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Are Dragons Real?

BODIE HODGE

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Are dragons real? Were dragons real? To answer these questions, it is important to acknowledge the fact that dragons were considered real creatures until relatively recently. For example, there are historical accounts, art, petroglyphs, and literature from cultures around the world—and even some ancient authorities—describing or depicting dragons.

Accounts of dragons are difficult to dismiss considering the weight of historical and scientific evidence. And even more importantly, what does the [Bible](#) say?

Are Dragons Real?

The history of the dodo provides a very interesting historical parallel in some ways to the history of dragons. The dodo was a strange bird, and our understanding of its demise and extinction by 1662 is equally strange. The dodo was a flightless bird that lived on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. It was easy to catch and provided meat to sailors. There were numerous written accounts, sketches, and descriptions of the bird from the 1500s through the 1600s.

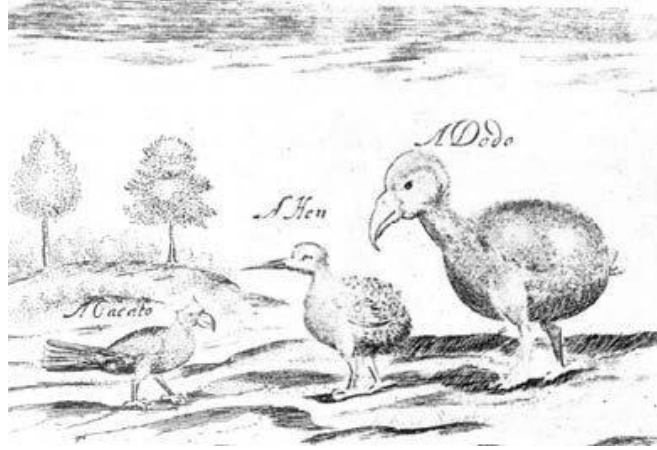
The Bible reveals the TRUTH about Dragons!

<https://youtu.be/Kaqjxq15wmw>

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Drawing by Sir Thomas Herbert of a cockatoo, red hen, and dodo in 1634.

Courtesy of Wikipedia Commons,

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lophopsittacus.mauritanus.jpg>.

But when the dodo went extinct, no one seemed to notice. And a few years later, scientists began to promote the idea that the dodo was merely a myth not supportable by science. Just look at the evidence:

1. It was a very strange creature.
2. No one could find them.
3. They seemed to exist only in old descriptions, accounts, and drawings.

Had it not been for specimens popping up in the recesses of museum collections and finally brought to light, they could have been labeled simply as “myth” for as long as the earth endures! But in the nineteenth century, at last, there was vindication that the dodo was real and that it had merely gone extinct. Since then, fossils and other portions of specimens have been identified as dodo.

Parallel to Dragons

1. Dragons are very strange creatures.
2. No one can find them.
3. They seem to exist only in old descriptions, accounts, and drawings.

If we don't know our history, are we doomed to repeat it? Sadly, in recent times, secular scientists have relegated dragons to myths also.

But unlike the dodo, which is just a particular type of bird, dragons are a large group of reptilian creatures. Moreover, we have descriptions, drawings, and accounts of

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dragons—not just in handfuls like we have of the dodo, but in *massive numbers* from all over the world! And many of these descriptions and accounts are very similar to creatures known by a different name: dinosaurs. We'll consider this connection below.

Dragons in the Bible

To settle this issue of the reality of dragons, let us turn to the Word of the Almighty [God](#) who knows all things.

In each case in Table 1, the verses use the Hebrew word *tannin*, or its plural form *tanninim*, which was usually translated as “dragon(s).” In some cases, you might see the translation “serpent” or “monster.” There is also the word *tannim* (plural of *tan*, “jackal”), which sounds quite similar to *tannin* in Hebrew. Many previous translators viewed these creatures as dragons, too. But many scholars today suggest these are separate and that *tannim* should be translated as jackals.¹

Reference	Verse
Deuteronomy 32:33	Their wine is the poison of dragons , and the cruel venom of asps. ⁰
Nehemiah 2:13	And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.
Job 7:12 (YLT)	A sea-monster am I, or a dragon , That thou settest over me a guard?
Psalm 74:13	Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

¹ For more information see Steve Golden, Tim Chaffey, and Ken Ham, “*Tannin*: Sea Serpent, Dinosaur, Snake, Dragon, or Jackal?” Answers in Genesis, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/aid/v7/n1/tannin-hebrew-mean>.

