

Dr. John Walton, Job, Session 15

Job 19:25 – I know my Redeemer Lives

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Walton, Job, Session 15, Job 19:25, I know my Redeemer Lives, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. John Walton **examines Job 19:25**, exploring various interpretations of Job's "Redeemer." Walton **rejects the common interpretation** that the Redeemer is Jesus, arguing that within the context of the Book of Job, the "goel" represents an advocate seeking **vindication**, not forgiveness for sins. He proposes that Job seeks an advocate from the divine council, **differentiating this role from Jesus' role** as Redeemer in the New Testament. The lecture ultimately emphasizes the **distinct nature of Job's plea for justice and the inappropriate application of New Testament concepts** to interpret his Old Testament context.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Walton's, Job, Session 15 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Psalms & Wisdom → Job → Walton).



**Walton_Job_Session
n15.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of John Walton's "Session 15: Job 19:25 – I know my Redeemer lives":

Briefing Document: John Walton on Job 19:25

Subject: Interpretation of Job 19:25 ("I know that my Redeemer lives...")

Source: Excerpts from John Walton's "Walton_Job_Session15.pdf"

Date: October 26, 2023

Overview:

This session focuses on a critical passage in Job (19:25-27), often cited and misinterpreted due to its familiarity within a Christian context (Handel's "Messiah"). Walton meticulously analyzes the verse, arguing against the common interpretation that Job is prophesying about Jesus as a redeemer. Instead, Walton situates Job's words within the context of his legal struggle, arguing Job seeks vindication rather than forgiveness. The session explores possible candidates for the role of "goel" (translated as Redeemer) and concludes Job is looking for a member of the divine council to testify on his behalf.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Job's Legal Context:

- Job's speech, including 19:25, is a response to Bildad and is rooted in a legal framework.
- Job repeatedly seeks an advocate ("goel"), someone to represent him before God. This advocate is not simply a figure of speech but a critical part of the legal setting in which the text is set.
- Walton asserts that understanding the legal, familial context of "goel" is essential to interpretation.

1. Meaning of "Goel" (Redeemer):

- The Hebrew word *goel* has a legal function within Hebrew society; it refers to a family member responsible for protecting the rights of the clan.
- Several interpretations of who the *goel* might be are explored:

- **Personification of Job's cry:** (D.J. Cline's view) that his cry of innocence itself would be his advocate. Walton dismisses this impersonal interpretation.
- **God:** Walton argues this is problematic since God is the one Job is accusing, making Him an unsuitable advocate.
- **Human Relative:** While consistent with the meaning of *goel*, all of Job's relatives have abandoned him.
- **Elihu:** Elihu later presents himself as a possible advocate but has a different outcome in mind than Job, so he is unlikely to be the type of advocate Job seeks.
- **Member of the Divine Council:** Walton's preferred interpretation is that Job is appealing to a member of God's heavenly court.

1. **The Advocate's Role:**

- Job needs a *goel* to testify on his behalf, to demonstrate his innocence, and to prove that he does not deserve the suffering he has endured.
- The *goel* does not address Job's potential offenses, but rather works to rectify a wrong done to Job.
- Job is not seeking forgiveness, but rather vindication. This is a crucial distinction that separates the meaning of the *goel* from the traditional view of Jesus.

1. **"I Know My Redeemer Lives":**

- Walton argues that this is not a prophecy about Jesus, despite the common Christian interpretation.
- Job believes his *goel* is alive *now* and will take a stand on his behalf.
- The *goel* is expected to arrive at Job's "dung heap", not a heavenly place. Job is expecting a tangible interaction.

1. **"Yet in my flesh I will see God":**

- Walton considers and rejects the idea that this refers to resurrection, pointing out that there is little evidence to support resurrection in the Old Testament.
- He also rejects the idea of post-humous vindication.
- Walton interprets it as a reference to Job's immediate condition: despite scraping away his skin with a potsherd, he expects to see God's favor restored to him while

he is still alive, in his flesh. Seeing God is symbolic of being restored to God's favor and ceasing to be a stranger.

- Walton's interpretation suggests a last-minute reprieve rather than resurrection or posthumous recognition.

1. **Rejection of Jesus as Job's *Goel*:**

- Walton explicitly states that the *goel* in Job's context is *not* Jesus.
- Jesus, as the Christian Redeemer, provides forgiveness of sins, which is fundamentally different from the vindication Job desires.
- Job does not need someone to take punishment for him; he does not believe he deserves punishment.
- The role Jesus plays is in direct opposition to what Job seeks from the *goel*. Job is seeking someone to say that he is innocent of the things that he has been accused of.

1. **Importance of Context:**

- The New Testament authors do not connect Jesus with Job 19, emphasizing the importance of understanding the passage within the original text of Job, not a later Christian lens.
- Using Handel's "Messiah" or other artistic interpretations to explain the text is a misinterpretation. The text needs to be interpreted by the context that is in the text.

