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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Job 40.

(2015)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Job 40.

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### Topics.

- Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? And argue with God.
- I am of small account; I have spoken once, and I will not answer twice.
- The LORD answers Job out of a whirlwind.
- The LORD asks Job, will you condemn me so you are right.
- Abase the proud and then I will acknowledge your right hand can save you.
- Behemoth, the first of the works of God which He made as he made Job.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** the book of Job is considered both a theological and a literary masterpiece it is an honest discussion of why God allows good people to suffer. The test of Job's faith, allowed by God in response to a challenge from Satan, reveals God's sovereignty and the supremacy of divine wisdom over human wisdom (personified by Job's four friends). Believing that God is good despite the apparent evidence to the contrary, Job rested in faith alone.

In the depths of agony he could still proclaim, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19:25). In the end God silenced all discussion against the truth that He alone is wise (Job chpts. 38–41). Yet he vindicated Job's trust in him (chpt. 42), proving that genuine faith cannot be destroyed. The unknown author was probably an Israelite writing sometime between 2000 and 500 B.C.

**Helpful facts:** before reading Job it is helpful to understand when Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are speaking they are not speaking, "thus sayeth the LORD", they are simply giving their opinions on how they personally perceive things to be. Amongst their conversations there is truth and wisdom, but it must be kept in mind not everything they are saying is true or even wise, in fact God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar and tells them they have spoken foolishness, but Job has spoken what is right (Job 42:7-9).

The book of Job is not about doctrinal truth, but human suffering and the questions regarding God that arise during a person's calamity and pain.

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The LORD speaks

### Shall a Faultfinder Contend with the Almighty? And argue with God.

Job 40:1-2 ----- <sup>1</sup>And the LORD said to Job: <sup>2</sup>"Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it."

The King James Bible says: -

- Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.

**Faultfinder:** is not in the original manuscripts it has been added, the proper word is contends.

**Contends:** comes from the Hebrew word (*riyb*) it literally means to toss (i.e. grapple), plead, rebuke, strive, complain and to wrangle (i.e. hold a controversy or contend with). By implication it carries the idea of defending oneself against an adversary by debate.

**Reproves:** comes from the Hebrew word (*yakach*) it means to be right; to be correct; to convince; to plead; to maintain; to decide and to justify or convict. To argue, dispute, chasten, rebuke, reprove and judge. It carries the idea of reasoning together.

God is basically saying to Job does he really think he can contend with the Almighty? Job's desire was to stand before God as one stands before a judge in a court room and plead his case concerning what is right and what is wrong and what is just and what is unjust to prove to his three friends that he was not a wicked man as they believed him to be and to prove to God the same thing since he was confused and lacked understanding why he was being afflicted with such sorrow and grief. God does not enter into such a debate with Job or even answer his questions, but instead challenges him to answer the many questions He has been asking him in the last two chapters and the ones he is about to ask him in this chapter and the next.

**Shall he that contends with the Almighty instruct him?** (v2) carries the following ideas: -

- Shall Job (and by extension any living thing on earth or in heaven) contend with God is there any hope that you Job will instruct and convince God that He is wrong and unjust in what He does.
- Shall Job, who presumes to contend with God in judgment, and to dispute the reasonableness and equity of His proceedings, give Him instructions or directions how to govern His creatures?
- Shall Job a mortal man think he is right to content with the Almighty who is boundless in wisdom and perfect in Holiness and think he can instruct Him!.
- Shall Job contend with God in judgment, and question His proceedings and advise Him how to manage His affairs and govern His creatures?

The reference is to the fact that Job had so often expressed a wish to carry his case before God, as a man takes his case before an honest and impartial judge in a courtroom so that he could secure a verdict in his favour that would prove that he was not the hypocrite and wicked man Elihaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu aggressively accused him of being which is OK so far, but Job also wanted God to explain Himself to him concerning why such terrible calamities had come upon him and why he was suffering afflictions.

It should be mentioned that this is not about inward sin (as many assume), but about outward behaviour. Job didn't trust in his own self-effort or good works to be counted righteous by God and saved to eternal life, but upon his Redeemer, we know this because in chapter nineteen Job said: -

- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25-26).

