

# Dr. John Walton, Job, Session 22 – Podcast

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Hey everyone, and welcome back. We're diving deep into the book of Job today. Sounds exciting.

It is, but We're not looking at the whole book. Okay, specifically, we're going to be exploring the significance of these creatures, Behemoth and Leviathan. Well, those are good ones.

They are in God's second speech to Job, right? Now, you know, these creatures are often misunderstood. Yeah, reduced to simple animal metaphors, right? Just like, oh, it's a hippo or a crocodile. Yeah, exactly.

But there's so much more to them than meets the eye. Oh, absolutely, so much more way more than a hippo, way more than a hippo, way more than a crocodile. Yeah, and really, like, understanding these creatures, I think, can completely change. Yeah, your perspective on the entire book for sure. Okay, so before we get into Behemoth and Leviathan, can you quickly set the scene for us, remind us what's going on in the book of Job at this point? So Job is in deep despair. Okay, he's lost everything: his wealth, his family, his health.

It's like all the classic things you don't want to lose. Yeah, the things you don't want to lose. Yeah, and he's questioning God, right? Like, why is all this suffering? Like, why is this happening to his friends and me? They try to offer explanations. But their arguments only add to Job's frustration, right? Because they're all they keep trying to tell him: you must have done something to deserve this, right? Like, you sinned. Yeah, somehow like God's some kind of cosmic accountant. Yeah, God's keeping track, balancing the books with suffering.

Yeah, you get what you deserve. That's their argument. Yeah, and that's why God's entrance into the story is so dramatic. Oh, he speaks from a whirlwind Symbol of chaos and power.

Oh, wow, right, and he doesn't immediately answer Joe's question. He's like, hold on, Joe, before we get into all that. Yeah, let's talk about who I am. Yes, God's first speech focuses on the wonders of creation, like the vastness and complexity of the world, right? It's this reminder of like how limited our human understanding is, but it's in his second speech that things get really interesting. Yeah, that's where behemoth and Leviathan come in, right? Mm-hmm.

So what's the deal with these creatures? Are they just some ancient mythical beasts? They're actually much more than that. They belong to a category of figures known as chaos creatures. Yeah, and this wasn't just some random idea that the author of Job came up with. Okay, these chaos creatures were well known in ancient Near Eastern thought, so this is connecting to a much larger cultural context here. It's like a known thing.

Okay, what exactly did these chaos creatures represent? So they embodied the potential for disorder and disruption. They existed on the edge of the ordered world, representing the forces that could overturn stability and create chaos. So we're talking about, like, evil forces here, like demons or monsters, not necessarily. The important thing to remember is that

these creatures were not considered inherently evil. Okay, think of them more like forces of nature. Okay, like a hurricane or a volcano. They can cause immense destruction, but it's not out of malicious intent.

That's an interesting distinction. Yeah, so it's not about good versus evil, right? It's about the raw, untamed power of nature. Exactly. I like it, and to make them even more imposing, these chaos creatures were often described as composites. Okay, combining features of known animals. Okay, to create these like fearsome, unimaginable beasts, like a chimera or something totally like imagine a creature with the head of a lion, the body of a serpent, and the wings of an eagle.

Okay, now we're talking, right? Yeah, that's quite a visual. Yeah, so how does God? Use these creatures in his speech to Job is he just trying to scare him into submission. Not quite.

Okay, God starts by directly challenging Job's perception of divine justice. Okay, he asks whether you would discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? It's a powerful rhetorical question. It almost sounds like a dare, like, okay, Job, you think you can do better? Try running the universe for a day and see how easy it is to make everything fair.

Yes, God is essentially saying, look, Job. I understand your pain. Uh-huh, but you have to trust that.

I know what I'm doing, okay, and then to illustrate his point, he introduces behemoth. So let's talk about behemoth. Okay, what exactly is this creature? And why is it so significant? Well, first we need to dispel the common misconception that behemoth is simply a hippopotamus. Okay, while some translations might suggest that it's a gross oversimplification, remember we're dealing with a chaos creature here, right a creature that embodies those powerful chaotic forces. Exactly. So what clues does the text give us about Behemoth? God describes Behemoth as? Incredibly strong and powerful with bones like beams of bronze and limbs like bars of iron Wow He says he ranks first among the works of God Highlighting his unique position in creation and he also says that behemoth feeds on grass like an ox Yeah, which seems kind of odd for such a fearsome creature, it's actually a very deliberate detail Okay, God is drawing a parallel between behemoth and Job himself.

