



THE BIBLE AND THE

by Robert A. Ginskey

Do dinosaurs disprove the Bible? Scientists say ancient dinosaur fossils are millions of years old. Yet the Bible supposedly says that everything was created a mere 6,000 years ago. Do science and the Bible contradict each other?

At some time in the past, the earth was inhabited by a bizarre assembly of awesome and immense reptiles. Gigantic dinosaurs roamed the land. "Thunder lizards" weighing 50 tons must have shaken the ground as they walked.

Other creatures were terrorized by the horrendous tyrannosaurus (pictured above with triceratops), a 50-foot-long, 20-foot-high meat-eating monster with a four-foot head filled with huge, saberlike teeth.

Giant-winged pterosaurs swooped down from the sky, while the oceans were alive with fearsome marine reptiles called ichthyosaurs and mosasaurs.

Then, in what is probably the most mysterious and dramatic paleontological event in all earth history, the dinosaurs suddenly became extinct.

Scientists say the strange and remarkable "age of reptiles" occurred

more than 70 million years ago. Yet most fundamentalist churches and creationist groups attempt to support the idea that God created the whole universe, including man and the dinosaurs, about 6,000 years ago.

Thus the dinosaur has come to symbolize one of the most fundamental challenges to the Bible and Christianity: Can the Bible account for the existence of dinosaurs and other extinct creatures in the short period of 6,000 years? And if not, must the Bible be rejected?

The fact is, fundamentalists face a real problem in trying to squeeze dinosaurs into 6,000 years of earth



Charles R. Knight — Field Museum of Natural History

DINOSAUR WORLD

history. The *facts* just don't allow it, even when Noah's Flood is invoked as an explanation.

Fact #1: There is a vast difference between the world of man and that of the dinosaurs.

We live in a world dominated by mammals, birds and men. But imagine an environment filled with enormous creatures covered with armor, hellish flying reptiles with 50-foot wingspans, and rapacious 50-foot-long sea serpents.

Truly, dinosaurs would be out of place in today's world. The world in which dinosaurs roamed was in most respects utterly unlike our own. Man would feel strange and

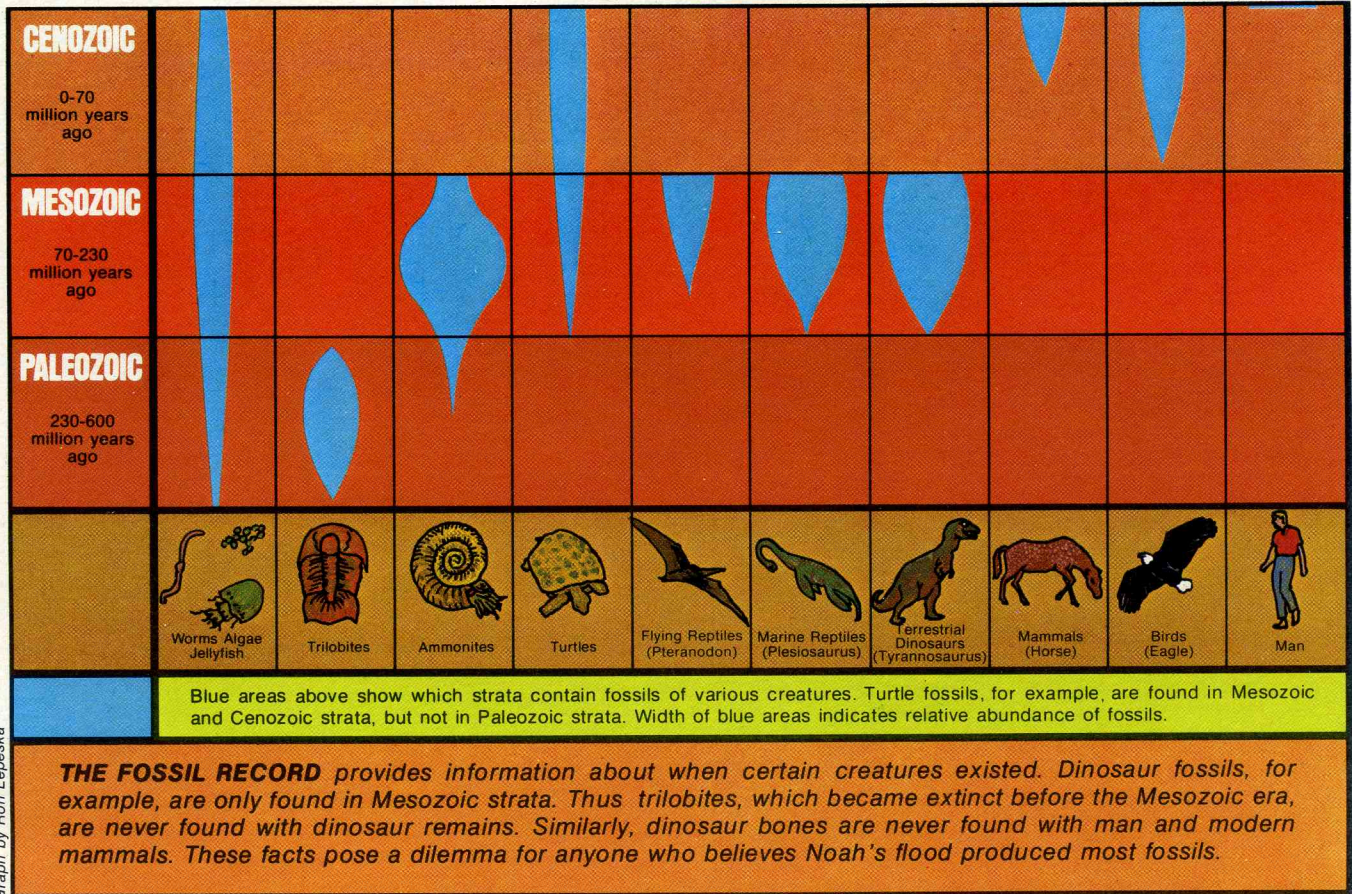
foreign in that world—as if he had landed on another planet!

