

Dragons & Dinosaurs

When God Speaks – Part V

Job 40:15-42:6

Introduction

God has finally spoken to Job – and His speech has startled us all. While we thought His appearance would bring some form of answer or divine explanation, God has instead appeared to Job, not to answer questions, but to ask them – seventy-seven in all.

These are questions that effectively took Job on a tour of the universe – as high as the constellations and down as to the smallest raindrop. Then, God took Job to the zoo, where He showed him a dozen animals – the strong, the shy, the sturdy, the strange, and more.

In so doing, God revealed to Job that just as He was in control of the animal’s habitat, He was in control of Job’s. If a bird had not escaped the notice of God – from the eagle to raven – Job had not slipped off the divine radar and out of sight.

God may be asking questions, but His questions are providing deep answers and rich assurances.

The Creator, who spoke the first words of human history, is deserving of the last word in our own hearts. And not surprisingly, Job is left at the end of God’s first series of questions with his hand over his mouth in muted awe and humility and submission . . . and reassurance!

Until studying this book with you, I had no idea how the creation of God could bring such comfort from God. I now understand a little better why Peter would connect God’s creative power to assurance and hope in suffering, when he wrote,

. . . those . . . who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (1 Peter 4:19)

Our hope in suffering is literally bound up in the truth that God is the Creator of heaven and earth and everything and everyone in them.

This is what God is doing with Job. He is saying, “Job, you can trust Me in the midst of your suffering because I, the Creator God, will do what is right.”

Frankly, if you are having trouble with the ways of God, take some time and notice the ways of God through His creation. Simply put, for some of you today, one of the best things you could do for your spiritual refreshment is to take a drive through the countryside. Drive south down to Fuquay-Varina and then on highway 42 – it is beautiful countryside. On the way back, stop at the new Dairy Queen in Fuquay – that will enrich your spirit too!

Sit out on the deck at sunset. Take a bike ride or a hike in the woods. Go camping overnight. My version of camping is a Holiday Inn in the mountains, but it works for me. Sit on your porch or walk around a nearby lake or pond. And do not just walk, look around, observe, listen and wonder – you just might be led to worship God with fresh perspective and gratitude.

David Atkinson challenged the believer when he wrote in his commentary on Job, “Sometimes it is by enjoying the Creator’s handiwork that we often begin to feel again the touch of the Creator’s hand.”¹

This is God’s panoramic challenge to Job. “Have you really thought about snowflakes and raindrops and dew and wind? Have you considered the

currents of oceans and the clouds passing overhead? Do you know who rules the planets and directs the lightning and the thunder? What about the lion crouching in his lair or the ostrich with her head in the sand? Can you figure out all the ways and wonders of My creation? I made all of it. And I made you – down to the last detail! If I would take so much creative energy in thinking up snowflake designs, what do you imagine I took in thinking up you?”

“If I care about the sparrows, imagine how I care about the saints:

- you – sons and daughters of My own grace and glory (John 1:12; Galatians 4:7);
- you – new creations by My Spirit’s power (II Corinthians 5:17).”

I wish I could deliver to you half of what I have learned about the universe and the animal kingdom over the course of this study. It is proof to me all over again that I was not really listening in high school science class; I really did deserve those bad grades.

As we come to a close of this section when God speaks comfort to Job, God will focus His final words on two additional animals. These are magnificent illustrations of God’s power and providence. The final animals described to Job are the Behemoth and the Leviathan.

The Behemoth

Turn to Job chapter 40. In verse 15, God says to Job,

Behold now, Behemoth, which I made as well as you . . .

Now, if you are like me, you immediately think, “All right, from the last trip to the zoo I knew a little bit about horses and ostriches and donkeys and ravens, but what in the world is a Behemoth?”

The word “Behemoth” is really just a transliteration of the Hebrew word “Behemoth”. In fact, it is actually a plural form of a word we would normally translate “beasts”.

Because of this plural form, some believe that God is only talking in general, in this chapter and the next, about large animals. However, He specifically describes one particular animal in view in this chapter, and in chapter 41 He will specifically describe another animal that we will look at in a moment.

Scholars debate long and loud about what animal this is. In fact, many evangelical authors have

suggested this is the hippopotamus or the elephant or the water buffalo.

The problem is that the description does not quite fit these animals entirely. Notice Job 40:16-17.

Behold now, his strength in his loins and his power in the muscles of his belly.

He bends his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together.

Hippos and elephants have tails that do not resemble a cedar tree. Continue to Job 40:18-19a.

His bones are tubes of bronze; his limbs are like bars of iron.

He is the first of the ways of God . . .

