Early Earth Ready for Life

Written by Administrator Friday, 11 January 2013 00:09 -

Early Earth ready for life, according to articles in ScienceNOW, 6 May 2005 and *New Scientist*, 14 May 2005, p41. According to current theories the earth is believed to have formed as a hot molten blob under constant bombardment by meteorites. The surface of the early earth is believed to have been so hot and harsh that the period from 4.6 to 3.8 billion years ago is called the Hadean period, as in "Hades" - literally "Hell on Earth." Such hellish conditions would not have allowed any liquid water or atmosphere to exist so life could not have arisen until it cooled down considerably.

However, zircons from rocks in the Jack Hills in Western Australian, believed to be some of the oldest rocks on earth, provide evidence that the early earth wasn't such a hostile place. In 1999 scientists from Wisconsin State University and University of California, Los Angeles found that the zircons had relatively high proportions of oxygen 18 and contained inclusions of mica, quartz and feldspar - all of which indicate the zircons were formed from water soaked sedimentary rocks. If they were, the early earth must have had a crust, oceans and an atmosphere. This view of the early earth has been confirmed by a new study of the zircons by geochemists Bruce Watson of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York and Mark Harrison of the Australian National University, who studied titanium atoms in the zircons.

The researchers found levels of titanium in the zircons that could only have occur if they were formed in "water saturated sediments packed and heated until they formed rock." Altogether, these results indicate that "far from being a 'magma ocean' with no atmosphere, the earth 4.4 billion years ago was solid, cool and wet. And if there was liquid water then there had to be a thick atmosphere: otherwise the water would have boiled off. Hell on Earth was suddenly looking rather balmy." The New Scientist article concludes with: "And that has important implications for another highly charged scientific debate; when did life begin? ... We'll never know for sure. But thanks to the ancient zircons of the Jack Hills, we now know that, close to the dawn of creation, the planet was ready for life."

Editorial Comment: The most significant finding in these studies is that they indicate the early earth was covered with water - just as Genesis and the Apostle Peter clearly state (See Genesis 1:2 and 2 Peter 3:5). Genesis and Peter tell us the world has been completely covered by water twice: at creation and during Noah's flood. After both of these there was massive uplift of land from the water and much sediment would have been washed off the newly forming land masses, giving rise to plenty of "water saturated sediments" (see Psalm 104).

Some readers of our newsletter may have noticed we recently reported claims that that the

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early earth's oceans were too hot and salty for life - the opposite of this week's claim. This provides a useful lesson: the stories presented by scientists about the formation of the earth and the origin of life are not established facts, but 'hotly' debated theories that keep changing while Genesis stays the same. (Ref. geochemistry, earth, water)