The only reason anyone trusts in a Redeemer is because they are fully aware that they cannot save themselves or attain to the perfect demands of the law and the pure Holiness of God. These words of Job clearly show that his faith was not set upon his own righteousness, but upon his redeemer and Saviour the Messiah the Christ. Though Job knew he had not committed any outward sin worthy of such harsh suffering he was aware that if God did examine him inwardly he would not be counted as a man that was blameless or righteous. In chapter nine Job said: -

- Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, God would prove me perverse. (Job 9:20).

These words shine a brilliant spotlight upon the fact that Job was aware that sin dwelt within his fallen corrupt body. Though I am in the right refers to him being right in saying that outwardly and in his behaviour he was not the wicked and corrupt man Eliphaz and Bildad accused him of being, but even though he knew this to be true he was also fully aware (as are all the faithful) that should he stand before the Holiness of God and be judged he would not be able to justify himself. If Job (or any of us) could attain to the glorious state of living a sin free life Christ died for no reason.

When God referred to Job as being blameless He was not saying he was without sin, but that he was a decent man of integrity who did no harm to others and who helped the poor and did what was right before God. There has only ever been one man who walked on earth without sin before God and his name was not Job, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

There would have been no need for God to sacrifice His only Son so that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16) if we could attain to a sin free life by our own self-effort and good works. Christ did not die so that we could attain to the perfect standard of the law and the perfection of God's Holiness, but because it is impossible for us to do so.

The thing Job was guilty of was demanding God explain Himself to him which also implies he wanted God to justify Himself. Now after asking Job many questions he could not answer (in the previous two chapters) God is asking Job if he is still of the same mind and felt himself qualified to bring his case before God. God is giving him the opportunity as he wished, to carry his cause directly before Him. The result is stated in the following verses: Job had nothing to say.

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Job speaks

**I am of Small Account; I have Spoken Once, and I will Not Answer Twice.**

Job 40:3-5 ----- <sup>3</sup>Then Job answered the LORD and said: <sup>4</sup>"Behold, I am of small account (behold, I am vile In KJV): what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. <sup>5</sup>I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further."

Job now begins to melt into godly sorrow, the expression, "I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further," (v5) does not mean that Job will never speak again, but that he will not speak in a manner that he has been speaking concerning the LORD.

**I lay my hand on my mouth:** (v4) is an expression of silence and of astonishment. It carries the ideal that Job has no plea to offer and even if he did feel he had something to say he would restrain and curb himself from speaking. It carries the idea of Job standing in stunned silence and putting his hand over his mouth in absolute shame and humbleness. After God had highlighted Job's ignorance of His work in nature, how unable he was to contend with God, he has nothing to say to justify himself, because he realises the knowledge that he does have even though great by human standards is pathetic when measured against the knowledge of God so he owns his guilt and yields himself to the grace of God.

**Behold, I am vile what shall I answer the Almighty?** (In KJV) instead of Job being able to argue his case and vindicate himself as he had expected, he now sees that he is so lacking in knowledge and wisdom that he has nothing to say. Job had argued boldly with his counsellors (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu) that he was innocent of the charges which they brought against him, and had supposed that he would be able to maintain the same argument before God. But when the opportunity came and he was awarded a space of time to answer God, he felt that he was a miserable man guilty of offending God.

Based upon Job's words, "I am a vile man," many scholars and Bible expositors appear to agree with Eliphaz, Bildad's and Elihu accusations that Job was a prideful and wicked man, but this is not the case. Job was not saying that he was a vile man because he was a hypocrite and wicked man, but because he was

thinking and wishing he could stand before God and demand the Almighty explain Himself and explain why He had brought such calamities and afflictions upon him. Though it is right for us to debate our case when we disagree with our fellow-creatures on earth, it is a very different thing to think we can do the same with God. To think we can defend ourselves before the Almighty is foolishness as Job discovered. Many on earth who vindicate themselves will not only be struck dumb as Job was when they stand before the Almighty at judgment, but also discover that they have no defence.

