

Title: Hope is Here

Text: Job 19:25-27

Date: April 4, 2021 (Easter Sunday)

Verse 25

In verse 25, Job professed his great faith in the Lord. He said, “But I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the end he will stand on the dust” (Job 19:25). The conjunction at the outset of the verse marked a great transition in the book of Job. It also indicated a change in the Job’s outlook. So far, his words had revealed a vacillating spirit. The man fluctuated between despair, despondency, hope, and faith.

His divided emotional state was understandable, given the immensity of his trials. He had experienced the complete loss of his property (Job 1:14-19), financial security (Job 1:14-17), posterity (Job 1:18-19), and personal health (Job 2:6-8). Our current verse, however, contained a turning point in the man’s struggle. Because of Bildad’s assertion that the memory of Job would perish from the earth (Job 18:17), Job contemplated his desire to defend his cause with a written record (Job 19:23-24). Now, in our current verse, he turned his eyes to the Lord. He gave up the hope of being vindicated by a written record. He set his sights on a better hope. He valiantly expressed his faith in his Redeemer. As he did, there was an air of assurance, an aura of bold confidence, in his proclamation.¹

The word translated “Redeemer” was used of one who stood up in defense of someone. It was the Hebrew word *gō’ēl*. It depicted “a person who defended or avenged the cause of another.”² The Pentateuch used it to speak of one who provided surety for a property (Leviticus 25:25), or of one who advocated for a slave (Leviticus 25:48). The term was a legal one used of a person who represented another as an advocate or guarantor.³ In the book of Ruth, *gō’ēl* was used of a Boaz, the one who redeemed Ruth by rescuing her from the cruel ravages of widowhood (Ruth 4:8).

In his affliction, Job yearned for someone to come to his defense. His wife (Job 2:9) and friends (Job 16:2) all suspected he was at fault. His circumstances were supposedly a consequence for sin. The word rendered “Redeemer” was a fitting one to describe what he desired, as it spoke of a person who served “like a witness for the defendant at a court trial.”⁴ Where could Job find such an advocate? Would anyone state his case and defend his cause?

Though he previously contemplated creating a written account for the purpose of defending himself (Job 19:23-24), Job turned his eyes to the Lord. He professed belief that his Redeemer would “stand on the dust.” The word rendered “stand” was a legal term used of a witness or judge who rose to another’s defense in a court of law.⁵ The word translated “dust” was a word for “Earth.”⁶ It seems Job intended to make an allusion to his eventual death. The language is identical to that found in Genesis 3:19 — “For you are dust, and you will return to dust.” Job might have had that passage in mind. Surely he had heard of Moses’ account

¹ Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), [CD-Rom].

² Walvoord, John F. and Roy B. Zuck. eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 1983), [CD-Rom].

³ Alden, Robert L. *The New American Commentary, Volume 11: Job*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), [CD-Rom].

⁴ Walvoord and Zuck, [CD-Rom].

⁵ Gibson, John C. L. *Job. The Daily Study Bible Series*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), [CD-Rom].

⁶ Gibson, [CD-Rom].

regarding the Lord's promise in the Garden of Eden. His intent in our passage was to express his trust that, after he had died, the Lord would raise to his defense and vindicate him and his suffering.

Ultimately, Job's hope was an eschatological one. Note the way in which he spoke of "the end." His language literally meant "the last one" or "the one coming after." It was intended to take one "forward to the Last Judgment and the resurrection of the dead at the end of the age, when Christ will return to earth to inaugurate God's final kingdom..."⁷ Job's eyes were on the final dispensation of human history. He had hope that his Redeemer would defend him at the culmination of all things.

The way in which Job looked to the Lord is instructive for us. One has commented, "For Job and every believer before and after him there is a divine Redeemer. We know his name is Jesus, and at the last day he will stand up and defend us because he has bought us with his blood."⁸ Another has said "there is a Redeemer provided for fallen man, and Jesus Christ is that Redeemer."⁹ Every man and woman needs an advocate before God. Because we are stained by sin (Romans 3:10 and 3:23), and because we are all subject to its consequences, (Romans 6:23), we need a representative. We need a gō'ēl. The Bible reveals that Christ stands as a Redeemer for us (Romans 5:8).

Job did not know about Christ specifically. He, like the prophets (1 Peter 1:10-12), undoubtedly searched diligently for information about God's Redeemer, but he had limited revelation. However, he clung to what truth he did have. He had surely heard of God's words in Genesis 3:15 — "I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." He knew one was coming from the womb of woman who would defeat man's adversary (Job 1:6-12 and Job 2:1-7). Though his knowledge of his Redeemer was limited, his faith was not. He professed great trust that his advocate would stand on his behalf in the end.

