

Science and the Bible, Part 4: Dinosaurs in Human History

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on April 26, 2009

www.goldcountrybaptist.org

This evening I want to continue and conclude our study we began last week of God's creation of the greatest creatures that ever lived, not millions of years ago, but thousands, maybe up to recent centuries - dinosaurs (ancient Hebrew and Greek had different words than that 19th century English word "dinosaur" of course). This is part 4 of our series on Science and the Bible as we are studying through the book of Genesis. The goal of this little excursus is to help us to have biblical thinking and a God-centered worldview about some of the questions that arise in this Book relating to science and in particular the greatest creatures God ever made and why. Last week if you weren't here you will want to listen to or read that message online to get the first part of this study about the greatest sea creatures God ever made, what the Hebrews called *tannim*, dragon-like, dinosaur-like, sea creatures (Gen. 1:21) and *Leviathan*, and the land creatures *behema* and *remesh* (including reptiles) from Genesis 1 that also went on the ark according to Genesis 7. In all of His creation and the greatest of His creatures, God intended them to reveal His greatness to man, as we saw last time - these great creatures should cause us to praise God's greatness. All of creation is for the glory of the very BIG God who created it all in 6 days.

Some resources that may help you for further study are:

The Answers Book 1 & 2 (edited by Ken Ham)

www.christiananswers.net

www.answersingenesis.org

The Bible is not a science textbook but it gives us the framework and foundation necessary to understand all of life, the origin of life, the purpose of all life and all of God's creatures, where we have come from, how we got here, where we are headed. It may not answer every question we might want to know, but it does give us all we *need to know* about how and when the world began, and the goal of history and what the chief end of God's creation is, which is for His glory. We need to see with biblical glasses, not trying to fit / force public school science textbook assumptions and assertions about origins into Scripture or looking through the lens of science at Scripture. We want to look at true science through the lens of Scripture.

In Job 38-41, we have the most extended discussion of animals I know of in Scripture. This is after the flood, maybe in the year 2000 B.C. or so. God is speaking of His literal creatures to make the literal point that He is sovereign over all things and is aware of all things and His Providence governs all things in all of creation even when we can't figure them out (which Job and his friends had lost sight of in speeches in chapters 3-37). Beginning in Job 38:39 and following, God speaks of 10 creatures He created and how His Providence takes care of them, and by implication, God knows how to take care of man as well. He presents question after question, not to see what Job knows but for Job to see what he does not know. Man is to humble himself before creation and give all glory to the Creator who is the only one who can pass this test. The answer to each question is the same: "No, not me. God does, I can't. God is God. I am not. Creation should make me glorify the Creator."

The right answer to God's test is to humbly admit you don't have the answers. The only way to pass this test is to admit you fail and fall on your face. Come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our God and Maker

Listen to how our Maker and Creator uses His creation and creatures to crush the pride of man who questions His sovereignty in Job chapter 40:

⁹ *...do you have an arm like God, And can you thunder with a voice like His?* ¹⁰ *Adorn yourself with eminence and dignity, And clothe yourself with honor and majesty.* ¹¹ *Pour out the overflowings of your anger, And look on everyone who is proud, and make him low.* ¹² *Look on everyone who is proud, and humble him ...*

This is God does, and watch how God concludes and climaxes His argument with this creature He created for this very purpose and this very moment. God takes a break from His questions to draw attention to a creature that speaks for itself, and speaks of God's power and man's place:

¹⁵ *Behold now, Behemoth, which I made ...*

This is the climax of God's argument, these 10 animals God draws attention to that had come off the ark and were known to Job. God says look at, be humbled by what my power has created, behold!

Oxford English Dictionary: **behemoth** - a huge or monstrous creature, from Heb. *bēhēmōt*, intensive pl. of *bēhēmāh* 'beast'.

Scholars of Hebrew grammar classify this word as a plural of majesty, meaning a large, great beast,¹ i.e., "beast of all beasts," or some scholars have suggested the translation "colossal beast."

