

What Really Happened To The Dinosaurs?

Introduction. Dinosaurs are used more than almost anything else to indoctrinate children and adults in the idea of millions of years of earth history. However, the Bible gives us a framework for explaining dinosaurs in terms of thousands of years of history, including the mystery of when they lived and what happened to them.

Many think that the existence of dinosaurs and their demise is shrouded in such mystery that we may never know the truth. However, dinosaurs are only a mystery if you accept the evolutionary story of their history, but there is no mystery surrounding dinosaurs if you accept the Bible's totally different account of dinosaur history.

How can there be such totally different explanations for dinosaurs? Whether one is an evolutionist or accepts the Bible's account of history, the evidence for dinosaurs is the same. All scientists have the same facts -- they have the same world, the same fossils, the same living creatures, the same Universe. If the "facts" are the same, then how can the explanations be so different? The reason is that scientists have only the present, but scientists are trying to connect the fossils in the present to the past.

Many people think the Bible is just a book about religion, but it is much more. The Bible is the history book of the Universe and tells us the future destiny of the Universe as well. Ultimately, there are only two ways of thinking: starting with the revelation from God as foundational to all thinking (including biology, history, and geology), resulting in a Christian worldview; or starting with the evolutionary story as foundational to all thinking, resulting in a secular worldview. Most Christians have been indoctrinated through the media and education system to think in a secular way.

I. ***Where Did Dinosaurs Come From?***

- A. According to the Bible, God made the dinosaurs, along with the other land animals, on the sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:24-25, 31).
 1. Adam and Eve were also made on the sixth day -- so dinosaurs lived at the same time as people, not separated by eons of time. Dinosaurs could not have died out before people appeared because dinosaurs had not previously existed.
 2. So if one approaches Genesis to Revelation consistently, interpreting scripture with scripture, then death, bloodshed, disease, and suffering came into the world only after Adam sinned (Genesis 1:29-30; 3:21; Romans 5:12, 14; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).
- B. According to evolutionists, dinosaurs first evolved around 235 million years ago, long before man, from some reptile that had originally evolved from amphibians. No human being ever lived with dinosaurs.

1. Their history is recorded in the fossil layers which were deposited over millions of years. But they cannot point to any clear transitional (in-between) forms to substantiate their argument.
2. Dinosaur family trees in evolutionary books show many distinct types of dinosaurs, but only hypothetical lines join them to some common ancestor. The lines are dotted because there is no fossil evidence. Evolutionists simply cannot prove their belief in a non-dinosaur ancestor for dinosaurs.
3. They were so successful as a group of animals that they eventually ruled the earth. However, around 65 million years ago, most evolutionists believe some sort of cataclysmic event, such as an asteroid impact, killed them.

II. ***Who Discovered Dinosaurs?***

- A. Secular books would tell you that the first discovery of what later were called dinosaurs was in 1677 when Dr. Robert Plot found bones so big they were thought to belong to a giant elephant or a giant human.
- B. In 1822, Mary Anne Mantell went for a walk in Sussex, England. According to tradition, she found a stone that glittered in the sunlight and showed it to her fossil-collecting husband. Dr. Mantell, a physician, noticed that the stone contained a tooth similar to, but larger than, that of modern reptiles. He concluded that it belonged to an extinct giant plant-eating reptile with teeth like an iguana. In 1825 he named the owner of the tooth *Iguanodon* (iguana tooth), and thus the "age of reptiles" began.
- C. From a biblical perspective, however, the time of the above discoveries was actually the time when dinosaurs were rediscovered. Adam discovered dinosaurs when he first observed them.

III. ***Does The Bible Mention Dinosaurs?***

- A. If people saw dinosaurs, you would think that ancient historical writings, such as the Bible, would mention them. The King James Version was first translated in 1611. Some people think that because the word "dinosaur" is not found in this or other translations, the Bible does not mention dinosaurs. It was not until 1841, however, that the word "dinosaur" ("terrible lizard") was invented.
- B. Is there another word for "dinosaur"? There are dragon legends from around the world. Could these actually be accounts of encounters with what we now call dinosaurs? Just as Flood legends are based on a real global Flood -- dragon legends are possibly based on actual encounters with real animals that today we call dinosaurs. Many of these land-dragon descriptions do fit with what we know about dinosaurs.

