

Dragons, Dinosaurs, Myths, or Monsters?

The Problem of Behemoth and Leviathan in Job 40-41

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The book of Job “is one of the most difficult books of the Old Testament to translate and thus also to interpret” (Dillard and Longman 199). Perhaps this inherent difficulty is no more clearly seen than in Yahweh’s second speech to Job. In the second half of the Lord’s first speech (chapter 39), God invites Job to contemplate his divine majesty by observing the traits and behavior of the animals he created. These animals include the lioness, mountain goat, wild ass and wild ox, the ostrich, war horse, hawk and vulture (Wilson 5). The animals God describes in chapters 40 and 41, however, are significantly more difficult to identify. The two enigmatic beasts of God’s second speech are known as the Behemoth and the Leviathan.

The identities of these creatures, as well as their significance in God’s argumentation, has been debated for centuries. Most contemporary scholars conclude that these beasts can be identified as the hippopotamus and crocodile, or else they are mythical monsters. There are also some dissenting opinions which need to be discussed. This study will first address some of the translational problems involved, especially in the Behemoth passage. Then, references to the beasts outside the book of Job will be considered. Finally, differing theories will be discussed and evaluated, and a final conclusion offered.

Identifying the Behemoth

Translation Issues in Job 40:15-24

Since one’s identification of the Behemoth rests largely on how the different translation issues are resolved, this section will focus on the translation of the passage in Job 40:15ff.

Job 40:15

“Behold now, Behemoth, which I made as well as [Lit. *with*] you;
He eats grass like an ox.”¹

This is the verse which introduces Behemoth. בְּהֵמוֹת is the feminine plural of the common Hebrew word for “bovine.” Ordinarily, it would be translated “cattle,” but in this text it is used with third person masculine singular verbs. “The plural form here must be the so-called intensive plural or plural of majesty, The Beast, par excellence” (Pope 320). Like modern English translations, the Aramaic Targums, the Latin Vulgate, and the Syriac simply transliterate the word, leaving it as a reference to a single animal. The Greek Septuagint, on the other hand, translated it with *theria*, “animals” (Pope 320). According to Mitchell, the word occurs nine times in the Hebrew Bible², with Job 40:15 as the only instance where it does not simply denote “beasts.” Although later Jewish writers developed their own ideas about Behemoth based on this passage, “there is no antecedent example, in Hebrew or other Middle Eastern literature, of a mythological animal with Behemoth’s name or characteristics” (Wolfers *Behemoth* 220). Behemoth was often identified as an elephant, until the publication of Bochart’s *Hierozoicon* in 1663, where the author argued that Behemoth was a hippopotamus, and Leviathan a crocodile, an opinion which is still the dominant view today (Day *God’s Conflict* 76, cf. Gordis 569). For more on this theory, see the discussion below.

The creature is identified as the one which Yahweh “made with” Job. Delitzsch suggests that “בְּיָדְךָ” signifies nothing but “with thee,” so that thou hast it before thee” (687). In this case,

¹Scripture references will be taken from the *New American Standard Bible: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, 1995), unless otherwise noted.

²“Behemoth” (with the same vowel pointing) is found in the following verses: Deut. 32:24; Job 12:7; 40:15; Psalms 49:12, 20; 50:10; 73:22; Jer. 12:4; Hab. 2:17. Gordis sees Deut. 32:24 as another text besides Job 40:15 “where the context favors a mythological reference” (570). However, the fact that בְּהֵמוֹת here simply denotes “beasts” can be seen when parallels such as Lev. 26:22 are consulted.

God is saying that this Behemoth, like the animals of chapter 39, is simply another of his many creations. However, it might be the case that the verb “to be” needs to be supplied in this line, thus creating “Behemoth, whom I made to be with you.” This translation would support the notion that Behemoth represents the animalistic side of man.

This reference alone is an explanation of why v. 15 follows v. 14 without a pause. If Behemoth is “the beast in man”, and the Lord is telling Job that this beast is in him as in all men “Behold: the beast which I bestowed on you...”, then this is in itself an adequate answer to his own question, “Have you an arm like God’s and can you thunder with a voice like his?”... No man has the glory and majesty of God, because all men are tied to their own bestial nature (Wolfers *Lord’s Second Speech* 478-479).

The second line of verse 15 states that the beast “eats grass like an ox (or “the cattle” -- כִּכְבֵּן).” Although most commentators understand this phrase simply to mean that the beast is herbivorous (or graminivorous -- a grass eater), Wolfers may be correct in suggesting that it means “chews the cud,” an activity in which, incidentally, the hippopotamus does not engage himself. Wolfers also says that chewing the cud is “a natural expression for indolence and lack of energy,” and points out that the only biblical parallel is in Daniel 4:33, where it is said that Nebuchadnezzar goes out into the fields where he began “eating grass like cattle” (*Lord’s Second Speech* 480).

Job 40:16

“Behold now, his strength in his loins

And his power in the muscles of his belly.”

“The loins are the seat of strength, Nah. 2:2, especially of the male as connected with virility and sexual power” (Pope 323). Regarding 16a, Wolfers comments:

“His strength is in his loins”, while usually, and somewhat carelessly, taken to mean that

he is very strong, actually bears a remarkable resemblance to the colloquial vulgarity “His brains are in his balls”. . . he concentrates – wastes – his strength on reproductive exercise (*Lord’s Second Speech* 480).

The word translated “muscles” in 16b (שרר) is from a root which in both Aramaic and Post-Biblical Hebrew means “to be firm, hard” (BDB). The word is found in Song of Songs 7:2 (7:3 in Hebrew Bibles) “in anatomical progression between thighs and belly,” suggesting that it “signifies “pudenda”, forming a synonymous parallel with “loins”... the second stitch merely repeats the first” (Wolfers *Lord’s Second Speech* 480). The passage in Song of Songs reads:

The curves of your hips are like jewels,
 The work of the hands of an artist.
 Your *navel*(שרר) is like a round goblet
 Which never lacks mixed wine;
 Your belly is like a heap of wheat
 Fenced about with lilies.

