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I Know That My Redeemer Lives

A Study of Job 19:23-27

Gary Henry

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Introduction

- A. The “problem of pain” is one of universal concern — it touches everybody sooner or later.
- B. And the problem of pain is more than just a philosophical question.
 - 1. When suffering enters our lives, we cry out for *relief* — and when relief doesn’t come, we beg for an *explanation*.
 - 2. Our means of making a living is suddenly taken away. A child dies a tragic death. We learn that we have a terminal illness. A family member leaves the Lord and plunges into a life of sin.
 - 3. Hardships like these can tear our lives apart, and when they do, *God does not explain to us personally WHY our hearts had to be broken so painfully*.
 - 4. Faced with this agony, more than a few people have left the faith — *how can a good God exist if these atrocities are allowed to happen?*
- C. No book in the Bible speaks to the issue of *unexplained suffering* any more than the Book of Job, and no passage in Job speaks to the issue more powerfully than **19:23-27**.
 - 1. **Verse 25**, in which Job cries, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth,” is certainly one of the great texts in the Old Testament.
 - 2. If we properly understand it and courageously apply it, **Job 19:25** can be a strong part of the foundation of our faith — it can make the difference between hope and despair.
- D. In this study, our review of the passage will be divided into three sections:
 - 1. We will discuss the meaning of the passage its original context.

2. We will notice two factors that make the passage especially striking.
3. We will apply the passage to our situation today.

I. THE MEANING OF THE PASSAGE

- A. For all its greatness, **Job 19:23-27** is *one of the hardest texts in the Old Testament*.
1. It is hard to translate, in one or two places the Hebrew text may have been miscopied, and almost every phrase in the passage can be taken in more than one way. (A comparison of even a few modern translations will show marked differences in how the details of the passage can be understood.)
 2. So the passage needs to be approached with great care.
 3. Despite the difficulties, however, the main point of Job's declaration stands out clearly.
 4. So we will be studying the passage to see *what it was that Job declared concerning God*.
- B. In **19:1-22**, Job had been responding to the discourse of Bildad who, along with two other friends, Eliphaz and Zophar, had reasoned that the tribulations which had overwhelmed Job were simply God's response to sins that Job must have committed.
1. Job was being chastened for his sins, they had argued — and not only that, but the magnitude of the chastening meant that his sins must have been quite serious.
 2. Against that charge, Job had maintained his innocence.
 3. He was not *a perfect man*, of course, but he knew himself to be *a godly man*. He knew himself to be the kind of person he was described as being in **1:1**: "blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil." Cf. **1:8**; **2:3**.
 4. In a court of law, Job could have sworn, "I, Job, do solemnly aver that I have committed no such transgression as to warrant the catastrophe that has befallen me" (Archer, 74).
- C. Job did not know what the reason for his suffering *was*, but he knew one thing it was *not*, and that was the sinfulness that his friends were falsely attributing to him.
1. Under their onslaught, Job had stood his ground, steadfastly defending his integrity. His friends were being unfair to him — and cruelly so.
 2. "Have pity on me," he said, "have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has struck me! Why do you persecute me as God does, and are not satisfied with my flesh?" (**vv.21,22**).
 3. The hand of God had struck him. God was persecuting him.
 4. He had no idea why, and from his vantage point it all looked quite unjust, but his friends were only making matters worse by falsely accusing him.
- D. So at this point in the book, Job's argument was something like this: *I am suffering horribly. God, who could at least have kept this from happening, is ultimately responsible, but I do not know why He has chosen for me to suffer so. I see nothing about this situation that would make it anything less than an injustice to me, and my friends, who should be standing by me, are*

standing against me.

