

# What We Can Know in a Day of Uncertainty

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*Job: View From The Ashes*

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**Bible Text:** Job 19:25-26; 2 Peter 1:21

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This morning, I would encourage you to open your Bibles to two very specific places, the book of Job 19, and that is where we're going to spend the overwhelming majority of our time today, but there's also another necessary passage all the way in the New Testament, the book of 2 Peter 1. We're going to spend just a brief amount of time there in just a moment, you may want to be able to "put your hands or eyes on it," but Job 19 is our primary text today and if you are a visitor or a guest, I want to welcome you to a journey from the ash heap of life. That's right, a man by the name of Job, one of the most prolifically known individuals in all the Bible. In fact, in James 5 it says that we remember the patience of job. Ezekiel 14 puts Job in the same company as Daniel and Noah. And even though he's one of those names that is synonymous with suffering and grief and trials and tribulation, over the last month we've been walking through what we know is the book of Job for a lack of better terms, just kind of peeling the layers away to see not only who he was, but how he became whom the Lord worked through.

Now, if you're not familiar with the story, first two chapters are very critical. Here's a man who loses all 10 of his children in one day, his bank accounts are emptied, his fame is destroyed, and if that was not enough, and sometime later he is stricken with some type of physical ailment. In fact, the Bible says from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet there are sores upon him that he's scratching with shards of pottery. And if the loss of his children and his fortune and his physical health was not enough, beginning in chapters 2 and 3, there are these "friends" who show up by the name of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, who for the majority of the book of Job decide to "tee off on him" to share with him how he is wrong, there's no way he could be in a right relationship with God and everything they say he pushes back against.

Today we've made our way to chapter 19. You say, "What do you mean we've made our way to 19?" In chapter 19, verse 25 and 26, not only some of the most famous words in all of the Bible but I want you to imagine saying these words in the condition that Job was in. Today, we're going to look at the silver lining of suffering. You know, oftentimes whatever we're walking through seems a lot longer than it actually is. For Job, we don't know the exact chronology. It could have been several weeks or months, some people believe even years that he walked through the difficulty and the struggle that he did so, and today in the midst of the silver lining, for you it might be a few months, it might be a

few years, it might be 50 years, might be longer than that, but every now and then, God gives us the silver lining that says, "You know what? Not only was it worth it, but it will continue to be so."

Beginning of verse 25 of Job 19.

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

You talk about a statement. He's on the ash heap, he is sore from the top of his head to the bottom of his foot, he's being ridiculed, he's being criticized, he has no money in the bank, he's done 10 funerals for each of his 10 children, and he and his wife have had a very difficult conversation along the road and yet, he says, "I know my redeemer lives and that one day he shall stand on the earth at the latter day, and even though the worms destroy my flesh, this body, there's coming a time where I shall see God." I don't know about you, I can't read those words without looking through the lens of the empty tomb. I can't do it. I mean, think about Job for just a moment. This man chronologically lived somewhere in the era of Jacob and Esau. In other words, he might have had a conversation with Isaac. There's a chance he could have known Abraham, but as far as the gospel message, the person of Jesus Christ, the cross, the resurrection completely foreign to him. He had no concept. He had no idea. Yet when we read those words, "I know my redeemer lives," what do we think about? Resurrection Sunday. We think about the fact that one day he will stand on the earth, we think about those great passages, about the second coming, that one day the worms destroy this body, I will see God. We cannot, it is so difficult to see this passage in any light other than the facts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ which begs this question: do you and I today have biblical permission to do that? I mean, after all, Job couldn't conceive it. There is no way while he was sitting on the ash heap, that Job comprehend Jesus Christ. There's no way he grasped a crucifixion, much less a resurrection. So do we have biblical permission to look at this passage through the lens of the empty tomb?

Well, that's where 2 Peter 1 comes into play. If you have 2 Peter 1:20 and 21 available, I want to share with you some unbelievable insight, not only description, totality, but to the ash heap of Job's life. Verse 20 of 2 Peter 1 says,

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Why is that passage so important? Because what that says is whomever the Lord used, whether it was Moses, David, Joshua, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, it didn't matter who the Lord used, what that passage says is there were times where God had them say and/or write something that they had no comprehension of what that actually meant.

