

Job Chapter 19

Verses 1-29

Job's response to Bildad's second speech was desperate.

This is Job's second response to Bildad.

The common charge of his friends has brought such grief to Job that he cries again for a mediator, and affirms his deep belief in the ultimate justice of Yahweh, even if His justice is revealed in the life to come.

Job's words concerning His "Redeemer" and his belief in the resurrection of the body are among the most significant in the book.

(In verses 1-19), Job felt "strange" by God and abandoned by his "Close friends" and what remained of his "relatives".

No one stood up to defend him.

All that was once strong in Job's life, his family, his social standing, his wealth, his faith, was now broken and "removed".

In verses 1-5

Job began with the anguished cry that his friends have become defiant and relentless for mentors (verses 2-3), and they have had no effect on his dialog with the sin they imagine is present (verse 4).

Job 19:1 "Then Job answered and said,"

This chapter contains the highlight of the discussion cycles, since in it Job expresses the deepest faith possible for a believer in his day from the midst of the deepest despair.

Job 19:2 "How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?"

Job begins as Bildad himself had begun in both cases.

His last speech had been so offensive and unfeeling that Job may well ask:

"How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?":

Moreover, Bildad had infused a kind of personal malice into his charges, which Job felt most keenly, so that he is constrained to ask, "If indeed I have erred, doth not my error remain with myself?"

I alone suffer for it, and ye do not even sympathize or suffer with me."

We must understand that the three men that were tearing Job to pieces with their cruel accusations were supposed to be his friends.

Bildad's attack of Job in the last chapter was the cruelest of all of them, up until this chapter.

Cruel words spoken by people who are your friends can cut your heart out.

It left Job more wounded than if they had thrust a sword through him.

Job 19:3 "These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed [that] ye make yourselves strange to me."

"Ten times" is an expression for "often" (compare 31:7).

It seemed their attack would never end.

Job mentions ten times here.

The sad thing was that they were not reluctantly reproving Job.

They were viciously attacking his character.

Job 19:4 "And be it indeed [that] I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself."

If I have sinned, I myself suffer for my sins, and therefore deserve your pity rather than your reproaches.

He reminded them that he would pay for his own sins.

They would not be held responsible for what he had done.

Verses 5-7

Job confessed that if God sent him friends like Bildad, who needs enemies?

He feared there was no justice.

Job 19:5 "If indeed ye will magnify [yourselves] against me, and plead against me my reproach:"

Look and talk big, set up themselves for great folk, and resolve to run him down.

Open their mouths wide against him and speak great swelling words in a blustering manner; or magnify what they called an error in him, and set it out in the worst light they could.

"And plead against me my reproach":

His affliction which he was reproached with, and was pleaded against him as an argument of his being a wicked man.

If therefore they were determined to go on after this manner, and insist on this kind of proof, then he would have them take what follows.

Job 19:6 "Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net."

Bildad had spoken a great deal about the wicked being snared by his own sin, and now Job, without actually quoting his words, or he uses a word for net that Bildad had not used, speaks to their substance.

It is God who has taken him in His net and compassed him about therewith.

This is the assertion he has made before (Job 16:7; Job 13:27).

They had shown Job no mercy at all.

He reminded them that he was being punished by God for whatever it was that he had done wrong.

It was not their duty to add to his pain and suffering.

It appeared they thought if they could tear Job down, it would elevate their positions.

Job 19:7 "Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but [there is] no judgment."

To wit, unto God by prayer or appeal.

"Of wrong":

That I am oppressed, either by my friends; or rather, by God, who deals with me according to his sovereign power and exact and rigorous justice.

And not with that equity and benignity which he showed to the generality of men, and hath promised to good men, such as He knows me to be.

"There is no judgment":

God will not hear my cause, nor pass sentence.

Which I might reasonably expect from him; but he quite neglects me, and hath utterly forsaken me, and left me in the hands of the devil and wicked men.

See the like complaints of other good men in the like case of desertion (Psalms 13:2; 22:2; 88:15; Lam. 3:8; Hab. 1:2).

Job declared that the sufferings he had endured were undeserved.

He even cried to God about this, but it appeared that God had not judged this particular situation at this time.

