INTRODUCTION:

Just as in the inanimate world [cosmology, astronomy, oceanography, meteorology, geology] the creative and providential activity of God encompasses processes and activities beyond man's understanding and control, so too in the world of living things does it encompass wild creatures beyond man's understanding and control.

By presenting His power and wisdom in all that exists, God showed Job his ignorance and weakness. How could Job comprehend or control God's purposes with mankind, when he could not comprehend or control God's creative wisdom and power?

God did not need to explain His ways to Job; nor to us. He is Creator and King of kings and LORD of lords. God's creative genius, which is exhibited all around us, is sufficient to demonstrate that the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of the universe does not owe puny man an explanation of His actions. Man is answerable to God, not vice versa. Yet, though God does not explain His purposes in man's suffering and pain, He does reveal Himself through those difficulties.

The application of this truth is that although people cannot understand God's workings, they can still trust Him. Thus, worship should stem from an appreciation of God Himself, not a comprehension of all God's plans and purposes. Though believers may at times be puzzled over the intent of God, the people of God can still praise Him for His wisdom, power, goodness and mercy.

In the last chapter the LORD reminded Job of a group of enormous land animals collectively referred to as “behemoth” to impress him of His majesty creative wisdom and power. The LORD tells us that the behemoth “is the first of the ways of God” (Job 40:19).

In this chapter, the LORD concludes His dialogue with Job, this time reminding Job of another animal, equally as impressive as the “behemoth”, the “Leviathan”.

In Isa. 27:1 the prophet Isaiah refers to LEVIATHAN as a “him” and describes this creature as being an elusive, writhing serpent [nachash: “a snake” or “snake-like”; i.e., elongated] and a dragon [tanniyn: “a large lizard-like creature”] that lives in the sea. Today we would refer to it as a “marine reptile”.

From the description that the LORD gives us, the Leviathan (a) primarily lived in the sea but (b) sometimes came on shore, (c) had scaly, thick skin that deflected spears, javelins and harpoons, (c) was huge and terrifying, (d) breathed fire, (e) left luminescent wakes in the water and (f) had a neck, nose, and a mouth with terrorizing teeth.

Like the behemoth, Leviathan was a creature of unusual size, power and ferocity. Of this creature the LORD proudly says, “On earth there is nothing like him, which is made without fear. He beholds every high thing; he is king over all the children of pride” (Job 41:33-34). And that was Job’s problem—spiritual pride!

Finally, it should be noted that the thrilling language used in this chapter to describe the Leviathan, the terrifying “sea monster”, found its way into pagan literature. In 1928 in the ancient city of Ugarit, located in NW Syria and now known as Ras Shamra, clay tablets were discovered that contain writings known as the “Baal Epic”. In it are parallel descriptions of Leviathan which are found in Ps. 74:13-14 and Isa. 27:1. It is believed that Ugarit had close connections to the Hittite Empire, sent tribute to Egypt and maintained trade and diplomatic relations with Cyprus [then called Alashiya]. Ugarit was at the height of its glory between 1450—1200 BC; about 500 years after Job.

It should be noted that in the Hebrew Bible text, vv.1-8 of this chapter comprise the last 8 verses of chapter 40; vv.25-32. The first verse of chapter 41 in the Hebrew text is v.9 of the English chapter 41 text.

The LORD is specific in His description of a Leviathan and He asks Job 17 questions about this creature. Note that the Lord would not do this if it were an imaginary animal—this was a real creature!
vv. 1-2 ➤ The “Leviathan” is Introduced

[1 “Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?
2 Can you put a reed through his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook?”]

The Hebrew word “Livyathan” refers to a “wreathed or joined creature”; i.e., a sea monster whose shape is twisted or writhing and whose skin is joined together with plates or scales.

When cross-correlated with other occurrences, the Hebrew word, ‘livyathan’, evidently refers to a large sea creature whose skin appears to be joined together in a twisted or braided fashion. It was a monstrous sea creature than dwelt primarily in seas and oceans.

According to a literal, historical understanding of Genesis 1–11, humans and dinosaurs would have coexisted. Gen. 1:20-23 tells us that marine reptiles, such as Leviathans, were created on the 5th day and Gen. 1:24-28 tells us that land animals, including dinosaurs, were created on the 6th day, along with man.

Since marine reptiles already lived in water Noah would not have had to put marine reptiles in the ARK. Afterward, he took the land animals, along with birds, that were on the ARK and released them onto dry land when the GREAT FLOOD was over {Gen. 7:1-16; 8:13-19}; including dinosaurs. Both groups of creatures evidently survived thousands of years after the flood. Refer to Appendix A: The Connection Between Leviathans and Dragons and Job 40 notes.

Remember also that throughout the LORD’s discourse on His animal creations we are dealing with real creatures. A Leviathan, like the behemoth in the last chapter, was a literal creature Job could have observed. It was not an allegorical reference {e.g., Ps. 74:13-14; Isa. 27:1}.

Albert Barnes, in his Notes on the Bible, makes a strong case that this animal is a Nile crocodile. Many other scholarly commentators also identify a Leviathan with a crocodile.

Representative pictures of two large crocodile species are shown in Figure 41-1.

---

1 It is noted that in the Hebrew Bible text, vv.1-8 of this chapter comprise the last 8 verses of chapter 39; vv.25-32. The first verse of chapter 41 in the Hebrew text is v.9 of the English text.

2 This is usually interpreted to mean that this creature has scales or plates, which appear to be overlapped or joined together as if intertwined. We know that it lived in the sea {Ps.104:25-26; Isa. 27:1}.

The large Nile crocodile is indeed a formidable creature and would be a terrifying animal to encounter in the wild. But as we shall see, based on the Biblical description, there are some major difficulties with this identification.

Although the Leviathan was probably not a crocodile; an alternate candidate might include the extinct Sarosuchus imperator, which grew to 40 ft. [12½ m] long and weighed 8 tons [refer to Figure 41-2]. Note the boney plates on its back, perhaps correlating to v.15-17.

This is probably the best possible crocodile-like candidate for what a Leviathan was. But this animal probably lived in rivers and marshes, not the sea as Leviathan did.

Figure 41-2. Skeletal Reconstruction of Sarcosuchus imperator, an Extinct Giant Crocodilian.

So, as in the case of the mighty behemoth {Job 40}, could the Hebrew term “Livyathan” also be referring to an animal which, as far as we know, may be extinct and belong to such a group of marine reptiles that we now refer to as “plesiosaurs”, “pliosaurs” and “mosasaurs”?! The answer to this question is “Yes!”

After careful analysis of the text, and as in the case with the behemoth, there are some distinctive features about a Leviathan that rule out the possibility that it is referring to a modern-day crocodile—even though they can grow to a length greater than 20 feet and weigh more than a ton. Although they are formidable creatures to subdue—they are nevertheless able to be subdued and even “tamed”, as was the case in ancient Egypt.

For example, a Leviathan lived in the sea, not in rivers and marshes like the crocodile. Note: In v.17 the LORD asks: “Can you fill his skin with harpoons or his head with fishing spears?” Harpoons and fishing spears were used on large ships that sailed the sea; not small boats on rivers. Note also these other Biblical references:

4 Sarcosuchus, meaning “flesh crocodile”, is an extinct genus of crocodylians that weighed up to 8 tons and were up to 40 feet [12 meters] long. The purpose of the bulbous structure at the end of its snout remains a mystery. Some creationists have speculated it’s related to fire breathing ability [v.21].

5 Plesiosaurs, pliosaurs, along with mosasaurs were not “dinosaurs” but ancient marine reptiles which, as far as we know, are now extinct. Pliosaurs and mosasaurs had shorter necks and elongated heads compared to plesiosaurs and typically had sharp, thorn-like conical teeth. The word “plesiosaur” derives from the compound of two Greek words <plesios> + <saurus> = [“near to/similar to”] + [“lizard”] and so means “similar to a lizard”. The name was coined by the British paleontologist Richard Owen in 1841 along with the word “dinosaur”. Plesiosaurs breathed air, and bore live young; there are also indications that they were warm-blooded. These kinds of fossil remains were first discovered in a limestone quarry at Maastrict, Netherlands, near the Meuse River in 1764—over 250 years ago! Many others were also found in the late 1700’s as well as the early 1800’s.
“You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.”—Ps. 74:13-14

“This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great. There the ships sail about; there is that Leviathan which You have made to play there.”—Ps. 104:25-26

“In that day the Lord, with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.”—Isa. 27:1

“He makes the deep boil like a pot; he makes the sea like a pot of ointment. He leaves a shining wake behind him; one would think the deep had white hair.”—Job 41:31-32

“In that day the Lord, with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, even Leviathan the squirming serpent; and He will slay the dragon that is in the sea.”—Job 41:33-34

In Isa. 27:1 there is also another Hebrew word, ‘tannin’, associated with the word Leviathan, which is apparently referring to a large, elongated, snake-like [i.e., reptilian] creature. Here is how this verse is rendered in various translations:

(NKJV) "In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing [elusive] serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent, and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea."

(NASB) "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 who lives in the sea."

(NET) "In that day the Lord will punish with his destructive, great, and powerful sword, Leviathan the fast-moving serpent, Leviathan the squirming serpent; He will kill the sea monster."

(KJV) "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

(NIV) "In that day, the Lord will punish with his sword, his fierce, great and powerful sword, Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; He will slay the monster of the sea."

Therefore, the word Leviathan is describing a very large serpent-like [i.e., dragon-like], marine reptile [a “sea monster”].

And as were all the other animals that have been described in the previous chapters the Leviathan was a real creature. And as stated previously, the Lord would not be describing a mythical or imaginary creature.

Leviathan was a monstrous sea creature, an inhabitant of the sea, not a dweller of rivers and marshes. This creature probably did not live in the Jordan or Nile Rivers. Therefore, we need to look for candidates other than a crocodile for what this animal was.

First of all, whatever this animal was, from the description given here in Job and elsewhere, it was a monstrous creature that lived in the sea! Therefore, we need to look for better suited candidates, other than the Nile crocodile, for what a Leviathan was.

---

6 Although the term “Leviathan” is allegorically used in this passage to represent the oppressors of God’s chosen people or the enemy of God, it is still confirms the characteristics of this creature.
Since Job lived in the ancient Middle East\(^7\), the seas he would have been most familiar with were the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea; from where he could have known about them.

