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Monsters in the Bible - The Torah Series

Main Verses:

- [Genesis 1:21](#)
- [Exodus 7:10](#)
- [Isaiah 27:1](#)
- [Job 7:12](#)
- [Psalm 74:13](#)
- [Ezekiel 32:2](#)
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- [Isaiah 30:7](#)
- [Isaiah 51:9](#)
- [Jeremiah 51:34](#)
- [Matthew 14:25](#)
- [Romans 8:38](#)
- [1 Kings 20:1](#)

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Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home. So we've been exploring the Torah in this new series, and it's been a little bit different than in the past when we've revisited the Torah. We've been looking at some of the design patterns that are in the Torah. We've been exploring the Pentateuch, not only as like a divine law code, a divine checklist, but we've been exploring it as a narrative. as the narrative that it is. I mean, that's how it starts out. The first 69 chapters of the Torah are a story. Like 69 chapters of a riveting, action-packed story before Israel ever gets any formal law codes. And that speaks volumes, that should speak volumes, about the

story that starts off explaining the character of our God and invites us into that same narrative. And so we spoke about the point of Genesis 1 recently, which I hope was edifying, and how the story, how the Torah tells us a story about the character of our God. And we're supposed to read that, and we're supposed to understand and digest that, just who this God of Israel is, this great Yahweh that is brought forth into the story in Genesis 1. What is his character like? And so how many of you guys know that sometimes... We tend to miss things in the Bible because of a language barrier. Hebrew or Greek or Daniel or Aramaic. Sometimes, um... You know, we read translations and we miss things because we don't know what the Hebrew says or the Greek or we're not understanding. And of course, it happens. It happens all the time. And the translators of the Bible, the many translations we have, guys, they do a very, very, very good job. And they try their best to translate all of the things to maintain the context and the flow of the story so it's not too confusing. I'm amazed at the The more I learn about the translations of the Bible, the more respect, mad respect I have for textual criticism and just how they do what they do, how we got the Bible that we have. And yeah, it really is a tasking objective. But sometimes we still end up missing things, even when it's translated right. So without further ado, I guess we can jump in. So let's just start off with this verse right here. Genesis 1, and we went over this briefly, I think, a few weeks ago, but I didn't really get into it. I'm reading, this translation is from the JPS, Jewish Publication Society, Tanakh, 1917, and it reads like this, and it's during the creation week, and God is creating all these things, he created the sky, he separated the waters, and all these things, and he says, and God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that creepeth wherewith the water swarmed. So here we go. Giant sea monsters. And this is how the JPS, TANAKH, the ASV, and the CEV all translate this word, or these two words there. And if you have another translation, or if you look at your translation, most likely it will say something like sea creatures. It kind of gives a neutral tone to it. But the word here is *tanin*. It's *gadolim taninim*. It's big *tanin*. And elsewhere in the Bible, this word is very enigmatic because sometimes it's translated as snake, like a little snake, *tanin*. And sometimes it's translated as dragon, right? A few examples. Let's just jump right in. Here we go. Exodus 7.10, perfect example. So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Is there serpents? It's a little, you know, I mean, maybe it's a big serpent. It's not anaconda. It's not like out of the movies. It's a little snake. Isaiah 27, 1, however, takes this word, *tenin*, in that day the Lord, with his hard and great and strong sword, will punish Leviathan, big old sea creature, monster, the fleeing serpent, Leviathan, the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon, the *tenin* that is in the sea. Now, last time I checked, a snake is not a dragon. And if a dragon is a snake, it is a really big Really, really big snake with real big teeth. No, the word here describes an epic seafaring monster. Like that's what it describes. When we look at other usages of it in the Bible, we see Job. Job 7.10 or 12. Am I the sea or sea monster, the *Tanim*, that you set a guard over me? They translate it there. Psalm 74, 13, you divided the sea by your might. You broke the heads of the sea monsters, the *Tanim*, on the waters. Ezekiel 32, 1, son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and say to him, you consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you are like the dragon, *Tanim*, of the seas, the oceans. Why should I find this interesting? in which I would respond promptly, how could you not? It seems that God created this Godzilla-looking sea monster when we just take a rough view at the word, and you aren't going to find that interesting, at least intriguing. No, the *tanin*, or *tanenim* in the plural, as observed in the Bible, is like this, it's the Leviathan type, it's like this mythological level looking monster that is associated with chaos and death and disorder. It brings forth destruction and undoes

everything that is good. It disrupts peace, it devours justice and mercy. The Tanin. The Tanin.

