

Hints of Hope



SABBATH—NOVEMBER 19

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Proverbs 17:28; Job 13:1–15; James 2:20–22; 1 Corinthians 15:11–20; 1 Peter 1:18–20; Genesis 22:8.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘No matter how things turn out, I’m [I am] sure I’ll [I will] still be saved. After all, no ungodly person would dare to come into his [God’s] court’ ” (Job 13:16, NlrV).

BRITISH WRITER WILLIAM HAZLITT ONCE wrote, “Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps. This is because he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they should be.”

Things surely are not what they should be. But for Christians who live with the promise of the Second Coming, there is hope. We have a great hope of what things will become (2 Peter 3:13). They will become something so wonderful that we, with sin-darkened minds (1 Corinthians 13:12), cannot imagine them now. The narrow, worldly mind lost this hope long ago.

This week we continue to study the question of suffering in the book of Job. Sad and unfair events hit Job unmercifully. But we will find that Job could still speak words of hope.

What was that hope? And what does it tell us that we can hope in too?

FORGERS (MAKERS; CREATORS) OF LIES (Job 13:1–14)

“We think even a foolish person is wise if he keeps silent [quiet]. We think he understands what is right if he controls his tongue” (Proverbs 17:28, NIV).

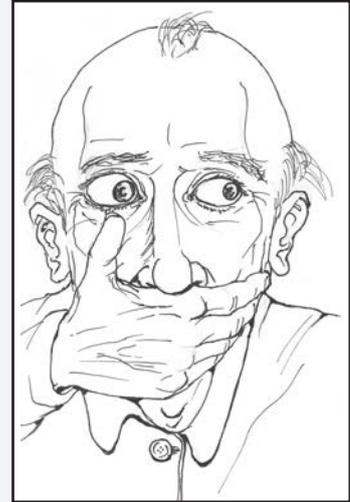
Whatever a person wants to say about Job, he or she cannot say that Job was going to just sit and quietly listen to the insults that his friends were throwing at him. Instead, much of the book of Job shows Job fighting back against a mixture of truth and error. As we learned, these men do not show Job much kindness or pity. They claim to speak for God as they try to explain what has happened to Job. And they say he is getting what he deserves. Any one of these lines of thought would have been bad enough. But all three (and others) are too much, and Job answers them back.

Read Job 13:1–14. How does Job answer what is being said to him?

In chapter 2, when these men first come to visit Job, they say nothing to him for seven days. But after hearing what they have to say to Job, perhaps they should have remained quiet. That is certainly what Job thinks.

Notice, too: Job says that these men talk lies. And they talk lies about God. (That is interesting in light of what happens toward the end of the book itself [read Job 42:7].) Surely it would be better not to speak than to say things that are wrong. (Who among us has not experienced how true that is?) But it seems that to say things that are wrong about God is much worse. The strange thing is that these men really think they are defending God and His character (who God is) against Job’s bitter complaints about what happened. Job remains unable to understand why all these things have come upon him. But he knows enough to recognize that what these men say makes them “forgers of lies” (Job 13:4).

When was the last time you said things that were wrong and that should not have been said? How can you learn from that experience so that you do not make the same kind of mistake again?



Surely it would be better not to speak than to say things that are wrong.

THOUGH HE SLAY (KILL) ME (Job 13:15)



“Let your faith be like Job’s. . . . Claim the promises of your heavenly Father. And remember . . . , ‘in all things God works for the good of those who love him.’”

DEFINITIONS

1. grace—God’s gift of mercy and forgiveness that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

When we started this quarter, we went right to the end of the book. And we saw how well things later turn out for Job. We saw that, even though Job suffers much, he really has something to hope for. In fact, living when we do and knowing the end of the Bible, we can know that Job has a whole lot more to hope in than he could possibly have imagined at the time.

But when Job’s children die, when his property is taken and his health is ruined, Job does not know how things will turn out. Instead, what he knows is that life suddenly has turned bad.

Job complains bitterly. He wishes he had not been born. But Job still shows hope. And this hope is in the very same God whom he thinks is dealing so unfairly with him now.

Read Job 13:15. What hope is shown here in this verse? What is Job saying?

“Even if He will kill me, I will trust Him.” What a powerful testimony (witness; statement) of faith! With all that has happened to him, Job knows that very possibly the final thing (death) could come. And God could cause it too. If this happened, Job would die trusting in the Lord.

“The riches of the grace¹ of Christ always must be remembered. Store [heap] up the lessons that His love gives. Let your faith be like Job’s, that you may say, ‘Even if God kills me, I’ll [I will] still put my hope in him’ (Job 13:15, NIV). Claim the promises of your heavenly Father. And remember His past services for you and with His servants. Because ‘in all things God works for the good of those who love him’ (Romans 8:28, NIV).”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 20, 1910.

From our human way of understanding Job’s situation, Job has no reason to hope for anything. But the fact is, Job is not thinking about his problems the way most of us would. If he had done so, what hope could he possibly have? Instead, Job makes this wonderful testimony of faith and hope. And he does so because he trusts in God.

A reasonable question could be: How does Job keep his faith in God after all that happens to him? Read Job 1:1 and James 2:20–22. How do they help answer this question? And what should the answer tell us about the importance of faithfulness and obedience in our Christian life? (This will be studied more in lesson 13.)

HINTS (SIGNS) OF HOPE (1 Corinthians 15:11–20)

“No matter how things turn out, I’m [I am] sure I’ll [I will] still be saved. After all, no ungodly person would dare to come into his [God’s] court’ ” (Job 13:16, NlrV). This verse follows right after the one we read yesterday. How does it support even more the idea that Job has hope and that his hope is in God?

