

Qur'an and Archaeological Findings of Ancient Ruined Civilizations

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Abstract

In order to unravel the archaeological findings of ancient ruined civilizations as mentioned in the Qur'an, this paper mostly discusses the detailed historical background of Noah's Ark (pronounced Nuh in the Qur'an), exact location where Noah's people lived, sailing point of Noah's Ark, resting place of Noah's Ark, and the latest modern archaeological findings of Noah's Ark.

Search for Nuh's (NOAH) Ark and the Qur'an

An article titled "Archaeologists claim to have found Noah's Ark" written by Martin Wore was published in the London Observer on January 16, 1994. The report said: "Noah's Ark has been found on the Turkish-Iranian border, 32 kilometers from mount Ararat, according to the leader of a team of scientists that has been investigating the site for six years. The Turkish Government is so convinced by the findings that, after years of intransigence, it has designated the site as one of special archaeological interest and agreed to its excavation in the next summer." The remote site contains a buried, ship-like object, resting at an altitude of 2300 meters. At 170 meters long and 45 meters wide, it conforms almost exactly to the 300 cubit by 50 cubit that Allah told Noah (pronounced Nuh in the Qur'an) to build, according to Genesis, chapter 6 in the Bible. On the surrounding terrain, the American and Middle Eastern scientists have identified huge stones with holes carved at one end, which they believe were "dragged behind ships in the ancient world to stabilize them. Radar soundings indicate unusual levels of iron-oxide distribution."

"Salih Bayraktutan, Head of Geology at Turkey's Ataturk University, estimates the age of the vessel at more than 100,000 years. According to the Bible, Adam the first man was created some 6000 years ago. Bayraktutan's estimate is a clear contradiction to the Bible. The Qur'an

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however does not specify exactly when Adam was born. It does say that human beings were created a long time ago. The structure is man-made and for sure it is Noah's Ark. The site is directly below the mountain of Al-Judi; named in the Koran (Qur'an) as the Ark's resting place." (The Observer, London, January 16, 1994).

The history of Nuh (AWS) [pronounced Noah in the Bible] has been described elaborately in the holy Qur'an mainly in Sura Hud (11:36-49), Sura Nuh (71:1-28), Sura Araf (7:59-64) and also in other places of the holy Qur'an. We have come to know from the holy Qur'an that Allah sent Nuh (AWS) to his people as messenger and prophet. It is evident from the Qur'an that the people of Nuh (AWS) neither denied the existence of God, nor were they opposed to the idea of worshipping Him. Their real problem was polytheism. They did not believe in One God. They had associated other Gods with the One Supreme creator Allah. As a result, this basic sin gave rise to a number of other evils among them. There had arisen among them a class of people representing the false Gods. For long, Nuh (AWS) strove with patience and wisdom to change the attitude, character and morality of his people. But unfortunately all his efforts failed miserably.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an that Nuh (AWS) lived for 950 years. During that long passage of time, he tried his utmost to show his people the right path as against falsehood. At last Nuh (AWS) prayed to Allah, as mentioned in the Qur'an: "And Nuh (Noah) said, 'My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth. If you leave them, they will mislead your slaves, and they will beget none but wicked disbelievers.'" (Sura Nuh, 71:26-27). Allah granted his prayer and ordered Nuh (AWS) to construct a large size ship (Ark) as there will be a Great Flood in the world. It took a long time, until at last Nuh (AWS) constructed a large ship.

Further events have been mentioned in the Qur'an in the following manner: "At length, behold! There came our command and the fountains on the earth gushed forth. We said: 'Embark therein, of each kind two, male and female, and your family— except those against whom the Word has already gone forth— and those who believe.' And none believed with him, except a few. And he (Nuh) said: 'Embark therein: in the name of Allah will be its (moving) course and its (resting) anchorage. Surely, my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' So the Ark floated with them on the waves (towering) like mountains and Nuh called out to his son, who

had separated himself (apart): 'O my son! Embark with us and be not with the disbelievers.' The son replied: 'I will betake myself to some mountains, it will save me from the water.' Nuh said: 'This day there is no saviour from the Decree of Allah except him, on whom He has mercy,' and waves came in between them, so he (son) was among the drowned. Then the Word went forth: 'O earth! Swallow up the water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain).' And the water was made to subside and the Decree (of Allah) (i.e. the destruction of the people of Nuh) was fulfilled. And the Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said: 'Away with the people who are *zālimun* (polytheists and wrong-doers)!' (Sura Hud, 11:40-44).