² All references are taken from the KJV except where noted.

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Psalm 91:13	Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
Psalm 148:7	Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons , and all deeps:
Isaiah 27:1	In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.
Isaiah 51:9	Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon ?
Jeremiah 51:34	Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon , he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out.
Lamentations 4:3 (GNV)	Even the dragons draw out the breasts, and give suck to their young, but the daughter of my people is become cruel like the ostriches in the wilderness. a
Ezekiel 29:3	Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.
Ezekiel 32:2 (GNV)	Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh King of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a lion of the nations and art as a dragon in the sea: thou castedst out thy rivers and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and stampedst in their rivers.
Genesis 1:21 (YLT)	And God prepareth the great monsters [<i>dragons</i>], and every living creature that is creeping, which the waters have teemed with, after their kind, and every fowl with wing, after its kind, and God seeth that it is good. b

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<p>Exodus 7:9, 10, 12</p>	<p>When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent [dragon]. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent [dragon]. . . . For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents [dragons]: but Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.c</p>
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- a. Some have thought this word for dragons is a copyist mistake in that *tannin* should be *tannim* and may represent another animal type (e.g., jackal). But there is no textual support for this. The argument is that reptiles today do not suckle their young. However, we know so little about extinct dragons that we can’t say definitely if they suckled or not. Even some mammals were thought to only give birth to live young until we found the platypus and spiny anteaters that lay eggs, so we need to avoid making “blanket statements” about creature types based only on what we know today. We simply do not know all things about extinct creatures, and if [Lamentations 4:3](#) does refer to dragons (or dragons of a specific type), then we would know that some did suckle.
- b. Though the word here is not translated as “dragon” it is still the same word used of dragon elsewhere and could and likely should have been used here as well.
- c. The Hebrew word translated “serpent(s)” is *tannin* (plural *tanninim*), which is typically translated “dragon.” Most translate this as “serpent” or “snake” since a staff is similar in shape to a snake (i.e., serpents being a specific form of dragon). Other ancient translations render this as “dragon,” including the Latin Vulgate (only in v. 12), and the Greek Septuagint. Consider also the scriptural references to “fiery serpents” or “fiery flying serpents,” “leviathan,” and “behemoth”:

<p>Table 2. Fiery Serpents, Leviathan, and Other Dragon-Like Creatures</p>	
<p>Reference</p>	<p>Verse</p>
<p>Numbers 21:6, 8</p>	<p>And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. . . . And</p>

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	the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent , and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.
Deuteronomy 8:15	Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents , and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;
Isaiah 14:29	Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent .
Job 41:1	Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?
Psalm 74:14	Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
Psalm 104:26	There go the ships: there is that leviathan , whom thou hast made to play therein.
Isaiah 27:1	In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.
Job 40:15-24	Behold now behemoth , which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth

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	that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.
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We could rightly lump these creatures among dragons. Even leviathan is called a dragon in [Isaiah 27:1](#).

Some have argued that the fiery flying serpents (and fiery serpents) were myth, but God clearly reveals them as real creatures, just as other creatures are real in the immediate context like scorpions, lions, vipers, donkeys, camels, and so on.

Some have argued that fiery flying serpents were real but were just venomous snakes that would leap into the air. But that would render a portion of the Scriptures redundant, as the viper, which does that very thing, is mentioned immediately before it in [Isaiah 30:6](#). Even today, there is an insect from South America called the bombardier beetle that shoots out two chemicals that essentially ignite and superheat its victim. Leviathan was also a fire-breather ([Job 41:1–21](#)).

Some have suggested the behemoth as an elephant or a hippo, but neither the elephant nor the hippo eat grass like an ox, nor do they have a tail that moves like a cedar. An elephant has a tail that moves like a weeping willow, and a hippo hardly has a tail! Some have argued that behemoth and leviathan were myth, but why does God speak of real creatures (lion, raven, donkey, wild ox, ostriches, horse, locust, hawk, and eagle) in the same context as the behemoth and leviathan (Job 38–41)?

