

Job's Creed or Confession of Faith.

by John Gill

Job's Creed is a statement of faith that expresses his confidence in a living Redeemer and provides a model for Christian faith and practice.

Scripture: Job 19:25

Topics: "Hope of Resurrection", "Faith in Suffering"

Description

John Gill preaches on Job's profound confession of faith, emphasizing Job's unwavering belief in his living Redeemer amidst immense suffering and loss. Job asserts that despite his physical decay, he will see God in his flesh, highlighting the hope of resurrection and eternal communion with the Lord. Gill elaborates on the five key articles of Job's faith: the existence of a living Redeemer, the promise of resurrection, the certainty of death, the assurance of seeing God, and the personal nature of this relationship. This sermon serves as a powerful reminder of the hope and assurance believers have in Christ, even in the face of death and despair.

Transcript

JOB'S CREED:

OR, CONFESSION OF FAITH.

Occasioned by the Death of the Reverend Mr. Edward Wallin,

Preached June 18, 1733.

JOB 19:25-27

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: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.

THIS chapter contains Job's answer to Bildad the Shuhite, who, in the preceding chapter, had represented him as a wicked man, and one that knew not God, and had said many severe things concerning him; which shows, that he looked upon him as rejected of God, and devoted to ruin and destruction; all which he concluded from his present afflictions, and conduct under them. Job replies, by granting, that he was under very great and sore afflictions, which he particularly enumerates, and therefore was a proper object

of pity and compassion, and ought not to be used in the barbarous and inhuman manner he was by him and his other friends; and, that he ought not to be traduced as a wicked man, and ignorant of the divine Being; since he did know God, as his living Redeemer; was able, in the midst of all his afflictions, to exercise faith and hope in him, and to believe that he should everlastingly enjoy him.

And though Bildad had represented destruction (Job 18:12, 13.) near at hand, which should devour the strength of his skin; yea, even his whole strength, and bring him to the king of terrors: this gave him no frightful apprehension; he knew in whom he had believed, and to whom he had committed both soul and body: though he saw himself in a wasting consumption, reduced to skin and bones, and had reason to conclude, that he should in a short time be laid in the silent grave, and the remains of his body be the repast of worms; yet he believed he should rise out of his dusty bed, live again, and be forever blessed with uninterrupted communion with his living Redeemer.

Bildad had intimated, that his light should be put out; and the spark of his fire should not shine; that the light should be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle should be put out with him. (Job 18:5, 6.) Job, on the contrary, was fully assured that his Redeemer would plead his cause, bring him forth to the light, and he should behold his righteousness: That though for a time he should be shut up in the dark and gloomy grave, yet he should rise from thence, and in his flesh see God, whom he should see for himself, and his eyes should behold, and not another.

These words may be considered as containing the substance of what was Job's support under his present troubles, the unkind treatment of his friends and others, and in the views of death and eternity. His troubles were many and great; he had lost both his children and his substance, his brethren and acquaintance were estranged from him, his kinsfolk failed him, and his familiar friends had forgotten him; his maids counted him a stranger, and his servants refused to obey him; his breath was strange to his wife, young children despised him, and all his inward friends abhorred him; his body was filled with a loathsome disease, and was become a mere skeleton, his bones cleaved to his skin and flesh, and he just escaped with the skin of his teeth; and in this most sorrowful condition had none to pity him, or show any compassion to him.

Add to this, that he had received the sentence of death in himself, and judged that he was near his last end, and long home: My face, says he, is foul with weeping, and on my eye-lids is the shadow of death. (Job 16:16.) My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, and the graves are ready for me. He was waiting and looking for death and the grave, and endeavored to make them easy and familiar to him: If I wait, says he, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness: I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister. (Job 17:1, 13, 14.)

Now Job's support under all this was, his settled and secure interest in a living Redeemer, the delightful prospect he had of his appearance in the latter day, the resurrection of the same body by him, and the glory and happiness which should follow upon that; and indeed, nothing short of this can yield solid relief and comfort, when afflictions press hard, death stares in the face, and an awful eternity is in view. Such were the joy and peace this good man's soul was filled with, through believing these things, that for the glory of the Redeemer's grace, and the encouragement of others, he is desirous that the words by which he had expressed them, might be transmitted to the latest posterity.

O, says he, that my words were now written; O that they were printed in a book; that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever. (Job 19:23, 24.) This refers not to what he had said before, to

the apology and defense he had made for himself against the unjust censures of his friends; but to what follows after, to the words of my text, to which these are a preface; and it ought to be observed, that the Hebrew particle Vau, placed at the beginning of my text, is not to be rendered by the adversative but, as it often is, nor by the copulative and, as frequently it is, nor by the illative or causal particle for, as it is here in our translation, but by an explanative,[1] 1 such as namely, or to wit; and so the words stand in connection with the former in this manner; O that my words were written; O that they were printed in a book; that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock forever; namely, (or to wit) I know that my Redeemer liveth, etc.

He would have these words written, that they might abide; and not written only by a private person, and for private use, but he would have them printed or engrossed (for printing is not to be taken in a strict sense, it being a late invention) by some public notary, and registered among the public acts, which are most likely to continue; but inasmuch as books and writings may be lost, are liable to corruption and rottenness, to be eaten by moths, or consumed by fire, he would have his words engraven with an iron pen, on sheets of lead;[2] upon which, as well as on brass, it was usual to engrave public acts for long preservation; and fearing lest this should not be sufficient, he desires they might be cut out on some rock or another, where they might abide forever.