One of the most important questions is where did Noah's Ark land? The Bible says: Mount Ararat. The Qur'an says: Mount Judi. So which one is correct? Are they the same place or are they different? Is the Ark at both of these locations? With a view to obtaining a broader knowledge on this issue, in mid 1986, this writer sent a letter to NASA, Lewis Research Center, Cleveland, Ohio for the mailing address of Colonel James B. Irwin, Apollo-15 Astronaut who was at that time engaged in search of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat. On receipt of his mailing address from NASA, this writer sent a letter to Col. Irwin to inquire about the landing site of Noah's Ark and other details. The present writer received a hand written letter and a Testimony from Col. Irwin, Apollo-15 astronaut who landed on the moon in the year 1971. He was the first man from planet earth who drove a special type of car on the lunar surface. As token of friendship, the present writer also received one piece 10"x12" size original colored photographs from Astronaut Irwin taken on the lunar surface while he was on the moon. Astronaut James B. Irwin presented the author with a few books written by him, one of which was on his search for Noah's Ark titled "More than an Ark on Ararat," published in the year 1985. The book is mainly based on his first expedition for the search of Noah's Ark on mount Ararat. In the preface of the book, Irwin wrote: "I have been interested in Noah's Ark since I was a young lad in Sunday school. The journey to the moon opened up new doors. I was speaking in Farmington, New Mexico in 1976 and met Eyril Cummings, who is regarded as the American expert on the Ark. He has spent forty years of his life researching it and has been to Turkey's Mount Ararat seventeen times. I thought it would be interesting to look for the Ark. So I told Cummings that if he needed anyone to carry his bags or keep his company, I'd love to go with him. About a year later, he called me to go

with him to Turkey. . . . After our work in Jordan we went into Eastern Turkey. Unfortunately, the ground work had not been sufficient, and the Turkish government wouldn't allow us to go on Mount Ararat. I did see the Prime Minister and presented him with a Turkish flag I'd carried to the moon. My interest continued to build. Cummings called me in 1982 and asked me to be the leader of an expedition to find the Ark. I wrote to the Turkish President and told him of my desires. Very surprisingly, about a month later, I received a letter from him inviting me to come to Turkey and look for the Ark as his guest. We accepted his invitation and searched on the north slope from the Kop plain east to Ahora Gorge. This book is a result of that expedition." (More than an Ark on Ararat, Broadman Press, USA, 1985). Unfortunately this was a most unsuccessful mission.

In the year 1984, on request of Ronald E. Wyatt, a specialist on Noah's Ark, James Irwin decided to travel with him so that Wyatt could show him the Ark landing site on Mount Ararat. They arrived in Istanbul on August 19, 1984 and proceeded to Ankara. In Ankara, Irwin met with Dr. Kashim Gulek and his wife. Gulek, who had served as a Cabinet member in the Ataturk government, was a very influential man. Wyatt accompanied Irwin to their home, and this proved to be a valuable meeting. They spent the night at Gulek's home and the next day, they went to Dogubayazit. Wyatt took Irwin and several members of his group to the boat shaped object. At that time he employed the metal detectors on the site. But Irwin wasn't convinced that it was the Ark, since he was dedicated to searching for it on Mount Ararat. But this time all his effort failed to find the exact landing site of Noah's Ark.

In September 1987, the writer of this article received a letter from James B. Irwin regarding his expedition in search of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat. Irwin wrote:

High Flight Foundation

September, 1987

P.O. Box- 1387, Colorado Springs

Colorado 80901-9958, U.S.A

Dear Friend,

Thanks for your prayers. We are safely back from another trip to Eastern Turkey in search of the Ark of Noah. We were unsuccessful. It was a most

frustrating experience and a great disappointment for all of us! We were not permitted into the area where we think the Ark is located. The government authorities would not give us permission to enter the area of the Ahora Gorge.

