

BEHEMOTH AND LEVIATHAN—CREATURES OF CONTROVERSY

Eric Lyons

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This month's article is by our new Director of Research, Eric Lyons, who has joined us as of January 1. Please see my "Note from the Editor" on the back page for an introduction to this extremely talented young man. I commend to you both him and his article.]

Many have heard of Hercules, the Greek hero remembered for his strength, courage, and numerous legendary exploits. In his journeys, he encountered, among other things, the multi-headed monsters Geryon (whose oxen he ultimately captured) and the Hydra (whom he killed). Still others may recall the Greek hero Odysseus (Ulysses in Latin) in Homer's work, *The Odyssey*. His adventures came to life as he found himself face to face with the man-eating giant, Polyphemus, and then with the goddess Calypso, who offered him immortality if he would abandon his quest for home. Such adventurous stories always are entertaining to read. They allow a person to dream about what it would be like to live in a world with such fantastic beings.

In Job 40 and 41, God describes two amazing creatures that some have compared to the monsters of pagan mythology. Behemoth and leviathan are so famous that an ocean liner was named after one, while the other has become a synonym for objects of enormous size. Are these two animals—as described in God's last speech to Job—simply mythological monsters that should be considered in the same light as those beasts conquered by Hercules and Odysseus? Are they simply fic-

titious creatures of an extraordinary time when pagan gods allegedly ruled the world? Or, are the two beasts God described in Job 40-41 real flesh-and-blood animals? Furthermore, if it can be established that these creatures are real, what are their identities?

MYTHOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Over the last several centuries, many have attempted to mythologize the inspired Word of God. Atheists vigorously attack the Genesis account of creation, calling it nothing more than a fictitious story that should be placed alongside (or even "behind") myths like the Babylonian creation account. Liberal theologians similarly labor to make Scripture conform to secular sources, claiming that the Israelite religion is a mere "Yahwization" of pagan religions (i.e., attributing to Yahweh what pagan religions attributed to their gods) [see Brantley, 1993, 13:50]. Such attempts to mythologize Scripture represent a blatant attack upon God's Word.

But even though the Bible is not based on pagan mythology, on occasion it does contain unmistakable allusions to it. Consider, for example, Isaiah 27:1: "In that day Jehovah with his hard and great and strong sword will punish leviathan the swift serpent, and leviathan the crooked serpent; and he will slay the monster that is in the sea." Here, the inspired writer makes reference to leviathan in a prophetic passage depicting the future victory of God over His foes. As Pfeiffer has observed:

Isaiah was, of course, a strict monotheist. He did, however, draw upon the common stock of poetic imagery known to his people just as contemporary writers allude to mythology to illustrate a point without thereby expressing or encouraging faith in the story so used (1960, 32:209).

Among the clay tablets found in ancient Ugarit (present-day Ras Shamra), there was one that described with similar words a creature called Lotan: "When thou hast smitten Lotan, the fleeing serpent [and] hast put to an end the tortuous serpent, the mighty one with seven heads..." (as quoted in Pfeiffer, 32:209). In explaining the language of Isaiah and other Bible writers, John Day commented:

Canaanite mythic imagery was the most impressive means in that ancient cultural milieu whereby to display the sovereignty and transcendence of Yahweh, along with His superiority over Baal and all other earthly contenders. Although the Hebrews did not borrow the theology of Canaan, they did borrow its imagery—here the imagery of Baal's enemy, Sea/Dragon/Leviathan (1998, 155:436, emp. added).

Day believes the problem is not one of borrowed **mythology**, but one of borrowed **imagery**. In summarizing his view on this subject, R. Laird Harris wrote: "We may conclude that mythological symbols are used in the Bible for purposes of illustration and communication of truth **without in the least adopting the mythology or approving of its ideas**" (1992, p. 165, emp. added). To suggest that the godly men and writers of the Old Testament

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believed in these mythological creatures is to make an abrasive and completely unwarranted assumption. In the words of Old Testament scholar, J. Barton Payne, such a view should be “roundly denied” (1980, 1:472). Elmer Smick noted:

Reading primitive meaning into a piece of monotheistic literature where the idiom can be viewed as a result of simple observation or the use of quaint expressions is poor methodology. On the other hand, we must be cautioned against the rejection of all mythological usage in a strained attempt to remove the writers of Scripture from such contamination (1970, p. 222).

