

# JOB

## CHAPTERS 18 & 19

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### Introduction

One of the automobile manufacturers - - I think it's Nissan - - has as their advertising slogan, "Life's a journey - - enjoy the ride!"

The ad works because you are familiar with the idea of comparing life on earth to a journey. You can see yourself as a traveler along life's road.

As you travel life's road, seeking to "enjoy the ride," you frequently encounter troubles of various kinds. Job was correct when he said, "Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."<sup>1</sup>

Trouble along life's road is the theme of chapters eighteen and nineteen of Job. In chapter eighteen, Job's friend Bildad sees the troubles along life's road as a source of terror; he says, in verse eleven, "terrors frighten... on every side." Job, in chapter nineteen, also sees the troubles along life's road. He doesn't see them as terrors, though; he sees them as testings and looks forward to one day standing in a resurrection body before God to receive his rewards.

Are troubles terrors? Or are they testings? Obviously, they can be both! What makes the difference is your position in life as you encounter troubles. Bildad is describing troubles as they are encountered by *unbelievers*, those he calls "the wicked" in verses five and twenty-one, whom he says "[do] not know God."<sup>2</sup> Job is describing troubles as they are encountered by *believers*; he

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<sup>1</sup> Job 5:7

<sup>2</sup> Job 18:21

considers himself redeemed when he says, in verse twenty-five of chapter nineteen, "I know that my Redeemer lives..."

Are your troubles terrors? Or are they testings?

We'll see two things in our study:

#1 The Troubles You Encounter Traveling  
Life's Road Are Terrors For Unbelievers

#2 The Troubles You Encounter Traveling  
Life's Road Are Testings For Believers

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#1 The Troubles You Encounter Traveling  
Life's Road Are Terrors For Unbelievers  
(Chapter 18)

It may come across as negative thinking, but I have come to the conclusion that life is terrifying for unbelievers - - that it is filled with constant terror for them. Unbelievers don't seem to understand this; but it is true nonetheless. For an unbeliever, every moment brings eternity closer to them, but it is a terrifying eternity. Jesus said, in Mathew 10:28,

Matthew 10:28 "... do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Bildad describes the troubles unbelievers encounter traveling along life's road in terms of terror, leading them, he says in verse fourteen, to "the king of terrors" - - probably referring to their death. Death is the final enemy of unbelievers, to whom their troubles lead; and for them, it is terrifying.

Chapter eighteen records the second of Bildad's three dialogs with Job. Let's begin in verse one, where we read in verses one through four,

Job 18:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

Job 18:2 "How long till you put an end to words? Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak.

Job 18:3 Why are we counted as beasts, And regarded as stupid in your sight?

Job 18:4 You who tear yourself in anger, Shall the earth be forsaken for you? Or shall the rock be removed from its place?

More words that hurt rather than heal. Bildad is personally offended by Job and lashes out at him. Considering Job's situation, Bildad ought to have endured Job's strong words; he ought to have let himself be offended. When someone offends you, you have the right and the privilege of overlooking it! It's a right we should all exercise more often than we do.

Beginning in verse five, Bildad describes traveling along life's road. Remember, he's talking about unbelievers; twice he calls them "wicked," and at the end of his words he clearly states that they "[do] not know God." Bildad sees the unbeliever dwelling in a tent, then chased along life's road by one terror after another until, as he says in verse eighteen, he or she is "chased out of the world" - - until death, the final and ultimate terror.

Bildad sees the *tent*, the *traps*, the *torments*, and the *tree* along life's path.

▶▶ The tent:

Job 18:5 "The light of the wicked indeed goes out, And the flame of his fire does not shine.

Job 18:6 The light is dark in his tent, And his lamp beside him is put out.

The picture here is that of a lamp hanging in a tent, and a fire smoldering in a fire pot. It pictures life on earth as a very transitory, temporary journey - - like an extended camping trip away from home with bare essentials to depend upon. It wouldn't take much of a wind or storm to extinguish the flame of the lamp or the spark in the coals; and it doesn't take much trouble to extinguish the things you feel secure about in this life.

No matter your stature or station in life, from God's perspective you're dwelling in a tent. When trouble comes it brings terror as your light and heat are removed - - whether it be health, or wealth, or some other product of this world.

▶▶ The traps:

Job 18:7 The steps of his strength are shortened, And his own counsel casts him down.

Job 18:8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, And he walks into a snare.

Job 18:9 The net takes him by the heel, And a snare lays hold of him.

Job 18:10 A noose is hidden for him on the ground, And a trap for him in the road.