The month was completely dedicated to the Ark search. Our climbers, Bob Stuplichj, Bob Cornuke and Bill Dodder arrived in Ankara over a week before I arrived so they could obtain all the necessary approval. When they were assured that our request was granted, I flew to Turkey.

In Ankara we met with General Toruntay, the Turkish Army Chief of Staff; Dr. Kashim Gulek, a Turkish statesman, and Mr. Aytun from foreign Affairs. Since we had all the required approvals, we departed for Eastern Turkey. We made arrangements for a Cessna 206 and a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter, and we even had permission to use military base in Dogubayazit at the foot of Mount Ararat.

After our aircraft arrived, we were told by the Governor of Dogubayazit that we could not fly over the Ahora Gorge. These restrictions had come from the minister of the Interior. The next morning we found the mountain covered with snow — the first winter storm of the season. It appeared that the door was closing on our attempt for 1987. Just before we left Eastern Turkey, we asked the aircraft and helicopter for photo flights west of Mount Ararat. We thought we should make some use of the aircrafts since we had invested money to get them there.

We did have a chance to visit the boat-shaped object. It has deteriorated a great deal since I first saw it in 1984. It appears less likely to be a man-made object. However, the Turkish government has put up a sign on the highway that Noah's Ark is there, has paved the road and is constructing a visitor center. Perhaps this is why we were not allowed to search the Ahora Gorge.

The International team we had assembled was the best ever. We had Dutch, Canadian, US and Turkish participation. We had skilled climbers, an aerial surveyor, geologist and a television crew. We had a Cessna 206 and a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter. We had the right people, the right equipment and the right mission, but we were not given the opportunity to use these resources. I am asking the Turkish authorities why we were not permitted to find the Ark. We missed a great opportunity to be of service to not only the people of Turkey, but the whole world.

It was a month filled with problems. Problems in Turkey and problems at home, but we are grateful that we are completely dependent upon Him.

Your Friend from the Moon

Col. James B. Irwin

From space shuttle image taken on November 11, 1994, NASA scientists confirmed that Mount Ararat is the largest and highest (16940 feet) volcano in Turkey. Ararat is a stratovolcano and is located at 39.7N, 44.3E. The border of Armenia is 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the summit. Ararat has not erupted in historic time. The most recent eruption was probably in the last 10,000 years. Western scientists believe the volcano to be the resting place of Noah's Ark. The observation of vessel shaped features in aerial photographs of Ararat caused a stir in the late 1950's. Expeditions found the features to be landslides and lava flows. The cause of volcanism in Eastern Turkey has not been established. Some geologists argue that the Arabian plate is being sub-ducted beneath the Eurasian plate. The region lacks moderate and deep earthquake activity common to most subduction zones. An alternative model proposes that the volcanism is related to a shear along the contact of the two plates.

Other scientific source confirmed that rising to 5165 meters (16914 feet) at the western borders of Alfaristan is the Mount Ararat. It is called Mount Ararat in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. The Qur'an calls the location Jabal Judi (Sura Hud, 11:44) and the Turks called it Agri Dagh or "the Mountain of Pain". Christian researchers and archaeologists believe that about 4300 years ago Noah's Ark came here to rest after the Great Flood. They also believe that the spot where the Ark has been preserved is seventeen miles south of Mount Ararat's peak from the lower slopes of 6300 feet to 14000 and 15000 feet up, following the right-hand side of Ahora Gorge right up to the front of Parrot Glacier. There is a huge flat plateau there, as big as a football field, and 100 yards deep in ice. During melting periods the Ark can be seen. Mount Ararat is considered by many mountaineers to be one of the most dangerous mountain peaks in the world, not because of its height, but because of its construction. Local residents have believed for centuries that the Ark rested on their mountain. There is even a report that the way to the Ark was originally marked by carved hand and footholds in the rocks. Eventually, landslides, earthquakes and other factors shrouded the Ark in

mystery until a terrible earthquake in 1840 caused massive damage on the slopes of the mountain.

