

50:2; Nahum 1:4). These references show us that the drying up of seas is at least a possible or likely event in the mind of God.

#### The More Recent Sediments Above the Evaporite Beds

During the thirteenth cruise, test holes were drilled at 14 different sites in the Mediterranean Sea, as shown in Figure 34. In those test holes which were drilled in the parts well out to sea, away from land masses, the thickness of the sediments above the evaporite layers ranged from approximately 250 to 1,100 feet. At the sites where the greater thicknesses lay, there were often rather thick layers which contained considerable amounts of land-derived sands and silt, in between layers of finer, ocean-formed oozes. The layers of land-derived materials show that there were periods when moderately strong water currents brought sediments out to sea. However, the presence of layers of pure ocean-formed oozes at some sites demonstrates that there were very long periods when tranquil seas prevailed, with no appreciable water currents to interfere with the settling out of very minute pelagic particles.<sup>44</sup>

At some of the drilling sites there were layers of these pelagic oozes which were made up of 70 to 80% Foraminifera shells and coccoliths (chalk-forming microfossils), with a correspondingly high content of calcium carbonate. The sedimentary column found at Site 125, in the Ionian basin, southwest of Crete, is of particular significance in this respect. At this location, the ocean floor has a gentle rise in it, and is far enough from land masses so that the sediments which accumulated above the evaporite beds are almost purely pelagic in nature, being composed mainly of the skeletons of minute carbonate-producing organisms. The thickness of this deposit of oceanic sediment was found to be approximately 250 feet, and its fossil Foraminifera and coccolith plates are very abundant and well preserved. The upper 105 feet of this column is of the Recent and Pleistocene Epochs, and the lower 145 feet (down to the evaporite beds) is Pliocene.<sup>45</sup>

The nature of the pelagic oozes at Site 125 also provides a useful source of information concerning the changes of climate and local environment during the long period of sediment accumulation. Climatic cycles reflecting important temperature changes, and changes in the degree of stagnation at the bottom in deep water, can be readily detected by observing the kinds of organisms which thrived, or did not thrive, at various levels in the column. The periods of stagnation to which we refer here are not those characterized by rapid increase of salinity due to excessive evaporation, but were long intervals of time during which the water in the deep sea bottom accumulated excessive amounts of organic matter, due to a lack of mixing and a consequent lack of oxygen. The layers which show this characteristic serve to assure us even further that the oozes at this site accumulated in exceedingly calm and tranquil water.<sup>46</sup>

One can gain some idea of the minimum time required for accumulating the 250 feet of pelagic oozes at this site by using the