Christians need to cultivate a faith like Job's. In the book of Romans, we learn that such trust should characterize the people of God. It says, "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17). An ever-present reliance on the Redeemer is to don the life of the godly. Paul gave testimony to the way in which he lived with such an abiding faith. He said, "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Are you living with a faith like the one possessed by Job and Paul? Do you trust in Christ during the troubles and trials of life?

Verse 26

Job further professed his faith in God in verse 26, saying, "Even after my skin has been destroyed, yet I will see God in my flesh" (Job 19:26). In light of what we read in Job 2:7, it seems that Job's words in our current verse may have taken the man's skin disease into account. Perhaps Job believed he could have possibly died from the infectious boils that covered his body. If so, his words in our verse were a pronouncement that, even if the skin disease was fatal, he believed he would see his redeemer.

First, however, notice Job's plain awareness that he would die. He was aware of the truth of Hebrews 9:27 — "it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment." The man had been reduced to a place in life in which he realized he was finite. Though his outlook may have seemed macabre to many, the man's outlook was healthy. He had a godly awareness of the certainty of death.

Some rarely think about such sober realities. They glibly glide through life with no thought that life will end one day. Busied with work, engagements, entertainment, and worldly

⁷ Gibson, [CD-Rom].

⁸ Alden, [CD-Rom].

⁹ Henry, [CD-Rom].

pursuits, they stay unaware of the fact that they will one day stand before God. All along, Satan takes delight in their blindness. It is his aim to keep people ignorant of eternal realities (2 Corinthians 4:4). May we not be duped by his deceptions. May we always remember that “our outer person is being destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:16) and that “in Adam all die” (1 Corinthians 15:22). A sober awareness that our physical lives will come to an end one day will do a lot to help us progress in godliness.

Despite the reality of death, Job had faith that he would “see God in” his “flesh.” The concept of eyesight was a theme in Job. Perhaps his skin disease (Job 2:7) had affected his ability to see. At the end of the book, Job’s ability to see the Lord would mark the end of his suffering and the restoration of his fortunes (Job 42:5). Though he would regain his physical eyesight in his temporal life, Job’s ultimate hope was in what he would see in the next life. Though he could not comprehend the reason for his suffering, and though it was as if he saw through a glass dimly (1 Corinthians 13:12), he had confidence that he would one day behold his Redeemer in the afterlife. Faith in such realities sustained him in his grief.

The man’s words make us think of the the Lord’s promises concerning the death of a believer. One is made to recall promise of 2 Corinthians 5:8 — “to be away from the body” is to be “at home with the Lord.” In addition, the glorious realities of 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 are brought to mind. While on Earth, Jesus promised His disciples, “Because I live, you will live too” (John 14:19). Though he had not heard Jesus’ teaching on the resurrection, Job believed in the same promises.

Believers of all generations can stake a claim on the promisees Job cherished. The Bible promises that all will one day see Christ. Revelation 1:7 says, “ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth, will mourn over him. So it is to be. Amen.” Speaking of the Lord, John told first-century believers, “we will see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). The Bible tells us that in the New Earth “there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads” (Revelation 22:3-4). When facing the sting of death and the throes of loss, God’s children have great hope. There is coming a day in which Jesus’ personal presence will erase all pain from our hearts and minds.

Verse 27

In verse 27, Job reiterated his confidence that he would see God. He said, “I will see him myself; my eyes will look at him, and not as a stranger. My heart longs within me” (Job 19:27). One has said that the spirit of Job’s words meant “God will not be a stranger to me.”¹⁰ Job knew even if his problems were never resolved on earth, and even if no person ever came to his defense, he would see His God, his redeemer, after his death. In the original language of the text, emphasis is placed on the personal pronoun. The man’s words could be rendered “I, even I.”¹¹

Job had a profound, personal trust in the Lord’s divinely promised future. His mention of his “heart” longing within him was meaningful. The word rendered “heart” was one that literally referred to one’s kidneys. In the Hebrew way of seeing things, the kidneys were the seat of human emotions and affections. The psalmists used the same language from our text to speak of their desires for God (Psalm 19:14 and 139:23).¹² Job meant to convey the deep passion he had for seeing the Lord.

Christians have the same hope as Job. Sometimes, the problems of life are never reconciled while one earth. Some pains won’t be healed until the culmination of all things. To look for perfection on earth is a vain pursuit. The Lord never intended for us to find it here. It

¹⁰ Alden, [CD-Rom].

¹¹ Walvoord, and Zuck, [CD-Rom].

¹² Gibson, [CD-Rom].

won't be until He makes all things known that we will revel in the totality of His goodness and grace. We await the day in which He will remove all sin and suffering from the human condition (1 John 3:2-3 and Revelation 22:20). May we learn to cultivate a passion like Job's. In the midst of the daily affairs of life, we may have a heart desire to see the Lord's kingdom come to fulfillment (Matthew 6:10 and Revelation 22:20).