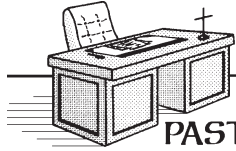


Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✦ Paola, Kansas

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FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK

What Really Happened to the Dinosaurs?

The latest "Jurassic Park" movie has again sparked much interest in and many questions about dinosaurs. The answers to two of the most perplexing questions about dinosaurs may possibly be found in the first chapters of Genesis.

It is a widely held but very much mistaken notion that the Bible is silent on the subject of the pre-historic reptiles we call dinosaurs. The English word "dinosaur" did not come into use until the 1800's. It was coined by combining the Greek words *deinos*, "terrible," and *sauros*, "lizard," and literally means a "terrible lizard."

Hebrew has three words for dinosaurs: *tanniyn*, *livyathan*, and *behemoth*. *Tanniyn* can refer to either aquatic or land-dwelling dinosaurs. It occurs 27 times in the Old Testament and is usually translated in the King James Version as "dragon." *Livyathan* refers to aquatic dinosaurs. It occurs six times and in most translations is simply transliterated as "leviathan." *Behemoth* refers to land-dwelling dinosaurs. It occurs one time and is also usually transliterated as "behemoth."

Far from being silent on the subject, dinosaurs are in fact the very first animals mentioned in the Bible, in the Bible's first reference to animal life, Genesis 1:21: "So God created the great sea monsters [*tanniyn*] and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good" (Revised Standard Version).

One unanswered question about some dinosaur species is how they were able to even exist from a physiological standpoint. Fossil remains of certain dinosaurs indicate animals so massive that hearts, lungs, and circulatory systems similar to what we see in the animal kingdom today would simply be unable to sustain them. A brontosaurus specimen at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City is over 65 feet long and is estimated to have weighed 40 tons. Scientists are puzzled as to how such colossal creatures would accomplish respiration and associated bodily functions.

It is really a stunning confirmation of the Bible's authenticity that it mentioned both land-dwelling and aquatic dinosaurs, and even described them in great detail, long before the widespread unearthing of dinosaur remains.

A related question is how the ecosystem could support the extremely large number of such creatures which evidently roamed our world at one time. From the fossil remains, it appears that various species of dinosaurs were at one time as numerous as the buffalo of the Old West. It seems many of the larger dinosaurs were herbivores, eating plants exclusively, as Job 40:15 also testifies. But where did the astoundingly vast quantities of vegetation come from required to feed so many of these enormous beasts?

The second perplexing question is, why did the dinosaurs become extinct? Why did this entire class of massive reptiles suddenly die out worldwide?

Genesis 1:6-8 says, "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so" (King James Version). Based on these verses, it has been postulated that the Earth was originally surrounded by a water-vapor barrier, similar to several other planets in our solar system. Such a "firmament" would intercept the rays of the sun and diffuse their heat so equally that a sub-tropical climate would prevail worldwide. With such a "firmament" the entire Earth would be, in essence, one big hothouse.

And, indeed, fossil remains of tropical plants and animals have been unearthed around the world, in all climatic zones, even beneath the polar ice caps! Such a "firmament" would also absorb many harmful aspects of the sun's rays, like a huge "sun-blocker" for all life on Earth. Another consequence of such a "firmament" would be a dramatic increase in atmospheric pressure. So, the Earth would have been not only one big hothouse, but also one big hyperbaric oxygen chamber.

One would expect such conditions to result in exceptional plant and animal life, and just such evidence is seen in the remarkably long human life spans recorded in Genesis 5. Also, the oversized examples of flora and fauna found in the fossil record may be dramatic evidence of this hothouse/hyperbaric chamber effect: ferns, otherwise ordinary, over 100 feet long; snail shells a foot in diameter; lobsters six-foot across; locusts with a wingspread of seven inches; dragonflies with bodies a foot and a half long and a wingspread of over two feet; ten-foot long frogs; bats with a wingspread of 15 feet; and many more such examples.

All this may explain both how the dinosaurs were at one time able to survive physiologically, and why the dinosaurs perished.

Genesis 7:11-12 reports, *"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights"* (King James Version). The fossil record clearly indicates that the Earth at one time had a uniform sub-tropical climate. But at some point there was a cataclysmic change in the Earth's atmosphere. Based on these verses, it seems this change may have been brought about at the time of the Flood. The phrase *"the windows of the heaven were opened"* could mean that the "firmament," a water-vapor barrier which once encircled our planet, was the main source of the rain which poured down *"upon the Earth forty days and forty nights."* At the end of those forty days and nights, the Earth would have been left with a greatly altered, and in many ways inferior, atmospheric system.

According to Genesis 2:5-6, prior to the Flood there had been no rainfall, with its inherent irregularities and extremes of flood and drought, but instead the Earth had been watered by mists and

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springs. That is why Genesis 9:12-16 indicates that the phenomenon of the rainbow first appeared after the Flood.