In the book of Job, there no doubt are allusions to mythology (cf. 3:8; 26:12), but Job itself is not a mythological book. Rather, Job is presented as a devout monotheist who rejected then-popular mythological concepts (cf. 31:26-28). It is quite possible that a mythological element can be seen in the poetic language of Job 3:8: “Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to rouse up leviathan” (Job 3:8; see Hailey, 1994, p. 49). [The KJV rendering “who are ready to raise up their mourning” misses the reference to leviathan, which is obvious in the original language.] Many scholars identify the leviathan of this verse with a mythological creature described in Ugaritic myths. According to such mythology, a marine monster named Lotan was capable of altering the entire world order by eclipsing the Sun or Moon with its body (Payne, 1980, 1:472). Smick has suggested, then, that in the context of chapter 3, “Job, in a cursing mood, employs the most vivid, forceful, proverbial language available to call for the obliteration of that day” (1978, 40[2]:215). In his commentary on Job, Roy Zuck made the following observation concerning mythology and its relation to the book.

Was Job indicating belief in a creature of mythology? No, he was probably doing nothing more than utilizing for poetic purposes a common notion that his hearers would understand. This would have been similar to modern adults referring to Santa Claus. Mentioning his name does not mean that one believes such a person exists (1978, p. 24).

Thus, even though the Bible may make allusions to mythology, “neither the book of Job nor any of the Old Testament has the slightest hint of belief in any such mythology” (Smick, 1970, p. 229).

BEHEMOTH AND LEVIATHAN— MYTHOLOGICAL OR LITERAL?

For centuries, students of the Bible have questioned the identity of behemoth and leviathan. In the Middle Ages, some theologians, like Albert Magnus, conceived of behemoth as a symbol of sensuality and sin. Others, like Thomas Aquinas, equated behemoth with the elephant, and leviathan with the whale—both being natural monsters in the **literal** sense, but representing diabolical power in a **figurative** sense. In 1663, Samuel Bochart published a two-volume work identifying the two animals under consideration as the hippopotamus and the crocodile. Then, as additional extrabiblical literature came to light in the middle-to-late nineteenth century (most notably from Mesopotamia), the mythological interpretation was revived and comparative mythology became very popular among biblical scholars.

By the closing of the nineteenth century, some scholars began to see mythology as the solution to the “identification problem” of the creatures described in Job 40-41. That problem was stated by T.K. Cheyne as early as 1887 when he observed that “...neither Behemoth nor Leviathan corresponds strictly to any known animal” (p. 56). In 1892, C.H. Toy argued that behemoth and leviathan were water animals associated with the “primeval seas Apsu and Tiamat as they appeared to be presented in the emerging Babylonian Epic of Creation” (as quoted in Wilson, 1975, 25:2). In his commentary on Job, Tur-Sinai dismissed behemoth altogether, and suggested instead that the passage of Scripture from Job 40:15 through the end of the chapter is concerned with only one powerful figure—the mythological leviathan (1967, p. 558). Marvin Pope probably is the most recent well-known supporter of the mythological view. Using the Ugaritic texts as support for his theory, Pope has proposed that behemoth and leviathan of Job 40-41 are the same mythological creatures found in the ancient Jewish writings of Enoch, IV Ezra, and the Apocalypse of Baruch.

Arguments for the Mythological View

Some scholars believe behemoth and leviathan are mythological monsters due largely to the fact that similar creatures are mentioned in pagan myths. Those holding to this view do admit that the plural form *behemot*

occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament without any hint of mythological implications (cf. Psalms 8:8; 50:10; Joel 1:20; 2:22; Habakkuk 2:17). Generally speaking, for example, in Scripture behemoth often refers to ordinary cattle. But those same scholars quickly point out the instances in which behemoth is used in some of the ancient Jewish writings that echo ancient pagan mythology. By citing extrabiblical texts such as 1 Enoch 60:7-9, 4 Ezra 49-52, and 2 Baruch 29:4, Pope has suggested that behemoth had a prototype in pre-Israelite mythology that was connected in some ancient myth, or played similar roles in different myths (1965, p. 269).

Scholars also allude to the Ugaritic texts where, they point out, the violent goddess 'Anat boasts of having conquered along with Leviathan a bovine creature called *'glil'ik* that may be rendered "the ferocious bullock of El" (Pope, p. 269). Pope believes that this bullock of El very well may correspond with the behemoth of Job 40. He further suggests that the monstrous bullock of the Ugaritic myths and behemoth both are connected with the Sumero-Akkadian "bull of heaven" that was slain by Gilgamesh and Enkidu (Gilgamesh's foe-turned-friend) from the Gilgamesh Epic. The "bull of heaven" is said to have brushed Enkidu "with the thick of his tail" (as quoted in Pope, p. 272). Pope likens this description to that of the massive tail of the behemoth in 40:17 where God said that "he moveth his tail like a cedar."