Pope remarks that שרר in this passage “is hardly the lady’s navel,” and says that “the term could apply to the privy parts of male or female” (323)³. There is an additional problem with the traditional translation “the muscles of its belly.” As Wolfers (a medical practitioner) explains:

Judaism and the religions of the neighbouring countries were religions of animal sacrifice. The common facts of comparative anatomy were therefore well known, especially to such highly educated men as the author of the book of Job. He must therefore be expected to have been well aware – as most modern men are not – that the only animals which have or need muscles in their bellies are bipeds” (*Lord’s Second*

³Regarding the use of שרר in Song 7:3, Brown, Driver, and Briggs remark that the term is “now often interpreted as = *vulva*.” However, they claim that the context suggests “sinew, muscle” for the term in Job 40:16.

Speech 481).

Thus, in Wolfers' own words, talking about a quadruped's belly muscles makes as much sense as a discussion on "the wings of a worm." Based on the above analysis, Job 40:16 might more accurately be rendered: "Look, his strength is in his sex organs, and his power is in the private parts of his belly," which sets the stage for the next verse.

Job 40:17

"He bends his tail like a cedar;

The sinews of his thighs are knit together."

The verb in 17a has been understood in various ways. It has been translated bends⁴, arches⁵, delights in⁶, lets hang⁷, makes erect⁸ bends down⁹, is as straight as¹⁰, moveth¹¹, sways¹², stiffens¹³, etc. The verb is from רָצַף , which means "to delight in" (BDB)¹⁴. Although Day contends that this verb "here cannot have its usual meaning" (*God's Conflict 75*), and Pope asserts that "it cannot have its usual sense of "delight, take pleasure in, desire" (324), Wolfers

⁴NASB

⁵Pope 317, 324

⁶Wolfers *Deep Things* 371

⁷Holladay

⁸Day 75. He says "makes erect" follows the LXX, Peshitta, the Arabic version, and Ibn Ezra.

⁹Brown, Driver, and Briggs

¹⁰New Living Translation

¹¹ASV (1901)

¹²NIV

¹³Habel 553. He translates the passage, "When erect, his tail is like a cedar."

¹⁴Both Holladay and BDB give variations of "delight/take pleasure in" for the meaning of this word in all of its more than 100 occurrences, except for Job 40:17, where they suggest "let (tail) hang" and "bend down," respectively.

says, “I am at a loss to know why “delight” has not been universally accepted, not only as the only meaning of נִחַם in Hebrew, but also as the *mot juste*” (481).

The identification of the Behemoth as a hippopotamus suffers most at this verse. There is really no way in which the short, scrawny tail of the hippo is like a cedar tree. There is another possibility, though. The word “tail” in this verse is the simple Hebrew word for tail, but most commentators acknowledge that it probably also serves as a euphemism for the male sex organ. Pope says “the term “tail” is inevitably suggestive of sexual sense in the light of similar euphemisms in several languages, e.g. German and Yiddish “Schwanz” (324). Hartley says that in later Hebrew, “*zanab*, “tail,” colloquially has this meaning” (525). This interpretation of “tail” goes perfectly with the interpretation of verse 16. “Taking “his tail” as a stock euphemism, the line then becomes a third with the previous verse expressing excessive preoccupation with sex, with the cedar-tree as an exaggerated phallic equivalent” (Wolfers *Lord’s Second Speech* 481)¹⁵. Despite the unanimity of scholars in this regard, no major public translation has yet reflected this insight into “tail.” Perhaps the general reading public isn’t quite ready for a Behemoth who “delights in his cedar-like penis.”

The second line of verse 17 provides further difficulties, largely because of questions over the word פָּהַד , “thighs.” As Delitsch (687) and others notice, in the Aramaic Targums, this word is used to translate the Hebrew word for “testicles” in Lev. 21:20 and retained in the present passage (cf. Pope 324, Hartley 525). Furthermore, Habel says “the rendering of *pahadaw*, “his thighs (v. 17b) by “testicles” in the Syriac and Vulgate suggests that the parallel term “tail” is a euphemism for “penis” (553). Tur-Sinai, however, points out that the word is cognate with the Arabic *fahdh* and the Syriac ܦܗܕܐ , “thighs,” and does not mean “testicles,” as the Targum might

¹⁵Habel therefore translates the line thus: “When erect, his tail is like a cedar tree” (550). Still, based on the meaning of the verb, Wolfers’ translation is to be preferred: “He delights in his ‘tail’, like a cedar-tree” (*Deep Things* 371).

suggest (560).

Traditionally, most interpreters have understood the Behemoth's intertwining of sinews as a description of great strength. However, Wolfers asserts that "the intertwining of sinews, like the tangling of guide ropes, is a metaphor for paralysis." He interprets this to mean that the Behemoth "fails to respond to situations of danger appropriately" (481-482). Wilson also observes that "sinews should not be intertwined or twisted; they should be separate" (8). Whether this line is understood as a description of strength or of paralysis will influence, or be influenced by, one's understanding of the next verse.

Job 40:18

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

These two lines are usually understood to mean that the Behemoth possesses great physical strength¹⁶. Not so, says Wolfers. He suggests looking at how brass and iron are applied figuratively to human beings.

Isaiah 48:4 (of obstinate Israel): "Because I know that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead bronze."

Isaiah 6:28: "All of them are stubbornly rebellious, going about as a talebearer. They are bronze and iron; they, all of them, are corrupt". Here, bronze and iron are parallel with "corrupt."

Ezekiel 22:18: "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are the dross of silver."

Wolfers says "these passages suggest that iron and brass are not always complimentary designations." He further notes that "bones" "in biblical poetry have the additional significance

¹⁶Wolfers humorously remarks, "The description cannot be intended to be literal – this is not the bionic animal" (*Lord's Second Speech* 482).

of representing the whole man, the personality, so that if Behemoth is indeed a symbolic rather than a real animal, the description is almost certainly unkind” (*Lord’s Second Speech* 482).

Wilson likewise puts a negative spin on this verse:

“Moreover, the tragedy of Behemoth is clear also from v. 18, where his ribs, which should be hard and strong, are likened to “tubes of copper” and were therefore hollow and crushable (copper being a soft metal), while his backbone which should be supple and articulate to allow of movement is likened to a “bar of iron”, and so was quite the reverse” (8).

Job 40:19

“He is the first of the ways of God;

Let his maker bring near his sword.”

