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## The Ice Age

### Key Themes

- God upholds His creation.
- God's Word must be the absolute authority.

### Key Passages

- Genesis 8:20–22; Romans 1:20

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the connection between the Flood and the Ice Age.
- Recognize God's attributes displayed in the uniformity of His creation.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

Write on the board, "How many ice ages have there been?"  
Have students use bookmarks to mark Genesis 8:20–22 and Romans 1:20 in their Bibles.



### Studying God's Word

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Although the Bible does not directly speak of it, the physical evidence on the surface of the earth supports a period of time when ice covered a large portion of the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. The global Flood of Noah's day would have created the proper conditions for the Ice Age. We can apply our God-given reason to develop scientific explanations for how the evidence can be understood.

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.



### Activity: Biblical Ice Age Model

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Students will view segments of a video lecture describing portions of the biblical model for the Ice Age.

- Preview "The Ice Age" video clip (28 mins) to prepare for the lesson.
- DVD player and TV or computer



## Prepare to Share

### SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

It has often been said that the Bible is not a science textbook. That is true in the sense that the Bible does not describe scientific details, such as that of genetic inheritance. However, the Bible is not silent on topics of scientific interest. One area that seems to get little attention in Scripture is the occurrence of an ice age. In fact, very little in the Bible would directly connect to the idea of an ice age. But this doesn't mean that an ice age did not occur or that it is an unbiblical idea.

As we try to develop scientific descriptions to explain the physical evidence around us, we must always remember that the Bible must be the authority that we check everything against. The Flood provides a major historical point that we must first understand before forming any ideas about the occurrence of an ice age. Since the Flood was global, it would have removed the evidence for any ice age that occurred before the Flood. So, as we develop models to explain the evidence, they should explain the Ice Age after the Flood, since the earth contains abundant evidence for an Ice Age. (As a significant event, we capitalize Ice Age to differentiate it from the general idea of ice ages.)

After the Flood, God promised Noah and all of his descendants that the world they lived in would never be completely flooded again. In that same passage, God also promised that He would continue to uphold the earth in a relatively constant manner. The seasons, day and night, and cycles of hot and cold would continue under God's control until the end (Genesis 8:20–22).

If you search for the word *ice* in your concordance, you will find only three references, all in the book of Job (Job 6:16, 37:10, 38:29 NKJV). Job lived about 200 years after the Flood, and the references to the freezing of broad waters could refer to the Ice Age. In general, we wouldn't expect to hear a lot about major snow storms in the Bible since it was written primarily within a subtropical climate. Snow was certainly known to the biblical writers, and it often gets used in Scripture as a metaphor for pure whiteness or purity. One of the most striking passages comes as God tells Isaiah that his sins

of scarlet can be made as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18). What a wonderful promise we have through Christ and the gospel.

### APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

From a secular perspective, there have been many ice ages spanning millions of years. The most recent reached its maximum about 20,000 years ago, and the small ice sheets and pockets of glaciers are the remnants of that period.

From a biblical perspective, there is no reason to doubt that much of the earth was covered in ice sheets for a period of time. The physical evidence is consistent with a recent time where the advancing ice sheets carved the earth's surface, leaving moraine valleys, kettle lakes, and other features characteristic of glaciation.

The events of the Flood can explain the Ice Age in a way that no other model from secular or biblical scientists can match. As the fountains of the great deep broke open, they would have released lava and hot water into the ocean. Clouds and ash would have filled the atmosphere as the continents shifted. The atmosphere would have been cooled as sunlight was reflected from the earth, leading to a cooler climate over the continents.

This mixture of warm oceans with increased evaporation and cool climates caused massive amounts of snow to fall. The snow continued to accumulate into ice sheets that covered large portions of North America, Europe, and Asia in the Northern Hemisphere. Computer simulations of the conditions provided by the Flood support these ideas and are superior to models based on secular assumptions. As the oceans cooled and the atmosphere cleared, the snow decreased. The Ice Age reached its maximum approximately 500 years after the Flood and melted significantly within the next 200 years.

Unlike the frozen tundra that now exists in much of Siberia, Alaska, and Canada, these areas once supported communities of mammoths, giant beavers, antelope, and grasses. As the Ice Age ended and the climate shifted, giant storms covered some mam-

moths in sediments and trapped others on islands. The food supply decreased, and the animals either moved south or died of starvation. Today, we find their remains buried in the permafrost layer—some have been amazingly well preserved.

In terms of global warming, the earth has been warming gradually ever since the peak of the Ice Age (glacial maximum). Those temperatures have surely fluctuated, including the Little Ice Age from 1300 to 1880, but temperatures generally are on the rise. But this doesn't mean that man is causing the warming or that the rise is a bad thing. God promised to maintain the earth through cycles of hot and cold, day and night, and we can trust that promise (Genesis 8:20–22). However, we do not have cause to exploit the earth for our selfish reasons; rather, we are to act as stewards of God's good gifts to us.

