

4. JOB

2nd millennium BC

Job was a blameless, godly, wealthy man from the East, apparently not an Israelite but he knew God. He is not the author of the book that carries his name. The book is about his sufferings, and he was sure that he would be vindicated one day. The Messianic passage in which we are interested is Job's own words:

I know that my Redeemer lives and that he will stand upon the earth later on. After my skin has been destroyed, I know that I will see God in my flesh. I will see him myself with my own eyes, I and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

(Job 19:25-27).

These three verses from Job are very precious and immortalized in Handel's Messiah. Job expresses his faith in a Redeemer who, in comparison with other Scriptures, is recognized as the Messiah. He expresses his belief in the resurrection of the body, but the Hebrew of vs. 27 is not clear.

The Hebrew word for redeemer is *go'el*, the kinsman redeemer we meet in the book of Ruth. Although Job is pessimistic about the way God is treating him, he has faith and believes that he has a redeemer or savior of some kind, probably a vindicator. When he states that he will see God with his own eyes, it suggests that he believes in the resurrection of the body. The phrase "in the end, he will stand upon the earth" has a couple of problems. "In the end" translates a Hebrew word which usually means "the last," for example when the Lord says he is the first and the last. The word for "earth" used here is not a word meaning the world; it is the loose soil on the ground or the "dust" associated with a grave. The International Standard Version translates verse 25 as: "And he, the Last One, will take his stand on the soil."

The book of Job has similarities to literature written in the time of Solomon, a time when the idea of resurrection was not fully developed. The translation “after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God” has some difficulties. Literally, it is: “After they strike off my skin, this! And from my flesh, I will see God.” The preposition is “from” not “in”. The word “flesh” in Hebrew (and Greek) is usually regarded negatively as weak or corrupt; not the right word to use in regard to seeing God. This line could be translated as “away from my flesh I will see God.” But, if Job had the resurrection body in mind, then that resurrected flesh would not be weak or corrupt, and when he says that one day he will see God with his own eyes, he implies that he will be in a resurrected body.

Whether or not this is an accurate translation of Job’s words, they express truths that are revealed elsewhere:

On that day he will plant his feet on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem. (Zech 14:4)

As for me, I will see your face in a righteous state.

When I awake, I’ll be satisfied with your likeness. (Ps 17:15)

I am the First and the Last; the Living One. I was dead, and look, I am alive forever and ever! (Rev 1:17b-8)

The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city and his servants will serve him. They will see his face. (Rev 22:3-4)