1. **Job's Focus on Vindication:**

- Job is seeking vindication - having his innocence proven - rather than justification - being made righteous despite guilt - or forgiveness for his sins.
- This is a key distinction that is often missed, which leads people to incorrectly interpret the *goel* as being Jesus.

Key Quotes:

- "I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end, he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh, I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes-- I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me." (Job 19:25-27, NIV, quoted in the text)
- "A goel is trying to right a wrong done to a person... A goel does not work on behalf to right a wrong the person has committed. That's what Jesus did, but that's really not the role that we find."
- "Job is expecting someone to play a role that is the polar opposite of that which is played by Jesus."
- "Viewing Jesus as the goel in Job is a distorting factor in the interpretation of the book and runs against the grain of Job's hope and desire."

Conclusion:

Walton's analysis of Job 19:25-27 challenges traditional Christian interpretations by grounding the passage in its ancient Near Eastern legal context. He argues that Job's hope is not for a Christ-like redeemer who will atone for his sins, but for an advocate, likely from the divine council, who will vindicate his innocence and restore his standing before God while he is still alive. This interpretation is essential to correctly understanding the message of the Book of Job. This nuanced reading emphasizes the importance of careful exegesis and sensitivity to the original context when interpreting religious texts.

4. Job Study Guide: Session 15, Job 19:25, I know my Redeemer Lives

Job 19:25 - "I Know My Redeemer Lives" Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. According to Walton, what is the significance of Job 19:25 in the context of Job's ongoing arguments?
2. What is the traditional understanding of the "redeemer" in Job 19:25, and why does Walton find this interpretation problematic?
3. What are the different views of who or what Job's advocate might be and how does Walton rank them?
4. What is the role of the *goel* in Hebrew society, and how does it relate to Job's situation?
5. Why does Walton argue that Elihu is not the *goel* that Job is seeking?
6. What reasons does Walton give to suggest that Job's *goel* might be a member of the divine council?
7. How does Eliphaz's statements in Job 5:1 and 22:2-3 contribute to Walton's interpretation of Job's possible advocate?
8. According to Walton, why is the interpretation of the *goel* as Jesus a misreading of Job 19:25?
9. What is the difference between the concept of *vindication* and *forgiveness*, and how does this difference apply to Job's situation?
10. What does Walton believe Job means when he says, "yet in my flesh I will see God," and why does he believe this?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Job 19:25 is significant because it expresses Job's belief that he has an advocate who will take his side in his legal case against God. It is a powerful declaration of faith in the face of intense suffering, showing his persistent hope for vindication.

2. The traditional view often sees the "redeemer" as God or Jesus, but Walton finds this problematic because it doesn't make sense for a mediator to be the accused party. Additionally, he points out that New Testament authors do not make this connection to Jesus, so it's essential to stay within the context of Job.
3. The different views of who Job's advocate might be include the personification of Job's cry for justice, God, a human relative, Elihu, or a member of the divine council. Walton ranks the member of the divine council as the most likely, based on references within Job and the overall understanding of the divine realm at the time.
4. The *goel* in Hebrew society was a family member who was responsible for protecting the rights of the family. This often involved acting in legal matters to avenge or redeem family members and their property. For Job, a *goel* would stand up for his rights.
5. Elihu is not the *goel* that Job seeks because, according to Walton, Elihu's understanding of the desired outcome is different. Job seeks vindication, but Elihu has a different end in mind that doesn't result in Job's declared innocence.
6. Walton argues that Job's advocate could be a member of the divine council because Job is looking for someone to take his side in the heavenly realm where these matters are decided. He points to Elihu's reference in Job 33:23-24 as a supporting reason, though Eliphaz's dismissal of that idea also gives it a theoretical possibility.
7. Eliphaz's statements in Job 5:1 and 22:2-3 are significant because they dismiss the idea of a member of the divine council acting on Job's behalf. This shows it was a possibility considered by people within the narrative, making Job's hope more focused and specific by elimination of other options.
8. Walton argues that the interpretation of the *goel* as Jesus is a misreading because Job is looking for someone to demonstrate his innocence, not to take the punishment for his sins. The concept of Jesus as a redeemer is tied to forgiveness, which is the opposite of what Job is looking for.
9. Vindication is about being cleared of any wrongdoing and having one's innocence proven, while forgiveness is about having one's sins pardoned. Job is seeking vindication to demonstrate that he is innocent and does not deserve the suffering. Walton explains that this is opposite of the role Jesus plays.