- C. The Hebrew word in Genesis 1:21 for "whales" is the word translated elsewhere as "dragon" (Isaiah 27:1; Ezekiel 29:3). So, in the first chapter of the Bible's first book, God may be describing the sea-dwelling, dinosaur-type animals that He created.
1. There are other Bible passages about dragons that lived in the sea (Psalm 74:13). Though the word "dinosaur" strictly refers to animals that lived on the land, the sea reptiles and flying reptiles are often grouped with the dinosaurs. The sea dragons could have included dinosaur-type animals such as the *Mosasaurus*.
 2. Job 41:1-34 describes a great animal that lived in the sea, Leviathan, that even breathed fire. This "dragon" may have been something like the mighty 40 ft. *Sarcosuchus imperator*, or the 82 ft. *Liopleurodon*.
- D. There is also mention of a "fiery flying serpent" in Isaiah 30:6. This could be a reference to one of the pterodactyls, which are popularly thought of as flying dinosaurs, such as the *Pteranodon*, *Rhamphorhynchus*, or *Ornithocheirus*.
- E. God showed Job how great He was as Creator by reminding him of the largest land animal He had made (Job 40:15-19). What kind of animal was the "behemoth"?
1. Bible translators, not being sure what this beast was, often transliterated the Hebrew, giving us the word "behemoth."
 2. However, in many Bible commentaries and Bible footnotes, "behemoth" is said to possibly be the hippopotamus or elephant. Some Bible versions actually translate "behemoth" this way.
 - a) Besides the fact that the elephant and hippo were not the largest land animals God made, this description does not make sense, since the tail of behemoth is compared to the large cedar tree (Job 40:17).
 - b) An elephant's tiny tail (or a hippo's tail that looks like a flap of skin) is quite unlike a cedar tree. Clearly, the elephant and the hippo could not possibly be "behemoth." No living creature comes close to this description. However, "behemoth" does sound very much like *Brachiosaurus*, one of the large dinosaurs.

IV. **Are There Other Ancient Records of Dinosaurs?**

- A. In the film *The Great Dinosaur Mystery*, a number of dragon accounts are presented.
1. A Sumerian story dating back to 2000 B.C. or earlier tells of a hero named Gilgamesh, who, when he went to fell cedars in a remote forest, encountered a huge vicious dragon that he slew, cutting off its head as a trophy.

2. When Alexander the Great (c. 330 B.C.) and his soldiers marched into India, they found that the Indians worshipped huge hissing reptiles that they kept in caves.
 3. China is renowned for its dragon stories, and dragons are prominent on Chinese pottery, embroidery, and carvings.
 4. England and several other cultures retain the story of St. George, who slew a dragon that lived in a cave.
 5. There is the story of a tenth-century Irishman who wrote of his encounter with what appears to have been a *Stegosaurus*.
 6. In the 1500s, a European scientific book, *Historia Animalium*, listed several living animals that we would call dinosaurs. A well-known naturalist of the time, Ulysses Aldrovandus, recorded an encounter between a peasant named Baptista and a dragon whose description fits that of the small dinosaur *Tanystropheus*. The encounter was on May 13, 1572, near Bologna in Italy, and the peasant killed the dragon.
 7. Petroglyphs (drawings carved on rock) of dinosaurlike creatures have also been found in the Natural Bridges National Monument in Utah.
- B. People down through the ages have been very familiar with dragons. The descriptions of these animals fit with what we know about dinosaurs. The Bible mentions such creatures, even ones that lived in the sea and flew in the air. There is a tremendous amount of historical evidence that such creatures have lived beside people.

V. **What Do The Bones Say?**

- A. Evolutionists claim dinosaurs lived millions of years ago. But it is important to realize that when they dig up a dinosaur bone it does not have a label attached showing its date. Evolutionists obtain their dates by indirect dating methods that other scientists question, and there is evidence against the millions of years.
- B. In 1991, the Journal of Paleontology reported on one of the largest dinosaurs ever discovered -- *Seismosaurus*. In the description of the *Seismosaurus* remains, the author admits (in a veiled manner) that bone and bone protein is present (Gillett, 11:417-433).
- C. In 1992, Dr. Margaret Helder reported two cases of "fresh" dinosaur bones that were discovered in Alaska. In her report she asked: "How these bones could have remained in fresh condition for 70 million years is a perplexing question. One thing is certain: they were not preserved by cold. Everyone recognizes that the climate in these regions was much warmer during the time when the dinosaurs lived" (14:16). Also in 1992, an article appeared in the journal *Geology* titled: "Preservation of the Bone Protein Osteocalcin in Dinosaurs." In this report

Gerard Muyzer and his colleagues used a procedure known as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to amplify a bone protein from two Cretaceous dinosaurs (20:871-874).

