

The Precambrian and the biblical record—harmony or contradiction?

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Dickens & Snelling (*Journal of Creation* 22(1):65–72)¹ claim to harmonise the Precambrian geological record with the biblical record, suggesting;

‘The Mesoproterozoic Era ... was a time of extensive rifting and this is inferred to correspond with Day 3 [of Creation Week].’

The Mesoproterozoic Era comprises the middle subdivision of the Proterozoic Eon which overlies strata of the Archean, the oldest Precambrian Eon (figure 1).^{2,3}

Davison⁴ notes regarding the mid Mesoproterozoic Ventersdorp Supergroup in South Africa;

‘van der Westhuizen *et al.*, ... described raindrop imprints within the Ventersdorp Supergroup ... at five different stratigraphic levels.’⁵

And suggests;

‘The implication of this observation is that if rain first occurred only at the Flood (previous to the Flood mist rose out of the ground to water the earth ... Genesis 2:5–6), then these rocks must be considered Flood deposited ... Also implied by this observation is that some sort of mechanism allowed for repeated brief subaerial exposure of the deposits during the Flood. Further support for these rocks being Flood deposited is the recognition of organic carbon (“kerogen”) in Witwatersrand rocks, ... implying that organic material was buried and matured within the Witwatersrand Basin.’⁶

In 1991, after documenting the widespread occurrence of fossils (primarily stromatolites) and organically derived carbon in the Precambrian geological record, and noting that Genesis 2:5 may preclude rainfall before the Flood, Snelling⁷ suggested that ‘we must decide the criteria for reclassifying rocks and ores as either

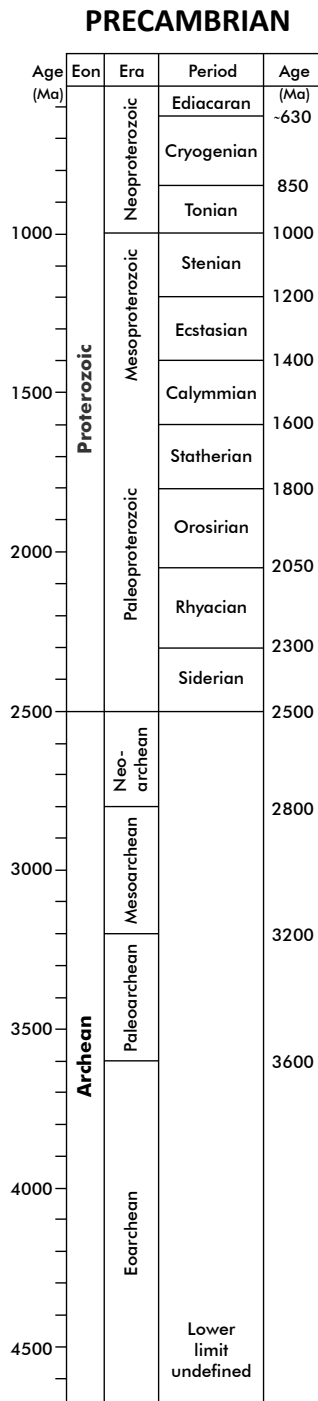


Figure 1. Precambrian geological time scale (Modified from Gradstein *et al.*²).

Creation Week, pre-Flood, Flood (early, middle or late) or post-Flood. What I am contending here is that fossils, whether they be microscopic or macroscopic, plant or animal, and their fossil counterpart, organic matter, along with its metamorphosed equivalents (graphite and related carbon forms), are the primary evidence which should distinguish Flood rocks from pre-Flood rocks’ and concluded that, on the basis of their fossil and organically derived carbon content;

‘... it is far easier to conceive of most, if not all of these Precambrian strata sequences, particularly from the Late Archaean and Early Proterozoic onwards, as being deposited during the Flood [emphasis added].’

Snelling’s ‘Late Archaean and early Proterozoic onwards’ includes the Mesoproterozoic, which Dickens and Snelling now claim were deposited during Day 3 of Creation Week¹ (figure 1).

Snelling⁷ noted the widespread occurrence of ‘copious quantities’ of organically derived carbon throughout the Precambrian geologic record and discussed the origin of carbonaceous material in the gold-bearing reefs of the 2.3–2.7 billion (‘evolutionary’) year ‘old’ Mesoproterozoic Witwatersrand Group of South Africa, noting;

‘Although this carbonaceous material was early recognised as being of organic origin, it was not until the mid 1970’s that the technology was developed to show authoritatively that the Witwatersrand ‘carbon’ is in fact *the fossilized remains of Precambrian plants* [emphasis added].’

The Witwatersrand Group, which Snelling thereby concluded, on the basis of its content of organic carbon derived from plants, was Flood deposited, and which Dickens and Snelling now claim

is Creation Week Day 3, is stratigraphically lower than, and therefore older than, the Ventersdorp strata⁸ in which Davison notes the occurrence of raindrop imprints and organic carbon,

More recently, in 2005, in his discussion of the significance of radiohalos in granites, Snelling⁹ implies that all of the Precambrian geologic record is pre-Flood when he says;

‘Perhaps the most critical issue that needs to be first resolved is the question of the distinction between pre-Flood and Flood granites It is a moot point, but very much still under investigation and discussion as to just how much of the Precambrian *geologic record* and the granitic rocks it contains should be consigned to the Creation week, and *therefore* how much of it pertains to the pre-Flood era from the end of the Creation week until the initiation of the Flood event . . . there is a widespread consensus that that the evidence for the commencement of the Flood in the geologic record is where the strata containing fossilized multi-cellular organisms begin, and that is confirmed by the associated evidence of catastrophic deposition of those and other sedimentary strata. [emphases added].’

The implication in this statement, which contains no indication that any of the Precambrian geologic record is Flood deposited, is that when it is determined ‘how much of the Precambrian *geologic record* and the granitic rocks it contains should be consigned to the Creation week,’ then the remainder of the Precambrian ‘*therefore* . . . pertains to the pre-Flood era from the end of the Creation week until the initiation of the Flood event [emphases added].’

Snelling doesn’t here tell us where in the geologic record he believes these ‘strata containing fossilized multi-celled organisms’ begin, nor whether he agrees with the ‘widespread consensus’, and thus the statement above is difficult to interpret, but this interpretation seems to be confirmed several times elsewhere in the text where Snelling makes statements such as;

‘. . . radiohalos appear to be more prolific in Paleozoic-Mesozoic (Flood) granitic rocks than in Precambrian (pre-Flood) granitic rocks.’

If taken at face value, they could be interpreted as meaning that all Precambrian rocks are pre-Flood and all Paleozoic-Mesozoic rocks are Flood deposited.

How do Dickens and Snelling reconcile their contention that the mid Proterozoic Mesoproterozoic strata were deposited during Day 3 of Creation Week with Davison’s observations regarding raindrop imprints and organic carbon in the mid Mesoproterozoic Ventersdorp Supergroup of South Africa, and with Snelling’s 1991 contention that, based on their fossil and organically derived carbon content, the late Archean and Proterozoic, including

the early Mesoproterozoic Witwatersrand Group strata, which Snelling notes contain organic carbon derived from ‘multi-cellular organisms’, namely plants, were Flood deposited?

References

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