

Legion & Leviathan

Stockpiling Stories So God Can Speak

May 1, 2022

Today Legion and Leviathan are going to help us learn to enjoy God's Word a little bit more.



Here's a question I'm often asked: **What's the best Bible to get?** And after decades of experience here, I can give you a *definitive* answer: **The One you'll read!** It's like asking which piano is best when you start to play. Does it *matter* all that *much*? Cuz, **if you're serious about playing, you'll be practicing and upgrading as you go.**



Since it's close to Easter, I thought it'd be fun to dig into the empty tomb. Not the one Jesus *rose* from; the one vacated by the escaped, chain-breaking, totally naked, self-mutilated, and insane Gadarene who'd taken up residence in the tombs across the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum, who was teeming with a legion of demons, till Jesus arrived and sent 'em squealing into 2,000 pigs. You see ...



In the *past* God spoke to our *forefathers* [like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel] ... but in these last days [which began 2,000 years ago] He has spoken to us by His Son, – Hebrews 1:1-2 NIV

Who died and *rose* 2,000 years ago. And 2,000 years before *that*, Jacob/Israel just *died*.

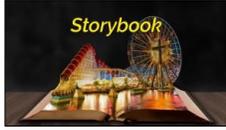
[So] Jacob called his [twelve] sons [who became the twelve *tribes* of Israel] and said, "Gather together, that I [as a "forefather"] may *tell* you what *shall befall* you in the last days [2,000 years later (when God speaks through *Jesus*). And when Jacob gets to son #7, he suddenly shouts] ... I have waited for Your Salvation, [Yeshua/Jesus] O Lord! Gad, [of the land of the Gadarene] a troop [in Greek: *legion*] shall tramp upon him, but *he* shall triumph at [the] last." [Who? *Gad*? Or Yeshua/Jesus/Salvation?] – Genesis 49:1, 18-19 NKJ

I'm guessing it's *at the last*, when God *spoke* through His *Son*, Yeshua/Salvation, in the desolate land of *Gad*, while it was *literally* being *tramped* on by 2,000 pigs and a *legion* of demons, in that *lone* Gadarene; when Yeshua/Salvation triumphed with a *pig* for each *year* that Jacob had to wait!



And it all took place the same night, and just after, Jesus ordered a hurricane to stop blowing; and *it did*. And then told the massive waves that were swamping the boats to stop moving; and *they did*. And His boys are freaked out and terrified – of *Him* – because they had no idea they were doing Psalm 107; you know, the *ol'* ...

... *tempest* that lifted *high* the waves. ... [And] in their *peril* their *courage* melted away ... they were at their *wits' end*. *Then* they cried out to the Lord ... [and] He *stilled* the storm to a *whisper*; [and] the waves of the sea were *hushed*. – Psalm 107:23-29 NIV



Poor boys. They have *no idea* they're *about* to do what God spoke to *Gad*. Noah said my Easter sermon *lit* him up – well, *his* sermon last Sunday, about loading in the stories, lit *me* up! Because, about 15 years ago, I came to my Psalm 107 “wit’s end” with the Bible. And I threw it down on Ken Ekle’s desk and said, **“If God can’t write a book that makes sense, He can’t be God.”** At which point Ken swiveled his chair, patted his lap, and said, “Tell daddy what the problem is.” Which was *just* the *light heartedness* I needed to begin my *escape* from my “*me-deep*” despair. And my-oh-my how *that* has all changed! You see, I didn’t go to seminary, I went to film school. I thought I’d be a producer, not a pastor, cuz I enjoyed reading scripts *far more* than Scripture. But, turns out, to my *delight*, I read it *wrong*. **Scripture isn’t written in *theology*** (*that’s* beliefs and theories *based* on what’s written); **it’s written almost entirely in *story***. Tough on Pharisees, but kids *love* it! So, want to find *His Way*? Then Act like *His kid*!