Bildad uses six different words to describe troubles along life's road as traps:

▶▶ A "net" - - something spread across the path;

- ▶▶ A “snare” - - branches covering a deep pit;
- ▶▶ A “net” - - this time meaning a kind of trap that springs with a noose when touched;
- ▶▶ A “snare” - - this time meaning another kind of pitfall;
- ▶▶ A “noose” - - another kind of rope trap hidden on the ground;
- ▶▶ A “trap” - - a general term describing any device used to catch prey.

The road of life is a dangerous place - - filled with traps of various kinds that seek to catch and cripple you. We use the term “pitfalls” in this same way; we talk about the pitfalls of life - - the troubles that come unannounced and unawares. Again the point is this: Pitfalls are, or should be, a source of terror to the unbeliever.

▶▶ The torments:

Job 18:11 Terrors frighten him on every side, And drive him to his feet.

Job 18:12 His strength is starved, And destruction is ready at his side.

Job 18:13 It devours patches of his skin; The firstborn of death devours his limbs.

Job 18:14 He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent, And they parade him before the king of terrors.

Job 18:15 They dwell in his tent who are none of his; Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling.

This is a general description of aging from the perspective of the unbeliever. He or she gradually deteriorates; “the firstborn of death,” the ravages of aging and disease, “devours.” The “king of terrors” eventually comes for them. Everything is taken.

Until or unless you know Jesus as your Savior, death ought to send shivers up your spine! It ought to terrify you. And if death should thus affect you, aging is a torment - - the agent of the “king of terrors.”

▶▶ The tree:

Job 18:16 His roots are dried out below, And his branch withers above.

Job 18:17 The memory of him perishes from the earth, And he has no name among the renowned.

Job 18:18 He is driven from light into darkness, And chased out of the world.

Job 18:19 He has neither son nor posterity among his people, Nor any remaining in his dwellings.

Job 18:20 Those in the west are astonished at his day, As those in the east are frightened.

Job 18:21 Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, And this is the place of him who does not know God."

Death is in view again - - this time likened to a dying tree. The roots dry up, the branches start to wither, and the dead branches are

cut off one by one. The tree takes death one step further; it illustrates the death of an entire family, a “family tree,” if you will. When the unbeliever dies, so too die all who might have been his or her descendants. In the East, the extinction of an entire family line was viewed as a great tragedy. Again the point is the same: It is a terror along life’s road.

Are you prepared to die? You aren’t unless and until you know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior! If you don’t, you may not feel terror... *But you should!*

Bildad was right, but he was talking to the wrong man! Job was not an unbeliever; he knew God. Thus he saw his troubles very differently.

## #2 The Troubles You Encounter Traveling Life’s Road Are Testings For Believers (Chapter 19)

Job knew that he had a different destiny than unbelievers. He said, in verses twenty-five and twenty-six of chapter nineteen,

Job 19:25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;  
Job 19:26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,

Death held no terror for Job; after his skin was destroyed, he knew he would live again in a body of flesh, a resurrection body. When he did, he could expect a *review* of his life, and *rewards* for his service. Thus he could see troubles as testings along the road that led heavenward.

Job addresses Bildad in verses one through four:

Job 19:1 Then Job answered and said:  
Job 19:2 "How long will you torment my soul, And break me in pieces with words?  
Job 19:3 These ten times you have reproached me; You are not ashamed that you have wronged me.  
Job 19:4 And if indeed I have erred, My error remains with me.

Words can wound. “These ten times” wasn’t the actual number of times Bildad had spoken; it was an expression that meant he had gone overboard in repeating himself. “My error remains with me” is a reminder that God will ultimately judge every situation. We don’t need to judge things prematurely. It’s Job’s way of telling Bildad that he could have shown more patience in his efforts to comfort.

Bildad had given four illustrations to describe troubles; *Job gives seven!* You don't avoid troubles as a believer - - you may even have **more** troubles than unbelievers do. Your perspective is what is different, because your destiny and destination is heaven and not hell.

In each of Job's illustrations it is God Who is the agent of his trouble. Trouble is designated by God for your good, for His glory. We know that Job was involved in a testing; thus we can say that his troubles were for testing.

▶▶ Job described a believer encountering trouble like a trapped animal:

Job 19:5 If indeed you exalt yourselves against me, And plead my disgrace against me,  
Job 19:6 Know then that God has wronged me, And has surrounded me with His net.

Bildad described six different kinds of traps that are along life's road. His picture was of an animal fleeing away. Job was not fleeing from God; it was God Who had suddenly caught him in a net for reasons Job didn't yet understand. Though he felt trapped, it wasn't by the king of terrors; it was by the King of kings and, therefore, had a purpose. It was a test, not a terror.

This describes troubles that seem to have no way out. They do... You just don't see the path yet.

▶▶ Job described a believer encountering trouble like a criminal in court:

Job 19:7 "If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard. If I cry aloud, there is no justice.

