

JOB

Chapter 19

Job Replies: My Redeemer Lives

Then Job answered and said: 2 “How long will you torment me and break me in pieces with words? 3 These ten times you have cast reproach upon me; are you not ashamed to wrong me? 4 And even if it be true that I have erred, my error remains with myself. 5 If indeed you magnify yourselves against me and make my disgrace an argument against me, 6 know then that God has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me. 7 Behold, I cry out, ‘Violence!’ but I am not answered; I call for help, but there is no justice. 8 He has walled up my way, so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness upon my paths. 9 He has stripped from me my glory and taken the crown from my head. 10 He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone, and my hope has he pulled up like a tree. 11 He has kindled his wrath against me and counts me as his adversary. 12 His troops come on together; they have cast up their siege ram against me and encamp around my tent. 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. 15 The guests in my house and my maidservants count me as a stranger; I have become a foreigner in their eyes. 16 I call to my servant, but he gives me no answer; I must plead with him with my mouth for mercy. 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. 20 My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh, and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth. 21 Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has touched me! 22 Why do you, like God, pursue me? Why are you not satisfied with my flesh? 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! 25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. 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. My heart faints within me! 28 If you say, ‘How we will pursue him!’ and, ‘The root of the matter is found in him,’ 29 be afraid of the sword, for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment.”

19:3 *Ten times.* Several times. Ten is often used as a round number (see, e.g., Ge 31:41; 1Sa 1:8). (CSB)

Round number for “repeatedly” or “often”; a full measure. (TLSB)

19:4 *my error remains with myself.* Job’s friends have no right to interfere or to behave as if they were God (see v. 22). (CSB)

Job will have to deal with his sin. No one else can take God’s office to punish him or place his transgression on another person. (TLSB)

19:5 Chrys: “Not only was there no one to soothe him but many even on many sides beset him with taunts. And you see him lamenting this bitterly” (*NPNF* 1 9:196). (TLSB)

19:6 *put me in the wrong*. Cf. 40:8. The Hebrew for this verb is twice translated “pervert” in 8:3, where Bildad denied that God perverts justice. But Job, struggling with the enigma of his suffering, can only conclude that God is his enemy, though in fact he is his friend who delights in him (see 1:8; 2:3). Job’s true enemy, of course, is the Accuser. (CSB)

closed his net. The wicked may get themselves into trouble, as Bildad had pointed out (see 18:8–10), but Job here attributes his suffering to God. (CSB)

Job asserts that God has entrapped or tricked him into sinning, the way a fowler lures and traps wild birds. (TLSB)

19:7 *I cry, ‘Violence’* Lit. “I cry, ‘Violence!’ ” See Hab 1:2. (CSB)

God appears to treat Job with unprovoked anger. As a result, Job receives neither an answer to his prayer about why he is suffering nor any relief from his persistent pain. God has not, however, ever revealed Himself as Job’s enemy. In fact, this alien work of God (see note, Is 28:21) is part of God’s way of leading Job to the great climactic description of the Redeemer (v 25). (TLSB)

19:8–12 In Job’s mind, God is at war with him (see 16:12–14). (CSB)

19:10 *pulled up like a tree*. See 24:20; unlike 14:7–9, where Job had used as a symbol of hope a tree that is cut down but later sprouts again. (CSB)

19:13–19 See Jer 12:6. Nothing in life hurts more than rejection by one’s family and friends. Job’s children are gone, and his wife, brothers, friends and servants find him repulsive. (CSB)

19:14 Job is denied solace of company, respect, and intimacy of family. Bonds of moral obligation and affection are shamelessly severed. See note, 42:11. Like the Servant of the Lord (Is 53), Job is treated as an outcast. (TLSB)

19:16 Those who did the daily chores in Job’s house now regard their master as a stranger. The servants’ high esteem for Job has turned to contempt. Chrys: “Let the sufferings of that man [Job] then be the medicines for our ills, and his grievous surging sea the harbor of our sufferings, and in each of the accidents which befall us, let us consider this saint. Seeing one person exhausting the misfortunes of the universe, we shall conduct ourselves bravely in those [misfortunes] which fall to our share, and—as to some affectionate mother, stretching forth her hands on all sides, and receiving and reviving her terrified children—so let us always flee to this book [of Job]. Even if the pitiable troubles of all men assail us, let us take sufficient comfort for all and so depart” (NPNF 1 9:196–97). (TLSB)

19:17 *breath*. Hbr *ruach*, “spirit,” “life’s breath.” *strange to my wife*. Those who ought to empathize with Job find him repulsive both physically and spiritually. (TLSB)

19:18 *young children despise me*. An intolerable insult in a patriarchal society, where one’s elders were to be honored and respected (see Ex 20:12 and note). (CSB)

19:20 *bones...skin*. His body is so wasted away that the skin has tightened around his bones. (TLSB)

skin of my teeth. The NIV text note understands the phrase to imply that even Job's teeth are gone. (CSB)

Likely a reference to the effects of his disease (cf v 17). The "skin" may be Job's gums or the skin surrounding his teeth. This saying has become an English proverb for a narrow escape. Job expresses amazement that his body continues to sustain any life at all. (TLSB)