He doesn’t ask us to *comprehend* it or *control* it, just to *know* it. And *enjoy* it. And get *absorbed* in it. When I came to my wit’s end, I realized **I didn’t enjoy it cuz I *barely* knew it.** Which came as *quite* a *shock*, because it’s the ol’ study vs. story that Noah was talking about. **I read a lot *about* it ... just not so much *it-it*.** But *that’s* the *only* way it works. **We help each other load it in, and He sorts it out,** and uses whatever’s stored up to speak.

It’s so simple that it’s easy to ignore we’re ignoring it ... till we *need* it! But imagine earnestly asking for an answer in prayer, and having *every* example in *every* story stored in your *heart*. Think it’d be any *easier* to *hear*? So **I not only studied it, I tried to enjoy it.** Tough at first. Like *anything* worth *anything*. Till the moment you’re *reading* it or *hearing* it or *sharing* it, and a *piece* from another *part* suddenly *appears* and *connects itself*, and you realize: **it’s talking!** To you. Not by *magic*. **By His Word. By your faith.** Cuz **everything connects!** Jesus said:

If anyone causes one of these *little ones* who *believe* in *Me* to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. – Mark 9:42 NIV

Do you think Jesus just says *random stuff*? He’s warning the hard-hearted, legalistic *heads* of the House of Israel to stop using the *Law of Moses* to keep the *children* of *Israel* from receiving the *Living Word* in their *heart*. So what better reference than *Leviathan*, the *serpent* of the *sea*?

[The Lord told Job, that] [*Leviathan’s*] heart is as hard as stone, even as hard as the lower millstone. ... [And] [*Leviathan*] is king over all the children of pride. – Job 41:24, 34 NKJ

But You, O God, are my King ... You bring *Salvation* [**Yeshua**] upon the earth. ... [You] split open the *sea* by Your power ... [and] crushed the heads of *Leviathan* – Psalm 74:12-14 NIV

[Jesus said] “I did not *come* to bring *peace*, but a *Sword*.” – Matthew 10:34 NIV

In *that* day the Lord with His severe Sword, great and strong, will punish *Leviathan* the fleeing serpent, *Leviathan* that twisted serpent; [**Oh, that Leviathan**] and He will *slay* the reptile that is in the *sea* ... *sing* to her, “A vineyard of *red wine*! I, the Lord, keep it,” – Isaiah 27:1-3 NKJ

So, 1) Leviathan's a "her"? And, 2) What's God got against *Leviathan*? My commentaries say she's either *Lotan* of Ugaritic mythology, a marine dinosaur that survived the Flood, a whale (of a tale), or a giant crocodile. But I say, why "sing to her, 'A vineyard ... I, the Lord, keep it'?"!

[Well, because, 22 chapters earlier, Isaiah said] Let me sing [Ok?] ... a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard ... [He] cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest Vine. ... For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, – Isaiah 5:1-2, 7 NKJ

Wait. It's not a *real* vineyard? Nope. It's a *symbol*. And it's not a *real* sea-monster in a *real* sea?

[See for yourself] To what can I *liken* or *compare* you, O daughter Jerusalem? What *example* can I *show* you ... for great as the sea is your downfall – Lamentations 2:13 NAB



So why is Leviathan's stone-cold heart like a "lower millstone"? Well, here's a *lower* millstone from *Capernaum* from the time of *Jesus*; and it turns out they were in the shape of a human heart! Which hangs around our neck by our jugulars. And if our heart is hardened toward the Lord, we'll be tossed in a sea that only the Living God can *calm*.



