

Critical Examination of a Video: Noah's Ark

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Introduction

The organization, **Ark Discovery**, has published a video titled "**Noah's Ark**" that can be viewed at the following link: <https://truediscoveries.org/noahs-ark>. This video wants the viewer to judge the evidence for itself and watch and read. It appears to be an improved shorter version of three videos produced in earlier years and is 37 minutes long. It totally ignores the article that I wrote (Collins, 2016), which reviews the material in the older videos and details the scientific evidence as to why the supposed ark site in eastern Turkey near Dogubayazit cannot be the fossilized remains of Noah's ark. See: <http://www.csun.edu/~vcgeo005/Dogu.pdf> article. What is presented below is a discussion of what is given in the new video **Noah's Ark**, bringing my older article up-to-date.

Those people, who are now the leadership of the **Ark Discovery** organization, after the passing of Ron Wyatt, are certainly fine Christians who are dedicated to following Jesus. So, this article is not meant to be critical of their Christian theology or to denigrate any of them personally. However, in spite of their good intentions, none of them (nor Wyatt) apparently had any background in geology, chemistry,

and physics. Consequently, what they promote in this video is full of lies, and Christians should not be telling lies. Truth matters!!!

Ron Wyatt is the main person who is described in this video as being the discoverer of the supposed fossilized remains of Noah's Ark in eastern Turkey. He is an amateur archaeologist whose primary early vocation was being an anesthesiologist nurse. He made 24 trips to the site beginning in 1977. What is presented in this video is a super example of the quote alleged to have been made by Goethe: "We only see what we think we know."

This video, **Noah's Ark**, shows a good chronological history of what happened progressively through time as Ron Wyatt and other people who accompanied him investigated this site in eastern Turkey. The video claims that the Bible says that Noah's ark landed on the "mountains of Ararat" and not on Mt. Ararat and that this volcanic mountain was formed later, and, therefore, Noah's ark could not have landed on Mt. Ararat. It shows progressive findings during discoveries made there by Ron Wyatt and in nearby areas. It shows Hassan Oser, a local villager, who describes how the ark structure first became apparent when an earthquake caused a large mass to slide away from its side to produce a cliff that exposed the side of the ark. But the video presents only interpretations based on what Wyatt and others want to believe and what they think they see without having any real true evidence to support their beliefs.

Problems That Exist in This Video

Nineteen examples are listed below as to the kinds of presumptions, scientific errors, and misinterpretations that the video presents.

(1) Saying that Mt. Ararat formed later than when Noah's ark was built and came to rest in the mountains of Ararat makes the ark younger

than the supposed 6,000 year age of the Earth as claimed by the authors of the video, who would say that Noah's flood would have occurred about 4,500 years ago. But forming Mt. Ararat, which is a volcano 16,854 feet high cannot be produced in 6,000 years (Hill, 2019).

(2) It is said on the video that the symmetric shape of the supposed ark structure with a rounded bow and pointed stern (**Figure 1**) makes it man-made. Lots of erosional landforms exist that have symmetric shapes that are not man-made, such as those shaped by flowing rivers that form braided stream systems or results from flowing landslide (mudflow) masses that erode around resistant bedrock, as in this site in Turkey at the basalt mass in the pointed stern of the supposed ark. Therefore, the symmetric shape does not necessarily make it man-made.



Figure 1. Alleged fossilized remains of Noah's ark with rounded bow (left corner) and pointed stern (distant right center), as seen looking south toward Mt. Judy in the mountains along the Turkey-Iran border. (Photo provided by David Fasold)

(3) Ron Wyatt is shown at a ceremony in June 21, 1987, in which the construction of a Visitor Center was dedicated. At this ceremony were many officials, including a governor and military leaders. The officials were all Turkish Muslims that all spoke using the Turkish language, and Ron Wyatt had no idea what they were saying. These officials were announcing a new Turkish Noah's Ark National Park because they believed that this site was the ark described in the Muslim bible, the Qur'an. They were merely being courteous to Wyatt to allow him to shovel some concrete out of a barrel into the beginning foundation of the Visitor Center because he also had worked on the supposed ark site.

