

## DO DATING METHODS DISPROVE THE BIBLE TEACHING OF CREATION?

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### INTRODUCTION

The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Although many believe this to be true, many others deny its claim; devising their own theories to depict the beginning. It is very interesting that many of their unscriptural theories and explanations concerning the creation or origin of the world are answered by this one verse.

It answers *atheism*, which holds that there is no God, by setting forth the existence and work of God; it answers *agnosticism*, which asserts that we cannot know how things began, by stating that God did the creating; it answers *polytheism*, which holds that there were many gods, by setting forth God, not many gods, as the Creator (Free 11, 12).

What about the age of the earth? Is it young or old? Does it even matter? "The evolutionist asserts that the Earth is billions of years old. He has no choice, of course, because without eons of time, evolution is impossible" (Thompson, Age [tract]). On the other hand, Bert Thompson notes:

According to the data involved in the biblical genealogies, which extend from Jesus to Adam (Luke 3:23ff), the Earth can be shown to be only few thousand years old—not billions of years as evolutionists, and those sympathetic with them, allege (Age).

Once again the claims of man conflict with the Word of God! Anytime this happens, it matters on which side we stand. Yet, even some who say they believe the Bible contradict themselves by rejecting God's Word when they declare that the earth is many thousands, or even millions, of years old. Such people can unfortunately be described by the words of the English poet, William Cowper.

Some drill and bore  
The solid Earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register by which we learn  
That He Who made it, and revealed its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age (Thompson).

As the debate over the creation of the world and its age have progressed, many efforts have been made to destroy the Bible's claim. Two of the most prominent efforts to this end have already been discussed this week; the geological record and the fossil record. My subject, concerning dating methods, is another effort of man to destroy the viability of God's Word.

Archeologists and scientists are dependent on the use of dating methods to ascertain the approximate age of an artifact or ruin he or she finds. The archeologist or scientist assumes that the date they receive is generally correct" (Brown 2). The claim is that such scientific dating methods disprove the Bible teaching of creation. Is this true? We will spend our time together this afternoon in an effort to determine whether this claim is true or not.

## DATING METHODS

Evolution, depending as it does on pure chance, requires an immense amount of time to stumble upon anything remotely approaching the complexity we see in even the simplest things. For over 100 years, geologists have attempted to devise methods for determining the age of the earth that would be consistent with evolutionary dogma (Menton 1).

According to Java, an internet archaeology dating exhibit, when archaeologist strove to arrange sites and artifacts in the order in which they appeared they relied on a system of "relative dating" to put things into context. In relative dating, a series of techniques are used that compares artifacts to determine which is older. As the word "relative" indicates, these testing methods gave only the estimated age of the items in question, and thus their accuracy was often in question even by the scientist using them. Since dating techniques tend to be very important to archaeologists, and the relative testing was not accurate enough, they searched for more reliable methods of dating.

Willard Frank Libby (1908-1980), an American Chemist, began a revolution in dating and the start of "absolute dating," or as the proponents of an old earth claim, "the determination of an actual age of an object" (Java, dating 1).

In 1947, Libby and his students and the Institute for Nuclear Studies developed the method of C14 dating using a highly sensitive Geiger counter. Carbon 14 is an unstable radioactive isotope that decays at a measurable rate upon the death of an organism. Libby was able to determine the age of organic artifacts by measuring the amount of remaining C14 (Java, biography 1).

Other so called "absolute dating" methods were devised as well. The people of Java claim, "There are many ways in which the absolute date of something can be achieved" (absolutedat 1).

Time and space necessitate that our discussion, or even mention, of their methods be limited to only a few in the absolute category.

### **Radio-carbon or Carbon 14 Dating**

This dating method is one of the most popular, and thus the one we will spend the most time with. It, according to its adherents, obtains the age estimates on organic material, and has been used to date samples as old as 50,000 years (Java, carbon 2). They say that radiocarbon determinations can be:

Obtained on wood, charcoal; marine and fresh-water shell; bone and antler; peat and organic-bearing sediments, carbonate deposits such as tufa, caliche, and marl; and dissolved carbon dioxide and carbonates in ocean, lake and ground-water sources (carbon 1).

They do admit that “each sample type has specific problems associated with its use for dating purposes, including contamination and special environmental effects” (carbon 1). Yet, they did not follow with an explanation as to how they overcome those “problems.”

The “Dating Exhibit” that Java put on the inter-net describes the process by which carbon is received and then measured. They explain:

Radioactive carbon, produced when nitrogen 14 is bombarded by cosmic rays in the atmosphere, drifts down to earth and is absorbed from the air by plants. Animals eat the plants and take C14 into their bodies. Humans in turn take carbon 14 into their bodies by eating both plants and animals. When a living organism dies, it stops absorbing C14 and the C14 that is already in the object begins to disintegrate. Scientists can use this fact to measure how much C14 has disintegrated and how much is left in the object. Carbon 14 decays (Half-life) is known: C14 has a half life of 5730 years. Basically this means that half of the original amount of C14 in organic matter will have disintegrated 5730 years after the organisms death; half of the remaining C14 will have disintegrated after another 5730 years and so forth. After about 50,000 years, the amount of C14 remaining will be so small that the fossil can't be dated reliably (Carbon 1).

