

“My Redeemer Lives”

Job 19:23-27

Intro: It is well known that the best way to highlight the beauty and brilliance of a diamond is to place it against a black, velvet cloth. In Job 19 we come across a brilliant diamond of gospel truth and it shines all the more brightly and beautifully against the devastating and dark backdrop of Job’s suffering.

It is a wonderfully appropriate verse for us today. Against the backdrop of a worldwide pandemic, the brilliance and beauty of Easter shines all the more clearly. In the face of death, and all the loneliness and loss death contains - we have a glorious affirmation of a Living Redeemer, and all the victory and blessings He brings.

I. Job’s Condition

In chapter 19, it is clear that Job believes that he is about to die. It seems to him that God has declared war on him (vs 11) and the end is near.

19:12 His troops come on together; they have cast up their siege ramp against me and encamp around my tent.

As Job contemplates his death, he wishes deeply for his words to be recorded.

²³ “Oh that my words were written!

Oh that they were inscribed in a book!

²⁴ Oh that with an iron pen and lead

they were engraved in the rock forever!

Job is planning his gravestone. He has this deep sense that it is important, for justice’s sake, that his words be engraved in a rock. There needs to be an enduring record of what has happened to him, the wrong that was done to him. This will be his epitaph. Though his life will be lost – his voice will still speak. It matters to him that his name and his integrity do not disappear with his body into the grave. His life and his suffering can’t be utterly meaningless. It must matter. Death cannot be allowed to sweep it all away.

In chapter 19, Job records the most painful experiences of his suffering. He highlights the loss, the loneliness and a profound sense of condemnation.

Loss: He has lost everything – his possessions, his children, his health, and his intimate friends and family. He’s lost his status. He was once a revered and respected man – but now his own servants ignore him.

Suffering and dying are experience of loss.

Loneliness: In his book *The Anatomy of Loneliness* Thomas Wolfe writes, "The most tragic, sublime and beautiful expression of loneliness which I have ever read is the Book of Job." (Ash,63). Listen to Job as he grieves his deep alienation from friends and family.

- 13 "He has put my brothers far from me,
and those who knew me are wholly estranged from me.
14 My relatives have failed me, my close friends have forgotten me.....
17 My breath is strange to my wife,
and I am a stench to the children of my own mother.
18 Even young children despise me; when I rise they talk against me.
19 All my intimate friends abhor me,
and those whom I loved have turned against me.

Suffering can be a deeply lonely experience. No one really understands. And dying, is certainly a lonely experience. No matter how many people might be gathered around our death bed, when we leave this life, we go alone – none of our loved ones can walk across that river with us.

But nothing is worse than to feel that God has forsaken and abandoned you. And that's what grieves Job the most.

Condemnation: The most painful experience is the sense that God is against him.

Ash "The deepest question Job faces is, is God for me or against me? Ultimately nothing else matters." (207)

It's the most critical issue in the life of every person. Is God for you – or is he against you? Ultimately, nothing else matters – for life and for eternity. Suffering and dying have ways of bringing this into sharp focus. When times are good, we are busy with so many things, so many seemingly important things. But when we are very sick, when we are told the disease is terminal – the truly essential things come into focus. And none more than this.

And against the black night of Job's loss and loneliness and despair – he discovers a brilliant jewel of gospel hope.

II. Job's Confession

²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

Verse 25 begins with a strong contrast. The word "For" in the ESV is too weak. The Hebrew literally reads, "As for me" and could be best interpreted. "But as for me." (Ps

73:2). We are to see a definitive shift in thought, a clear break from what has preceded. Something has happened in Job's mind and heart.

Hywel Jones, "Some divine illumination has broken through the dark night of his sorrow and Job comes across a deep, unexpected, but glorious conviction."

That is clearly conveyed in the words - "**I Know**". What an unexpected and wonderful thing for Job to say. There are so many things Job does **not** know.

- He doesn't know why God is doing these things to him.
- He doesn't understand why his friends have abandoned him.
- He doesn't know how this story will end.

