

The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved!
Book Review
Part 2 (Pages 18-52)



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First Published 15 September 2005
Answers In Creation Website
www.answersincreation.org/the_great_dinosaur_mystery_solved_2.htm

Dinosaur History (Page 18)

How Do We Know Dinosaurs Ever Existed? (Page 18)

Ham presents it as young earth creationists vs. evolutionists. However, it should be noted that progressive creationists are not evolutionists. Ham and his ministry Answers in Genesis constantly refer to all non-young earth creationists as evolutionists, even though he must know this is not true. I'm not sure why they prefer to stereotype all non young earth creationists as evolutionists.

Ham claims that old earth proponents obtain their dates by indirect dating methods. This is true. He goes on to state that other scientists have shown that they cannot be trusted. This part is not true. So-called young earth creationist scientists have tried to point out errors in the dating methods, but these claims have all been shown to be false and misleading. To disprove the dating methods, they have to pick and choose from the data, finding several bad dates out of thousands, and using these to cast doubt upon dating as a whole. For more on radiometric dating, and the deceitful young earth tactics, see Radiometric Dating (www.answersincreation.org/radiometricdating.htm).

Next Ham says that there is evidence that dinosaur bones are not old at all. He refers to the now famous T-rex red blood cells from a specimen found in Montana. There were no red blood cells in this specimen. For more, see T-Rex Blood (www.answersincreation.org/trexblood.htm).

On page 20, he mentions the "fresh" dinosaur bones found by a young earth expedition in Alaska. The fossil bed in question, the Liscomb, has been mined for dinosaur fossils since its discovery in 1961. The bones in some cases are not fully fossilized, but they are anything but fresh. None have ever been discovered with soft tissue (except the ones that young earth creationists supposedly found...rather suspicious!). The bones have been significantly diagenetically altered (by their deposition environment). No DNA has ever been recovered from these bones.

If it is true that young earth creationists discovered bones with ligaments still attached, you would think they would publish a technical paper on this topic to prove the earth is young. They have not. What did the young earth creationists do with these bones with ligaments? Were they given to competent scientists who are qualified to perform research on them? They appear to have either disappeared, or were left in the field! That's an odd way to treat a valuable dinosaur find! The disappearance of these bones makes it impossible for anyone to accept that they ever existed in the first place.

It is entirely possible for bones to not be 100 percent fossilized after millions of years. There are many variables with the turning of a bone into a fossil...age of the fossil is not the most important of these.

At the end of this section, he says death before sin would undermine the entire gospel. This is only true from the young earth perspective, which is a flawed interpretation of Death Before Sin. Millions of Christians testify to their full belief in the Gospel, and in millions of years of death before Adam sinned. Physical death is not the issue with Adam's sin...only spiritual death is important, since it is only spiritual death that can separate you from God.

What Did Dinosaurs Look Like? (Page 21)

Yes, scientists make assumptions concerning what dinosaurs looked like. However, these assumptions are based on many years of study. Scientists who reconstruct animals from fossils are well trained in anatomy and biology, and are highly qualified to make such "educated assumptions." Paleontologists also understand that all these assumptions are just that...they do not preach them as 100 percent accurate of the animal being portrayed. There is no deceit intended on the part of these scientists.

Where/When? (Page 22)

The evidence for transitional fossils is scant, and thus the lines of descent are estimated by those involved in showing the evolution of the dinosaurs. There is no intended deceit by the scientists, as everyone understands the limitations. Given the nature of fossils, and their difficulty in becoming preserved, a lack of transitional fossils is not unexpected. Keep in mind that a "lack of evidence" for one theory (evolution) does not "prove another theory" (a young earth).

Ham briefly touches on the Hebrew word for day, "yom." More can be read about this in Word Study: Yom (www.answersincreation.org/word_study_yom.htm). Ham claims the dinosaurs were made on Day Six of creation, about 6,000 years ago.