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The LORD speaks

### **The LORD answers Job Out of a Whirlwind.**

Job 40:6-7 ----- <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: <sup>7</sup>"Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me.

God began to speak to Job out of a whirlwind in (Job 38:1) perhaps much like He spoke to Moses out of a pillar of cloud) some think the whirlwind or pillar of cloud stopped while the LORD was talking to him and now appears again, other suppose that though it is mentioned here again it is still a continuation of the whirlwind that began in (Job 38:1) which is far more likely since God has to veil His glory in some way to speak to man.

The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind carries the idea of God answering Job out of a dark and thick cloud. God is often represented in Scripture as speaking to people from a dark and thick cloud. He perhaps speaks to Job in this manner for the following three reasons: -

1. If God appeared to us in our fallen sinful state His glory would destroy us so He has to veil Himself when He appears to man.
2. Veiling Himself in dark clouds was the usual method of manifesting Himself to men in those times.
3. To humble and awaken Job and his friends to the seriousness of what He is about to say and to give His words greater majesty.

The LORD had given Job an opportunity to speak and to bring his case before Him as he had desired, but since Job had nothing to say, the LORD now resumes speaking again to Job.

### **The LORD asks Job, Will You Condemn Me So You Are Right?**

Job 40:8 ----- <sup>8</sup>Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?

The King James Bible says: -

- Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

In the last two chapters the LORD has been asking Job questions that he could not answer. Job had desired to stand before the LORD to plead his case to prove himself right and now he is before the LORD he cannot answer one question the LORD has asked him. Job of course feels totally shamed and humiliated.

The LORD here is saying to Job if you cannot even answer one of the questions I have asked you what makes you think you have the right to put me in the wrong that you may be in the right and thereby condemn me? Based upon the words, "that thou mayest be righteous," some suppose Job was a prideful self-righteous man attempting to condemn God, but this is not so. Job's sin was not that he was self-righteous, we know this because in chapter nineteen he says: -

- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25-26).

A self-righteous person trusts in their own self-effort and good works, especially religious works for their righteousness and not in a Redeemer. Job was not a man of weak faith, but of great faith, many would have forsaken their faith and turned from God by now, but Job holds fast his faith and endures to the end knowing that his redeemer lives, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth and even after worms have destroyed Job's skin and his body, he knows in his flesh he will see God. (Job 19:25-26).

**Condemn:** in this verse comes from the Hebrew word (*rasha`*) it carries the idea of declaring to be wrong and by implication to condemn.

**Disannul:** in this verse comes from the Hebrew word (*parar*) it carries the idea of breaking up, causing to cease and to disannul, dissolve and make of no effect.

Job's sin was not self-righteousness, but that he with great zeal and determination desired that God would explain why He was dealing with him as He was which of course implies that Job believed God was unjust in dealing with him in the way that He was. God's judgment and His ways with mankind cannot be disannulled, for they are according to His eternal ways and according to truth and therefore it, is a great impudence, presumption and iniquity in us to call God into question. Job in earlier chapters said: -

- God has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me. <sup>7</sup>Behold, I cry out, "wrong," but I am not answered; I call for help, but there is no justice. (Job 19:6-7).
- As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter. (Job 27:2).

Job had complained of the dealings of God which implied that he could show that those dealings should have been different from what they were. When a person confidently and determinedly and aggressively complains against God, it implies the following three things: -

1. That they could show why God's dealings should be different from what they are.
2. That God's dealings should be reversed.
3. That they know better than God.

God, with numerous questions has humbled and shown Job his complete inability to govern the earth and rule the inhabitants on it, by highlighting his inability to govern the wild animals and the birds of the air. Job was humbled and brought to the understanding that if he could not restrain even the lower creatures why would he think he could contend with God, who created all things, controls all things and is the source of all life.

**Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?** Job had allowed himself to use language which strongly implied that God was improperly severe. He had regarded himself as punished far beyond what he deserved, and as suffering in a manner which justice did not demand. All this implied that he was in the right in the case and God was wrong and unjust in dealing with him as He was. When we allow ourselves to vent such complaints, it indicates that we esteem ourselves to be more just than our Maker.

