

Dinosaurs in the Bible

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Introduction

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Are dinosaurs in the Bible and what happened to them?

Yes and no. The word “dinosaur” is not specifically found in any version (that I know of), but then the word wasn’t invented until 1842 (means “terrible lizard”), so it ought not surprise us that the word is not there. Nevertheless, there are indeed both direct and indirect references to dinosaurs in Scripture. Let us look first at the indirect passages regarding creation...

Exodus 20:11 says, “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them...” John 1:3 adds, “All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” The Bible makes it clear that everything that is and has been is a result of the God’s creation that took place in six days. If God created the earth, the heavens, the seas, and everything in them in six days, what does that omit? It omits absolutely nothing! That means that dinosaurs were created by God during those six days.

On day five (Genesis 1:20-23), God created sea-dwelling creatures and birds. On day six (Genesis 1:24-25), God created creeping things and beasts of the earth. Numerous remains, fossils, and bones have been found of huge and strange creatures, animals called dinosaurs that are now extinct. And, according to Scripture, all these dinosaurs were created on day five and six of God’s creation.

Notice also that man was also created on day six (Genesis 1:26-27). Thus, no matter what atheistic scientists may claim, the inescapable conclusion is that men and dinosaurs lived on the Earth as contemporaries. Remember the Theory of Evolution and the Day-Age Theory both try to separate men from the dinosaurs by millions of years.

Children in grade school will tell you that men and dinosaurs did not live together. Their weekly reader teaches them that the dinosaurs lived about 175 million years ago and became extinct about 65 million years ago, and that the cavemen arrived on the scene only about 3½ years ago. But God’s inspired written word says otherwise; it clearly teaches that they were created together and thus lived together.

Furthermore, scientific evidence even betrays the supposed facts of the Theory of Evolution. In the early 1920s, archaeologist Dr. Samuel Hubbard went to the Hava Supai area of the Grand Canyon in Arizona in search of Indian relics. He found what he was looking for: pottery, arrowheads, etc.

But he also found more than he was looking for. On the walls of the canyon, he found some beautiful drawings made by the Indians that had inhabited that area long ago. And not just simple stick drawings, but elaborate and detailed drawings of cattle, sheep, oxen, dinosaurs, and buffalo. Yes, dinosaurs. Upon seeing these pictures of the dinosaur, Dr. Hubbard remarked:

Taken all in all, the proportions are good. The huge reptile is depicted in the attitude in which man would be most likely to see it—reared on its hind legs, balancing with the long tail, either feeding or in fighting position, possibly defending itself against a party of men (as quoted in Verrill, 1954, pp. 155ff.).

Remember: according to evolutionists, dinosaurs and men did not exist together. But if that were true, how did the inhabitants of that region know how to draw them so accurately?!

Job 40:15-24 and Job 41:1-34

In 1663, a man named Samuel Bochart published a two-volume book that declared that these passages are referring to the hippopotamus and the crocodile. Since then, many commentaries have simply accepted this and done little to investigate the matter. In fact, many Bibles have marginal notes that state the behemoth is a hippopotamus and the leviathan is a crocodile.

Job 40:15-24 ... The Behemoth

While it is true that a few similarities do exist between the behemoth and the hippo, and between the leviathan and the crocodile, many of the descriptive details do not seem to fit either creature. These differences are so numerous and significant that they cannot be overlooked.

1. It has been contended that eating grass like the cattle, having any contact with the mountains, and being related to the Jordan River are all incompatibilities between Behemoth and the hippopotamus.
2. God described the behemoth as a creature that “moveth his tail like a cedar” (40:17). The tail of a hippopotamus “would surely not have been compared to a cedar by a truthful though poetic observer like the author of chapters 38-39” (Cheyne, 1887, p. 56). The hippopotamus hardly could be described—with its little 6-8 inch stubby appendage—as having a stiff or large tail. The tail of the hippo is short and small like that of a pig, and is a mere twig in comparison with a cedar tree. But that fact has not prevented commentators from attempting to avoid the obvious. Edgar Gibson wrote: “The comparison of the short, stiff, muscular tail, to the strong and elastic cedar branch (which is probably intended) seems really to be perfectly natural, and need cause no difficulty” (1905, p. 221, parenthetical comment in orig.). Keil and Delitzsch also concluded that the tail should not be compared to the cedar tree, but the cedar branch.
3. The behemoth is said to be “chief [i.e., largest] of the ways of God” (40:19). Surely this would rule out the hippo, since at full size it is but seven feet high (Thompson and Bromling, n.d., p. 5). An elephant is twice the size of a hippopotamus, and yet even it was dwarfed by certain extinct creatures. For example, the creature once popularly referred to as *Brontosaurus* (now known more accurately as *Apatosaurus*) grew to weigh more than 30 tons, whereas the hippo weighs in at only around 4 tons (Jackson, 1983, p. 86).
4. The text indicates that no man could approach the behemoth with a sword (40:19), nor was he able to capture him (40:24). Yet as mentioned earlier, the hippopotamus was hunted frequently and captured successfully by the Egyptians (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 353). Hartley observed:

