

# Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Bildad

## Job Chapter 8

**Job 8:1–2** *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,  
2 How long wilt thou speak these things?  
and how long shall the words of thy mouth  
be like a strong wind?*

**S**IMILAR to what we saw in chapter one, in which messengers come one by one to inform Job of the loss of all that he owned or cherished,<sup>1</sup> now a similar pattern begins developing when one by one, those who are thought to be Job's friends bring accusation against him. Before it was Eliphaz, now Bildad, and soon it would be Zophar.<sup>2</sup>

Bildad demonstrates little patience toward Job and voices irritation after hearing Job's rebuttal to Eliphaz as to the cause of his trouble. Zophar's speech immediately declares not only ignorance on his part but also supreme arrogance. He likens Job's speech to being as a strong wind, claiming that Job is full of pride and that this is the reason he cannot be persuaded of guilt.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:2) The words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?—The*

Syriac and Arabic (according to Walton) render this, "the spirit of pride fill thy mouth." The Septuagint renders it, "The spirit of thy mouth is profuse of words"—*πνομηῖ ῥῥυλο polurrēmon*. But the common rendering is undoubtedly correct, and the expression is a very strong and beautiful one. His language of complaint and murmuring was like a tempest. It swept over all barriers, and disregarded all restraint.

**Job 8:3** *Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*

Bildad's words, though accurate, come not from God's Spirit. True, the Lord will neither pervert judgment nor deny justice and cannot, because of His own righteous character, deal with men unjustly. There is nothing for Him to gain by doing so and nothing unrighteous in Him that could cause Him to act in such an unrighteous manner.

*(Benson Commentary, Job 8:3) Doth God—Hebrew, אלהים, El, the mighty God, as this word signifies; pervert judgment?—Judge unrighteously? No: this is inconsistent with God's nature, which is essentially and necessarily*

<sup>1</sup> Job 1:13–20 *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: <sup>14</sup>And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: <sup>15</sup>And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. <sup>16</sup>While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. <sup>17</sup>While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. <sup>18</sup>While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: <sup>19</sup>And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. <sup>20</sup>Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

<sup>2</sup> Job 11:1 *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,*

## *I Repent in Dust and Ashes*

just, and with his office of governor of the world. *Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*— Hebrew, **יְשׁוּב**, *Shaddai*, a word that sets forth God's omnipotence and all-sufficiency. These names are emphatically used to prove that God cannot deal unjustly or falsely with men: because he hath no need so to do, nor temptation to it, being self-sufficient for his own happiness, and being able, by his own invincible power, to do whatsoever pleaseth him.

Though Bildad spoke of God as unable to pervert justice, in truth he should have looked within himself and cast the mote out of his own eye<sup>3</sup> before thinking himself able to cast it out of Job. The truth is that what he said of Job was actually true of himself. The Lord had given him no right to chastise Job, and it was his own pride that had both prompted and encouraged him to do so.

***Job 8:4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;***

Bildad's words reveal his complete and total lack of compassion toward Job when

speaking of the death of his children. The death of one child is unbearably painful, let alone the deaths of all of one's children. If men are not prompted by love or led by God's Holy Spirit, then even if what they speak contains elements of truth, they cannot speak for God. If a man also does not love, then any other thoughts he may have of God or of the Lord's reasons for divine judgment cannot be right.<sup>4</sup> Truly enlightened men are fully aware that it grieves the Lord's character to bring forth judgment on sinful men, if even they have proved themselves worthy of it.<sup>5</sup> *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? (Ezek. 18:23).*

Bildad's words continue but with the very shaky premise that if Job were truly pure and upright, then the Lord would respond to his pain.

***Job 8:5–6 If thou wouldst seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;***

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 7:5 *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

<sup>4</sup> John 13:35 *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

<sup>5</sup> I John 2:9 *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

<sup>6</sup> I John 3:17 *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

<sup>7</sup> I John 4:12 *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

<sup>8</sup> I John 4:20 *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?*

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 6:5–7 *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

<sup>10</sup> Exod. 32:14 *And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.*

<sup>11</sup> I Sam. 15:10–11 *Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, <sup>11</sup>It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.*

<sup>12</sup> II Sam. 24:16 *And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.*

<sup>13</sup> I Chrn. 21:15 *And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.*