And then, of course, the next question that you might be asking is, Matt, why would a seemingly, if this is true, why would a seemingly mythological level looking sea monster be in the Genesis 1 account? And I'll tell you, there is a very good reason why we see the Tanin here in Genesis 1.21. And the reason why we can make that assertion with such confidence is because Israel was not the only culture. They were not the only ancient culture to write about the Tanin in this mythological sense. Are you intrigued? Do we dare explore what we found and dug up in our archaeological efforts? In 1938, we discovered a gold mine of ancient tablets written by ancient Canaanite communities in this ancient area. ancient city on this mound called a Ugarit, or it's the Ugaritic tablets, also known as Ras Shamra in northern Syria, on the coast of northern Syria. And what's so amazing about these tablets, sorry, I misread the date, I misquoted the date. I have it in my notes here, 1938, that's not correct, it was 1928. It was the 30s that we really dug into Babylon. The thing that's so amazing about these tablets is the stories that they contain. about the ancient pagan gods that these neighbors of Israel used to worship and we've essentially dug up their stories about what they believed and how they worshiped and And it's from these tablets that if we choose to read them We discover things and we realize things that we didn't even know in the Bible word So it's from these tablets that we realize that bail how many of you guys have heard the name bail before? Okay bail It means Lord We always know it means Lord, but we never really consider that maybe that wasn't the name, the actual name of a god. And it's from these tablets that we realize it just means Lord. It's a title. The actual deity that Elijah went up against and claimed was used in the bathroom during that whole thing on Mount Carmel, his name was Baal for short, but his full name was Baal-Hadad. Baal-Hadad. That's your, like, I'm smarter every day, I learned something new about ancient Canaanite myth. Baal-Hadad was his name. Interesting. It doesn't really edify your relationship with the Lord. I just find it interesting. But we also learn things like the pagan god named Dagon. How many of you guys have ever heard Dagon? Of course, he's mentioned in Joshua. He's mentioned in the Samson story many times. We learn more about him and his characteristics. We learn that he's actually not a fish god like we thought before we discovered these tablets. He's actually a god of grain, which may actually be one of the reasons why Why Samson went and burnt up all the grain fields as an affront to the Philistines. Possibly. It's a theory. But these are the things that we learn when we dig into the other cultures that surrounded Israel, and they kind of cross-mingle a little bit in the biblical text. Is anybody interested still? I hope so. You don't have a choice, but... If you want to read more about those tablets, which are kind of... I geek out on these things. There's a book. It's a great book, short book, called The Stories of Ancient Canaan. You can get it at Amazon. It's real short. Translated and edited by Michael D. Coogan. It's a great little resource. And I think it has like biblical footnotes in it to contrast it. Among those tablets, now that I'm done talking about that, among those tablets there were six found that tell the story about this Baal Hadad. And these six tablets came to be known as the Baal Cycle or the Baal Epic. And the thing is, they told about how the ancient Canaanites believed and what they believed about Baal. And they start out with this huge battle. First thing that Baal Hadad does, he has this huge battle. And the battle takes place between Baal Hadad and the god of the sea known as Yam. Everybody say Yam. Like a yam, but kind of a mix between yam and yum, right? Like you eat them, but Yam. That was the sea battle. Sea deity. And in the battle, Yom becomes represented by a massive sea dragon known as Tunen. Tunen. It's like the Canaanite word for Tunen. And not only does Baal have to fight this sea monster Tunen, the Tunen, he also has to fight against a seven-headed sea dragon

