

The Greatest of Creatures

By Geneva Durand

Age 14

They are huge. They are mysterious. They are the magnificent dinosaurs. Literally the *terrible lizards*, dinosaurs have been a source of interest and even amazement to scientists ever since they were first discovered. Dinosaurs certainly seem to be reptiles, cold-blooded animals which grow all their life (Brown 250). Before the flood, there were lush, beautiful plants everywhere providing an ideal, tropical climate for cold-blooded animals whose temperature adjusts to its surroundings. Since some men lived almost 1000 years before the flood, if dinosaurs lived even half that amount, they would grow to tremendous proportions. During the flood, many dinosaurs drowned, and afterwards the few which remained were unable to survive. A closer look at dinosaurs and their environment before, during, and after the flood can help answer questions such as what really happened to them and why they are extinct.

What were dinosaurs like before the flood? When did God create them? Did God create them at all? Clearly, Genesis testifies that the Lord created every living animal that ever existed. In Genesis 1:21 the Bible states, "And God created great *tannin*", which is the Hebrew word for dragon. The translators of the Authorized Version translated this word *whales*, probably because these were the biggest real creatures they knew (Beechick, *Genesis* 11). What ancient peoples and cultures knew as dragons, we know as dinosaurs. These were the marine reptiles, the aquatic dinosaurs, created on the fifth day of creation. On the sixth day, the Lord created the land dinosaurs, right along with human beings. Although there seems to be no dinosaurs living today, we can see them in fossils and remains of broken bones. Fossils of a man's footprint right along a dinosaur's track certainly indicate that man and dinosaurs lived together (Brown 11). Sadly, we are unable to tell exactly what dinosaurs looked like. What color were they? What color were their eyes? Did they have scales? Many of the answers to these questions we just do not know. Nevertheless, we know that before sin entered the world, all dinosaurs ate vegetation, although afterwards some ate meat. Genesis 6:11 tells us that the earth was full of violence. Striking terror into the inhabitants of the earth, the larger dinosaurs prowled around, looking for something to appease their tremendous appetites. Men were violent, but the fearful creatures also contributed to the indescribable chaos that existed before the worldwide flood (Ham and Morris 20).

During the flood, were there dinosaurs in the ark? Since Noah was commanded by God to bring of every land animal into the ark, he certainly would have brought dinosaurs of the various types that must have existed. Of course, that brings us to the question, "How did they fit in the ark?" Most people assume that the ark was not big enough - but the ark was huge. It was as tall as a four story building and longer than a football field (Dooley 70). In addition, Noah probably took young adults. Not only would they be easier to manage, they would also be able to adjust better (Brown, 250). While dinosaurs were on the ark it is likely that many of the animals went into a state of hibernation, something that some animals still do today (Beechick, *Adam* 74-75). Naturally, Noah took only the land dinosaurs. Some of the aquatic dinosaurs, designed for living underwater, would be able to survive the deluge, although many were converted into fossils. Flood conditions were ideal for creating fossils. Fossils form fast. According to scientist Henry Morris, "...the preservation of fossils requires rapid burial and

lithification, or else they will be destroyed by decay or scavengers" (205). Erupting sky-high and shooting into the air, the "fountains of the great deep" bounded upwards, returning to the earth in clouds of debris and foam (Authorized King James Version, Gen. 7.11). Continuing to pour for forty days and nights, this water submerged the earth, trapping all kinds of animals and converting them into fossils and fossil fuels, like coal and oil. Tremendous earthquakes shook the world, mountains and valleys were formed, making conditions drastically different for those animals, people, and dinosaurs who survived during the worldwide flood.

After the flood, dinosaurs dispersed to different areas in the earth. Eventually, they became extinct. Why? Since the seas were warmer due to volcanic eruption, and the air was cooler, there was plenty of snow and ice covering all the polar regions and even reaching down into North America (Brown 92). As a result of the "Ice Age" after the flood, dinosaurs had trouble staying warm and finding food. "Scientists think that Apatosaurus would have eaten up to 2000 pounds of plants each day" (Ham and Morris 28). Before the deluge, there were many plants, but the flood wiped out the great forests. Some dinosaurs may very well have gone extinct because the food they needed no longer existed, or simply not as much of it. Lack of food might have caused dinosaurs to begin attacking people, which resulted in people trying to kill dinosaurs. Where else would we get legends like St. George and the Dragon, or Beowulf? Ruth Beechick states, "Grendel [the monster Beowulf kills] himself was described in the original language as greedy, ravenous... the terrifying ugly one, and other terms that seem to describe a real rather than a fantastic creature" (*Genesis* 67). Although legends from all over the world tell us about dinosaurs after the flood, God himself also reminds Job about two massive creatures that lived at the same time, after the flood. One, Behemoth, "moveth his tail like a cedar" (Job 40.17). This is not an elephant! Another, Leviathan, counted "darts... as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear" (Job 41.29). Describing him as a sea creature, the Lord tells Job that he "maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment" (Job 41.31). Dinosaurs existed after the flood, and even now, some people think they still might be around - somewhere.

Thankfully, God told Noah that "the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered" (Gen. 9.2). How could God promise this to Noah if there were giant dinosaurs, of which He Himself said "when he raiseth up himself [Leviathan], the mighty are afraid" (Job 41.25)? Before the flood, dinosaurs created havoc, but during the flood the Lord began to destroy them, working out his almighty purposes through man's sin and death, like a wise chess player will use even an opponent's moves to his advantage. Now, after the flood, mankind can learn an important lesson from the extinct dinosaurs: God is sovereign, He is the supreme ruler of all. This means that the creation and extinction of the dinosaur were completely controlled by the Lord. He who can create such a magnificent animal with a mere word, is fully able to give us life eternal. He who has power over the greatest of creatures, clearly has power over us. He who destroyed the dinosaurs, will someday destroy the world, bringing all sin and death to an end. He is able to keep His promises and to protect all those that trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

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