



DRAGONS AND DINOSAURS

Job 40:15-42:6

Creation is a wonderful teacher. It is a powerful witness to the might and wisdom of the Creator. Observing what He *has* done comforts us with the assurance that what He *is* doing in our lives is fully within His control and according to His wise purposes.

God has finally spoken to Job. And His speech has surprised us all. Instead of showing up to provide answers, God began asking questions—seventy-seven in all.

These questions effectively took Job on a tour of the universe, from the constellations down to the smallest raindrop. Then God took Job to the zoo, where He revealed that He had created the animals' habitats and instincts; and if a bird—from an eagle to a raven—never escaped the notice of God, Job could be sure he had not slipped off the divine radar either.

God might have been asking questions, but His questions provided deep answers and wonderful assurances. The apostle Peter tells those who suffer to remember God's power in creation. He writes in 1 Peter 4:19, "Let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator."¹

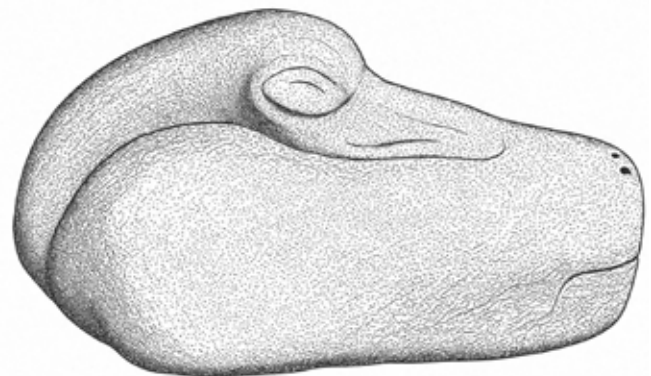
So why don't you take some time to walk around the block or take a hike in the woods. Sit out on your back porch or visit a nearby lake. And don't just walk around but look around. Observe, listen, and marvel at the creative detail and design in God's creation. One author wrote; "Sometimes it is by enjoying the Creator's handiwork that we often begin to feel again the touch of the Creator's hand."

Well, God is about to point out to Job two final animals, and they happen to be the largest land and sea animals in all of creation.

In Job 40:15, God says to Job, "Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you; he eats grass like an ox." This Hebrew word *behemoth* simply means "great beast."

Now I have been surprised by all the scholars who have suggested that the behemoth was a hippopotamus or an elephant. Those animals do not come close to fitting the description we are given here in verses 16-17: "Behold, his strength in his loins, and his power in the muscles of his belly. He makes his tail stiff like a cedar." Hippos and elephants don't have tails that resemble cedar trees.

The description continues:



5 mina weight in shape of a duck



“The sinews of his thighs are knit together. His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like bars of iron. He is the first of the works of God.” (verses 17-19)

In other words, he is first in strength and size.²

God says that if the Jordan River flooded, it would not bother the behemoth at all (verse 23). No one is big or strong enough to catch him (verse 24).

God is describing the largest land animal He ever created—the dinosaur. It has a tail like a cedar tree but eats grass like an ox.

Now maybe you’re saying, “Well, I’ve never seen the word *dinosaur* in the Bible.” And that’s true. It was not until 1841 that the word was coined by Sir Richard Owen, Director of the British Museum of Natural History. After viewing the bones of Iguanodon and Magalosaurus, he realized these were the remains of a unique group of reptiles that had never been classified before. He called them *dinosaurs*, meaning “terrible lizards.”

Now we don’t know which dinosaur God was pointing out to Job. It could have been a Brachiosaurus, which could weigh 90,000 pounds and reach 75 feet in length.

The average person today has been taught that dinosaurs existed at least ten million years before humans. But according to Genesis 1, the land animals were created mature and fully functioning on the sixth day—the same day Adam and Eve were created.

And here God implies that Job is already aware of the dinosaur. He tells him in verse 15 to “behold” the behemoth—to look at him. So evidently this massive land animal, extinct in our generation, was roaming the earth in Job’s day.

I found it interesting that stone carvings and cave drawings of people several thousand years ago show them hunting mammoths and antelope, and those famous drawings ended up in textbooks. Well, on those same cave walls were drawings of huge animals that look like dinosaurs, and those drawings were conveniently left out. Beloved, we do not interpret

Scripture through the lens of the universe; we interpret the universe through the lens of Scripture.

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But let me tell you, if you have trouble believing God could create a huge dinosaur to roam around at the same time as humans, then you are going to have a lot of trouble with this final animal God now speaks of here in chapter 41. God is about to describe the largest water creature, and it happens to be a fire-breathing dragon! And we are given here the most detailed description of any animal in all of Scripture, so hold on to your hat.

God’s description of leviathan is highlighted by questions for Job:

“Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook or press down his tongue with a cord? Can you put a rope in his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook?” (verses 1-2)

He continues in verses 7-8:

“Can you fill his skin with harpoons or his head with fishing spears? Lay your hands on him; remember the battle—you will not do it again!”



Then in verse 10 the Lord says of this creature, “No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him up. Who then is he who can stand before me?” God is saying, “Job, I am the creator of the terrifying leviathan, and I alone can control him.”

Now note this amazing description:

“His sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn [that is, his eyes are blood-red]. Out of his mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap forth. ... His breath kindles coals, and a flame comes forth from his mouth.” (verses 18-19, 21)

This is the description of a fire-breathing dragon!

People might say, “There is no way for an animal to breath fire.” Well, what about the bombardier beetle, which fires at its enemies explosive bombs made of powerful chemicals stored and mixed inside its body?

And what about the firefly, which has an internal chemical reaction, converting chemical energy into light energy without burning a hole in its abdomen?

Here is a creature that once brought terror to the world of Job but is now extinct. Isaiah calls the leviathan “the dragon that is in the sea” (Isaiah 27:1).

Now why would God end his words of comfort to Job by pointing out these two massive creatures? Could it be because they were fierce and cruel and untamable—like the events that had occurred in Job’s life? Beloved, this was God’s way of reminding Job that everything God created He can control, in order to bring about His ultimate plans for our lives.

And that’s exactly the lesson Job understands. He responds to God, “I know that you can do all things, and

that no purpose of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2). Here is Job, bowing before God and with a repentant heart expressing awe and reverence and a submissive spirit to his glorious, all-powerful creator God.

And that is our solution today. In the face of unexplainable suffering, in the presence of difficult situations, let us join Job in saying what the hymn writer expressed so well:

*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.*³

“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.” Reflect on Job’s conclusion about God’s character. Make a list of those characteristics and then a list of the sufferings you’re enduring. Which list do you ponder the most? Why?

Who in your life might benefit from learning to view their suffering with a correct understanding of God’s character and His intentions? How can you help this person gain that insight and perhaps the hope to persevere?

¹ David Atkinson, *The Message of Job* (InterVarsity, 1991), 147.

² Roy B. Zuck, *Job* (Moody, 1978), 179.

³ Adelaide A. Pollard, “Have Thine Own Way, Lord!”

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