Not long ago James A. Jensen, paleontologist at Brigham Young University, may have discovered the biggest dinosaur of them all in Colorado. The find indicates an 80-ton, 50-foot-tall, 100-foot-long supersized creature once inhabited the area. Certainly, dinosaurs were strikingly different from the animals we find in our modern world. Yet a lot of fundamentalists would tell you that Adam and his descendants literally lived with the dinosaurs.

Fact #2: The world of the dinosaurs and the modern world of mammals are not intermixed in the fossil record.

Dinosaurs are not found in just any stratum of rocks. They are *only* found in what has been labeled the Mesozoic. The Mesozoic strata are said to represent the *age of reptiles* for that reason.

But in the geologic column, dinosaurs are *never* found past the upper-Cretaceous strata—never in the more recent Cenozoic strata, which are associated with men and mammals. Paleontologist Björn Kurten notes: "The dinosaurs were with us until the *very end* of the Cretaceous; in our minds we may picture the great sauropods, the herds of triceratops, and the solitary, hungry Tyrannosaurus, and feel the ground



Graph by Ron Lepeska

tremble under their feet. Then we ascend a few inches in the series of strata, and suddenly they are all gone forever, and it is strangely empty around us."

Edwin Colbert, the famed dinosaur expert, writes: "The great extinction that wiped out all of the dinosaurs . . . forms one of the major lines of demarcation in the record of the rocks, indicating in a rather spectacular and certainly in a very definite manner the end of a long chapter of the complex story of life through the ages."

Famous scientist and scholar George Gaylord Simpson has said: "It is as if the curtain were rung down suddenly on a stage where all the leading roles were taken by reptiles, especially dinosaurs, in great numbers and bewildering variety, and rose again immediately to reveal the same setting but an entirely new cast, a cast in which the dinosaurs do not appear at all, other reptiles are mere supernumeraries, and the leading parts are all played by mammals of sorts barely hinted at in the preceding acts."

The fossil record is clear: The strata containing dinosaurs are found *below* strata containing modern mammals and man.

Fact #3: Many dating methods show dinosaurs lived millions of years ago.

Natural radioactive clocks such as the decay of uranium to lead, rubidium to strontium, potassium to argon, and carbon to nitrogen attest to the great antiquity of the earth. All of these methods show the earth and many fossils, including dinosaurs, are much older than 6,000 years.

Tree rings—which go back, in the case of the bristlecone pine, over 8,200 years—also establish that the earth is over 6,000 years old.

Many other dating methods yield extremely old dates for both the earth and dinosaur fossils. The newest dating method is the so-called "protein clock." By measuring the conversion of left-handed amino acids to right-handed ones after an organism dies, the protein clock also establishes that animals lived on earth long before the supposed creation date of the Bible.

Of course, this is not to say that all dates obtained by these various methods are 100 percent accurate. In fact, in some cases grossly inaccurate results have been obtained. But, taken as a whole, they provide cogent evidence that the earth and many life forms are much older than 6,000 years.

Fact #4: Both the Bible and the stratigraphic record conflict with the view that Noah's Flood killed the dinosaurs.

Most fundamentalists believe that *all* life dates from the creation week of Genesis. According to this view, *all* fossils must therefore have been formed *since the creation of man*—about 6,000 years ago. Thus many fundamentalists call upon Noah's Flood as the mechanism which killed off the dinosaurs and produced the fossils we now find.

But Genesis 6:19 clearly states that "of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female."

