

Job's Redeemer



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Job 19:25–27; John 1:1–14; Job 10:4, 5; Luke 2:11; Gal. 4:19; Luke 9:22; Isa. 53:1–6.*

Memory Text: “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted” (*Isaiah 53:4, NKJV*).

With the sudden appearance of the Lord Himself, beginning in chapter 38, the book of Job reached its climax. God revealed Himself to Job in a powerful and miraculous way, and this resulted in Job's confession and contrition. The Lord then rebuked Job's three friends for their wrong words, and Job prayed for them. “And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before” (*Job 42:10, NKJV*), and Job lived a long and full life afterward.

There is, however, something unsettling, something unsatisfactory about the story and how it ends. God and Satan, arguing in heaven, battle it out here on earth in the life and flesh of poor Job? It just doesn't seem fair, doesn't seem right, that Job would have to bear the terrible brunt of this conflict between God and Satan, while the Lord remained in heaven and simply watched it.

There must be more to the story. And there is. It is revealed many centuries later, in Jesus and His death on the cross. In Jesus alone we find amazing and comforting answers to the questions that the book of Job doesn't fully answer.

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, December 17.

My Redeemer Liveth

When God appeared to Job in chapter 38, He revealed Himself to Job as the Creator, who “ ‘divided a channel for the overflowing water,’ ” the One who made “ ‘a path for the thunderbolt, to cause it to rain on a land where there is no one’ ” (*Job 38:25, 26, NKJV*). Our Lord, though, isn’t only the Creator. He has another crucial title and role, as well.

Read Job 19:25–27. What do these words reveal about Job’s hope of salvation?

With these famous verses, Job shows that he had some knowledge of the Redeemer, some knowledge that, though people died, there was hope beyond the grave, and this hope was found in the Redeemer, who was to come to the earth one day.

These words of Job point to what is the most crucial and important truth in the Bible: God as our Redeemer. Yes, God is our Creator. But in a fallen world, in a world of sinners doomed to die eternally in their sins, we need more than a Creator. We need a Redeemer, as well. And that’s precisely who our God is: both our Creator and our Redeemer (*see Isa. 48:13–17*), and it’s from Him in both those roles that we have the great hope of eternal life.

Read John 1:1–14. In this passage, how does John tie together Jesus as Creator with Jesus as our Redeemer?

The allusion to Genesis 1:1, God as Creator, is obvious in John 1:1. And if that weren’t enough, these words—“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him. . . . But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (*John 1:10–12, NKJV*)—make the link between Jesus as Creator and Redeemer inseparable. Indeed, it’s only because He is the Creator that He can be our Redeemer, as well.

If we had only a Creator but no Redeemer, what hope would we have? What does your answer say about why Jesus as Redeemer is so important to us?

The Son of Man

In the earliest chapters of Job, we were given a glimpse into the reality of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. As we know, it was a battle that started in heaven but eventually came to the earth (see *Rev. 12:7–12*). In the book of Job we saw that same dynamic: a conflict in heaven that comes to earth. Unfortunately for Job, that particular conflict on earth centered on him.

Read Job 10:4, 5. What was Job’s complaint, and did he not have a point?

Job’s point was simple. You are God, the Sovereign of the universe, the Creator. How can you know what it is like to be a human, to suffer the things that we suffer?

How do the following texts answer Job’s complaint? *Luke 2:11, John 1:14, Luke 19:10, Matt. 4:2, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 4:15.*

Job’s complaint, that God wasn’t a human and therefore couldn’t know human woe, was answered fully and completely by the coming of Jesus into humanity. Though never losing His divinity, Jesus also was fully human, and in that humanity He knew what it was like to suffer and struggle, just as Job and all humans do. In fact, all through the Gospels, we see the reality of Christ’s humanity and the sufferings that He went through in our humanity. Jesus answered Job’s complaint.

“It was not a make-believe humanity that Christ took upon Himself. He took human nature and lived human nature. . . . He was not only made flesh, but He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1124.

Think what it means that Jesus took humanity. What should this tell you about how closely He can relate to you in any of the struggles that you are facing right now?

The Death of Christ

What do the following texts tell us about Jesus and how we are to view Him?

