

# CHAPTER 41

The description here given of the leviathan, a very large, strong, formidable fish, or water-animal, is designed yet further to convince Job of his own impotency, and of God's omnipotence, that he might be humbled for his folly in making so bold with him as he had done.

**I.** To convince Job of his own weakness he is here challenged to subdue and tame this leviathan if he can, and make himself master of him (v. 1-9), and, since he cannot do this, he must own himself utterly unable to stand before the great God (v. 10).

**II.** To convince Job of God's power and terrible majesty several particular instances are here given of the strength and terror of the leviathan, which is no more than what God has given him, nor more than he has under his check, (v. 11, 12). The face of the leviathan is here described to be terrible (v. 12, 14), his scales close (v. 15-17), his breath and neesings sparkling (v. 18-21), his flesh firm (v. 22-24), his strength and spirit, when he is attacked, insuperable (v. 25-30), his motions turbulent, and disturbing to the waters (v. 31, 32), so that, upon the whole, he is a very terrible creature, and man is no match for him (v. 33, 34).

## <BIB>JOB 41:1-10

### DESCRIPTION OF LEVIATHAN

Whether this leviathan be a whale or a crocodile is a great dispute among the learned, which I will not undertake to determine; some of the particulars agree more easily to the one, others to the other; both are very strong and fierce, and the power of the Creator appears in them. The ingenious Sir Richard Blackmore, though he admits the more received opinion concerning the *behemoth*, that it must be meant of the *elephant*, yet agrees with the learned Bochart's notion of the *leviathan*, that it is the *crocodile*, which was so well known in the river of Egypt. I confess that that which inclines me rather to understand it of the whale is not only because it is much larger and a nobler animal, but because, in the history

of the Creation, there is such an express notice taken of it as is not of any other species of animals whatsoever (<sup>1012</sup>Genesis 1:21, *God created great whales*), by which it appears, not only that whales were well known in those parts in the time of Moses, who lived a little after Job, but that the creation of whales was generally looked upon as a most illustrious proof of the eternal power and godhead of the Creator; and we may conjecture that this was the reason (for otherwise it seems unaccountable) why Moses there so particularly mentions the creation of the whales, because God had so lately insisted upon the bulk and strength of that creature than of any other, as the proof of his power; and the *leviathan* is here spoken of as an inhabitant of the sea (v. 31), which the crocodile is not; and <sup>10425</sup>Psalms 104:25, 26, *there in the great and wide sea, is that leviathan*. Here in these verses,

**I.** He shows how unable Job was to master the leviathan.

**1.** That he could not catch him, as a little fish, with angling, v. 1, 2. He had no bait wherewith to deceive him, no hook wherewith to catch him, no fish-line wherewith to draw him out of the water, nor a thorn to run through his gills, on which to carry him home.

**2.** That he could not make him his prisoner, nor force him to cry for quarter, or surrender himself at discretion, v. 3, 4. “He knows his own strength too well to *make many supplications to thee*, and to *make a covenant with thee* to be thy servant on condition thou wilt save his life.”

**3.** That he could not entice him into a cage, and keep him there as a bird for the children to play with, v. 5. There are creatures so little, so weak, as to be easily restrained thus, and triumphed over; but the leviathan is not one of these: he is made to be the terror, not the sport and diversion, of mankind.

**4.** That he could not have him served up to his table; he and his companions could not make a banquet of him; his flesh is too strong to be fit for food, and, if it were not, he is not easily caught.

**5.** That they could not enrich themselves with the spoil of him: *Shall they part him among the merchants*, the bones to one, the oil to another? If they can catch him, they will; but it is probable that the art of fishing for whales was not brought to perfection then, as it has been since.

6. That they could not destroy him, could not *fill his head with fish-spears*, v. 7. He kept out of the reach of their instruments of slaughter, or, if they touched him, they could not touch him to the quick.

7. That it was to no purpose to attempt it: *The hope of taking him is in vain*, v. 9. If men go about to seize him, so formidable is he that the very sight of him will appal them, and make a stout man ready to faint away: *Shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?* and will not that deter the pursuers from their attempt? Job is told, at his peril, to *lay his hand upon him*, v. 8. “Touch him if thou dare; *remember the battle*, how unable thou art to encounter such a force, and what is therefore likely to be the issue of the battle, *and do no more*, but desist from the attempt.” It is good to remember the battle before we engage in a war, and put off the harness in time if we foresee it will be to no purpose to gird it on. Job is hereby admonished not to proceed in his controversy with God, but to make his peace with him, remembering what the battle will certainly end in if he come to an engagement. See ~~2370~~ Isaiah 27:4, 5.