Perhaps the mythological theory rests mostly on the simple evidence of leviathan's name and its use elsewhere in biblical and pagan literature. The name "leviathan" (*liwiyatan*) appears six times in the Bible (Job 3:8, 41:1; Psalms 74:14; 104:26; Isaiah 27:1 [twice]; Lipinski, 1995, p. 504). Excluding Job 41, leviathan occurs once in the meaning of a natural sea-monster (Psalm 104:26), and three times in the meaning of a mythological creature (Job 3:8; Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 74:14). In commenting on the name leviathan and its use both within and without Scripture, James Williams stated:

The mythological significance of Leviathan is well known. Appearing as the Lothan of seven heads that Baal destroys in the Ugaritic myths, he is likewise the sea-serpent of many heads that Elohim defeated in the beginning (Ps. 74:12-14). One mythical tradition of the eschaton represents a final battle of Yahweh with Leviathan (Isa. 27:1). This Leviathan

is doubtless the mythical origin of the dragon of seven heads in Rev. 17. Leviathan, as well as Behemoth, appears with eschatological significance in Enoch 60:7-9, IV Ezra 6:49-52, and Apoc[r]yphal Baruch 24:4 (1992, p. 367).

Unlike Williams (who understands these as mythological creatures in some texts but as real animals in Job 40-41), others have proposed that the leviathan in Job 41 might possibly be equated with the "leviathan with seven heads" found within Ugaritic mythology. Mythologizers frequently cite Ugaritic passages as "proof" that the leviathan in Job 41 is, in fact, a mythological monster. In the following portion of the Ugaritic myth, a discussion is taking place between Baal and Mot (Death), wherein Mot gives Baal the credit for having slain Lotan.

When you smote Lotan the fleeing serpent,
Annihilated the tortuous serpent,
The tyrant with seven heads.
(as quoted in Pope, p. 276)

In another section of this Canaanite myth, the goddess 'Anat (Baal's sister and the most active goddess in Ugaritic mythology) claims to have destroyed the seven-headed dragon along with other assorted monsters.

What enemy rises up against Baal,
What adversary against Him who
Mounteth the Clouds?
Have I not slain Sea, beloved of El?
Have I not annihilated [the]
River, the great god?
Have I not muzzled the Dragon,
holding her in a muzzle?
I have slain the Crooked Serpent,
The Foul-fanged with Seven Heads,
I have slain the beloved of earth-deities.
(as quoted in Gray, 1961, p. 129)

After quoting various Ugaritic passages like the ones above, those who support the mythological view seek to make a connection with Psalm 74:12-14 and its allusion to the tradition of a leviathan with many heads once smitten by the Almighty long ago. The psalmist wrote:

Yet God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: Thou brakest the heads of the sea-monsters in the waters. **Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces;** Thou gavest him to be food to the people inhabiting the wilderness (Psalm 74:12-14, emp. added).

Marvin Pope takes the view that the supernatural character of leviathan can be seen quite clearly in this passage, as well as from the myths mentioned above (pp. 276-277). He thus concluded that the leviathan of Job 41 is identical to the one spoken of in the Ugaritic citations.

Mythologizers "see" numerous similarities between the leviathan of Job 41 and the creatures mentioned in pagan myths. Pope has compared God's rhetorical question of whether Job could put a rope into leviathan's nose or a hook in his jaw (41:2) to the following mythical passage from the Babylonian Creation Epic: "Ea (father of Marduk) liquidated or neutralized his foes, he laid hold on Mummu (counselor of Apsu), **holding him by the nose-rope**" (p. 279, emp. added). Then, in commenting on the teeth of leviathan (Job 41:14), Pope compared them to the "formidable dentition of the monsters engendered by Tiamat" (p. 284). And finally, Pope expressed how the beasts' invincibility is one more reason to view these beings as mythological: "In the Ugaritic myth of the conflict between Baal and Prince Sea, the terrible messengers of the Sea-god intimidate the entire divine assembly, except Baal, **by their fiery appearance**" (p. 285, emp. added). Supporters of the mythological view make all these comparisons, and many more.

A final reason why many scholars hold to the mythological view is simply because they believe (correctly) that behemoth and leviathan cannot be the hippopotamus and the crocodile. It is obvious that the animals in Job 40-41 are represented as being beyond the power of men to capture. Yet it is known that ancient Egyptians hunted and captured both the crocodile and the hippopotamus (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 353). Also, if the animals really are the hippopotamus and the crocodile, one wonders why there is a shift from the Palestinian animals of the previous chapters to Egyptian animals in chapters 40-41? Mythologizers suggest that the animals described in Job 40-41 are neither crocodiles, hippopotamuses, nor any other known creature. Thus, they conclude the animals described in these two chapters must be imaginary monsters.