- D. In 1994, Scott Woodward and his colleagues wrote an article titled: "DNA sequences from Cretaceous Period Bone Fragments" (266:1229-1232). In their report, the authors remarked: "DNA was extracted from 80-million-year-old bone fragments found in strata of the Upper Cretaceous Blackhawk Formation in the roof of an underground coal mine in eastern Utah" (p. 1229). They continued: "On the basis of the circumstantial physical and geologic evidence, it is likely that the bone fragments belong to a Cretaceous period dinosaur or dinosaurs" (p. 1230). In 1997, an article titled "Heme Compounds in Dinosaur Trabecular Bone" was published (see Schweitzer, et al., 94:6291-6296). Heme is one of the constituents of hemoglobin -- a respiratory protein found in red blood cells, which is responsible for gas exchange in living organisms. This study demonstrated blood-derived compounds and remnants were still in the dinosaur tissue.
- E. Surely it is time we stop asking how these proteins and soft tissues can exist for millions of years, and begin asking: "Why are we assuming these bones are so old?" To claim that these proteins remained intact for millions of years stretches credibility. This is a puzzle to those who believe in an "age of dinosaurs" millions of years ago, but not to someone who builds his thinking on the Bible. Dinosaur bones could not be millions of years old because Adam lived only thousands of years ago.

VI. ***Why Do We Find Dinosaur Fossils?***

- A. Fossil bones of dinosaurs are found around the world. Many of these finds consist of just fragments of bones, but some nearly complete skeletons have been found. Scientists have been able to describe many different types of dinosaurs based on distinctive characteristics, such as the structure of the skull and limbs.
- B. Fossil formation requires a sudden burial. When an animal dies, it usually gets eaten or decays until there is nothing left. To form a fossil, unique conditions are required to preserve the animal and replace it with minerals, etc.
- C. Evolutionists once claimed that the fossil record was formed slowly as animals died and were gradually covered by sediment. But they have acknowledged more recently that the fossil record must involve catastrophic processes. To form the billions of fossils worldwide, in layers sometimes a mile or more thick, the organisms, by and large, must have been buried quickly. Many evolutionists now say the fossil record formed quickly, in spurts interspersed by millions of years.

- D. According to the Bible, as time went on, earth became full of wickedness so God determined that He would send a global Flood (Genesis 6:17). Around 4,300 years ago, God commanded Noah to build a very large boat into which he would take his family and representatives of every kind of land-dwelling, air-breathing animal (that God Himself would choose and send to Noah, Genesis 6:20). This must have included two of each kind of dinosaur.
- E. The land animals that were not on the ark, including dinosaurs, drowned. Many were preserved in the layers formed by the Flood -- thus the millions of fossils. Presumably, many of the dinosaur fossils were buried at this time. The contorted shapes of these animals preserved in the rocks, the massive numbers of them in fossil graveyards, their wide distribution, and some whole skeletons, all provide convincing evidence that they were buried rapidly, testifying to massive flooding.

VII. How Did Dinosaurs Fit On The Ark?

- A. Many people think of dinosaurs as large creatures that would never have fit into the ark. But the average size of a dinosaur, based on skeletal finds, is about the size of a sheep. Many dinosaurs were relatively small. For instance, *Struthiomimus* was the size of an ostrich, and *Compsognathus* was no bigger than a rooster. Only a few dinosaurs grew to extremely large sizes (e.g., *Brachiosaurus* and *Apatosaurus*), but even they were not as large as the largest animal in the world today, the blue whale. Reptiles have the potential to grow as long as they live. Thus, the large dinosaurs were probably very old ones.
- B. Dinosaurs laid eggs, and the biggest fossil dinosaur egg found is about the size of a football. Even the largest dinosaurs were very small when first hatched. Remember that the animals that came off the boat were to repopulate the earth. Thus, it would have been necessary to choose young adults, which would soon be in the prime of their reproductive life, to go on the ark.
- C. Some might argue that the 600 or more named species of dinosaurs could not have fit on the ark. But Genesis 6:20 states that representative kinds of land animals boarded the ark. The question then is, what is a "kind"? Biblical creationists have pointed out that there can be many species descended from a kind. For example, there are many types of cats in the world, but all cat species probably came from only a few kinds of cats originally. The cat varieties today have developed by natural and artificial selection acting on the original variation in the genes of the original cats.

- D. Dinosaur names have grown tremendously, with new names being given to just a few pieces of bone, even if the skeleton looks similar to one that is a different size or found in a different country. There were probably fewer than 50 distinct groups or kinds of dinosaurs that had to be on the ark. Also, Noah's ark was extremely large and quite capable of carrying the number of animals needed, including dinosaurs.