And perhaps he may mean the rock out of which his tomb was made, in which he designed to be interred; since it was customary with the eastern people to make ready their tombs beforehand, and to hew them out of rocks, as appears from the instance of Joseph of Arimathea; and then Job's request and with is this, that though he desired no stately monument to perpetuate his memory, no pyramid or marble statue to be erected for him; a tomb cut out of a rock was sufficient for him; yet he earnestly begged, that these words might be his logofiov, his "funeral epitaph;" that these, even these, might be inscribed on his sepulchral monument, his rocky grave, I know that my Redeemer liveth, etc. that so everyone that passed by might read them; and, if it was the will of God, receive some advantage by them.

Job had his wishes in some measure answered, though, perhaps, not in his own, yet in a better way. These words of his are written in the most public book in the world, and are among the most authentic records, "the Scriptures "of truth," where they stand, and will stand to the latest ages, as a testimony of his faith in Christ, and for the support and encouragement of other saints. These words may be rightly called Job's creed, or the confession of his faith, which consists of various articles; some of which respect the living Redeemer, and his interest in him; and others, his state and condition at, by, and after death, and to all eternity; and are as follow: I.

That he had, and he knew that he had, an interest in a living Redeemer. II. That this living Redeemer should stand upon the earth at the latter day. III. That as for himself, he should die, return to dust, and be devoured by worms. IV. That he should rise again from the dead, with true flesh, and the same body. And, V. That he should enjoy the beatific vision of God to all eternity. I. The first article in this creed of Job, is, that he had, and knew that he had, an interest in a living Redeemer, I know that my Redeemer liveth;[3] or, as the words may be literally rendered, I know my living Redeemer; by whom we are not, with some Jewish writers,[4] to understand any mere man, who was then alive, or should hereafter live, and rise up, and plead the cause of Job, assert his right, and defend his innocence; for, as a learned interpreter observes,[5] the word Redeemer properly belongs, to God, and is scarce ever used in scripture of any other, in any sense of it.

Some persons may be said to be redeemers, inasmuch as they have been God's instruments to deliver his people, such as Samson, Gideon, and others; particularly Moses, is said to be "a ruler and a deliverer, lutrw>thv, a redeemer;" (Acts 7:35.) because he was made use of by God for the redemption of his people Israel from Egypt, and was an eminent type of the Redeemer Jesus. Some[6] think by the living Redeemer, is meant God the Father; and it must be allowed, that he is often called so in the Old Testament; he being the Rock of Israel, and the high God their Redeemer: but then it may be observed, that all the temporal redemptions and deliverances of God's people under that dispensation, are easily applicable to the Messiah, the Angel of his presence, who in his love and pity redeemed them, and bore them, and carried them all the days of old; (Isaiah 63:9.) and certain it is, that he was spoken and prophesied of, and promised, under the character of a Redeemer, to the Old Testament saints, and as such they expected him; who being come, has by his blood obtained eternal redemption for his people: I conclude therefore, that he is principally designed in my text.

There are several things to be considered in this first article of faith. First, The character of Christ as a Redeemer. Secondly, The excellency of him as such, a living Redeemer. Thirdly, Job's interest in him, my Redeemer. Fourthly, The knowledge he had of this, I know that my Redeemer liveth. First, I shall consider the character of Christ as a Redeemer; what it supposes; how he came to sustain it; and how qualified he is for it. 1. It supposes persons to be redeemed; the Redeemer and the Redeemed are correlates, they mutually imply, and have a respect to each other.

It will not be unnecessary to inquire, who these persons are; these are not all the individuals of human nature, which have been, are, or shall be on the earth; for if these are all redeemed by Christ, they are redeemed by him either in whole or in part; if in part only, then Christ is a partial, or an imperfect Redeemer, which must reflect dishonor upon him; if they are wholly redeemed, then they are redeemed from all sin, and the consequences of it, and in the issue shall be eternally saved; which cannot be said of all mankind.

Besides, if so, those who are redeemed could not be said to be redeemed from among men, or, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, (Revelation 14:4 5:9, Titus 2:14.) or to be a peculiar people. Those whom Christ has redeemed are such as the Father has chosen in him, and has given to him to be his people and portion; electing and redeeming grace being exactly commensurate to each other: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath visited and redeemed his people. (Luke 1:68.)

But my design is not to enter into this controversy now. 2. It supposes those persons redeemed to have been in a state of bondage and slavery, as they are by nature to sin; they are the servants of it, vassals to it, shut up in it, are overcome by it, and in bondage under it; for while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. (2 Peter 2:19.) They are also under the law shut up in it, imprisoned by it, in bondage to it; they are under it as an accusing, convincing, and condemning law, and as considered in themselves exposed to the curses of it: They are likewise taken and led captive by Satan at his will, who is therefore called by the name of captivity; (Psalm 68:18.) and as he by his suggestions and temptations fetters them the more strongly in their lusts, so by his terrifying them with the fears of death, they are sometimes a considerable while subject to bondage. 3.

It implies a deliverance from all this; redemption obtained by Christ, from which he is denominated a redeemer, is a deliverance from sin, from all sin, and all the wretched consequences of it; he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. (Titus 2:14.) It is owing to redemption by Christ that his

people are in time delivered from the dominion of sin, to which they were subject, are secured forever from the damning power of it, and shall hereafter be entirely freed from the very being of it.

It is also a deliverance from the law; it is not an exemption from obedience to it, as a rule of walk and conversation, but from the curse and condemnation of it as a covenant of works; (Galatians 3:13.) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. It is likewise a deliverance from Satan; by virtue of it, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered; the strong man armed is spoiled of his goods, sinners are delivered from the power of darkness, are turned from the power of Satan to God, and this because Christ has ransomed them from the hand of him that was stronger than they. (Jeremiah 31:11.)

