

Strategic stratigraphy: reclaiming the rock record!

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Over the past forty years, creationist geology has expanded from initial efforts that broadly critiqued uniformitarian geology to today's steady trickle of original research: debunking uniformitarian arguments, compiling data and developing Flood models. This growing momentum now needs a more systematic and strategic approach, with a goal of liberating the rock record from its uniformitarian captivity. Comprehensive stratigraphic expertise across basin to subregional areas is required, reinterpreting the complete rock record from the basement to the surface. Such work would need to be supported by cooperative integration on regional and continental scales. Ongoing work in the North American Mid-continent has identified methodologies, pitfalls, data resources and advantages of this strategy.

The idea of deep time was one of the most significant developments in the history of modern thought. It dominates natural history and permeates popular culture. Most accept it because they believe its claims of overwhelming empirical support, but this has been a distortion from the very beginning.

'Lyell's great treatise is not, as so often stated, a textbook summarizing all prevailing knowledge in a systematic way, but a passionate brief for a single, well-formed argument, hammered home relentlessly.'¹

That 'argument' now has an iron grip on the interpretation of the rock record, resulting in an approximately 4.5-billion-year geologic column. Few stop to consider that the conceptual column is an interpretation of the rock record, which has uniformitarian bias blended with the empirical data. It is claimed that the data demand billions of years of current geologic processes, but in reality it is the underlying assumptions that drive these long-age conclusions.

In order to reclaim history, advocates of the biblical worldview must first reclaim natural history. And that will require us to liberate the rock record from the formal and empirical distortions of modern uniformitarianism. Whitcomb and Morris recognized the empirical challenge

and its extent at the onset of the modern creation movement.

'It is the conviction of the writers ... that a true historical geology will never be formulated until the Genesis Flood ... is granted its rightful and vital place ... *It becomes very important, therefore, for Christians to re-study and re-think the great mass of geologic and paleontologic data, with two main purposes in view.* The first aim should be to examine carefully the currently accepted scheme of historical geology and its guiding principles, in order to determine clearly wherein and to what degree it is at variance with the biblical record of creation and the Flood ...

'The second aim ... will be to develop, if possible, a new scheme of historical geology, which would not only be true to the biblical revelations that are pertinent to it but also would serve as a better basis of correlation for the available scientific data than does the present one ... *There is an immense amount of data available that must be restudied and re-evaluated, enough to require the attention of many experts for a very long period of time*' [emphases added].²

Since that time, a slowly increasing number of creationists have worked to create models, reinterpret formations and phenomena, call attention to evidence of catastrophism and point to errors in uniformitarian interpretation. While all of these efforts are laudable and much of the resulting research beneficial, there has been no systematic effort to pursue the goals of *The Genesis Flood*. Thus, I propose that creationists strategically assess the necessity and scope of retaking the rock record, commit to the task and find efficient ways to accomplish it.

Uniformitarianism: the battle for history

Flood geology requires a formal, as well as empirical, assessment of historical geology. Uniformitarianism preceded Darwinism and appears likely to outlive it; especially within Christian circles. For example, the Intelligent Design movement has mounted a strong challenge to Darwin, but proves reluctant to critique uniformitarian geology. Those who challenge Darwin on logical grounds do not appear to see similar weaknesses in Lyell nor his crucial role to the worldview of naturalism.^{3,4} They accept uniformitarianism as merely a method of historical geology, when in fact *uniformitarianism is naturalism's philosophical foundation* (figure 1). The worldview of naturalism holds science as the gatekeeper of truth. It requires the axiom of uniformitarianism for its unlimited extrapolation of scientific observation back in time. Lyell recognized this and paved the path of *subsuming* history into science *in order that biblical history could be discarded in the name of science*.

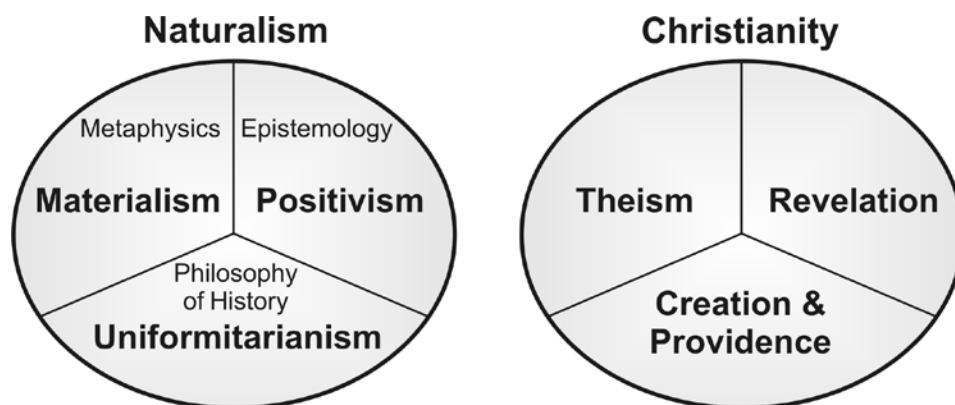


Figure 1. Contrasts between the worldviews of naturalism and Christianity can be identified by comparing their metaphysical, epistemological and historiographic elements. Note an internal consistency in naturalism—materialism restricts truth to science, and the extrapolation of science across time requires uniformitarianism as an axiom of history.

