

November 10, 2019
Sermon Manuscript

Job 19:23-27a

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[^].

**Hebrew: go'el*

+Hebrew 'al-'apar = place of mourning, grave, dung heap

^Hebrew: zar = someone foreign, a stranger

Luke 20:27-40

²⁷ There came to Jesus some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, ²⁸ and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. ³⁰ And the second ³¹ and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. ³² Afterward the woman also died. ³³ In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife.”

³⁴ And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, ³⁵ but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, ³⁶ for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. ³⁷ But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. ³⁸ Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.”³⁹ Then some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” ⁴⁰ For they no longer dared to ask him any question.

There Will Be Justice

This morning's gospel passage is taken from the twentieth chapter of Luke. And if you were to read the whole chapter you would note that it seems to include almost one episode after another of religious leaders challenging Jesus. And yet, unsurprisingly Jesus has been up for the challenge every time.

- Chapter 19 had ended with Jesus' famous cleansing of the temple, so chapter 20 begins with a group of the chief priests, scribes, and elders coming up to Jesus and demanding to know “by what authority” he'd done these things. And yet, Jesus stumped them with a question of his own.¹
- Then, the scribes and chief priests sent spies to ask Jesus whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. But Luke says, perceiving “their craftiness” Jesus asked them whose likeness was on the coin, and said, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

So now, in our passage, it's a group of leaders called the Sadducees who wanna take a crack at Jesus. This sorta reminds me of one of those action movie fight scenes where the hero's surrounded by bad guys who each take their turn trying to beat him up, but he seems to *dispense* with each challenger without even breaking a sweat. :)

¹ **John 20:3-8** (Jesus) answered them, “I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?” And they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From man,’ all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet.” So they answered that they did not know where it came from. And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

Now, the Sadducees were a strain of Judaism whose name in Hebrew literally means “righteous ones”; and many scholars believe they were mostly priests. But their school of thought was at odds with the traditions of the Pharisees, such as their purity laws and sabbath observances, which dominated the Judaism of Jesus’ day. And yet, the Sadducees *were* influential with some select wealthy Jews; and they had also cultivated good relationships with the Romans; so they were powerful. But in addition to disagreeing with the Pharisees’ traditions, verse 27 notes that the Sadducees also disagreed with the Pharisees and Jesus’ contention that there would be a bodily resurrection of individuals in the afterlife. And it is on that point that the *Sadducees* choose to challenge Jesus, by posing a hypothetical to him about a woman who becomes a seven-time widow. You see, in many ancient cultures, and even some cultures to this day where women can’t earn a wage, if a woman’s husband dies and they have no son to provide for them, then the husband’s brother is then expected to marry her in order to provide economic and social protection. And this practice, known as the Law of Levirate marriage, was decreed by Moses in Deuteronomy 25.

So the Sadducees pose a scenario to Jesus where a woman goes through seven brothers, marrying them one after the other after each one dies, and never has a child with any of them. But the Sadducees actually don’t come up with the story out of nowhere, rather they’ve taken a storyline that would’ve been known in those days from the book of Tobit in the Apocrypha where a woman becomes a seven-time widow² before being rescued and married by the protagonist Tobit.³ Anyway, having described this scenario to Jesus, the Sadducees ask him: if there is a resurrection, whose wife this woman will be? “For (all) seven had her as wife” (v32).

In other words, they believed this hypothetical situation they’ve devised *proved* that belief in resurrection is untenable. However, Jesus, unwavering, responds by explaining that marriage will no longer be necessary after the resurrection, because since there will be no more death people will have no need to procreate (as the angels currently don’t need to procreate since they are immortal).

But even though eight of the twelve verses in this passage concern this marriage question, Jesus’ purpose in this interaction is not really to teach about marriage or sexual ethics, but rather to affirm that one day all the will be raised. And this is a doctrine **we** affirm this in the Nicene Creed every Sunday, when we say that “We look for the resurrection of the dead”, as well as what we believe will happen on that day: “That Jesus will judge the living and (those who have been) dead.”