In a word, Christ has ransomed his people from the power of the grave, redeemed them from death, and has saved them from their enemies, and from the hand of all that hated them. 4. This redemption which gives Christ the character of a redeemer, is obtained either by power or by price. There is a redemption by power; thus God redeemed the people of Israel out of Egypt, with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments; and in this way Christ has redeemed his people from Satan and other enemies; for by the strength of his arm he has destroyed him who had the power of death, which is the devil; and by the greatness of his might has spoiled principalities and powers, and rescued his people from the devouring jaws of death and destruction.

There is also a redemption by price; Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20, 1 Peter 1:18, 19.) which price is not corruptible things, as silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ. This is the *ajiti>lutrov*, "the ransom, the redemption price," which is a sufficient one, it being the blood of an innocent person the spotless lamb of God, and the same blood with ours, and shed in our room and stead; and besides all this, the blood of the Son of God, and therefore must have an infinite virtue and efficacy in it: This price was paid, not into the hands of Satan, by whom we were detained captives, but into the hands of God, the sovereign proprietor of us, against whom we have sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied.

Christ has redeemed us to God by his blood. (Revelation 5:9.) 5. If it should be asked, how came Christ to be the Redeemer of his people? It may be answered, that his Father called him to it, and appointed him this work in the counsel of peace, when he said to him, Is it a light thing, that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. (Isaiah 49:6.)

Christ agreed to all this, and a covenant was entered into by them both, which for its original, substance, and end, is commonly called the covenant of grace, and from this principal article of it, the covenant of redemption; in consequence of which Christ was sent in the fullness of time to redeem them that were under the law; (Galatians 4:4.) and by his blood he has procured it, and is of God made unto us that, as well as other blessings of grace. 6. Christ was sufficiently qualified for this work.

As God, the Lord of hosts, he is a mighty Redeemer, able to save to the uttermost, and has a fullness of abilities answerable to the undertaking. As man, he has a right unto it, being the Goel, the near kinsman of his people, which is the sense of the words[7] in my text, to whom, according to the law, the right of redemption belonged. As God-man and Mediator he was fit for it, having a proper regard to both parties, and a just and strict concern for things pertaining to God, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

The redemption which Christ has effected is a complete and an eternal one, and is what could never have been procured by any other person, or in any other way. The excellency of this redemption, and the author of it, cannot be sufficiently expressed by us: There is one peculiar epithet given him in my text, which I am now naturally led to consider, which is, Secondly, That Christ is a Redeemer that liveth, or a living Redeemer; which may design, 1. The existence of Christ: in this sense the phrase is used in Hebrews 7:8, where it is witnessed of Melchizedek, that he liveth, that is, exists, or is in being.

Christ was in being in Job's time, and existed then under the character of a Redeemer. Indeed, he was in being before Job or Abraham, or any other person; before Abraham was, I am, says he; (John 8:58.) he was in the beginning with God, and was God, by whom all creatures were brought into being; he existed as a Redeemer from the foundation of the world; he was not only so in designation and appointment, but in reality; the virtue of his future redemption reached to all the Old Testament saints, who were all justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; had all their sins pardoned through that blood, which was shed for the redemption of transgressions that were under the first testament; and saved by the grace of the same Lord Jesus Christ as we are; they then viewed him as Job did, and we do now, as the living Redeemer, who then existed as such. 2.

The eternity of Christ. To say that Christ lives, or is living, is to say, that he is eternal: As God, he is from everlasting to everlasting; as God-man and Mediator, he was set up from the beginning, or ever the earth was; his goings-forth, in the covenant of grace, were of old, from everlasting; he is the alpha of all God's ways, and the omega of all his works; he is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, which is, and which was, and which is to come. 3. The stability, permanency, and immutability of Christ.

This stands opposed to the inconstancy, and mutability of everything in this world, which Job had a large experience of, and under which he was supported by this consideration. There was a change in his outward circumstances, his substance was gone, but his Savior was in being; his children were dead, but his Redeemer lived; his friends and relations were fickle, inconstant, mutable, but his Jesus was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.[8] What supported Job, may support saints in the like circumstances; whatever changes and vicissitudes they undergo, Christ remains the same, and his years fail not: Though friends and relations die, and the strongest ties and bonds of nature are unloosed, and every relation ceases, as those of husband and wife, parents and children, master and servant, pastor and people, yet the Redeemer ever lives, and relation to him can never be lost.

Though as man he once was dead, he will die no more, death shall have no more dominion over him; he is alive, and shall live for evermore, and that for the good, comfort, and happiness of his people; for he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25.) 4. The life of Christ. This he has in himself for all his people; he has a fullness of life, he is the fountain of it, all spiritual and eternal life spring from him: As God, he has an original, underived life, which is not given him by, or received from another; but as Mediator, the Father has given him to have life in himself; and this gift is in consequence of a request of his to him; he asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. (Psalm 21:4.)

He came into this world that his people might have life, and that in abundance; he gives it to them, and it is secured in him; their life is hid with Christ in God: (Colossians 3:3.) This lays a solid foundation for faith and hope, both with respect to a final perseverance in grace and holiness, and to the resurrection of the body at the last day: Because I live, says Christ, ye shall live also; (John 14:19.) which is, and will appear to be true, both of a spiritual and corporal life.

