



Think & Believe

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What about Dinosaurs?

By Dave and Mary Jo Nutting

One of the questions most frequently asked at a creation presentation or seminar is: Well, what about the dinosaurs? Often it's asked in almost a defensive or challenging manner. Why? Undoubtedly, dinosaurs hold a lot of interest, but there is a deeper reason for this question. For many people, dinosaurs are visible "proof" of evolution.

Most children begin reading books on dinosaurs in kindergarten or in early elementary school. These books depict very graphically how the dinosaurs evolved from more "primitive" ancestors. Many show a complete evolutionary lineup which eventually leads to apes and men. Besides the books, most television programs about dinosaurs make it very clear to children that the dinosaurs had evolved and roamed upon this planet and then became extinct about sixty-five million years ago, long before man had "evolved".

With this background, it is no wonder that the question about dinosaurs arises. The creation viewpoint is totally alien to what most children have been programmed to believe. Unfortunately this is also true of a majority of "church kids." Secular training (even prior to school age) has done a remarkable job of helping young children believe in evolution without offering a shred of evidence.

What can be done? First, take time to really see the contents of your children's books. Then, discuss with them the evolutionary bias that is being presented. Finally, be able to give them a reasonable alternative explanation.

So, where *do* dinosaurs "fit" in the creation model? It is our opinion that the basic "kinds" of dinosaurs were created at the same time as the other animal kinds, that they lived and thrived on earth prior to the Great Flood, and that most of them perished in the

Flood. The great fossil bone deposits are "concrete" reminders of that Flood and of God's judgement on sin. However, not all the dinosaurs perished in the Flood — some were preserved on the ark (it was large enough). After the Flood, climatic conditions on earth probably differed drastically from pre-Flood conditions, which may have been moderated by a canopy of water vapor high above the atmosphere. (For a further discussion of this check the article on the canopy model in our Jan./Feb 1985 issue.) Under the new, harsher climate, most of the dinosaurs probably couldn't survive. Those that remained certainly would not have found conditions very conducive to allow them to grow to the size they once had attained. Finally, people may have contributed to their demise as we have done with many species.

*Behold Now Behemoth
See Spotlight on Science*



NOTES & QUOTES

■ Kids love dinosaurs! There's something about these fantastic creatures that capture their imaginations. Check any public library and you're bound to find all kinds of books on dinosaurs in the children's section. Check a little further though and you'll find that almost all of them teach evolution. So as kids pour over these books, they not only learn about dinosaurs, but about evolution as well.

The following quotes were taken from books in the local public library. Some are old, some are new, yet the story of evolution is consistently presented as fact along with descriptions of these magnificent animals. As you read these quotes, note the implied certainty. How are the children supposed to decipher fact from speculation when presented with statements like these?