VIII. **Why Do We Not See Dinosaurs Today?**

- A. At the end of the Flood, Noah, his family, and the animals came out of the ark (Genesis 8:15-17). The dinosaurs thus began a new life in a new world. Along with the other animals, the dinosaurs came out to breed and repopulate the earth. They would have left the landing place of the ark and spread over the earth's surface. The descendants of these dinosaurs gave rise to the dragon legends.
1. But the world they came out to repopulate differed from the one they knew before Noah's Flood. The Flood had devastated it. It was now a much more difficult world in which to survive.
 2. After the Flood, God told Noah that from then on, the animals would fear man, and that animal flesh could be food for man (Genesis 9:1-7). Even for man, the world had become a harsher place. To survive, the once easily obtained plant nutrition would now have to be supplemented by animal sources.
 3. Both animals and man would find their ability to survive tested. We can see from the fossil record, from the written history of man, and from experience over recent centuries, that many forms of life on this planet have not survived that test. Dinosaurs seem to be numbered among the extinct groups.
- B. Why then are people so intrigued about dinosaurs and have little interest in the extinction of the fern *Cladophobius*, for example? It is the dinosaurs' appeal as monsters that excites and fascinates people.
- C. Evolutionists have capitalized on this fascination, and as a result, evolutionary philosophy has permeated modern thinking, even among Christians.
1. If you were to ask the zoo why they have endangered species programs, you would probably get an answer something like this: "We've lost lots of animals from this earth. Animals are becoming extinct all the time. Look at all the animals that are gone forever. We need to act to save the animals." If you then asked, "Why are animals becoming extinct?" you might get an answer like this: "It's obvious! People killing them, lack of food, man destroying the environment, diseases, genetic problems, catastrophes like floods -- there are lots of reasons."

2. If you then asked, "Well, what happened to the dinosaurs?" the answer would probably be, "We don't know! Scientists have suggested dozens of possible reasons, but it's a mystery." Maybe one of the reasons dinosaurs are extinct is that we did not start our endangered species programs early enough. The factors that cause extinction today, which came about because of man's sin, are the same factors that caused the dinosaurs to become extinct.
- D. However, it would be tantalizing to discover a modern-day dinosaur. One cannot prove an organism is extinct without having knowledge of every part of the earth's surface simultaneously. Experts have been embarrassed when, after having declared animals extinct, they were discovered alive and well. For example, in the 1990s explorers found elephants in Nepal that have many features of mammoths.
1. Explorers and natives in Africa have reported sighting dinosaur-like creatures, even in the twentieth century. These have usually been confined to out-of-the-way places such as lakes deep in the Congo jungles. Descriptions certainly fit those of dinosaurs.
 2. Cave paintings by native Americans seem to depict a dinosaur. Scientists accept the mammoth drawings in the cave, so why not the dinosaur drawings? Evolutionary indoctrination that man did not live at the same time as dinosaurs stops most scientists from even considering that the drawings are of dinosaurs.
 3. It would pose no problem to a creationist if someone discovered a dinosaur living in a jungle. However, this should embarrass evolutionists.

IX. ***Why Does It Matter?***

- A. Many are tempted to think there are many more important issues to deal with in today's world: abortion, family breakdown, racism, promiscuity, dishonesty, homosexual behavior, euthanasia, suicide, lawlessness, pornography, etc. They may think that we should tell people about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not worry about side issues like dinosaurs.
- B. Actually, the evolutionary teachings on dinosaurs that pervade society do have a great bearing on why many will not listen to the gospel, and thus why social problems abound today. If they do not believe the history in the Bible, why would anyone trust its moral aspects and message of salvation?
 1. If we accept the evolutionary teachings on dinosaurs, then we must accept that the Bible's account of history is false. If the Bible is wrong in this area, then it is not the word of God and we can ignore everything else it says that we find inconvenient.

2. If everything made itself through natural processes without God, then God does not own us and has no right to tell us how to live. In fact, God does not really exist in this way of thinking, so there is no absolute basis for morality. And without a basis for morality, sin does not exist.
- C. The teaching that dinosaurs lived and died millions of years before man directly attacks the foundations of the gospel in another way. The fossil record, of which dinosaurs form a part, documents death, disease, suffering, cruelty, and brutality. Allowing for millions of years in the fossil layers means accepting all this before Adam's sin.
- D. But the Bible makes it clear that death, bloodshed, disease, and suffering are a consequence of sin (Genesis 3:19). After Adam disobeyed God, the Lord clothed Adam and Eve with "coats of skins" (Genesis 3:21). To do this He must have killed and shed the blood of at least one animal. God required the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). What happened in Eden was a picture of what was to come in Jesus Christ, who shed His blood on the cross as our sacrifice (John 1:29).
- E. If the shedding of blood occurred before sin, as would have happened if Eden was sitting on a fossil record of dead animals millions of years old, then the foundation of the atonement of Christ would be destroyed.

Conclusion. If we accept God's word, beginning with Genesis, as being true and authoritative, then we can explain dinosaurs and make sense of the evidence we observe in the world around us. In doing this, we are helping people see that Genesis is absolutely trustworthy and logically defensible, and is what it claims to be -- the true account of the history of the universe and mankind. And what one believes concerning the book of Genesis will ultimately determine what one believes about the rest of the Bible. This, in turn, will affect how a person views himself or herself, fellow human beings, and what life is all about, including their need for salvation.