This has led some commentators and students of the scriptures to associate this creature with an extinct species of marine reptiles\(^8\) known as *plesiosaurs* [long necked], *pliosaurs*\(^9\) [short necked] and *mosasaurs* whose skeleton remains are found\(^10\) on every continent, including Antarctica.

**Figure 41-3** shows some examples of *plesiosaur* and *pliosaur* and *mosasaur* fossil reconstructions. The fossil remains of these creatures have been found up to 55 feet [17 meters] long and are typically 35-45 feet [11-14 meters] long, with skulls 6-8 feet long. They were enormous sea creatures!

These marine reptiles were not dinosaurs [lit. “terrible lizards”], but are related more to turtles because they lived primarily in the sea, but sometimes came onto shore {see v.30}. They were in effect, enormous “marine lizards”.

Comparing the skeletal features of a giant sea turtle, shown in **Figure 41-4**, with those shown in **Figure 41-3**; one can see that they shared in common a hard, bony underside called a “carapace”.

*Plesiosaurs, pliosaurs* and *mosasaurs* all had the turtle-like *carapace* underneath their abdomen giving them a stiff underside providing them with protection underneath.

\(^7\) In the introduction to this book it was mentioned that Job lived in the “land of Uz” {Job 1:1}; which was probably located somewhere between Damascus on the North and Amman on the South; that is, somewhere in the plains located between modern-day Syria and Jordan.

\(^8\) Although just a fraction of the size, the *marine iguanas* which live on and in the Pacific waters of the Galapagos Islands, off the coast of Ecuador, are modern-day examples of such creatures.

\(^9\) The *pliosaurs* were short-necked *plesiosaurs* with elongated heads and massive, toothed jaws.

\(^10\) For example, fossils of a type of *plesiosaur*, known as *Elasmomosaurus* have also been found in Jordan, Iran, Syria and Morocco.
Thus, the fossils of *plesiosaurs*, *pliosaurs* and *mosasaurs* reveal a unique and, somewhat, bizarre skeletal structure—a combination sea serpent [i.e., an eel] and sea turtle.

Note the comment made by the British geologist and naturalist, Prof. William Buckland\(^\text{11}\), who, in 1832, likened *plesiosaur* fossils to “...*a sea serpent run through a turtle*”. This description is consistent with that of “Leviathan” given in this chapter.

And like crocodiles [refer to Figure 41-1]; they may also have had tough, leathery skin covering their *bodies* and *flippers* giving them great protection and making them a formidable animal to capture or kill.

There have been many types of large *plesiosaurs* discovered such as the *Styxosaurus*, one of several species of a group collectively called *Elasmosaurs*, shown in Figure 41-5.

*Styxosaurs* were up to 40 feet [12 meters] long, with about half of the length being composed of its 17 foot [5 meter] neck. Its sharp teeth were conical and were adapted to puncture and hold rather than to cut. Apparently, like other *plesiosaurs*, *Styxosaurs* swallowed their food whole.

---

\(^{11}\) William Buckland [1784—1856] was a renowned English *theologian*, *geologist* and *paleontologist*. Unfortunately, he was also a proponent of the “Gap Theory”, which placed hundreds of millions years in *Genesis 1*, between *vv.1-2*, and an ardent promoter of what much later became known as “*progressive creation*” [Hugh Ross, 1990].
Fossils of an *Elasmosaur*\(^{12}\), were also recently found [2012] in the *Aravah* [Negev] *Desert* in Southern Israel\(^{13}\) [directly south of the Dead Sea]. The fossil specimen appears to be 26 feet [8 meters] long, although similar specimens found in other parts of the world have been up to 40 feet [12 meters] in length. Refer to **Figure 41-6**.

![Figure 41-6. Reconstructed Fossil Skeleton of an Elasmosaur Showing the Characteristic Long, Serpentine Neck of a Plesiosaur. Note Especially the Large Teeth, the Paddle-Like Flippers and Turtle-Like Carapace Underneath.](image)

The largest species of *pliosaur* that has been found are the *Liopleurodon*, up to 40 feet [12 meters] long, and *Kronosaurus*, up to 35 feet [11 meters] long, shown in **Figure 41-7** and **Figure 41-8**, respectively.

![Figure 41-7. Fossil Reconstruction of Liopleurodon Specimen (left) and Artist’s Rendering (right).](image)

\(^{12}\) *Elasmosaurs* typically have long necks that are at least half the length of the body, and composed of 60-72 vertebrae.

\(^{13}\)*Israeli Archeologists Find Unprecedented 85-Million-Year-Old Reptile Remains*; Daniel Eisenbud, The Jerusalem Post; Feb. 10, 2015. Note: These fossils were of course assigned *Evolutionary* dates!
There have also been many large mosasaurs discovered, which were 40 to 56 feet [12 to 17 meters] long and had sharp, thorn-like, conical teeth, such as the Mosasaurus hoffmannii shown in Figure 41-3 (right) and the Tylosaurus proriger, shown in Figure 41-9.

To get a perspective on size, the length of its flipper was about the height of an average man. The varied locations of Tylosaurus fossil finds also indicate that it inhabited shallow coastal waters as well as deeper water far from shore. This might mean that it had the ability to come upon the shore; as required by the description given in v.30.

Fossilized skin impressions of T. proriger indicate skin with large, closely spaced scales, which are consistent with the description given in vv.15-17, 23.

Fossilized stomach contents associated with T. proriger indicate that it was a ferocious marine predator with a varied diet, including fish, sharks, smaller pliosaurs and plesiosaurs, and flightless diving birds [hesperornis].

All these artistic renderings may or may not be accurate, but based on the description given in vv.23, 30 a Leviathan probably would have had skin similar to that of a crocodile or sea turtle.

Note also that, just like a sea turtle, this huge and formidable creature must have had the ability to walk up onto land {vv.25-30} using its flippers. In so doing, it would have caused fear, panic and havoc among any human settlements it encountered.

Finally, it is also possible that the Leviathan was a type of enormous marine reptile whose fossil remains have yet to be found. Perhaps their population was relatively small at the time of the GREAT FLOOD so that the probability that one was preserved as a fossil is lower than that for the other ancient marine reptiles.

---

14 These should not be confused with mesosaurs, which apparently had webbed feet instead of flipper-like paddles.
On this note, it should be noted that the skeletal remains of the *coelacanth* fish appear in the fossil record about 360 million years ago [by evolutionary reckoning]. This fish was thought to be extinct for 65 million years—until one was caught in the Eastern Indian Ocean, off the East Coast of Africa, in 1938. Since then, other specimens have been caught in the waters around Indonesia. It is considered a “living fossil”. No one knows how many other “living fossils” of “extinct animals are yet to be discovered.^{15}

From the description given by the LORD, a Leviathan could very well have been a cross between a *crocodile* and *sea turtle*: (a) the head, teeth, body and tail of a crocodile with (b) the armor-like plating, neck and paddle-like flippers of a sea turtle. Note especially vv.15-17 in this regard.

Remember that this was the opinion of the British geologist Prof. William Buckland who, in 1832, likened *plesiosaur* fossils to “...*a sea serpent run through a turtle*”. If the *Sarcosuchus imperator*, which had boney back plates, was sea-going it would become an excellent candidate for a “Leviathan”. Especially if they grew larger than the fossil specimens found to date! Refer to Figures 41-2 and 41-11.

Now that we have established that a Leviathan was a *terrifying sea creature*; probably a large marine reptile *now extinct*, and NOT a marine mammal [e.g., a whale] NOR a fish [e.g., a basking shark], we can proceed to appreciate what the LORD says about him.

Note that since Leviathan was a sea creature it was created on the 5th day of Creation Week:^{16}

> “So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good....So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.”—*Gen. 1:21, 23*

[Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook.....] The meaning here is “to extract from the water, to fish”. The implication is that, “No, one cannot draw Leviathan from the water with a mere fish hook”.

One cannot catch this animal the way one would catch even a large fish. Why? Because such an animal was far too ferocious, large and heavy to be easily caught this way.

To consider the meaning here, compare this description to *whales*, which are the approximate size of *plesiosaurs* and *pliosaurs*, they also cannot be caught with only a hook.

The LORD seriously asks Job if he can capture a Leviathan with a hook; He is not asking Job to perform an imaginary action. Neither is this allegorical, since this is related to the real issue of Job’s *power* and control contrasted with the LORD’s. Like behemoth, Leviathan was a real creature.

Somewhat ironically, Job was familiar with this creature! He had already referred to Leviathan in *Job 3:8* as some huge, untamable and fierce monster; “*May those curse it who curse the day, those who are ready to arouse Leviathan.*”

Job is saying that those who would dare *arouse or disturb* such a beast will curse that day in the same manner as Job was cursing the day he was born.

---

^{15} For example, the *Megamouth* shark was not discovered until November, 1976 [25 mi. off the coast of Kaneohe, Hawaii). Europe did not even know about the Giant Panda until March, 1869.

^{16} Unlike behemoth which was created on the 6th day of Creation Week along with the other land creatures.
The meaning is that those who dared to disturb a Leviathan take their lives into their own hands and, if they survive, would regret doing so for the rest of their lives; which the LORD confirms this in vv.8-11.

This is another indication that a Leviathan was not a crocodile because the ancient Egyptians could fairly easily catch one in the manner described in this verse:

Herodotus\(^\text{17}\) says that catching the Nile crocodile by drawing it out of the water with a hook was one of the methods which were used in his time. He states:

“Among the various methods that are used to take the crocodile, I shall relate only one which deserves most attention; they fix a hook on a piece of swine's flesh, and suffer it to float into the middle of the stream. On the banks they have a live hog, which they beat until it cries out. The crocodile, hearing the noise, makes toward it and in the way encounters and devours the bait. They thus draw it on shore, and the first thing they do is to fill its eyes with clay; it is thus easily manageable, which it otherwise would not be\(^\text{18}\).”

This could not have been said about a Leviathan.

[…..or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?] The meaning here is: One cannot catch a Leviathan with a rope or cord fashioned into a noose [a snare] and lowered into the water. The idea would be to catch the animal around its snout [not head], perhaps a reference to its long jaws, which contains the tongue [ref. Fig. 41-4–6].

One could never hope to snare such an animal in this manner. However, the fact that it is possible to catch a crocodile in this fashion is another indication that Leviathan is probably not referring to that animal. Also, crocodiles do not have tongues per se.

