

## Did Dinosaurs Really Exist?

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I will readily admit that I know nothing about dinosaurs except what I read from those I believe to be experts. And most of what I read has come from Apologetics Press, a non-profit, tax-exempt work dedicated to the defense of New Testament Christianity. Bert Thompson is the Executive Director of Apologetics Press, and a former professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas A & M University. I contacted Apologetics Press and got in touch with Kyle Butt, one of the employees and staff writers, who was very helpful in getting good information to me for this manuscript. Kyle sent a number of pamphlets, books and tracts for my consideration. I have chosen two sources from that material for the information in this manuscript. The two sources are: *The Dinosaur Controversy*, a tract by Bert Thompson, Ph.D and Apologetics Press; and *Dinosaurs and Creation – Questions and Answers*, by Donald B. DeYoung, Baker Book House Co. I highly recommend these two sources to answer many questions about this subject.

### THE NAME “DINOSAUR”

The name “Dinosaur” did not come into existence until 1842, when it was coined by Sir Richard Owen, a leading British anatomist. “Dinosaurs” is from the Greek words *deinos* and *sauros* – meaning “terribly great lizards.” By 1877 there were so many finds of bones from these large creatures, no one doubted the existence of dinosaurs.

### HOW THE EVOLUTIONISTS USE DINOSAURS

Dinosaurs have been used by evolutionists to attempt to sway people to their side of the Creation and Evolution controversy. There are basically two ways the evolutionists use dinosaurs to teach their evolutionary schemes: WHEN dinosaurs existed and the OVERALL TEACHING of dinosaurs. As to the WHEN dinosaurs existed, Bert Thompson notes:

Evolutionists advocate that dinosaurs evolved from some ancient reptile 200 million years ago, and that they became extinct roughly 65-70 million years ago. Man (in some form) allegedly evolved only 2-3 million years ago and thus was separated from the dinosaurs by approximately 65 million years of geologic time. Creationists who accept the Genesis record as an accurate, historical account of God’s creative activity oppose such claims, and maintain instead that the dinosaurs were created by God within the six literal days described in the biblical record. Thus, man and the dinosaurs would have been created at essentially the same time and would have lived together as contemporaries on the Earth. (2)

As far as the OVERALL TEACHING concerning dinosaurs is concerned, Evolutionists champion the cause that dinosaurs prove organic evolution. Almost all the teaching being done in the kindergarten through university levels concerning the origin, development and extinction of dinosaurs is being used from the organic evolution side of the controversy. Those teachings have gone a long way in trying to persuade children and adults alike to give up their belief in God and accept organic evolution instead. Bert Thompson writes concerning the evolutionary teaching of dinosaurs:

Because they are fascinating to children, because they are such an effective teaching aid, and because they generally are used to teach evolution, dinosaurs represent a formidable tool that can be employed to rob students of all ages of faith in God and the Bible as His Word. This makes the controversy over dinosaurs extremely important. (3).

### **DO CREATIONISTS HAVE TROUBLE WITH DINOSAURS?**

The evolutionists leave the idea with the general public that Creationists have trouble with an explanation of dinosaurs. They leave the impression, if not flat out say it, that Creationists cannot deal with the TIME dinosaurs existed, or the ORIGIN, or WHAT HAPPENED to the dinosaurs. That simply is not the case.

The word “dinosaur” is not found in the Bible, and there is a simple explanation for that: the word “dinosaur” did not exist in the English language until 1842. The King James Version of the Bible was translated in 1611. And remember, the Bible is not a textbook in Zoology, Science, or Taxonomy. It is the textbook in Religion. There are many other animals that are not mentioned in the Bible, but in no way discourages belief in them as God’s creatures.

Even though the name “dinosaur” is not mentioned in the Bible, Christians believe there is ample evidence that dinosaurs and dinosaur-like creatures are described in God’s Word. Job describes these creatures as “behemoth” and “leviathan.” Donald B. DeYoung answers the question, “What were behemoth and leviathan?”

These are Old Testament Hebrew names for specific animals. Their exact identity is somewhat obscure. The behemoth is named only in Job 40. Its description includes the following:

- It feeds on grass like an ox (v. 15).
- Its tail sways like a cedar tree (v. 17).
- Its bones are like tubes of bronze and rods of iron (v. 18).
- Behemoth ranks first among the works of God (v. 19).
- The beast hides among the reeds in the marsh (v. 21).