known as Lotan. Leviathan. Lotan is the Canaanite version of Leviathan. And Baal is not doing so hot in his epic. He's not doing so great in his battle, going back and forth. I mean, is he gonna win? Is he gonna lose it all? Like, I don't know what's gonna happen. And finally, he gets some help from a god known as Kothar. He gets some magical clubs, which just becomes epic, and he starts beating Yom up and smashing the brains and everything. It gets really, really gnarly really quick. And The reason that Baal is having this battle is because he wants to create a palace. He wants to build a residence. He wants to make himself known in the pantheon of Canaanite gods, and he wants to have a place where he can dwell. And so I found that interesting. And in this story, what's happening here, the underlying allegory in this story, is that the waters of chaos, Yam, must be defeated in order for Baal to establish his reign of peace and order. Now, Babylonian myth says In the Enuma Elish, the Babylonian creation account, if you will, it begins with these waters of chaos. So now we're going from ancient Canaan, we're going more east over to Babylon, Mesopotamia. And in these tablets that we discovered, their story starts off with these chaotic waters that are going back and forth, and they're co-ruled by this feminine goddess known as Tiamat. And she's depicted as a serpentine sea monster, right? A big threat. There's a big conflict. A bunch of these pagan deities, they come together and the story goes like, oh, what are we going to do? We have to fight Tiamat together and they have to resist her and her demons of chaos. And a champion known as Marduk, who seemingly becomes the chief god and the patron god in Babylon, he has to fight Tiamat. And during the battle, Tiamat and Marduk are fighting, and Tiamat comes, and she opens her big jaws and teeth, and she goes to get Marduk, and Marduk does this superpower thing, you know, whatever, and he throws wind at her. And she's like, whoa, or he's like, whoa, right? And the mouth is open, so he pulls out a bow and arrow and shoots it down her throat and kills her. Or him, sorry, him. Then, oh, it's not done. Then Marduk takes her body, or her body, takes the body, splits it open, and creates the firmaments and basically creates the world with her guts and brains. That's so gnarly. Like they should make a movie. Like as fiction as that is, they should make a movie. Like anyone else? Okay. I thought that was pretty cool. Egypt had their own versions of the stories of the chaotic waters that had to be defeated and overcome and creatures, the alligator crocodile smashed. Um... Bringing it back to what we believe in our faith, the truth of the Bible, why would the author of Genesis 1 choose to toss this word, this monster, the Tanin, this big sea dragon thing in there in Genesis 1? Because it's polemic. It's polemical. It's like a polemical account against the surrounding nations. Remember, remember, we discussed the point of Genesis 1 a few weeks ago, and the point of Genesis 1 is to tell us about a God that would do anything to pursue a relationship with us, right? And by throwing this creature in here, this is not... We have the Canaanites, and they have to fight this big old dragon just to get peace, and then we have the Babylonians, and in order for creation to come about, they have to fight these arrows, and creation itself is thwarted by this huge sea monster, and what are they going to do? And Egypt has the same thing, and oh my gosh, like the chaos and disorder, and what are we going to do? And I hope we win. And then we turn to the God of Israel, and we turn to Genesis 1. Oh, and God made the Tanin too. They're his pets. Like... So what would happen here in the ancient world is you would go, ooh, like all you guys had to fight and everything. No, these are the pets of God. They didn't thwart his reign. Our God didn't have to pursue a sea monster to make his will known. No, and he created all the things that live in the sea. Oh, and he created the tannin. I get a kick out of things like that because it's very audacious of the writer. He didn't have to put this word in there. It's very... So let me tell you about our God. It's just totally, I love it. I love it. Here God creates all the sea creatures of the sea, and he also creates, you