Verses 8-10

Before his trials began, Job had been one of the most important men in the East.

But this adversity had "stripped" him "of" his "glory", ruining his financial position and his standing in the community.

He could no longer see what the future held ("darkness in my paths").

(In verses 8-21), Job rehearsed his suffering.

God had closed him in, stripped him, broken him and turned against him (verses 8-12).

His family and friends had failed him (verses 15-19), so that he was to be pitied because God had caused this to occur (verses 21-22).

Job 19:8 "He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths."

So that I can see no means or possibility of getting out of my troubles.

"He hath set darkness in my paths":

So that I cannot discern what course I ought to take.

It appeared that God had blocked Job's way out of this trouble.

There was no light to guide Job in his escape from this problem.

Job 19:9 "He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown [from] my head."

That is, of my estate, and children, and authority, and all my comforts.

"And taken the crown from my head":

All mine ornaments.

Job had been glorified by God and man.

He had prospered Job, because of Job's faithfulness.

It was actually God who allowed Satan to take all of this away from Job.

Job did not know about Satan, but he was staying faithful to God.

Job 19:10 "He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree."

Or, broken me down.

Job compares himself to a city, the walls of which are attacked on every side and broken down.

His ruin is complete and he perishes.

"And mine hope hath he removed like a tree":

Rather, torn up like a tree.

Job's "hope" was no doubt, to lead a tranquil and a godly life.

Surrounded by his relatives and friends, in favor with God and man, till old age came and he descended like a ripe shock of corn (Job 5:26), to the grave.

This hope had been "torn up by the roots" when his calamities fell upon him.

Job had been strong.

He was established.

Now it appears he had lost all hope.

Job 19:11 "He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as [one of] his enemies."

He hath stirred up his wrath against me of his own accord, without any provocation of mine, human infirmity excepted.

"He counteth me unto him as one of his enemies":

I.e. he uses me as sharply as if I were an inveterate enemy of God and of all goodness, though he knows I am and have ever been a hearty lover and servant of him.

Job could have stood the calamities much better had he known where they had come from.

His worst hurt was believing that God's wrath had been poured out upon him.

He wanted to be God's friend, and he felt that God counted him as His enemy.

His loss of his close relationship with God was the worst hurt he had.

Job 19:12 "His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle."

"Raise up their way against me":

In the ancient world conquering armies often had their own road crews level out the rough places so that their military forces could attack.

Job felt that God had sent His troops against him.

He believed they had encircled him and there was no way out.

Job 19:13 "He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me."

I looked for some support and comfort from my kindred and friends, but they were so astonished at the number and dreadfulness of my calamities that they fled from me as a man accused of God.

And as for my neighbors, who formerly much courted my acquaintance: they keep aloof from me, as if they had never known me.

As we must see the hand of God in all the injuries we receive from our enemies, so likewise in all the slights and unkindness we receive from our friends.

Since early on in the book of Job, we have not heard of any family of Job.

Even his wife has not been heard of, since she suggested that Job curse God and die.

It appears that everyone had left him that could.

They possibly thought they might be punished along with Job if they stayed.

Job 19:14 "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me."

To wit, to perform the offices of humanity and friendship which they owe to me.

"Have forgotten me":

I.e. neglect and disregard me as much as if they had quite forgotten me.

Those who had come to Job's house for the great celebrations he held had left.

They did not want to catch Job's illness.

Job 19:15 "They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight."

Even those of his house, male and female, his servants, guards, retainers, handmaids, and the like, looked on him and treated him as if unknown to them.

"I am an alien in their sight":

Nay, not only as if unknown, but "as an alien," i.e. a foreigner.

Job 19:16 "I called my servant, and he gave [me] no answer; I entreated him with my mouth."

Astounding insolence in an Oriental servant or rather slave, who should have hurried to serve his master's words, and striven to anticipate his wishes.

"I entreated him with my mouth":

Begging him probably for some service which was distasteful, and which he declined to render.

The only reason the servants and the maid had not left, was because Job was their master.

It appears even they had lost respect for Job.

They probably thought like Job's friends, that Job was being punished by God for his sins.

Job 19:17 "My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's [sake] of mine own body."