“First” in this verse has been variously understood as priority of time, priority of rank, or greatness of power or size. Delitzsch says the “ways of God” refers to “God’s operations as the Creator of the world” (688), while Wolfers insists that “there is good evidence of the meaning of the phrase “the ways of God” in the book of Job (21:14; 23:11; 34:27), where it is used to refer to the moral and legal demands of God on man” (483). Many commentators point out that the phrase, “first in the ways of God” is also applied to wisdom in Proverbs 8:22 (Pope 324, Tur-Sinai 560, etc.). Wilson understands the opening pronoun (אֵלֶּיךָ – “this/he”) to be emphatic and sarcastic (i.e., “*This* is the first of the ways of God??!!”) (8). This is another verse where the “hippopotamus” theory has problems. It is difficult to imagine in what manner the phrase “first of God’s ways” could apply to the unsightly hippo, a creature which Delitzsch affectionately refers to as “the plump mass of flesh of the gigantic boar-like grass-eater” (688).

The second line of verse 19 has been amended and re-interpreted in a variety of imaginable ways. Delitzsch offers the suggestion that the “sword” refers to the hippo’s “gigantic

incisors... with which it grazes upon the meadow as with a sickle” (688-689). But Pope says this rendering “strains the text as much as the imagination” (324). As the text stands, Wolfers sees the verse indicating that God will approach Behemoth with his sword either to protect or punish him (483). Hartley understands the verse to mean that Yahweh is unafraid, and thus the sword “symbolizes his complete mastery of this beast” (525).

Job 40:20

“Surely the mountains bring him food,
and all the beasts of the field play there¹⁷.”

The word rendered “food” (בֹּל) provides all sorts of difficulties. It is usually taken to be a contraction (copyist’s corruption) of בֹּרֵל, meaning “produce” (as in Job 20:28). בֹּל is found one other time in the Hebrew Bible, Isaiah 4:19, where it is used in connection with wood. Pope, however, claims that “the emendation of בֹּל to יִבּוּל is rendered dubious by the lack of congruity with the following parallel member of the bicolon, 20b. This latter colon is devoid of difficulty and clearly depicts a haunt where wild beasts sport” (325). Tur-Sinai points out that “the meaning of בֹּל הַרִים is apparent from Accadian, where *bul seri* is a common expression, signifying “the beasts of the field”, a concept also referred to – in complete parallelism – by חֵית הַשׂוּדָה in the second stitch” (560). Pope accepts Tur-Sinai’s conclusion, and then emends the verb in the first line, changing it from “they lift up/bring to him” to “they are at ease” (326). His translation is, “the beasts of the steppe relax; all the creatures of the wild play there” (317). It thus seems that in this verse Behemoth is being honored by the other beasts (Habel 553).

Job 40:21-24

“Under the lotus plants he lies down,

¹⁷“The LXX renders “there” as “in Tartarus,” thereby implying a mythological or subterranean realm for Behemoth’s abode. “There” is a euphemism for “Mother Earth” and “the underworld” elsewhere in Job (1:21; 3:17)” (Habel 567).

In the covert of the reeds and the marsh.
 The lotus plants cover him with shade;
 The willows of the brook surround him.
 If a river rages [or *oppresses*], he is not alarmed;
 He is confident, though the Jordan rushes into his mouth.
 Can anyone capture him when he is on watch [Lit. *in his eyes*],
 With barbs can anyone pierce his nose?

These verses suggest that Behemoth is an aquatic creature (contrary to the popular misconception that he is the “dry” animal, as opposed to Leviathan, the “wet” animal). Translators often seem to overlook the force of the verb in verse 22. According to Wolfers, “the significance is of protection, or defense: “The lotus trees screen him as his defense”... the inadequate and illusory nature of these flimsy screens as protection gives the verse its flavor, that of irony” (*Lord’s Second Speech* 485).

The problem in the first line of verse 23 is understanding how a river “oppresses.” Wolfers notes that the Hebrew word for “river” (*nahar*) is also a poetic designation of the king of Assyria in Isaiah 8:6-8, as well as the name of a comrade of the Ugaritic mythological figure Prince Yamm, who is the sea, which is equivalent to the sea monster, who is Leviathan. Thus, *Nahar* becomes a synonym for Leviathan, who is a symbol for Assyria, and Wolfers’ theory of Behemoth representing Judah and Leviathan representing Assyria is born (486-487). Wolfers’ theory, though, dies on the operating table under the surgical knife of Occam’s razor. It is best to understand verse 23 as simply stating that the large aquatic animal Behemoth isn’t concerned about perishing in a flood.

The subject of verse 24 is left unstated. Habel translates it: “El takes him by the mouth with El’s rings, and pierces his nose with hooks” (554). Literally, the first line talks about taking

Behemoth “by the eyes.” Pope explains the various interpretations:

It has been suggested (Ehrlich) that it is a matter of charming or fascinating the creature by staring at him. Often it is taken to mean “while he is looking.” In keeping with the parallel line, some understand it to refer to capture by injuring the eyes or blinding the beast. Dhorme adopts an interesting interpretation, citing Herodotus (ii.70) who mentions a process of controlling a crocodile by plastering its eyes with clay (327).

At any rate, the thrust of the verse seems to be that capturing the Behemoth was beyond the power of mortal man¹⁸. However, hippos and crocodiles were both hunted in the ancient near east (Day *God’s Conflict* 77, 78).

What is the Behemoth? Competing Theories

The Hippopotamus Theory¹⁹

As Day explains,

The most common view of modern scholars is that the word Behemoth here refers to the hippopotamus. Like the identification of Leviathan ... with the crocodile, the widespread acceptance of this view goes back to S. Bochart’s *Hieroicoicon* 2, cols. 753-69, published in 1663, which rejected the view then common that Behemoth was the elephant (*God’s Conflict* 76).

Delitzch and other claim that בהמורה is “Hebraized from the Egyptian *pe-ehe-mau*, (*muau*), i.e., the (*p*) ox (*ehe*) of the water” (686). “It is now recognized, however, that no such Egyptian (or Coptic) word ever existed” (Day 76). Tur-Sinai calls it “impossible linguistically” (557). Day gives the following reasons why the “hippo theory” should be rejected:

¹⁸Wolfers disagrees. “There is in fact [in 40:24] no reference to the capture of Behemoth. The subject is not raised. He translates the verse, “by ruses, he will puncture wrath,” but what is this supposed to mean?”