**II.** Thence he infers how unable he was to contend with the Almighty. *None is so fierce*, none so fool-hardy, *that he dares to stir up the leviathan* (v. 10), it being known that he will 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 feet of man, and over whom he has dominion, keep us in awe thus, how terrible must the majesty of our great Lord be, who has a sovereign dominion over us and against whom man has been so long in rebellion! *Who can stand before him when once he is angry?*

## ~~8411~~ JOB 41:11-34

### DESCRIPTION OF LEVIATHAN

God, having in the foregoing verses shown Job how unable he was to deal with the leviathan, here sets forth his own power in that massy mighty creature. Here is,

**I.** God's sovereign dominion and independency laid down, v. 11.

**1.** That he is indebted to none of his creatures. If any pretend he is indebted to them, let them make their demand and prove their debt, and they shall receive it in full and not by composition: “*Who has prevented me?*” that is, “who has laid any obligations upon me by any services he has done me? Who can pretend to be before-hand with me? If any were, I would not long be behind-hand with them; I would soon repay them.” The apostle quotes this for the silencing of all flesh in God's presence, <sup>415</sup>Romans 11:35. *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* As God does not inflict upon us the evils we have deserved, so he does bestow upon us the favours we have not deserved.

**2.** That he is the rightful Lord and owner of all the creatures: “*Whatsoever is under the whole heaven, animate or inanimate, is mine* (and particularly this leviathan), at my command and disposal, what I have an incontestable property in and dominion over.” All is his; we are his, all we have and do; and therefore we cannot make God our debtor; but *of thy own, Lord, have we given thee*. All is his, and therefore, if he were indebted to any, he has wherewithal to repay them; the debt is in good hands. All is his, and therefore he needs not our services, nor can he be benefited by them. *If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is mind and the fulness thereof,* <sup>416</sup>Psalms 50:12.

**II.** The proof and illustration of it, from the wonderful structure of the leviathan, v. 12.

**1.** The parts of his body, the power he exerts, especially when he is set upon, and the comely proportion of the whole of him, are what God will not conceal, and therefore what we must observe and acknowledge the power of God in. Though he is a creature of monstrous bulk, yet there is in him a *comely proportion*. In our eye beauty lies in that which is small (*inest sua gratia parvis — little things have a gracefulness all their own*) because we ourselves are so; but in God's eye even the leviathan is comely; and, if he pronounce even the whale, event he crocodile, so, it is not for us to say of any of the works of his hands that they are ugly of ill-favoured; it is enough to say so, as we have cause, of our own works. God here goes about to give us an anatomical view (as it were) of the leviathan; for his works appear most beautiful and excellent, and his wisdom and power appear most in them, when they are taken in pieces and viewed in their several parts and proportions.

(1.) The leviathan, even *prima facie* — at first sight, appears formidable and inaccessible, v. 13, 14. Who dares come so near him while he is alive as to discover or take a distinct view of *the face of the garment*, the skin with which he is clothed as with a garment, so near him as to bridle him like a horse and so lead him away, so near him as to be within reach of his jaws, which are like *a double bridle*? Who will venture to look into his mouth, as we do into a horse's mouth? He that *opens the doors of his face* will see *his teeth terrible round about*, strong and sharp, and fitted to devour; it would make a man tremble to think of having a leg or an arm between them.

(2.) *His scales are his beauty and strength*, and therefore *his pride*, v. 15-17. The crocodile is indeed remarkable for his scales; if we understand it of the whale, we must understand by these *shields* (for so the word is) the several coats of his skin; or there might be whales in that country with scales. That which is remarkable concerning the scales is that *they stick* so close *together*, by which he is not only kept warm, for no air can pierce him, but kept safe, for no sword can pierce him through those scales. Fishes, that live in the water, are fortified accordingly by the wisdom of Providence, which gives clothes as it gives cold.

(3.) He scatters terror with his very breath and looks; if he sneeze or spout up water, it is like a light shining, either with the froth or the light of the sun shining through it, v. 18. The eyes of the whale are reported to shine in the night-time like a flame, or, as here, *like the eye-lids of the morning*; the same they say of the crocodile. The breath of this creature is so hot and fiery, from the great natural heat within, that *burning lamps and sparks of fire*, smoke and a flame, are said to *go out of his mouth*, even such as one would think sufficient to set coals on fire, v. 19-21. Probably these hyperbolic expressions are used concerning the leviathan to intimate the terror of the wrath of God, for that is it which all this is designed to convince us of. *Fire out of his mouth devours*, <sup><SR></sup>Psalm 18:7, 8. *The breath of the Almighty, like a stream of brimstone, kindles Tophet*, and will for ever keep it burning, <sup><SR></sup>Isaiah 30:33. The wicked one shall be *consumed with the breath of his mouth*, <sup><SR></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:8.

