

# CHAPTER 18

In this chapter Bildad makes a second assault upon Job. In his first discourse (Job 8) he had given him encouragement to hope that all should yet be well with him. But here there is not a word of that; he has grown more peevish, and is so far from being convinced by Job's reasonings that he is but more exasperated.

**I.** He sharply reproves Job as haughty and passionate, and obstinate in his opinion (v. 1-4).

**II.** He enlarges upon the doctrine he had before maintained, concerning the miser of wicked people and the ruin that attends them (v. 5-21). In this he seems, all along, to have an eye to Job's complaints of the miserable condition he was in, that he was in the dark, bewildered, ensnared, terrified, and hastening out of the world. "This," says Bildad, "is the condition of a wicked man; and therefore thou art one."

## ~~180~~ JOB 18:1-4

### SECOND ADDRESS OF BILDAD

Bildad here shoots his arrows, even bitter words, against poor Job, little thinking that, though he was a wise and good man, in this instance he was serving Satan's design in adding to Job's affliction.

**I.** He charges him with idle endless talk, as Eliphaz had done (~~180~~ Job 15:2, 3): *How long will it be ere you make an end of words?* v. 2. Here he reflects, not only upon Job himself, but either upon all the managers of the conference (thinking perhaps that Eliphaz and Zophar did not speak so closely to the purpose as they might have done) or upon some that were present, who possibly took part with Job, and put in a word now and then in his favour, though it be not recorded. Bildad was weary of hearing others speak, and impatient till it came to his turn, which cannot be observed to any man's praise, for we ought to be swift to hear and slow to speak. It is common for contenders to monopolize the reputation of wisdom, and then to insist upon it as their privilege to be dictators. How unbecoming this conduct is in others every one can see; but few that are

guilty of it can see it in themselves. Time was when Job had the last word in all debates (<sup>8392</sup>Job 29:22): *After my words they spoke not again*. Then he was in power and prosperity; but now that he was impoverished and brought low he could scarcely be allowed to speak at all, and every thing he said was as much vilified as formerly it had been magnified. *Wisdom* therefore (as the world goes) *is good with an inheritance* (<sup>2071</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:11); for *the poor man's wisdom is despised*, and, because he is poor, *his words are not heard*, <sup>2096</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:16.

**II.** With a regardlessness of what was said to him, intimated in that, *Mark, and afterwards we will speak*. And it is to no purpose to speak, though what is said be ever so much to the purpose, if those to whom it is addressed will not mark and observe it. Let the *ear be opened to hear as the learned*, and then the tongues of the learned will do good service (<sup>2804</sup>Isaiah 50:4) and not otherwise. It is an encouragement to those that speak of the things of God to see the hearers attentive.

**III.** With a haughty contempt and disdain of his friends and of that which they offered (v. 3): *Wherefore are we counted as beasts?* This was invidious. Job had indeed called them *mockers*, had represented them both as unwise and as unkind, wanting both in the reason and tenderness of men, but he did not count them beasts; yet Bildad so represents the matter,

**1.** Because his high spirit resented what Job had said as if it had been the greatest affront imaginable. Proud men are apt to think themselves slighted more than really they are.

**2.** Because his hot spirit was willing to find a pretence to be hard upon Job. Those that incline to be severe upon others will have it thought that others have first been so upon them.

**IV.** With outrageous passion: *He teareth himself in his anger*, v. 4. Herein he seems to reflect upon what Job had said (<sup>8334</sup>Job 13:14): *Wherefore did I take my flesh in my teeth?* “It is thy own fault,” says Bildad. Or he reflected upon what he said <sup>8360</sup>Job 16:9, where he seemed to charge it upon God, or, as some think, upon Eliphaz: *He teareth me in his wrath*. “No,” says Bildad; “thou alone shalt bear it.” *He teareth himself in his anger*. Note, Anger is a sin that is its own punishment. Fretful passionate people tear and torment themselves. *He teareth his soul* (so the word is); every sin wounds the soul, tears that, wrongs that (<sup>2085</sup>Proverbs 8:36), unbridled passion particularly.

