

More on Carbon 14 Dating

We have already explained that Carbon-14 can only date things of organic matter, meaning it must have been alive and contained carbon, things such as plants, trees, animals, or humans. We are therefore limited to about 60,000 years (with evolutionary timing), so only fairly recent items may be dated by this method.

Once again, the general concept behind C-14 dating is quite simple. C-14 is made in the upper atmosphere, as nitrogen-14 (N-14) is bombarded by cosmic rays. Through this process the N-14 is changed into C-14. Also in our atmosphere is a great deal of carbon dioxide, which also contains C-12. As you know, the C-12 in carbon dioxide would naturally be cycled through plants and animals because we use it in photosynthesis and breathing. The C-14 acts much like the C-12 by entering our bodies as well. The only difference is that the C-14, after being formed, is radioactive and begins to immediately change back into N-14 (similar to the uranium decaying into lead).

The air we breathe has a certain amount of C-12 and a certain amount of C-14, creating what is called a C-14/C-12 ratio. We expect to find an equal ratio everywhere on the earth, because it is believed the two have been mixed thoroughly. It is like making Kool-Aid; the mixture spreads evenly throughout the entire jug of water. Likewise, the ratio of carbon would be the same in the atmosphere, as in our bodies, because we continually take the carbon in. However, once we die we stop taking in carbon, and the C-14, which is decaying, is not replaced. Therefore, knowing the decay of C-14 to have a half-life of 5,730 years, we simply measure how much C-14 is left in the body or plant to see how much has decayed, hence, how much time has gone by.

The problem with the above process is that we must assume that we know what the C-14/C-12 ratio was thousands of years ago (millions of years for the evolutionist). Scientists do not claim that it has remained constant, because it is well known that the industrial revolution changed this ratio by producing a large amount of C-12 through the burning of coal, etc. Tree rings show us what the different ratio was before the industrial revolution; and this change is calculated into the formula when the dating is done. However, how can we assume that this has been the only change in the ratio for the past eons of time?

Still another problem is that as C-14 enters the atmosphere, other C-14 decays into N-14 and leaves the atmosphere. Therefore, the more C-14 coming into our system the more it will leave our system as N-14. Dr. Snelling uses this example of this process: Picture a tank designed to hold water but having small holes in it. Once you turn on the water, some water will go into the tank while some water will leave through the small holes. Gradually, the water will build up to a point where the water leaving the tank will equal the amount of water being put into the tank and a balance will be established. The same scenario is going on with the C-14 in the air, as more comes into the atmosphere, more goes out until a balance is established, having equal amounts coming in and leaving simultaneously. At the present time, about 18 pounds of carbon enter our atmosphere a year and 15 pounds leave (total of 62 metric tons). In order to reach our balance, we need to have about 75 metric tons, which we do not yet have (Humphry, radiocarbon). W. F. Libby, the man who invented this dating method, as well as other scientists, for years assumed that this balance had already been reached, because from the moment the C-14 began to enter our atmosphere (when the faucet was turned on in our analogy) to the moment a balance would be reached, should be only 30,000 years (Snelling, Answers, pp. 65-69). Obviously, evolution states the earth is far older than this and, therefore, this balance should have been reached millions of years ago.

Libby was wrong. In his day the amount of C-14 entering the atmosphere was about 12% more than what was leaving the atmosphere and, therefore, this system must be younger than 30,000 years because this balance has not yet been reached. Later, more sophisticated technology used by nuclear chemists, Fairhall and Young, showed that the system may be as much as 50% out of balance (Fairhall, p. 402). Others have measured it

to be less at 35% and, therefore, the inconsistencies should send out warning signs as to the accuracy of both the ratio measurements and the dating method itself (Snelling, Answers, pp. 69-70). Tree rings and other outside information indicate that this process is not as simple as once believed and, therefore, we should proceed with extreme caution, especially since there are other assumptions involved as well. (Is the Kool-Aid really equally mixed?)

