

Bildad's Second Speech and Job's Response

Job 18-19

Job 18:1-4 - *"Then Bildad the Shuhite said: ² "How long till you put an end to words? Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak.*

³ Why are we counted as beasts, and regarded as stupid in your sight? ⁴ You who tear yourself in anger, shall You^[a] who tear yourself in anger. Shall the earth be forsaken for you? Or shall the rock be removed from its place?"

Background Notes

In Job 18:1-4, Bildad rebukes Job for treating his friends as "cattle." He scolds Job for thinking that he was so right! Would God move the world for him and his problem? Would He change the whole moral order of the universe just to vindicate Job? Job said, "Bildad, be reasonable and sensible. You're just hurting yourself and tearing yourself apart in your anger!"

Doctrinal Points

1. In his second speech, Bildad emphasizes the fate of the wicked.

In verses 5-21, Bildad describes the fate of the wicked, implying Job could expect those consequences. Bildad gives four descriptions of the death of the wicked: like a light being extinguished (v5-6), like a person being trapped (v7-10), like a criminal being chased (v11-15), and like a tree being ripped up by its roots (v16-21).

- The fate of the wicked is like a light being extinguished. *"The light of the wicked indeed goes out, and the flame of his fire does not shine. The light is dark in his tent, and his lamp beside him is put out"* (v5-6).

- The fate of the wicked is like a man falling into a trap that he set for others. *"The steps of his strength are shortened, and his own counsel casts him down. ⁸ For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walks into a snare. ⁹ The net takes him by the heel, and a snare lays hold of him. ¹⁰ A noose is hidden for him on the ground, and a trap for him in the road"* (v7-10).

- The fate of the wicked is like a criminal being pursued. *"Terrors frighten him on every side, and drive him to his feet.*

¹² His strength is starved, and destruction is ready at his side. ¹³ It devours patches of his skin; the firstborn of death devours his limbs. ¹⁴ He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent, and they parade him before the king of terrors. ¹⁵ They

dwell in his tent who are none of his. Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling" (v11-15). When Bildad describes the skin of the wicked as being devoured by disease, it's easy to see that he's putting Job into that category. And he points the finger at Job with the loss of his family, and loss of possessions by fire from heaven (v15).

- The fate of the wicked is like an uprooted tree. *"His roots are dried out below, and his branch withers above. ¹⁷ The memory of him perishes from the earth, and he has no name among the renowned. ¹⁸ He is driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world. ¹⁹ He has neither son nor posterity among his people, nor do any remaining in his dwellings. ²⁰ Those in the west are astonished at his day, as those in the east are frightened. ²¹ Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him who does not know God"* (v16-21).

Much of what Bildad said here about the fate wicked is true - **but it was not true of Job!** Notice that Bildad dared to declare that Job didn't know God (v21). This was not true! Job was not in the category of the wicked. In his second speech, Bildad emphasizes the fate of the wicked.

Chapter 19

2. In his second response to Bildad, Job reaches a new high in faith.

Job 19:1-6 - *"Then Job replied: ² "How long will you torment me and crush me with words? ³ Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me. ⁴ If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone. ⁵ If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me, ⁶ then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me."*

At the end of Job 19 Job will reach a new high in his faith. He believes that God will vindicate him. But before that new high is reached, once again Job descends into the valley of despair. The bad counsel of his three friends was devastating.

Job says that he's willing to admit that he's wrong if his friends can prove it - but they had not and could not prove that Job was guilty of an unconfessed sin.

Job 19:7-12 - *"Though I cry, 'Violence!' I get no response; though I call for help there is no justice. ⁸ He has blocked my way so I cannot pass; he has shrouded my paths in darkness. ⁹ He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head. ¹⁰ He tears me down on every side till I am gone; he uproots my hope like a tree. ¹¹ His anger burns against me; he counts me among his enemies. ¹² His troops advance in force; they build a siege ramp against me and encamp around my tent."*

Job agreed with them that God was responsible for his trials, but he insists it is not punishment for a life of sin, as they are implying.

