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# AWESOME SCIENCE

EXPLORE

# Yellowstone

with  
Noah Justice

## Study Guide

let's talk



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SCIENCE**

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# STUDY GUIDE & WORKBOOK

EXPLORE

**Yellowstone**

with  
Noah Justice



March 2012

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# Introduction

One of the most remarkable places on earth is Yellowstone National Park. With beautiful mineral pools and hot geysers, this place is full of mystery. Early trappers thought that this was the entrance to hell itself, and came back with unbelievable stories of this amazing landscape. As more explorers came, a movement began to save this national treasure for the people, and in 1872 it became America's first national park.

Most of the signs in the park approach its history from an evolutionary perspective, meaning millions of years for its formation, and based on the religion of secular humanism. But a closer look at the evidence reveals consistencies with much shorter ages and large catastrophes. The biblical record best explains what we see at Yellowstone!

This study guide is divided by different concept areas related to the park and is designed to help enhance the learning experience after you have watched the DVD. Fill-in-the-blank questions help the learner become familiar with important words and concepts, true and false questions help in comprehension, and the discussion questions and bonus activities help extend the learning experience.

All this and more, from the Awesome Science DVD series!

## Bonus Activity:

Research and read more about the discovery and early explorations of Yellowstone. See if you can discover which president was in office when Yellowstone was made a national park.

## Complete Word List

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acidic	geologic ages	pools
ash	geysers	Precambrian
basalt	hardwood	reptiles
basement	hydrogen sulfide	magma
buoyancy	ice dam	mammals
caldera	lava	mega-volcanism
canyon	layers	Mesozoic
cataclysmic	log mats	microbes
catastrophic	magma	micro-organisms
Cenozoic	mammals	mineral
cycle	mega-volcanism	mud pots
earthquakes	Mesozoic	Paleozoic
elements	microbes	petrified
erosion	micro-organisms	plates
eruption	mineral	pools
Flood	mud pots	Precambrian
fossils	Paleozoic	reptiles
fumarole	petrified	
geologic column	plates	

## Key Concepts

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glaciation	worldview	humanism
evolutionary	deposition	sin-cursed
fossilization	petrification	

# About Yellowstone National Park

Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:

geysers	super volcano	sedimentary
eruptions	caldera	geologic
mud pots	plates	sin-cursed
basement	Flood	lava chamber
tuff	volcanic rhyolite	

When thinking of Yellowstone National Park, most people usually remember the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, but there's so much more to see. It covers over two million acres and three states cross its boundaries.

Yellowstone contains one of the world's largest \_\_\_\_\_. The last of three gigantic \_\_\_\_\_ was hundreds of times greater than that of Mount St. Helens, and the first was thought to have been 2,000 times that of Mount St. Helens.

The Bible tells us that at the beginning of the worldwide Flood the fountains of the great deep burst forth. During the Flood and right after, the earth was going through tremendous \_\_\_\_\_ changes, because of the moving of earth's outer \_\_\_\_\_.

Volcanoes were still active, shaping the land after the \_\_\_\_\_. We can see other super volcanoes around the world. They can be seen on almost every continent.

Besides the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ rocks, there are two other types of rocks in the park: \_\_\_\_\_, which is hardened lava, and \_\_\_\_\_, which is cemented volcanic ash.

Much of the rim of the volcano's \_\_\_\_\_ in Yellowstone has been breached, or covered with volcanic products.

Remember, this is an active volcano, with a \_\_\_\_\_ just several miles beneath the surface that is a reminder of the volcanic activity that was observed in the past and activity that we expect in the future.

Because of our Creator's design, even in a \_\_\_\_\_ world the forest is coming back quickly.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is volcanic tuff?
2. What effect does fire have on Yellowstone in terms of plant life?
3. Were larger animals able to escape from the fire and return to the park later?

### Bonus Activity:

On a map, locate five other locations that have super volcanoes.