know, the Tanin as well. Canaanite myth. You guys almost lost the fight, remember? My God didn't need a fight. And we see the biblical authors pull a stunt like this again, using this word and kind of swapping it out in the text. Later on in the Exodus story, Exodus 4, we have the scene is Moses, and Moses is standing before the Lord, and he's told he's going to have to go into Egypt again. and face off with Pharaoh, right? And Moses is like, I don't know about this. Like, how are they going to know and all this stuff? And God's like, listen, listen, take your staff, throw it on the ground. What's it become? A serpent. The Hebrew word, *nakash*. It becomes a snake, okay? And then he tells, what's he tell Moses to do with the snake? Pick it up by its tail, right? All right, pick it up by its tail. It becomes a staff again. This is how you will show them who I am, Moses. This is how you will show them my power. And in my opinion, the narrative here is showing us an ideal of a man taking dominion over the serpent. I mean, it's supposed to flash you back to Genesis 3. Like, could this be the one who crushes the head of the serpent? Like, he's taking dominion over the snake here. And anyway, four chapters later, we have the scene. Moses goes with Aaron, and they go into the courts of Pharaoh, and what happens? Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, When Pharaoh says to you, Prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you shall say to Aaron, Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may turn into a serpent. So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men, So already we have like a pretty If we're reading it like a story, and that's how they're writing it. They could have written this differently. They chose to include this story, and they chose to write it this way. So automatically, when we read it in our English translations, we see these snakes everywhere. It's like a bad Indiana Jones episode, but there's one snake that's, right? And we have the snake that eats other snakes. And so the picture is that everyone's just looking at the floor, watching snakes bite each other and eat each other, right? Okay? So... The thing is, is in this account, the word that the authors used is not *nakash*. It's not serpent. I'll give you one guess of what word they chose to use. *Tanin*. *Tanin*. Let that sink in. Let that sink in. This was not a little snake that the staff turned into. If we're taking the word for what it is, it's not a little snake. The writer here like swaps, if you will, maybe swaps out *nakash* for *tanin*. And the function here is to show God's fierce dominion over all of the forces that portray themselves as chaotic and evil and against his good creation, Pharaoh. Aaron throws down his stick in the ground, and instead of picturing like a little snake, I want you to picture like a huge, monstrous, ferocious sea dragon. They're no longer looking at the ground, right? And then the magicians of Egypt come out, and so they toss their staffs down. And instantly, we have like a Godzilla showdown of monsters in downtown Tokyo right there in the courts of Pharaoh. It may be hard to imagine, but this is the word that they're using. This is the word. And then the *Tanin* of God, his pet, chomps down the *Taninim*, not *Tanim*, but *Taninim*, the plural of *Tanin*, chomps down all of their monsters. Why? Why is this imagery put here in the Bible? To reinforce... Our God rules over all the monsters of chaos. Our God rules over you, Pharaoh. He is sovereign. His rule cannot be matched. You better slow your roll, Pharaoh. We forget that the authors telling the story of Exodus, they didn't have to include this. They chose to include this aspect of the story for a reason. And it doesn't stop there. Ezekiel goes on to use this language to compare Pharaoh to the *Tanim*. So Ezekiel's taken this tradition of the *Tanim* used in this section of the story, and he takes this and he speaks against Pharaoh. And Ezekiel 29.3 says this, Speak and say, Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon, the, what word is it? It's the *Tanim*. The Gadotaneen that lies in the midst of the streams that says, my Nile is mine. I made it for

myself. I will put hooks in your jaws. I will make the fish of all of your streams stick to your scales, and I will draw you up out of the midst of the streams with all the fish of the streams that stick to your scales, and I will cast you out into the wilderness. You and all the fish of the streams, you shall fall in the open field and not be brought together or gathered. The beasts of the earth and the birds of the heaven, I will give you as food. Then all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord." shall know that I am the Lord. Where do we hear that again? Oh, that's right. That's what God was portraying to Moses to throw the stick down so that they will know that I am Lord. Pharaoh is referred here as a Tanin and his pride of all things is specifically called out. Your pride is what will cause you to fall. Your pride will disrupt the order of all that is good. God says, I'm going to chop you up, Pharaoh, and feed you to all of the creatures. Why is Pharaoh referred to as the Tanin? Because in the Near East as a whole, the Tanin were the monsters of chaos that prevented all of good creation from progressing. God says, listen, you're the Tanin. I'm going to destroy you. You're not even a match for me, Pharaoh. In Isaiah 30, verse 7, God gives Egypt a new name based off of their pride. He calls her Rahab. Egypt's help is worthless and empty. Therefore, I have called her Rahab for it sits still. And he's lamenting to his people who are contemplating going back to Egypt, so on and so forth. Rahab. Rahab becomes synonymous in the scriptures with this Leviathan, Tanin type of figure. We see this Rahab again mentioned in Isaiah 51, 9, Rahab. Was it not you, he's praising to God, was it not you that cut Rahab into pieces and pierced the dragon? So stories of the Near East should kind of come to mind now. Again, this is a response. Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depth of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass through? Again, what is this talking about? Dried up the sea, dried up the water so that the redeemed can pass through them? He's speaking about the Exodus account. And he's referring to Pharaoh as this Rahab. So incidentally enough, Rahab in Hebrew, this word in the context means pride. Pride. I have cut you into pieces and pierced you like a dragon, like a tannin. Pretty cool. This is how the authors of the Bible link the story together to create a continuous flow and a continuous story that's constantly referring back to the story before it but building itself up. The authors of the Bible, they do the same thing to Nebuchadnezzar. This other great ruler who has brought chaos and is represented as a beast in history, Jeremiah 51, 34. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has devoured us. He has thrown us into confusion and chaos. He has made us an empty jar. Like a serpent, like a tannin, not an akash, tannin, he has swallowed us and filled his stomach with our delicacies and then he has spewed us out. The tannin, Nebuchadnezzar. the one who brings chaos against God's order in the world. Just like the ancient world, the Tanin represented the mascots of destruction and disorder. So Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar are both associated with them as a result. But does God rule over the Tanin? Yes, of course he does. There are none that can be considered a champion against our God. This is Genesis 121. It's subtle. It's so subtle. And so unnecessary to have the word in there. He created all the sea creatures. Oh, and the Tanin. Psalm 74 is one of my favorite psalms because it's kind of a psalm of lament by a man by the name of Asaph. And it's not the Asaph that lived during the time of David. It's probably Asaph later during the Babylonian exile. But he's like lamenting of everything that's taken place. And you know, tip was destroyed. Like just everything that's taken place in his life. It's suffering. It's suffering. And then he goes into like these praises of God. So he's lamenting to God. This is not so kosher, but you are God. You are the God who does all these great things. Like he's encouraging himself. And in verse 12, in verse 12 here, we have one of the creation accounts in the Bible. And this like polemical, this type of response to all the pagan neighbors around him. Yet God, my king, is from old,

