

# Not all life died before Day 150 of the Flood

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Many creationists believe that all life on Earth had died by the 150<sup>th</sup> day of the Flood. This causes a rampant debate about the Flood/post-Flood boundary. For if the fossil traces of life cannot be explained before Day 150, they must be explained in contrived post-Flood catastrophes. The discussed strata are found in sedimentary deposits more than a kilometre thick on all continents and contain millions of ichnofossils. However, the Bible does leave room for life after Day 150, where that life could logically have caused the marks in Flood deposits. Of course, all such earthly life did perish before the end of the Flood year. If this shift to Day 370 is accepted, it could shift the discussion of the Flood/post-Flood boundary to Late Cenozoic. Obviously, this adding of thick layers to Flood evidence will derail the naturalistic geologic timescale even more.

Most biblical creationists believe that all life on Earth had died by the 150<sup>th</sup> day of Noah's Flood.<sup>1</sup> However, the Flood lasted a little over a year (c. 370 days).<sup>2</sup> This causes much debate about the Flood/post-Flood boundary.<sup>3</sup>

For example, Marcus Ross cited the 150-day criterion as a weighty argument for a Cretaceous–Paleogene (K–Pg) post-Flood boundary at the Round Table Debate on the Flood boundaries at the Ninth International Conference on Creationism in 2023. After all, are the ichnofossils (fossil traces of life, e.g., footprints) from before or after Day 150? The discussed strata are found in sedimentary deposits on all continents and contain millions of fossils, including footprints and scavenged remains. Most fossils of birds and mammals are here also, plus *all* known fossils of man.

It is therefore an extremely important question. For, theologically, could this have been deposited after God's explicit blessing and repeated rainbow promise to humans and animals? Notice the contrast of these fossil remains with God's Word in Genesis 8:16–17:

“Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it”.

Being fruitful and increasing in number is the opposite of getting killed in watery deposits worldwide. It also conflicts with Genesis 9:15: “Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.” Both the blessing and the promise are repeated several times, which underlines its importance.<sup>4–6</sup> But, what is the value of that promise for the many animal species that were then globally extirpated and buried in deposits from so-called regional water floods? Or do these fossil remains, if indeed they perished in such monstrous fashion after the Flood, constitute an indictment of the rainbow promise? That would indeed be a serious and well-founded charge. For this reason, it is highly unlikely that God allowed humans and animals to multiply prolifically after the Flood, only to kill

and bury them worldwide in sedimentary rocks (sediments deposited by water). The entire discussion can be traced back to the literal reading of Genesis 7:24 as the *terminus ad quem* for what is described in Genesis 7:23; i.e., *at the end of the 150 days* all flesh was wiped out.

## No literal reading

Grigg notes: “Creationists are often accused of believing that the whole Bible should be taken literally. This is not so!”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, this is an unfair accusation. For example, a literal reading of “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food” in Genesis 3:19 might generate the idea that brow sweat will be a condiment for Adam's food. However, nobody (including creationists) would seriously take that to be the author's intended meaning.

Grigg continues, “Rather, the key to a correct understanding of any part of the Bible is to ascertain the intention of the author of the portion or book under discussion.”<sup>7</sup> Table 1 lists all biblical texts highlighting the destructive nature of the Flood. Can a literal reading of these texts conflict with the author's intention and/or with reality? For example, “I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth” (Genesis 6:17) and “the springs of the great deep burst forth” (Genesis 7:11) do not stop creationists from also giving other geologic mechanisms an important role. Oard notes:

“Creationists expect the Flood to have been a volcanic, tectonic, and hydrological cataclysm. Both submarine and subaerial volcanism is expected, and indeed there is abundant evidence for volcanism in both Precambrian and Phanerozoic sedimentary rocks.”<sup>8</sup>

Reality then confirms, and does not conflict, with the reading of Genesis 8:21: “curse the ground” and Genesis 9:11: “destroy the earth”. There are good reasons to admit that there was a lot of volcanic activity involved in the destroying process. So, creationists are flexible and do not always apply a woodenly literal reading. The intention of

the author and the observational facts should both be taken into account.

