

(These strata usually are made up of several diverse kinds of rock which have remained distinct from each other in the deposit.) For example, Whitcomb (1972) makes the following statement:

Before the huge sedimentary deposits laid down during the Flood had time to consolidate or solidify, they were pushed up to great heights. Still somewhat plastic in consistency, they did not split or shatter when uplifted, but rather were bent and twisted like pages in a thick magazine. (p. 66)

This assertion is actually pure hypothesis, and there was evidently no attempt to do any research to verify it. Furthermore, the second sentence quoted above is entirely inconsistent with the first sentence. The first states that the sedimentary layers were not consolidated or solidified; the second speaks of the bending or magazine pages--which are thoroughly consolidated and solidified. The particles which compose the magazine pages were strongly cemented together and dried to form a material which has a rather high tensile strength. But the sedimentary layers the author is talking about would have been wet, with the particles of sand, silt, and gravel free to move about in relation to each other. In such case, the many layers of the "huge sedimentary deposits" would have quickly amalgamated into each other when external forces were applied--just as wet sediments piled up on a beach or lying in a cement-mixing box today become mixed when they are "bent and twisted."

(2) A second much-used erroneous hypothesis of "Flood geology" is the assumption that most kinds of sediments which could be laid down by water were able to become quickly lithified after deposition. Whitcomb, in the statement just quoted, postulates that the layers being pushed up to form a mountain had not "had time to consolidate"--which in geological language means not being lithified, by such processes as cementation. However, some authors who believe that the Flood formed most or all of the sedimentary strata of the earth consider it necessary to assume that a considerable degree of lithification took place before any appreciable bending or folding of the strata occurred--in order to avoid the amalgamating of layers, as explained above. This necessitates the unrealistic assumption that sediments can be rapidly lithified in a very short time, because the Bible states that the Flood lasted only about a year, and that at the end of that year "the waters were dried up from off the earth" (Gen. 8:13 ARV). So, it is evident that the great tectonic upheavals which young-earth creationists believe formed the mountains, would have had to have occurred by the end of the year--or at least before many years elapsed.

Whether one or several years, it does not matter, because most types of sediments require at least hundreds of years for appreciable lithification, even under favorable circumstances. The cementation processes by which the particles of both limestones and sandstones are bound together have been studied in great detail by sedimentologists and petrologists during the past 20 years, and these processes are now well understood. Cementation of the sedimentary particles (often called grains) is mainly a process of precipitating very small crystals of calcium carbonate, silicon dioxide, or some other inorganic compound in between the particles. These minute crystals can be clearly seen adhering to the grains, with the aid of microscopes; and many photomicrographs of sediments in various degrees of cementation are shown in the research reports of sedimentology and petrology. Also, the published research reports of these disciplines frequently describe detailed observations which have revealed the rates at which such cementation occurs in various types of environment. So, in view of the fact that cementation is the main kind of lithification which converts sediments to rock, we would be foolish to continue to think of lithification as some mysterious process which could occur very rapidly within a great mass of buried sediments. In fact, deep burial nearly