

Behemoth & Leviathan

by: Steven J. Wallace

“Behemoth” And “Leviathan”

Their fossilized remains were so immense and grand that shortly after their discovery Sir Richard Owen articulated the term “dinosaur” for a new order of animals in 1840 (*deino* = terrible; *sauros* = lizard). The Bible speaks of several different kinds of creatures in its historical pages. Two of the most fascinating ones are the Behemoth and the Leviathan found in Job 40:15-24; 41:1-34.

The significance of such a passage is invaluable in understanding human history and the fallacy of the pseudo-sciences of the day. There are several today who believe it is absurd to think that mankind and dinosaurs were contemporary with one another. Many people believe that dinosaurs became extinct 65 million years before man’s arrival on the evolutionary ladder; however, the evidence screams something different. Even so, men who do not wish to throw God completely out of the picture, yet with a death-grip grasp on the belief of evolution and/or of long age geology, scheme up compromising and scripture-distorting theories. To this end, human wisdom has paraded before us a barrage varying and fanciful theories which do nothing more than explain away scripture.

David Matthews, www.geocities.com/dmathew1, in his article, “*The Pronouncements of Science*” was at least honest in writing what long-age theories demand of those who hold them, “*Christians should keep in mind that it is much easier to re-interpret the Bible than it is to compress billions of years of history into a six or ten thousand year time frame*” (par. 4). Of course, he can only assume billions of years of history yet is willing to “re-interpret the Bible” to satisfy his position. Christians who bow down to evolution and/or uniformitarianism must be willing to “re-interpret” and surrender the clear teaching of scripture for their earthly wisdom and scripture-twisting theories. They must be willing to replace God’s word with human wisdom as their foundation for truth. It

doesn’t end here, for they, in fact, will have to re-interpret every kind of evidence so that they may hold ever so faithfully to their unscriptural beliefs. Brother Shane Scott, former Bible class teacher at Florida College affords us with an example of this mindset in his sermon/article entitled, “Dinosaurs and the Bible.” (web.tampabay.rr.com/sscott02.) He writes against the young earth position saying:

“Warning! If you take this view, avoid a few common young earth creationist mistakes: a) The claim that human footprints have been found along dinosaur prints. b) The claim that ‘Behemoth’ and Leviathan’ are dinosaurs” (p. 2).

Whether it is physical evidence in nature, like human footprints next to dinosaur footprints, or whether it is evidence in the Scripture, it must be “re-interpreted.” Human footprints found next to dinosaur footprints in the Paluxy River Bed near Glen Rose, Texas, must be “interpreted” as a hoax or “mistake” because dinosaurs had to have lived and died 65 million years before man! For the same reason, they conclude that the Behemoth and Leviathan could never be dinosaurs since scripture shows these creatures are contemporaries with man. John C. Whitcomb and Henry Morris make a notable observation about these tracks, writing, “. . .the genuineness of neither would be questioned at all were it not for the geologically sacrosanct evolutionary time-scale” (The Genesis Flood, p. 174). To that we assert a hearty “amen!” Likewise, Don Patton rules out accidental resemblance:

“One simply can not believe that a sequence of clouds resembling 14 elephants holding each other’s tail could occur naturally, even if some of them are not perfect. If objective people see four old men in the mountain that resemble presidents, they will not believe the scene was produced naturally by erosion. These readily understood examples illustrate the strength

of a sequence in terms of evidence. It eliminates the idea of accidental resemblance by natural, unintelligent processes from the sphere of rational discussion. Fourteen tracks in a consistent right left pattern, consistent in length, including several amazingly detailed tracks with all five toes, instep and clearly defined heel, demonstrate conclusively that these tracks are not the product of natural erosion" (www.bible.ca/tracks/taylor-trail.htm).

The above web page also points out:

"By following the trail back under the river bank, seven more very human like tracks were exposed. The process involved removing tons of limestone overburden, effectively eliminating the possibility that the tracks were carved."

For some, it just doesn't matter what the evidence says, if it doesn't fit their presupposition, then it must be thrown out. Fourteen human footprints with dinosaur prints is hard evidence to simply dismiss, yet the "evolutionized" and "uniformitarian" mind cannot allow such a possibility.

We may also add that the controversy over the days of Genesis has occurred because of the same mindset. Would there be any controversy at all if it were not for the evolutionary time scale? It is hard to imagine such a controversy with the absence of evolutionary philosophy. Some may mistakenly think the controversy exists because the Bible is not clear. However, that is not the case. The controversy exists because the Bible is too clear! If the Bible were more vague and indeterminate regarding the days of creation or Behemoth and Leviathan for that matter, then there would be no rebuttal of long age geology.

What exactly were the Behemoth and Leviathan?

Some say, as brother Scott suggests, that the Behemoth was a hippopotamus and that Leviathan was a crocodile. Like the days of Genesis 1 with ages, there is nothing in scripture to suggest an image of a

hippopotamus or crocodile in Job 40 and 41. Are these creatures explained away because we have been "evolutionized" into thinking that dinosaur and man could never have been contemporaries? Unfortunately, that seems to be the reason for some.

Are Behemoth and Leviathan Literal or Figurative?