Egyptian pharaohs took pride in slaying a hippopotamus. There are numerous pictures in which the pharaoh, hunting a hippopotamus from a papyrus boat, is poised to hurl his harpoon into the animal’s opened mouth, thereby inflicting a fatal blow (1988, p. 524).

Egyptians even celebrated festivals known as “Harpooning the Hippopotamus” (Hartley, 1988, p. 524). Additionally, Egyptian monuments frequently picture single hunters attacking the hippo with a spear (McClintock and Strong, 1968, 1:728). How could one accurately compare the unapproachable and unseizable behemoth with the hippopotamus?

Job 41:1-34 ... The Leviathan

[AP] 1. The leviathan also is represented as unapproachable and too mighty to be apprehended by men. The Lord said:

Canst thou draw out leviathan with a fishhook? Or press down his tongue with a cord? Canst thou put a rope into his nose? Or pierce his jaw through with a hook?... If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail; Nor the spear, the dart, nor the pointed shaft (41:1-2,26).

It is clear that the leviathan is represented as “too powerful and ferocious for mere man to dare to come to grips with it” (Pope, p. 268). He is “beyond the power of men to capture” (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 353). Leviathan is “peerless and fearless” (Strauss, 1976, p. 437).

Contrariwise, the crocodile—like the hippopotamus—was hunted and captured by Egyptians. Herodotus discussed how they captured crocodiles (Rowley, 1980, p. 259), and how that, after being seized, some even were tamed (Jackson, 1983, p. 87). Such a scene hardly depicts the animal of Job 40:15ff.

2. According to Jehovah, the leviathan’s “sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning torches, and sparks of fire leap forth. Out of his nostrils a smoke goeth, as of a boiling pot and (burning) rushes. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth forth from his mouth” (Job 41:18-21). Some, such as Driver and Gray, have suggested that perhaps God did not intend to use **literal** imagery in these verses (1964, p. 366). However, as Henry Morris observed:

It is presumptuous merely to write all this off as mythological and impossible. To say that the leviathan could not have breathed fire is to say much more than we know about leviathans (or water dragons or sea serpents). Fire flies produce light, eels produce electricity, and bombardier beetles produce explosive chemical reactions. All of these involve complex chemical processes, and it does not seem at all impossible that an animal might be given the ability to breathe out certain gaseous fumes which, upon coming in contact with oxygen, would briefly ignite (1984, p. 359).

3. When leviathan “raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid: By reason of consternation they are beside themselves.... He beholdeth everything that is high: He is king over all the sons of pride” (Job 41:25,34). True, crocodiles are frightening creatures. Yet they are no more frightening standing up than when sitting, because their legs are so short. How could it thus be said of the crocodile that “he beholdeth everything that is high”—when he himself is so close to the ground?

4. God also described leviathan as an animal that cannot be availed by swords, spears, or darts (41:26). In fact, leviathan “laugheth at the rushing of the javelin” (41:29) and “his underparts are (like) sharp potsherds” (41:30). In commenting on these verses, Thompson and Bromling wrote:

Although the hide that covers the crocodile’s back is extremely thick and difficult to penetrate, this is not true of his belly. The crocodile is most vulnerable to spears and javelins on his underside; hence, it could not be said of him that “his underparts are like sharp potsherds” (n.d., p. 7).

5. Concerning leviathan, Wolfers wrote: “Underside like sharpest potsherds, swimming in sea rather than river, and breathing fire and smoke, are incompatibilities between Leviathan and the crocodile” (p. 191). Job 41 is dominated by the idea of the beast’s utter invincibility.

As Driver and Gray admitted: “There is nothing, unless we should so regard 41:7, that points necessarily or at all striking to the crocodile, and one or two points seem inconsistent with it” (1964, p. 353). In reality, there are more than just “one or two points” that are inconsistent with the suggestion that the leviathan is little more than a crocodile.

The evidence documents overwhelmingly that the behemoth and leviathan of Job 40-41 are flesh-and-blood animals, not imaginary creatures. Furthermore, the description of these creatures does not fit that of any known animal present in the world today, regardless of attempts to equate them with the hippopotamus and the crocodile. Thus, they must be some type of extinct creature.