As creation scientists continue to study these issues, they will refine models and resolve problems that exist today. Not unlike the secular models, much more research is needed and many more questions remain to be answered. However, when we use the Bible as the starting point for looking at the evidence, we can trust that we can better understand how God has worked in His creation.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The secular view of multiple ice ages happening over millions of years does not make sense in light of the earth's biblical history. Even the most recent ice age would have occurred many thousands of years before God created the universe. This gives us a solid reason for rejecting such an interpretation of history. As we survey the biblical timeline, the Flood occurred about 4,300 years ago, so the Ice Age must have occurred more recently than that.

This also corresponds to the writing of the book of Job, in which we see references to ice and snow, specifically the freezing of broad stretches of water. The current models show the Ice Age peaking within a few

hundred years after the Flood's end. This places the Ice Age during the time of the dispersion from Babel.

As people were spreading to the north, they would have encountered ice sheets encroaching into Europe and Asia. Many of the cave-dwelling cultures would have lived in these areas and hunted animals like mammoths, mastodons, woolly rhinos, giant deer, and others that are often depicted on the walls of the caves people used as shelter.

Another opportunity that resulted from the Ice Age was the creation of land bridges. As the water evaporated from the oceans, areas like the Bering Strait would have been passable. As people moved across Asia, they would have been able to travel to Alaska over dry land. Similarly, people could have passed from Indonesia into Australia aboard boats traveling relatively short distances.

Another recent area of research is the existence of large cities that have been found underwater off of the coast. If the water level had been lower, cities built along the coast during the period of the Ice Age would have been flooded as the ice sheets melted and the sea level rose. Regardless of what evidence we uncover, we must always strive to honor God and His Word as we seek to understand the world we live in and the past events that have shaped it.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Father, I come before you recognizing that you are the author of this planet's creation and every moment of its history. Thank you for your faithfulness in keeping all of the promises you make. Help me to find comfort in your sovereign control, to trust in you alone, and to use your Word to understand this world. Help me to communicate your attributes to the students so that they will understand you better.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





## Review

In last week's lesson, we examined Abraham's faith and obedience as he offered up Isaac, the son of the promise he had received. Abraham fully trusted God's promises, and this allowed him to obey God knowing that His work would be accomplished.

We also looked at how Isaac and the account of his sacrifice had many striking parallels to what happened to Christ.

? **Who can recall some of those shadows of the gospel in Isaac's account?** *Isaac was the son of the promise just as Jesus was; Isaac was the only begotten son just as Christ was; Isaac carried the wood just as Jesus carried the Cross; both were offered as a sacrificial lamb to God; Jesus was the substitute for our sins just as the ram was a substitute for Isaac; the father offered the sacrifice; both were offered on Mount Moriah.*

It is amazing to stop and consider the amazing tapestry that God weaves together through time—His faithfulness and sovereignty are so clear. As we continue through the Old Testament, we will continue to connect it to the New Testament writings so that we understand

how Christ is present throughout the entirety of Scripture and history.

Today's lesson will be a bit different. We are using today's lesson to focus on an idea that isn't presented clearly in Scripture. If you think back, we talked about how scientists who trust the Bible developed a model to explain how the continents might have split during the Flood. Today, we are going to talk about another scientific model that deals with the Ice Age.

As we think about these ideas, it is so important to remember that we must begin thinking from the truths that Scripture reveals. If any of our scientific models run contrary to what Scripture clearly teaches, we need to reexamine our models, not Scripture.

As we explore a biblical explanation for the Ice Age, we need to keep in mind that God has promised to uphold His creation. We must also remember that we must test everything against Scripture and hold fast to what is true (1 Thessalonians 5:21).



➤ Write on the board, "How many ice ages have there been?"

➤ Have students use bookmarks to mark Genesis 8:20–22 and Romans 1:20 in their Bibles.



## Studying God's Word

### READ THE WORD

This is a passage that we have looked at before, but we are going to review part of it today to have this promise from God fresh in our minds. Let's read Genesis 8:20–22 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

### EXAMINE THE WORD

Now that we have read the text, let's take some time to observe what it is saying to us. This process is an important part of understanding what God's Word is telling us.

Genesis 8:20–22

## Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.

- ? **What is the context (biblical, historical, geographical, chronological) of the passage?** *Only eight people remained on earth after the Flood; God was in essence "restarting" His creation and gave Noah and his descendants the mandate to be fruitful and fill the earth. This event took place about 2349 BC. Refer to the Seven C's Timeline to establish the historical context.*
- ? **Why was Noah offering a sacrifice to the Lord?** *Noah's sacrifice was in response to God preserving him and his family during the Flood.*
- ? **How did God view Noah's sacrifice?** *He considered it a soothing aroma.*
- ? **What do we learn about the condition of the heart of man?** *The imagination of his heart is evil from youth.*
- ? **What did God promise in verse 21?** *To never destroy every living thing with a Flood.*
- ? **How did God confirm the promise in verse 22?** *He described how He would uphold the creation.*
- ? **What cycles are described in verse 22?** *Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night.*
- ? **When will these cycles end?** *They will remain in effect while the earth exists.*
- ? **What does the passage tell us about God?** *God has promised to uphold His creation in an orderly manner despite mankind's constant depravity.*

## Discover the Truth

This passage, along with many others, reminds us that God has designed the universe we live in to function according to certain laws and patterns. This shows us a glimpse of His character through His creation. Just as Romans 1:20 tells us that God's attributes are revealed in what He has made, we see several attributes in the way God sustains the created order.

