

When Friends Forsake You

International Bible Lesson

Job 19:1-7, 23-29

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“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26—KJV).

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25-26—NRSV).

As Job’s suffering intensified, his family and friends forsook him; however, a few “friends” came to make his suffering worse. They misused Job’s misfortune to make themselves look better, and they accused him of hiding the most heinous sins. Whenever Job tried to defend himself, they invented more falsehoods to use against him. Therefore, Job took the only action left a godly man. He did what Joseph Scriven immortalized in “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”: “Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!” In answer, the Holy Spirit inspired Job to ask that his words be inscribed in a book, which became the Book of Job. Then, Job proclaimed the truth that God had revealed to him: he knew that his Redeemer lived, even as he spoke, and His Redeemer would stand on the earth someday. He proclaimed that someday, after he had died and his skin had been destroyed, that he would rise again and in his flesh he would see God. A mark of the patience of Job was his willingness to wait and bear the falsehoods of his friends until after he died and his Redeemer had raised him from the dead and proved him right. But Job did not need to wait until after Jesus came to earth to vindicate him. God spoke to both Job and his friends. God condemned and punished Job’s friends for their falsehoods, declaring, “You have not spoken to me what is right, as my servant Job has” (Job 42:7).

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Thinking Further

1. Why was Job suffering?
2. Did Job’s friends help him as he suffered? Explain your answer.
3. What did Job’s friends think of themselves?
4. What did Job want done with his words?
5. Where did Job place his faith for his future?