So some of what we can learn from the Bible is (1) dragons were real creatures and (2) the term “dragon” could include land, flying, or sea creatures.

Dragons by Ancient Historians, Literature, and Classic Commentaries

Dragons were viewed as real creatures by virtually all ancient writers who commented on them. While many references could be cited, consider these select accounts:

1. “But according to accounts from Phrygia there are Drakones in Phrygia too, and these grow to a length of sixty feet.”³
2. “Africa produces elephants, but it is India that produces the largest, as well as the dragon.”⁴

³ Aelian (ca. D.D. 220), *De Natura Animalium*.

⁴ Pliny (ca. A.D. 70), *Natural History*.

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3. "Even the Egyptians, whom we laugh at, deified animals solely on the score of some utility which they derived from them; for instance, the ibis, being a tall bird with stiff legs and a long horny beak, destroys a great quantity of snakes: it protects Egypt from plague, by killing and eating the flying serpents that are brought from the Libyan desert by the south west wind, and so preventing them from harming the natives by their bite while alive and their stench when dead."⁵
4. "Among Egyptian birds, the variety of which is countless, the ibis is sacred, harmless, and beloved for the reason that by carrying the eggs of serpents to its nestlings for food it destroys and makes fewer of those destructive pests. These same birds meet winged armies of snakes which issue from the marches of Arabia, producing deadly poisons, before they leave their own lands."⁶
5. Gilgamesh, the hero of an ancient Babylonian epic, killed an enormous dragon named Khumbaba in a cedar forest.
6. The epic Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* (ca. AD 495–583) tells how the title character of Scandinavia killed a monster named Grendel and its supposed mother, as well as a fiery flying serpent.
7. "The dragon, when it eats fruit, swallows endive-juice; it has been seen in the act."⁷



Baryonyx head and forelimb
(Ballista, Wikimedia Commons)

⁵ Marcus Tullius Cicero (ca. 45 B.C.), *De Natura Deorum*, I, 36.

⁶ Ammianus Marcellius (ca. A.D. 380), *Res Gestae*, 22, 15:25-26a.

⁷ Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, <http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbn/toccer-new2?id=AriHian.xml&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=9&division=div2> (accessed June 14, 2013).

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Ancient historians and writers clearly believed creatures like dragons were real. They describe seeing them firsthand—often in the context of other types of animals that still live today. Some historians even describe the fiery flying serpents as real creatures in regions near where Moses and Isaiah were and point out the *winged* nature of these flying serpents. Such things are a great confirmation of the biblical text.

Interestingly, in the *Beowulf* account, the dragon called Grendel was known to have a heavy claw on its finger, yet had a fairly small arm. (Beowulf was famous for ripping the arm off this dragon.) Correspondingly, we have a dinosaur with smaller arms (and its remains are found in Europe) called *Baryonyx*, which literally means “heavy claw”! Its arms are actually smaller, too! The common descriptions of Grendel and *Baryonyx* are striking.

Classic commentators often agreed that dragons were real and spoke of them as real, and these are just a small sample of the writings these expositors of Scripture have on the subject:

1. Dr. John Gill wrote, “Of these creatures, both land and sea dragons, see Gill on ‘Mic 1:8’; see Gill on ‘Mal 1:3’; Pliny says the dragon has no poison in it; yet, as Dalechamp, in his notes on that writer observes, he in many places prescribes remedies against the bite of the dragon; but Heliodorus expressly speaks of some archers, whose arrows were infected with the poison of dragons; and Leo Africanus says, the Atlantic dragons are exceeding poisonous: and yet other writers besides Pliny have asserted that they are free from poison. It seems the dragons of Greece are without, but not those of Africa and Arabia; and to these Moses has respect, as being well known to him.”⁸
2. John Calvin stated, “Then he says, he has swallowed me like a dragon. It is a comparison different from the former, but yet very suitable; for dragons are those who devour a whole animal; and this is what the Prophet means. Though these comparisons do not in everything agree, yet as to the main thing they are most appropriate, even to show that God suffered his people to be devoured, as though they had been exposed to the teeth of a lion or a bear, or as though they had been a prey to a dragon.”⁹ [9](#)



⁸ John Gill, Commentary notes Deuteronomy 32:33.