Arguments for the Literal View

What evidence is there to suggest that the behemoth and leviathan of Job 40-41 are, in fact, real, literal, historical creatures? First, of course,

it is evident that certain Old Testament passages speak clearly of leviathan and behemoth in various contexts without any hint whatsoever of mythological or symbolic implication. Even though leviathan seemingly refers to a mythological creature in three passages of Scripture (Job 3:8; Psalm 74:14; Isaiah 27:1), there is at least one passage (other than Job 41) that speaks of it as a real animal. In expressing his thoughts that the great sea monsters were created by Yahweh, the Psalmist wrote: "There go the ships; there is leviathan, whom thou hast formed to play therein" (Psalm 104:26). Furthermore, every time behemoth is mentioned outside of Job 40, it refers to real animals (Cansdale, 1996, p. 43). In differentiating between whether the passage is speaking of an imaginary or a literal creature, one must be guided by the thrust of the context, not by what similarities might be found between pagan mythology and the Bible (Smick, 1978, 40[2]:214). In the context of Job 38-41, God is in the midst of asking Job a lengthy series of questions—the entire purpose of which was to show the patriarch that he did not know nearly as much as he thought he did when he charged God foolishly. If the creatures in Job 40-41 were, in fact, mythological, Job then could (and likely would!) have turned to God and asked, "Lord, what's your point? These creatures are mythological!" God's argument would have collapsed of its own weight. The context (which also refers to other real animals such as horses, hawks, and ostriches) becomes critical, especially considering the purpose and intent of God's questions to Job. That the leviathan was referred to in ancient mythological literature is beyond question. But this does not prove that mythological creatures are under consideration in Job 40 and 41.

Second, behemoth is not described as horrifying and predatory, as is the "ferocious bullock of El" in the Ugaritic texts. On the contrary, he is portrayed as a herbivorous animal (40:20) that even allows other animals to graze nearby without harm (20), lies peacefully in the shadow of the rushes of the rivers (21-22), and leisurely laps up its waters (26) [see Gordis, 1978, p. 571]. As John Hartley noted in his excellent commentary on Job:

In contrast to mythological thought, Yahweh did not have to defeat Behemoth to gain control over the forces of chaos. Rather Behemoth obeyed him

from the first moment of origin.... Unafraid, Yahweh can approach Behemoth with his sword. Such an act symbolizes his complete mastery of this beast (1988, p. 525).

Similarly, the leviathan of Job 41 poses no threat to God (contrary to what ancient myths depict), regardless of how unmanageable and terrifying he may appear to puny Job.

Third, neither description is close to being identical with that of such monsters as depicted in any ancient Near Eastern mythology (see Wharton, 1999, p. 175). No mythical creature called behemoth, nor anything like it, is seen in pagan mythology (despite Marvin Pope's attempt to identify the behemoth with "the ferocious bullock of El"). In fact, one of leviathan's most impressive characteristics—the ability to breathe fire—is not even mentioned in the Ugaritic texts. It also is interesting to note that in Job 41, God does not mention leviathan having multiple heads, as is stated in the mythopoetic language of Psalm 74:14: "Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces." Mythology speaks of leviathan as having seven heads, but in the description of Job 41 we read that he has only one head (v. 7), one tongue (v. 1), one nose (v. 2), and one jaw (v. 2). There is absolutely no hint of Job's leviathan having multiple heads. Surely, if the leviathan of Job 41 were a mythological creature, God would not have excluded such vital characteristics as these.

Fourth, instead of attempting to **prove** that these are mythological creatures, some mythologizers try to reason in a somewhat reverse fashion. They argue that since these creatures cannot be the hippopotamus and the crocodile, then they must be mythological (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 351). This kind of logic is faulty, however, as it closes its parameters to another very real possibility—extinct creatures.

Fifth, although the poems in Job 40-41 are longer and are placed into the context of a separate speech, essentially they are the same as the earlier poems which deal with familiar birds and animals that the reader would have been expected to know (Anderson, 1974, p. 289). From the existence of these animals, God obviously intended Job to draw important conclusions regarding the nature of the world and man's place in it. Robert Gordis commented: "The same consideration supports the idea that Behemoth and Leviathan are also natural creatures, the existence of

which heightens the impact of God's argument" (1978, p. 571). Descriptions of these creatures are critical in regard to the intent of God's speeches to Job. "They are surely to be taken...as variations on the theme that God is God and Job is not" (Wharton, p. 174). Job is overwhelmed by the "sheer power and terror of these beings, but even more so by the fact that they exist as signs of God's overarching power" (Wharton, p. 174). In contemplating taking up his case with God, Job has been concerned with being overcome by terror (cf. 9:32-35; 13:20-21). Now Yahweh is showing Job that his apprehensions were not misplaced. If he would have to retreat in terror before a literal animal like leviathan, he certainly was unfit to contend in court with Almighty God!