¹⁹While in Russia recently, this author learned that the Russian word for “hippopotamus” is *begemot*, which is derived from the Hebrew “behemoth.” Thus Bochart’s theory has affected the development of a language.

- (1) The hippo does not have a tail like a cedar (v. 17).
- (2) The hippo does not have visible bones and sinews (v. 17-18).
- (3) The hippo does not qualify as “first of the ways of God” (v. 19).
- (4) In contrast to the implications of verse 24, the hippo can be captured by man. “If Behemoth were simply the hippopotamus here, the whole point of God’s argument would be destroyed, since Job would have been able to retort that it was perfectly feasible to capture a hippopotamus” (77).

As Wolfers sums it up,

Eating grass like the cattle, having a tail in any way comparable to a cedar, having any contact with the mountains, and relating to the Jordan River are all incompatibilities between Behemoth and the hippopotamus. Underside like sharpest potsherds, swimming in sea rather than river, and breathing fire an smoke are incompatibilities between Leviathan and the crocodile (476).

The “Behemosaurus” Theory

Some writers are now suggesting that the Behemoth and Leviathan are dinosaurs which were still alive during the time of Job, and which he had either seen or heard about (Kaiser 262, cf. Morris, Henry M. The Remarkable Record of Job. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988. 111-125.). A literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2 leads to the conclusion that dinosaurs and humans were created at about the same time, and thus lived contemporaneously. In his article, *Dinosaurs, Creationists, Scientists, and the Bible*, Bert Thompson of Apologetics Press, Inc. raises the possibility that some dinosaurs may have survived the flood and lived for many years side-by-side with humankind. Job 40 and 41 are cited as evidence of this thesis. “Does the Bible speak of dinosaurs? Conservative Bible scholars look to Job 40:15-24 and answer with a resounding, “YES!” (3). After quoting the passage, he asks,

What is this “behemoth” creature? Some have argued that it is an elephant or hippopotamus. But the text says he is “the chief of the ways of God” and that he “moveth his tail like a cedar.” There are creatures (dinosaurs) larger than elephants (remember that *Brachiosaurus* stood over 3 ½ stories tall, and weighed over 90 tons!); and did you ever see the tails of the elephant or the hippo? Enough said! Yes, the Bible does speak, both directly (Job 40:15-24) and indirectly (Exodus 20:11) of dinosaurs (3).

In his commentary, Wayne Jackson says,

More recently some scholars have suggested that some species of *dinosaur* may better fit the picture, though this view has not been readily accepted due to the fact that many people have accepted [evolution]... some sort of dinosaur, such as the brontosaurus²⁰, may be a viable possibility (86).

At present, the dinosaur theory begs for further proof. What historical evidence is there that dinosaurs were known to ancient civilized peoples? The two sketchy cave paintings that Thompson and Jackson cite are hardly adequate. The theory also fails to take into account the abundant hyperbole and sarcasm in Job 40:15-24.

In regard to Leviathan, the dinosaur theory plunges further into fantasia. Jackson goes so far as to suggest that there were actually dinosaurs who breathed fire (as in Job 41:18-20). He cites Duane Gish (in his book, *Dinosaurs, Those Terrible Lizards*), who suggests that the bombardier beetle (which sprays hydrogen peroxide and hydroquinone out of its rear end as a defense mechanism) sets a “precedent for a “fire-breathing” creature in nature” (87). The special behavior of this insect, however, is much more akin to spraying of a skunk than the “light, smoke, sparks of fire, and flame” that issue from the mouth and nostrils of the Leviathan.

²⁰For the sake of accuracy, it should be mentioned that, although the name *Brontosaurus* is the “more popularly employed” name for this particular dinosaur, the term *Apatosaurus* is “technically correct,” a fact about which Mr. Jackson is presently aware (Thompson *Questions* 67).

The Mythical Monster Theory

This theory meets one major difficulty: “There is no antecedent example, in Hebrew, or other Middle Eastern literature, of a mythological animal with Behemoth’s name or characteristics” (Wolfers *Behemoth* 220). As far as the literary evidence is concerned, before the book of Job, there was no Behemoth.²¹

Many commentators accept Behemoth as mythological based on the fact that his (apparent) counterpart, Leviathan, is obviously a mythological beast. On the one hand, as Pope says,

The juxtaposition of Behemoth and Leviathan in Job and in the post-biblical texts [(Enoch 40:7-9; IV Ezra 6:49-52; Apocalypse of Baruch 24:4)] cited above suggests that Behemoth, like Leviathan in the Ugaritic texts, had a prototype in pre-Israelite mythology and that the monsters were connected in some ancient myth or played similar roles in different myths (321).

However, remember that these texts about Behemoth are post-biblical, and provide no background to Job.

It is also important to remember that it is a “fallacy” and an “unjustified assumption that Behemoth and Leviathan are of the same nature” (Wolfers 220). Just because Leviathan might be a mythical beast, it doesn’t necessarily follow that Behemoth is, too.

Is there any evidence for a pre-biblical mythical creature which might correspond to Behemoth? Pope offers the following:

“Among the several monsters which the violent goddess ‘Anat boasts of having conquered along with Leviathan there is mention of a bovine creature called... “the

²¹This situation is very different from the status of Leviathan, which is linked to a wide variety of ancient mythological sea-monster motifs both within the Old Testament and in the traditions of various eastern cultures.

ferocious bullock of El” or “the monstrous, ferocious bullock.”²²

“In the fragmentary text designated BH, ... El sends out divine handmaids into the wilderness equipped with obstetrical paraphernalia and instructed there to give birth to creatures called “Eaters” and “Devourers”... “On them are horns like bulls and humps like buffalo, and on them the face of Baal” (321).

There is also the “Sumero-Akkadian “bull of heaven” slain by Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the Gilgamesh Epic” (322).

These references are interesting, but they do not show any definite connection between Behemoth and any pre-biblical myth. As Pope admits, “there is no intimation of bovine character of Behemoth apart from the reference to its herbivorous nature” (322). Gordis, who supports the hippo and crocodile view, provides the following critique of the mythical monster theory of Behemoth and Leviathan.