working salvation in the midst of the earth. You divided the sea by your might. You divided the what? You broke the heads of the sea, the tannin of the waters. The heads, you know, kind of like in the Canaanite story of Lotan with the seven heads. You broke the heads of the monsters in the water. You crushed the heads of Leviathan, Lotan. You gave him as food for the creatures in the wilderness. You split open springs and brooks. You dried up ever-flowing streams. Yours is the day. Yours is also the night. For you have established the heavenly lights and the sun. You have fixed the boundaries around the earth. You have made summer and winter. Now this is extremely, an extreme, audacious rebuttal, like polemic, if you will. We have Asaph saying, writing this psalm completely mocking all of the surrounding pagan cultures. Did you pick up on that from the stories that we told a few minutes ago? Like, he's taking all of their stories, and instead of Baal, and instead of Marduk, he's saying, no, Yahweh did that. Like, y'all are wrong, by the way. Our God split the sea. So the word here in Hebrew is yom. Our God split yom. And it's a wordplay. You could call it a wordplay because the context is speaking about the Exodus as well. But it's so blatant. Like, it was our God that split open Yom, the sea God. I love that. This is a pointed response to the Canaanite story of Baal defeating Yom. Our God split the heads of Leviathan and gave him his food. So the King James Version is neat because they translate that verse, giving it for the creature, they translate that verse as he gave Leviathan as food to the people of the wilderness, not creatures, but people. The chaos monster has been destroyed by our God, chopped up and given to the people in the wilderness to feast on. Probably not kosher, but look at the imagery here. Like, look at the imagery. So if this is not only a type of creation account, but also a reflection of the redemption of God, a type of new creation of bringing Israel out into a new life, then they're the ones in the wilderness and they're celebrating the defeat of the monster in Egypt. Do you see how neat that is? Can you see how it's just such a mockery of Egypt along with Canaan, along with Babylon? Just you guys, just so bold. I love it. And then the chapter kind of encapsulates this epic with the creation narrative. For you are the God who creates everything. So you have God splitting up this sea monster, and then the next few verses talk about how creation came to be. What story does that sound like? Oh, that's over, isn't that the Babylonian myth of Marduk? Splitting the sea monster open to create the, I'm geeking out on this because wow, like, I don't know how I can portray it appropriately, but But Babylon, like our God, is more powerful than anything you can imagine. And so if this was written, and during the time period that the scholars believe it was, during or after the Babylonian fire were going in, then imagine the context of this. Babylon, despite what you've done to us, despite what you've done to our city, despite we're enslaved, our God still rules despite the monstrous ways that you've presented yourself. So here's a quote from the Jewish Encyclopedia. It's a great little resource online, kind of draws a lot of stuff together. So here's what the rabbis say in Midrash. According to a Midrash, the Leviathan was created on the fifth day. Why? Because the Tanin was created on, okay, the Tanin was created during the creation account. And so here we have, they believe the Leviathan was created on the fifth day. Originally God produced a male and a female Leviathan. Now your first instinct would probably be, what are they talking about? Which is appropriate. This is Midrash. It's not meant to be taken too, too seriously. It's like these rambunctious conversations of, what if this? No, this is how. And the underlying message is, well... Leviathan, Tanin, Rahab all represent the monsters of chaos, disorder, death, and everything that disrupts the goodness of our creation. And this Midrash says that when the Messiah comes, the Messiah will usher in this feast marking God's supreme dominion and control over it. And the righteous will feast on the flesh of this adversary that had the audacity to come against us. That's pretty cool.