1 John 2:6 _____

Gal. 4:19 _____

Without question, Jesus is the model man. His life—His character—is the example that all who follow Him should seek by God’s grace to emulate. Jesus is the *only* perfect example we have in terms of how to live the kind of life to which God calls us.

Still, Jesus didn’t come to this earth merely to give us an example. Our situation as sinners called for more than just character development, as if reforming our characters and molding us into His image is all that His work as Redeemer required. We need more than that; we need a Substitute, Someone to pay the penalty for our sins. He came not just to live a perfect life as an example to us all; He came also to die the death that we deserve so that His perfect life can be credited to us as our own.

What do the following texts teach about the necessity of Christ’s death for us? *Mark 8:31, Luke 9:22, Luke 24:7, Gal. 2:21.*

Jesus had to die for us because obedience to the law, though central to the Christian life, is not what saves the fallen. “Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law” (*Gal. 3:21, NKJV*). If any law could save a sinner, it would be God’s, but even that law can’t save us. Only the perfect life of our perfect Example, Jesus, could save us, and so Christ came to offer Himself as “one sacrifice for sins forever” (*Heb. 10:12, NKJV*).

How does your own record of law-keeping show you your need of a Substitute?

The Sufferings of the Son of Man

Read Isaiah 53:1–6. What does this tell us about the sufferings of the Lord on the cross?

Isaiah 53:4 said that Jesus bore our griefs and sorrows. That must include Job's griefs and sorrows, as well. And not just Job's but the whole world's. It was for the sin of all humans who ever lived that Jesus died on the cross.

So, only at the cross can the book of Job be put into proper perspective. Here we have the same God who revealed Himself to Job—the God who teaches the eagle to fly, the God who binds the quarks—suffering more than any human being, even Job, ever suffered or could suffer. The griefs and sorrows that we know individually, He assumed corporately; no one, then, can lecture God on suffering, not when He in humanity bore in Himself the full brunt of all the suffering that sin has spread around the globe. We know only our own griefs, only our own sorrows; at the cross, Jesus experienced them all.

The God who asked Job, “Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth?” (*Job 38:33, NKJV*) becomes more incredible when we realize that though He created the “ordinances of heaven,” He also took upon Himself earthly flesh and in that flesh died so that He “might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (*Heb. 2:14, NKJV*).

Viewed through the Cross, the book of Job makes more sense than it does without it, because the Cross answers many questions that the book leaves unanswered. And the biggest question of all deals with how fair it is for God to be up in heaven while Job on earth is forced to suffer as he does, all in order to help refute Satan's charges. The Cross shows that no matter how badly Job or any human being suffers in this world, our Lord voluntarily suffered so much worse than any of us could, all in order to give us the hope and promise of salvation.

Job saw God as Creator; after the cross, we see Him as Creator and Redeemer, or particularly, the Creator who became our Redeemer (*Phil. 2:6–8*). And to do that, He had to suffer from sin in ways that no human being, Job included, would or could ever suffer. Thus, like Job, only more so, what can we do before such a sight but exclaim: “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (*Job 42:6, NKJV*)?

Satan Unmasked

Read John 12:30–32. What is Jesus saying about Satan in the context of the Cross and the great controversy?

After talking about the death of Jesus on the cross, Ellen G. White wrote about the powerful impact it had in heaven and for the onlooking universe. “Satan’s lying charges against the divine character and government appeared in their true light. He had accused God of seeking merely the exaltation of Himself in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, and had declared that, while the Creator exacted self-denial from all others, He Himself practiced no self-denial and made no sacrifice. Now it was seen that for the salvation of a fallen and sinful race, the Ruler of the universe had made the greatest sacrifice which love could make; for ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.’ 2 Corinthians 5:19. It was seen, also, that while Lucifer had opened the door for the entrance of sin by his desire for honor and supremacy, Christ had, in order to destroy sin, humbled Himself and become obedient unto death.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 502.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:19. How did Christ’s death reconcile the fallen world to God?

