

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

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Preacher: Cameron MacIver

- [0 : 0 0] The church I first went to when we got married had a beautiful tradition.
- And if you're a normal Christian, this is something that you will love, I'm sure. On a Friday before we would celebrate the Lord's Supper together, we would invite two or three people to come and bear testimony to what Christ had done for them.
- They would explain how they came to fully trust in Christ. And there were quite a number of people obviously over the years came and gave a word of testimony.
- I don't remember them all, but one stands out as being particularly extraordinary to me. And I don't remember all the details.
- But this person came and they explained that they had heard the gospel, they'd heard the good news. And instead of responding straight away to it, this created in them an overwhelming sense of spiritual turmoil.
- [1 : 1 5] And they just didn't know how to get rid of it, what to do about it. And this is quite a strange story. And as I say, I may have remembered some details wrongly.
- But it became so overwhelming for them that they felt they had to just escape and get away from it. And so they got in their car and began driving.
- And maybe they put on music or whatever, I don't know. Maybe they were driving fast. I can't remember the details. But for some reason, there was an extraordinary moment when a van overtook them.
- And for some reason, that was unexpected. And here they were trying to clear their head driving along. And this van overtakes them.
- And then they're stuck behind this van at the next set of lights or whatever it was. And on the back of the van, instead of the usual wash me or a rude joke, quite unexpectedly were the words, What think ye of Christ?
- [2 : 2 1] This was a moment where this person felt that they were brought. It was an important moment in this person coming to trust in Christ.
- And it's an important question that all of us must address. What we think of Christ. But if you look up that verse, What think ye of Christ?
- It's a quote from Matthew 22, verse 42. And you'll see that it's Jesus himself, of course, who asks that question. And when he asks that question, if you study it, it's a question with a distinctly Old Testament flavor.
- What Jesus is actually asking is, What do you think about the Messiah who is promised in the Old Testament scriptures? How much do you know about him?
- Do you know enough about him? And tonight I want us to, in effect, ask this question of this Old Testament prophet Job.
- [3 : 3 3] Because he gives us here in his profession of faith in chapter 19, a model answer. Why do I say it's a model answer to the question, What think ye of Christ?

Because if you, like Job, know that you have a living Redeemer, a living Divine Redeemer, a living Divine Redeemer who you will look forward to seeing on the last day, on the day of judgment, on the day of general resurrection.

If you are looking forward to seeing your Redeemer then, as the one who will vindicate you, then you know enough to be eternally safe, to be secure.

You have saving faith if you, like Job, can say that you know these things. So as I say, Job knows that he needs a Redeemer.

He claims that it's his Redeemer. I hope to show in a minute that his Redeemer is a Divine Redeemer. And we'll see that he is looking forward to this Divine Redeemer coming on the day of judgment to a general resurrection, which Job is looking forward to rather than fearing.

[4 : 54] Well, the context of this profession of faith in chapter 19, as I've been saying, is that Job is being accused of all kinds of horrible things by his friends.

Falsely accused. And this in the midst of horrible suffering. And Job knows that he is innocent of these charges.

But he knows also that he is a sinner. If you look at verse 4, he says, And even if it be true that I have erred, my error remains with myself. In other words, my sins are between me and God.

And the Bible uses a number of different ways of explaining what sin is. Most commonly we think of sin as transgression, of breaking a law, a commandment that God has given us.

And we break it, we transgress it. There's also the sin that comes about from the implied duty of every commandment.

[6 : 14] So James will tell us, for example, that he who knows the right thing to do and does not do it commits sin. If many of you may have been coming to this for a long time, you've probably heard the explanation that the one relates to an arrow that has gone wrong, that has failed to hit its target.

And so in Romans 3, we have the well-known verse, All have sinned of the glory of God. And so sinning involves a failing to achieve what is required of us.

But in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, they're also described as a debt. And a debt is a claim of in the Old Testament times and perhaps to this day in some parts of the world, if you have bad debt, there is always a last resort.

You yourself, you forfeit your very self, you sell yourself into slavery in order to pay a debt that you cannot otherwise. We're not so familiar with that.

It doesn't maybe resonate with us. But perhaps some of you here have a mortgage. I have a mortgage. If I do not pay that mortgage, then there is a claim of which my bank will exercise its right to to take my house away.

[7 : 58] When I was a student job and I was working for a bank and we admin, that was all we did. And one Saturday, I was really surprised.

We went in to start work and I was told, well, today I'm going to show you how to process a batch of redemptions. And as a Christian, I had no idea that the word redemption was used out in any context other than the Bible.