⁹ John Calvin, Commentary notes Jeremiah 51:34.

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Even the artwork for John Calvin's commentary for Genesis (when translated from Latin to English in AD 1578) included images of dragons such as the one shown here.

3. Charles Spurgeon, when speaking of London, said, "We are not sure that Nineveh and Babylon were as great as this metropolis, but they certainly might have rivaled it, and yet there is nothing left of it, and the dragon and the owl dwell in what was the very center of commerce and civilization."¹⁰
4. John Trapp stated, "Anger is a short madness; it is a leprosy breaking out of a burning, and renders a man unfit for civil society; for his unruly passions cause the climate where he lives to be like the torrid zone, too hot for any to live near him. The dog days continue with him all the year long; he rageth, and eateth firebrands, so that every man that will provide for his own safety must flee from him, as from a nettling, dangerous and unsociable creature, fit to live alone as dragons and wild beasts, or to be looked on only through a grate, as they; where, if they will do mischief, they may do it to themselves only."¹¹
5. Church fathers, on Philip killing a dragon in Hierapolis, stated, "And as Philip was thus speaking, behold, also John entered into the city like one of their fellow-citizens; and moving about in the street, he asked: Who are these men, and why are they punished? And they say to him: It cannot be that thou art of our city, and askest about these men, who have wronged many: for they have shut up our gods, and by their magic have cut off both the serpents and the dragons."¹²

There were numerous dragon slayers in history as well. Not to belabor the point, I've simply made a table of a few:

¹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, "A Basket Of Summer Fruit" (sermon, Exeter Hall, London, England, October 28, 1860).

¹¹ John Trapp, *Complete Commentary*, s.v. Proverbs 22:24, (<http://www.studydrive.org/com/jtc/view.cgi?bk=19&ch=22>) (accessed June 14, 2013).

¹² The Acts of Philip, Of the Journeyings of Philip the Apostle: *From the Fifteenth Acts Until the End, and Among Them the Martyrdom*, http://archive.org/stream/apocryphalgospel00edin/apocryphalgospel00edin_djvu.txt (accessed June 14, 2013).

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Table 3. A Few Dragon Slayers and Capturers¹³

Slayer/Capturer	Approximate Date	Place
Martha of Tarascon	AD 48–70	Tarasque
Apostles Philip and Barnabas	Before AD 70	Hierapolis
St. George	AD 300	North Africa
St. Sylvester I	AD 300	Italy
Sigurd	Before AD 400–500? ^a	Northern Europe
Beowulf	AD 400–500	Denmark, Sweden
Tristan	AD 700?	British Isles

- a. Although the more complete account of Sigurd and the dragon is discussed in the 13th-century document called *Volsunga Saga*, Sigurd's father Sigemund (Sigmund) is mentioned in the *Beowulf* account, so it must have preceded it.

I could continue with hosts of other quotations from the [church](#) fathers who often spoke of dragons as real creatures, not questioning their reality. But the point is already made: people believed dragons were real.

Dragons in Petroglyphs

It would be nearly impossible to have an exhaustive listing of dragons on walls, pottery, textiles, petroglyphs, artwork, maps, books, and so on. Here are a few, and note that some of these dragons are very similar in form to our understanding of dinosaurs.

¹³ Bibliography for this table includes *The Golden Legend*, various texts of the church fathers, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, *Beowulf*, *Volsunga Saga*, and several others.

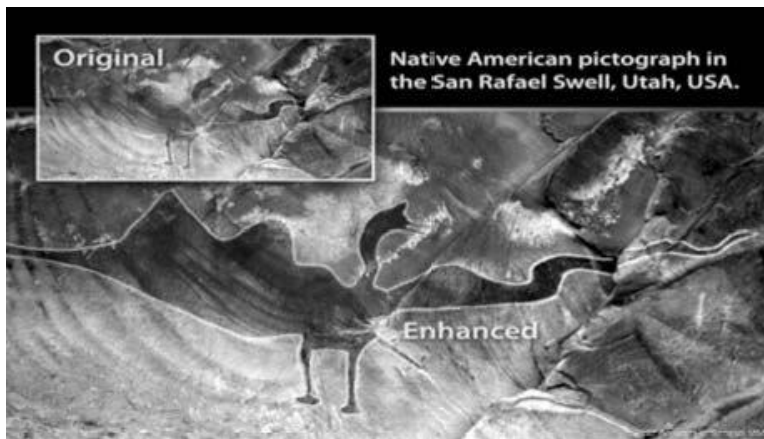
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This famous petroglyph by the Anasazi natives looks strikingly like a sauropod dinosaur (i.e., dragon).¹⁴



This dragon with back spines is reminiscent to a *Kentrosaurus* or *Amargasaurus* but possibly a *Lambeosaurus* near Lake Superior in Canada.



