Beneath the Surface:
What the Durupınar Formation Teaches Us About Science, Scripture, and Scoffers

By
Alfred B. Davis
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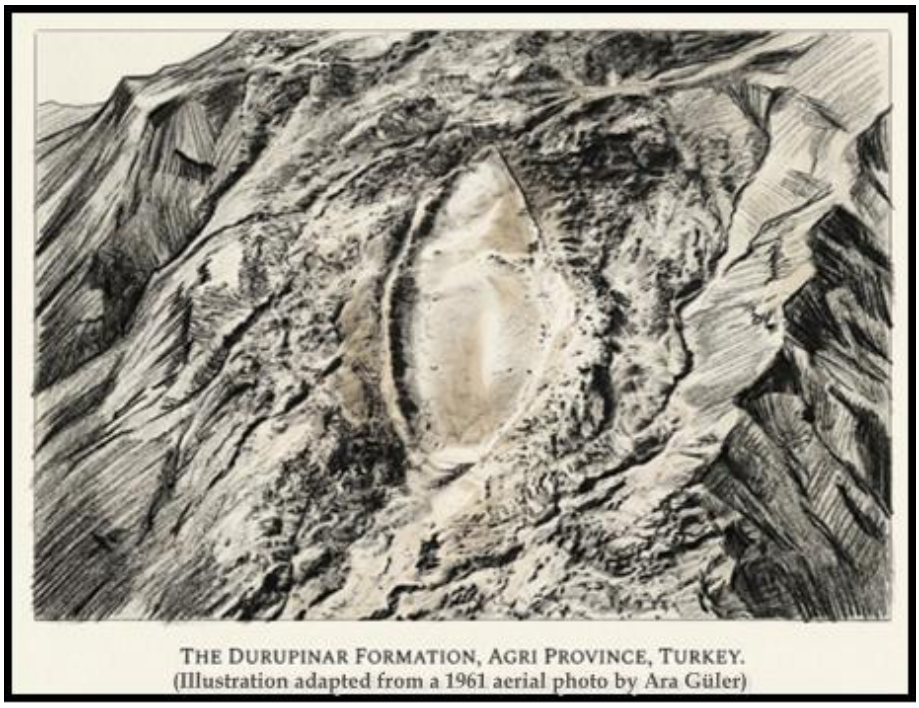
THE DURUPINAR FORMATION, AGRI PROVINCE, TURKEY.
(Illustration adapted from a 1961 aerial photo by Ara Güler)

Christian apologetics, biblical archaeology, and creationist sites have been buzzing about recent investigations by Noah's Ark Scans at a site in Eastern Turkey. The Durupınar Formation, a large boat-like formation located approximately 18 miles south of the Greater Mount Ararat summit on Mount Tendürek, has been the subject of numerous expeditions and investigations since being spotted by Turkish Army Capt. İlhan Durupınar in 1959. Conflicting claims and counterclaims as to its authenticity have been made, countered, refuted, and repudiated but no one has yet definitively proven whether it is or is not the real remains of Noah's Ark.

According to the Jerusalem Post, the Turkish government gave Noah's Ark Scans permission in 2026 to begin more invasive and comprehensive geological and archaeological excavations at the Durupınar Formation. These investigations include soil and core samples, drilling into the site and deploying a special "gopher" robot to explore and map underground abnormalities. It also marks the first use of an innovative subsurface imaging system known as BakhtarRadar—originally developed by Dr. Khosrow Bakhtar as the U.S. Air Force EarthRadar as a near-field, multistation platform for high-resolution, three-dimensional volumetric imaging of buried objects,
unexploded ordnance, structures and voids—across the 157-meter (515-foot) formation.

Preliminary results prompted Dr. Bakhtar to remark:

> *Whatever the object is beneath the surface is extraordinary. In forty years of this work, I have never seen anything like it. It could be a ship…What I can say from the radar is that it is organized, it is structural, and a solid geological mass would not have returned such a strong*

signature…If it was from geologic origin, we would have not seen it at all since we masked the subsurface geologic features…Natural ground does not organize itself into corridors, chambers and hallways. The system was built to separate buried structure from host geology, tunnels, voids, worked materials, discontinuities. That is what it is seeing here. A solid geological mass would not have returned this signature.

Be that as it may, until further tests and investigations are carried out and the results checked and rechecked, it is still too soon to say definitively that the Durupınar Formation is or is not the actual site of Noah's Ark.