Job had supposed that he could enter into a debate with God and show that he was right in his thinking and his Maker wrong in His dealings with him. The focus here is not on Job being a proud and wicked man, but on him implying he knew better than God. This was his sin. Job desired to stand before God and plead his case for the following two reasons: -

1. To have God prove to Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu that they were wrong in accusing him of being a hypocrite and a corrupt and wicked man. God is not humbling Job for this and He does later rebuke Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar for speaking so cruelly to Job and saying the things that they said. (Job 42:7).

2. To explain to God that he was not deserving of such afflictions and that He had no justifiable reason to be afflicting Job as He was.

Concerning wickedness Job was innocent even God agrees with this. We know this because the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." (Job 2:3). Job's greatest sin was demanding God explain Himself to him. God did have two reasons to afflict Job and neither of them were to cleanse Job from the wickedness that his counsellors falsely accused him of having, but to: -

1. To prove to Satan (and by extension the unbelieving world) that he was wrong in his claim that Job (and by extension all the faithful) only worshipped God because his life was prospering and blessed. (Job 1:8-11) (Job 2:3-5). Job triumphantly proved Satan to be wrong. It is obviously true that Job did not handle his circumstances in the best way, but at no time did he turn from his faith and curse God as his wife said he should, but remained strong in his faith.

There is something beautiful in the story of Job that is often overlooked. God must have had tremendous confidence and faith in Job, if he had turned from his faith (as many do under such circumstances) it would have proved Satan's accusation to be true and God's sovereign plan with Job would have completely failed!

- 2 To bring him into a much higher relationship of love and grace and a far greater understanding of God Himself. We know that God achieved this because at the end of the story Job says:

- I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. <sup>4</sup>Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.' <sup>5</sup>I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; <sup>6</sup>therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:3-6).
- The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. (Job 42:12).

It is certain that if Job was asked today if he had any regrets his answer would be no! Since he now knows the LORD'S love and grace in a manner he never knew before and for the faithful to have a greater relationship with God is a far greater treasure and far more valued than any riches this world can give.

The story of Job can be seen as a picture of the life of the faithful whose true citizenship is not of this mortal world, but of the heavenly world to come as they endure suffering and hardships as they travel through this fallen and corrupted world as foreigners and pilgrims in a strange land. Like Job when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to gather them to himself they will say as Job did "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you," and he will abundantly bless their latter days in eternity with everlasting happiness and glory so much so that all their days in this mortal and fallen world will seem as though they were, but a blink of the eye.

Though Job did not expressly and directly condemn the LORD, and accuse Him of being unjust, when he did talk of his own innocence and integrity it should have been with respect toward the justice of God concerning his afflictions. It is not wrong to justify our own character when falsely accused by others as Job was by his counsellors, but we should always take care to speak well of God.

When a thing is between man and man it is right and proper to defend ourselves against falsehoods, abuse and wrongdoing, but when it is between man and God He is not to be brought into question or considered to be wrong in His dealings with mankind. When we are tempted to think we know better or that God is unjust in His ways we should consider the following words of Ecclesiastes: -

- God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

- Man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. (Ecclesiastes 8:17).
- The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. <sup>12</sup>For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them. (Ecclesiastes 9:11-12)

This means that no man can find out the works of God upon the earth. The LORD has designed the universe this way so that no human whether righteous or wicked can find out their future or know what will happen to them tomorrow.

The expression, "Will you condemn me that you may be right signifies that those who believe themselves to be right in their ways and thinking condemn God as being wrong in His thinking and ways.

### **Abase the Proud and then I will Acknowledge Your Right Hand can Save You.**

Job 40:9-14 ----- <sup>9</sup>Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his? <sup>10</sup>"Adorn yourself with majesty and dignity; clothe yourself with glory and splendor. <sup>11</sup>Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on everyone who is proud and abase him. <sup>12</sup>Look on everyone who is proud and bring him low and tread down the wicked where they stand. <sup>13</sup>Hide them all in the dust together; bind their faces in the world below. <sup>14</sup>Then will I also acknowledge to you that your own right hand can save you.