They speak of this process in such “matter of fact” terms that one may casually accept their claims as fact, and unfortunately many do. So we must ask, “Could they be wrong?”. After all, they themselves have already admitted, as noted above, that there are some problems with their procedures. After brief consideration of a couple of other dating methods, we will consider some problems with this one.

### **Potassium-argon Dating**

I mention this particular dating method because it is specifically noted as one that is used to determine an old age, when the more common methods give a younger age; one not acceptable to those who reject the Biblical account of creation and a young earth.

The Potassium-Argon (K-Ar) dating method is the measurement of the accumulation of argon in a mineral. In contrast to a dating method such as C14 dating which measures the disappearance of a substance, K-Ar dating measure the accumulation of argon in a substance from the decomposition of potassium (Emuseum 1).

Argon, being an inert gas, usually does not leech out of a mineral and is easy to measure in small samples. The actual date is comprised of the time it has been formed from molten/heated minerals. As a result, this method does not date the time a human bone has been found in the ground, but rather, it helps in determining the age of the artifacts that are found with the human bone (Emuseum).

### Uranium-thorium Dating

I find this dating method particularly interesting because just the description of it shows why it is necessary for those who claim that the earth is ancient, must have it so. Consider the description of this test.

Uranium-Thorium dating is an absolute dating technique which uses the properties of the radio-active half-life of Uranium-238 and Thorium-230. The half-life of uranium-238 is 4,470,000,000 years, that is in that many years half of the original amount is still uranium - the other half has lost protons to form a different element which is more stable. The half-life of thorium-230 is only 75,380 years. When the amounts of uranium and thorium are compared an accurate estimation of the age of an object can be obtained (Emuseum 1).

To say that the half-life of Uranium-238 is almost 4 ½ billion years old, and then to assume that the universe is that old or older, is to assume a mighty lot!

### DATING METHODS REFUTED

As we think of the dating methods and their claims, we must ask, "Are they true?". In answer to this question let us consider some erroneous assumptions encountered in these evolutionary dating methods.

First, there are no scientific methods which can prove — in any absolute sense — the age of the Earth. The scientific dating methods we have discussed, as well as all we did not have time to discuss, are based on certain built-in assumptions. You see, no one was there when the "clock of time began ticking." Neither does anyone know that once the clock of time began running that it ran at a uniform rate. Assumption on these and many other matters may, or may not, be correct. *Dating methods are only as accurate as the assumptions upon which they are based* [emphasis mine, e j]. Therefore, *if they are incorrect assumptions, incorrect dates will result* [emphasis mine, e j] (Thompson, The Age...[tract]).

Second, regardless of their claims, scientists have not “proved” the Earth to be billions of years old! For example, those who hold to the carbon 14 dating system have to “assume” that the concentration of Carbon 14 has always been at the same level as it is today. So it is with all such methods! As Bert Thompson notes,

. . . evolutionists frequently fail to point out the major assumptions behind these methods. For example, in order for these procedures to work, Evolutionists must **assume**: (a) **uniformitarianism is true** (i.e., rates at which processes are now being observed to occur remained constant through geological time; (b) **the Earth’s environment is a closed system** (i.e., no outside forces could be allowed to alter processes, or the rates at which they be allowed to alter processes, or the rates at which they occur); (c) **the initial conditions of the systems’ components are known with certainty** (i.e., it is known that the radioactive elements being measured must be the result of decay over time, and could not have been present at the rock’s formation) (tract).

These are assumptions that actually we know to be false! In reality “the so called ‘absolute’ methods of dating (radiometric methods) actually only measure the *present* ratios of radioactive isotopes and their decay products in suitable specimens — not their age” (Menton 1).

Third, “there are many scientific methods which establish a relatively young age for the Earth.” This being true, “Why are these methods not published in our children’s textbooks, even though they are as reliable (and in many cases more so)” as other dating methods? Because such methods show clearly that the Earth is young and that evolution is false (Thompson, The Age... [tract]). “Of one thing you may be sure: whenever ‘absolute’ radiometric dates are in substantial disagreement with evolutionary assumptions about the age of associate fossils, the fossils always prevail” (Menton 2). They simply will not pay attention to the earlier dates that their so called “absolute” dating methods show! They will accept the dates only when they concur with their assumptions.

