

Day 55 - FRIDAY: December 23rd

Job 8

Job 8:1-22 NKJV

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: "How long will you speak these things, And the words of your mouth be like a strong wind? Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice? If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgression. If you would earnestly seek God And make your supplication to the Almighty, If you were pure and upright, Surely now He would awake for you, And prosper your rightful dwelling place. Though your beginning was small, Yet your latter end would increase abundantly.

"For inquire, please, of the former age, And consider the things discovered by their fathers; For we were born yesterday, and know nothing, Because our days on earth are a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you, And utter words from their heart? "Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the reeds flourish without water? While it is yet green and not cut down, It withers before any other plant. So are the paths of all who forget God; And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, Whose confidence shall be cut off, And whose trust is a spider's web. He leans on his house, but it does not stand. He holds it fast, but it does not endure. He grows green in the sun, And his branches spread out in his garden. His roots wrap around the rock heap, And look for a place in the stones. If he is destroyed from his place, Then it will deny him, saying, 'I have not seen you.' "Behold, this is the joy of His way, And out of the earth others will grow. Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, Nor will He uphold the evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with

laughing, And your lips with rejoicing. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, And the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing."

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 4 – What an awful thing to say to someone who is grieving the loss of his family. To state that they got what they deserved is awful. May we never be this kind of friend.

The UCG reading program for this chapter states: "Bildad the Shuhite now answers. Eliphaz had started by "attempting a word" (see Job 4:2). Bildad, in contrast, opens by outright blasting Job, asking him how long he would spew forth his nonsense. In verse 2 of chapter 8, "Bildad twists Job's words of Job 6:26. Job had acknowledged that he had overreacted with words that belonged to the wind. To paraphrase Bildad's sarcastic response: 'Yes, you're right, Job! All your words are like a mighty wind; you are full of hot air!'" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 8:2).

This demonstrates that Bildad had listened to what Job said—but only with his ears and not with his heart. Job had described himself as helpless and full of despair (Job 6:13-14; Job 6:26). He had pleaded for comfort and compassion from his friends. Yet, while Bildad had silently mourned with Job for a week, what was his response now? "It seems almost incredible that Bildad would reply so callously. There is not only steely indifference to Job's plight but an arrogant certainty that Job's children got just what they deserved and that Job was well on his way to the same fate. The lesson we must learn is that there are such people in the world and that they do their heartless disservice to mankind under the guise of being the special friend of God" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on chapter 8).

Bildad's reaction was evidently wholly focused on Job's challenge in 6:24: "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; cause me to understand

wherein I have erred." Bildad did not have a specific answer for Job. He was more concerned with the implication that Job had done nothing wrong to deserve what was happening to him. This contradicted his theological worldview. In chapter 8, Bildad's "one and only theological point [was that] Job's suffering was the proof of his sinfulness. Since God cannot be unjust (v. 3), there is only one conclusion—Job and his family (v. 4) had received the punishment they deserved. Job should plead for mercy (v. 5). Then, if he deserved it (v. 6), God would restore him (v. 7). Bildad failed to see that mercy implies the forgiveness one receives even though he does *not* deserve it" (note on verses 1-10). Indeed, the fact that all people are wholly undeserving of God's grace is one of the great lessons of the book.

In support of his views, Bildad invokes the tradition of the fathers of times past (verses 8-10). The poetic discourse beginning in verse 11 appears to be quoting from this tradition. As with Eliphaz, it may be that Bildad is here quoting from an extant psalm—perhaps one that was known to Abraham and Isaac or possibly even written by them. Again, the principles espoused here are generally true, as Job himself will acknowledge (Job 9:1-2). It is Bildad's application of them with respect to Job that is the problem.

Verse 13 of chapter 8 speaks of the hope of the hypocrite perishing. Bildad reckoned that Job must surely have been a hypocrite. For while Job maintained his innocence, his suffering, Bildad reasoned, was proof of sin. The faulty premise here led to a completely wrong conclusion. His earlier remark, "*If you were pure and upright...*" (verse 6), was meant exactly as it sounded—to indicate that Job obviously was not. Continuing in the poetic discourse, by applying the metaphor of the fleeting and frail spider's web of verses 14-15 to the present situation, Bildad implied that Job had trusted in his wealth and estate rather than in God. This was not true. Recall that after the listing of Job's possessions

in 1:3 we immediately learned that he was constantly concerned about his family's devotion to God (Job 1:4-5).

The Hebrew at the end of Job 8:16-19 is difficult and the translation is disputed. The New Living Translation renders the passage this way: "The godless seem so strong, like a lush plant growing in the sunshine, its branches spreading across the garden. Its roots grow down through a pile of rocks to hold it firm. But when it is uprooted, it isn't even missed! That is the end of its life, and others spring up from the earth to replace it."

In verse 21, it is true that God will not ultimately cast away the blameless and uphold evildoers. Yet this does not mean that God will not allow the blameless to suffer or even to die. Nor does it mean that God will not, for the time being, sustain the lives of the disobedient. God in many ways sustains the whole disobedient human race—for now. But in the end, those who remain faithful to Him will be eternally preserved and those who choose to ultimately and forever reject Him will be destroyed. Once more, Bildad misapplied this general truth—seeing Job's immediate suffering as proof that he could not be blameless.”

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