

Job Chapter 18

Verses 1-21: In his second speech, “Bildad” decides he cannot reason with Job, so he seeks to scare him instead, reciting all the traps that are in place to ensnare the wicked. He considers Job one who will die the death of the wicked.

Bildad, like his predecessor, ruthlessly attacked Job in his second speech (compare chapter 8), by telling Job to stop complaining and to become sensible (verse 2). Next, he turned to scorn (verses 3-4). Then he turned to another long tale of the bad outcomes the wicked experience (verses 5-21).

In verses 1-4 Bildad takes offense at Job’s description of him and his two friends in animal terms (12:7-12).

Job 18:1 "Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,"

“Bildad” argues that the law of retribution applies to all men, believing that Job’s suffering is the result of personal sin. Thus, Bildad becomes frustrated with Job’s self-defense. He believes that only the wicked suffer. He implies therefore, that all suffering is judgmental, assuming that Job is suffering because he is being judged for his sin.

Job 18:2 "How long [will it be ere] ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak."

How long shall we continue this dispute? Why do not you, my brethren, give over discoursing with Job, who is so transported by his passions, as not to be fit to be discoursed with? At least, forbear to proceed till both you and he shall better understand the subject?

"Mark, and afterward we will speak": Consider the matter better, and then we shall speak concerning it to more advantage. Or, inform us: make us to understand. Seeing you look upon us as ignorant and brutish men.

Bildad was very angry at the things that Job had said about his friends. "Mark" in the verse above, means consider. He was saying that Job talked too much. I would say again, these friends were no comfort at all to Job. They were a thorn in his already wounded side. In a sense he was saying, "Why don't you hush defending yourself"?

Job 18:3 "Wherefore are we counted as beasts, [and] reputed vile in your sight?"

“Are we counted as beasts?” Bildad is saying, “You’ve insulted our intelligence!”

Job had every right to speak of these so-called comforters as miserable, ungodly, and wicked. It would have been better, if they had just stayed home. Perhaps God allowed them to come and do this, so Job's fighting spirit would be stirred up.

Job 18:4 "He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?"

I.e. Job, of whom he speaks in the third person for the second (as Job 12:4; 16:7; Obad. 1:3). Or, O thou that tearest thyself! You complain of us for vexing you with our speeches, when in truth thou art your own greatest tormenter by thy own impatience and rage.

"Shall the earth be forsaken": To wit, by God? Shall God give over the government of the earth, and men, and things in it, and suffer all things to fall out by chance, and promiscuously to good and bad men, without any regard to his truth, or wisdom, or justice? Shall God forbear to rule the world righteously, as he hath hitherto done, in favoring good men, and destroying the wicked?

"For thee": I.e. for your sake; or to prevent your complaints and clamors.

"Shall the rock be removed out of his place?" shall the counsels of God, which are more firm and unmovable than rocks, and the whole course of his providence, be altered to comply with thy fancies or humors?

Bildad said some of the cruelest things that had been said up until this point. He accused Job of tearing himself as a child does when he is having a temper tantrum. He said that Job actually wanted God to change the forces of nature to suit him. He accused Job of wanting to be the center of attention.

Verses 5-21: A blistering speech on the woes of the wicked.

(In verses 5-6), light is associated with life just as darkness is associated with death. Since God is the Author of life. He alone can "light" a person's "lamp" (Prov. 13:9; Acts 17:25, 28). But Bildad's misguided point is that the Lord also snuffs out "the light of the wicked".

Job 18:5 "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine."

"Yea": Depend upon it, the thing is true and certain, notwithstanding thy dissatisfaction and opposition to it;

"The light of the wicked shall be put out": All their glory and felicity shall perish.

"And the spark of his fire shall not shine": His light is but a spark, which shines briskly for a moment, and is soon extinguished.

Bildad began to speak of all the horrible things that await the wicked man. He thought Job was a very wicked man. Bildad was saying here, that all the splendor and blessings that had come to Job had been taken away because of his sin. He said that Job's fire and light had been put out. Job would not shine any more.

Job 18:6 "The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him."

Not the light of the eye, in the tabernacle of his body, rather the light of nature and reason in him. And when that "light that is in a man becomes darkness", as our Lord says, "how great is that darkness" (Matt. 6:23). But best of all it designs the light of prosperity in his house and family, which should be quite obscured.

"And his candle shall be put out with him": Which sometimes signifies the spirit of man, his rational soul, called "the candle of the Lord" (Prov. 20:27). Which, though it dies not when man dies, yet its light is extinct with respect to the things of this life. And all its thoughts and reasoning's are no more about civil matters, and the affairs of this world. In that sense, this light is put out, and those thoughts perish with him (Psalm 146:4). But more frequently it is used for outward prosperity, which if it continues with a man as long as he lives, as it often does, yet when he dies, it ceases and is no more. It does not descend with him into the grave, and he cannot carry it into another world, but it is put out in "obscure darkness" (see Job 21:17).