Sixth, poetic use of hyperbole, including the possible utilization of traits from mythology, is characteristic of poetry in general and of the book of Job in particular (Gordis, 1978, p. 571). Quite fanciful imagery and hyperbole already had been used in earlier poems to describe living animals. We no more are required to believe that behemoth's bones were made of metal (40:18) than that God has water-bottles in the sky (38:37) or that a horse "swallows the ground" (39:24, RSV). Thus, embellishment is to be found in both of God's speeches. To conclude that leviathan and behemoth are mythological creatures based upon the use of hyperbole (and possible mythopoetic language) is a very poor methodology of interpretation. As Wayne Jackson commented in regard to the poetry of Job 41:19-21: "It must not be assumed that this language implies a mythological creature. It may simply be poetic hyperbole..." (1983, p. 87). The other possibility, of course, is that there was a real animal at one time that breathed fire. This certainly is not physiologically impossible, as various scientists have pointed out (see, for example: DeYoung, 2000, pp. 117-118; Morris, 1984, p. 359).

Seventh, allowing for the use of highly poetic language at times, the book of Job remains realistic throughout (Anderson, 1974, p. 288). Job was a **real** person (cf. Ezekiel 14:14,20; James 5:11) who experienced **real** pain. He challenged a **real** God that was (and is) alive. Jehovah described **real** creatures in Job 38 and 39. And so there is no legitimate reason for rejecting behemoth and leviathan as **real animals**.

Eighth, unlike the mythology in the Babylonian and Ugaritic creation epics (where the writers described alleged cosmic events of the distant past), God was concerned in His discussion with Job with the appearance and habits of these creatures in the present. God “is not interested in imaginary creatures from the dim mythological past—he is concerned with the actual present, with the vast universe as it is governed by its Maker” (Gordis, 1965, p. 119).

Ninth, God’s purpose in glorifying His creation would not be served by describing mythological creatures derived from a polytheistic background. In his commentary on Job, Gordis elaborated on this point:

A passing mythological reference, such as we encounter in Isa. and Ps., is conceivable, but not an extended description of primordial beasts the reality of which the exalted monotheism of the author of Job had rejected. The point need not be labored that an uncompromising monotheism is the indispensable religious background for the book of Job and for the discussion of the issue of evil which it raises. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that Job parts company with Sumerian, Akkadian, and Egyptian Wisdom precisely here—the book is not a lament on suffering, nor even a complaint to the gods, but a challenge to the one God, whose hallmark is justice and who is being charged with having violated His own standard (1978, p. 571).

Finally, that these creatures are real would seem to be quite conclusive, for Job 40:15 states explicitly that behemoth and Job are equally God’s creatures (Anderson, 1974, pp. 288-289). Speaking to Job, God said, “Behold now, **behemoth, which I made** as well as thee” (40:15, emp. added).

Scholars who take the mythological approach when interpreting Job 40-41 simply are making comparisons to **their** liking. They have been so captivated by “apparent” parallels in ancient literature that they have lost sight of the basic exegetical test—the relevance and appropriateness of the interpretation within the context of the book of Job (Gordis, 1978, p. 569).

IDENTIFYING BEHEMOTH AND LEVIATHAN

What are these flesh-and-blood creatures that Jehovah employed to impress upon Job his puniness when compared with God’s omnipotence? Older expositors like Thomas Aquinas thought that perhaps behemoth was the elephant, while leviathan was the whale (e.g., Gibson, 1905, p. 220). But since Samuel Bochart’s two-volume work *Hierozoicon, sive bipertitum opus de animalibus Sacrae Scripturae* was published in 1663, most modern critics have labeled the animals in question as the hippopotamus and the crocodile (Wilson, 1975, 25:1). Their basic claim is that the hippopotamus fits many of the characteristics of behemoth, while the crocodile aligns itself very closely with leviathan. This position has become so popular in modern times that few commentators have bothered to challenge the proposed identification of these beasts. In fact, even some versions of the Bible identify these creatures in the marginal notes or chapter headings as the hippopotamus and the crocodile.