In the grammatical category and source cited for this word in *HALOT*,² the emphasis in the Hebrew is "evidently intended to intensify the idea of the stem (plural of amplification) ... (exceptional) *strength*, Jb 41:4 ... (greatly) *beloved* ... (fierce) *wrath*; ... (extreme) *bitterness* ... (the highest) *joy* ... *the great river* (of the Nile, generally ...)"³ – so apply those terms to "beast"

¹⁹ *He is the first of the ways of God ...*

"First" is translated as "chief" or "best" or "foremost." In other words, "the greatest / biggest creature God created." The greatest and biggest land creature known that God created was the sauropod.

19b ... Let his maker bring near his sword.

Only God could bring down a mighty sauropod! Vs17 compares his tail to a cedar tree – the most massive tree in that part of the world. The only land creatures ever known to be longer than the height of an average cedar of Lebanon (85 feet) were sauropods. Some estimate the ultrasaurus and supersaurus as nearing 100 feet in length. The Apatosaurus had 82 bones in its tail, and the

tail of the Diplodocus was nearly 50 feet long, so it would make sense that God would draw attention to this body part.

Now some Study Bibles say *behemoth* refers to a hippopotamus or elephant. Have you ever seen the tail of a hippo? It's a 6-8 inch stubby appendage, hardly more than a flap of skin. An elephant's tail is pretty flimsy and floppy and skinny, almost humorously so compared to its size. Some commentators agree and so they think maybe God meant the trunk of the elephant. Do you mean God can't tell the difference between the nose and the rear end of His creatures? Friends, I think God knows head from tails (pardon the pun). In fact this same Heb. word is used in Dt 28:13 "the Lord will make you the head and not the *tail*" and Judges 15 uses the same word to describe the tails of animals. There was another Hebrew word for "elephant" (1 Maccabees) not used here.

Actually *verse 24* describes the nose and says you can't capture him by it, like the Leviathan in the next verse, it can't be killed or captured by man or tamed by mere mortal man.

Elephants have not only been tamed but have been trained to perform tricks in circuses, unlike the untamable behemoth. No one was ever able to teach Brachiosaurus to balance a large ball, or stand on a little teeter-totter or jump through a hoop. In fact with dinosaurs weighing nearly 100 tons, you'd want to stay as far away from where they would walk as possible.

And unlike *behemoth* 'the hippopotamus was hunted frequently and captured successfully by the Egyptians (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 353). Hartley observed: Egyptian pharaohs took pride in slaying a hippopotamus. There are numerous pictures in which the pharaoh, hunting a hippopotamus from a papyrus boat, is poised to hurl his harpoon into the animal's opened mouth, thereby inflicting a fatal blow (1988, p. 524). Egyptians even celebrated festivals known as "Harpooning the Hippopotamus" (Hartley, 1988, p. 524) ... Egyptian monuments frequently picture single hunters attacking the hippo with a spear (McClintock and Strong, 1968, 1:728). How could one accurately compare the unapproachable and unseizable behemoth with the hippopotamus?'⁴

Job 41:33-34 (NASB95)

³³ *Nothing on earth is like him, One made without fear.* ³⁴ *He looks on everything that is high; He is king over all the sons of pride.*

Job 42:1-6 (NASB95)

¹ *Then Job answered the LORD and said, ² I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. ³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' ⁵ I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; ⁶ Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.*

The point is that if man is so inferior to God's creation and creatures, he is infinitely inferior to the Creator of all.

SEE SLIDES AT GCBC WEBSITE DATED 4/26/09

¹Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. (p. 105). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M., & Stamm, J. J. (1999, c1994-1996). *The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*. (p. 112). Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill.

³Gesenius, F. W. (2003). *Gesenius' Hebrew grammar* (E. Kautzsch & S. A. E. Cowley, Ed.) (2d English ed.) (p. 397). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁴<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/154>