### Not every living creature was drowned

Outside the Ark, no eyewitnesses survived. Therefore, what took place there necessarily rests on inferences from paleontology, geology, and the texts listed in table 1. The Flood probably destroyed most living creatures by drowning, but the duration of the catastrophe also took its toll. It already took forty days just to lift up the Ark. And it is certain that many creatures died of heart attacks, starvation, hypothermia, age, predation, crushed under the feet of fleeing hordes, landslides, earthquakes, etc. So, “I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens” (Genesis 6:17) should not exclude causes of death other than drowning. The language is loose enough to allow a multitude of different causes of death, so long as they are all sourced ultimately in the Flood and its effects on geology and the atmosphere.

In short, there is no reason to narrow the meaning to the most literal reading. The intention of the text and geological and paleontological findings must also be weighed. Reasonable considerations make room for causes of death other than water-related ones. On this basis, it may be useful to look again at the discussion about tracks in Flood deposits. Were those tracks made *before* or *after* Day 150?

### Not all earthly life died before Day 150

Johnson and Clarey position the highest water level at day 150 at the end of the Zuni megasequence, whereafter the Tejas [early Cenozoic] follows in the run-off phase of the Flood.<sup>12</sup> They calculate an average thickness of 1.5 km of Tejas sediments on the Americas and Africa. Tomkins presented a thickness and extent map of the Tejas for the entire world.<sup>13</sup> He also shows that the Tejas sediments surrounding Ararat were in place and dry at the time the Ark was disembarked.<sup>14</sup> Froede *et al.* note a major challenge to this view of an upper Cenozoic post-Flood boundary:

**Table 1.** Texts alluding to the verdict carried out throughout the Flood year. Up to Genesis 7:4, the verdict is announced. Up to Genesis 7:21–23, the verdict is being carried out. And from Genesis 8:21, the texts look back. As Noah was allowed to exit the Ark no earlier than Day 370, it is logical that the Curse (8:21a) was ended that day. It hadn't already ended at Day 150.

Genesis 6:7	I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.
Genesis 6:13	I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.
Genesis 6:17	I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.
Genesis 7:4	Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.
<b>DAY 150</b> <sup>9,10</sup>	
Genesis 7:21–23	Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth.
<b>DAY 370 (371 if counting the first day and last day of the Flood as full days)</b> <sup>11</sup>	
Genesis 8:21	Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.
Genesis 9:11	Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.
Genesis 9:15	Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.
Matthew 24:39	... until the flood came and took them all away.
Luke 17:27	Then the flood came and destroyed them all.
2 Peter 2:5	He did not spare the ancient world when He brought the flood on its ungodly people,
2 Peter 3:6	By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

“... the Tejas megasequence contains an abundance of footprints/tracks/trackways created by formerly living animals/birds. This is puzzling, since no living terrestrial life should exist outside the Ark during this time, when, according to advocates of the megasequence model, floodwater was withdrawing from the continents.”<sup>15</sup>

In their figure 1, reproduced as figure 1 here, they present what they believe are the biblical expectations regarding the occurrence of fossil trackways.<sup>15</sup> They specify that flood layers deposited after Day 150 should not contain footprints, tracks, and trackways—with the uncommon possibility of isolated foot impressions from a dead animal bobbing along a soft substrate. They position Day 150 in the lower flood layers, followed by enormous middle and upper flood layers without tracks.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, they do not give any example of such a trackless zone. What is striking in their diagram is that the judgment on the earth is apparently not yet halfway through, while the destruction of life has already ended.