[Can you put a reed through his nose…..] In the KJV translation has the word “hook” here instead of “reed” because that seems to make contextual sense.

However, the Hebrew word here refers to a “reed” or “bulrush”; or collectively, a stand of reeds or bulrushes that grows in a marsh. The word is rendered that way in the three places it occurs in the book of Isaiah. Note that it is a different Hebrew word than used in v.1, where the Hebrew word does refer to a “hook”.

In v.20 the same word is rendered “cauldron” in the KJV. However, there within the context it is actually better translated “burning reeds”.

Here {v.2} it is probably referring collectively to a “rope of reeds” and several other translations render the word as “rope or cord”.

[…..or pierce his jaw with a hook?] The Hebrew word rendered “hook” here literally refers to “a thorn” as in a bramble bush or thistle [see also Job 31:40; Prov. 26:9]. The word rendered “pierce” means “to puncture”. Thus, this verse could be rendered as “…..or puncture his jaw with an awl?”; for the purpose of attaching a hook or ring.

\footnote{\textit{Herodotus} was a Greek historian who was born in Halicarnassus in the Persian Empire [modern-day Bodrum, Turkey] and lived in the fifth century BC [c. 484–c. 425 BC], a contemporary of Socrates. He is widely referred to as “The Father of History” [first conferred by Cicero]. He was the first historian known to have broken from Homeric tradition to treat historical subjects as a method of investigation—specifically, by collecting his materials systematically and critically, and then arranging them into a historical narrative. \textit{Herodotus, Histories}, II, ref. 12, p.70.}
A hook or ring would be put through the nose of an animal, in order to secure it. The idea seems to be that an instrument, such as an awl, sharpened like a thorn or spike, and then bent so as to become a ring attached to the animal’s jaw or nose {cp. Isa 37:29}.

The idea is that the LORD is asking Job if he would be able to put a metal hook or ring through the nose of a Leviathan, securing it with a rope and lead it around [like an ox].

The implication of the question calls for a negative answer, “No, Job would not be able to put a rope made of reeds through the nose of a Leviathan”.

Note that although this might also be impossible to do with a very large crocodile, it still remains that a crocodile is a creature of the river, and not of the sea.

The point is that Job is powerless to control a Leviathan because any attempt to secure it with a rope and hook through its jaw would be unsuccessful. This may imply that one could not get close enough to such a creature to even attempt such a feat.

This is consistent with the warning the LORD gives in vv.8-10; where we are told that; “Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false; shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him?”

vv. 3-6➤ LEVIATHANS WERE FEROCIOUS CREATURES & COULD NOT BE TAMED

[Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you? Will you take him as a servant forever? Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you leash him for your maidens? Will your companions make a banquet of him? Will they apportion him among the merchants?]

So far the LORD has asked Job four questions about the Leviathan that he could not answer. He continues to ask Job questions—13 more questions to be exact!

[Will he make many supplications to you?] The question asks if a Leviathan, if it were to be caught and tied up, make numerous appeals to you; or beg or plead for mercy to be let go.

The expected answer to this question is; “No, absolutely not!”

[Will he speak softly to you?] Again, a rhetorical question having the expected answer; “No, a Leviathan would not communicate tenderly with you!”

[Will he make a covenant with you?] The point of this question is to ask whether or not the Leviathan would make a treaty with you and voluntarily agree to a peaceful surrender. The expected answer is; “No, he would not!”

[Will you take him as a servant forever?] In so doing, would a Leviathan become your slave for life? Again, the expected answer: “No, he would not!”

[Will you play with him as with a bird…..] Or; “to make sport with”, “to trifle with”, as a “little bird”, i.e.; “a sparrow”. That is, would one be able to tame a Leviathan and make a pet out of him? Would one be able to have fun with a Leviathan and teach it “tricks” like a killer whale?

Many wild animals have been tamed such as parrots, monkeys, chimpanzees. Even lions; leopards, tigers, bears and killer whales have been trained to follow the commands of man. But the LORD’s question implies this would not have been the case with the Leviathan. This creature could not be “owned” and therefore could not be tamed and domesticated as a pet for someone’s enjoyment and entertainment.
The expected answer to this question is; “No, such a creature cannot be trained, tamed nor made a pet!”

However, According to Herodotus a crocodile can be tamed:

“For some Egyptians, the crocodiles are sacred, but others treat them as enemies. The people that inhabit the surroundings of Thebai and the Moiris Lake consider them to be especially sacred and both groups keep one special crocodile, which they tamed; they put glass and golden ear decorations on it and bracelets on its front legs and they present it with especially prepared holy food and treat them as very important creatures.”

But from the description given here, like the behemoth, a Leviathan was a monstrous creature; nothing like it existed on earth!

Again, this argues against the case that a Leviathan was a crocodile.

[…..or will you leash him for your maidens?] That is, could someone put a leash on a Leviathan and let their young girls lead him around? Again, the expected answer is, “No, one could not!” More likely, if anyone were to be so foolish in trying to do this, the Leviathan would probably turn and eat the young girl!

Although Barnes strongly argues for the case that a Leviathan was a crocodile in his notes, he inadvertently undermines that claim when in his commentary on this verse he states:

“In some cases the crocodile was treated with the greatest respect, and kept up at considerable expense; it was fed and attended with the most scrupulous care; geese, fish, and various meats were dressed purposely for it; they ornamented its head with earrings and its feet with bracelets and necklaces of gold and artificial stones; it was rendered tame by kind treatment, and after death the body was embalmed in a sumptuous manner. This was particularly the case in the Theban, Ombite, and Arsinoite nomes, and at a place now called Ma’abdeh, opposite the modern town of Manfaloot, are extensive grottoes cut far into the limestone mountain, where numerous crocodile mummies have been found, perfectly preserved and evidently embalmed with great care.”

Obviously, before one can adorn a crocodile’s head with earrings and ornament its feet with ankle bracelets and necklaces of gold and semi-precious stones, one would need to subdue and tame it!

This does not sound at all like the foreboding and menacing implications of the LORD’S questions related to the character of the Leviathan.

But it does sound like that of a gigantic and terrifying ancient and extinct marine reptile like a plesiosaurus, pliosaurus or mosasaurus.

[Will your companions make a banquet of him?] The Hebrew literally reads; “Will partners bargain over him?”

This question paints a picture based on the fact that fishermen usually work together as partners to make a catch and then divide up the catch when they come ashore; a process which involves bargaining.

The expected answer to this question is; “No they wouldn’t because they would not even have a chance of catching such a creature!”

---

19 Herodotus, Histories, II, ref. 12, p.69.
20 Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible, Job 41 [1834].
21 A “nome” was a sub-national administrative division in Ancient Egypt.
[Will they apportion him among the merchants?] Continuing with the illustration, the LORD asks if these same fishermen would be able to divide up [lit.; “cut up”] the body and sell the meat to the merchants [lit., “Canaanites22”].

“No, they would not because such a creature is impossible to hunt and catch successfully.”

However, Herodotus writes:

“The people from the area of Elephantine24, in contrast, do eat crocodiles and do not at all consider them to be sacred…..Crocodiles are frequently hunted and in many ways…..Among the various methods that are used to take the crocodile, I shall relate only one which deserves most attention; they fix a hook on a piece of swine's flesh, and suffer it to float into the middle of the stream. On the banks they have a live hog, which they beat until it cries out. The crocodile, hearing the noise, makes toward it and in the way encounters and devours the bait. They thus draw it on shore, and the first thing they do is to fill its eyes with clay; it is thus easily manageable, which it otherwise would not be”

Again, the description given in the previous verses argues against the case that a Leviathan was a crocodile.

vv. 7-11➤ Leviathans were Ferocious, Terrifying & Resisted Being Captured

[7 “Can you fill his skin with harpoons, or his head with fishing spears? 8 Lay your hand on him; remember the battle—never do it again! 9 Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false; shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him? 10 No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me? 11 Who has preceded Me that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.”]

In v.2 the LORD made the point that Job is powerless to control a Leviathan because any attempt to secure it with a rope and hook through its jaw would be unsuccessful.

In vv.3-6 the Lord made the point that a Leviathan is an extremely dangerous creature because of its ferocity and could not be tamed. It was a fearsome animal!

Now He describes what happens when one attempts to hunt and capture a Leviathan.

[Can you fill his skin with harpoons…..] The Hebrew word rendered “harpoons” is used only here and literally refers to a “barbed spear”: i.e., a long spear with a thorn-like metal spike or barb pointing backwards on the pointed end.

From vv.13-17 we learn that the Leviathan had leathery skin similar to that of a salt-water crocodile, which we know is armored with scales composed of boney deposits.

---

22 Canaanites: This designation came to be employed of the country in which the “Canaanite” or Phoenician sea-faring traders exchanged for their commodities their most important commercial product, red-purple, which was obtained from the murex mollusks of coastal Palestine and used for dyeing. In the Amarna Letters the “land of Canaan” is applied to the Phoenician coast [comprised of the coastlines of Syria, Lebanon and Israel]. The Egyptians called all of western Syria by this name. By the time of the conquest the term Canaan signified the territory later called Palestine. In Gen. 10:6, 15-20 Canaan is listed as the fourth son of Ham along with the geographic region his descendents populated.

23 Herodotus, Histories, II, ref. 12, pp. 69–70.

24 Elephantine is an island in the Nile in northern Nubia. It is a part of the modern city of Aswan, in southern Egypt. There are archaeological sites on the island.
It is known that a crocodile skin is 1 to 2 inches thick; even small caliber bullets, if fired at a slanted angle, will ricochet off of the hardest part of a crocodile’s back.

Since the Leviathan was over twice the length of a crocodile and about 20 times more massive, its skin would have been even thicker; perhaps 2 to 4 inches thick; making their skin almost impregnable and resistant to darts, spears and arrows.

It was impossible to fill a Leviathan's hide with harpoons because it was probably so thick and armor-like they just bounced off; especially with only the force of hand-throw spears. This is confirmed by the description given of a Leviathan's outer layer of skin or hide in vv.15-17.

[.....or his head with fishing spears?] The Hebrew word rendered “head” can also mean “top of”; so this could refer to the both the actual head and the top of, that is, the back of a Leviathan.