(4.) He is of invincible strength and most terrible fierceness, so that he frightens all that come in his way, but is not himself frightened by any. Take a view of his neck, and there remains strength, v. 22. his head and his body are well set together. *Sorrow rejoices* (or *rides in triumph*) *before*

him, for he makes terrible work wherever he comes. Or, Those storms which are the sorrow of others are his joys; what is tossing to others is dancing to him. His flesh is well knit, v. 23. *The flakes of it are joined so closely together, and are so firm*, that it is hard to pierce it; he is as if he were all bone. *His flesh is of brass*, which Job had complained his was not, <sup><RB2></sup>Job 6:12. *His heart is as firm as a stone*, v. 24. He has spirit equal to his bodily strength, and, though he is bulky, he is sprightly, and not unwieldy. As his flesh and skin cannot be pierced, so his courage cannot be daunted; but, on the contrary, he daunts all he meets and puts them into a consternation (v. 25): *When he raises up himself* like a moving mountain in the great waters even *the mighty are afraid* lest he should overturn their ships or do them some other mischief. *By reason of the breakings* he makes in the water, which threaten death, *they purify themselves*, confess their sins, betake themselves to their prayers, and get ready for death. We read (<sup><RB3></sup>Job 3:8) of those who, when they raise up a leviathan, are in such a fright that they curse the day. It was a fear which, it seems, used to drive some to their curses and others to their prayers; for, as now, so then there were seafaring men of different characters and on whom the terrors of the sea have contrary effects; but all agree there is a great fright among them when the leviathan raises up himself.

(5.) All the instruments of slaughter that are used against him do him no hurt and therefore are not error to him, v. 26-29. *The sword and the spear*, which wound nigh at hand, are nothing to him; the *darts, arrows*, and *sling-stones*, which wound at a distance, do him no damage; nature has so well armed him *cap-a-pie — at all points*, against them all. The defensive weapons which men use when they engage with the leviathan, as *the habergeon*, or breast-plate, often serve men no more than their offensive weapons; *iron and brass* are to him *as straw and rotten wood*, and he laughs at them. It is the picture of a hard-hearted sinner, that despises the terrors of the Almighty and laughs at all the threatenings of his word. The leviathan so little dreads the weapons that are used against him that, to show how hardy he is, he chooses to lie on the *sharp stones, the sharp-pointed things* (v. 30), and lies as easy there as if he lay on the soft mire. Those that would endure hardness must inure themselves to it.

(6.) His very motion in the water troubles it and puts it into a ferment, v. 31, 32. When he rolls, and tosses, and makes a stir in the water, or is in pursuit of his prey, *he makes the deep to boil like a pot*, he raises a great froth and foam upon the water, such as is upon a boiling pot, especially a

*pot of boiling ointment; and he makes a path to shine after him, which even a ship in the midst of the sea does not,* <sup>(KJB)</sup> Proverbs 30:19. One may trace the leviathan under water by the bubbles on the surface; and yet who can take that advantage against him in pursuing him? Men track hares in the snow and kill them, but he that tracks the leviathan dares not come near him.

**2.** Having given this particular account of *his parts, and his power, and his comely proportion*, he concludes with four things in general concerning this animal: —

**(1.)** That he is a non-such among the inferior creatures: *Upon earth there is not his like*, v. 33. No creature in this world is comparable to him for strength and terror. Or the earth is here distinguished from the sea: *His dominion is not upon the earth* (so some), but *in the waters*. None of all the savage creatures upon earth come near him for bulk and strength, and it is well for man that he is confined to the waters and there has *a watch set upon him* (<sup>(KJB)</sup> Job 7:12) by the divine Providence, for, if such a terrible creature were allowed to roam and ravage upon this earth, it would be an unsafe and uncomfortable habitation for the children of men, for whom it is intended.

**(2.)** That he is more bold and daring than any other creature whatsoever: *He is made without fear*. The creatures are as they are made; the leviathan has courage in his constitution, nothing can frighten him; other creatures, quite contrary, seem as much designed for flying as this for fighting. So, among men, some are in their natural temper bold, others are timorous.

**(3.)** That he is himself very proud; though lodged in the deep, yet *he beholds all high things*, v. 34. The rolling waves, the impending rocks, the hovering clouds, and the ships under sail with top and top-gallant, this mighty animal beholds with contempt, for he does not think they either lessen him or threaten him. Those that are great are apt to be scornful.

**(4.)** *That he is a king over all the children of pride*, that is, he is the proudest of all proud ones. He has more to be proud of (so Mr. Caryl expounds it) than the proudest people in the world have; and so it is a mortification to the haughtiness and lofty looks of men. Whatever bodily accomplishments men are proud of, and puffed up with, the leviathan excels them and is a *king over them*. Some read it so as to understand it of God: *He that beholds all high things, even he, is King over all the children*

*of pride; he can tame the behemoth (<sup><3819></sup>Job 40:19) and the leviathan, big as they are, and stout-hearted as they are. This discourse concerning those two animals was brought in to prove that it is God only who can *look upon proud men and abase them, bring them low and tread them down, and hide them in the dust* (<sup><3811></sup>Job 40:11-13), and so it concludes with a *quod erat demonstrandum* — *which was to be demonstrated*; there is one that *beholds all high things*, and, wherein men deal proudly, is above them; he is *King over all the children of pride*, whether brutal or rational, and can make them all either bend or break before him, <sup><211></sup>Isaiah 2:11. *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and thus the Lord alone shall be exalted.**