This divide on the 150<sup>th</sup> day is widely supported among YECs without questioning whether the Bible necessarily supports it.<sup>17–19</sup> Oard confirms this literal interpretation of Genesis:

“... all air-breathing land animals were dead by Day 150, and most likely died earlier. There were no animals available to make tracks during the Recessive Stage of the Flood. If we accept the Flood narrative, this means that the Mesozoic represents the rising stage of the Flood within its first 150 days.”<sup>20</sup>

However, Boyd noticed something problematic in the chronology of the Flood:

“I had always thought and taught my students that God remembered Noah at the middle of the Flood (8:1), and that ‘God remembered Noah’ chronologically followed 7:24. But there were seven verbs involving processes in between the two aforementioned chronological pieces of information [running from 7:24 to 8:4], which both appeared to point to the same or nearly the same time. How would there be time in between these virtually identical instants of time for all the events represented by these verbs? Could 8:1 be at a different time than is conventionally thought?”<sup>21</sup>

This led him to question the conventional understanding of the chronology of the Flood narrative.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, a research team was formed. One of the questions they had to consider was: “Does the Hebrew Indicate when all Life had Perished?”<sup>22</sup> However, the team was instructed, essentially without argument, that all life died when the floodwaters peaked: “But once the waters peaked globally it would be assumed all land life had perished, just as the Genesis account describes, and maybe from then on only carcasses were buried.”<sup>22</sup>

However, this premise can be called into question. And, interestingly, two issues raised in *Grappling with*

*the Chronology of the Genesis Flood* indicate why. First, the team wondered precisely when all life had really been eradicated, given that creatures could have been floating around on debris.<sup>23</sup> Second, the temporal sequence of the Flood narrative was challenged (based on their proposed understanding of the Hebrew use of *wayyiqtol* verbs).<sup>24</sup> But if the *wayyiqtol* isn’t primarily limited to denoting sequential actions, then it’s not clear that the *wayyiqtol* in Genesis 7:24 (*wayyigbərū* “and [it] prevailed”) indicates that the ‘destruction of all flesh’ described in Genesis 7:21–23 must be limited to the first 150 days of the Flood.

Of course, there is a cogent narrative sequence running from Genesis 7:17–24: The Flood engulfed the earth for 40 days → the Ark rose and floated → the waters topped the mountains → all ‘land flesh’ died → the Flood prevailed 150 days. However, the sequence is not an airtight logical or causal sequence. First, did any animals die *before* the floodwaters topped out? If so, then this conflicts with the narrative sequence, since the death of animals is only mentioned *after* the floodwaters topped out. Rather, the

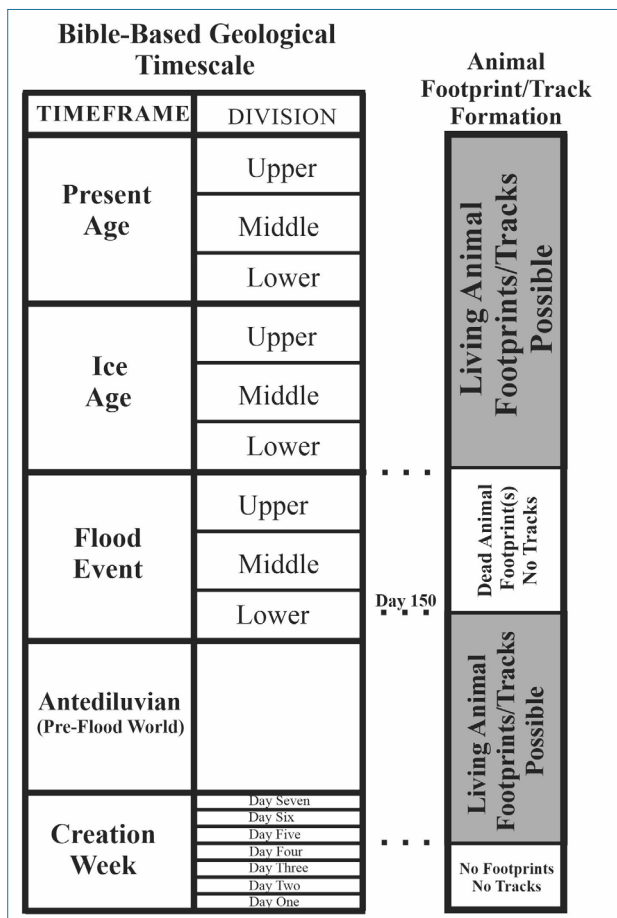


Figure 1. The proposed biblical geological timescale of Froede *et al.* (from ref. 15) indicating where they would expect a total absence of fossilized live animal tracks

animals dying is a causal consequence of the rising waters *more generally*. But even that only tells us that animals died because the waters came over the earth. It does not tell us they stopped dying when the waters stopped prevailing.

