



Job - Chapter Forty One

- II [Job 3:1-42:6 - Dialogue: Job, His Suffering, and His Standing before God \(continues\)](#)
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Summary of Chapter Forty One

God continues his argument that Job has now power over the mighty creatures of creation, this time using Leviathan, the giant of the seas, as his example. Therefore, Job has no right to contend with the God who created it.

- 1 'Can you draw out Leviathan with a fish-hook,
or press down its tongue with a cord?
- 2 Can you put a rope in its nose,
or pierce its jaw with a hook?
- 3 Will it make many supplications to you?
Will it speak soft words to you?
- 4 Will it make a covenant with you
to be taken as your servant for ever?
- 5 Will you play with it as with a bird,
or will you put it on a leash for your girls?
- 6 Will traders bargain over it?
Will they divide it up among the merchants?

7 Can you fill its skin with harpoons,
or its head with fishing-spears?

Job 41:1-7

Can you draw out Leviathan with a fish-hook? After the discussion of Behemoth in Job 40:15-24, God now called Job to consider another fearful monster, Leviathan. This creature was first mentioned in Job 3:8; Job in that context considered how sailors and fishermen would curse the threatening Leviathan and with the same passion he cursed the day of his birth.

Usually Leviathan is considered to be a mythical sea-monster or dragon that terrorised sailors and fishermen. Yet, in the context of Chapter 41, God does not seem to consider Leviathan to be mythical at all. Some believe that Leviathan describes some ancient dragon-like dinosaur that either survived to Job's day, or survived in the collective memory of mankind, so that God could refer to it as an example. Others consider that in this context that Leviathan is nothing more than a mighty crocodile. However, the focus of this section is on the fact that, whatever powerful creature is being referred to, it is a part of God's creation and is governed by his power.

The name Leviathan means 'twisting one' and is also used in other interesting places in Scripture.

- Psalm 74:12-14 refers to Leviathan as a sea serpent and that God broke the head of the Leviathan long ago, perhaps at the time of creation.
- Psalm 104:26 also refers to Leviathan as a sea creature.
- Isaiah 27:1 speaks of the future defeat of Leviathan, also associating it with a twisted serpent that lives in the sea.
- Isaiah 51:9 and Psalm 89:8-10 also speak of a serpent associated with the sea that God defeated as a demonstration of his great strength and identifies this serpent with the name Rahab, meaning proud one.
- Job 26:12-13 also refers to God's piercing defeat of a fleeing serpent associated with the sea.

Can you put a rope in its nose, or pierce its jaw with a hook? God's point with this description of Leviathan is to show Job just how powerless he is against this creature. There is nothing that Job can do against this mighty monster. This makes the association between Leviathan - obviously, some dragon-type creature, even if it were in this context only a mighty crocodile - and Satan even more interesting. Satan is often represented as a dragon or a serpent; refer to Genesis Chapter 3; and Revelation Chapter 12-13. Therefore, Leviathan may be another serpent-like manifestation of Satan.

8 Lay hands on it;

- think of the battle; you will not do it again!
- ⁹ Any hope of capturing it will be disappointed;
were not even the gods overwhelmed at the sight of it?
- ¹⁰ No one is so fierce as to dare to stir it up.
Who can stand before it?
- ¹¹ Who can confront it and be safe?
– under the whole heaven, who?

Job 41:8-11

Any hope of capturing it will be disappointed. Job could not hope to defeat Leviathan; it was simply beyond his power to do so.

No one is so fierce as to dare to stir it up. Who can stand before it? The logical point is made. If Job cannot contend with Leviathan (or even with Satan, whom Leviathan represents), how could he ever hope to stand against the God who made and masters Leviathan? This was another effective way of setting Job in his proper place before God. If it is futile for people to presume that they could lay their hands on Leviathan, who is a part of God's creation, then how much more should Job be cautious about his presumption in wanting to bring his case and stand before God. Without Jesus no one can: <<*Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, 'O Lord, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In your hand are power and might, so that no one is able to withstand you*>> (2 Chronicles 20:5-6), <<*To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, as though we were alike?*>> (Isaiah 46:5), <<*Like a lion coming up from the thickets of the Jordan against a perennial pasture, I will suddenly chase them away from her; and I will appoint over her whomsoever I choose. For who is like me? Who can summon me? Who is the shepherd who can stand before me?*>> (Jeremiah 50:44), and: <<*Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'*>> (Revelation 6:15-17).

- ¹² 'I will not keep silence concerning its limbs,
or its mighty strength, or its splendid frame.
- ¹³ Who can strip off its outer garment?