But, Thirdly, Job expresses his faith in Christ as his Redeemer; he asserts and claims his interest in him, when he calls him my Redeemer; which is more than to say or believe that he is a Redeemer. It is one thing, with the men of Samaria, to know, believe, and own, that Christ is the Savior of the world; and another thing, with Job and other believers, to know, own, and declare him to be our Savior and Redeemer; the one without the other will be of little avail; the one is indeed absolutely requisite to the other.

The disciples of Christ are justly reprehended for their slowness to believe, and for their hesitation about Christ's being he who was to redeem Israel. And on the other hand, such are commended who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah and Savior of the world; for without believing that he is a Redeemer, we cannot believe in him as ours; but then, such a faith is not to be depended on, because it may be where there is no true grace, no going out to Christ, relying on him, or committing anything to him.

Again, Such an act of faith as Job here puts forth on Christ, is more than a bare reliance on him, or hope of interest in him. Souls, when first awakened to see their need of Christ, and the worth of him, long for an interest in him, but cannot claim it; their language is, give me Christ, or I die; but cannot see their property in him; under a sense of their perishing condition, and with some encouraging hopes of finding grace and mercy, they venture on him, resolving, that if they perish they will perish at his feet; they put their mouths in the dust, if so be there may be hope; and sometimes encourage themselves, that there is hope in Israel concerning this thing; and so are helped to trust in the Lord, and stay themselves upon the mighty God of Jacob.

But, This is expressive of a very strong act of faith, such as was the church's, when she said, My beloved is mine, and I am his; (Song of Solomon 2:16.) and Thomas's, when he made a declaration of it in these words, My Lord and my God; (John 20:28.) and the apostle Paul's, who could say, Who hath loved me, and hath given himself for me. (Galatians 2:20.) Now let it be observed, that it is not this, or any other act of faith, that gives a soul an interest in Christ; not this act, because then none could be said to have an interest in him, unless they had the faith of assurance; nor any other act, because a man cannot believe unless he is alive in Christ; and no man can be alive in Christ without an interest in him; consequently then an interest in Christ is before faith, and not by it; he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die. (John 11:26.)

An interest in Christ is not got but given; it is not obtained by faith, nor any other act of the creature, but is owing to the free grace of God. Faith views an interest in Christ as freely given; asserts and claims it on that act of grace, but does not procure it. An interest in Christ is the greatest of blessings: To be able to say these two words in faith, my Redeemer, is the greatest mercy in the world. If a man could say, the whole world was his; all the riches of the Indies, the vast treasures that lie in the several parts of the universe; all the kingdoms, inheritances, and possessions of the earth his, what would it signify, if he could not say, that Christ was his?

This is the chief of mercies, and what gives a title to all the other blessings of grace, which are all the believer's, because Christ is his, and he is Christ's: It is a discovery of this which supports the soul in dying moments, and when just ready to enter upon an invisible world. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. (Psalm 73:25, 26.)

Job not only had an interest in Christ; but, Fourthly, He knew it: I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth. This was not a mere speculative knowledge of the Messiah, which he might have by special revelation, as Balaam had, or from the first intimation of him, as the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head, to our first parents; which was, no doubt, traditionally handed down to Job's time; but Job not only knew that there was a Redeemer promised, that he then existed, but he knew him to be his Redeemer.

Nor was this knowledge only a knowledge of approbation. Those who savingly know Christ, do approve of him above all other persons or things in heaven or in earth; he is to them the chiefest among ten thousand: They value him for his personal excellencies, and proper qualifications to be a Redeemer; they like and approve of him to be theirs, as did Job, when he said, He also shall be my salvation. (Job 13:26.) But then this was not all, he not only approved of him as a Redeemer, but he knew him to be his.

Nor was this knowledge only a fiducial one; they that know his name, his person, blood and righteousness, will put their trust in him; and as their knowledge of him increases, their confidence in him will grow. And such a trust was reposed in him by Job, who could say, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; (Job 13:15.) but he does not stop here, he mounts the highest step in the ladder of faith, and rises up to a full assurance of it; he could say as the apostle Paul long after did, under greater light, and larger discoveries of Christ; I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded; that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:12.)

The doctrine of assurance is decried by Papists, and now-a-days discouraged by many who are called Protestants, and understood experimentally by a very few. It is true, indeed, that for a man to know his interest in Christ, and title to heaven, is the highest pitch of grace he arrives to here; yet this may be attained under the influences of the Spirit of God, without an extraordinary revelation, as is objected. You will say, how do any know their interest in Christ, or that he is their Redeemer?

I answer, this may be, and is known, from the inhabitation of the Spirit in them, Hereby we know, that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (Job 4:13.) This known also from the testimony of the Spirit witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children and heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ; and from the work of the spirit upon their souls, which is a fruit and effect of redeeming grace; and from the benefits of redemption being applied to them, such as righteousness, pardon of sin, atonement, and the like; this is certain, that they to whom the blessings of redemption are applied, are interested in the Redeemer, who may justly conclude, from their receiving the earnest of the redemption of the purchased inheritance, that they shall enjoy the whole: The connection between grace and glory is inseparable, and he that has the one may be sure of the other.

So much for the first article of Job's faith. 2. The second article in this creed is, that the living Redeemer shall stand upon the earth in the latter day. The word day is not in the original text, but is a supplement of the translators; hence some interpreters leaving it out, refer the word latter or last, not to time, but persons, about whom they cannot agree: some[9] ascribing it to God the Father, who is the first and the last, the eternal God, who, as he is before all creatures, so he will continue after all have had their beings, and have acted their part in this world.

Others[10] to Jesus Christ, to whom the same characters of Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, belong. Others to[11] Job himself, who, they suppose, calls himself the last upon the earth, that is to say, "the meanest among men,[12] the most despicable of creatures, the off-scouring of all things, and the refuse of the earth;" and yet, notwithstanding this, declares his faith and confidence, that he should stand,

keep his ground, maintain his cause, and carry his point against his friends, having an interest in such a Redeemer.