1. Such was Job's plea in the middle of his ordeal — *but no one seemed willing to listen or to agree that he might be right.*
 2. So Job wished that his words might be written down — later (perhaps after he was dead and gone) what he had said might be remembered and it might be seen that his cause was just.
- E. “*Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever!*” (vv.23,24).
1. In a series of three progressively stronger statements, Job says that he wishes a *permanent record* might be made of his words:
 - a. That they might be written down rather than just spoken.
 - b. That they might be inscribed on a scroll, which is a more durable medium.
 - c. That they might be chiseled into stone with an iron stylus and filled with lead, thus making a record as permanent as any human record could be.
 2. What Job is doing here amounts to the same thing as when we use the expression, “Mark my words.” What we mean is, “Remember what I’ve said. Write it down. The time will come when the truthfulness of what I’ve said will be borne out.”
- F. Job's desire for a written, permanent record of his plea would have been meaningless if he had thought the future would never bring anything different than the present. But here is where Job's bedrock, end-of-the-day confidence in God shone through the cracks in the clouds around him.
1. Job was a hurting man whose pain had made him miserable, perplexed, and even angry.
 2. But even at the worst of his ordeal, ***he still hung on and reached forward to the future.***
 3. The present made no sense to Job, but he doggedly refused to let go of a future in which there would be some relief and vindication, however distant that future might be.
 4. In some of the most powerful language in the Old Testament, Job then gave three reasons why he wished his words could be written down, each expressing a confidence in something he knew about the future:
- G. “*For I know that my Redeemer lives*” (v.25a).
1. The first confidence Job had was that **there was one who would redeem him.**
 - a. “Redeemer” (NKJV) is a translation of the Hebrew *gōēl*. Other possible translations are avenger, vindicator, defender, or deliverer.
 - 1) Many versions capitalize their translation of *gōēl* in this verse, indicating their editorial decision that the term here refers to God.
 - 2) Other versions leave the word uncapitalized, indicating the possibility that Job may not have been speaking of God.
 - 3) Before we make our own decision about that, we need to look at how *gōēl* was used elsewhere in the Old Testament.
 - b. The primary use of the noun *gōēl* had to do with family law. These terms referred

- to “the duty of a relative to protect and defend the rights of a member of his family who was in trouble” (Gibson, 151).
- 1) If a person had to sell himself into slavery to pay his debts, a near relative could redeem him - **Lev. 25:47-49**.
 - 2) If a person had to sell his property to pay his debts, his closest relative was to be given the first opportunity to buy the land and keep it in the family - **Lev. 25:25; Ruth 4:1-6**.
 - 3) The most dramatic case, of course, involved murder: a kinsman avenged a wrongful death by killing the one who was guilty - **Num. 35:9-34; Deut. 19:1-13**.
- c. But *gōēl* could also be used of God.
- 1) In **Isa. 49:26**, God said to His people, “I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine. All flesh shall know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, and your Redeemer (*gōēl*), the Mighty One of Jacob.” Cf. **Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 49:7; 54:5; 63:16**.
 - 2) In **Jer. 50:33,34**, this hope was given to those who were facing captivity in Babylon: “Thus says the LORD of hosts: The children of Israel were oppressed, along with the children of Judah; all who took them captive have held them fast; they have refused to let them go. Their Redeemer (*gōēl*) is strong; the LORD of hosts is His name. He will thoroughly plead their case, that He may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.”
 - 3) But the nearest parallel to **Job 19:25** may be **Psa. 19:14**, where David prayed, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer (*gōēl*).”
- d. Looking at all of these passages, the common idea is that of *deliverance from trouble*.
- 1) Sometimes the *gōēl* was an earthly kinsman; sometimes it was God.
 - 2) Sometimes a price had to be paid; sometimes it did not.
 - 3) But the essential idea is that a *gōēl*, or redeemer, *comes to the aid of a loved one and solves the particular problem that has arisen*.
- e. In the passage we are studying, Job declares his confidence that no matter how terrible his troubles might turn out to be, he still had a *gōēl*, a near-kinsman redeemer, who would deal with the difficulty. But of whom does he speak: God or someone else?
- 1) The choice may not be as clear as the traditional interpretation makes it seem, but after studying and restudying the passage, I believe the traditional interpretation is in fact correct.
 - 2) **Verse 25** is part of a section that clearly refers to God. If all we had was the bare statement “I know that my redeemer lives,” the question would be more difficult. But **v.25** can hardly be separated from **vv.26,27**. Andersen is right when he says, “[V]erses 25-27 are so tightly knit that there should be no doubt that the *Redeemer is God*” (194).
 - 3) Job is affirming his confidence that, when all was said and done, right would

