

JOB

Chapter 41

“Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook or press down his tongue with a cord? 2 Can you put a rope in his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook? 3 Will he make many pleas to you? Will he speak to you soft words? 4 Will he make a covenant with you to take him for your servant forever? 5 Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you put him on a leash for your girls? 6 Will traders bargain over him? Will they divide him up among the merchants? 7 Can you fill his skin with harpoons or his head with fishing spears? 8 Lay your hands on him; remember the battle—you will not do it again! 9 Behold, the hope of a man is false; he is laid low even at the sight of him. 10 No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him up. Who then is he who can stand before me? 11 Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine. 12 “I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, or his mighty strength, or his goodly frame. 13 Who can strip off his outer garment? Who would come near him with a bridle? 14 Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth is terror. 15 His back is made of rows of shields, 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. 18 His sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn. 19 Out of his mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap forth. 20 Out of his nostrils comes forth smoke, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. 21 His breath kindles coals, and a flame comes forth from his mouth. 22 In his neck abides strength, and terror dances before him. 23 The folds of his flesh stick together, firmly cast on him and immovable. 24 His heart is hard as a stone, hard as the lower millstone. 25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid; at the crashing they are beside themselves. 26 Though the sword reaches him, it does not avail, nor the spear, the dart, or the javelin. 27 He counts iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. 28 The arrow cannot make him flee; for him, sling stones are turned to stubble. 29 Clubs are counted as stubble; he laughs at the rattle of javelins. 30 His underparts are like sharp potsherds; he spreads himself like a threshing sledge on the mire. 31 He makes the deep boil like a pot; he makes the sea like a pot of ointment. 32 Behind him he leaves a shining wake; one would think the deep to be white-haired. 33 On earth there is not his like, a creature without fear. 34 He sees everything that is high; he is king over all the sons of pride.”

41:1–34 The second of two poems in the Lord’s final discourse (see note on 40:15–24) (CSB)

The first of two poems (ch. 41 constitutes the second) in this discourse, each describing a huge beast and resuming the animal theme of ch. 39.). (PBC)

41:1 *leviathan*. The OT uses the word in both a figurative and a literal sense. Literally, the leviathan was a large marine animal (see Ps 104:26), here perhaps a crocodile. His description in ch. 41 indicates that he is even more terrifying than the behemoth in ch. 40. (CSB)

Hbr term; scholars debate its meaning. Many suggest it is a crocodile; others suggest it is a whale or dinosaur-like creature. The description goes beyond a literal explanation to depict something completely and monstrously evil, a force opposed to the Lord Himself. Ultimately, Leviathan represents the devil, the serpent (Gn 3) whom God defeats (cf Is 27:1). Though God may play

with Leviathan (Ps 104:26), in the end, He crushes Leviathan's heads (Ps 74:14; in light of Gn 3:15). (TLSB)

fishhook. In ancient times, bronze and iron hooks were used not only to catch fish but also to control wild animals and subdue prisoners (hooks were placed in their mouth [v 2] and attached to a lead rope). (TLSB)

press down his tongue. Leviathan cannot be muzzled by using a cord bridling his mouth. (TLSB)

41:3 Sarcasm. This animal will not plead his case by asking for leniency or mercy, as Job had been doing. Leviathan will remain defiant. (TLSB)

41:5 *bird*. Sparrows and doves were considered suitable pets for children to hold and care for. Leviathan cannot be domesticated. The imagery is ludicrous. (TLSB)

41:9 *laid low*. Bowing down in obeisance was a common custom for showing respect. Leviathan's opponents' knees buckle, and they lose hope. People cringe before Leviathan, since they have no ability to resist its horrible presence. Leviathan stands at the end of Job as a symbol of Satan's power and opposition to the Almighty. (See Jesus' words in Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.). (TLSB)

41:10 The leviathan is mighty, but God is infinitely more powerful. (CSB)

He is only a creature. God, on the other hand, is the Creator who made everything, including the leviathan. (PBC)

41:11 Perhaps alluded to, though not directly quoted, by Paul in Ro 11:35. (CSB)