- Millions of years ago, strange monsters ruled the earth. There were no people then, or televisions or schools or cars. But the monsters, called dinosaurs, found plenty to keep them busy. (Robin Bates and Cheryl Simon, *The Dinosaurs and the Dark Star*, 1985)
- Dinosaurs lived millions of years ago. . . . Dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago. (Millicent E. Selsam and Joyce Hunt, *A First Look at Dinosaurs*, 1982, Recommended for ages 6-9)
- Dinosaurs lived on the earth millions and millions of years before there were any people. They lived on the earth about 170 million years ago. That was millions and millions of years before even the cave men lived on the earth. (Glenn O. Bough, *Discovering Dinosaurs*, 1960)
- The dinosaurs ruled the world for about 150 million years. The last dinosaur died out 65 million years ago, many years before the first humans evolved — about two million years ago. (Michael Benton, *The Dinosaur Encyclopedia*, 1984)
- Because man has existed on earth for only the past million years, no human being ever saw a living dinosaur. (Carla Green, *How To Know the Dinosaurs*, 1966)
- Dinosaurs lived on this earth 200 million years ago, *to be exact*. (Darlene Geis, *The How and Why Wonder Book of Dinosaurs*, 1974 Printing. Emphasis added)
- Dinosaurs are not the oldest known fossils. They were advanced animals and there had been a long history of life before they evolved. (Michael Benton, *The Dinosaur Encyclopedia*, 1984)
- Dinosaurs ruled the animal world when they lived, millions of years ago. . . . In those days there were no horses, no cows, no sheep, no squirrels. There were no birds. (Glenn O. Bough, *Discovering Dinosaurs*, 1960)
- To understand how dinosaurs came into being and developed, it is important to know that all living things constantly go through a long, slow process of change known as evolution. (Carla Green, *How To Know Dinosaurs*, 1966)
- *How did life on earth begin?* In the beginning there had been life only in the seas. That is where life first started. . . . Then the seas began to swarm with fish. . . . And some of the fish, after millions of years, became able to live part of the time on land. They began to look less like fish as they developed little legs. Finally some of the creatures became able to live on land all of the time. . . . These completely land-living animals were called "reptiles." (Darlene Geis, *The How and Why Wonder Book of Dinosaurs*, 1974 Printing)
- . . . try to think how long a hundred years would be. A thousand years. A million years. A hundred million years!
To know dinosaurs you must go back even further to a period on earth which scientists named the MESOZOIC ERA, also known as the Age of Reptiles or the Age of Dinosaurs. This era began about 200 million years ago and continued for 130 million years. (Carla Green, *How To Know Dinosaurs*, 1966)

■ And the list goes on and on. There just aren't many books showing dinosaurs in anything but an evolutionary setting, and chances are that unless an active creationist has been influential in the selection of books for your library you probably won't find any alternative explanations available. As creationists, we have a big job ahead of us! We need your help!

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Behold Now Behemoth

Has man ever seen a living dinosaur? Most people would automatically answer, "No, of course not. The dinosaurs were extinct many millions of years before man ever came on the scene." But is that necessarily true?

It is true that there are no dinosaurs in zoos today, and there have not been any well-documented sightings of dinosaurs in recent history, but there have been some interesting cases reported that deserve more research. For example, for generations there have been reports of strange, dinosaur-like "sea monsters." Most people pass these off as fairy tales, or the effects of too many weeks at sea, but is there any basis for these reports? In 1976 off the coast of New Zealand, a Japanese fishing vessel snagged the carcass of a huge, dinosaur-like creature. They took photographs and skin samples of the decaying carcass. Whether or not it was really a dinosaur is still not clear, but it was not identifiable as any other known creature.

More recently scientists organized an expedition to the heart of the African jungle in search of an unidentified creature. From descriptions given by natives in the area, it sounded much like a description of a dinosaur.

Is it really so fantastic that there might still be dinosaurs someplace in the depths of the jungle? The only real basis for saying no man has ever seen a living dinosaur is evolutionary bias. According to the standard evolutionary time scale, dinosaurs have been extinct for at least 65 million years. Since man is not supposed to have evolved until recently, the thought of man and dinosaurs living at the same time is out of the question to staunch evolutionists.

According to the creation model, dinosaurs and man could easily have lived at the same time (though not necessarily in the same area). If they did, we would expect the written and pictorial records of ancient peoples to include encounters with dinosaurs. Indeed, many cultures around the world do have stories and drawings of dinosaur-like creatures. Very noticeable are the ancient Chinese drawings of "dragons," embellished with ornamentation no doubt, but still very much like dinosaurs in general body form. In fact, it is reported that the ancient Chinese used to breed "dragons" to pull the emperor's chariot. Now that's real class!

