

I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES - JOB 19:25

Introduction

- A. Text: **Job 19:25**.
- B. The “problem of pain” is a problem of universal concern — it touches everybody sooner or later.
 - 1. 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, etc.
 - 2. 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.*
- 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**.
- D. **Verse 25**, in which Job cries, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth,” is one of the great texts in the OT — *it can make the difference between hope and despair.*

I. THE MEANING OF THE PASSAGE

- A. 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. Against this charge, Job maintained his blamelessness: *I am suffering horribly. God, who could at least have kept this from happening, is ultimately responsible, but I don’t 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.*
 - 2. That was Job’s plea — *but no one seemed willing to listen or to agree that he might be right.*
- B. *“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. 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.
 - 2. 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.
- C. *“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 *gō’ēl*. Other possible translations are avenger, vindicator, defender, or deliverer.
 - b. In the OT, the primary use of the noun *gō’ēl* had to do with family law. It referred to the duty of a relative to defend the rights of a family member who was in trouble.
 - 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 *gō’ēl* could also be used of God - **Psa. 19:14**. Cf. **Isa. 49:26; Jer. 50:33,34**.
 - d. Looking at all of these passages, the common idea is that of *deliverance from trouble*.
 - 1) Sometimes the *gō’ēl* was an earthly kinsman; sometimes it was God.

- 2) Sometimes a price had to be paid; sometimes it did not.
 - 3) But always the basic idea is that a *gō'ēl*, 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 be, he still had a *gō'ēl*, a redeemer, who would deal with the difficulty.
2. But who is the redeemer to whom Job refers? In a context (especially **vv.26,27**) that clearly refers to God, it is almost certain that Job is identifying his "redeemer" as God Himself.
- D. *"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.
 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*.
- E. *"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, but all things considered, the NKJV has done a commendable job of dealing with the various difficulties in translating **vv.26,27a**.
 3. But can Job really be saying what he seems to be saying? So far back in OT history, is he expressing what would amount to a faith in a bodily resurrection after death?
 4. 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) 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**.
 - 2) A similar transformation will happen to us, if we are found in Christ at the resurrection.
 - 3) "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**).
 5. Job had what David (**Psa. 17:15; 73:23,24; 139:8**) and the other patriarchs had: faith that *death would not break off a communion with God that they had enjoyed in this life*.
- F. *"How my heart yearns within me!" (v.27b).* To actually see the God who was his Redeemer was more than a mere preference; it was a heart-wrenching passion — 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. Real faith does not mean having no questions.
 2. 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.
 3. But that does not mean that faith is any less an option at those times.
 4. "I believe in the sun even when 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. *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.
 3. But if Job was a godly man, that would mean that *godly people can suffer as painfully as anybody else in the world.*
 4. Are we anything but naive if we think that we are going to get through this life without hurting and grieving and being tested?
 5. 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. 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**).
 2. And in Revelation, 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**).
 3. 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.
 4. But on the other hand, if we are too nice to hate what God hates, then we're just too nice.
- B. *It is possible to have the kind of integrity that Job had.*
1. Job was not sinless, but *he was blameless* - **1:1,8; 2:3**.
 2. It is high time we understood that a godly, faithful life is possible.
 3. Often, "I'm only human" is not an expression of humility; it's only an excuse for irresponsibility.
 4. 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.
- C. *But 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 calling upon God to punish our enemies and do "justice," we need to consider the possibility that we may be the ones who are in the wrong.

3. 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 - **Mal. 3:1,2**.
4. The day of the Lord's justice will be a fearful day, no less for many churchgoers than for the atheists and the apostates. Cf. **Rom. 2:17-24**.

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

1. We may bear injustice 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.
2. There MUST be a Redeemer who will at last stand upon the earth — or else life is unbearable.

Conclusion

- A. The hope of the gospel of Christ is that **there is indeed a Redeemer** who will one day stand up and do what is right about all that has gone wrong!
- 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 the momentary doubts that may assail us, to hang on to two truths: (1) His *existence*, and (2) His *benevolence* - **Hb. 11:6**.
- C. God does not plan to renovate this world or take the pain out of it for His people; He plans to destroy it and give us a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells - **2 Pt. 3:10-13**.
- D. 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.
- E. It's the kind of faith powerfully pictured 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.***
- F. *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!* - **Job 19:23-27**.