Genesis 8:22 reports that after the Flood the Lord proclaimed, *"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease"* (1984 New International Version). Perhaps *"cold and heat, summer and winter"* were also new phenomena, appearing for the first time only after the Flood. With the "firmament" no longer equally dispersing the sun's heat, our planet would be transformed, from a uniform sub-tropical climate encircling the globe continually, to the pattern of seasons and the climatic zones we know today.

Christians need not fear dinosaurs nor deny that they once existed. But we must understand their true meaning and significance, as evidence of the wonder and majesty of God's creation. With this attitude, dinosaurs become not a threat to our faith but a source of wonder and praise.

In Genesis 6:19 the Lord commands Noah, *"You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you,"* and Genesis 6:22 reports, *"Noah did everything just as God commanded him"* (1984 New International Version). So, it seems dinosaurs were indeed included on the Ark. (Because of space limitations, Noah probably took aboard the Ark immature specimens—"baby" dinosaurs—of the larger dinosaur species.)

Why then did the dinosaurs not survive following the flood? Perhaps the Earth's pre-Flood environment, like the tropical climates of today, was favorable to the reptilian species, including the pre-historic reptiles we call dinosaurs. Perhaps it was the hothouse/hyperbaric chamber effect, caused by the "firmament" which existed prior to the

Flood, that made it possible for the dinosaurs to survive and even thrive in the pre-Flood world. But, after the Flood, with the "firmament" dissipated, there were severe variations in climate and temperature, very unfavorable to cold-blooded reptiles; a greatly reduced atmospheric pressure, making respiration difficult or even impossible for some dinosaur species; and, as a result of these atmospheric changes, a diminished amount of vegetation.

In this changed environment, the dinosaurs were simply unable to survive, possibly unable even to function physiologically. Perhaps not every species which Noah saved aboard the Ark was able to adapt to the world's changed atmosphere and climate after the Flood. The dinosaurs as a class may represent those species that, although saved from the Flood itself, were not able to adapt to the changed conditions and permanently reestablish themselves after the Flood.

There is, however, much evidence that a remnant of the dinosaurs may have survived for a time after the Flood. The Bible contains many post-Flood references to dinosaurs, and amazingly detailed descriptions of both land-dwelling and aquatic dinosaurs are found in Job 40:15-24 and 41:1-34. Other accounts of "dragons" and similar creatures, which are found in all cultures worldwide, may also have their origins in actual encounters with dinosaurs that managed to survive for a time after the flood. Even recently, there have been numerous native reports of a brontosaurus-like animal in the swampy interior of the Congolese rain forests (*Science*, November 1980, pp. 6-7), and in 1977 the carcass of a plesiosaur-like creature—described as a "living dinosaur"—was actually hauled in by a fishing boat near New Zealand.

So, the Bible tells us that dinosaurs did indeed exist. They did not evolve into existence over a period of millions of years, but they were a part of God's six-day creation. It seems that specimens of the land-dwelling dinosaurs were taken by Noah on the Ark. Although some dinosaurs seem to have survived for a time after the Flood, as evidenced by later references to them and descriptions of

them in the Bible and possibly elsewhere, for some reason these species were unable to permanently reestablish themselves. Perhaps changes in the atmosphere and climate after the Flood made the earth's environment hostile to them, or even made it impossible for them to function physiologically.

The fact that dinosaurs once roamed our world does not in any way threaten our faith or contradict the teachings of the Bible. It is ironic that the Bible's references to "dragons" and great "monsters" are often dismissed as fanciful myths. It is really a stunning confirmation of the Bible's authenticity that it mentioned both land-dwelling and aquatic dinosaurs, and even described them in great detail (Job 40:15-24 and 41:1-34), long before the widespread unearthing of dinosaur remains began in the 19th century.

Christians need not fear dinosaurs nor deny that they once existed. But we must understand—and especially explain to our children—their true meaning and significance: as evidence of the wonder and majesty of God's creation; possibly showing the devastating effects of the Flood; and certainly testifying to the truthfulness and reliability of God's Word. With this attitude, dinosaurs become not a threat to our faith but a source of wonder and praise. As Psalm 148:7 says, "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons" (King James Version).

Pastor Kevin Vogts

Sermon Topics for August



Sermons by Pastor Vogts are available in both printed and audio form on our congregation's web site, www.trinitylcms.org/sermons.

August 2

Rev. Roger Schemppmann
Guest Minister

August 9

"The Journey Is Too Much for You"
1 Kings 19:1-8

August 16

"The Living Bread"
John 6:51-58

August 23

"The American Idols"
Joshua 24:14-18

August 30

"Neither Add Nor Subtract"
Deuteronomy 4:2



Patricia Ann Prothe Peckman

Entered Eternal Rest – July 25, 2015
Christian Burial – August 6, 2015

"Come unto Me, all you who are weary
and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28



Blocktoberfest

Mark your calendars for the third annual Blocktoberfest, on the grounds at Trinity on Saturday, September 19, from Noon to 6:00pm. Our previous two Blocktoberfests have been an extraordinary success! Check out fun photos from previous years under the Photo Gallery button on our church web site, www.trinitylcms.org/photos.

