

DISCUSSION 11

FOSSILS AND CREATION

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OUTLINE

- 1. Two contrasting views**
- 2. Fossils and evolution**
- 3. Creation explanations for the fossil sequence**
 - (a) Ecological zonation**
 - (b) Motility of animals**
 - (c) Buoyancy factors**
- 4. The scarcity of human remains in the geologic column**
- 5. Human origins and the fossil record**
- 6. Trying to reconcile the Bible and the long geologic ages**
- 7. Conclusions**
- 8. Review questions**

1. TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS

1. TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS

The biblical model of origins is that God created the various creatures and plants a few thousand years ago, in six days. Many centuries after that, a worldwide catastrophe, the Genesis Flood, destroyed most of the life that was present on the earth at that time. Both creation and the Flood are important to interpretations of the fossil record. Speaking of the Flood, the Bible states:

“And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven: and they were destroyed from the Earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.”
Genesis 7:23-24.

1. TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS

In the context of the biblical account, **most of the fossil record**, which is harbored in the sedimentary layers of the crust of the earth, would seem to be the result of the great Genesis Flood. We can come to this conclusion, in part, because there seems to be **little time between creation and the Genesis Flood**. Furthermore, there seems to be little of the kind of activity that would deposit the huge sedimentary layers including the burying of uncounted numbers of organisms that became fossils. **Since the Flood, there has also not been that much time** for major sediment deposition and fossil preservation. Under ordinary conditions, fossilization is a rare event. Hence, it appears that most of the fossils must have come from the **Flood**, and that Flood is the catastrophic event that **harmonizes the fossil record** to biblical history.

1. TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS

In contrast to the biblical view, the picture presented in evolutionary textbooks of science is that fossils represent past life that was gradually buried over billions of years, and as you go up through the geologic layers “**all forms of plant and animal life have continually and systematically undergone changes with the passage of time, a process termed *organic evolution*.**” **Strahler AH. 1977. Principles of Physical Geology, p 106.**

Which is true, the Flood or evolution?

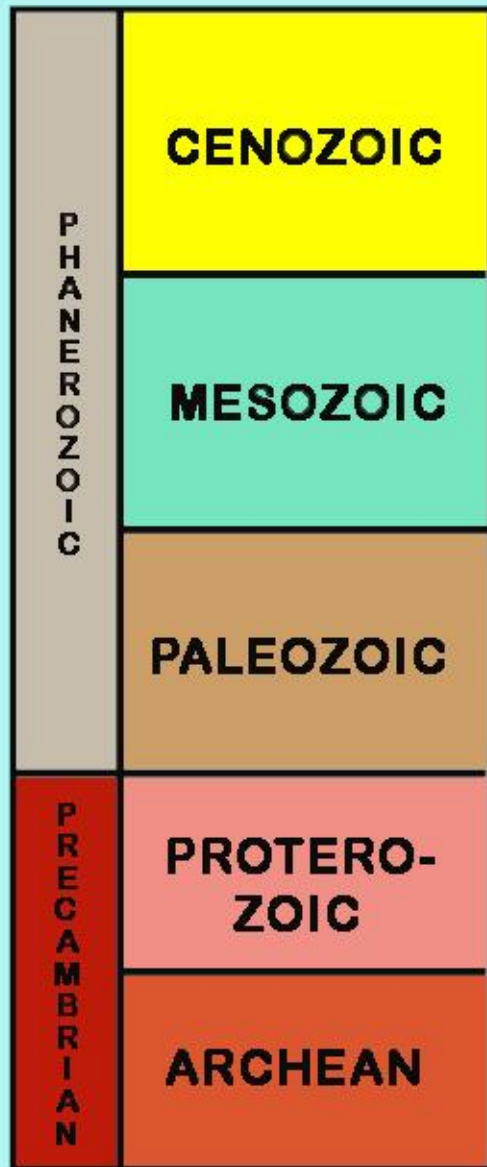
1. TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS

The biblical view and the evolutionary view could hardly be more different. The Bible speaks of life forms having been created by God a few thousand years ago, and a major destruction of life by the Genesis Flood. Evolutionists speak of life arising by itself a very long time ago, and of a slow evolutionary process producing the various forms of the organisms we find as fossils.

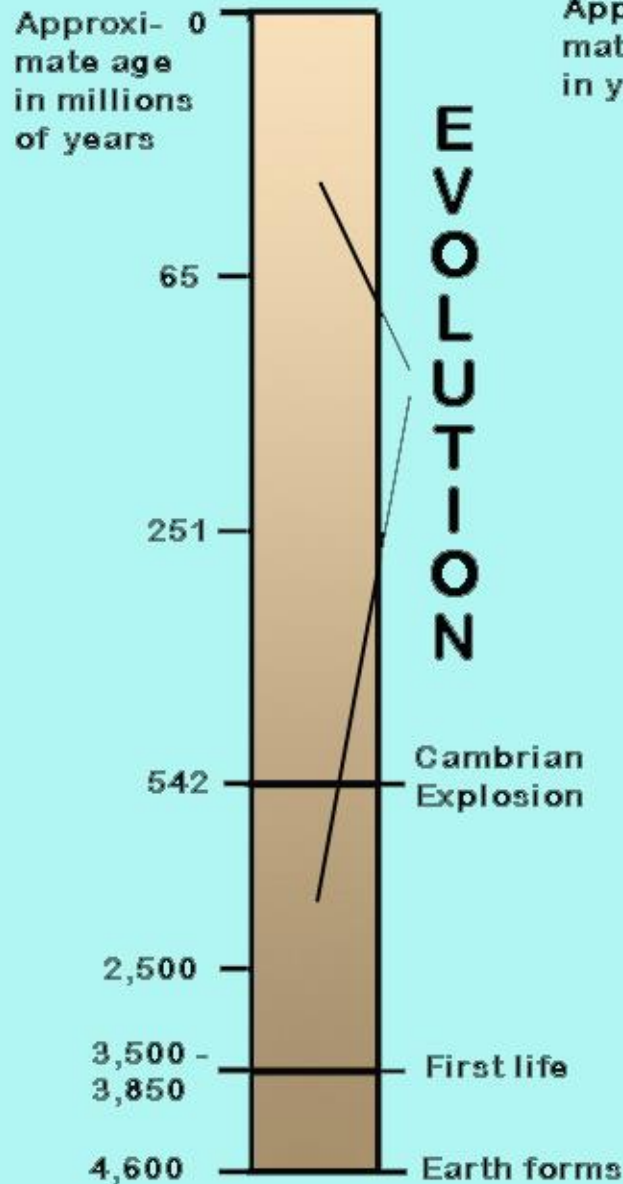
The creationist sees the fossil record as mostly a record of the destruction by the great Genesis Flood. The evolutionist sees the fossil record as a record of a slow gradual evolutionary process. These two very contrasting perspectives need to be constantly kept in mind as we look at interpretations of the fossil record. The next slide illustrates how these two views relate to the geologic column.

TWO MODELS FOR THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

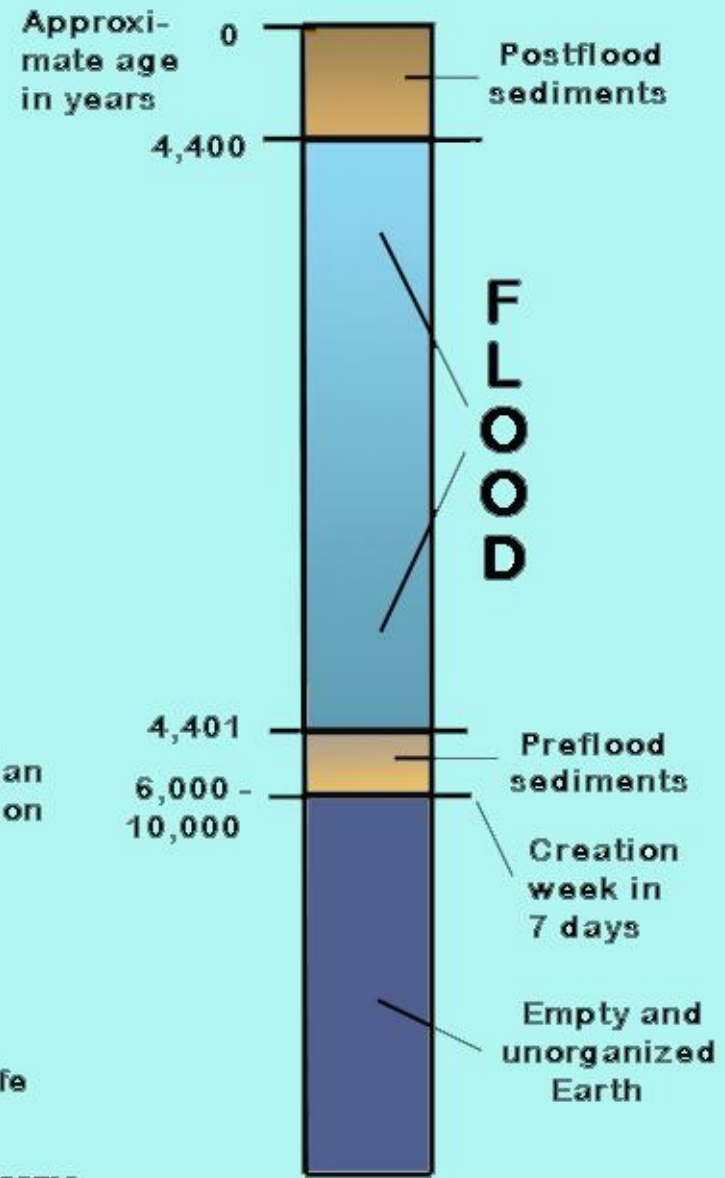
GEOLOGIC COLUMN



EVOLUTION



CREATION



1. TWO CONTRASTING VIEWS

This discussion assumes the reader is somewhat familiar with Discussion 10, FASCINATING FOSSILS of this series. A slide of the divisions of the geologic column is repeated below for convenience. This present discussion should be considered along with the two (number 12 and 13) titled: PROBLEMS THE FOSSILS POSE FOR EVOLUTION, part 1 and 2, so as to get a comprehensive view of various interpretations of the fossil record.