I am become so loathsome that my wife will not come near me, though I have conjured her to do it, by the dear memory of our children, those common pledges of our mutual love.

"I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body":

Which may mean, as interpreted above, for, or by the memory of our children, namely, the children now dead.

The general interpretation here supposes that Job's breath, by reason of his sores and ulcers, was so offensive that his wife could not bear to come near him.

This was saying that Job had extremely bad breath from the disease he had.

He had lost the loving tenderness of his wife, because of the terrible odor accompanying the disease.

Everyone avoided him, because of this terrible disease and the awful odor that accompanied it.

Job 19:18 "Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me."

Or, fools; the most contemptible persons.

"I arose":

To wit, from my seat, to show my respect to them, though they were my inferiors.

To show my readiness to comply with that mean and low condition, into which God had now brought me.

Or, I stood up; for so this word sometimes signifies.

I did not disoblige or provoke them by any uncivil and uncomely carriage towards them, but was very courteous to them.

"And they spoke against me":

And yet they make it their business to rail against me, as you also do.

The children were probably saying out loud, what their parents had said against Job in private.

Job 19:19 "All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me."

That is, my intimate friends: the men of my counsel who are familiar with my secret affairs.

"Whom I loved are turned against me":

Sincerely and fervently, which they so ill requite.

He saith not, they who loved me; for their love, had it been true, would have continued in his affliction as well as in his prosperity.

The inward friends were probably speaking of the friends that he had as counsel.

He had loved and trusted the three friends that had attacked him so brutally with their tongue.

Job 19:20 "My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth."

The "skin of my teeth" is a well-known phrase, referring to skin that is thin and fragile.

The idea is that he had escaped death by a very slim margin. The loss of all his family, as well as the abuse of his friends was added to the terror of God-forsakenness which had gripped him.

He had lost so much weight that his skin seemed to be stretched over his bones.

Job 19:21 "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me."

Job, in his limited perspective, was convinced "the hand of God ... touched" him.

The opening chapters of this book show differently.

Job was appealing to his friends and family to have pity upon him.

It was hard enough to endure the terrible things that had happened to him, but was even harder when he had no one in sympathy with him.

Job 19:22 "Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?"

Why are ye as hard on me as God himself?

If I have offended him, what have I done to offend you?

"And are not satisfied with my flesh":

That is, with the consumption and torment of my whole body.

But add to it the vexation of my spirit, by grievous censures and reproaches.

And are like wolves and lions, which are not contented with devouring the flesh of their prey, but also break their bones.

Job was asking his friends and family to not add to his suffering.

“In my flesh” (verse 26) speaks of a resurrected body.

Though it may also be translated “apart from my flesh,” as a spirit being, the emphasis of the original means “from the standpoint of my flesh,” in my resurrected body.

Here then is clear evidence of the Old Testament belief in the resurrection of the human body.

In verses 23-29 we see Job at his greatest despair, but his faith appeared at its highest as he confidently affirmed that God was his Redeemer.

He wanted that confidence in the record for all to know (verses 23-24).

Job wished that the activities of his life were put into words and “engraved in the rock,” so all would know that he had not sinned to the magnitude of his suffering.

God granted his prayer.

God was his Redeemer (compare Exodus 6:6; Psalms 19:14; 72:14; Isa. 43:14; 47:4; 49:26; Jer. 50:34), who would vindicate him in that last day of judgment on the earth when justice was finally done (Jer. 12:1-3; John 5:25, 29; Rev. 20:11-15).

Verses 23-27

God has humiliated Job (verses 8-12), his friends and relatives have abandoned him (verses 13-20), and he has been reduced to pleading for pity (verses 21-22).

But from the depths of degradation he expresses the confidence that if his case could only be recorded for posterity, future generations would judge him favorably (verses 23-24).

Furthermore, he knows confidently that he has a “Redeemer” (verse 25, Hebrew *goel*), One who will champion his cause and vindicate him.

The Redeemer is more than an arbiter (9:33) or a witness (16:19) but a Kinsman-Redeemer who will avenge him.

Clearly, Job viewed God Himself as the Redeemer, and the Hebrew word is in fact used often of God (Psalm 19:14; Isa. 41:14; etc.).

Job 19:23 "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!"