**V.** With a proud and arrogant expectation to give law even to Providence itself: “*Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* Surely not; there is no reason for that, that the course of nature should be changed and the settled rules of government violated to gratify the humour of one man. Job, dost thou think the world cannot stand without thee; but that, if thou art ruined, all the world is ruined and forsaken with thee?” Some make it a reproof of Job's justification of himself, falsely insinuating that either Job was a wicked man or we must deny a Providence and suppose that God has forsaken the earth and the rock of ages is removed. It is rather a just reproof of his passionate complaints. When we quarrel with the events of Providence we forget that, whatever befalls us, it is,

1. According to the eternal purpose and counsel of God.
2. According to the written word. Thus it is written that in the world we must have tribulation, that, since we sin daily, we must expect to smart for it; and,
3. According to the usual way and custom, the track of Providence, nothing but what is common to men; and to expect that God's counsels should change, his method alter, and his word fail, to please us, is as absurd and unreasonable as to think *the earth should be forsaken for us and the rock removed out of its place.*

## ~~XXX~~ JOB 18:5-10

### MISERABLE CONDITION OF THE WICKED

The rest of Bildad's discourse is entirely taken up in an elegant description of the miserable condition of a wicked man, in which there is a great deal of certain truth, and which will be of excellent use if duly considered — that a sinful condition is a sad condition, and that iniquity will be men's ruin if they do not repent of it. But it is not true that all wicked people are visibly and openly made thus miserable in this world; nor is it true that all who are brought into great distress and trouble in this world are *therefore* to be deemed and adjudged wicked men, when no other proof appears against them; and therefore, though Bildad thought the application of it to Job was easy, yet it was not safe nor just. In these verses we have,

**I.** The destruction of the wicked foreseen and foretold, under the similitude of darkness (v. 5, 6): *Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out.* Even his *light*, the best and brightest part of him, shall be put out; even that which he rejoiced in shall fail him. Or the *yea* may refer to Job's complaints of the great distress he was in and the darkness he should shortly make his bed in. "Yea," says Bildad, "So it is; thou art clouded, and straitened, and made miserable, and no better could be expected; for *the light of the wicked shall be put out, and therefore thine shall.*" Observe here,

**1.** The wicked may have some light for a while, some pleasure, some joy, some hope within, as well as wealth, and honour, and power without. But his light is but a spark (v. 5), a little thing and soon extinguished. It is but a candle (v. 6), wasting, and burning down, and easily blown out. It is not the light of the Lord (that is sun-light), but the *light of his own fire and sparks of his own kindling,* <sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 50:11.

**2.** His light will certainly be put out at length, quite put out, so that not the least spark of it shall remain with which to kindle another fire. Even while he is in his tabernacle, while he is in the body, which is the tabernacle of the soul (<sup>2311</sup>2 Corinthians 5:1), the light shall be dark; he shall have no true solid comfort, no joy that is satisfying, no hope that is supporting. *Even the light that is in him is darkness; and how great is that darkness!* But, when he is put out of this tabernacle by death, *his candle shall be put out with him.* The period of his life will be the final period of all his days and will turn all his hopes into endless despair. *When a wicked man dies his expectation shall perish,* <sup>2311</sup>Proverbs 11:7. *He shall lie down in sorrow.*

**II.** The preparatives for that destruction represented under the similitude of a beast or bird caught in a snare, or a malefactor arrested and taken into custody in order to his punishment, v. 7-10.

**1.** Satan is preparing for his destruction. He is *the robber that shall prevail against him* (v. 9); for, as he was a murderer, so he was a robber, from the beginning. He, as the tempter, lays snares for sinners in the way, wherever they go, and he shall prevail. If he make them sinful like himself, he will make them miserable like himself. He *hunts for the precious life.*

**2.** He is himself preparing for his own destruction by going on in sin, and so *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.* God gives him up, as he

deserves and desires, to his own counsels, and then *his own counsels cast him down*, v. 7. His sinful projects and pursuits bring him into mischief. He is *cast into a net by his own feet* (v. 8), runs upon his own destruction, is *snared in the work of his own hands* (~~1916~~ Psalm 9:16); *his own tongue falls upon him*, ~~1618~~ Psalm 64:8. *In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare.*

**3.** God is preparing for his destruction. The sinner by his sin is preparing the fuel and then God by his wrath is preparing the fire. See here,

**(1.)** How the sinner is infatuated, to run himself into the snare; and whom God will destroy he infatuates.

**(2.)** How he is embarrassed: *The steps of his strength*, his mighty designs and efforts, *shall be straitened*, so that he shall not compass what he intended; and the more he strives to extricate himself the more will he be entangled. Evil men wax worse and worse.