MAIN DIVISIONS OF THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

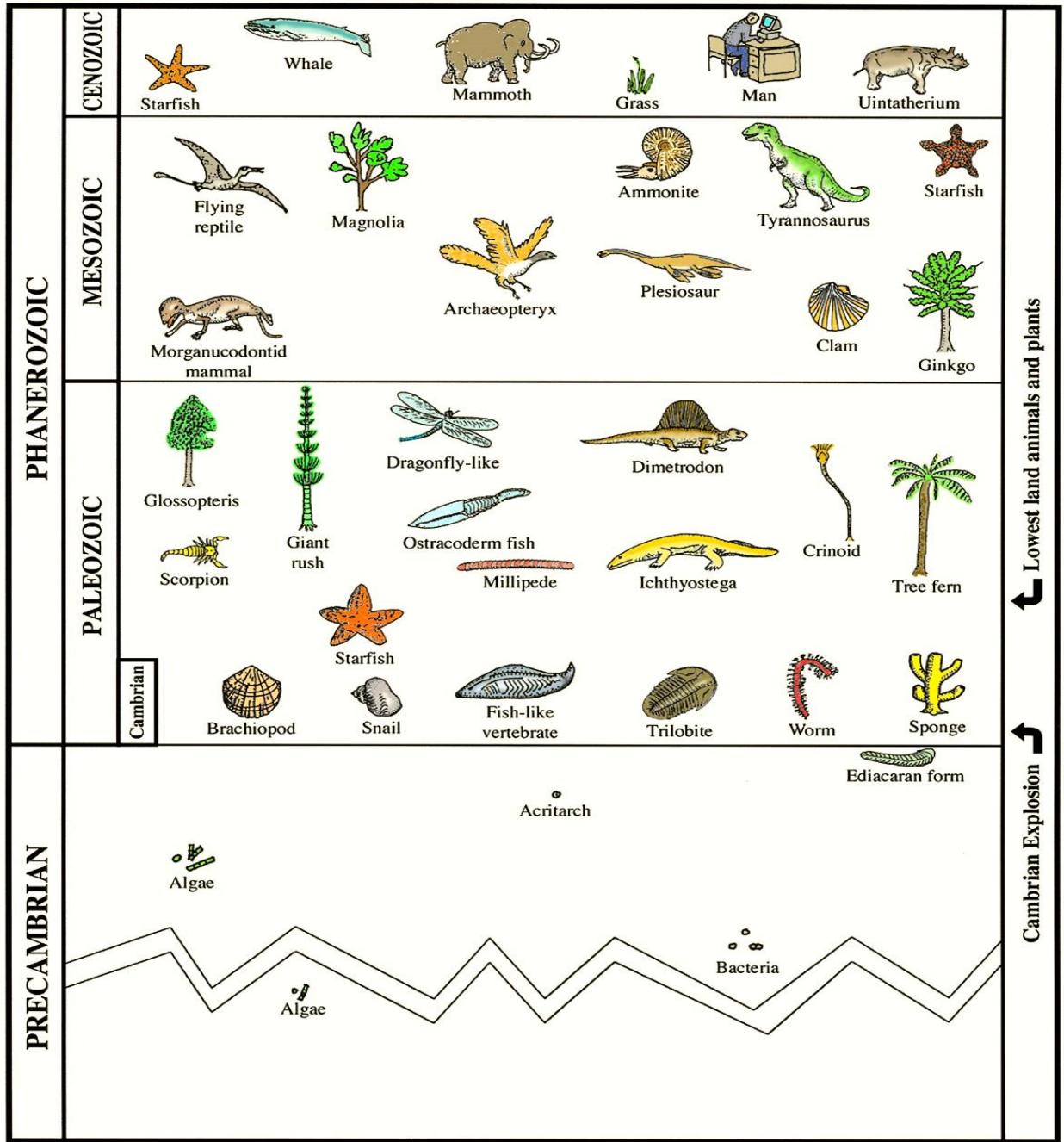
EON	ERA	PERIOD	EPOCH	Putative age in Ma*
Phanerozoic	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Holocene	0.01
			Pleistocene	1.6
		Tertiary	Pliocene	5.3
			Miocene	24
			Oligocene	34
			Eocene	55
			Paleocene	65
	Mesozoic	Cretaceous	144	
		Jurassic	206	
		Triassic	248	
	Paleozoic	Permian	290	
		Carboniferous	354	
		Devonian	417	
		Silurian	443	
		Ordovician	490	
		Cambrian	540	
PRECAMBRIAN Proterozoic Eon				2500
Archaean Eon				4600

*Ages given represent beginning of time period in millions of years (Ma).
Dates not endorsed by author.

2. FOSSILS AND EVOLUTION

2. FOSSILS AND EVOLUTION

There are many problems for evolution. However there also appears to be a **general, albeit erratic, progression** of organisms from simple to complex as one ascends the geologic column, and that is consistent with evolutionary views of progressive increase in complexity over eons of time. See the slide below.



GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF ORGANISMS THROUGHOUT THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

2. FOSSILS AND EVOLUTION

Evolutionists find some fossil patterns that are consistent with their theory. The slide below uses vertical lines to illustrate the more detailed distribution of organisms in the geologic column. Note that we essentially have only **microscopic organisms** in the lower Precambrian, and in the Phanerozoic the vertebrate animals seem to show progression in complexity with first appearances in **fish to amphibians, then reptiles and mammals** (see the extreme right part of the slide). The evolution of birds that first appear higher in the fossil sequence is a controversial enigma.

2. FOSSILS AND EVOLUTION

Progression as one goes up through the fossil record is not very significant for invertebrate animals and they lack intermediates between major kinds. Progress in the plant kingdom can be argued but intermediates are notoriously lacking. Evolutionists consider the general advancement of vertebrates in the fossil record to be some of the strongest evidence for their theory of gradual development over time. Keep in mind that vertebrates form only about 3% of all the living species of organisms. While not a strong quantitative representation, they are the animals we are most familiar with and are in the focus of the issue.

**3. CREATION
EXPLANATIONS
FOR THE FOSSIL
SEQUENCE**

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

We will discuss below three creation explanations for some of the general progression, from simple one-celled organisms to huge complex ones, that is seen as one ascends the geologic column. These are: **(a) ecological zonation, (b) motility, and (c) flotation.** These explanations all relate to the Genesis Flood which is the event that reconciles the fossil record to the recent six day creation by God as described in the Bible.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

**(a) ECOLOGICAL ZONATION
THEORY (EZT):**

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) ECOLOGICAL ZONATION THEORY (EZT): A SYNOPSIS

- The theory (EZT) proposes that the order and uniqueness, and the moderate amount of progress one finds in fossils as one ascends the geologic column, is due mainly to the original pattern of distribution (ecology) of organisms on the earth before the Genesis Flood. However, the many different patterns of vertical and lateral transport expected during the catastrophic Flood would cause some variation in order of deposition. Also there may have been unusual horizontal patterns of distribution of organisms before the Flood. Hence EZT is expected to reflect a general framework of preflood distribution, not necessarily details.
- During the Genesis Flood, as the waters **gradually rose**, they destroyed **in order** the various preflood landscapes (regions, zones), transporting, with the aid of gravity, sediments and organisms to deeper depositional basins.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) ECOLOGICAL ZONATION THEORY (EZT): A SYNOPSIS

- The lowest zones (regions, landscapes, biomes) were destroyed first, then subsequently higher and higher environments were destroyed and **re-deposited in generally the same original order** in the depositional basins. This will be illustrated below.
- Thus the ascending order of the fossil record reflects the generally ascending order of the ecological zones of the organisms in the preflood world.
- The preflood ecology (distribution) was generally similar to our present ecology, but differed in significant details because there was a much greater variety of organisms living then, and there were more seas at different levels than we now have.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

The next slide of a mountain illustrates how the plant distribution pattern changes dramatically as one ascends up through the different ecological zones. We have heavy vegetation lower down, changing to a different sparse vegetation higher up, to no vegetation on top. The animals in the region also change dramatically with changes in altitude.



ECOLOGICAL VARIATION WITH CHANGE IN ALTITUDE

Note

the tall trees in the foreground and a gradual decrease in vegetation as one ascends towards the peak of this mountain in western France.

