

Job 8:1 ¶ Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
Job 8:2 How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?
Job 8:3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
Job 8:4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;
Job 8:5 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;
Job 8:6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.
Job 8:7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

The next one to speak is Bildad the Shuhite. Job had made a plea for mercy, but I guess Bildad chose to ignore that fact. He continues to assume Job's guilt and questions how long he plans to maintain his innocence. Does Job really think that God is unjust?

That is a question that every Christian confronts some time or another. We can't help but try to judge God using human understanding. I have learned to cling to the truth of Isaiah 55 when I can't understand. If I could fully understand God, He wouldn't be God.

Isaiah 55:8–9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Bildad posits that Job's children had been killed because they sinned against God; their death was an act of God's justice. If Job would seek God in righteousness before Him, then He would surely restore him to a place of blessing. Though he might not have much to begin with, God would surely greatly bless the rest of Job's life.

Bildad is right in declaring that God is just and ready to forgive the repentant sinner and restore him to a place of blessing. He is wrong, however, to assume that what happened to Job and his children was a result of sin. Not only that, he was also horrid to make that accusation to an obviously distraught and bereaved father. He is also wrong to think that the righteous never suffer and will always prosper. Scripture is full of examples and verses that refute this supposition.

Job 8:8 ¶ For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:
Job 8:9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)
Job 8:10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

Bildad then uses the argument of the experience of their ancestors. In comparison, their own experience is quite small. Aren't you willing to learn

from the words they have passed down to us?

This seems to imply some type of written or oral history to which they can refer.

Bildad is right to posit that we can benefit from studying history and striving not to make the same mistakes made by others as recorded and revealed there. He was wrong, however, to assume that the experiences of men are always valid standards by which one can determine truth.

**Job 8:11 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?
Job 8:12 Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.**

The obvious answer to the first two questions is “No.” Bildad rightly notes that they will begin to wither before they can reach maturity without the proper nourishment.

Job 8:13 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish:

Job 8:14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web.

Job 8:15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

Bildad compares the man that *forgets* (does not heed) God and the *hope* (expectation of good) of the *sinner* (from the Hebrew for “hypocrite”) will just as surely die. It’s like a spider’s web that can easily be destroyed. The spider has confidence that his house will support him, despite the fact that it won’t endure. No matter how he tries to strengthen it, it will not hold up.

What Bildad says is true, but his application to Job is not.

Job 8:16 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

Job 8:17 His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.

Job 8:18 If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

Bildad pictures the sinner as a plant growing in a garden with roots growing through ruins among stones. If God removes that sinner, it declares him to have been *false* (from the Hebrew for “deny”) and that He has no *regard* (from the Hebrew for “seen”) for that sinner.

In other words, Bildad is repeating once again that Job must be lying about having no sin or God would not bring such destruction upon him.

Job 8:19 Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

This verse is very confusing to me; I got no help from the Hebrew. Most

translations seem to connect “joy of his way” to the sinner’s life. Once that life is gone, another will arise to replace him.

Coffman quoted this explanation from Samuel Terrien that makes sense to me: “Behold, this is the joy of his way, should be interpreted ironically.”

Job 8:20 ¶ Behold, God will not cast away a perfect *man*, neither will he help the evil doers:

Job 8:21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

Job 8:22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

Bildad then confidently declares that God does not cast off a righteous man; neither does He strengthen the wicked. Implied conclusion: Job, you can’t be righteous.

“Till” is not in the Hebrew. Bildad tries to close on a positive note, declaring that he knows that Job will yet find cause to rejoice. His enemies will be wrapped in shame and the wicked will be destroyed. I guess he is assuming that Job will surely confess his sin and be restored to God’s good graces.

I liked these thoughts from Stedman: “...these friends never seem to refer to God for help for themselves in understanding Job's problem. They never pray with Job. They never ask God for help to open their minds and to illuminate their understanding so that they can help their friend. The book is filled with prayers, but they are all the prayers of Job, crying out to God in the midst of his sufferings. His friends never seem to feel the need for further illumination on the subject.”

I loved this quote Guzik used from Chambers: “The biggest benediction one man can find in another is not in his words, but that he implies: ‘I do not know the answer to your problem, all I can say is that God alone must know; let us go to Him’ The biggest thing you can do for those who are suffering is not to talk platitudes, not to ask questions, but to get into contact with God, and the ‘greater works’ will be done by prayer.”