

32a JOB

This is Friday, the 12th of January, 2007. We continue tonight our study in the Book of Job. We're in Chapter 41.

Let's take a moment as we begin to exercise the privilege of our priesthood to come before God and acknowledge his grace and the ministry of the Holy Spirit who teaches us and moves the information that we perceive beyond the realm of the ordinary into the type of information that makes a difference in our spiritual life. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is for us to set aside the challenges and the distractions and many preoccupations of this life and devote our attention together to the study of your word. We thank you for its preservation and for its truth.

We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ who came to this earth and sacrificed himself on our behalf so that we could have a relationship with you through him. We pray that our study tonight will enable us to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus and that as we do so, we will reflect your glory and his both now and in the age to come. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen. Chapter 41 follows chapter 40. Chapter 40 gave us in its last portion the picture of Behemoth beginning in verse 15.

What do we know about Behemoth? What do you remember? Where does he dwell? He's a land dwelling animal, but what is he near? He's near the river. He's in the reedy lotus blossoms and the shade of the trees and so on. He can take the Jordan up in his mouth and it can get in his eyes and nose and so on.

What is his principal characteristic in this description that God gives? I would say, yes, immovable strength. He's planted there and you're not going to move him. You can't put a hook in his jaw.

You're not going to lead him away with a ring in his nose. He is not disturbed. Verse 23 says he is confident you could dam up the Jordan and then flood it on down and you're not going to wash him out of his place.

He's happy in his liaison or his cohabitation, his dwelling place there with the river. He's a friend of the river. The river is his friend.

He's not going to be moved. Now, in chapter 41, God moves to this second picture of Leviathan. And we've talked about Leviathan last time.

What is his dwelling place? It's the deep, it's the sea, and the characteristics are different. He is more of a threat. He is more dangerous.

God says, can you, actually, this is the one that you can't put a reed through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook. Will he make supplications to you? Will he speak softly? Will you make a covenant? Will you take him as a servant? Will you play with him as a bird or will you leash him

for your maidens? I'll tell you something funny. I think the single funniest interpretation that I have ever seen of the Leviathan passage here is by the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Now, I don't think they go with this anymore. But back in 1926, they published a book called *The Finished Mystery*. And, of course, the Jehovah's Witnesses treat the publications of the Watchtower Society as the only definitive commentary.

Well, this is what they said about Job 41, verses 1 through 6. And they gave a corrected translation. They expanded it, kind of like the Amplified. And this is how it goes.

Remember, this is 1926. Thou wilt lengthen out Leviathan, the locomotive, with a hook, automatic coupler, or with a snare, coupling pin, which thou wilt cause his tongue, the coupling link, to drop down. Wilt thou not place a ring, piston, in his nostrils, the cylinders, or pierce through his cheeks, piston ends, with a staff, piston rods? They think that Leviathan is the locomotive.

It's a train. Leviathan is a train. Will he make a repeated supplication unto thee, to get off the track? Or will he utter soft tones unto thee, when he screeches with the whistle? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? Make him whistle at will.

Or wilt thou bind, enslave him, for thy maidens, so that you can take them to a picnic or convention? Companies of stockholders will feast upon him, his earnings. Well, there you go. I really don't think that's helpful, which is why I gave it to you.

As such, you can imagine what some of the rest of the stuff that comes from the Watchtower is. But what does this mean? What exactly is going on with Leviathan? Leviathan is also mentioned over in Isaiah. And the allusion is to pre-existing mythology.

Leviathan, I mentioned last time, there are these old mythologies that have existed for a long time. In Isaiah 27.1, it says, In that day, the Lord, with his severe sword, great and strong. Remember, we saw the sword of the Maker for Behemoth in the last chapter.

In that day, the Lord, with his severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan, the fleeing serpent. Leviathan, that twisted serpent, and he will slay the reptile that is in the sea. Now, without going into a lot of gory detail, when it says the fleeing serpent, the word there translated fleeing, I think is actually a goof for an almost identical word that means ancient.

