

Questions for Lesson 26: Fossil evidence.

1. What is a fossil?

Answer: Any evidence of life that has existed in the past, including bones, skin, tracks, waste products, etc.

2. Why does the proof or disproof of evolution depend ultimately upon the fossil record?

Answer: The fossils show what actually happened historically. The biological evidence gives ideas of what might have happened, but no historical documentation that it actually did happen that way.

3. Do fossils show that factual evolution has taken place?

Answer: Yes! Factual evolution is the concept that things can change. Fossils show horses have changed. They are all still the same kind, but change has taken place. This is not to be confused with theories proposing massive changes in living things such as porpoises evolving from sharks.

4. Did dinosaurs really live in the past, and did humans see them and live around them?

Answer: There is massive evidence that dinosaurs lived including mummified specimens, eggs with babies inside them, and scat (coprolites--dinosaur dung) which tells us a great deal about them and how they lived. There is no credible evidence that humans and dinosaurs lived together or that early man ever saw a dinosaur. The condition of the earth at the time of the dinosaurs would have been quite hostile to humans living on it--way too hot, high oxygen content etc.

5. What good were dinosaurs? Why did they ever exist?

Answer: They have been called "the gardeners of the Jurassic"--the age in which they existed. They pruned the rapidly growing plants. They broke down plant material into anaerobic (without oxygen) mats that would eventually produce the coal and other resources man would need. (Oil is not "smushed dinosaurs" as some have proposed.) They were part of the Earth's ecosystem that would produce the resources needed by humans today.

6. Do fossils show that all life evolved from a single-celled organism?

Answer: No! This is actually unproveable because every step would have to be documented for literally billions of changes. The lack of truly transitional fossils further erodes confidence in this theory.

7. What basic assumption about the history of the earth is evolution based on?

Answer: Uniformitarianism--the belief that the processes currently operational upon the earth are the only ones that have ever operated. This would mean that no events like the Flood have ever taken place. Be careful not to accept disasters as being a violation of this. Volcanic eruptions, glaciers, supernovae etc. have always been functional on this planet. Things like the flood of Noah, asteroid collisions, and nuclear explosions have not shaped the Earth significantly in the past.

8. Give some examples of things that are believed to have happened on the earth that do not conform to uniformitarianism.

Answer: The Flood of Noah, rapid freezing of woolly mammoths, asteroid collisions with the earth which may have wiped out the dinosaurs, and magnetic reversals. Note: Volcanoes and glaciers are not answers because they occur today.

9. Why is uniformitarianism critical to evolution?

Answer: Infinite periods of gradual change cannot occur if catastrophes like those in #8 have been a regular part of the earth's history. A global flood, for example, would stop all evolutionary processes and it would have to start all over again.

10. What is the biblical position on uniformitarianism?

Answer: The Bible teaches that every so often the earth's history has been interrupted by a catastrophic event--the Flood, the plagues in Egypt, the crucifixion of Jesus--when major changes occurred in the earth.