

## **Job 40:15-41:34 - Dinosaurs, Dragons, and Repentance**

This morning we come to a section on Job which I think you'll find to be fascinating on several levels. And I'll be honest, it is hard for me to even know where to begin because there is so much to talk about. **Job 40** and **41** were some of the most profound chapters in the Bible when I first became a believer because I didn't realize all the different issues that the Bible touched on. Here in Job, one of the unique topics that Job touches on, what I believe, are dinosaurs.

God is going to use two creatures - the behemoth and the leviathan - to show how much more powerful God is than Job. God created them, he made them, he can contain them - Job can't even kill them or capture them. Although he is made in God's image, he is small and weak in the grand creation of God as these 2 creatures show. So we're going to talk about dinosaurs for most of our time.

At the same time I want us to keep in mind where we are in the book. I don't want to get so bogged down in the weeds that we miss what God is really getting at here.

Remember in the aftermath of Job's tragedy of losing all his kids, his wealth and his health, Job wants an audience with God. He wants to ask God questions and get God to answer him.

In **Chap. 38** God actually answers Job's request. God shows up in the whirlwind - in basically a hurricane - but Job isn't the one asking questions. God is asking all the questions. God asks him about the cosmos - the sun, moon, stars, weather. God asks Job about the animal kingdom - the lion, the raven, the goat, ostrich, the war horse. Job can't answer even one question. And although he is humbled, he doesn't quite repent for his foolish speech from earlier in the book.

Job says he puts his hand over his mouth, but he doesn't quite repent. Which is why God keeps going. And from here the Lord basically brings up 3 things. He challenges Job to put on his own majesty and try to judge everyone who is wicked. "You think I'm a bad judge? Grab a robe and take a seat." That's what God says in **40:10-14**.

But the Lord spends the rest of 41 and all of 42 talking about Behemoth and Leviathan. And I don't know about you, but if I were planning on putting someone into their place and humbling them I wouldn't be like, "Job let's talk about dinosaurs."

But that's exactly what God does. And because God is wise and we are not it works. Job is humbled and repents and then God blesses his socks off even more than what he originally had. So that's the really big picture.

But I want to take a rabbit trail today because I think it's worthwhile. I mentioned that I think these 2 creatures are dinosaurs. You need to understand that that view is the minority view. In most biblical scholarship that view is laughed at.

And it's laughed at because most people in biblical scholarship have abandoned the historical Christian view that the earth is actually only a few thousand years old. And most scholars deny the idea of a worldwide flood. Really, the issue comes down to where in Genesis a person thinks Moses turns from writing fiction to writing non-fiction.

Most scholars believe that Genesis 1-11 is a fictional account of some sort. They would say it's ancient poetry, they would say it's just a literary style of Hebrew ancestry. They would say it lines up with other ancient near eastern accounts of mythology. Or they would attempt to say that days mean millions or billions of years rather than evenings and mornings.

So some amount of Genesis is fiction. By the way, they don't come to the conclusion the earth is billions of years old from the Bible. They get that from secular scientists who tell them it's billions of years old. They accept that without question and then they open their Bible and try to make sense of what is very plain.

The difficulty comes that at some point they would say the fictional portion of Genesis ends and the non-fiction history begins. For many that happens at the end of Genesis 11 with the introduction of Abram. Most scholars believe he was a real person.

But as a result of this view that some of Genesis is fiction, most scholars believe in an old earth - billions of years old. And because they believe the earth is billions of years old they cannot accept the these creatures in Job were dinosaurs because dinosaurs could never have co-existed with humans. Dinosaurs, according to secular science, died out 65 million years ago. Modern humans only came about 100,000 years ago - the two could not have co-existed. This is why most of them deny Noah's worldwide flood.

The problem is that nowhere in the Genesis account is there any indication that any of it is anything other than simple history. It is all *non*-fiction. And, frankly, a simple look at the Bible and an honest evaluation of true science would lead us to believe that dinosaurs and humans did co-exist.

I want to take this morning to explain why I think they are. Maybe this seems trivial to you or to others. But I think as fair-minded Christians we are required to wrestle with what the Bible says about every issue. Not every issue is a salvation issue. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't seek to understand what the Bible is saying. This is what God has spoken to us and it's important that we understand what he's saying.