- (1) The first speech of the Lord deals with flesh-and blood animals, so the second speech should also be expected to.
- (2) The poetic use of hyperbole is found in the first speech, so should also be expected in the second.
- (3) Behemoth is not described as horrendous and predatory, as is the creature in all creation myths. The poet emphasizes that these beasts are peaceful, yet powerful.
- (4) The poet is not describing cosmic events in the past, but the appearance and habits

²²Pope is here referring to CTA 3.IIID.40-41 (=KTU 1.3.III.43-4), which reads:
 Surely I lifted up the dragon, I...
 (and) smote the crooked serpent,
 they tyrant with the seven heads.
 I smote Ars beloved of El,
 I put an end to El’s calf Atik.

A similar text offered by Day (81), says “In the sea are Ars and the dragon” (CTA 6.VI.50 = KTU 1.6.VI.51-3). The best things these texts can do is show an ox-like creature in close association with a mythical sea serpent in Ugaritic mythology.

of these creatures in the present.

- (5) The poet's purpose in glorifying the miracle of the cosmos would not be served by conjuring up mythological creatures deriving from a polytheistic background, which the poet and his contemporaries had decisively abandoned (571).

J. Kinnier Wilson's "Job Apotheosis" Theory

In his 1975 article, Wilson puts an unusual spin on the Behemoth story. It revolves around the verses immediately preceding Behemoth, Job 40:10 especially. In this verse, God challenges Job, "adorn yourself with eminence and dignity, and clothe yourself with honor and majesty." According to Wilson, this was a command Job had to obey – a command to become a god. Yahweh and Job create the Behemoth together, and in 40:15-24, God ridicules Job's pitiful creation, the awkward Behemoth. In Wilson's hands, Job 40:15 becomes, "behold now Behemoth which I have made with thy help." The "maker" in verse 19 becomes Job (7).

"The problem with this interpretation is that Job is not challenged to "create" like El, but to rule and suppress evil with an arm like El's" (Habel 565, cf. Day *God's Conflict* 79).

Tur-Sinai: Behemoth Who?

Tur-Sinai (a.k.a. Torczyner) believes there is no such thing as the creature "Behemoth." In Job 40:15, he translates the term *בהמות* as "beasts," just like everywhere else in the Bible, and believes that the whole of 40:16-41:34 refers to Leviathan. The subject of the description just isn't mentioned until 41:1 (557-558).

Wolfers' Allegorical Interpretation

This theory interprets Behemoth as a symbol for Judah and Leviathan as a symbol for Assyria. Job 40:15-41:34 thus becomes an allegory of Judah's inability to stand up to the military might of Assyria. Judah, the Behemoth, is too preoccupied with sex and idolatry and is afflicted with paralysis and a bad attitude. The mighty Leviathan, Assyria, will surely overcome

them and mete out God's justice (see *The Lord's Second Speech*, or its reprint in *Deep Things Out of Darkness*).

The problem with Wolfers' theory is that it doesn't seem to fit in with the theme and purpose of Job. How does a lengthy allegorical prophecy of a future Judean military defeat fit into the story of the righteous sufferer Job (a non-Hebrew) and his quest for theodicy? Wolfers' analysis is ingenious, yet incongruous to the book of Job as a whole.

The Beast In Man Theory

This interpretation is not new. "In the Middle Ages, some theologians, like Albert Magnus, conceived of Behemoth as a symbol of sensuality and sin" (Gordis 569, cf. Pope 323). Wolfers begins to articulate this theory in his article on *The Lord's Second Speech*, but he drops it in favor of the allegorical interpretation. According to the beast in man theory, the Behemoth (which is gluttonous, lazy, cowardly, and preoccupied with sex) represents Job's human weaknesses and sinful nature. In Job 40:1-14, Yahweh challenges Job to be like God, to clothe himself honor and majesty and enact justice upon the world. If Job could do this, then that means he has a right to challenge God. "Then I will also confess to you [or *praise you*], that your own right hand can save you" (Job 40:14). However, the Lord knows Job can not do this, and he points out Job's human shortcomings in a poetic and obtuse way by introducing the Behemoth. As Wolfers states the theme of the section, "no man has the glory and majesty of God, because all men are tied to their own bestial nature" (479).

The reader should keep in mind that much of the poetry in the book of Job has double meanings, sarcasm, irony, double entendre, etc. One does not need to switch streams at chapter 40 and begin reading everything as literal.

In accordance with the beast in man theory, Job 40:15 is understood to mean "Behemoth whom I made (to be) with you, with the implication "I saddled you with" (Wolfers 478). Wolfers

also gets a strong clue from Psalm 73:22, where the poet says to God, “I have been like a beast (בְּהֵמוֹת) before You” (478), a clear indication that בְּהֵמוֹת can refer to the bestial nature of man.

Habel offers the following helpful suggestion:

By linking Job and Behemoth in the opening line [“Behemoth whom I made with you”], the poet invites comparisons between them at other key points in the poem. . . Behemoth, the Beast, is the symbol of those chaotic and threatening forces . . . which need to be kept subjugated. Perhaps Job should see himself as a similar threat (558-559).

“The idiom “I made along with you” also implies that Job and Behemoth are somehow linked together with a common destiny... the emphasis ... lies on the createdness and lot common to both Job and Behemoth” (Habel 565).

An additional parallel between Job and Behemoth is seen when 40:15-18 is compared with Job’s words in 10:8-11. “The description of God “making” the “bones” and “belly” of this extraordinary creature and knotting together the “sinews” of its thighs, is probably designed to jog Job’s memory about the way he portrayed God “making” him in the belly of his mother, with “bones” and “sinews” woven together” (Habel 566).

Identifying Leviathan

The Sea Monster in the Old Testament

Leviathan

In Job 41:1, Job is asked, “Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook?” Based on the information that follows, the answer to the question is a resounding, “Not unless you’re God!” In the passage, Leviathan is depicted as an uncapturable sea-beast with fearsome teeth and impregnable scales. It is known, however, that the crocodile was hunted in ancient times.²³

²³ “Herodotus (II.70) informs us that the crocodile was captured [by ancient Egyptians] by means of a hook baited with a piece of pork, while a live pig was beaten on the bank to attract the crocodile towards the bait. As soon as the crocodile was landed, its eyes were covered with mud to make it easy to kill” (Day *God’s Conflict* 65).