Behemoth has been variously identified as a hippopotamus, elephant, or water ox. However, none of these animals fully fit the biblical description. Instead, the behemoth sounds very much like a large saurischian dinosaur, perhaps the Brontosaurus (Apatosaurus). If true, then Job 40 provides the only detailed written description of this dinosaur. It should be noted that God Himself directly

spoke the words of Job 40. Furthermore, Job was evidently familiar with behemoth. Since Job lived after the great flood, the Brontosaurus then did not disappear in the flood event. Instead, representatives left the Ark and began to repopulate the earth. A few behemoths still lived during Job's time. The name behemoth today has appropriately become associated with anything enormous in size or power. Leviathan is mentioned several places in Scripture (Job 41; Psalm 74:14; 104:26; Isaiah 27:1). In particular, Job 41 gives a full description. Here are some details about leviathan:

- It cannot be captured (v. 1).
- It is strong and fierce (vv. 8-10).
- There are many teeth (v. 14).
- Smoke and fire pour from its nostrils (vv. 18-21).
- Its hide cannot be pierced (v. 26).
- Leviathan's swimming leaves a wake (v. 32).

Modern identification attempts for leviathan often include a crocodile, whale, or some kind of sea serpent. Others believe that the leviathan must be a nonliteral, mythical animal that exists only in poetry. Contributing to this view is the reference to the fire-breathing nature of the leviathan. However, this behavior is entirely within the realm of possibility (see Question 48). The detailed biblical description of leviathan goes far beyond some imaginary beast; it closely matches that of the seagoing plesiosaur. This long-necked marine reptile glided through the water and certainly could leave a glistening wake behind. The people of Job's day were clearly familiar with both the behemoth and leviathan. Perhaps these impressive animals were some of the last remaining dinosaur and marine reptile examples living on the earth. (46-47)

The question as to the ORIGIN of the dinosaurs is also not a problem for Creationists. The Bible is very clear in Exodus 20:11 that God created the earth, the heavens, and the seas, and everything in them in six days. Bert Thompson asks and answers, "What does that omit? It omits absolutely nothing." He continues:

Add to that the statements found in Genesis 1:31 and 2:1, and the case is strengthened considerably. In Genesis 1:31, as He surveyed everything that He had made, God proclaimed it "very good" – the Hebrew phrase representing both completion and perfection. In Genesis 2:1, He then stated that the creation was "finished," indicating an action completed once and for all, without continuation into the future.

The information thus presented may be summarized as follows:

(a) God created everything in six days; (b) that creation was complete and perfect; and (c) the creation was finished. The implications of this teaching are clear. According to the Genesis record, no animals were created before day five, at which time God created sea-dwelling creatures and birds (Genesis 1:20-23).

On day six (Genesis 1:24-25), God created the “creeping things” and “beasts of the earth” – descriptions that certainly would include dinosaurs. Since man likewise was created on day six (Genesis 1:26-27), the inescapable conclusion is that men and dinosaurs lived on the Earth as contemporaries. (4)

### WHERE DID DINOSAURS GO?

The next question that Evolutionists believe to be insurmountable for the Creationists is: “Where did dinosaurs go?” What happened to these large creatures that inhabited the earth? Actually, the Evolutionists are the ones who have problems in answering this question. They have fostered ideas that have ranged from the humorous to the bizarre. DeYoung identifies some of these theories from the Evolutionists:

The earth’s climate became either too warm, cold, dry, or wet for dinosaur health. A nearby supernova, an exploding star, flooded the earth with intense radiation, resulting in fatal mutations. A “death star” called Nemesis periodically approaches the solar system and wipes out living creatures by raining comets down upon the earth. A nearby collision between two neutron stars bombarded the earth with deadly muon particle radiation. There were deadly giant meteor showers or meteor storms. A passing comet poisoned the earth’s atmosphere with chemicals, perhaps cyanide...Overpopulation. Extreme hay fever plagued the dinosaurs. Mass suicide was carried out by dinosaur herds. Dinosaurs were weakened by slipped vertebral discs. A laxative plant in dinosaur diets disappeared, and they died of constipation...Dinosaurs ate plants containing drugs and died of an overdose...Either starvation or overeating occurred... (26-27)

