

IS THERE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TO SHOW THAT THE CREATION IS OLD?

In the modern world many scientists believe that the creation is quite old. As with other popular ideas, it is easy to believe that the majority must be right. After all, how could so many scientists be wrong? We must strive always to think biblically, however. If we accept the majority position on the basis that the majority must be right, we are assuming implicitly that man has an innate capacity to arrive at truth. The Bible does not support this view. **Indeed, the Bible asserts that man unaided by Divine revelation actually leaves truth and follows falsehood (Prov. 14:12 and 16:25).**

Rather than accepting the word of the majority, the biblically discerning Christian will see "red flags" of caution surrounding any majority view. **For the Christian, any majority view should be accepted only after careful critique.** This is often a difficult process. "Conventional" sources of information may not help, since by nature they espouse the majority view. In fact, the process is sufficiently difficult that throughout the history of the church, Christians have opted for harmonizing various majority ideas with the Bible. After all, it is easier to go with the stream than against it.

Nevertheless, with respect to chronology, the history of chronology as a discipline reveals that the following points are true.

1. An old age for the universe is based on the evolutionary age of the earth.

A. The age of the universe has been based on the age of the stars.

B. The age of the stars has been based on the age of the sun.

C. The age of the sun has been based on the age of the earth.

If this seems surprising, consider that solar scientist John Eddy has stated, "I suspect that the Sun *is* 4.5-billion years old. However . . . I suspect that we could live with Bishop Ussher's value [4004 BC] for the age of the Earth and the Sun. I don't think we have much in the way of observational evidence in astronomy to contradict that. Solar physics now looks to paleontology for data on solar chronology" [emphasis in original].¹ In other words, **there is no independent astronomical evidence that the sun is old, but its old age is inferred from paleontology, with its assumptions about the age of the earth.**

2. An old age for the solar system is based on the evolutionary age of the earth.

A. The age of the solar system has been based on the age of meteorites.

B. The age of meteorites has been based on the age of the earth.

3. An old age for the planets is based on the evolutionary age of the earth.

A. The age of cratered planets has been based on the age of the moon.

B. The age of the moon has been based on the age of the earth.

I have seen statements basing an old age for the earth on the age of the universe, or the stars, or the sun, or the moon, or meteorites, or the solar system, or other planets. How can we say that these ages are based on the age of the earth?

Answer: Historically, the evolutionary age of the earth came first. The other ages followed from it and are based on it. This is a fact of history.² However, as these other ages have become more and more accepted, they have assumed a life of their own, and are believed to date the earth by writers insufficiently familiar with the history of chronology.

Evolutionary ages depend on the presumed evolutionary age of the earth. What if the evolutionary age of the earth were based on a foundation other than scientific observation? *Then the rest of evolutionary chronology would collapse.*

4. An old age for the earth is supported in two ways (a) by dating fossils; (b) by radiometric dating.

A Consideration of Fossil Dating

This method is applicable only to sedimentary rocks, the type of rock which contains the overwhelming majority of fossils. **Sedimentary rocks make up some 90% of the rocks at the surface of the earth.** However, it has long been recognized that fossils can't really be dated without knowing the age of the rock containing them:

"The most reasonable age [of a fossil] can be selected only after careful selection of independent geochronological date [i.e., the presumed evolutionary age of the rock it is in]."³

Further, sedimentary rocks cannot be dated radiometrically, so must be "dated" by the fossils they contain:

"In each sedimentary stratum certain fossils seem to be characteristically abundant: these are known as index fossils. If in a strange formation an index fossil is found, it is easy to date that particular layer of rock ..."⁴

We have a circle of reasoning here: the rocks date the fossils, and the fossils date the rocks. **The paleontologist must supply his preconceived age in order to "date" a fossil by this method.** Therefore, fossil dating does not independently date fossils, and thus cannot imply that the earth is old. This fact long ago caused chronologists to look to radiometric methods to date the earth.

5. Radiometric dates are based ultimately on the chronology of Charles Lyell.

A Consideration of Radiometric Decay Constants

The "bedrock" of radiometric methods is the assumption that decay occurs at a steady "exponential" rate. This is often the first statement made by writers on the topic. Radioactive decay is viewed as a precise "clock." However, decades of data tell a different story. **Decay constants are not constant.**⁵ This includes decay constants for isotopes used in radiometric methods:

"The [exponential decay equation] can no longer be considered valid. The decay 'constant' has been shown to be a variable . . ."⁶

This observation was made in the context of safety concerns for nuclear reactors. If nuclear decay is not necessarily steady and is influenced by a number of external factors, then the performance of nuclear reactors is unpredictable and may be unstable. Such findings could threaten the entire nuclear industry, resulting in losses of billions of dollars. The fear of such findings becoming too generally known appears to explain why these findings remain obscure, though they have been in the literature for decades.

B. Radiometric results are not precise. This is true not only for earth dating, but for carbon dating.

A Consideration of Carbon Dating

There is a huge scatter in all radiometric dates; the methods are notoriously imprecise. To illustrate, King Tut-anh-amen's remains have been placed by historical data within a time span of a few years, but the best C-14 method allows several centuries over which Tut-anh-amen could have lived. Thus the question arises, What dates does one choose as "useful"? Answer: Dates are chosen to agree with preconceived notions of what the age ought to be. This has been attested by many authorities (who continue to use radiometric dating anyway) and applies to all radiometric dating methods, not just C-14.

Examples: (1) **Shroud of Turin:** It was believed to be some 800 yr old based on historical evidence, then dated by C-14 at 800 yr by selection of appropriate data points. This was no surprise, since the investigators chose from the range of C-14 results the one agreeing with the history. (2) **Old Stone Fort:** An Indian ceremonial site near Murfreesboro, Tenn., thought to be 1000 yr old based on historical evidence; C-14 dating of fire pit charcoals ranged from 500-1500 years old, and archeologists picked the average, 1000 yr, which is what history had already revealed.