Some understand this to refer to the words he is about to utter; by others they are interpreted generally.

The former view is probably owing to the Christian acceptation given to them, and the consequently great importance attaching to them.

Since, however, the three verses (Job 19:25-27), are manifestly more emphatic than any he has yet spoken.

Though they do not stand quite alone, there is no reason why it should not be especially these very words which he desires more than any others to have recorded.

Perhaps the “now” here shows this.

"Oh that they were printed":

This points us to primitive time, when writing materials and the use of writing involved more or less of engraving.

For instance, in later times was the case with tablets of wax.

Job 19:24 "That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!"

A peculiar kind of rock-inscription, of which, so far as I know, no specimens remain, appears to be here alluded to.

Job wished the characters of his record to be cut deep into the rock with an iron chisel, and the incision made to be then filled up with lead (compare the mediaeval "brasses").

I believe the words that Job was speaking of that he wanted written down were the ones he was about to utter.

They were so important, I agree with Job, they should be engraved in stone.

Verses 25-26

Job had no hope left for this life, but was confident that “after” he was dead, his Redeemer would vindicate him in the glory of a physical (“from my flesh”), resurrection in which he would enjoy perfect fellowship with the Redeemer.

That Jesus Christ is that Redeemer is the clear message of the gospel (see Luke 2:38; Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:12).

We are not told how Job knew this, but in his heart, God placed this confidence, one of the Bible’s most triumphant statements of faith: “I know that my redeemer liveth, and” ... He shall stand at the latter days ... I shall see God”.

Redeemer means “a go-between”, or “one who will ransom.”

As hopeless as life seems, and as awful as death can be, none of it is the end for those who know the Lord.

A day is coming when God Himself will vindicate all of life’s suffering.

Job 19:25 "For I know [that] my redeemer liveth, and [that] he shall stand at the latter [day] upon the earth:"

Rather, but I know.

This is now something higher to which his mind rises.

"My Redeemer liveth":

“Liveth” means more than is, exists.

Job uses the word in opposition to himself.

He dies but his redeemer lives after him.

"And that he shall stand in the latter day":

In the days of the Messiah, or of the gospel, which are often called the latter or last days, or times (as Isaiah 2:2; Hosea 3:5; Joel 2:28; compared with Acts 2:17; 1 Timothy 4:1; and 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrew 1:1).

Or at the day of the general resurrection and judgment, which, as those holy patriarchs well knew, and firmly believed, was to be at the end of the world.

For this was the time when Job’s resurrection, of which he here speaks, was to take place.

I believe Job was speaking of the Redeemer (the Lord Jesus Christ).

"Liveth" is a word that means continues to live.

He was speaking prophetically of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Jesus Christ), who stands in the latter days upon the earth.

Notice that Job said "know".

There was no doubt as far as Job was concerned.

Job had fulfilled the Scripture in Romans that says:

Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Job had professed his faith in this.

Job 19:26 "And [though] after my skin [worms] destroy this [body], yet in my flesh shall I see God:"

Meaning not, that after his skin was wholly consumed now, which was almost gone, there being scarce any left but the skin of his teeth (Job 19:20).

The worms in his ulcers would consume what was left of his body, which scarcely deserved the name of a body.

And therefore, he points to it, and calls it "this", without saying what it was.

But that when he should be entirely stripped of his skin in the grave, then rottenness and worms would strip him also of all the rest of his flesh and his bones.

By which he expresses the utter consumption of his body by death, and after it in the grave.

And nevertheless, though so it would be, he was assured of his resurrection from the dead.

"Yet in my flesh shall I see God":

He believed, that though he should die and decay into dust in the grave, yet he should rise again.

And that in true flesh, not in an aerial celestial body, but in a true body, consisting of flesh, blood, and bones.

Which spirits have not, and in the same flesh or body he then had, his own flesh and body, and not another's.

And so with his fleshly or corporeal eyes see God, even his living Redeemer, in human nature.

Who, as he would stand upon the earth in that nature, in the fullness of time, and obtain redemption for him.

So he would in the latter day appear again, raise him from the dead, and take him to himself, to behold his glory to all eternity.

Or "out of my flesh", out of my fleshly eyes; from thence and with those shall I behold God manifest in the flesh, my incarnate God.

