

Is this wolf pup 57,000 years old?

When I was in my early teens, I remember visiting Lake Michigan, 30 minutes from where I grew up in Wisconsin (and still live).

As I stood on the shore watching the waves crashing in, I saw a large rock, picked it up and held it high over my head. I then slammed it down on top of another flat rock lying on the sand, breaking it in two.



“Wow, what an amazing story! You should submit that to Readers Digest! I wonder who Hollywood will get to play you when they turn it into a movie?” Hold on; there’s a point to me sharing this seemingly underwhelming event.

What made this entire unextraordinary incident memorable was what was going on in my mind at the time. I thought to myself, “Wow! That rock sat there for millions of years, and I came along just now and smashed it into pieces!” There was something powerful about that thought; millions of years of history shattered by my actions. For those of you who don’t know my background, I was raised in a Christian home and attended a very solid, non-denominational Bible church. I believed everything I was taught about God, creation, Jesus, etc. However, I also attended the local public school where they taught me the Earth was billions of years old and most of the Earth’s rocks were millions of years old.

I had not spent any time contrasting or comparing the biblical view of history with the secular view. I don’t remember my church addressing this either, although I am willing to concede there just might have been a Sunday or two during my youth when I didn’t pay close attention to absolutely everything that was taught. But only a Sunday or two, of course!

That leads to this month’s question. In December 2020 an article appeared in Science News entitled, “Ancient wolf pup mummy in Yukon permafrost from 57,000 years ago.” The article stated it was “the most complete wolf mummy that’s ever been found,” and went on to say it is basically 100% intact, except for the eyes.



So, 57,000 years old. What do you do with that? Scientific articles are replete with claims of tens of thousands of years, millions, and billions. (“Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!”) Many Christians have long ago largely accepted the general conclusions of the secular scientific community, so for them, things like this are never really an issue. For most other Christians, it is an issue, but they don’t know what to make of it, so they tend to go on their way, not wanting to think about it any deeper, or worse, get into a discussion with someone about the apparent dilemma this creates with the straight-forward creation account found in Genesis 1-2.

Question of the Month

This is a brief article, so I can only highlight a few issues related to this discovery, but I cannot flesh each of them out.

1. A problem with the age.

How do they know it is 57,000 years old? According to an article in New Scientist magazine, “The researchers used DNA analysis and carbon dating to determine that the pup lived around 57,000 years ago, during the Last Glacial Period.” I have discussed carbon-14 dating in a previous article and a number of our resources, including [my book](#), so I won’t go into detail here other than to say that this dating method can be accurate in limited situations. However, it is fraught with problems and often gives over-inflated dates, extending far beyond any biblical timeframe. Researchers also used DNA analysis. The problem is that their DNA analysis is based on the assumption that molecules-to-man evolution is true, and the time scales are accurate. So, the dates they get will tend to line up with their expectations because they are a built-in feature.

2. The preservation problem.

This wolf pup is exceptionally well-preserved. The only way to get preservation (and in this case, original mummified material not replaced by minerals) is to bury the creature rapidly, so there’s no time for decay or for predators to scavenge. In the middle of an ice age, how do you bury something quickly when the ground is supposedly frozen? In this case, researchers are guessing that maybe the den collapsed but didn’t bury the mother or sibling pups. No evidence; it’s just a guess. And then there’s the diet issue. What diet issue? They were able to tell what the wolf pup ate... mainly salmon. But that’s harder to imagine during an ice age, when most other carnivores are eating bison or musk oxen.

The data are much better understood within a biblical scenario in which the Genesis flood (roughly 4,500 years ago) caused an ice age. Some post-flood animals got buried rapidly by local dust storms, providing some preservation, which was greatly enhanced by subsequent freezing.

It is comforting to know that while secular scientists often have to jump through mental gymnastic hoops to make sense of what they are discovering, the straight-forward reading of Scripture makes the best sense!

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to [contact us](#)!