(4) Samples on museum shelves were shown in the Visitor Center of corals, clams, and brachiopods (indicating that the area had some rocks of marine origin) and samples of black rock, identified as supposed petrified wood. I have seen these samples in other videos where close-up images could be observed. In one of them, I could see small rectangular crystals of white plagioclase feldspar which only occurs in basalt and not in petrified wood. No thin sections were ever made of the samples displayed at the Visitor Center. These samples are clearly misidentified.

(5) The video shows a molecular frequency generator being used to reveal underground structures in evenly spaced distances apart and, therefore, being too periodic, the sponsors of the video claim that such cannot be geologic in origin but must have been man-made structures, such as timbers of the ark. Tom Fenner (a geologist) is also shown using a ground radar instrument to reveal vertically spaced places which show strong radar reflection patterns as well as the supposed rounded hull of the ark, and he claimed that this structure, therefore, is man-made. On

that basis Ron Wyatt accepted their interpretations. But these vertical sites likely represent concentrations of tiny magnetite grains that have been washed down by rainwater from above into open, periodically-spaced, vertical joints. Magnetite is iron oxide (density 5 grams per cc), and vertical arranged concentrations of this heavy mineral would produce these strong radar reflections. One such magnetite concentration at a joint intersection produced an angular mass that Wyatt interpreted as an iron bracket that held the walls of the ark together (**Figure 2**). But if that were true, then tens of thousands of such brackets should have been found at this ark site, and only one was found.

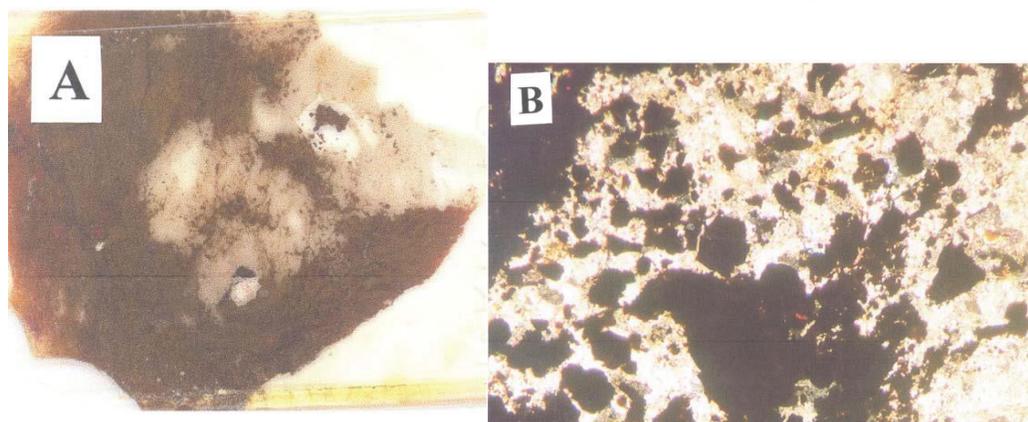


Figure 2A. Thin section cut through half of the only supposed iron bracket found, containing both magnetite and limonite. Top to bottom is 5 centimeters. (Out-of-focus appearance is caused by the presence of a glass cover slip.)

Figure 2B. Image (40x) shows magnetite (black) altered to limonite (brownish black) in a matrix of calcite or siderite (white) and clay (grayish white); image comes from the right part of the thin section shown in 2A. (Images by author)

(6) David Fasold used a metal detector that showed the surface intersections of the locations of the above strong, vertical, radar reflections and the same iron detections of iron-bearing magnetite. Dr.

