What does the Bible say about dinosaurs?

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The Bible never uses the word “dinosaur,” which is not surprising because the term itself wasn't coined until the 1800s. Scripture does, however, speak about large land creatures, sea creatures, and powerful beasts created by God (Gen. 1:20–25; Job 40–41; Ps. 104:24–26). Christians differ on whether any of those passages specifically describe dinosaurs, but the Bible clearly teaches that all animal life—including extinct creatures—ultimately comes from God as Creator.

The more important theological point is this: dinosaurs do not pose a problem for the Christian faith or for the truthfulness of Scripture. Whether one holds a young-earth or old-earth view of creation, believers can affirm that the universe, the earth, humanity, and every creature ultimately owe their existence to God (John 1:3; Col. 1:16).

The word “dinosaur” was coined in 1842 by Sir Richard Owen from the Greek words deinos (“terrible” or “fearfully great”) and sauros (“lizard”). Since the Bible was written thousands of years earlier in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, we would not expect it to contain modern scientific terminology. Scripture likewise does not mention terms such as “galaxy,” “DNA,” or “tectonic plates,” even though it speaks truthfully about the created world.

The closest biblical discussions related to dinosaurs usually center on two creatures found in the book of Job: Behemoth and Leviathan.

In Job 40:15–24, God describes Behemoth as a massive creature of immense strength:

> “Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you… He makes his tail stiff like a cedar” (Job 40:15, 17).

Some Christians believe this description resembles a dinosaur-like animal, perhaps a sauropod. Others argue it is poetic language describing a hippopotamus or another large known animal. The passage is highly poetic, so caution is warranted before making dogmatic identifications.

Likewise, Job 41 describes Leviathan, a terrifying sea creature no human can control. Some interpret this as a crocodile. Others see it as symbolic language describing chaos and evil. Still others believe it may preserve memory of some ancient marine reptile. Mainstream Christian

scholars differ on these details.

The key point in both passages is not zoology but theology. God is demonstrating His unmatched power and wisdom. These creatures—whatever their exact identity—are presented as awe-inspiring works of divine creation far beyond human control.

Christians also differ on how dinosaurs fit into earth history. Broadly speaking, there are two major approaches among Bible-believing Christians:

- **Young-earth creationists** generally believe dinosaurs were created during the six days of Genesis 1 alongside other land animals (Gen. 1:24–25) and lived alongside humans for a time after creation.
- **Old-earth creationists** generally accept the scientific consensus that dinosaurs lived millions of years before humans while still affirming God as Creator.

Importantly, salvation and orthodox Christianity do not depend on holding one particular timeline regarding dinosaurs. Faithful Christians have held differing views on the age of the earth while affirming the authority of Scripture and the central truths of the Gospel.

One caution is worth mentioning. Sometimes both skeptics and Christians overstate the issue. Skeptics may claim dinosaurs “disprove the Bible,” while some Christians try to force modern paleontology directly into every obscure biblical passage. Neither approach is necessary. The Bible’s primary purpose is not to function as a modern scientific textbook but to reveal God, His creation, mankind’s fall into sin, and His redemption through Jesus Christ (John 20:31).

Key Scriptures to Study

Core teaching passages

- Genesis 1:20–25 — God created all sea creatures and land animals.
- Job 40:15–24 — Description of Behemoth.
- Job 41:1–34 — Description of Leviathan.
- Psalm 104:24–26 — God’s wisdom displayed in the creatures of the sea.
- Colossians 1:16–17 — Christ created and sustains all things.

Supporting theological framework

- John 1:1–3 — All created things came into existence through the Word.
- Romans 1:20 — Creation reveals God’s power and divine nature.

- Hebrews 11:3 — The universe was created by the word of God.

Objections & Misconceptions

Common Objection: “If dinosaurs existed millions of years ago, doesn’t that disprove Genesis?”

Not necessarily. Christians differ on how to interpret the timeline and literary structure of Genesis 1–2. Some understand the days of creation as ordinary days; others view them differently. What orthodox Christians agree on is that God is the Creator of all things.

Common Objection: “Why doesn’t the Bible mention dinosaurs directly?”

The Bible also does not mention countless other animals by modern scientific classification. Scripture was written in the language and worldview of the ancient Near East, not modern paleontology.

Common Objection: “Did humans live with dinosaurs?”

Young-earth creationists say yes. Old-earth creationists generally say no. Christians have debated this issue while still affirming the authority of Scripture and the Gospel.

Why This Matters

Questions about dinosaurs often sit underneath larger questions about creation, science, and whether the Bible can be trusted. For many people—especially younger believers—this issue becomes a stumbling block because they are told Christianity cannot account for scientific discoveries.

But Scripture never asks Christians to fear the created world. Christians believe that truth is unified because God is the author of both Scripture and creation. Properly understood, scientific discovery should ultimately deepen our awe of the Creator rather than diminish it.

At the same time, believers should avoid treating speculative questions about dinosaurs as tests of orthodoxy. The center of Christianity is not prehistoric animals but the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for sinners (1 Cor. 15:3–4).

Recommended Resources

- The Case for a Creator (Lee Strobel) — Accessible introduction to science and Christian belief.

- The Lost World of Genesis One (John H. Walton) — Important discussion of Genesis in its ancient Near Eastern context.
- Genesis 1–4 (C. John Collins) — Scholarly treatment of Genesis and interpretation.