Let me just read the text to you - it's a little bit of a haul - and then we'll begin to unpack this. **Read 40:15-41:34**

So we have 2 very impressive animals. They are foreboding and powerful. And really the point of the section is that Job is not able to contain these 2 animals but God can. And if Job can't even contain these 2 animals, who is he to sit in judgment on God?

So most people fall into 3 camps with these creatures:

- 1) They are mythological in nature. What they would say is that the descriptions here are accurate, what God is describing we should take at face value. But they would go on to say that God is not describing real animals. They would say these are mythological animals that were known in Job's time and would suffice for God to show his power over the largest animal ever conceived by man.

If you have an ESV Study Bible - which I recommend because I think it's a great resource, you'll notice that one of the options the ESVSB gives is that this is mythology. Nowhere does the ESVSB indicate that these could be what we refer to as dinosaurs.

The problem with the mythological view is that the text plainly says these are real animals that God created. **Read 40:15, 19, 23**

There's nothing in here that would suggest these are mythological creatures. No one is afraid of mythological creatures. And, as obvious as this sounds, God did not *make* mythological creatures. That would be like saying, "Behold the Easter Bunny - mighty with fangs, fast as an eagle, eyes like lasers, deliverer of magical chocolate eggs - can you contain him?!" The Easter Bunny doesn't exist and so it's hard to be impressed with a mythological creature that God did not make.

- 2) These are common animals. Most commentators believe that these are actually animals that we know; they would say that the behemoth is a hippopotamus or an elephant. And they would say leviathan is likely a crocodile.

The problem with that is that a hippo and an elephant don't match the description of the behemoth. **Read 17**

Neither the elephant nor the hippo has a tail like a cedar. The cedar tree throughout the Bible is the biggest possible tree around and used in constructing the most impressive structures - like the Temple and David's palace. These are massive trees that are taller than most of our pine trees. Our pine trees around here are 80-100 feet tall. Cedar trees grow to 130 feet tall and have a huge circumference.

To which some commentators will say, well, it's not talking about his tail, it's talking about his male genitalia or maybe the elephant's trunk. But that's simply not what the text is talking about - it's talking about his tail that is massive.

Also, the whole point here is that these animals can't be contained. They can't be captured. **Read 40:19, 24; 41:1-2, 7-8**

So these can't be captured. You know where you can find the closest elephant and hippo and crocodile? In the zoo. All those animals can be contained. They can all be brought into submission and killed.

The ESV sort of punts the issue and says it's a creature whose identity is unknown. NASB footnote says these are the hippo and crocodile. I'm not an expert on crocodiles, but I don't think they breathe fire.

3) Third - but rare - option is that these are spiritual creatures that have sort of supernatural powers to represent cosmic good and evil.

In the Bible there is a class of spiritual creature called the cherubim. Cherubim are not angels, per se. They are spiritual creatures that are described in animal ways. **Rev. 4:6** talks about living creatures around the throne of God with eyes all over its body. Some look like lions, others like oxen, other like men, others like eagles all of them have 6 wings and they fly around the throne of God.

So the argument is that maybe these are spiritual creatures. Or some hybrid.

The problem with all of these is that the creatures God is describing here are creatures everyone would be familiar with. No one talks about shooting cherubim with harpoons or the mountains yielding food for them. These explanations all have to dismiss some obvious part of the passage.

Again, I just want to emphasize that the reason anyone would do this is not because of a plain reading of the passage. You can't get to hippo or crocodile from a straightforward reading of the passage.

I want to make it clear: the reason they do this is because they believe a young earth is absurd. They think the idea that the earth is only 7 or 10 thousand years old is not possible. They think that Genesis 1-11 cannot be history, it must be some kind of fiction.

They believe that the earth has to be billions of years old and that it would be foolish to believe God is talking about real dinosaurs because real dinosaurs could not have existed in Job's time.

Again, is this an issue of salvation? Are those who believe in an old earth going to hell because of their view? No, I don't think so. I have good Christian friends who hold to an old earth view. I think they're wrong, and they think I'm wrong - but we'll see each other in glory. I do think that it is impossible to hold to evolution and hold to the biblical gospel.

So here's what I want to do with our time left. I want to talk about these animals and help you understand why I believe they are what we would call dinosaurs. And then next week we'll come back and put the pieces together for the big picture.

So to lay my cards all out here: I think behemoth is something like a sauropod dinosaur - like a brachiosaurus or possibly an ankylosaurus or something of that nature. These were massive grass and tree eating dinosaurs with long powerful tails.