Let me give you some examples. Do you really believe that in Isaiah chapter 7, when that prophet thousands of years ago said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive," do you think he really knew the lyrics to "Silent night, Holy night"? No. When Ezekiel was given the vision of breathing on the bones and them coming to life as a great army, do you think he really conceived the concepts of what we know as the book of Revelation? Of course not. In other words, as you're walking through particularly the Old Testament, there are times where the Lord gave these individuals insight to things they couldn't grasp, they couldn't comprehend, they had never personally witnessed, nor could they imagine, but according to what we just read, the Holy Ghost moved them and their faithfulness to the Lord to just say what he told them to say, or write what he told him to write. Why is that important? Because of 2 Peter 1:20 and 21, you and I have biblical permission that even though Job couldn't comprehend it, we have the beautiful aspect of hindsight. We can look back in verse 25 and 26 through the lens of the empty tomb of Jesus Christ.

So that being said, as we go back to Job 19, we have biblical permission. Let's see what was Job saying, what was he declaring and how does it impact us today? Let's begin with this perspective, he says, "for I know my redeemer liveth." Four times in these two verses he uses the personal pronoun either "I or my." Now this is significant. I know John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son," I get that. I understand the breadth and the width of the the person and the the message and the means of Jesus Christ. I get that. But at the end of the day, the Bible says that we alone will stand before God. He makes this very personal, "This is my redeemer." Why is this important? Because at the end of the day, the only person that you can be assured of their relationship with God is you. You're it. Now I know that we know our spouses well, we know our children well, we know our friends well, but at the end of the day, only the Lord knows somebody's heart.

He said, "I know my redeemer lives." How personal that is, "that he shall stand on the earth, and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I will see God." How personal this message is. But notice how profound it is. He says, "I know." Notice he doesn't say, I think, I hope, I wish, statistically it's possible and/or probable. He said, "I know that my redeemer lives."

Now, when I have the opportunity and the privilege and it happens quite frequently to have a conversation with someone, it doesn't matter what the age or stage of life is, but when I have a conversation with somebody about their sin condition and their need to call upon Jesus to save them, as soon as that conversation is over, that decision has been rendered, sometimes I'm just verifying the decision that was made weeks, months or years ago, sometimes I have the actual opportunity to be there in the spiritual birthing room, when, as the Bible says, they are born again, but anytime I have the opportunity to sit down with somebody either immediately after or sometime shortly thereafter of their salvation experience, I always take them to 1 John 5:12 and 13. Allow me to quote them for you. Verse 12 says, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Why do I take them to that verse? Because every single word is one syllable. If that's not simple, I don't know what is. And I want to break it down real simply that the only reason you have eternal life is because of Jesus Christ. It's not

because of something you did, something that you stopped, something that you bought off. It's that simple, if you have the Son, you have life. If you don't, you don't.

Which leads to verse 13. It says, "I have written these things," listen to this, "so that you might know that you have eternal life." Now why is that important? Because oftentimes our environment, our emotions, our feelings, get in the way of the facts of our faith. Think about how Job was feeling for just a moment. His body was sore from his head to his feet. He's emotions were ragged. His nerves were on edge. Think about everything he'd walked through and he makes the declaration, "I know." The day that you get saved sometimes fireworks don't go off unless you get saved at our Fall Fest and they go off shortly thereafter when you get saved. But nonetheless, fireworks rarely go off, the lights don't get brighter, you can't always guarantee there's going to be a rush of adrenaline. So how do we know? How do we know that we know that we know that we have a Redeemer, that we've been saved? 1 John 5:13 says it is written down.

Now back up to Job 19. I want you to go back into verse 23 and 24. I want you to hear what Job says. "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" Isn't it interesting the one wish that Job has is an opportunity and privilege that we usually take for granted each and every day. How do we know it's written down? Let me put that in very pragmatic terms. I can only share my story, my testimony. Again, this is personal, only you know your relationship with the Lord. So I'll go ahead and state the facts for me. In all my years, I've never personally visibly seen Jesus Christ. I've never seen him. I didn't see his earthly ministry. I never saw him in his resurrected state. I've never seen. I personally have never audibly heard the voice of Jesus Christ. I've never audibly heard it. I've never touched, like Thomas did, his side or the wounds. And so when we think about my senses, my faculties, I've never touched, I've never heard, I've never seen. You say, "Well, why is that significant?" Because neither had Job. Job hadn't seen his redeemer. Job hadn't heard his redeemer. Job hadn't ever touched his redeemer. I want you to think about this, what that means for me and hopefully for you is this: I am basing my entire existence and my eternity based on what's been written in this book. That's it.