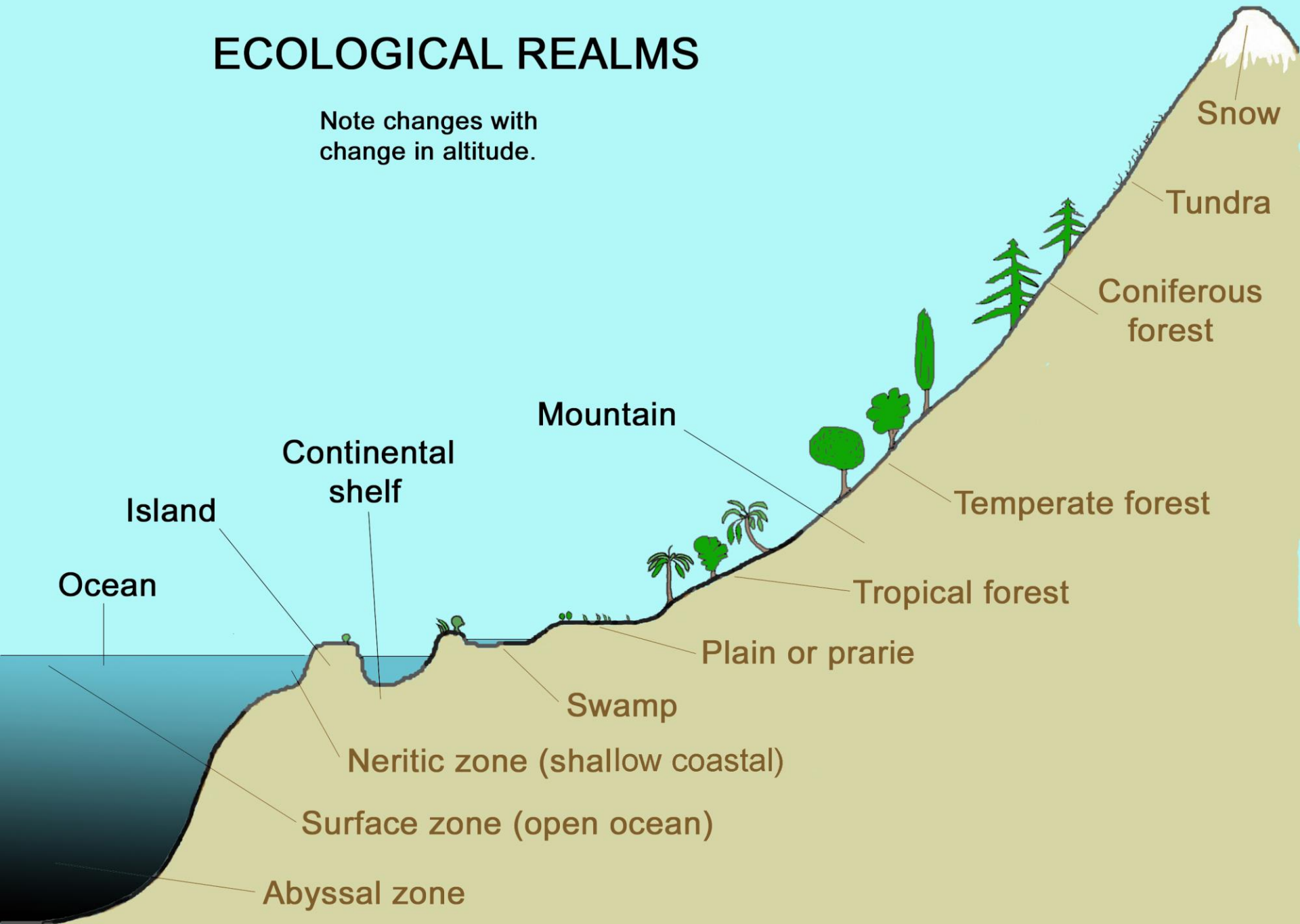
3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

The next slide gives details of the variety of zones or realms one finds on the present earth and how they vary with altitudinal changes.

ECOLOGICAL REALMS

Note changes with
change in altitude.



3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

The **ecological zonation** theory or model proposes that, as the Bible describes, **all the earth** was affected by the Genesis Flood. All the different zones of life from the **deep ocean to the highest mountains** were involved.

The model of the Flood that is proposed is that **first the oceans were disturbed**, as marine animals were first buried when the “fountains of the great deep” of the biblical record (Genesis 7:11) burst forth. Then as the waters gradually rose higher and higher, the **waves destroyed, in ascending order, the various zones** (realms, landscapes) that existed at higher and higher levels of the world before the Flood.

The sediments and organisms from these zones were buried in the order that they were destroyed as waters rose and they were eroded, transported, and **deposited one on top of another** in lower lying depositional sedimentary basins during the Flood.

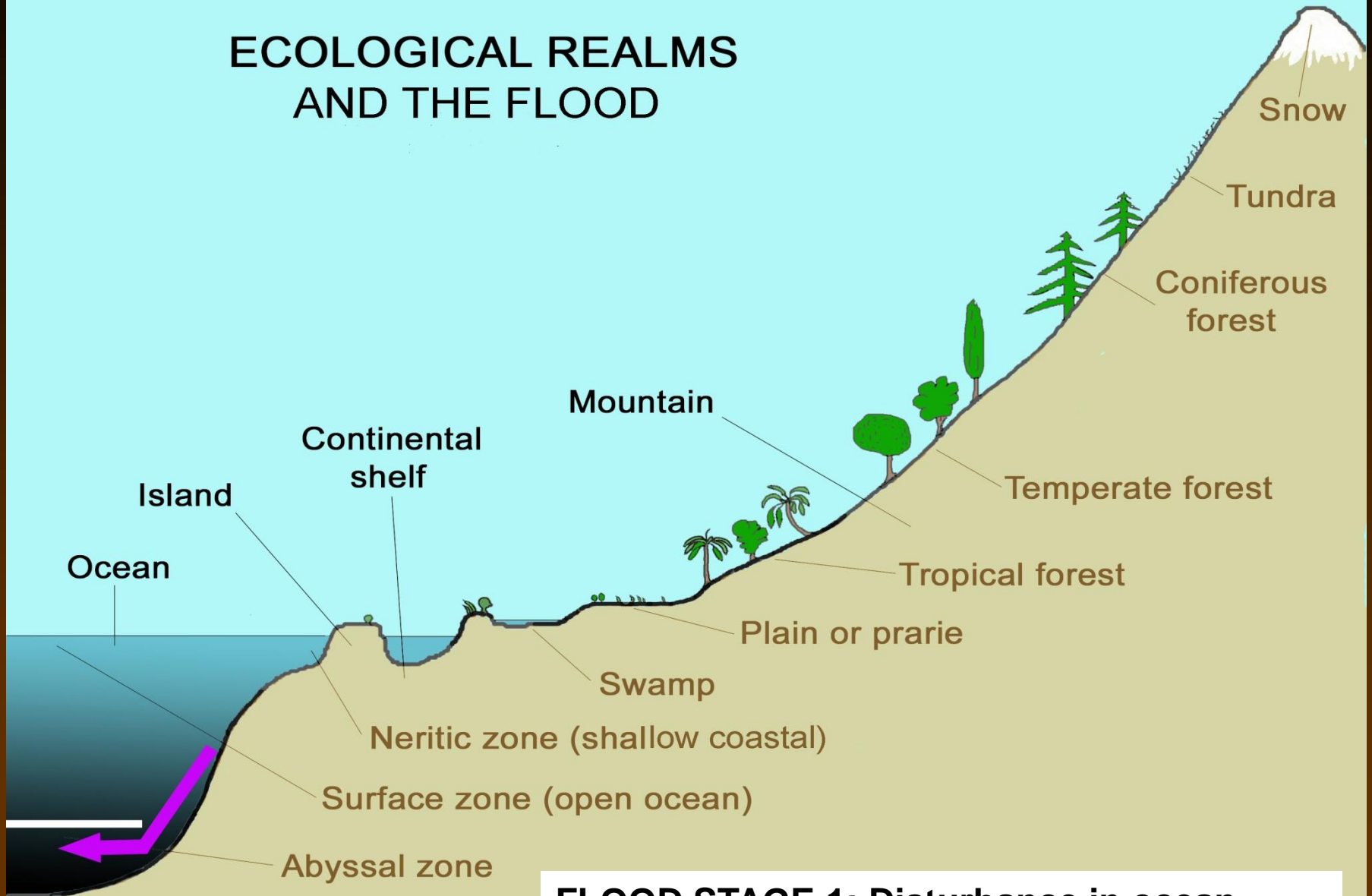
3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

The next four slides illustrate what would likely happen should we have a Genesis type of worldwide flood on our present earth. You can see a rising sea level, eroding the various zones at the right, and following the arrows, these would be buried one on top of another as they flow down due to gravity to lower areas to the left.

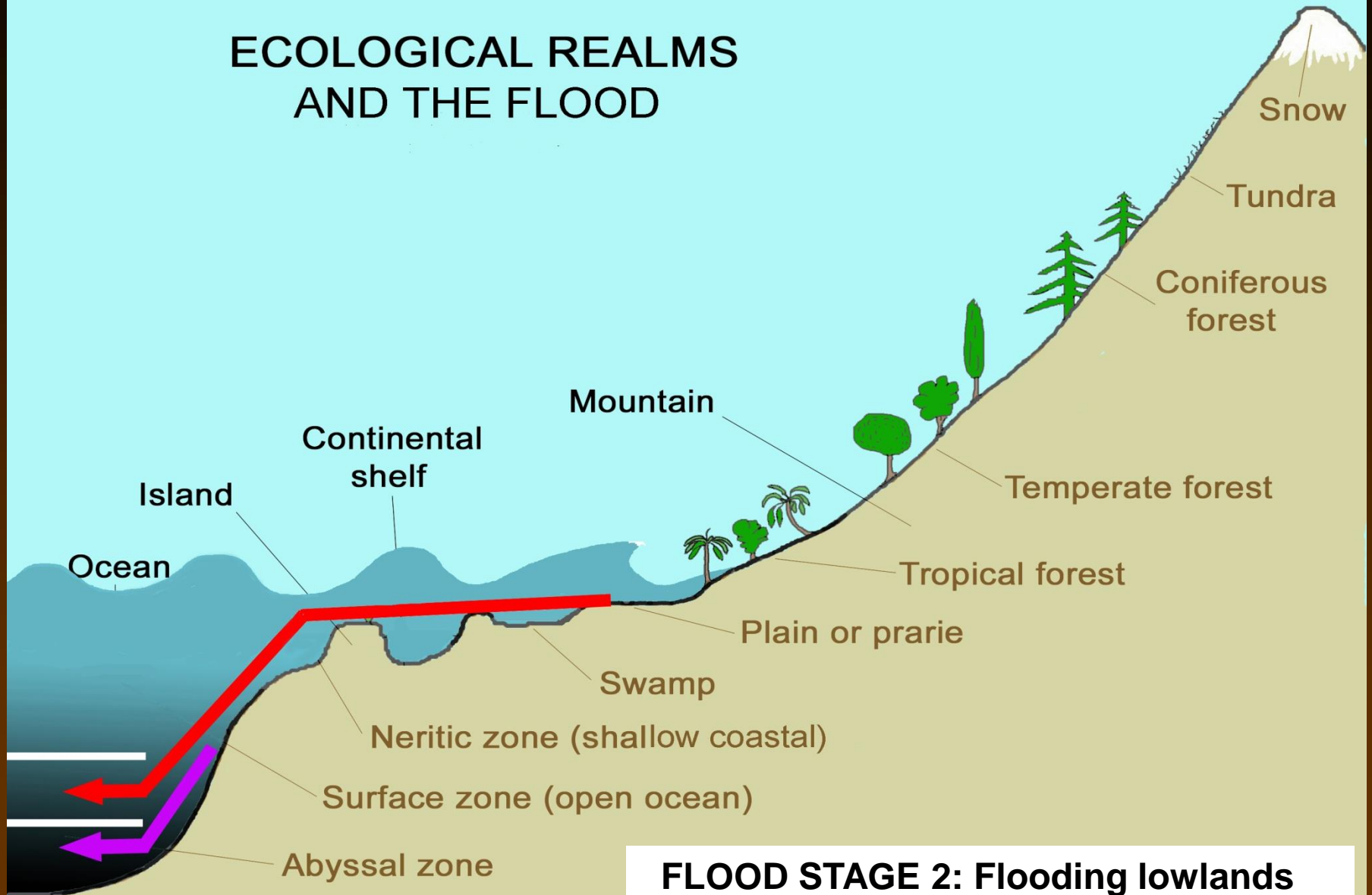
The colored arrows illustrate succeeding stages of movement of sediments, plants and animals as expected in a **slowly gradually rising worldwide Flood.**