- ? **From the list on the Attributes of God poster, which attributes can we see in the orderliness of creation?** *Immutability as the laws are constant; sovereignty as He is in control of all things; faithfulness as He continues to do as He has promised.*

Knowing that God upholds the universe in an orderly way is what gives us confidence that we can study things in a scientific manner. As we look at the uniformity in God's creation, science becomes reasonable. Apart from God, there is no reason to think that the universe should behave in an orderly manner.

To say that we believe in uniformity in God's creation does not mean that we believe in uniformitarianism, which is the idea that the processes we see today have been constant in the past. We understand that the Flood was a global event that had a huge impact on the earth.

And we must consider the Flood, and other factors described in Scripture, as we think about the Ice Age.



- Review the promises of God often to be reminded of His faithfulness.

IMMUTABLE  
SOVEREIGN  
FAITHFUL

*(Refer to Attributes poster)*

**Uniformity:**  
God's creation follows laws that allow us to perform scientific inquiry



# Biblical Ice Age Model

## MATERIALS

- “The Ice Age” video clip on the Resource DVD-ROM
- TV and DVD player or computer

## INSTRUCTIONS

Rather than me teaching about the Ice Age, today we are going to watch some video segments by an expert, which describe a biblical view of the Ice Age. Keep in mind that God has given us the ability to reason and examine the world we live in. Science, rightly done, should seek to glorify the Creator of the universe, not exalt the creature.

Today’s video is part of a lecture given by Michael Oard, a meteorologist and researcher who has studied the idea of an Ice Age from a biblical and scientific perspective. You will hear some of the basic information about a scientific model to explain how the Flood can help us

understand the Ice Age. What we will be watching today is excerpted from a longer lecture, so the arguments are much more involved than what we will see here. There is space in your Student Guides to take notes as you watch.

*Play the video for the class. The video is about 28 minutes, so you may need to stop it early in time to discuss the ideas.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

So, that is a brief explanation of some of the support, both biblical and scientific, of an Ice Age occurring after the Flood. There are certainly many questions that remain unanswered and more work to be done, but the same is the case for secular models of multiple ice ages. It seems clear from the evidence we have, viewed in light of Scripture, that the Ice Age must have been a post-Flood event that lasted about 700 years.



# Applying God’s Word

## WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

The cycles of nature, as God described them to Noah, are part of the earth we live on. We can trust that they will not change because God has made that promise. We also see God’s character—His immutability, sovereignty, and faithfulness—in the way He upholds His creation.

Because of this, we have reason to trust that our scientific endeavors can help us understand the truth, but only in light of what is clearly revealed in Scripture. From a secular viewpoint, there is no foundational

reason to trust that the future should be like the past or that “nature” should behave the same today as it did yesterday. Yet secular scientists trust science to give them the answers they are seeking and wrongly apply the idea that the present is the key to the past (uniformitarianism) to their interpretation.

## GOD’S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? It might be a little hard to think about this topic from the perspective of the gospel, but the Ice Age is a part of history. How might the Ice Age be a part of discussions about the truth of the gospel? *There are many topics that are intellectual stumbling blocks to people even listening to the truths of the Bible. In that sense, answering questions about the existence of an Ice Age might be helpful in certain situations. As we tell people that the Bible is the starting point for thinking about everything, we should be willing to live and think that way.*
- ? Is it important for each of you to know the details and inner workings of the latest Ice Age models as you seek to share the gospel with others? *No! As the body of Christ, there are certain individuals who can be trained on and focused on such topics, but not everyone needs to know everything. However, being able to respond to basic questions is part of defending the faith and giving a reason for the hope we have. Hopefully, the training you are getting from this Sunday school class will be part of the equipping of the saints (Ephesians 4:11–13).*
- ? How could you respond to someone who asks you a question about the Ice Age, or any other topic, that you are not able to answer? *There is no shame in not knowing the answer to a question, especially a specific question on a specific topic. Be humble and admit you do not know the answer. Then, be willing to find an answer and report back to the person asking the questions. This will also show them that you are sincere and desire to learn and answer their questions. You can find answers to many difficult questions on the Answers in Genesis website.*
- ? Many people are afraid of the effects of global warming. How does Genesis 8:20–22 give you assurance of the future? *God is faithful to His promises and He has promised to maintain the earth.*
- ? How does understanding that God is faithful give you assurance as His child? *God can be trusted to fulfill all He has promised, so we can take great comfort in knowing and trusting Him.*
- ? How can you use God’s creation to offer Him praise for His attributes? *While taking a walk and watching the animals in the woods, watching the sunset, or simply watching the clouds move across the sky, you can see God’s power demonstrated and His design present in all of creation. Thanking Him for upholding His creation should be easy in light of the amazing world around us.*





## MEMORY VERSE

**Acts 17:26–27** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.



## GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for giving us such an amazing creation to live in.
- Praise God for His sovereignty, faithfulness, and immutability.
- Ask God to help each person understand Him more.