

Science and the Bible, Pt 3: The Deluge and Dinosaurs (Genesis 7:13-16)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on April 19, 2009

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You may or may not have ever heard an exposition of what the Bible has to say about dinosaurs that once roamed the earth, allegedly dying out 65 million years ago, but this is a question that comes up in our text (at least I think that) is important to have a biblical perspective on. Maybe you've heard the story of the evolutionist tour guide who as he went around the museum would say things like, "and here is a skeleton of this type of dinosaur that died out 70 million *and 10* years ago." When one kid asked what's with the "and 10 years ago" part, the tour guide said, "Oh, well, when I started working here at the museum 10 years ago they told me the dinosaur died out 70 million years ago, so I just want to be precisely accurate."

I'm not a scientist, but I will have to draw from those who are, and are much smarter than us. There are many thousands of scientists who have questioned how precise and accurate the dating and data assumptions are of evolutionists. You won't hear on the news that there are thousands of scientists who have converted from evolutionists to Bible-believing creationists who have PhD's in various fields of science and who are also convinced that Genesis 1-11 literally happened, including recent creation and a worldwide flood that changed the world, as we began to discuss last time. In our verse-by-verse study through Genesis, our text this evening is 7:13-16, but I want to begin reading in v. 11 and we'll also look at other passages that describe the creatures that went on the ark that we haven't discussed yet, which I trust will be interesting.

Genesis 7:11-22 (NASB95) ¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month [*note the exact historical chronology, which virtually all conservative Bible scholars agree was only a few thousand years ago*], **on the same day** all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. ¹² The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. ¹³ **On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark,** ¹⁴ **they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds.** ¹⁵ **So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life.** ¹⁶ **Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed *it* behind him.**

God closed the door of the ark on that day right before judgment came. Noah didn't close it, the text says God did. God shut it. God sealed it and at the same time sealed the fate of all who had shut their ears and hearts to the preaching of Noah. This is the sobering truth: grace does have a limit, the offer does come to an end, there is such a thing as too late, and unbelieving man has no guarantee of life and grace when he refuses to repent of his sin. Jesus said it will be just like the days of Noah in the last days as well, people carrying on with life as usual, when judgment comes. Jesus called Himself the door, the only way, and the NT says Christ is also the ark of salvation through the judgment for all in Him (1 Peter 3). Verse 13 tells us that Noah and his family, his wife and son's wives, entered the ark exactly as God told them and on the very day God told them the flood was going to come. They did not question like Satan did in Genesis 3, "did God really say?" There was no observable or scientific reason to think it would rain 40 days and 40 nights and flood the whole world when they'd never seen a flood or storm or rain (?) like that. It looked pretty ridiculous to the eyes of the sophisticated world to see this guy and his boys building a huge boat on dry land many miles from any water, a boat bigger than probably any structure most had seen.

But Noah and family trusted God and believed what God said, even though the whole world around them did not believe or trust what God had revealed to them. If God said it, that settled it, for Noah and family whether or not anyone believed it. Majorities and percentages don't determine truth. We know that ancient man from this period was quite intelligent and advanced, and perhaps the world's smartest and most scholarly tried to convince Noah and family that there's no way a worldwide flood could happen and all the experts agree and scholars agree you're wrong, just like the same kind of people today still say to us. The critics and skeptics of Noah for a century must have mocked him more than any mocking we receive today for believing what God said in Genesis, but Noah still trusted God and his family alone while the literal rest of the world (millions or even more than a billion people?) perished in disbelief.

What a great example for us, in a world where it seems like hardly anyone is committed to God's Word from cover-to-cover, that we would be willing to believe God and stand alone if necessary. If God says he created the world in six days with morning and evening, and the Ten Commandments say we are to work six literal days the same way, we shouldn't question, "hath God really said?" If God says all land creatures were created on the same day as Adam and lived *with man* rather than millions of years before man "evolved," I don't question, "hath God really said?" If God says it flooded so much that v. 19 says "... all the high mountains under the heavens were covered" – don't object "hath God really said?"

