

Job 18:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

Analysis

His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors. Bildad the Shuhite, one of Job's three friends, speaks these words describing the fate of the wicked. The Hebrew word for "confidence" (mibtach, מִבְּטַח) denotes security, trust, or that in which one places confidence. "Rooted out" (nataq, נָתַק) suggests violent tearing away or forcible removal. The "tabernacle" (ohel, אוֹהֶל) represents one's dwelling place, household, and sphere of security.

The phrase "king of terrors" (melek ballahot, מֶלֶךְ בַּלְלוּהוֹת) is a powerful metaphor for death personified as a sovereign ruler whose authority inspires dread. Ancient Near Eastern literature personified death (Mot in Canaanite texts) as a powerful deity, though biblical usage strips death of divine status while acknowledging its terrifying power over humanity. Bildad portrays the wicked person's false confidence being stripped away, leaving him defenseless before death's approach.

Ironically, while Bildad intends this as description of the wicked, it applies to all humanity apart from God's redemption. Every person faces the "king of terrors" when earthly securities fail and death looms. The New Testament reveals Christ's victory over death (1 Corinthians 15:55-57; Hebrews 2:14-15), transforming death from "king of terrors" to defeated enemy. For believers, Christ removes death's sting, enabling facing mortality without terror. Bildad's theology, while containing truth about sin's consequences, fails to comprehend grace, redemption, and God's purposes in righteous suffering—the very lessons Job's experience would teach.

Historical Context

The Book of Job is set in the patriarchal period (approximately 2000-1800 BCE) in the land of Uz, likely located in Edom or northern Arabia. Job's friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—represent conventional ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions that connected suffering directly to personal sin and prosperity to righteousness. This retribution theology permeated ancient cultures and appears in various wisdom literature from Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan.

Bildad's speech in chapter 18 reflects typical ancient Near Eastern poetic forms using vivid imagery of trap, snare, and terrors to describe the wicked person's fate. The cultural context assumed that premature death, loss of property, and destruction of one's household signaled divine judgment for wickedness. This worldview made Job's suffering particularly scandalous—his catastrophic losses suggested severe sin, yet the book's prologue reveals Job's righteousness (Job 1:1, 8).

The Book of Job challenges simplistic retribution theology by presenting a righteous sufferer, demonstrating that suffering doesn't always indicate personal sin and that God's purposes transcend human understanding. Ancient readers familiar with retribution theology would find Job's experience profoundly disturbing and thought-provoking. The book's preservation in Scripture validates honest questioning while ultimately affirming God's sovereignty, wisdom, and inscrutability. Historical interpretation shows Job's enduring relevance: every generation faces the problem of innocent suffering and must choose between simplistic formulas and trust in God's mysterious but good purposes.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's victory over death transform our understanding of death from "king of terrors" to defeated enemy?
2. What false securities or confidences do we tend to build our lives upon that will ultimately be "rooted out"?
3. How should we respond to those who, like Bildad, assume suffering always indicates personal sin?
4. In what ways does Job's experience challenge simplistic formulas about the relationship between righteousness and blessing?
5. How can we cultivate confidence in Christ that enables us to face death without terror?

Interlinear Text

יִנָּת ק shall be rooted out H5423	מִאֶהֱלֹ of his tabernacle H168	מִבְטַח ו His confidence H4009	וְתַצְעֵד הו and it shall bring H6805
לְמֶלֶךְ him to the king H4428	בַּלְהוֹת: of terrors H1091		

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