

Evolution, Creation, and the Geologic Record

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As Tasman Walker observes, “it is impossible to separate theory, presupposition, and assumption from models of geological history.”¹ Evolutionary geologists, however, have been operating from a presupposition of slow gradual processes that is not supported by the evidence. Instead, the so-called geologic record is more consistent with a history of large-scale catastrophic events in the Creation and Noahdic flood.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, James Hutton and Charles Lyell proposed the idea that all current geologic phenomena could be explained by the influence of gradual processes and that practitioners should attempt to explain the observational data by means of “causes now in operation” (what is now known as “uniformitarianism”).² This ideology rules out *a priori* any isolated catastrophic events that may have occurred in the past. It naturally excludes biblical explanations from the discussion, because no one observes events such as the Creation or Noahdic Flood happening today. However, this exclusion is the result of a presupposition, not evidence. In fact, the evidence paints a very different picture that is inconsistent with a resort solely to “causes now in operation.”

A consequence of uniformitarianism is the belief that the earth must be billions of years old. After all, if the slow gradual processes we observe today are the only explanations permitted, then billions of years are necessary before such explanations even begin to be plausible. However, when the uniformitarian presuppositions are jettisoned, not only are billions of years unnecessary, but many problems inherent in that model also disappear.

¹ Tasman Walker, “The Geologic Record,” in *Evolution’s Achilles Heel*, ed. Robert Carter (Powder Springs, GA: Creation Book Publishers, 2015), 159.

² Ibid.

For example, fossilization of animals is rarely observed today. When an animal dies, its remains are scavenged and not preserved long enough to be fossilized over time. As Walker points out, evolutionists “end up having to invoke abnormal and catastrophic processes to explain fossilization, describing it as a rare event.”³ But as Walker also notes, if catastrophic processes are the best explanation for fossilization, then the fact that we find fossils on all continents suggests a global nature to this catastrophe.⁴ Another inconsistency lies in “dinosaur graveyards.” For example, Douglass Quarry Dinosaur National Monument in Utah contains hundreds of dinosaur bones. Yet there is nothing “now in operation” that would cause such a large number of animals to all be buried together in this way. Walker argues that the “graveyard” is far more consistent with a large scale “watery catastrophe.”⁵

Uniformitarians are also hard pressed to explain the characteristic “dead dinosaur posture,” in which the “back and neck of the animal are arched, the head tilted, the tail curved and the feet pointed outwards.”⁶ However, some experts have argued that this posture is consistent with muscle spasms from a malfunctioning nervous system when an animal loses oxygen as it is buried alive, or due to buoyancy of the neck and tail when an animal is drowned.⁷ Either explanation is consistent with a catastrophic flood, but not with a slow fossilization process that occurs only after the creature has already passed away. The discovery of jellyfish

³ Ibid., 161.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 162.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 161-62.

fossils is equally problematic because a soft-bodied animal like a jellyfish would not be expected to fossilize. Yet numerous examples of jellyfish fossils have been found.⁸

Other geologic features, aside from fossils, are also contrary to uniformitarianism. For example, despite the assumption that stalactites and stalagmites take long periods of time to develop, the abandoned Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine in Colorado has examples of stalagmites on top of an old wooden chair and an explosives container. At most, these phenomena developed in a 20-year span after the mine closed.⁹ Geologists following Hutton and Lyell have generally assumed that the various strata within the sediments took an extremely long time to develop. However, as a result of the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens, 25 feet of layered sediment appeared in just one afternoon.¹⁰ Derek Ager pointed out two fossil tree trunks, each 10 meters high, that crossed through multiple strata (i.e., polystrate fossils).¹¹ Had these trees been buried gradually the higher portions would have rotted away long before they could have fossilized. The only plausible explanation is that they were buried rapidly, meaning the multiple layers must also have developed rapidly. Blankets of sediment containing evidence of “rapid and energetic deposition” can be found covering huge swaths of the continents.¹² Again, nothing today explains why such sedimentary layers should cover such a large area, but they are consistent with a global flood. “Flat gaps” are areas between layers in which millions of years are supposed to

⁸ Ibid., 163.

⁹ Ibid., 167.

¹⁰ Ibid., 164.

¹¹ Ibid., 173.

¹² Ibid., 174-75.

have elapsed, and yet there is no evidence of any erosion occurring over such long periods of time. In fact, there is more alleged time inside the gaps than out, yet no geologic evidence for such time exists.¹³

Walker argues that all of these issues disappear if a large catastrophic event such as the Noahdic flood occurred in earth's past. Polystrate tree trunks were ripped up and deposited, sometimes vertically, as the sediments accumulated. Large, blanketing sediments over the continents were formed "by rapid sedimentation from continental-scale water flows."¹⁴ Features such as rivers flowing through, rather than around mountain ranges can be explained by water flowing over lower parts of the range as flood waters receded.¹⁵ The global flood even explains the occurrence of the ice age as volcanic activity warmed the oceans, creating the evaporation needed to generate the amount of frozen precipitation necessary to bring on such an age.¹⁶

Initially, uniformitarians following Hutton and Lyell excluded any type of catastrophe from consideration. Over time, however, the evidence forced geologists to carve out exceptions to uniformitarian thinking (although they continued to insist that catastrophic phenomena were unusual, and uniformitarianism was by and large still correct). However, the overall picture of the geologic record does not support their view and is more consistent with large scale catastrophe.

¹³ Ibid., 176.

¹⁴ Ibid., 184.

¹⁵ Ibid., 187.

¹⁶ Ibid., 188.