<sup>14</sup> Jnh. 3:10 *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.*

*6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.*

It is amazing how right a man's words can initially seem to be without careful biblical inspection. Bildad now claims, not simply by insinuation but also by actual declaration, that if Job were actually pure and upright, then God would hear him and rise to answer his pleas, that it was because of the sin of hypocrisy in Job that prohibited the Lord from responding to his prayers.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:6) If thou wert pure and upright— . . . Nothing could be more unjust and severe, however, than to take it for granted that he was a hypocrite, and then proceed to argue as if that were a settled point. He does not make it a supposition that possibly Job might have erred—which would not have been improper; but he proceeds to argue as if it were a point about which there could be no hesitation.*

Bildad speaks of men being upright before the Lord as if it were a small thing—as if man in his sinful state could ever be pure in the Lord's eyes without the Lord making him such. It is also not because of a man's uprightness and purity that God saves men but only through His own divine mercy and grace.<sup>6</sup> It is also only truly religious hypocrites who do not know this,

and Job surely was not one of these.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted as well that true religion does not make a man pure but rather reveals to him how impure he really is. The truth also is that any prayer, without exception, heard and answered by God comes from a sinner to some degree. This is because even godly men are sinful men. Hence, if God were to hear only those without sin, then none could be actually heard at all. Thus, every petition that the Lord answers needs extended mercy from Him to grant it. For no prayer answered by the Lord could ever be based on the worthiness of man. God's throne is a throne of mercy and grace, wherein divine mercy is given to the unworthy. It is a throne of compassion where through God's good character and benevolence He grants the petitions made to Him by unworthy petitioners. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need* (Heb. 4:16).

Bildad speaks of Job as though he were not pure and upright, and to this Job replies, "Who then can be?" Only the self-righteous man, similar to the Pharisee Jesus speaks of in Luke 18,<sup>8</sup> thinks himself worthy to stand in God's holy presence on his own merits and illustrates a stark contrast to the publican in the same parable, who cries for mercy.<sup>9</sup> Job was also aware, at least to a degree,

<sup>6</sup> Luke 18:13 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

<sup>7</sup> Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

<sup>8</sup> I Pet. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

<sup>9</sup> Eph. 2:4–5 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, <sup>5</sup>Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

<sup>10</sup> I Cor. 5:6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

<sup>11</sup> Luke 18:9–12 *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <sup>10</sup>Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.*

<sup>12</sup> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 18:13–14 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

of man's unholy state. This is seen in the burnt offerings presented to God on behalf of his children in chapter one.<sup>10</sup> Job's sacrifices reveal his consciousness of sin and the need for its atonement. Yes, Job was aware of his sin and far more than his friend, who assumed he himself had none.

**Job 8:7** *Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.*

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Job 8:7) Bildad seems to have spoken under a spirit of prophecy, without being sensible of it, and not imagining in the least that so it would be in fact; for he only affirms it on supposition of Job's good behaviour for the future, putting it entirely upon that condition, which he had no great expectation of it ever being performed.

The Lord is more than able to speak through men—and He has—even when they do not know it. Hence, just as the Lord can make an ass speak,<sup>11</sup> so He can also bring truth out of those totally unaware of it. Bildad's words would be proven true, but not because of anything either divinely done or purposed by Bildad.

**Job 8:8** *For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:*

Bildad here appeals to Job to consider the past—to search in history for answers concerning the present. Perhaps Bildad is referring to the men of the past who lived long lives, who because of their longevity had much more of an opportunity to understand God and His dealings with

man. No doubt, this reference is made in contrast to the relatively short life that Job had lived. In chapter 32 Elihu addresses a similar issue when he speaks of what length of life should accomplish but seldom does.

**Job 32:7–9** *I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.*

<sup>8</sup> *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*

<sup>9</sup> *Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.*

It is not merely what a man has seen, either with his own eyes, or the eyes of his ancestors, that imparts true wisdom. For this there must be given to the spirit of a man inspiration from the Almighty. It is thus only from the Lord and His divine revelation that true understanding can enter the sinner's heart, especially concerning the error of his ways. And though human history does afford some instruction, the truly deep things of life are discovered only through receiving both inspiration and revelation from God.