Well, those who devised the lectionary that appoints our scriptures for each Sunday recognized that the resurrection is what this passage is about, and therefore chose our First Lesson to be from Job 19 and Psalm 17, which *seem* to also speak about resurrection. Or, at least that’s what many throughout Church history have interpreted these scriptures to be about. When it comes to Job 19:25 and following, this includes heavyweights like St Clement and St Jerome, Origen and Luther, and even Handel’s *Messiah*,⁴ who have interpreted it to be an instance where Job is proclaiming his belief that God will raise him up from the grave to witness his vindication, and that the “redeemer” Job speaks of is none other than Jesus himself.

² Though in the story from Tobit none of the woman’s husbands were brothers.

³ In the book of Tobit (which is a Jewish folk tale) the woman’s name is Sarah, a righteous woman whose first seven husbands are killed by the jealous demon Asmodeus before Tobit defeats Asmodeus and marries Sarah. (see Tobit 3:7-17 text pasted below)

⁴ A section of Handel’s *Messiah* draws from Job 19: 25-26 & 1 Corinthians 15: 20 as follows: “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.”

However, a careful interpretation of both Job 19 and Psalm 17⁵ and a consideration of their context actually reveal quite clearly that neither of these are actually referring to resurrection after death. So I actually want to appeal to these passages today - and Job in particular - for a different reason than the lectionary may have intended. I believe a consideration of the book of Job can help us understand why the Sadducees actually came by their disbelief in the resurrection honestly, but also why that belief caused them to **resist** putting their faith in Christ. So we're going to look at Job with that aim, of understanding why the Sadducees came by their disbelief in the resurrection honestly, but also why that belief caused them to **resist** putting their faith in Christ. ###

But let me begin by reviewing just a little background on what the book of Job is and it's about. Many of you here will remember that back at the beginning of the year I preached a two-week mini-series on the book of Job, drawing from the work of John Walton and Tremper Longman.⁶ And you can find it on our podcast feed if you missed it.

But to review the premise of Job, he is introduced as a man whom God had blessed in many ways. He had a large family of ten children and enough livestock to make him the wealthiest man in his region. But the book also establishes Job as a *righteous* man, saying he was {quote} "blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil." And yet, after establishing this, the book then describes an interaction between Satan and God that results in Job being stripped of all of his wealth, the death of all his children, and being struck with loathsome sores all over his skin from head to toe.⁷

Passage not about resurrection

Now, turning our attention to our passage from Job 19, I'd like to take a few minutes to explain why Job is actually *not* talking about resurrection after death here, despite what it may seem. And I'll draw from the work of John Walton to do so.

Our passage opens in verse 23 with Job saying "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!" Basically because Job doesn't expect to be alive much longer to present his case personally, his wish here is that there could be a permanent record of his sufferings, that God's unjust treatment of him would never be forgotten. But then in verse 25 he says, "²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer* lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth." Now, as you can see from the asterisk, the word translated as 'redeemer' here is *go'el*, which could be translated as advocate or witness. And basically Job is looking for a legal advocate to take up and argue his case before God." Of course, many people understandably read the word 'redeemer' and think Jesus here. And that's why the ESV has even (recklessly) capitalized it!⁸ But the sort of advocate Job is hoping for is very different from how Jesus functions for us, as Job wants to someone to argue that he has done nothing wrong and therefore God is treating him unjustly.⁹ And Job is convinced that such a redeemer lives - is alive - that help is on the way! The Hebrew for 'upon the

⁵ John Walton on Psalm 17: "Psalm 17 we can see that in the context the psalmist is praying to be delivered from enemies (Ps 17:14) and he seeks vindication (Ps 17:15). Dying would not constitute deliverance and vindication even if he ended up in the presence of God in heaven. This passage makes perfect sense as a reference to waking in the morning and finding the enemy defeated. We should not opt for a metaphorical reading if the text makes perfect sense without reading it that way...Such a passage could not be used to prove that Israelites had a hope for heaven. Ambiguous terms and contexts do not serve well as primary evidence. All these passages can easily be interpreted within the framework of Sheol being the only alternative."

⁶ 1/27/19 and 2/3/19

⁷ Job 2:7-8 - *So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.*

⁸ Ancient Hebrew and Greek (LXX) do not have distinctions in capitalization.