But, for my own part, I am inclined to think, that the living Redeemer mentioned in the first article, is designed in this, and that the words belong to him, which, according to the different versions they will admit of, refer to different things. 1. Reading them as they are rendered by our translators, He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, they may design the incarnation of Christ, and hold forth Job's faith in it. This was an article in his creed, that the same Redeemer, who then lived and existed in heaven, should descend from thence, not by local motion, but by assumption of the human nature, and frond and dwell with men here upon this earth.

Thus, according to Job's faith, the word was made flesh and dwelt among us; (John 1:14.) conversed with mortals upon earth upwards of thirty years, traveled over the land of Judea, took many fatiguing journeys, went about doing good, at length died for his people, and was buried in this earth. Now it was in the last days that God sent this Redeemer, and spake to us by this his Son: (Hebrews 1:2 and 9:26.) It was once in the end of the world that Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 2.

If we read the words as they may be, and are rendered; He shall rise the last out of the earth, or dust.[13] Then they express Job's faith in the resurrection of Christ, that as he should appear on earth, converse a while here, then die, and be buried, so he should rise again; God would not leave his soul in hell, (or the grave) or suffer his holy One to see corruption. (Psalm 16:10.) When Christ is said to rise the last out of the dust, this is not to be understood, as though he should be the last man that should rise from the dead; so far from this, that he is the first that rose from the dead to a life of immortality: God first showed him the path of an immortal life, hence he is called the first-fruits of them that slept, and the first-born from the dead; (1 Corinthians 15:10, Colossians 1:18.) but when he is said to rise the last, this, as[14] some well observe, is to be understood of him as the last Adam, in opposition to the first man; and so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45.)

The resurrection of Christ is a considerable article of faith, much depends upon it; it has a great influence both on our justification and regeneration: The whole system of the christian religion is nothing without it; if this is not true, our faith and hope are both in vain; nor have we any reason to expect the resurrection of our bodies, or look for the blessed hope. Hence the resurrection of Jesus was a principal subject of primitive preaching, and ought not to be neglected now. 3.

If we translate the words as they may be translated, thus, He shall stand at the latter day above, or[15] over the earth, they may refer to Christ's second coming to judgment, when he will descend from heaven, come in the clouds of it, and appear in the air, over the earth, where he will be met by the living saints, and will judge the world in righteousness. This was a very early article of faith; the Jews say,[16] that the dispute and quarrel between Cain and Abel was about this; the one asserting, the other denying, that there would be a future judgment.

However, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, (Jude 14, 15.) prophesied of it, and of the coming of the Lord with ten thousand of his saints, to execute it. It was known and believed in Job's time; he asserts it, and acquaints his friends with it; that ye may know; says he, that there is a judgment. (Job 19:29.) This has been, and ought to be, a generally received truth, "that after death is judgment." Nothing is more certain, than the coming of Christ to judgment: or, than that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,

that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10.) 4.

If we render the words as they may be rendered, thus, He shall stand at the latter day against the earth,[17] they may intend the general resurrection of the dead by Christ. The bodies of men are laid, imprisoned, and detained in the earth, nor is it in the power of any creature to release them; but Christ will appear, and stand against the earth in the latter day; he will contend with it, and get the victory over it; death and the grave will be obliged to surrender up their dead to him, who has the keys of hell and death, and can at his pleasure open the gates of the grave, and set the prisoners free; destroy the power of death, and quicken the dust of men.

This now is, and ought to be, an article of our creed, which was one of Job's, of the Old Testament saints, and the ancient Jews in general, and of Christ and his apostles, namely, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (Acts 24:16.) 3. The third article of Job's faith is his own mortality and dissolution; he knew and believed that he should die, return to the dust, and be consumed by worms. Though he puts an if upon man's dying in one place, if a man die; (Job 14:14.) yet it was no question with him, whether he would die or no, for in the same chapter he says, man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not: Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? (Job 14:1, 2, 10.)

Nor had he any doubt about his own mortality and death, he knew that God would bring him to death, and to the house appointed for all living; (Job 30:23.) he looked for it, he expected it in a little time; when a few years are come, says he, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return. (Job 16:22.) Death is the fruit of sin; God threatened it in case of disobedience to his will; it entered into the world by it, is the just wages of it; and since all have sinned, none are exempted from it, or what is equivalent to it; It is appointed unto men once to die; no man can secure himself from it, or hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war, neither shall wickedness deliver such who are given to it. (Ecclesiastes 8:8.)

Such who are hardened in sin, and would out-brave death and hell, who say, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; their covenant with death shall be disannulled, and their agreement with hell shall not stand. (Isaiah 28:15-18.) And indeed, the righteous are as liable to the stroke of death as the wicked; Your fathers where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? (Zechariah 1:5.) It may, perhaps, seem strange, that these should die, since Christ has died for them, and abolished death, and him that had the power of it: And indeed, though they do die, they do not die like other men, there is a difference between the death of the righteous and of the wicked; Christ by dying has took away the sting of death, removed its curse, and turned it into a privilege and blessing; death is yours: (1 Corinthians 3:22.)

It is not inflicted on them as a penal evil, or by way of punishment for sin, but that they may be entirely rid of it; and that when their bodies are raised immortal, incorruptible, spiritual and glorious, these, with their souls, may enjoy an eternity of happiness. Death is here expressed by a destruction of the body by worms, and by a consumption of the reins; after, or besides my skin, worms will destroy this body, and my reins will be consumed within me.[18] Death is properly a separation of soul and body; the consumption of the body in all its parts, internal and external, skin and reins, is the fruit and effect of death and the grave; where the body lying a little while, is subject to corruption and rottenness.

