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# The Age of the Earth - Part 2

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*Editor's note: In Part 1 of this two-part series we looked at two events in the recent past that cast serious doubt about the reliability of current methods being used to test rocks and rock strata in order to determine their ages.*

*The volcanic explosion at Mt. St. Helens in 1980 created land features appearing to be thousands and millions of years old. Surtsey island, created by an undersea volcano in 1963, demonstrated that gullies, canyons and other land features can be formed in less than a decade.*

*We also looked at the questionable assumptions that lie behind the conventional radioisotope dating methods. In Part 2 we will consider other ways to measure the ages of the earth and solar system.*

## Why Secular Scientists Need Long Ages

The theory of gradual evolution by chance and by means of natural selection needs a long, long time to seem the least bit reasonable to the general public. Charles Darwin himself wrote: "The belief that species are immutable [unchangeable] productions was almost unavoidable as long as the history of the world was thought to be of short duration."—\*Charles Darwin, Origin of the Species (conclusion to second edition).

Often we will read in a secular science magazine about an amazingly well-designed feature in some organism with the explanation that "well, it had X million years to evolve and perfect that adaptation." However, even 4.5 billion years (the assigned age for the earth and solar system) are not nearly long enough to account for life as we now know it. Some computer studies such as one by Dr. William Dembski, show life evolving by random chance to be impossible even in a universe billions of years old.

Dembski took the estimate of the number of atoms in the entire universe (10 to the 80 power) and multiplied it by the smallest division of time during which there could be an evolutionary change (10 to the 45th power changes per second) and multiplied that by the commonly accepted age of the universe (10 to the 25th power seconds) to arrive at an absolute limit of 10 to the 150th power. The odds of even a simple body protein evolving out of amino-acid components is 10 to the 325th power, far beyond the boundary of zero probability. **1**

To arrive at an age of 4.5 billion years for the earth and the solar system, scientists have to (1) ignore the assumptions that lie behind radioisotope dating and (2) ignore many clues that our planet cannot be billions of years old. Here are some yardsticks that give an age of far less than 4.5 billion years. Many more examples could have been provided.

### **THE RECEDING MOON**

The laws of physics indicate that the moon should be receding from the earth, and it is. The same laws have set an absolute limit to how close to the earth the moon could possibly have been. Known as the Roche limit, the distance of 11,500 miles is the point at which the earth's tidal forces would have broken the moon into pieces, something like the rings of Saturn. Using the known speed of recession, the moon could not have been receding from the earth for 4.5 billion years or even 1 billion years or it would have been inside the Roche limit. **2**

### **THE SLOWING DOWN OF THE EARTH'S ROTATION**

The earth-moon tidal friction is causing the spin rate of the earth to be gradually slowing down. British physicist, Lord Kelvin, used the rate at which the earth's rotation is slowing, and assuming an initial molten earth, proved that the earth must be less than a billion years or its shape would be different. If the earth's molten land masses had consolidated billions of years ago, centrifugal force would have caused the elevation of land at the equator to be up some 40 kilometers higher than it actually is now and eventually would have caused the oceans to settle into two very deep basins at the two polar regions. **2**

### **THE DECAY OF THE EARTH'S THERMAL ENERGY AND MAGNETIC FIELD**

Due to the process of conduction to the earth's surface, the thermal energy within the earth has been decaying. Also, the earth's magnetic field, which shields the planet from cosmic and solar radiation hazards, has been decaying. Using the measured decay rates for thermal energy and the magnetic field together with reasonable estimates as to their initial states, physicists can determine reasonable limits to the earth's age. In the case of thermal energy, Lord Kelvin said the earth's age has to be less than one billion years; in the case of the magnetic field, less than 24 million years. **2**

### **METEORITE DUST**

The amount of meteorites in the earth's strata and meteorite dust in the crust has been determined. Using present rates at which meteorites are reaching the earth, the earth's age should be measured in thousands of years, not millions or billions. **3**

### **PRESSURE IN OIL FIELDS**

The strong pressures that have been found in oil reservoirs couldn't have been sustained for more than a few thousand years. **3**

### **HELIUM**

At present rates, the amount of helium in the atmosphere could have accumulated in only a few thousand years. **3**

### **RADIOCARBON IN THE ATMOSPHERE**

Several thousand years is all that would be needed for the buildup of radiocarbons in the atmosphere to have reached present levels. **3**

### **HUMAN HISTORY**

According to evolution theory, mankind has been around on this planet about a million years. Why is it then that written records can be traced back only a few thousand years? The origin of written records fits nicely with the biblical age for the Flood. **4**

### **EARTH'S POPULATION**

Granted that events such as wars, natural catastrophes, and famines can wipe out large segments of the population at once, the fact remains if humans have been around for a million years and the population had increased just 1/100 of a percent a year, the world's population at the time of Christ would have been  $2 \times 10$  to the 43rd power or enough people to fill all the planets in our solar system 1,000 times **4**

**COMETS**

Comets are continuously breaking apart because each time one circles the sun, some of its ice is evaporated and some of the gas is boiled away by the sun's heat. Additional material is lost through gravitational forces. According to studies, all short-term comets should have totally dissipated within 10,000 years. Despite the invention by astronomers of something called the Oort Cloud, an imaginary birthplace for comets, there is no known way new comets can come into existence. **4 5**

**TOPSOIL**

It has been calculated that 300 to 1,000 years are needed to build one inch of topsoil. Since the average depth of topsoil around the world is about eight inches, a few thousand years is all that is needed for the topsoil to have been deposited. **4**

**NIAGARA FALLS**

Recent calculations indicate the Niagara Falls is eroding at a rate of about 3.5 feet per year. Since the length of the Niagara Falls gorge is about 7 miles, the age of the falls can't be more than 5,000-10,000 years. Of course, Noah's Flood would have caused a great amount of the initial erosion. **4**

**OCEAN SEDIMENTS**

About 29 billion tons of sediment are added to the ocean every year. Because there are only a few thousand feet of sediment on the ocean floor, they could have accumulated in only a few thousand years. If the earth were billions of years old, the sediment should be close to 100 miles in depth. **4**

**TREE RINGS**

California's giant sequoias have no known enemies, not even insects or fire can bother them. They are probably the oldest living things on earth. Yet their rings indicate they can't be more than 4,000 years ago, placing their initial growth during the era following Noah's Flood. **4**

Some people say the earth looks old because it is old. Some others may say the earth looks old but is young. What's wrong though with the observation that the earth looks young because it IS young? Our planet still has a molten interior, experiences volcanoes, earthquakes and shifting plates, and is home to a wide variety of living organisms. It is not some cold, dead rock floating in space. While other bodies in the solar system do not support life, they are not necessarily cold or dead either. For instance, Satan's moon Enceladus has been found to be relatively smooth (lacking a lot of craters), has active geysers, and possibly even a warm, radioactive interior. **6**

Many people likely reject a literal interpretation of Genesis because it can't be harmonized with a 4.5 million year old earth. This is a mistake because we don't live on a planet anywhere near that old. There is no reason we should doubt Genesis. Especially should we not doubt its account of the first sin and the first promise of a Savior. *LSI*

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