

Job 18:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.

Analysis

Disease consumes the wicked: 'It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.' The 'firstborn of death'—a vivid personification—suggests death's most powerful agent, perhaps disease. This describes Job's actual condition (skin disease). Bildad cruelly uses Job's symptoms as evidence for his theology. Yet disease afflicts righteous and wicked alike (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Suffering's presence doesn't indicate cause.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern thought often connected disease with divine displeasure. The 'firstborn of death' phrase is unique—possibly referring to most deadly diseases. Bildad's application of this imagery to Job's actual condition shows profound pastoral insensitivity.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do we avoid assuming disease indicates divine displeasure or personal sin?
2. What pastoral wisdom does Jesus demonstrate in John 9:3 when His disciples assume blindness indicates sin?
3. How should Christians respond to illness—both in ourselves and others?

Interlinear Text

יֹאכֵל ל	בִּדְיוֹ	עוֹר ו	יֹאכֵל ל	בִּדְיוֹ
It shall devour	his strength	of his skin	It shall devour	his strength
H398	H905	H5785	H398	H905
בְּכֹר ור	מָוֶת:			
even the firstborn	of death			
H1060	H4194			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 14:30 (Parallel theme): And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.