Now by this destruction of the body we are not to understand an annihilation of it, for though the body returns to dust, and sees corruption, yet it is not reduced to nothing. The dead indeed are not; they are not in the land of the living, existing among, and conversing with men, as formerly, yet they are in being. God will destroy not only meats, but the belly; not as to its substance, but as to its present use, when it will be no more employed in the service it now is. If the body was annihilated by death, Christ would lose part of his purchase, yea, part of his mystical self, and the Spirit his dwelling-place; for the bodies of the saints, as well as their souls, are bought with the price of his blood, and are members of him, and temples of the Holy Ghost.

Besides, the resurrection would not be properly a resurrection, but a new creation.[19] 4. A fourth article in Job's confession of faith is, the resurrection of the same body. This he firmly believed, though he knew his body would be destroyed by worms, and his reins be consumed within him; otherwise he could not have said, or believed, or hoped, that he should see God in his flesh, and for himself; and, that his eyes should behold him, and not another. When he says, in another place, If a man die, shall he live again? which, according to the usual sense of such interrogations, without a negative particle, must be answered, No, he shall not live again; his meaning is, that he shall not live again in this world, he shall not live a natural mortal life again, supported in the manner it now is.

And when he says of himself that in a little time he shall go to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death, from whence he should not return; (Job 10:21.) he means, that he should return no more to his house, neither should his place know him any more, (Job 7:10.) nor to a mortal state, or to the business and employments of this life; for, that being once laid in the grave, he should not rise again until the heavens be no more; (Job 14:32.) that is, until the end of the world, when there will be an universal resurrection of good and bad.

Job had no scruple upon his mind about the resurrection, nor do these passages imply any; no man more firmly believed it, or more clearly asserted it. Two things are to be observed in this article; 1. That he believed he should rise with true flesh; in my flesh shall I see God. The bodies of men at the resurrection will not be airy, etherial, or celestial bodies, destitute of flesh, blood, and bones; they will not be turned into spirits, but will be like the body of Christ after his resurrection; who said to his disciples, being terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit, Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. (Luke 24:39, 40.)

It is true, the bodies of the saints will be raised spiritual ones; they will be subject and subservient to the soul or spirit, employed in spiritual service, and delighted with spiritual objects, and live without natural helps, as spirits; but then they will not be changed into spirits, or lose their former true nature and substance. The apostle indeed says, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; (1 Corinthians 15:50-53.) by which he means, not flesh and blood simply considered, but as either sinful or mortal, or both; therefore this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruption must put on incorruption. 2.

That he believed he should rise with the same body; otherwise, he should see God, not in his own flesh, but in another's; not for himself, but for another; not with his own eyes, but with the eyes of another, a stranger, as the word signifies;[20] a strange body, to which he was not united, in which he never dwelt, and which he never was acquainted with before. If the same body is not raised, it will not be properly a resurrection; nor are the figurative phrases just, by which it is sometimes expressed, as quickening the seed sown in the earth, awaking out of sleep, and the like.

Besides, the places from whence the dead will be summoned; the subject of the resurrection; this vile and mortal body; the several instances of resurrections past, prove the identity of raised bodies: And indeed, it is inconsistent both with the justice and goodness of God, to punish or glorify other bodies than those we carried about with us here.[21] But I proceed to, 5. The fifth and last article of this creed, and that is, the beatific vision of God, which Job firmly believed he should enjoy; concerning which may be observed the following things: 1.

That the vision of God he believed, and expected he should have, when raised from the dead, would be a corporal one; hence he says, In my flesh shall I see God, and mine eyes, my fleshly eyes, shall behold him. Therefore, by God we are to understand, not God essentially considered, but God personally considered in the Son, or God manifest in the flesh. God will be seen through the Mediator; in heaven much of the glory of the Deity will shine through the humanity of Christ; the human nature of Christ will be a glorious object for the saints to look at.

To see Christ on earth was the desire of kings and prophets. It was one of Austin's three wishes, which were these, to see Christ in the flesh, Paul in the pulpit, and Rome in its glory. In heaven saints will see Christ as he is, as crowned with glory and honor; raised to the highest dignity in the human nature, shining with the brightest majesty it is capable of: and when they are thus blessed with this delightful, desirable, and everlasting sight, they will have their wishes, and Christ his prayers answered; such as, Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. (John 17:24.)

I would not be understood, as though I thought this corporal sight will be all the saints will have of God; no, the intellectual vision of him, with the eyes of the mind, will be enlarged to the highest degree it is capable of, and the understanding will be everlastingly employed in such contemplations of the being, perfections, and glory of God, as are now inconceivable to us, and inexpressible by us. 2. This vision will be very distinguishing; it will be such an one as many others will not be blessed with; mine eyes shall behold him, and not another, or a stranger.

Such who are strangers, both to themselves and Christ, are unacquainted with the new birth, know nothing of the grace of God in truth, shall never see him; Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, (Matthew 5:8.) and none but them. As a stranger does not now intermeddle with the joy of saints, so neither shall he hereafter: A stranger, an hypocrite, such an one as Balaam, shall see him, but not now; shall behold him, but not nigh; such may see Christ in his human nature, but not so as to enjoy his presence, and be delighted with his glory: The sight of him will throw horror, into their minds, and confusion in their faces; every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. (Revelation 1:7.)