Naturally it is reasonable to question, confirm, and challenge the statements of any person or group who claims to have located the remains of Noah's Ark before embracing them wholeheartedly. However, there are those who reject any such announcements automatically because they believe Noah's Ark was nothing more than a myth or an ancient folktale. These people are those whom the Bible labels as scoffers:

[3]Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, [4]And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. [5]For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: [6]Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: [7]But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:3-7)

In this passage, Peter first points out that scoffers will be active in the last days, that is the days leading up to the return of Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom over the earth. That is not to say that there have not always been scoffers in the world questioning God's Word and casting doubt. It's just that they will increase as we get closer to the Lord's return:

[17]But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; [18]How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. (Jude 17-18)

As both Peter and Jude note, these scoffers will be motivated by their own lusts:

[1]This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. [2]For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3]Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, [4]Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; [5]Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

Focused on their own selfish desires and motivations, they question the Bible, especially the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is as if denying the return of Christ emboldens them to deny the authenticity of the Bible, setting themselves free to indulge their own lusts without fear of reprisal. Or, as Joseph Benson (1749-1821) commented on 2 Peter 3:4 in his *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*:

> *By representing Christ's promised coming as a delusion, the scoffers set themselves and others free from all fear of a future judgment, and bereft the righteous of their hope of reward.*

This denial leads to willful ignorance; ignorance of both the creation of the world and the devastating judgment of the world with a global flood in Noah's day. In other words, they make a choice to reject any evidence that might suggest a catastrophic worldwide flood or a special creation because they do not want it to be true. For example, my Forest Biology professor at Colorado State University in 1982 told us candidly at the end of the course that there were only two explanations for how everything came to be: special creation by a creator (God) or evolution. He chose, he said, to believe in evolution because he did not want special creation to be true. It seemed apparent that his choice reflected the exact intellectual posture Benson described to be "free from all fear of a future judgment."

Once someone rejects the special creation and the flood, they begin to justify their rejection, lest they seem as ignorant as the Bible says they are. In doing so, they unwittingly demonstrate another sign that we are in the last days. Remember, in 2 Peter 2:4, the Bible said they claim that "since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

This brings up the idea of uniformitarianism. Uniformitarianism, popularized by Charles Lyell, a Scottish lawyer-turned-geologist, is the principle that the Earth's geological features are shaped by slow, continuous processes acting over immense periods of time. Or, to put it simply, the present is the key to the past. Lyell visited Niagara Falls in 1841-1842, which, at the time, was a remote, difficult location to visit. Returning to Great Britain, Lyell observed in the 9th edition of his foundational book, *Principles of Geology,* in 1859:

> *Mr. Bakewell, son of the eminent geologist of that name, who visited Niagara Falls in 1829, made the first attempt to calculate from the observations of one who had lived forty years at the Falls, and who had been the first settler there, that the cataract had during that period gone back about a yard annually. But after the most careful inquiries which I was able to make, during my visit to the spot in 1841-42, I came to the conclusion that the average of one foot a year would be a much more probable conjecture. In that case, it would have required thirty-five thousand years for the retreat of the falls, from Queenston to the present site.*

Without explaining how or why, Lyell concluded that the observed erosion rate of Niagara Falls was much slower than the rate of three feet a year reported by long-time residents of the area (the actual rate was later determined to be 4-5 feet per year). In doing so he calculated that the Falls had been receding for some 35,000 years, thereby calling into question the prevailing view of many Western theologians and natural philosophers in his day that the earth was, based on Mosaic chronology, less than 6,000-8,000 years old.

An understanding of why Lyell greatly inflated his calculations of how long Niagara Falls had been receding may be gleaned from a private letter to George Poulett Scrope, a fellow uniformitarian geologist and politician, on June 14, 1830, where he indicated his desire to "free the science from Moses." By arguing that natural laws and rates of change were strictly uniform, Lyell was directly calling into question the prevailing geological models based on a recent creation and a catastrophic global flood.

Charles Lyell's seeming refutation of biblical chronology provided Charles Darwin what he needed to make his idea of evolution work: deep time. As Lyell argued, slow, everyday occurrences, such as

wind, rain, temperature changes, over vast periods of time could account for the wide variety of physical features in the world, Darwin proposed that minute, incremental variations over vast periods of time could account for the wide variety of biological features in the world—without the need for sudden creative acts of God or a global flood. Thus, Lyell's work—specifically *Principles of Geology*, which Darwin took with him aboard HMS *Beagle* in 1831—was foundational not only to Darwin's development of his theory of evolution by natural selection but to its widespread acceptance as well.

Since then, the concept of deep time—the idea that the world is far older than what the Bible indicates—has become the prevailing view among both theologians and secular scientists. Arguments in favor of a young earth and a recent creation, as well as a catastrophic global flood, are now met with skepticism, disdain, and ridicule rather than being objectively or empirically considered. Hence, even if the actual remains of Noah's Ark were to be found, confirmed, and proven to be real beyond any reasonable doubt, you can be sure that the scoffers will still deny it saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Nevertheless, we do not need the actual remains of Noah's Ark to believe that the Bible is true. Groups such as the Institute for Creation Research, Creation Ministries International, Logos Research Association, and Answers in Genesis, are actively conducting research in fields such as geology, biology, genetics, and astronomy, publishing their findings in peer-reviewed papers, popular articles, and books interpreting the data through a biblical lens. In doing so, they are challenging the secular deep-time paradigms, countering the legacy of Lyell and Darwin, and bolstering the claims of those who believe in the biblical accounts of a recent creation and a worldwide flood by providing strong, factual evidence that was not available to theologians and scientists in the 1800s and early 1900s.

Scoffers will continue to scoff, but let me encourage you by closing with the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 6:20-21:

> *[20]O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: [21]Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.*

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