

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church  
Adult Bible Class  
The Book of Job  
November 18, 2020  
God Speaks - Part 2**

***“Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?  
I lay my hand on my mouth.  
<sup>5</sup> I have spoken once, and I will not answer;  
twice, but I will proceed no further.”***

Silence. This is the “best” answer Job can give The LORD after being taken on a tour of creation and begin asked repeatedly if he knows the secrets of the earth, the heavens and the animal kingdom. Job’s silence coupled with placing his hand over his mouth may be a way of “taking the Fifth” to borrow a theme from American police dramas. He does not want to incriminate himself any further. God has called him a “faultfinder” who dares to contend with the Almighty. Sometimes the best response is to be silent both out of respect and self-preservation.

The first questions God asked Job were, “What do you really know about the mysteries of nature? What do you really understand about the mysteries of science? Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?” Where were you in creation’s morning? What do you know about the mystery of life and nature, about its origin and preservation? Where were you ‘when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?’” The obvious answer is that Job, like all of us, knows little of these things. He is small; he is silent.

**God’s Second Speech - Job 41:6 - 41:34**

Even though the tone of God’s second speech is similar to the first and filled with rhetorical questions to which Job can only answer “No,” the focus is different. After challenging Job (40:6-14) God focusses his attention upon two mythical beasts, Behemoth and Leviathan.

**The Challenge -- Job 40:6-14**

Job’s initial response to God is that he is “small.” But God does not want Job to give into his smallness, so he challenges him again. Verses 7-14 can almost be read as a good-natured taunt from the LORD to Job. In sense he is saying, “You’re not giving up already, are you?” God fears that if the conversation were to end after the first speech Job will go away as one who condemns God rather than one who trusts him (v. 8). So, he challenges Job to adorn himself with majesty and dignity and rejoin the discussion.

“Have you an arm like God and can you thunder with a voice like his?” If Job can tread down the wicked, then perhaps his own arm can save him. But evil is not so easily contained. For the rest of the speech God will focus attention on two mythical figures – Behemoth and Leviathan.

Over the centuries there have been any number of attempts to explain God using mythological creatures in his argument with Job. The word behemoth is simply the plural of the Hebrew word for beast and there are places in the Old Testament where the word is used in that sort of way. It is also possible that behemoth was a creature such as a hippopotamus. But here it seems something more is intended. Leviathan also occurs in a number of places in the Old Testament and is often thought to be an animal like a crocodile. But it is also used in several places to refer to great, cosmic evil. While Job may have pictured great animals in his mind, it is most likely that we are to understand these two beasts as metaphors for what St. Paul will later describe as the “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12)



### **Behold Behemoth – Job 40:15-24.**

Behemoth is described as a creature of amazing strength – powerful muscles, bones of bronze, limbs of iron and even a “tail stiff as a cedar.” He feeds in the mountains and in the rivers. Always present, always hungry. He is created by God and only God can slay him. No human will put a ring in his nose and haul him off to the zoo.

### **Draw out Leviathan – Job 41:1-34**

If Behemoth did not frighten you, Leviathan certainly will! He is beyond taming – not a pet to bring home and give the children. He cannot be hunted for food and if you try to lay a hand on him you will not do it again. He breathes fire and smoke comes from his nostrils. His teeth are strong and sharp, and his back is covered with shields. No human weapon, sword, club, or arrow can slay this beast. Yet, right in the middle of the poem there is a reminder of who is really in charge. “Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine,” says the Lord.

### **So, who are we to think of when we consider these creatures?**

Behemoth and Leviathan are storybook creatures, but they are also utterly real and true; it is just that their truth is conveyed to us in storybook descriptions that arouse in us a response of visceral fear. In this way they convey to us the truth of Satan much more powerfully than a calm and measured theological description would do. To a generation more familiar with the Harry Potter stories, we might want to compare Satan to Voldemort.

We are therefore on strong Biblical ground when we identify the Leviathan at the end of the book of Job with the Satan at the start. Even though Satan disappears from view after chapter 2, he is never really gone. He does not ever totally disappear; he is always there. And Behemoth? Here it would appear that we are perhaps to think of death. This ever-hungry super-beast is always devouring, like the grim reaper in modern cartoons, the hooded figure of death with his sickle picking off one and then another to keep feeding his insatiable appetite.