And you remember in Revelation, two different places, that serpent of old is mentioned. And this is that serpent of old. We don't have any other references to the serpent fleeing or to Satan fleeing, except maybe one New Testament reference where it says, you know, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

But that's not what's going on here in Isaiah 27. So just as a suggestion, I think you could at least put a star and a possible alternate word here in Isaiah. One of these days we'll do Isaiah, Lord

willing.

And I think this is probably Leviathan, the ancient serpent. I.e., the serpent of the garden, all the way back to the beginning, the serpent of creation times. Leviathan, that twisted serpent.

In fact, Leviathan itself comes from a root that in Arabic means twisted or folded. When you take that Paleo-Semitic root, this is its root meaning, something that is folded or twisted or laid on top of itself, coiled, is the idea. So what I want to do is just give a little bit of background.

Now, here's the reason. This is one of the oldest accounts in the Bible, right? We have a little bit of stuff in Genesis before this from Adam to Abraham. But basically, the extended imagery and theology and so on that's given here, it goes beyond the narrative of Genesis.

And this is our first poetic and theological information that's given to us at length in the book of Job. Where's the last place where we get poetical and imagery and that kind of communication? It's the book of Revelation, written in probably the 90s A.D. And we also have Leviathan and Behemoth in Revelation. So we have kind of a bracket from beginning to end.

And so the reason I'm dwelling on this a little bit is we find this imagery all through the Bible. But it's emphasized in Job and it's emphasized in Revelation. And this is a kind of bracket.

And we like brackets. We like chiasm. We like to see what's at each end and what's in the middle.

So I'm going to draw upon another great article I found, which is a fairly recent one from 98, in one of my theological magazines. And a fellow named John Day, who is a pastor, at least at the time this was written, of the Town North Presbyterian Church right down here in Richardson. Made the big time, wrote this great article and got it published.

But he pulls together a lot of information that is scattered in other sources. And this is a convenient way to present it. You will find this information if you want to look up these individual ancient deity names in some place on the Web.

You can look it up in Wikipedia or in any good encyclopedia. But let me just give this to you because it's pulled together nicely here and I can get it all without having to click around a lot. The Leviathan, ancient serpent, the crooked serpent, the dragon of the sea is what we have presented to us in Isaiah.

Who or what is this creature? Where do these images come from? The background for this terminology is found in the ancient Near Eastern mythology, as I mentioned before. And this mythology involves whatever the local god of the area is. If anybody wanted to become a god in Canaan or any of those ancient Near Eastern places, basically he had to prove himself.

He had to go out and conquer something, just like later on Alexander will do and Julius Caesar will do. If you were going to be the big time god, you had to go beat something up. You had to

defeat it and take charge.

So they had kind of a standard situation where the local deity would go out and defeat the great sea monster. And the reason for this is that all of these have their roots and are strands of these older mythological traditions that I think came from before the flood and were kind of converted and morphed into some of these later things. So the local deity would become the active head of the pantheon by defeating the power of chaos.

Leviathan is the chaos monster. That's why it dwells in the sea. The sea is the very picture and image.

And many times Leviathan is almost synonymous with the sea or becomes the same as the sea itself. And this is order out of chaos. This deity, whoever he is, Baal or whoever, starts out and conquers the chaos and imposes order.

Well, isn't this nice? That's what God did in Genesis 1. And so if you're going to be the new god on the block, why this is what you have to do in some way other than the way God actually did it. So we've gotten a lot of good information about ancient Canaanite mythology from the tablets that were found at Ras Shamra. It's one of the most famous archaeological finds of all time.

They found just thousands and thousands of, well I shouldn't say thousands, they found many, many clay tablets at Ras Shamra and they're in Ugaritic. You've got the old Semitic language and from it comes Hebrew, Arabic, Ugaritic, Akkadian and a couple of other old languages. So Ugaritic tells us a lot about Hebrew because it's another cognate just like Arabic.