- be done in regard to his suffering, and that the One who would take care of this would be none other than God himself.
- f. But after having laid the responsibility for his suffering at God's feet (19:1-22), what sense would it make for Job to look to this same God for ultimate vindication? Here, I believe, is an area where we have something to learn from Job about the meaning of both total honesty and real faith.
- 1) First of all, real faith is neither blind faith nor wishful thinking; it is based on solid *evidence*.
 - a) Job's confidence in God was founded on the past words and deeds by which God had *proven* His trustworthiness, not only in Job's past but before Job was born.
 - b) At the end of the book, Job will say to God that, prior to his ordeal of suffering, he had "heard of You by the hearing of the ear" (42:5). Job's faith was based on the testimony of witnesses to God's past words and deeds.
 - 2) But second, with such a faith Job could look beyond the confusing circumstances that surrounded him at the moment.
 - a) No matter how much long-term, large-perspective evidence may exist for God and His goodness, *immediate* circumstances can hide that evidence from us.
 - b) At night, for example, there is no *immediate* evidence that such a thing as daylight exists, but it would be a fool who quit believing in daylight just because there was no evidence for it at night. When it's dark, an unbeliever might say, "Where is the evidence now that daylight exists?" and a believer would have no answer to that question — *at the moment*. But what about past evidence? Past evidence doesn't suddenly cease to exist when a moment arrives containing questions can't be answered.
- g. Job was more honest than most of us would have been about the unanswerability of the questions that surrounded him.
- 1) He refused to sugarcoat those questions with pious platitudes.
 - 2) To the contrary, he pressed the issue of the seeming unfairness of what was happening to him.
 - 3) From what he could see at the moment, there was no acceptable reason why he should be suffering so, and he spoke about that with extreme frankness.
 - 4) But even as he was saying, "God, You have struck me for no good reason that I can see," he could also say, "God, Your reasoning is beyond all earthly reason, and I rest my hopes on You. I trust that You are my Redeemer, my Near-Kinsman, who will someday do what is right about whatever is wrong."
- h. There is no inconsistency between Job's charges against God and his confidence that God would still be his Redeemer.
- 1) Commenting on Job, C. S. Lewis said it well: "No explanation of the problem of unjust suffering is . . . given: that is not the point of the poem. The point is that the man who accepts our ordinary standard of good and by it hotly criticizes divine justice receives the divine approval: the orthodox, pious people who palter with that standard in the attempt to justify God are condemned.

Apparently the way to advance from our imperfect apprehension of justice to the absolute justice is not to throw our imperfect apprehensions aside but boldly to go on applying them. Just as the pupil advances to more perfect arithmetic not by throwing his multiplication table away but by working it for all it is worth” (69,70).

- 2) Job declared his faith that God was his Redeemer at a time when he was anguished and uncertain about many things. Yet his honesty was his salvation: he was too honest to renege on what he knew about God.
 - a) He hadn't a clue why he had been hurt so badly, but he was *certain that there will be an ultimate vindication of goodness and truth.*
 - b) As to the specifics, he knew fewer of the details than we do with our fuller revelation of God, but whatever details he may not have understood, Job had a vice-grip on one thing: **God was God, and God would do what was right — sooner or later.**
- 3) His faith was like that of the three Hebrew men who were about to be cast into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace: “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter, if that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (**Dan. 3:16-18**). Even if God did not do what, in their judgment, seemed to be the right thing, the evidence for His goodness was still what it always had been, and they would not back away from that evidence.
- 4) Similarly, Job could say of God, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him” (**13:15**).
- i. Where Job went wrong, of course, was in overestimating what he knew of the world.
 - 1) If all he had said was, “Based on what I know of the facts (and that is very little), it appears that I have been wronged by God,” that would have been one thing.
 - 2) But in his frustration, Job went further and talked as if what he knew was *all there was to know*, and therefore that God had *surely* wronged him.
 - 3) God was patient with this, of course, since Job truly did love God, but in the end God had to chasten Job and remind him that he actually knew *very little* of the ways of the world.
 - 4) Once Job's perspective had been adjusted, he could see that when any human being says, “Based on what I know,” what he knows is very little indeed.
 - 5) And so Job repented, confessing that he had been wrong to forget *the gap between his knowledge and God's knowledge* - **42:1-6**.
- j. But it was not wrong for Job to express his confusion, and even his anger, in the throes of an ordeal that had no apparent explanation.
 - 1) His confusion and anger were very different from those of a blasphemer or a rebel against God's will.
 - 2) At the bitterest moment of his bewilderment, with unanswered questions

that made him angry even to think about, Job could still say, “I know that my Redeemer lives.”