David N. Menton, in a study entitled, “The Dating Game,” made the following observations which clearly show the bias upon which those who claim the Earth is very old rely:

For over 100 years, geologists have attempted to devise methods for determining the age of the earth that would be consistent with evolutionary dogma. At the time Darwin’s ***On the Origin of Species*** was published the earth was “scientifically” determined to be 100 million years old. By 1932, it was found to be 1.6 billion years old. In 1947, geologists firmly established that the earth was 3.4 billion years old. Finally in 1976, they discovered that the earth is “really” 4.6 billion years old. These dates indicate that for 100 years, the age of the earth doubled every 20 years. If this trend were to continue, the earth would be 700 thousand, trillion-trillion-trillion years old by the year 4000 AD. This “prediction,” however, is based on selected data and certain assumptions that might not be true. ...selected data and unprovable assumptions are a problem with all methods for determining the age of the earth,

as well as for dating its fossils and rocks. It has all become something of a “dating game” in which only the evolutionary-correct are allowed to play. (1).

To prove their various dates, they utilize “circular reasoning,” which proves nothing! Mr. Mention explains the process in this way:

The most widely-used method for determining the age of *fossils* is to date them by the “known age” of the *rock strata* in which they are found. On the other hand, the most widely-used method for determining the age of the rock strata is to date them by the “known age” of the fossils they contain. ... In this “circular dating” method, all ages are based on evolutionary assumptions about the date and order in which fossilized plants and animals are believed to have evolved (1).

Friends, such circular reasoning proves nothing! All it does is to allow the blinded person to remain blind.

## REJECTION

It is interesting to note that evolutionists will not use their own “accepted” dating methods on certain items at all. Why is this so? Because the dates do not fit the preconceived notions that they hold so dear!

As we have already seen, Carbon 14 dating is a very popular method used by many scientists and evolutionists. Yet, unknown to many, they will not use it to determine the age of dinosaur bones which they claim to be millions of years old, saying that it is only accurate back a few thousand years. What is the problem with this? The problem is their “assumption” that dinosaurs lived millions of years ago instead of thousands of years ago. Based on that assumption they will not even consider the possibility of the dinosaur, or any other creature or item they perceive to be old, being young. Nor, as noted earlier, will they accept any information from tests that would suggest such a conclusion. With this in mind, consider the following incident and the reasons given for it:

What would happen if a dinosaur bone was carbon dated? - At Oakridge National Laboratory, Scientists dated dinosaur bones using the Carbon dating method. The age they came back with was only a few thousand years old. This date did not fit the preconceived notion that dinosaurs lived millions of years ago. So what did they do? They threw the results out. And kept their theory that dinosaurs lived “millions of years ago” instead. This is common practice. They then use potassium argon, or other methods, and date the fossils again. They do this many times, using a different dating method each time. The results can be as much as 150 million years different from each other! (Jesus, Dinosaurs and more; The Problem with Carbon 14, 1).

The same author listed the following Carbon 14 dates that were rejected by the champions of the

test, because they did not agree with their belief in evolution:

- < Living penguins have been carbon dated and the results said that they had died 8,000 years ago.
- < The shells of living mollusks have been dated using the carbon 14 method, only to find that the method gave them a date as having been dead for 23,000 years.
- < The body of a seal that had been dead for 30 years was carbon dated, and the results stated that the seal had died 4,600 years ago!
- < What about a freshly killed seal? Well, they dated one of those too. The results stated that the seal had died 1,300 years ago.
- < A lake Bonney seal, known to have died only a few weeks before was carbon dated. The results stated that the seal had died 515 to 715 years ago.
- < Shells from living snails were dated, and were shown to have died 27,000 years ago.
- < One part of the Vollosovitch mammoth was dated at 29,500 years old while another part of the same mammoth was dated at 44,000 years old.
- < One part of a frozen baby mammoth was dated at 40,000 years and another part of the same mammoth was dated at 26,000 years. The “wood immediately around the carcass” was dated at 9-10,000 years old.
- < The lower leg of the Fairbanks creek mammoth had a radiocarbon date of 15,380, while its skin and flesh were radiocarbon dated at 21,300 (3, 4).

Interesting isn't it. Surely we recognize that if a person can pick and choose the outcome that he wants, rejecting all others, the results will not be accurate. So it is with the conclusions of those who deny the Bible's teaching of the creation! It is a shame — one that will haunt its adherents eternally — that the majority ultimately will abandon God's wisdom in favor of their own (Matthew 7:14) (Thompson, Creation [tract]). It has always been dangerous to follow the majority, because as Guy N. Woods rightly said, “The majority is almost always on the wrong side in this world” (Thompson, Creation). So it is, that many intelligent people view the belief in creation and Christianity as a crutch, because they “follow the crowd” instead of looking at the evidence of creation and Christianity with an open mind.

## CONCLUSION

“Because of the invalid assumption upon which most evolutionary dating methods are based, contradictions between the results of these methods and the testimony of Scripture are to be expected” (Bromling). Yet, it is clear that dating methods based on those invalid assumptions do not disprove the Bible teaching of creation!

Certain people continue, at all cost, to deny the Biblical account of creation—declaring rather that all that we see came about by chance! Yet, the inspired Hebrew writer declared, “For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God” (Hebrews 3:4). Who will we believe?

If it is recognized that a little design must have a designer, and it commonly is; common sense

tells us that the complexities of this world must also have a designer. That designer, my friend, is God! No amount of theories, tests and circular reasoning will ever destroy that fact!

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