

Easter Early
March 27, 2016
Job 19:25
No Uncertainties Here
Rev. George Ferch

Dear friends in Christ,

Sources site Benjamin Franklin as the first man to say, “The only thing certain is death and taxes.” Good thoughts, but incorrect. A man named Job who lived centuries before Franklin stated a fact he was quite certain about. “I know that my Redeemer lives.” We concur, don’t we? We shout it. We sing it. We live it.

We do not celebrate Easter because we believe Jesus’ tomb might be empty. Today is not about vague suspicions or unfounded conclusions or theological open questions. We reject those as totally insufficient for our joy. Not to mention when we must stand toe to toe with death, or bear the burden of sorrow at the death of a loved one who has died in Christ.

Jesus gave up his life on the cross after he had fulfilled all of Scripture and had paid for every sin of every person who lives on this planet. As his reward, his God and Father brought him back to life in the new tomb declaring the world not guilty of sin. No uncertainties here. Jesus lives. The victory is won. I know that my Redeemer lives. Many a conflict, many a doubt may toss my ship of faith but the living Christ is my seas anchor. I will not capsize and sink beneath the waves of trials and tribulations. Just like Job did not.

With the eyes of faith and with a sense of the prophetic present, Job saw his Redeemer raised from death and the grave. This is the same good news the evangelists and prophets shared with the world as eyewitnesses to Jesus’ new life. They had seen their risen Lord with their own eyes. They had touched him with their hands. They had seen him eat. This is the good news we share through the Spirit inspired holy record of their witness.

Not a thing has changed since Job, perhaps a contemporary of Abraham. Job is one of us. Loss of property and loved ones, bodily pain, temptations to use these as a reason to curse God are part of our lives in a sinful world just like Job’s. We share the same truth. I know that my Redeemer lives. No uncertainties here. The Messiah who for him was coming and who for us has come died on a cross and lives again. He reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

We will die. Worms might eat our flesh. Some crematorium might turn us into ashes more quickly than nature. Yet we say with the apostle Peter, “In his great mercy, God has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection from the dead.” [1 Peter 1:3] The resurrection of Jesus not only removes uncertainty. It also prevents it. I once heard someone compare Jesus’ resurrection to an aspirin; it takes away headache and body ache. I can take an aspirin to prevent a heart attack as well. I know that my Redeemer lives. How do I know? The Bible tells me so.

Job was so certain about his Redeemer he thought it should be written down on a scroll, thankfully God did that, and also “inscribed with an iron tool on lead or engraved in rock forever.” That would be like ancient cave paintings that have stood for thousands of years. The apostle Paul wrote with the iron tool and engraving instrument of his inspired pen, “Where, O death is your victory? Where I death is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” [1 Corinthians 15:55-57]

Our faith is not in vain. We are not liars or frauds. We are not delusional so to be pitied by all. We are not uncertain of our present or our future. I know that my Redeemer lives. I worship him because of what comfort this sweet sentence gives. Jesus lives, my ever living Head. Job, we are right there with you. Amen. <SDG>