19:23–27 Probably the best-known and most-loved passage in the book of Job, reaching a high point in Job's understanding of his own situation and of his relationship to God. Its position between two sections in which Job pleads with (vv. 21–22) and then warns (vv. 28–29) his friends causes it to stand out even more boldly. (CSB)

19:23 *my words.* Job would have his complaint and defense recorded so that even after his death they would endure until he is finally vindicated. (CSB)

Suggests carving upon some durable substance. Writing and composition were highly developed by the second millennium BC. (TLSB)

book. Permanent written record of his testimony. A "book" might be a scroll or a tablet of clay, a metal plate, or a stone slab. (TLSB)

19:24 *iron.* Iron did not come into common use in the ancient Near East until the 12th century B.C. (CSB)

Job wants his case to become a matter of indelible record. "Pen" is used not only for a reed pen or brush for writing with ink but also for an iron stylus or chisel used on stone. (TLSB)

19:25–27 "We affirm that no one but God alone can separate human nature and this corruption of human nature from each other. This will fully come to pass through death, in the <blessed> resurrection. At that time our nature, which we now bear, will rise and live eternally without original sin and be separated and divided from it. As it is written in Job 19:26–27, 'After my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold' " (FC Ep I 10). Life after death is undeniably prominent in these verses. Three times Job confidently asserts, I shall see God. Mention of "flesh," "eyes," and "heart" (lit, "kidneys") shows that Job thinks of his future, vindicated existence in bodily terms. (TLSB)

19:25 *I know that my Redeemer lives.*† This staunch confession of faith has been appropriated by generations of Christians, especially through the medium of Handel's *Messiah*. But these celebrate redemption from guilt and judgment; Job had more than this in mind. Although in other contexts he desires a defender as an advocate in heaven who would plead with God on his behalf, here the Redeemer seems to be none other than God himself or possibly the Messiah (see note on Ru 2:20). (CSB)

Hbr *go'el*. Comparable to "arbiter" of 9:33 and "witness" of 16:18–22. The Redeemer is God. Job appeals to God against God 16:19–21). In light of the fuller biblical revelation, we know that Christ, the God-man, fulfills the description of the Redeemer. In support of this view that Job appeals to God Himself are the following: (1) Job consistently recognizes God as the ultimate arbiter in all matters of justice; (2) Job knows that nothing can deliver a person from the wrath of God's Law other than God Himself; (3) the Lord Himself confirms all of this in chs 40–41; (4) in

Job's final plea (ch 31), he puts his legal case solely into the hands of God. As Christians, we know this appeal is to Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, who as a person is distinct from the other two persons of the Godhead. *at the last*. The ultimate Last Day, as in Mt 25:31–46 and Rv 20:11–15. Job yearns for public acquittal of the righteous. (TLSB)

Job expresses confidence that ultimately God will vindicate his faithful servants in the face of all false accusations. – It must have been his faith in his God and Savior that kept him from collapsing under the severe sufferings and trials. As Job looked ahead in faith to his Savior, he could for the moment forget his present troubles and in faith see what lay ahead for him after his life on earth had ended. (PBC)

at the last. Lit. “afterward” (after Job’s life has ended). (CSB)

he will stand. To defend and vindicate me. (CSB)

19:26 *my skin has been destroyed*. Job senses that the ravages of his disease will eventually bring about his death. (CSB)

I shall see God. He is absolutely certain, however, that death is not the end of existence and that someday he will stand in the presence of his Redeemer and see him with his own eyes (see v. 27; see also Mt 5:8; 1Jn 3:2). (CSB)

Job is certain that there will be a glorious resurrection of the body on the Last Day, that the very skin that clothed him during his mortal life will again cover the flesh that has become subject to decay and corruption. From this very same body, Job knows that he will see God. 1 Clem: “Do we then deem it any great and wonderful thing for the Maker of all things to raise up again those that have piously served Him in the assurance of a good faith?... Job says, ‘You shall raise up this flesh of mine, which has suffered all these things’ ” (ANF 1:12). Aug: “No doubt [these words] were a prophecy of the resurrection of the flesh” (NPNF 1 2:508; cf Chem, *LTh* 1:320). (TLSB)

19:28 *pursue*. The Hebrew for this verb is translated “pursue” in v. 22. It serves as a clue that Job’s tirade against the counselors is being resumed after the intervening section (vv. 23–27). (CSB)

19:29 *be afraid ... judgment*. Job is warning his friends that, by siding with God against an innocent victim, they can expect retribution by the sword. When the dust settles, the friends will also know there is a time of judgment, a time when accounts will be settled. In view of the Redeemer who will stand at the last, the judgment of v 29 is the Last Judgment. (TLSB)

Ch 19 When Job’s physical condition grows closer to death and he considers a permanent memorial to record his innocence, his spirit soars to his only hope: the Redeemer, God Himself. The divine Redeemer will stand on the earth on the Last Day. Job will receive his vindication in his resurrected body, from which he will see the Redeemer with his own eyes. Today, the Redeemer sees you in your helpless state. As a true Redeemer who buys back His kinsman from bondage, Christ has won you for Himself at the cost of His own flesh and blood. • Come, Lord Jesus, raise up Your saints! Amen. (TLSB)