**(3.)** How he is secured and kept from escaping the judgments of God that are in pursuit of him. *The gin shall take him by the heel*. He can no more escape the divine wrath that is in pursuit of him than a man, so held, can flee from the pursuer. God *knows how to reserve the wicked for the day of judgment*, ~~1619~~ 2 Peter 2:9.

## ~~1611~~ JOB 18:11-21

### MISERABLE CONDITION OF THE WICKED

Bildad here describes the destruction itself which wicked people are reserved for in the other world, and which, in some degree, often seizes them in this world. Come, and see what a miserable condition the sinner is in when his day comes to fall.

**I.** See him disheartened and weakened by continual terrors arising from the sense of his own guilt and the dread of God's wrath (v. 11, 12): *Terror shall make him afraid on every side*. The terrors of his own conscience shall haunt him, so that he shall never be easy. Wherever he goes, these shall follow him; which way soever he looks, these shall stare him in the face. It will make him tremble to see himself fought against by the whole creation, to see Heaven frowning on him, hell gaping for him, and earth

sick of him. He that carries his own accuser, and his own tormentor, always in his bosom, cannot but be afraid on every side. This will drive him to his feet, like the malefactor, who, being conscious of his own guilt, takes to his heels and *flees when none pursues*, <sup><100></sup>Proverbs 28:1. But his feet will do him no service; they are fast in the snare, v. 9. The sinner may as soon overpower the divine omnipotence as flee from the divine omniscience, <sup><100></sup>Amos 9:2, 3. No marvel that the sinner is dispirited and distracted with fear, for,

**1.** He sees his ruin approaching: *Destruction shall be ready at his side*, to seize him whenever justice gives the word, so that he is *brought into desolation in a moment*, <sup><100></sup>Psalm 73:19.

**2.** He feels himself utterly unable to grapple with it, either to escape it or to bear up under it. That which he relied upon as *his strength* (his wealth, power, pomp, friends, and the hardiness of his own spirit) *shall* fail him in the time of need, and *be hunger-bitten*, that is, it shall do him no more service than a famished man, pining away for hunger, would do in work or war. The case being thus with him, no marvel that he is a terror to himself. Note, The way of sin is a way of fear, and leads to everlasting confusion, of which the present terrors of an impure and unpacified conscience are earnest, as they were to Cain and Judas.

**II.** See him devoured and swallowed up by a miserable death; and miserable indeed a wicked man's death is, how secure and jovial soever his life was.

**1.** See him dying, arrested by *the first-born of death* (some disease, or some stroke that has in it a more than ordinary resemblance of death itself; *so great a death*, as it is called, <sup><100></sup>2 Corinthians 1:10, a messenger of death that has in it an uncommon strength and terror), weakened by the harbingers of death, which *devour the strength of his skin*, that is, it shall bring rottenness into his bones and consume them. *His confidence shall then be rooted out of his tabernacle* (v. 14), that is, all that he trusted to for his support shall be taken from him, and he shall have nothing to rely upon, no, not his own tabernacle. His own soul was his confidence, but that shall be rooted out of the tabernacle of the body, as a tree that cumbered the ground. "Thy soul shall be required of thee."

**2.** See him dead, and see his case then with an eye of faith.

(1.) He is then brought to *the king of terrors*. He was surrounded with terrors while he lived (v. 11), and death was the king of all those terrors; they fought against the sinner in death's name, for it is by reason of death that sinners are *all their lifetime subject to bondage* (~~3015~~ Hebrews 2:15), and at length they will be brought to that which they so long feared, as a captive to the conqueror. Death is terrible to nature; our Saviour himself prayed, *Father, save me from this hour*. But to the wicked it is in a special manner *the king of terrors*, both as it is a period to that life in which they placed their happiness and a passage to that life where they will find their endless misery. How happy then are the saints, and how much indebted to the Lord Jesus, by whom death is so far abolished, and the property of it altered, that this king of terrors becomes a friend and servant!

