

32b JOB

Let's pick up our study now. We are educating ourselves in ancient Ugaritic and Canaanite mythology, going back to the days of the ancient Sumerians. And we have seen this common element, and you'll find this over and over again in many of the myth structures of the ancient world that deal with creation.

You can find it in the flood story of, what's the guy's name, I can't remember. Sometimes I put a thing on a shelf and I go to get it and it's not there. Enuma Elish, you remember the guy, Gilgamesh, the Gilgamesh epic.

If you go to that, there are these elements of the chaotic sea monster and the forces at work. You know, so the personifications that were made in these mythological contexts in the Canaanite world are corrected in the Bible. When the Bible makes allusion to these things and incorporates them into the words of the prophet, it is a message to the surrounding nations.

And they say, oh, wait a minute, I thought it was this way. And you know, my mythology says it's this way. And the word of God comes and says, look, here's the truth about who's going to conquer who.

Here's the truth about who's in charge of whom. Here's the God that has power over the storm. Here's the God that actually shut in the sea with its bars and gates.

And it is purposely put in this format that alludes consciously and with malice of forethought to these mythological stories because it corrects them. It hooks in and these people now have to make a choice. Well, am I going to believe in Tiamat? Am I going to believe in Tanin? Am I going to believe in Mot? Am I going to believe in Yam and Baal and these others? And the stories, these wild stories about how things came into being? Or here is something that has a ring of truth because there is one God in heaven who brought order out of chaos, who imposed by his spirit his will and brought the dry land up out of the sea and told the sea you can go this far and no farther.

And there is a historical reality that stands in contrast to and stands in fulfillment of these myths. You will often find, Matt and I again, we're always rubbing elbows with strange people in the ether world out there, but there are people who like to say, well, Christianity is just derivative from ancient mythology. There's nothing new in Christianity.

The virgin nursing her child, you can find that in tomb paintings from Egypt. Lazarus rising from the dead. Jesus is actually the sun god.

It goes back to Akhenaten. It's all derivative. The Christians just took Jewish things and other ancient things and wove it together.

It's just a mishmash and it has no veracity and it has no truth. Well, there are many ways you can address that particular argument. One of them is to note that mythology is just that, mythology.

You can't point to a Tiamat, you can't point to a Mot or a Yam or any of these other fanciful entities and say here they are. Jesus Christ is a historical fact. He's mentioned in the Roman historians.

He's mentioned, there is extensive documentation within a hundred years of his life. I mean, the complete New Testament is in existence within 70 years to 80 years at the latest of Jesus' life. And by ancient history standards, this is incredible.

A lot of the literature of the ancient world, the oldest copies that we have are 1,000 years or 1,500 years or 2,000 years after the fact. We have copies of copies of copies. We have Egyptian copies of Mesopotamian copies of Sumerian myths.

We have Greek copies of Babylonian copies of Assyrian copies of Sumerian myths. We don't have anything that is anywhere near contemporaneous. And yet, for the Lord Jesus Christ, we have extensive eyewitness testimony verified and confirmed by the early church fathers and so on.

Secondly, there is a historic reality. For example, they like to say, well, the Christian cross comes from the Egyptian Ankh. Well, excuse me, but I don't think the Christians went to the Romans and said, hey, could you please use crucifixion as a method of execution so that we can borrow the Egyptian Ankh and make it our symbol? I mean, these kinds of connections are false, but they play well.

This is how the Da Vinci codes sold so many copies. But back to our study here, because we are looking at these ancient myths and looking at the difference between what is... basically, my point here is the same thing is happening today as happened 2, 3, and 4,000 years ago, where you have a pale copy and a distorted imitation of the truth being passed off as truth and as a competitor to the actual truth. It happens today.

Satan has been doing this, as Jesus said, he is a liar from the beginning. He has been telling these lies. The first time we hear Satan speaking, he is in the garden to Eve, and what does he say? Hath God not said? And then he gives a half-truth.

He twists the truth. He is the twister. He is the distorter.