‘But Lyell held a complex view of uniformity that mixed this consensus about method with a radical claim about substance—the actual workings of the empirical world. Lyell argued that all past events—yes, every single one—could be explained by the action of causes now in operation. No old causes are extinct; no new ones have been introduced. Moreover, past causes have always operated—yes, always—at about the same rate and intensity as they do today.’⁵

But why did 19th century thinkers accept such a radically different view of history?

‘Lyell then pulled a fast one—perhaps the neatest trick of rhetoric, measured by subsequent success, in the entire history of science. He labelled all these different meanings as “uniformity”, and argued that since all working scientists must embrace the methodological principles [uniformity of natural law], the substantive claims [uniformity of process rates] must be true as well. Like wily Odysseus clinging to the sheep’s underside, the dubious substantive meanings of uniformity sneaked into geological orthodoxy—past an undiscerning Cyclops, blinded with Lyell’s rhetoric—by holding fast to the methodological principles that all scientists accepted.’⁶

Lyell understood that only unlimited extrapolation from the present to the past could win history away from Christianity for naturalism. So he persuaded his contemporaries that accepting a strict uniformity of rate and process was nothing more than traditional science; and in this regard little has since changed.

However, subsequent observation has uncovered numerous examples within the rock record that discredit Lyell’s philosophy of history. But geologists continue to use Lyell’s semantic trick to confuse opponents about the

relative roles of science, history and philosophy. The one thing that has changed is that modern geologists do not seem to possess Lyell’s logical acumen. He knew that even the smallest concession to catastrophism would swing the battle with Moses to Cuvier. Cuvier, by allowing limited catastrophism, advocated a quantitative difference with Moses, but Lyell, a qualitative. In this regard, many modern scientists side with Cuvier, oblivious to what a profound change that is from Lyell with respect to Moses. For them, flood geology is a relic of the past; they

see no need to avoid the ‘stain’ of catastrophism.⁷

But logic is timeless and their position leaves them firmly stuck on the horns of a dilemma. Lyell’s advocacy of uniform rates and processes was philosophically necessary to naturalism’s 19th-century victory over biblical history, but that version has since been empirically negated. When confronted, geologists revert to Lyell’s own ‘bait and switch’ tactic—publicly arguing that uniformitarianism is merely ‘methodological’.⁸ But methodological uniformitarianism, or ‘actualism’ as it is often called today, is only a quantitative step away from Moses and does not make a clean break with biblical history. And they dig a deeper hole in claiming (like Lyell) that it is just ‘uniformity’, since it was, after all, Christians who advocated and justified uniformity as an axiom of science.⁹ So on one hand, uniformitarians continue to disdain a short biblical history and the Genesis Flood, but the basis for their 19th-century victory has evaporated under their own empirical advances!

Although their foundation has vanished, uniformitarianism survives as dogma. Why? One answer is the powerful symbol of the geologic column.¹⁰ Academia and industry have worked for decades under that paradigm. Creating another fallacy, they equate the column with the physical rock record and demand that since the column is opposed to biblical history, the rocks themselves are ‘proof’ of their anti-Christian position. Many Christians have been misled or intimidated by this position and the rocks remain a stumbling block to the reliability and authority of the Genesis record. Removing this impediment should open the way to an apologetic victory for the biblical worldview in the minds of many Christians and nonbelievers.

So, one path for Christian apologists is a formal critique that would: (1) recognize the inseparable links between naturalism and uniformitarianism, (2) point out contradictions between axioms, methods and conclusions of that worldview and (3) force clarity in the concept of