⁹ Walton notes that in contrast we have nothing to argue before God, but stand guilt and condemned for our sin. "Jesus is our mediator because he has taken our sin upon himself." Ironically, Tobit (see the third footnote above) would be a much better analogy for what Jesus does for us, than Job's hoped for "redeemer".

earth' is actually refers to the place where one dies or a place of mourning. That is, Job expects this advocate to arrive here at his expected grave before he dies and testify on his behalf.¹⁰

In verse 26 Job continues, “²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.” Now, we know Job cannot be talking about resurrection here, because elsewhere in the book he has made it definitively clear Job lacks any belief that resurrection after death is a possibility. Most explicitly, in chapter 14 verse 12 (in the box) Job says, “a man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more he will not awake or be roused out of his sleep”. Rather, in verse 26 what Job is describing is the destruction of his skin, which he has been flaking off with a potsherd ever since sores began to cover his body. So Job’s saying that his skin may be in shambles, but he still expects to see vindication before he dies; and to (quote) “see God, ²⁷whom I shall see for myself” he expects to receive and audience with God; “and my eyes shall behold, and not another”: he expects at that time God will no longer be a stranger to God and God will no longer continue treating him like He doesn’t know him.

So I’ve included in the box a paraphrase from John Walton of what the context indicates Job is actually talking about. Job is saying something to the effect of,

“I firmly believe that there is someone, somewhere, who will come and testify on my behalf right here on my dung heap at the end of all this. Despite my peeling skin, I expect to have enough left to come before God in my own flesh. I will be restored to his favor and no longer treated as a stranger...”

Job is not talking about Jesus or resurrection. In fact, the Ancient Israelites really didn’t have any concept of an afterlife, at least not one based on reward and punishment. Instead, they believed all people, when they died, were destined for a place they called “Sheol”, which was thought of as “a shadowy, gloomy existence cut off from the world of the living and from God.” It wasn’t until after every book of the Old Testament was written¹¹ that *some* Jews’ views of the afterlife began to be modified and the idea of resurrection began to be accepted by some Jews, and in Jesus’ day those who had come to believe in resurrection in the afterlife¹² included the Pharisees, but the Sadducees rejected it. They remained committed to the traditional outlook of Judaism, which for thousands of years had not included the afterlife. And even though Jesus at the end of our gospel passage points out hints about the resurrection in the story of the burning bush from the book of Exodus, that’s a divine insight the Jews had never picked up on; it had been totally lost on them. So all of this is to say, again, that the Sadducees came by their disbelief in the resurrection honestly, as they had thousands of years of Jewish tradition for interpreting the scriptures to back them up.

Retrib principle proverbial

But before we get back to the Sadducees, there is another sense in which the book of Job turns out to be very relevant to the perspective of the Sadducees in our gospel passage today. Those of you who were here in January remember that I explained how crucial it is to understand the genre of the book of Job, because it is a piece of Wisdom Literature that’s most similar parallel in scripture are the Parables of Jesus. Therefore, we mustn’t assume that the Bible is asking us to believe that the story of Job is any more historical than that of the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son. Rather, it is a sort of thought-experiment that is meant to explore some particular theological questions/issues.¹³ The first

¹⁰ The word *apar* is used in Genesis 3:19 to refer to the substance humans were made from and the place where they will return (‘dust’).

¹¹ The Hellenistic and early Roman periods [325 B.C. - A.D. 325] (*Haper Collins’ Bible Dictionary*, Paul Achtemier, p451-2)

¹² While the concept of resurrection is present in the Old Testament in two senses - that of a single individual’s return to life (resuscitation; e.g. 1 Kg 17:22, 2 Kg 4:35,13:21) or the metaphorical corporate resurrection of a people being brought back into existence from apparent extinction (e.g. nation of Israel in Ezek 37) - the bodily resurrection of individuals in the afterlife (“eschatological resurrection”) is really not found in the Old Testament. Possible exceptions include Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:1-2, but both of these are probably better understood as referring to resurrection in the sense of a nation of people being brought back into existence from apparent extinction.

¹³ A pertinent excerpt from the 1/27/19 sermon:

But recognizing that the book of Job is wisdom literature, and perhaps something like a parable, is also critical for

objective of the book of Job is to challenge the readers to consider our motives for righteousness and loving God¹⁴, but what is relevant for our gospel passage today is the second topic Job explores, which is the reliability of what is often called the “Retribution Principle”. The Retribution Principle is the idea that “the righteous will prosper and the wicked suffer” (and I’ve printed this in your bulletin). Ancient peoples, including the Israelites seem to have generally believed the “Retribution Principle” reflects how life in this world works. And wherever there is wholesale belief in the Retribution Principle, it is almost as common that the converse of the principle is believed as well: that if someone is prospering it must be an indication they are righteous and if someone is suffering it must be because they are wicked. And even though Jesus explicitly rejects this converse of the principle in Luke 13¹⁵ & John 9¹⁶, there are still many Christians who believe it (either consciously or subconsciously) and sadly many Churches that teach it.

