

Yellowstone Petrified Forests
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www.answersincreation.org/yellowstone.htm

Jonathan Sarfati gives a good description of some problems faced by trying to apply a young earth model to an old earth theory about these petrified forests. In the article, he suggests a model for deposition, by implying a possible solution by young-earth geologist Dr. Steven Austin and a colleague.¹

For some background, at Specimen Ridge there are 27 layers of upright petrified trees, and at Specimen Creek, there are about 50, amounting to a vertical height of 3,400 feet of sediment with petrified trees.

He attempts to dismantle the long-age explanation, and brings up some valid points. However, while my purpose here is not to provide a possible solution, I will only comment on his methods, and on Austin's attempt to provide a solution.

In the section "New explanation needed," he begins with the mistaken preconception that the earth is young. He states that any contradiction with the young earth theory must be wrong. (See my article on Preconceptions, www.answersincreation.org/preconceptions.htm).

He uses as a possible solution the example of trees from Mt. St. Helens, and proposes this example as a possible solution. However, upon closer examination, it is impossible to come up with a young earth model for a process that will deposit these trees.

Remember, we must do this during the year of the Flood. There are at least 50 distinct layers, over 3,400 feet of sediment, with trees at the bottom, and the top. Under the process he alludes to, the trees would die, be stripped of their smaller branches through the working of the waters, and deposited.

Here is the problem. According to the flood model, a globe submerged in water produces water currents of 40-80 meters per second.² Given this model, and the source forest, you would plainly have trees scattered all throughout North America, deposited in upright positions, down current from the source forest.

However, here we have all these trees, buried in one central location! In order for their model to work, there would have to be no current at this location.

OK, let's assume there is this spot in Yellowstone with no current. This assumption introduces another problem. If you don't have the currents, then you have no sediments to deposit this 3,400 foot thick layer of rock! Their theory for these trees falls apart using this simple logic.

He states that if the logs at the bottom of Spirit Lake were found thousands of years later, we would probably interpret them as multiple forests buried in place. Let's see...the Yellowstone formation has 3,400 feet of sediment, and Spirit Lake has less than a hundred feet of sediment...there is no comparison between Spirit Lake and Yellowstone. Here, the author is referring to a common ploy used by young-earth scientists...if it is true on a small scale, then it must be true on a larger scale. While interesting, it proves nothing.

In the section "Why does it matter?" the author gives the example of a person who fell away from the faith, because he realized that the world had to be older than 6,000 years, because of the Yellowstone trees. However, he did not fall away from the faith because of the trees. He fell away because he apparently did not try to reconcile the Bible with an old earth. He was probably raised to believe in a young earth, and this narrow-minded teaching doomed him (I have not read his book, thus cannot discuss the details of this case).

Just because you believe in an old earth, does not mean that God does not exist. You can still be a Christian (see link below). We should not take the example of a man who lost faith to mean that all old-earth Christians are apostates. On the contrary, we have outgrown the narrow-mindedness of the past, when we let our church leaders do our thinking for us.

Conclusion

The author ends with a large cop-out. He states, "*We now have answers to both the Piltdown and Yellowstone challenges. We should remember, if confronted with other 'unanswerable' challenges to the biblical world view, that even if we don't have all the answers, God does. And He, in His good time, may raise up godly scientists to discover them.*" In other words, if it doesn't fit the young-earth model, then it must be flawed, and re-evaluated until it does agree. Therefore, using this assumption, it is impossible to prove an old earth from their perspective. But, as I've said elsewhere, the purpose of Answers In Creation is not to convert the young-earth believer into an old-earth believer, but to provide support and evangelistic tools for the old-earth creationist. Young-earth creationists should continue defending the faith as they see it.

Footnote: The author also states that it only takes a year to petrify a tree. He makes the same mistake that Tas Walker makes in his article about petrified flour (www.answersincreation.org/petrified.htm).

¹ answersingenesis.org/docs/4109.asp

² icr.org/index.php?module=research&action=index&page=researchp_jb_patternsofcirculation