He is the nahash. He is the Leviathan. Well, the association that is made in books like Isaiah to Leviathan and Satan with currently existing nations like Egypt, we went through all of those chapters in Ezekiel, where the woe songs to the nations, and you find these allusions back.

These are manifestations and reflections. And a good point was made during the break that you

find the same kinds of characteristics in the fallen human nature as you find in the fallen satanic nature. The same kinds of I-wills are said by human beings who are far from God and are not pursuing a relationship with God as you find in Satan himself.

He is the archetype of what a sentient creature is going to think and do in a status of separation from God. And so not only as you study Satan and see his affinity for chaos, his affinity for destruction, his affinity for deception, for substitution, for mirror imaging things and putting himself into place, why do you think we are going to end up with an anti-Christos at the end of the age, a substitute Christ, a counterfeit Savior? That is what Satan does best. And this is what fallen human beings do best.

We counterfeit the righteousness of God. We counterfeit the order that God alone can impose. Well, as in the past, so in the future.

These images are going to appear. The Revelation, chapters 19-22, where you have the great harlot that corrupted the earth with her fornication. He has avenged the blood of his servants, God has, that was shed by her and so on.

This harks back to the images that we have just seen in Isaiah and in the Old Testament, here in Job in particular. So, Isaiah was looking forward in his day and he said, in that day Yahweh will punish, the Lord will punish with his sword Leviathan the ancient serpent, Leviathan the crooked serpent and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea. Again, that is Isaiah 27-1.

The same thing is going to be found in Revelation. Satan is described there as the great dragon. Revelation 12, the sign that appears in heaven, a great fiery red dragon having 7 heads and 10 horns.

7 crowns on those heads. 7 heads, you go back, remember when Daniel had his vision and he saw 4 beasts rise up out of the sea. There was the first one that was like a lion and then the second one was like a bear that had the bones hanging out of its teeth and the third was like a leopard, but the leopard had 4 heads.

Remember that? And then the fourth one I think had a head like an eagle, if I am remembering that correctly. Well, count the heads. Lion head, bear head, 4 leopard heads and an eagle head.

How many heads do you have out of these beasts rising from where? Out of the sea. 7 headed beasts in the sea. These are manifestations, these are partial representations of this original 7 headed beast.

In Ugaritic myth, as I have said, the storm god Bael defeats this 7 headed monster Leviathan and sets up his kingdom. In Mesopotamia, you have a similar version. Marduk, the god of light, kills the 7 headed dragon Tiamat, who has thrown down a third of the stars.

This is an ancient Mesopotamian myth and the 7 headed dragon knocked a third of the stars out

of the sky. In the Roman times, Greek and Roman mythology, the goddess Leto, who was pregnant with Apollo, I don't know how much you know of the whole Roman pantheon, but Leto is a goddess, she is pregnant with Apollo and she is pursued by a dragon named Python. She is rescued by Poseidon.

Now, who is Poseidon? Poseidon places her in safety on an island. After Apollo is born, Apollo goes back and slays Python, the dragon that was after his mother. So you see these echoes and these perversions of the truth, these distortions and these twists, these coils in these ancient myths.

The question you can ask is, why does the Bible tend to hook into these existing myths? Here in Revelation, John is well familiar with Roman mythology and he recounts the fact that the dragon is going to scoop a third of the stars out of heaven with his tail and he knows that people familiar with Greco-Roman mythology are going to make that connection. So why do that? Why not just avoid anything that even smells like mythology? Well, here is another good idea and I don't know who wrote this. The New Testament demythologizes Greco-Roman myth by giving the real history, by putting it in an actual historical context.

What the pagans were longing for and their aspirations and their view of what had happened and what should happen in the world is fulfilled. This is what Paul did when he went to talk to the Romans and he said, you've got this monument to the unknown God. Well, I'm here to tell you who he is.

Well, that's not actually who they had set that up to, but he employs what they are familiar with and their paradigm to communicate and to answer the truth that they are actually seeking. So the curses that are found in Genesis chapter 3 are reflected in the overcoming of the saints. Paul says at the end of one of his letters, Satan will be crushed under your feet shortly.