I was quite surprised to discover that in the context of mortgage administration, you also process redemptions. And it was quite striking for me.

There's a couple of things that really struck me. One, and most obviously, the first job in missing a redemption is to check that the debt has been fully paid.

The next job is to produce a letter. I didn't write it. It was a standard form of letter. I just had to print it. It had all kinds of legal jargon in it. But basically, the letter said, the bank no longer has a claim of ownership on your property because the debt has been written.

[9 : 08] probably not for this one but there's a great sermon illustration for this for another time. Again, so striking.

Imagine me and the guy that's showing me how to process these redemptions says, well the last job you have to do is you take a big fat red marker pen and this dusty old file, these files are 20 years old, whatever.

He says, you must put a huge capital R on the front of the cover of this file in red. I said, why do you do that?

He said, well because anyone who picks up this file will see the first thing they will notice is that this debt has been redeemed. There's a sign on it. As I say, that's probably a ceremonial station for another time but it was very striking for me.

Well the debt ownership is really neither here nor there. Job is looking for a rich friend to help him out with his mortgage arrears.

[10 : 18] Job knows that his sins create a much more serious because the claim of ownership is on himself. He's a person with an immortal soul.

He needs someone to pay the price for his sins. And that's exactly of course the same position all of us are in. So Job knows he needs a redeemer.

He knows that his redeemer is a divine redeemer. Now when I was preparing for this more modern commentators on these verses I was quite disappointed how cautious they were interpreting this.

There seemed to be an aversion to Job as a prophet and an academic dryness to say well it's too much of what you know to be true from the New Testament back into this Old Testament passage.

And they were arguing that Job does not believe the redeemer. But let me try this experiment with you.

[11 : 37] If I tell you the old God is strong I have no doubt that tonight he'll be worshipping in Tain Free Church.

I'll phone my father and ask him how his day was. Are you completely confused?

Have you no idea who the old man in the first statement was? It's not so difficult. It's the same here in these verses. The way they're translated for us in any of the translations that are widely used make it perfectly clear.

Job's redeemer who will stand upon the earth is the same God that he will see with his own eyes.

Job's redeemer is a divine redeemer. At the end of Luke's gospel we have an account of the Lord Jesus meeting two of his disciples and he tells them on the road to Emmaus that beginning with Moses and he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

[12 : 58] I feel sure that Job is one of those prophets and surely this is a good example of something that points clearly to Jesus.

it can only be Jesus that is referred to. Perhaps we don't give Job enough credit we think of him as a hopeless Old Testament believer benighted and knowledge but I think that way of reading the Old Testament is to condemn poor Job and to be as joyless as the Sadducees of Jesus day.

He knows that he has a he's expressing his faith in that Redeemer right here and yet he says at the end of verse 37 my heart faints within me.

He longs to know more to see the fulfillment of the prophecy that he's just made and as Christians we too have something of that longing we long to see every bow and every tongue confess Jesus.

So he knows that he needs a Redeemer he needs a divine Redeemer and he knows that his resurrection at the resurrection for I know my Redeemer lives and at the last he will stand upon the earth and after my skin has been thus destroyed yet in my face I shall see God whom I shall see for my eyes shall behold and not another my heart faints within me.

[14 : 59] A lot of the same people who were a bit squeamish about claiming that Job has a clear faith in a divine Redeemer would be even more squeamish that here he expresses a clear and hope for a day of a resurrection but to my mind it's clear I hope you agree with me as read the verses what else can he be talking of other than a general resurrection I don't find this difficult why else would the Holy Spirit have given us if not for Job in the midst of his terrible suffering to give this clear profession of his faith and that in a life to come he'll be vindicated Job will go on in reply to some of his friends most hurtful allegations to point out the thing that everybody knows we can all see that there are people who are and wicked and yet who have amassed great wealth for themselves who live healthy and as far as we know happy lives

Job is looking for justice and he's looking for mercy and that's why he needs a hope for a resurrection translation you're following this and you may have a footnote for one of the verses one of the words rather in verse 25 I'm using the English standard version here and I have the footnote dust in the international version the footnote says grave I'm told that the Hebrew word translated here is indeed the word for dust the same dust that we are described as having been made and the same dust that the Bible tells us that our bodies will eventually decay too and so what Job is really saying is that his redeemer will come and stand on the earth yes but stand in a sense on his grave and call him out of his grave for this resurrection so going back to question what think well