Tyrannosaurus Rex (Page 25)

Ham says that "we know that originally T. rex was a vegetarian." His sole evidence for this is Genesis 1:30. Yes, God gave the green plants for food, but He did not prohibit the eating of meat in this verse. The Hebrew word for meat can also be translated food, so nothing can be implied about the plants being considered "meat." Ham goes on to mention the T-Rex's teeth possibly being designed for melons, gourds, etc. One would not need six inch serrated teeth to open a melon.

To solve the T-Rex tooth problem, Ham takes the standard young earth approach...the Curse from the Fall may have resulted in changes to their structure, either by starting a degenerative process or by deliberate design. There is no evidence to support this claim. There will be a longer discussion on the Curse further into this review.

Ham briefly touches on several issues, such as musculature, the speed of T-Rex, the forearms, and the facts surrounding the discovery and naming of T-Rex and several specimens, none of which has any relevance for the age of the earth debate.

A minor note...he quotes Dr. John Horner as saying nobody has found a skeleton of a young T-Rex. This quote is from 1993, and Ham wrote the book in 1998. At the time of the writing of the book, a juvenile T-Rex was discovered in South Dakota (www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Galaxy/8152/babyrex.html).

Who Discovered Dinosaurs (Page 30)

Ham attributes the discovery of dinosaurs to Adam, who named them, and the rediscovery of them to the scientists which came along within the last 300 years. It is obvious from the fossil record that Adam never saw a live dinosaur. As we will see in a later section on dragons, many of the legends for these beasts were probably the result of someone discovering a skeleton of a dinosaur. In this sense, mankind has known about these giant creatures for thousands of years, but it is only in the last 300 that serious scientific study has been accomplished on them.

Dinosaurs With People? (Page 31)

Ham claims that “there is a lot of historical evidence that dinosaurs did live with humans.” He will revisit this topic later in the book. However, when we examine it, you will see that Ham’s evidence is nonexistent. He goes on to say that Christians “can authoritatively state that dinosaurs did live with people! This can be declared on the bases of the authority of the Word of God.” The Bible makes no claims of man and dinosaurs living together. For more on this issue, check out the commentary on Job 40-41 (www.answersincreation.org/job4041a.htm) and the Dinosaur section (www.answersincreation.org/dino.htm).

Where Did the Word Dinosaur Come From? (Page 32)

There is not much of interest here.

Is There Another Word for Dinosaur? (Page 33)

Ham poses the question, “Could the stories about dragons actually be accounts of encounters with what we now call dinosaurs?”

The Dragon (Page 34)

Ham claims that the bible talks about dragons as real animals. He uses two verses to support his claim, Psalm 91:13 and Isaiah 43:20. The Hebrew word translated dragon is tannîym. According to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, it is;

“a marine or land monster, i.e. sea-serpent or jackal; dragon, sea-monster, serpent, whale.”

The King James Version, which he quotes, is the only major version to translate it as “dragon.” The New American Standard (NAS), regarded by scholars as the most literal

version, uses “serpent” in Psalm 91 and “jackel” in Isaiah 43. The New International Version and Amplified Version agree with the NAS. The New King James Version also corrects the KJV version, using “serpent” and “jackel.”

Incredibly, Ham tells the story of the discovery of Baryonyx. The story has absolutely nothing to do with dragons! In the end, he says “...you just might be looking at the skeleton of one of the dragons from English history and legend (e.g., Sir George the Dragon Slayer) or one of the dragons spoken of in the Bible.” He could have easily made the same claim with T-Rex, Allosaurus, or other theropods.

Dragons per se have never been proven to exist. In all likelihood, people of the past discovered dinosaur fossils and came up with these legends to accompany them. It is no surprise, given the number of dinosaur fossils coming out of China, that China’s culture is dominated by the dragon figure. This does not in any way prove that dinosaurs and man lived together.

He goes on to mention the flag of the country of Wales (page 38), and their dragon on the flag. One cannot possibly make an argument that dragons existed because the Welch put it on their flags! This ties into the discussion of the dragon, and Baryonyx, on pages 35-37 (see above).