Even the Bible records a description of a large, powerful creature that sounds amazingly like a dinosaur. In Job 40, we find God speaking directly to Job about a creature Job apparently knew:

Behold now, Behemoth, which I made as well as you; he eats grass like an ox. Behold now, his strength is in his loins, and his power in the muscles of his belly. He bends his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together. His bones are tubes of bronze; his limbs are like bars of iron. He is the first of the ways of God; let his maker bring near his sword. Surely the mountains bring him food, and all the beasts of the field play there. Under the lotus plants he lies down, in the covert of the reeds and the marsh. The lotus plants cover him with shade; the willows of the brook surround him. If a river rages, he is not alarmed; he is confident, though the Jordan rushes to his mouth. Can anyone capture him when he is on watch, with bars can anyone pierce his nose? (Job 40:15-24, NASB)

Just what is this Behemoth which is described as the first or the mightiest of the ways of God? Thinking Behemoth must be a familiar animal living today, many scholars have determined that this passage is referring to a hippopotamus or an elephant. However, fossil evidence indicates the existence of animals much greater and more powerful than either of these. Could this passage be referring to the very large brontosaurus or perhaps the brachiosaurus?

Actually, the description fits a dinosaur much better than the hippopotamus or the elephant. For instance in Job 40:17, the tail is compared to the cedar tree. The cedars usually referred to in the Bible were the cedars of Lebanon — very large trees with massive trunks. Have you ever seen the tail of a hippopotamus or an elephant? It is more like a thin string than a tree trunk! The tail of the brontosaurus could certainly be described as a cedar. The passage in Job also says, "Can anyone capture him when he is on watch?" A full-grown dinosaur weighing 20-25 times as much as a hippopotamus would certainly be a more formidable foe than either an elephant or a hippo. It is also perplexing why the hippo would be called the "mightiest" of the ways of God. Those this writer has seen never did appear to be very stately!

Yes, just imagine as you read those passages in Job, a stately brontosaurus with his huge cedar-like tail as he tromps through the jungle swamps with fear of nothing. This certainly sounds closer to the first of the ways of God! Just because we apparently do not have dinosaurs living today, doesn't mean they were not common just a few thousand years ago. If the scientists who are investigating reports of an unknown, dinosaur-like creature in Africa are right, perhaps Behemoth still lives on!

Summer in the Rockies

Thinking of summer vacation plans? Alpha Omega Institute is pleased to announce a summer family vacation with a purpose. We will be combining our creationism seminar with the beauty and excitement of the great outdoors at one of Colorado's most popular camps — Camp Redcloud. We feel there is no better location to study the scientific evidences supporting creation than right in the midst of God's spectacular mountain country. Outdoor options available will be hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, rappelling, horseback riding, and mountain biking as well as fishing, boating, sailing, and just good old-fashioned mountain and camping fun. Costs for the entire seminar will be very reasonable and will include seminar sessions, lodging, and plenty of delicious food. Come join us for 6 days of fun, fellowship and learning in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. Mark these dates on your calendar: August 17-22. Space is limited, so send for more information today using the enclosed request sheet.



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Would you like additional information about any one of the condensed articles or on another subject that we haven't even touched upon as yet? Write to us and we will gladly send you some.

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Book Review

For a refreshing alternative to the evolutionary books on dinosaurs we recommend *Dinosaurs: Those Terrible Lizards* by Dr. Duane Gish. It gives a unique creationist view of dinosaurs in an attractive, readable manner with lots of colorful illustrations. This book is a "must" for Christian families and libraries. It is suitable for children of all ages and is a valuable reference for parents and teachers. (Available from Alpha Omega Institute, Box 4343, Grand Junction, CO 81502, for \$7.95 plus \$1.00 for shipping and handling.)

Spread the Word

We are thankful for the numerous opportunities we had during the past year to give creation presentations and seminars. We were especially pleased to have been able to talk to 25 public school classes. Many of the presentations were possible because you, our readers, were instrumental in arranging them. Thank you for your efforts. We have found that the best way to arrange either a church or public presentation is for someone within the group to make the initial contact. When a member of a group asks the leader to schedule a presentation, it is much more effective than when we call them out of the blue.

Want to learn more about the evidence supporting creation? Why not contact us about scheduling a seminar in *your* area? Just fill out the enclosed information request sheet and return to us. We will send you the right information with tips on what to do next. The packet will include enough information for you to give to your pastor or to a school official explaining our approach and the presentation topics available. Write soon! We are arranging our summer schedule *now*.

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