John Baumgardner in 1985 took half of the supposed bracket (**Figure 2A**) at one of these intersections to his laboratory and found that it contained iron. But this iron is in black magnetite and is not composed of metallic elemental native iron. This magnetite likely occurs in joints (fractures) that trended along the length and width of the ark. In the video such locations were traced out by using yellow ribbons. Such rectangular joint systems are common in sedimentary rock layers, and, therefore, they need not be man-made features of the ark.

(7) Vertical elongate columnar rock masses along the side of the "ark structure" in the cliff (**Figure 1**) facing the Visitor Center were interpreted to be former ribs of the ark. However, these columnar masses are evidence of the side views of the vertical joint systems in item (5) that produce their columnar appearance. The differential weathering and erosion of softer rock adjacent to these joints relative to harder rock away from the joints is what produced the appearance that they represent former vertical ribs of Noah's ark. Not a single sample of any rock collected from these supposed ribs was ever made for thin section study. Moreover, if this cliff face was where vertical wood ribs existed on this side of the ark and if this ark site truly represents symmetric construction of the ark, then these ribs on the side facing the Visitor Center should also consist of the same black rock that is found on the opposite side of the ark, and that is not so. No resistant black rock occurs on the cliff facing the Visitor Center.

(8) The video pans along the sides and lengths of the ark with rocks poking up in resistant linear outcrops. Mostly, these rocks are black basalt dikes that are interpreted as rib timbers or gunnels of the ark. This is true for the basalt dike on the far side of the ark structure away from the Visitor Center where yellowish green epidote can be found coating fracture surfaces in the basalt, and epidote cannot form in

petrified wood (Collins, 2016). The video also shows what is said to be a curved rib that reveals the rounded shape of the hull.

(9) The video shows a small slab of black rock that Wyatt dug out from below the surface that was detected by the ground radar. It was suggested to be like plywood that was glued together in three different layers having different textures. The glue was shown to be a brown glob, said to have oozed out of the plywood on one side. However, no analysis is ever reported of this glue that would demonstrate that it consists of an organic compound. A chemical analysis of the supposed plywood, however, is reported that claims that a large amount of organic carbon occurs in it, and this analysis reported 8.08 % Fe, 8.06 % Al, and 0.71 % C. Another analysis of a supposed wood plank reported 11.54 % Al. In the composition of plagioclase in certain kinds of basalt, its aluminum (Al) content is about 15 %, and if the basalt has 75 % plagioclase with 15 % aluminum in it, the rock would show 11.24 % aluminum; this is very close to the measured value of 11.54 % aluminum. The company doing the chemical analysis said that much of the carbon was organic carbon. The new video reports that the slab of black rock is covered with pitch. Because no thin section was made of that part the slab for which the above analysis was made, there is no way of knowing exactly what was analyzed, and the sample for an analysis was likely cut from the outside of the slab where the supposed pitch occurs and not from its interior. Perhaps the alleged organic carbon came from the supposed pitch that could have been incorporated from a source outside the ark in an old mudflow that carried the basalt slab to where this slab was found in the interior of the supposed ark. To do a proper analysis, a person must know exactly what is being analyzed. Also, it is said in the video that nails could be seen on the surface of the slab. Again, no evidence is provided that a thin section shows that these nails really consist of iron metal. Likely, they are in the imagination of the viewer who sees what he wants to see.

It was reported (elsewhere and not in this video) that Ron Wyatt had a thin section made of this slab and sent it to a botanist who was expert on wood identification, and this expert (not a geologist)

interpreted it to be a species of pine. Thus, Wyatt used this claim to confirm his belief that he had found Noah's ark. He definitely found the wrong expert. The reason for making that assertion is because David Fasold (a former merchant marine ship officer), who accompanied Ron Wyatt many times to the site, supplied me with 12 samples of black rock that Wyatt had identified as being wood in ribs, decks, posts, and walls of the ark. None of these samples that I examined in microscopic thin sections consisted of petrified wood. Eleven were volcanic basalt and one was volcanic andesite. One of these samples contains brown siderite (iron carbonate). Another contains chalcedony, which also can have a brown color. On that basis, the supposed brown globular glue is likely one of these minerals. I volunteered to do a thin section study of this slab of black rock, free of charge, but the offer was never accepted.