Wait, he's comparing Job to a chaos creature. How does that work? He says Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you He then goes on to list specific comparisons between them. Okay, both Behemoth and Job were content, well-fed, and strong before Job's suffering. Okay, both occupied a position of prominence and were cared for by God. So is God saying that Job is a chaos creature? Not exactly. It's more about challenging Job's understanding of his own righteousness. Before his suffering, Job likely saw himself as deserving of God's blessings. Okay, much like Behemoth, who seems to effortlessly enjoy God's provision. So God's using Behemoth to point out that Job's previous state of peace and prosperity Wasn't necessarily a result of his own righteousness, exactly, but rather a gift from God. Yes, a gift. Okay, and there's another crucial aspect of behemoth that we haven't touched on yet.

Okay, his stability. Okay, God describes behemoth standing firm even when a raging river surges around him. Wow, unshakeable, unyielding in the face of chaos. That's an incredibly powerful image. It is so, even though behemoth represents chaos. Yes, he also embodies

this sense of resilience and steadfastness. Exactly, and that's the quality God wants Job to learn from. Okay, to find that same unwavering trust and stability, even when life feels chaotic and out of control. This is blowing my mind. I'm starting to see behemoth in a whole new light. Good. So if behemoth is about challenging Job's understanding of his own righteousness and pointing him toward a more resilient faith, what about Leviathan? Well, that's where things get even more interesting.

Oh boy. Yeah, I can't wait. Yeah.

All right, we'll have to pick this up. Thanks, time in part two. Yeah, right.

See you then. Okay. Bye. Welcome back.

Glad we're picking up right where we left off with Leviathan. Yeah, Leviathan. This is a big one It is a big one.

So remind me where we left off with Behemoth, and how does that connect to Leviathan? So we were talking about Behemoth's stability even in the face of, like, a raging river, right? Right, and there's a similar idea at play with Leviathan, but with a slightly different emphasis. Okay, I'm intrigued. Tell me more about this Leviathan character. What kind of chaos does he represent? So just like Behemoth, Leviathan is another one of those chaos creatures I'm talking about, but while Behemoth seems almost peaceful in his stability, Leviathan is just pure untamed wildness.

Yeah, like the text describes him with these incredible, almost terrifying details: fiery breath, impenetrable scales, smoke coming out of his nostrils. Oh, yeah. It's like something out of a monster movie, right? And God uses all of this vivid imagery to really drive home a point to joke. Okay, remember God has already challenged Job's ideas about righteousness through behemoth, right? Now, with Leviathan, he shifts the focus to something else: control. Control. What do you mean? Well, God bombards Job with this series of rhetorical questions about Leviathan. Okay, like can you pull him in with a fishhook? Okay, can you put a rope through his nose? Will he beg you for mercy? I can only imagine how Job must have felt hearing those questions. It's like God is saying This creature is completely beyond your grasp, Job, yeah, and you're trying to control him exactly, and that's the key insight here. Okay Leviathan's untamable nature is a mirror to Job's own attempts to like control or bargain with God He wants answers he wants justice he wants things to go back to the way they were right, but God is showing him that he's Operating under this limited human perspective So it's not just about Job's suffering but also about his attitude towards God in the midst of that suffering, right? And God takes it a step further.

Okay, he directly compares Leviathan to himself Wow He says no one is fierce enough to rouse Leviathan who then is able to stand against me So if behemoth was a parallel to Job, but Leviathan is a parallel to God in a way Yes, God is using Leviathan to illustrate his own unfathomable power and sovereignty Okay, just as Leviathan cannot be tamed or subdued neither can God that makes me think about all the different ways people have interpreted Leviathan throughout history. Oh, yeah, some scholars see him as a symbol of the forces of chaos that God ultimately defeats In order to establish order and creation right others see him as a representation of powerful empires or even Satan himself That's a great point Yeah, there's a lot of debate about the exact meaning of Leviathan not just in the book of

Job But in other ancient texts as well. Oh, really? Yeah Okay, some see him as like a purely destructive force while others see him as a necessary part of the cosmic balance Some see him as a figure of like fear and dread while others see him as an object of awe and wonder It's fascinating how these ancient texts can be so open to interpretation makes you wonder what the original author intended Exactly, but I think that's part of what makes them so enduring they continue to speak to us across centuries Inviting us to engage with these complex ideas and wrestle with our own interpretations So in a way these chaos creatures behemoth and Leviathan aren't just about God's power, but also about the nature of faith itself I think you're right.

It's not about having all the answers or being able to control every aspect of our lives It's about learning to trust even when things are difficult, even when we don't understand Exactly, and I think that's a really powerful message for us today, you know living in a world that often feels chaotic and unpredictable It is but it also raises another question if we can't control God if we can't even fully comprehend him Then what does it mean to have a relationship with him? That's a great question, and I think it's one that the book of Job helps us to answer. Okay, not by giving us a set of rules or doctrines, but by showing us an example of someone who wrestled with those same questions and emerged with a deeper, more authentic faith. Hmm, I like it. And I think that's what we'll explore next as we delve into Job's response to God's powerful speech. Welcome back.

