

Serious Problems With Radiometric Dating: How Old Are Those Rocks?



By: Jeffrey D. Mason, C.Ht., M.A. and M.H.

The presupposition of the “Evolutionary Theory” is, the earth is literally billions of years old. Evolutionists will often site radiometric dating of rock in an effort to “support” their view of old earth geology. Indeed, one evolutionary textbook states:

“Some elements, such as uranium, undergo radioactive decay to produce other elements. By measuring the quantities of radioactive elements and elements into which they decay in rocks, geologists can determine how much time has elapsed since the rock has cooled from an initially molten state.”

Though this statement sounds scientifically reasonable, this evolutionary long ages determination of rock and therefore, the earth, is really nothing more than an interpretation based on the starting belief, evolution is true. The actual scientific information on isotope ratios as found in the rock; Most of the elements found in these rocks have several

forms of these isotopes, which also have differing masses. However, as we shall see, there are definitely other reasonable interpretations of radiometric data.

Dr. Jonathan Sarfati, PhD gave a good example in his article "How Old is the Earth?" using the hourglass analogy. He basically stated, if we observe an hourglass with sand still flowing from top to bottom, we could determine how long ago it was completely full at top, by the quantities of sand in both ends of the glass in combination with the flow rate. But, in order to do this we **MUST** assume three things, which may or **MAY NOT** be true. These three starting assumption, as we will discover lead to great extrapolations beyond observed information, that could **NOT** actually be known. These three assumptions are as follows:

- 1.) We **KNOW** for **CERTAIN** the quantities of sand in both ends of the hourglass from the start.
- 2.) We know **FOR SURE** the rate of flow has remained constant. For example we **KNOW** sand didn't ever become damp and thus, slow-down in its flow from one end of the glass to the other.
- 3.) We know as an **ABSOLUTE**, the hourglass system has remained closed. That is to say, no sand has been added or removed in either end of the container without our knowledge of it.

Then if we calculated the time since the last up ending of the hourglass, by measuring the sand in both ends, our measurements should prove quite accurate, if radiometric methods actually work as well as claimed by evolutionists in the first place. Unfortunately, and realistically, these three assumptions are impossible to know with any degree of certainty. These are **HUGE** assumptions, for we cannot know with certainty the quantities of isotope producing elements in the rocks at their start. We cannot know with certainty if the conditions the rock was exposed to remained steady and constant for supposed billions of years; and we cannot know with certainty, the rock system has remained closed

for the length of its entire history. Therefore, ALL radiometric dating methods from thallium, potassium-argon, to uranium and even the much shorter-lived carbon-14 are highly speculative. The uncertainties of the assumptions going into such dating methods, from the start, should lead us to question the accuracy of radiometric dating on this basis alone! However, there is still more lending doubts to the radiometric methods, besides these unrealistic presuppositions. Evolutionary geologists often assume the rocks under chemical analysis have not undergone alterations over time by migration of atoms in or out of the rock. Again this is due to assumption number three, and is based on the fact that since we have been measuring over about 100 years, radioactive decay rates seem constant, and are unaffected by heat or pressure.

Again this is a major assumption because, for example, Potassium and Uranium, both common parent elements, are easily broken down in water and so can leach out of rocks. Argon, created by decay of potassium, is a gas and therefore also easily escapes the confines of rock bodies and other substances.

Another problem, as so well pointed out by Dr. Sarfati, is the conflicting dates between differing radiometric methods. ***"If two methods disagree, then at least one of them MUST be WRONG."*** One example he gave was buried wood found in Australia. This wood was buried by basalt lava flow, as could be deduced by its charring, showed a carbon-14 date of around 45,000 years of age. However, the basalt itself was dated by K-Ar radiometric analysis and found to be 45 million years old! We also have fossilized wood from the Upper Permian rock layers. These rock layers are supposed to be some 250 million years old according to modern evolutionary geologists. And yet the fossilized wood found inside this radio metrically dated rock layer were discovered to contain carbon-14 isotope. Obviously something is amiss here, since ALL traces of carbon-14 would have disintegrated in this petrified wood if it were any older than 50,000 years! Obviously this is NOT a small gap.

In addition, there are numerous examples where the radiometric methods, ALL OF THEM, have given wrong dates on rocks and other materials with known historical ages. One example worth noting is the

rock taken from the dacite lava dome of Mt. St. Helens. Even though we KNOW the rock was formed in 1986, this rock was dated at a staggeringly old .35-.05 million years according to one of THE most common, Potassium-argon K-Ag techniques for dating rock. Andisite rocks from Mt. Ngauruhoe in New Zealand, hardened from lava flows in 1949, 1954 and 1975 dated to no less than .27 million years old and some ages put them as high as 3.5 million years in age.