3) That’s not inconsistency; that’s real faith.

H. “*And He shall stand at last on the earth*” (v.25b).

1. The second confidence Job had was that **his Redeemer would have the last say**.
2. “Stand” is probably a legal term, as when a witness “stands up” in court to set the record straight.
 - a. The Revised English Bible translates this verse, “I know that my vindicator lives and that he will rise last to speak in court.”
 - b. This rendering is consistent with the role of the *gōʿēl*, the redeemer, as the one who defends the legal cause of a person who has suffered.
 - c. In **Prov. 23:10,11**, for example, we read, “Do not remove the ancient landmark, nor enter the fields of the fatherless; for their Redeemer (*gōʿēl*) is mighty; He will plead their cause against you.”
 - d. Job is confident that God will do this for him. When all of the other witnesses have had their say, God will take the stand “at last.”
3. History may have its ups and downs — *but God will have the last say*.
4. The truth will be known — *and right will be done*.

I. “*And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another*” (vv.26,27a).

1. The third confidence Job had was that **the time would come when he would see God**.
2. This part of the passage is notoriously difficult. To illustrate how differently the passage can be translated, we need only compare the King James Version and the American Standard Version:
 - a. “And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (KJV).
 - b. “And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God; Whom I, even I, shall see, on my side, and mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger” (ASV).
3. Time does not permit a detailed examination of all the difficulties here, but a few points may be noticed.
 - a. “After my skin is destroyed.” The KJV needlessly inserts “worms” into the text. The point is simply that Job’s skin (and by extension, his body) was wasting away. He had “painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (2:7), and he foresaw a time when he would die. The language literally means “when my skin has been struck off.”
 - b. “In my flesh I shall see God.” The Hebrew preposition *min* (“from”) can mean “away from,” and so the ASV translates this “without my flesh I shall see God.” Archer, however, comments, “In some contexts *min* may mean ‘without,’ but never with the verb to see. Always *min* indicates the vantage point from which the seeing or viewing is done” (75). So Job is saying, “Even after my skin has been stripped off

- my body, I will see God in my own flesh” (God’s Word translation).
- c. “Whom I shall see for myself.” “For myself” is literally “to me” and may be taken in a benefactive sense: “for me” or “on my side.” So the Living Bible translates, “Then he will be on my side!” But Andersen says, “Whom I shall see for myself” cannot be improved on” (194).
 - d. “My eyes shall behold, and not another.” “Another” is from *zar* which can mean “stranger.” It would be possible to take the word as the object of the verb rather than as a second subject, in which case the meaning would be, “I shall see him not as a stranger, but as a friend.” But there is no compelling reason to reject the conventional translation.
4. All things considered, the NKJV has done a commendable job of negotiating the various difficulties in translating **vv.26,27a**: “*And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.*”
 5. But can Job really be saying what he seems to be saying? So far back in Old Testament history, is he expressing what would amount to a faith in a bodily resurrection after death?
 6. Andersen offers several good reasons for answering in the affirmative: “First, there would be no need for Job to deposit a written testimony, if he expects to be vindicated before he dies. Secondly, the word translated *earth*, as used in Job, is constantly connected with Sheol, and the statement that the Redeemer *lives* is a direct answer to the fact that a man *dies* (**14:10**). The repetition of the word *after* (-wards) in the prominent position at the beginning of **verses 25b** and **26a** suggests an interval, or even, with the meaning *at last*, something eschatological. Finally, the argument that Job does not expect personal reconstitution as a man, because this idea entered Judaism only towards the very end of the biblical period, can be dismissed in the light of much recent research that shows interest in the after-life as an ancient concern for Israelite faith” (194).
 7. I personally believe this passage contains one of the earliest references in the Bible to a bodily resurrection.
 - a. Job might not have known what we know of the resurrection (cf. **1 Pt. 1:10-12**), and when he spoke of seeing God in his flesh, he probably spoke more truth than he knew he was speaking (cf. **Jn. 11:49-52**).
 - b. Nevertheless, Job seems to have believed that the time would come when, after his present body had been destroyed, he would have some kind of a body in which he would see God.
 - c. I believe the Living Bible is correct in its rendering of **v.26**: “I know that after this body has decayed, this body shall see God!”
 - d. As contradictory as it sounds, that is exactly what the doctrine of the bodily resurrection asks us to believe.
 - 1) If we die before the Lord returns, then the body in which we now live will decompose and our spirits will go back to God who gave them - **Eccl. 12:7; 1 Thess. 4:13,14**.
 - 2) But at the resurrection, our bodies — our *bodies*, no less — will be raised. They will be changed into glorious bodies that are no longer corruptible or mortal