1		2	3		4					
Era	Period	Geologic Energy	Timeframe Division		Event / Era Stage		Duration	Phase		
Cenozoic	Quaternary		Present Age	Upper	Postdiluvian Era		4,000 Y	Modern		
	Middle									
	Lower									
Tertiary	Ice Age		Upper	300 Y			Residual			
			Middle							
			Lower							
Mesozoic	Cretaceous		Flood Event	Upper	The Deluge	Recessive	220 D	Dispersive		
	Jurassic			Middle				Abative		
	Triassic			Lower		Inundatory	110 D	Zenithic		
Paleozoic	Permian		Creation Week	Antediluvian Era	The Creation Event	Formative	2 D	Biotic		
	Pennsylvanian								1,700 Y	Antediluvial
	Mississippian									
	Devonian			40 D		Eruptive				
	Silurian			Day 7		Foundational	2 D	Ensuing		
	Ordovician								0 D	Primordial
	Cambrian									
	Vendian									
Proterozoic										
Archaean										

Figure 2. Comparison of stratigraphic interpretive frameworks. They include: (1) the uniformitarian stratigraphic column, (2) geologic energy vs time;²² (3) Froede's creationist column;²¹ and (4) Walker's creationist column.²⁰ Please note that there is no specific correlation between (1) and the other columns, nor is there exact correlation between the various creationist proposals.

uniformitarianism, by whatever name it is known.¹¹ While devastating, this formal critique is a 'necessary-but-not-sufficient' answer. An empirical path is also needed, if for no other reason than that the positivist mindset of our culture demands a tangible alternative to the uniformitarian column. But the empirical path is no burden—the opportunity to explore the rock record from a new perspective offers exciting avenues of investigation.

Vision

God created the world for Himself: to manifest His glory, honour and pleasure.¹² He governs it for the same reasons. The rock record, therefore, has theological significance because it reveals God's power and majesty in judgment. His deserved glory in those areas has been obscured for too long by the claim that the rocks document, instead, billions of years of modern processes, operating at predictable rates and manifesting a history at odds with the Bible. God's glory is thereby compromised, and it is an honour for creationists to bring back the meaning of the rocks in all of their detail and grandeur.

Creationists are, in this sense, like restorers of great art. The original masterpiece has been caked with layers of dirt and obscured by centuries of grime. We have no desire

to destroy the original, but fervently want to remove the accreted layers of error and distortion, and present this facet of the creation in all of its beauty and glory. Therefore, our vision with regard to natural history should be its recovery, by reinterpretation of the rocks, demonstrating their origin in creation and the Flood, in order to display the power and majesty of God and affirm the truth of His account.

Strategy

Creationist geologists are few; uniformitarians number in the tens of thousands. Creationists do not enjoy the privileges of extensive academic, professional and government infrastructure, funding and support. Commercial enterprises searching for hydrocarbon and mineral resources exacerbate this lopsided situation. But despite these logistical disadvantages, creationists enjoy several advantages: (1) an understanding of Earth history that conforms to reality, consistent across the spectrum of theology, philosophy, science and history; (2) readily available data, often via the internet; (3) the motivating opportunity to revolutionize the earth sciences and (4) the promise that 'with God, all things are possible.'¹³

If a radical overhaul of stratigraphy and the associated forensic components of natural history is necessary, it is