# Geologic Column

**Fill in the blanks with words from the following list; one word is used twice in this section:**

layer	Flood	fossils	log mats
sedimentary	Cenozoic	catastrophic	creation
week	buoyancy	Paleozoic	fossilization
sediments	vegetation	Precambrian	microbes
erosion	biblical worldview		

In order for us to better understand the geology of Yellowstone, we need to take a look at the Geologic Column.

The traditional belief from secular scientists is that the geologic column represents long ages of time, billions of years, starting with the \_\_\_\_\_ and ending in the \_\_\_\_\_ being laid down slowly and gradually without a global catastrophe.

Using the Bible as our history guide book, the earth is only about 6,000 years in age according to the genealogies. Since many of the layers are \_\_\_\_\_, the Flood was the \_\_\_\_\_ historical event that was the mechanism for quickly laying down each layer.

The \_\_\_\_\_ we find in each \_\_\_\_\_ were mostly buried over the year of the Flood.

Many \_\_\_\_\_ rocks are those created during the week of creation, mostly on day 3. There were likely forces acting upon them during the

\_\_\_\_\_ with the raising and lowering of the mountains and valleys to cause some changes, but largely they were the rocks made during the \_\_\_\_\_.

Because of the years before the Flood, we do see some evidence of the process of \_\_\_\_\_ and some sediment layers, but there are very few fossils because the Flood, the prime mechanism for \_\_\_\_\_, had not yet come.

Secular scientists say that these early layers do not have fossils because life was too “simple” at the beginning, and only \_\_\_\_\_ had evolved.

The \_\_\_\_\_ layers start with fossils of sea floor creatures, which would have been buried first with the onset of the Flood. In layers above are fish fossils because they were the next to die. How does this make sense when you read the time-line of events regarding the Great Flood?

Above the fish and sea creature fossils are found land plant fossils and coal. When the Flood moved inland, it wiped out most of the \_\_\_\_\_. As trees were uprooted, they surely formed into some of the large floating \_\_\_\_\_, similar to what we have seen at Mount St. Helen’s Spirit Lake after the eruption.

Large reptiles could no longer survive. Their bodies may have floated on top of the water for a while, but eventually their weight and mass carried them to the ocean floor, where they were quickly buried by other \_\_\_\_\_. The natural sorting power of

flowing water may have also contributed to distributing plants and animals in sedimentary layers through \_\_\_\_\_ and other factors.

Most layers have a better explanation when viewed in light of a \_\_\_\_\_.

Since there is not a full sequence of the column in any one location, this is consistent with the Flood account because water and currents will carry sand, silt, and mud to different places around the earth.

It's Flood action, not billions of years of activity.

**Use the numbers between 1 and 7 to order the events into the sequence that created coal:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ the tree bark came off
- \_\_\_\_\_ causing large deposits of peat
- \_\_\_\_\_ which eventually turned into coal
- \_\_\_\_\_ the bark sank to the bottom of the sea floor
- \_\_\_\_\_ loosened logs rubbed together
- \_\_\_\_\_ floating on the Flood waters
- \_\_\_\_\_ when buried by other sediments.

Discussion questions:

1. Read Psalm 104:8–9 and Genesis 2:10. How does this help our understanding of Yellowstone in terms of geology and geologic processes?
2. Why do secular scientists have to combine locations to get their full view of the geologic column?

3. How many years passed between the creation week and the Flood of Noah?
4. How does the Bible's account of creation and the great Flood explain the historical evidence of dinosaurs and their fossils?
5. How could the ability of land animals to move to higher ground during the first stages of the Flood impact their placement in the fossil record?
6. From which time period on the geologic column are the rock layers containing more coal and reptiles?
7. Fossilization of plants and animals happens quickly. It does not take long periods of time. What are some scenarios that could explain the lack of numerous mammal fossils and support the idea of them surviving longer during the initial stages of the Flood?
8. Why is the biblical explanation so much stronger for several reasons than secular explanations regarding the geologic record? (Clues: Where do "simple" life forms and fossilization relate to this?)
9. What are several reasons why we don't see fossils being formed today?
10. Which layer on the geologic column contains the last layers of fossils and represents the end stages of the Flood?