This flying dragon was made by Native Americans in Utah.

¹⁴ I. Abrahams, "Feedback: Kachina Bridge Dinosaur Petroglyph," Answers in Genesis, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2011/03/18/feedback-senter-and-cole>.

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This relief in Angkor, Cambodia, is something akin to *Stegosaurus*—type of dragon.¹⁵

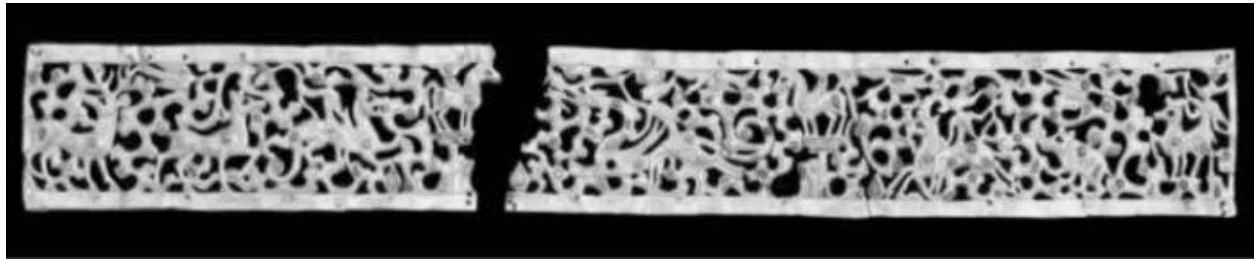


Built by the order of King Nebuchadnezzar, the eighth gate of Babylon has aurochs (an extinct type of cattle) and a dragon alternating all the way up the gate. Since this dragon

¹⁵ K.E. Cole, "Evidence of Dinosaurs at Angkor," Answers in Genesis, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2007/01/15/evidence-dinosaurs-angkor>.

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is a reptile (note the scales and tongue), it also has hips that raise the body off the ground; so by definition, it is also a dinosaur.



There are several animals portrayed in this ancient golden diadem from Kazakhstan. The onset of the second portion is a dragon.¹⁶



Dragons in Peru adorn hosts of ancient pottery, rock art, textiles, and so on. This pottery is from the ancient Moche Culture and is on display at the Museum of the Nation in Lima, Peru.¹⁷

¹⁶ Diadem (gold, turquoise, carnelian, and coral), Kargaly, Myng-Oshtaky tract, Almaty region. Photo: © The Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Almaty,

http://www.kazakhembus.com/sites/default/files/documents/Nomads_and_Networks_FS_Images.pdf

¹⁷ Bodie Hodge, "The Dragons of Peru," *Answers*, September 14, 2010,

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v5/n4/dragons-peru>.

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The George Cross which is featured on the flag of Malta.

Dragons on Flags and Banners

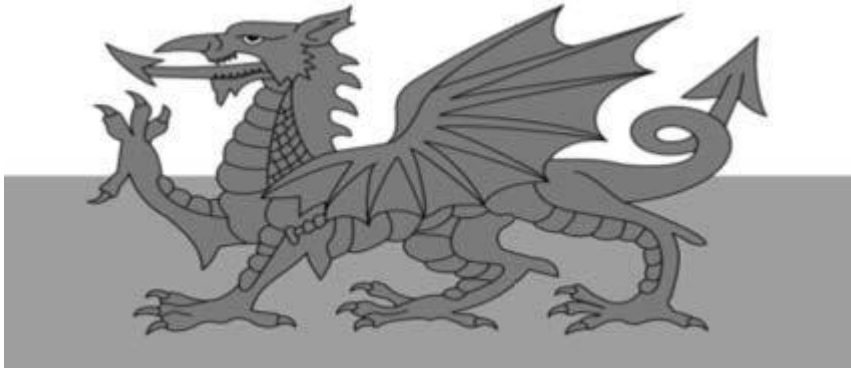
It is fairly well known that the Welsh flag endows a dragon. But few realize that this was not the only culture to have a dragon on its flag. These cultures clearly viewed dragons as real.