But the reason the ancient Israelites (and some Christians today) believe the Retribution Principle is in part because there are passages of scripture, particularly in the Old

The RETRIBUTION PRINCIPLE:
The righteous will prosper and the wicked suffer.

The CONVERSE of the Retribution Principle:
Prosperity is an indication of righteousness
and suffering is an indication of wickedness.

preventing us from drawing some of the incorrect conclusions about God that readers of the book of Job have been prone to take over the years. Turning back to the parables for a moment, where Jesus is using stories to make theological points, sometimes this requires Jesus to caricature some things about God that are beside the point in order to make the story work. But must be careful not to take these caricature elements to be truths Jesus is revealing about God, while missing the point Jesus is intending to make.

Just take a moment to consider Jesus’ parable in our gospel passage today from Luke 11. While attempting to teach his disciples about prayer, Jesus tells the disciples a parable where he tells them to imagine going to a friend at midnight and asking them for bread. So the friend in this parable represents God, and yet the friend’s initial response to the request is “Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything.” Yikes! So if a reader mistakes this as the point of the parable, they might conclude Jesus is suggesting that God “is reluctant to help us or that God needs to be badgered in order to help us”. But in reality, Jesus is portraying God in this extreme way – in a caricature, if you will – in order for the story to work and to be able to make the theological point he is intending, which is about the value of persistence in prayer.

So the rule of thumb, especially with parables, is that the only authoritative – or God-inspired – message in them is the particular message Jesus was intending to convey. And anything that is beside the main point must be treated not as divine truths, but instead as literary window-dressing.

Well, the book of Job is much the same. In the set-up of the story we have the writer portraying God as a king who receives reports from Satan, and Satan seems to be playing a role akin to something like a CIA spy. But notice this set-up also includes God seeming to have no knowledge of what Satan is doing (1:7, 2:2), God making a wager with Satan (1:8, 2:3), and God seeming all-too-willing to hang a righteous Job out to dry (1:12, 2:6) in order to win that wager!! And these are the very elements of God’s character in the story that leave many readers aghast and wondering “How can God be like this?” and “Does God really operate like this?” But the answers to those questions are “he’s not actually like this” and “no, he doesn’t operate like this”; it’s a story.” The book of Job is a sort of thought-experiment aimed at exploring some very particular theological questions about God, and those are the only matters for which the book should be taken as authoritative, or as actually revealing the character of God: everything else is literary window-dressing necessary to construct a story.

¹⁴ Job challenges us to consider our motives for righteousness and loving God; to consider whether we love God for the benefits and rewards we hope to receive from Him or do we love Him with integrity; that is, simply for who He is.

¹⁵ **Luke 13:1-5** There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. **2** And (Jesus) answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? **3** No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. **4** Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? **5** No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

¹⁶ **John 9:1-3** As (Jesus) passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” **3** Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

Testament in Psalms¹⁷ and Proverbs¹⁸, that affirm the Retribution Principle. And yet, what the Book of Job is meant to reveal is that the Retribution Principle is **only proverbially true**.¹⁹ By establishing from the outset that Job is righteous - which we know in reality that no human but Christ is completely righteous, but remember: Job is a thought experiment, like a parable - by establishing from chapter 1 that Job is righteous and yet God allows him to suffer, the story teaches that the Retribution Principle cannot be relied upon, and all the more because justice in the afterlife was off the table, since the Israelites had no idea that was a possibility.²⁰ And so, the lesson from Job when it comes to suffering is that we should expect to all experience some suffering in this life, but that we can trust in God's ability to use that suffering for good, even if it's in ways that are beyond our comprehension. ##

But despite the best efforts of the book of Job, by Jesus' day the Retribution Principle and its converse continued to be accepted as the way the world works.²¹ And we can be sympathetic to people missing Job's point, can't we? After all, most Christians today don't have any clue *what* to make of it! But why have I gone into all of this today - using Job to explain the retribution principle and how the Sadducees' disbelief in the resurrection was carrying on a longstanding tradition of how the Jews interpreted their scriptures? Because it's **the combination of those two beliefs that would've blinded the Sadducees to their need for Jesus and the salvation he offered!!** And let me explain.