### Bonus Activity:

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Read Genesis 1:1–11; compare a secular geologic column to the creation week timeline.

# The Geysers

On the northwest side of the southern loop is a prize collection of geysers. It's a great place to get out and tour the hot springs.

**Please note if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).**

Yellowstone hosts one-thirds of all the known geysers in the world. \_\_\_\_\_

The close proximity of these geysers is because of the large magma chamber a few miles below the surface.  
\_\_\_\_\_

The highest geyser in the world resides here; Steamboat Geyser. It can erupt up to 300 feet high, and eruptions are rarely unpredictable. \_\_\_\_\_

A geyser's source is melted snow and rain which eventually moves through the porous sedimentary rock.  
\_\_\_\_\_

The water mixes with saline brine and heat from the shallow magma. \_\_\_\_\_

The water rises well above the boiling point, but remains in a liquid state due to the pressure and weight of overlying water and rocks. \_\_\_\_\_

The water can exceed 900 degrees. \_\_\_\_\_

The silica in the water creates seals in the fissures and a plumbing system develops. When the pressure is sufficient, it forces the water up to the surface and a geyser results.

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There are a variety of minerals and species of algae in the hot pools. Microbes grow at different acidities. A pool's color cannot be used to determine its acidity. Orange is more acidic and green is more alkaline. \_\_\_\_\_

The organisms and enzymes can survive sulfur emissions similar to microbes living near thermal vents on the bottom of the ocean. \_\_\_\_\_

Secular scientists suggest that if you look into the pools you imagine as it began billions of years ago. \_\_\_\_\_

In reality, these heat-loving microbes are not simple or primitive, but extremely complex in their structure and biochemistry. \_\_\_\_\_

Microbes, like all of creation, require an intelligent designer, the creator God of the universe. Evolved over billions of years? Not a chance! \_\_\_\_\_

# Yellow River and Hayden Valley

**Fill in the blanks with words from the following list; one word is used twice in this section:**

Yellowstone Lake      glacial      Hayden Valley  
buffalo                  shoreline      fumaroles  
Ice Age

Some of the hottest geothermal features here in Yellowstone are \_\_\_\_\_.

The Yellowstone River runs through the park, with its source being \_\_\_\_\_.

There were once millions of \_\_\_\_\_ that roamed the plains and mountains of North America. They were killed off mostly by hunting, but now a strong herd exists in Yellowstone year-round.

\_\_\_\_\_ is thought to have been covered by 200 feet of water when Yellowstone Lake extended through this valley after the retreat of the glaciers at the end of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Very little grows here because it was a lake bed where \_\_\_\_\_ clay lines the valley floor. Trees across the river mark the former \_\_\_\_\_ of the lake.

## Discussion Questions:

---

1. In which part of Yellowstone Park are bison normally found?
2. What effect has Yellowstone River had on rhyolite and soft tuff?
3. What causes the stained pastel color by the hot springs and fumaroles?

# Yellowstone Falls

Fill in the blanks with words from the following list:

ice dam            Missoula flood

tens of thousands of years

Grand Canyon of Yellowstone

There is an area in the park called the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. It was cut by the  
Yellowstone River through basalt and ash and is one of the  
most well-recognized geologic features of the park.

Secular geologists thought that the carving of this canyon  
took \_\_\_\_\_, but evidence is  
beginning to emerge that an upstream \_\_\_\_\_  
may have failed, carving out this canyon in a very short  
period of time, maybe in even as little as a day.

The rock in the canyon is soft, so it would have been quite  
easily cut by fast-moving water.

There is similar evidence like this in eastern Washington  
with the \_\_\_\_\_, at Mount St. Helens, as  
well as the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

## Discussion Questions:

1. How does the steepness of the canyon walls help us realize there has been a recent cutting of the canyon?
2. How can we tell that Yellowstone was not formed by glaciation?
3. Explain the processes that form a U-shaped canyon.
4. Understanding that this canyon has not been affected by glaciation helps us conclude that it was formed quite recently, after the Ice Age, only a few thousand years ago.