Indeed, Noah was allowed to exit the Ark no earlier than day 370 because conditions outside the Ark were antithetical to survival for months after the 150 days. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that the ongoing destruction of life ended much later than day 150. That is the logic from the *theological nature* of the text; its purpose being to advance a theological point and not to indicate eventuality sequence.<sup>25</sup> The texts in table 1 and the geologic and paleontological evidence might indicate that no living terrestrial life existed outside the Ark *when the Ark was emptied*.<sup>26</sup> That is 220 days later, in which time living creatures in fact could make abundant tracks.

Therefore, there is no valid reason we must believe that all waterbirds, dippers, waders, crocodiles, otters, etc., had drowned at Day 150. Food was easy to grab for hunters. Also, vegetarians could have obtained their meals from floating plants.

### Fresh water

Bible-based geology should include the idea that the water sources of the Flood likely provided fresh water. Where the 150 days of rain is concerned,<sup>27</sup> this is obvious, but even for the springs of the great deep it is possible that they supplied freshwater. Genesis 2:6 describes that fresh water came up from the earth and supplied Eden and the whole earth with water. This might be the water released from “the fountains of the great deep” (Genesis 7:11) at the onset of the Flood. If so, it would have significantly increased the survival rate of terrestrial life.

Take into consideration that even ‘lifeboats’ were provided. Pre-Flood floating forests are considered.<sup>28</sup> Despite the destructive power of waves, researchers give good reasons for the formation of large floating islands *during* the Flood.<sup>29,30</sup> An evolutionist argued,

“In times of flood large masses of earth and entwining vegetation, including trees, may be torn loose from the banks of rivers and swept out to sea. Sometimes such masses are encountered floating in the ocean out of sight of land, still lush and green, with palms 20–30 ft [7–10 m] tall. It is entirely probable that land animals may be transported long distances in this manner.”<sup>31</sup>

Note that evolutionists think that this transport of land animals over long distances occurred without fresh water supply. In that respect, it was easier during the Flood. Moreover, Oard refers to animal transport: “the Flood would have provided much fodder for the formation of large floating vegetation mats akin to modern ‘floating islands’, but much larger, potentially enabling them to survive trips even across



Image courtesy, Janine Heerema-van der Velde.

**Figure 2.** The Ark was positioned on the highest mountain above the dense volcanic gases.

oceans.”<sup>32</sup> By example, undersea volcanism can create floating pumice islands.<sup>33</sup> A witnessed example of animals crossing oceans on a floating island is the iguana.<sup>34</sup> A cougar has been witnessed on a floating iceberg.<sup>35</sup> It is reasonable, then, to expect this from larger cats as well. And there are more examples.<sup>36–38</sup> Even elephants can survive in water for a long period of time as long as they have something that floats to lean their trunks on.<sup>39</sup>

### Surviving people

The people before the Flood should not be underestimated in their attempts to survive the Flood. Those in the vicinity had witnessed Noah building the Ark. They saw the animals arrive in a supernatural way. They saw the food that was being taken on board. All this prepping took time and people must have taken notice. And finally, assuming they did not run off scared, they might have seen the door of the Ark being closed by God Himself. Therefore, some people likely took precautions. Even today there are people who prepare for a nuclear attack, sea level rise, or the failure of utilities like water, gas, and electricity. It should also be taken into account that the water rose over many weeks. The Ark was not immediately washed away by a tsunami. This is shown by the fact that the Ark was lifted on the fortieth day. Only exceptionally stubborn people would not have used those weeks to prepare for being on the water.<sup>40</sup>

### Postponed disembarkation

The Ark rested on the highest mountain from Day 150. On Day 223, the tops of other mountains also became visible, but disembarking was delayed till Day 370. Why was Noah’s family not allowed to go out for a walk? If only to stretch their legs and get some fresh air. Perhaps they were not

allowed to interfere with any survivors. And the Bible gives another very serious reason. Genesis 7:23 reveals, “Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air.”