- (1 Cor. 15:50-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-4), but they will still be *our* bodies, as hard to understand as that may be (1 Cor. 15:35).
- e. After His resurrection, Jesus had a body that was gloriously different from his previous body, but it was still His body.
 - 1) There was some discontinuity between the before and after, but there was also some continuity.
 - 2) When His disciples saw Him, they probably noticed wonderful differences, but they also recognized His body as being the body of Jesus - Jn. 20:24-29.
 - 3) A similar transformation will happen to us, if we are found in Christ at the resurrection. So John says, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2).
 8. So to sum up, Job 19:26,27 is hard to translate. But despite the difficulties of translation, the clear emphasis of the passage is plain: *Job expected to see God*.
 9. Job had what David (Psa. 17:15; 73:23,24; 139:8) and all the other great fathers of the faith had: a determined confidence that *death would not break off a communion with God that had begun in this life*.
- J. “How my heart yearns within me!” (v.27b).
1. The thought of seeing God was almost more than Job could bear. “He nearly swooned at the thought” (Ellison, 69).
 2. To actually see the God who was his Redeemer was more than a mere preference; it was a heart-wrenching passion.
 3. And so it should be with us today.

II. TWO FACTORS THAT MAKE THE PASSAGE STRIKING

- A. What Job says in 19:23-27 is impressive by any account, but just how extraordinary it is may not be seen until we notice a couple of things about it:
- B. *Job was a man who had serious questions about God*.
 1. We sometimes do with Job 19:25 what we often do with great texts: we pull it out of context and preach it as a stand-alone principle of truth. Doing this makes Job look like a man who, in the midst of trials and tribulations, still had a buoyant attitude and a triumphant spirit: “I know that my Redeemer lives!” And when we’re suffering, we foolishly wish that we could have as few questions and doubts as Job.
 2. But as we have already suggested, real faith does not mean having no questions.
 - a. Job was racked with uncertainty, and his gritty declaration of faith in vv.23-27 should be seen in its context.
 - b. Job 19 is not a bright, sunny chapter; it is filled with a discouragement that few of us have ever felt.
 - c. When he said, “I know that my Redeemer lives,” Job was not pouring pious syrup

over his problems; he was wrestling with God, much as Jacob had to do in **Gen. 32:22-32**.

- d. What was happening to him made no sense, and he was willing to say the same kind of thing that Abraham had said to God, “Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (**Gen. 18:25**). Cf. **Hab. 1:2-4,12-14**.
3. We need to understand that the solid foundations of our faith will sometimes be hidden from us; there will be too many tears in our eyes to see the evidence that has been so plain in the past. But that does not mean that faith is any less an option at those times.
 - a. Real faith means doing what Job did: hanging on in the darkness to evidence we remember having seen in the light.
 - b. And if it comes to it, we must be willing to do what Job did in **19:23-27**.
 - 1) No matter how discouraged we may be at a given moment, we must be willing to reach up out of the muck and the mire and hold on for dear life to the truth that God is God, whether we feel like it or not.
 - 2) “I believe in the sun even if it isn’t shining. I believe in love even when I am alone. I believe in God even when He is silent” (World War II Refugee).
 - c. There will be times, maybe few, when our faith is easy and enjoyable, but there will also be times, maybe many, when our faith will be no more than sheer, dogged determination.
 - d. Against all reason that we can see from within our straitened circumstances, we must be willing to say what Job said, having heard the testimony of God in the past: “I know that my Redeemer lives.”