Several other dragon legends are mentioned;

Gilgamesh. A search of the Gilgamesh epic revealed no references to a dragon. Perhaps this is another story about Gilgamesh that is outside of the famous epic.

England (St. George). A story based on a fairy tale. For more, see Dragons were dinosaurs (http://wiki.cotch.net/index.php/Dragons_were_dinosaurs).

A tenth-century Irishman who encountered Stegosaurus. This one is found on young earth websites, but I could find no references in secular literature. The Irishman probably found a dinosaur fossil, and made up a story to go with it. The ancient Celts were prolific storytellers, leading to many fairy tales. Generally, it is not a good idea to formulate scientific conclusions based on fairy tales.

The Italian Peasant story. This story was easy to find on the internet...it was all over the young earth creationists websites. No credible scientific websites contained any information. There are two possibilities. First, it was not a small dragon, but something else such as a lizard of some type. Second, it could have been a work of fiction. The author of the work was a prolific writer of scientific texts. I'm trying to verify if he wrote any fiction. The author is most famous for his writings on evidences for the unicorn, thus the accuracy of this dragon report is suspect. Since we have no physical evidence to support this claim, it means nothing.

One final thing to consider...in the Dark Ages and Medieval Europe, it was common to impress the ladies with tales of grand encounters, such as slaying of dragons. There is no actual physical evidence of any of these dragons. Without the physical evidence, all we have are apparently fictitious tales.

Ham mentions that the Hebrew word for dragon is mentioned 21 times in the Bible. However, it is only translated as “dragon” consistently by the King James Version, which is a product of medieval England, which at the time could be considered full of fairy tales about dragons and princes and knights in shining armor. Where other versions use “dragon,” it refers to place names (Nehemiah 2:13), or sea serpents (Isaiah 27:1) (not your classic dragon image), or “serpent” or “monster” (Jeremiah 51:34).

As you can see, since young earth creationists cannot get any scientific evidence to back up their claims, they have turned to fairy-tales to prove their theory of a young earth.

He goes on to claim there are two passages where the dragon lived on land. Again, this is a King James only issue. In both verses, all the major translations, including the New King James, use the word “jackel” and not “dragon.” (The KJV also uses “unicorn”, another throwback to medieval times).

Plesiosaur (Page 40)

I agree that plesiosaurs were created during the events described in the fifth day of creation. However, no time reference can be established due to the days being long ages. To Ham’s credit, he notes that they are not true dinosaurs. However, other creationists, such as Kent Hovind, fail to notice this simple fact. Ham continues with a description of the plesiosaur, which is generic and has no bearing upon the age of the earth debate. He alludes to the possibility that some may still be alive today. This is a possibility, although unproven. A discovery of a live plesiosaur would not, however, prove a young earth. For more, see Plesiosaurs – What If? (www.answersincreation.org/plesiosaur.htm).

Leviathan (Page 44)

Ham relates Kronosaurus to Leviathan. He gives the text of Job 41:1-34 in full, and then goes into a discussion of the discovery, the specimens, its swimming ability, and feeding habits. There is no possible way to connect Kronosaurus to Leviathan...it is all conjecture on the part of Ham.

Pteranodon (Page 49)

Next Ham discusses the flying dinosaurs, using Isaiah 30:6 as a possible Biblical reference to them. The Hebrew words here for “fiery flying serpent” is sârâph ‘ûwph. The first word is translated as burning serpent, with the second word responsible for the “flying.” The New International translates it as indicating poisonous snakes, and this is likely, because the Hebrew word for burning serpent can also be translated as poisonous snake. There is no evidence to link flying dinosaurs to this verse, and any connection is merely guesswork.

Ham states they were created on Day Five, (or, for the old earth believer, during the creative events represented by Day Five). He goes into a discussion of the discovery of these creatures and the crest of Pteranodon. He repeats the Isaiah 30:6 claim, and Ham even admits it is figurative, weakening his argument.