

Job Is Speechless after God Addresses Job's Pride

Chapters 40:5–41:34

Job 40:5 *Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.*

JOB spoke once, yea, more than once, in an insulting manner, and now he sees his spiritual error. Afraid that he might sin again, he refuses to speak anymore without first confessing his unworthiness. Job's words and thoughts have gotten him into trouble with the Lord, and now he has gained sufficient wisdom to hold his peace and quietly humble himself to the Lord's correction. No longer will he speak of the perceived errors of God's ways; instead, he will confine his speech to the subject of his unworthiness. Contrite, he rejects saying anything that might tempt him to be lifted with pride again. It is in humility that men find God and learn more about Him, whereas in human pride the Lord will not be found at all. *The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.*¹

Once have I spoken - That is, in vindicating myself. He had once spoken of God in an irreverent and improper manner, and he now saw it.

but I will not answer - I will not now answer, as I had expressed the wish to do. Job now saw that he had spoken in an improper manner, and he says that he would not repeat what he had said.

Yea, twice - He had not only offended once, as if in a thoughtless and hasty manner, but he had repeated it, showing deliberation, and thus aggravating his guilt. When a man is brought to a willingness to confess that he has done wrong once, he will be very likely to see that he has been guilty of more than one offence. One sin will draw on the remembrance of another; and the gate once open, a flood of sins will rush to the collection.²

¹ Ps. 25:9

² Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 40:5

³ II Cor. 5:10

Job 40:6 *Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,*

After Job's confession of his vileness and his desire to speak no more, the Lord continues His correction. This teaches us that it is God, not man, who determines the degree of both repentance and the length of correction needed before He cleanses men of sin. The Lord leaves nothing to men, nor will He allow men to set their own standards for what He deems is sufficient reproof for sin. And a full confession for sin can come only when the sinner fully sees and understands the sin. Understandably, any partial repentance by man will certainly fail to achieve full forgiveness from the Lord.

Job 40:7 *Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*

(NIV) *"Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.*

(NLT) *"Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.*

Every man will have to stand and give an account of himself before God, as Job must do here. Human cowardice will not be tolerated, nor will any be able to plead weakness to escape God's correction or judgment for their sin. As with Adam and Eve, no matter what effort is made to hide, a full account for transgressing God's Word will have to be given. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*³

That every one may receive the things done in his body.—It would have seemed almost impossible, but for the perverse ingenuity of the system-builders of theology, to evade the force of this unqualified assertion of the working of the universal law of retribution. No formula of justification by faith, or imputed righteousness, or pardon sealed in the blood of Christ, or priestly absolution, is permitted by St. Paul to mingle with his expectations of that great day, as revealing the secrets of men's hearts, awarding to each man according to his works. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7) was to him an eternal, unchanging law.⁴

It is foolish for men to hope that how they have lived and what they have thought and said against God will not be brought to light.

Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

(NIV) "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?"

(NLT) "Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right?"

⁴ *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, II Cor. 5:10*

⁵ *Deut. 1:26 Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: Deut. 1:43 So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill.*

Deut. 9:23 Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

I Sam. 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Neh. 9:26 Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

Ps. 107:10&11 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; ¹¹Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

Ps. 5:10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

Isa. 1:19&20 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: ²⁰But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Jer. 28:16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD.

Jer. 29:32 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.

Ezek. 20:8 But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

Ezek. 20:13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

Ezek. 20:21 Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; they polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness.

⁶ *Job 34:11*

Here we have the source of all human reproach and condemnation of God: the desire of men to justify themselves. At the core of such condemnation is man's assertion that it is he who is righteous, not God, as none would bring claims against the Lord unless they sought to both exalt and justify themselves. By questioning God's judgments, sinners imply that He is the sinner and they are not. Thus, it is easy to see why God deals so harshly with human self-righteousness, as it is the seed of all true rebellion.⁵ Ultimately, whatever God allows or permits is just, and to question this is to discredit and count as unjust God Himself. By complaining and murmuring, Job put a blot on God's justice, implying that he had done nothing to deserve the tragedies in his life. He placed the blame upon the Lord, as if he had not sinned. Yet all, regardless of who they are, reap as they have sown, and none reap as they have not sown. *For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.*⁶ Job's erring religion had so infected his heart that he believed it was he, not God, who should determine what was fair in life. This teaches us that false religion can be

as dangerous as witchcraft if, instead of humbling a man, it gives him what he thinks is sufficient grounds to condemn God and His judgments.