And I think leviathan is some kind of seagoing dinosaur, something like a plesiosaur but I think there's evidence that this animal was closer to what we might call a dragon. That's a simple reading of the passage.

Let's walk through Behemoth. **Read 15-16**

So we have behemoth. The word itself doesn't help us because it's a transliteration from the Hebrew word Behemoth. Behemoth is used in a lot of ways throughout the OT to refer to a lot of different animals including cattle, sheep, oxen. It's sort of a catch all for any land based herbivore. So the specific word here doesn't help us. What helps us identify this animal is the description.

It's important to point out that he is actually a creation of God just like Job is a creation of God. This rules out that this is a mythical animal. Whatever this is, it cannot be mythical. Mythical animals don't eat grass. They don't eat anything. But behemoth does.

His strength is in his loins - as in his underside. The loins of an animal are the undercarriage muscles and leg muscles. Clearly this is an impressive animal whose legs and underside are particularly noticeable for their power. **Read 17**

So the behemoth tail is a key feature here. The long powerful tail like a cedar tree. Cedar trees were 80-130 tall and very large around. That describes a lot of dinosaurs but almost no creature we know of today. No one would describe the hippo or elephant tail like a pine tree - that wouldn't make any sense. And the cedar tree, which is larger, certainly doesn't make any sense either. This animal has a massive tail.

And this animal has massive bones. **Read 18**

The word used here for tube is the Hebrew word for channel - or we would say a pipe. That's the idea. These are huge bones that, if they were hollow, could carry water through them. Or they could also be described as bars of iron. Structural metal that keeps roofs up. This is a huge animal.

Again, I just have to say that reading commentaries on this section is almost comedy because those who say it's an elephant or hippo say that these descriptions are nothing like a hippo or an elephant. And those who say it's mythological say that the language seems to indicate a real creature. But they just cannot bring themselves to even acknowledge that this could have been a dinosaur even though that's basically what the text seems to be describing. **Read 19-24**

When God says he is the first of the works of God what he's getting at is not the first animal God made - that would have been birds and fish on day 4. What he means is that this is the greatest of God's creations. This is the mightiest and fiercest. NIV: It ranks first among the works of God and only God - it's maker - can approach it with a sword.

So this animal lays under plants and trees near marshes most of the day. It roams around the mountains wherever it wants to go because it's not afraid of any other animal - it has no natural predator. Elephants and hippos - though big and fierce - don't roam freely. Elephants are in herds and hippos stay in the water because that's their advantage.

This thing goes wherever it wants and the size is that it can drink of the entire Jordan river in flood stage and not think twice about it. No one is taking this animal down - no one is capturing it.

Again, elephants and hippos, though dangerous, have always been zoo animals - even from ancient times. This is a creature on a different level than the zoo.

And God says: Can you contain this 1 animal? I made him, I can do anything I want with him - can you even capture him? No. Job has no power.

Next is Leviathan. He is depicted as a massive sea creature. Again, the idea that this is a crocodile is, frankly, dishonest. For many of the same reasons that behemoth is simply not describing a hippo.

Leviathan in Hebrew literally means dragon or serpent. That's just what the word means. When the Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek the word they used for Leviathan was drakonta - three guesses what that word means. Dragon. It's the same word used in Revelation to describe Satan.

So, to be quite honest, when the footnote of the ESV says exact identity is uncertain they're not being honest. At the very least translate it dragon and let us figure out what God is really talking about. But to say the identity is unknown is simply not true.

And although salt water crocodiles are huge - 20 feet long, the largest of reptiles alive today - they don't come close to this thing.

So call me crazy, but what God goes on to describe is a dragon. **Read 41:1-8**

So we have a sea creature that cannot be contained. It's so big you can't even get it in your boat.

Now, while crocodiles are big and fierce, they are able to be captured. Steve Irwin used to do it on his TV show on a regular basis. There are alligator trappers and hunters that capture these animals alive without ever using deadly force.

The very point here is that this animal would never be captured because of how fierce and powerful it is. Merchants wouldn't touch it. Ancients merchants were a greedy bunch. If they could trap an exotic animal and go sell it to some king they'd be famously rich. These guys aren't touching it. **Read 7**

Again, you can do that with a crocodile. You can kill it and fill it with harpoons. The rhetorical question here helps us understand that the answer is that we could never do that to leviathan. **Read 8-11**

Whatever this animal is, no one dare goes near it. They'll die. God says, "Job, that thing is my pet. You can't even go near it, I'll do whatever I want with it. That's how powerful I am."