You see, according to the Retribution Principle and particularly to its converse, which most everyone in the first century believed, the Sadducees would've understood the wealth and power they had - their prosperity - to be an indication that they were blessed and approved of by God; as proof of it! And since they didn't believe in the resurrection, that meant there was no possibility that retribution was being *delayed* until the afterlife. So the combination of these two beliefs would've made it impossible for them to grasp how they could have any need for salvation; salvation from what? And as for the gospel of living in close relationship with God in this life - and in his kingdom - these Sadducees had built a kingdom of their own and had no sense of what greater intimacy with God could even be like!

So **no wonder they're mocking Jesus' teaching** that the dead will be raised!! For them to even consider that would threaten the very foundations of their sense of worldly and spiritual security. And yet, if they are *wrong* and what Jesus said is true, that the dead will be raised, then *this* changes the whole equation: if there is a judgment beyond this life, perhaps they aren't really secure and perhaps they *do* need salvation.

And the same implications of resurrection apply to us: no matter if we are rich or poor, powerful or powerless, when the Day of Jesus' return comes, everyone of us will be raised and judged for what we did with this gift of life. And because there are ways that everyone of us will be found wanting - significant ways - our priority in this life must be to abide in Christ, so that whatever our failures have been we will be forgiven and we will not have to hear Jesus state those dreaded words, "Depart from me; I never knew you."²² Therefore, belief in resurrection should give us an urgency to take the Great Commission seriously, by praying for the lost and offering ourselves to be used by the Lord to make disciples: to teach people to abide in Him.

But even those of us who have entered into a trusting relationship with Jesus will not be exempted from Judgment. But for us Judgment will mean that our salvation from sin and its effects will come in full. Everything will be exposed for what it really is. And anything we have built on sin or

¹⁷ E.g. Psalm 37 & Psalm 73

¹⁸ Proverbs 10:3, Proverbs 10:16, Proverbs 10:24, & Proverbs 12:1

¹⁹ Perhaps Luke's apparent interpretation of the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8) should be taken as proverbially true - a la Galatians 6:7-8 - instead of as a guarantee?

²⁰ So it turns out that Job and his friends were wrong that the Retribution Principles is reliable in this life. And toward the end of the book, God teaches that there mistake was in believing that justice is a foundational principle of God's creation. And God's wisdom - why he at times allows the righteous to suffer - is often beyond human understanding.

²¹ Again, see Luke 13:1-5 and John 9:1-7 in footnotes above.

²² Matthew 7:21-23

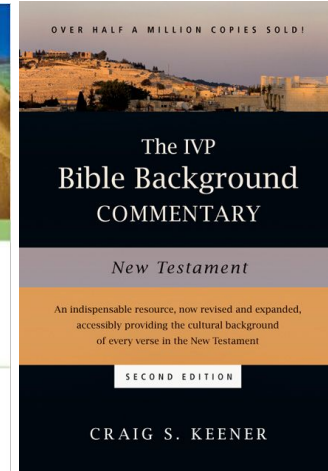
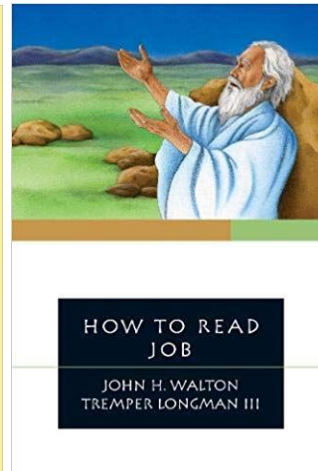
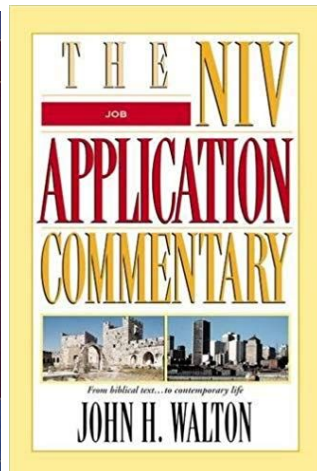
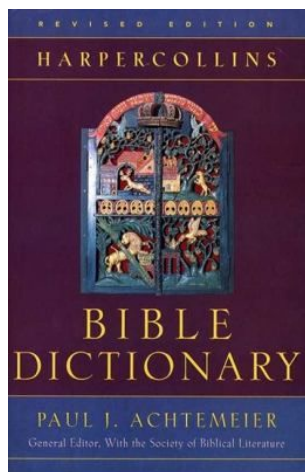
corrupted by sin will be lost.²³ Any distortions or dysfunction in our human relationships (or relationship with God) will be righted. It will mark the final termination of evil and the triumph of truth. And this reality should encourage us to remain diligent in confronting our sin and seeking to overcome it in God now. It's so easy for the promise of resurrection to allow believers to fall into this mentality of waiting out the clock. I know the older we get the more resistant we are to change, but complacency now just ensures that judgment will be all the more painful and include all the less reward.²⁴