When commenting on behemoth and leviathan, modern scholars who do not hold to the mythological view choose to make a general statement like, “Most identify these beasts as the hippo and the crocodile.” But then they give little if any evidence to support such a claim. Another disturbing trend is how “certain” many of the critics sound


when identifying these animals. For example, Gordis confidently stated: “Behemoth is to be identified as the hippopotamus and Leviathan as the crocodile” (1978, p. 571). Edgar Gibson wrote: “...there can be little doubt that” behemoth corresponds with the hippopotamus, and “there can be no doubt here leviathan means the crocodile” (1905, p. 223). In his practical book on Job, Theodore Epp confidently affirmed: “The first animal mentioned is the behemoth or the hippopotamus” and the leviathan “was a large crocodile” (1967, p. 175). Again, however, after making such definite statements, little evidence is offered, except for making a few comparisons between the animals. Actually, in more than one commentary the reader will find ample time spent answering objections, but little to none laying out concrete evidence supporting the author’s particular theory.

The Hippopotamus and the Crocodile?

While it is true that a few similarities do exist between the behemoth and the hippo, and between the leviathan and the crocodile, many of the descriptive details do not seem to fit either creature. These differences are so numerous and significant that they cannot be overlooked.

1. It has been suggested by some scholars that the word behemoth itself derives from a hypothetical Egyptian compound *p²-ib-mw* (pehemu), meaning “the ox of the water” (Mitchell, 1996, p. 127). But, as Marvin Pope observed, “no such word has yet been found in Coptic or Egyptian and no known Egyptian designation of the hippopotamus bears any close resemblance to the word Behemoth” (1965, p. 268).

2. God described the behemoth as a creature that “moveth his tail like a cedar” (40:17). The tail of a hippopotamus “would surely not have been compared to a cedar by a truthful though poetic observer like the author of chapters 38-39” (Cheyne, 1887, p. 56). The hippopotamus hardly could be described—with its little 6-8 inch stubby appendage—as having a stiff or large tail. The tail of the hippo is short and small like that of a pig, and is a mere twig in comparison with a cedar tree. But that fact has not prevented commentators from attempting to avoid the obvious. Edgar Gibson wrote: “The comparison of the short, stiff, muscular tail, to the strong and elastic cedar branch (which is probably intended) seems really to be perfectly natural,



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and need cause no difficulty” (1905, p. 221, parenthetical comment in orig.). Keil and Delitzsch also concluded that the tail should not be compared to the cedar tree, but the cedar branch (1996). Hartley has advocated the view that the tail (*zanab*) is being compared to a cedar tree, rather than to a branch, but that God really was referring to the genitals of the hippopotamus (1988, p. 525). However, there is no credible evidence that *zanab* was used euphemistically in Hebrew (e.g., as in regard to the genitals), while referring only to analogies in English or other languages (Pope, 1965, p. 324). It appears that Hartley and others have rejected the logical rendering of the passage in order to force a comparison between the behemoth and the hippopotamus.

3. The behemoth is said to be “chief [i.e., largest] of the ways of God” (40:19). Surely this would rule out the hippo, since at full size it is but seven feet high (Thompson and Bromling, n.d., p. 5). An elephant is twice the size of a hippopotamus, and yet even it was dwarfed by certain extinct creatures. For example, the creature once popularly referred to as *Brontosaurus* (now known more accurately as *Apatosaurus*) grew to weigh more than 30 tons, whereas the hippo weighs in at only around 4 tons (Jackson, 1983, p. 86).

4. The text indicates that no man could approach the behemoth with a sword (40:19), nor was he able to capture him (40:24). Yet as mentioned earlier, the hippopotamus was hunted frequently and captured successfully by the Egyptians (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 353). Hartley observed:

Egyptian pharaohs took pride in slaying a hippopotamus. There are numerous pictures in which the pharaoh, hunting a hippopotamus from a papyrus boat, is poised to hurl his harpoon into the animal’s opened mouth, thereby inflicting a fatal blow (1988, p. 524).

Egyptians even celebrated festivals known as “Harpooning the Hippopotamus” (Hartley, 1988, p. 524). Additionally, Egyptian monuments frequently picture single hunters attacking the hippo with a spear (McClintock and Strong, 1968, 1:728). How could one accurately compare the unapproachable and unseizable behemoth with the hippopotamus?

5. The leviathan also is represented as unapproachable and too mighty to be apprehended by men. The Lord said:

Canst thou draw out leviathan with a fishhook? Or press down his tongue with a cord? Canst thou put a rope into his nose? Or pierce his jaw through with a hook?... If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail; Nor the spear, the dart, nor the pointed shaft (41:1-2,26).