I know scientists say those things can't and didn't happen, and they don't stop with the first book of the OT, they do it with the first book of the NT. A virgin birth is impossible, the same scientists would tell us, and those "miracles" Jesus did must have natural explanations or they're not true, and a man can't die on a cross and be in the tomb for 3 days and rise again like Jesus did. Well, if you don't believe Jesus literally died and rose as the Bible says, you're not a Christian. True Christians don't bow to scientific or secular pressure in the first book of the NT; why do we think we have to in the first book of the OT? Just because natural minds haven't observed something and naturalistic processes can't explain it doesn't mean the supernatural events of God's Word didn't happen

If I can paraphrase and update the famous speech of Martin Luther: "I do not accept the authority of scientific 'popes' or councils of men who pontificate rather than prove their scientific theories, and [as Luther said of unsaved scholars in his day] who have erred and frequently contradicted each other [as evolutionists do]. Unless I am convinced by Scripture, and by plain reason, I cannot and I will not recant the interpretations of Genesis that Bible-believers have held since day one. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me. Amen."

As I said last week, we don't need scientists or science to *prove* the Bible (even if it could) but we also don't need to be intimidated into thinking true science has ever been able to *disprove* any part of God's Word, a book that is true in every area it speaks.

So look at verse 16, where it says male and female of "all flesh" entered the ark. If you look back at v. 15, it describes animals going into the ark to Noah in pairs or twos of all flesh with the breath of life, or in other words, the creatures of the earth that breathe air (the air-breathing sea creatures and mammals of the water of course could survive in the water).

Verse 14 further clarifies that the creatures entering the ark were the *land* animals (it even says “on the earth”) as well as flying creatures, a Heb. word that probably covers more than just “birds” as NASB / NKJV has it. Several good translations have “everything with wings” (NIV, HCSB, NET), and ESV has “every winged creature.” So it would not just be creatures that modern taxonomists classify as birds, but whatever flying mammals or flying reptiles were around then, bats, etc., perhaps even flying insects if they could not survive the flood.

Were some of the bigger land animals excluded from being on the ark? No, the passage says there were 2 of all flesh and creatures with breath of life (and 7 of clean animals). As we saw a couple weeks ago, the study of original “kinds” of animals, called *baraminology* (which tries to trace back to the original genera / genus / family, approximate to biblical “kind”) suggests that all known non-extinct land animals and birds could have fit on maybe only one of the three decks of the ark. So there was a lot of room in the 1.5 million cubic feet of the ark as Genesis 6 describes its dimensions, including known creatures now extinct and then some, and even the biggest of creatures like woolly mammoths and dinosaurs still around (50-55 dinosaur “kinds?”), undoubtedly smaller of these and giraffes rather than full-grown and tallest ones.

Verse 14 actually describes the land animals of the ark using the same exact language as Genesis 1. So these are the same categories and land creatures God created at creation week and the genealogy of Genesis 5 reveals this was less than 1700 years after creation of all creatures. That’s the biblical timeline. Look at Genesis 1:

¹⁹There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. ²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds [*ESV footnote says “flying things”*] fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.” ²¹God created **the great sea monsters** [*we’ll come back to that later*]... ²³There was **evening and there was morning, a fifth day.** ²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle [*first one it mentions is the Heb. word “behema” – we’ll see its plural form “behemoth” a little later*] and creeping things [*this term seems to include reptiles*] and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so. ²⁵God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind [*these creatures including reptiles are listed last in order of creation before man*]; and **God saw that it was good.** ²⁶Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ... ³¹God saw all that He had made, and **behold, it was very good.** And there was **evening and there was morning, the sixth day.**

So what day would land dinosaurs have been created? Day Six. Sea dinosaurs? Day Five.