Also, “his underparts are like sharp potsherds,” whereas the crocodile has a smooth belly.

Perhaps the most striking feature about this beast is his pyrotechnic breath:

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. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes forth from his mouth (Job 41:18-21).²⁴

These verses strongly suggest a mythological monster, and not a crocodile²⁵.

According to Day, “Leviathan” is “the name of a mythological sea serpent or dragon, personifying the chaos waters, mentioned in the Ugaritic texts, in the OT, and in later Jewish literature. Etymologically the name means “twisting one,” as befits a serpent”²⁶ (*Leviathan* 295). In the Hebrew Bible, the word Leviathan is connected to the words Rahab and Tannin. Its equivalent in Ugaritic is Lotan (or Litan). Some scholars also connect Leviathan with Yam, Tehom, and Nahar. Most old versions simply transcribe the name *Leviathan* without identifying any earthly creature, although the LXX renders it δρᾱκόντα (“dragon”).

The term “Leviathan” is found in four OT passages besides Job 41.

- Psalm 104:25-26: “There is the sea (*yam*), great and broad, in which are swarms without number, animals both small and great. There the ships move along, and Leviathan, which You have formed to sport in it.” In the context, Leviathan

²⁴Although Jackson (along some others) says that this passage “may simply be poetic hyperbole which graphically portrays a blast of steam from the creature’s mouth and nose as he emerges from beneath the water” (87, cf. Hartley 532), Pope comments that “only the presumption that the animal is a crocodile [or some other natural creature] suggests that the poetic image is of the prismatic effect of sunlight on the spray from a crocodile’s sneeze... the obvious reference is to the exhalation of flame in normal dragonsque fashion” (340).

²⁵Other nominations for a naturalistic identification of Leviathan include the whale (G. R. Driver), dolphin (later G. R. Driver), and tunny fish (S. Spinner) (cf. Day *God’s Conflict* 67-68).

²⁶The crocodile, on the other hand, “has vertebrae which are shaped in such a way that it has great difficulty in turning its body rapidly” (Day *God’s Conflict* 66).

seems to be a literal sea creature. Thus many interpreters see a whale in this passage. The final phrase could also be rendered, “Leviathan, whom you formed to play with.” Either way, there is a striking connection to Job 41:15, where Job is asked whether he can play with Leviathan (Day *Leviathan* 296). In Job 41, all of the questions implicitly entail things which Job cannot do, but God can do and does do. Thus, Job 41:15 seems to indicate that God does play with Leviathan, a fact which is also attested in Rabbinic literature (see Day *God’s Conflict* 73 for a list).

- Psalm 74:13-14: “You divided the sea (*yam*) by your strength; you broke the heads of the sea monsters (*tanninim*) in the waters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.” In this passage, Leviathan is parallel with *tannin* (sea monster). *Tannin* is the generic word for sea monster. Leviathan is a *tannin*, but not every *tannin* is a Leviathan (cf. Wakeman 72-73). It is clear in verse 14 that Leviathan has multiple heads. The “sea monsters” (plural) in verse 13 may be the same as the “helpers of Rahab (=Leviathan)” in Job 9:13 (Day *God’s Conflict* 24). On the other hand, Wakeman thinks that “sea monsters” should be singular, since “in no other instance [of *tannin* -- including Is. 27:1 and 51:9] is the plural found in a passage which directly evokes the myth.” She thinks the text has become corrupted, and an “enclitic mem has been misread as a plural termination” (68, note 5). Her suggestion also improves the parallelism between verses 13 and 14 (“heads” = “heads,” “sea monster” = “Leviathan”).

Although these words (verses 12-17) are set in a creation context, the psalm itself is a psalm of lament for the 586 B. C. destruction of the Jerusalem

temple. The message is that, since God was mighty enough to vanquish Leviathan in the beginning, he is surely able to help Israel now.

- Isaiah 27:1: “In that day the Lord will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, with His fierce and great and mighty sword, even Leviathan the twisted serpent; and he will kill the dragon (*tannin*) who lives in the sea.” Unlike the previous reference, where the defeat of Leviathan is spoken of in the context of creation, this passage has an eschatological context.²⁷ It is uncertain what historical power Leviathan might here represent (Day 295). Notice that Leviathan is again paralleled in this verse with *tannin*.
- Job 3:8: “Let those curse it [the day of Job’s birth] who curse the day, who are prepared to rouse Leviathan.” Gaster provides some interesting insight into this verse. He first connects it with the ubiquitous international myth that eclipses are caused by a dragon swallowing the sun or moon. But he then suggests that Job is alluding to another myth, namely the belief that the primeval chaos sea monster will break free and have to be defeated again at the end of time (see Isaiah 27:1 above, and also Rev. 20:1-3, where the “ancient serpent” is loosed for a while). He concludes, “The curse which Job invokes, therefore, would be that the day of his birth may be deemed so ill-starred that it will be the one on the anniversary of which the Dragon will emerge and ‘all hell break loose’” (787-788).

Leviathan is also mentioned in the following later Jewish texts: 2 Esdras 6:49-52; 2 Baruch 29:4; 1 Enoch 6:7-9, 24. In these texts, the Leviathan myth is further embellished, and it is said that Leviathan and Behemoth are to both be devoured at the Messianic banquet (Day

²⁷“That a conflict originally associated with creation should become an element of eschatological imagery is explained by the principle *Urzeit wird Endzeit* (= the primeval time becomes the endtime), which is attested elsewhere in apocalyptic literature, as the notions of Paradise regained and a new heaven and a new earth” (Day *Leviathan* 295).

Leviathan 296).