The December '96 issue of *Popular Mechanics* has "Science solves Ancient Mysteries of the Bible" as the cover story. They took a look at a number of Biblical mysteries including Noah's Ark. According to this report: "Not too long ago, explorers claimed that they had found Noah's Ark atop Mount Ararat in Turkey. Yet, two years ago, what some believe to be Noah's Ark was found not on Mount Ararat but on a remote site about 20 miles away, near the border of Turkey and Iran. According to the American and Middle Eastern researchers who have been to the location, the remote site contains a buried, ship like object, resting at an altitude of 7546 feet. Some 558 ft. long and 148 ft. wide, the object conforms almost exactly to the 300x50 cubit boat that, according to the Bible, God told Noah to build."

Biblical archaeologist Ron Wyatt identified huge stones with holes carved at one end on the surrounding terrain. Researchers believe that these are "drogue stones", which in ancient times were dragged behind ships to stabilize them. Images returned by ground- penetrating radar indicate unusual levels of iron-oxide distribution, suggesting metal fittings. Salih Bayraktutan, head of geology at Turkey's Ataturk University, estimates the age of the vessel at more than 100,000 years. "It is a man-made structure and for sure, it is Noah's Ark," Bayraktutan said at the time of discovery.

Several expeditions have been made in the past in search of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat. We may focus here on some of the glimpses of the past expeditions. The Armenian King Haithon said in 1254 AD: "In Armenia, there is a very high mountain, the highest in existence, and its name is Ararat. On the mountain, Noah's Ark landed after the Flood. No one can climb this mountain because of the great quantity of snow on it in winter and summer. But at the summit a great black object is always visible, the Ark of Noah."

In the 13th century Marco Polo in the company of its residents was informed that the Noah's Ark was still resting on the summit of Ararat. We can quote from the book "Marco Polo the Travels", translated by Ronald Latham from the Italian version. Here is a quotation from his book with regard to Noah's Ark: "In the heart of the greater Armenia is a very high mountain, shaped like a cube (or cup), on which Noah's Ark is said to have rested, whence it is called the mountain of Noah's Ark. The

mountain is so broad and long that it takes more than two days to go around it. On the summit the snow lies so deep all the year round that no one can ever climb it; this snow never entirely melts, but new snow is forever falling on the old, so that the level rises.”

In 1829 Dr. Friedrich Parrot wrote, “all the Armenians are firmly persuaded that Noah’s Ark remains to this very day on the top of Ararat, and that, in order for its preservation, no human being is allowed to approach it.” (Journey to Ararat p. 162). In 1959 the father of president Kazan Kabir visited the Ark and the cave for the first time. During their visit the Turkish Air Force conducted an aerial survey of the Ararat and Alfari region. They were at the Ark, seventeen miles south of Mount Ararat’s peak, on the lower slopes, when photographed by Lt. Ahmed Kurtis. The picture reveals the outline of Noah’s Ark, close to the Biblical dimension.

Charles Berlitz, in his book titled “The Lost Ship of Noah”, described the fascinating experience of George Hagopian who went to the Mount Ararat, Ahora Gorge (in Turkish) along with his uncle in the year 1908. While passing the grave of St. Jacob on the way they found something that looked like a great ship located on a rock ledge over a cliff and partially covered by snow. Charles Borlitz described: “It had flat openings like windows along the top and a hole in the roof. Hagopian had first thought it was a house made of stone but when his uncle showed him the outline of plants and told him it was made of wood he realized it was the Ark, just like the other people had described it to him. His uncle boosted him up from a rock pile to reach the Ark roof telling him not to be afraid, because it is a holy ship. . . and the animals and people are not here now. They have all gone away.” Hagopian climbed on the roof and knelt down and kissed the surface of the roof which was flat and easy to stand on. While he stood alongside the Ark, his uncle shot into the side of it but the bullets bounced off as if it were made of stone. He then tried to cut off a piece of the wood with a sharp knife and was equally unsuccessful. On this first visit to the Ark they spent two hours there looking at it. When Hagopian returned to his village eager to tell other boys about the adventure they replied: “Yes we saw the Ark too.”