The world had fallen into sin, into rebellion; it had left itself open to the schemes of Satan as so clearly seen, for example, in the book of Job. Jesus, though, by His taking hold of humanity in Himself while never losing His divinity, formed an unbreakable bond between heaven and earth and, with His death, guaranteed the final demise of sin and Satan. At the cross, Jesus paid the legal penalty for sin, thus reconciling the fallen world to God. Though we are sinners condemned to death, by faith we can have the promise of eternal life in Jesus.

Whatever sins you have committed, Jesus paid the full penalty for them at the cross. Why should this amazing truth change your life and cause you to want to live in obedience to Him?

Further Thought: “ ‘Now is the judgment of this world,’ Christ continued; ‘now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die.’ This is the crisis of the world. If I become the propitiation for the sins of men, the world will be lighted up. Satan’s hold upon the souls of men will be broken. The defaced image of God will be restored in humanity, and a family of believing saints will finally inherit the heavenly home. This is the result of Christ’s death. The Saviour is lost in contemplation of the scene of triumph called up before Him. He sees the cross, the cruel, ignominious cross, with all its attending horrors, blazing with glory.

“But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 625, 626.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 What are other ways that you can think of regarding how the life and death of Jesus answered questions that the book of Job left unanswered?
- 2 Think over what the Cross reveals to us about the character of God, especially when we realize that the One who created us was the One who died for us on the cross. Why should this reality give us so much hope and comfort, regardless of whatever trials we are facing? How can this amazing truth teach us to trust in God and in His goodness? (See *Rom. 8:32*.)
- 3 As we saw, the book of Job showed, among other things, that the great controversy is a cosmic issue and that the conflict between Christ and Satan has a dimension that goes beyond the earth itself. Imagine what it must have been like for heavenly creatures, who knew Jesus only in His heavenly glory, to see Him go through what He did on the cross. How can dwelling on this amazing idea help us to come to a great appreciation of what we have been given in Jesus?

Waking Up My Heart: Part 1

I grew up in a caring, intellectually stimulating home. My parents treated my brother and me with respect. We were never hungry and always had what we needed. But religion wasn't part of our home. I never considered that anything or anyone might actually exist somewhere beyond my tangible world. I never dreamed God could speak to me.

My parents quarreled a lot, and when I was 10 years old, they divorced. Father had a top-secret job in the army, and Mother was a clerk at the town hall. After the divorce, my brother and I lived with our mother. There I finished high school and planned for my future.

One day, I met a former schoolmate on the street in our town. We weren't close friends, but we shared a similar philosophy of life. I was surprised when he started talking about religion. Right there in the street, Kveto began telling me about Jesus Christ, about God's love for me, and about the Bible and prophecy. He spoke enthusiastically, and I became embarrassed as passersby stared at us. Soon, I had heard enough. I excused myself and walked on, wondering what had changed Kveto so radically.

I met Kveto on the street several times soon after that. Each time we met, he turned the topic of our conversation to religion. He spoke, I listened, and from time to time I tried to outwit him with a question I didn't think he could answer. But my lack of religious training and knowledge of the Bible was no match for Kveto's newfound Christian zeal.

Each time we met, Kveto invited me to his house to study prophecy. Finally, I agreed to go. While Kveto wanted to prove that God exists, I was more interested in proving that He didn't. I told him I thought the Bible could have been written by anybody and that it certainly wasn't true. I wanted to set Kveto straight.

Kveto always prayed before we opened the Bible, and later he admitted that he prayed after I left his house. As we began studying the prophecies, I felt a growing curiosity about what the Bible had to say about the future. We studied the books of Daniel and Revelation and some writings of Ellen G. White.

Then something strange happened. I came home from a Bible study and began to pray—by myself, alone, for the first time in my life. I didn't have anything special to say in my prayer; I simply found myself reaching out to make contact with the Power of the universe.

To be continued in next week's Inside Story.

The Lesson in Brief

▶ **Key Text:** *Job 19:25–27*

▶ **The Student Will:**

Know: Study how the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross provides the ultimate answer to all questions of human suffering.

Feel: Appreciate the suffering that God went through when He saw His Son suffering on the cross.

Do: Live the life of the redeemed, modeled on the life of Christ.