And that goes all the way back to Genesis. He will bruise thy head, thou shalt bruise his heel. And Paul makes a clear allusion to the fact that Satan is the serpent of the garden when he says God is going to crush Satan under your feet shortly.

The things that you see in Revelation chapter 12 are particularly interesting because you have the woman clothed with the sun and so on and the great war breaks out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them any longer. The great dragon was cast out.

That ancient serpent, that serpent of old, called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world. He was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him. And you remember the rest of that in Revelation chapter 12.

You can read it. It talks about the woman given the great wings of an eagle. She flies to the wilderness.

The serpent spews water out of his mouth like a flood. Remember in Job, a behemoth is sitting there and he can take all of the Jordan into his mouth, so to speak. Well, here the dragon is spewing water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth, swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out. The dragon was enraged with the woman.

He went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Now we get to the punchline of our lesson tonight. And this is Revelation chapter 13.

Then John says, I stood on the sand of the sea. He's on the beach. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns.

And on his horns ten crowns and on his head a blasphemous name. The beast which I saw was like a leopard. His feet were like the feet of a bear.

His mouth like the mouth of a lion. He is summing up all of those beasts of Daniel's vision. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

And I saw one of his heads mortally wounded, etc., etc. Now, this is the beast. Where does he come from? Out of the sea.

He's got a mouth speaking blasphemies. Now in verse 11 of Revelation chapter 13, John says, Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. And he had two horns like a lamb, and spoke like a dragon.

He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. He causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast. He is the earthly face of this sea-dwelling beast.

This, of course, is your false prophet. He, this land-originating beast, performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. Remember, Leviathan, his sneezings flash forth like fire, and so on.

Well, this beast is sort of mini-me for the dragon of the sea. He's on the land, and he's a small imitation. He does kind of the same thing.

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth. That's the name of his game, deception. That's what he does.

He deceives those who dwell on the earth by the signs which he is granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. Who pierced the ancient serpent? Pierced him, wounded him, but he's

not gone yet. Right? This all goes all the way back to the beginning.

By the way, keep your finger here and go back to Genesis chapter 1, verse 20. Remember, you've had the first four days of creation. God set the firmament of heaven to give light on the earth.

You've got the greater light, the lesser light, the stars are mentioned here. The evening and the morning were the fourth day. Then God said, verse 20, Genesis 1, let the waters, let the mayim, let the yam, the seas, abound with an abundance of living creatures.

Verse 21, God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves with which the waters abounded. God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, multiply, fill the waters in the seas. Evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Then God said, verse 24, let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind. Bahama, cattle. The word translated cattle here is bahama, the land creature.

So this duality of the sea-dwelling creature and then followed by the land-dwelling creature in Revelation goes all the way back to the fifth and the sixth day. Remember what it said at the beginning of the description of Behemoth? He said, the guy that I made with you, what all gets created on the sixth day? Bahama and Adam, sixth day. So he's the archetype, he's the summation, he's a larger than life incarnation of that which is beast from the earth.

And this is what you have when you go all the way over to Revelation 13. And these two beasts are empowered by, this is Satan working through that which is on the land. The creation has been corrupted.

Creation, which on the fifth day and the sixth day, God looked around and said what? Cove. It's good. Nothing wrong with the sea creatures, nothing wrong with the land creatures.

What happens when Satan succeeds in getting man to fall? All creation comes under a curse, Romans chapter 8. The whole creation groans waiting for the redemption of the sons of God so that the curse will once again be lifted. In the meantime, it is Satan who is working through these earthly means and these are representations, these are symbolic manifestations, if you will, of the character and the nature and the plans and the purposes of Satan. So he becomes the great sea creature.

He becomes the greatest and most fearsome of the land dwelling, the river dwelling creatures. And that's what you have from the beginning of the Bible to the end of the Bible, the first chapter to some of the last chapters. Performs these great signs.