Hundreds of expeditions have long since been made in search of Noah’s Ark. Almost all the expeditions were made by the Christian researchers, archaeologists, astronauts and Ark specialists. Their expeditions were carried out mainly based on the Bible (Old Testament). According to the

Bible, "On the seventeenth day of the seventh month the boat (Ark) came to rest on a mountain in the Ararat range." (Genesis 8:4). On the basis of this Biblical statement, all expeditions in search of Noah's Ark were being conducted on the mountain of Ararat range. But the landing site of Noah's Ark is mentioned as Mount Judi in the holy Qur'an. According to the holy Qur'an: "And it was said: 'O earth swallow up the water, and O cloud, clear away. And the water was made to abate,' and the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Judi." (Sura Hud, 11:44). In this connection, Christian writer Bill Crouse published a very informative article titled "Noah's Ark: It's Final Berth". He wrote: "Cudi Dagh (pronounced Judi in the Qur'an) is located approximately 200 miles south of Mount Ararat in southern Turkey almost within sight of the Syrian and Iraqi borders. The Tigris river flows at its base. The exact coordinates are 37 degrees 21 minutes N, and 42 degrees 17 minutes E. In literature it has also been called "Mt. Judi", "Mt. Qardu", the "Gordyene mountains", "Gordian mountains", the "Karaduchian mountains", "the mountains of the Kurds" and to the Assyrians: "Mt. Nippur". It is also important to note that at times this mountain has even been called "Mt. Ararat". At about 7000 feet altitude it is not a terribly high mountain, though it is snow-capped most of the year. The current edition of the Encyclopedia of Islam lists it as 'over 13000 feet and largely unexplored. We are unsure of the exact altitude, but it seems strange that it is not noted in our modern aerial navigation map if it were 13000 feet!' Most modern maps do not show the location of Cudi Dagh. It is, however, located about 25 miles from the Tigris River, just east of the present Turkish city of Gizre and still within the bounds of the Biblical region of Ararat (Urartu).

"Cudi Dagh (Mount Judi) overlooks the all-important Mesopotamian plain and is notable for its many archaeological ruins in and around the mountain. There are also references to it in ancient history. Sennacherib (700 BC), the Assyrian King, carved rock reliefs of himself on the side of the mountain. The Nestorians (a sect of Christianity) built several monasteries around the mountain including one on the summit called 'The Cloister of the Ark'. It was destroyed in 766 AD. The Muslims later built a mosque on the site. In 1910, Gertrude Bell explored the area and found a stone structure still at the summit with the shape of a ship called by the locals 'Sefinet Nabi Nuh' (The ship of Noah). Bell also reports that annually on September 14, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sabians and Yezidis gather on the mountain to commemorate Noah's sacrifice. As

late as 1949 two Turkish journalists claimed to have seen the Ark on this mountain, a ship 500 feet in length!” (Bill Crouse in *Archaeology & Biblical Research*, Vol-5, No-3, Summer, 1992).