In other words, this land animal, which also enjoys the water, is first in rank – not according to chronology, but size and strength.ⁱⁱ

In fact, if the Jordan raged toward him he would not be moved at all (Job 40:23). And no one can catch him (Job 40:24).

I would agree with scholars who believe that this animal was a kind of dinosaur. There would be the tail like a tree and yet, “he eats grass like an ox” (Job 40:15b). We get the picture of the greatest land animal known to mankind.

You might say, “But I’ve never seen the word ‘dinosaur’ in the Bible.”

This is true.

The King James Bible was first translated in 1611 and several revisions have followed since, along with a number of newer English translations that are also committed to translating from the original languages.

It was not until 1842, however, that the word “dinosaur” was first coined by Sir Richard Owen, a famous British anatomist who directed the British museum. He originated the word for these huge creatures that were being excavated. The word “dino” means “terrible” and the word “sauros” means “lizard,” so he coined a word for these “terrible lizards”. After viewing the bones of Iguanodon and Magalosaurus, he realized that he was examining the remains of a unique group of reptiles that had not been classified before.

We could easily translate “Behemoth” as “great beast” or “dinosaur”.

We are not sure which dinosaur God was referring to. One author suggests it could be the Brachiosaurus, which weighed 90,000 pounds and was 75 feet long and over 40 feet tall.

The problem for the average person today is that after a century of evolutionary conditioning, we have been taught to believe that dinosaurs existed at least ten million years before mankind. The bones are dated using indirect methods that have been proven to be unstable and inconsistent.

This is not to mention, believer, that according to the creation account, Adam and Eve were created on the same day as the beasts of the earth, right? So, we need to do away with six literal twenty-four hour cycles and get millions of years in between each day so that they are not literal days, but eras. Then we have time for the universe to be as old as it seems to be. We have time for the fossils to age millions of years.

According to Genesis chapter 1, the world and the universe were created with all the appearances of age, for our benefit. Trees were bearing fruit immediately upon creation. Light from the sun, moon, and stars was immediately cascading to earth. A man and a woman were immediately walking and talking – it was not the egg first, but the chicken.

Even bones that seem to be millions of years old were fossilized quickly by the right amounts of pressure, sediment, and water – explainable only in terms of a universal flood. This explains how fossilized sea creatures have been discovered on mountain tops and in deserts.

Ladies and gentlemen, I do not interpret the scriptures through the lens of the universe; I interpret the universe through the lens of scripture.

Let me read from one account that will not be in your child's science textbook any time soon. It clearly indicates that dinosaur bones are not as old as we are being told by the evolutionists.

Seventeen years ago, scientists from the University of Montana found T-Rex bones that were not entirely fossilized. The sections of the bones were considered fresh bone. If these bones were really millions of years old, then the blood cells would have already totally disintegrated. A report by one of these scientists recorded, "The lab was filled with murmurs of excitement for I had focused on something inside the vessels that none of us had ever noticed before: tiny round objects, translucent red with a dark center . . . red blood cells. Blood cells are mostly water and could not possibly have stayed preserved in the 65-million-old tyrannosaur. They were indeed hemoglobin fragments."ⁱⁱⁱ

This discovery never made it to the local PTA meetings.

Still many have suggested that Behemoth in Job chapter 40 and Leviathan in chapter 41 are simply poetic creations to speak of the power of God. They are not to be taken literally.

I do.

- For one thing, all the animals presented to Job as proof of God's providence thus far, are real. The only one we have never seen is the aurochs – the wild ox which is now extinct.
- Secondly, the detailed description of the anatomy of these two animals suggests real animals.
- Thirdly, both animals are mentioned elsewhere in Scripture apart from any mythological context: Psalm 104:26 speaks of the Leviathan playing in the ocean and Joel 1 speaks of the Behemoth panting in need of God's provision.
- Fourthly, and most importantly, God said in Job 40, "I created the Behemoth just as I created you."

That is good enough for me.

The problem is that God implies Job already knows about the Behemoth. Look again at Job 40:15a, which says, "Behold now . . ." or "Look now . . .". This huge animal was already apparent in the life of Job.

Job was probably grateful that God created the Behemoth to eat grass.

This massive animal that is extinct in our generation evidently was not extinct in Job's generation.

I find it interesting that stone carvings and drawings of people who lived several thousand years ago that show them hunting mammoths and antelope – even drawings by American native Indians – end up in textbooks, but not their drawings of huge animals that look very much like dinosaurs.

I need to warn you that if you have trouble believing that God could create the huge dinosaur to roam the earth at the same time of mankind, then you are really going to have trouble with the final animal God mentions to Job.

