

Frozen In Time – Book Review Chapter 11 – Only One Ice Age



By Greg Neyman

© Answers In Creation

First Published 7 September 2005

Answers In Creation Website

www.answersincreation.org/frozen_in_time_11.htm

In short, ice ages in the geologic past, millions of years ago, presents problems for the young earth model. They must disprove this to prove their model. However, the arguments fall short...way short. I'll address minor issues, and then give a link to a thorough rebuttal for Oard's claims.

Why Multiple Ice Ages? (Page 107)

Enough is enough! On page 108, Oard says "...if there was one ice age, why not many? Multiple ice ages, to many scientists, was a more satisfying idea because the idea conformed to their assumption of uniformitarianism..." Oard has been doing this throughout the book, saying that scientists are looking for evidences to support their old age theories. This is bunk. Scientists report on the evidence. The evidence is what it is...no tweaking of it to obtain more favorable results for an old earth is necessary. Oard paints a picture of evil scientists out to disprove the young age of the earth. If there was a conspiracy against the young earth evidence, then why is Oard so easily able to quote works by secular scientists, which casts doubt upon old earth theories? Clearly, these doubts and problems are being discussed in the open. There is no "conspiracy theory" in action here...only the paranoid concerns of the young earth community.

Perhaps they would not feel this way if they at least had some evidence for a young earth...but there is none. They are completely ignored by the scientific community...and rightly so.

In the following paragraphs, he paints a picture of scientists first believing in one ice age, then four ice ages, and now 30 ice ages. He says "History indicates that the number of glaciations has never been on a solid footing. It has changed according to the popular ideas of the time." This explanation is very simplistic. Yes, it has changed, but based on much more than "the popular idea of the time." Scientific observations, rather than the whims of scientists, drive the number of ice ages. What are the evidences for these 30 ice ages? Oard does not list them!

Scientists, by their very nature, are skeptical. The "bandwagon" approach which Oard explains is much less likely to happen in the scientific community, where your research comes under peer-review.

One Recent Ice Age? (Page 109)

"There is strong evidence there was only one fairly recent ice age." This is Oard, quoting his own reference. How is the reader to decide this, since Oard did not list the evidences for the 30 ice ages?

Oard starts his evidence with the claim that glacial debris, known as till, was deposited mostly in the last ice age (of the 30). Oard fails to mention that the 30 ice age periods are unique and have different levels of ice accumulation. For instance, only 3 of the 30 brought ice down to Ohio.¹ Distinct layers of till can be identified for these 3 instances. Although there is not evidence for all 30 in Ohio, evidence for three distinct events is enough to disprove Oard's single ice age theory.

Next, Oard claims the till comes from the bedrock below, and thus it was not transported a great distance. However, geologic formations can stretch for hundreds of miles. A rock 300 miles away may look exactly like the rock under your foot. All that can be proven is that the source bedrock is the same. Oard claims that successive ice ages would "bulldoze" the debris farther from the source. This oversimplification will work, but only partially. Material is not "bulldozed" out in front of the advancing ice sheet. As the snow and ice accumulates, the underlying rock is trapped, and then as the ice advances, it captures material and drags it along. There is no "dozer blade" on the front of glaciers.

His next argument is the driftless areas, or areas of no glaciation. The picture shows some sandstone spires in Wisconsin, which he claims would have been planed flat. The problem here is his assumption that these are normal glaciers. Remember from earlier, they are ice sheets, not glaciers. Ice sheets do not move like glaciers. It is not necessary to plane the entire area flat, as the movement is minimal. For instance, in Antarctica, the Transantarctic Mountains protrude above the 4,200 meter thick ice sheet...they are not planed flat.²

Next Oard mentions that with Canada's many glaciations, the bedrock should be heavily eroded. True...if these were glaciers, and not ice sheets. This argument fails for the same reasons mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Oard then argues that the lack of supposed animal evolution during the two million year ice age period better fits his one ice age theory. Here he is arguing based on a lack of evidence. The lack of one piece of evidence does not validate other pieces of evidence. There were evolutionary processes at work, hominids most notably. They did not stop showing signs of evolution. He also argues that the mass extinctions better fit his theory. The truth is...we don't know what caused the extinctions, and neither does Oard...without the causal agent of the extinctions, he cannot claim to be in a better position than we are.