Tannin

It was noticed above that Leviathan was mentioned along with the word *tannin* (dragon or sea-monster). *Tannin* appears in the following OT texts:

- Job 7:12: “Am I the sea (*yam*) or the sea monster (*tannin*), that You set a guard over me?” In this passage, the sea monster (i.e., Leviathan/Rahab) is somewhere captured and under guard. One might be tempted to think of the dragon in Revelation being chained in the abyss (20:1-3).
- Ezekiel 29:3-5: “Speak and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great monster (*tannim*) that lies in the midst of his rivers, that has said, ‘My Nile is mine, and I myself have made it.’ I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish of your rivers cling to your scales. I will abandon you to the wilderness.” Here the dragon obviously represents Egypt, but the “hooks in your jaws” imagery echoes what is said in Job 41:2.
- Ezekiel 32:2-4 “...You compared yourself to a lion of the nations, yet you are like the monster (*tannin*) in the seas, and you burst forth in your rivers... I will cast you on the open field. And I will cause all the birds of the heavens to dwell on you, and I will satisfy the beasts of the whole earth with you...” This is another oracle against Egypt. Egypt is “like the monster” (Egypt is “Rahab” in other passages) in that Egypt will be utterly crushed and defeated by God, just like the sea monster was crushed in the beginning.
- Isaiah 51:9-10: “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon (*tannin*)? Was it not You who dried up the sea

(*yam*), the waters of the great deep (*tehom*); who made the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed to cross over?” In this passage, the crossing of the Israelites through the Sea of Reeds is likened to God’s primordial defeat of the dragon (who represents evil and chaos). The defeat of the dragon made creation possible, while the defeat of Egypt brought about the birth of the Jewish nation. Notice how *tannin* in this passage is parallel with *Rahab*. *Rahab* may be synonymous with Leviathan. “Whereas *Rahab* and Leviathan are never mentioned together in the same context, *tannin* appears once parallel to *Rahab* (Is. 51:9) and twice parallel to Leviathan (Ps. 74:13, Is. 27:1)” (Wakeman 72).

- Jeremiah 51:34: “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me and crushed me, he has set me down like an empty vessel; he has swallowed me like a monster (*tannin*)...”
- Genesis 1:21: “God created the great sea monsters (*tanninim*) and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed...”
- Psalm 148:7: “Praise the Lord from the earth, sea monsters (*tanninim*) and all deeps...”
- In Exodus 7:12, the rods of Aaron and the Egyptian magicians become serpents (*tanninim*).
- There is also Psalm 44:20 (where *tannim* has been translated “jackals”), Deuteronomy 32:33 (which speaks of the poison of *tanninim*), and Psalm 91:13.

Rahab

It was seen in Isaiah 51:9 that *tannin* is used parallel with *Rahab*, a beast which may be identical to Leviathan. “*Rahab* is the (masculine) proper name of a mythological beast. It is found only in Israelite tradition, and is in some passages identified with Egypt” (Wakeman 59).

According to Day,

The name apparently means ‘boisterous one,’ an apt term for the personified raging sea. The fact that Rahab and ‘the crooked serpent’ are mentioned in parallel verses in Job 26:12-13, and that Rahab is mentioned parallel to ‘the dragon’ (*tannin*) in Is. 51:9, suggests that Rahab may simply be an alternative name for Leviathan, who is likewise called ‘the crooked serpent’ and ‘the dragon’ in Is. 27:1 (*God’s Conflict* 6).

The name Rahab “has not hitherto been found mentioned in any extra-biblical text” (Day 6), but it appears in the following Old Testament passages:

- Isaiah 51:9 (mentioned previously): “...Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon (*tannin*)?”
- Psalm 89:8-11: “O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds you. You rule the swelling of the sea (*yam*); when its waves rise, You still them. You Yourself crushed Rahab like the one who is slain; You scattered your enemies with Your mighty arm. The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all it contains, You have founded them.” In this passage, like Isa. 51:9-11 and Psalm 74:12-17, “Yahweh’s defeat of the chaos monster(s) in the past is appealed to as a ground of confidence for him to act to deliver his people in the present when the powers of chaos seem to have triumphed” (Day 22). Day suggests that the “enemies” in this passage might be the same as the “helpers of Rahab” in Job 9:13 (41).
- Job 26:12-13: “He quieted the sea (*yam*) with His power, and by His understanding he shattered Rahab. By his breath the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.” Here, the shattering/piercing of Rahab is (like Psalm 89) set in a creation context. God’s activities in creating the world

involved a battle with this beast. This primordial conflict is alluded to in Job 41:8, where Yahweh tells Job to “remember the battle!”

- Job 9:13: “God will not turn back His anger; beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab.” As Hartley comments on this verse,

Proof of God’s incontestable might is his victory over the forces of chaos represented by *the helpers* or cohorts *of Rahab*... By reason of their role in the myths of Israel’s neighbors, in the OT these creatures [Leviathan, Rahab, Tannin] symbolize the forces of chaos in opposition to God. It is always affirmed that God has defeated them as a testimony to the belief that God is master over all cosmic forces, including those that are hostile to his rule (173).

Day thinks that the “helpers of Rahab” may be the same as the “sea monsters” of Psalm 74: 13 (*God’s Conflict* 24), although “sea monster” (singular) may be the better reading for this verse.

- In Isaiah 30:7, Egypt is called “Rahab who sits still” (or “thwarted Rahab”). In other words, “Egypt is as impotent as the monster Yahweh crushed in the beginning.” “Rahab is the prototype of the defeated-by-God” (Wakeman 60).
- Rahab represents Egypt again in Psalm 87:4.
- In Isaiah 3:5 and 14:4, verbal forms are found, meaning “to act like Rahab.”
- In Psalm 40:5, the name appears as an epithet, as a way of expressing contempt for foreign gods and those who worship them (Wakeman 58, 60).

The many verses mentioned above should make it abundantly clear that there was indeed an ancient Hebrew mythological motif in which God battled a dragon in connection with the

quelling of chaos at the creation of the world.²⁸ The first thorough scholarly consideration of this story was published in 1895 in H. Gunkel's book *Schopfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (cf. Wakeman³, Day 1). The Ugaritic texts which have been discovered since the publication of this book have tended to support his ideas, although it is now believed that "the dragon and sea mythology of the Old Testament is of Canaanite and not Babylonian origin as Gunkel thought" (Day *God's Conflict* 7).

The fact that this mythology is alluded to in the Old Testament does not indicate that the biblical writers actually believed in the stories, nor does it impugn the militant monotheism of the authors of the Old Testament. Prevalent contemporary mythological motifs were incorporated as illustrations, much like a modern preacher might illustrate a sermon with a fairy tale or folk legend. It is also significant that all of the above "sea monster" texts are taken from poetic literature (with the exception of Exodus 7:12, where *tannin* describes Aaron's miraculous snake).