Dinosaurs were land-dwelling,

air-breathing creatures and should therefore have been on the ark, *if* they were alive at that time. Therefore, they would *not* have been killed by the Flood and would still be alive today!

The same holds true for the flying reptiles, which would have been in the ark and should have survived. The marine reptiles also should have survived—even though they would not have been on the ark. But the rocks tell us that when the land dinosaurs died, so did the marine reptiles—the ichthyosaurs, the plesiosaurs, and the mosasaurs. This despite the fact they were doubtless excellent swimmers and should have survived just as other fish and sea creatures did!

So there's really no way to fit the dinosaurs in with Noah's Flood. Remember, the fossil record shows that the dinosaurs, flying reptiles and marine reptiles lived at a different time. They are not found intermixed with the fossils of modern birds, mammals or man. If all these life forms had lived at the same time, they should be mixed in the fossil record.

Some try to rationalize the clear separation between dinosaurs and man by saying that when Noah's Flood came, dinosaurs were "swept away" first, but that men and other mammals swam, or were "bloated," or by some means "survived" so their remains are found on top of the earth's sedimentary strata. But man and many other mammals are vastly inferior swimmers compared to fish and marine reptiles. When you really analyze that argument, it just doesn't hold water!

For these four reasons, we must reject the traditional fundamentalist idea that the earth and all life forms that have ever appeared were created a mere 6,000 years ago.

Yet the Bible does supply the answer! It recognizes an inhabited earth—a prehuman world—*prior* to the creation week of Genesis 1. Genesis 1:1 speaks of the original creation: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." But between the first two verses of Genesis, a time gap of unknown length exists. Surprising as it may seem, the Bible nowhere specifies
(Continued on page 41)

The Enigma of the Dinosaur

Why did the once proud dinosaurs perish?

According to paleontologists, dinosaurs dominated the earth for nearly 140 million years. Then, abruptly, the main reptilian groups disappeared forever. At the end of the Cretaceous period, the last of the dinosaurs, the marine plesiosaurs, the mosasaurs, and the flying pterosaurs succumbed to some unknown cause or force. Indeed, the sudden extinction of the dinosaurs is truly one of the towering enigmas of earth's history.

But it was not just the dinosaurs that disappeared. The end of the Cretaceous also saw the extinction of the ammonites (shelled, tentacled mollusks), much of the woody terrestrial vegetation of the earth, and many groups of plankton and foraminifera.

Yet the devastating cataclysm that was responsible for such widespread extinction did *not* extinguish many other species. Strangely enough, most life on earth was not destroyed. Numerous creatures, along with many plants, apparently survived! In fact, paleontologists conclude that the upper-Cretaceous extinction affected

only about 25 percent of the animal families on earth. Nor was this extinction the only such event in earth history; the Permian period and the Pleistocene epoch were also times of great extinction.

Many theories have been propounded as to why the dinosaurs and other life forms suddenly became extinct: climatic changes, radiation or shock waves from a stellar explosion, a change in vegetation, disease epidemics, or any number of other causes. But considering the diverse list of creatures that were devastated, and the differing environments in which they existed—and equally, the many organisms which were *not* destroyed—no one has yet been able to provide a satisfactory explanation.

"It is difficult to account for the simultaneous extinction of great tribes of animals so diverse in relationships and in habits of life," asserts geologist Carl O. Dunbar. "Its cause is a complete mystery," observes Archie Carr, research professor of zoology at the University of Florida. Thus the perplexing puzzle of the demise of the dinosaurs remains an intriguing but unsolved riddle.

Warm-Blooded Dinosaurs?

The popular idea that dinosaurs were hulking, dull-witted, cold-blooded reptiles is being seriously challenged by recent studies of their relationship to other animals.

By rethinking traditional ideas about the energy requirements of dinosaurs compared to birds, mammals and other animals, by comparing dinosaur bone tissues to those of warm-blooded creatures, by re-evaluating the implications of predator-prey ratios, and by checking the range of climate in which dinosaurs survived, scientists are now concluding that dinosaurs may actually have been *warm-blooded* creatures!

Fossil evidence of hair and hairlike feathers provides additional clues that dinosaurs may have been endotherms with high internal heat production, perhaps not unlike highly active mammals and birds.

Indeed, the most sensational fossil ever discovered, *archaeopteryx*, is gen-

erally considered to be the first bird. Yet in spite of its birdlike appearance, *archaeopteryx* had many features like certain small dinosaurs. In fact, were it not for the feathers, *archaeopteryx* would probably be classified as a small dinosaur. But since birds (including *archaeopteryx*?) are warm blooded, perhaps dinosaurs were warm blooded as well.

Paleoecologist Robert T. Bakker believes that the remarkable success of the dinosaurs, "an enigma as long as they were considered 'cold-blooded,' can now be seen as the predictable result of the superiority of their high heat production, high aerobic exercise metabolism and insulation. They were endotherms."