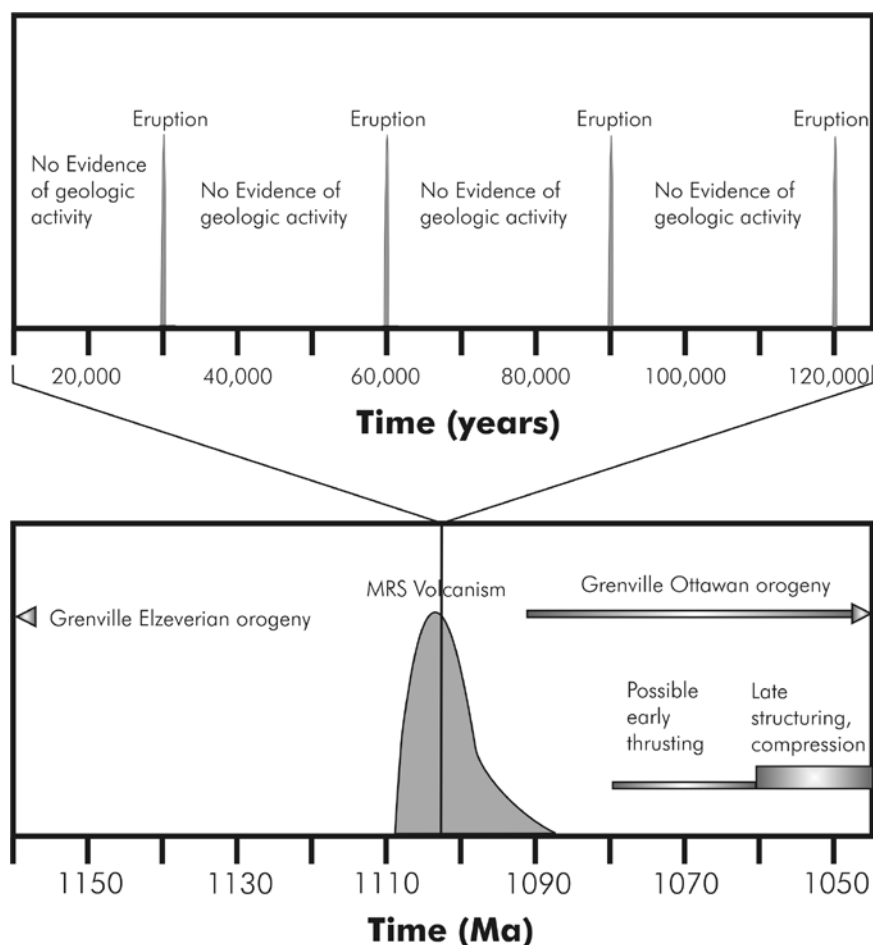


Figure 3. Illustration of uniformitarian scale masking from the Midcontinent Rift System.²⁴ The lower figure shows the history of the MRS using a uniformitarian timescale. The top scale illustrates a small slice of uniformitarian history, demonstrating that most of the 'deep time' is 'dead time', effectively masked by the scale of millions of years in the lower figure. Note that even the thicknesses of the eruption spikes in the top figure distort their temporal extent of hours or days.

well worth evaluating the foundations of this work. The following attributes of the empirical rock record are a good place to start:

- Global extent.
- Limited observation due to predominantly subsurface occurrence.
- Inherent organization.
- Information across a wide range of scale.
- Relative importance of sedimentary basins.
- Distinct continental and oceanic records. So if I keep typing here what happens?

The rock record and the geologic column are not one and the same.¹⁴ The latter is a philosophical interpretation of the former. It is true that the uniformitarian column and any final 'Flood column' will share similarities, because of a shared empirical base. There should be relatively minor disagreement about the descriptive aspects of the rock record; but there will be significant disagreement about the conceptual columns, because creationists start with different

presuppositions, including:

- Rejection of uniformitarianism.
- Relative unimportance of time as a stratigraphic key.¹⁴
- Relative importance of depositional, rather than biostratigraphic, interpretation.
- Willingness to re-evaluate traditional assumptions of stratigraphy.¹⁵
- Larger interpretive scale.
- Emphasis on vertical as well as lateral interpretive coherence, due to negligible time assigned to unconformities.

The rock record is a global, organized phenomenon; therefore our strategy must systematically aim for global interpretation and integration. It is doubtful that we will live to see that goal achieved. Therefore, we should work to provide a foundation for future generations rather than think that we can discover some silver bullet that will open all the mysteries of the earth's crust to our own understanding. We cannot build the mansion until we make the bricks.

However, we are not bound by modern academic strictures. Any creationist willing to devote years of effort towards this work can play a part. It does not require advanced degrees, although experience gained from that level of education is immensely helpful and to be desired. But knowledge is more important than the public recognition of

knowledge. It is primarily a matter of willingness to read and read and keep reading. Any reasonably intelligent person who has absorbed several hundred publications about the geology of a particular area will have educated himself sufficiently to start contributing. Internet networking¹⁶ can leverage existing specific expertise among those willing to pursue the work, but lacking advanced formal training.

There is an incredible complexity of information that varies with scale. Therefore, our investigations must start with those scales that provide an initial, basic interpretation, consistent with general information provided by the Bible, and proceed to scales that provide detail, not necessary to broad interpretation. We differ from uniformitarians in emphasizing a mega-regional signature of the Flood, rather than smaller-scale, modern processes. We should expect tentative results that raise questions our successors will answer by investigation at a finer scale. Scale has been a shortcoming of creationist geology. We tend to work on either too coarse a scale (developing global

Flood models which lack sufficient empirical foundation) or too fine a scale (providing good, yet unsystematic work on specific features or strata). In addition, much effort has been expended on addressing uniformitarian ‘proofs’ and objections. Such work should continue, but subordinated within the larger strategic framework of retaking the rocks. This will best occur with a developing consensus, which, given the grass-roots nature of the creationist community, must be developed as a shared vision, rather than an organizational mandate.

I propose that investigation is better bounded geographically rather than stratigraphically. In other words, individuals interested in this goal should study the complete stratigraphic record of a geographic locale rather than a single stratigraphic interval over a mega-regional area. The distinct presuppositions of creationists suggest that many current stratigraphic divisions, based on faulty assumptions of evolutionary biostratigraphic and the *in situ* preservation of biota, will be altered. If so, then the geographic approach will better highlight needed changes. It also provides advantages of: (1) vertical integration, (2) a comprehensive look at the complete Flood record, (3) less emphasis on time and (4) simultaneous work on neighbouring stratigraphic sequences, providing a system of checks and balances in the overall effort.

