



Lesson 5

Dinosaurs, Science, and the Bible

Apologetics Press Advanced Christian Evidences Correspondence Course

DINOSAURS, SCIENCE, AND THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

Dinosaurs! *Iguanodon*, *Struthiomimus*, *Poddkesaurus*, *Triceratops*, *Styracosaurus*, *Stegosaurus*, *Trachodon*, *Psittacosaurus*, *Apatosaurus*, *Tyrannosaurus*. Who were these strange creatures with polysyllabic names? Where did they come from? Where did they go? Or did these magnificent creatures of the past—some of which stood 3½ stories tall and weighed over 100 tons—really exist? Such questions frequently are “bothersome” to people who sincerely are seeking the truth about the question of ultimate origins. And so it is to the dinosaurs, and what the Bible and science have to say about them, that we now turn our attention.

DID THE DINOSAURS REALLY EXIST?

There can be no doubt about it: dinosaurs really did exist. We’ve discovered their bones on all seven continents—from North America to the Antarctic. Visitors to any of the larger museums of natural history can see the life-size replicas of these magnificent creatures, which makes it somewhat difficult to suggest that they never existed.

The first discovery of the dinosaurs as far as “recent” times is concerned occurred in the spring of 1822. Gideon Mantell, a country doctor in England with a life-long passion for collecting fossils, set off in horse and buggy to visit a patient. His wife Mary Ann went along for the ride. While Dr. Mantell tended to the ill patient, Mrs. Mantell took a stroll and came across a pile of stones that had been placed alongside the road to be used in filling ruts caused by spring rains. Amidst those stones, she glimpsed some very large fossil teeth. She took them back to her husband, who was amazed, never having seen such huge teeth before. He went to the quarry from which the stones had been cut, and found more teeth like those his wife had discovered. Although he showed the teeth to several scientists, none agreed with him that they were from some kind of heretofore-unknown creature. He, however, was stubbornly sure that they were. In 1825, he eventually named the long-dead owner of the teeth as *Iguanodon* (literally “iguana-tooth”), since the teeth were similar to those of an iguana, but much larger. Several years later, more teeth like these were discovered in a different quarry. Now no one doubted that *Iguanodon* had once lived on the Earth. Meanwhile, huge bones of another creature that came to be known as *Megalosaurus* had been dug up farther away in Oxfordshire. By 1842, enough of these kinds of fossils had been uncovered to convince the leading British anatomist, Sir Richard Owen of the British Museum of Natural History, that a whole tribe of huge, lizard-like reptiles had lived in the distant past. Based on his studies, he named them “dinosaurs” (from the Greek words *deinos* and *sauros*, translated by him as “fearfully great lizards”)—today known to us as “terrible lizards.”

Soon, American fossil hunters also joined in the search. The climax came in March 1877 when two schoolmasters—Arthur Lakes and O.W. Lucas—separately stumbled onto colossal fossil bones projecting from the rocks in differ-

ent parts of Colorado. Lucas revealed his find to the well-known paleontologist, Othniel Marsh. Lucas showed his finds to Marsh's bitter rival, Edward Cope. Marsh and Cope became the most famous of the "dinosaur hunters." All told, Cope named 9 new genera of dinosaurs, while Marsh's total was 19. Now no one who bothered to keep up with the times doubted the existence of the dinosaurs. The question no longer was "Did the dinosaurs exist?" Rather, the question was, and still is, "**when** did the dinosaurs exist?"

THE CONFLICT

Today, an important controversy exists between evolutionists and creationists regarding the matter of exactly when the dinosaurs existed. In fact, a chasm exists between these two groups that never will be bridged—so long as each side maintains its present view. Evolutionists advocate that dinosaurs evolved from some ancient reptile(s) 200 million years ago, and that they became extinct roughly 65-70 million years ago. Man (in one form or another) allegedly evolved roughly 2-3 million years ago, and thus was separated from the dinosaurs by approximately 65 million years of geologic time. Creationists who accept Genesis 1-11 as an accurate, historical record of God's creative activity, oppose such claims, and instead maintain 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.