It is clear that the leviathan is represented as “too powerful and ferocious for mere man to dare to come to grips with it” (Pope, p. 268). He is “beyond the power of men to capture” (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 353). Leviathan is “peerless and fearless” (Strauss, 1976, p. 437). Contrariwise, the crocodile—like the hippopotamus—was hunted and captured by Egyptians. Herodotus discussed how they captured crocodiles (Rowley, 1980, p. 259), and how that, after being seized, some even were tamed (Jackson, 1983, p. 87). Such a scene hardly depicts the animal of Job 40:15ff.

6. According to Jehovah, the leviathan’s “sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning torches, and sparks of fire leap forth. Out of his nostrils a smoke goeth, as of a boiling pot and (burning) rushes. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth forth from his mouth” (Job 41:18-21). Some, such as Driver and Gray, have suggested that perhaps God did not intend to use **literal** imagery in these verses (1964, p. 366). However, as Henry Morris observed:

It is presumptuous merely to write all this off as mythological and impossible. To say that the leviathan could not have breathed fire is to say much more than we know about leviathans (or water dragons or sea serpents). Fire flies produce light, eels produce electricity, and bombardier beetles produce explosive chemical reactions. All of these involve complex chemical processes, and it does not seem at all impossible that an animal might be given the ability to breathe out certain gaseous fumes which, upon coming in contact with oxygen, would briefly ignite (1984, p. 359).

7. When leviathan “raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid: By reason of consternation they are beside themselves.... He beholdeth everything that is high: He is king over all the sons of pride” (Job 41:25,34). True, crocodiles are frightening creatures. Yet they are no more frightening standing up than when sitting, because their legs are so short. How could it thus be said of the crocodile that “he beholdeth everything that is high”—when he himself is so close to the ground?

8. God also described leviathan as an animal that cannot be availed by swords, spears, or darts (41:26). In fact, leviathan “laugheth at the rushing of the javelin” (41:29) and “his underparts are (like) sharp potsherds” (41:30). In commenting on these verses, Thompson and Bromling wrote:

Although the hide that covers the crocodile’s back is extremely thick and difficult to penetrate, this is not true of his belly. The crocodile is most vulnerable to spears and javelins on his underside; hence, it could not be said of him that “his underparts are like sharp potsherds” (n.d., p. 7).

The problem of identifying these two creatures was acknowledged by T.K. Cheyne long ago. Even though his mythological interpretation of Job 40-41 is faulty, he and others have observed correctly that neither the behemoth nor the leviathan corresponds well to the hippopotamus or the crocodile. If Edwin Good was speaking of present day animals, he was correct when he wrote: “There is simply no plausible natural counterpart to Leviathan” (1990, p. 361). Plus, “Eating grass like the cattle, having a tail in any way comparable to a cedar, having any contact with the mountains, and relating to the Jordan River, are all incompatibilities between Behemoth and the hippopotamus” (Wolfers, 1995, p. 191). Actually, the only support for identification of the behemoth as the hippopotamus is the biblical description “not of the animal but of its habitat” (Good, 1990, p. 358).

Concerning leviathan, Wolfers wrote: “Underside like sharpest potsherds, swimming in sea rather than river, and breathing fire and smoke, are incompatibilities between Leviathan and the crocodile” (p. 191). Job 41 is dominated by the idea of the beast’s utter invincibility. As Driver and Gray admitted: “There is nothing, unless we should so regard 41:7, that points necessarily or at all striking to the crocodile, and one or two points seem inconsistent with it” (1964, p. 353). In reality, there are more than just “one or two points” that are inconsistent with the suggestion that the leviathan is little more than a crocodile.

Behemoth as a Dinosaur; Leviathan as a Water-Living Reptile?

The evidence documents overwhelmingly that the behemoth and leviathan of Job 40-41 are flesh-and-blood animals, not imaginary creatures. Furthermore, the description of

these creatures does not fit that of any known animal present in the world today, regardless of attempts to equate them with the hippopotamus and the crocodile. Thus, they must be some type of extinct creature. But what kind? God's descriptions of behemoth and leviathan are compatible in every way with the descriptions we have of dinosaurs and dinosaur-like, water-living reptiles that roamed the Earth, not millions of years ago as some have suggested, but only a few thousand years ago. Moses wrote: "For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and **all** that in them is (Exodus 20:11, emp. added). Man, according to Christ, existed "from the beginning of the creation" (Mark 10:6; cf. Matthew 19:4). So did the dinosaurs.

