

Book Review
Grand Canyon: Monument
To Catastrophe
Chapter 7 – Fossils
Review by Greg Neyman
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Snapshots In Time

In this section, the authors give a good background of the positions of both the evolutionists (and old-earth creationists) and the young-earth creationists.

Fossilization

For the most part, this is a well-written section. At the end, the author claims that decomposing bacteria will quickly break down any remains. This is why rapid burial is needed. However, do we have the same rate of decomposition today as we had two hundred million years ago? (food for thought)

Earlier Fossils of Grand Canyon

Stromatolites (Page 134)

Not much of interest here. In the last paragraph, the author questions where the first life form came from. The author concludes that it could not have come from the theory of spontaneous generation, and this data provides a powerful argument for the Creator. I agree. God created the first life form, and all subsequent life forms we see in the fossil record and alive today were created by Him.

Chuarina (Page 136)

The only thing of note here is the last sentence of the first paragraph, which states the Precambrian/Cambrian boundary is estimated at 570 million years. This boundary is now at 543 million years. It was adjusted after the publication of this book.

Plant Microfossils (Page 136)

Vase-Shaped Microfossils (Page 136)

Nothing Important

Pollen (Page 137)

Interesting discussion, from which one can gain an understanding of the complexities of getting a clean sample, and a clean, uncontaminated test. Aside from this, nothing of importance here.

Fossil Jellyfish (Page 138)

The only thing of interest here is the reference to one researcher's claim that the impressions were made by falling raindrops. However, by the young-earth model, there was no rain before the Flood, so how could there be raindrops in these rocks which are claimed to be pre-Flood?

Later Fossils of Grand Canyon

Plants (Page 138)

Ichnofossils (Page 138)

Nothing important.

Sponges (Page 138)

The author here questions evolutionary theory. Because of the nature of sponges, they should be easily buried and preserved, and thus should easily provide a progression of evolution of these organisms. This is no problem for the old-earth progressive creationist, because they denounce evolution as well. This is a question for the theological evolutionist, however.

If these sponges are so easy to preserve, then why don't we see them in rock layers beneath the Carboniferous Period? By the young-earth model, we should see them in both the early Flood rocks, and in the pre-Flood rocks, but they are not there. The authors mention this, to their demise. If they were created during the six days of creation, then we should have them mixed with all other fossils throughout the fossil record.

Foraminifera (Page 141)

This simple organism is used by the author to question the uniformitarian claim that you get increasingly complex fossils as you go up the geologic column. However, this argument is not valid.

To accept this, you have to make the assumption that ALL simple lifeforms were created by God early on in the creation sequence. The presence of this simple lifeform in Carboniferous or Permian strata does not mean that God created it early in the fossil record. God obviously did not stop creating simple life forms when he moved on to more complex forms.

Also, using the flood model, these fossils show up during the deposition of "late-flood" sediments, during the receding phase of the Flood. If all the flat-lying sediments

of the Grand Canyon were formed by the Flood, why are there no Foraminifera fossils in the lower layers of Flood rocks? By the young-earth model, they should be there also.

In fact, the fossil record of these sediments should be completely randomized, with dinosaurs, trilobites, and foraminifera fossils all together. However, that's not what we see.

Corals (Page 141)

The authors dismiss the existence of any large coral structure in the Grand Canyon. However, if there are ANY large fossil reef structures in any rock strata anywhere in the world, then there would be definite proof of an old earth.

Consider the Coral Caverns of Pennsylvania, where a fossilized coral reef can be seen in the walls of these caverns. Even more conclusive is the reef exposed at Falls of the Ohio State Park. This 387 million year old reef stretched for 1,000 miles, and could not have formed in only weeks, as the Flood requires.

Also, if corals were created during the creation week, why don't we see them in the layers of rock beneath the Redwall Limestone...why don't they show up in the Mauv, Dox, or Bass Limestones? Using the young-earth model, they should be there...but they are not.

Bryozoans (Page 141)

Not much of importance. Again, we should see these fossils in the rock record throughout the Canyon, however, they are not found below the Mauv Limestone. Surely some were killed by the early Flood event, and in the period between the creation week and the Flood, but no fossils appear in the layers of rock the young-earth creationists propose as being creation week and pre-Flood.

Brachiopods (Page 141)

Nothing important here for the old-earth progressive creationist. The claim that there are no ancestral forms for these fossils may be an issue for the theistic evolutionist.

These fossils begin to appear in the Bright Angel Shale. Again, if they were created during the creation week, we should see them in the post-creation, pre-flood sediments of the Grand Canyon, which includes the Chuar and Unkar Group of sediments, but they are not there.