One thing on which both creationists and evolutionists do agree is that dinosaurs make marvelous teaching tools. Rare is the adult—and even more rare is the child—who does not have a keen interest in dinosaurs. These magnificent beasts with the odd names capture our attention as we fixate on their massive size, their lizard-like skin, or the terror they apparently were able to create as they roamed the Earth. From kindergarten through graduate school, dinosaurs frequently are used as a tool to indoctrinate students regarding the "fact" of organic evolution. In most public school, college, and university settings, whenever dinosaurs are discussed, it is in the context of their evolutionary origin, development, and extinction. Students are told that these wondrous animals evolved **from** some ancient reptile **into** what we now know as birds. In such a setting, it is also commonplace to use the dinosaurs to instruct on the ancient nature of the Earth and/or Universe.

What effect does this kind of teaching have on young minds? Because almost all youngsters have a fascination with dinosaurs, and because teachers are among the most trusted of all adults, children often accept without question evolutionary dogma and its accompanying concept of an ancient Earth. With what result? If testimony from many of the evolutionists themselves can be accepted at face value, the study of dinosaurs was the deciding factor in their conclusion to abandon their belief in God and to accept in its place organic evolution. Evolutionists like Stephen Jay Gould, Robert Bakker, and others are on record as stating that it was the study of dinosaurs, at a very young age, which set them on their lifelong path as evolutionists. Because dinosaurs are fascinating to children, because they are such an effective teach-

ing aid, and because they generally are used to teach evolution, these creatures represent a formidable tool to be used in robbing students of all ages of their faith in God and His Word. This makes the controversy over dinosaurs extremely important.

WHEN DID THE DINOSAURS EXIST?

Knowledgeable, conservative Bible students are fully aware of the plain and simple teachings of the Bible concerning the creation of all life forms—including the dinosaurs. Exodus 20:11 (cf. 31:17) could not be any clearer than it is: “For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day.” Consider this: if God made (in the six days of creation) the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all that in them is, what does that leave out? The answer, of course, is **absolutely nothing!** Furthermore, Genesis 2:1 clearly states that at the end of the six days, the Creation was “finished.” If God created everything in six days, and if at the end of those six days the Creation was finished, then everything that was created was created in those six days.

What, then, does this mean? It means simply this: **dinosaurs and men lived as contemporaries on the Earth!** There is no other conclusion that respects the clear statements of the verbally inspired Word of God. For some, however, this conclusion simply is not acceptable, and they have gone to great lengths to try to avoid the implications of the Bible’s teaching on this subject. Contrast such statements (“Man is a very recent newcomer to this planet”) with statements from Jesus Christ Himself: “**But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them**” (Mark 10:6; cf.: Matthew 19:4, emp. added). Further contrast such statements (“all of these are recent additions to the earth geologically”) to statements of the inspired apostle Paul: “For the invisible things of him **since the creation of the world** are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse” (Romans 1:20, emp. added). The term “perceived” is from the Greek *noeo*, a word used for rational human intelligence. Paul, speaking by inspiration, stated that someone human was “perceiving.” What were they perceiving? The things God had made. How long had they been perceiving those things? Since the creation of the world! Who, from a human vantage point, was doing the “perceiving”? Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45, Romans 5:14) and Eve (1 Timothy 2:13). The apostle’s point was that Adam and Eve had been present since the creation of the world (i.e., as a part of the six-day creative activity of God), perceiving the things that were made. And that includes the dinosaurs!

THE BEHEMOTH

But does the Bible speak of dinosaurs? Conservative Bible scholars look to Job 40:15-24 and answer with a resounding, “Yes!” Consider these verses:

Behold now, behemoth, which I made as well as thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the muscles of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his thighs

are knit together. His bones are as tubes of brass; his limbs are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: He only that made him giveth him his sword. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field do play. He lieth under the lotus trees, in the covert of the reed, and the fen. The lotus-trees cover him with their shade; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, if a river overflow, he trembleth not; he is confident, though a Jordan swell even to his mouth. Shall any take him when he is on the watch, or pierce through his nose with a snare?