In this context Charles Berlitz made a very informative comment on Mount Judi in his book titled “Lost Ship of Noah”. According to him: “Mount Judi spelled Cudi Dagh in Turkish means ‘Highest’ or ‘heights’ in Arabic and for this reason a number of people in Eastern Turkey including some Islamic Scholars thought that Al-Judi refers to Ararat. But Cudi Dagh is actually located south of Lake Van, rising to a height of 7700 feet. The local tribesmen there maintain that the Ark drifted to a high point in the Cudi mountain chain and that remains of it are still on the top of Cudi-Dagh, the highest mountain in the area.” But there is a mountain named Judi and also there is a mountain named Ararat. They are both located within the Qur’anic and Biblical region of Ararat (Urartu). Some researchers and archaeologists believe that it is very possible that both the Bible and the Qur’an speak in unison on this issue. Could it be that both Mount Ararat and Mount Judi are the same locations? As we can see, some of today’s authors use the two words and locations interchangeably regarding the location of Ark. So according to contemporary archaeologists, the Qur’anic location “the heights” and the Biblical location of the mountains of Ararat are the same location even though there are two different mountains named as such. But it is the belief of the present writer that Al-Judi refers to one of the specific mountains of Ararat whereas Bible refers to all the mountains of Ararat region. Hence, the Qur’an specified the exact landing site of Noah’s Ark, called Mount Judi which is one of the mountains of the Ararat region.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali, one of the commentators of the holy Qur’an has remarked: “Let us get a little idea of the geography of the place. The letters Jim, Ba and Kaf are philologically interchangeable, and Judi, Gudi, Kudi are sounds that can pass into each other. There is no doubt that the name is connected with the name ‘Kurd’ in which the letter *r* is a later interpolation, for the oldest Sumerian records name a people called Kuti or Gutu as holding the middle Tigris region not later than 2000 BC (see *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Kurdistan). That region comprises the modern Turkish district of Bohtan, in which Jabal Judi is situated (near the frontiers of modern Turkey, modern Iraq and modern Syria), and the town of Jazirah Ibn Umar (on the present Turco-Syrian frontier) and it extends into Iraq and Iran. The great mountain mass of the Ararat plateau dominates this district. This mountain system ‘is unique in the old world

in containing great sheets of water that are bitter lakes without outlets, Lake Van and Lake Urumiya being the chief" (Encyclopedia Britannica, Asia). Such would be the very region for stupendous Deluge if the usual scanty rainfall were to be changed into a very heavy downpour. A glacier damming of Lake Van in the Ice Age would have produced the same result. The region has many local traditions connected with Noah and the Flood. The Biblical legend of Mount Ararat being the resting place of Noah's Ark is hardly plausible seeing that the highest peak of Ararat is over 16,000 feet high. If it means one of the lowest peaks of the Ararat system, it agrees with the Muslim tradition about Mount Judi (or Gudi), and this is in accordance with the oldest and best local traditions. These traditions are accepted by Josephus, by the Nestorian Christians, and indeed by all the Eastern Christians and Jews, and they are the best in touch with local traditions. See (Viscount) J. Bryce, '*Transcaucasia and Ararat*', 4th edition, 1896, p. 216." [The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, note 1539, New Edition with Revised translation and commentary, Amana Corporation, USA, 1992].

Some Islamic scholars like Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi believe that Mount Judi is situated to the north-east of the Island of Ibn Umar in Kurdistan. In 1979, the present writer visited Kurdistan, located at the north of Iraq beside the ancient city of Nineveh (modern day Mosul), 400 kilometers from Baghdad. At that time, he had the opportunity of climbing one of the mountains of Ararat located at Kurdistan, called Judi in the holy Qur'an. Judi is a part of this range and is known today by the same name. Some scientists of Syria and Turkey do believe that Al-Judi is a mountain facing Ibn Umar Island at the junction of the Syrian and Turkish borders, on the eastern bank of the Tigris River. This Judi Mountain could easily be seen from the Syrian town of Ain Dewar. American Scientist & Archaeologist Ronald E. Wyatt claimed that he found 100,000 years old fossil of Noah's Ark [pronounced Nuh in the holy Qur'an]. He is credited by the Turkish Government with the discovery of Noah's Ark.

Ron E. Wyatt claimed that he discovered the remains of a fossilized boat constructed of gopher wood, and an anchor stone in the mountains of far Eastern Turkey, 20 miles from Mount Ararat, which the Turkish and their scientists believe to be the actual remains of Noah's Ark. On June 20, 1987, the Turkish government officially dedicated "Noah's Ark National Park", after a Government Commission verified the investigative work on the site by American Scientist & Archaeologist

Ronald E. Wyatt and independent work by Turkish scientists and archaeologists. The site is now on the Turkish map as Nuhun Gemesi, Noah's big boat, and is now open for the visitors.

A further very imperative question is: whether the Flood was world-wide or limited to the area inhabited by the people of Noah?