It seemed to Job that his cry of "*Innocent!*" fell on deaf ears. Little did he know that God had already declared him innocent - - that the whole point of his troubles was to show that even in sufferings Job would persevere in his love for God.

This describes troubles that seem unfair to you... They only seem that way because you don't have all the facts!

▶▶ Job described a believer encountering trouble like a traveler on an impassable road:

Job 19:8 He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass; And He has set darkness in my paths.

The way is blocked; there is no light to see the road even if you get by the obstacle.

You often face what seem to be insurmountable obstacles... They are not! Grace always proves sufficient for you in your troubles. Oswald Chambers wrote,

“It is not the days of sunshine and splendor and liberty and light that leave their lasting and indelible effect upon the soul, but those nights of the Spirit in which, shadowed by God’s hand, hidden in the dark cleft of some rock in a weary land, He lets the splendors of the outskirts of Himself pass before our gaze.”<sup>3</sup>

▶▶ Job described a believer encountering trouble like a king who had been dethroned:

Job 19:9 He has stripped me of my glory, And taken the crown from my head.

Before his trouble, Job had been regarded as the greatest man of the East. Now he had been stripped of everything.

God sometimes strips you down so you can see what you’re really pursuing. Is it Him? Or is it what He offers you in terms of comfort in this world? It’s good to be dethroned every now and then - if the wrong king is on the throne!

▶▶ Job described a believer encountering trouble like a structure that had been demolished:

Job 19:10 He breaks me down on every side, And I am gone...

This language describes a wall that has been scaled by troops who then left what was protected by it in ruins.

There are things that we believe God would never allow to happen to us... Until they do! When they do, it is a test. Can you, like Job, say, “though He slay me, yet will I trust Him?” You won’t know until then.

▶▶ Job described a believer encountering trouble like an uprooted tree:

Job 19:10 ... My hope He has uprooted like a tree.

The uprooted tree has lost its essential source of nutrients. Hope is an essential nutrient for the believer; troubles can cause you to lose hope. But hope should not depend on your circumstances; it

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<sup>3</sup> quoted in *Be Patient*, p. 72.

should depend on God's promises. The worse the trouble, the greater the opportunity for God's promises to be put to use!

▶▶ Job described a believer encountering trouble like a besieged city:

Job 19:11 He has also kindled His wrath against me, And He counts me as one of His enemies.

Job 19:12 His troops come together And build up their road against me; They encamp all around my tent.

Everything seemed to be against Job - - he was like a city under siege. This is trouble from direct attack by enemies. God allows it - - again, a test, not a terror. It is the only way of proving the truth that if God be for you, who can be against you?

Ever feel lonely? Troubles along the road of life have a way of producing loneliness like Job describes in verses thirteen through twenty:

Job 19:13 "He has removed my brothers far from me, And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.

Job 19:14 My relatives have failed, And my close friends have forgotten me.

Job 19:15 Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants, Count me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight.

Job 19:16 I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him with my mouth.

Job 19:17 My breath is offensive to my wife, And I am repulsive to the children of my own body.

Job 19:18 Even young children despise me; I arise, and they speak against me.

Job 19:19 All my close friends abhor me, And those whom I love have turned against me.

Job 19:20 My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

Job 19:21 "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, For the hand of God has struck me!

Job 19:22 Why do you persecute me as God does, And are not satisfied with my flesh?

I mentioned this last time; let me say it again. Sometime in your life you will go through a time when friends, relatives, acquaintances will fail you. God removes their support to test you, and to teach you.

In a blinding flash of faith, Job utters the following words:

Job 19:21 "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, For the hand of God has struck me!

Job 19:22 Why do you persecute me as God does, And are not satisfied with my flesh?

Job 19:23 "Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!

Job 19:24 That they were engraved on a rock With an iron pen and lead, forever!

Job 19:25 For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;

Job 19:26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God,



Job 19:27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Job 19:28 If you should say, 'How shall we persecute him?'; Since the root of the matter is found in me,

Job 19:29 Be afraid of the sword for yourselves; For wrath brings the punishment of the sword, That you may know there is a judgment."

*"My Redeemer lives!"* Job was confident he had been saved. He was confident he would stand before God in a body of flesh - - a resurrection body, an eternal body. We know that in that day the Lord will *review* our lives, *reveal* those things which pleased Him, and *reward* us accordingly. We know that all of our troubles were testings that anticipate that wonderful moment that we see Him for ourselves.

Knowing you are His, and will see Him, should instill in you the fear of the Lord - - but never terror!

### Conclusion

As the sparks fly upward, man was born to trouble. But if you are a man or woman who has been born again, trouble is very different. It is not your master; it is your servant - - sent to test you.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

James 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.