This year's Blocktoberfest will again include lots of fun activities and delicious food. On the following Sunday morning, September 20, we will again have our "Blocktoberfest Outdoor Service" at our regular worship time of 10:00am. This year's service will be the first to be held in our new Trinity Memorial Shelter House, and will include the formal dedication of this marvelous new structure to the glory of God.

We look forward to another great year celebrating our German heritage—and having fun!



Adult Bible Class "These Are a Few of Our Favorite Hymns"

Our current study in Adult Bible Class is *These Are a Few of Our Favorite Hymns*, looking at the background and meaning of—and singing!—beloved hymns. Join in Sundays at 9:00am in the Overflow to get a deeper appreciation for your favorite hymns!



Our congregation helps support these missionaries through our mission contributions. Each month we remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world supported in this way by our congregation.

August 2

Blake & Elizabeth Warren
Dominican Republic

August 9

Rev. Ryan & Emily McDermott
Ghana

August 16

Rev. Duane & Elizabeth Meissner
Belize

August 23

Richard & Sarah Sovitzky
Czech Republic

August 30

Rev. Lawrence & Tina Matro
Papua New Guinea



Free Car Wash August 22

Mark your calendars for the Trinity Youth Free Car Wash on Saturday, August 22, from 7:30am-12:00pm at the Price Chopper in Paola. How does a free car wash work? The youth solicit pledges in advance from congregation members and others, either a flat donation or an amount per vehicle washed. Everyone gets their car washed for free, and the pledges received will be used to support our youth attending the LCMS National Youth Gathering in 2016.



The first Confirmation class session for 2015-16 for students in 7th & 8th grades will be Sunday, September 13 from 8:00am-9:00am in the Youth Room. Please contact Pastor Vogts with questions.



Beginning in September every Sunday thru the end of 2015 remains open for serving snacks after worship! Consider signing up for special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries. There is a sign-up sheet on the table with the snacks. Our Generations group has generously agreed to provide and prepare the coffee and juice each week, so those signing up are only asked to provide some treat. Thank you to all those providing snacks for Coffee Hour!

- August 2
McMullins
- August 9
Linda Prothe
- August 16
Paul Haley
- August 23
Nancy Golubski
- August 30
Phyllis Trickett



H2O! God Keeps His Promise is the theme for our Summer Sunday School during June, July, and August. In addition to Bible stories and singing the children will enjoy making fun crafts. Bring your children this summer on Sundays at 9:00am for *H2O!* God Keeps His Promise.



All youth are invited to join in each week our Youth Bible Study, led by our Youth Director, Janette Reinke, during the Sunday School hour from 9:00am-10:00am in the Youth Room (upstairs behind the Choir Loft).



Our records of birthdays and anniversaries may not complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at blocktlc@midwest-connections.com.

- August 1 Linda Giager
- August 1 Nancy Golubski
- August 1 Shirley Hubbard
- August 1 Justin Shay
- August 2 Zack Hutchison
- August 2 Russell Prothe
- August 3 Ilda Koopman
- August 3 Jeron Hermann
- August 5 Kelly Kaiser
- August 5 Halle Schlegel
- August 6 Jeremiah Ordonez
- August 8 Jeff Garrison
- August 8 Melissa Mondry
- August 8 Trevor Fleming
- August 8 Kurt Golubski
- August 9 Chris Tesar
- August 10 Hailey Jones
- August 10 Tabytha Ritch
- August 11 Angela Parks
- August 12 Janet Schneider
- August 14 Jeremiah Brandt
- August 14 Gerald Woodall
- August 14 Terese Vogts
- August 15 Alicia Brandt
- August 15 Joan Fehling
- August 15 Derek Johns
- August 16 Shaun Ferrell
- August 16 Shaylan Gibson
- August 16 Mike Oberheide
- August 16 Ellie Reyelts
- August 16 Jace Allen
- August 17 Tony Thompson
- August 17 Bailey Vaughn
- August 18 Kaley Debrick
- August 18 Cathy Warring
- August 20 Angela Carwile
- August 20 Enora Copenbarger
- August 22 Gayle Plummer
- August 23 Ryan Boyer
- August 24 Kelly Gerken
- August 24 Anna Vogts
- August 25 Derik Vaughn
- August 26 Brooke Prothe
- August 27 Cale Elkinton
- August 27 Don Prothe
- August 27 Beth Prothe
- August 28 Courtney McHenry
- August 30 Barb Brandt
- August 30 Hailey Raines
- August 31 Jamie Ennett
- August 31 Quentin Garrison
- August 5 Jeff & Karen Garrison (9)
- August 8 Dennis & Sara Prothe (17)
- August 9 Tyler & Danielle Allen (7)
- August 16 Doug & Judy Parks (35)
- August 17 ... Curtis & Lucy Kettler (30)
- August 18 ... Greg & Karen Windler (42)