I don't know about you, but I am still trying to wrap my head around all this talk about chaos creatures and the nature of faith. It's intense. It really is. The book of Job really doesn't shy away from those big questions. Does it? No, not at all, and as we've seen, God's response to Job's questioning is anything but simple, right? He throws these wild, powerful images at him. Yeah, but he myth Leviathan, right? It's almost like he's saying Deal with this, Job. See if you can fit this into your neat little box of understanding, right, or like your system of how you think the world works. Yeah, exactly.

And it's such a shift from the way Job's Friends were approaching things, right? They kept trying to explain away his suffering. Uh-huh, offering all these tidy theological Explanations. Yeah, but God comes in and just blows everything wide open, exactly, and that's what makes Job's response so fascinating. Okay, so remember we left off talking about how God is essentially asking Job Can you trust me even in the midst of all this chaos and uncertainty, right? So, how does Job answer that question? Well, he doesn't try to argue back with God.

Okay, he doesn't offer any more justifications for his own righteousness. Instead, he says something really profound. He says I know that you can do all things No purpose of yours can be thwarted. Surely I spoke of things.

I did not understand things too wonderful for me to know. That's a beautiful response. It is; it's a powerful moment of humility. Yeah, Job finally recognizes the limits of his own understanding. He admits he was wrong. Yeah, he admits that he's been trying to fit God into this like limited human framework. Yeah, exactly, and he realizes how audacious that was. It is pretty audacious when you think about it. It's almost like he's saying, okay, God, you win. You're bigger than I thought.

Uh-huh. My attempts to control you, to understand you, to make you fit into my categories. It was all foolish. Yeah, and it's important to note that Job's repentance here isn't about feeling bad for specific sins. Okay, it's about a shift in perspective, right? He's retracting his previous pronouncements, acknowledging that he was speaking from a place of ignorance. So it's less about saying I'm sorry for what I did and more about saying I was wrong and how I was thinking. Exactly, and that shift in thinking is what allows Job to move forward.

Okay, he goes from demanding Explanations to accepting the mystery. He stops trying to control God and instead surrenders to his sovereignty Thinking about this whole idea of surrendering to God's sovereignty in the midst of chaos Yeah, it makes me wonder if that's part of what those chaos creatures behemoth and Leviathan were meant to represent all along I think you're right, you know, they're these powerful untamable forces But they're also part of God's creation They exist within the order of things even if that order seems chaotic and incomprehensible to us. It's a good point It's like they're a reminder that God's ways are not our ways His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and sometimes the best we can do is just acknowledge that and trust that he knows what he's doing Right and that kind of trust that willingness to let go of our need for control That's ultimately where we find peace and even joy in the midst of life's challenges It's not about pretending that suffering doesn't exist or that it's all part of some grand plan that we just can't see yet It's about acknowledging the reality of pain the reality of chaos Yeah, and still choosing to trust Exactly, and I think that's the enduring message of the book of Job.

Okay. It's a book about wrestling with doubt, confronting the limits of our understanding, and ultimately finding a way to have faith even when we don't have all the answers. It's a message that's incredibly relevant for us today. Oh, for sure, isn't it? Yeah, we live in a world that's full of chaos and uncertainty. Totally, we face all sorts of challenges, personal struggles, global crises things that just seem unfair and senseless. And in those moments, it's easy to feel like Job, angry, confused, questioning everything, right? But the book of Job reminds us that it's okay to ask those questions.

Yeah, it's okay to wrestle with doubt. It's okay to feel overwhelmed by the chaos, but it also reminds us that we're not alone in those struggles, right? God is with us even in the midst of the storm. And sometimes the best thing we can do is just let go of our need for control and trust that he's got us. It's funny We started this whole deep dive talking about these strange mythical creatures behemoth and Leviathan Yeah, and we ended up talking about some of those profound questions of human existence suffering faith The nature of God, I think that's the beauty of the book of Job Yeah It takes these seemingly bizarre images and uses them to explore the deepest truths about life and faith Right and it leaves us with more questions than answers, which I think is a good thing I agree because ultimately it's the questions that keep us searching Keep us growing keep us engaged with the world and with God so to all our listeners out there We encourage you to keep exploring keep questioning keep diving deep into the mysteries of the book of Job and beyond Yes, who knows what incredible insights you might uncover and who knows you might even encounter behemoth and Leviathan lurking in the depths of your own imagination Until next time keep diving deep.

Yeah