And if Job was one of those saints that rose when Christ did, as some say, he saw him in the flesh and with his fleshly eyes.

Job was saying though this disease killed his present body and he died, he would arise in a new body to meet God.

Job 19:27 "Whom shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; [though] my reins be consumed within me."

These words might mean merely, whom I myself shall see; or, for myself may mean, favorable to me, on my side and to my joy.

And mine eyes shall behold, and not another”:

I.e. "not the eyes of another

I myself, retaining my personal identity, "the same true living Iman," shall with my own eyes look on my Redeemer.

“Though my reins be consumed within me”:

Which may be considered as a passionate exclamation, such as we find (Genesis 48:18 and often in the book of Psalms), arising from his confident expectation of this his unspeakable happiness, and expressing his vehement desire and longing for that blessed time and state.

Every eye shall see Him.

Job was looking to that great and glorious day, when we shall all meet God.

He was not speaking of a vision or of a dream.

He was speaking of reality.

We are all restrained at present from such an encounter.

There is a day when Job and all who believe, shall behold Him.

Verses 28-29

Job warned his friends that their misjudgment of him and violence against him could bring punishment on them.

Job 19:28 "But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?"

Rather, if ye shall say “how shall we persecute him?”

That is to say, "If, after what I have said, ye continue bitter against me, and take counsel together as to the best way of persecuting me, then, seeing the root of the matter (i.e. the essence of piety) "is found in me, be ye afraid," etc.

The statement that Job had just made should have stopped all of the persecutions from his friends.

If it did not, it would be because of their lack of understanding, and not because of anything Job was guilty of.

Job 19:29 "Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath [bringeth] the punishments of the sword, that ye may know [there is] a judgment."

Not of the civil magistrate, nor of a foreign enemy, but of the avenging sword of divine justice.

Lest God should whet the glittering sword of his justice, and his hand should take hold of judgment, in order to avenge the wrongs of the innocent.

Unless the other should also be considered as his instruments.

"For wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword":

Or "sins of the sword".

The sense is, either that the wrath of men, in persecuting the people of God, puts them upon the commission of such sins as deserve to be punished with the sword, either of the civil magistrate, or of a foreign enemy, or of divine justice.

Or else the wrath of God brings on more punishments for their sins by means of the sword.

"That ye may know there is a judgment":

That is executed in the world by the Judge of all the earth, who will do right.

And that there is a future judgment after death, unto which everything in this world will be brought to light, when God will judge the world in righteousness by Christ.

Whom he has ordained to be Judge of the quick and dead; and which will be a righteous judgment, that none can escape.

And when, Job suggests, the controversy between him and his friends would be determined.

And it would be then seen who was in the right, and who in the wrong.

And unto which time he seems willing to refer his cause, and to have no more said about it.

But his friends did not choose to take his advice; for Zophar the Naamathite starts up directly and makes a reply.

Job was speaking of the sword of God which would destroy his friends, if they happened to be persecuting an innocent man.

We all stand before the judgement seat of Christ.

This judgement is just.

There will be those who thought they were in right standing with God who will not be accepted.

Job was warning his friends to be careful how they judged.

They will be judged as they had judged.

Job Chapter 19 Questions

1. Who were vexing and tearing Job to pieces with their accusations?
2. Who had been the cruelest so far?
3. How many times did Job say they had reproached him?
4. They were viciously attacking Job's _____.
5. He reminded them that _____ would pay for his own sins.
6. Why were they tearing Job down?
7. Job declared that the suffering he had endured was _____.
8. Who had Job been glorified by?
9. In verse 11, what hurt Job the worst?
10. Who were estranged from Job?
11. How had Job's servants treated him?
12. Why had Job's wife not comforted him?
13. What had those who Job loved done to him?
14. What was he asking for in verse 21?
15. What did Job desire would be done with his proclamation of belief?

16. I know that my redeemer _____.
17. When shall he stand upon the earth?
18. Who was Job speaking of when he said redeemer?
19. What does "liveth" mean?
20. What great and glorious day was Job looking forward to?
21. What effect should the statement Job just made have on his accusers?
22. What sword was Job speaking of?
23. Why should they be careful how they judged?