

## The God of Leviathan – Job 41

**Chapter 41**, the climax of the theophany, is entirely devoted to a long poem on an extra-ordinary creature named Leviathan.

Leviathan, it seems, is God's **trump** card, His **ace** in the hole, His **final answer** to all of Job's perplexity and pain. → Obvious by Job's reaction.

What's going on here?

- **What is it** about the Lord's description of Leviathan that Job finds so completely convincing?
- For in all fairness, many readers do not share Job's reactions.
- Many are unimpressed by this final word from the Lord; they find it unsatisfying and bafflingly **anticlimactic**.

Is this God's **answer to all the world's suffering**?

- Is this **the resolution** to all the complex problems discussed in the dialogue?
- Are these words suitable to be **read aloud** to the sick, the depressed, and the dying?

### **Read Job 41 -**

If there is **a key** to this chapter, it must **lie in the correct interpretation** of this bizarre image of Leviathan.

- Some scholars identify this creature as the **crocodile – pointing to vs. 14-15**.
- But **can vs. 19-21 really said of a crocodile**: fire breathing, smoke in his nostrils, and his breath sets coals on fire? → sounds like a dragon!

What in the world is this thing! → or maybe we should ask another question:

**who** does this creature represent?

- Who could this possibly be whom the Lord calls in **v.34**, “**king over all that are proud**”? → Who else but... Satan

Those who find the conclusion of *Job* unsatisfying are the **same ones who complain that Satan**, following his two appearances in the Prologue of this book, **is never mentioned again**.

- They complain that **not only** is his name never spoken again, **but also** no one in this book seems even aware of his existence.
- Furthermore, they complain, the **Lord never reprimands** or disciplines Satan for his brutal attacks on Job,
- And worse, they say, the Lord **never offers even one word of explanation** as to the **satanic origin** of Job's sufferings.
- Instead, it seems as if **Devil gets off scot-free**, while Job takes all the flak.

And it does appear this way **on the surface**.

- **And in such a way this mirrors life itself.**
- God can talk all He wants about the beauties and marvels of His creation, but as long as Satan is **at large** in it, **alive** and **well** and **able** to wreak havoc at will, there is an evil fly in the sacred ointment.
- This **one loose end ravel**s the whole garment.

But, beloved, you must realize that **Job 41 IS THE LORD'S ANSWER** to this very dilemma.

- It is **His answer** to the problem of evil.
- While it is true that Satan is never mentioned by name outside the Prologue, this does not mean that the Lord never deals with him.
- He does **deal with him... HERE** in the form of Leviathan.

Here God deals with the Devil, describing him with the same picturesque language as God uses to describe the Devil in the Book of Revelation:

- **Revelation 20:2-3** - <sup>2</sup>And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, <sup>3</sup>and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive

the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

- But if that doesn't convince you that the Leviathan of Job is the Dragon of Revelation – The Devil himself, then I encourage you to look at
  - **Isaiah 27:1** - <sup>1</sup>In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

Wherever Satan is, there is confusion, and for that very reason his presence can be difficult to discern.

- His ways are bewildering, complex, and **like bacteria**, capable of endless mutation.
- His strategies **keep pace** with our level of cultural sophistication, on the one hand, and with our spiritual maturity on the other.

### **Simply knowing this, however, is not enough to overcome temptation.**

- To overcome the enemy we must **first penetrate the nature** of his deception, and then find a way of answering him.
- We must **expose** the lie by **countering** it with the truth.

**In the pride and presumptuousness of our humanity**, we have all felt that there **must be some way** to tame the evil that both surrounds and permeates us.

- We have all clung to the hope that there must be **some method**, **if not to avoid** suffering entirely, **then at least** to get the upper hand on it.
- From time to time we **sincerely and ardently believe** that we have found it – this master key to victorious living.
- We think we have some secret, **the answer to the riddle of life**, some formula that can solve our problems.
- **And it works!** Hurray! We are happy and successful... **For a little while.**

### **Christians have the worse time with this:**

- They find it difficult to face the enemy of our souls...

- And to pray, to cry out to God for help...
- **For Him to only to say to us what He told Job in 41:9, “Any hope of subduing Leviathan is false.”**
- It’s like God says, “With all of **your theology**, with all of your **faith**, with all the **spiritual secrets**, **still you cannot lead the Devil** around by the nose.”
- **Not only that He says (Job 41:8) - Lay your hands on him; remember the battle—you will not do it again!**

Most of the world’s religious and philosophical systems are advanced by people who, in one way or another, appear to be on top of life’s problems.

- For a brief while, someone may seem to have discovered the “secret.”
  - Someone finds something that works, then he writes a book, goes on Oprah and starts a movement.
  - He’s on top and is preaching to all the low-lifers still on bottom.
- ➔ But this is not the Christian way.
- No the message of Christianity is not preached by someone who is on top.
  - Rather it is preached by someone who is at the very bottom = hanging on a Cross.

True it is -- that **without the resurrection** of Christ **then** all of Christianity would be worthless.

- But the **heart** of Christianity is not in the resurrection but in the Cross!
- **The cross is the pulpit** in which God stood to preach His greatest sermon,
- And it is also the only pulpit where anyone else may stand and rightfully preach to others.
- As disciples of Christ we have true victory as we are crucified in the spirit.