This question remains unanswered to date. Presently, we shall discuss this issue in the light of recent scientific findings. Under the influence of the Israelite traditions, it is believed that it was a universal flood (Genesis 7:18-24). The Qur'an does not explicitly say so. There are several allusions in the Qur'an which indicate that subsequent generations of mankind are the descendants of those who were saved from the flood. But that does not necessarily mean that the flood covered the whole world. For, it is quite plausible that at the point in history the human population was confined only to the area which was overtaken by the flood, and that those born after the Flood gradually dispersed to other parts of the world. This view is supported by two things, First, ancient historical traditions, archaeological discoveries and geological data provide evidence that a Great Flood took place at some period in the distant past in the Tigris-Euphrates region.

Secondly, it is clear from modern scientific advancement and research that at the time of Great Flood, there was one land mass. According to modern scientists Europe, Africa, America and all other lands were connected. There were lakes and rivers that dotted the landscape, but most of the water was well beneath the earth's surface. The flood started with torrential rains followed by opening of the earth. Pressure on the earth's crust caused it to crack northward. The earth was split open at a rate of 3 miles per second encircling the globe in approximately 2 hours. This split created continental plates that divided east from west.

The compressed rock beneath the continental plates was forced upward creating the mid-Atlantic ridge currently located in the center of the Atlantic Ocean. As the ridge was pushed upward, the continental plates were pushed apart at rates up to 45 miles per hour. The two continental plates eventually collided with other plates causing the land to move upward and downward. The upward movement created the mountainous regions of the world. The downward movement resulted in deep trenches in the ocean floors. This explains why major mountainous regions and ocean trenches are parallel to one another.

Waters were initially released from the earth burst forth into the atmosphere at supersonic speeds. As the water went higher and higher into the atmosphere, much of it became solid ice. Rain, hail and snow fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights. All life forms that found themselves on top of mountains were instantly frozen in time. This explains the fish and animal fossil remains in nearly every mountain region of the world, and how some were completely preserved. The so called "Ice Age" was in fact just a matter of days. Sediments from displaced earth rapidly settled trapping animal and plant life beneath it. The once thriving cities disappeared under tons of rock and then mud. The decomposed remains of plants, trees and animals beneath the sediment currently provide the world's oil supply.

After some days, the water receded and dry land appeared. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, one of the mountains of Ararat region. Noah (pronounced Nuh in the Qur'an) and his family came out from the Ark with the survivors. Jewish, Christian as well as many ancient civilizations throughout the world spoke of the Great Flood. Scientists have proven conclusively that there was indeed a flood that covered some specific places of earth and this occurrence is carved in stone or clay in nearly every ancient civilization. The Sumerians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Hittites, and the Chinese all wrote of a Great Flood that covered significant areas of earth.

In the light of the Qur'anic allusions and Biblical statements, it seems certain that the people of Noah inhabited in the land presently known as Iraq. This writer had the opportunity to visit a small city of Iraq named Kufah, an important Islamic town of early Arab history. Kufah was the first Arab capital proper, founded by Saad ibn Abi Waqqas in 638 AD and adopted by Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA)² as the center of his caliphate. It had four sectors with the house of the caliph and the mosque occupying the central space. It is located in the south of Baghdad. During his visit to Iraq, the present author observed a site in front of Kufa Mosque which looks like a big water reservoir full of sordid dark colour water with small greenish plants. The surroundings of the site are covered with iron grill and brick cement wall. Local people call it Safinat-e-Nuh, meaning Ark of Noah. After more scientific excavations, it will be clear to us that this was the actual sailing site of Noah's Ark. This writer firmly believes that Noah and his people inhabited the land of Kufah, southern Iraq where by the order of Allah, Noah built a large size Ark which took a long time to construct before the Great Flood. The Ark's construction

place was on a tract of land far from any sea or river. Noah's people laughed and mocked at him when they found Noah was busy building the Ark on a dry land. Allah has mentioned this in the holy Qur'an in this way: "And as he (Noah) was constructing the ship, whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they mocked at him." He said: "If you mock at us, so do we mock at you likewise for your mocking." (Sura Hud, 11:38). They called it an adventure of sailing on the Ark across the dry land! Definitely this dry land for construction of Ark was Kufah from where Noah (Nuh AWS) started his unknown journey with the Ark, along with his family, righteous followers, pairs of animals, birds, and the like, at the time of Great Flood. Geographically the location of Kufah was the sailing point of Noah's Ark that occurred between 5000 to 10,000 years ago as estimated by the modern scientists and researchers.