Just as dates can be selected to fit a long chronology, dates can be preconceived that are young. Creationists have C-14 dated trace amounts of organic materials in dinosaur fossils at 5000 years - which is the approximate date of the Flood when the dinosaurs would most likely have fossilized. **But these results did not confirm biblical chronology any more than the conventional C-14 results support a long chronology.**

What this shows is that C-14 dates can be used to fit anyone's idea of chronology, thus they are really telling us nothing. Radiometric dating at best confirms a correct age (but doesn't tell anything new), and at worst "confirms" a fictitious age. So why do people use this method when these facts are widely known? Because other chronometric methods are unkind to the long chronology which evolution requires.

C. Radiometric dates were selected to agree with pre-radiometric ages.⁷

I thought that before radiometric dating was developed, scientists didn't try to assign actual ages to the earth and its rocks. I've always heard that they assigned only relative ages to the rocks, so they could say, This rock is older (or younger) than that one - but that they couldn't say how *much* older or younger.

Answer: This is a common misconception and has been repeated by many writers. But a look at books published before the discovery of radioactivity shows that scientists back then thought they could prove the earth is very old just as scientists do today. *Scientists assigned absolute ages to rocks and to the earth before radioactivity was discovered, and these ages became the basis for radiometric dates.*⁸

D. Pre-radiometric ages were based on the chronology of Charles Lyell.

E. Lyell devised his chronology to displace the biblical one.

A Consideration of Lyell's Chronological Motivation

The basis for Lyell's chronology was not science, but rather a long-standing animus of the Word of God in general, and the chronology of Moses in particular. Lyell in fact altered data in an attempt to make his dating scheme appear reasonable.⁹ Lyell was by training a lawyer, or in the terminology of the time, a barrister, a fact formally acknowledged in the title of the memorial volumes published after his death.¹⁰ **Lyell's real "hidden agenda" was revealed in private correspondence with colleagues and friends.**

He wrote that he had "driven" the biblical Flood "out of the Mosaic record."¹¹ He also revealed his plan for undermining the Bible. He would not make a frontal attack against the Scripture, but "conceived the idea ... that if ever the Mosaic chronology could be set down [discredited] without giving offense, it would be in an historical sketch ..."¹² Lyell's reference to "an historical sketch" meant a work about "historical geology" written from an evolutionary viewpoint. His *Principles of Geology* was the fulfillment of this plan.

In sum, Lyell using his legal skills would manufacture an opus presenting the alleged evolutionary version of the earth's geological past. He would lead his readers to doubt the chronology of Moses and the Bible as a whole without directly attacking it and without even naming it. With his *Principles of Geology*, published when he was only in his early thirties, he succeeded no doubt beyond his wildest dreams.

We are not left to wonder if Lyell was conscious of his indirect, deceitful maneuver against the Bible. He employed the same tactic generally, rarely asserting dogmatically what he wanted readers to believe, but cleverly allowing them to reach his conclusions on their own.

Indeed, he wrote of his use of this tactic to encourage belief in biological evolution: "I left this rather to be inferred, not thinking it worthwhile to offend a certain class of persons by embodying in words what could only be a speculation."¹³ Darwin observed Lyell using this tactic:

"Lyell is most firmly convinced that he has shaken the faith in the Deluge far more efficiently by never having said a word against the Bible than if he had acted otherwise. . . I have read lately Morley's *Life of Voltaire* and he insists strongly that direct attacks on Christianity (even when written with the powerful force and vigour of Voltaire) produce little permanent effect; real good seems to follow only the slow and silent side attacks."¹⁴

I have always heard that the idea of the creation not being old began with the Reformation. Before then, the dominant belief of the Church was that the creation is old, just as science teaches today. Besides, certain Church Fathers taught that the creation is old.

Answer: A careful examination of any of any of the Church Fathers fails to show that they believed in an old creation. Further, the belief that the creation is not old did not begin with the Reformation but was common before then.¹⁵

Interestingly, most of the Church Fathers did not address questions of origins or chronology extensively. There is an interesting reason for this. The early Church had so thoroughly rejected the evolutionary ideas and long time scales of the Greeks that in the early Church there was little debate over these issues, with the result that they were not extensively discussed. *Those seeking to find evidence in the Church Fathers of a belief in long chronologies must exploit sparse selective quotations.*

A Final Point to Ponder

As we approach the end of the age, is the world in its views and practices -- including ideas impinging on science -- moving toward God and the Bible or away? **May we as Christians be**

wary of accepting the dominant views of such a culture. Such views will be persuasive, finally culminating in "great delusion" (2 Thess. 2:11) which, if it were possible, would deceive the "very elect" (Matt. 24:24 and Mark 13:22).

Could the world of the end times be susceptible to "great delusion" if for a long time other lesser delusions had not been preparing the world for such a lie? The historical fact is that long ages for the creation are a creature of evolutionary thought, not biblical exegesis, and evolution - regardless of whether Christians accept it or not - is ultimately about running the world without God. May we as Christians find ourselves prayerfully "[testing] all things" and holding "fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

CONCLUSIONS

1. An old age for the universe, stars, sun, solar system, and planets is based on the presumed evolutionary age of the earth.
2. Fossils give no support to the conclusion that the earth is old.
3. Radiometric dates for the age of the earth are ultimately based on the chronology of Charles Lyell.
4. Lyell devised his chronology to displace the biblical one.

Old ages for the earth and universe are rooted in the anti-biblical agenda of Charles Lyell.

This is the fact of history. Advocacy of old ages even by many Christians does not undo this historical reality.

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