"It's written that you might know that you have eternal life." Why is this significant? Because Job made this statement, "I just wish it were written down, but I know." Do you know what we have the privilege of saying? It is written down and we know. You talk about a perspective. This isn't talking about a hunch, this isn't an inclination, this isn't some type of emotional response. It has been written, it has been recorded. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15 numerous times it says, Jesus Christ, he lived, he died, he rose again, listen, according to the scriptures. So you and I have a perspective that we can know not just on feelings, emotions or desires but because it's written down.

So what's the provision? What is it that he so desperately desires? Notice it says in verse 25, "For I know that my redeemer liveth." Interesting, his desire, his need is for one who will redeem him, and let's define what a redemption is, or a redeemer is. When you redeem something, that is, you exchange something for something else. Let me make this very secular, and then we're going to get real serious for a moment. Today's world,

oftentimes it's in a digital format, rarely ever do we use paper and such, if you go to a store, go to a restaurant and you've got a coupon or a gift card, you know what it's called when you exchange it? You redeem it. You're redeeming that coupon, you're redeeming that gift card, which means that that which you desire to acquire, that which you desire to experience is going to be placed to somebody else's charge other than you. That's simply what redemption is. So when he says, "I know that my redeemer lives," he's saying, "I know," and you and I because it's written down, we know that he is the redemption, he is the one who has paid the price for what we have the benefit of receiving in our lives.

Now probably the best description in all the earth, the picture in scripture is in the minor prophets, the story of a man by the name of Hosea and Gomer. If you're not familiar with the story, Hosea was not a "thus saith the Lord," prophet, he was a lifestyle prophet. You say, "What's a lifestyle prophet?" His life was a picture of the message that God wanted to give his people.

He was married to a woman whose name you will rarely ever see duplicated on somebody's birth certificate. Her name was Gomer. In fact, I tease young men, if you ever, whether in person or online, you meet a young lady by the name of Gomer, you need to run the opposite direction real fast. There's a reason we don't name our little girls after Gomer. Her lifestyle, she not only lied, she cheated, she manipulated and then blamed it all on Hosea. There came a point, though, she's a lot like the prodigal son. Remember the prodigal son took his inheritance, had a good time, so to speak, but when the money ran out, the friends ran away. He found himself all by himself in a horrible condition. In fact, he just begged, "Maybe my my father will take me back as a servant."

What happened to Gomer? It got so bad, her life, her existence was so bad, she was actually placed, and I know this is politically incorrect, but it's just Bible, she was placed on a slavery auction block where people were allowed to come by, visually inspect, poke around and decide if they wanted to buy her for themselves. If you read the story of Hosea, guess what? People came on that day and they left and nobody bought her. She was in such a bad condition that nobody thought she was worthy to purchase except Hosea. Hosea shows up and buys. You understand he could have gotten her for a penny. I mean, nobody else would buy her. They didn't want to take her back. He goes back and he buys back the woman who cheated on him. He buys back the woman who lied to him. He buys back the woman who ran off on him. Is that not what Jesus did for you? Because you cheated on him. You lied to him. You ran away and he said, "That's alright." You're not worth anything. The world doesn't want you, they just want to spit you out. "But I will buy you back." When he says, "I know my redeemer lives," he's saying, "I know that there is one who is willing to exchange himself for me, even though I'm not worth buying."

Now think about this. If somebody is going to be a redeemer, they not only have to be willing but they have to be able. You say, "What do you mean 'able'?" I want you to walk up a few verses to verse 14. Job makes this incredible statement. Verse 14, he says, "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me." You say, "Why is that so important?" Because in biblical days, the only one who was qualified to redeem you

from a "slave scenario, bondage scenario," was what we call the kinsman redeemer, somebody who's actually related to you. You want a good biblical illustration? Read the book of Ruth where here's this woman who is redeemed by Boaz, who technically was related to her. It had to be someone that was related. Why is it so significant? He says, "My kinsfolk, they're not willing." Better understand a redeemer has to be a kinsman. A redeemer has to be qualified for the redemption process.

Here's where it gets interesting. In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, do you know what Jesus Christ is called? The second Adam. That's what he's called, the second Adam. You say, "Well, why is that so significant?" You do realize that Adam came to planet earth very differently than you did. In fact, the overwhelming majority not always came by what we call natural means, okay? But you go back to the book of Genesis, the Lord takes the dirt, he forms it, he breathes into Adam, he becomes a living soul. Eve comes by way of the rib in the side, Cain and Abel and everybody else, including you and me, came by what we know as natural means. You say, "Why is that important?" Because when Jesus Christ is called the second Adam, he's only the second person on planet earth to come directly by the will, the word and the breath of God which meant that him and Adam technically were brethren. That's right. In fact, you get to Acts 20, it talks about the church which God purchased with his own blood.

