

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

Geology 103 Age of the Earth

Welcome back, class. Please get settled in and take hold of your pick point rock hammer and hand lens so that we can continue our study of geology. As we start our a discussion on rock types, plate tectonics, Ice Ages, canyons and fossils, we need to do this in light of a world-wide flood—a perspective long since abandoned by those who think themselves more learned than God’s Word. There was a time when the words Antediluvian (before the flood) and Prehistoric (before any recorded history) were common words to be used in all forms of scientific discussion. They were used together because they covered a similar time frame around 2300 BC to 3200 BC.

It is generally agreed that the true writing of language (not just numbers) was invented separately in at least two places: Mesopotamia around 3200 BC, and Mesoamerica around 600 BC. It is debated whether writing was developed completely independently in Egypt 3200 BC and China around 1200 BC, or whether the appearance of writing in either or both places was due to Mesopotamian influence. It is also generally agreed that the biblical flood account happened around 2348 BC. Whether or not scholars believe a world-wide flood happened, there is not disagreement in what it claims in the narrative and that the approximate date of that event is around 2348 BC. Was writing invented before the flood? Well, if you check the dates, it appear so, however there is room for doubt—but remember that the only evidence we have of written language before 500 BC is carved in some hard surface or etched on a pot chard, and the bulk of historical writing evidence does not really start showing up until after the flood date above.

So why does any of this matter, and what does it have to do with geology, you may ask? In its early days, geologists did use words like antediluvian and prehistoric. However, in the 19th Century, when the age of the Earth debate took off, the bulk of the scholastic community started talking in millions and billions of years. Because of this, we will have to approach geology as outsiders, because we question the assumptions of dating methods. We will do something geologically bold: we will approach the topic with our own assumptions. We will assume that God spoke all there is into existence, and that He is an eyewitness to all that has happened in history. We have a record of that from Creation to the Flood in the first nine chapters of Genesis. We further know these accounts to be true because our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ referred to them as historical fact.

That being said, let’s jump into the subject of rocks. We know, if we remember from our school days, that rocks fall in three basic categories. Igneous rocks, crystalline solids which form directly from the cooling of magma. Sedimentary rocks which form when the small particles of pre-existing rocks combine due to pressure, chemical, or organic processes. Finally, metamorphic rocks which form when pressure and temperature change the properties of the rock. As we look at these rocks, we will see that they can clearly be understood in a young Earth setting. First, we can acknowledge that all of the old Earth evidence from igneous and metamorphic rock is primarily based on flawed dating methods mentioned back in the Biology Wing in Lessons 104 to 107.

There is some evidence for a young Earth in metamorphic rock—evidence like Carbon 14 contained in rocks that are supposed to be millions of years old, but contain Carbon 14, which you may remember decays to nothing in 80,000 years. However most of the young Earth evidence will be found in different types of sedimentary rock. For example, coal is a very hard sedimentary rock formed by compressing biomass (organic material such as plants). It too is supposed to be millions of years old, but in many cases contains C14. Diamonds, while not a rock but a mineral, are much harder than coal, and also have been found to contain C14. Sedimentary rock is where we find most of our young Earth evidence, so let’s examine some of that. Rocks do not normally bend; they break because they are hard and brittle. But in many places, we find whole sequences of strata that were bent without fracturing, indicating that all the rock layers were rapidly deposited and folded, while still wet and pliable before final hardening. For example, the Tapeats Sandstone in the Grand Canyon is folded at a right angle (90°) without evidence of breaking. This folding could only have occurred after the rest of the layers had been deposited, while the Tapeats Sandstone remained wet and pliable. This is clear evidence that many strata were laid down in rapid succession, not slowly over long periods of time. More to come.