He makes fire come down from heaven on earth inside the men, Revelation 13, 14. He deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he's granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who is wounded by the sword

and lived. He has granted power to give breath to the image of the beast.

This is the human antichrist who is the image of the beast, the actual Satan. So that he should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. Unless you think that religion doesn't become popular even when it has a death penalty for disobedience, look at Islam.

It is becoming ubiquitous and they have the death penalty for all kinds of things. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive the mark, right hand or forehead. No one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, the number of his name.

Here is wisdom, let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, which is the number of a man, and you get the 666. But this is, when you think of the mark of the beast and the 666 thing, this is Leviathan behemoth. This is the beast from the sea and the beast from the land.

They cooperate to create this system and this structure. This is what we're looking at. This is what God is talking about in Job chapter 40 and 41.

So if we go back there now, miraculously pleased and happy that we're actually able to do so, look at this now. Remember who Leviathan is. Think about his roots in history.

Think about his projected future in eschatology. Who are you dealing with here? Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook? Do you really want to take on the beast from the sea that has been there from the beginning, opposing the liar, the murderer, the twisting serpent? Do you really want to put yourself on an equal par? You think you can snare his tongue with a line which you lower? Remember the great swelling words that he speaks and his heads and the horns on his head speak? He's been promulgating this stuff all down through history. Those seven heads, when you look at the nations, have to do with Egypt, Assyria, and then Babylon, and then the Medo-Persians, and the Greeks, and the Romans, and finally the revived Roman Empire.

Those are the seven heads when you think in terms of great international empires. In other words, people who say, well I'm going to say a little prayer and I'm going to bind Satan. I mean, it's beyond ludicrous.

It's just absolutely, hopelessly ignorant. Are you going to deal with Leviathan on your own? Are you going to throw your little fish hook into the sea and pull Leviathan out? Do you want to take a little piece of twine and wrap his tongue? What's the message here? Christian Crusaderism is unbiblical. We are not here to create moral majorities or vocal majorities or any other kind of political entities to try to bind the forces of Satan, the policies of Satan, the doctrines of Satan.

That's not within our human power, and we have not been commissioned by God to go tame the

beast. That's not why we're here. And scale that down a little.

Is it God's intention for us to go picket the local newspaper that's printing bad things or the local abortion clinic or whatever it is, the local bar? Let's shut down the bars. If you want to picket something, why don't you go down to South Dallas, why don't you go over to Oak Cliff and picket some crack dens? Go picket that. See if you can put the hook in Leviathan's jaw down there.

You picket some harmless thing where a bunch of poor, emotionally disturbed ladies are going down to get counseling about abortions or something. Well, if you want to go tackle Leviathan, go down there where Leviathan dwells. We go to some convenient, safe place and make ourselves feel real holy and spiritual by walking around with a sign.

All you have to do is look in Scripture. There is no record of Jesus and the disciples going down and picketing the slave market. They didn't go down and picket the Roman garrison.

Shame on you Romans for your oppressive practices. Shame on you slave traders for selling slaves in the market. Jesus didn't do any of that.

He didn't go down and picket the tax collectors, the collaborators that were cheating and taking four for one out of the pockets of their countrymen. Why? You can't draw Leviathan out with a hook. This is the work of Satan.

This is bigger than us. This is what goes on in the sea. If you go out there and stand on the sand of the sea and swing your hook and brandish your spear, is he going to make many supplications to you? Is he going to get down on his dragon knees and beg for mercy? Oh, please stop your boycott of my stores because I sell Disney movies or because I sent money to the homosexuals in Washington or whatever it is.

Christians all want to band together. Well, we'll boycott. We'll use our economic power or our political power or our voting block or we'll go down and stuff the local school board.

Will he speak softly to you? Oh, let us reason together. Let's come to an accommodation. I'll stay in the sea and you stay on the land and everything will be fine.

Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever? You can subdue him and get him to do your will and keep him in line? This is one of the reasons Christians take so much flack from atheists and secular humanists today because goofball Christians have tried to impose Christian morals and Christian philosophy of life on a secular public and we're not called to do that any more than we're called to go out and tackle people and shove tracts down their throat to get them saved. We're not called to that and when we do it, it makes a mess of things. We harm the cause of Christ.

You're not going to take Satan and his forces as a servant. You're not going to come to an accommodation. You're not going to play with him like a bird.

You're not going to leash him as a pet. Oh, here, daughters, here's your pet dragon. Here's your pet leviathan that I pulled out of the sea.

Why is God belaboring this point to Job? What's the situation with Job? Job has said back in chapter 8 and chapter 19 and a couple of other places, he said, I would talk with the most high. I would get up and make my case. I will argue that there needs to be justice and I've got a view and I've got an opinion about how this thing ought to be going and I trust God.

I'm not rebelling against God. I trust him. I serve him, but I want to talk to him about this current situation.

Why is this a part of God's response? Why is he getting into the larger picture here? God has bigger fish to fry. We are a part of something much bigger than ourselves. Your life and my life is a very small part of a much larger panorama and God is, as it were, grabbing Job by the hair and raising him up like Ezekiel and saying, look, I'm working with some pretty big things here.

Leviathan, behemoth, all of these other animals that I've got in their place and I have organized. I've set the limits and I have set up this equation and it's going to play itself out. You are in no position to take control of the experiment.

I mean, do you really want me to leave the cockpit of the 747 and let you fly it? Do you really want me to walk out of the nuclear power station and let you oversee it? Do you really want me to abdicate the throne of heaven and let you decide how justice ought to be dispensed? This is the idea. Will they apportion him among the merchants, your companions? Will they make a banquet out of him? And this is a part of the mythology that existed in Mesopotamia and so on that eventually Tiamat was chopped up and they had a big banquet out of his flesh and God is sort of alluding to this sideways and saying, you know, there's a real dragon. There's a real Leviathan.

I made him. I set his limits. Do you want me to let you take over and you see if you can chop him up and make hot dogs out of him for your weenie roast? Do you want to fill his skin with harpoons and fill his head with fishing spears? Now, I think that in between the mythology and the statements of God, there is also a physical reality.

I think in Job's day there were still literal, physical, a few remaining dinosaur species that bridge this gap because when God says, look, look, look, he's not saying, look at the myth. And I think he's saying, look at the reality. And at that time, I think they were still around.

Lay your hand on him, God says. You can't lay your hand on a myth. Lay your hand on him.

Remember the battle and you'll never do it again. I don't think they really translated this quite as well as they could have. He says, lay your hand on him.

You will remember the battle. You will never do it again. You know, if you stick your hand out

there, it's going to get bit off and I think you'll remember it.

Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false. Don't think that as believers you're going to eradicate the satanic strategy, the satanic influence, the satanic presence in this world. You're not.

One is overwhelmed at the very sight of him. No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. But who is able to stand against me, God says.

Who has preceded me that I need to pay homage or to submit? Everything under heaven is mine. I will not keep silent about his limbs and the extent of his might and the grace of his arrangement, the graceful proportions. And this puts you in mind of some of those passages we've seen in Isaiah and Ezekiel talking about the workmanship of Satan in terms of his bejeweled appearance and the brightness of his presence before his fall and so on.

God says, I made him and I'm not going to, even though he's the dragon and he's powerful and he's dangerous and everything else, I'm not going to be silent about the great reach. Who can uncover his covering? Remember, it talks about his covering of gemstones and so on. Literally, who can uncover the face of his garment? This is what you see when you approach somebody from the front.

Who can penetrate to the inside of his armor? It says bridal, I think, in your New King James, but this word Resen is translated by the Septuagint as Sirion, which transposes the R and the S and this comes out to be coat of armor. And Akkadian is a cognitive Hebrew and it matches that as well. So I think this is, who can uncover his covering? Who can penetrate to the inside of his armor? Who can open the doors of his face, literally? Which would be his lips, his mouth, his jaws, that's the doors of his face, with his terrible teeth all around.