Weren’t these “days” long ages of thousands or millions of years and only at the very end did man come to be? Many Christians try and reconcile Gen. 1 with assumptions of evolutionists. There’s a number of reasons I gave awhile back that Gen. 1 days are 24-hour

- G** **God's statement in The Ten Commandments**
- E** **Evening and morning language indicates normal days**
- N** **Night and day are defined and contrasted in the 1st day**
- E** **Every time numerals are used with *yom* in Hebrew, it means a normal day**
- S** **Seasons and years (longer literal timeframes) are contrasted with “days” (v. 14-18)**
- I** **Interpretation of Scripture as a whole supports a literal Genesis 1 (Mark 10:6, Rom. 8, 5:12, etc.)**
- S** **Scientific theories have not disproven biblical creation**

So mankind and all land and sea creatures that God created originally lived together in a very good creation, including dinosaurs. Death came as a result of sin in Genesis 3, so you don't have millions of years of death, decay, destruction, dying out of dinosaurs or any creatures with breath of life before Genesis 3.

Look at v. 21 again, which says God created “great sea monsters” (NASB), or other translations have “large sea animals” (NCV) or “large sea creatures” (HCSB) or “great creatures of the sea” (NKJV, NIV, cf. ESV “great sea creatures”). Emphasis on *size*.

The Septuagint (ancient Jewish translation of OT into Greek, often abbreviated as LXX) has *ta keta* [sea monster, huge fish] *ta megala* [mega in size]

What do the dictionaries and lexicons say?

- *New Bible Dictionary*, p. 43, translates “giant marine animals”
- *Brown Driver Briggs Lexicon*, 1072.2, gives “serpent” and “dragon” as other definitions
- *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the OT*, p. 1764: ‘the meaning of the sbst. is always sea-monster, dragon ... sea-dragon
- *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains*: ‘sea monster, sea-dragon, i.e., a serpent-like monster (of myth?) that lives in the deep (of river or ocean), which can only be controlled by great powers ... sea creatures, i.e., very large, impressive-looking creatures of the oceans ... serpent monster, dragon, i.e., a serpent-like monster’ (DBLH 9490, #4)
- *Theological Wordbook of the OT* (Vol 2, p. 976): ‘The word denotes “any large reptile” ... Referring to anything from large snakes ... to enormous sea creatures.’
- *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (8577, Woodside Bible Fellowship): ‘[*tanniyn, tanniyim* /*tan·neen*/] 28 occurrences; AV translates as “dragon” 21 times, “serpent” three times, “whale” three times, and “sea monster” once. 1 dragon, serpent, sea monster. 1A **dragon or dinosaur**. 1B sea or river monster. 1C serpent ... Intensive from the same as 8565 = *tan*: From an unused root probably meaning to elongate ... dragon, maybe the **extinct dinosaur the plesiosaurus**’

The English word “dinosaur” was not invented until the 19th century but there were words in ancient cultures for these massive creatures that seem to have inspired dragon stories that eventually became legends in so many cultures of the world (but had original historical basis). Gen. 5-6 says there were human giants and long lifespans before the flood and the fossil record reveals there were giant animals and creatures as well. Reptiles interestingly continue to grow all their life, so perhaps long life spans of the dinosaur kind explains how they lived to be so big before the flood.

Some of the ancient Jewish writings identify the *tannin* in this verse with their word *Leviathan* (Targum Jonathan, 2 Bar. 29:1-8 and 4 Ezra 6:47–52), and 2 inspired passages seem to link the two:

Psalm 74:13-14 (NASB95) “... You broke the heads of the sea monsters [creatures / dragons] in the waters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan ...”

