

Chapel in the Hills (A stave church)

Free

3788 Chapel Lane, Rapid City

Open 7 a.m. until dusk daily from May 1 through September 30. Vespers (worship) services begin at 8 p.m. each evening from mid-June through late Aug.

What do churches and dragons have in common? Both are true.

This little stave chapel built in 1969 is a replica of the Borgund Church in Norway which was built about 1200 AD. While the rest of Europe was building towering cathedrals out of stone during the medieval times, Norwegians were building churches out of wood. Stave churches had mighty wooden corner posts (staves) and the walls were made of planks placed vertically. The stave churches were then ornately decorated with carvings, many times with dragon motifs. When visiting this church look to the roof and see the carved dragons. Dragons on a church, sounds fanciful?

Do you know that the Bible mentions dragons? The translators did not call them dragons, they could not figure out what kind of creature was being mentioned, so they just transliterated the Hebrew word. Here is a partial description of Leviathan in Job 41: “his strong scales are his pride” (v.15), “His sneezes flash forth light” (v.18), “Out of his mouth go burning touches; sparks of fire leap forth. Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals and a flame goes forth from his mouth”. (v.18-21), “when he raises himself up, the mighty fear” (v.25). Sounds like a fire breathing dragon doesn’t it?

Dragon legends are numerous around the world. The Chinese are famous for their dragon stories and have always displayed dragons prominently on their pottery, carvings, and embroidery. Some old books record that the Chinese kings used “dragons” for pulling royal chariots on special occasions. One family even kept “dragons” and raised the offspring. European accounts speak of knights fighting dragons like England’s story of St. George who slew a dragon and saved a village from further harm. The Vikings built ships with carved dragon heads on the prows. The emblem on the Flag of Wales (Great Britain) is a dragon.

Dragons were real creatures; only today we would call them dinosaurs. The word dinosaur was invented in 1841. Are dinosaurs mentioned in the Bible? YES, not the exact word but the description. In Job 40: 15-19 it speaks of a Behemoth, “Look at the behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength he has in his loins, what power in the muscle of his belly! His tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of his thigh are close-knit. His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like rods of iron. He ranks first among the works of God.” This awesome creature was huge a gigantic beast! Even the behemoth’s tail was huge and strong; God compared the tail to the ancient world’s largest and most spectacular trees - the gigantic cedars. Yes, dinosaurs are mentioned in the Bible, but with different words.



Where did dragons/dinosaurs come from? God created all the land animals including the dinosaurs on day number six of creation week (Genesis 1:20-25). The swimming creatures were made on day number five, which would have included the swimming reptiles like the plesiosaurs.

What happened to most the dinosaurs? They were killed in the worldwide Flood of Noah's day. We dig them up as fossils today.

Did any of the dinosaurs go on the Ark? Yes, Noah took animals that had the breath of life in its nostrils. Creation scientists calculate that Noah had about 50 kinds of dinosaurs or about 100 dinosaurs on the Ark.

Did they get off the Ark? Yes. We find accounts of dinosaurs in dragon legends from around the world

What has happened to the dinosaurs that got off the Ark? Most have gone extinct through environmental changes, for the world after the Flood was quite different, also people began killing them.

What do churches and dragons/dinosaurs have in common? Both are true. So as you look at the church's roof notice the dragon/dinosaur heads, know that people and dinosaurs did live at the same time. These Norwegian's personally saw or knew of these living dragons/dinosaurs.

(Taylor, Paul S. *The Great Dinosaur Mystery and the Bible*. 1987. Chariot Books, David C. Cook Publishing Co: Elgin, IL.
Ham, Ken.1998. *The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved!* Master Books: Green Forest, AR)

