

# HOW DO DINOSAURS FIT WITH THE BIBLE?

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?" Job 12:7-9

Dinosaurs are fascinating animals. From the huge, long necked Sauropods, to the array of horns, spikes, or plates on such as Triceratops or Stegosaurus, to the impressive, sharp-toothed Tyrannosaurs, dinosaurs have captured people's attention. Looking at the enormous bones of these creatures not only brings a sense of awe at their sheer size, but also prompts questions. Where did they come from? Why aren't they alive today? And do they fit into the Bible's history of the world?

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## WHAT IS A DINOSAUR?

First, dinosaurs were land-dwelling reptiles, some walking on four legs, some on two. Often people think of the marine reptiles like Plesiosaurs and Mosasaurs as dinosaurs, but technically they are not. Likewise, the flying reptiles, the Pterosaurs, are also often incorrectly called dinosaurs. Dinosaurs are distinct from living lizards in multiple ways, one example being their legs. Lizards' legs are positioned horizontally, sprawled out to the sides, while dinosaurs' legs were positioned vertically under their hips.

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## ASSUMPTIONS AND INTERPRETATION

Often, when we hear about dinosaurs it is in an evolutionary, long ages context. In an evolutionary view, it's often claimed the dinosaurs first evolved around 240 million years ago, and then went extinct around 65 million years ago. They call this time period the Mesozoic. Remember this important detail. When we find dinosaur bones, they don't come with labels attached, saying how old they are. These dates are an interpretation of the facts, not the facts themselves. We all must interpret facts; the key is to have the correct worldview to interpret with.

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## 7 F'S OF DINOSAUR HISTORY

Let's look at how dinosaurs are explained by the Bible's account of history. I like to use Ken Ham's idea of seven "F's" of dinosaur history.

**Formed**—First, being land-dwelling animals, dinosaurs would have been created around 6,000 years ago on the 6th day of creation along with all the other land animals, and later, mankind.

**Fearless**—In the beginning there was no death or suffering, and God had given plants to be food, not just for Adam and Eve, but for all the animals as well. This includes dinosaurs, which had a vegetarian diet originally. It was a 'fearless' environment.

**Fallen**—When Adam and Eve sinned, the earth was cursed and death was introduced. It appears that at least some dinosaurs began to switch to a carnivorous diet after the Fall.

**Flood**—Because of mankind's utter depravity and rebellion against God, God warned Noah that He would send a global flood to destroy the evil people, instructing Noah to build an ark to save him and his family, along with representatives of all the land-dwelling, air-breathing animal kinds. Since dinosaurs were land-dwelling and air-breathing, they were also on the ark. But what about giant sauropods over a hundred feet long? How could they even fit through the door? Interestingly, the biggest dinosaur eggs found aren't much bigger than a football – suggesting that like other animals, they start out small. Noah could have easily fit young dinosaurs on the ark.

While there are over a million species known today, Noah only needed representatives of each 'kind,' which seems to have corresponded in most cases with the 'family' level of modern taxonomy, drastically reducing the number of animals on the ark. This would apply to dinosaur kinds as well; there may have been less than fifty dinosaur kinds. If the biblical kind corresponds to the family level, there could have been around 2,000 animals on the ark, while if it corresponds to the genus level, there could have been around 16,000 animals, either of which would easily fit into the available space of the ark.<sup>1</sup>

The dinosaurs not on the ark found themselves in very good conditions for fossilization. As catastrophic processes laid down thick sedimentary layers, many were rapidly buried, sealing them off from scavengers and other decomposing forces. The flood is a perfect explanation for the dinosaur fossils found today.

**Faded**—After the flood, the dinosaurs left the ark along with the other animals, and presumably spread across the earth from there. There are ancient clues to their continued existence, such as references to dragons, and carvings, petroglyphs, and paintings from around the world.<sup>2</sup> It seems they gradually became fewer in number until they went extinct at some point. Some probable causes of their extinction include overhunting, habitat loss, competition, and climate and environmental changes from a post-flood ice age.

**Found**—Dinosaur fossils started to be found, and they were finally recognized as a distinct group of creatures, leading to Sir Richard Owen coining the term dinosaur in 1841. It's interesting to note that these fossils were often called dragons before this.

**Fiction**—Unfortunately, many started to interpret dinosaur fossils through an evolutionary worldview. They decided that these bones were many millions of years old, rejecting the Bible's history of the world as authoritative.

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## CONCLUSION

Far from dinosaurs being a problem, it turns out that they are far better explained by the Bible's account of history. While this article has been an overview of how dinosaurs are explained by

the Bible, there are many details such as original soft tissue and measurable amounts of C-14 in dinosaur fossils, dinosaur graveyards, and more that could be discussed.

The next time you see a dinosaur in a museum, remember that you're not seeing a biblical problem, but an example of an amazing creation of God that was preserved by the flood. In a sense, dinosaur fossils are a reminder of judgement – a global judgement on sin. Just as there was one way to be saved from the global flood through the ark, so there is only one way to be saved from the judgement to come: through Jesus Christ.

~Denton Ford

**Endnotes:**

1. Andrew A Snelling, "Earth's Catastrophic Past: Geology, Creation & the Flood, vol. 1" (Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books, 2009) p.136-137 - This two-volume set has been replaced with one volume and is now published under the title "The Genesis Flood Revisited", in reference to Morris and Whitcomb's pivotal 1961 book, "The Genesis Flood".
2. Vance Nelson, "Untold Secrets of Planet Earth: Dire Dragons," (Red Deer, Alberta, Canada: Untold Secrets of Planet Earth Publishing Company, 2012) - This book is filled with examples of ancient dinosaur artwork.