Civic groups adopt stretches of highways, keeping them free of litter. Similarly, individual creationists should ‘adopt’ the rock record in a given basin to subregional area, determined to commit years to remove the accretions of uniformitarian dogma. They can do so by reinterpreting their area from the basement to the surface. This process will include: (1) the stripping away of layers of uniformitarian interpretation (the geologic column); (2) the organization of residual descriptive data (the rock record); and (3) the reintegration of data with biblical natural history. In North America, I suggest working loosely within the political boundaries of states and provinces, because publicly available data are best organized by state geological surveys and local professional organizations. The first goal should be a broad stratigraphic synthesis. During that process, specific questions for additional work will be identified. Finally, and only late into that work, elements that will contribute to full-fledged, empirically robust Flood models

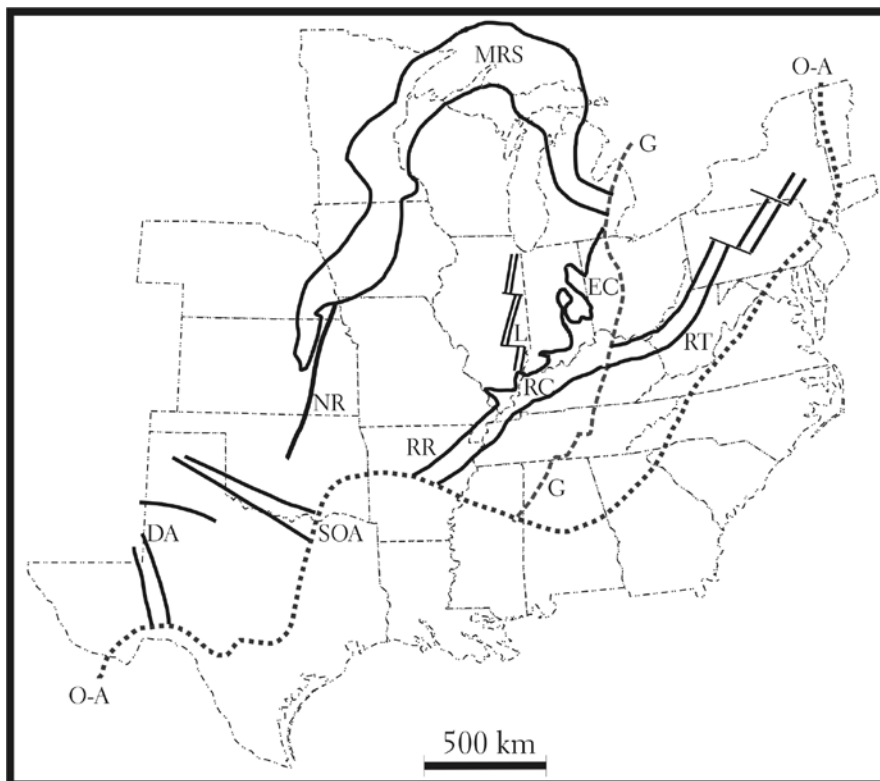


Figure 4. Selected tectonic features of the North American Midcontinent. O-A = Ouachita-Appalachian orogen, G = Grenville Front, MRS = Midcontinent Rift System, EC = East Continent Rift, RC = Rough Creek Graben, RR = Reelfoot Rift, RT = Rome Trough, L = LaSalle Deformation Belt, NR = Nemaha Ridge, SOA = southern Oklahoma aulacogen, DA = Delaware aulacogen. After Reed, ref. 24.

can be introduced or refined. Identifying specific questions for further work will provide predictive constraints on future models, and help direct constructive research for creationists not interested in the proposed systematic approach.

Tactics

How does one pursue such a daunting task? Several steps have proven helpful in attempting this strategy in the North American Midcontinent. First, identify data resources. The best are the state or provincial geological surveys,¹⁷ which also provide links to local professional organizations and local work being done by national surveys. Most state surveys have extensive lists of publications and maps, often as downloadable files. Increasing amounts of data, reports and maps are becoming available online, too. Many states have overviews of their geology; some very coarse, some very detailed.¹⁸ These often include compilations of the geologic column for the region; if not, they can be found on the American Association of Petroleum Geologists COSUNA charts.¹⁹ Although the column is not identical to the rock record and will likely require alteration, it is the default system of organization for the rock record; thus it is the necessary starting point

		Age	Lithology
Cambrian	My		
	—490		Marine Cambrian sediments: Reagan, Lamotte, Mt. Simon, etc., grading up into marine carbonates
	—500		
Erosional hiatus of between 500,000,000 and 1,100,000,000 years			
Proterozoic	~1.05 to ~1.6 Gy		Nonmarine clastics of MRS, igneous rocks of MRS, and igneous rocks of Southern Granite-Rhyolite Province

Figure 5. The basement-basal sediment hiatus in the North American Midcontinent. Although clearly an erosional surface, there is no empirical time value inherent in the hiatus. After Reed, ref. 31. (My = million years; Gy = billion years).

from which the empirical rock record can be extracted. Information about basins, tectonic features and resources is also usually available. More detailed research can focus on journals and professional publications. These searches are best directed after preliminary reading, one goal of which is to identify specific experts.

