

Children stand in awe as they gaze upon the giant skeletons of dinosaurs assembled and preserved in a number of museums around the world.

They read books in which pictures portray these astounding animals, often in the frightening poses of terrible meat eaters. The very name dinosaur means “terrible lizard.”

But what are dinosaurs?

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that in them is.” Exodus 20:11

“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:3

Become a Part of the Discussion

Southern Adventist University fully supports the belief in a literal six-day creation. Recognizing that there are still unanswered questions relating to the creationist worldview, professors and students are involved in research to address these topics.

Southern provides the following resources to enable church and community members to become more educated about issues related to creation.

Origins Exhibit

The hallways of Hickman Science Center, the home to Southern Adventist University's Biology Department, are being transformed into origins exhibits. Visitors of all ages and scientific levels are able to enjoy the detailed wall art depicting the complexity of God's creation, considerations of the geological column, and thoughts about an Intelligent Designer.

E. O. Grundset Lecture Series

These natural history and research lectures, open to the public, are held each semester with guest speakers presenting on various scientific topics.

Origins Weekend

Southern's Biology Department hosts invited speakers to present on origins-related topics on campus each spring.

Faith and Science Website

Southern is host to a faith and science website, which showcases an interdisciplinary approach to origins: www.southern.edu/faithandscience.

Located in Collegedale, Tennessee, Southern Adventist University provides a welcoming learning environment. To learn more about Southern or any of the above resources, call 1.800.SOUTHERN or visit www.southern.edu.



¹ *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 2, page 75

² *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 3, page 92

³ *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 4, page 121

Dinosaurs: Could God Have Created Such Beasts?



Dinosaurs: Could God Have Created Such Beasts?

Would God create something so big, mean, and ferocious? Are dinosaurs even real, or are they the creation of evolutionary scientists trying to prove their worldview?

These questions and others are on the minds of many of our youth, even college students. Christian parents are often at a loss to explain these creatures to their children. Even the science teachers at our schools often do not know exactly what to say.

Are dinosaurs real?

The short answer is yes. Lee Spencer, a professor in the Biology Department at Southern Adventist University, and Art Chadwick of Southwestern Adventist University co-founded a dinosaur excavation program in Wyoming not far from the Black Hills of South Dakota. Every year, more than 1,000 specimens are removed. Not all of them are big bones like leg or hip bones. Sometimes there are tail and toe bones.

There are bones from dinosaurs not much bigger than a chicken while others are 40-foot behemoths. But there are never any horses, camels, or elephants like those that are found in layers above these dinosaur-bearing layers.

Dinosaurs, like lizards, alligators, and crocodiles, have a number of bones that make up the lower jaw. Mammals, like horses, camels, and humans, have only one bone that makes up the lower jaw. Alligators, crocodiles, and lizards have limbs that come out from the sides of the body; in mammals like horses and camels, the limbs come straight down under the body. Dinosaurs are like mammals in the way the legs are attached to the body; they come straight down under the body. Dinosaurs are basically reptiles behaving like mammals.

How can we understand dinosaurs from a Biblical point of view?

Some Adventists believe that God did not create the dinosaurs. Because of their large size and fearsome appearance, they do not believe that a loving God would create such

monsters. Some believe that Satan created them. It seems unlikely that Satan has the power to create life. That is one of the reasons that he rebelled in the first place. Christ was going to work with the Father in the anticipated creation of the Earth, and Satan was not invited to participate. Why, then, would we think he could create something as grand as a dinosaur?

Other Adventists believe that dinosaurs were the product of amalgamation. Ellen White states, "Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the flood."¹ Since dinosaurs are extinct today, many Adventists believe they must not have been on the ark and thus were not created by God.

Amalgamation means a blending. We use the term today in "amalgam," which is the blend of metals dentists use in filling teeth. What are you going to blend to get a dinosaur? A horse and a crocodile? How do you get it to be 50- or 80-feet long?

There are two other quotes that may help:

"I was shown that very large, powerful animals existed before the flood which do not now exist."²

"Soon after the flood the race [mankind] began to rapidly decrease in size, and in length of years.

There was a class of very large animals which perished at the flood. God knew that the strength of man would decrease, and these mammoth animals could not be controlled by feeble man."³ So God evidently did create some very large, powerful animals.

Could evidence point to God-created dinosaurs?

Dinosaurs are buried with other types of dinosaurs; there are no large modern mammals buried with them. Dinosaurs also seem to have filled all of the niches that mammals are filling today. There are large, medium, and small plant eaters (herbivores), and large, medium, and small meat eaters (carnivores). There are even bat equivalents in the pterosaurs, and dolphin and whale equivalents are in the ichthyosaurs. Remember, we can tell they were not mammals because they have a reptilian head construction. If our modern animal communities are so complex that we say they must have been created, then the same argument would apply to dinosaurs. If God created complex mammal communities with large, medium, and small

herbivores, and large, medium, and small carnivores plus bats and dolphins, then He must have created large reptile communities as well.

Dinosaurs are basically reptiles behaving like mammals.

But would God create something so big, mean, and ferocious as a *Tyrannosaurus rex*? A predator has to be big enough to take its prey. If the prey is a 40-foot-long hadrosaur (a

plant-eating duck-billed dinosaur), how big would the predator have to be? Did God create grizzly bears and polar bears or lions and tigers? How did they get to be so ferocious? Clearly, there had to be great changes to animals after sin that God did not intend at creation.

Some might argue: "A *Tyrannosaurus rex* is ugly with those big teeth and short, stubby arms. Surely, God would not make something like that!" Part of our acceptance of something is familiarity. Consider an animal with large bones protruding out of its head. We would think that was rather strange, except we know it as a beautiful deer.

What happened at the flood?

As the flood waters rose, they encountered higher, cooler, and dryer habitats. Dinosaurs are buried below layers with large mammals; therefore, they lived at lower elevations than the mammalian communities did. Lower elevations are warmer than higher elevations; therefore, dinosaurs lived in warmer, more humid biomes than modern mammals do. Large mammals would have been too hot to survive within the dinosaur communities. This is why there are no large mammals buried with the dinosaurs.



Without a proper habitat, dinosaurs that survived the flood failed to thrive and eventually went extinct.

After the flood, the Earth's habitat was changed. The Mesozoic habitats, which were extremely warm and ideal for large cold-blooded animals, disappeared. Without a proper habitat, dinosaurs that survived the flood failed to thrive and eventually went extinct.

Based on these evidences and theories, it is likely that God, indeed, was the creator of dinosaurs.