His world is wrapped in mystery. He is drowning in sea of unanswered questions. But suddenly – there is something he does know. And he knows it with all the conviction and confidence of his mind and heart.

Jones, "He lays claim to a knowledge that is characterized by tremendous, joyful certainty."

There are three truths that make up this rock of conviction.

1. A Redeemer
2. A Vindication
3. A Reward

A. A Redeemer

Before we interpret this word from a New Testament perspective, we need to interpret it from Job's perspective. What did he understand by this term?

A redeemer or 'redeemer-kinsmen' was a common institution in the Old Testament, even before the law of Moses codified it. A redeemer was someone who was tied to you by solemn covenant, usually a relative, who had the responsibility to act and protect you in times of loss or injustice.

Ash, "If you were murdered, he saw to it that your murderer was punished; if your share in the promised land was under threat he safeguarded it, if your widowed wife was childless, he was responsible to provide her with a child so that your name and portion in the land might continue."

The Redeemer is called upon precisely in circumstances of **loss** – loss of life, or property or posterity. And Job has lost all these things. He's lost all his property. In the death of all his children, he has lost his posterity. He has, in every meaningful way, lost his life. All that is left is the burial. But in the face of all this loss – there is a Redeemer, someone, bound to Job by covenant, who was able to protect him from all he seemed to have lost.

A Living Redeemer

"I know that my Redeemer lives."

The idea is not simply that this redeemer is living but that he will live forever. That's the sense of the term. This Redeemer will never die. Clearly Job is not thinking of a mere man - for all men die. His conviction is that, in heaven itself, in the presence of God Himself, stands a person who will never die – and this One has taken Job's cause and concern upon himself by covenant oath.

Consequently, Job's cause will not be lost when Job dies. The presence of an ever-living Redeemer makes all the difference!

H. Jones "Since my Redeemer lives, it doesn't matter if I am dying. There is someone who is for me, who will not forget me, who is standing for me and will act on my behalf."

Job clearly does not have the insight we have as New Testament saints. He does not know the name of this person, he does not know how this could possibly be true – but God has given him the eyes of faith, and he knows it IS true. And it is true, not generically or generally – but true *for him*.

A Personal Redeemer

"**MY** Redeemer lives."

His conviction, you see, is not simply that there is such a Redeemer – but this this ever-living One is HIS personal redeemer. Job can say, He is MY Redeemer. "I am His and He is mine".

"My" is such a little word - but it is the word that makes all the difference. What matters in the hour of our death is not that there is **a** Redeemer. The question is this: Is he **my** Redeemer? Has he undertaken **MY** cause? Has he taken responsibility for my eternal well-being? Is He willing to own me as his own and redeem my life from eternal death and loss? By faith, Job rejoices to say "yes"! My Redeemer lives!

B. Vindication

²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, **and at the last he will stand upon the earth.**

Job has this deep conviction that his Redeemer will take action! The meaning of "stand" is really "stand up". It pertains to a courtroom where a witness rises to his feet to give testimony. Job had served as a judge. He knows the scene intimately. His Redeemer will stand up for him and vindicate him.

One of the themes of Job's suffering is that he cannot meet with God, there is a chasm between Holy God and man the creature – a chasm that can't be crossed. Job can't go to Him, he can't stand in God's presence to present his case. In chapter 9 we saw Job express his deepest wish – "Oh, if only there were an Arbiter, a Mediator. Someone who could put his arm on me and God and reconcile us!"

Well, by faith, Job now is convinced that his wish has been answered. He has come to the glorious confidence that his Redeemer will do just this. His Redeemer will go where Job himself is not able to go, into the very presence of God, to stand in Job's defense, testifying to Job's righteousness and reconcile Job and his God.

The words "**at the last**" give the sense that, in the great trial of Job's life, the word and testimony of this Redeemer will be the last and decisive word. There won't be any witnesses called after Him. His testimony will conclude the trial and seal the verdict!

Job is absolutely convinced that, though it seems that God is, at the moment, against him, the Redeemer will make things right. The Redeemer will stand on the day of his trial and Job will be vindicated! He will be declared righteous, justified in the court of heaven. And he will receive the reward of the righteous.