You see, Job says, "You know what? There's not one of my family members who can fix this problem," but because you, in spite of what modern culture says, you do realize that each and everyone of us our great, great, great, great, great grandfather, all of us was a man by the name of Adam according to the Bible, and Jesus Christ, because of how the Lord brought him here was his kinsman, which means he's yours too. Jesus Christ is qualified to redeem you and he's actually capable of doing so. You say, "What do you mean he's capable?" The Bible says without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. Blood has to be shed in exchange for, life has to be given. That's why 2 Corinthians 5 is so important, "He that knew no sin, knew sin so that we might be declared righteous in him."

When he says, "my redeemer," he's basically saying, "one who has purchased on our behalf, who's qualified and he's capable." But it's also very prophetic. Notice what he says. Now remember, it's the Holy Spirit that spoke through him. I mean, he bypassed Christmas, he bypassed Easter, he said, "He's going to stand at the latter day upon the earth." Now think about that imagery for just a moment because we know that for 33 1/2 years he "stood on the earth." We know that after his resurrection, Jesus Christ stood among the disciples until he ascended up on high. But the Bible says in Revelation 19 there's a day coming where the heavens are going to part and Jesus Christ is going to descend and he will "stand on the earth at the latter day." It's the battle of Armageddon. It's the second coming. It's the end times. Guess what Job is doing here in these very simplistic verses. He's saying, "I know that someone has purchased me. I know someone has offered only that which they are capable of doing and when it all comes to the end, he's the one that's going to wrap it all up."

Think about that, "I know." So what does that mean for you and I? Not only do we have the opportunity for forgiveness, not only do we have the opportunity for salvation, but I've got news for this old world because every time you turn around, every time you turn around, they tell us a new way that we're going to destroy ourselves. We're going to destroy ourselves with heat. We're going to destroy ourselves with cold. We're going to destroy ourselves with nuclear armaments. We're going to destroy ourselves with ozone. Every time we turn around, there's a new way we're going to destroy ourselves. I got news: if you read the last book of the Bible, it doesn't happen that way. You know what happens? Jesus Christ shows back up. And there's an old bumper sticker that I love that says "Jesus Christ is coming back and, boy, is he mad."

He said, "I know one day he will stand on the earth at the latter day." What a declaration for you and I. You see, we have permission to look at these verses through the empty tomb which means that's what's "next" on God's prophetic calendar because the Messiah came, the Messiah lived, the Messiah died, the Messiah rose, the Messiah ascended, and guess what? The next thing is he will do just as Job said. He will come and he will stand on the earth at the latter day.

There's only one problem with this passage. It's verse 26. It says, "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." You say, "Why is that a problem?" Because nothing that Job said in verse 25 negates the fact that you and I are all going to breathe our last breath. In fact, one of the most famous illustrations in John chapter 11, we know it as the raising of Lazarus, but remember his two sisters or dialoguing with Jesus, and they're struggling with the fact that from a human perspective, when we breathe our last breath, that is it. And that's a problem. You say, "Why?" Well, it's obvious, at least it should be, that worms are going to destroy our body. Now we live in a time today where there's alternate means of internment, so to speak, but let's just say for the sake of illustration that you roll down the street and you prepare for you or your loved one's burial, and you buy the most expensive casket they've got, you buy the most secure vault they've got, you go through every measure you can to guarantee that you or your loved one is as "preserved" as "humanly possible." I got news for you: give it about 100 years and worms going to be all up in that vault. You give it a couple of hundred years, 500 years, as an old doctor told me years ago, someone asking about cremation and the issues revolving in that. He said, "Pastor, I got news for, you stay dead long enough we all return to dust." He said, "You want to get there quickly, you want to get there slowly, it's your choice."