ECOLOGICAL REALMS AND THE FLOOD



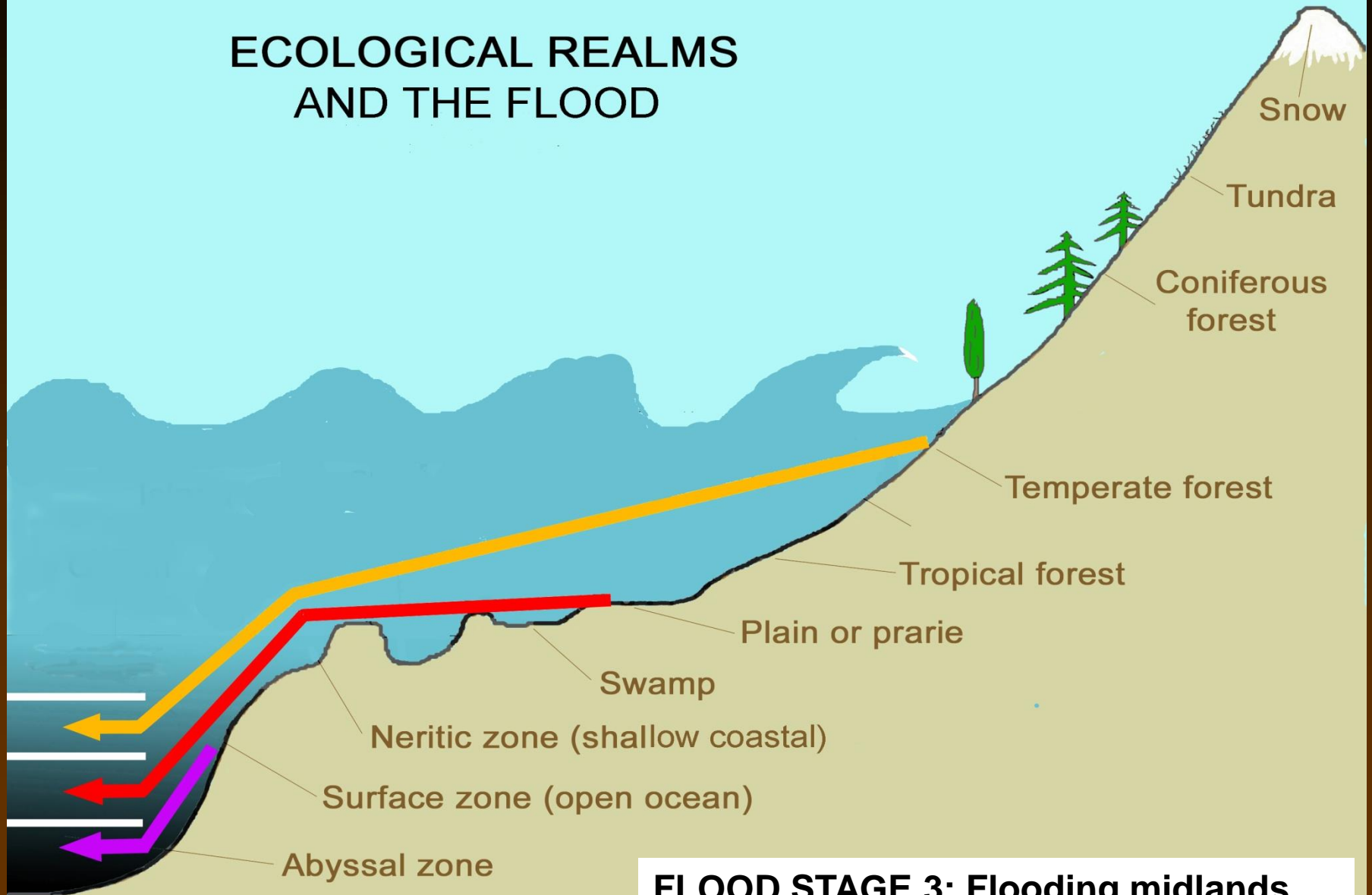
FLOOD STAGE 1: Disturbance in ocean

ECOLOGICAL REALMS AND THE FLOOD

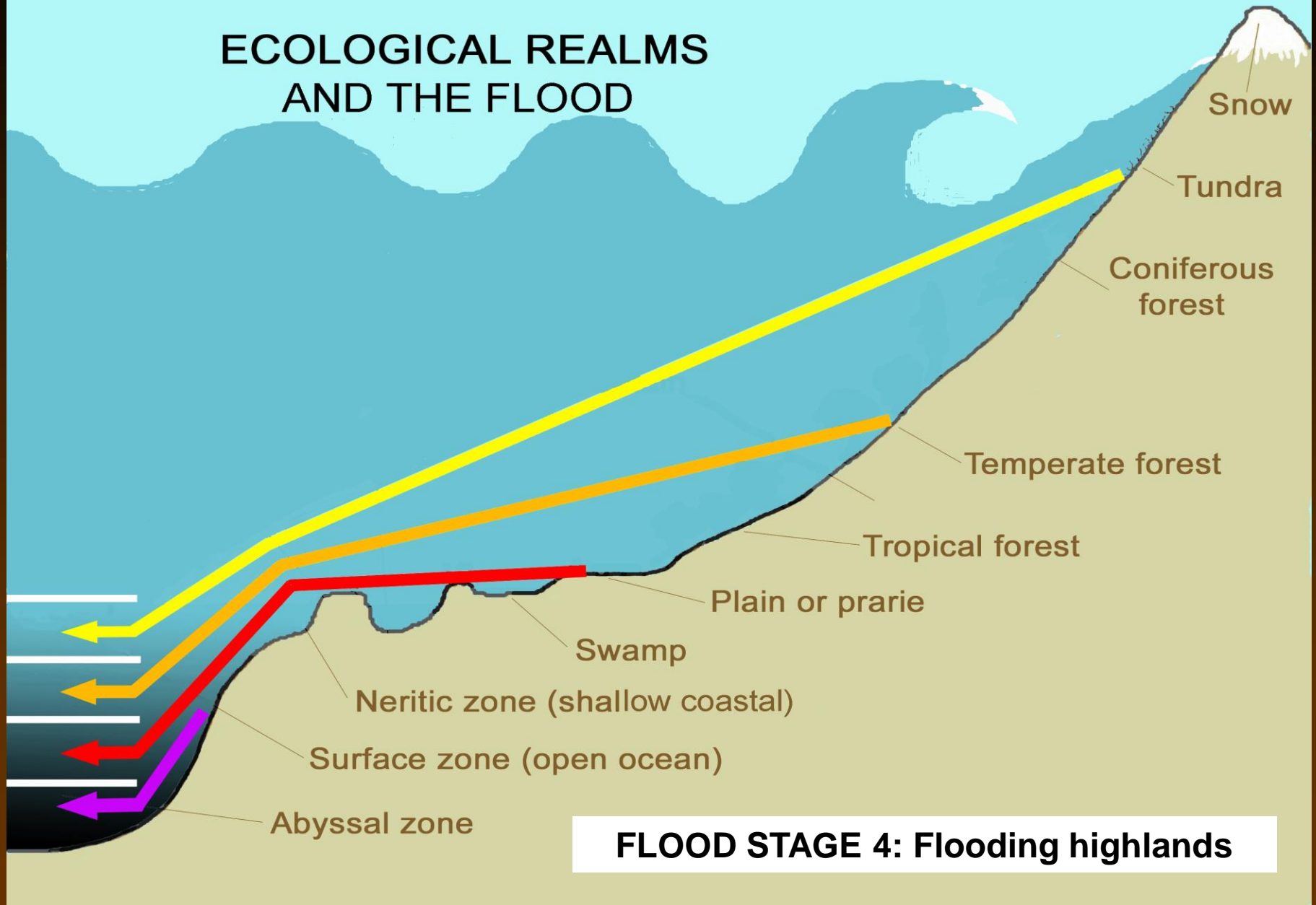


FLOOD STAGE 2: Flooding lowlands

ECOLOGICAL REALMS AND THE FLOOD



ECOLOGICAL REALMS AND THE FLOOD



3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

The sediments deposited by the Flood **were not all mixed** up as some might surmise for a world-wide Flood. They were **deposited gradually over weeks or months**. Sediments are heavier than water and **not easily mixed up**. Even during present major catastrophic floods the sedimentary layers are laid down usually flat, and are well sorted into different layers and sediment types and are not all mixed up.

The important mechanism of destruction during the Flood was the **waves** of the rising waters and not especially the rain of the Flood event. This is illustrated in the next slide of waves during a storm I witnessed in Hawaii. The waves are by far the more powerful agent of destruction compared to the rain that was falling at the same time.



STORM WAVES, ISLAND OF HAWAII

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

The fossils tell us that there were many different kinds of organisms on the earth before the Flood that do not exist at present on the earth, and a **different detailed ecological distribution of organisms that accommodates them is proposed**. These different kinds of organisms such as dinosaurs or giant rushes had to subsist somewhere, and they lived mainly in the middle of the Phanerozoic part of the geologic column. Also, one would expect that a horrendous event like the Genesis Flood would change the ecology of the earth. So some difference is expected.