C. *Job was a godly man.*

1. One reason Job’s friends may have been so eager to find wrongdoing in his life is that it would have given them a measure of security to do so.
2. After all, Job’s sufferings were not the kind of thing anybody would want to happen to themselves, and it would have been reassuring to them to know that Job was suffering only because he had committed serious sin.
 - a. As long as they avoided sins like Job’s, they could feel protected against hardships like his.
 - b. But what if Job’s sufferings were not the consequence of sin? What if that kind of thing could happen to a *godly* person?
 - c. They were godly people themselves, at least on some level, and the possibility that a man as godly as Job could suffer that horribly would have been an unsettling thought.
3. Because we have the information in chapters one and two that Job’s friends did not have, we know that Job was a godly man, innocent of the charges they were making against him, and that Job’s sufferings were not the consequence of any sin that he had committed. What this means is simply this: *godly people can suffer as painfully in this world as anybody else.*

- a. It is simply not true that the godly man will have no heartaches.
- b. In fact, Job's sufferings came upon him *because* he was a godly man, and if such things befell a man like Job, are any of us exempt?
- c. Are we anything but naive if we think that we are going to get through this life without hurting and grieving and being tested?
- d. When we have given the Lord our best and still have our hearts broken, Peter would say to us, "Do not think it strange" (1 Pt. 4:12).

III. APPLICATIONS TO US

A. *It is not wrong to long for vindication.*

1. It is a fact that bad things can happen to us in this world, and when they happen at the hands of other people, it is not wrong to cry out for God to do what is right about the wrongs that we have suffered.
 - a. Job was mistreated by his friends, and he was right to cry out to God to defend his cause.
 - b. David, in the imprecatory psalms, often voiced similar sentiments - **Psa. 69:22-28; 109:6-20**; etc.
 - c. In the New Testament, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "It is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God" (**2 Thess. 1:6-8**).
 - d. And in the Revelation given to John, those who had been slain for the word of God "cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'" (**Rev. 6:10**).
2. Admittedly, the prayer for God to "avenge our blood" is a dangerous prayer. Few can pray it without hypocrisy or without letting sinful thoughts creep in.
3. But on the other hand, if we are too nice to hate what God hates, then we've become far too nice.

B. *It is possible to have the kind of integrity that Job had.*

1. As we have said, Job was not sinless, for none have lived sinlessly in this world except the Lord. But Job was something it is possible for a human being to be: *he was blameless* - **1:1,8; 2:3**.
 - a. If you wanted to make a charge against Job, you could find nothing to charge him with but the common foibles that all people are prone to.
 - b. In that respect, Job was like Daniel - **Dan. 6:4,5**.
2. It is high time we understood that a godly, faithful life is possible.
3. It was so even before the coming of Christ, as evidenced by the commendation of Zacharias and Elizabeth, John the Baptist's parents: "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (**Lk. 1:6**).

4. And blamelessness is not merely an *option*; we are *commanded* to lead blameless lives. “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (**Phil. 2:14,15**). Cf. **1 Tim. 3:2**; **2 Pt. 3:14**; etc.
5. Often, “I’m only human” is not an expression of humility; it’s only an excuse for irresponsibility.
6. We need to quit making excuses and get busy living the kind of life that Job lived — and Enoch and Abraham and Daniel and many others.
7. We need to build the kind of record that can be defended as steadfastly as Job was able to defend his integrity.