The LORD tells Job He will acknowledge that he could save himself if he can answer yes to the following questions: -

- Does he have such awesome power that he can cause thunder (which embraces lightening and violent storms) to come at his command?
- Can he humble everyone who is proud and cast them and the wicked down into the grave?

Obviously Job cannot answer these questions with a yes. God is showing Job how pathetic human knowledge and power is when it is held up in the light of God's knowledge and His power, and therefore showing all mankind that no-one is capable of contending with God or saving themselves.

**Hide them all in the dust together in the world below:** (v13) based upon this verse and others similar to it many worldwide believe in the traditional religious teaching that the dead go to a place of torture and extreme suffering and pain called hell, but consider the following verses concerning death: -

- Why did I (Job) not die at birth, for then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept and been at rest. There the wicked cease from troubling, the weary are at rest and the prisoners are at ease together. The small and the great are there and the slave is free from his master. (Job 3:11-19).
- For God sees that even the wise die; the fool and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others. <sup>11</sup>Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they called lands by their own names. (Psalm 49:10-11).
- Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. <sup>13</sup>This is the path of those who have foolish confidence; yet after them people approve of their boasts. *Selah* (Psalm 49:12-13).
- What happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. <sup>20</sup>All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. (Eccles. 3:19-20).



Their graves are their homes forever (Psalm 49:11) is the true teaching of the Bible, those who are judged unworthy of eternal life do not go to a place of fiery flames called hell where they are cruelly and brutally tortured by evil eternal creatures called demons and their bodies burned by fiery flames so that they suffer the worst of all agonies for all eternity.

This age old traditional doctrine is not only a gross misunderstanding of Scripture, but is also a gross misrepresentation of God's character, since it portrays Him as an extremely sadistic God, especially when it is considered that even those in the secular world would not inflict such brutal and cruel torture on a human for their entire life let alone for all eternity. Added to this John tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8) (1 John 4:16).

This horrific doctrine of hell was most likely perpetuated in the early years of the church by religious leaders to scare the naïve into the church and has been adopted and perpetuated by their followers (without question) from generation to generation through tradition and religious institutions and organisations. Eternal life or eternal death (i.e., utter and total extinction) is the only two choices the Bible teaches from Genesis to Revelation. For further information see the titles: -

- Hell or the Grave (Final destination of Humans).
- The Lake of Fire.
- Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

#### **Behemoth, the First of the Works of God which He Made as He Made Job.**

Job 40:15-24 ----- <sup>15</sup>"Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you; he eats grass like an ox. <sup>16</sup>Behold, his strength in his loins, and his power in the muscles of his belly. <sup>17</sup>He makes his tail stiff like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together. <sup>18</sup>His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like bars of iron. <sup>19</sup>"He is the first of the works of God; let him who made him bring near his sword! <sup>20</sup>For the mountains yield food for him where all the wild beasts play. <sup>21</sup>Under the lotus plants he lies, in the shelter of the reeds and in the marsh. <sup>22</sup>For his shade the lotus trees cover him; the willows of the brook surround him. <sup>23</sup>Behold, if the river is turbulent he is not frightened; he is confident though Jordan rushes against his mouth. <sup>24</sup>Can one take him by his eyes, or pierce his nose with a snare?

The characteristics of Behemoth are: -

- He is the first thing God made and God made him as he made Job.
- He eats grass like an ox and is enormously strong and powerful
- He lives on mountains and amongst trees, plants, brooks and the marsh.
- He has no-fear and is very difficult to capture.

**Behemoth:** comes from the Hebrew word (*b<sup>e</sup>hemowth*) Strong's Concordance says that it refers to a water-ox, (i.e. the hippopotamus or Nile-horse) while the Hebrew word (*b<sup>e</sup>hemah*) probably means to be mute, a dumb beast; especially any large four footed animal.

**Behemoth:** from the Zondervan Bible Dictionary says it refers to the hippopotamus by some known as the "river horses of Africa," they are bulky, ungainly, short-legged creatures weighing up to four tons. They can sleep by day, blow and snort at night, and can swim float, or sink and run along on the bottom. The elephant has also been named as the animal meant by Behemoth.