▶ **Learning Outline:**

I. Know: Christ's Substitutionary Death

- Ⓐ How does Christ's death at Calvary relate to the suffering of Job?
- Ⓑ Why is it only the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ that makes it possible for us to be saved?

II. Feel: The Father and Son at the Cross

- Ⓐ Was the Cross just a well-enacted universal spectacle with a known outcome, or was there real suffering? Discuss.
- Ⓑ Is it possible for God to suffer? Why, or why not?

III. Do: Living the Redeemed Life

- Ⓐ How are we transformed in our suffering by knowing, as Job did, that our Redeemer lives?
- Ⓑ How can we live the life of the redeemed even in the midst of suffering?

▶ **Summary:** Long before Jesus came to live and to die for us, Job knew that his Redeemer lived. We are now looking back at the Cross some two thousand years later. From this vantage point, we understand the substitutionary death of our Redeemer, whose suffering encompasses the total sum of all sufferings and sorrows that this world's generations have and will ever live. This saving knowledge leads us, through our sufferings, into the life of the redeemed.

Learning Cycle

►STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: *Job 19:25 and 1 Corinthians 15:20*

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: Job’s knowledge of his Redeemer involved looking more than two thousand years into the future, fixing his hope on the fact that his Redeemer was living. Two thousand years after the Cross, we still base our hope on the risen Savior, this time in hindsight and with a fuller understanding of Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross. It is this knowledge of the divine suffering that provides a resolution to our human suffering.

Just for Teachers: The passage in Job 19:25–27 ends with a heart-wrenching exclamation: “ ‘How my heart yearns within me!’ ” (NKJV). For Job, the discussion about suffering was not an abstract theological debate in a circle of friends on a Sabbath morning during Sabbath School time. In all our discussion, let’s not forget that this is an existential outcry of a tormented soul who fixes his only hope on the Redeemer. One can only hope for similar yearnings in our Sabbath School classes.

Opening Discussion: George Frederic Handel (1685–1759) is best known for the *Messiah*, which is probably one of the most revered pieces of religious classical music in Western civilization. The oratory was first performed in Dublin in 1742, and one year later, in London, after having been composed in only 24 days. Just before his death in 1759, Handel expressed his wish to be buried in Westminster Abbey in London. His grave can still be found in the South Transept, which is known as Poets’ Corner. Above his grave on the walls of the church, a monument by the artist Roubiliac was installed, showing a life-sized statue of Handel, surrounded by instruments and a harp-playing angel, as well as an open score of the *Messiah* oratory.

In front of the statue of Handel there is the open music score of the soprano aria from the oratory, “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”; the index finger of Handel’s statue points exactly at the words that formed the very basis of Job’s hope in the resurrection. The text of this inspirational piece of music is drawn from Job 19:25, 26 and 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22. The sculptor perfectly captured the essence of Handel’s *Messiah* in centering it on Job’s hope of his Redeemer. While the following question might be a bit morbid, it is nevertheless important: What Bible verse would you like to see on your stone of remembrance?

►STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: Throughout the Bible there is an intricate connection between creation and re-creation. The need for re-creation is founded in the fall of humanity (*Genesis 3*), which resulted in a de-creation, the undoing of creation. Jeremiah 4:23–26 describes this reversal of creation in vivid language. The prophets especially resorted often to creation language in order to express humanity’s need for re-creation, or restoration (for example, *Isa. 44:24, Jer. 10:12–16*). Therefore, the manifestation of God the Creator in Job 38 and 39 leads Job to the recognition of his own sinfulness, which drives him right into the arms of the Redeemer.

Bible Commentary

The Redeemer and His life and death on earth have been foreshadowed typologically in the Old Testament. Typology can be defined as the study of various persons, events, or institutions in salvation history, which God specifically designed to predictively prefigure their antitypical eschatological fulfillment in Christ and the gospel realities brought about by Christ. Commentators debate whether or not Job, by referring to the Redeemer, had a concept of the Messiah. But one should not underestimate the theological prophetic competency of the Old Testament people, as the Messiah had been promised since the Fall in Eden (*compare Gen. 3:15*).