But the sight the saints will have of Christ will be of a different kind, and produce different effects. 3. This sight will be an appropriating one; whom I shall see for myself, says Job; I shall see my own interest in him very clearly; this will turn to my own account; it will issue in my own pleasure and delight, profit, and advantage. Saints in the resurrection-morn, and when in heaven, will see Christ for themselves, and not for others; they will be able to appropriate him to themselves, and say, My Lord, and my God.

Now, very often they can see him as a Savior and a Redeemer for others, but not for themselves; they can believe for others, but not for their own souls; but in heaven they will see him for themselves, and that forever; their sun shall no more go down, neither shall their moon withdraw itself: The Lord shall be their

everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended. (Isaiah 60:20.) 4. This fight will be an assimilating and transforming one. Views of Christ in the glass of his gospel, promises, and ordinances, change the saints into the same image, in some measure, in this life; how much more will clear views of him hereafter?

The true reason why the saints shall be so perfectly like Christ in the other world, is, because they shall see him as he is. 5. and lastly, This sight is exceeding desirable, will be greatly delightful, wonderfully satisfying, and will last forever. This is the reason why saints are so desirous of departing out of this world, and to be with Christ, that they may see his glory, and enjoy his presence, the consequence of which is fullness of joy; for if a sight of Christ by faith now, fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory, what must a sight of him do in the world above?

Here the eye is not satisfied with seeing, but then it will be, both the eye of the body and of the mind; as for me, says the Psalmist, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. (Psalm 17:15.) And, to conclude, this vision will be an everlasting one, free from all clouds and darkness, obscurity and imperfection, and will not suffer any interruption. The saints shall be for ever with the Lord, and behold his glory. Thus have I gone through the several articles of this creed, and considered the several parts of this portion of scripture, in compliance with the request of my deceased brother, and fellow-laborer in the gospel, whose remains we shall shortly commit to the grave, in hope of the resurrection of the just.

His character may now be expected from me. I shall give a brief account of him (as I am able) chiefly as the saint and minister. It pleased God to bless him with a religious education, under parents, who cheerfully and joyfully took the spoiling of their goods for the cause of Christ. When, and at what age, the Lord called him by his grace, and revealed his Son in him, I am not certain; but evident it is, that it was betimes, and in his early days, since he not only made a profession of religion; but entered upon the public work of the ministry very young; having been, as I am informed, pretty near thirty years a pastor of this church, and yet died in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

He engaged in the work of preaching the gospel with disinterested views, and not upon any mean, mercenary, or worldly consideration, as sufficiently appears from this single instance; having a call to two several congregations at one and the same time, he chose rather, upon mature deliberation, to accept the call of the poorer and meaner church; believing it to be the mind of God he should do so, and that his work lay there; though at the same time he had a growing family, and under pressing circumstances of life.

And though he had, afterwards, temptations thrown in his way to leave his small flock, he bravely resisted them, and cheerfully continued in his oversight of it. And as he committed himself and his family to the care of divine providence, the Lord was not wanting to appear for him in an uncommon manner. How often have I, with others of my brethren here present, heard him relate, with the utmost pleasure, and gratitude of mind, the instances of providential goodness to him, with a single view to glorify God, and to encourage the faith and hope of others in him.

His indefatigableness was very considerable, as appears from the progress he made in some of the learned languages, and in other parts of useful knowledge, which recommended him to the pulpit and the press,[22] and to every branch of conversation. Add to this, his laborious industry in keeping a school, at the same time he was engaged in public work, and had the pastoral care of a congregation. His ministerial endowments and qualifications were such, as are rare in this present age.

Besides a large experience of the grace of God, he had a considerable share of light and knowledge in the great truths of the gospel; he had an heavenly skill to lay open the wretched and miserable state and condition of sinners by nature, and to let forth the glory of Christ in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice. His language was plain and easy, though strong and masculine, far above contempt, and yet free from the swelling words of vain rhetoricians. His reasoning was clear and nervous, his mien and deportment was grave, his address was with majesty, which at once had a tendency to command awe, engage the attention, and strike the affection.

And, let me not forget to take notice of his excellent talent in prayer, and of that sweet and near communion he often enjoyed with God in the discharge of that work in private. His success in the ministry was very great, he had many seals of it, both in conversion and edification; some of which went before him to glory, and others are here behind, and both will meet him in the great day of the Lord. There needs no further proof and demonstration of this, than the bare consideration of the low estate in which you, this church was, when he came among you, and the very flourishing one in which he has now left you: May it continue and increase.

His large knowledge of, and acquaintance with men and things, together with great sagacity and penetration, joined with labor and pleasure in it, fitted, and gave him an uncommon turn for business. How many will miss him for his private advice and counsels? What a loss will the churches in city and country sustain, who had a common share in his care and affections? And, how long has he been a father and a guide to you, my brethren, and myself? Have we not reason to cry as the prophet did, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!

But while I am speaking of his great concern for the public good of the churches of Christ abroad, let me not forget to take notice of his affectionate regard to you, this church, of which he was pastor, who, of all the branches of a Redeemer's interest, lay nearest his heart, and for whom he spent his time, his talents, and his strength. And here I cannot forbear reading a passage of his, in a paper fallen into my hands since his death, and which seems to be written at a time when he was engaged in prayer and tears for you; being, as I apprehend, fearful, at that time, of some divisions among you: His words are these, "O! that my present tears might cement the hearts of my dear members together in love, and that there might be no other contention among them, than what might express their self-denial for the sake of Christ, and their fellow-members, striving together for the faith of the gospel, but not with one another about different sentiments in matters not essential to true religion, or the public worship of God under the gospel.

