



Job 9:31-32; 19:23-27

Job's Umpire

Thomas Carlyle made this observation on the book of Job: "There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."

Some of the probing words that flash through our minds when we reflect on this book has to do with suffering, innocent, righteousness, judgment, reward, etc. Questions come to mind like, Why do the righteous suffer, and the sinful go free? Doesn't God care for His people? Does suffering and adversity prove that the one suffering is wicked? Does God really care and can He show mercy? Can there be any goodness without reward?

In his conflict and pain Job answered Bildad and said in Job 9:32-33 that he needed an umpire between he and God.

He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him,
That we may go to court together.
There is no umpire between us,
Who may lay his hand upon us both.

With bold faith Job takes up his plea in 16:18-21,

O earth, do not cover my blood,
And let there be no *resting* place for my cry.
Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven,
And my advocate is on high. My friends are my scoffers;
My eye weeps to God.
O that a man might plead with God
As a man with his neighbor!

The need for one to intercede is heard again in 31:35.

Oh that I had one to hear me!
Behold, here is my signature;
Let the Almighty answer me!

Clearly, Job needs an umpire, a mediator. An "Umpire" is one able to act as an arbitrator at an appointed day. The original word means "to act as umpire," or "mediator." The term implies one who hears two parties in a dispute and decides the merits of the case.

Job continues with his plea for one to stand before God on his behalf. In 19:23-27 he makes a bold statement of faith regarding his *Goel*. His nearest of kin can be that umpire!

Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
That with an iron stylus and lead
They were engraved in the rock forever!
And as for me, I know that my redeemer lives,
And at last He will take His stand on the earth.
Even after my skin is flayed,
Yet without my flesh I shall see God;
Whom I myself shall behold,
And whom my eyes shall see and not another.
My heart faints within me.

"I know that my Redeemer lives" (v. 25). He is speaking of his *Goel*, who is his nearest of kin. The kinsman had the responsibility of redeeming his kinsman's lost opportunities. It is as if Job is saying everyone else has a kinsman. The person who is forced to become a slave because of financial disaster has a kinsman. When debts overwhelm him, a redeemer buys his homestead for him so that his family can live. When a family member dies without an heir the kinsman redeems his name by marrying his widow and rearing a son in his name. If another man kills a man, the redeemer has the responsibility to avenge the blood of the victim by pursuing the killer. Why, Job had lost everything! (Job 1-2). Job's complaint is that no one has come to redeem him. However, Job's faith launches out and declares that Yahweh will provide his *Goel*!

He speaks of his kinsman saying, "at last He will take His stand on the earth" (v. 25b). His kinsman redeemer will come to the earth. After his death, "Even after my skin is flayed, Yet without my flesh I shall see God" (v. 26). After his body is destroyed in death, in the future life he will see the One he worships and adores. He will see *Eloah*, "the Adorable One, the Worshipful One." "Whom my eyes shall see and not another" (v. 27b). Job expects to see God in the future life. It is simple faith from a sincere heart.

Job's Kinsman told the apostle John on the island of Patmos, "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys to death and Hades" (Revelation 1:17-18).

Jesus answered Job's cry. He has ideally fulfilled this need of an umpire. The perfect mediator is Emmanuel. The "daysman" (KJV) is the one who sets the date for the arbitration. There can be only two options: Either God became man, or a third party must mediate. God became man to bring about our reconciliation with God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). The umpire got one hand on man and one on God and brought them together.

Because of our depravity in sin, we are estranged from God. Our Savior and mediator Jesus Christ stepped in and made us one with God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Old Testament did not have an intercessor as we know Him in Christ. The writer of Hebrews wrote, "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us . . . (9:24).

In the New Testament, Christ is the one true mediator between man and God. "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time" (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

The "mediator" (*mesites*) is "a go-between" (from "middle," and "to go"), "in the middle," "middleman." He is the person who stands in the middle and brings the two estranged parties together. He is one who mediates between two parties to bring peace or fellowship. He must equally represent both parties.

In His incarnation Jesus Christ perfectly represented both parties. He is the perfect God man. He perfectly represents God to man, and is man's representative to God. In order to bring salvation he had to possess the attributes of God and the nature of man.

Through His incarnation the gulf between God and man has been decisively and finally crossed. Christ bridged the gulf and united God and man by becoming the God-man. The Word of God mediates God's mind, message and righteousness. No man had seen God at anytime, but Jesus. He is the exegesis of God. Those who see Jesus see and hear the Father. Moreover, as man Jesus became what God expected of every man in perfect obedience. He was obedient to the point of death by giving His life as an unblemished sacrifice for our sin. Jesus mediated the new covenant which brings about a perfect relationship with God. As the "one mediator" Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all.

The writer of Hebrews saw Christ as the One who "is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (7:25). Cf. Rom. 5:10.

The writer of the book of Hebrews stresses that Christ was superior in every way to the old covenant. He surpasses all mediators –angels, Moses, Aaronic priesthood, etc.

Christ our mediator is clearly seen in John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. Neither is salvation found in anyone else, nor can anyone come to the Father but through Him.

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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