At the end of the day, worms destroy our body and notice this last statement, "yet in my flesh I'm going to see God." You say, "Why is this problematic?" Because in our own world, we've all got this Job complex. I got news for you, I know your life. You say, "What do you mean you know my life?" Your life hasn't gone the way you planned. Things have happened that you could have never imagined. Things went sideways, upside down, whatever it may be, and deep down inside, every one of us at some level is frustrated, maybe even mad at God for whatever it may be. And if I've heard it once, I've heard it a thousand times, people say, "Pastor, one day when I see God face to face, man, I got something I'm going to tell him." I got proof that you won't because in Job 38 God

shows up. You know what happens when God shows up? Job shuts up. That's right, he doesn't say a word. Why? Because he sees the Lord. He sees him and he had no idea in chapter 19 it was only a few chapters away where he would actually see him in the flesh. And I got news for each and every one of us, the Bible says it's appointed unto men once to die and after this, the judgment." You say, "Why is this problematic?" Because we're all going to appear before God one day, and based on what we just read in verse 23 and 24, everything of your life has been written down and really only the question is this: is your name in the book of works or in the book of life? You self-justify and rationalize and explain your life away and say, "Well, God, if you were in my position, if you knew my existence, if you knew my situation, then you would see it from my perspective." Or Job who had an existence worse than any of us could ever imagine and he says, "though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I will see God." You say, "Why is this problematic?" Because every one of us needs a redeemer, every one of us needs one to exchange themselves on our behalf, and the problem is that most of us try self-redemption. "I'm going to get redeemed by being good. I'm going to get redeemed by being religious. I'm going to be redeemed by giving a lot of money. I'm going to be redeemed by stopping this. I'm going to be redeemed by starting that." He says, "I know my redeemer lives and that he shall stand on the earth at the latter day." Unless you're going to be the one standing on the earth the latter day, you're not qualified to redeem yourself.

What a statement, "I know my redeemer lives, and one day he shall stand on the earth at the latter days. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." Every single one of us at one point is going to meet God face to face, the question is, are you prepared to do so?

Let's pray with their heads bowed, our eyes closed. Maybe today, as we look at this very famous passage of scripture, maybe today is the day where the Spirit of God took the word of God and really got your attention that it's not about the present day suffering, it's not about the issues of this current life, but at what beholds and what is before each and every one of us. And today, can you emphatically state that you know your redeemer lives? Have you done what Roman 10:13 says where you have called on the name of the Lord to save you? Maybe today's the day, maybe you're not on the literal ash heap like Job, but maybe you feel like you are, maybe today's the day where you look at all that around you and say it is time for an exchange, it is time for redemption not based on me or my ability, but based on Jesus Christ alone.

If you're that person today, today would be a great day to call out, much like Job did in chapter 19. You don't have to say the words he said. You don't have to say the words that I or somebody else might say. But maybe your declaration, maybe your prayer, maybe your conversation will go a little something like this. "God, today. I'm coming in agreement with you that, God, I have a sin problem. God, I've gone contrary to your will, your way and your word. God, there are things I've done that only you alone know of. God, they are things I've said that only your ears alone have heard. And God, you know, there are things that I have thought that nobody knows of except you and you alone and your Bible, your word says the wages, the result of my sin is death. And God, I want you

to know that I believe I deserve it. I deserve it, but also believe the latter part of that verse that says, 'but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' So God, today I believe, I believe that Jesus Christ is not only qualified but he is capable to redeem me from my sin. God, I believe, I believe you love me so much that Jesus came on my behalf. God, I believe you love me so much that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on my behalf. God, I believe you love me so much that Jesus Christ was willing to be the redeemer, he was willing to pay the price of his blood on his cross. And God, I believe that your love didn't remain on the cross or remain in the grave but three days later when Jesus Christ rose from the grave, he made it possible, he made it feasible for my sin to be forgiven and my soul to be saved. God, today I don't have the answers to all the issues, the problems and the struggles of my life, much less the world in totality, but there's one thing that I know much like Job did today, I know that my redeemer lives. And God, I know that you're willing to save me, so the best way I know how I'm asking you to do so, and I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe today is that day either here in person or online, where you called on the Lord to forgive you and save you. In a moment, I'm going to pray for us, we're going to stand and sing. We just want to invite you just to step out and step forward. We'd love to do as Luke 15, celebrate with the angels above just to hear your story, to pray with you and to pray for you.

*Heavenly Father, as we come to this time of decision, God, what a celebration today, that declaration to know that our redeemer lives and, God, know that one day you will stand on the earth at the latter day. God, to know that, yes, the worms will destroy this body but one day we will stand before you face to face. And God, I pray today that we would allow all the distractions of this world to go by the wayside that we would know that we know that we know that we have eternity settled in the person and in the redemption of Jesus Christ. And it is in his name we pray. Amen.*