## Bonus Activity:

What geologic features do Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, and Mount St. Helens all have in common?

# Mud Volcano

**Please note if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).**

Throughout the park there are some really cool mud pots, and they are some of the least acidic features in the park.

\_\_\_\_\_

In 1870, Mud Volcano was a miniature volcano. It spewed mud up to 450 feet in the air. Early explorers were awed by it. \_\_\_\_\_

Hydrogen sulfide gas from deep in the earth is used by some micro-organisms as an energy source. \_\_\_\_\_

They help convert the gas into hydrochloric acid, which breaks down rock into wet clay and mud. \_\_\_\_\_

Escaping gases can't explode through the mud. \_\_\_\_\_

# Yellowstone Lake

At over 7,000 feet, Yellowstone Lake is the biggest and highest lake in North America. Some people are concerned because a bulge has been seen growing on the bottom of the lake. Some say it's going to erupt soon.

It's true that scientists have been closely monitoring Yellowstone Lake for volcanic activity and a growing bulge on the bottom of the lake. In studies of past eruptions around the world, a bulge in a volcano can be bad news. Look up recent volcanic eruptions from around the world; you may be surprised at how many of them occur!

**Fill in the blanks below with words from the following list:**

catastrophe          magma          dormant  
mega-volcanism    Mount St. Helens    equalize  
water                  valley

Right before \_\_\_\_\_ erupted in 1980, the entire north side of the mountain grew out in a large bulge, then the entire north side of the mountain slid into the \_\_\_\_\_ below and a nine hour eruption ensued.

Let's face it, the Yellowstone Caldera is not just \_\_\_\_\_; it's active, but very placid at the moment.

If the area were to become active in a big way, based on what we can infer from eruptions in the past, the effects could be

devastating to the entire \_\_\_\_\_.

This type is a remnant of the \_\_\_\_\_ recorded in Genesis chapters 6–8, where the fountains of the great deep opened up, which included \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We don't see it like that today because the earth after the Flood began to \_\_\_\_\_ and the large-scale volcanic activity slowed down. But during that time, it was catastrophic.

Could the Yellowstone super volcano erupt again? Let's read 2 Peter 3:10 (NKJV) to find out: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." What do you think?

# Old Faithful

1. What was the average time between the eruptions of the famous geyser known as Old Faithful?
2. What are the two years in which earthquakes occurred that altered how regular Old Faithful has become?

# The Mammoth Hot Springs

On the northern loop in the northwestern corner, there is an amazing site where hundreds of feet of white terraces have been built up. During the time of the global Flood, about 4,350 years ago, large deposits of lime mud accumulated and were deposited in this area as limestone layers.

How do they continue to form?

**Use the numbers between 1 and 9 to arrange in order the events of this terrace-building sequence:**

- \_\_\_ Water flows across the surface
- \_\_\_ Elements are left to form terraces
- \_\_\_ Winter snows and summer rains bring a lot of water to the area
- \_\_\_ The water and lime seeps out of the ground through fractures in the calcium carbonate beds
- \_\_\_ Water is heated
- \_\_\_ The water dissolves
- \_\_\_ Water evaporates
- \_\_\_ Water moves through the ground
- \_\_\_ Lime is picked up by the water

These terraces are always in a transitional state. Old ones stop forming while new ones begin. This is because the chemicals in the water frequently plug up the outgoing water, forcing it in a different direction where there is less resistance.

Some signs in the park suggest that Mammoth Hot Springs took 65,000 years to form, but at the current rate of deposition, averaging about eight inches a year, only a few thousand years would be required to make the terraces we see today. Now that is awesome!

# Petrified Forest

One of the most fascinating parts about Yellowstone is the Petrified Forest, as much of it is in the Specimen Ridge area. There we find hundreds of upright petrified logs in 27 to 50 “layers of forests.”