- Who can penetrate its double coat of mail?
14 Who can open the doors of its face?
There is terror all around its teeth.
15 Its back is made of shields in rows,
shut up closely as with a seal.
16 One is so near to another
that no air can come between them.
17 They are joined one to another;
they clasp each other and cannot be separated.

Job 41:12-17

I will not keep silence concerning its limbs, or its mighty strength, or its splendid frame. To strengthen the point made in the previous section (that Job cannot stand against Leviathan, so he could not hope to stand against God), the Lord will now describe in greater detail the might and glory of this creature.

Who can strip off its outer garment? There is terror all around its teeth. Its back is made of shields in rows, shut up closely as with a seal. This description of Leviathan, especially with the rough, armour-like scaly skin and terrible teeth, makes some people believe that whatever Leviathan is in other Biblical and mythological contexts, here God had in mind something mightier than a crocodile, perhaps some other relative to the dinosaurs.

- 18 Its sneezes flash forth light,
and its eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.
19 From its mouth go flaming torches;
sparks of fire leap out.
20 Out of its nostrils comes smoke,
as from a boiling pot and burning rushes.
21 Its breath kindles coals,
and a flame comes out of its mouth.

Job 41:18-21

Its sneezes flash forth light. From its mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap out. This description of Leviathan seems definitely beyond that of a crocodile

and leads other commentators to believe that God had in mind much more than a currently known species.

Out of its nostrils comes smoke, and a flame comes out of its mouth. This description of Leviathan seems much more like what would be thought of as a dragon. Curiously, the dragon motif is common across cultures and lands and may point to the actual existence of some creature of this type in pre-history. It may be to this common memory of this fire-breathing, reptilian creature that God refers. Even if this is a mythological creature, the message remains the same.

Interestingly, David gives a similar portrayal in a reference to the Lord: <<Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. He bowed the heavens, and came down; thick darkness was under his feet>> (Psalm 18:7-9).

- 22 In its neck abides strength,
and terror dances before it.
- 23 The folds of its flesh cling together;
it is firmly cast and immovable.
- 24 Its heart is as hard as stone,
as hard as the lower millstone.
- 25 When it raises itself up the gods are afraid;
at the crashing they are beside themselves.
- 26 Though the sword reaches it, it does not avail,
nor does the spear, the dart, or the javelin.
- 27 It counts iron as straw,
and bronze as rotten wood.
- 28 The arrow cannot make it flee;
slingstones, for it, are turned to chaff.
- 29 Clubs are counted as chaff;
it laughs at the rattle of javelins.
- 30 Its underparts are like sharp potsherds;
it spreads itself like a threshing-sledge on the mire.

- 31 It makes the deep boil like a pot;
it makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
- 32 It leaves a shining wake behind it;
one would think the deep to be white-haired.
- 33 On earth it has no equal,
a creature without fear.
- 34 It surveys everything that is lofty;
it is king over all that are proud.'

Job 41:22-34

In its neck abides strength, and terror dances before it. In this last extended description of Leviathan, God spoke in terms that more closely connected the concept of Leviathan with Satan. It could be said of Satan as well as Leviathan, if not more so of Satan:

- They are strong (in its neck abides strength).
- They are cruel and entertained by sorrow (terror dances before it).
- They are strongly defended (the folds of its flesh cling together; it is firmly cast and immovable).
- They are unsympathetic and hard hearted (its heart is as hard as stone).
- They cause the mighty to fear (when it raises itself up the gods are afraid).
- They cannot be successfully attacked (though the sword reaches it, it does not avail, it laughs at the rattle of javelins).
- They have few vulnerable spots (its underparts are like sharp potsherds).
- They have no worthy adversaries on earth (on earth it has no equal).
- They are filled with pride (it is king over all that are proud).

It is king over all that are proud. This description of Leviathan - especially at this point - is so like that of Satan, that it may fairly be supposed that God here was indicating to Job not only his great might and Job's vulnerability before Satan, but also alluding to Satan's role in Job's great crisis.

God called Job to consider these unconquerable beasts, who each in their own way were examples of Satan and his power. In this God allowed Job to consider the fact that he could not stand before the power of Satan without God empowering him. Job thought that he was all alone through his ordeal; indeed he felt he was alone. Yet this was God's way of saying that he was not alone, because if he were then he surely would have crumbled before the power of Leviathan and Behemoth.

God ends his words to Job without ever telling him the story behind the story. Job was left ignorant about the contest between God and Satan that prompted his whole crisis. Although Job did not know the whole story, God did tell him of his great victory over Leviathan/Satan, giving Job assurance for the past, the present and for the future.