But in addition to being saved in full, the resurrection is also good news for the concerns from the Book of Job. Certainly the lessons of Job still remain, that in this life we will have troubles, and though God promises in Romans to transform those troubles for good for those who love him,²⁵ the resurrection means that while the retribution principle cannot be relied upon in this life, we can be assured of justice in the next, when the loss & harm of this life will be undone for good.

So how is the Holy Spirit speaking to you about this doctrine of judgment and resurrection today?

- Perhaps some of us have felt convicted of living as a Christian in name only, but not truly seeking to abide in Christ.
- Or perhaps some of us have been convicted of just waiting out the clock and minimizing the reality of our sin and continuing to resist the uncomfortable journey of change the Lord has been calling you on for years. It will be much less painful to answer for sin now than at judgment.
- Or maybe some of us needed to hear that encouragement today that whatever injustice we've endured may not be rectified in this life, but that it will be in the life to come. And if that's the case, can we pray for acceptance of justice's delay? So we don't allow the wrong that's been done to us to be the god of our lives?

Whatever it is, don't let this lengthy sermon you've just sat through be for nothing. :) Rather, I pray God will use it to spark a willingness in us to allow Him to bring our lives further into line with His Will. Amen.



²³ **1 Corinthians 3:12-15** "12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

²⁴ **2 Corinthians 5:9-10** "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

²⁵ Romans 8:28

Tobit 3:7-17 (RSV)

7 On the same day, at Ecbat' ana in Media, it also happened that Sarah, the daughter of Rag' uel, was reproached by her father's maids, **8** because she had been given to seven husbands, and the evil demon Asmode' us had slain each of them before he had been with her as his wife. So the maids[a] said to her, "Do you not know that you strangle your husbands? You already have had seven and have had no benefit from[b] any of them. **9** Why do you beat us? If they are dead, go with them! May we never see a son or daughter of yours!"

10 When she heard these things she was deeply grieved, even to the thought of hanging herself. But she said, "I am the only child of my father; if I do this, it will be a disgrace to him, and I shall bring his old age down in sorrow to the grave."[c] **11** So she prayed by her window and said, "Blessed art thou, O Lord my God, and blessed is thy holy and honored name for ever. May all thy works praise thee for ever. **12** And now, O Lord, I have turned my eyes and my face toward thee. **13** Command that I be released from the earth and that I hear reproach no more. **14** Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am innocent of any sin with man, **15** and that I did not stain my name or the name of my father in the land of my captivity. I am my father's only child, and he has no child to be his heir, no near kinsman or kinsman's[d] son for whom I should keep myself as wife. Already seven husbands of mine are dead. Why should I live? But if it be not pleasing to thee to take my life, command that respect be shown to me and pity be taken upon me, and that I hear reproach no more."

16 The prayer of both was heard in the presence of the glory of the great God. **17** And Raphael[e] was sent to heal the two of them: to scale away the white films from Tobit's eyes; to give Sarah the daughter of Rag' uel in marriage to Tobi' as the son of Tobit, and to bind Asmode' us the evil demon, because Tobi' as was entitled to possess her. At that very moment Tobit returned and entered his house and Sarah the daughter of Rag' uel came down from her upper room.

- a. Tobit 3:8 Gk *they*
- b. Tobit 3:8 Other authorities read *have not borne the name of*
- c. Tobit 3:10 Gk *to Hades*
- d. Tobit 3:15 Gk *his*
- e. Tobit 3:17 Other authorities read *the great Raphael. And he*