Question: In verses 6-12, is Job guilty of blasphemy when he says that God has wronged him? That there is no justice? That God is angry? That God is against him? Answer: No, I don't think so. Job is not mocking or despising God. Rather, he is simply expressing his longing for God to give him understanding of what appears to him to be unjust

treatment. Although it was not right for Job to question God's ways, he was not blaspheming God by showing contempt or a lack of reverence for Him.

Job 19:13-22 - *"He has alienated my family from me; my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. ¹⁴ My relatives have gone away; my closest friends have forgotten me. ¹⁵ My guests and my female servants count me a foreigner; they look on me as on a stranger. ¹⁶ I summon my servant, but he does not answer, though I beg him with my own mouth. ¹⁷ My breath is offensive to my wife. I am loathsome to my own family. ¹⁸ Even the little boys scorn me; when I appear, they ridicule me. ¹⁹ All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me. ²⁰ I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth. ²¹ "Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. ²² Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh?"*

Job relates how everyone has forsaken him – even his own household. He longs for some affection from his friends and family, and he longs for pity from his three would-be counselors. These verses should be a lesson for us! Let's not forsake friends and family members who are suffering. Let's care for them - especially when it's difficult to deal with physical or psychological afflictions.

Job aspires to see his case inscribed in a book, or carved in stone (v23-24). Why? Because he's confident that he will be vindicated. And even if vindication doesn't happen until after his death, Job's wants his case to be permanently recorded. And his desire has been realized! The book of Job is probably the earliest written book of Scripture, and it will endure forever.

Job 19:25-27 - *"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. ²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"*

These are probably the best known verses in the book of Job. Here Job reaches a new high in his faith. It's hard to say how much insight and understanding Job had when he spoke these words, but he probably had more than we think. In this burst of faith, notice that Job is convinced of several great truths - and they are truths that apply to us as well!

- In verse 25, Job doesn't say, "I think that my Redeemer lives," or "I hope that my Redeemer lives." No! He says, "**know** that my Redeemer lives" (v25). We too can know this truth about our Redeemer!

- Job refers to the One who will vindicate him as "My Redeemer." We now know that the "Redeemer" is the Lord Jesus Christ. And we can call Him "my Redeemer" when we come to Him and by faith trust in Him as our personal Savior. Job was confident that his Redeemer was alive, and would ultimately stand on this earth as the Judge of the wicked, and the Vindicator of the righteous! Job was right in line with the teaching of the rest of the Bible.

- Here we have the clearest statement in the Old Testament of the bodily resurrection of the believer: *"And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"* (v26-27).

- Job says he expects to see God with his **eyes**, which implies bodily resurrection! He was overwhelmed with such a truth (v27). We, too, are overwhelmed with this truth of resurrection bodies! 1 John 3:2 says, *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*

Job concluded his response to Bildad with a warning to all three of his would-be counselors (v28-29). If they continued to wrongly persecute him, he says, they should be aware that they might experience judgment. *"If you say, 'How we will hound him, since the root of the trouble lies in him?' - you should fear the sword yourselves; for wrath will bring punishment by the sword, and then you will know that there is judgment."* In his second response to Bildad, Job reaches a new high in faith.

Practical Application

Try to see present circumstances in the light of eternity!

The mountain peak of faith that Job experienced at the end of chapter 19 marks a turning point in Job's attitude. Why? Because he saw his present sufferings in a new light – in light of the future! He still didn't know why God was allowing him to suffer, but in view of eternity, he knew that God had reasons for the suffering. And Job knew that the Lord would vindicate him. He also knew that in the future he would have a pain free body – a body that is whole, and not subject to disease.

What a difference it makes when we see our present circumstances in the light of eternity! But taking that view is not automatic, and it's not easy. (Although, folks, it gets a little easier, the older we get!)

All of us should try to see our present circumstances with eternity in view. Try to see your present circumstances in the light of eternity!