The Leviathan

God will describe a water creature that is nothing short of a fire breathing dragon. It is called the Leviathan. Notice verse 1 of Job chapter 41.

*Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?
Or press down his tongue with a cord?*

By the way, this is the longest, most detailed description of an animal anywhere in the Bible.

Continue to Job 41:2.

Can you put a rope in his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook?

Skip to Job 41:7-8.

Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears?

Lay your hand on him; remember the battle; you will not do it again!

Look at Job 41:10.

No one is so fierce that he dares to arouse him; who then is he that can stand before Me?

Here is the point Job. Note Job 41:11.

Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.

In other words, “I, the creator of Leviathan, am the controller of Leviathan. You cannot control him, but I can.”

The Lord goes on in Job 41:13-16.

Who can strip off his outer armor? Who can come within his double mail?

Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth there is terror.

His strong scales are his pride, shut up as with a tight seal.

One is so near to another that no air can come between them.

Now get ready for this in Job 41:18-20.

His sneezes flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

Out of his mouth go burning torches; sparks of fire leap forth.

Out of his nostrils smoke goes forth as from a boiling pot and burning rushes.

This is nothing less than a fire breathing creature. You might say, “No way!”

Well, explain the bombardier beetle, which fires at its enemies, bombs made up of powerful chemicals stored and mixed inside its body.^{iv}

Explain to me how a firefly can have a chemical reaction and convert chemical energy to light energy without burning a hole in its abdomen. And it does this with 90% efficiency, where an ordinary light bulb burns with only about 10% efficiency.^v

What we do know is that dinosaur bones have been excavated that show a strange protrusion with an internal cavity on the top of the head which some speculate served as the mixing chamber for combustible gases that would ignite when exhaled into the outside oxygen.^{vi}

Notice Job 41:21.

His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes forth from his mouth.

Isaiah called this animal,

. . . the dragon that lives in the sea. (Isaiah 27:1)

The Leviathan was a real animal, more than likely now extinct. But undoubtedly to Job’s world, it was the largest and fiercest of all the beasts that lived in the water.

I think it is an interesting thought that God has concluded His tour of the animal world by ending with the dragon – the fire-breathing, unstoppable, untamable, fierce and fearful dragon.

Could it be – and we do not know for certain – that God ends with this animal because it is this animal throughout scripture that is used to represent that old serpent – the dragon – Satan?

In Revelation, Satan is referred to as the “red dragon” for his lust after blood and killing. John writes in Revelation 12 of the tribulation period,

. . . Michael and his angels waged war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Follow this,

. . . the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:7-10)

The dragon is the accuser of the brethren. One day he will be defeated by the power of God, but now, he accuses the brethren.

This is the same dragon who accused Job. That is how the book started.

Now the book is coming to an end with a reference to God's victory and power over the dragon – "He is under My heaven." (Job 41:11)

I do not know if Job caught this or if he lacked the revelation that we have to show the end of the dragon, but I do know the great dragon who accused Job would have been listening to this conversation between God and Job. He would not have missed it.^{vii}

The dragon knows his end – he knows his doom is sure.

Why would God choose to talk about these giant and fierce animals?

- They are intimidating;
- they are uncontrollable;
- they are untamable;
- they seem to rule over everything they encounter.

No, all the powers and forces and creatures of heaven and hell are under God's control.

This trip around the universe and the field trip to the zoo changed Job's attitude and spirit.

One hour or two in the presence of God and God became everything and Job found his security and peace, not in the storm, but in the Sovereign who rides the winds of the storm.

Sarah Edwards was the faithful wife of Jonathan Edwards, one of the key architects of the great spiritual awakening of the 1700s. Just after assuming the role of president of Princeton College, he died unexpectedly from smallpox. Actually, from a reaction to a smallpox inoculation he had received one month earlier. His wife Sarah wrote their daughter Esther a note. Esther was still grieving the loss of her husband six months earlier. Sarah wrote, "My dear child, what shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod and lay our hands upon our mouths (a reference to Job chapter 40). The Lord has done this. He has made me adore His goodness that we had your father so long. But my God lives; and He has my heart."^{viii}

- God created everything.
- God controls everything He has created.
- Everything God created, He controls to bring about His ultimate and perfect cause.

Job's Response for Us to Follow

Our response is to be like Job's. It was five-fold.

1. First, there was affirmation.

Look at Job 42:2.

I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

In other words, "Lord, when You start something, no one can stop it. Lord, when You plan something, no one can hold it back."

2. Secondly, there was awe.

Continue to Job 42:3.

Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

3. Thirdly, there was attention.

Notice Job 42:4.

Hear now, and I will speak; I will ask You [the questions], and You instruct me.