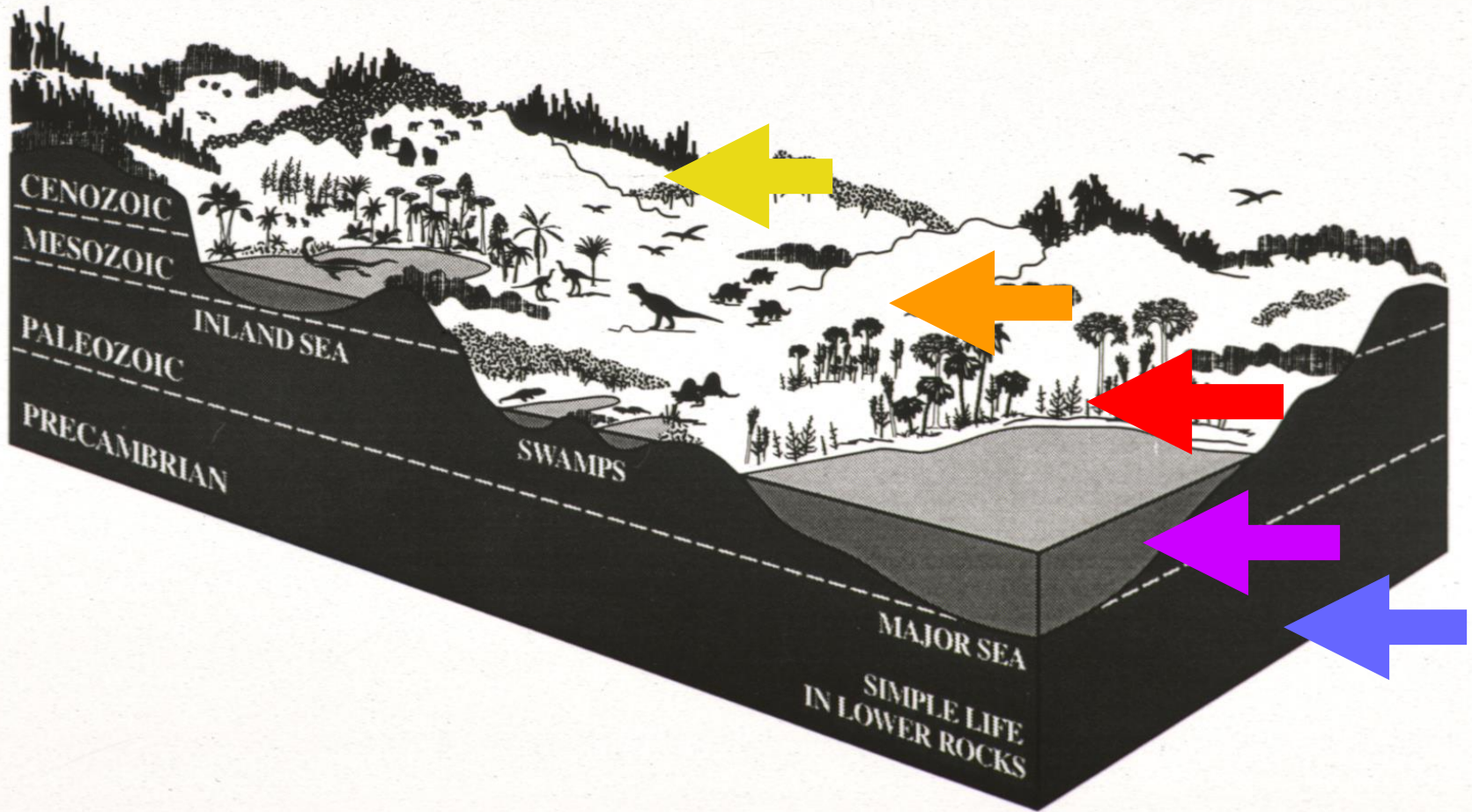
Recall that EZT proposes that the order of the fossils in the geological column reflects the general order of the altitudinal ecological distribution of life forms before the Flood as the various zones were destroyed by the rising waters of the Flood.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

On the basis of what is found in the fossil record one can somewhat reconstruct what the distribution of organisms was like before the Genesis Flood. The next slide illustrates such a reconstruction.

If the various zones (realms) illustrated in the next slide should be eroded by the gradually rising waters of the Flood, (four top arrows) and be redeposited in order in the low lying basins of the earth, you would end up with the sequence of fossils we now find in the geologic column.



PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF ORGANISMS BEFORE THE FLOOD
Note the geologic column to the left, and major sea to the right.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

The ecological zonation model postulates a **different pattern** of distribution of some organisms before the Flood than on the present earth. Recall that there would have been **a greater variety of types of organisms and ecological zones**, such as the Carboniferous swamp coal regions that show very different organisms than now live on the earth. There were likely more seas at different levels than we have now. Also there may have been **less mixing in the distribution of organisms than now**. In other words the distribution of organisms was more restricted and orderly than at present. Amphibians and reptiles dominated in the upper Paleozoic and Mesozoic realms respectively, and there were many strange kinds of plants there also.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

At present, on the earth, we have the same **general** increase in complexity of organisms as seen for the fossil record. We note this as we go up from simple microscopic life in the deep rocks, that are mostly one-celled organisms, or a rare (1/2 millimeter long) worm that lives several kilometers down. Higher up, above these deep rocks, we have marine (sea) environments, with organisms of moderate complexity like sponges and fish; and then to the most advanced organisms, like dinosaurs and flowering plants, living on the higher terrestrial environments of our continents.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT

However there are **significant differences in details of distribution, such as mammals and flowering plants,** that were higher up in ecological distribution before the Flood than now on our present earth. Biological competition from many kinds of strange organisms that do not now live on the earth, but whose fossils are found in upper Paleozoic and the Mesozoic layers, could have forced mammals and flowering plants into higher altitudes. Also, higher temperatures in middle altitudes may have been a factor favoring a high concentration of mammals and flowering plants in the cooler higher regions (Cenozoic), but this is only a suggestion.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT. FOSSIL EVIDENCE THAT AGREES WITH THE ECOLOGICAL ZONATION THEORY

There are some major features of the fossil record that lend support to the ecological zonation theory.

1. The rare “Precambrian” microfossils found in the deep rocks represent the simple **microscopic organisms that live in deep rocks** and that have become fossilized sometime in the past; before, during or after the Flood.
2. The abundant and almost exclusively marine organisms found in the lower Paleozoic rocks represent the **lowest seas before the Flood**. This explains the appearance in the Cambrian of most animal phyla. This sudden appearance is called the “**Cambrian Explosion**” (See Discussion 13) and is rather compelling evidence for the creation model.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(a) EZT. FOSSIL EVIDENCE THAT AGREES WITH THE ECOLOGICAL ZONATION THEORY (CONTINUED)

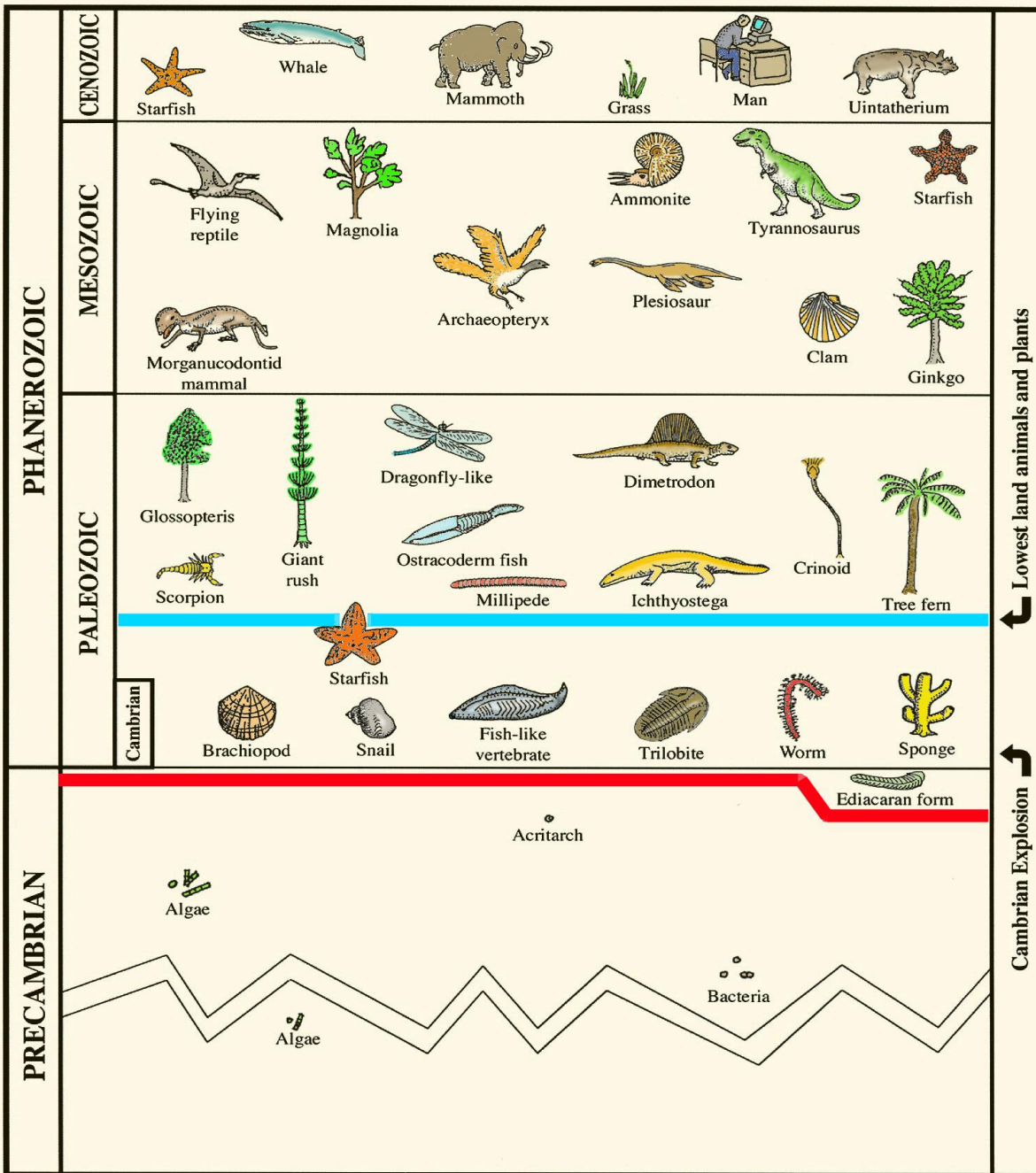
- 3.** A variety of **land (terrestrial) organisms first appear at about the same level** in the fossil record above the Cambrian Explosion in the lower Paleozoic (Silurian). This represents the lowest land level of the world before the Flood. During the Flood the lower marine (ocean) organisms were buried first. No significant evidence of our usual terrestrial organisms is found below this. This is an odd thing for the evolution model, but fits EZT nicely.

