

## OUR EARTH—YOUNG OR OLD?

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There are several views among religionists concerning the age of the Universe and the Earth. Theistic evolutionists and their theological kin contend that the Universe is perhaps 20 billion years old, while the Earth is some 4.6 billion years of age. By the use of interpretative manipulations such as the “gap theory” (the notion that billions of years are silently tucked away between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2) and the “day-age view” (the assertion that the “days” of the creation week are not literal days but eons of time), the Bible is made to accommodate these vast ages of time.

Others feel that the question of the Earth’s age is unimportant. They contend that the Bible is silent regarding such matters, hence, the Universe may be “old” or “young”—the issue really is irrelevant. Still others (including this writer) affirm that the Bible does **not** ignore this subject. They argue that there are chronological data in the Scriptures that suggest a relatively young Earth, and that such being the case, this theme, as with any biblical subject, never can be irrelevant.

### MOTIVES

Let us briefly look at this controversy in terms of motive: If the Bible did not address this topic, creationists really could not care less about “when” the material Universe began. An all-powerful God might have accomplished His creation billions of years ago, or thousands of years ago. The creationist simply wants to know—does the divine narrative speak regarding this matter? He thus will humbly let the testimony of the Bible settle the issue. On the other hand, those who feel that the Earth’s present order is the result of evolutionary processes are **forced** to contend for an ancient Earth because **time** is the very essence of evolution. All evolutionists acknowledge that without sufficient time the process never could have occurred. In the words of George Wald, “time itself performs the miracles” (1954, p. 481).

### ASSUMPTIONS AND EVIDENCES

In view of the foregoing, every student of the Holy Scriptures should consider the following facts:

**(1) There is absolutely no scientific proof that the Earth is billions of years old.** The average layman thinks that the geologists have infallibly established the antiquity of the Earth. They have not, and the candid writers admit this. Dr. Stephen Moorbath of the University of Oxford wrote: “No terrestrial rocks closely approaching an age of 4.6 billion years have yet been discovered. The evidence for the age of the Earth is circumstantial, being based upon...indirect reasoning” (1977, p. 921). Dr. John Eddy of the High Altitude Observatory in Boulder, Colorado declared: “There is no evidence based solely on solar observations that the Sun is 4.5 to 5 billion years old.” He went on to say, “I suspect that the Sun is 4.5 billion years old. However, given some new and unexpected results to the contrary, and some time for frantic recalculation and theoretical readjustment, I suspect that we could live with Bishop Ussher’s value for the age of the

Earth and Sun. I don’t think we have much in the way of observational evidence in astronomy to conflict with that” (1978, p. 18). Although Ussher’s precise calculations are not now considered to be totally accurate, it is interesting to observe that some scholars are gravitating back in that direction.

**(2) The techniques for “dating” the Earth are based upon uniformitarian (evolutionary) assumptions.** Radiometric methods for dating the Earth’s rocks are grounded upon the decay sequences of certain elements. For example, uranium-238 (called a “parent” element) will, through a series of decomposition processes, ultimately produce lead-206 (referred to as a “daughter” element). Since scientists believe they know the present rate of decay, if a sample rock is found to contain both uranium-238 and lead-206, the ratio of the two is used to determine the age of the sample. However, scientists admit that in order for this technique to be valid, certain **assumptions** must be granted: (a) It is assumed that there was no lead-206 in the rock at the time of its formation. But what if lead-206 was a part of the **original creation**? That invalidates the entire system! (b) It must be assumed that neither the parent uranium nor the daughter lead has decreased or increased since the beginning. However, there is an increasing body of evidence which indicates that both parent and daughter elements, under the proper conditions, can migrate in the rocks. (c) The assumption is made that decay rates have remained constant. Again, however, recent research has shown that while these decay rates appear constant within narrow limits, under special circumstances they may be altered. Evolutionist Frederic B. Jueneman wrote:

The age of our globe is presently thought to be some 4.5 billion years, based on radiodecay rates of uranium and thorium. Such “confirmation” may be short-lived, as nature is not to be discovered quite so easily. There has been in recent years the horrible realization that radiodecay rates are not as constant as previously thought, nor are they immune to environmental influences.

And this could mean that the atomic clocks are reset during some global disaster, and events which brought the Mesozoic to a close may not be 65 million years ago but, rather, within the age and memory of man (1982, p. 21).