This darkening of the light of Job was extended to his family. It was saying the Light of the LORD would no longer be in any of Job's descendants.

Job 18:7 "The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down."

As a man in health can take large and strong steps, and travel in the greatness of his strength; so in prosperity he can and does take large steps in obtaining fame and reputation among men, in amassing substance to himself, and towards settling his family in the world. He is like one in a large place, and walks at liberty, goes in and out at pleasure, and none can control him. He walks in pride, and with a high and lifted up head, and with contempt of others, and his will is his law, and he does as he pleases.

"And his own counsel shall cast him down": As Ahithophel's and Haman's did, which issued in their ruin (2 Sam. 17:23). What wicked men sometimes plot and devise, with a view to their own good, and the injury of others, proves the destruction of themselves; when they have contrived to raise themselves upon the ruins of others. It has been the means of casting them down from the state and condition they were in, instead of raising to a higher, even down to desolation, and into the most miserable circumstances.

Job had great wealth and had controlled a wide area, before all of this calamity fell on him. Bildad said that Job would be in an isolated place where he could take only a few steps forward. He also said that Job would no longer have any influence on anyone.

Verses 8-10: A "net", a "trap", "and a snare" are used to catch birds and animals. According to Bildad, this is also how the wicked person rightly meets his or her demise.

Job 18:8 "For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare."

By his own choice, design, and actions.

"And he walketh upon a snare": Or, as the words may be rendered, runneth to and fro on the toils, and therefore must need to be entangled and destroyed. "The metaphor" says Heath, "is taken from a beast, which the hunters have driven into the toils. He runs hither and thither, striving to find a way out, but the net entangles him more and more, till at length it fastens upon him."

Bildad said that Job brought all of this upon himself by his sin. He was snared in the net he had set for others.

Job 18:9 "The gin shall take [him] by the heel, [and] the robber shall prevail against him."

"The gin" is a trap.

Job 18:10 "The snare [is] laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way."

Or, the noose is hidden for him in the ground. Six different kinds of traps or snares are mentioned. "The speaker heaping together every word that he can find descriptive of the art of snaring." The art had been well studied by the Egyptians long before the age of Job, and a great variety of contrivances for capturing both beasts and birds are represented on the very early monuments. We may conclude from this passage that it had also been brought to an advanced stage of excellence in Syria and Arabia.

A "gin" is a metallic sheet pounded thin, or a spring. This was speaking of a trap that was set at night to catch robbers and thieves. They would be held tight until morning when they would be apprehended. (Verse 10), is speaking of the two types. One above ground and one that was like a pit.

Job 18:11 "Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet."

Both from men, and from God, and from his own unquiet mind and guilty conscience.

"Shall drive him to his feet": Shall force him to flee here and there, and he knows not where. Being secure and safe nowhere, but pursued by terrors from place to place.

This was just saying that he had no peace of mind. Even imagined terrors made him very afraid, and caused him to run away.

Job 18:12 "His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction [shall be] ready at his side."

By "strength" some understand his firstborn son (as Gen. 49:3). But it is not necessary to take it otherwise than literally.

"Destruction shall be ready at his side": Or, according to some, for his halting. Shall lie in wait for his tripping in order to overthrow him.

He would be hungry and have no food to eat. His strength had waxed away. When a person does not eat, he becomes very weak. This leads to total destruction.

Job 18:13 "It shall devour the strength of his skin: [even] the firstborn of death shall devour his strength."

"The firstborn of death": A poetical expression meaning the deadliest disease death ever produced.

This was just saying that the muscles of his body withered away. This was speaking of Job's disease, which they thought would automatically lead to Job's death.

Job 18:14 "His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors."

"The king of terrors": Death, with all its terrors to the ungodly, personified.

Bildad wished the worst for Job, because he thought he was such an evil man. The tabernacle here, could be speaking of the home of Job, which would generally have been a safe place. The king of terrors was speaking of death.

Job 18:15 "It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because [it is] none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation."

Or, "There shall dwell in his tent they that are none of his," or "which is no longer his". I.e., terrors shall dwell, or "which is none of his" may hint that it had been violently taken from someone else.

"Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation": As God rained fire and brimstone out of heaven upon the cities of the plain (Gen. 19:24), so shall brimstone be scattered upon his habitation to ruin and destroy it (compare Deut. 29:23; Psalm 11:6).

"It" would make you think this was speaking of the terrors. He was saying that Job's own house would be inhabited by terror. He was saying that God would rain down brimstone on Job's house for his sin.

Job 18:16 "His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off."

With tacit allusion to what he had said (in Job 8:12), and also to the destruction of Job's own offspring, which had already been accomplished.

"And above shall his branch be cut off": His children that sprung from him, as branches from a tree, and were his glory and beauty. These should be cut off; referring no doubt in both clauses to

Job's present circumstances. Whose root in the time of his prosperity was spread out by the waters, but now dried up, and on whose branches the dew lay all night, but now cut off (Job 29:19). So the Targum, "his children shall be cut off out of the earth, and from heaven his destruction shall be decreed". Both clauses signify the utter destruction of the family of the wicked man, root and branch (see Mal. 4:1). It is a beautiful description of a tree struck with thunder and lightning, and burnt and shattered to pieces, and agrees with (Job 18:15).

