

Creation and the Fossil Record

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Emil Silvestru lays out two potential explanations for the development of life on earth, Darwinian evolution and biblical creation. Both of these models carry with them certain expectations about what should be found in the fossil record if the particular theory is true. After analyzing each proposal in detail, however, it becomes clear that the evidence at hand strongly favors the creation account, and repeatedly contradicts an evolutionary history of life.

As Silvestru explains, if life developed through evolutionary processes, “the sediments should contain a good record of that evolution in the number and form of fossils, especially *transitional fossils* linking consecutive evolutionary stages.”¹ The allegedly older layers should contain simpler life forms, with the types of animals steadily and gradually becoming more complex as we ascend through the sedimentary layers. Land animals should be found buried with other land animals, and the same would be true with marine life.

However, if the biblical creation is correct, specifically including the Noahdic flood, we would expect different findings. To name a few:

creatures should appear suddenly, generally with no precursors, exist for a given time and disappear without descendants, if not found alive today. ... All major taxa ... should be present immediately before the Flood, existing as basic *kinds*, which would then re-radiate into many varieties (*species*) after the Flood. ... organisms that live in one habitat should occasionally be found fossilized with organisms from a totally different habitat as a result of catastrophic flow and burial. ... There should be few to no fossils of transitional forms.²

Bearing these expectations in mind, the creation model consistently explains the available evidence whereas the evolutionary model does not.

¹ Emil Silvestru, “The Fossil Record,” in *Evolution’s Achilles Heel*, ed. Robert Carter (Powder Springs, GA: Creation Book Publishers, 2015), 115.

² *Ibid.*, 116.

First, the fossil record does not support the slow, gradual progression that the evolutionary model demands. According to evolutionists, the earth is 4.54 billion years old. The first prokaryotic cells allegedly emerged 3.6 billion years ago. However, multicellular life did not arrive on the scene until approximately 1 billion years ago, meaning for the first 3.54 billion years, evolution supposedly only developed the most basic forms of multi-cellular life.³ As Stephen C. Meyer details,

For over 3 billion years, the living world included little more than one-celled organisms such as bacteria and algae. Then, beginning in the late Ediacaran period (about 555-570 million years ago), the first complex multicellular organisms appeared in the rock strata ... This represented a large increase in complexity. ... Then 40 million years later, the Cambrian explosion occurred. Suddenly the oceans swarmed with animals such as trilobites and anomalocaridids that probably required fifty or more cell types – an even greater jump in complexity.⁴

After moving at an almost unspeakably slow rate for billions of years, the evolutionary process supposedly took off like a rocket blasting into outer space. In fact, the earliest vertebrate was found in an Ediacaran layer, leaving an unreasonably short period of time for pre-chordates to evolve.⁵

Further, Silvestru cites numerous examples of “evolutionary stasis,” in which organisms “have not changed or have changed very little over extremely long geologic times.”⁶ For example, stromatolites are the “oldest” fossils on earth, but these microorganisms still exist

³ Ibid., 117.

⁴ Stephen C. Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 163.

⁵ Silvestru, “The Fossil Record,” 123-24.

⁶ Ibid., 138.

virtually unchanged today. Other examples include the horseshoe crab, coelacanth and scorpions.⁷ The alleged evolutionary explanation for this stasis, i.e., that evolution only occurs when necessary and that stable environments will yield stable organisms, will not do. Many of these static organisms have lived through dramatic environmental changes and have remained constant even while surrounding organisms have supposedly evolved to better compete for survival.⁸

In addition to the timing issues, many fossils are “offset,” being found either in layers earlier or later than the evolutionary story would expect or having been buried among organisms from a completely different environment. Silvestru cites examples of Hadrosaurs, a Nodosaurus and an Ankylosaurus all being found in marine sediments.⁹ Such findings would be most sensible if the world had experienced a catastrophic flood event, such that land animals and marine animals were washed together. However, on the standard evolutionary model, land and marine fossils should not mix.

Because evolutionary scientists insist on viewing all evidence through the interpretive lens of evolution, they have “stacked the deck” in such a way that no type or amount of evidence could ever persuade them to abandon their paradigm. After all, their model allegedly is used to explain changes in organisms over time. But in light of evolutionary stasis, it also allegedly explains stasis in organisms over time. Silvestru appropriately asks, “Can you see that, if evolution, on the one hand, claims to explain radical changes over time while, on the other hand,

⁷ Ibid., 139-41.

⁸ Ibid., 138.

⁹ Ibid., 125.

also claims to explain radical stasis over time, there is no evidence one can submit as a test of evolutionary theory?"¹⁰ If organisms change, evolution is true. If organisms do not change, evolution is still true. In other words, no matter what happens, nothing can disprove evolutionary theory. Not only is such a stance illogical, it is unscientific as being unfalsifiable.

It is a relatively simple endeavor to outline what we should expect the fossil record to show if either evolution or biblical creation is true. In the case of the former we would expect a gradual development from simpler organisms to more complex, with the simpler life forms in the lower sedimentary layers and the more complex in the higher layers. Further, land and marine animals should be buried each in their own environment and we should see transitions from one kind of organism to another. If biblical creation was true, including the catastrophic flood described in Genesis, then we would expect to see various *kinds* emerge rapidly, with further development possible, but remaining within the particular kind. There would be no transitional forms between kinds. Occasionally land and marine animals may be found buried in proximity with one another as the flood washed them together. Once these expectations are laid out in such a manner, it is clear that the fossil record supports the creation model, not Darwinian evolution. The evolutionary proposal only continues to stand when it is structured in such a way that no amount of evidence will ever be accepted as refuting its underlying assumptions. However, the fossil record creates a clear picture that is consistent with biblical creation.

¹⁰ Ibid., 142.