The skull and backbone was probably made of thick bone which was protected by a thick and leathery reptilian hide. Fishing spears would just bounce off and so it was also impossible to fill his head with fishing spears!

[Lay your hand on him; remember the battle—never do it again!] This verse uses two imperatives which can be applied in sequence: “Do this and then this will happen”.

If one were to try and lay hand on a Leviathan, that is attack him, they would remember the terrifying struggle and never try it again!

Underestimating the power and “fight” in this animal would be a dangerous mistake which no one would ever dare repeat. In the case of a Leviathan, even a “bigger boat” wouldn’t help [to borrow a line from the 1975 theatrical movie, Jaws].

The point the L ORD is making is this: If one were to engage such a creature by attacking it, they would be unsuccessful in subduing it. The battle would be fierce and terrifying and confidence of success would be diminished as each second went by. A person might survive such an experience but it would be so terrifying and unforgettable that they would never, ever attempt to do it a second time!

This is reaffirmed in the next two verses.............

[Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false.....] This Hebrew phrase along with the following phrase, are somewhat difficult to understand so the words “overcoming/subduing” were added in the NIV and NKJV.

The NET renders this; “See, his expectation is wrong”. The NAS renders this as; “Behold, his expectation is false”. The KJV renders this as; “Behold, the hope of him is in vain”.

This verse literally reads “Behold, the expectation of him is a lie”.

This reaffirms what was said in the previous two verses.

It appears that the L ORD is emphasizing the fact that any assailant who expects, or hopes, to capture or subdue a Leviathan is grossly mistaken—it would be “a lie”.

The hunter’s patient preparation and waiting to capture this creature will come to nothing, disappear like a mirage. And more likely than not, the hunter would become the hunted!

[.....shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him?] The Hebrew word rendered “overwhelmed” means “to pitch or reel over”. The idea is to be caught off-guard and fall over.

Thus, the NET and NAS render this as; “.....he is laid low even at the sight of it/him”.
Just one look at a Leviathan would be enough to overwhelm any normal person. So formidable and terrifying was the appearance of such a creature that the courage and resolution of anyone who would dare attack him would fail.

In particular, it is understood from fossil evidence that mosasaurs were enormous; up to 56 feet [17 meters] long and probably weighing over 40 tons. They must have been ferocious creatures and, judging from their teeth, voracious in their appetites. Refer to Figure 41-9.

This implies that it was extremely difficult for a person even to get close enough to such a creature in an attempt to kill or capture it.

Again, this does not sound like its referring to a crocodile. For example, Oliver Goldsmith writes:

“The manner of taking it [i.e., the crocodile] in Thailand is by throwing three or four strong nets across a river at proper distances from each other, so that if the animal breaks through the first, it may be caught by one of the rest. When it is first taken it employs the tail, which is the grand instrument of its strength, with great force; but after many unsuccessful struggles, the animal's strength is at length exhausted. Then the natives approach their prisoner in boats, and pierce him with their weapons in the most tender parts, until he is weakened with the loss of blood.”

[No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up] Or, “None is as ferocious that would awake/arouse him”. The idea here is that no one is equal to the task of picking fight with a Leviathan, not even the fiercest warrior. Like the fictitious character, “Conan the Barbarian”.

The irony is that Job already knew this—but evidently he forgot.

The first words out of Job’s mouth after his friends arrived were; “May the day perish on which I was born…..” {Job 3:3}.

And to drive home that point, five verses later {3:8}, speaking of the day he was born, he says: “May those curse it, who curse the day that they were ready to arouse Leviathan.”

Job himself was using the example of rousing a Leviathan—it would be a “death wish” and those that tried it would end up cursing that day.

Remember, Elihu’s wrath was aroused because Job had justified himself rather than God {Job 32:2} and he had charged Job with saying, “I am righteous, but God has taken away my justice” {Job 34:5}.

With this the Lord had concurred; “Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?” {Job 40:8}.

---

25 In comparison, a blue whale, is 100 feet [30 meters] long and typically weighs 180 tons; the whale shark is the largest known existing fish with largest confirmed specimen measured at almost 42 feet [13 meters] long and weighing an estimated 22 tons; the largest accurately measured basking shark was 40 feet [12 meters] long and weighed an estimated 19 tons; a great white shark can grow up to 20 feet [6 meters] long and weigh almost 3 tons; a male salt-water crocodile, can grow up to 23 feet [7 meters] long and weigh over 2 tons; an African elephant, is up to 23 feet [7 meters] long and can weigh up to 8 tons; a hippopotamus, is up to 11½ feet [3½ meters] long and weighs up to 3 tons.

26 Goldsmith, O. [1728-1774]; A History of the Earth and Animated Nature, first published in 1774 in eight volumes. Goldsmith was an Irish novelist, playwright, poet and journalist as well as the author of many works of natural history.
The LORD now gets to his point and asks Job two questions meant to get him to think deeper about his attitude. They are intended to get Job to rethink his position contrasted to the Almighty Creator and humble him.

The LORD then shows Job how far he has fallen by reminding him of exactly Who is in charge. [Who then is able to stand against Me?] Literally, “Who is he that can stand before My face?”

The point that the LORD is making is this: If a man cannot stand up to the most formidable creature that He created, how can he legitimately expect to stand up against with the One who created him, gain the upper hand or force Him to grant the favors which he demands?

The lesson here is that it is infinitely more dangerous to confront God than to confront a Leviathan!

Job also knew this for he had earlier said; “Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?” {Job 9:4}.

The awesome power and glory of God is unparalleled: The LORD is adorned with majesty and splendor; He is arrayed in glory and beauty; He disperses the rage of His wrath unhindered and unchallenged; He can look upon anyone who is proud and humble them and bring them low; He treads down the wicked where He finds them and hides them in the grave all together, imprisoning their faces in hidden darkness {Job 40:10-13}.

Ultimately, and ironically, this question, “Who is able to stand?”, will be asked by the rebellious and wicked inhabitants of the earth at the time of the LORD’s Judgment and Second Coming.

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come and who is able to stand?”—Rev 6:12-17

[Who has preceded Me that I should pay him?] The Hebrew word rendered “preceded” literally means “to project” (oneself) and is usually rendered “prevent/prevented”. The word can mean “to anticipate” in the sense of being presumptive.

The LORD is asking; “Who would legitimately anticipate/presume that I should repay or recompense him”; that is, for a perceived debt or wrong, as Job has done with the LORD.

Since the context of this verse is within a passage highlighting the utter futility of suddenly attacking a Leviathan to subdue him, the LORD may be making the following allusion:

The meaning is: If one cannot surprise and subdue Leviathan, and compel “him” to submit to his will, how can he expect to constrain the Creator himself to be obligated to him, or to grant him the requests which he demands?

The message is directed to Job because such was his attitude. Job is being reminded [as we all are] that anticipating repayment from the LORD would be futile because He is obligated to no one—He is a “debtor” to no one. See Elihu’s comment in Job 35:7.
In other words, “Who would be so foolish to presume that they could convince, compel or obligate the Lord to provide compensation for some perceived grievance?”

**Application:** The point that the Lord makes here has serious implications related to the theology of salvation. Redemption from one’s sins cannot be earned; salvation is a “gift” wholly provided and “paid for” by the Lord.

We cannot work for it or earn it. If we could, it would make God a debtor—He would “owe” a person their salvation.

The Word of God, as here, teaches us that it is impossible for Him to be in debt to us because what we can give Him or do for Him that He doesn’t already owns and has. That is why the apostle Paul tells us:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”—Eph 2:8-10

[Everything under heaven is Mine] Since God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them, they are His. He owns all things. There is no one higher than He is.

There is no higher authority one can go to.

The Lord’s claim to proprietorship of all things was meant to remind Job that it was useless to argue with or fight with God.

This claim is intended to remind Job, and us, that He is the ultimate Force in the Universe and we are expected to submit to His loving care and protection.

**Application:** As the Lord asks Job here, He asks all of us:

- “Who then is able to stand against Me?”
- “Who has preceded Me that I should pay him?”

When we forget who the Almighty Lord God actually is; when we lightly esteem the awesome glory of His creative wisdom and power, when we think we could do a better job of controlling the events in our lives; we can easily fall into the same trap as Job.

In effect, we can begin to think of ourselves as having more insight than the Lord has, that we have a better handle on what’s going on. We may even begin to think ourselves superior to God in our foolish attitude of pride.

Who indeed can stand before the Lord? No one! All our own righteousness is as “filthy rags” in the sight of God {Isa. 64:6}. Who at any time has given counsel or instruction to the Lord—no one {Isa. 40:13-14}? And only the Lord can search the heart and test the mind {Jer. 17:10}. And, by the way, the Lord does not need anything from us; in Psalms 50:12 He tells us:

“If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine and all its fullness.”

The Lord also tells us that

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”—Isa. 55:8-9
And the apostle Paul tells us:

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? ‘Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?’ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”—Rom. 11:33-36

Thankfully, however, there is one [and only one] way we can stand before Him, which is through none other than Jesus Christ; Who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” {Jn. 14:46}—no one can be saved without Him {Acts 4:12}!

The Lord then reminds Job, and us, that He is in charge—He is in control because He created everything, including the mighty Leviathan. He is the mighty Creator and He owns everything. He owns our very lives!

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”—Col 1:13-18

When we forget our place before the Lord three very bad things happen: (1) we lose our identity and purpose {Jer. 2:32}, (2) we pervert the truth {Jer. 3:21} and (3) we wander from the truth and begin to trust in lies {Jer. 13:25}.

On a final note, for those who have been called into Christian service and get weary and want to give up, the Lord effectively admonishes us:

“If you have run with the footmen and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?”—Jer. 12:5

vv. 12-14eva. Leviathans were powerful, but graceful creatures
[12 "I will not conceal his limbs, his mighty power or his graceful proportions. 13 Who can remove his outer coat? Who can approach him with a double bridle? 14 Who can open the doors of his face, with his terrible teeth all around?]

[I will not conceal.....] Literally, “I will not keep silent”; the LORD is going to brag about Leviathan and is proudly showing off His creation—and we will soon see why!

Specifically, not keep silent about what?.................

[.....his limbs, his mighty power or his graceful proportions] This is speaking of Leviathan’s (1) extremities, (2) mighty power and (3) graceful form and dimensions!

The Hebrew word rendered “graceful” occurs only here and is derived from a word that means “grace, favor”; and the Hebrew word rendered “proportions” refers to an “estimation” or “dimension”.