4. Fourthly, there was adoration.

Look at Job 42:5.

I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You;

5. Finally, there was genuine apology.

Note Job 42:6.

Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.

Job has finally come back into fellowship with God. He has come home.

I read recently in one of my commentaries on the book of Job about a family of five. This mom, dad, and three sons were personal friends with the commentator. The oldest son was greatly gifted intellectually and musically. Along with being a fine young scholar, he was also a splendid violinist. Earlier in his high school years, the father – a medical doctor – had some trouble with the boy's spirit of submission. But we know how we will do with our gifted children – we will give them room; cut them a little too much slack. A proud streak soon accompanied this boy's independent spirit.

Upon graduation from high school, this son was accepted into a prestigious school on the West Coast – a very expensive, but excellent university known for its academics. The physician father paid the full tuition that year, and the boy began his first year many miles from home. It was not long before he started running around with a tough crowd. He continued his musicianship – playing violin in the school's orchestra – and did well academically. But

while he was out there, he cultivated even further a rebellious spirit.

After completing his freshman year, this boy returned home, bringing his proud spirit of selfishness with him. It was not long into the summer before his mom, dad, and two younger brothers realized they had a real problem getting along. The conflicts intensified. His arrogant, stubborn, and mean-spirited attitude disrupted the family harmony.

Late one afternoon, the father had had enough. He called the young man into his study, closed the door, pointed to the large leather chair, and said firmly, “Sit down.”

He then delivered a speech the boy would never forget. “Everything you own is mine. I bought every stitch of clothing you wear and everything that hangs in your closet. Your car in the driveway is mine – I paid for it. The money in your pocket came from my account.

“Now, I want you to empty your pockets and your wallet on my desk. Leave everything that is mine in this house, and I want you to leave. Leave all your clothing, give me the car keys, and oh, by the way, also leave your violin – I bought that too. Leave everything behind that you have been using, which I am now claiming as rightfully mine. You can keep the clothes on your back and the shoes on your feet, but that is it. There is the door, you can leave now.

“By the way, if you decide to change your attitude and come back into this home with a cooperative, submissive spirit, you need to know that we will accept you and we will welcome you back as a part of this family, but not until. I love you and always will, but you are not the son we raised and I am not putting up with it any longer.”

The father told this commentator that the boy stood defiantly to his feet, put all his money on the desk, walked to the door, and left everything without saying one word – not even goodbye. He proudly walked to the sidewalk out front, took a left, and got about three blocks down the street and then stood

there motionless with his hands in his empty pockets. He began to think it through as night was falling. He thought about all he would be facing, the street life he knew nothing about, and everything he was leaving behind. No money, no prospects, no car, no job, no food, no college, no sophomore year ahead of him – after his dad had taken everything he owned that was rightfully his, this young man realized he had nothing left.

When it was almost dark, he turned around, walked back home with his proud head now hanging down and a heart that was truly repentant. He knocked on his own front door. His dad opened the door with his mom standing next to his two younger brothers, who had already been thinking, “Who is going to get his room?”

Then came the words, “I am sorry . . . I realize I really need you all and love you all . . . I’ve been wrong and I want you all to forgive my attitude and spirit.”

They reached out and embraced him and welcomed him home.^{ix}

Here is Job, knocking on the door, as it were, with his proud head hanging low and his repentant heart now submissive to the unchangeable, unknowable, unspeakable, unsearchable heart and mind of God. I hear him saying, “Lord, I was wrong to demand my way; to command You to answer me. In spite of all my suffering, I had no right to challenge You or condemn You as unjust. Everything I have and everything I am, You gave me. You made me.”

Friends, we, like Job, believe our solution is an answer. God’s answer is our surrender to His sovereignty; submission to His word, His ways, and His Spirit.

The hymn writer put it this way,

Have Thine own way Lord! Have Thine own way!

Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.

Mold me and make me after Thy will,

While I am waiting, yielded and still.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 12/2/2007 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ David Atkinson, The Message of Job (InterVarsity Press, 1991), p. 147.

ⁱⁱ Roy Zuck, Job (Moody, 1978), p. 179.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ken Ham, The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved (Master Books, 2000), p. 18.

^{iv} “Bombardier Beetle,” <http://www.wikipedia.com>.

^v Ibid., “Firefly”.

^{vi} Henry Morris, The Remarkable Record of Job (Master Books, 1988), p. 118.

^{vii} Ibid., p. 123.

^{viii} John Piper, http://www.desiringgod.org/Job_Wrestling.

^{ix} Charles Swindoll, Job: A Man of Heroic Endurance (W Publishing, 2004), p. 293.