It appears that Bildad was speaking of Job's ancestors being forgotten, and him not having any children to be his branches. We read of the tree which had no water at its roots drying up and dying.

Job 18:17 "His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street."

This is the doom which above all others is dreaded by the modern roamers of the desert (Compare also Jeremiah 35:19).

"And he shall have no name in the street": Much less in the house of God, still less in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life. So far from it, that he shall have none on earth, no good name among men. If ever his name is mentioned after his death, it is with some brand of infamy upon him. He is not spoken of in public, in a court of judicature, nor in any place of commerce and trade, nor in any concourse of people, or public assembly of any note. Especially with any credit or commendation; such is the difference between a good man and a wicked man (see Prov. 11:7).

Bildad was predicting that Job would not be remembered by anyone. We can tell that Bildad was speaking lies. Job was one of the best remembered people in the Bible. We can easily see from this, how false Bildad's predictions were.

Job 18:18 "He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world."

Hebrew: They shall drive him, i.e. his enemies, or those whom he hath oppressed. Or they whom God shall appoint to do it, whether angels or men. Or it is an impersonal speech, and to be rendered passively, as it is also (Job 7:3; Luke 12:20; 16:9).

"From light into darkness": From a splendid and prosperous life to disgrace and misery, and to the grave, the land of darkness and forgetfulness, as the following Scripture explains it.

Job was not dreading death as Bildad thought. Job would have welcomed death. Bildad was saying death would be forced upon Job.

Job 18:19 "He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings."

Neither son, nor son's son, or grandson. So the Targum, Jarchi, and Bar Tzemach; that is, he shall be childless, and have no heirs, successors, or survivors, to inherit his estate, or bear and perpetuate his name among the people of his country, city, or neighborhood. Bildad respects no

doubt the present case of Job, who had lost all his children. But he was mistaken if he thought he should die that way, for he had after this as many children as he had before.

"Nor any remaining in his dwellings": Being all dead, or fled from them, through the terror, desolation, and destruction in them. Aben Ezra and Bar Tzemach interpret those places in which he was a sojourner or stranger. And Mr. Broughton; nor remnant in his pilgrimage.

At the moment that Bildad said this, it appeared that this part of his condemnation of Job might come true. Job's children were dead. Job had no idea that God would restore his children.

Job 18:20 "They that come after [him] shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted."

Meaning "at the time of his visitation" (compare Psalm 37:13), "The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming;" (and Psalm 137:7), "Remember the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem," (i.e. the day of its overthrow).

"As they that went before were affrighted": His fate shall alarm equally his contemporaries and his successors, at possibly "the dwellers in the West and the dwellers in the East".

This may be the first indication of why Bildad attacked Job so harshly. He was frightened of the same fate coming to him, if he took the part of Job. Job is an astonishment to all generations.

Job 18:21 "Surely such [are] the dwellings of the wicked, and this [is] the place [of him that] knoweth not God."

Bildad's words throughout the chapter illustrate the power of words; in this case, their power to do further damage (Prov. 12:18). Job is obviously broken already, and here is Bildad, tearing him to shreds. Much of the Book of Job is a manual on how not to counsel, how not to help hurting people, why not to spend one's life criticizing.

"That knoweth not God": This describes "know" in a redemptive sense and is here applied to an unbeliever.

Bildad said the reason he said all of this was to show Job what came to those who knew not God. He believed that Job was chief among sinners. He believed that Job deserved all of this punishment and even more, because he was not of God.

Job Chapter 18 Questions

1. What was Bildad angry about?
2. What did "mark", in verse 2, mean?

3. What does the author believe these friends have been to Job?
4. What was Bildad saying to Job, in a sense?
5. What did Job have every right to call his friends?
6. Why do you suppose God allowed them to attack Job?
7. What did Bildad accuse Job of doing in verse 4?
8. The light of the wicked shall be _____.
9. Why did Bildad speak to Job of all the things that would come to a wicked man?
10. Who was the darkness of the Light extended to in verse 6?
11. Bildad said that Job _____ all of this upon himself by his sin.
12. What is the "gin" in verse 9?
13. What was verse 9 speaking of?
14. What are the two types of traps in verse 10?
15. Verse 11 was saying that Job had no _____ of _____.
16. What happens to a person when he does without food?
17. They thought Job's illness would automatically lead to _____.
18. Why did Bildad wish the worst for Job?
19. What was the tabernacle, in verse 14, speaking of?
20. What did Bildad say would rain down on Job's house?
21. In verse 16, the roots were whom?
22. In the same verse, who was the branch?
23. Bildad was predicting that Job would not be _____.
24. What is the actual truth about that?
25. Bildad believed that Job was chief among _____.