This description of a Leviathan is consistent with the fact that the fossil specimens shown in Figures 41-5–9 indeed show graceful proportions for both the long-necked and short-necked variety of these marine reptiles.
Artistic renderings of these marine reptiles, but depicted without the leathery skin of a crocodile, are shown in Figure 41-10 highlighting their graceful form.

![Figure 41-10. Artistic Rendering of Plesiosaur *Elasmosaurus* (left) and Pliosaur *Kronosaurus* (right).](image)

In vv.12-30 the following characteristics of Leviathan are described:

- Distinct body parts (including the head, neck, arms, legs and tail)
- Mighty power and force
- Thick, armored, leather-like skin
- Ferocity
- Large mouth and sharp teeth
- Tightly sealed scales and carapace
- Fiery breath
- Strong neck
- Thick skin and taut muscles
- Fearless predator having a fighting disposition
- Breaching and splashing
- Immunity to swords, spears, arrows, slung stones and javelins
- Rough and sharp underside
- Major disturbance of the water

[Who can remove his outer coat?] Literally, “uncover the face of his garment”. This verse needs to be understood in light of the description given of Leviathan’s armor-like skin in vv.15-17. For example, most of the thick, leathery skin on the head of a crocodile is fused to its skull.

The reference to an “outer coat”; i.e., “the face of his garment”, is a reference to the thick, leathery and armor-like skin similar to that of a crocodile, or a sea turtle. The point is that the skin of a Leviathan was so tightly attached to its muscles and sinews it was most difficult to remove even if the animal was dead.

[Who can approach him with a double bridle?] Although the Hebrew word rendered “bridle” could be used to denote the “interior of the mouth”, that is, the jaws and teeth of where the bit or bridle is placed; it is never used elsewhere in this context, even in Job [see Job 30:11; Ps. 32:9; Isa. 30:28]. The Hebrew word properly means a “curb” or “halter”, which goes over a horse’s snout and hence, a bit or bridle.

The LORD is methodically moving His description from the creature’s overall stream-lined shape, to its outer covering, or skin, to its head, then jaws and finally to its teeth.
The LORD is saying that any hope of subduing a Leviathan with a bit or bridle twice as big and strong is doomed to failure. This is confirmed by the fact that the fossil skull of a typically sized mosasaur/pliosaur was 6 to 9 feet in length; double that of the largest crocodiles.

[Who can open the doors of his face…….] The “doors of his face” is a reference to the jaws of a Leviathan and “who can open” is speaking about the great strength of its jaws. The description is moving from the body and head to the jaws.

This is referred to as “bite force” of an animal, which has been measured for many animals. This force is determined by the muscle mass, which is limited by the size and shape of the hinge joint where the bones of the upper and lower jaws meet. The larger the volume of this hinge joint, the larger the muscles and the stronger the bite. Refer to Figure 41-11.

For example, muscles in the jaws of a saltwater crocodile have been measured to have a downward bite force of about 3700 lbs [almost 2 tons]; the strongest in the animal kingdom.

However, a sub-type of mosasaur, the Pliosaurus funkei, nick-named “Predator-X”, had a skull length of approximately 7–8 feet with a total body length of 35–40 feet, making it one of the largest pliosaurs discovered so far. Its bite force has been estimated to be about 33,000 lbs [over 16 tons]!

A 2009 March article in Times magazine declared “Predator-X” to be the “most fearsome animal ever to swim in the oceans”.

Indeed, this is the point that the LORD is making to Job!

[…..with his terrible teeth all around?] This of course can describe the teeth of a crocodile; but it also describes the teeth of mosasaurs and pliosaurs as can be seen in Figures 41-6—9, 11.

The extinct Sarcosuchus imperator, the “super-croc” which was previously mentioned, had 35 teeth in each side of the upper jaw, while in the lower jaw there were 31 teeth in each side; for a total of 132 teeth. The upper jaw is also typically longer than the lower one; leaving a gap between them when the jaws were shut, creating an overbite. Refer to Figures 41-2, 12.
Modern *crocodiles* on the other hand, typically have about 80 teeth; 20 on each side of the upper and lower jaws, which are replaced, like those of a shark, about 50 times in their 70+ year lifespan. They are the only non-mammalian vertebrates with *tooth sockets*.

The extinct *mosasaurs* had enormous jaws armed with massive, conical [thorn-like] teeth that came to a very sharp point, similar to that of a *crocodile*. Refer to Figures 41-3, 9.

**vv. 15-17** LEVIATHANS HAD TIGHTLY PACKED SCALES, WHICH APPEARED AIRTIGHT

[15 “His rows of scales are his pride, shut up tightly as with a seal; 16 one is so near another that no air can come between them; 17 they are joined one to another, they stick together and cannot be parted.”]

In vv.7-11 we learned that unlike a *crocodile*, which can be successfully harpooned, a person would be unable to “fill its hide with harpoons or its head with fishing spears”. Now we learn why.

Here the Leviathan’s skin is described as being much tougher than either a *whale* or *crocodile*.

*His rows of scales are his pride…..* The English words “rows of scales” actually renders two Hebrew words; <“rows” + “shields”> and the Hebrew word rendered “pride” literally refers to “the back”.

Therefore, this verse literally reads “rows of shields are his back”.

Earlier, a crocodilian candidate for Leviathan was mentioned, the *Sarcosuchus imperator* {see vv.1-2 notes}. The first fossil remains were discovered during several expeditions [from 1946 to 1959] in the Sahara led by the French paleontologist Albert-Félix de Lapparent.

This enormous creature was about 40 feet in total length and weighed an estimated 8 tons, and it had rows of boney plates on its back [refer to Figure 41-12].

![Figure 41-12. Fossil Skeleton of Sarcosuchus Imperator Clearly Showing Rows of Boney Back Plates or “Shields”.

Photo Credit: Valerie Everett](image)
But the association of *S. imperator* with *Leviathan* is still somewhat questionable because it is assumed that it lived primarily in wetlands and marshes, not the sea, similar to other *crocodilians*.

Some type of *pliosaur* or *mosasaur* perhaps remains a better candidate for a *Leviathan*.

[......shut up tightly as with a seal......] The Hebrew word rendered “tightly” here is most often rendered “enemies” or “adversaries”. The meaning suggests that the rows of *scaly shields* on the *Leviathan*’s back were pressed together, like stone-against-stone.

[......one is so near another that no air can come between them......] These *scaly shields* were so closely fitted that they formed an air-tight seal!

[......they are joined one to another......] Each individual *scaly shield* is joined to its adjacent neighbor. This feature is actually the basis for the meaning of *Leviathan*—a “twisted serpent, joined together with scales and shields [scutes]”.

[......they stick together and cannot be parted] This skin, although bumpy and rough in appearance, formed a continuous, uninterrupted layer over the *Leviathan*’s body. These scaly shields were so strongly connected together, they could not be pried apart.

Since there is skeletal similarity between mosasaurs and turtles/crocodiles, it is reasonable to conclude that they also may have had similar skin. So what would this skin have been like?

The skin of *crocodilians* is thick and *cornified*, and is clad in non-overlapping *scales* or *shields*, called *scutes*, arranged in regular rows and patterns. These *scutes* are continually being produced by cell division in the underlying layer of the *epidermis*, and the surface of individual *scutes* sloughs off periodically. The outer surface of the *scutes* consists of the relatively rigid *beta-keratin* while the hinge region between the *scutes* contains only the more pliable *alpha-keratin*.

Many of the *scales/shields* are strengthened by *bony plates* known as *osteoderms*, which are the same size and shape as the superficial scales but grow beneath them. Examples of these can be seen in the fossilized bones on the back of *Sarcosuchus imperator* [Figure 41-12] and also the skeletons of crocodiles and alligators.

They are most numerous on the back and neck of the animal and may form protective armor. They often have prominent, *bumpy* ridges and are covered in hard-wearing *beta-keratin*.

Most of the skin on the head of a crocodile is fused to the skull. The skin on the neck and the sides is loose, while that on the abdomen and underside of the tail is sheathed in large, flat square *scutes* arranged in neat rows. This is similar to that of *sea turtles*!

Artistic renderings of *plesiosaur*, *pliosaur* and *mosasaur* fossil reconstructions usually show the animals with a *smooth* skin surface because it is assumed to be the most streamlined.

However, being a marine reptile, closely related to sea turtles and crocodiles, its skin would probably have been thick and leathery with *scaly shields* or *scutes* on its back. Note that simply looking at the skeletons of a *sea turtle* or *crocodile* alone, one does not get any idea that it has thick, leathery skin.

---

27 The same material that fingernails and the horn of a rhinoceros are made out of.
The fact that plesiosaurs and pliosaurs have a carapace [shell-like underside], like turtles, would indicate that, on their undersides at least, they would have had “breastplate” of a hard, boney material like that of a turtle, and not soft skin tissue.

Note that the fossilized skin impressions of Tylosaurus proriger, a type of mosasaur, indicate skin with large, closely spaced scales, which are “shut up tightly like a seal” [refer also to v.23]. See Figure 41-13.

Figure 41-13. Fossilized Skin Impression of Tylosaurus proriger; a type of mosasaur.

vv. 18-21 LEVIATHANS COULD BREATHE OUT HEAT, FIRE & SMOKE!

[18 “His sneezings flash forth light and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. 19 Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. 20 Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. 21 His breath kindles coal and a flame goes out of his mouth.”]

Because it is stated in v.21 that Leviathans had the ability to breath out a plume or flame of fire, this has been a controversial passage of scripture.

But, reading these verses in their entirety leaves one with the impression that this is describing what is known as a “dragon”. Taking these verses at face value, some have even pictured Godzilla!

Is the LORD speaking figuratively or literally in these verses? I believe the answer lies in the original meaning of the Hebrew language and faith in the capability of God’s creative wisdom and power.

[His sneezings flash forth light.....] Or, “By his snorting light does shine.” The Hebrew word rendered “sneezings” is used only here and means “to sneeze or snort”.

28 The Hebrew word rendered “flash forth” is “halal”, which means “to be clear” or “to shine” and is almost always rendered as “praise” because praise is like a light illuminating the LORD.
When a Leviathan snorted through its nose, there were \textit{flashes of light} emanating from his nostrils \citep{20}. This description is consistent with the \textit{“burning lights”} and \textit{“sparks of fire shooting”} that came out of its mouth.