10. Walton believes Job means that even after the destruction of his skin, while still alive, he expects to be restored to God's favor and no longer be treated as a stranger. He interprets this as a last-minute reprieve rather than a resurrection.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the different interpretations of the "redeemer" in Job 19:25, and explain why Walton argues for his particular interpretation of a member of the divine council. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the alternative interpretations.
2. Discuss the role of the *goel* in Hebrew society and how this understanding shapes Walton's interpretation of Job's situation. In what ways does this role highlight the differences between the Old Testament and New Testament understandings of redemption?
3. Explore the significance of Job's desire for vindication rather than forgiveness. How does this contrast with Christian theological concepts of redemption, and why is it essential to understand this distinction in the context of the book of Job?
4. Explain how Walton's analysis of Job 19:25 contributes to a larger understanding of the Book of Job's message about the nature of suffering and justice. Why does he think we should avoid mapping New Testament concepts onto the Old Testament Book of Job?
5. Examine Walton's interpretation of Job's phrase "yet in my flesh I will see God." How does this interpretation align with or differ from other views, and what impact does this understanding have on the overall message of Job's declarations in chapter 19?

Glossary of Key Terms

Advocate: A person who pleads the case of another, especially in a court of law or before a higher authority. In the context of Job, it refers to someone who will represent him before God.

Divine Council: A group of heavenly beings or members of the divine court that surrounds God and often participates in decisions that have implications for humans.

Forgiveness: The act of pardoning someone for an offense or sin. In a religious context, it's often associated with God's mercy and grace in removing guilt.

Goel: A Hebrew term that translates to "redeemer" and refers to a family member with legal obligations to protect the family's interests. This role often included redeeming property, avenging crimes, and securing rights for family members.

Redeemer: A person who saves or rescues someone from hardship, especially in a legal context. Also associated with theological concepts of salvation.

Vindication: The act of clearing someone of blame or suspicion, proving their innocence, and restoring their honor.

5. FAQs on Walton, Job, Session 15, Job 19:25, I know my Redeemer Lives, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Job 19:25 and the Concept of the "Goel"

1. **What is the significance of Job 19:25, "I know that my Redeemer lives?"** This verse is central to understanding Job's hope. He is expressing a belief that he has an advocate (goel) who will ultimately vindicate him and stand up for his innocence. Job is not seeking forgiveness for wrongdoing; rather, he believes a great injustice has been done to him, and he wants someone to testify on his behalf. The concept of the goel is tied to justice, not salvation.
2. **What does the term "goel" mean in the context of the Old Testament?** The Hebrew word "goel," often translated as "Redeemer" in English, refers to someone who has a legal duty to protect the rights and interests of a family member or clan member. A goel would act as an advocate, standing up for those who had been wronged and restoring their rights. In ancient Hebrew society, this could be a relative.
3. **Who does Job believe will be his "goel" (redeemer)?** Job is looking for someone who will represent him in the heavenly realm where he believes decisions are being made about his suffering. He believes his advocate will come and testify on his behalf right where he is suffering, not after his death or resurrection. He considers the possibility of a member of the divine council as his advocate. Job does not think of God as his advocate because God is the one accused of injustice, and a mediator cannot be one of the parties.
4. **Why is it problematic to interpret Job's "Redeemer" as Jesus?** While Jesus is a Redeemer in Christian theology, Job's concept of a "goel" is different. Job is looking for vindication, a declaration of his innocence, not forgiveness for sins he doesn't believe he committed. Jesus's role as a Redeemer is to atone for sin, which is not the situation that Job feels he's in. The New Testament does not directly connect Jesus to Job's goel, therefore, inserting a Christian viewpoint does an injustice to the context of the book. The context is key to interpretation.

5. **What is the primary difference between Job's concept of a "goel" and the Christian understanding of Jesus as a Redeemer?** The primary difference lies in the focus. Job is seeking someone who will demonstrate that he is innocent and has been treated unjustly. He does not believe he deserves the suffering he has experienced. Jesus, in Christian theology, acts as a redeemer by taking the punishment for the sins of humanity. Job's focus is on vindication, while Christian understanding of Jesus is based on atonement and forgiveness.
6. **What does Job mean when he says "in my flesh I will see God?"** Job does not anticipate resurrection. He expects to have his flesh restored to favor right where he is. He has been scraping at his skin, and he believes that although it may be gone, he will experience God's restoration and no longer be a stranger and an outsider before he dies. To "see God" in this context means to be restored to God's favor.
7. **What is Job's central desire in seeking a "goel?"** Job's central desire is to be vindicated, to have his innocence recognized, and to have it on record that he did nothing to deserve his suffering. He seeks an advocate who will testify on his behalf and restore him to God's favor. Prosperity is not his ultimate goal.
8. **How does understanding Job's concept of a goel impact our understanding of the book of Job?** Understanding Job's concept of "goel" is crucial because it keeps the focus on the central question of innocent suffering. It allows us to understand the nuances of the book of Job on its own terms. By not interpreting the goel through a Christian lens, we can see that the book of Job is about justice and the problem of innocent suffering, not about salvation or forgiveness. This interpretation respects the book's unique contribution to our understanding of suffering and faith.