- 4.** The general fossil pattern of an **ascending but erratic increase in complexity is similar to the normal ecological distribution of organisms** on the earth now. We now have simple organisms in the deep rocks, abundant marine organisms at intermediate levels in the seas, and generally more complex terrestrial organisms on land above our major seas. Hence the general **increase in complexity**, sometimes seen as evidence for evolution, is also what we **would expect from the Genesis Flood**. The erratic pattern, i.e. lack of fossil intermediates between basic kinds (Discussion 12), and extreme variability in assumed rates of evolution (Discussion 13) **fits better with EZT and creation than evolution**.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

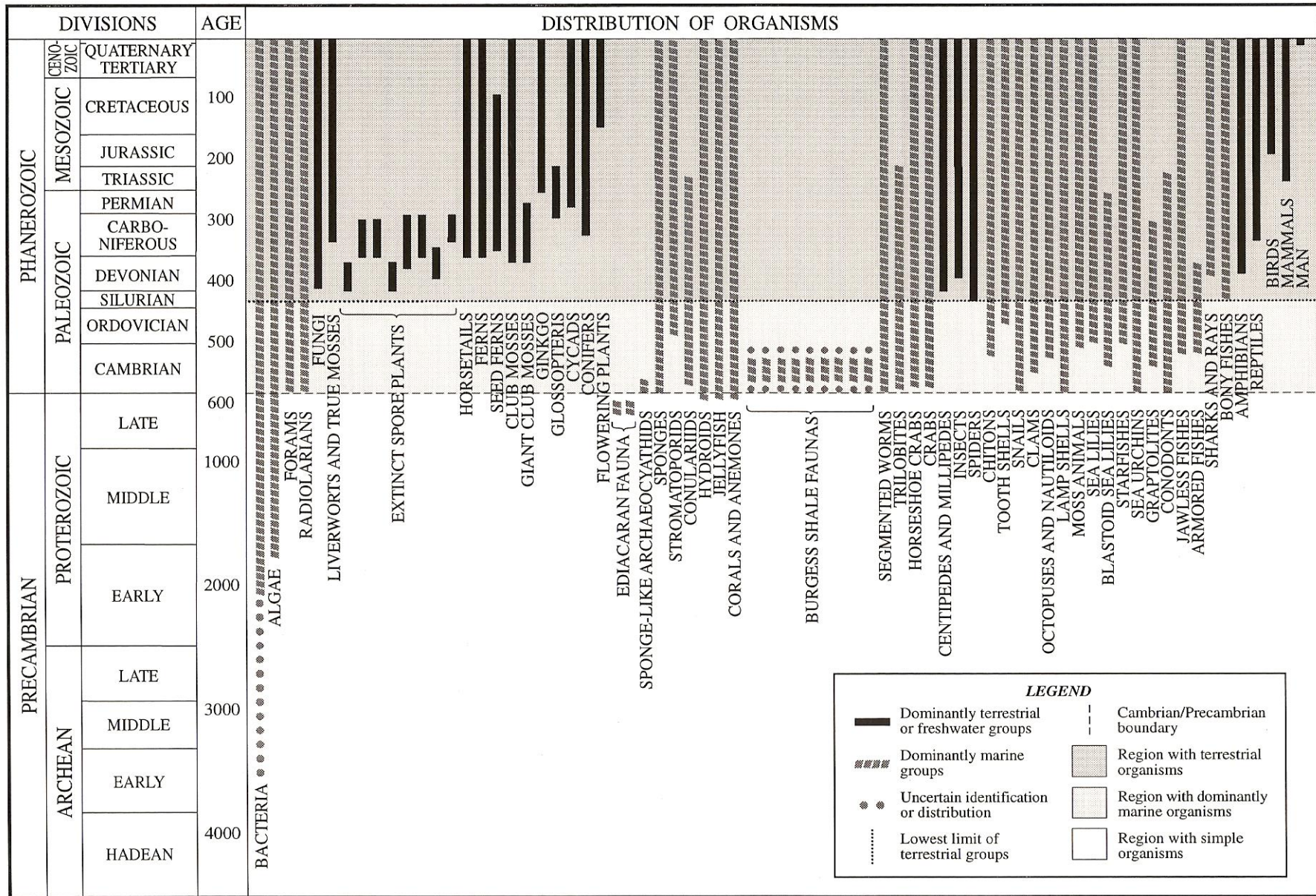
(a) EZT

The four factors listed in the previous slides, that support the ecological zonation model can be easily observed in the fossil record. The slide illustrating the general fossil pattern in the geologic column and the one of “Distribution of Organisms” are repeated below for your convenience so you can analyze these factors: In those illustrations note: (1) deep microorganisms: bacteria and algae in the deep layers, (2) marine organisms first appear above, (3) more advanced terrestrial organisms first appear higher up, and (4) a general moderate, but erratic, increase in complexity as one ascends through the layers.



GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF ORGANISMS THROUGHOUT THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

Note microscopic organisms below the red line, land and marine organisms above the blue line, but only marine organisms between the two.



SPECIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF ORGANISMS IN THE GEOLOGIC LAYERS. Putative ages are given in millions of years are not endorsed by the author

**3. CREATION
EXPLANATIONS
FOR THE FOSSIL
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(b) MOTILITY FACTOR

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(b) MOTILITY FACTOR

Motility would tend to sort some animals as they would try to escape the gradually rising Flood waters. For instance, **birds are rare** in the fossil record and well preserved remains have so far not been found below the middle Mesozoic (Jurassic). Birds would be expected to escape to higher ground during the weeks or months of the Flood, leaving only tracks in the soft sediments. This could explain the appearance of some bird tracks in the lower Mesozoic (Triassic) **below any good fossil bird bones**. This has also been noted for some other animals. **Whales, dolphins and porpoises**, as well as **turtles**, that breathe air, would tend to remain near the surface of the rising Flood waters.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(b) MOTILITY FACTOR

Larger land animals would seem to be better able to escape the rising waters than smaller ones. This may explain the occasional observation of an **increase in size** within a fossil type as one ascends through the geologic column (Cope's Rule of evolutionary biologists). While evolutionists attribute this phenomenon to gradual evolutionary advancement, it may be the result of the greater ability of larger animals to escape the Flood waters compared to their smaller counterparts.

The picture of a flying egret in the next slide simply illustrates a bird's special ability to escape water.



EGRET ESCAPING THE WATER

Photo courtesy Leonard Brand

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(c) BUOYANCY FACTOR

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(c) BUOYANCY (DENSITY, HEAVINESS) FACTOR


It has often been suggested that sorting by **density** might explain the fossil sequence in the geologic column. Many simpler organisms such as coral, snails, clams and brachiopods have a greater density than other animals, and are better represented in the lower parts of the fossil record than animals of lower density such as snakes, cats and dinosaurs. Could density be responsible for the fossil distribution pattern? This could well be a factor on a **local level**, i.e. in certain limited localities or zones, but not as likely, but still possible, for the overall distribution for the whole Flood. During a gradually rising Flood that took months, one might not expect an overall density pattern for the whole fossil record. Besides that, we do frequently find some high density marine animals in the middle (Cretaceous) and the higher parts of the geologic column.

3. CREATION EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FOSSIL SEQUENCE

(c) BUOYANCY FACTOR

The buoyancy (floatation) of vertebrate carcasses is another interesting factor that might have played a role in the distribution of organisms in the geologic column. Preliminary experiments indicate that some vertebrates tend to float longer after death than others. On an average, **birds float for 76 days, mammals 56 days, reptiles 32 days, and amphibians 5 days.** These results agree with the time frame of the Flood and with the order in the fossil record. See the distribution of these kinds of organisms given towards the right side of the more specific “Distribution of Organisms” slide provided earlier. However, there are many complicating factors for a complicated Flood.

This phenomenon is illustrated in the next picture.



Floating dead bird (red arrow) in water above one of the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, California.

**4. THE SCARCITY
OF HUMAN
REMAINS IN THE
GEOLOGIC
COLUMN**

4. THE SCARCITY OF HUMAN REMAINS IN THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

Thus far we have found good fossils of humans only in what appear to be the top geologic layers. Evolutionists claim that man had not evolved before then. However other reasons for this in a creation-Flood context are:

1. There were **not that many humans** before the Flood so chance of preservation and discovery are slim. According to the Bible, reproduction was slow before the Flood . On an average the first born son of the patriarchs that lived then, was born after the patriarch was already 100 years old, and Noah had only 3 sons after 600 years.

2. During the Flood, intelligent humans **escaped to the highest regions** where there were no higher sediments to bury and preserve them. Without burial, organisms tend to disintegrate quite rapidly and not be preserved, or if buried shallowly they can be easily exposed and destroyed.

4. THE SCARCITY OF HUMAN REMAINS IN THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

3. Before the Flood humans lived in higher, cooler regions of the earth and would not be expected in the lower geologic layers. There is significant evidence that the earth was warmer in the past, and lower regions before the Flood may have been less pleasant for humans then, like being inside the oceans is definitely less pleasant for us now.

4. The Flood activity destroyed the evidence of humans in the main part of the geologic column.

4. THE SCARCITY OF HUMAN REMAINS IN THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

As mentioned in an earlier discussion the question of the absence of good fossil remains of humans, expected after some 1500 years or more of reproduction before the Flood, **is not as serious a problem for creation as the question evolution faces as to why there are so few human remains after some half a million or more years of humanoid reproduction.** On the basis of evolutionary time, one would expect that the earth should have filled up with humans a very long time ago, because humans reproduce quite rapidly and readily claim the territory. Human population growth is geometric and not linear. At our present rate of reproduction, world population doubles in size in less than a century, and overcrowding can occur in a relatively short time.

