

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

Geology 109 Dragons

Welcome back, class. Please get settled in and take hold of your pick point rock hammer and hand lens so that we can continue our study of geology. Let's have a look at some of the geological evidence that many extinct creatures had interaction with man. Yes, even dinosaurs, which supposedly became extinct over 65 million years ago. This dating is a common position taken by many Paleontologists; however, there is solid scientific evidence that calls into question this commonly held notion.

There is no question that very large reptiles once populated the earth. The point of debate is how long ago. (I addressed the question of time in Biology lessons 104-107.) While there were some very large dinosaurs, weighing in at an estimated 80 tons and standing 40 feet high!, the average dinosaur was probably about the size of a small horse. Were dinosaurs extinct 65 million years before we existed or were, they part of God's creation on the day that corresponds with whether or not they flew, swam, or crawled along the ground?

If we examine history, we can find much evidence of the existence of dinosaurs along with man. First, let's look at some biblical historical evidence in the book of Job, chapter 40, written about 4000 years ago, only about 300 years after the flood. In it, God describes a great beast. This great animal, called "behemoth," is described in detail as "the chief of the ways of God," perhaps the biggest land animal God created. Impressively, he moved his tail like a cedar tree! This beast description best fits a large sauropod more than any other animal. "Leviathan," from Job 41, has a description that closely matches a Plesiosaur. Anyone familiar with sea lore knows about all the stories and drawings of sea monsters cooked up in sailors' imaginations. However, there may be some basis in fact, as many of the sea creatures in those drawings have a striking resemblance to many known aquatic dinosaurs.

It is easy for us to look at ancient documents like The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and say all of their descriptions of dragons and other massive beasts are either imaginative or fiction. But there is sufficient fossil evidence in the British Isles to at least give credit to the chroniclers, and to suggest that maybe what they describe as dragons, are actually dinosaurs. It makes more sense to say it is a mixture of truth and imagination, than to say it is pure imagination because we decide with theoretical science based on unprovable assumptions that man never lived with dinosaurs. This type of evidence exists all over the earth. Some Aborigines have reported a dinosaur like creature that matches the description of a *Struthioimimus*. Marco Polo visited Madagascar and saw a huge bird 9 feet tall (now extinct). In 1649, there were reported sightings of "flying dragons" in Europe. Sioux Indians saw a huge flying creature that got struck down in a storm. When they found the remains several days later, it had large claws on its feet and wings. It had a long bony crest pointing backwards on its head, and it had a wingspan of over 18 feet. Could what they called the "thunderbird" be what we call today a *Pteranodon*?

Ancient explorers and historians reported seeing flying reptiles in Egypt and Arabia that match the description of *Rhamphorhynchus*. The Greek researcher Herodotus wrote: "*There is a place in Arabia, situated very near the city of Buto, to which I went, on hearing of some winged serpents; and when I arrived there, I saw bones and spines of serpents, in such quantities as it would be impossible to describe. The form of the serpent is like that of the water-snake; but he has wings without feathers, and as like as possible to the wings of a bat.*" There is also a sketch drawn in Egypt, by the Naturalist Pierre Belon, of a flying reptile.

There are a lot of references to dragons throughout history. These creatures are probably based on real, living dinosaurs that are described correctly, or they have been described with the combined features of several dinosaurs, or they may be based on a real dinosaur with imaginative exaggerations. The 1973 World book Encyclopedia, under the category of "Dragon" says: "The dragons of legend are strangely like actual creatures that have lived in the past. They are much like the great reptiles which inhabited the earth long before man is supposed to have appeared on earth. Dragons were generally evil and destructive. Every country has them in its mythology." Is it possible that they are extinct because they were terrifying and could have been hunted for food? We have caused the extinction of many animals—why not dinosaurs?

We still have much to say about fossils and the large beasts that produced them; so we will continue this discussion in or next lesson.