

Frozen In Time – Book Review Chapter 6 – The Multiplications of Ice Age Theories



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Oard explains that there are two basic sets of theories concerning what causes an ice age. One is extraterrestrial, the other terrestrial.

Extraterrestrial Theories (Page 61)

Theories of this sort hinge on a decrease in the amount of solar heat upon the earth. True, we do not have much information on the history of the solar energy being felt on earth. The solar constant, which Oard says is assumed to be reliable, does vary. For instance, average global temperature in recent recorded history shows an increase of almost 0.7 of a degree from 1861 to 1991.¹ If this warming trend has occurred since the end of the last ice age, 11,000 years ago, then at this rate, we are 59 degrees warmer than we were 11,000 years ago. This possibility lends much credence to this theory...the only thing we are missing is observational evidence for temperatures of the last 11,000 years, which is next to impossible to come by. Studies of tree rings are the best method we have now, and they show a 0.2% to 0.6% variance in the sun over many centuries.² Oard says that changes in the solar constant have been minimal (referring to changes due to sunspot activity). Over time, however, it may well be a different story. Now, you have “the rest of the story.”

Terrestrial Theories (Page 62)

The first theory mentioned here is a decrease in carbon dioxide. While it may have a role to play in the overall causes of an ice age, it is probably not the main catalyst, as Mr. Oard points out.

Another idea is that higher altitudes mean colder temperatures. He throws this out without references, and I've seen no claims that the land was higher, and caused the colder temperatures of the ice ages.

The next theory mentioned is that the Arctic melted, providing the moisture for increased snowfall over Canada and Eurasia. I agree with Oard on this one.

Next, volcanoes are mentioned, as the ash would block the sunshine. This is shot down because of the duration of the ice ages, some of which last 100,000 years. You would need a very long period of volcanic eruptions to account for this. Again I agree with Oard.

The West Antarctic theory is also flawed, as Oard points out. Next, he mentions that simple climatic fluctuations are thought to possibly cause the ice ages. He says the plausibility of this option is open to serious questions...and then he fails to list any

challenges to this theory! How can a reader decide without the information? However, you must understand the nature of the young earth reader. In their sub-culture, they will accept as truth anything from an authority figure, such as a pastor, young earth scientist, author, etc. There is no need to examine the information further, if Mr. Oard says it, then its true.

Summary (Page 64)

The lack of a universally agreed upon theory for the cause of the Ice Age does not mean that all the theories are wrong. Sure, they have flaws (which Oard calls “fatal”...but are they?). In the next chapter, Oard starts to explain his own theory. The lack of a universally accepted theory provides no proof of his theory...if there were 60 theories, there are now 61...since his cannot be proven also (but it has even more fatal flaws than the other 60 theories).

In the end, he picks out one of the most popular theories and attacks it (Page 65-68). One prominent claim is that a desired date is determined, and then the data is tweaked to match that desired date (just like young earth creationism!). I don't know if this is true in this case. Young earth creationists have had a bad habit of claiming that scientists tweak the data, but most of these claims have turned out to be false.

I suspect that no one theory has the answers, but a combination of factors probably contributes to causing an ice age.

¹ <http://www.agu.org/history/sv/temperature/index.shtml>

² http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/17jan_solcon.htm