This conclusion is supported by the available scientific evidence as well. In the early 1920s, distinguished archaeologist Samuel Hubbard uncovered Indian petroglyphs in the Hava Supai area of the Grand Canyon. Among them were representations of easily recognizable creatures, including the ibex, the buffalo—and the dinosaur. In fact, a reproduction of the dinosaur petroglyph graced the front cover of the scientific monograph authored by Dr. Hubbard and published under the auspices of the Oakland, California Museum of Natural History (where Dr. Hubbard served as the honorary curatory of archaeology, and which had sponsored the expedition as a result of funding by the highly respected philanthropist E.L. Doheny; see Hubbard, 1925). Upon seeing the petroglyph of the dinosaur, Dr. Hubbard remarked:

Taken all in all, the proportions are good. The huge reptile is depicted in the attitude in which man would be most likely to see it—reared on its hind legs, balancing with the long tail, either feeding or in fighting position, possibly defending itself against a party of men (as quoted in Verrill, 1954, pp. 155ff.).

In the book, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery and the Bible*, there is a reproduction of the Hava Supai dinosaur petroglyph, side-by-side with a representation from the evolutionists' texts of the dinosaur known as *Edmontosaurus* (see Taylor, 1989, p. 39). The two are indistinguishable. And that, in this context, raises an important question: How could Indians draw such accurate pictures of a creature they never had seen? It is evident that both biblical and scientific evidence support the coexistence of man and dinosaurs at some point in the not-too-distant past.

CONCLUSION

There are three possible explanations as to the exact identity of the biblical creatures known as behemoth and leviathan: (1) they are unreal, mythological monsters; (2) they are real animals that exist somewhere in the world today; or (3) they are some kind of real, yet extinct creature. The biblical and scientific evidence makes it clear that the third choice is the only correct option. Yet, sadly, as Henry Morris has observed:

Modern Bible scholars, for the most part, have become so conditioned to think in terms of the long ages of evolutionary geology that it never occurs to them that mankind once lived in the same world with the great animals that are now found only as fossils (1988, p. 115).

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INTRODUCING: OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

With the December 2000 issue of *Reason & Revelation*, we celebrated **twenty years** of publishing the journal. And what a marvelous twenty years it has been! Along the way, the work of Apologetics Press has flourished in ways we never could have dreamed. From the smallest of beginnings, it has grown into a work that—if we are to believe the mail that crosses our desks practically every business day—is a blessing to the lives of countless thousands of people, both young and old alike.

Over the last 2-3 years, however, the growth has been so incredible that, quite honestly, my staff and I have had trouble keeping up. Furthermore, as I discussed in my “Note from the Editor” in the November 2000 issue of *R&R*, Trevor Major, who had served with distinction as our Director of Scientific Information for almost fifteen years, resigned on October 1 in order to study toward his doctorate.

Just a year ago, in January 2000, Kyle Butt joined us as our new Director of Biblical Research. Upon Trevor’s departure, Kyle and I shared the day-to-day responsibilities associated with the work, which include researching, writing, and editing articles for our two monthly journals (*Reason and Revelation* for adults and *Discovery* for children), traveling on speaking assignments, authoring new books and tracts, producing new audio/video tapes, keeping the content updated and current for each of our amazingly popular Web sites (ApologeticsPress.org and DiscoveryMagazine.com), responding to the hundreds of requests for information and assistance that arrive in our offices by regular mail, e-mail, and telephone each month, etc. Because we have been serving as the only two full-time, professional staff members since Trevor’s departure, all of these responsibilities (and many more!) have been ones that we have had to assume by necessity.



As thrilled as we are about the unprecedented growth, Kyle and I have had to face the fact that there simply are not enough hours in the day for us to handle these tasks by ourselves. For example, the number of people subscribing to *Reason and Revelation* has more than tripled in the past two years, going from 4,000 subscribers in 1998 to almost 15,000 as of this month; the number of children receiving *Discovery* has doubled—going from 5,000 to almost 10,000! We therefore desperately needed another professional staff member to assist us. But, as most of our readers are well aware, we always have been extremely cautious in our hiring procedures. We want to ensure that the soundness of the work is protected for many years to come, so that the blessings derived from it may be available for future generations even yet unborn.

For approximately the past year, I have had my eye on an amazing young man by the name of Eric Lyons who, I believed, had the potential (just like Kyle) to be a valuable asset to our work. Eric, who is 24, holds an earned B.S. degree in Bible from Freed-Hardeman University, and is in the process of completing his M.Min. degree. He not only is a faithful Christian, but also a serious Bible student. As he neared completion of his graduate degree, I invited Eric and his wife Jana (and their small son, Elijah) to visit our facilities. I explained that we needed a new Director of Research, and asked if he might be interested in filling that position upon completion of his Master’s degree. He accepted my offer, and on January 1 began his new job with us. I have asked him to author this month’s feature article (the first of many, I assure you). I commend Eric to you unreservedly. Call or write him if he can be of assistance to you in any way. He, like Kyle, is available for speaking engagements.

Bert Thompson