O! imitate a dear Redeemer in this self-denying, loving, and tender spirit and carriage one towards another; this will produce peace in the church; this will yield peace in your own souls; this will yield a comfortable reflection in the near view of death, and an eternal world." Notwithstanding all his attainments, gifts and usefulness, he was humble, and entertained mean and low thoughts of himself; this might be seen in his carriage to those who were inferior to him. In the above-mentioned paper I meet with some lines of his, breathing out his sense of divine grace, and his own unworthiness.

"O! says he, how unworthy have I always been of such dear favors with which I have been indulged. I can say, in the views of many infirmities, I have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful in the ministry to the best of my light. O! that I had but more light, and liberty, in my Lord's work, in every respect. Alas? How short have I come of filling up the character I have unworthily bore in the churches." His conversation with men was free and pleasant, affable and courteous, instructive and diverting, which made him universally esteemed and beloved.

He was calm and quiet under afflictive providences, and much resigned to the divine will, and particularly throughout his last illness. When he was first seized, which was many months ago, and had the sentence of death in himself, he expressed himself in this manner, as I find his own words in the paper before referred to; "And now, methinks, I am ready to yield up my soul into the hands of a dear Jesus, in whom alone I have hope, and with whom I long to be. I have been a wonderful instance of his grace, and indeed, of sovereign goodness, in that he should put such an one as I into the ministry, and uphold me so long in it, to some usefulness to poor souls, whom I hope to meet in the great day with exceeding joy."

During his long indisposition he was very comfortable in his soul, and satisfied about his eternal state. In my last visit to him, that he was able in any tolerable manner, with any degree of strength to converse with me, I asked him whether his faith in Christ was now steady; he replied, "Steady, steady on the person of Christ, and those glorious truths of the gospel, which have been the support of my soul, and the delight of my ministry." One of the last things he was heard to say before his death was, that the present dispensation was the most delightful one he ever was yet under.

Which shows, that he must have great supports, and large discoveries of love in his last moments. And thus he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, and now makes one of the shining crowd, which stand before the throne, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. May we be able to make a right use of this melancholy providence: Should not the removal of such able and faithful servants of Christ send us to the throne of grace, to pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest, that his churches may be supplied, and his interest preserved? FOOTNOTES:

[1] Vid. Noldii Concordant. Particular. Ebraeo Chald. p. 287. n. 1208. where several instances are given of this use of it.

[2] Postea publica monumenta plumbeis voluminibus, mox & privata linteis confici coepta, aut ceris, Plin. Nat. Hist. 50:13. 100:11. Fuit que antiquissimi moris, publica monumenta plumbeis voluminibus; privata autem linteis describi: in quibus nonnunquam publica, Alex. ab Alex. 50:2. 100:30.

[3] yj ylag yt[dy ygaw Et ego novi Redemptorem meum vivum. Ar. Montan.

[4] Rejected by Ramban in Mercer in loc.

[5] Vox Redemptoris proprie Dei est, and vix in scriptura reperitur de alio dicta, quam de Deo, quocunque modo sumatur. Bolducius in loc.

[6] So Mercer in loc.

[7] ylag a radice lag Redemit, vendicavit, vindicavit. Particip. lag propinquus, cognatus, qui jus indiciam habebat. Luxtorf. Sic vocat Christum. Job 19:25. qui carnem nostram assumens factus est noster frater, consanguineus, ut non ex potestate diaboli redimendi jus ad ipsum pertineret. Schindler. lex Pentaglott. Col. 267.

[8] The Chaldee Paraphrase renders the Word by $\mu\eta\eta$ firm, stable, durable; the Septuagint by $\alpha\iota\eta\eta\alpha\sigma\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$, perpetual, constant, which always continues.

[9] Vid. Mercerum in loc.

[10] Vid. Caryl in loc.

[11] Vid. Bolducium in loc.

[12] So Ultimus Myforum, "the last of the Mysians," a poor mean people in Phrygia, was used proverbially of one that was exceeding despicable and contemptible. Quid porro in Graeco sermone tam tritum atque celebratum est, quam, siquis despicatui ducitur, ut Myforum ultimus dicatur, Ciceron. Orat. 24. pro L. Flacco, p. 785. Ed, Gothofred

[13] Nempe ego novi Redemptorem meum vivum, qui postremus ex pulvere (terra) surget. So Noldius in his Concordant. Ebraeo. Chald. particular, 27 p. 676. n. 1750, where he gives many instances of the particle I[being so used.

[14] Caryl in loc. Lightfoot, vol. 11. p. 279. See also Junias in loc.

[15] So the particle I[is rendered in Genesis 1:20. Ezekiel 1:25, and in other places.

[16] In Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Genesis 4:8.

[17] So I[is often rendered, as in Isaiah 29:8, Jeremiah 11:19, Ezekiel 29:2, and in many other places.

[18] So Noldius, p. 12. N. 80.

[19] See my second sermon on the Resurrection, in the second volume of the Lime-street sermons, p. 451-453.

[20] rz Alienus, extraneus a radice rwz Alienari. Abalienare. Buxtorf.

[21] See these arguments at large in my second sermon on the Resurrection, in the second volume of the Lime street sermons, from p. 457 to 468, and in my first sermon, p. 398, 399. etc. I have shown, that these words of Job are not to be understood, as they are by most Jewish, and some Christian writers, of a metaphorical, but a real resurrection; which is the true reason why I have taken no notice of it in this discourse.

[22] He published two discourses, one on the death of the Reverend Mr. John Noble, the other on the death of Mrs. Mary Weare.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-gill/jobs-creed-or-confession-of-faith/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net