

I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES

“Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (Job 19:23-27).

Job was in a mess. In chapter 1 we are told that he lost his wealth and his children. In chapter 2 we are told that he lost his health and was at the point of death. In the chapter of our text we are told that he was stripped of honor, alienated from his brethren, scorned and ridiculed by little children, and detested by his intimate friends. He was reduced to nothing but skin and bones.

That’s when Job said that he knew his redeemer lived! In the midst of a struggle for his life he was so confident of his redeemer that he wanted his words engraved with an iron tool in lead or a rock so that they could be read forever. In spite of his own mortality he expected his redeemer to raise him from the dead. Even after his skin was destroyed he expected to see God with his own eyes.

Like many things in the Bible, the concept of a “redeemer” is both simple and profound. When a person was enslaved, for example, some rich relative or friend could pay the price and “redeem” them. This is what God did for the Israelites who were enslaved in Egypt. This is what Boaz did for Ruth and Naomi. The more profound aspect of redemption involves eternity. In Hebrews 9:12 we are told that Jesus entered with His own blood into the Most Holy Place in heaven so that we might obtain “eternal redemption”.

Ezekiel told of 6 men with deadly weapons. They were to “kill without showing pity or compassion” everyone who did not grieve and lament about the apostasy of Israel (Ez. 9:1-6). Jesus, however, is not a killer, He is a Redeemer. The importance of this identity cannot be overstated. Jesus is not a killer. He came to seek and to save what was lost (Lk. 19:10). He would not even break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick (Matt. 12:16-21). That is, he would “redeem” those whom society deemed to be worthless. He touched the lepers with healing power and fraternized with publicans and sinners. Nobody was too poor, too sick, too unpopular, or too sinful to be beyond the redemptive ministry of Jesus. Like a Good Shepherd He would risk everything to save a lost sheep.

Every generation and every society develops proverbs or sayings that state some important truth succinctly. The early church had sayings too! One “saying” was: **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15)**. Paul reminded Timothy of this and then explained that he was not just “a” sinner, he was the “worst of sinners”. He went on to explain that Jesus used him as an example of his unlimited patience. In other words, if Paul could be redeemed, anyone can be redeemed.

The devil, as you know, is a liar and a murderer (Jn. 8:44). When you are in some valley of despair like Job was, the wicked one will whisper in your ear that there is no hope. This inveterate liar will try and convince you that no one has ever been so perverse and wicked as you are. No one has ever had such evil thoughts as you have. The truth is, that no temptation has come upon you that is not a common temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). Lots of people have the same problems that you have. In fact, Jesus Himself was tempted in all points like we are yet without sin. **“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Heb. 4:15, 16).**

Sadly, many people are not certain about anything. David A. Gershaw, Ph.D., for example, has concluded that 2 + 2 is not always 4. It depends, he says, on whether you use the nominal scale, the ordinal scale, the interval scale, or the ratio scale. Dr. Gershaw would probably be shocked by Job’s certainty. How could Job “know” that his redeemer lived? How could he know anything? For people so brilliant Job’s confidence is childish! There you have it! Unless you are converted and become as a little child you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3). Job’s faith was vindicated for God blessed the latter part of his life more than the first (Job. 42:12-15). Not only was Job’s family and fortune redeemed, but his body will also be resurrected that he might enjoy the world to come!