After learning the general geology of the area, stratigraphic evaluation can begin. Through the myriad of detail, it is important to note that descriptions consist of two elements, geometry and composition. I recommend beginning with the basement and working up stratigraphically, since this order mimics the actual historical events in proper sequence. Increasing familiarity with the rocks will result in the ability to reorder the record within the context of the Flood. ‘Flood columns’ will not mirror uniformitarian counterparts, since they will not include vast amounts of missing time, will not recognize a temporal significance of evolution to stratigraphy, nor expect to find modern depositional environments in the middle of catastrophically deposited sediments.

Although several creationist ‘columns’ have been proposed (figure 2), these are actually top-down frameworks based on the biblical record.^{20,21} As such, they are very broad and may or may not provide the most useful framework for integrating the rock record. If the bulk of the rock record was formed during the year of the Flood, then the record is extremely asymmetrical to historical time, was formed by catastrophic processes and most probably reflects diachronous deposition. Thus, time cannot be

the stratigraphic key for a creationist approach, and other paradigms may be necessary.²²

One area of fruitful investigation exists in the uneasy tension between lithologic and biostratigraphic correlation. Commonly, there is an overly complex division of strata, driven by the uniformitarian necessity of fitting limited physical data into an expanded chronological record. Time, which is often presented as a problem for creationists, is actually more of a problem for uniformitarians. While uniformitarians accuse creationists of trying to fit a swimming pool worth of time into a teacup, the reality is that their swimming pool is full of bubbles blown, like warm soda, from a mere teacup-worth of reality. It is important to note the resulting formal problem for uniformitarianism: most sections that are claimed as evidence for billions of years can account for very little of that time without biostratigraphic fudging and immense hiatuses. For a positivist (who limits his knowledge to what he can observe in nature), the dramatic incompleteness of the stratigraphic record results in an incredibly tenuous grasp on history. No reconstruction is compelling when the vast majority of the evidence is missing—especially if the only evidence allowed is ‘scientific’.²³

Creationists can further highlight discrepancies between the rock record and the geologic column by placing a ‘time envelope’ around particular strata or features. Simply put, that means breaking down the actual processes required to produce a given formation or feature and evaluating the minimum time needed for each process, without uniformitarian assumptions. For example, volcanism at the Midcontinent Rift System (MRS) is purported to have formed over nearly 25 million years. However, individual basalt flows can occur in hours or days, depending primarily on the size of the volcanic vent. The total volume of basalt generated at the MRS could easily have been extruded after the onset of the Flood, but prior to continental inundation.²⁴ That physical reality forces uniformitarians to posit large, rapid individual basalt flows interspersed by tens of thousands of years of quiescence. This is often disguised by what I call ‘scale masking’—applying an overly expanded scale to force large time intervals for any depicted event. Scale masking commonly obscures the time differences between the actual events and their uniformitarian interpretation (figure 3).

Another stratigraphic problem, related to excessive subdivision, is the tendency to assign multiple names to the same unit in different locales.

‘Early studies of the pre-Pennsylvanian units were focused on outcrops in the widely separated Ozark Uplift, Arbuckle and Wichita Mountains, and Llano Uplift areas ... and thus a different nomenclature for each area was established and ingrained before equivalency of the rock units could be fully established.’²⁵

The problem is even more widespread. For example, the early Paleozoic saw the development of a megaregional carbonate platform in North America. The Arbuckle (Oklahoma), Ellenburger (Texas) and Knox (Tennessee) Groups are all part of this platform, yet they are just three of many stratigraphic names given to the same rocks. Biostratigraphic splitting creates a more subtle division of units that is not always justified by lithologic or depositional boundaries. Careful evaluation of stratal geometry should highlight these unnecessary divisions. One should expect to end up recombining uniformitarian strata both laterally and vertically.