I. The *Goel* (Review Job 19:25 and Luke 2:11 with the class.)

The Hebrew word *goel*, which is translated as “redeemer” in Job 19:25, is one of the most important words in the Old Testament to describe God’s work of salvation in terms of a human institution that provided a legal way out of social misery. It is one of the keywords in the story of Ruth and Boaz. The *goel* or “parental redeemer” appears 10 times in Ruth (*Ruth 2:20; 3:9, 12, 13; 4:1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 14*), a book with only four chapters, and therefore serves as an important keyword in the book.

In some contexts in the Old Testament, *goel* is used with God as subject. It is He who redeems (*Exod. 15:13*), and it is a divine epithet in the book of Psalms (*Ps. 19:14, 69:18, 72:14, 74:2, and so on*). But the term also is used in connection with human beings in a legal context, which provides the original context (see Leviticus 25:23–34, in the context of the law of redemption; Numbers 5:8, in the context of the law of restitution; Numbers 35:12, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27, in connection with cities of refuge, where it translates *goel* as “avenger”). But it is important to remember that the saving element always accompanied the legal requirements in the Old

Testament. For example, in Isaiah 49:26, 60:16, and 63:9, this pairing occurs side by side with the Hebrew word for “save.”

In the Messianic typology, Jesus Christ is the *goel* and fulfills the required legal conditions: (1) He must be a blood relative (*Ruth 2:20*)—Christ became human; (2) He must have the means to purchase the estate (*Ruth 4:10*)—only Christ could pay the price for sinners; (3) He must be willing to buy the estate (*Ruth 4:9*)—just as Christ laid down His life willingly; and (4) He must be willing to marry the deceased relative’s wife (*Ruth 4:10*)—the husband-and-wife relationship points to the bond between Christ and His church.

Consider This: How does Christ, as the *goel*, fulfill the required legal conditions? Which aspect of the *goel* do you find the most appealing to your own life situation?

II. Divine Suffering (Review Luke 9:22 and Matthew 27:46 with the class.)

When Jesus cries out in anguish on the cross, “ ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ ” (*Matt. 27:46, NKJV*), He is feeling a separation from His Father that the combined sins of this world have caused (*2 Cor. 5:21*). Satan appears to have won at last. Christ hangs between heaven and earth in the center of three crosses on Calvary. The disciples who have dared to follow their teacher up to this moment watch as their hopes dissolve amid the sufferings of the Son of God. The triumph of evil seems perfect. Nature hides itself in the darkness and suffers together with its Creator. Even God seems to be silent. This must be the ultimate suffering.

Yet, there is another perspective to this depressing scene, as captured by Ellen G. White: “With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour’s despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. ‘There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.’ . . . In that thick darkness God’s presence was hidden. . . . God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 753, 754. The Father suffered with His Son, and the combined divine suffering constitutes the turning point in the plan of salvation that made it possible for humankind to return to God. All human suffering finds its resolution in this moment.

Consider This: Think deeply about the suffering of God at Calvary. What perspective does it give you on your own suffering?

III. Christ Our Substitute (Review Isaiah 53:1–6 and Galatians 3:13, 4:19 with the class.)

Christ's life serves as a model for our life, and we aspire to live like Him. However, mere aspiration does not provide salvation. Only Christ's substitutionary death on the cross grants us salvation. The atonement is accomplished only by Christ's taking the place that I should have taken, in making my sin His sin, and in making His righteousness my righteousness.

Consider This: Why is it crucially important to emphasize the substitutionary character of Christ's sacrifice?

►STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: This lesson study is full of the gospel: Jesus Christ as our Substitute and Redeemer. We need to move through a theological understanding to a practical application of this truth.

Thought/Application Questions:

- ❶ How do examples of a substitute in the human sphere illustrate what Christ did for us on the cross?
- ❷ What were the moments in your life when Jesus, as your Redeemer, became most precious to you?

►STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: This lesson started with the powerful image of the Redeemer who provides hope beyond death and will end with it as well.

Class/Individual Activities:

- ❶ Listen as a class, or on your own, to a recording of Handel's *Messiah* and especially to the aria, "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth."
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- ❷ Plan with your church choir to perform parts of Handel's *Messiah* in a venue where people need hope.
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