He goes on to describe just how armored this animal is. Remember, he's already said no harpoons are going into it's skin. He continues. **Read 12-16**

This is a massive creature that has impenetrable skin. It has huge jaws and rows and rows of teeth.

The next section is the one that has to be reconciled. Because it describes fire coming out of Leviathan's mouth and that no effort by men can kill him. **Read 18-34**

What do we do with that? Either this is a mythical creature - which most scholars deny because it seems like God is talking about a real creature Job would know about. Or this is a crocodile that has been embellished. Or, and call me crazy, this is an actual dragon or dinosaur that is like a dragon that Job would have been familiar with.

Now, to be clear - the Bible doesn't use the term dinosaur. That's a word we invented just a couple hundred years ago to classify animals that we kept finding that are now extinct and fundamentally different than what we have today. But to Job these would have just been creatures he knew.

Job would have lived shortly after the flood and it's likely that these creatures would have still existed around the world and have since become extinct.

There are many instances, by the way, of sources outside the Bible describing and drawing what we now call dinosaurs.

- 1) Did you know that the oldest archeological plate we have - from 3100 BC called the Narmer plate - has a drawing of 2 sauropod dinosaurs on it? It's an Egyptian plate and on one side it has a drawing of 2 brachiosaurus with their necks wrapped around each other.

Here's what makes that fascinating: we didn't even know those creatures existed until 1904 when Elmer Riggs discovered bones of a brachiosaur in Colorado. How was it that Egyptians in 3100 BC knew about an animal that had been buried under ground for 65 million years? Maybe because they aren't 65 million years old.

There's another carving of a sauropod in Carlyle Cathedral in northern England. Back in the day people would bury their bishop - their pastor - under the floor of the church. Just something to think about in the event of my untimely death.

But on the tomb of Bishop Bell, who was buried in the floor of the cathedral in 1496 is a carving of sauropod dinosaurs. This is along with other animals like dogs, fish, and birds. This was 400 years before sauropods were ever known to even exist.

There's a stone carving in a temple in Angkor Watt, Cambodia of a Stegosaurus. It was carved in 1100 AD. Stegosaurus fossils weren't discovered until 1877 - almost 800 years later. How did they know to carve this animal?

There is an ancient history archive of England that began in the 890s. It's just a book that has a simple historical record seeking to document major events of each year. One of the entries talks about Vikings raiding a town in northern England and they were fiery dragons seen in the sky. This is not an embellished record, it's a very simple document recording boring history. So it's a very odd entry for something that is mythical.

Of course, in China the dragon is legendary throughout that country's history. And although many people view it as mythological there is some evidence that it was a real creature, not the least of which is that it appears on their calendar along with other known animals and has so since time immemorial.

Babylon, Egypt, and North African histories all record incidents with creatures we know as dragons.

If we simply look to the Bible it's not hard to imagine. God created 6-7,000 years ago. Drowned the world in a flood which accounts for the fossils. Noah brought 2 of every creature on the ark - including dinosaurs that would have been alive. And after the ark they spread but many animals have become extinct. The closer you lived to the Ark the more animals you'd be familiar with.

I'll be honest, the thing that seals the deal for young earth for me - aside from the Bible's clear teaching - is the soft tissue that they've found in T-Rex fossils. T-Rex was supposed to have died out 65 million years ago. But you can go over to Montana right now and find soft tissue in T-Rex bones. How is that possible after 65 million years? The woman who discovered this was not a believer and was called a fraud by her colleagues because it was impossible. Well, it's impossible if you believe in millions and billions of years. It's pretty simple if you just read your Bible.

What do we do with this as Christians? What does this have to do with the gospel and Jesus and our day to day lives?

First, that every part of our Bible is true - even the parts talking about dinosaurs. You know what's crazier than God talking about dinosaurs? That God took on flesh, died for his people and rose again. If you believe in the resurrection of the body of God it's not a stretch to believe that Job saw dinosaurs.

Second, and this is more to the point of the section, the biggest, baddest creatures on the planet that could easily devour Job are absolutely no match for the sovereign God. What makes us tremble is what makes God laugh. God's not scared of bears or wolves or killer whales or TRex or Leviathan. God made them. He made all things and all things are for his purpose - even dragons and dinosaurs that could kill humans.

God's majesty extends to all creation and what he wants for us is to humbly praise him for his power over all things.

**Pray**