Many commentators believe the \textit{LORD} is speaking \textit{figuratively} here. For example, Roy Zuck in commenting on these verses the Bible Knowledge Commentary, Vol. 1 Old Testament, states \cite{29}:

\begin{quote}
“\textbf{The movements of a crocodile’s nose, eyes, and mouth also put people in panic. A crocodile can stay completely submerged underwater for about five minutes. When it comes up for air and sneezes the water out from its nostrils, the spray looks like flashes of light in the sun. When this reptile emerges from the water, its small eyes, with slits for pupils like cat’s eyes, are seen first, like the dawn’s rays} \cite{30}. Interestingly in Egyptian hieroglyphs, the crocodile’s eye represents the dawn.”
\end{quote}

The comment on this verse in the margin of the NET Bible states:

\begin{quote}
“\textbf{For the animal, the image is that of pent-up breath with water in a hot steam jet coming from its mouth, like a stream of fire in the rays of the sun. The language is hyperbolic, probably to reflect the pagan ideas of the dragon of the deep in a polemical way—they feared it as a fire breathing monster, but in reality it might have been a steamy crocodile.”}
\end{quote}

But this begs the question; why would the \textit{LORD} switch from speaking \textit{literally} about all the other animals He’s mentioned \cite{29} [although at times invoking \textit{poetic language} to do so]; including the Leviathan, to speaking \textit{figuratively} in these verses?

Why would the \textit{LORD} use metaphorical language corresponding to \textit{“pagan ideas”} when Job was not a pagan and would not have mistaken \textit{smoke} and \textit{flames of fire} for a \textit{“hot jet of steam”} coming from a Leviathan’s mouth\? In other words, why would the \textit{LORD} find it necessary to speak to Job using a metaphor based on pagan ideas of a dragon\cite{31} if it wasn’t necessary?

Also, a \textit{“steamy crocodile”} does not accurately capture the \textit{fearsome nature} of the creature that the \textit{LORD} is describing in this passage.

Furthermore, whenever the \textit{LORD} speaks metaphorically He prefaces it with the words \textit{“are like”}, but here those words are not actually used when speaking about the \textit{smoke}, \textit{flames} and \textit{fire} coming from the Leviathan’s nostrils and mouth. But they are used of his eyes................

\begin{quote}
[…..\textbf{and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning}] This is the only place in this passage where the \textit{LORD} prefixes His description with the words \textit{“are like”}. He does so in describing the Leviathan’s eyes, which \textit{“are like eyelids of the morning”}.
\end{quote}

Taken in its immediate context, this phrase is a wonderful, and commonly used\cite{32}, metaphor relating to the way that the bright morning sunlight dispels the darkness as it spreads over the land at the dawning of a new day.

\begin{flushright}
\cite{29} See also Rabbi Victor E. Reichert, \textit{Job}, (1967), p.216.
\cite{30} The reason for this analogy may be that before the whole body of this creature appeared, its eyes seemed to rise as if from nowhere. There is a remarkable coincidence here, in the fact that when the Egyptians would represent the morning dawn by a hieroglyph, they did so by drawing a crocodile’s eye.
\cite{31} And as we shall see, it’s not that outrageous that ancient peoples depicted these creatures as “dragons” spewing out fire if that’s really what happened.
\cite{32} The phrase is used in speaking about sunlight coming over the horizon at dawn, flashing forth and progressively illuminating the landscape; \textit{“like the eyelids of the morning”}. This is the meaning used by the \textit{LORD} in \textit{Job 38:12-13}; \textit{“Have you commanded the morning since your days began and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth…..”}
\end{flushright}
Thus, in this context, the metaphor is referring to the fact that when the Leviathan *emanated light by its snorting* and breathed out “*burning lights*” and “*sparks of fire*”, the light reflected off of the Leviathan's *reptilian* eyes, which were *framed* by its eyelids. His dark eyes then appeared to light up suddenly as the dawning sunlight lifts the cover of darkness of the night.

The point is that when a Leviathan snorted forth a glowing light and breathed out a plume of fire, the sudden reflection of the light in its eyes was a dreadful sight to behold—it produced a *very noticeable* and *dramatic effect*!

*[Out of his mouth go burning lights…..] The “burning lights” refer to flames of fire.*

*[……sparks of fire shoot out] The Hebrew word rendered “*sparks*” occurs only here and means “something struck off”. It is derived from another word which means “to strike” as in causing sparks. These sparks are produced from the hot coals of a furnace when metal is forged or clay is fired.*

Accompanying the flames from a Leviathan's mouth are glowing sparks of fire.

*[Smoke goes out of his nostrils…..] This describes the lingering smoke that would come out of his nostrils, which was produced by the *flames* and *sparks of fire* coming from its mouth. This is not unlike the smoke from a cigarette blown through the nose.*

*[……as from a boiling pot and burning rushes] The preface “*as from*” introduces a metaphor. The smoke coming from the Leviathan's mouth wafts upward like the *steam* rising from a boiling pot of liquid; or the smoke from the *smoldering embers* of dried grass.*

Note that this does not describe water that is being violently sprayed out through a *crocodile’s* nose.

*[His breath sets coal ablaze and a flame goes out of his mouth] In v.19 we were already told that out of the mouth of a Leviathan “*go flames*” and “*sparks of fire shoot forth*”. Now the LORD elaborates.*

Although the descriptions given in vv.18-20 may be interpreted to metaphorically refer to a spray of water illuminated by the sun at dawn [as Zuck suggests]; it is *highly unlikely* that the two statements; “*his breath kindles coal*” [i.e., *lights coals on fire*] and “*a flame goes out of his mouth*” are metaphors.

The LORD’s makes Himself pretty clear; “*his breath kindles coal, and a flame goes out of his mouth*”. How can a dense spray of water, which may appear like “fire” in the red-orange glow of the morning or evening sunlight; *kindle anything on fire*? It can't.

Here is where the *literal meaning* of this passage of scripture is established. The LORD does not preface His description using the words “*are like*” or “*as from*”. He just states matter-of-factly what a Leviathan is capable of doing!

The other fire-breathing characteristics must then be *literal* as well—matching classic depictions of creatures known as “dragons”!

Many cultures around the world have stories about people fighting *dragons* and *sea monsters*. One of the oldest stories is that of *Gilgamesh*, a hero from ancient Babylon. Several times it is remarked, regarding this animal, that “*His mouth is fire, his breath is death*”.

---

Various Babylonian depictions portray dragons; for example, a seven-headed dragon is described, with fire emanating from the body\textsuperscript{34}. The Chinese (fire-breathing) dragons are familiar to everyone and may indicate that such creatures existed in the past\textsuperscript{35}. Refer also to the notes on vv.26-30 and Appendix A: The Connection Between Leviathans and Dragons.

This answers the question asked earlier—the LORD is speaking \textit{literally} in these verses! And the LORD certainly has the wisdom and power to have created such a \textit{metabolic} capability.

However, with regard to heat generating processes that are synthesized \textit{organically}, is it possible to find an existing animal that can \textit{metabolically} generate heat? Yes—the \textit{bombardier beetle} can.

God created an insect called the \textit{bombardier beetle} that mixes organically produced chemicals\textsuperscript{36,37} to generate a directed \textit{chemical spray}, pulsating at 4000 Hz, and heated to 203 °F [95 °C] which it shoots off against attackers, such as frogs, birds and ants [\textbf{Figure 41-15}].

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{bombardier_beetle.png}
\caption{\textit{Bombardier Beetle and Its “Chemical Weapon Factory”}.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{34} See Pritchard, J.B. \textit{Ancient Near Eastern Texts}, nos. 671, 691.
\textsuperscript{36} The \textit{bombardier beetle} has a muscle-controlled valve located in the rear of its abdomen which allows \textit{hydroquinones} [a benzene derivative] and \textit{hydrogen peroxide} [which the beetle produces] to enter a small “reaction” or “combustion” chamber. There, ectodermal glands surrounding the chamber secrete \textit{catalase enzymes} which instantly cause an \textit{exothermic} reaction heating the mixture to almost the boiling point of water [203°F]. This hot liquid is quickly squirted out through an opening in the rear of the beetle’s abdomen at a rate of about 4000 pulses per second. The beetle actually has the ability to aim the liquid stream 360°; similar to the gun turret underneath a B-17 Flying Fortress of WWII. In this way the beetle can hit attackers in front, to the side or behind.
Could God have created a marine reptile that had the capability of metabolically processing naturally occurring compounds like this, but producing much greater heat that, when exhaled, would ignite a stream of gas similar to a flame-thrower?

Again, this is highly speculative, but not out of the realm of God being able to devise such a capability. And perhaps a much better candidate for a Leviathan is yet to be found in the fossil record.

The description given here, if taken in the intended literal sense, would provide an accurate description of what would happen if this creature breathed out a mixture of chemicals that would self-ignite in the air.

Lest someone may still think this is wild speculation, *marine iguanas* are large lizards that live only on the Galapagos Islands. These sub-species of iguanas have adapted [been given the ability by their Creator] to forage for inter- and sub-tidal red and green algae that grows in the sea, along the rocky coastline. They are therefore, like the Leviathan, marine reptiles.

A well-developed nasal gland filters a *marine iguana's* blood for excess salt ingested while eating. The excess salt that would build up in their blood stream is expelled by sneezing it out through their nostrils. When the wind blows back the salt spray, their heads become encrusted with salt. Refer to Figure 41-14.

![Figure 41-14. Marine Iguanas Sunbathing on Rocks in the Galapagos Islands.](image)

Thus, it may be that other marine reptiles, such as the *mosasaurs*, would have also been able to do something similar to this, but with much more spectacular results.

In keeping with this, the *mosasaur Tylosaurus progenitor* was a large, predatory marine lizard closely related to modern lizards [i.e., *iguana*, *monitors*] and to snakes. Its skeletal reconstruction usually is shown with a boney “oculus” in its eye socket. This can clearly be seen in Figures 41-3, 11; but is not evident in the reconstruction shown in Figure 41-9.
It is noted that white phosphorus\(^{38}\), although an element that does not usually occur naturally, is highly flammable and is also pryophoric, that is, it spontaneously ignites upon contact with the oxygen in the air.

A derivative of phosphorus, a flammable gas called phosphine, has an auto-ignition temperature of only 100°F [38°C]. The air exhaled from an animal’s lungs can easily be that hot.