That's also Daniel 7, like kind of. Right? Where we spoke about this a few weeks ago, where the Son of Man is killed by the beast, but ultimately is vindicated, and through his death and vindication, the beast is defeated, and the Son of Man joins into the throne room of God and is given all power and authority over all of creation, dominion, and his people. He creates a kingdom of the righteous that usher in this kingdom that lasts forever. I don't know. It's kind of neat. It's kind of neat. You guys good? We still good? Still tracking? Okay. Okay. So in Matthew chapter 14, something happens. Yeshua is followed by all of these people, and the disciples want to send all these people back. They're getting annoying. But Yeshua wants the people to stay. And he says, let them stay, and we're going to feed them. So he feeds them. He feeds them a bunch of fish sandwiches, right? And he feeds them this bread and the fish. He shows them love and compassion and mercy. Just this example of what... of how we act out the kingdom of God. And then later that night, the disciples are in a boat alone, and it says that the wind and the wave were crashing up against the boat, and then Yeshua comes walking out on top of the waves, on top of the chaotic waters. Man, it's powerful. So Genesis starts out with the Spirit of God hovering on top of the, right? The defeat of, no, our God reigns over the chaos, over the waters. And here comes Yeshua walking out, This is how you defeat the chaos. What does Peter say? If it's really you, let me come to you. No, Peter, you can never come to me on the waters. This is me. No, what is the issue? Come. Come on. Peter, come to me. Stay focused on me. Come to me. You know, when we take away the point that fear and doubt and anxiety allow the waters of chaos to overtake you, like, man, that's what that story tells us. When we stop thinking focusing on the absolute rule of God, we fall prey to the waters. We fall prey to the Leviathan, the chaos. We fall prey to the Tanin. When we take our eyes off the king and forget he is over it all. He reigns from the beginning. He reigns. If there's monsters, he created them. He's over them. You stay focused on what you need to be focused on. Don't be distracted. Don't become scared or you'll find yourself engulfed by them. It's an awesome message that the gospel writers portray to us. I love that. He rules in his throne over all aspects of creation. That's what Genesis 1 tells us. Do you believe that? Do you believe that? Because to the ancient authors, Genesis 1 was not simply meant to contain this polemical account against the nations and against the myths. It wasn't some polemical response to them. No, it was supposed to give you hope. This subtle word that's randomly just inserted in the middle of Genesis 1 and verse 21 doesn't need to be there. God created everything that swims in the sea and the birds in the air. Oh, and he created the Tanin. It's to remind you and to give you hope. It was supposed to give you peace. It gave the ancient readers peace. It was supposed to speak the truth of God's sovereignty over all aspects of creation and all aspects of our life. Leviathan, Tanin, Rahab, In the pagan cultures, these were all mythological monsters representing deep truths of chaos that we face in our daily lives. What monsters are you fearing in your life right now? I'm sure we don't have any. I'm sure we don't have any type of real situations that would match the type of iconography and imagery that the ancient writers tend to portray as far as a life of unsettled, a life of stress, a life of anxiety, a life of what if. Can I not do this? I don't think I can go on any longer. Do any of you have monsters that you encounter, leviathans that you encounter in your daily lives even right now? That's why that verse, I'm convinced. That's why that verse exists in Genesis 1. What monsters? What monsters can separate you from the love of God? What monsters can thwart his relationship that is barreling ferociously towards you with outstretched arms? What monster? What stress? What anxiety, what circumstances, what pain in your life, what fear, what rejection, what shame, what regret haunts your, what tragedy overshadows you? What hopelessness have you experienced? What injustice are you holding on to? What