But what kind? God’s descriptions of behemoth and leviathan are compatible in every way with the descriptions we have of dinosaurs and dinosaur-like, water-living reptiles that roamed the Earth, not millions of years ago as some have suggested, but only a few thousand years ago.

What Happened to the Dinosaurs?

Many theories have been suggested to explain the extinction of the dinosaurs, but none fits all the available facts or is provable. Reginald Daly documented over twenty explanations for the dinosaurs’ disappearance (1972, pp. 29ff.), and since the publication of his work, additional theories have been advanced as well.

The idea most often suggested to explain the disappearance of the dinosaurs centers around a sudden climatic change over the Earth—a change so drastic that the dinosaurs could no longer survive.

Nobel laureate Luis Alvarez and his son Walter have suggested, for example, that the dinosaurs perished in a short time span some 65 million years ago when an asteroid-like object impacted with the Earth, throwing up dust and soot which blocked the Sun's rays, causing plants to die, which in turn caused herbivores to die, which in turn caused carnivores to die (see: Hoffman, 1982, pp. 58-63; *Discover*, 1984, pp. 21ff.; Alvarez and Asaro, 1990, pp. 78-84). While this particular theory has many supporters, and has been popular for several years, it also has a number of credible detractors as well (see Courtillot, 1990, pp. 85-92).

Creationists generally believe that the dinosaurs' extinction may be tied, at least in part, to the global Flood of Genesis 6-8 (see for example Gish, 1977, pp. 55-60; 1990, pp. 73-75). There is compelling evidence to indicate that the pre-Flood world was much different than the post-Flood world (Gish, 1990, pp. 74-75). The devastating effects of local floods are well known. What kind of damage, then, could be expected from a 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 the hostile conditions, eventually became extinct. [End AP]

Also remember the ages of man before the flood compared to afterwards. Regardless of whether there was a water canopy in place, it seems apparent that conditions were such that allowed men to live many times longer than after the flood. And if men were able to live so long, why not animals? Remember, dinosaur means "terrible lizard." The dinosaurs were reptiles, and reptiles have a unique feature: they continue to grow as long as they live! So it shouldn't be surprising to find that certain creatures grew to be perhaps 100 tons in weight and 35 feet tall.

Were There Dinosaurs on the Ark?

Look at Genesis 6:15. The ark was approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high with 3 levels. Assuming all levels to be the same size (in other words, a huge, rectangular barge), this amounts to slightly more than 100,000 square feet of floor and over 1.5 million cubic feet of cargo space. Imagine waiting at a railroad crossing while a freight train pulling 52 boxcars moved slowly by, one after another. You could put a lot of animals on that train. Now imagine 9 more trains just like it. That's how much space was available on the ark, equivalent to 520 modern railroad boxcars. A barge of such gigantic size, with its thousands of individual rooms (Gen. 6:14) would surely have been sufficiently large for its purpose. After all, God Himself designed and created the animal kingdom, so it's safe to conclude that He was similarly able to design a boat large enough to carry a portion of those animals to safety.

Noah was instructed to take into the boat land-dwelling, air-breathing animals. Regarding the unclean animals, today the number of species of animals that fit that description is about 20,000. Assuming that another 20,000 species have become extinct since that time, Noah would have to fit approximately 80,000 such animals into the ark. [NOTE: Noah was not commanded to take two, or seven, of every species into the ark, but every kind, which would shrink considerably the numbers of animals onboard the ark. A biblical "kind" is not necessarily the same as the biologists' "species," but can have a much broader classification.]

The average size of those animals has been calculated to be that of a sheep (see Gish, 1990, p. 75). Thus, about 50,000 square feet of space on the boat would have been filled. That leaves another 50,000 square feet available for five additional representatives of each of the comparatively few kinds of animals acceptable for sacrifice, Noah's family, and food for them all (Gen. 6:21).

Also, it may be that God allowed Noah some latitude in regard to the animals that were taken onboard. For example, perhaps it was not necessary for Noah to take adult animals; rather, immature animals may have been stowed. This would save space, and prevent potential reproductive problems. And furthermore, it is possible that God may have placed some, or all, of the animals into hibernation, thus making them easier to care for.

One other point of interest: the draft of a ship is the depth to which it is immersed when carrying its load (how much of it sinks below the water level). Typically, this amounts to half the height of the ship. According to Genesis 6:15, the height of the ark was 30 cubits, or about 45 feet. Now look at Genesis 7:19-20. The waters of the flood covered the highest mountains by 15 cubits, or about 22½ feet, exactly ½ the height of the ark. Don't you think God knew what He was doing?!