(2.) He is then *driven from the light into darkness* (v. 18), from the light of this world, and his prosperous condition in it, into darkness, the darkness of the grave, the darkness of hell, into utter darkness, never to see light (~~3016~~ Psalm 49:19), not the least gleam, nor any hopes of it.

(3.) He is then *chased out of the world*, hurried and dragged away by the messengers of death, sorely against his will, chased as Adam out of paradise, for the world is his paradise. It intimates that he would fain stay here; he is loth to depart, but go he must; all the world is weary of him, and therefore chases him out, as glad to get rid of him. This is death to a wicked man.

**III.** See his family sunk and cut off, v. 15. The wrath and curse of God light and lie, not only upon his head and heart, but upon his house too, to consume it with the *timber and stones thereof*, ~~3017~~ Zechariah 5:4. Death itself shall dwell in his tabernacle, and, having expelled him, shall take possession of his house, to the terror and destruction of all that he leaves behind. Even the dwelling shall be ruined for the sake of its owner: *Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation*, rained upon it as upon Sodom, to the destruction of which this seems to have reference. Some think he here upbraids Job with the burning of his sheep and servants with fire from heaven. The reason is here given why his tabernacle is thus marked for ruin: *Because it is none of his*; that is, it was unjustly got, and kept, from the rightful owner, and therefore let him not expect either the comfort or the continuance of it. His children shall perish, either with him or after him, v. 16. So that, *his roots being* in his own person *dried up beneath, above his branch* (every child of his family) *shall be cut off*. Thus

the houses of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, were cut off; none that descended from them were left alive. Those who take root in the earth may expect it will thus be dried up; but, if we be rooted in Christ, even our leaf shall not wither, much less shall our branch be cut off. Those who consult the true honour of their family, and the welfare of its branches, will be afraid of withering it by sin. The extirpation of the sinner's family is mentioned again (v. 19): *He shall neither have son nor nephew, child nor grandchild, to enjoy his estate and bear up his name, nor shall there be any remaining in his dwelling akin to him.* Sin entails a curse upon posterity, and the iniquity of the fathers is often visited upon the children. Herein, also, it is probable that Bildad reflects upon the death of Job's children and servants, as a further proof of his being a wicked man; whereas all that are written childless are not thereby written graceless; there is a name *better than that of sons and daughters.*

**IV.** See his memory buried with him, or made odious; he shall either be forgotten or spoken of with dishonour (v. 17): *His remembrance shall perish from the earth;* and, if it perish thence, it perishes wholly, for it was never written in heaven, as the names of the saints are, <sup><210></sup>Luke 10:20. All his honour shall be laid and lost in the dust, or stained with perpetual infamy, so that *he shall have no name in the street,* departing without being desired. Thus the judgments of God follow him, after death, in this world, as an indication of the misery his soul is in after death, and an earnest of that everlasting shame and contempt to which he shall rise in the great day. *The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot,* <sup><100></sup>Proverbs 10:7.

**V.** See a universal amazement at his fall, v. 20. Those that see it are affrighted, so sudden is the change, so dreadful the execution, so threatening to all about him: and those that come after, and hear the report of it, are astonished at it; their ears are made to tingle, and their hearts to tremble, and they cry out, *Lord, how terrible art thou in thy judgments!* A place or person utterly ruined is said to be *made an astonishment,* <sup><68></sup>Deuteronomy 28:37; <sup><40></sup>2 Chronicles 7:21; <sup><28></sup>Jeremiah 25:9, 18. Horrible sins bring strange punishments.

**VI.** See all this averred as the unanimous sense of the patriarchal age, grounded upon their knowledge of God and their many observations of his providence (v. 21): *Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place* (this the condition) *of him that knows not God!* See here what is

the beginning, and what is the end, of the wickedness of this wicked world.

**1.** The beginning of it is ignorance of God, and it is a wilful ignorance, for there is that to be known of him which is sufficient to leave them for ever inexcusable. They know not God, and then they commit all iniquity. Pharaoh knows not the Lord, and therefore will not obey his voice.

**2.** The end of it, and that is utter destruction. *Such, so miserable, are the dwellings of the wicked.* Vengeance will be taken of those that *know not God*, <sup><sup>2</sup> Thessalonians 1:8. For those whom he has not honour from he will get himself honour upon. Let us therefore stand in awe and not sin, for it will certainly be bitterness in the latter end.