Isaiah 27:1 (NASB95) “In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent [*nachash*], With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon [*tannin*] who lives in the sea [NKJV “the reptile that is in the sea”; others “sea monster / creature”]

What's the oldest book of the Bible? Job. Turn to Job 41, where we have God talking to Job about the greatest creature He had made, a creature known to Job to still be alive approximately 4,000 years ago

Here's what the dictionaries and sources say of Leviathan:

'**Leviathan**, dragon, i.e., a reptile, serpent-like creature of the sea that takes on mythological proportions [i.e., massive, seemingly unreal size?] ... large swimming creature' (DBLH 4293, #2)

Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, p. 433: 'a serpent of a larger kind, Job 3:8 ... any very large aquatic creature, Ps. 104:26'

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, p. 1327: '**Leviathan**. - Great sea monster or large aquatic reptile (Jb 3:8; Ps 74:14)'

Enhanced Strong's Lexicon: Six occurrences ... **leviathan**, sea monster, dragon. 1A large aquatic animal. 1B **perhaps the [now] extinct dinosaur, plesiosaurus, exact meaning unknown.**

Job 41 (NASB95) ¹"Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook? Or press down his tongue with a cord? ²"Can you put a rope in his nose Or pierce his jaw with a hook? ³"Will he make many supplications to you, Or will he speak to you soft words? ⁴"Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him for a servant forever? ⁵"Will you play with him as with a bird, Or will you bind him for your maidens? ⁶"Will the traders bargain over him? Will they divide him among the merchants? ⁷"Can you fill his skin with harpoons, Or his head with fishing spears? ⁸"Lay your hand on him; Remember the battle; you will not do it again! ⁹"Behold, your expectation is false; Will you be laid low even at the sight of him? ¹⁰"No one is so fierce that he dares to arouse him; Who then is he that can stand before Me? ¹¹"Who has given to Me that I should repay *him*? *Whatever* is under the whole heaven is Mine. ¹²"I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, Or his mighty strength, or his orderly frame. ¹³"Who can strip off his outer armor? Who can come within his double mail? ¹⁴"Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth there is terror. ¹⁵"His strong scales are *his* pride, Shut up *as with* a tight seal. ¹⁶"One is so near to another That no air can come between them. ¹⁷"They are joined one to another; They clasp each other and cannot be separated.

What is this creature called *Leviathan* (Hebrew term brought over straight into English because they weren't sure how to translate it). The ancient Jews who translated the OT into Greek when they came to this Hebrew word *leviathan*, they used the Greek word *drakon* (any guesses what that word means?).

- massive 10-volume *TDNT* (vol. 2, p. 281) defines this word as referring to "serpent, dragon, or sea-monster ... [which] plays a great part in Persian, Babylonian and Assyrian. Egyptian and Greek" literature, which I read in other sources seems to document ancients who believed this was a real creature, not just a myth as other sources assume
- In classic Greek it meant "*a dragon, or serpent of huge size ... Homer, etc.*" (*Liddell-Scott Lexicon, Abridged*, p. 211)
- *Complete Word Study Dictionary*: "A dragon, a huge serpent, so-called because of his sight which is very acute (cf. *óphis* [3789], a serpent). The Greeks called the dragon a species of serpent because he could see so well."

³⁴"He looks on everything that is high ..."

Thomas Aquinas in the middle ages thought the *leviathan* was a whale, but that doesn't fit the description very well. Samuel Borchers in 1663 proposed a crocodile, and many followed after.

NASB footnote: "Leviathan, or the crocodile" (interestingly, it also translates a different Heb. word as crocodile in Lev. 11:30)

NIV: "possibly the crocodile" (at least a little less certain)

How does the crocodile compare to what we just read? Language of scaly armor-like skin certainly could refer to a reptile, but is the *crocodile* unable to be caught, captured, roped, tied down, tamed, sold, or killed with the harpoons or weapons as v. 1-9 describes? Commentators say these verses clearly portray a massive creature:

- "peerless and fearless" (Strauss, 1976, p. 437).
- "too powerful and ferocious for mere man to dare to come to grips with it" (Pope, p. 268).
- "beyond the power of men to capture" (Driver and Gray, 1964, p. 353).

But the crocodile was hunted and captured by Egyptians around the time of Genesis and perhaps earlier. Herodotus discussed how ancients captured crocodiles (Rowley, 1980, p. 259), and how that, after being seized, some were tamed (Jackson, 1983, p. 87). They can be and were killed by spears/javelins but v.26 and 29 say those don't even bother *this creature*, whatever it is. Verse 27 says iron weapons are like straw to this creature, and bronze are like rotten wood to him. No creature alive really fully fits this description.