C. *We need to be honest enough to see when our integrity is NOT what Job’s was.*

1. Job was right, but that doesn’t mean that we are.
2. Before we get carried away defending our blamelessness and calling upon God to blast our enemies, we need to consider that, in our case, God might say our enemies are right and we are wrong!
3. It’s easy to *assume* our own rightness and our enemies’ wrongness, but that might not be the truth of the matter.
4. When the Judge considers all the evidence and gives His perfect judgment, those of us who have called loudly for justice may find that what we need is not justice but mercy.
5. So while it is possible to be in Job’s position and know that we have been mistreated, it takes a person of more than average honesty to see when that is true and when it is not.
6. The people of Malachi’s day looked forward to the coming of the day of the Lord, when He would punish the Gentiles. And that day was indeed coming, but it would hold some serious surprises for many who thought they were the “good” folks.
 - a. “The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts” (**Mal. 3:1**).
 - b. “But,” the prophet added, “who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?” (**Mal. 3:2**).
7. The day of justice will be a fearful day, no less for many churchgoers than for the atheists and the apostates. Cf. **Rom. 2:17-24**.

D. *There MUST be a Redeemer who will someday stand up and do what is right.*

1. There is much about the world as it stands today that does not make any moral sense.
2. The world is full of suffering, and much of it is suffered by people who have done nothing to bring it upon themselves.
3. In short, much of what happens in the world is *wrong* and requires *vindication*.
4. We may bear it for now in the hope that justice will be done later, but if there were never to be any vindication at all, we would have to say that this life is worse than no life at all.
5. There MUST be a Redeemer who will at last stand upon the earth, or else life is meaningless.

6. There is no safe middle ground, and we need to be honest enough to confront that reality.

Conclusion

- A. The hope of the gospel of Christ is that **there is indeed a Redeemer** who will stand up and do what is right about all that is wrong!
 1. Job could not have known much of what we know about the kind of redemption Christ would accomplish, but he did not really need to know the details.
 2. He simply needed to trust — as he surely did — that at some point in the future God would act on behalf of those who had been faithful to Him.
- B. God has placed monumental evidence on record, above all in the resurrection of His Son, that He can be trusted. And He asks us, despite whatever momentary doubts may assail us, to hang on to two truths: (1) His *existence*, and (2) His *benevolence*. Cf. **Hb. 11:6**.
 1. He asks us not only to believe these things intellectually but to be *confident* of them and to *entrust* ourselves to Him when we are suffering.
 2. Oh, how we need to learn the meaning of entrusting ourselves to God - **Hb. 13:5,6; 1 Pt. 5:6,7**.
 3. How we need to be able to say what Paul said, “For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (**2 Tim. 1:12**).
 4. And how we need to do what Peter said, “Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (**1 Pt. 4:19**).
- C. Freedom from suffering is not here and now.
 1. This world will never again be what it was before sin did its damage, and to live in this world is to hurt. The Lord lived perfectly in this world, but that didn’t keep Him from suffering (**Jn. 11:35**), and living as His people won’t keep us from suffering.
 2. So our expectations of life in this world shouldn’t be too high — we shouldn’t expect to do much more than *groan*.
 3. “For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance” (**Rom. 8:22-25**).
- D. In the here and now, if we ever quit groaning, the devil will have us. Cf. **2 Cor. 5:1-8**.

1. Most of us will need some “thorn in the flesh” to keep us from getting too comfortable this side of heaven.
 2. Our thorns may not be any more comfortable than Job’s boils, and when we cry for relief, God’s answer may be what it has often been when His people have cried for relief: “Not yet. Hold on a while longer.”
 3. If our attitude is what it ought to be, we will think about suffering as Paul did. We will look upon anything that pries our grip loose from this world as something to be thankful for.
 4. “Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12:8-10).
- E. God does not plan to renovate this world and take the pain out of it; He plans to destroy it and give us a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells - 2 Pt. 3:10-13.
1. Until that time comes, we should be prepared to suffer.
 2. Our hope must not be in the betterment of this world, whether by our own or anyone else’s effort, but in Christ’s ability to overcome the world.
 3. “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace,” He said to the apostles. “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33).
- F. So when we find ourselves in some predicament like Job’s, even if only to a smaller extent, the thing that will get us through is the same kind of grit that he had, the same determination not to give up, and the same through-it-all faith that God will settle every account in the end.
- G. It’s the kind of faith pictured so powerfully in Maltbie D. Babcock’s great hymn, *This Is My Father’s World*:
- This is my Father’s world, O let me ne’er forget
That though the wrong oft seems so strong, **God is the Ruler yet.**
- H. *Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

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