**(3) Numerous evidences reveal that evolutionary dating methods are not reliable.** The following examples demonstrate the folly of giving unqualified endorsement to the different “clocks” that are reputed to establish an aged Earth. (a) Studies on submarine basaltic rocks from Hawaii, known to have formed less **than two hundred years ago**, when dated by the potassium-argon method, revealed “ages” from 160 million to almost 3 billion years (Funkhouser and Naughton, 1968, p. 4601). (b) The shells of living mollusks have been dated at up to **2,300** years old (Keith and Anderson, 1963, p. 634). Talk about a Methuselah mollusk! (c) Freshly killed seals have been dated at 1,300 years, and mummified seals, dead only some thirty years, have yielded dates as high as 4,600 years (Dort, 1971, 6:210). (d) Ac-

ording to the evolutionary dating scale, stalactites (mineral deposits that are formed by dripping water) build at the rate of about one inch per century. Huge stalactites are used as “proof” of an ancient earth. However, in an unused wing of the Milwaukee Public Museum (a portion of which is underground), there are stalactites some six feet long. This would suggest, according to uniformitarian assumptions, that the museum was built 7,200 years ago—or some **5,700 years before Columbus sailed to the new world!** (*Bible-Science Newsletter*, June 1983, p. 10). Many other examples, equally devastating, could be cited.

**(4) There are clear biblical affirmations which suggest an Earth that is relatively young.** If it can be established biblically that humanity and the Earth are approximately the same age, and if it can be shown that man’s existence is to be measured in terms of thousands, not millions or billions, of years, such would demonstrate the relative youthfulness of our planet. Accordingly, please consider the following declarations of Scripture. (a) Moses declared that all created things had their genesis in the same week (Genesis 1:31). This included both Earth and man, and that “week” consisted of literal days such as Israel observed in keeping the Sabbath (Exodus 20:11). (b) The prophets affirmed that Jehovah’s sovereignty had been evident to man “from the beginning,” even from “the foundations of the earth” (cf. Isaiah 40:21). (c) Christ stated that “male and female” (i.e., Adam and Eve) had been made “from the beginning of the creation” (Mark 10:6), and Christ should know for He was there (John 1:1ff.)! That statement never can be harmonized with the notion that the Earth existed billions of years before the creation of mankind. (d) Paul argued that evidences of the invisible God have been perceived (obviously by man) “since the creation of the world” (Romans 1:21). Anyone who takes seriously the testimony of the Scriptures cannot but see the import of such passages.

Additionally, the Bible documents that man’s years upon the Earth have been relatively few. In Luke 3, the historian lists the genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam, who was the “first man” (1 Corinthians 15:45). From Christ back to Abraham, there are some fifty-five generations. Archaeology has demonstrated that these fifty-five generations span approximately two thousand years at most (cf. Kitchen and Mitchell, 1974, p. 213). Further, from Abraham back to Adam there are but twenty additional generations (a number of which were renowned for longevity). Even if one granted a few omissions in the genealogy (as with some of the O.T. genealogies—cf. Ezra 7:3-4; 1 Chronicles 6:6-10), there is no reason to assume that those earlier generations of the Lord’s family tree are treated in a different manner than the later generations. Hence, they span only a few thousand years, certainly not millions! If that is not the case, then the genealogical records of the Bible are a meaningless waste of space! The Scriptures are not silent concerning the relative ages of the Earth and of man.

**(5) There is scientific evidence for a young Earth.** The Bible is the final word on **any** subject that it addresses. Any time that science is at odds with the clear testimony of the Word of God, then science is in error. In spite of evolutionary claims to the contrary, it is refreshing to know there are genuine scientific evidences that point to a young Earth, in harmony with the indications of Scripture. Of the many tests that might be discussed, only a few can be mentioned here.

(a) The late Thomas Barnes, professor emeritus of physics at the University of Texas, did extensive research into the decay of the Earth’s magnetic field. His findings indicated that the magnetic field had been created only a few thousand years ago and is decaying toward extinction (Barnes, 1973).

(b) Deep under the crust of the Earth lie huge reservoirs of oil and water. Many of these are characterized by extremely high fluid pressures. It is this high pressure that produces the “gushers” with which well drillers are so familiar. Now scientists are aware of the fact that these underground pressures are diminishing (much like air seeping from the tire of an automobile). What intrigues them is this: if this seepage has been going on for millions of years (evolutionists assume the reservoirs are millions of years old), why hasn’t the pressure been completely diminished? It is an acknowledged fact that the rock above these pressure pools, even under the strictest conditions, is porous enough to allow the pressure to escape in a matter of only a few thousand years (see Cook, 1960, pp. 254-262).

(c) Supposedly, meteorites have been falling from outer space to Earth for billions of years. If the various strata of the Earth required billions of years to establish, meteorites should be found all the way down in each individual stratum. But the fact is, meteorites have not been found in the so-called “older” strata. It thus would appear that the sedimentary strata were laid down in a relatively **short period** of time, thus explaining why the meteorites are found near the top. This fits well with the biblical narrative about the Genesis Flood (cf. Kofahl, 1980, p. 123).

(d) According to recognized population growth statistics, if man had been multiplying on Earth for one million years, there would be more people than could be jammed into the entire known Universe! And remember, evolutionists claim that man has been here two to three million years!

## CONCLUSION

Is the Earth therefore “young” or “old”? Evidence indicates that it is young. Does it matter? Yes, for a young Earth is consistent with the testimony of the Bible; further, it is a valid argument against the “time” ingredient essential for the alleged process of evolution.

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