[It all began, once upon a time, when] [The Lord] gave *Moses* two tablets of the Testimony, [which were just] tablets of stone, [but] written with the finger of God. – Exodus 31:18 NKJ

[And they were called "the Testimony" because] *Moses* was ... testifying to what would be *said* in the *future*. – Hebrews 3:5 NIV



[Like when *Jesus* said to the stone-cold Pharisees on the very *day* He'll cast out *Legion*] "If I cast out *demons* with the finger of God, surely the *kingdom* of *God* has *come*" – Luke 11:20 NKJ

[And so] *Judah's* sin is *engraved* ... on the tablets of their hearts – Jeremiah 17:1 NIV

[Cuz they received the *legalism* of the *stones* rather than the *Testimony*] For the law was given through *Moses*, but grace and truth came through *Jesus Christ*. – John 1:17 NKJ

[And] Of this *salvation* the *prophets* ... searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what ... the Spirit of Christ who was in *them* was *indicating* when He testified beforehand – 1 Peter 1:10-11 NKJ

[You see] [*Moses*] *chose* to be mistreated along with the people of *God* ... [Ask why!] he regarded *disgrace* for the sake of *Christ* as of *greater* value than the treasures of *Egypt*, because [1) That's who he was meeting with, face to face; and 2)] he was looking ahead to his reward. [And, 3) *He's* the One the whole book is about] – Hebrews 11:24-26 NIV

[And now] *You* show that you are a [love] letter from *Christ* ... written *not* with *ink* but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone [like ol' Leviathan] but on tablets of human hearts. [And so do as the *living God* commanded] – 2 Corinthians 3:3 NIV

Store up My commands within you ... and you will live; guard My teachings as the apple of your eye ... [and] write them on the tablet of your heart. – Proverbs 7:1-3 NIV

Let *love* and *faithfulness* never leave *iathan* you; bind *them* around your neck, [and] write *them* on the tablet of *your heart*. – Proverbs 3:3 NIV



Think Jesus just says random stuff? “No. But do we *have* to *care* about the *Old Testament* parts?” No. I’m not telling you to *care*. I’m telling you to *fathom* how it *works*, and to **decide whether or not to get a Bible you’ll read, and take it to heart on His terms**. And you’ll be tempted to think, “Well that’s hopeless – it’s like a proficient piano player telling me to sit down and just have fun.” It *is* like that. But you *can!* Ever hear of Chopsticks? **The moment you begin to make music all by yourself, your joy will be like mine**. I had just as much *joy* five years ago; and five years before *that*; and five before *that!*



And *while* you’re softening your heart by **storing up the clear lessons in the obvious stories**, rest assured **your subconscious will be collecting the clues He’ll suddenly use to speak specifically to you, when you need to hear Him most**. It’s the strangest thing, like lower millstones, and Leviathan, and Legion. You know, after Jesus calmed the storm there was a dead calm. The boys are rowing, soaking wet, some puking, seasick and scared ... *of Jesus’*. **“Who is this?”** (Lk 8:26) **“Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”** (Mk 4:41) “Couldn’t He have left a *little* wind – so we didn’t have to *row*?” Cuz with *us*, it’s always *something!*



But up on this hillside among the tombs, possibly inside this *very* cave, a hurricane, coming to a crashing halt, had to raise the curiosity. It’d be an eerie calm, even for a demon-filled Gadarene. And though *he* was known for *his* screams, imagine the *noise* of Jesus’ *boys* once they got past their *fears*: “He just *did* Psalm 107!” “We just did Psalm 107!” “He *is* Psalm 107!”

Their voices alerting a massive swarm of killer demons of who’s coming ... and *what’s* coming.

And if ever there was a time for a blood-curdling Gadarene scream, this was it. “Uh, Jesus, what are we doing?” **“Didn’t you read the Script? We’re fulfilling God’s Word to Gad.”**

[And so] They went [silently] across the lake [in the dark; and] When He arrived at the other side in the region of the *Gadarenes*, [Jesus did something not found in the Gospels, but straight out of Isaiah, regarding this very moment; and likely to His disciples’ horror, He screamed: “Here I am! Here I am!” And] a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs ... no one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with *stones*. When he saw Jesus from a *distance*, when Jesus stepped ashore, he ran and he cried out, – Mt 8:28; Mk 5:1-6; Lk 8:26-28 NIV

And one of the disciples might’ve cried out, “Egad – we’re doin’ Isaiah 65!”

Next Sunday.