It is noted that all organic life contains compounds of phosphorus. For example, calcium phosphate is found naturally in the milk and blood of cows. The bones of animals are composed of 50—70% calcium phosphate. Phosphine can be synthetically made by boiling bones [calcium phosphate] in urea [urine] in the absence of air to produce the flammable gas phosphine.

Therefore, given the nature of fossil discoveries and uncertainties inherent during fossil reconstructions, these structures may have actually been inside the throat facing forward and served the purpose of directing streams of a pryophoric gas, like phosphine, from the creature’s throat out through its mouth.

The phosphine may not have ignited until it cleared the mouth of the creature. The LORD could also have made it so the creature secreted some kind of mucus-like coating to protect the mouth from these flames.

Although the previous discussion is highly speculative because it is based on numerous assumptions and is an untested hypothesis; it needs to be remembered that the LORD certainly has the creative ingenuity to have created such an animal even though (a) we may not yet have found its fossil remains and (b) the mechanism and metabolic processes that God created to produce the fire are unknown.

However, because a fire-breathing capability in a living creature is certainly within the realm of possibility [as is seen in the unexpected capability of the bombardier beetle] for now we can trust in the creative wisdom and power of God and take Him at His word!

This, after all, is the primary purpose in LORD asking Job all these questions about the natural world.

**vv. 22-25** LEVIATHANS WERE LARGE, POWERFUL CREATURES

[22 “Strength dwells in his neck, and sorrow dances before him. 23 The folds of his flesh are joined together; they are firm on him and cannot be moved. 24 His heart is as hard as stone, even as hard as the lower millstone. 25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid; because of his crashings they are beside themselves.”]

[Strength dwells in his neck…..] Or, “strength abides in his neck”. This describes a thick, muscular and powerful neck; indicating that a Leviathan had a shorter, stronger, rather than longer, skinnier neck. Thus, it is more likely that it was more like a species of mosasaur or pliosaur than a plesiosaur, which had much longer necks. Refer to Figures 41-5—9.

---

\(^{38}\) It is interesting to note that the word “phosphorus” comes from the Greek language and means “light-bearer” or “light-bringer”. It is a word associated with the bright “morning star”; Venus. The Latin word corresponding to phosphorus is “lucifer”, and the Latin translation of the Old Testament [the Vulgate] translate the Hebrew word “heylel” as Lucifer in Isa. 14:12. Some commentators mention that Leviathan is sometimes associated with Satan—i.e., Lucifer.
Although crocodiles do have thick, muscular neck, it is very short and their heads appear to be connected directly to their bodies [ref. Figure 41-1]. But more importantly, they don’t breathe fire as a Leviathan.

[…..and sorrow dances before him] The Hebrew word rendered “sorrow” only occurs here and its verbal root means “to languish or pine”. A related noun speaks of dejection and despair in Deut. 28:65. The Hebrew word rendered “dances” only occurs here and means “to leap”.

So this could also read; “and despair leaps before him”.

This is a poetical expression meaning that the sight of the sheer size and strength of this creature was so fearsome that the first thing that entered a person’s mind was a feeling of despair and anxiety. The thought is, “It’s hopeless—I’m undone.”

[The folds of his flesh are joined together…..] The Hebrew word rendered “folds” refers to anything that appears to be “falling or pendulous”. Here the description is in regards to the relatively softer parts of its body, what we might call the flabby parts; under its neck and sides. But even these parts of its body are “joined together” and so are still tough and leathery; similar to that of a turtle or crocodile.

However, this description does not apply to its undersides because v.30 tells us that “his undersides are like sharp potsherds”; meaning hard and rough, probably similar to a sea turtle!

[…..they are firm on him and cannot be moved] The Hebrew word rendered “firm” means “to pour out” and is used in the context of describing something that has the appearance of being poured out; like a clear sky on bright sunny afternoon[e.g., Job 37:18].

The meaning is that even though some parts of a Leviathan’s body are not covered with “rows of shields” {v.15}, those parts, having the appearance of being “form fit” to the contour of the body, were still very muscular and so thick and tough they could not be moved.

If a Leviathan had a carapace, a hard, boney underside like a turtle, that part could also be described this way.

[His heart is as hard as stone…..] The Hebrew word rendered “heart” is used to describe the inner emotions so this is speaking of the behavior of a Leviathan—it was fearless and cruel.

[…..even as hard as the lower millstone] Even just a “slice” of the nature of a Leviathan was callously indifferent to the uttermost.

[When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid…..] That is, elevates himself up, out of the water.

The Hebrew word rendered “mighty” here is most often identified with “Almighty God”! It is speaking of the strongest, bravest and toughest warrior.

When a Leviathan elevates itself up out of the water and thereby making a threatening action, even the mightiest of warriors are afraid!

[…..because of his crashings they are beside themselves] The Hebrew word rendered “crashing” refers to the action of making a destructive or violent movement; such as “breaching through a wall” {e.g., Isa. 30:13}.

This is a reference to the behavior of a Leviathan at sea—it engaged in breaching which caused a massive crashing of waves, similar to that of whales but their splashes were probably far more awe-inspiring and would have terrified any “mighty” men nearby in a boat.

The waves made by such breaching would probably have been enough to capsize a small boat.
The Hebrew word rendered “beside themselves” literally means “to miss (a mark)” or “lose (oneself)” and is usually rendered “sinned, have sinned, did sin”. At first glance the use of this Hebrew word here seems somewhat out of context.

However, we have seen that the book of Job (a) contains many Hebrew words that are found uniquely, only in this book or (b) may have their meanings slightly altered to fit the meaning of the passage. Such is the case here.

This verse is telling us that when the strongest, bravest and toughest seamen see a Leviathan breaching, they would lose their confidence, miss their courage, they wouldn’t know where to turn and would be sent into confusion—basically, they would lose themselves in terror.

Again, this does not sound like the description of a crocodile—no matter how large it was!

**vv. 26-30 Leviathans Could Come Up Onto Land**

[26 “Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail; nor does spear, dart, or javelin. 27 He regards iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. 28 The arrow cannot make him flee; sling stones become like stubble to him. 29 Darts are regarded as straw; he laughs at the threat of javelins. 30 His undersides are like sharp potsherds; he spreads pointed marks in the mire.”]

[Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail.....] The sense of the Hebrew is that the sword “does not hold firm”, or “gives way”. In other words, a sword might reach a Leviathan but it does not stick, it does not hold and therefore has no effect on the creature.

[......nor does spear, dart, or javelin] Neither swords, spears, darts nor javelins faze him. None of these kinds of weapons can harm a Leviathan.

[He regards iron as straw.....] Metal weapons are like flimsy dried out stalks of grass. They are probably like “play-things” to him.

[......and bronze as rotten wood] Spears, darts and javelins made out of bronze snap like rotten wood as if they’d hit a rock.

Perhaps a Leviathan had a hard shell and was actually a gigantic sea turtle with a long, serpentine neck whose fossil remains have yet to be found.

[The arrow cannot make him flee.....] If iron and bronze weapons have no effect on a Leviathan, then a volley of arrows will not make him suddenly flee in fear and panic.

[......sling stones become like stubble to him] Stones flung from a sling {ref. Jud. 20:16} at a Leviathan, like the one David used against Goliath {see 1 Sam. 17:40, 48-50}, would have the same effect as flinging flimsy pieces dried grain stalks at him.

[Darts are regarded as straw.....] Literally, “clubs are regarded as stubble”. As with sling stones, wooden clubs would also be just like the flimsy pieces of dried stalks left over on a threshing floor.

[......he laughs at the threat of javelins] Literally, “he mocks the shaking of a lance”. A Leviathan just ignored the shaking and clanging of spears and javelins; they would not frighten him at all. Actually, the noisy clamoring associated with this activity would probably be an invitation for a Leviathan to attack rather than to flee!

---

39 For example the suborder of turtles known as Pleurodira, and specifically the genus Chelodina.
Again, this does not sound like the reaction of a crocodile to being attacked by these kinds of weapons. A crocodile would either succumb to such an attack or flee in an attempt to escape being injured or killed.

[His undersides are like sharp potsherds….] “Potsherds” are broken pieces of clay pottery. The undersides of this creature were rough and sharp, like shards of clay pottery.

The meaning is that this beast’s underside had a different texture than the rest of the body and any scales or plates it had there were sharp and could easily cut.

This sounds like a Leviathan did have something like a carapace on its undersides similar to that of a turtle. Again, compare the underside of a sea turtle shown in Figure 41-4 with the undersides of fossil marine reptiles shown in Figures 41-7, 8, 9.

[…..he spreads pointed marks in the mire] The “mire” here is referring to “mud”. The sharp undersides, like “sharp potsherds”, of a Leviathan made pointy marks in the muddy seashore.

It tells us that this creature was an air-breather and was amphibious [but not an amphibian] like a sea turtle.

Here we see that although the Leviathan was primarily a marine sea creature, it could come up onto the seashore—up onto land! Finding such tracks would have immediately sent chills down one’s spine with a strong desire to leave the area!

Refer to Appendix A where there is a reference to “huge serpents” that Marco Polo describes in his travel journal, which also left deep marks in the mud.

vv. 31-32 LEVIATHANS STIRRED UP THE SEA

[31 He makes the deep boil like a pot; he makes the sea like a pot of ointment. 32 He leaves a shining wake behind him; one would think the deep had white hair.”]

The LORD now uses poetical language to describe the effect an incredibly large creature, which has “rough” surfaces on its body, would have as it moves rapidly on the water surface.

[He makes the deep boil like a pot…..] This describes the affect of a Leviathan’s large body, which is twisted together with “plates” and “shields”, as it moves through the surface of the ocean water. Evidently, this would leave a massive amount of turbulence in its wake.

The creature’s movement would leave the water behind it disturbed and in turmoil; like that of boiling liquid in a pot.

The sheer size and movement of this creature made an enormous wake in the water and the turbulence would have left behind foaming waves. Picture something similar to the wake left behind a large, powered boat; or perhaps even an ocean liner.

The “deep” refers to a “deep place”, as in “the depths of the sea”. So this could also refer to the Leviathan swimming underwater and, just before it comes to the surface, exhaling a large amount of air. That would definitely have the affect of making the water above the creature appear to boil.