Even modern flags such as that of Bhutan or Malta also sport dragons referring back to previous accounts. In the case of Malta, it represents St. George killing the dragon in the upper corner.

The flag of Bhutan, though designed in 1947, heralds back to the old tradition of the *druk*, that is, dragons. They also have a national emblem that has two dragons on it.

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Many other flags and banners could be added to this list, and diligent searches will turn up numerous ancient flags, banners, and emblems with such things.



Welsh Flag



Royal Bavarian Flag



Imperial China Flag

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Bhutan flag and national emblem



The famous Bayeux Tapestry that depicts the Norman invasion of England has numerous animals on it. Some are dragons.

Have Dragons Been Relegated to Myths?

Popular fiction books such as J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* feature dragons. Today's kids love tales of adventure that feature dragons. But it was not until the twentieth century that dragons were seen as myths or fantasies. In 1890, a large flying dragon was killed in Arizona (in the United States), and samples were sent to universities back east. This was recorded in a newspaper, the *Tombstone Epitaph*, under "A Strange Winged Monster Discovered and Killed on the Huachuca Desert" on April 26, 1890. No one seemed to entertain the idea they were myths then.

Even the 1902 edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, while trying to explain away the accounts of sea dragons ("sea serpents"), concluded that they might still exist (as their numbers were few by this time):

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It would thus appear that, while, with very few exceptions, all the so-called “sea serpents” can be explained by reference to some wellknown animal or other natural object, there is still a residuum sufficient to prevent modern zoologists from denying the possibility that some such creature may after all exist.¹⁸

Yet only eight years later, it was published that dragons were myth! In 1910, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* states the following:

18

Nor were these dragons anything but very real terrors, even in the imaginations of the learned until comparatively modern times. As the waste places were cleared, indeed, they withdrew farther from the haunts of men, and in Europe their last lurking-places were the inaccessible heights of the Alps, where they lingered till Jacques Balmain set the fashion which has finally relegated them to the realm of myth.¹⁹

This was only about 100 years ago that the dragon first began being relegated to a mythical status. Apparently, since Jacques Balmain couldn't find one, they were deemed myth. Perhaps the idea that they went extinct was too much to consider.

Though this idea of dragons being myth still defied *Encyclopædia Britannica's* claim even into the 1920s, they were not too eager to make such bold claims. In 1927, one dictionary consulted still viewed dragons as real but rare:

A huge serpent or snake (now rare); a fabulous monster variously represented, generally as a huge winged reptile with crested head and terrible claws, and often as spouting fire; in the Bible, a large serpent, a crocodile, a great marine animal, or a jackal.²⁰

But it makes sense that as more people spread out and settled in more lands, the dragons were pushed to the brink of extinction. Many old accounts of dragons had them living underground, particularly near swamps (e.g., *Beowulf*). As man develops areas, those habitats are destroyed. But just like the dodo, when you can't find them any longer, they are suddenly considered “myth” instead of being seen as extinct.

¹⁸ William Evans Hoyle, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed. s.v. “Sea-Serpent” (New York, NY: The Encyclopædia Britannica Company, 1902), <http://www.1902encyclopedia.com/S/SEA/sea-serpent.html>.

¹⁹ Walter Alison Phillips, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed. (New York, NY: The Encyclopædia Britannica Company, 1910), 8:467.

²⁰ *The New Century Dictionary* (New York, NY: P.F. Collier & Son Corporation, reprinted in 1948), p. 456.

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Sadly, this practice also influenced Christians, and subsequently modern translations rarely use the word “dragon” in the Old Testament, due, in my opinion, to these secular influences.

Dragons and Their Relation to “Dinosaurs”

Dragons include land, sea, and water reptiles. Though dragons in old forms of classification also denoted snakes, dinosaurs are more specific.