What is this “behemoth” creature? Some have argued that it is an elephant or hippopotamus. But the text says he is “the chief of the ways of God” and that he “moveth his tail like a cedar.” There are creatures (dinosaurs) larger than elephants (the largest dinosaur, *Argentinosaurus*, stood over 3 stories tall and weighed over 100 tons!). And did you ever see the tails of either the elephant or the hippo? Enough said! Yes, the Bible does speak—both directly (Job 40:15-24) and indirectly (Exodus 20:11)—of dinosaurs. And the Bible teaching is plain. Men and dinosaurs lived on the Earth at the same time. We repeat: there is no other view that can be entertained respecting the verbal, plenary inspiration of God’s Word.

The evolutionary claims of dinosaurs living and becoming extinct long before man ever arrived are at odds with what the scientific facts have to say. Science bears out that the Bible is correct: man and the dinosaurs lived on the Earth at the same time. Consider the following.

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT MEN AND DINOSAURS COEXISTED

In the late 1800s, Samuel Hubbard, honorary curator of archaeology at the Oakland, California, Museum of Natural History, was excavating ancient Indian dwellings in the Hava Supai Canyon in Arizona. On the walls of the canyon where the Indians’ ancestors once lived long ago, Dr. Hubbard found elegant drawings of an elephant, an ibex, a dinosaur, and other animals. Dr. Hubbard stated concerning the dinosaur drawing: “Taken all in all, the proportions are good.” He further suggested that 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.). Dr. Hubbard also noted: “The **fact** that some prehistoric man made a pictograph of a **dinosaur** on the walls of this canyon upsets completely all of our theories regarding the antiquity of man. . . . The fact that the animal is upright and balanced on its tail would seem to indicate that the prehistoric artist must have seen it alive” (1925, pp. 5, 7, emp. in orig.). Nearby, Dr. Hubbard and his team of archaeologists discovered dinosaur tracks preserved in strata identified as Triassic—alleged by evolutionists to be more than 165 million years old. Question: How would the Indians have known how to draw such a perfect picture of an animal (the dinosaur) they had never seen (or had described to them by someone who had seen it)?

According to the belief commonly held by evolutionists, no advanced mammals were present in the “age of the dinosaurs.” Artists’ reconstructions, in fact, generally show the huge reptiles living in swamps surrounded only by other species of dinosaurs. The dinosaurs allegedly became extinct in the Cretaceous Period, and the only mammals that had evolved up to that point in time (even toward the very end of the period) were, according to the late evolutionist of Harvard, George Gaylord Simpson, supposedly “small, mostly about mouse-sized, and rare” (1957, p. 797).

It is unthinkable, in evolutionary terms, that dinosaurs and advanced mammals (e.g.: such as giraffes or elephants) could have lived at the same time. Once again, however, Dr. Hubbard’s discoveries have “thrown a monkey wrench” into the evolutionary timescale.

Another highly important feature of Dr. Hubbard’s report is the discovery of fossil footprints of both the three-toed carnivorous dinosaurs and the imperial elephants in the same locality. If, as it appears, both of these creatures left their footprints in the river’s sand or mud at approximately the same period, then we must assume that the dinosaurs continued to survive for millions of years later than scientists would have us believe, or else that the imperial elephants appeared on earth millions of years before their supposed arrival. But it seems highly preposterous, and entirely contrary to all known laws of evolution, to assume that these highly developed pachyderms were inhabiting the earth long ages before more primitive types of mammals (Verrill, p. 162).

To complicate matters, researchers reported in the April 18, 2002 issue of *Nature*, one of the premier science journals in the world, that they now have determined that the “last common ancestor of extant primates” existed (as dated by evolutionary dating methods) 85 million years ago (Tavaré, Marshall, et al., 2002). Since dinosaurs are supposed to have died out 65 million years ago, that means the primate would have lived **with the dinosaurs** for at least 20 million years. One of the coauthors of the *Nature* paper, Christophe Soligo of London’s Natural History Museum, stated in regard to the find: “What we demonstrate is that modern orders of mammals appeared well before dinosaurs disappeared...” (see “Primate Ancestor Lived with Dinos,” 2002). So much for the commonly held idea that dinosaurs evolved into mammals.