4. THE SCARCITY OF HUMAN REMAINS IN THE GEOLOGIC COLUMN

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, why is the good evidence of man, such as writing, buildings, history, etc. so recent, if man has been here for half a million years or more? The good valid evidence for man is recent and indicates only a recent existence as indicated in the Bible.

**5. HUMAN
ORIGINS AND
THE FOSSIL
RECORD**

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

There is no area of the study of fossil that is so fraught with contention as the persistent battle about humanity's origin. Physical anthropologists debate endlessly about the relationship of various assumed evolutionary ancestors of modern humans. Part of the problem is that the various kinds of fossils overlap each other up and down the fossil record and do not provide a good continuous evolutionary sequence. Some also suggest that the battles are due to psychological factors such as our personal involvement in the question of where we came from. One of the greatest hoaxes ever created was when an ape's jaw was attached to a human skull. For 40 years, the fabrication, known as the "Piltdown Man" commanded a very respected position as an evolutionary intermediate, when proposing that apes evolved to humans.

The real deep question at issue here is: Did we evolve from some ape-like ancestor, or were we created by God in His image, as indicated in the Bible?

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

Popular illustrations of sequences of hominid organisms gradually advancing from ape to modern man are hardly ever accurate, and the scientific literature about this speculative topic is confounded by too many ideas running after too few facts.

In general the hominid fossils, that are used to illustrate human evolution, can be divided into two major groups. There are the small australopithecines and similar types, that are around one meter high and have a cranial capacity (where the brain is) of around 450 cubic centimeters. These fossils appear closely related to our modern apes. The famous fossil “Lucy” is an example. The second group is the genus “*Homo*” group that can reach two meters in height and have a cranial capacity up to three times that of australopithecines. Neanderthal man is an example, who interestingly had an average cranial capacity larger than that of modern man.

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

However, there is one kind of fossil in the *Homo* group that is considered by some evolutionists to be highly important and it is notoriously controversial. It consists of the few *Homo habilis* fossils that have a short stature and a brain size just a little larger than that of the australopithecines. The group is considered by some evolutionists to bridge the gap between the small australopithecines and the much more advanced hominids (*Homo erectus*, Neanderthals, and *Homo sapiens*). Other evolutionists disagree and think that *Homo habilis* should be classified with the australopithecines. It had more of the crawling gait of an ape, than the upright gait of the rest of the *Homo* group. It also had a much smaller average brain size than the other groups in the genus *Homo*. There are conflicting interpretations about the origin of various *Homo habilis* samples and some do not consider the group to be a valid category. The gap between the advanced *Homo* types and the australopithecines remains very large.

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

It can be argued that the less advanced fossils in the *Homo* group are lower down in the fossil layers, thus illustrating evolutionary advancement over time as you go up through the layers over millions of years, but this is not a valid general conclusion. The time overlap of the various kinds of *Homo* fossils as one ascends the fossil layers is extreme and negates the common illustrations of man's gradual linear evolution through various fossil types to more and more advanced forms. It looks like many of the different kinds of *Homo* fossils lived at the same time. Also there have been significant controversies over the dating of some of the layers.

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

In general, those who believe the Bible point out that the australopithecines likely just represent another created kind of ape, and has nothing to do with man's evolution. With the exception of the controversial and enigmatic *Homo habilis* kind, that is likely an australopithecine or may be an invalid grouping; the rest of the *Homo* group represents humans created in God's image, spreading over the earth after the great Genesis Flood.

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

The idea that man originated from a kind of ape runs into especially difficult scientific trouble when the amount of time evolutionists propose for this feat is compared to the improbabilities of many millions of favorable chance mutations required by the evolutionary model. Based on the fossil record and other factors, it is estimated that man evolved from an ape-like ancestor some 5 million years ago. This 5 million years is way too short a time for the necessary genetic changes involved. You have to have the right mutations at the right time and place, and they have to be selected through the barrier of all kinds of bad mutations that are generated much faster than good ones, and then they have to spread and be established (fixed) in the evolving populations, and that takes a lot of time.

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

Evolutionists have been pointing out that there aren't that many differences between apes and man. It is often claimed that the genetic formula of man is 98.5% similar to that of chimpanzee apes. This is incorrect, and when the full DNA is compared the figure is closer to the 80-90% range. Similarity of part of the DNA is expected because the general anatomy of man and apes is somewhat similar.

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

Calculations based on likely details indicate extreme improbability for evolution. The genetic formula for humans is around 3.3 billion bases. The 15% (100% - 85%) difference between the DNA of humans and chimpanzees, means that to evolve humans from a chimpanzee type you need 495 million ($3.3 \text{ billion} \times 0.15$) new favorable mutations. But in 5 million years you have time for only 500,000 ten year generations of slow reproducing primates to follow each other. Hence each generation would need close to 1000 ($495,000,000 / 500,000$) favorable mutations. Recent data indicates that humans have about 60 mutations per generation, and likely much less than 1 out of 1000 mutations is advantageous (some suggest only one out of a million). Hence, it would take on an average, at least 16 ($1000 / 60$) successive generations of primates to produce one favorable mutation. But you need 495 million new favorable mutations or 7,920 million ($16 \times 495,000,000$) generations to produce them. However, evolutionary time provides time for only 500,000 generationa. If one allows for the complete separate evolution of both modern man and chimpanzee from an assumed common evolutionary ancestor 5 million years ago, this would double the number of changes, but still provide only 1 million favorable mutation events. So evolutionary time is at least 7,920 ($7,920,000,000 / 1,000,000$) times too short for man to evolve.

5. HUMANS AND THE FOSSIL RECORD

One can also suggest that several advantageous mutations could be produced at the same time, but such synchronized random activity is less likely, and if you are going to consider all the mutations, the problem for evolution becomes much, much worse, because for every good mutation you have at least several hundred bad ones and they negate survival value. It looks like we are degenerating fast, and evolution seems essentially impossible, while creation seems a lot more plausible.

Some references that provide more details and many more references to the intriguing question of the evolution of humanity and its genetic challenge include:

Gauger A, Axe D, Luskin C. 2012. *Science & Human Origins*. Seattle: Discovery Institute.

Sanford JC. 2008. *Genetic Entropy & the Mystery of the Genome*. Classroom Edition. Third Edition. Waterloo, New York: FMS Publications.

Behe MJ. 2007. *Mathematical Limits of Darwinism*. Chapter 3 in: **Behe MJ.** *The Edge of Evolution*. New York: Free Press.

Lubenow ML. 2004. *Bones of Contention*. Revised Edition. Grand Rapids. Baker Books.

**6. TRYING TO
RECONCILE THE
BIBLE AND THE
LONG GEOLOGIC
AGES**

6. TRYING TO RECONCILE THE BIBLE AND THE LONG GEOLOGIC AGES

Some have tried to reconcile the sequence of different fossil types in the Phanerozoic layers with the proposed long geologic ages of millions of years, while at the same time preserving the idea of a creator God. One popular idea proposes that God created many times during the long geologic ages, gradually creating more advanced forms over the eons of time, with man created recently at the top of the geologic column. This is called the *progressive creation* model alluded to earlier. Others suggest God used evolution and this is called *theistic evolution*. While the details of the models remain vague, the number of adherents to these ideas is not inconsiderable.

6. TRYING TO RECONCILE THE BIBLE AND THE LONG GEOLOGIC AGES

There are serious problems with the *progressive creation* model.

a. It does not agree with God's own words in the Bible (Exodus 20:11) that He created all in six days, nor with Genesis 1 that states that creation was in six days..

b. In this model one runs into a logical inconsistency because we see the effects of man's sin before man was created. The Bible describes God's creation as very good (Genesis 1:31), but we see evil in the form of predation occurring an assumed many millions of years before man. For instance, in the Jurassic period one sees rampant predation as some dinosaurs chewed each other up long before man appears in the Pleistocene. But the Bible teaches that evil came into the world as the result of man's sin (Genesis 3:17-19, Romans 5:12). How could we see the results of man's sin, before he was created?

6. TRYING TO RECONCILE THE BIBLE AND THE LONG GEOLOGIC AGES

c. In the fossil record we see mass extinctions of organisms at various levels. These are regions where large numbers of organisms that existed in the layers below are no longer found higher up in the layers above.

Paleontologists often describe six major mass extinctions during the Phanerozoic. They occur around the end of the following geologic units listed below. See the Geologic Column above for location.

Eocene
Cretaceous
Triassic
Permian
Devonian
Ordovician

6. TRYING TO RECONCILE THE BIBLE AND THE LONG GEOLOGIC AGES

It is difficult to reconcile these mass extinctions with the work of any kind of creator acting before the major problems caused by man's sin. It seems like a useless exercise for God to create so many different kinds of organisms only to have them disappear later on in mass extinctions. One would not expect such wholesale wasteful activity from any creator intelligent enough to create all these marvelous different kinds of organisms. On the other hand in the context of a Genesis Flood, the destruction was brought on because man was "only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5), and humanity needed special help.

6. TRYING TO RECONCILE THE BIBLE AND THE LONG GEOLOGIC AGES

In the progressive creation model these mass extinctions would have occurred long before man was created. Why would a creator repeatedly provide organisms to be later destroyed by mass extinctions for no apparent reason? This does not seem to fit well with the logical perceptive God described in the Bible. The repeated mass extinctions are more easily explained as the result of the Genesis Flood, as specific realms of organisms living at different altitudes were destroyed by the rising Flood waters. The biblical model seems to make more sense.

d. It also seems strange that in the progressive creation model, God creates some kinds of life, and then waits for very long periods before creating some other kinds, as the fossil record would suggest. Why would He wait millions of years between various creations? The model seems logically bizarre.

6. TRYING TO RECONCILE THE BIBLE AND THE LONG GEOLOGIC AGES

For *theistic evolution* it is proposed that God created over billions of years by using evolution. Some of the problems mentioned above for progressive creation, such as the consequences of evil before man was created, also apply to theistic evolution. There are a number of scientific problems with the model, such as the lack of fossil evolutionary ancestors for major groups of plants and animals (To be considered in the “PROBLEMS ...” Discussion 12 to follow).