It must be said that the exact landing site of Noah's Ark is still a great debate among the researchers and scientists of the contemporary world. But "we firmly believe that the remains of the Ark of Noah is the greatest archaeological treasure of all history" as rightly remarked by the US Apollo-15 Astronaut Colonel James B. Irwin in his book titled "More than an Ark on Ararat."

How the ad Peole Were Ruined

In the holy Qur'an, Ad are said to have been perished through a 'furious wind'. In the verses of the holy Qur'an, it is mentioned that this furious wind lasted for seven nights and eight days and completely destroyed Ad people. Allah said in the Qur'an: "The Ad (people) belied (their prophet Hud); then how (terrible) was my Torment and my Warnings? Verily, we sent against them a furious wind, on a Day of Violent Disaster, plucking out men as if they were uprooted stumps of date-palms." (Sura Qamar, 54:18-20). Allah also mentioned, "And as for Ad, they were destroyed by a furious wind, exceedingly violent! Which Allah imposed on them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so that you could see men lying overthrown (destroyed), as if they were hollow trunks of date-palms!" (Sura Haqqah, 69:6-7).

Thought to be the remains of Ad, "The Atlantis of the Sands, Ubar (Iram)" has been recovered from under a layer of sand meters thick. It seems that the furious wind, that lasted for "seven nights and eight days" according to the Qur'anic description, accumulated tons of sand on top of the city and buried people under the earth alive. Excavations made in

Ubar point to the same possibility. The French magazine titled *Co M'Intersee* states the same as follows: "Ubar was buried under a sand of 12 meter thickness as a result of storm." The most important evidence showing that Ad were buried by a sand storm, is the word *ahqaf* used in the Qur'an to signify the location of Ad. The description given in verse 21 of Sura Ahqaf is: "And remember (Hud) the brother of Ad, when he warned his people in *Al-Ahqaf* (the curved sand-hills in the southern part of Arabian peninsula). And, surely, there have passed away warners before him and after him (saying): 'Worship none but Allah; truly, I fear for you the torment of a mighty Day (i.e, the Day of Resurrection).'" Here *Ahqaf* means "sand dunes" in Arabic and it is the plural form of the word *Hiqf* which means a "sand dune". This shows that Ad lived in a region full of "sand dunes", which provided the most logical ground possible for the fact that they were buried by a sand storm. According to one interpretation, *ahqaf* lost its meaning of "sand hills" and became the name of the region in south Yemen where Ad people lived. This does not change the fact that the root of this word is sand dunes, but just shows that this word has since become peculiar to this area because of the abundance of sand dunes in the region.

What one should do in looking at those remains buried in the sands, is to take warning just as the Qur'an stresses. Allah said in the Qur'an: "Ad, they were arrogant in the land without right, and they said: 'Who is mightier than us in strength?' Did they not see that Allah Who created them was mightier in strength than them? And they used to deny Our Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, revelations etc.)! So We sent upon them a furious wind in days of evil (for them) that We might give them a taste of disgracing torment in this present worldly life. But surely the torment of the Hereafter will be more disgracing, and they will never be helped." (Sura Fussilat, 41:15-16). The destruction that befell Ad from a sand storm, must have annihilated the entire people in a very short time. These were the people who were until then living there by cultivating fertile lands and building dams and irrigation channels for themselves. All of the fertile and cultivated fields, irrigation canals and dams of the community living there were covered by sand. The entire city and its inhabitants were buried alive under the sand. After the people were destroyed, desert spread there in time and covered them leaving no trace.

In view of the above, we can be grateful for Almighty Allah's sayings in the holy Qur'an about the destruction of Ad people which have at last

been proved true through archaeological excavations. Using satellite images in the year 1992, the relics of a city correlating with the Qur'anic location and description of Iram were discovered deep beneath the desert named Salalah in the state of Oman. The city's wealth was evidenced by frankincense burners, Parthian pottery, and the 90cm-thick walls guarding them. □

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