Plus this stuff at Ugarit is old. It's really old. Ugarit was destroyed around 1200 BC.

So right around the time that the children of Israel were occupying the land of Canaan, this is the mythology that they were hearing from the inhabitants of Canaan. So it's a real treasure trove. The theme in Canaanite mythology is the kingship of the local Canaanite deity, which is Baal.

Now Baal is a word that simply means Lord. But it's kind of like the word God where we take small g and make it a capital G and now that's the deity. Well they would take Baal, put a capital B on it and Baal is the big time God.

This is why sometimes in the scripture you'll find someone with this as an element of their name. Jerubbaal, isn't that the other name for Gideon? Wasn't he Jerubbaal? Well the last element in his name, Baal, means Lord. It's just like when you find Yehonatan where Yeho is a reference to Yahweh or you find Mishaël and El is a reference to God.

Well Baal was a reference to God or a god. So to establish this kingship, this is what the mythology said Baal did. Baal prevailed over the sea god Yam, Y-A-M-M, remember Yam Suph, the Sea of Reeds? Well sea is Yam and the death god Mot and you remember Mot is the word for death in Hebrew.

So there's a maker, there's a manufacturing God in the Canaanite pantheon. His name is Kothar and Kossos and so this is what Kothar and Kossos says. He's telling this old story and he says, I tell thee O Prince Baal, I declare O rider of the clouds.

Who does that remind you of? Remember at the beginning of Ezekiel where God comes in in his chariot, he's surrounded in clouds. Now thine enemy O Baal, now thine enemy wilt thou smite, now wilt thou cut off thine adversary. Thou wilt take thine eternal kingdom, thine everlasting dominion.

So Baal is going to come riding in on the clouds and subdue Yam and Mot, that's the plan. So it begins when Yam, now pay attention to this because we're going to talk about the relation to reality. Yam is the son of the big god El.

El is like Zeus, El is the biggest fish in the pond. He's the big main heavenly god. He's got a son named Yam.

Yam is the sea god, the god of chaos. Well, Yam has a bone to pick with Baal who's another god in the pantheon. Yam doesn't like Baal, Yam wants to get rid of Baal.

So Yam scares up a couple of fearsome scary messengers and he sends them up to El and he says, Look El, I want you to give me Baal because I'm going to beat him up and destroy him. So when these messengers come in up in the pantheon of heaven to deliver this message from Yam to El and say, Hey, give me the guy. And of course, he's kind of talking to his father.

Well, all the other gods cower, they're afraid. These messengers are so awesome and terrible. They're all kind of fleeing and hiding in the shadows except Baal.

Baal's not afraid. Baal says no problem. So El says, Look, Baal, you need to go down there and have it out with my son Yam.

Baal says fine. He says, This ticks me off that he's sending these fearsome messengers up here asking for me. So fine, I'll go down there and I will fight him.

And he gets kind of angry. So he accepts the challenge to combat. And it is through this that Baal is going to prevail and he's going to ultimately supersede El as the big cheese of the whole Canaanite pantheon because El kind of is old and feeble and it's Yam and Baal duking it out for who's going to be the next big guy.

So you remember Kothar and Kossos, he's the manufacturer god. Well, he's a friend of Baal. So he says, Look, Baal, I'll help you out here so you can win this battle.

I'm going to make you two great big clubs that you can just wail the daylights out of Yam with. So the first club is named Yagrush, which in Ugaritic means the pursuer, the chaser. So this is the

chaser.

And so Kothar and Kossos says, he holds up the first club that he makes and he says, Hey, you, club, your name is Yagrush, Yagrus, chase Yam, chase Yam from his throne, chase Nahar from the seat of dominion. Now, Nahar, if you know Hebrew, is the Hebrew word for river. Yam is the sea guy and the river guy.