Warm-blooded dinosaurs? The mounting evidence has already stimulated a revolution in paleontology and a resurgence of interest in the intriguing world of the dinosaur.

tried to resist the invisible force, turning the wheel with all my might, but failed. Suddenly I found myself driving down this side street.

"Oh well," I thought, "I'll drive to the next cross street and turn back." But at the end of the block the street turned right ONLY. I was now forced to turn right and the street then turned right again, into the very street where the paralyzed man lived.

By this time I decided it had been an angel that turned me there and that God wanted me to see this man again. I found him now stricken with blood poisoning—the doctors giving him less than 24 hours to live.

I told him how I had been miraculously brought there.

"I believe God wants to PROVE TO YOU that He will heal you IF you will obey Him and keep His commandments," I said. "If you want, I will pray for the healing of the blood poisoning to SAVE YOUR LIFE. And if then you will repent and obey Him, I will pray for your twisted spine and paralytic condition and HE WILL HEAL YOU."

"Yes," he answered. "You pray for the healing of the blood poisoning to save my life."

I did. I called again the next day. He was COMPLETELY HEALED of the blood poisoning, to the doctors' astonishment.

But as for keeping God's commandments, he only laughed in scorn.

"God has PROVED to you by this test that He will heal you of your paralytic condition IF you will obey Him. Since you refuse, and ridicule and make fun of His commandments, there is nothing more I can do for you. I am terribly disappointed and sorry. Good-bye."

I have never seen or heard of that man since.

There have been numerous times when I know God has providentially saved my life and protected me from harm. He has kept me in vigorous health most of the time, healed me when ill—which is seldom—watched over me. I am grateful beyond words. With David I say, "Oh how love I thy law. . . . Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me" (Ps. 119:97-98). □

SAINT OR SINNER

(Continued from page 29)

scribes and Pharisees. "For when John came to show you the right way to live, you did not believe him, but the tax-gatherers and prostitutes did; and even when you had seen that, you did not change your minds and believe him" (Matt. 21:31-32, *The New English Bible*).

Today, the individual Christian can fall into the same trap as Saul and the Pharisees if he begins to equate righteousness or the absence of sin with such things as times, cycles and dates, technical points of doctrine, dress and dietary codes, or length and/or frequency of personal prayer and Bible study. While these things can certainly help, of and by themselves they are not esoteric keys to the Kingdom that will somehow guarantee perpetual grace and favor with the Almighty.

If a person's righteousness is based on outward observance rather than inner conviction he could easily be thrown into a state of spiritual disequilibrium when changes take place in his most cherished points of practice. If the individual then insists on retaining his outward formulas to the letter, like some kind of spiritual security blanket, he could end up like the Pharisees and scribes who found it difficult to make any kind of meaningful response to the message Christ brought.

God is looking for the individual who is willing to admit he has been wrong, not one who is too self-righteous to ever be willing. The man who is hung up about his outward righteousness may ultimately end up being the last one to really get the message. □

RECOMMENDED READING

Several of our Worldwide Church of God publications are germane to the above subject. To receive your free copies, simply request them by title: *What Is a Real Christian?* *What Do You Mean . . . Salvation?* and *Just What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?* (Mailing addresses are on inside front cover.)

DINOSAURS

(Continued from page 33)

the time of the original creation; perhaps it was billions of years ago.

Nor does the creation week of Genesis constitute the only time of creation. This is evident from verse 2 of Genesis 1, where we find something unexpected—the earth "was [became] without form, and void." Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 show the earth was at one time under the rule of the archangel Lucifer, and that his rule occurred before the Genesis account of the creation of man. (Write for the free booklet *Did God Create a Devil?*) Thus the creation described in Genesis 1, beginning with verse 2, is a later creation, after the world of the dinosaur. Indeed, the Bible never mentions dinosaurs, though it does name many other creatures.

The creation described in Genesis—that of mammals, birds, flowering plants and man—is that of an era following the dinosaur world. It is actually a re-creation, a refurbishing of an already existing earth.

Both the Bible and the stratigraphic record show that the only sensible answer is that the dinosaurs and their world existed before the creation of man and the creation week of Genesis 1.

With this overview of the age of reptiles, the facts of science and the account in Genesis take on new meaning. There is no real conflict between science and the Bible. But a seeming conflict sometimes arises because men have misunderstood and misinterpreted not only the fossil record but also the biblical account.

These truths have been lost to a world taught to believe either in the Bible-denying theory of evolution and a totally uniformitarian interpretation of geology or in the untenable "religious" concept of a 6,000-year-old earth and a geology based entirely on Noah's Flood.

Dinosaurs do not disprove the Bible; there is no conflict between the fossil record and Scripture. Instead, science and the Bible mutually amplify and complement each other. □