Leviathan is the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31), and “the prince of the powers of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). But God has him on a leash! Satan was “created by God” in the sense that he was first an angel. Sadly, he rebelled, but that does not give him power beyond what God has allowed. Satan is not a god; he is not all powerful. And in the end he is crushed.

### **Psalm 74:14**

### **Isaiah 27:1**

Behemoth, likewise, is a created thing. Death comes as the result of sin and to our eyes it is unstoppable. But as Job has already confessed death does not get the last word.

It is not until the New Testament that we learn what it cost God to win this victory over the Leviathan. Neither the Behemoth nor the Leviathan can finally be defeated by the imposition of a greater force of the same kind; evil cannot be defeated by evil, but only by the redemptive suffering of pure goodness. This victory was won, by Christ on the cross. As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews explains, the reason the Son of God became a fully human being was so “that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).

**And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Colossians 2:13–15)**

God’s second speech to Job, though somewhat mysterious to our ears, is really of greatest comfort! Not only is God the author and sustainer of creation (speech 1) he is also the one who has conquered death and Satan. No matter what evil we face in this world “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us!” (Romans 8:37).

### **Job’s Response - Job 42: 1-6**

Then Job replied to the Lord:

<sup>2</sup>“I know that you can do all things;  
no purpose of yours can be thwarted.  
<sup>3</sup>You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?’  
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me to know.  
<sup>4</sup>“You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak;  
I will question you,  
and you shall answer me.’  
<sup>5</sup>My ears had heard of you  
but now my eyes have seen you.  
<sup>6</sup>Therefore I despise myself  
and repent in dust and ashes.”

Job's response to the LORD comes in three parts:

1. What Job knows (and believes) namely that God is in control of all things, even evil.
2. What he did not know, namely the plans of the LORD
3. What he now has seen. Though we cannot be sure exactly how God manifested himself to Job, he has "seen" God and is strengthened by that revelation.

Of particular interest is the Hebrew word which translates into English as "repent." The word used here by Job is not the common word for repentance. Instead it is a word that has a dual meaning. In addition to meaning have a change of mind, or to recant something, it also means to find peace and comfort. Job hears God, repents of his errors and at the same time finds peace.

What is also worth noting is that Job finds peace even though he never knows why he suffers. When we began our examination of God's word to Job we noted that he was looking for explanation (why did this happen?) and for vindication (was some action of Job's the cause of the suffering?). At the end of it all he still does not have a concise answer to either of those questions. God never specifically says why this happens, nor does he vindicate Job. Like us, Job must proceed by faith.

This also reveals another parallel between Job and Jesus. Hanging on the cross, Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" As valid as that question is not even Jesus receives an answer! For Job, for Jesus and for you and me, the call is to live by faith! We don't have all the answers we would like to have, but we know our God is triumphant over evil, over Satan and over death!

**Hebrews 11:1**

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

**The Epilogue - Job 42:1-17**

The final 10 verses of the book of Job describes the restoration of Job. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar come under God's wrath for their folly. They presumed to know the way of God and did not come to comfort Job but torment him. Job's first restoration is to the role of priest. He will offer a sacrifice for his friends and pray for them, so they are not dealt with according to their error. This highlights yet another parallel between Job and Jesus. Jesus offers himself as the sacrifice so we do not receive from the Lord what we deserve for our folly and now intercedes for us.

This spiritual restoration is followed by physical restoration. He receives from the Lord twice as much as he had before and his family is restored. He is also blessed with long life, seeing his descendants to the fourth generation.

At the beginning of the book Job's life was described as a paradise on earth, perhaps a reference and reminder of the life of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Now at the end, paradise is restored! However rather than pointing us backward to Eden, this restoration points us forward to the paradise being prepared for us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Revelation 7:9-17

<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

<sup>11</sup>All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>saying:

“Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”

<sup>14</sup>I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>Therefore,

“they are before the throne of God

and serve him day and night in his temple;

and he who sits on the throne

will shelter them with his presence.

<sup>16</sup>‘Never again will they hunger;

never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat down on them,’

nor any scorching heat.

<sup>17</sup>For the Lamb at the center of the throne

will be their shepherd;

‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’

‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”