**Job 8:9–10** *(For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)*

<sup>10</sup> *Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*

Again comparing the shortness of life of men in Job's age to those of the antediluvian fathers and those born soon after the flood, Bildad states that present knowledge is insufficient and that men should

<sup>10</sup> *Job 1:5* And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

<sup>11</sup> *Num. 22:27–31* And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. <sup>28</sup> And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? <sup>29</sup> And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. <sup>30</sup> And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? and he said, Nay. <sup>31</sup> Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

look to history to be truly taught. Whatever men also trust in is where they will search for life's answers. Thus, the man who trusts in himself<sup>12</sup> will look within himself as a means to guide his path while on the earth.<sup>13</sup> Even so are those who trust in others as holding the keys to life, who will likewise look to man on how to live. Rarely, though, is found one whose trust lies not in himself nor in other men but solely in his God. A wise man is also one who does not rely on his natural wisdom<sup>14</sup> as a true source of wisdom but instead seeks the spiritual wisdom that originates from above<sup>15</sup> and is imparted by the Spirit of God.<sup>16</sup> In truth, it is only the inspiration that God gives and comes from Him that can enlighten the sinner to the error of his ways and the divine path necessary to be forgiven of them.

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

Here Bildad refers to two marsh plants common in the area to illustrate the short and very limited prosperity of the hypocrite. He points out that hypocrites may flourish for a time but that this time of prosperity will be momentary.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:11–12) The word "rush" here רֹמֶשׁ *gôme'* denotes properly a bulrush, and especially the Egyptian papyrus—*papyrus Nilotica*; see the notes at Isaiah 18:2.<sup>17</sup> It is derived from the verb רָמַם *gâmâ'*, to absorb, to drink up, and is given to this plant because it absorbs or drinks up moisture. . . .

*Without mire*—Without moisture. It grew in the marshy places along the Nile.

*Can the flag*—Another plant of a similar character. The word אֶחָז *'achû*, flag, says Gesenius, is an Egyptian word, signifying marsh-grass, reeds, bulrushes, sedge, everything which grows in wet grounds. . . . Jerome says of it, "When I inquired of the learned what this word meant, I heard from the Egyptians, that by this name everything was intended in their language which grew up in a pool." The word is synonymous with rush, or bulrush, and denotes a plant which absorbs a great quantity of water. What is the exact idea which this figure is designed to convey, is not very clear. I think it probable that the whole description is intended to represent a hypocrite, and that the meaning is, that he had in his growth a strong resemblance to such a rush or reed. There was nothing solid or substantial in his piety. It was like the soft, spongy texture of the water-reed, and would wilt under trial, as the papyrus would when deprived of water. . . .

12 Jer. 17:5 *Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.*

Prov. 28:26 *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whose walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

13 Isa. 30:2 *That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!*

Isa. 31:1 *Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!*

Isa. 36:6 *Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.*

14 1 Cor. 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

15 Jas. 3:17 *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

16 1 Cor. 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

17 Isa. 18:2 *That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!*

*And is not cut down*—Even when it is not cut down. If suffered to stand by itself, and if undisturbed, it will wither away. The application of this is obvious and beautiful. Such plants have no self sustaining power. They are dependent on moisture for their support. If that is withheld, they droop and die. So with the prosperous sinner and the hypocrite. His piety, compared with that which is genuine, is like the spongy texture of the paper-reed compared with the solid oak. He is sustained in his professed religion by outward prosperity, as the rush is nourished by moisture; and the moment his prosperity is withdrawn, his religion droops and dies like the flag without water.

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

Bildad's words reveal his belief that Job only outwardly professed religion and was in fact a hypocrite at heart. From Bildad's perspective, Job's world had crashed because of the lack of sincerity in his faith. Job's life, Bildad concludes, was like that of marshy plants, which can endure only in the wet season, when also there is prosperity and not adversity. And though it is true that the hypocrite's hope will perish, this would surely not be Job's end.<sup>18</sup> As for hypocrisy, God's Word teaches us that its roots stretch deep into man's past, all the way back to man's beginning. Hence, even in the time of Job, religious hypocrisy was as present, prevalent, and pervasive as it is today. The truth, though, was that Job was not a hypocrite but was as God had defined him to be, one who feared God

and eschewed evil,<sup>19</sup> especially the evil conduct of those manifesting insincere faith around him.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:13)* (1) That there were hypocrites even in that early age of the world. They are confined to no period, or country, or religious denomination, or profession. There are hypocrites in religion—and so there are in politics, and in business, and in friendship, and in morals. There are pretended friends, and pretended patriots, and pretended lovers of virtue, whose hearts are false and hollow, just as there are pretended friends of religion. Wherever there is genuine coin, it will be likely to be counterfeited; and the fact of a counterfeit is always a tribute to the intrinsic worth of the coin—for who would be at the pains to counterfeit that which is worthless? The fact that there are hypocrites in the church, is an involuntary tribute to the excellency of religion.