Some assert that Behemoth and Leviathan were figurative creatures. Whatever Behemoth was, it was something that was made along with man, "*Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you. . .*" (Job. 40:15). This should be enough evidence that this creature is literal. As Genesis 1:24-31 teaches, all beasts and creeping things were made along with man on day six. Furthermore Behemoth eats grass like an ox (Job. 40:15). What is it about Behemoth that would make one think he is figurative? Behemoth was not an ox, but he eats the same kind of diet that an ox does. Behemoth is confident though the Jordan gushes into his mouth (Job. 40:23). Is the Jordan literal or figurative? If Behemoth were figurative, we would have a figurative creature made with man, eating grass like an ox and confident when the Jordan rages into his mouth! Let us accept the evidence, Behemoth was real; there is no indication given in scripture that he is figurative. Since Behemoth is literal, why would Leviathan be any different as he is the next creature in God's argument? "*Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook or snare his tongue with a line which you lower? Lay your hand on him; remember the battle—never do it again! Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false; Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him? No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me?"* (Job 41:1, 8-10). If Leviathan were figurative, then God's point of standing against him is absurd and without reason. False doctrine often does just that, it makes our reasonable God unreasonable.

Behemoth a Hippo?

We think not! First of all, think how weak a hippo makes God look. God describes Behemoth as, "*He is the first of the ways of God; Only He who made him can bring near His sword*" (Job 40:19). Can we think of a

hippopotamus being the *first of the ways of God*? That seems ludicrous to ascribe such a lofty title to such a tubby and round creature. Furthermore, only God can bring the sword near and prevail.

Second, God speaks of him as moving "his tail like a cedar" (v. 17). When the world displays a hippo who can move his tail like a cedar tree, we will consider such a position! A hippo has a tail like a "stick" not a cedar tree. How does a cedar move? We can understand it swaying with the wind. The Behemoth had a tail that moved like the swaying of a cedar tree. Anything else is a tale of fabrication and a figment of fiction!

Finally, he is confident in a raging river even if it gushes into his mouth and takes it into his eyes or is pierced in the nose with a snare (vv. 23, 24). Can it be said of a hippo that he is confident in a raging and gushing river? Can it be said of a hippo that he is confident even when he is pierced in the nose with a snare?

Leviathan a Crocodile?

One has as much authority to believe that Leviathan is a crocodile as one does to believe the creation week consisted of billions of years, or that the "singing" in Ephesians 5:19 accompanies mechanical instruments, or of the church Jesus built being a denomination. Here are some reasons why Leviathan never was nor ever will be a crocodile.

One, "*Behold, your expectation is false; will you be laid low [cast down, KJV; overwhelmed, NKJV] even at the sight of him?*" (Job 41:9, NASB). Does a crocodile have that effect on a person? Does the very sight of a crocodile cast us down?

Two, "*When he raises himself up the mighty are afraid; because of his crashings they are beside themselves*" (Job 41:25). How high does a crocodile rise? He doesn't raise himself up much higher than a serpent who crawls on his belly! Can we describe a crocodile as one that rises and frightens the mighty with his "crashings?" If a crocodile could make crashings, would it crash enough to make the mighty beside themselves or bewildered (NASB)?

Three, "*His undersides are like sharp potsherds; He spreads pointed marks in the mire*" (Job 41:30). We see men wrestle alligators and crocodiles all the time. When they turn crocodiles over and expose their "undersides," do we see *sharp potsherds*? Is it not rather smooth? When crocodiles goes through mire, do they leave *pointed marks*? Only if someone drug one upside down! What is it in Job 41 that makes anyone think a crocodile is being discussed?

Four, "*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). Have you ever seen a crocodile go out into the deep blue sea and make it boil? Would his wake make you think the deep has white hair? Again, we must answer in the negative.

Five, "*Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals and a flame goes out of his mouth*" (Job 41:19-21). Perhaps this is one reason why people are apprehensive to embrace Leviathan being literal. But again, why would Behemoth be literal and Leviathan figurative? There is presently living in our world a unique beetle called the bombardier beetle which could have a similar mechanism to that of the Leviathan. On video I watched this little 1/2 inch beetle defend itself by toasting a toad's taste buds! Hence he lives up to his name "BOMBARDIER BEETLE." In speaking about the Bombardier beetle's 212° noxious gas blast, Duane T. Gish, Ph.D. writes:

"The chemicals and catalysts react to form another chemical, called quinone, which is very irritating. All of this happens extremely quickly in the bombardier beetle's combustion tubes. . . Scientists using special high-speed cameras have recorded both audible pops and puffs of smoke when the bombardier beetle sprays. They have also discovered that some species emit sprays in violent pulses at

the rate of 500 per second"
(Dinosaurs By Design, p. 83).

The point is easily understood. If a present day 1/2 inch beetle can protect itself with such a display of force, imagine what a several ton dinosaur could do with a similar mechanism. No wonder Jehovah says of this mighty and terrifying creature, *"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. 40:33-34). Leviathan is also mentioned outside of Job, showing that he was alive and well during the prophets:

"You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness" (Ps. 74:14).

"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" (Is. 27:1).