Job's view of the Messiah in the Old Testament is this redeemer who has paid the that is due for Job's own self to fulfill the debt that he's incurred with his and that redeemer is God himself to this day of resurrection the sense in which these things that Job is speaking of here are as Jesus said they're things that point us towards Christ and it's our privilege but also our responsibility light not only of the Old Testament but the New as well and so what Job yearns within him faints within him to see we see so much more but not everything we have the gospels where we can read of who this redeemer is we know we have the epistles where his is explained for us the implications of it and of course we have the book of revelation at the end where the fulfillment of all these things is described in prophetic terms

Job puts a lot of effort and emphasis into telling us that he will see God with his own eyes and so on and when we read the book of Revelation there are a number of places where the fulfillment of this is made clearer for us revelation one for example behold he's coming with the clouds and every eye will see him even those who appear and so on revelation as some of you may know has these cycles of visions describing the history of the church age and at the end of one of these chapters again there's a vision of an angel the angel is ascribed as having divine attributes things that only normally apply to God apply to this angel who comes and stands with one foot on the land and one foot on the sea the two possible final graves final resting places for any of us the land or the sea

Job sees forward to this vision of the last day the day of judgment and even more poignantly at the end of the Bible in chapter 22 of Revelation no longer will there be anything accursed but the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it and worship him they will see his face and so on what Job's heart faints within him to know more of we have the light of seeing fulfilled partially and we have the certainty of seeing it fulfilled completely well just as we draw to a close you'll see that this chapter doesn't end in verse 27 there's another two verses and these are awkward verses in some ways

[21 : 43] Job knows that his redeemer is the divine judge who will want human beings from their graves and it's on this that he bases his confidence but it's also on this basis that he warns his friends he speaks to them about in effect the wrath to come and one of the questions I want to ask us all if this was a bible study we might say what are the implications of this for evangelism what are the implications of the general resurrection from the dead for you and your friends do you warn your friends to flee the wrath to come now probably at this point in the proceedings at least some of you are thinking well hopefully in a minute I'm going to balance that with some statement about please don't be that guy who makes christianity and christians so awkward on about hell and judgment and wrath all the time here we see job driven by his great suffering to be brutally with his friends and although of course we can't just scream and shout at our friends how they'll react we need to bear in mind that this is a reality this judgment that job is mentioning is something real and it's something to flee and I know that for myself often if I ever come close to saying anything of a terrible value to my friends

I wrap it up often in so much cotton wool that I know why they need a saviour why they need well I said as we're clear one other thing to mention and that's for us to have a little way to see how does this work out for Job he makes this wonderful clear accurate prophetic prophetic in the midst of his suffering what happens next well unfortunately his friend Zophar comes in here and basically claims how you interpret it has revealed to Zophar that Job is in this who deserves the punishment he's experiencing and will continue to experience that and in actual fact in the book of

Job I said this is from this point on his friends up their false accusations against him it gets more and more painful as they come with more and more outrageous allegations against him so it doesn't work out well for Job but Job is one of these great cloud of witnesses who's spoken of in the book of Hebrews who's cheering us on as it were as we live our brief lives here seeking Job to be faithful as we profess our work in our redeemer us to run the race that's set before us inspired by heroes like Job who endured these trials and the suffering and testing and opposition and who yet remained faithful Jesus teaches us clearly that this is what we're to expect

Job like Job we too may experience all kinds of horrible things in our lives some of these will have a satanic background that is not clear to us just as it was not clear to Job that it was Satan who was at the root of his suffering we also may suffer material loss bereavement our health may break down we may experience disfigurement some people think that the reference to the skin of his teeth in verse 20 is a way of saying that he's fallen out and also the ridicule the false accusations the betrayal of all of these things are things that may test our faith and the Bible doesn't hide these things from us Jesus nowhere promises us health wealth happiness comfort honour and respect from our friends he actually tells us that if we are faithful in following him then we should share in his suffering we share in his suffering we'll also share in his glory and this is because when we trust him we're brought into a special relationship with him which the

Bible describes a joining together as if we're one and so it's on the basis of that union that we too have like Job hope for the resurrection writer of the Romans tells us that if we've been united with him in a death like his in the sense of Jesus we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his so Job saw his faith in his redeemer and saw with eyes of the resurrection hope and so the obvious application and this really is in closing is that as we study this part of scripture we need to reflect that first and foremost do we have a hope in Job's hope do we have saving faith in our life does your heart fade within you as you look forward to the last day do you hope on that day to see your with your own eyes may God these reflections on his word