Mollusks (Page 142)

Echinoderms (Page 142)

Nothing important, except that the absence of these fossils from the earlier rock layers, proves that they were not around when they rocks were deposited. However, by the young-earth model, they should have been.

Arthropods (Page 143)

No problems here. The author appeals to the apparent complexity of the trilobite as proof against evolution. This presents no problem for the old-earth progressive creationist. However, here as in previous lifeforms, they should have existed prior to the Flood, and should be preserved in the pre-Flood deposits, but they are not, and thus they cast doubt upon the young-earth model.

Fish (Page 145)

Nothing important.

Nonskeletal Fossils of Vertebrates (Page 146)

Very Important section! The first sentence sums it up (you can ignore the rest of the section). There are no actual fossils of land vertebrates in the Grand Canyon strata! Why not? During a worldwide flood event, they would have been some of the first animals to die. All the animals in the Canyon strata are marine varieties...you would expect them to endure the Flood longer, since they were underwater, as opposed to the air-breathers. The young-earth creationist model for the Grand Canyon (Figure 4.1) shows there to be early Flood (waters rising) and late Flood (receding waters) sediments in the Canyon. All the land vertebrates were killed during the early Flood phase. Yet, to see a land vertebrate in the fossil record, you have to go into the late-Flood rocks!

By the flood model, you should have dinosaur fossils, along with all the others, mixed together, in the lowest layers of early flood rocks. However, we don't have dinosaur fossils in the Grand Canyon. They are in strata which are above the Grand Canyon rocks, and can be found towards the north. They are in Mesozoic rocks, which according to Figure 4.1, is Late-Flood, or the period of receding water. Please note that at this point of receding water, all life forms are dead. Please note Genesis 7:17-24, which clearly states the waters killed all the life on earth. AFTER this passage, the waters started receding (Genesis 8:1).

Why is this important? Look at the dinosaur rock layers. We have footprints from the dinosaurs, we have egg nests, we have bones that have been chewed on by other dinosaurs (including baby meat-eaters teeth marks), and we have fossil excrement from the dinosaurs.

How could dinosaurs be making footprints, when they were killed months before? How could we have dinosaurs laying nests full of eggs, during the receding phase of the flood? How could meat-eating dinosaurs be feeding on the carcasses of dead plant-eaters? How can we have dinosaurs pooping all over the Mesozoic rocks? At this point in the young-earth model, there should be no living animals on earth, yet here is direct evidence of moving, breathing, eating, and breeding dinosaurs...right in the middle of the Flood!

Significance of Grand Canyon Fossils

How Were the Strata Laid Down? (Page 146)

Nothing important here. For a full discussion, see the rebuttal for Chapters Three and Four.

Did Life Slowly Evolve? (Page 147)

Nothing important here for the old-earth progressive creationist. This is a question for debate if you are a theistic evolutionist, however.

A Great Progression? (Page 147)

Nothing important. To see a discussion of what can be inferred from relative fossil positions, see <http://www.answersincreation.org/fossilrecord.htm>.

Diversity and Disparity (Page 147)

Nothing important here for the old-earth progressive creationist. This is a question for debate if you are a theistic evolutionist, however. Not being overly familiar with evolutionary principles, I shall not try to respond to this.

However, from a common sense perspective, I have a problem with both major theories on evolution. As stated, they predict as speciation events occur, you see the great explosion of different life forms, which is evident in the top two portions of Figure 7.7. However, not all life forms are in a constant state of evolving. The old adage, “if it’s broke, don’t fix it” should be applied here. By this, if an organism is functioning successfully in its environment, it may not have a need to further evolve, and thus may appear throughout geologic time as being unchanged, as you may see as a straight line in the bottom graph of the chart, with no branches. So, while those who believe in evolution may indeed believe in the first two charts, it is also apparent that the bottom chart could also fit well within the evolutionists’ scope for some life forms.

A Creationist View of Fossil Disparity (Page 149)

Nothing important here for the old-earth progressive creationist. This is a question for debate if you are a theistic evolutionist, however. In the future, this article may include the defense of the theistic evolutionist, if someone wishes to contribute a defense.

Why Trackways Without body Fossils? (Page 150)

No major issues here. In the second paragraph, the author states that a dead animal would have a higher probability of being fossilized in the strata above its footprints. Duh! You can’t bury him below his own footprints!

In the third paragraph, the author mentions the possibility that the strata above the Canyon, which were eroded away, contained the bodies of these animals which made

these tracks in the Grand Canyon strata. True...IF they were not separated by millions of years!

God's Judgment and Mercy (Page 150)

Generalities about God's judgment and mercy. No problems.

Conclusion

There are too many problems with the young-earth model to explain the fossil distribution of the Grand Canyon. The presence of living, breathing dinosaurs, during the latter part of the Flood, cannot be explained by the Flood model.