

ONE THAT WILL LAST
RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD/EASTER

JOB 19:23-27
MAR 27, 2016

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!

These are beautiful words from book of Job
but if you have read the long book of Job
you know much of it is not so beautiful.
Job is grieving the death of all his children, is terribly sick,
depressed and miserable when he is visited by 4 friends.
that is what friends do.
Most of book is his dialogue with these friends.
But when his friends first come, they cry with him,
then sit on ground with him 7 days & nights saying nothing.
They are showing compassion, suffering with him.
But then they start talking about why he is suffering,
trying to help him understand it all,
trying to give him good advice.
But as sometimes happens even with friendly advice,
it doesn't make Job feel better at all.
He doesn't think they understand or even God understands.
But in these verses he still expresses confident hope
that even though those visiting are not such good friends
He does have what young people would call a BFF
Best Friend Forever.
Jesus is friend who is understanding, compassionate, helpful.
and loyal. And he is a forever friend.
Calling someone a BFF can be a hyperbole, exaggeration,
because even if they never move away, they die
and we die and so forever is not forever.
but here Job affirms that we do have one
who is more than a friend, a redeemer,
who does not stay dead but lives forever
so that we also do not stay dead but live forever.

WE CAN MAKE NOTHING LAST FOREVER
but OUR REDEEMER LIVES AT THE LAST FOR US

so that WE WILL SEE GOD AT LAST FOR OURSELVES

WE CAN MAKE NOTHING LAST FOREVER

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What would you do if you wanted to record something forever?

You probably have in your closets things you wanted
to record to remember and to pass on to posterity.

Depending on your age, they may be an 8 mm movie,
a VCR tape, a cassette, a DVD or a memory stick.

Good luck with any of those in 100 years.

That's the problem with forever. Things keep changing.

For saving things, Job's technology of writing them down
is probably better than anything else.

His words are among the oldest ever written we still have
but Job is still hard to read because language changes

language it is written in is so ancient

we no longer know what some of the words mean.

One reason Job's words have been preserved

is not just because they were written down - and not on rock,
but because they were memorable.

They were written on people's hearts

because of the powerful message.

We may like to preserve things in life: savings, property, health,
which is hard to do for long & impossible to do forever,

But another concern is preserving not just what we have,
but who we are: the immortality of being remembered.

We may hope this happens by our being engraved on hearts
of good friends or family members.

None of this was going so well for Job

What he had was not lasting. At beginning of book

he loses all his property, all his children & his health.

All he has left is his wife, his friends and his God

and he wasn't getting along with any of them too well.

His wife was tired of seeing his misery and suggested

that he curse God and die.

His friends kept trying to explain that since God is righteous

surely he had done something to deserve his suffering

and he would be better if he just admitted it.

Job keeps insisting that is not true, it is all unfair,

and he wishes he could talk to God face to face

to make his case but God seems far away.

One reason things we have don't last is decay over time

caused by elements, microbes & germs too small to see.

It has been found our very bodies have millions of microbes
that are a natural part of who we are.
Who we are is also ruined by decay.
To a degree Job's friends were right
we do all deserve suffering even if, like Job
no one can point to any special sin
because of the sin that is just a natural part of us,
which is why we all die, which corrupts relationships,
and makes us spiritually allergic to God
so that we can't stand his holy presence.
But although Job's friends may be partly right,
they are no help. Our only help, Job recognizes, is that

OUR REDEEMER LIVES AT THE LAST FOR US

²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

If things went so bad for you that you lost all you had,
your savings, possessions, even your ability to work,
and were so deep in debt the property you used
to make a living was foreclosed on
you would need a special kind of friend, a Redeemer.
The Hebrew word for Redeemer here means a relative
who buys back inherited property to keep it in the family.
A redeemer is something like a cosigner on a loan
who pays off the debt when you can't.
Job is confident, no matter how bad things get,
he has a redeemer, not just for his real estate
but for his life.
His friends suggest he is morally bankrupt, a hypocrite,
but he says no, he is still solvent.
He may be a poor miserable sinner himself
but he has a redeemer who is as good as gold
and is rich in mercy to take care of his debt.
And Job says that at the last he will stand upon the earth.
The word he uses for earth is literally dust.
When everything crumbles to dust, he will still be standing.
Job is absolutely right. This one who comes at the last is Jesus.
He is not just our friend but our brother
who was born to be one of us.
Because we have failed to give God the obedience we owe
we are deep in debt and the wages of our sin is death.
We die and return to dust.
But Jesus perfect life has earned produced such a return
he offers the free gift of life to all.
By his death on the cross he has paid all our penalties

and frees us from the debtors prison of hell.
By his redemption he keeps our eternal inheritance
in the family and restores us to God's family.
And when all the dust settles, Jesus is still standing.
He has risen again
By his victorious resurrection, his enemies, death & the devil,
have been crushed to dust under his feet.
Because he lives and reigns forever, on the last day
he will come again and stand on the earth as Lord of all.
That is when, along with Job and all who have ever lived,

WE WILL SEE GOD AT LAST FOR OURSELVES

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.
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When Jesus rose again on the first Easter even his best friends
didn't believe it until they saw him with their own eyes.
But Luke tells us the women remembered & believed his words.
This is why we are here today,
even though we do not yet see him with our own eyes
to be reminded of and believe his words.
Job knew and believed and was comforted in his troubles
even though he realized he didn't yet see God
or what he was up to in his life.
He didn't understand his ways or why he suffered.
But he did know that his Redeemer's living
meant he too would live again, real life in the flesh.
even after he had lost everything including his life,
and even his body had rotted away.
This is the real way what we are is preserved,
not just living on in someone's memory
but being turned from dust back to real life.
As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, all the dead will be raised.
As we say in creed, we believe in resurrection of the body.
This is not good news for those who refuse to be God's friends.
The last day means they can no longer deny his truth
and no longer pretend to hide from him.
But for us it is the best good news of all
because it means we will see the smiling face
of him who is our best friend forever.
No longer will God need to shield us
from being blinded by his glory
by hiding himself in a lowly manger, on a deadly cross,
in simple bread and wine, in common written words.

No longer will see only a dim reflection in his creation
but we will see him face to face
and know him fully as we are fully known.

WE CAN MAKE NOTHING LAST FOREVER

One day, like Job, we will lose everything,
our words and everything we have, do and are will fade.
but OUR REDEEMER LIVES AT THE LAST FOR US

Jesus, who has paid all our debts & bought us back for God
has risen & lives & stands with us when all turns to dust
He will return to stand on the earth and raise us up too

WE WILL SEE GOD AT LAST FOR OURSELVES

and will see how he has worked good in our lives
and will see how much he loves us
and the wonderful life he has to give us eternally.