

# Mt. St. Helens

Abby

14 years old

Junior High Level

Tennessee

Homeschooled

*On May 18, 1980, at 8:32 a.m., Mount St. Helens in Washington state erupted. In a matter of minutes, approximately 230 square miles had been destroyed. Over the next six years, there were several more eruptions. Destroying 150 square miles in six minutes, the first wave of the May 18<sup>th</sup> eruption moved at more than 650 miles per hour.*

The eruption of Mount St. Helens showed many areas of geology in which previous assumptions had been incorrect and misguided. The speed with which coal, layers of sediment, and canyons are formed had all been grossly overestimated and the radioisotope dating methods that were used at Mount St. Helens were found to be atrociously inaccurate.



“StHelensBeforeAfter\_USGS750-750x412” <https://magazine.washington.edu/feature/after-mount-st-helens-erupted-1980-became-a-lost-spring-for-some/>

Spirit Lake near Mount St. Helens is in a position to become a new coal bed. The eruption of Mount St. Helens was accompanied by an earthquake. The shockwave upset Spirit Lake causing a surge of water that swept logs from the forests on the slopes, as high as “850 feet above the pre-eruption water level” (Austin par. 1), into the lake. Over one million logs were floating on the lake, many in an

upright position, by that afternoon. Over time, these many logs sank, with as many as 20,000 upright logs estimated to have been fully submerged in August of 1985 with an average height of twenty feet, some laying on the bottom, others buried up to three feet. These floating logs were rubbed together by the wind and waves. Their bark and branches were removed over the next five years, forming a layer of peat 3 feet deep. In a mere five years, this "Spirit Lake peat" had already begun to resemble coal beds found in other places in the United States. When forests are quickly flattened, coal can be created swiftly. Sadly, many geologists still insist that coal is formed slowly in swamps where it takes 1,000 years for one inch of coal to form. But this doesn't add up. Peat found in swamps is quite different in texture than coal. Coal forms quickly, not slowly like swamp peat. The Great Flood described in Genesis wiped out forests, causing a huge version of what happened at Mount St. Helens and creating most of the world's coal deposits. On Spirit Lake, there are still many floating logs, and others that have washed up on the shore. The Spirit Lake peat will eventually become a coal deposit.



"da3e4f17ca25496da87f96800328e78e-spirit-lake-log-mass" <https://www.deltackett.com/resources/1364/mt-st-helens-filming-day-5>

Fast-moving sediments form bold layers. The initial eruption of Mount St. Helens and the other

eruptions after, set more natural disasters into motion. These include ash flows, mudflows, landslides, violent waves on Spirit Lake, and massive clouds of ash falling from the sky. All of this caused huge piles of sediment to build up, some as thick as 600 feet. Surprisingly, this ash and mud, rushing down the mountain at 80 miles per hour, accumulated in distinct layers, similar to those found around the world. Some of these layers were mere millimeters, while other bands were up to 3 feet. One of these embankments was formed on June 12, 1980 while the sediment was moving at 90 miles per hour. 25 feet thick, it was created in just 3 hours. It is startling to think that these thin horizontal stripes were formed by coarse and fine particles moving more than three times as fast as Usain Bolt's top speed. Volcanic ash has, on many occasions, been shown to behave and produce deposits the same as other types of sediment. The layers at Mount St. Helens are indistinguishable from those found in limestones, Mudstones, and even the cliffs in the Grand Canyon. From this, one can conclude that lime mud and other mud sediment layers are created while moving at incredibly high speeds.

The erosion of canyons is another geological process for which the timeframe has been severely overestimated. As another result of the eruption, over one-half of a cubic mile of rock came tumbling down Mount St. Helens, the largest observed debris avalanche on record, which blocked Spirit Lake's drainage into the Toutle River. This enormous wall of mud was 150 feet tall. Then on March 19, 1982, another eruption melted an accumulation of snow in the crater, generating a giant mudflow that burst through the avalanche's debris, carving canyons at 40 miles per hour. This brand-new canyon was a one-fortieth scale model of the Grand Canyon; the plateaus looked like the North and South Rims of the Grand Canyon, and the flow cut a similar meandering path. Although this flow cut through freshly deposited ash and debris, two months later, another melted-snow avalanche made a 100-foot canyon through basalt bedrock. A third canyon, up to 600 feet deep, was also carved through lava and ash layers. All three canyons have miniscule streams, dwarfed by the cliffs around them, flowing through them. This is similar to many canyons around the world that geologists have assumed were carved slowly by these creeks, although at Mount St. Helens it was shown that it is possible for the canyon to have been created before the creek. Errors abound in the immense time periods assigned to the erosion of canyons. Water released suddenly has great power to carve hard rock, including the canyons at Mount St. Helens and the Grand Canyon. When water flows at a certain velocity, cavitation

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occurs. Cavitation is what happens when water rushes so fast that it forms vacuum bubbles that implode, mercilessly attacking rock. The Grand Canyon was almost certainly formed a few years after Noah's Flood. The sediment from the flood had dried out enough that the side walls wouldn't slump, but it was still soft enough for the deep canyons to be cut. When shown under this light, the destructive power of water becomes clearer, and it is much more apparent the extent of the damage the Flood caused.



"little-grand-canyon" <https://answersingenesis.org/geology/mount-st-helens/lasting-lessons-mount-st-helens/>

In 1996, Dr. Steve Austin found conclusive evidence against radioisotope dating methods. When Mount St. Helens first erupted in 1980, 1,300 feet of the peak was annihilated, leaving a massive crater. The removal of this rock allowed pressure to be released, and with the release of pressure came lava. The lava filled the crater and eventually hardened into a lava dome. In the next six

years, four domes were formed and blasted away in eruptions. When the sixth dome was formed, the cycle was broken, and the dome remained intact for years. All six lava domes were formed between October 18, 1980 and October 26, 1986. Dr. Austin took a rock sample from the last of those lava domes in June, 1992. Considering where he found the sample, it is likely that his rock was formed in 1986. Four years after collecting the sample, Dr. Austin sent it to laboratory to receive a potassium-argon date. When the results came in, they were incredibly wrong. Some of the minerals contained in the 10-year-old rock dated as much as 2.4 million years old. Critics accuse Dr. Austin of being careless with his sample and using the wrong dating method for the lava rock. However, one of the critics, G. Brent Dalrymple has, in fact, used a variant of the potassium-argon method to date other lava flows. In addition, many geologists use the potassium-argon dating method to determine the age of volcano rocks, both new and old. Dr. Austin was incredibly thorough with his sample and even published pictures of the rock under the microscope, so that other people could be certain that no older material or rock pieces were in his sample. This reduces radioisotope dating to a myth.

These facts are convincing evidence for young-earth creationism. Quickly formed coal, sediment layers, and canyons support the account of the Great Flood in Genesis, and the fallacies in radioisotope dating dismiss many people's reasoning for believing that the earth is millions of years old. Without millions of years for evolution to occur, the Darwinian worldview is obsolete. "Erase the time and you erase evolution" (Thomas par. 9) And if young-earth creationism is the correct worldview, many people's objections to the historical accuracy of Genesis is erased. Therefore, the next logical step is to assume that Genesis and the rest of the Bible is true. When a person realizes that there is no evidence against the Bible and accepts it as fact, they are on the brink of the discovery of a lifetime: the Gospel- the Fall, the incarnation of Christ, His ministry, death, and resurrection- is true and applies to every human on this wonderful planet. This isn't simply an informational essay. This is important and relevant. The events surrounding Mount St. Helens are a picture of the forces God used to shape the world He created.

## Bibliography

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