monster has stood up in your life and caused you to fear, stress, and even doubt the power and control of your God in your life? Genesis 1.21 says... Not one is able to conquer God. God rules over them all. Now, sometimes we have a hard time accepting that fact. Anybody? I'll be honest. Sometimes it's just too hard to stay strong with the anxiety that comes with this life. God forbid it's a tragedy when people give up. The news is a pastor out in California recently, 30 years old, didn't know how to overcome it. Sometimes it's just too hard to stay strong against the stress and disappointment that we sometimes face in our life, in this life. Sometimes it's just too hard to allow the anxiety to not overtake us. And I get it. I do get it. But the thing is, the Bible testifies and speaks about a God that is with you and beside you and alongside you every single moment of that encounter. Ready, yearning for you to lean into him because he's got this. This is not a surprise to him. This is not an anomaly in his creation that is preventing him from allowing his goodwill to come forth. No. I'm convinced this is why Genesis tosses this in there. In the ancient world, chaos and disorder, the monsters, no. They're not a threat to God's good creation. Don't take your eyes off the king. Don't take your eyes off the throne. Do not let the waves distract you. Do not let the wind distract you and cause your attention to drift from our king to a monster. Do not let that fear take root. Our king reigns. And this is the testimony from page one to the end of Revelation. Romans 8, 38. I love it. I love it. Because it's so encouraging to me that Paul, even though the immense stress and anxiety and fear that took place through his ministry and his life, even though he gripes about it in his letters, here we go again. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That should be like, this is the truth of God's word. See, sometimes we're so focused on changing the circumstances of the world around us. Sometimes we get so absorbed by how things are just not perfect around us that we forget that how we live in the midst of those circumstances is truly what has the power to change them. Sometimes we forget that. When we lean into the joy that only God can provide, when we lean into gratitude, when we lean into the divine love that is presented before us, that is how we live out the truth of God's reign despite the circumstances and despite the monsters and despite the rage and despite the stress and the anxiety. Genesis chapter 1 is a chapter about a God that will do anything to pursue a relationship with you. Anything. Don't doubt that. Do not doubt that. Just because it's hard doesn't mean it's over. Just because you feel lonely doesn't mean that you are alone. Have peace in knowing that the hope and the reign of your God is manifest and here now. In 1 Kings chapter 20, so I was reading this chapter late last night and wow. So 1 Kings chapter 20, there's an epic story. Can I tell you the epic story? Okay, I'm excited. For those of us who have cried out and pledged our allegiance to our King Yeshua, we know what the arms of the Father feel like. But far too often, we do get distracted just like Peter, and we forget what the arms of the Father feel like even though they're holding us tightly. That's something that I dare say happens to too many of us. The scripture says he's still here. He's still surrounding you, despite how hard it is. Still there. And he never once got off of his throne and walked away. In 1 Kings chapter 20, there's an epic story involving King Ahab, the king of Israel at the time. And he was married to that old girl, Jesse, you know. And he's being attacked by Ben-Hadad, a big army led by Ben-Hadad from Edom or Rome. And Ahab, at first, he's kind of a pushover because the king's like, I want you to give me all the gold and all the people and everything. And Ahab's like, I don't want to give you all the gold. But then he walks back and he tells the elders of the city and they're like, no, we're not. No, he can't have it. What are you doing? Like, no, he can't have us and he can't have our gold. Like, stop it. And so he gets a