C. Reward

²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,

²⁷ whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

What did Job mean? The Hebrew is difficult. Is Job referring to the end of time or the end of the book? Did he mean that he would see God when his own flesh was resurrected – or that he would, yet in this life, see God and be vindicated? The Hebrew could mean either. And, in fact, Job did see God in chapters 38ff.

But the important point is Job's underlying conviction – "**I will see God**"! The reason this matters is because this is the **reward** of the righteous. "*Blessed are the pure in heart – for they shall see God.*" Job knows, to the marrow of his bones, that he shall be rewarded with the reward of the righteous. He shall see God!

This is Job's conviction and his consolation. This will happen to him!

"In my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes behold, and not another."

The treasure of this confession is not only that Job will see God – the truth, of course is that on the day of judgement, **every** eye will see God. But the words “**for myself**” can also be translated “on my side”. And the word “**another**” is translated in other places as “stranger”. The meaning is that when Job sees God – God will not say, “I don’t know you.” When he sees God and comes into the presence of God he will be received as a friend, as a beloved child. God will be for him – not against him.

How can he say this when all the evidence seems so clearly to point to the fact that God is NOT for him? His three friends are promising him that God isn’t for him. Nothing could be clearer, to the human eye, than the fact that God is **against** Job! How can he so confidently say that he will see God, he will receive the reward of the righteous, and God is actually **for** him?

It’s all because of the Redeemer. It’s all because his Redeemer lives - and his Redeemer stands in Gods’ very presence and intercedes for him. That’s why Job **knows** that he will see God and will be lovingly received as God’s child and friend. God is for him. His Redeemer lives.

This is so overwhelmingly beautiful to Job that he writes, “*My heart faints within me.*” It is too much. Too good. The weight of the glory is overwhelming.

III. Our Consolation

This is precisely how we should feel about the message of Easter. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is God’s pronouncement over this wicked and dying world that He has provided us with a Redeemer!

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

He is an Ever-Living Redeemer.

- **Romans 6:9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.
- Rev 1:18, Jesus introduces himself as “The Living One. I am alive forevermore.”

And He stands in the presence of God to make intercession for us.

Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

The only question that remains is this – is He *your* Redeemer? Ultimately, it is the only thing that matters.

But, the Devil or your conscience might say, Job was a righteous man, and so are many others. It makes sense that Jesus would be a Redeemer for Job and others like him. But not for you. You are a great sinner. You are not like Job at all. How foolish to think that Jesus would be willing to stand up and intercede for you!

But you see, this is the glory of our Redeemer. As Isaiah prophesied in chapter 53.

Is 53:12 “He bore the sin of many, *and makes intercession for the transgressors.*”

Did you hear that? He makes intercession for the transgressors! And, since he bore our sins in his own body, He always gains for us the verdict of righteousness! As Paul writes;

Rom 4:25 (He) was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

This is what it means to confess that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

There is an interesting statement Paul makes in **Romans 10:9**.

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

And I’ve thought, why does Paul add, “*believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead*”? Why not “believe in your heart that he was born of a virgin, or that he was the Son of God”? I think the answer is right here – to believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead is to understand and confess that Jesus is both Lord AND your own living Redeemer! It is to believe that Jesus is your covenant kinsman; that He has bound himself to you by covenant oath, has committed himself to your cause, sworn himself to your eternal good, and is able to reclaim all that has been lost and ruined in the fall. He has reconciled you to God; pronounced you righteous in the court of heaven; and has promised you that one day you will see his face. If you believe this, you shall be saved.

Ash, “Each of us who suffers or cares for another who suffers ask “Why has this happened? Is God for me or against me? As we hear Job’s faith in these words, we can bring our pain to the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though our life may be ebbing away, and our wick is burning low, we too may say, “I know that my Redeemer lives And in my flesh, I shall see God – and not as a stranger!”

Easter means that God in Christ Jesus is always, eternally, with you, and for you! Your Redeemer lives.