

Have you ever shouted at God Part 2

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Date: 21 July 2019

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[0 : 00] The reading, as I say, is from Job 16. To the first 17 verses, I have given the title, He has torn me in his wrath.

Then Job answered, And the solace of my lips would assuage your pain.

If I speak, my pain is not assaged. If I forbear, how much of it leaves me? Surely now God has worn me out.

He has made me desolate, all my company. He has shriveled me up, which is a witness against me. And my leanness has risen up against me, it testifies to my face.

He has torn me in his wrath and hated me. He has gnashed his teeth at me. My adversary sharpens his eyes against me. Men have gaped at me with their mouth.

[1 : 41] They have struck me insolently upon the cheek. They mask themselves together against me. God gives me up to the ungodly, and casts me into the hands of the wicked.

I was at ease, and he broke me asunder. He seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces. He set me up as his target.

His archers surrounded me. He slashes open my kidneys and does not spare. He pours out my gall on the ground. He breaks me with breach upon breach.

He runs upon me like a warrior. I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and I've laid my strength in the dust. My face is red with weeping, and my eyelids in deep darkness.

Although there is no violence in my hand, and my prayer is pure. And to the final verse is the title, My Witness is in Heaven.

[2 : 45] O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place. Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high.

My friends scorn me. My eye pours out tears to God that he would maintain the right of a man like that of a man with his neighbor. For when a few years have come, I shall go the way when I shall not return.

Amen. May God, as he's blessing to that word, may it be his praise and to his glory. Before we come to the wordings advertised, you often get an anachronism, which means what you see is what you get.

And in the book of Job, it can be said that what you read is what you get. I said that last week, the book of Job was a very honest book because he tells you exactly how he feels through this dark experience that he's going in.

I said last week that he has this case that he's mounted against God for being uncaring. And the friends also have a case against him because they reckon that he's the worst sinner.

[4 : 17] So, where we are this week is that while all these accusations have been going on, what happens now is there a gradual chunk of light, chunk of light showing.

And you see that in Job 16, verse 19. Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high.

A chink of light in this dark experience. This speech contained in Job 16 is one from Job himself and is a response to what Eliphaz has to say in the previous chapter.

In that chapter, Eliphaz had accused Job of hindering meditation. This word meditation simply means the occupation of your mind with whatever thoughts that happen to be in it.

And obviously, if you're busy accusing God of this, that, and the other, you can't properly meditate on God.

[5 : 39] So, that's what's happening here. In chapters 13 and 14, there is this renewed offensive against a cruel and uncaring heaven.

But there's a difference here. There's the dawn of a gradual faith. So, that even in this dark experience, he receives glimpses of a good God which caused to return him to hope. Now, the background for this kind of statement in the book of Job is surely some of the Psalms. For example, in Psalm 22, cited by Jesus on the cross, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But, going on to the end of the Psalm, it says, I will praise your name in the great congregation. So, there is this thought of persecution and darkness which suddenly reverses itself into hope and belief.

In the first five verses of this chapter, Job is imagining the positions could have been reversed and how he could have played the role of the miserable comforter that they have.

[7 : 07] but now, his words of complaint and appeal, he judges, they have not budged God an inch.

But, without any reason, the scene changes. And, the scene changes to this instant of assurance of faith.

Even now, my witness is in heaven and he who vouches for me is on high. So, if we're saying that God is a witness, what is it that God is witnessing?

What is it that God is witnessing for you, for me, in the moments of our trial? That's the question that comes here. Now, when we speak about witnesses, we're immediately taken back to this legal argument that you find in the book of Job.

Now, in the Old Testament, when you had a trial, there was not a prosecutor or a defending counsel.

[8 : 28] In the Hebrew court, the offended party did his own prosecuting. And the accused defended himself and called witnesses as required.

Now, here's something else. In this Hebrew court, the defending witness always stands to the right-hand side of the accused.

Now, for example, in Psalm 16, verse 8, the psalmist says, because you are at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

So, the idea of God being a witness is not a new one. Now, the hope is that Job will appear before this heavenly court, and another will be there to speak for him in a better way than he could ever do. So, the witness is the witness of his thoughts, the witness of his sufferings, the witness of his trial, the witness of everything that has come upon him.

[9 : 47] He who vouches for me is on high. The witness. there's a word in the Hebrew text here, which is sahid.

Now, it does actually appear in English translation in Genesis 31, 47. Now, in that there's a discussion between Laban and Jacob, and they agree to make a covenant so that Jacob will not ill treat Laban's daughters, and Laban, who was well known as a double dealer, will not do so again. And in Genesis 31, 47, Laban called it Yegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galib.

Now, these are just two different terms for the same thing. They literally mean a heap of witness, a witness to all that's going on.

And it is to this heavenly witness that you hear him saying, my friend is my intercessor.

[11 : 08] My eye pours out tears to God, that he would maintain the right of a man with God like that of a man with his neighbor. So this has a profound effect on Job, hope, because he now has hope.

He now has hope that things, this bad situation is going to end. But here's something else.

And now I move to Job 19, 25, and this is a famous text. Job 19, starts off with being a lament for all his situation.

And very briefly, you can summarize it like this. In Job 19, verses 8-10, God has deprived him of all hope.

In verses 11-12, God has openly and visibly assailed him as though he were his enemy. In verses 13-10, following, God has isolated Job from all human contact and affection.

[12 : 34] And then suddenly, without any warning, there is the entrance of hope. And the entrance of hope is first uttered in his cry, O that my words were written, in verses 23-24, O that they were inscribed in a book, O that with an iron pen and lead they were graven in the rock forever.