Vertical integration will also differ within a Flood paradigm. For example, stratigraphic contacts in the lowest formations in Oklahoma are primarily lithologic shifts that record a marine transgression—eroded basement siliciclastics to mixed carbonates and siliciclastics to carbonates. Within the Timbered Hills Group, the basal Reagan Sandstone is distinguished from the overlying Honey Creek Formation by the first appearance of carbonates, and the Honey Creek is distinguished from the overlying Arbuckle Group by the first appearance of carbonate mud and termination of significant siliciclastics. Clearly, the entire sequence could be interpreted as a single transgressive sequence; lithology shifts merely delineate water depth, energy level and lithologic sourcing, rather than time. I suspect that the same is true in many other

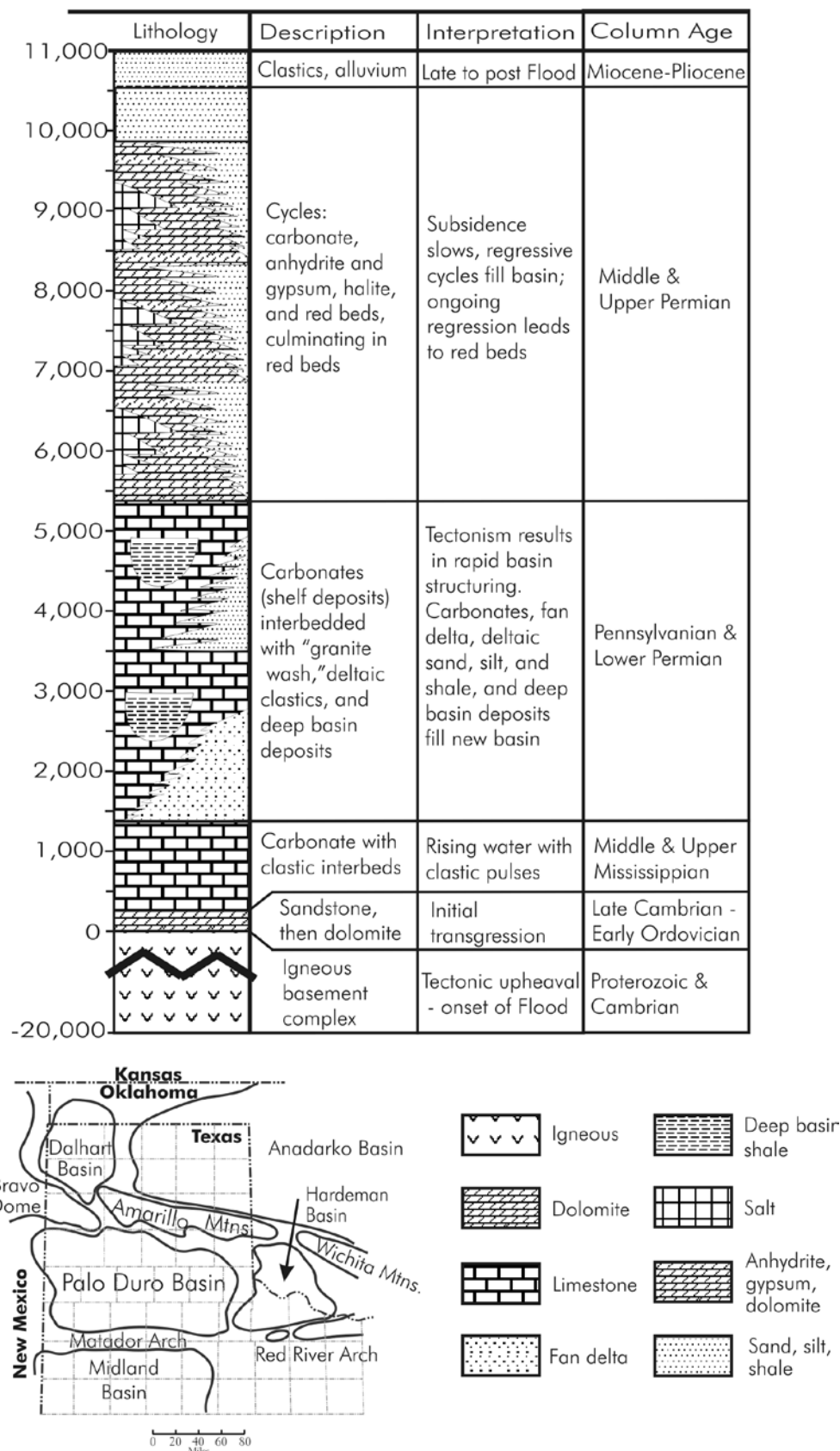


Figure 6. The sedimentary fill of the Palo Duro Basin can be reclassified by depositional characteristics and broadly set within a Flood framework. Vertical scale in feet of thickness relative to top of igneous erosion surface. After Reed, ref. 32.