Next, he says that if there were interglacial periods, the animals would repopulate previously frozen areas. He says the bones are found mainly at non-glaciated areas and at the edges of the ice sheets. Two points...this is exactly what one would expect. First, there are evidences of fossils with disharmonious associations (previously discussed in Chapter 3, page 44). They give evidence of animals repopulating. Second, as animals die and ice waters melt, the bones would stand a much greater chance, through the movement of the melt waters, to wind up at the edges of the ice sheets.

His last argument is that at least one of the thirty ice ages should have affected the lowlands of Siberia, Alaska, and the Yukon. Why? There are no problems if not even one ice age affected these areas. Again, he is arguing from a lack of evidence to support his theory.

He sums it up by saying, "...the uniformitarian scientists actually assume there were multiple ice ages." This is a huge oversimplification. There are multiple evidences for

multiple ice ages. For instance, as I write this, I'm at home in Ohio...my house sits on ground moraine from the Wisconsin glaciation (24,000-14,000 years ago). A short drive takes me into glacial deposits with the Illinoian glaciation (130,000-300,000 years ago). A little further and there is glacial deposits from pre-Illinoian glaciation. Ohio has three distinct glacial deposits, proof positive against Oard's single Ice Age theory. He uses a quote to show that scientists assume a multiple-glaciation hypothesis...that's because the evidence supports it!

How Can One Ice Age Explain Evidence for Multiple Ice Ages? (Page 112)

None of the arguments Oard gives supports a one ice age theory, for the reasons previously mentioned. His model for depositing sand layers between till layers, and thus giving the "appearance" of multiple glaciations, only works over small geographic ranges. When you consider that these small fluctuations in the ice sheet cannot account for sand layers spread over large geographic areas, his theory fails. The secular world recognizes these fluctuations (as evidenced by Oard's quotation of them), and their deposition of inter-till layers, and explains them quite well, without the need of resorting to a young earth hypothesis.

Let's take this a step further...let's suppose that Oard is right, and there was only one ice age. Does this prove that the earth is young? Absolutely not! Although there may have been one ice age, the duration of this ice age lasted via various dating methods, for two million years. Add to that other evidences, such as starlight from distant stars, the geologic column, the fossils, (coupled with the failure of the young earth model to explain these features). It is apparent, through millions of scientific observations (data points) that the earth is old. The addition of a few data points which indicate a young earth is overwhelmed by these millions. In essence, YECs are grasping at a few straws...and ignoring the millions of straws in the fifty-foot tall haystack at their feet.

The formulation of the single ice age theory proves one thing...you can make the evidence support anything that you want. If you start with the assumption that the earth is young, you will twist the data to match your assumptions. When it comes to science, secular scientists are much more reliable than young earth creation scientists, because they have no religious assumptions.

Oard goes on to list several other issues, using quotes from secular scientists to make his point. Scientists know all about these issues he is bringing up (as he quotes from them), and he gives no evidence that would cause them to doubt the multiple-glaciation theory, nor the old age of the earth.

Is the Next Ice Age Due Soon? (Page 114)

Oard argues against a book which claims another ice age is coming. Here's my take on the issue.....who cares? If one comes, OK, if not, that's OK too. Scientists don't need another ice age in order to prove their multiple ice age theory.

Were There Ancient Ice Ages? (Page 116)

This three page section argues that ancient till deposits are not glacial in origin, but instead come from submarine landslides. For a thorough rebuttal of this claim, read geologist Dr. Kevin Henke's expose on Oard's theory (Oard is a meteorologist). (http://home.austarnet.com.au/stear/henke_oard1.htm)

¹ <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/news/apr04/0405glacialmap.htm>

² <http://www.solcomhouse.com/icecap.htm>