Seas and the rivers, that's all Yam. So sometimes he's called Yam, sometimes he's called Nahar. Where does Behemoth dwell? By the Nahar.

Where does Leviathan dwell? In the Yam. Okay. Yagrush, he's talking to this club.

Chase Yam, chase him from his throne, chase Nahar from the seat of dominion, swoop in the hand of Baal like an eagle between his fingers, strike the back of Prince Yam, strike between the arms of Judge Nahar. The club swoops in the hand of Baal like an eagle between his fingers. It strikes the back of Prince Yam between the arms of Judge Nahar.

But Yam is firm. He is not bowed. His joints bend not, nor is his frame broken.

So remember, he made two clubs. Club number one, Baal basically throws it. It hits Yam between the shoulder blades, but it doesn't do him in.

His frame is not broken. He's still there. He's still ready.

So Baal throws the club, but no dice. So Kothar fashions another club, a more powerful club, and he names this one the Ugaritic word that means driver, like you drive. And he says, look, this time I command you, O club driver, not the putter, not the nine iron, the driver.

He says, strike Yam between the eyes. I try to remember these details. Think of your biblical stories.

Where does David hit Goliath? It's no accident. Strike Yam between the eyes. This time, Baal is successful.

When he throws his driver at Yam, it hits Yam between the eyes. Yam falls down. Here's the poetry.

The club swoops in the hand of Baal like an eagle between his fingers. It strikes the head of Prince Yam between the eyes of Judge Nahar. Yam collapses.

He falls to the ground. His joints bend. His frame breaks.

So Baal, who is the storm god, the guy who rides the clouds, triumphs over Yam slash Nahar, the sea and the river. And as one of the translators says, henceforward, Yam is evidently confined to his proper realm. His frame is broken.

All he can do is stay plastered into the river and into the sea. He's dominated by Baal. Baal is the lord of the earth.

He is the god of this world now. In other words, the forces of chaos typified by the ocean have been brought under control and order has been established in the world. Now, Baal later on is going to get married.

Well, he's going to have a consort. He's going to have a female deity palling around with him. And her name is Aenath.

You've heard of Aenath before. And she's going to sing a little song. And she says, what foe has risen up against Baal? What enemy has risen against the rider of the clouds? Surely I destroyed Yam, beloved of El.

Surely I made an end of river, the mighty god. Surely I lifted up the dragon. I destroyed the crooked serpent, the tyrant, with the seven heads.

So Leviathan is pictured as having seven heads. I destroyed the beloved of El. I put an end to El's calf, Atik.

I destroyed El's bitch, the fire. I made an end of El's daughter, the flame. And so, now think about this.

If you were Satan and you wanted to propagate an alternate truth, instead of the son of God defeating you, you would say, oh no, I defeat the son of God. I am the rider of the clouds. I am the god of the world.

Now, the first time I threw a club, think of Baal as sort of the Satan figure here, and Yam as kind of a perverted form of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yam is the son of El. And Yam says, I want to defeat Baal and I want to put him out of commission.

Baal gets angry and says, oh no, you don't. He gets these clubs made of wood. The first one he throws and hits Yam between the shoulder blades.

But it doesn't put him out of commission. No bone of his is broken, right? So he says, wait, I've got one more club. And next time, I'm going to hit him between the eyes.

Why do you think Satan still has hope? Why do you think he's going to rise up in rebellion at the Gog Magog rebellion at the end of the Millennial Kingdom? He thinks he's got one more club left. And well, you know, the first one didn't work, but I've got another one. And it's reflected in this ancient, I think, in this ancient mythology.

And so, and he tries to pull this switcheroo. Have you ever been in an argument where somebody is being hypocritical and they accuse you of hypocrisy or they're being petty and they accuse you

of being petty? And it's like, you are the pot calling the kettle black here. All they do is get that in first so that you're left with saying, oh no, you, oh no, you, and they, oh no, you, oh no, you, oh no, you.

