

# Atheists Attacking the Holy Bible to Prop Up their Belief in Nothing

## Part I: If you Believe the Bible, then you believe...in dragons

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On an ill-named website blog called “The Thinking Atheist” there appear some interesting attacks designed to ridicule the Bible. I say “ill-named” because after reviewing the material, I have found there isn’t much thinking going on at all—mostly junior-high level attacks against anyone who hasn’t had the atheist’s skewed revelation that the entire universe was created by “nothing.”

The attacks take Biblical verses out of context and fail to examine them in the original languages or vernacular extant at the time they were written, over 2,000 years ago.

The unnamed author purports to doing a scholarly research, but his conclusions come across at the level of a second-rate *Saturday Night Live* skit.

Since atheists have no facts to support their position, they can only resort to ridiculing and distorting the positions of those who believe in a Divine Being.

In this series, I will dissect this particular atheist’s assertions on specific Bible verses in order to more fully understand what the Biblical book actually meant and bring greater elucidation to this atheist’s misunderstanding.

The atheist writing on this site gives a laundry list of verses that belittle the Bible due to his own misunderstanding of them. In this editorial, I will first give you the atheist’s bullet point and then address it with a researched rebuttal:

In his first point, he states:

“If you believe the Holy Bible is absolutely, perfectly accurate and infallible:

-You also believe in dragons. Yes, the authors of scripture speak about dragons as real creatures. (Deuteronomy 32:33, Job 30:29, Psalm 74:13, Isaiah 27:1, Jeremiah 9:11, Micah 1:8)”

### You Believe in Dragons.

This atheist has apparently done no research into the original languages or root words in order to more fully understand what the King James Bible translates as “dragons.” He attempts to presume the word dragon refers to the cultic imagery instilled on our modern society by Saturday morning cartoons. However, since the ancient writers of those verses over 3,000 years ago didn’t have Saturday morning cartoons—and the cultic imagery had not yet been fully developed as it is today—we must look at the original language to determine what was actually meant by the words the King James translators translated as “dragons” and what the word dragons meant when the King James translators employed it in their original work.

In all the verses cited by that atheist, the word dragons is translated from the Hebrew, תַּנְיִן *tanneen*’ or תַּנְיָנִים *tanneem*’. Depending on the word used, it means a marine or land monster, such as a sea-monster, serpent or whale, or a jackal.<sup>1</sup>

The two aforementioned words are derived from the original Hebrew root word, תָּן *tan*—meaning to elongate, a sea serpent (or other huge marine animal);

also a jackal (or other hideous land animal).<sup>2</sup>

In the Torah, *tanneen* is translated as “vipers”, not “dragons”<sup>3</sup>. In the Jewish Study Bible, the English translation of *tanneen* and *tanneem* is; vipers (Duet. 32:33), jackals (Job 30:29), monsters in the water (Psalm 74:13), dragon of the sea (Isaiah 27:1), and jackals (Jer. 9:10-11, Micha 1:8).<sup>4</sup>

In zoology, the word dragon means any of various lizards with winglike membranes that can make long, flying leaps; in the Bible it can mean a large snake, whale, crocodile, or jackal.<sup>5</sup>

“Dragon is derived from the Old French, via Latin from Greek *drakōn* ‘serpent’, which was an early meaning of the English word.”<sup>6</sup>

“[Dragon] is derived through the French and Latin from the Greek *δράκων*, connected with *δερκομαι* ‘see,’ and interpreted as ‘sharp-sighted.’ The equivalent English word ‘drake’ or ‘fire-drake’ is derived from Anglo-Saxon *draca*. In Greece the word *δράκων* [drakōn] was used originally of any large serpent, and the dragon of mythology, whatever shape it may have assumed, remains essentially a snake.”<sup>7</sup>

“The word *tannin* seems to refer to any great monster, whether of the land or the sea, being indeed more usually applied to some kind of serpent or reptile, but not exclusively restricted to that sense.”<sup>8</sup>

So, whenever the word “dragon” is rendered in the Bible, it has behind its meaning that of a poisonous snake, sea serpent (of which there are plenty), or a jackal or any other similar, violent, bottom-feeding land animal. Depending on the context, it could be used literally, or figuratively as a derogatory adjective describing sinners and those who are against God.

This atheist’s insinuation that “dragons” may be interpreted using common vernacular and the imagery of colorful, fire-breathing monsters of mythical fiction is unsubstantiated and has no historical or linguistic evidence to back it up.

More of these notes and rebuttals to follow in upcoming editions of FFJ.

### Notes

1. *Strong’s 8577*
2. *Strong’s 8565*
3. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, ©1981 Union of American Hebrew Congregations, p. 1560
4. *Jewish Study Bible*, ©2004 Oxford University Press.
5. Thorndike Barnhart World Book Dictionary, ©1969 Doubleday Co., p. 635
6. Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories, ©2002 Oxford University Press, p. 160
7. *Encyclopedia Britannica* ©1958 Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Vol 7, p. 569
8. Peloubet’s Bible Dictionary, ©1925 John C. Winston Co., p. 153