**Is Belief In God Reasonable?**

**Dinosaurs: Friend Or Foe For Christians?**

Dinosaurs have long captivated the minds of mankind. Movies, cartoons, and other cinema have profited billions of dollars displaying these incredible creatures on screen. And how many of us can remember playing with dinosaur figures when we were younger? Dinosaurs are really neat creatures!

As we continue our series on scientific evidences for the biblical God, we turn our attention now to these fascinating dinosaurs. Technically speaking, dinosaurs refer specifically to land dwelling creatures of ages past. Sea creatures and flying creatures are categorized differently, although most non-professionals don’t make that distinction.

We want to discuss dinosaurs because it is commonly stated in textbooks, colleges, high schools, museums, and other centers and avenues of learning that dinosaurs prove Christianity wrong, or at the very least requires monkeying with the biblical text. In fact, I myself was accosted as ignorant of how dinosaurs prove the Bible wrong several years ago while handing out Bibles at the USF Library. It is quite helpful for Christians who desire to make a defense of Christianity or non-Christians with a desire to consider the evidence for Christianity, to consider the dinosaurs. Our lesson today will center on three key areas: vindication of the Bible’s claim of the coexistence of humans and dinosaurs, dinosaurs in the Bible, and what happened to the dinosaurs. So, let’s dig in!

**I. Did Dinosaurs Co-Exist With Man?**

A. A Major Problem: “*Modern Bible scholars, for the most part, have become so conditioned to think in terms of the long ages of evolutionary geology that it never occurs to them that mankind once lived in the same world with the great animals that are now found only as fossils”* (Morris, Henry M. (1988), The Remarkable Record of Job (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), p. 115)

B. What Evolutionary Science Says:

 1. *“The standard evolutionary argument is that dinosaurs are separated from modern humans by a span of about 60 million years. If that were true, we could predict that no modern human has ever seen a dinosaur.”* (RK Bentley, “Marco Polo Describes A Dinosaur”, March 9, 2012, online).

 2. What Is Sold As Truth:

 a. An article in the January 1993 National Geographic boldly proclaimed: *“No human being has ever seen a live dinosaur”* (“Age of the Dinosaurs,” 1993, 183[1]:142).

 b. *“Did people and dinosaurs live at the same time? No! After the dinosaurs died out, nearly 65 million years passed before people appeared on Earth.”* (US Geological Survey)

 3. If coexistence of humans and dinosaurs was shown, evolutionary scientists have said this regarding the implications:

 a. According to Louis Jacobs, Southern Methodist University, Former President of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology: *“Such an association [co-occurrence of men and dinosaurs] would dispel an Earth with vast antiquity. The entire history of creation, including the day of rest, could be accommodated in the seven biblical days of the Genesis myth. Evolution would be vanquished."* (In Quest of the African Dinosaur, p.261)

 b. Ernst Mayr, Harvard, *"Creationists have stated that humans and dinosaurs were contemporaries in time...Were this momentous statement true the names of its discoverers would thunder down the corridors of time as individuals who made one of the most outstanding discoveries of the twentieth century."* (Gish-Mayr Debate, Evansville, Indiana.)

 c. NOVA TV Special “God, Darwin And The Dinosaurs”, *“Finding [dinosaur footprints, side by side with humans] would counter evidence that humans evolved long after the dinosaurs became extinct and back up...[the] claim that all species, including man, were created at one time."*

 C. What The Evidence Reveals (Of Necessity, This Is Non-Exhaustive):

 1. Asia

 a. Marco Polo witnessed dinosaurs in China (T-Rex?)

 b. Angkor Wat carving of Stegosaurus in Cambodia (12th cent.)

 c. Sumatran Crested Dinosaur (possibly Corythosaurus and Lambeosaurus or even a Velociraptor)

 d. Hongshan Jade Carvings (China) – e.g. Protoceratops dinosaur

 e. Mesopotamian Cylinder Seal of Uruk in the Louvre (3,300 BC)

 2. Europe

 a. Pliny The Elder wrote of massive serpentine creatures 120 feet long that could kill elephants and swallow stags and bulls whole. He draws a distinction between these and snakes, crocodiles, and other reptiles (Natural History, Book VIII).

b. Herodotus and Josephus describe creatures that fit the description of Pteranodons and Pterodactyls in their respective histories.

 c. Human Footprints Found Alongside Dinosaur Footprints (e.g. 1983 expedition reported in *The Moscow News*).

 d. Richard Bell tomb engravings of Sauropods in England (15th cent.)

 e. Nile Mosaic Of Palestrina in Italy (pre-15th century)

 f. Hunt Mosaic from Pompeii (pre-79 AD)

 g. Girifalco Stegosaurus Pottery (pre-Greek)