cases. Field geologists tend to notice lithologic changes, not biostratigraphic transitions, and the biostratigraphy may well have accommodated general divisions after the fact. This sequence also illustrates the rock record's openness to vertical integration. The Timbered Hills Group and the Arbuckle Group record a single major transgression that led to the cessation of clastic deposition and the development of a megaregional carbonate platform across southern North America—an interpretation entirely consistent with the Genesis Flood.²⁶

Creationist presuppositions will probably affect the interpretation of the basement even more than that of overlying sediments.^{27–29} Uniformitarians delineate the igneous basement based on (1) grouping by isotopic dates and (2) plate tectonic terranes. These are of less (if any) relevance to creationists. Several basement features are of interest, however. Extensive and pervasive extensional deformation (supposedly from the Precambrian to Cambrian) is present across the North American craton,³⁰ as seen in faults and basement rifts (figure 4), such as the Midcontinent Rift System (MRS).²⁴ Another important feature is the regional unconformity between the igneous and metamorphic basement and the overlying sediments (figure 5). First, this unconformity documents widespread erosion, as would be expected from the Flood. Second, it presents uniformitarians with a time gap of up to 900,000,000 years—almost twice the length of the entire Phanerozoic!^{29,31}

Sediments overlying the basement are best preserved in basins. Commercial interests have generated an abundance of data in many of these basins, and they provide rich fodder for investigation. For example, the Palo Duro Basin in the Texas Panhandle contains more than 3,000 m of sediments over a basement surface that itself records tectonic disruption. The sediments document a marine incursion; renewed tectonic disruption and exposure of uplifts; extensive marine deposition; marine withdrawal, culminating in red beds, erosion, the uppermost Ogallala Formation and later geomorphic alteration.³² This progression is entirely consistent with the biblical account of the Genesis Flood, demonstrating that the rock record and the uniformitarian column are not identical (figure 6). The Palo Duro basin illustrates how a comprehensive basement-to-surface overview offers a feasible alternative to uniformitarian interpretation. It also provides elements that constrain future Flood models: (1) tectonic disruption at the onset of the Flood and at the onset of floodwater regression, (2) continuous marine deposition through most of the sequence and (3) distinct geochemical signatures of different Flood stages.

Any creationist willing to commit to this systematic

approach must keep two cautions in mind. First, the biblical record, though deficient in detail, must provide a strict constraint on research. If particular strata or particular features do not immediately appear comprehensible within a Flood framework, then it is a neon light shining on a question or a need for questioning assumptions, not a rationale to abandon the Bible. After all, if we abandon the Bible so easily, then we have demonstrated not the insight of scientific investigation, but only that we have been too heavily influenced by our cultural milieu of positivism. After two centuries of uniformitarian fog, it is only to be expected that some aspects of the rock record will not be readily understood in the context of the Flood. We should learn from the mistakes of others: compromise positions have often come about when individual Christians believe that their inability to understand given phenomena must render Scripture unreliable. Creationists must be willing to trust in a cooperative framework of investigation and be content, at times, merely to document an interesting question with relevant detail and leave the answer to someone else. 'I cannot see how this could work in the Flood' is not an excuse to ditch biblical truth; it is rather to be expected as a systematic re-evaluation begins. The solution to these problems may well produce some of the most profound geological insights.

Second, natural history is primarily a historical enterprise, not a scientific one. But it is also a mixed question.³³ In other words, science operates as a forensic tool in a historical task constrained by theology and philosophy. Science may contribute a quantitative bulk of a given investigation, but the scientific method cannot dictate the methodological approach. Beneath all forensic work must lie the greater reliability of written historical accounts and historiographic assumptions rooted in biblical truth, which govern the discovery of historical truth.³ Erasing the distinction between science and natural history is a concession to the naturalist worldview.³⁴

Conclusion

Belonging to an intellectual minority is always a challenge. Religious prejudice only makes it worse. Swimming against the tide of centuries of naturalistic interpretation, supported by all the institutional weight of academia, much of the church (sadly), and relevant industry, makes the task of the creationist appear as impossible as any that has ever been attempted. Only the vision of gaining spiritual, intellectual and emotional satisfaction of delighting the Creator with our advocacy of His truth can possibly sustain an ongoing, viable creationist enterprise. History is replete with examples of God's underdogs overcoming impossible odds, and I believe that the modern creationist movement is a developing continuation of that history. But time passes, and as we derive intense

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satisfaction from the growing assault on Darwinian biology, we must finish the task by liberating the rock record from naturalistic assumptions. That will be best achieved through a systematic, global effort of comprehensive stratigraphic reinterpretation of the wealth of data that currently exist. Whitcomb and Morris pointed the way in 1961; it's time for us to just do it.

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