Though what Bildad believed about Job was not true, what he spoke of the hypocrite's end surely is, so that if a man desires actual hope of spending eternity with God, then he must avoid any and all hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is that behavior in man wherein God is honored with the lips but the heart remains estranged of Him.<sup>20</sup> Ultimately the hypocrite's actions are purposed to please man, for it is from man that he desires to gain true recognition and honor.<sup>21</sup> The hypocrite also, blind to the true reality of the Lord, will set about to live his life seeking to gain honor for himself, often through actions speaking of God but with the real

<sup>18</sup> Job 42:12–16 *So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.* <sup>13</sup>He had also seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup>And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. <sup>15</sup>And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. <sup>16</sup>After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

<sup>19</sup> Job 1:1 *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

<sup>20</sup> Mark 7:6 *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

<sup>21</sup> Matt. 6:16 *Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

Matt. 23:13 *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*

intention of bringing praise and glory to himself. Practically speaking, every hypocrite is a worshiper of himself. For it is from others that he seeks praise—and ultimately from the Lord, Whom he seeks to steal it from.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:13) (2) The hypocrite has a hope of eternal life. This hope is founded on various things. It may be on his own morality; it may be on the expectation that he will be able to practice a deception; it may be on some wholly false and unfounded view of the character and plans of God. Or taking the word “hypocrite” in a larger sense to denote anyone who pretends to religion and who has none, this hope may be founded on some change of feeling which he has had, and which he mistook for religion; on some supposed vision which he had of the cross or of the Redeemer, or on the mere subsiding of the alarm which an awakened sinner experiences, and the comparative peace consequent on that. The mere cessation of fear produces a kind of peace—as the ocean is calm and beautiful after a storm—no matter what may be the cause, whether it be true religion or any other cause. Many a sinner, who has lost his convictions for sin in any way, mistakes the temporary calm which succeeds for true religion, and embraces the hope of the hypocrite.

***Job 8:14–15 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.***  
***<sup>15</sup> He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.***

Continuing with the theme of the frailty of the hypocrite and how his life cannot endure trial, Bildad references the spider vainly trying to hold its web together but cannot because of the feeble material it is made of. Such, then, is the hypocrite's life, Bildad reasons, which cannot stand up to life's trials because of the lack of true spiritual strength and integrity.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:15) *He shall lean upon his house*—This is an allusion to

the web or house of the spider. The hope of the hypocrite is called the house which he has built for himself; his home, his refuge, his support. But it shall fail him. In times of trial he will trust to it for support, and it will be found to be as frail as the web of the spider. How little the light and slender thread which a spider spins would avail a man for support in time of danger! So frail and unsubstantial will be the hope of the hypocrite! It is impossible to conceive any figure which would more strongly describe the utter vanity of the hopes of the wicked. . . . *He shall hold it fast*—Or, he shall lay hold on it to sustain him, denoting the avidity with which the hypocrite seizes upon his hope. The figure is still taken from the spider, and is an instance of a careful observation of the habits of that insect. The idea is, that the spider, when a high wind or a tempest blows, seizes upon its slender web to sustain itself. But it is insufficient. The wind sweeps all away. So the tempest of calamity sweeps away the hypocrite, though he grasps at his hope, and would seek security in that, as a spider does in the light and tenuous thread which it has spun.

All that Bildad states concerning the hypocrite is true—it is just not true of Job—teaching us that wisdom should never be viewed as true wisdom unless it is spoken at the very right time and exactly to the one to whom the Lord has purposed should hear it.

Bildad continues with another comparison. It is a strong one, revealing how even the earth will disown the hypocrite.