**Please note if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).**

Secular scientists say that there were many forests here, one laid on top of the other, which took around 30,000 years in an ongoing cycle to create, but when you look at the evidence, it doesn't really make sense. \_\_\_\_\_

A forest would continue growing when it would be covered by volcanic ash. \_\_\_\_\_

Minerals would soak into the tree, and petrify it. \_\_\_\_\_

The ash weathered into rocks and compost, then a new forest grew, was destroyed by the ash, and the process continued. \_\_\_\_\_

Eventually the layers were exposed by glaciation, revealing what we see today. \_\_\_\_\_

Yet even by the end of the Flood, some of the trees were still floating on the top of the Flood waters, even as the waters retreated from the new emerging land masses. \_\_\_\_\_

As the logs became water logged, the heavy end, the root ball, sank in the water to the submerged land surface below.

With the water currents still carrying the logs, they were completely lost. \_\_\_\_\_

There was also a lot of continuing volcanic activity beneath the waters and on the emerging land surface, creating large explosions of ash that was added to the accumulating silt.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Because the logs were not sinking at the same time, they would come to rest on different layers of silt and ash.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Eventually, the upright logs would be fully buried and the chemicals in the water and ash would petrify the trees over a period of a very long time. \_\_\_\_\_

When the Flood waters fully receded, up to 50 levels of logs were deposited. \_\_\_\_\_

If the logs were trees that grew at these locations, one would expect to find a well-developed root system under the logs, but they are non-existent in all of the mature trees at all 50 levels. \_\_\_\_\_

### Bonus Activities:

Using the Bible as our history guidebook, with an earth age of only 6,000 years, the Petrified Forest of Yellowstone does not match up with the secular science of 30,000 years, but there is a different explanation. What is this biblical view? Find and note verses that support this explanation.

# Awesome Facts about the Petrified Forest

Be sure to discuss these facts when you see the bolded questions at the end of some of the following bullet points.

## Awesome Fact #1: No Root Systems

- Also, none of the logs have branches or bark, indicating a cataclysmic event. **Is the lack of branches or bark really proof of a cataclysmic event and, if so, why?**
- In addition, the root balls at the bottoms of the logs are small and broken off, evidence of the trees being forcefully pulled out of the ground from a different location, transported, and deposited in this area at Yellowstone. **What event could have been taking place that explains this finding?**
- When studying the rings of the logs near the top of the ridge and at the bottom, there is a lot of similarity in the ring sizes, indicating they all grew at the same time. **If the trees grew in different forests at different time periods, would the rings appear similar?**

## Awesome Fact #2: Tree Ring Continuity

- If each forest was killed by a different eruption, then the trace element profiles in the ash the logs are buried in should also be different, even if from the same volcano.

### **Awesome Fact #3: Very Few Trace Element Profiles**

- There are only four different trace element profiles, which help us realize that the trees were buried in less than a year. **Why is this fact so important?**
- The fossil pollen, leaves, and needles in the ground do not match with the species of fossil stumps. **Does this evidence support the idea that these trees actually grew in this area?**

### **Awesome Fact #4: Non-Matching Forest Floor Flora**

- In a typical forest the decomposing material on the forest floor, such as pine needles and dead trees should match the trees around it. But at Specimen Ridge in Yellowstone, the petrified flora doesn't match the petrified trees, which makes for a very petrifying situation. It indicates they didn't grow there.
- In a typical forest you would expect to find evidence of animal life, such as burrows and nests, but this isn't what is found at Specimen Ridge.