Certainly man in ancient and modern times have killed, caught, captured, used rope to tie shut the mouths of crocs and gators, and some even wrestle them (brave or stupid?) and made pets of them.

So what is *leviathan* then? The description is the most detailed of any creature. The first feature of its anatomy pointed out in v. 12 is its limbs, its strength, and orderly or graceful frame (NKJV has "proportions"). The legs and frame and proportions of a crocodile don't really stand out compared to other creatures of the sea or land – it has short little legs and is not exactly graceful as it walks.

³⁰ "His underparts are *like* sharp potsherds ...

Does the crocodile have a smooth or sharp belly?

'Although the hide that covers the crocodile's back is extremely thick and difficult to penetrate, this is not true of his belly. The crocodile is most vulnerable to spears and javelins on his underside; hence, it could not be said of him that "his underparts are like sharp potsherds" (Thompson and Bromling, p. 7).

The NIV translates the next 2 verses this way:

³¹ He makes the depths churn like a boiling caldron and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment. ³² Behind him he leaves a glistening wake; one would think the deep had white hair.

Leviathan is described as a deep sea creature unlike the crocodile (crocs can swim in fresh and salt-water, even the ocean, but are not truly deep sea-creatures like what we read in Job 41).

And this is no mythical monster, this is a creature God created for the vast sea as one of its large creatures that was known to ancient man, sailors on ships would see it playing in the deep ocean.

Psalm 104:25-26 (NIV) ²⁵ There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number— living things both large and small. ²⁶ There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

Look at Job 41:22 – it says the Leviathan has strength in its neck.

Job 41:25, 34 (NIV)

²⁵ When he **rises up**, the mighty are terrified; they retreat before his thrashing ... ³⁴ He looks down on all that are haughty; he is king over all that are proud (NIV)

Crocodiles aren't known for their necks or for rising up high (when they rise up from laying down they're maybe a foot off the ground). How could something so low to the ground look on all that are high? Crocodiles certainly don't look down on all other creatures, much less proud man. But if *large long-necked dinosaurs that swam* were still around then, they of all creatures known to ever exist seem to match this passage the best.

- I've read the Kronosaurus described as the most fearsome creature to ever swim the oceans, and the larger dinosaurs that swam the great deeps certainly would have left a massive wake when they went under exactly as verses 31-32 describe.
- We don't know if the word *leviathan* referred to a class of creatures or just one species, but I've read there were some dinosaurs approaching the length of blue whales, and certainly when the largest ones rose up, even the most mighty of men or mammals would be terrified.
- They of all creatures created by God could literally and truly look down on all others, they were taller and terrifying to match this passage, true kings of all creatures, as it says.
- Their necks were remarkable and worth drawing attention to as they would rise up, their limbs were very noteworthy, as was their graceful frame and extraordinary proportions.
- Some dinosaurs had sharp spikes on their backs or stomachs, the biggest of them were virtually invincible to any attack by man or any other creature, and nothing on this planet equals them or has ever been like them.

³³ "Nothing on earth is like him, One made without fear.

I read you some of the footnotes for the NIV and NASB. What do some of the other versions say *leviathan* is in margin of v. 1?

HCSB: "Or *twisting one*; a mythological [?] sea serpent or dragon..."

ESV: "A large sea animal, exact identity unknown" (also NKJV)

KJV: "leviathan: an extinct animal of some kind" (lookup 1611?)

In 1611, of course, the English word "dinosaur" was not around yet (not till the 19th century) but many cultures had words for and stories of creatures they called dragons, large reptilian monsters that are remarkably like 20th century reconstructions of some types of dinosaurs. The word "dragon" was used by the KJV translators for a real creature, used over 20x in OT. This is not mythology, this is not even man's words here in Job 41; this is God speaking about the greatest and biggest creature He created. I'm not talking about imaginary creatures like Puff the Magic Dragon or Pete's Dragon or a purple guy like Barney who sings the "I love you, you love me" song. The Leviathan doesn't have wings and doesn't kidnap princesses or turn invisible.