This interpretation actually fits nicely with the next part of the description
Or, “cauldron of ointment”. The picture here is that the surface of water that a Leviathan passes through is agitated underneath by what’s called “upwelling”: a large volume [mass] of water is brought up from below and spills over onto itself.

This could also occur if the creature was surfacing; it would push up a large mass of water above itself.

This has the effect of causing a large area of water on the surface to heave upwards—as if it was being stirred from the bottom like a pot of ointment.

Also, ointment is thicker than water so the idea here is that the turbulence caused by a Leviathan as it swam through the water made it appear “thicker” than it is. Foamy water would definitely give the appearance of ointment.

This is referring to the sun’s bright reflection on the foaming waves extending behind him. This would also have been an impressive sight to behold.

However, another phenomenon may coincidentally come into play here. In tropical and subtropical waters the phenomenon of bioluminescence occasionally occurs. Single-celled algae produce light when they are disturbed. If a creature, or person, swims through water which saturated with these organisms, a lighted wake will be left behind because these algae produce light for several minutes after they’re disturbed.

This is referring to the white foam resulting from the waves that a Leviathan made when it swam on the surface of the sea. This effect was evidently quite extensive and covered a large area of the water’s surface.

vv. 33-34 Leviathans Were Created to Humble the Proud & Arrogant

[33 “On earth there is nothing like him, which is made without fear. 34 He beholds every high thing; he is king over all the children of pride.”]

This reiterates the fact that a Leviathan was a unique creature, totally different from the behemoth, there was and is nothing else like him—a marvel unto his own.

No other animal could come close to matching the formidable size, strength, ferocity, courage, and invincibility of a Leviathan.

Even though the Leviathan was a terrifying and formidable creature to man, it had no fear of its own! When God created this animal He made sure it would have no fear from any other creature, including a T. Rex. How much less would a man be able to frighten it?

Nothing bothered, frightened or made anxious this creature.

Only God, its Creator, had the power to approach, handle and subdue a Leviathan!

A Leviathan was over every high thing; that is, all that which prided itself on size, power and invincibility.

This creature could look down upon everything else that was around it as inferior.
Such a creature commanded the attention and respect of all that set itself up against God.

[…..he is king over all the children of pride] The Hebrew word rendered “pride” here is used only one other time [Job 28:8] and it means “to strut”.

It was all about pride—Job’s pride.

At the beginning of His discourse, prior to challenging Job with the power and majesty of behemoth and Leviathan, He says this to Job:

“Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Then adorn yourself with majesty and splendor, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Disperse the rage of your wrath; look on everyone who is proud, and humble him. Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; bind their faces in hidden darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you.”

—Job 40:8-14

After considering behemoth and Leviathan Job could not claim that he could look down on everyone who is proud and humble them; or bring them low; or tread down the wicked and put them in their place. How then could he make rationale and credible judgments about things pertaining to God?

The LORD is demonstrating to Job that if he was incapable of subduing behemoth or a Leviathan, then he surely was not ready to challenge God’s ways, plans and purposes.

A Leviathan was God’s stark reminder that no one is above God’s sovereignty. No one is beyond the control and authority of Almighty God.

Job had been concerned that God had not dealt with evil properly; so God was showing Job that he was unqualified to take over God's job of controlling the Universe.

Regrettably [or thankfully], we no longer have anything that exists on earth today that is equivalent to the size, power, ferocity and awe-inspiring terror of such a creature. This creature stands totally unique and is the “king” over all those who are proud and haughty.

Job knew nothing of the heavenly lawsuit between God and Satan described in Job 1–2.

But through all of the LORD’s references to natural science and natural history, including the mighty creatures known as behemoth and Leviathan, it appears that Job finally understood that even dreadful things and things that man has no control over are subject to God.

Through all this the LORD has revealed that He is in complete control and there was a purpose behind everything, and by extension, a purpose for our suffering.

Indeed, the next, and last, chapter opens with Job’s contrite confession of his folly in accusing the LORD of injustice and his repentance of pride; and closes with his complete restoration.
### Table 41-1. The Major Themes Repeated in Job’s Responses

#### First Round of Speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>1st Speech</th>
<th>2nd Speech</th>
<th>3rd Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of God’s greatness</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>9:1-12</td>
<td>12:7-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disillusionment with God’s ways</td>
<td>7:11-19</td>
<td>9:13-10:17</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despair with life (or desire to die)</td>
<td>6:8-13; 7:1-10</td>
<td>10:18-22</td>
<td>14:1-22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Second Round of Speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>1st Speech</th>
<th>2nd Speech</th>
<th>3rd Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment in his friends</td>
<td>16:1-5; 17:3-5</td>
<td>19:1-4</td>
<td>21:1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disillusionment with God’s ways</td>
<td>16:6-17</td>
<td>19:5-22</td>
<td>21:7-18, 23-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despair with life (or desire to die)</td>
<td>17:6-16</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for vindication with God</td>
<td>16:18-17:2</td>
<td>19:23-27</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Third Round of Speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>1st Speech</th>
<th>2nd Speech</th>
<th>3rd Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment in his friends</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of God’s greatness</td>
<td>23:8-17</td>
<td>26:1-4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disillusionment with God’s ways</td>
<td>24:1-17</td>
<td>26:5-14; 27; 28</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despair with life (or desire to die)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>29:1-25; 30:1-31</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for vindication with God</td>
<td>23:1-7</td>
<td>31:1-40</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

(4) Notes on the Bible, Albert Barnes (1834).
APPENDIX A
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LEVIATHANS & DRAGONS

There is no doubt that Leviathans were fearsome creatures of the ancient world; especially with their fire-breathing capability.

But what about “dragons” that are also depicted as breathing out fire? How do they fit in? Were they just the stuff of legends or could they have been real? And if they were real, could they have really breathed fire?

Well some of the stories about dragons appear to have been real. We would know them today as “dinosaurs”.

In fact, "dragon legends" are best understood as the faded and/or embellished memories of real human encounters with dinosaurs.

Reputable historians from Herodotus to Alexander the Great to Marco Polo, and many others, appear to have either related such encounters or reported on what they saw and their descriptions of these creatures bear an uncanny resemblance to dinosaurs.

As evidence for this, pictures of dinosaurs have been found depicted on engraved stones in Peru dated from around 500 A.D. Refer to Job 40 notes on vv.15-19 and Figure 40-5.

A bas-relief of a *stegosaurus* has been found engraved on a stone column, along with numerous other still-living animals, in a collection of ruins called Angkor Thom in Cambodia; which was built in the late 1100’s by King Jayavarman VII. Refer to Job 40 notes on vv.15-19 and Figure 40-6.

In 330 BC, after Alexander the Great invaded India, he brought back reports of seeing a great hissing dragon living in a cave, which people were worshiping as a god. One of his lieutenants, Onesicritus, stated that the Indian King Abisarbus kept “serpents” that were 120 and 210 feet long.

Subsequent Greek rulers are said to have brought “dragons” back alive from Ethiopia.

Additionally, numerous ancient sculptures of dinosaurs were found in Acambaro, Mexico not to mention the ancient *pictoglyphs* and *petroglyphs* carved by American Indians.

Marco Polo was a trader and explorer who spent over 20 years traveling throughout Asia, Persia, China, and Indonesia. It was his journey which ultimately inspired other men like Christopher Columbus to explore the world. His travels took place from around 1271-1298. The book, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, is the written record which chronicles the adventures and travels that Marco Polo experienced while exploring the eastern world.

In part 2, chapter 40, Marco Polo reports what he describes as “huge serpents”. The descriptions given bear a striking similarity to the fossils and depictions we have of dinosaurs. It is interesting to note that in his travel diary Marco Polo writes regarding people hunting a similar, but much smaller, animal in South Asia [India]:

“…..here are seen huge serpents, ten paces in length (about 30 feet), and ten spans (about 8 feet) girt of the body. At the fore part, near the head, they have two short legs, having three claws like those of a tiger, with eyes larger than a four-penny (1½ inches) and very glaring…..The jaws are wide enough to swallow a man, the teeth are large and sharp, and their whole appearance is so formidable, that neither man, nor any kind of animal can approach them without terror. Others are met with of a smaller size, being eight, six, or five paces long (about 15-24 feet); and the following method is used for taking them.

---

41 John C. Murphy, *Two Super Snake Stories from the Ancient World*.
43 *Marvels of the World: The Travels of Marco Polo*, (c. 1300), Book 2, Chapter XL, pg. 185-186.
In the day-time, by reason of great heat, they lurk in caverns, from whence, at night, they issue to seek their food, and whatever beast they meet with and can lay hold of, whether tiger, wolf, or any other, they devour. After which they drag themselves towards some lake, spring of water, or river, in order to drink. By their motion in this way along the shore, and their vast weight, they make a deep impression, as if a heavy beam had been drawn along the sands."

"Those whose employment is to hunt them observe the track by which they are most frequently accustomed to go, and fix into the ground several pieces of wood, armed with sharp iron spikes, which they cover with sand in such a manner as not to be perceptible."

“When therefore the animals make their way towards the places they usually haunt, they are wounded by these instruments, and speedily killed. The crows, as soon as they perceive them to be dead, set up to scream; and this serves as a signal to the hunters, who advance to the spot, and proceed to separate the skin from the flesh, taking care immediately to secure the gall, which is most highly esteemed in medicine."

Of course these creatures could not be "leviathans" because they were catchable; at least the smaller ones were. But neither is this the description of a crocodile, since Marco Polo refers to them as "huge serpents". It is another example of a dinosaur-like creature surviving into historical times [early 14th century].

In the book entitled Amazon Expedition there is a picture of an ancient South American cave drawing showing armed men surrounding a dinosaur.

There are some theropod [two-legged dinosaur] candidates that that looked like depictions of dragons and may have had the ability to breathe fire. Two examples of such possible creatures are suggested by the fossils of the Dracorex Hogwartsia ["Dragon King of Hogwarts] and Stygimoloch Spinifer ["Thorny Styx Demon"] shown in Figure A41-1.

---

45 Discovered in the Hell Creek Formation in South Dakota.
46 Fossils remains of Stygimoloch Spinifer have been known since the early 1980’s and are found in Southern Montana, Eastern Wyoming and the Dakotas.

---

Job Chapter 41
Klaus G. Schiessel
Copyright © March 2017
For further study, there are also several good resources on this subject: