

Jere E. Frost on the Origin of Matter and the Age of the Earth

In 1967 brother Jere E. Frost wrote an article on "The Bible on Origin of Matter" (*Pine Hills Exhorter*, March 6, 1967). The following comments are interesting:

The Bible does not tell us when the beginning was, and hence there can be no estimating of the age of the earth from the Genesis record. Nor is there any evidence as to how long an expanse of time transpired from "the beginning" of verse one until the time of God's saying "let there be light." But the Bible does tell us that the universe had a beginning and is not eternal.

The "gap" theory which Jere suggested between Genesis 1:1 and 1:3 seems weak to me because it is based on silence and is an effort to accommodate the biblical evidence with the idea that the earth must be old. After pointing out that "God is the eternal, self-existent one who had no beginning," Jere ended his article with a great statement of conviction:

"In the beginning God" explains the origin of life, matter and the vast universe in a manner that is both rational and in harmony with scientific principles.

In another article Jere said this about the age of the earth:

(3) **Age of the earth.** Various systems of calculating the earth's age have been devised employing measurements for radioactivity, the carbon-14 method and uranium-lead process. The technical aspects are interesting and, for many purposes, quite accurate and valuable. But they are by no means incontrovertible. Even though we know the present rate of uranium disintegration, we do not know (1) the original composition of the matter to be measured or (2) whether in ages past the rate of disintegration was constant, or (3) with what qualities of age God created the

earth. These unknown factors render any conclusions about earth's age as so much guesswork. When God created man he immediately had the anatomical age of an adult, yet his actual chronological age was less than one day. And then how rapid was the process of aging? One physicist undertook a study to determine whether the rate of uranium disintegration had, in fact, been a predictable constant. He said, "My investigations of the uranium and thorium halos disclosed a startling circumstance: the radioactive decay rate has probably changed considerably during geologic time." (R. Gentry as quoted in *The Theory of Evolution and Special Creation* by Clark and Eakin.) Besides, the age of the earth is irrelevant, for it neither proves evolution nor disproves creation, nor does the Bible say anything about the age of the earth (or of man, Ussher to the contrary notwithstanding). The question is not age, but origin. Not when, but how? God producing order, or chance and time producing evolution? ("Arguments for Evolution." *Pine Hills Exhorter*, October, 1970)

Brother Frost has presented Bible students with three facts and problems with which they must struggle:

- The Bible says nothing about the age of the earth.
- Ussher's chronology is wrong.
- We don't know how much time lapsed between Genesis 1:1 and 1:3. (We don't *know* that any time lapsed.)

These are the problems I mentioned in my speech at the Florida College 2000 lectures. It's comforting to see that others have recognized these same problems.