Early in chapter one Job brought sacrifices and offerings to God for the possible sins of his children.⁷ However, if we are to believe God's Word, true sacrifices must first contain a broken spirit for God to deem them worthy. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*⁸ If one's spirit is not truly humble, justifying God and condemning oneself, whatever is brought to the Lord will be found unworthy. This spiritual truth is critically important—for men's lives and actions to be treasured by the Lord, they must have broken and contrite spirits. It is not enough to perform religious movements if the heart has not been sufficiently humbled to exalt God and debase oneself.

The sacrifices of God] Such as He desires and approves.

A broken spirit and a contrite heart are those in which sorrow and affliction (Psalm 51:8⁹) have done their work, and the obstinacy of

pride has been replaced by the humility of penitence. Cp. Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15.^{10,11}

Job could not see until thoroughly enlightened by the Lord that he was guilty of the sin he thought his children had committed. In the end, Job's trials were purposed to produce a broken spirit, which alone would make the offerings he presented to God acceptable. Observe that trials have as their main objective the purification of religion. Understand as well that if a man truly desires to please the Lord, God will allow certain things in his life so his religion can be sufficiently cleansed and he may be found acceptable by Him. And though this journey will often prove painful, in the end it will prove profitable. To be refined for proper worship, men must be humbled so their self-righteousness may be replaced by the confession that they are, at their very cores, sinners and the understanding that God is in all ways righteous.

Job 40:9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

The *arm*, symbolic of strength,¹² is meant to show Job that his strength can-

⁷ Job 1:5 *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*

⁸ Ps. 51:17

⁹ Ps. 51:8 *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

¹⁰ Ps. 34:18 *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

Isa. 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

¹¹ Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Ps. 51:17

¹² Exod. 6:6 *Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:*

Exod. 15:16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.

Deut. 7:19 The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

Deut. 26:8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:

II Kings 17:36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

Ps. 98:1 O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Isa. 30:30 And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

Isa. 40:10 Behold, the LORD GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Jer. 32:17 Ah LORD GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

not be compared to God's.¹³ When the Scriptures refer to the *arm* and *hand* of God, it is to instruct men that God can accomplish things in their lives that they cannot.¹⁴ For the believer, without God's hand and mighty arm there would be no chance of victory. This includes victory over death¹⁵ and sin,¹⁶ as well as all other earthly afflictions.¹⁷ *O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.*¹⁸ Job does not have an arm like God's; therefore, he should not think that he could ever understand God's purposes for his life or be

Ezek. 20:33 As I live, saith the LORD GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you:

13 Ps. 93:1 The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

Jer. 10:12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

Jer. 51:15&16 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. ¹⁶When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

Jer. 32:17 Ah LORD GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

14 Deut. 7:19 The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

Deut. 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day

15 John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

I Cor. 15:57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Thess. 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Rev. 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

16 Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

17 Deut. 20:4 For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. Josh. 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Rom. 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

18 Ps. 98:1

19 Ps. 44:3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

Zech. 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

20 Rom. 8:29&30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Rom. 9:23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

II Cor. 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Col. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

I Thess. 2:12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

delivered from his affliction through his own wisdom or strength.¹⁹

Job 40:10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

It is impossible for men, especially sinful men, to replicate or adorn themselves in true heavenly glory. No matter how deep and expansive it is in the soul, human pride can do nothing to reproduce the glory that is God's alone. Hence, it is impossible for any to capture even an ounce of celestial glory unless, by the grace of God, it is given through Christ.²⁰

There is no natural light or any moral quality in men that would allow them to clothe themselves with the splendor, glory, and majesty that is God's alone. Because they lack this heavenly glory and are merely corrupted flesh, they are unworthy of entering God's presence. A naked man is completely vulnerable; he cannot protect himself from God's judgment or defend himself in God's courtroom.²¹ Because of his destitute condition, he is estranged from the Lord's holy presence. Unless God clothes sinners in His righteousness, they will be found unfit to enter His celestial presence. *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall*

*be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*²²

Jesus's parable of the marriage of the king's son reveals to us the importance of wearing a heavenly garment worthy of God's presence,²³ as no man will be allowed entrance into heaven if he possesses only the garments of his flesh. Consequently, if men are not made new creatures in Christ, replacing the old, fleshly nature passed on from Adam,²⁴

II Thess. 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II Tim. 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Heb. 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

I Pet. 4:13&14 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

I Pet. 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

II Pet. 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

21 Gen. 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Gen. 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Hab. 2:16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and let thy foreskin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory.