Many more problems arise with dating methods when we take into consideration what Scripture tells us. The firmament, or cloud canopy which covered the earth before the Flood, would have shielded the atmosphere from cosmic bombardment and the level of C-14 would be drastically lowered. Therefore, if one is trying to date organic material that died as a result of the Flood, it would be dated as extremely old because there would be an absence of C-14. Evolution would claim that the C-14 decayed, while creationists would say there wasn't much C-14 to begin with (coal is a good example). Furthermore, the Flood surely would have buried massive amounts of carbon caught up in the organic systems of that time, leaving the limestone, coal and shale deposits we have today (all are loaded with carbon). This removing of carbon from the atmospheric system would disrupt the balance of C-14/C-12 ratio, not only at the time of the Flood, but perhaps for a few centuries after as the earth was replenished. The higher electromagnetic field of the earth before the Flood (see section on the pre-Flood world or Biblical Pangea) would again cause the amount of C-14 to be significantly less. As a result, any attempt to find uniformity in the C-14/C12 ratio is pointless, making the entire dating method useless, at least in pre-Flood artifacts and probably even post-Flood ones.

Other warning signs come from the inconsistencies in actual datings. The following are further examples from Dr. Snelling to show where these dating methods are inaccurate. This is something the evolutionists probably would not want you to know about:

- 1) A freshly killed seal C-14 dated showed it to be 1,300 years old.
- 2) Living mollusk shells were dated at up to 2,300 years old.
- 3) Living snail shells showed they had died 27,000 years ago.
- 4) Coal from Russia from the 'Pennsylvania,' supposedly 300 million years old, was dated at 1,680 years.
- 5) Natural gas from Alabama and Mississippi (Cretaceous and Eocene, respectively) should have been 50 million to 135 million years old, yet C-14 gave dates of 30,000 to 34,000 years, respectively (Snelling Answers, pp. 73-74).

Because of results such as those mentioned above, Dr. Lee, though an evolutionist, writes:

The troubles of the radiocarbon dating method are undeniably deep and serious. Despite 35 years of technological refinement and better understanding, the underlying assumptions have been strongly challenged, and warnings are out that radiocarbon may soon find itself in a crisis situation. Continuing use of the method depends on a 'fix-it-as-we-go-' approach, allowing for contamination here, fractionation there, and calibration whenever possible. It should be no surprise, then, that fully half of the dates are rejected. The wonder is, surely, that the remaining half come to be accepted . . . No matter how 'useful' it is, though, the radiocarbon method is still not capable of yielding accurate and reliable results. There are

gross discrepancies, the chronology is uneven and relative, and the accepted dates are actually selected dates (Lee, pp. 9, 29).

It is refreshing to see others also opening their thoughts to accepting a catastrophic, global disaster to render these methods inaccurate. Dr. Frederick Jueneman, an *evolutionist*, writes:

There has been in recent years the horrible realization that radio-decay rates are not as constant as previously thought, nor are they immune to environmental influences and this could mean that the atomic clocks were reset during some global disaster; an event that brought the Mesozoic [age of dinosaurs] to a close may not be 65 million years old but ***rather in the age and memory of man*** (emphasis added -Jueneman, p.21).

Even those working in the field question the results. In describing a conversation John Morris had with a famous archaeologist from the University of Pennsylvania involved in an excavation in Turkey, Dr. Morris states:

He had discovered an ancient tomb with wooden timbers. I had asked if he had sent timber samples off for dating through the C-14 method . . . he had of course, . . . but claimed he would never believe anything that came back from a carbon-14 lab. Nor was he aware of any archaeologist in the world who would accept such dates. . . He was obliged to carbon-date artifacts to keep his grant money coming in, and so he always did so, but, he did not trust the method or its results (Morris, Young Earth, p. 65).

One last thing to discuss before leaving this topic is how scientists came up with the date of 4.6 billion years (present theory, anyway) for the age of the earth. If the earth was a big molten blob for millions of years, then the above dating methods won't work because they will only give a date from the point something becomes a solid. Rocks date only around 3.8 billion years old, so how did they date the earth at 4.6 billion? By a meteorite! Scientists have used a lead-to-lead dating method on rocks that fall from outer space, and this age is then transferred to earth. Obviously some questionable assumptions develop with this hypothesis.