6. TRYING TO RECONCILE THE BIBLE AND THE LONG GEOLOGIC AGES

Furthermore in theistic evolution we see a cruel system where those that are superior survive (survival of the fittest) while the less fortunate are eliminated. A system with such disregard for the weak is in sharp contrast with the loving attributes of the God described in the Bible. God is very concerned for the less fit and the erring, relentlessly trying to save the weak sinner. One can postulate a God that would create by using evolution, but it would not be the loving kind of God described in the Bible. Also, the powerful God of the Bible would not have to use a difficult process such as evolution to help create various life forms.

7. CONCLUSIONS FOR FOSSILS AND CREATION

7. CONCLUSIONS

As one ascends through the geologic column, one finds a very general but erratic trend of increase in complexity of organisms.

Evolutionists interpret this increase as gradual evolutionary development over eons of time.

Creationists interpret this as a result of the gradual burial of organisms living on the earth at the time of the Genesis Flood.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Creation explanations for the general increase in complexity include:

- 1. EZT.** A gradual destruction by the ascending waters of the Flood of an ecological distribution of organisms over the earth as reflected by the fossil record. That distribution differed in details from present earth ecology. However, the present general distribution of organisms on the earth also reflects an increase in complexity with microorganisms in the deep rocks, marine organisms above, and more complex terrestrial organisms higher up.
- 2.** Motility of organisms, such as that of birds, during the Genesis Flood would affect fossil distribution.
- 3.** Buoyancy factors, such as carcass flotation, would also have some effect on the ascending complexity found in the fossil record.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Fossil distribution indicates a past that is somewhat different than the present. It is also expected that the horrendous worldwide Genesis Flood would have affected the distribution patterns of organisms. While it is often hard to establish what exactly happened in the past, there are good explanations that agree with both the fossil record and biblical history.

It needs to be kept in mind that in this area of inquiry, one is dealing with a past that cannot now be observed. Because of limited knowledge, our conclusions are necessarily tentative. In this area of inquiry both careful study and caution are highly desirable.

7. CONCLUSIONS

While we don't seem to have found good examples of fossil remains of humans that lived before the Genesis Flood, the overall scarcity of fossil humans is a more serious problem for the evolutionary model. Reproductive rates for humans are so fast that humans should have filled the earth many times over in the hundreds of thousands or more years postulated for human existence by the evolution model.

The fossil record of the assumed evolution of humans faces serious problems. It is confounded by gaps and overlaps, and the proposed time of 5 million years is totally inadequate for the necessary genetic changes.

Ideas such as progressive creation and theistic evolution, proposing that God created over eons of time, have serious logical inconsistencies when carefully scrutinized, especially because in these models death and evil seem to appear long before humans and the consequences of their sins.

8. REVIEW QUESTIONS

(Answers given later below)

8. REVIEW QUESTIONS -1

(Answers given later below)

- 1. Why is it that, in the context of a biblical model, many creationists suggest that most of the fossil record (i.e. most of the Phanerozoic) resulted from the Genesis Flood?**
- 2. Describe how the ecological zonation theory proposes that the general order of the fossils we find in the geologic column reflects the vertical distribution of organisms before the Flood.**
- 3. Briefly explain how (a) Precambrian microorganism; (b) an exclusively marine lower Paleozoic; (c) terrestrial and marine higher Paleozoic on up; and (d) a general erratic increase in complexity; fit well with the ecological zonation theory (EZT) as an explanation for the fossil sequence.**
- 4. Not that many birds are found in the fossil record, and bird tracks are found lower down than fossil birds. Furthermore several of the same type of animal fossils get larger as one ascends up through the geologic layers. What characteristic of animals could explain these facts in the context of the Genesis Flood.**

REVIEW QUESTIONS -2

- 5. Are the buoyancy (flotation) and heaviness (sinking, density) of animals acting during the Flood an explanation for the sequence we find in the fossil record?**
- 6. Thus far, good evidence of fossil man has been found only in the upper part of the fossil record. What explanations can you give for this from a creation-Flood perspective?**
- 7. Briefly explain two main problems the fossils record poses for the evolution of humanity from an ape-like ancestor.**
- 8. Several problems were presented for the progressive creation model. What is that model, and why do so many endorse it?**
- 9. What is the theistic evolution model? How does it conflict with the God of the Bible?**

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - 1

1. Why is it that, in the context of a biblical model, many creationists suggest that most of the fossil record (i.e. most of the Phanerozoic) resulted from the Genesis Flood?

There are thick layers of sediments with fossils in many parts of the earth. Under normal (present) conditions; sediments form very slowly. In the biblical account there is not much time between creation and the Flood, and also since that Flood and now, for the formation of such a large volume of sediments under normal slow conditions. Hence, it appears that most of the fossil record would have to have been formed rapidly during the astonishing worldwide Flood described in the Bible.

2. Describe how the ecological zonation theory proposes that the general order of the fossils we find in the geologic column reflects the vertical distribution of organisms before the Flood.

As the Flood started the “fountains of the deep” burst forth and marine organisms in the oceans were buried first. As the Flood waters gradually rose, higher and higher landscapes on the continents were eroded by the waves and their organisms deposited in order in depositional basins, until the highest mountains were covered with water. Hence the order of deposition of organisms in the fossil record would reflect the general vertical order of distribution of organisms before the Flood.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - 2

3. Briefly explain how (a) Precambrian microorganism; (b) an exclusively marine lower Paleozoic; (c) terrestrial and marine higher Paleozoic on up; and (d) a general erratic increase in complexity; fit well with the ecological zonation theory (EZT) as an explanation for the fossil sequence.

(a). The fossil Precambrian microorganisms represent the organisms that live in the deeper rocks. This would be the lowest level of life on the earth before, during, and after the Genesis Flood.

(b.) Higher up, the abundant and almost exclusively marine organisms found in the lower Paleozoic rocks (Cambrian, Ordovician) represent the seas before the Flood. This explains very well the sudden appearance of most animal phyla in what is called the “Cambrian Explosion.”

(c). The appearance of a variety of terrestrial (land) organisms higher up in the Paleozoic represents the lowest level of the continents (land) that existed before the Genesis Flood. There were also seas at higher levels.

(d). The fossil record shows a moderate increase in complexity as one goes up through the layers. This is expected from the order that existed before the Genesis Flood with simple life in the deep rocks, more complex animals higher up in the lowest seas, and the most complex organisms on the higher continents. The increase in complexity claimed by evolution over long ages as one goes up the fossil record is also expected from the brief Genesis Flood.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS -3

4. Not that many birds are found in the fossil record, and bird tracks are found lower down than fossil birds. Furthermore we find that several of the same type of animal fossils get larger as one ascends up through the geologic layers. What characteristic of animals could explain these facts in the context of the Genesis Flood.

Motility. The birds flew to higher regions, and larger animals would be expected to escape to higher regions than their smaller counterparts.

5. Are the buoyancy (flotation) and heaviness (sinking, density) of animals acting during the Flood an explanation for the sequence we find in the fossil record?

Probably not, except in local situations. Also, fossils of very heavy animals like clams and coral have been found at many levels of the fossil record, not just the bottom. On the other hand the duration of flotation of the carcasses of vertebrates is in a time frame that might explain why we find amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds each starting in that order in the fossil record. One can suggest that during the Flood, the organisms now found higher in the fossil record, are there because they floated longer, but many complications would be involved.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - 4

6. Thus far good evidence of fossil man has been found only in the upper part of the fossil record. What explanations can you give for this from a creation-Flood perspective?

There weren't that many people before the Flood to be preserved.

Humans escaped to highest regions where preservation is unlikely

Before the Flood, humans lived only in the higher regions where it was cooler

The Flood activity destroyed the evidence for man

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - 5

7. Briefly explain the two main problems the fossils record poses for the evolution of humanity from an ape-like ancestor.

(1) The fossils tend to fall into two major groups: the Australopithecine types and the Homo types. Close examination of the Homo habilis kind, that is considered intermediate between the two main types, appears to be an Australopithecine. (2) Calculations indicate that the five million years of the fossil record that is proposed for the evolution of humanity, is many thousands of times too short for the genetic good mutational changes required.

8. Several problems were presented earlier for the progressive creation model. What is that model, and why do so many endorse it?

The model proposes that God created many times making more and more advanced forms of life over millions of years, finally creating man. The model is endorsed because it agrees with the popular concept of life developing over millions of years as suggested by current scientific evolutionary interpretations; but the Bible indicates God created all in six days.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - 5

9. What is the theistic evolution model? How does it conflict with the God of the Bible?

Theistic evolution combines God and evolution by proposing that God used the process of evolution to create the various forms of life on earth.

This model does not fit with the kind of God described in the Bible. The powerful and all knowing God of the Bible would not have to use an inadequate evolutionary process.

Furthermore, evolution is a harsh process where the fittest survive and the less fit perish. This is not a process that the kind of God described in the Bible would use. God tries to help and save the weak and erring, not eliminate them as evolution would do. One can propose that some kind of God would use evolution, but it would not be the loving kind of God of the Bible.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

For further discussions by the author (Ariel A. Roth) and many additional references, see the author's books titled:

1. **ORIGINS: LINKING SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE.** Hagerstown, MD. Review and Herald Publishing Association.
2. **SCIENCE DISCOVERS GOD: Seven Convincing Lines of Evidence for His Existence.** Hagerstown, MD. Autumn House Publishing, an imprint of Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Additional information is available on the author's Web Page: Sciences and Scriptures. www.sciencesandscriptures.com. Also see many articles published by the author and others in the journal **ORIGINS** which the author edited for 23 years. For access see the Web Page of the Geoscience Research Institute www.grisda.org.

Highly Recommended URLs are:

Earth History Research Center <http://origins.swau.edu>

Theological Crossroads www.theox.org

Sean Pitman www.detectingdesign.com

Scientific Theology www.scientifictheology.com

Geoscience Research Institute www.grisda.org

Sciences and Scriptures www.sciencesandscriptures.com

Other Web Pages providing a variety of related answers are: Creation-Evolution Headlines, Creation Ministries International, Institute for Creation Research, and Answers in Genesis.

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