But they are the person that is actually being inconsistent and they accuse you of inconsistency. They are being inaccurate. They accuse you.

Well, this is Satan saying, oh, Yam is the crooked serpent. Yam is the chaos monster, not me. I'm creating order.

I'm doing a good thing by getting him out of the way. And it's just the reverse. The whole original reason that Yam wanted to go up there and get Baal out of the way is he's the son of El.

And notice when Baal takes over, El is superseded and he's no longer the senior god in the pantheon. What did Satan say? I will raise myself above the stars of God. I'll be like the Most High.

He's going to supersede all of that. So, in the Ugaritic texts, the sea, Yam, and the river, Nahar, are equated. The dragon, Tanin, and Lotan, which is another deity name, these are equated.

Now, hang with me. I don't want to get too bogged down in the mythology, but this directly relates to the other half of the chiasm, the other end of the Bible. Now, what is the truth of what we've covered thus far? Who is the one who subjugates the sea? What did it say in Job? Who told the sea, this far you can go and no farther? Who confined it with bars and gates? We had this clear back in Job 26, 7 through 14.

It's God who stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, and the clouds are not broken under it. He covers the face of His throne, spreads His cloud over it.

He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His rebuke. He stirs up Yam with His power.

God does. That's Job 26, 12. And by His understanding, He breaks up the storm.

Remember Baal? By His Spirit, He adorned the heavens. His hand pierced the fleeing serpent. And again, fleeing, I think here is ancient.

The ancient serpent. That's Job 26, 13. Indeed, these are the mere edges of His ways and how small a whisper we hear of Him.

The thunder of His power, who can understand? Remember that back in Job 26? Well, these are allusions. This mythology already exists. These ancient Sumerian myths go back to even before the time of Job.

And this is the truth of the situation that has been distorted and glommed together into these mythological distortions. Well, the name Rahab, we've run across this as another term for personifying the raging sea, is only mentioned in the Bible. You don't find Rahab in any Canaanite mythology.

You don't find it anywhere else. But in Job 26, 12 and 13, you have the Rahab, an ancient serpent, mentioned in parallel lines. So that, yes, Rahab is the ancient serpent.

And Rahab is mentioned parallel to the dragon in Isaiah 51, verse 9. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in the ancient days in the generations of old. Are you not the arm that cut Rahab apart and wounded the serpent? That's Isaiah 51, 9. It is God who wounds the serpent.

It's not the pseudo storm God who defeated the son of El. And there's a reason why these mythological terms are employed even in the Bible. The Bible speaks to people in their culture and in terms that they understand.

Psalms 89, 9 and 10. The psalmist talking to God says, You rule the raging of the sea. When its waves rise, you still them.

You have broken Rahab in pieces as one who is slain. You have scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. Isaiah 30 and verse 7, God uses the term Rahab to refer to Egypt.

The Egyptian shall help in vain and to no purpose. Therefore I have called her Rahab hem Shabbat, which is if you translate that, it means Rahab sits at rest. Shabbat, of course, is the word that means Sabbath.

So, Isaiah 51, 9, you have the same thing. It's once again applied to Egypt. And in Psalm 87, 4, I will mention Rahab and Babylon to those who know me.

Behold, O Philistia, entire with Ethiopia. This one was born there. Once again, this is a reference to God's victory, to God's dominance over those things.

So, back to Job. We are dealing with archetypal forms that are found in Job. They're going to be found in the Psalms and in Isaiah, and they're going to be found in Revelation.

But we need to pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll complete the other half of this picture by looking at Revelation and the imagery that's found there. And having surveyed that, when we come back to Job chapter 41, which I hope to do before the end of the next session, this is going to greatly enhance our understanding of what God says about both Leviathan and Behemoth in this passage.

But let's pause here and take our break.