Isa. 47:3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

Lam. 1:8 Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honoured her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward.

Ezek. 16:36 Thus saith the LORD God; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them;

Nah. 3:5 Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.

Rev. 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

22 Isa. 61:10

23 Matt. 22:1-13 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, ²The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my failings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. ⁷But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. ⁹Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. ¹¹And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹²And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ¹³Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

24 Rom. 5:12-15 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ¹³(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. ¹⁵But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace,

then they will find themselves unfit for heaven. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*²⁵ As with the priests who served in the Old Testament temple, all flesh and nakedness of man must be covered before he can come into contact with the Lord. *Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.*²⁶

Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar — ... The garments worn in those countries, being perfectly loose, were easily blown aside, so as to discover the lower parts of the body; to prevent, therefore, this inconvenience, and that no indecency might be intermixed with the service of God, this precaution was necessary. And for the same reason the priests were afterward appointed to wear breeches, which were worn by none of the people besides...²⁷

What this teaches is that for any to enter the Lord's presence or perform service for Him, they must first be clothed in a garment sufficient to cover their flesh, since no flesh of any kind will be allowed into God's holy kingdom. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*²⁸ So also, *That no flesh should glory in his presence.*²⁹ Now that we understand God's view of the flesh, we should be able to see that unless the Lord imparts to men His glory, produced through His Spirit, they will never be worthy of entering His presence—a truth willingly received by the humble but wholly rejected by the proud. The prideful man foolishly believes that he need not change anything to be accepted by God or gain fellowship with Him. To a proud and rebellious man, his unchanging conviction is that God should receive him as he is, even if he is only fleshly and carnal. The pretentious think they need not repent of sin because they are not unrighteous. Instead, when *which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*

25 John 3:3

26 Exod. 20:26

27 Benson Commentary, Exod. 20:26

28 I Cor. 15:50

29 I Cor. 1:29

30 Ps. 3:8 *Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.*

31 Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 40:11

challenged by the Lord for their sin, they deem His correction sinful.

Job 40:11–14 *Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.*

¹² *Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.*

¹³ *Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.*

¹⁴ *Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.*

God's power is seen in His ability to abase the proud. What is intriguing is that the Lord brings up Job's lack of power to abase the proud as grounds that Job could never save himself. Job must have at least faintly still believed in his ability to deliver himself. This teaches us that just because men are in pain does not mean that they will not continue to trust in their power to save themselves, since the pride of man is often such that only as a last resort will it yield to the fact that all salvation belongs to the Lord.³⁰ It is not until all human hope is lost that men realize that only God's power, and not their own, can save them. When human pride is completely broken, however, men will begin trusting in the Lord.

Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath - That is, as God does. Show that the same effects can be produced by "your" indignation which there is in his. God appeals here to the effect of his displeasure in prostrating his foes as one of the evidences of his majesty and glory, and asks Job, if he would compare himself with him, to imitate him in this, and produce similar effects.

And behold every one that is proud, and abase him - That is, "look" upon such an one and bring him low, or humble him by a look. It is implied here that God could do this, and he appeals to it as a proof of his power.³¹

The Lord reminds Job of his inability to bring the proud low simply because

this is exactly what He is doing with Job. After his trials, Job possesses humility, reverence, and fear of God beyond anything he previously held.

Job 40:15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Attention is now brought to the *behemoth*. Exactly what this animal was is open to conjecture. Some have supposed it to be the hippopotamus, others the elephant. If we had to choose between the two using the characteristics revealed, the hippo would be the most logical choice. However, if we stick to the strict interpretation of Scripture, it is quite probable that neither of the animals mentioned above is the behemoth's true identity. Very likely this great creature is now extinct. What is revealed about it is that it was not carnivorous, could inhabit both water and land, and had a huge thirst, no doubt because of its great size and strength. Like the hippo, its power lay in its loins. According to verse 19, the behemoth was considered the *chief of the ways of God*. This means that no other creature could match it in size or strength.

