

JOB

Chapter 18

Bildad Speaks: God Punishes the Wicked

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: 2 “How long will you hunt for words? Consider, and then we will speak. 3 Why are we counted as cattle? Why are we stupid in your sight? 4 You who tear yourself in your anger, shall the earth be forsaken for you, or the rock be removed out of its place? 5 “Indeed, the light of the wicked is put out, and the flame of his fire does not shine. 6 The light is dark in his tent, and his lamp above him is put out. 7 His strong steps are shortened, and his own schemes throw him down. 8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walks on its mesh. 9 A trap seizes him by the heel; a snare lays hold of him. 10 A rope is hidden for him in the ground, a trap for him in the path. 11 Terrors frighten him on every side, and chase him at his heels. 12 His strength is famished, and calamity is ready for his stumbling. 13 It consumes the parts of his skin; the firstborn of death consumes his limbs. 14 He is torn from the tent in which he trusted and is brought to the king of terrors. 15 In his tent dwells that which is none of his; sulfur is scattered over his habitation. 16 His roots dry up beneath, and his branches wither above. 17 His memory perishes from the earth, and he has no name in the street. 18 He is thrust from light into darkness, and driven out of the world. 19 He has no posterity or progeny among his people, and no survivor where he used to live. 20 They of the west are appalled at his day, and horror seizes them of the east. 21 Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous, such is the place of him who knows not God.”

He perceives to be a belittling attitude. He considers Job’s emotional reaction as self-centered and irrational. (CSB)

Bildad appears to have been as sensitive of his own feelings as he was insensitive of the feelings of others. We can all use Bildad as a warning example when we visit someone who is sick or depressed. How unfortunate it is to turn a visiting sessions into a lecture or heated argument. (PBC)

18:3 *counted as cattle?* Considered stupid like cattle. (TLSB)

18:4 *forsaken for you.* For Bildad, the moral order is deeply connected with the natural order. Asking for a change in the moral order—for God to restore Job apart from repentance—is like asking God to change the physical world. (CSB)

18:5–21 Another poem on the fate of the wicked (see 8:11–19; 15:20–35). Bildad wants to convince Job that he is wrong when he claims that the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper. Bildad is absolutely certain that every wicked person gets paid in full, in this life, for his wicked deeds. (CSB)

Their theology was strictly a law theology without any gospel element, a theology of works and not a theology of grace. They refused to acknowledge that God would permit a godly person to suffer affliction. (PBC)

18:5 *The lamp of the wicked is put out.* See 21:17; repeated in Pr 13:9. Life, symbolized by light, is extinguished. (CSB)

Prosperity of the wicked will be utterly destroyed. (TLSB)

18:13 *firstborn of death.* Here Bildad probably referred to disease which would “devour his limbs” so they could hardly be recognized. (PBC)

Death’s most important ally, which brings the greatest devastation. (TLSB)

death. Hbr *maweth*. Likely the disease afflicting Job. (TLSB)

consumes. Mot, the Canaanite god of the dry season, was depicted as eating people. Drought brings famine, hunger, and death. (TLSB)

18:14 *king of terrors.* A vivid figure of speech referring to death, which is personified in v. 13. Canaanite literature pictured death as the devouring god Mot. Isaiah reverses the figure and envisions the Lord as swallowing up death forever (Isa 25:8; see 1Co 15:54). (CSB)

Among the terrors besetting people, death reigns supreme. (TLSB)

18:15 *sulfur.* Reminiscent of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (see Ge 19:24). (CSB)

18:16 *roots ... and ... branches.* Cf. Am 2:9; figurative for descendants (see, e.g., Isa 11:1, 10) and/or ancestors (see, e.g., Jdg 5:14; Isa 14:29). (CSB)

18:17 *his memory perishes.* † Bildad says nothing about punishment in the realm of death. The only retribution beyond the grave that he mentions is having one’s memory (name) cut off by not leaving any heirs (see v. 19). (CSB)

18:19–20 Death will find its prey regardless of where the victims flee. *They of the west ... them of the east.* News about the death of the wicked spreads everywhere. (TLSB)

18:21 *who does not know God.* Having no intimate knowledge of God is synonymous with being wicked (see Hos 4:1–2, 6). (CSB)

Does not recognize God or honor Him in the proper manner. Chapter seems to emphasize the moral disobedience of the wicked rather than their ignorance of doctrine. Bildad implies that Job needs to consider the moral ramifications of his refusal to repent of the sin that has caused his misery. (TLSB)

Ch 18 Bildad implies that unless Job repents, he will suffer the ravages of death. (Yet Bildad’s idea of justification is legalistic; Job must get his act together.) Certainly “the king of terrors” (v 14) threatens us, because “death spread to all men because all sinned” (Rm 5:12) and “the wages of sin is death” (Rm 6:23). However, we remember the joyous message of Scripture that in Christ we have “passed from death to life” (Jn 5:24). • O Christ, by Your death You opened to me the dwellings of the righteous. Lead me, I pray, by strong steps in the path of life. Amen. (TLSB)