His rows of scales are his pride. Now, again, the Masoretic text here has Ga'ava and it's translated pride, but in the Septuagint and in the Vulgate and lots of other places, they have Ga'vo, which is his back. And this is, think Stegosaurus, think dinosaur with a row of plates down the back.

Many of the ancient versions tend to talk about his back. His back has rows of plates or scales. They're called shields and I think these are stick-ups.

Shut up tightly as with a seal, one is so near to another that no air can come between them. They are joined to one another. They stick together and cannot be parted.

His sneezing is flash forth light and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lights. Sparks of fire shoot out.

And these are flashes, I think, metaphorically speaking, of the former glory. Satan is still capable.

He is still beautiful.

He can still pass himself off as an angel of light. And he's got these flashes that sound great and that dazzle and that impress and that intimidate. Smoke goes out of his nostrils as from a boiling pot and burning rushes.

Now in terms of a real animal, you can imagine that if a sea-dwelling animal came up and broke water and opened its mouth and you saw the flaming mucous membrane, you know, the bright pink of its mouth, steam and vapor coming out of its nostrils like you have when a whale blows and so on. His breath kindles coals and a flame goes out of his mouth. This is probably his hot breath and his tongue, you know, metaphorically speaking.

Strength dwells in his neck and sorrow dances before him. And I think the intimidation is what is in view here. His neck is strong and anything that's in front of him goes into despair.

The folds of his flesh are tightly joined. They are firm and cannot be moved. His heart is hard as stone, even as hard as the lower millstone.

Of course, in real terms, you'd be talking about the chest or the armored front of an animal, but in terms of Satan, he's not going to change his mind. His heart is, his mind is made up just like the heart of Pharaoh. When he raises himself up, even the mighty are afraid.

Because of his crashings, they withdraw. The Hebrew is difficult here, but obviously the mighty are intimidated in some fashion. That's good enough for our purposes.

You strike him with a sword, there's no effect. Spear, dart, javelin, no effect. He regards iron as straw and bronze as rotten wood.

The arrow cannot make him flee. Sling stones become like stubble to him. Again, human ingenuity, human weapons formed against this animal are not going to prosper.

What is the overall message? God is dealing with the dragon. God is dealing with Leviathan. He's already wounded him once, and he's going to put him out of his misery one day.

In the meantime, God is setting his limits, and God is in control. Now, if God is in control of these greater things, the a fortiori argument is, He is also in control of smaller things, like our lives, like calamities. If they befall us, was this out of God's control? Did He mess up? Was He unjust? Look at the power of God.

If He can control this thing, and only He can, then these other things that are out of our control, you need to leave them in God's hands as well. This is probably the first and foremost impression that these words are going to make on Job. None of the things that befall Job in the beginning of the book are controllable by human power, because they come from Satan.

It is God alone who can control him. So, when you think about this all the way through history, from beginning to end, God has created this beast, and it dwells with us. The only way to deal with the beast is to trust in God, to have relationship with God, to let God arm us, and equip us, and give us the tools to cope.

There is nothing else that will work. Anything that doesn't come from God is doomed to failure, and we've seen the outworking and the application of this in many applications in the past. Well, we're going to have to break off here and leave the shining wake in verse 32, and the rest for next time.

But I hope that this has at least given a little bit of perspective on just how big this subject is in the Bible. How big it was in the minds of those who dwelt in the ancient Near East, when they would hear these scriptures, whether it's Genesis, or Isaiah, or the Psalms, or Job, all the way through to the end of the New Testament times in the book of Revelation. This was current knowledge.

This was available background in terms of mythology, and this is the reality that straightens out those distortions and those perversions of the actual truth of God's plan and God's purpose in human history. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you that in a world of confusion and of distortion and of arguments pro and con on so many different things, your word gives us the truth.

Your word provides for us light, and we can walk in that light and see clearly the way to travel. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and his work on our behalf in giving us access to these things. We pray to God the Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.