little bit of courage later in the chapter. And there's a moment in the story, it's awesome, where Ben-Hadad and Ahab, so the king of Aram and the king of Israel, they're sending messengers to each other. And it's like taunting. It's like they started a Twitter war just right there in the Near East. It's absolutely amazing. And Ben-Hadad, he sends his message saying, like, I'm going to wipe out Samaria off the map. Like, there won't even be enough dirt left to hand to the people. No. Like, I'm going to wipe all of you and everything. There won't be anything left. And then Ahab has my new favorite line, almost, in the Bible. He has this just... Here. This is Ahab's response to this king, right? This king that is surrounding them. I'm going to take everything of your own. Your wife, your kids, your people. I'm going to destroy them all. Do... the king of Israel answered go tell him one who puts on his armor should not boast like the one who takes it off now we go like wow and if you don't get it I had to explain it to people if you don't get it what he's saying is he says the soldier who's about to go into battle shouldn't boast like the soldier who returned to battle with blood all over his sword and left you in the field who gets to take off his armor Sit down in victory. That's awesome. Okay, so there's a battle right and the whole time God's with him like God promised to protect a have during this time so there is a battle and and Israel's victorious after this like just and they had been a had been Haydad then tells his officers and he says, you know, why the battle we just just took place was on the hills and And you know, their God does give them power, obviously, but their God, their God is only the God of the hills only. Nah, we're going to fight them in the valleys. We're going to fight them in the lowest parts, strategically, so we can get our chariots and all this stuff, big missiles and stuff. We can lay all this out in the valleys. Their God is the God of the hills only, not the valleys, so we're going to fight them in the valleys with chariots and arrows and horses, and they can't win there. We will overtake them. So this huge, huge army positions themselves around Israel. And Israel is described in the chapter as two little small flocks of goats among the armies that are surrounding the hillsides, right? It doesn't look good, in other words. And is the Bible speaking to anybody else today? Like, this is amazing. I love it. So here's what happened. Here's what happened. The battle commences. We have these two little flocks of goats sitting here. And there's hundreds of thousands, all these men, and they're fixing to come down on them, right? The man of God, the prophet, came up and told the king of Israel, this is what the Lord says. Because there remains, think the Lord is the God of the hills and not the God of the valleys. I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the Lord. For seven days they camped opposite one another. And on the seventh day the battle was joined. So seven. What's the first instance where we see something about seven days? Creation, right? And creation builds up to the seventh day climactic thing. And what happens in the seventh day? This is when God rests like on his throne. The imagery is that he sits down and rules over his good creation, right? Everything is final victory, if you will. Once the seven days was complete, the Israelites inflicted 100,000 casualties of their man-foot soldiers in one day. They overtook them. Why did they overtake them? Because our God is not one that is limited in power or might. He's not only the supreme in a certain area. No, it says here, he doesn't just have authority in just like over here or up here or down here. And then I got to watch out when I go over here because, oh, no. No, that's not what the Bible says. He is not all powerful only when things are going good. Let it be known today that our God is the God of both the hills and the valleys. No matter what enemy, no matter what monster you are facing, no matter if it seems like they have the upper hand over No matter if you find yourself low in a valley in your life right now, surrounded, no escape, there is no way I'm going to get through this. You look at that monster that you're facing and you say, no, no. One who puts on his armor should not boast

like the one who takes it off. I serve Yahweh. He is my God. He is the God of the hills and he is the God of the valleys. And he will see me through this battle. That's what the Bible testifies about you. As Christians, we know this truth. We know that the truth of the power of God, and we are loyal to that kingdom. We're loyal to his kingdom. Don't ever forget that. The power of God is what makes the gospel message credible. He reigns. He reigns. And the worship team, you guys can come up. We can conclude. I don't know where you're at today. I don't know what things you may be facing in your life. big monsters of chaos that the world tells you there is no hope from, that the world tells you you cannot escape from, that the world tells you, oh, if you don't get out of this, peace will never, never come to fruition again in your life. And that's simply not true. That's simply not true. Just because it's hard doesn't mean it's over. There is still a God that reigns on his throne. He never left. His reign, he is all sovereign. And I hope that this is a reminder for you to recommit yourself to that truth of God's word. So if you'd please stand, we'll conclude. We'll conclude services the same way that we entered in, and that is through worship. And I invite you, I invite you to sing. I invite you to raise your hands. I invite you to, maybe you don't want to talk to God. I invite you to worship the King of Kings. The one who created all and manages all. And if you need prayer today, guys, we have a prayer team on both sides of the room. You will have someone that will walk beside you into the throne room of God and be there for you. And I invite you to take advantage of that as well. This is what we're here as a community. Alvina Mocano, our father, our king, father, we thank you for this time together. Father, I ask that you would continue Father, you're never going to stop. Father, we just thank you for being dedicated and pursuing us. No matter where we find ourselves, no matter what doubts we have in our life, no matter what fears that pop up, no matter how anxiety has ruled our life for so long, Father, we thank you for being the dedicated king that will never stop pursuing us. We know that you are God of the hills and the valleys, over everything that would dare make us doubt. Your love endures forever. In the Yeshua's name we pray. Amen. Shalom. I'm Matthew Vanderels and I hope you enjoyed this message. Founded in Truth exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we would love to hear from you. Send us a message through our contact form on our website and let us know how God has used this ministry to edify your faith and relationship with Him. Don't forget to subscribe by clicking here. And if you'd like to donate to this ministry and be a part of what God is doing through it, you can donate through our website at www.foundedintruth.com or by clicking here. We thank you for your continued support and we look forward to next time. Shalom.

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