***Job 8:16–18 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.***  
***<sup>17</sup> His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.***  
***<sup>18</sup> If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.***

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:18) *Then it shall deny him*—That is, the soil, the earth, or the place where it stood. This

## *I Repent in Dust and Ashes*

represents a wicked man under the image of a tree. The figure is beautiful. The earth will be ashamed of it; ashamed that it sustained the tree; ashamed that it ever ministered any nutriment, and will refuse to own it. So with the hypocrite. He shall pass away as if the earth refused to own him, or to retain any recollection of him. *I have not seen thee*—I never knew thee. It shall utterly deny any acquaintance with it. There is a striking resemblance here to the language which the Savior says he will use respecting the hypocrite in the day of judgment: “and then will I profess to them, I never knew you;” Matthew 7:23.<sup>22</sup> The hypocrite has never been known as a pious man. The earth will refuse to own him as such, and so will the heavens.

Other translations of verse 18 show us that even the earth will deny the hypocrite.

(NIV) *But when it is torn from its spot, that place disowns it and says, ‘I never saw you.’*

(NLT) *But when it is uprooted, it’s as though it never existed!*

(ESV) *If he is destroyed from his place, then it will deny him, saying, ‘I have never seen you.’*

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

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, Job 8:19) *Behold, this is the joy of his way*—This is evidently sarcastic. “Lo! such is the joy of his course! He boasts of joy, as all hypocrites do, but

his joy endures only for a little time. This is the end of it. He is cut down and removed, and the earth and the heavens disown him!”

*And out of the earth shall others grow*—This image is still derived from the tree or plant. The meaning is, that such a plant would be taken away, and that others would spring up in its place which the earth would not be ashamed of. So the hypocrite is removed to make way for others who will be sincere, and who will be useful. Hypocrites and useless people in the church are removed to make way for others who will be active and devoted to the cause of the Redeemer.

The Lord’s promise is that all false religion will one day be replaced by true religion,<sup>23</sup> that all false worshipers likewise should be supplanted by true worshipers; *out of the earth shall others grow*. Though hypocrites may have a temporary influence, in the end only those with genuine faith will inhabit the earth.<sup>24</sup> This is God’s promise to Israel,<sup>25</sup> and it will be fulfilled. Thus, there is no lasting and substantial hope for any who do not love, obey, and keep God’s commandments out of a sincere and pure heart. The hope of the hypocrite is vain, and it is unwise to pretend that with God he has any true hope of all.

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

Bildad’s words now shift to a very general truth, but it’s one that hardly applies to Job. In fact, according to the Lord’s own words,

22 Matt. 7:23 *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

23 II Pet. 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

24 Ps. 37:29 *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

Prov. 2:21 *For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.*

Matt. 5:5 *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

25 Ps. 37:9 *For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.*

Ps. 37:22 *For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.*

Ps. 37:34 *Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*

Isa. 57:13 *When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;*



Job meets this standard.<sup>26</sup> No doubt, *perfect* does not mean with no flaws but only the abiding both in one's heart and life a genuine and faithful pursuit of God.

*(Pulpit Commentary, Job 8:20) Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man. . . . If Job is, as he says, true to God, upright, and (humanly speaking) "perfect," then he has only to go on trusting God; God will not leave him "till he fill his mouth with laughing, and his lips with rejoicing" (ver. 21); then "they that irate him shall be clothed with shame, and their dwelling-place shall come to nought" (ver. 22); but if, as we feel instinctively that Bildad believes, Job is not "perfect," but "an evil-doer," then he must expect no relief, no lull in his sufferings; he is obnoxious to all the threatenings which have formed the bulk of Bildad's discourse (vers. 8–20)—he may look to being cut off, like the rush and the flag (vers. 11, 12), crushed like the spider's web (ver. 14), destroyed, and forgotten, like the rapidly growing gourd (vers. 16–19); he must look for no help from God (ver. 20); but must be contented to pass away and make room for men of a better stamp (ver. 19).*

*Job 8:21–22 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing. <sup>22</sup> They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.*

Bildad concludes that if Job is truly penitent and righteous, this will be his end. There is no real sense of certainty in his words, which are not nearly as harsh as the judgments he uttered previously concerning hypocrites, with the implication that Job was one. These verses also teach us that most are more acquainted with the evil of man than with the goodness of God, that most seem to speak much of sin but rarely that God will both forgive and cover it. Thus, the majority of Bildad's words concern the Lord's judgment on sin and very few words on how the Lord can deliver men from its grasp. In truth, Bildad could (at least he thought) identify sin but could not (as his words will reveal) help deliver Job from it. To inform a man that he is a sinner is therefore not enough unless also there is given him proper direction on how to escape remaining in his sin.

---

<sup>26</sup> *Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