Dinosaurs are land reptiles that (by definition) have one of two kinds of hip structures that allow the creature to naturally raise itself off the ground.²¹ In other words, crocodiles, Komodo dragons, alligators, and so on are not seen as dinosaurs since their hip structures have their legs coming out to the side so the belly naturally rests on the ground. But neither would flying reptiles like pterodactyls or water reptiles like plesiosaurs be dinosaurs by definition either.

So all dinosaurs are dragons, but not all dragons are dinosaurs. Dinosaurs and other land dragons were made on day 6 (Genesis 1:24–31). Flying dragons and sea dragons were made on day 5 (Genesis 1:20–23).

It is important to realize that the word “dinosaur” did not exist until the year 1841. Sir Richard Owen invented the term “dinosaur,” and it means terrifying or terrible lizard. Maybe the controversy could have been avoided if they just called dinosaur bones “dragon” bones.



One dinosaur resembles a dragon so much that they named it after a dragon from a movie series. *Dracorex hogwartsia* skeleton restoration, The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis (Wikimedia Commons)

²¹ P.S. Taylor, “Dinosaur!,” Films for Christ, <http://www.christiananswers.net/dinosaurs/dinodef.htm>

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But this means dinosaurs were created and lived the same time as man and went aboard the ark of Noah (Genesis 6:20). Those that did not go aboard died. Many likely rotted and decayed, and others were rapidly buried by sediment from the Flood, making them candidates for fossilization. Hence, we find many of these dragon bones (e.g., dinosaur bones) in rock layers from the Flood. Dinosaurs came off the ark and have been dying out ever since.

Reasons for Extinction?

So why did dragons (e.g., dinosaurs) die out? The simple answer is [sin](#). When [Adam and Eve](#) sinned (Genesis 3) death came into the world. Living things began to die, and many things began to die out—dragons as well as dodos were no exception.

Some specific reasons for their extinction likely include changing environments (e.g., the ice age that followed the Flood, the destruction of swamp lands by man, and so on), predation by man (cf. Genesis 10:9), diseases, genetic problems, catastrophic events, etc.²² Keep in mind that most dragon legends end with a dragon getting killed. Like the dodo, man could have been a major factor why dragons no longer survive, as far as we know. The possibility exists that some still live in remote parts of the world or underground and only come out at certain times. This was quite common with old dragon accounts.

However, it is unlikely that we will find any living ones, in the same way that it is unlikely that we will find passenger pigeons, dodos, and many other things that have been pushed to extinction.

Conclusion: Dragons in Relation to Satan

There is much to be said about dragons, and this brief chapter is just a taste. Dragons, including the specific subset of dinosaurs, were real creatures and have simply died out due to sin, just like so many other animals, including the dodo. The land-dwelling, air-breathing dragons survived on the ark of Noah, and they have been dying out ever since (Genesis 6:20, 7:21–22).

Many were surely timid creatures (especially since they are known to have inhabited old ruins), but others were known to terrorize, according to the old accounts of dragons. And when such conflicts arose, a dragon usually ended up dead by someone who could

²² Ken Ham, gen. ed., *New Answers Book 1* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006), p. 207–219.

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overcome it. Such conquerors were remembered in history with a powerful and strong name.

But such vicious attacks could well be the reason that Satan is metaphorically called a “dragon” in Scripture (e.g., Revelation 12:3); also consider Satan’s use of a serpent in Genesis 3:1 to deceive Eve and ultimately get Adam to bring sin and death into the world (Romans 5:12).

Satan’s vicious attacks leave many helpless (e.g., 2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Peter 5:8). But Christ, the “stronger man” in Luke 11:21–22, has conquered Satan (Hebrews 2:14), and has an eternal name above all names (Philippians 2:9). In Christ, one can have the victory over Satan, the great dragon (1 Corinthians 15:57).

With this in mind, it is good to realize the big picture. Satan *wants* people to accept the idea that dragons were myth because this assumption is another attack on the authority of God’s Word. Satan wants us to doubt God’s Word the same way he attacked Eve using a serpent in the Garden of Eden to doubt His Word (Genesis 3:1–6; 2 Corinthians 2:11). Were dragons a myth, or did they simply die out? It’s time to trust God’s Word over the fallible ideas of man, who was not there and not in a position of superseding God on the subject (Isaiah 2:22).

Of course dragons were real.

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