(10) Five evenly-spaced black masses on the far side of the interior of the ark away from the Visitor Center near the bow were interpreted as wooden deck-support structures that were man-made on the basis of their even spacing. If so, Wyatt should have taken samples of these masses and did thin section studies to demonstrate that they consisted of petrified wood and not basalt. That was never done.

(11) Black mounds were also shown on the upper surface of the interior on the far side of the ark, and these were interpreted as remnants of deck support posts. David Fasold shows in a sketch in his book (Fasold, 1988) that these mounds contained masses of iron that he detected with his metal detector. They are likely placer deposits of magnetite grains because magnetite is magnetic and the grains attract each other to form aggregate masses. I normally carry a small powerful magnet with me in the field, and had I been there, I could have easily demonstrated that these mounds consisted of magnetite because my magnet would have picked up small grains from the mounds and show that they were not metal fittings that held posts in place.

(12) A metal detector was used by Wyatt to find rusty-looking flaky crusts of supposed metallic iron on the rock surfaces of the cliff facing the Visitor Center, and these crusts Wyatt suggested were parts of iron metal fittings and washers that held the timbers in the ark in place. However, black magnetite grains will rust to form limonite, which is hydrated iron oxide that has a yellow-brown color of rust. On that basis, the crusty surfaces on the cliff face are where magnetite grains were washed down from above and concentrated locally in a vertical joint that was exposed on one side of a joint surface (now existing as the cliff face (**Figure 1**), as in item (5) above. As reported by Hassan Oser above, an earthquake that caused a large mass of rock to slide away from such a joint surface toward the Visitor Center exposed this cliff as one side of a joint surface that faces the Visitor Center.

(13) A rock with a supposed washer and a smashed rivet was shown in the video (**Figure 3**). If this washer and rivet were truly composed of metallic iron, then the rivet should consist of a metal rod that penetrated vertically below the surface into the lower part of the rock. This penetration could have been verified by using a diamond saw to cut through the center of the rivet down through the rock mass to see if a rod existed there. The saw cut was never done. Moreover, the supposed metal washer is so thin that it would have no physical strength to hold a heavy wall in place. Furthermore, its thinness allows tiny white rectangular crystals of plagioclase feldspar to be seen beneath its surface that occur in basalt and not in petrified wood.



Figure 3. Photo of supposed iron washer with central mashed rivet but which, in reality, is a coating of cemented magnetite grains altered partly to limonite. Tiny rectangular white plagioclase crystals that occur in basalt can be seen through the supposed washer. Image published by Wyatt Archaeological Museum; see

<https://wyattmuseum.com/a-rivet-discovered/2011-107#>

(14) The video shows at least two supposed remnants of crescent-shaped metal fittings, supposed former washers, that were chemically analyzed. Both were found to contain 8 percent aluminum (Al) and 1.3 percent titanium (Ti), and one was found with 3.8 percent magnesium (Mg) and also, not mentioned, the dominant iron (Fe) content. One metal fitting was said to contain a remnant rivet. No thin section or chemical analyses of this supposed rivet were ever obtained, so these assertions are purely conjecture on the basis that the sponsors of the video believe their iron metal identifications to be true. The company that did the chemical analyses normally does analyses as percentages of elements and not as oxides because this company generally does work for customers who want to know if their samples are polluted, for example, with selenium (Se) and arsenic (As) as poisons. The company

