

Tuesday, April 1

Job 19:23-27

My Redeemer lives!

Okay, so I can't even start reading these words without hearing Handel's solo echoing through my head, moving my arms, stirring my heart, and filling some Gothic cathedral with echoes, 'I know that my redeemer liveth.' I always hear in this music a cry of triumph, a shout of faith, a confession of belief.

And it appears that also controlled Handel's interpretation and the good reverend who helped put these texts together. Part I of the Messiah celebrates the birth of God's promised one, Part II tells the story of the Savior's passion, Christ's suffering, ending with the grand Hallelujah Chorus. "I know that my Redeemer liveth" opens part III that moves from resurrection to Christ's final triumph, a full celebration of Easter – stirring, thrilling, majestic, powerful, YES!

*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand
at the latter day upon the earth.:
And though worms destroy this body,
yet in my flesh shall I see God.
For now is Christ risen from the dead,
the first-fruits of them that sleep.*

^{NIV} **Job 19:23** "Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, ²⁴ that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever! ²⁵ I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes-- I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

For Job all this celebrating is not present. Job is in pain. Job is abandoned /attached by his friends. Job is without God. This is a cry of pain, a shout of despair, an agony of isolation.

As I wander around the history of China, my soul aches with the agony of millions, billions who are in despair. Floods wiping out cities. Disease destroying regions. Wars chewing up armies. Invaders experimenting with ways to shame and abuse. Reformers razing all that others have built. Leaders ready to sacrifice millions to suit their plans. Job utters the cry of pain, of agony, of despair, of horror from these billions.

And Job, that tormented one from long ago, has the vision, the power, the imagination, to see hope for the future, possibility where he experiences none, re-connection with the One who connects all. It isn't happening, but he sees:

For I know that my redeemer lives,
and the last one will arise in behalf of dust,
and after I awake, things will come around to this:
From my flesh I shall see God,

whom I myself shall see on my side,
and whom my eyes shall behold, and not estranged.
God, grant us the vision to see so clearly in our distress.

A Way to Pray – the struggle

- Picture some area of your life where you are struggling
- Imagine yourself as if you simply gave up the struggle
- Embrace the gift God gives – the gift of struggling