### **Awesome Fact #5: No Large Animal Activity**

- There is no evidence of animal tracks in this area, except the remains of termites and their holes in some of the logs.
- Some might say that the animals fled during the eruptions. This happens with large animals, but is not true of worms and insects. And bones, teeth, and droppings could not escape burial either. **From this information, does the idea of successive forests growing and being destroyed during different**

### **eruptions make sense?**

- If the secular story is used to explain the formation of these petrified forests, then there should be successive layers of clay and organic debris. **There is no clay found in these volcanic layers and the organic materials are only about an inch thick in places — does that help support this conclusion?**

### **Awesome Fact #6: No Successive Layers**

- In addition, sediments in these layers appear to have been graded and laminated, the result of water and fluid action. **If these layers were only produced by volcanic activity, would such features be evident?**

### **Awesome Fact #7: Graded and Laminate Layers**

- This was the result of the receding Flood waters, not just volcanic action.
- In 1980, during the eruption of Mount St. Helens the entire north side of the mountain slid down into the valley. Part of the landslide went into Spirit Lake, causing a massive water wave 800 feet high. The water wave and steam blast reached the opposite hillside where a large mature forest stood. In a very short time, all of the trees were uprooted and pulled down into the lake. Thirty years later, some of the logs still float on top of the lake. **How can this event help explain the Petrified Forest?**
- Several months after the eruption, some of the logs began to float upright, then slowly sank to the bottom of the lake in an upright position. The ones with less

resin sank first. **How could the presence of resin keep an object from sinking?**

- Using sonar equipment, SCUBA gear, and general observation, it was estimated that around 20,000 logs were upright on the bottom of the lake at different levels in the sediments.
- If another eruption happens at Mount St. Helens and a large mud flow empties into the lake, then more logs will be buried at a more rapid rate.
- If the lake was drained at any point in the future and the layers exposed, the buried logs would probably look much like Specimen Ridge in Yellowstone. **Do you agree with this conclusion?**
- Mount St. Helens has also explained petrified forests around other parts of the world, such as in Argentina where Darwin proposed long geologic ages. This evidence shows how short catastrophic events could explain the same geologic features from a biblical perspective.

What is Petrification?

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**Please note if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).**

Petrification is actually a pretty complex process. It doesn't take that much time. \_\_\_\_\_

Secular scientists used to say it took many years to petrify wood, but we can do it quickly in labs today. \_\_\_\_\_

What you need to petrify is the presence of water saturated with elements such as lime or silica. \_\_\_\_\_

We know from the caves around Yellowstone that these minerals are in abundance. \_\_\_\_\_

When a log is buried and saturated with water containing these minerals, there is a chemical exchange that takes place. \_\_\_\_\_

Researchers a few years ago did their own experiment by putting a piece of wood into a silica-rich hot spring at Yellowstone. One year later the wood contained substantial petrification. \_\_\_\_\_

Even if we give an extended range, it could take as much as five hundred years to fully petrify a log. That's still in the biblical time scale. \_\_\_\_\_

In fact, commercial hardwood is now being produced for flooring, which is man-made petrified wood. \_\_\_\_\_

Many of the processes in nature which secular science thought took ages we can now do very quickly. Coal and oil have been produced in less than a year. \_\_\_\_\_

The global Flood would provide the right conditions to quickly bury and exchange the chemicals and heat necessary to produce petrified wood on such a grand scale as in Yellowstone. \_\_\_\_\_

# Yellowstone: Conclusion

Yellowstone National Park, where many natural wonders are remarkably preserved, also preserves a testament to the catastrophic Genesis Flood and its after-effects. Secular and biblical geologists both agree on the evidence found in Yellowstone, but disagree on how to interpret that evidence.

One observer rejects God and the Bible and hence, a global Flood, and accepts millions of years from the religion of humanism.

The other observer views God as the authority in all areas, and hence recognizes the effects of the Flood as a result of God's judgment on sin.

We are all given the opportunity to turn to our Creator, repent of our sins, and make Him our Lord. We invite you to begin this journey today.

If you have enjoyed this great DVD and study guide, please look for others in the series:



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EXPLORE



# Yellowstone

with  
Noah Justice

Designed to make science fun, the *Awesome Science Series* is an educational and entertaining opportunity for everyone.

Use this study guide for *Episode 2: Explore Yellowstone* to display the knowledge the student has obtained by watching Noah explore America's first national park in Wyoming, Yellowstone. He has paid special attention to the petrified forests, showing evidence of how many of the park's features were created by catastrophe and not long ages.

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