But if you read Job 41 of this creature that once lived that God describes, you can understand why as ancient people knew and wrote about these creatures, where all the dragon stories came from in so many cultures around the world. Did legend and fantasy get added long the way? Of course. But what God says here is no myth or fairy tale. And many of the stories even from recent centuries all around the world of native peoples and real creatures they knew (some had a word for dragon and some used other words) sound very much like dinosaurs and sound very much like what the Bible describes.

Next week I want to look at some of that more with you, as well as look at the greatest land creature God ever made in Job 40:

Job 40:15-24 (NASB95) ¹⁵“Behold now, **Behemoth**, which I made as well as you; He eats grass like an ox. ¹⁶“Behold now, his strength in his loins And his power in the muscles of his belly. ¹⁷“He bends his tail **like a cedar**; The sinews of his thighs are knit together. ¹⁸“His bones are tubes of bronze; His limbs are like bars of iron. ¹⁹“**He is the first of the ways of God**; Let his maker bring near his sword. ²⁰“Surely the mountains bring him food, And all the beasts of the field play there. ²¹“Under the lotus plants he lies down, In the covert of the reeds and the marsh. ²²“The lotus plants cover him with shade; The willows of the brook surround him. ²³“**If a river rages, he is not alarmed; He is confident, though the Jordan rushes to his mouth.** ²⁴“Can anyone capture him when he is on watch, With barbs can anyone pierce *his* nose?

I would encourage you before next week to read the whole context of Job 38-42. God has spent 3 chapters highlighting all the things He created that give Him glory to humble man (including lists of real animals that show how God’s sovereignty and supremacy is on display) and the climax of it all is the greatest land creature and sea creature God created for this very object lesson for Job and for us.

The power of the enormous incredible dinosaurs (which modern scientists have only more recently re-discovered their massive skeletons, many of which were fossilized in the flood of Genesis 7) should cause us to glorify their Creator who is far more powerful. All of God’s creatures were made to glorify the Creator.

When God calls all of His creation and creatures to praise Him, He begins with these and then recounts the creatures of Genesis 1 & 7:

Psalms 148:7-14 (KJV) ⁷Praise the LORD from the earth, ye **dragons**, and all deeps [same word as Gen. 7 “fountains of deep” in flood]: ⁸Fire, and hail; snow, and vapor; **stormy wind fulfilling his word**: ⁹Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all **cedars**: ¹⁰**Beasts, and all cattle [behema]; creeping things, and flying ...** ¹¹Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: ¹²Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: ¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory *is* above the earth and heaven. ¹⁴He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; *even* of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

That result God intends is exactly what Job did after God speaks of these massive and mighty creatures of his in Job 42, and that’s what I hope we will do as a result of this study as well (humbly repent and recognize who God is and give Him glory). Is there any value in studying and knowing about these animals? Apparently God thought so in the longest audible speech He ever gave.

I like how one writer summed it up: ‘From the existence of these animals, God obviously intended Job to draw important conclusions regarding the nature of the world and man’s place in it. Robert Gordis commented: “The same consideration supports the idea that Behemoth and Leviathan are also natural creatures, the existence of which heightens the impact of God’s argument” (1978, p. 571). Descriptions of these creatures are critical in regard to the intent of God’s speeches to Job. “They are surely to be taken...as variations on the theme that God is God and Job is not” (Wharton, p. 174). Job is overwhelmed by the “sheer power and terror of these beings, but even more so by the fact that they exist as signs of God’s overarching power” (Wharton, p. 174). In contemplating taking up his case with God, Job has been concerned with being overcome by terror (cf. 9:32-35; 13:20-21). Now Yahweh is showing Job that his apprehensions were not misplaced. If he would have to retreat in terror before a literal animal like leviathan, he certainly was unfit to contend in court with Almighty God!
-- <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/154>