would have reported analyses of these contaminants as % Se and % As and not as % SeO₂ and % As₂O₃. Therefore, Wyatt interpreted that the % Al, % Ti, % Mg, and % Fe in these washers contained elemental native metals that were combined in alloys. Other companies, who normally do analyses of rocks for geologists, do their analyses as oxides. At any rate, Wyatt, not knowing any chemistry and how chemical analyses are done for rock samples, made a false assumption that the elemental analyses represented native metals and made a total error in interpretation that he had found metal alloys forged by Noah. Moreover, no thin sections were ever made of the samples that were analyzed. So, Wyatt had no idea what he had analyzed. If he had made thin sections, he would have realized that the Fe, Ti, and Mg were metal ions in titaniferous magnetite that commonly occurs in basalt, and that the Al was in clay minerals that were trapped between the magnetite grains and helped to cement the grains in place.

(15) Not shown in the video were chemical analyses of the supposed petrified wood and these analyses showed ratios of iron, titanium, magnesium, aluminum, and calcium oxides that are commonly found in basalt and is partly described in item (9). Wyatt assumed that these metals were dissolved and washed into the ark structure from overlying masses of volcanic ash to make the petrified wood contain these elements, but aluminum (Al) is not soluble in rainwater (Collins, 2016).

(16) An alleged cat hair and petrified dung were found when (in 1991) Wyatt drilled into the side of the ark structure and found them there. Because the layers of rock in the ark are sedimentary in origin, it is quite possible that a cat hair or hair from some hairy mammal living at the time was deposited in the sediment where Wyatt did his drilling, but that does not necessarily make it true that the hair came from a cat in

Noah's ark or an animal that left dung in the ark. Also, a fossilized antler was shown in the video which was alleged to be the remnant of animal that once was carried by Noah's ark. But, that can also only be speculation to fit the model that viewers want to believe.

(17) Away from the "ark-shaped structure" near Kazan (meaning village of 8) were found supposed large anchor stones with circular holes at the top (5 inches in diameter on one side and 7 inches on the other side, and these stones had crosses engraved on them (**Figure 4**).

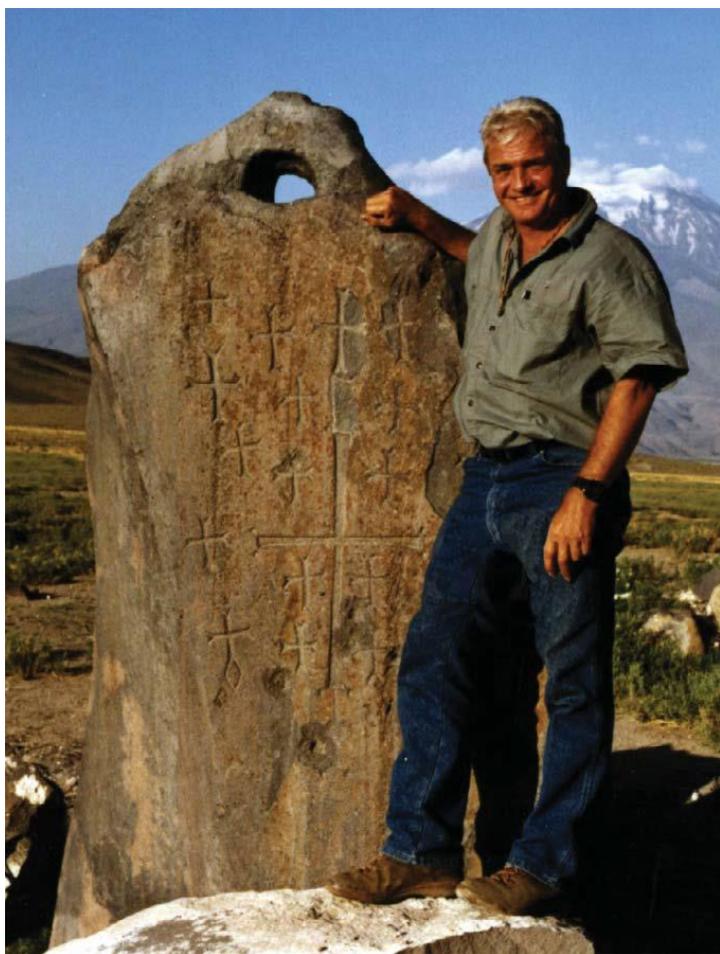


Figure 4. David Fasold standing beside an anchor stone with crosses on its face. (Wikipedia is the source of the image; search David Fasold.)