Now, the reason for the cry is that he doesn't think he's going to be vindicated in his life. So he wants his words preserved in a book, or better still, written on solid rock and filled with lead so that they will stand out for all time.

Then comes this, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last, he will stand on the earth. As soon as we hear the word Redeemer, we tend to think of the Christian Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who sets us free from the problem of indwelling sin.

But that's not what's meant here. What's meant here, this particular title, comes from family law in the Old Testament.

And it is the sphere of family law, this particular thing, is to defend a relative, or to protect and defend the rights of a member of his family.

[14:13] So, for example, if a member of the family is in debt, he is to be redeemed by one of his closest relatives, i.e.

his brother, or his uncle, or his cousin, who will pay off the debt on his behalf. And that's what's being talked about here.

Somebody who acts on Job's behalf. If it is the case that he has to sell his property, then it's the same thing.

It's all right. let's just interrupt it a minute, and we'll pray for Ella.

Gracious and eternal God we thank you that you are the one who cares for us more than we could ever think or ask or say and we do pray for Ella at this time that your hand might be upon her and that you would indeed touch her with your divine presence and deal with this situation in Jesus mighty name we ask it Amen so getting back to this law of the family it also acts if someone has to sell their property the property all if possible must be kept must be kept within the family so somebody in the family has to buy it to keep it in the family now the prime example of this is in the book of Ruth where Boaz effectively championed the rights of the dead relative Elimelech because he was taking on Ruth as his wife and he was also buying a parcel of ground now this is what is being spoken about here someone who acts on Job's behalf so that the real translation the best one that brings it out as to what's happening is my champion someone who will champion my rights or Job's rights even after he's gone and so we find this further expanded in the last bit and at the last he will stand upon the earth or upon the dust so the heavenly one is now going to intervene not just in heaven but more generally he's going to come down on earth and this standing on the dust or the earth may mean that he's standing on the dust of Job's grave or perhaps somewhere else on the earth so this is the vision which Job is now talking about he's been talking about his witness in heaven but now the witness is not just in heaven but one who comes down and stands beside him beside him on the earth

[17:59] I know that my redeemer lives what a change there is in the attitude of Job now this is a great ray of light that has dawned and he has found himself in and it is this that turns his attitude not to gloom or despair but to belief I want to close looking at 42 verse 1 the confession of a heavenly vindicator Job is speaking and he says this I know you can do all things and no purpose of yours can be thwarted now chapter 38 and verse 1 which we will look at next week starts off by saying the Lord answered Job from the whirlwind now this is exactly what he's been looking for in chapter 23 3 he says oh that I knew where I might find him that I might even come before his seat and that cry is fulfilled in chapters 38 to 42 now if you look at chapter 38 you find it's a series of questions and these questions are sarcastic in tone if you have an edition of the living bible you'll see that the translator there brings them out quite well and get you to see that this sarcasm is to show how puny

Job is and how great God is so in verse 4 where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth tell me if you have understanding were you there Job well the answer is no and there's three series of questions in this chapter the first of which from verses 4 to 7 concerns the creation of the earth and the idea is that to understand all this you would have had to been present when the creation took place because otherwise you would not have understood the will and counsel of God and so it goes on the third from verses 12 to 15 concerns the coming of the light into the darkness of the first chaos and the distinguishing of the two as day and night so the idea in this series of questions is to assure

Job as it is to assure us that the creator is still in charge of his creation so we say with the Psalms the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof now from all of this this has a searching effect and it causes Job to see his limitations in the sight of this all powerful God and we are dealing with an all powerful God a God who is a witness to our experience a God who is a witness to our suffering a God who is a witness to our thoughts a God who is prepared to do something about it the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge gird up your loins like a man and I will question you and you shall declare to me and it's repeated in

chapter 40 verses 6 to 7 the exact same words gird up your loins like a man and I will question you and you will declare to me and what

Job is saying in this chapter chapter 42 verses 1 to 6 he's giving the impression of someone who has been wronged and he wants justice but now his demand for that justice has stopped and instead he's entrusting himself to God himself so he goes on in verse 2 I know that you can do all things and no purpose of yours can be thwarted now all of this is going on in the Old Testament perhaps the oldest book in the Old Testament but speaks forward in its own way to the coming of Jesus who is the one that we have an advocate in heaven says 1 John 2 1

Jesus Christ the righteous now why should that be an illustration of this is to be found outside trade union congress house in London there you will see a statue of one man bending down to pick another man up and without being contradictory but clearly this is what happened in the incarnation Jesus Christ came down and stood on the dust that he might pick you and I up so we're in the Job is in this veil of tears but he comes to a conclusion in verses 5 and 6 he says

[24 : 45] I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear but now my eye sees you therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes so what's he saying he's saying that he thought he had a correct vision of God but now realizes that that vision compared to what he now has is nothing at all his vindication which had formerly occupied his pride of place is now gone to the bottom of the pile and what matters now is being at peace with the God who has loved and cared for him last week I ended with this quotation from James and I read it again as an example of suffering and patience brothers and sisters take the prophets who spoke in the name of the

Lord we call those happy who were steadfast you have heard of the steadfastness of Job and you have seen the purpose of the Lord how the Lord is compassionate and merciful so this book from the Old Testament speaks to us right where we are in our dark experience and it assures us there are chunks chinks of light and that light comes to you and I through his word and through that word we learn of the one who loved us beyond measure who identified himself for us and who will go on to bring us through like Job to the beautiful cloudless sky amen we'll close by singing amazing grace how sweet the sound gi to

Minist everything Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[29 : 04] Thank you.