Job 40:16–24 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.

¹⁷ *He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.*

¹⁸ *His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.*

¹⁹ *He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.*

²⁰ *Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.*

²¹ *He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.*

²² *The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.*

²³ *Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.*

²⁴ *He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.*

The reason God draws such attention to this mighty beast's strength is to fur-

ther impress upon Job His own strength. All this is meant to produce humility in Job so he might consider the vastness of the power of the one he so foolishly contended against. Men would never even consider wrestling with a creature such as the *behemoth*, so why would they imagine they could successfully strive against God and be successful?

Job 41:1–7 Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

² *Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?*

³ *Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?*

⁴ *Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?*

⁵ *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?*

⁶ *Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?*

⁷ *Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?*

Leviathan.—There can be little doubt that by this is meant the crocodile or alligator, whatever may be the true meaning of behemoth.³²

The Lord now asks Job if he could tame such a ferocious creature as the *leviathan*. *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?* Power is always directly related to being able to produce submission. This is true of God with man and man with certain beasts of the field. That men lack sufficient power to influence the weather, subdue the proud, or reign over certain of God's creatures should prove to them that they are not gods or equal with God in any manner, but pride can so inflate a man that he loses all touch with reality. The purpose of reminding him of his inability is to bring him back to sensibility concerning his true strength. Since Job cannot subdue and domesticate fierce creatures on earth, he should not think himself equal to the Lord. Sinners also frequently manifest megalomania, whereby grandiose thoughts of themselves tempt them to foolishly believe that they are at least minimally co-equal with God in wisdom

³² *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 41:1*

and strength. No man will resist God's will unless he first thinks himself strong enough not to need it. Hence, whenever men buck the truth, it is because they believe themselves strong enough not to have to submit to it. This is a foolish idea: *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.*³³

To have a high opinion of our own wisdom, is but to flatter ourselves; and self-flattery is the next step to self-deceit. The wisdom that worldly men esteem, is foolishness with God. How justly does he despise, and how easily can he baffle and confound it! The thoughts of the wisest men in the world, have vanity, weakness, and folly in them. All this should teach us to be humble, and make us willing to be taught of God, so as not to be led away, by pretenses to human wisdom and skill, from the simple truths revealed by Christ.³⁴

The fact is, men have no real power, and the sooner they realize this the sooner they will humble themselves to the Lord's power and authority.³⁵ *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.*³⁶ Man cannot save himself, as all true redemption, deliverance, and salvation in this world belong to God. Therefore, no man should think highly of himself, because the redemption of the world and the misery it lies in can be reversed only through divine power. In short, "the redemption of the world belongs to God, and should be ascribed to him."³⁷

Job 41:8&9 Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.
⁹ Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

With respect to the leviathan, the Lord informs Job that if he were to con-

³³ *I Cor. 3:18*

³⁴ *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, I Cor. 3:18-23*

³⁵ *II Chron. 20:6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?*

Ps. 62:11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

Dan. 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

³⁶ *Rev. 19:1*

³⁷ *Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rev. 19:1*

tend with him, he would learn never to do it again.

Job 41:8 (NIV) If you lay a hand on it, you will remember the struggle and never do it again!

Job 41:8 (NLT) If you lay a hand on it, you will certainly remember the battle that follows. You won't try that again!

The Lord's hope is that Job has learned not to strive against God's will for his life.

Job 41:9 (NIV) Any hope of subduing it is false; the mere sight of it is overpowering.

Job 41:10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

The ferocity of the crocodile is so great that none dare stir him up. If this is true of the croc, should it not be more true with God? There are so many creatures in this world, including the hippo, the elephant, the crocodile, the lion, the tiger, and even the North American grizzly, that men have the natural sense not to stir up lest the creature's power and strength be exerted on them—yet it is astounding how seldom this same fear is attributed to God. Whereas men are rightly afraid of the fierceness of so many of the earth's creatures, stunningly, most do not share the same fear of the Lord. This is evidenced by the casualness with which they break His laws and lightly esteem His commands. Divine wisdom teaches us that as ill-advised as it is to stir up the anger of creatures like the crocodile, it is nothing compared to the foolishness of stirring up God's wrath.