In 1945, a German archeologist discovered clay figurines buried at the foot of El Toro Mountain on the outskirts of Acambaro, Mexico. Eventually, over 32,000 figurines and artifacts were found. In order to prove their authenticity, the owners had three radiometric tests performed by Isotopes Incorporated of New Jersey, resulting in dates of 1640 B.C., 4530 B.C., and 1110 B.C. Eighteen samples were further subjected to thermoluminescent testing by the University of Pennsylvania, all of which gave dates of approximately 2500 B.C. All of these dates corresponded with the dates given to pieces of pottery that were found scattered among the figurines. Interestingly however, the dating results were later withdrawn when it was learned that some of the figurines depicted dinosaurs.

In 1990, samples of various dinosaur bones were submitted for Carbon-14 dating to the University of Arizona's department of geosciences' laboratory of isotope geochemistry. Bones from an *Allosaurus* and an *Acrocanthosaurus* were among those sent to the university's testing facility to undergo a "blind" dating procedure (which means that the technicians performing the tests did not know the bones were from dinosaurs). Amazingly, the C-14 dates assigned to the fossils were 16,120 and 23,760 years, respectively—a far cry from the millions of years that evolutionists suggest should be assigned to dinosaur fossils (see Dahmer, et al., 1990).

In 1966, Dr. Javier Cabrera Darquea, professor of medicine at the University of Lima, Peru, was presented with an unusual rock by a local farmer for his birthday. On the face of the rock was a picture of a fish. When he examined it more closely, he realized that the fish that had been carved on the rock had been extinct for thousands of years. The rocks turned out to be ancient burial stones that the Indians had placed with their dead. Eventually, Dr. Cabrera located over 11,000 rocks in all—almost one third of which depicted specific types of dinosaurs such as *Triceratops*, *Stegosaurus*, and various pterosaurs. Again, we ask: How could the Indians have drawn such accurate pictures of dinosaurs if they had never seen the animals (or had them described by someone who had seen them)? [For a brief discussion of Cabrera's research, see Swift, 1997].]

WHERE DID THE DINOSAURS GO?

Whatever became of the dinosaurs? Why did they become extinct? Evolutionists have suggested many different theories, but none seems to fit all the facts. Reginald Daly, in his classic work, *Earth's Most Challenging Mysteries*, gives an extensive listing of some 25 or so proposed theories and discusses each (1972, pp. 29ff.). Probably the most popular theory (which has been around for a little more than two decades) is the one first set forth by the late Nobel laureate, Luis Alvarez, and his son Walter. The Alvarazes suggested that the dinosaurs were killed off in a period of about three months some 65 million years ago as the result of an asteroid colliding with the Earth. The impact itself resulted in an envelope of dust forming above the Earth. But the impact also caused worldwide forest fires, which added soot and ash to the dust. The thick curtain of dust, soot, and ash then blocked out the Sun's rays, causing plants to die. This, in turn, caused the herbivorous (plant-eating) animals to die, which caused the carnivorous (meat-eating) animals to die (Alvarez and Asaro, 1990). There are various alternative explanations to the data used to support this unusual theory, however—explanations that do not postulate an asteroid impact (see DeYoung, 2000, pp. 26-35).

The most likely scenario, it seems to us, involves a drastic and sudden change in world conditions caused by the Noahic flood. There can be little doubt that the damage inflicted by such a worldwide flood would have impacted the Earth in a most significant manner. This explanation is quite attractive, and is accepted by many creationists today.

CONCLUSION

Contrary to some popular opinions or beliefs, dinosaurs do not present a problem to creationists. In fact, just the opposite is true. It is evolutionists who are presented with a “problem.” While they continue to maintain, as paleontologist Roland T. Bird of the American Museum of Natural History once put it, that “no man had ever existed in the age of the reptiles” (1939, 43[5]: 257), the evidence documents exactly the opposite.