What an interesting line to follow what comes before. Even if Job were to die, or *even if God were to kill him*, Job still trusts in his God for salvation. In one way, it is strange; but in another way, it makes perfect sense. After all, what is salvation other than being free from death? And what is death? For the saved, it is a quick moment of rest or an instant (a very short time) of sleep. Then it is followed by the resurrection (return to life from the dead) to eternal life. Is not this hope of the resurrection to eternal life the great hope of all of God’s people through thousands of years?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:11–20. What is the hope given to us in these verses? Without this hope, why would we have no hope at all?

Also, after showing this strong belief in salvation, Job says that the “*hanef* will not come before Him.” The root of the word *hanef* means “unholy” or “godless.” It is a word with very negative meanings in Hebrew. Job knows that his salvation is to be found only in God. It is found only in a life fully surrendered in faithful obedience to Him. That is why the evil and godless man, the *hanef*, does not have that hope. Job is speaking about his understanding of his “assurance [promise] of salvation.” Job faithfully offers animal sacrifices for sin, but we do not know how much he understands of their meaning. Before the Cross, most faithful followers of the Lord such as Job surely did not have as full an understanding of salvation as we can have while living after the Cross. But Job still knows enough to know that his hope of salvation is to be found only in the Lord. He also knows that his sacrifices to God are an example of how this salvation is to be found.



Is not the hope of the resurrection to eternal life the great hope of all God’s people?

HOPE BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN (2 Timothy 1:8, 9)

**“As soon as there was sin,
there was a Saviour.”**

Job has hope because he serves a God of hope. The Bible is filled with all the sordid (dark and dirty) stories of human sinfulness, from the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden (Genesis 3) to the fall of Babylon at the end of time (Revelation 14:8). But the Bible is a book full of hope. It is filled with a vision of something beyond what this world itself can offer.

“God has given full control of the world to Christ. Through Christ has come every blessing from God to the fallen race. Jesus was the Redeemer [Savior] both before and after He put on human form. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 210. And who is the Savior other than Jesus, the great Giver of our hope?

Read Ephesians 1:4; Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:8, 9; and 1 Peter 1:18–20. How do these verses affirm (declare the truth of) the wonderful hope shown in the Ellen G. White statement found in today’s study?

These verses teach the wonderful truth that God knew, even before the Creation of the world, that people would fall into sin. The Greek meaning in 2 Timothy 1:9 says that we have been called by a grace given to us in Christ Jesus “before eternal time.” This is a grace given us, “not according to our works.” (How could it have been “our works” if we were not even alive then?) It was possible only through Jesus. Even before we were alive, God put a plan in place that offered humans the hope of eternal life. The hope did not arise after we needed it. Instead, it was already there, ready for us when we *did* need it.

As Christians, we have so much to hope for and to hope in. We live in a universe created by a God who loves us (John 3:16), a God who redeemed (bought) us with His life (Titus 2:14), a God who hears our prayers (Matthew 6:6), a God who saves us (Hebrews 7:25), a God who promises never to leave us (Hebrews 13:5), a God who promises to raise our bodies from death (Isaiah 26:19), and to give us eternal life with Him (John 14:2, 3).

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). How can you make this hope your own even in the middle of whatever struggles you are facing now?

IMAGES (EXAMPLES) OF HOPE

Read the following verses. How does each of them show hope?

Genesis 3:15 _____

Genesis 22:8 _____

Leviticus 17:11 _____

John 1:29 _____

Galatians 2:16 _____

Philippians 1:6 _____

1 Corinthians 10:13 _____

Daniel 7:22 _____

Daniel 12:1, 2 _____

Matthew 24:27 _____

Daniel 2:44 _____

Follow the series of thoughts presented in these verses. Together, what do they tell us about the hope that we as Christians can have in Jesus?

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: From cover to cover, the Bible is filled with wonderful words of hope. “ ‘I have told you these things, so that you can have peace because of me. In this world you will have trouble. But cheer up! I have won the battle over the world’ ” (John 16:33, NIV). “He [Jesus] has removed our lawless acts from us as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12, NIV). “I am absolutely [fully] sure that not even death or life can separate us from God’s love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can do that. Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can do that. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God’s love because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done” (Romans 8:38, 39, NIV).

“ ‘When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it. I will remember that my covenant² will last forever. It is a covenant between me and every kind of living thing on earth’ ” (Genesis 9:16, NIV). “How great is the love the Father has given us so freely! Now we can be called children of God. And that’s [that is] what we are! The world doesn’t [does not] know us because it didn’t [did not] know him” (1 John 3:1, NIV).

These verses are just a small part of what is shown to us in the Bible about what our God is like and what He offers us. What reasons would we have for hope at all if we did not have the Bible to show it to us?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What other Bible verses speak to us of hope? Which ones are very important to you, and why?
- ② Of all the doctrines (teachings and beliefs) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which ones do you find the most hopeful?
- ③ Among the personal troubles and hardships of life, how can we learn to be glad in the hope that is given to us in the Bible? Why is it so easy to get discouraged by events, even with so much hope given to us? What can we do, within our ability, to always remember this hope and to be glad in it?
- ④ “Talk hope and faith and thanksgiving to God. Be cheerful, hopeful in Christ. Educate yourself to praise Him. This is a great cure for diseases of the soul and of the body.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, volume 2, page 492. Why is praise so important in helping us to stay hopeful in the Lord?

DEFINITIONS

2. covenant—promise or agreement between God and His people.