### Massive geologic activity after Day 150

When the whole earth was immersed, there existed no barrier to huge global tidal surges and tsunamis.<sup>41</sup> From Day 150, the continents were lifted up by volcanic and isostatic forces. Oard refers to it as ‘differential vertical tectonics’.<sup>42</sup> The waters were withdrawn vastly, defined as the ‘Recessive Stage’ by Walker.<sup>43</sup> Sheet erosion occurred.<sup>44</sup> Rivers were formed and were quickly shifted. Canyons opened and/or were carved.<sup>45</sup> The multiple freshly deposited sedimentary layers, over a kilometre thick had to dewater and shrink. Volcanoes erupted millions of cubic kilometres of basalt (e.g., Siberian and Deccan traps), salt,<sup>46</sup> dolomite,<sup>47,48</sup> ash, etc.

Many, but possibly still not all, living things on the face of the earth were drowned and/or buried. As long as they lived, they made tracks. Men could have built hasty shelters and/or made use of caves just like ‘hunter-gatherers’ known from the Ice Age. And they could have buried some of their dead when they were able to do so. This horrifying period of time endured for months in which the groups of surviving humans and animals rapidly declined in numbers.

### Finally wiped out by volcanic gases

Obviously, massive volcanism caused the atmosphere to become suffocating and toxic as the volcanoes emitted extensive deadly gases. This was the final stroke for every Flood survivor. “Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died” (Gen. 7:22). As an example of the total character of this fated death, reference can be made to the volcanic gas that escaped from Lake Nyos in Cameroon in 1986. Due to its higher density, the carbon dioxide gas cloud slid downwards, displacing the oxygen, and everything in whose nostrils was the breath of life died inside the canyon.<sup>49</sup>

This suggests one reason Noah’s family had to stay inside the Ark on top of the highest mountain. Even the raven and the dove (on its first mission) confirmed that there was no place to land, although other mountains were long visible (Genesis 8:5–9). It is possible that they could not reach these lower mountains as the whole continent was covered in volcanic gases (figure 2). Any swimming creature that came too near the gas-emitting continents was at risk as well. Whales that have been fossilized in sedimentary flood layers in Peru might be examples.<sup>50</sup>

Anyway, volcanic gases may be a reasonable way to wipe out *all* birds, including waterbirds, and *all* animals on floating islands or that could swim.

**Table 2.** Options to consider for explaining tracks in the Tejas megasequence. Option C is currently added and promoted in this paper.

A	Tracks in Flood sediments made by pre-Flood creatures killed before day 150 <sup>51</sup>
B	Tracks in Flood sediments accidentally made by dead floating pre-Flood creatures between day 150 and 370 <sup>52</sup>
C	Tracks in Flood sediments made after day 150 by living pre-Flood creatures that died before day 370
D	Tracks in Flood sediments made by post-Flood creatures <sup>53</sup>
E	Tracks in post-Flood sediments made by post-Flood creatures <sup>3</sup>

### Conclusion and recommendation

In table 2, the options to explain tracks in the Tejas megasequence within YEC models are listed. There are multiple reasons to favour option C. Men and animals could survive the first 150 days of the Flood and even longer if it was a freshwater Flood. Therefore, a Bible-based geologic timescale should not advocate for a trackless Flood deposit after Day 150. From a biblical point of view, tracks may still have been possible until just before day 370.

With the knowledge that many tracks were likely made in the last Flood phase, it is recommended to raise the post-Flood boundary to Late (Upper) Cenozoic. In fact, it might be rather difficult to distinguish Flood layers from Pleistocene Ice Age deposits. It may even be possible to attribute some human fossils to the Flood.

Obviously, this adding of a layer more than a kilometre thick to Flood evidence will further derail the naturalistic geologic timescale. It also has the potential to break down the battle between competing young-earth-creationist models.<sup>54</sup> There is also the possibility that Cretaceous deposits were deposited in one place at the same time as Cenozoic deposits were deposited elsewhere, as it all occurred in only one Flood year.

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