Varieties of domestic animals and beasts were created, and finally, man, the zenith of God’s creation, stood proudly upon the Earth. The dinosaur—one of the most majestic of God’s creatures—stood with him. No doubt they pondered each other’s existence. Today, we still stand in awe of these fearsome giants. And as we do, their presence in the past should remind us of the magnificence of the Creator Who was able to speak them into existence by “the word of His power” (Hebrews 1:3). Awesome creatures—from the hand of an awesome Creator.

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Questions—Lesson 5 Dinosaurs, Science, and the Bible

Apologetics Press Advanced Christian Evidences Correspondence Course
Bert Thompson, Ph.D. and Brad Harrub, Ph.D.

Questions—Lesson 5

TRUE OR FALSE

Write TRUE or FALSE in the blanks before the following statements.

- _____ 1. The word dinosaur is found in only one place in the Bible.
- _____ 2. We now know for certain that a giant asteroid was the cause of the dinosaurs' extinction.
- _____ 3. Over 11,000 Indian burial stones have been located, with almost one-third depicting pictures of dinosaurs on them.
- _____ 4. In 1990, samples of various dinosaur bones were submitted for Carbon-14 dating, and came back with dates of over 250 million years old.
- _____ 5. Dinosaur figurines were found near Acambaro, Mexico with radiocarbon dates ranging from 1110 B.C. to 4530 B.C.
- _____ 6. The behemoth was probably a hippopotamus or an elephant.
- _____ 7. The largest dinosaur known to walk the Earth was *Triceratops*, which weighed in at over 120 tons.
- _____ 8. Gideon Mantell was an American fossil hunter who eventually named nine new genera of dinosaurs.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the correct answer(s).

1. Evolutionists advocate that dinosaurs evolved from some ancient reptile about:
- (a) 500 million years ago (b) 2 million years ago
(c) 65 million years ago (d) 200 million years ago
2. Which of the following are used to describe the behemoth?
- (a) Taller than the lotus tree (b) Chief of the ways of God
(c) Bones are as tubes of brass (d) Moves its tail like a cedar

3. Who coined the term dinosaur?
 - (a) Gideon Mantell
 - (b) Arthur Lakes
 - (c) Othniel Marsh
 - (d) Richard Owen
4. The word dinosaur comes from the Greek words *deinos* and *sauros* meaning
 - (a) Large lizard
 - (b) Terrible lizard
 - (c) Man-eating monster
 - (d) Green giant
5. Samuel Hubbard discovered an ancient Indian pictograph of a:
 - (a) Dinosaur
 - (b) Sheep dog
 - (c) Cave man
 - (d) Flying saucer

MATCHING

Match the related concepts (place the correct letter in the space provided by each number).

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. ____ Named 19 new genera of dinosaurs | A. 1611 |
| 2. ____ Is on record as stating the study of dinosaurs set him on his path to becoming an evolutionist | B. <i>Megalosaurus</i> |
| 3. ____ Stood over three stories tall and weighed over 100 tons | C. Othniel Marsh |
| 4. ____ Year the term dinosaur was invented | D. <i>Argentinosaurus</i> |
| 5. ____ Year that the King James Version of the Bible was translated into English | E. Stephen Jay Gould |
| 6. ____ The literal meaning is "Iguana-tooth" | F. 1842 |
| 7. ____ Saw fossilized teeth while walking along a road in England | G. <i>Iguanodon</i> |
| 8. ____ Bones of this creature were found in Oxfordshire | H. Mary Ann Mantell |

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Dinosaurs and men lived as _____ on the Earth.
2. Mark 10:6: “But from the _____ of creation, male and female made he them” (ASV).
3. Genesis 2:1 clearly states that at the end of the six days, the Creation was “_____.”
4. Samuel Hubbard found impressive drawings of an elephant and a _____ in the Hava Supai canyon.
5. According to Harvard evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson, the only mammals around during the period of the dinosaurs were “small, mostly _____ -sized, and rare.”

NOTES

NAME _____

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