Job 41:11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

The apostle quotes this sentiment for the silencing of all flesh in God's presence, (Romans 11:35,) *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?* For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. As God doth not inflict upon us the evils we have deserved, so he doth bestow upon us the favours we have not deserved. Having said, and largely proved, that man could not contend with God in power, he now adds that he cannot contend with him in, or with respect to justice; because God oweth him nothing, nor is any way obliged to him: which having briefly hinted, to prevent an objection, he returns to his former argument, the description of leviathan.³⁸

Job 41:12 *I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.*

The Lord continues to reveal to Job details of the leviathan's strength and glory. By considering the might of such a great creature, Job might also see his own fragility and human weakness.

I will not conceal his parts - This is the commencement of a more particular description of the animal than had been before given. In the previous part of the chapter, the remarks are general, speaking of it merely as one of great power, and not to be taken by any of the ordinary methods. A description follows of the various parts of the animal, all tending to confirm this general impression, and to fill the hearer with a deep conviction of his formidable character. The words rendered, "I will not conceal," mean, "I will not be silent;" that is, he would speak of them. The description which follows of the "parts" of the animal refers particularly to his mouth, his teeth, his scales, his eyelids, his nostrils, his neck, and his heart.

Nor his comely proportion - The crocodile is not an object of beauty, and the animal described here is not spoken of as one of beauty, but as one of great power and fierceness. The phrase used here (ערכו חין *chîyn 'êrekô*) means properly "the grace of his armature," or the beauty of his armor. It does not refer to the beauty of the animal as such, but to the armor or defense which it had. Though there might be no beauty in an animal like the one here described, yet there might be a "grace" or fitness in its means of defense which could not fail to attract admiration.³⁹

³⁸ Benson Commentary, Job 41:11

³⁹ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 41:12

Job 41:13–32 *Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?*

¹⁴ *Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.*

¹⁵ *His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.*

¹⁶ *One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.*

¹⁷ *They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.*

¹⁸ *By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.*

¹⁹ *Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.*

²⁰ *Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.*

²¹ *His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.*

²² *In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.*

²³ *The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.*

²⁴ *His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.*

²⁵ *When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.*

²⁶ *The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.*

²⁷ *He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.*

²⁸ *The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.*

²⁹ *Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.*

³⁰ *Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.*

³¹ *He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.*

³² *He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.*

The characteristics of the crocodile brought to Job's attention are his terrible teeth (^v14), the compactness and density of his mighty scales (^{vv}15–17), his eyes (^v18), his nostrils, mouth, and breath (^{vv}19–21), the great strength of his neck

(v22), and the hardness of his heart (v24). The crocodile possesses such defenses that neither the spear, arrow, or dart can penetrate his rough outer exterior (vv26–29). With respect to the creature's movements, the Lord reminds Job that he makes the deep boil like a pot, especially when subduing his prey (v31). The water around him foams, froths, and boils like soup under intense heat as his renowned death roll sucks the life out of his victims.

Job 41:33&34 *Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.
34 He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.*

Two verses in this chapter are singularly important. The first says, *None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?* (v10). The second compares God's strength to leviathan: *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride* (v34).

Who then is able to stand before me? - The meaning of this is plain. It is, "If one of my

creatures is so formidable that man dare not attack it, how can he contend with the great Creator?" This may perhaps be designed as a reproof of Job. He had expressed a desire to carry his cause before God, and to urge argument before him in vindication of himself. God here shows him how hopeless must be a contest with the Almighty. Man trembles and is disarmed of his courage by even the sight of one of the creatures of God. Overpowered with fear, he retires from the contemplated contest, and flees away. How then could he presume to contend with God? What hope could he have in a contest with him?⁴⁰

All of God's creation, including each of His creatures, reveals characteristics of the Lord's glory.⁴¹ Though many may not see the reason for a creature such as the crocodile, its beauty lies in its great strength and fearlessness. Like God, it has no equal and fears nothing else in creation. The crocodile is king in his domain, just as God is even more so in His. *Nothing on earth is its equal— a creature without fear.*⁴²

⁴⁰ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 41:10

⁴¹ Ps. 104:24&25 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. ²⁵So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

Isa. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

Rom. 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Col. 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

⁴² Job 41:33 (NIV)