

## ~BEHEMOTH (121) (Be-he'moth)

- The designation **Behemoth**, appearing at;
- Here, now, is **Behemoth** that I have made as well as you. Green grass it eats just as a bull does. (**Job 40:15**)
- Has been variously viewed as (1) a derivative of an Egyptian word for **water ox**. (2) a word possibly of Assyrian origin meaning **monster**, and (3) an intensified plural of the **Hebrew** word *behe-mah'* (**beast, domestic animal**) that is understood to denote **great beast** or **huge beast**. In the **Greek Septuagint** the word *the-ri'a* or **wild beasts** translates the **Hebrew** *behe-moth'*.
- Evidently, though, a single animal is meant, as is indicated by the fact that the description given of **Behemoth** is not that of several creatures but of only one, generally considered to be the **hippopotamus**, *Hippopotamus amphibius*. In fact, a number of Bible translations, **AT, La, Ro, NW, JB, RS**, use the word **hippopotamus** in the main text or in footnotes to identify the creature referred to by God.
- The **hippopotamus** is a huge, thick-skinned, almost hairless mammal that frequents rivers, lakes, and swamps. It is noted for its short legs, huge jaws, and large head, which is said to weigh up to a ton. So great is the power in its jaw and teeth that **one bite can pierce the armor of a crocodile**. Full grown it may be 4 to 5 meters (12 to 15 feet) long and may weigh up to 3,600 kilograms (8,000 pounds).
- An amphibious creature, the hippopotamus, in spite of its prodigious size, can move relatively fast both in and out of water. It feeds on soft water plants, grass, reeds, and bushes, each day taking more than 90 kilograms (200 pounds) of greenery into its 150- to 190-Liter (40 to 50 gallon) stomach.
- The skin of the hide, especially that of the belly, is extremely tough, hence able to withstand bumping and scraping as the **hippopotamus** drags its low body over sticks and stones of riverbeds. The nostrils are strategically located at the tip of the snout, and the eyes are high up on the front of the head, enabling the **hippopotamus** both to breathe and to see while it is almost completely submerged. The ears and valve-like nostrils close when it submerges. Even while

sleeping, when the carbon dioxide in the blood reaches a certain level, the animal automatically surfaces for fresh air and then submerges again.

- At one time the **hippopotamus** was found in most of the large lakes and rivers of Africa, but, as a result of man's hunting, it has disappeared from many regions and is said to be unknown North of the cataract at Khartoum, Sudan. In ancient times the **hippopotamus** may even have frequented the Jordan. In fact, it is reported that tusks and bones of this creature have been found in various parts of Palestine.

- The description in the 40th chapter of the book of Job offers a vivid word picture of this **huge mammal, Behemoth**. It is described as being herbivorous.

- Here, now, is **Behemoth** that I have made as well as you. Green **grass it eats** just as a bull does. (Job 40:15)

- The sources of its tremendous power and energy are noted to be in the **hips and in the tendons of its belly**, that is, the muscles of its back and those of its belly.

- Here, now, **its power is in its hips**, and its dynamic energy in the **tendons of its belly**. (Job 40:16)

- The tail of **Behemoth** is like a cedar. Since the tail of a **hippopotamus** is fairly short, measuring about 46 to 51 centimeters (18 to 20 inches), this is likely to be understood as meaning that the animal can set its thick tail rigidly upright or swing it about like a tree. The sinews of its thighs are interwoven, so that the fiber and tendons of muscles of its thighs are twisted together and braided like powerful cables.

- It bends down its **tail like a cedar**, the sinews of its thighs are **interwoven**. (Job 40:17)

- The bones of its legs are as strong as **tubes of copper**, thus being able to support the great weight of the body. The bones and ribs are like **wrought-iron rods**.

- Its bones are **tubes of copper**, its strong bones are like **wrought-iron rods**. (Job 40:18)

- The **Behemoths** immense consumption of food is alluded to;

- For the mountains themselves **bear their produce for it**, and all the wild beasts of the field themselves play there. (**Job 40:20**)
- And mention is made of its **relaxing under the thorny lotus trees or concealing itself in a swampy place**, beneath the shade of the poplars.
- Under the **thorny lotus trees it lies down**, in the concealed place of **reeds and the swampy place**. (**Job 40:21**)
- The thorny lotus trees keep it blocked off with their shadow, the **poplars of the torrent valley surround** it. (**Job 40:22**)
- Even when a river overflows its banks, this creature does not panic, for it can still keep its **head above the level of water and swim against the force of the deluge**.
- If the river acts violently, it **does not run in panic**. It is confident, although the Jordan should burst forth against its mouth. (**Job 40:23**)
- Yehowah asked Job; Since **Behemoth** is so mighty and formidably equipped, would a man have the hardihood to try to confront it before its eyes and try to pierce its nose with a hook?
- Before its eyes can anyone take it? With **snare can anyone bore its nose?** (**Job 40:24**)