The evolutionists explain this anomaly as coming from the earth's mantle, when large amounts of argon in the lava became encapsulated in the rock and remained upon solidification. The secular scientific papers list many examples of such excess in Argon, leading to dates into millions of years in spite of the fact the rock has a known, and recent geological history. Dr. Sarfati rightly asks:

"If excess Argon can cause exaggerated dates from rocks of known age, then WHY should we TRUST the method for rocks of unknown age?"

These anomalies line-up well with the biblical account of a recent earth and creation event, roughly in the order of some 6,000 to 10,000 years old. Creation Scientists are currently looking into discovering the exact geophysical and geo-chemical mechanisms to explain the observed isotope ratios, according to Dr. Sarfati. One area of promise is looking into the first assumption- the original, initial conditions thought by evolutionists, as starting assumptions are not necessarily what they suppose, but perhaps are affected by the chemistry of the rock that melted to form the magma, or similar other geophysical affects and/or intrusions.

In Sketch Some Brief Evidences for a Young Earth

Most may not realize it, but there are numerous dating methods, which dispute the notion the earth, are billions of years old. In fact, 90

percent of the methods developed for estimating age suggest a young earth. Following are just a few pieces of evidence suggesting young ages for our planet.

EVIDENCES

- 1.) Salt levels in the seas are being deposited much more rapidly than is exiting. This deposition/exiting cycle could not have been going on for billions of years, as the ocean concentrations are NOT nearly high enough for billions of years of time. Even giving evolution very generous leeway, the seas could NOT be more than 65 million years of age. This is far, far younger than the billions of years believed upon by evolutionists. (Note: this projection represents the maximum possible age, NOT THE ACTUAL AGE.)
- 2.) The moon is moving further away from the earth at a rate of 1 and half inches per year. Scientists state, the receding would have been faster than present in times past. Calculating back the moon would have actually been touching the earth, 1.37 billion years ago, and in that time at its rate of recession, it would have taken that long to reach its current position, starting from an actual physical contact with the earth! This gives a maximum possible age of the moon, and again NOT the actual age...Maximum age based on this regress is 1.37 billion years. And that's if the moon started in direct contact with earth!
- 3.) Radioactive decay releases Helium into the atmosphere, while very little is actually escaping. Based on the rates of entry into and release out of the atmosphere, we find the current total amount of helium present is 1/2000th of what would realistically be expected if the atmosphere were actually billions of years in age. This helium mainly escapes from rocks, however, there is still enough helium encapsulated in rocks that it hasn't had adequate time to escape, certainly not billions of years; otherwise, helium would NOT be found in these ancient rocks today!

- 4.) Over the last 300 years we have been measuring the earth's magnetic field from various locations all over the globe, and keeping meticulous records. We have noticed a measurable loss in its strength at a specific rate of decay every year since records have been kept. At the current rate of decay, and calculating backwards, the earth's magnetic field couldn't be any older than about 10,000 years, otherwise it would be way too strong for life to have been comfortable and manageable on the earth.

- 5.) Un-fossilized Dinosaur bones have been found in scattered locations, including in Alaska and Montana. In addition hemoglobin and red-blood cells have been found inside these bones and have not degraded. These conditions could NOT have lasted in these bones more than just a few thousand years, and certainly NOT 65 million years or more; the time when evolutionists believe the last of the dinosaurs were alive on earth!

These are to list only a very, and I mean very few examples demonstrating a young earth. It must be kept in mind however, in spite of these evidences and the obvious shortcomings of radiometric dating methods, neither the creation scientist nor the evolutionary scientist can actually "prove" the age of the earth. We can only speak of evidences that suggest ages, and that is all. Not all the data is in, so it would be irresponsible of any scientist to state, conclusively how old our planet is. That being said, when we take the bulk of what we do see, 90 percent of the methods available for projecting an estimate of the age of earth suggest a very youthful planet. From the standpoint of science, that's really about all we can say for certain. However, given the major discrepancies involved with radiometric dating techniques, and all the assumptions put into the method to even extrapolate a date, it should be obvious to any enlightened mind, believing in a young earth is neither unscientific, nor has the idea in any way been overturned by "modern" scientific methods. Based on the known facts, it is just as reasonable to believe God's account of geologic history and ages as to believe in billions upon billions of years...and in fact, given all the points of the case for and against...a young earth seems far more reasonable when viewed in the light of those facts.

REFERENCES AND NOTES:

Sarfati, Jonathan, PhD; How Old Is The Earth? Refuting Evolution

Ham, Ken; I Got Excited at Mt. St. Helens: Creation Magazine, 1993

Snelling, A.A., PhD.: Radiometric Dating in conflict: Creation Magazine 1998

Schweitzer, Mary, PhD; The Real Jurassic Park, Earth magazine, 1997,

RELATED ARTICLE ON THIS SITE:

Mason, Jeffrey D. C.Ht., M.A., and M.H.; How Fast was the Fossil Record Created: Sword and Shield On-line Newsletter, June 2007