Does it seem to you that the Evolutionists are searching for an answer? It doesn’t sound like that are very definitive, does it? They overlook their wild and fanciful assumptions, and yet, at the same time, ridicule the Creationists for their views. That leads us to the next question: WHAT HAPPENED TO DINOSAURS IN THE CREATION VIEW? DeYoung answers:

Dinosaurs were made during the creation week along with all the other plants and animals. The land animals appeared on day number six. In pre-flood times, dinosaurs lived on earth together with mankind. When the great flood came in the days of Noah, dinosaur representatives were present on board the Ark, along with all the other animals. Dinosaurs did not become extinct until sometime after the flood. Climate changes occurred in the post-flood world. For a period of time the earth remained warm, largely due to the vast ocean waters. Much of this water had come from underground when the “springs of the great deep burst forth” (Gen. 7:11). This subterranean water was warm in nature. In the early post-flood years, animal populations again increased on the earth. During the following centuries, however, there developed a worldwide cooling trend. The loss of vegetation during the flood had resulted in much barren land. This sandy, rocky surface reflected sunlight upward rather than capturing it. An ice age slowly developed as average global temperatures dropped by 5-10 degrees Fahrenheit (2.8-5.6 degrees Celsius).

Animals that could not adjust to this cooler climate, such as the tropical dinosaurs, gradually diminished in number. In the creation view, humans may also have hunted the last surviving dinosaurs. Historically, mankind has always hunted large animals. The biblical patriarch Job probably lived during this cooler postflood period of time. Interestingly, there are indication of a cool climate in Job 37:6-10 and 38:22,29. These verses refer to snow, cold, ice, and hail... (33-34)

Bert Thompson agrees that the demise of the dinosaur was connected to the global flood of Noah's time. He writes:

Creationists generally believe that the dinosaurs' extinction may be tied, at least in part, to the global Flood of Genesis 6-8...There is compelling evidence to indicate that the pre-Flood world was much different than the post-Flood world...The devastating effects of local floods are well documented. What kind of damage, then, could be expected from a global Flood that covered "every high mountain on the whole earth" (Genesis 7:19)? Many creation scientists believe that the dinosaurs survived for a time after the Flood, but because of environmentally hostile conditions, eventually died out. (5)

Evolutionists who ridicule Creationists view of the demise of dinosaurs, ought to take a good long look at their own fanciful views.

## CONCLUSION

I am really thankful for the great work Bert Thompson and Donald DeYoung have done in answering many of the questions that we all have concerning these "terribly great lizards." Again, I readily admit that this paper is largely a compilation of their works in this regard. Without their scientific answers to many of these questions I would be at a loss as to how to deal with this topic. In forming up my conclusion, I have written and re-written my closing remarks, and nothing seemed to be fitting. But, as I finished Bert Thompson's tract and read his conclusion, I believe that it was fitting, and therefore, I again borrow his words:

The Mosaic record of the creation is inexhaustively sublime. In it, we learn of the creation of the heavens and the Earth by an Almighty God. Via divine fiat, light was formed and atmosphere was wrapped around this planet. Great seas were gathered together and separated from dry land. The world of botany miraculously bloomed and lights burst forth in the heavens. The waters swarmed with living creatures and birds soared through the pristine air. Varieties of domestic animals and beasts were created as well.

Finally man – the apex, the pinnacle, the zenith of God's creation – stood proudly upon the Earth's bosom. And the dinosaur – one of the most majestic of God's creatures – stood with him. No doubt they pondered each other's existence.

Today, we continue to ponder these intriguing animals. And what a grand teaching tool they can make for our children and grandchildren, all of whom need to understand that the same God Who created these awesome giants likewise created them. Let us seize every available opportunity to teach these urgent lessons to our youngsters. If we do not teach them the truthfulness of the Genesis account of creation and instill in them the importance of, and a reverence for, God's inspired Word, someone else may undermine their fledgling faith by teaching them the error of organic evolution – using the dinosaurs to accomplish this task. (6)

### Works Cited

- Thompson, Bert (nd) The Dinosaur Controversy. Tract. Montgomery, Alabama: Apologetics Press, Inc.
- DeYoung, Donald B. (2000) Dinosaurs and Creation – Questions And Answers. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, a division of Baker Book House