

JOB 41

A CLOSE LOOK AT LEVIATHAN

Having given an example, in the last chapter, of the sovereignty of His power in the creation and government of the largest of land creatures; the Lord here assumed the same sovereignty over the sea, as He spoke of a terrible monster by the name of leviathan – the largest of all ocean creatures. An awe-inspiring description is given of this animal, which fills this whole chapter from beginning to end. Although we are not entirely certain what kind of creature leviathan really was, we do know that he was definitely not a whale, as has been suggested by many commentators; for whales do not have scales (verse 15), nor do they lie upon the miry ocean floor (verse 30), nor do they breathe smoke out of their nostrils (verse 20) – just to reference a few of the specific details that the Lord gave concerning this monster. Some believe that leviathan may have been a now-extinct sea dragon, such as a pliosaur. But it is also not outside the range of possibility for this massive aquatic creature to have been something like the fearsome *Sarcosuchus*, which was a terrible saltwater “super-crocodile” type of monster.

The description of leviathan was intended to further convince Job of his own weakness, and of Jehovah’s Almighty power. Job was made to see how utterly unable he was to master leviathan. He could not catch him like a little fish with a hook. He had no bait that could attract him, no hook that could catch him, and no fish-line that could draw him out of the water. Neither could Job make him his prisoner, nor force him to cry for mercy, nor compel him to surrender himself. Leviathan knew his own strength too well to make supplications of peace or a covenant to be a servant, upon conditions of his life being spared. Job could not entice him into a cage, and keep him there like a bird for children to play with. There are creatures so little as to be easily restrained thus, and triumphed over; but leviathan was not one of these! He was the terror of mankind, and not a creature for his entertainment and diversion. Job was unable to have leviathan served up on his dinner-table; he and his companions could not make a banquet of him, for his flesh was too strong to be fit for food – and even if it were not, he would not be easily caught. Fishermen could not destroy him; nor could they catch him like a whale, with their fish-spears and harpoons. He kept out of the reach of their instruments of slaughter; and even if they did touch him, they could not pierce his body. And so the hope of capturing or killing him was in vain; there was no use even attempting it. Although some brave men might have ventured to go about seizing him, this monster was so formidable

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *The Lord challenges Job to subdue and tame leviathan if he can; and since he cannot do this, he must confess that he is utterly unable to stand before him – verses 1-10*
- ❖ *He gives several particular examples of the strength and terror of leviathan, in order to convince Job of His own power and majesty – verses 11-34*

that the very sight of him would terrify them and cause even the boldest of them to faint dead away! Job was told to lay his hand upon this creature at his own peril. And hereby he was admonished to make his peace with the Lord, and not to proceed in his controversy with Him – remembering what such a battle would certainly end in, just as if he attacked leviathan. Indeed, how unable he was to contend with the Almighty One! No one was so fierce or so foolhardy that he dared to stir up leviathan, for it was a sure fact that the terrible creature would certainly be too hard for them; and who, then, is able to stand before God – either to impeach and arraign His proceedings, or to out-face the power of His wrath? If the inferior creatures that are put under the dominion of man keep us in such awe, then how terrible must the majesty of our great Lord be! He has sovereign dominion over us, even though man has been so long in rebellion against Him. Who can stand before Him? If a created thing like leviathan was so tremendous, then what must the majestic Creator be like?



The description that was here given of leviathan was most striking and magnificent. How beautifully are the various features of this vast creature set forth, and how grand and lofty is the account of him! Yet when we call to mind that even this huge animal lay at the mercy of God, and could have been as easily destroyed by his Maker as the smallest fly or worm; then how astonishingly great and powerful must the Lord Jehovah be! Ought we not to humble ourselves to the dust of the earth, in token of our nothingness before the Lord? And should we not, above all things, seek the favor of Him to Whom our very breath belongs? Under a humbling sense of our own vileness, let us revere the Divine Majesty, cease from our own wisdom, give all glory to our majestic God, and cast ourselves entirely upon His free grace in Jesus Christ!

But there is another lesson that we may gather from the study of this chapter. The Lord created behemoth and leviathan; and did He not feed them, sustain them, and appoint the boundaries of their time and existence? And will he not feed, sustain, and comfort His own redeemed sons and daughters? O my soul! Cast all your cares upon Christ, because He cares for you! “Fear not,” He has said; “I am with thee.” And surely if the Lord so carefully governs the greatest powers in earth and sea, then everything that concerns His children must also be subject to His power, and not dare to resist His command. We belong to Him, both by creation and redemption; and surely He will care for those whom He has purchased by His blood and righteousness!

Thank You, Lord, for not only feeding and sustaining us, but also for the comfort and sure confidence that we enjoy in Your sovereignty, grace, and goodness! Amen.