I made a thin section from one of these stones that David Fasold gave me, and it was composed of anorthosite which is a kind of rock that occurs in mantle rocks (Collins, 2016). A geologic map of this part of Turkey shows that such mantle rocks occur there, and none is found in Mesopotamia where the ark was likely built. So, how did Noah get masses of anorthosite (weighing 4 to 10 tons) to his ark in Mesopotamia 500 miles away? The anorthosite masses were likely early memorial stones of Christians living in the area, and these stones must have been hauled from a local source, using ropes through the holes to pull them over slick winter snow and ice or by pulling them over rolling logs. The video makes a point that a large cross represented Noah, a slightly smaller one was his wife, and the three others were his sons. Other stones had 8 crosses (supposedly for Noah, his wife, three sons and their wives). One had 7 and not mentioned was one with 23 crosses. Thus, the video authors make up any story they wish to make each anchor stone with their crosses fit any story they want to believe.

(18) In another place near Kazan, a large rock was shown that when hit with a hand-held rock sounded hollow, and it had irregular ripples on its surface that were interpreted to be remnants of former tree bark on gopher wood that covered the outside of the ark (**Figure 5**).

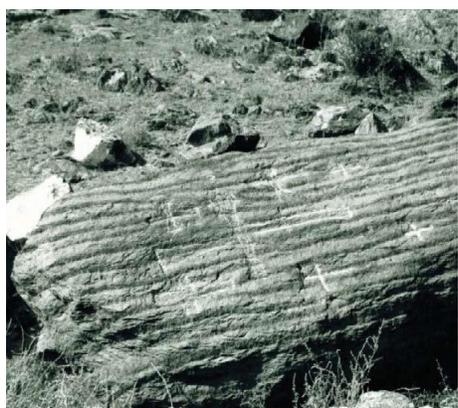


Figure 5. Crumpled rock surface of peridotite said to be from bark of gopher wood or reeds in Noah's ark. (David Fasold; image source)

Fasold gave me a sample of this rock, and I found that it is a metamorphosed piece of pyroxene rock (peridotite) in which the layering has been crumpled, and such a rock also comes from mantle rocks as in item (17). Most rocks when hit with a hammer make a dull thud sound, but a rock that is well crystallized, not altered by weathering, and which contains mineral grains that are bound strongly to each other, will ring like a bell and sound hollow. The people examining the rock in the video thought they could see remnants of 7 crosses, but this is likely because they were looking for what they wanted to believe were there. But this rock is definitely not petrified gopher wood, having bark on its surface.

(19) In the latter part of the video, a place was found that was said to be Noah's house on the basis of a photo taken by Ron Wyatt in 1977 of remnants of rock piles in the shape of walls in a rectangular orientation. Other linear rows of rock walls were said to line fields to enclose animals. This suggestion of the rectangular oriented rock walls, as being Noah's house, is purely speculation. There are no postal signs on these rocks that say Noah and his family lived there. Moreover, nearby is a large, naturally-rounded, cubic-shaped, fractured boulder (10 feet in diameter) that was said to be an altar. That is more speculation to fit what viewers want to believe. Generally, an altar is something that is constructed and not just an isolated large naturally formed boulder.

Conclusion

On the basis of what I have listed above, the authors of the **Ark Discovery (Noah's Ark)** video do not have any valid evidence to support the story that they present to their audience. But their audience will believe everything that they say because it sounds so convincing and their audience will not know that they have not done a proper scientific study. But truth matters, and Christians should not be telling

lies even though they are sincere in their beliefs that they are not doing so.

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