

Digging Deeper: The Greater Meaning of Job 14:14, 15

*“If a man dies, can he live again? I will wait all the days of my compulsory service Until my relief comes. You will call, and I will answer you. You will long for the work of your hands.”
(Job 14:14, 15)*

Job said these words while he was in terrible pain, having lost his children, his wealth, and his health. He felt that life is short and “filled with trouble,” and he even asked Jehovah to hide him in the Grave for a time. (Job 14:1, 13) The main point is that in his darkest moment, Job held on to a bright hope: death would not be the end, because Jehovah would remember him and call him back to life.

Job was sure that Jehovah, his Maker, would not forget the work of his own hands.

1 “Live Again”: Death Is Not the End (חַיָּה, *chayah*)

The Hebrew word חַיָּה (*chayah*) means to live, to stay alive, or to come back to life. Job had just said that a cut-down tree can sprout again “at the scent of water.” (Job 14:7-9) Then he asked: “If a man dies, can he live again?” The rest of his words show that he was not doubting. He was confident that Jehovah could restore him to life.

Centuries later, Jesus answered Job’s question clearly: “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life.” (John 11:25) Paul shared the same

hope “that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Acts 24:15)

- Faithful Job will live again, and so can our loved ones who have died.

2 “My Relief”: A Change for the Better (חִלְפָּה, *chaliphah*)

The word for “relief” is חִלְפָּה (*chaliphah*). It means a change, or one thing taking the place of another. The same word was used for a change of clothing, like taking off something worn and putting on something fresh. Job compared his time in the Grave to “compulsory service,” a hard period that a soldier or worker had to wait out. (Compare Job 7:1.) But he knew it would end, and a change would come.

Job said, “I will wait.” He was willing to wait patiently, even in death, for Jehovah’s time. The relief Job looked for-

ward to was being released from the Grave and given life again. Jesus promised: “The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out.” (John 5:28, 29)

- Like Job, we can wait patiently, knowing that Jehovah has set a time to bring relief.

3 “Long”: Jehovah Misses His Friends (קָסַף, *kasaph*)

The verb קָסַף (*kasaph*) means to long for, to yearn, or to have a deep desire for something. The NWT footnote says “yearn.” It is the word used when Laban told Jacob: “You have been longing to return to the house of your father.” (Genesis 31:30) It describes a strong, warm feeling, like being homesick.

Job believed that Jehovah himself feels this kind of longing for his faithful servants who have died. “You will call, and I

will answer you.” Jehovah is not cold or distant. He made us, he remembers each of his loyal ones, and he truly wants to see them alive again. The psalmist used the same word for his own love for Jehovah’s house: “My whole being yearns, yes, I am faint with longing, for the courtyards of Jehovah.” (Psalm 84:2)

- Jehovah is not only able to raise the dead, he deeply wants to.

Key Spiritual Reflections

- **Holding On to Hope:** When I think about loved ones who have died, how does Job’s question “Can he live again?” and Jesus’ answer comfort me? (John 11:25; Acts 24:15)

- **Waiting Patiently:** In my own “compulsory service,” a hard time I am going through, how can I wait for Jehovah’s relief the way Job did? (Job 14:14)
- **Feeling His Love:** How does knowing that Jehovah longs for the work of his hands help me feel closer to him, and how could I share that thought with someone who is grieving? (Job 14:15; John 5:28, 29)