In his dealings with you and me, there are times when we might wonder why God allows sickness, accidents, the loss of loved ones, or other afflictions to touch our lives. Instead of questioning him, we ought to submit to him in faith. We ought to find comfort in his Word and turn to him in prayer. We all need to grow in the virtue of patience. (PBC)

41:14 *doors of his face?* Leviathan's mouth is like a set of doors. They cannot be pried open or clamped shut (vv 1–2). Terror fills his mouth! (TLSB)

41:18–21 Highly figurative, exaggerated poetic imagery. (CSB)

41:18–21 *sneezings flash forth light*. Description of Leviathan is beyond that of any known animal. Some interpreters have suggested that this verse speaks of a dragon, while others see this merely as a way of developing poetic imagery in v 18. (TLSB)

eyelids of the dawn. The boundary of the horizon. (TLSB)

41:24 Leviathan cannot be killed; its heart cannot be pierced. (TLSB)

millstone. Commonly made from black basalt, a fine-grained volcanic stone. (TLSB)

In ancient times people would grind their grain between two millstones. The lower millstone was stationary, whereas the upper millstone would be turned by the person who ground the grain. Because of the extra wear the lower millstone had to be especially hard. (PBC)

41:27 *iron*. In ancient times iron and bronze were used in the manufacture of weapons. When such a weapon would be hurled at the leviathan, it wouldn't faze him at all. He would repulse it as if it were made of grain or rotten wood. One might as well throw a bundle of grain or a stick of wood at him. (PBC)

41:29 No weapon was capable of destroying this unique animal. Whether attacked by sword or spear, dart or javelin (v 26), this monster's skin is impenetrable. Stones and clubs are just as ineffective. (TLSB)

he laughs at – The leviathan will not be intimidated, but will face any opponent confidently and with laughter. (PBC)

41:30 *sharp potsherds*. Broken pottery fragments. (CSB)

Smaller pieces of broken pottery may look similar to the scales of a reptile. (TLSB)

When the leviathan goes on the mud he leaves a trail like a sledge that was used in ancient times. Such sledges had sharp pieces of stone that would beat out the grain at threshing time. From those words we can conclude that either the animal must have had short, stubby legs which didn't enable him to clear the ground, or he would purposely crawl along close to the ground. In either case he would leave a clear impression in the mud. (PBC)

sledge. Used for breaking grain away from stalks. Usually made up of two boards with a large rock placed on top to weigh it down, then dragged over the grain on the threshing floor to separate the kernels of grain from the stalks. As Leviathan moves over the floor of a body of water, it smoothes out the mud. Leviathan slithers on its belly (cf Gn 3:14). (TLSB)

41:31 *the sea*. Estuarine (or saltwater) crocodiles are known to swim miles out into the ocean. When a crocodile vocalizes, the vibrations make the water bubble. Other large beasts produce similar results. The sea becomes like a bubbling apothecary's cauldron. (TLSB)

Those two words strongly suggest a large body of water, not a river such as the Nile or the Jordan. The words suggest either the Mediterranean Sea, or possible even the Indian Ocean, both of which might have been familiar to Job. (PBC)

41:34 *king over all the sons of pride*. The Lord alone can humble such creatures. Job cannot be expected to do so, though God challenges him to attempt it—if he so desires (see 40:11–12). (CSB)

sons of. In Semitic usage, such family expressions are used for describing other relations. A “brotherhood” of proud beings is meant. (TLSB)

pride. In 28:8, same term is used for “proud beasts.” Cf Is 14:13–14 for example of a sinfully proud ruler. (TLSB)

40:6–41:34 Job finally recognizes his real insignificance in comparison with Leviathan's might and defiance. Today, many view defiance as a virtue, but reliance on the Lord is the only hope we, like Job, have. Though we can tame or cage most any animal today, the beasts of war, disease, and turmoil constantly break free and trample us. They overpower us and certainly remove our self-reliance. Yet God's own greatness and love for us overcomes them all. Despite

the seemingly insurmountable nature of evils around us, God is not only in control, He is also working for us in Christ. • “Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us, We tremble not, we fear no ill; They shall not overpower us. This world’s prince may still Scowl fierce as he will, He can harm us none. He’s judged; the deed is done; One little word can fell him.” Amen. (*LSB* 656:3). (TLSB)