

Article of the Month
May, 2018

Monsters!

PART 1

(Because this subject is rather long and complex — even when shortened for simplicity — it will be presented in two parts. The June Article of the Month will complete what this month's article has begun.)

Humankind seems to have some sort of inbred affinity for subjects like monsters! There, indeed, have been actual monsters in earth's history. Pre-human creatures like dinosaurs have captured our imaginations. Even current, but unconfirmed, creatures like the Loch Ness Monster ("Nessie") in Scotland, or "The Abominable Snowman" (also known as "Bigfoot" or "Sesquatch") in the Pacific Northwest, still catch the curiosities of many of us.

There are Biblical monsters, too! But the Biblical examples are meant to be symbols of things in human experience which are big and ugly enough in character that they need to be represented by something which impresses our imaginations. These Biblical "monsters" are not, and never have been, real creatures. They are fictional (or story-telling) inventions which serve to give us very pictorial representations of institutions which challenge our welfare.

In this and next month's articles, we will restrict ourselves to looking at four important Biblical "monsters." We will look at two from the Old Testament (Hebrew) writings, and two from the New Testament (Greek) writings. The first two are "Behemoth" and "Leviathan." The second two are "Dragon" and "Beast" (from Revelation). Dragon and Beast also occur in the Old Testament.

THE TWO MONSTERS IN THE BOOK OF JOB

Since the Book of Job describes both Leviathan and Behemoth, we can benefit from Job's description of these two creatures.

Job's life is allegorical — it really happened; but, like Abraham's life (Galatians 4:24), it tells a story which is far larger than just the story of one man's life. In one application,

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Job represents mankind and the experiences the race has had with evil and the subsequent benefits and redemption from that experience.

But Job also seems to represent the nation of Israel. Israel's experiences with evil are a microcosm of the experiences of the whole human race. But Israel, unlike the remainder of the human race, is being prepared to be the nucleus of God's kingdom on earth. They must learn special lessons for their soon-to-be prominence in the plan of God for the restoration of mankind to perfection.

To be very basic, the Book of Job is divided into five sections: (1) the introductory narrative; (2) the discussion with the three "comforters;" (3) the monologue from a fourth man, Elihu; (4) the voice of God speaking out of the whirlwind; and (5) the repentance and the restoration of Job. It is in this last section (Chapters 40 through 42) that we meet Behemoth and Leviathan.

As Job repents, he does so in stages. In 40:3-5, he admits his own failures, but he falls short of the ultimate repentance we see in 42:6. We might naturally inquire, What produced this further degree of repentance? The obvious answer is that it was God's discussion with Job in the intervening chapters. In these chapters, God, Himself, introduces Behemoth and Leviathan.

The lesson from Job is that Israel will experience the necessary repentance to prepare them to be the blessed nation as God's kingdom unfolds on the earth. Both Leviathan and Behemoth will help to explain the process. Both are described as being invincible. The point of Chapters 40 and 41 is to tell us that ONLY GOD is able to handle these two monsters.

LEVIATHAN

Job 41:34 helps us to understand clearly that Leviathan represents SATAN. (See also Isaiah 14:13, 14.) Isaiah 27:1 equates Leviathan with the "dragon" of Revelation — both of which (as we shall see) represent CIVIL GOVERNMENT. So, while Leviathan is primarily Satan, Isaiah seems to let us know that it is PARTICULARLY Satan's use of civil power which is represented by this monster.

Job 41:1 through the first half of verse 10, shows the futility of man's trying to tame Leviathan. Beginning in the second half of verse 10, God shows that HE is in control of the entire situation, and that He will "repay" Leviathan for all his evil deeds.

Interestingly, in verse 12, God shows that Leviathan has "comely proportions." This is reminiscent of the description of Satan in Ezekiel 28:12-15. Satan and his methods have actually appeared "comely" (attractive) to humanity. Then we see that Leviathan has (1) sharp teeth, (2) tight-fitting scales, (3) fiery breath, and (4) a hard heart.

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The teeth show the unsated appetite of the Adversary. The protective scales emphasize his invincibility. The breath of fire emphasizes the ferociousness with which he intimidates all opposition. The hard heart shows not only his lack of compassion, but also his self-confidence and lack of fear. The fiery breath lends itself to the mythological image of the fire-breathing dragon — with which this beast is connected in Isaiah 27, and thereby with the dragon of Revelation.

This fiery breath shows the bold and intimidating claims by which the Adversary has imposed himself (mostly through civil powers) as the “god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4).

In verses 31 and 32 we have Satan’s techniques in the final battle of the ages: “He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.”

The boiling of “the deep,” the sea, is prophetic of the incitement of humanity to the furors of anarchy and terror — “The sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25).

The “shining path,” making the deep to appear “hoary,” or having white hair (a symbol of the respect due to age), refers to the pseudo-knowledge and philosophies which make evil appear as good. Again we see Satan’s technique of making himself into an “angel of light” (II Corinthians 11:14). Thus mankind, even as its world is crumbling, will be inclined to claim that it is applying “wisdom” in its fight against all that troubles it!

BEHEMOTH

This monster appears only in Job (in 40:15-24). He is a little more difficult to identify. Like Leviathan, however, he is invincible. Otherwise, he can best be described as “undescribable” — a fact that actually helps us to identify him! Daniel, also, finds a monster (Daniel 7:19) different from others he had seen. It was SO DIFFERENT that Daniel couldn’t name it after any animal he’d ever witnessed.

“After this I saw in the night visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and break in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it. And it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.” (Daniel 7:7)

The fourth beast of Daniel, particularly after the little horn rises and displaces three other horns, represents the Papal religious-influence-government, especially as seen in the so-called Holy Roman Empire. Thus Satan manifests himself not only in civil authority, but also in religious authority.

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Like Satan, this mammoth (Behemoth) defies domesticating. God is showing to Job that, once again, only Jehovah is strong enough to control the uncontrollable forces which have been unleashed upon the earth.

In Job 40:19, we see Behemoth described as “the Chief of the ways of God.” This is precisely how Anti-Christ describes himself in II Thessalonians 2:4. There seems to be no mistake about it, Behemoth is the Anti-Christ system which has deceived the whole Christian world. But, as a better translation words the latter part of the verse, God has the power to raise the sword against him. How true that will be in the final collapse of Babylon the Great!

THE EFFECT UPON ISRAEL & THE WORLD OF MANKIND

When we come to the final events of the age (Ezekiel 38 and 39), we see that God’s deliverance of Israel will involve the destruction of both civil and religious powers. In the colorful language of prophecy, “heaven (religious power) and earth (civil-social powers) will pass away.” There will be a “NEW heaven (religious authority - The Christ), and a NEW earth (a new way of doing things, civil and social).”

Israel has in the past century or so been learning of the Lord’s miraculous dealings with them. Like Job, they have *a partial* returning to God now. (Job 40:3-5) When they observe the power of God in the destruction of evil civil and religious forces (Leviathan and Behemoth), their *total return* to God and His ways will be assured. In the words of Job 42:5, 6, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Then Israel will stand as the gateway to the new order for the rest of the world of mankind. (Zechariah 8:20-22) The allegorical application of Job’s life will have found its fulfillment. Both Israel and the world of mankind will be restored to life and riches.

(Part 2, BEAST & DRAGON, will be presented in the June Article of the Month.)

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