The fact that the Arabs traded extensively in ivory; the elephant has a larger tail than a hippo's and the elephant drinks vast amounts of water, are presented as evidence that the animal that "Moves his tail like a cedar" and "drinks up a river, and hastens not" was an elephant.

**INTRODUCTION:** theologians and Bible scholars have literally written pages and pages explaining who Behemoth maybe and though some do present very good reasoning not one of them comes up with an absolute or perfect answer as to what animal perfectly fits the description of Behemoth. The most common three are the Egyptian hippopotamus commonly called the river horse, the crocodile and the elephant.

Since no theologian is absolute in their studies it is also possible that the name Behemoth may refer to whatever animal was considered the king of beasts at the time of Job and also possible that it refers to none of these but symbolises a powerful nation, the pride of man, the serpent of the Garden of Eden, or sin that is rampant in the world.

For these reasons rather than try to discover what animal Behemoth maybe or what the name may symbolise we will look at some of the expressions used for his character and behaviour that may hopefully help those who do desire to hunt down greater evidence that will pin-point without doubt who or what the name Behemoth may refer to.

**Behemoth which I made as I made you:** (v15) perhaps refers to Behemoth being made at almost the same time as man was made. The animals were created on the fifth day and immediately after God created Adam and Eve on the sixth day so it would be right and proper to say that man and animals were made alongside each other and from the dust of the earth which would fit the expression, "Behemoth which I made as I made you."

**He makes his tail stiff like a cedar:** (v17) many try to make these words fit the tail of an elephant, or the hippopotamus by saying that though they are short yet, when erected they are exceedingly stiff and strong, but this seems to be an attempt to support the theory that Behemoth was an elephant or the hippopotamus since it is hardly likely anyone would liken their tail to a mighty and majestic cedar tree.

The description of the tail would agree much better with some of the extinct animals. Nevertheless since the object of the description is to inspire a sense of the power of Behemoth and his capacity to inspire terror and dread the idea maybe that even the smallest parts of Behemoth and those parts which are generally considered the least important have the strength, majesty and power of the cedar tree.

**The sinews of his thighs are knit together:** (v17) his sinews, thighs and muscles are so tightly and solidly compacted and wrapped together (perhaps like a thick twisted rope that cannot be parted and multiplies its strength tenfold) carries the idea that any attempt to overcome Behemoth will fail.

**His bones are as strong as pieces of brass, his limbs are like bars of iron:** (v18) carries the idea that the bones of Behemoth's body are exceeding hard and strong like brass and iron. All of these descriptions are presented to the reader to magnify the enormity, might, strength and power of this creature called Behemoth.

**He is the first of the works of God:** (v19) would seem to imply that Behemoth was created before the beginning of time, but this does not necessarily have to be if it is applied to the animal kingdom only. It would then carry the idea that Behemoth was the first of the works of God concerning the animals. If Behemoth is expressive of the superior excellency of a creature over all other works of God as it seems to be it must be limited to the animals, because mankind is the chief of all God's ways and works.

**Let him who made him bring near his sword:** (v19) God that made him can make his sword to approach unto him in the KJV) this is very obscure, but most likely carries the following idea, no man dare go near to Behemoth in their own strength, meaning without any weapons or traps, because only God can kill Behemoth without any sword (i.e., weapon).

Whoever who would kill Behemoth for food or any other reason let them approach him with a sword (i.e., a weapon that is able to kill him such as a spear, arrows or traps and snares) because his strength is so great that unlike God no man can by their own strength kill him.

**Under the lotus plants (shady trees in KJV) he lies, in the shelter of the reeds and in the marsh:** (v21-22) the word lotus comes from the Hebrew word (*tse'el*) and literally means to be slender it refer to the lotus tree for its shade. It is naturally grown in Egypt and because it has a tasty fruit most of Egyptians like to eat it has been cultivated there since the oldest ages. It grows abundantly on the banks of the Nile and often serves as a place of retreat and shade for wild beasts of the desert.

