern Turkey? Who cares if the Ark is found or not? We live by the New Testament, don't we? There is no biblical indication the Ark has any significance in end times!

I have had to ponder these questions over the past ten years and the answer has come unmistakably that the search for the Ark is very important. Christ used the illustration of Noah and the flood many times to illustrate Noah's faithfulness and God's judgment. Was Christ using a myth to make illustrations?

Anyone seriously in doubt of the Bible's authenticity needs to do a scientific study of the feasibility of Noah's adventure and the geological features all over the earth confirming the water deposition of the earth's surface features. This maligned story in the Bible will lead you to many other wonderful illustrations of compatibility with science, the "god" of our time.

Genesis contains fundamental principles of our faith. We cannot allow these events and principles to be trampled one by one by those who hate God. It is all true. As far as purchasing Bibles and feeding the poor goes, God has given us the capacity to do it all if we really wanted to do so.