 3. Africa

 a. Bronze Figurine in Mali (Gryposaurus)

 b. Mokele-mbembe in the Congo

 4. Australia

a. Plesiosaurus described by Aboriginal Tribe in Australia (17th cent.)

b. Aboriginals have also clearly described different animals fitting the description of other dinosaurs (e.g. “Bunyip”, “Kultra”)

 5. North America

 a. Anasazi petroglyph of a Sauropod in Utah (pre-1200 AD)

 b. Petroglyph of a Hadrosaur in Havaisupai Canyon in Arizona (discovered in 1879)

 c. The Granby Idol (found in 1920; Sauropod, mammoth, Chinese)

 d. Ankylosaurus Cave Drawing by Sioux found in Ontario

 6. Central & South America

 a. Acambaro Figurines – Collection of over 33,500 figurines and artifacts. Many of which are clearly dinosaurs. Also found include the skeleton of a mammoth, teeth of an extinct horse, and human skulls.

 b. Ica Burial Stones of Peru (typically dated 100 BC-1500 AD)

**II. Dinosaurs Mentioned In The Bible**

 A. Where Are They?

 1. Critics of the Bible have often referenced that the Bible does not use the term dinosaur. That’s really not an issue as that term is a rather novel one. Synonymous words are frequently used, most notably, “dragon”.

 2. All general Bible animal listings INCLUDE dinosaurs! (Genesis 1:20-25)

B. Behemoth (Job 40:15-24)

 1. Descriptive Features:

a. herbivore (15) e. pre-eminent (19)

b. massive (16-18, 23) f. spends time in the shade (21-22)

c. incredibly strong (16-18) g. not afraid of floods (23)

d. tail like a cedar tree (17) h. uncapturable (24)

2. What animal does this describe?

 a. Footnotes in major translations:

 i. NASB/RSV – “Hippopotamus”

 ii. NKJV/ESV – “A large animal, exact identity unknown”

 b. Dinosaurs that fit the description, namely “with a tail like a cedar”:

i. Apatosaurus – 90ft long; tail had 82 bones

 ii. Argentinosaurus – 70ft tall, 100 tons, 120ft long, 40ft tail

 iii. Diplodocus – 90ft long, 26ft long neck, 45ft long tail, tail was made of double beamed chevron bones on underside

 iv. Brachiosaurus – 85ft long

 v. Supersaurus – 138ft long, 60ft tail

vi. Seismosaurus – 130-170ft, kinked tail with wedge shaped vertebra; Hebrew word in Job 40 means “bent down”

C. Leviathan (Job 3:8; 41; cf. also Ps. 74:14; Ps. 104:26; Is. 27:1)

 1. Descriptive Features

a. uncapturable (1-6)

b. terrifying (7-10, 14, 22, 25)

c. armored and scaly (7, 13, 15-17, 23-24, 26, 30)

d. mightily strong (12, 22, 27-29)

e. large, sharp teeth (14)

f. breathes fire (18-21)

g. spends time in the water (31-32)

h. flies? (34)

i. unique (33)

2. What animal does this describe?

 a. Footnotes in major translations:

 i. NASB/RSV – Crocodile

ii. NKJV/ESV – A large sea creature, exact identity unknown

 b. Proof of dragons? That’s just nonsense mythology, right? Not necessarily!

 i. There is an undeniable, ubiquitous belief in dragons

 ii. Could an animal actually breathe fire? (e.g. bombardier beetle, spitting cobra)

 iii. All that would be needed are a pocket of combustible gasses & bioelectricity, which is observed in plenty of species.

**III. What Happened To The Dinosaurs?**

 A. Asteroid(s)? Speculative, but possible. But why would it only kill dinosaurs?

 B. Ice Age(s)? A known result of the Flood of Noah.

 C. Evolution? Minor perhaps; Macro definitely not. Alligators usually called dinos!

 D. Common Extinction? Happens every year to some 200 species of flora & fauna.

 E. Were They Killed? Would you want to keep them around?!

Do dinosaurs matter for Christians? YES! ABSOLUTELY! Writing off major elements of Earth history, undeniable life forms, or sticking our fingers in our ears will not answer critics! In fact, these common responses actually feed criticisms of Christians, the Bible, and God. We are explicitly commanded not to provide a ground of accusation for unbelievers. This necessitates that we bone up on our studies and love God with all of our minds.

Any reflection on the Creation should result in our magnification of the Creator. His power and creativity are truly without end! Yet, as we strive to understand our Creator more through studies like these, we should be infinitely more impressed by His willingness to be stripped of His power and be born into this world in Jesus. The greatest display of His power and creativity are seen in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The One Who made the dinosaurs willingly died to save you from your sins. He did this to prevent our spiritual death and He formulated a beautiful plan of response that you can participate in. He wants you to believe Him. He wants you to confess Jesus as Lord. He wants you to repent of your sins. He wants you to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. He wants you to stay faithful until death.