One of the largest valleys in Sinai is known as the Valley of Lotus, it is also found in south Europe, parts of China and many other places. Some species of lotus trees are relatively large in size and provide much shade, because its leaves are permanently green. Today they grow in Upper Egypt and their wood is used for making agricultural tools, furniture and also in building. The expression, "Under the lotus plants he lies, in the shelter of the reeds and in the marsh, presents a picture of Behemoth lying under the trees for shade and amongst reeds of the marsh on the banks of rivers for cooling rather than dwell in the open field or desert places. Reeds abounded along the banks of the Nile River and lotus trees flourished.

**If the river is turbulent he is not frightened:** (v23) carries the idea that should a river be in flood and overflowing its banks and the waters are rapid and violent he would have no fear and would be confident that it cannot cause him harm. Symbolically it would carry the idea that no matter how strong, how powerful and terrifying those who come against him appear to be he would have no fear of them.

**He is confident though Jordan rushes against his mouth:** (v23) the King James Bible says: -

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

This verse carries the idea that Behemoth trusts that he can stand without fear against anything that would come against him, he does not need to run in panic from those who come against him, his strength is so great he can take his time in preparing himself for the attack and do it without fear of anyone, because he is so confident that he can conquer whatever comes against him. It is most likely spoken in the language of hyperbole (i.e., exaggeration and overstatement) to magnify the strength, might, power and size of Behemoth.

**Can one take him by his eyes?** (v23) (He taketh it with his eyes in KJV) carries the following two ideas: -

1. The only way to capture Behemoth is by placing allurements and enticement before his eyes to lure him into a trap.
2. Who can take Behemoth by their own hands and in their own human strength while his eyes see them, the answer of course is no one. His great size force and strength are far too great for men to overcome without making use of weapons, traps and snares which is true of many large and wild animals.

**Can one pierce his nose with a snare?** (v23) can the huntsmen, capture Behemoth and pierce or bore his nose through with a hook so they can place a ring in his nose in order to insert a cord or rope through it to lead him along as working and domestic animals were. This was the common method by which wild animals were secured when taken. The meaning is that no one not even the greatest hunter could approach Behemoth while his eyes were upon them and take him captive and tame him in their own strength. Behemoth signifies a creature with great body mass and strength that far exceeds human physical strength and therefore the only way to capture him was with the aid of weapons, traps and snares.

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**FOOTNOTE:** perhaps Behemoth is not an animal at all, but, a symbol of the mighty and powerful nation of Egypt and its Pharaoh who no man could destroy except God alone by His mighty power (i.e., the ten plagues and the parting of the Red Sea). In this scenario Egypt would be seen as the first of God's works concerning great nations.

His tail would refer to all the allied nations in league with Egypt. His bones and muscles would refer to His mighty armies and warriors. It is certainly true no sword (i.e. army) could approach Egypt and attempt to overthrow their well organised armies and fierce warriors that marched as one people tightly wrapped together as the muscles and sinews of Behemoth's were. The majestic palaces and building of Egypt would be represented by the lotus trees that grew abundantly along the river Nile and provided a place of rest, shelter and shade.

Egypt in it pride had no fear of Israel symbolised by the Jordan River or any other army that came against it, but instead trusted in their-own might and power. The only way to conquer Egypt and its Pharaoh was not by attacking him in one's own strength, but by placing enticements before his eyes which God did through the ten plaques and the death of Egypt's firstborn.

Truly only God had the power to destroy such a fearful and powerful nation. Israel was slaves to Egypt for over four hundred years and though they grew mighty in number they had no power in their own strength to put a hook in the nose of Pharaoh and make his people slaves, but God through one man (Joseph) put all the power and riches of Egypt into his hands so that the nation that was once Israel's dreaded enemy became Israel's saviour through seven years of famine.

Now I am not saying that this is the case concerning Behemoth, but simply putting the idea out there that it is possible that though Behemoth maybe some type of animal, it is also possible that he could also be a symbol of something far more formidable (i.e., pride, the serpent of Eden, sin or any powerful nation) or maybe something similar to Leviathan (see the following chapter).

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End.