Christianity views humanity as corrupt, condemned and as worthless.

- False theologies try to do humanize God to distract from our depravity.

- Other religions exalt humanity.
- Other faiths prop up the deadness of humanity and try to put a smiley face on it.
- But Christianity has the **proper view of depraved humanity** and nails it to a cross.
- **A life is good for nothing except spiritual crucifixion and resurrection in the Christ life.**

This is why true faith is not something that runs along smoothly and efficiently.

- Rather, it has a built-in tendency to fall apart at the seams.
- According to the Apostle Paul faith regularly finds itself **“hard-pressed, “perplexed”, “struck down”** (2Cor. 4:8-9).
- The very fact that faith looks to a power beyond itself means that it is continually subject to loss of control.

→ So if you're hoping to get control of all your problems – **Christianity's not for you.**

→ If you are looking for success, happiness, or freedom from pain – **Christianity “.**

→ If you are looking to make yourself **FEEL better**, **appease** your flesh, and have **fun and be care-free** – **RUN FROM THIS CHURCH** – maybe you can still get home in time to catch an episode of Joel Osteen or Oprah or ...

- But the way of Christ is **the way of the Cross.**
- **This is the door** at which Jesus knocks.
- If you want to follow Jesus, **give up** any idea of trying to control Leviathan.
- If you want to follow Jesus, **get it through your mind** that you are going to suffer unspeakably at the hands of evil.

That's what's so PROFOUND about Job 41:

- Here God **boasts** about Satan.
- Here God **magnifies** the power of darkness.
- Here God **gives the Devil his due.**

- **Job 41:12** - “I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, or his mighty strength, or his goodly frame. (ESV)
- Here in this chapter God **vaunts** the Devil’s majesty and supremacy as second only to His own.

With rhapsodic abandon the Lord sings the praises of this...

- “creature without fear”
- who “looks down on all the at are haughty,”
- who “treats iron like straw” and “laughs at the rattling of the lance”
- and who “makes the sea fume like a scent burner”

What is going on here??

- What possible motive could God have in **extolling** this horrific monster Leviathan, making him appear so awesome and invincible?
- Be Honest → **We’ve been conscientiously bothered** since the beginning chapters of Job → bothered as to why the Devil was even **allowed to stroll** into God’s presence, **question** his wisdom or even be able to apparently **debate** God.

- **WHY!!!**

- **Why has God chosen** to bestow upon Satan powers and favors that overwhelmingly surpass those of any other creature in the universe?
- The Devil is God’s own bitterest enemy.
- **Why is God content** to let Satan run amok through the beautiful garden of His creation?

I’ll tell you what is going on

1. **God is revealing to Job the truth behind pain.**
  - Remember Job thought God was **gnashing His teeth** at Job,
  - that God must of **hated** Job.

- **But in JOB 41** God finally reveals to Job **who has been torturing him.**
2. **Moreover** the Lord here makes a distinction once and for all between His own power, which is **uncreated and unlimited**, and the power of Leviathan which, as sweeping and unparalleled as it may be, is nevertheless a created power and therefore one **with strict limits.**
- By painting metaphorically so sublime and impressive a portrait of the Devil, God is only doing what He has done all along with Job, and all along throughout the history of the world: giving the Devil his due.
  - **God allows evil, for now**, to have its day, and even to gain the upper hand and grow greater and greater.

Why does God do this?

- He does it so that in the end, when He finally steps in and crushes Satan's head, His victory over evil **will be all the more astounding and glorious**, and so that all those who have put their faith in Him will be filled with an exceedingly greater joy than would have been possible in any other way.
- What the Lord is trying to show us, in this elaborate puffing up of Leviathan, is that **God's goodness is ultimately so much greater than the Devil's evil** that there is really no contest between the two.
- A contest will be waged, but only because people do not believe. The longer this contest goes on, and the bigger and stronger Satan appears to grow, **the more his utter powerlessness will be exposed in the end**, and the **more the mystery of simple faith** in God will be vindicated.

- Yes, the “mighty are terrified” by Leviathan in **41:25**, but how much more shall the faithful be overjoyed at the coming of Christ!

**Job 41:10-11** - <sup>10</sup>No one is so fierce that he dares to stir him up. Who then is he who can stand before me? <sup>11</sup>Who has first given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine. (ESV)

- God has simply exalted Satan, **lifted up only to cut him down.**
- God has revealed the extent and horror of Satan’s evil; **only to show you just how extensive and wonderful God’s goodness is.**
- As large as Satan’s evil is; God’s goodness is **an infinity-times larger.**
- God lifts Satan higher and higher in this chapter only so that Satan’s fall in Rev. 20 is further and harder.
- Just so, each nail that was driven into the hands and feet of Christ was a nail driving into Satan’s coffin.

Job is being taught by God that the same God who made the silly ostrich is also the One who made the “king of terrors.”

- And in that light there is no real difference between Satan and a little mouse → for Satan is nothing more than a created being.
- For all his breathtaking power, the Prince of Darkness is **merely a creature**, just **one more lowly lump of dust** in the hands of his omnipotent Creator.
- So what does it matter if Job cannot “**put a cord through his nose**” (41:2)?
- Man cannot tame this fiery dragon – but God **can**, and **has** and **will**.
- And this is the message that finally pierces Job’s heart.