The Sea Monster in Ugaritic Texts

Before discussing the sea monster's role in the Ugaritic texts, mention should be made of Yam. In the above quotations, places where the Hebrew word *yam* occur have been emphasized. *Yam*, of course, is the word for "sea." But in the Ugaritic texts, it is also the name of the god of the sea who does battle with Baal. In much ancient literature the sea represents chaos, and so Yam (the sea personified) must be defeated before the creation of the world can be completed. Words like "the sea" (*Yam*), "the deep" (*Tehom*), and "the waters" (*Nahar*) are used in connection with this mythological motif. Even though this "God versus the sea" idea may have influenced a few biblical texts²⁹, there is no place in the Hebrew Bible where *yam* or any

²⁸The whole mythos of god versus the sea and the dragon (chaos) in the creation of the world is sometimes called the *Chaoskampf* motif.

²⁹Consider, for instance, Genesis 1:2ff ("The earth was formless/waste and void/emptiness (i.e., chaos), and darkness was over the face of the deep, and the spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters"). In this text, however, the sea and everything associated with it is called "good."

related word is used of a living being. *Yam* in the OT is not a god, a person, or a creature. *Yam* is simply the sea.³⁰ Consult Day's book, God's Conflict With the Dragon and the Sea for a thorough study of this subject (but reaching a somewhat different conclusion).

Excavation of the city of Ugarit (known as modern Ras-Shamra) began in 1929 after a Syrian peasant accidentally discovered a burial chamber. The excavation was begun by the French, under the leadership of Claude F. A. Schaeffer, who stayed with the project until 1939, when World War II brought about a temporary halt. As of 1984, the site was still being excavated. Among the finds at Ras-Shamra are numerous documents in several languages, including the previously unknown Ugaritic language, which is similar in many ways to Hebrew. The Baal epic mentioned below is one of the major Canaanite epics written in Ugarit in the 14th century B.C., but it probably existed in an earlier, oral form (Pfeiffer 838-839, cf. Hubbard 937-942).

In the Ugaritic texts, the sea monster, rather than being called Rahab or Leviathan, is named *ltn*. *Ltn* has traditionally been vocalized as *Lotan*, but "it has been persuasively argued by J. A. Emerton (1982) that the correct rendering should be *Litan*" (Day *Leviathan* 295). *Ltn* is mentioned in the following Ugaritic passage (CTA 5.I.1-3 = KTU 1.5.I.1-3)³¹:

Because you smote *Ltn* the twisting serpent,
and made an end of the crooked serpent,

³⁰“All those passages in the Old Testament which speak about God's control of the sea at the time of creation naturally presuppose the archaic world view shared by the ancient Israelites along with other peoples of the ancient near east that both above the domed firmament of heaven and below the earth there is a cosmic sea... (cf. Gen. 7:11). References to Leviathan or Rahab etc. relate to a dragon associated with this cosmic sea” (Day 4). Although the above observation should be taken into account, it is can not be maintained that all Leviathan references are in the “cosmic sea.” In Psalm 104:25-26, for example, Leviathan plays in the same “sea” with the ships.

³¹CTA refers to A. Herdner, *Corpus des tablettes en cuneiformes alphabetiques* (2 vols., Paris, 1963). KTU refers to M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, J. Sanmartin, *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit. Teil 1: Transkription* (AOAT 24, Neukirchen, 1976). These are two different texts which contain the Ugaritic manuscripts.

the tyrant with seven heads,
the skies will become hot and will shine.

The following passage from the Baal epic (CTA 3.IIID. 34-IV.47 = KTU 1.3.III.37-IV.3) is also a reference to *Ltn*. Although *Ltn* is not mentioned by name, the fact that the creature mentioned is “the tyrant with seven heads” (as above) makes this identification certain. Anat, the sister of Baal, is the speaker.

What foe has risen up against Baal,
What enemy has risen against the Rider of the clouds?
Surely I smote Yam, beloved of El,
Surely I made an end of River, the mighty god.
Surely I lifted up the dragon (*tnn*), I . . .
And smote the crooked serpent,
The tyrant with the seven heads.
I smote Ars beloved of El,
I put an end to El’s calf Atik.

Additional references to the dragon in the Ugaritic tablets can be studied in Day, *God’s Conflict*, pages 15 and 16.

These two passages provide some immediate biblical parallels. In Isaiah 27:1, Leviathan is called “the slippery serpent” and “the crooked serpent,” as in both of the above passages. These two passages depict the beast as having “seven heads.” In Psalm 74:13-14, it is Yahweh who “crushed the heads (plural) of Leviathan.” References to God battling the monster are found in Isaiah 51:9-10, Ps. 89:10-11, Job 26:12-13, Isaiah 27:1, Psalm 74:1:13-14 and possibly Job 9:13 and 41:8. The *Chaoskampf* is associated with creation in Psalms 74, 89, and 104. In addition to all this, Day also postulates that “there can be no doubt, in view of Leviathan’s seven

heads, that it is this mythological monster which underlies the seven-headed dragon (Satan) in Rev. 12:3 and the seven-headed beast (Rome) in Rev. 13:1, 17:3 (*Leviathan* 296).

The conclusion then is that the Leviathan of Job 41 is certainly a mythological sea-dragon. To deny the mythological nature of the beast is to deny a veritable mountain of documentary evidence both within and without the Old Testament. Leviathan represents chaos and the powers of evil. Job cannot control these powers by any means, but God can. The purpose of the passage is to point out the futility of contending with God. In his first speech, the Lord makes his power plain by appealing to the complexity of the created universe. In his second speech, Yahweh exposes Job's human weakness in the caricature called Behemoth, and then extols his own transcendence by reminding Job of his control over the forces of chaos and evil in the world, forces personified in the sea dragon Leviathan, whom Job could never hope to control. The literary use of this mythological monster does not reflect negatively at all upon the inspiration or accuracy of the Bible. As Kaiser says,

The Bible does not give even tacit credence or approval to any pagan mythology; but it will borrow some of its terms and language to depict exotic aspects of the titanic struggle against evil and unrighteousness that goes on behind the scenes. That is what is illustrated here in Job (262).

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