

## Session 6

# *Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Bildad*

## *Job 8*

### Scriptures

<i>Job 8:1–2</i>	<i>Job 8:7</i>	<i>Job 8:14–15</i>
<i>Job 8:3</i>	<i>Job 8:8</i>	<i>Job 8:16–18</i>
<i>Job 8:4</i>	<i>Job 32:7–9</i>	<i>Job 8:19</i>
<i>Romans 13:10</i>	<i>Job 8:9–10</i>	<i>Job 8:20</i>
<i>Job 8:5–6</i>	<i>Job 8:11–12</i>	<i>Job 8:21–22</i>
<i>Hebrews 4:16</i>	<i>Job 8:13</i>	

*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?*

Bildad demonstrates little patience toward Job and voices irritation after hearing his rebuttal to Eliphaz as to the cause of his trouble.

Bildad's speech immediately declares not only ignorance on his part but also supreme arrogance.

He likens Job's words to being as a strong wind, claiming him full of pride, and this is the reason that he cannot be persuaded of any personal guilt.

Similar to what we observed in chapter one, when messengers came one by one to inform Job of the loss of all that he owned or cherished, now a similar pattern begins developing when one by one, those who are thought to be Job's friends accuse him of being a sinner. Before it was Eliphaz, now Bildad, and soon it would be Zophar.

*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"—*πολυρῥῆμον 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 either the influence or inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.

What this teaches us is that men may speak a measure of truth, but this does not mean they speak for the Lord. Hence, though Bildad's words are accurate, they are spoken generally, without any actual measure of the Spirit leading him.

*Benson Commentary, Job 8:3*

*Doth God*—Hebrew, אֵל, 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 just, and with his office of governor of the world. *Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*—Hebrew, אֱלֹהִים, *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 before thinking himself able to cast it out of Job's.

The truth is that what he said of Job was actually indicative of himself. The Lord had given him no spiritual right to chastise Job, and it was his own pride and arrogance which prompted 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 their speech contains elements of truth, they do not speak for God.

If a man also lacks divine love, then any other thoughts he may think he possesses of God, or of His reasons for divine judgment cannot be accurate.

Perhaps Job's children had reaped as they had sown, but bringing up their deaths reveals immense spiritual insensitivity on Bildad's part. Truth delivers; it does not injure.

***Romans 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.***

To love fulfills divine law, and as such can only generate good to those around us.

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

***<sup>6</sup> 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 spiritual inspection.

Bildad now claims, not simply by insinuation but by accusation, 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 on Job's part, that prohibited the Lord from answering Job's prayers.

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.

The truth is, near the end of the record the Lord actually does, exactly as Bildad accused Him of not doing here.

*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 any are saved, but only because of divine acts of mercy and grace.

It is also only religious hypocrites who do not know this, and Job surely was not one of these.

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, 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, since no prayer answered by the Lord could ever be based solely on the worthiness of man.

God's throne is a throne of mercy and grace, which is what is necessary to assist those in time of need.

It is because of mercy and not worth that men are delivered, and only when this is truly understood, that true confidence in God can be held.

***Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.***

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, like the Pharisee in Jesus' parable in Luke 18, think themselves worthy to stand in God's holy presence on their own merits, whose belief system is set in stark contrast to the publican in the very same parable, who, repentant of his sinful condition, pleads for divine mercy.

Job was aware, at least to a degree, of the sinner's unholy state. This is seen in the burnt offerings he presented to the Lord on behalf of his children in chapter one. Job's sacrifices reveal his consciousness of sin and the need for its atonement.

What Job knew concerning atonement for sin, was far more than Bildad knew, who assumed he had none.

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

Though Bildad's words would be proven true, they were not because of anything divinely revealed to him by God. It is also common that those who are not led by God's Holy Spirit, and reveal themselves as false prophets, will often prophesy good, when in fact they have not received, nor have been taught anything truly from the

Lord. Examples include the 400 false prophets in I Kings 22:1–38, and Hananiah the false prophet in Jeremiah's time in Jer. 28:1–17.

***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.

The truth is, wisdom is not always found in a former age, or in the lives of our forefathers. Elihu addresses this issue in chapter 32 when he speaks of what length of years should accomplish but seldom do.

***Job 32:7–9 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.  
8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.***

***9 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 experiences of others, that imparts true wisdom. For this there is needed, the *inspiration of the Almighty*.

It is thus only from the Lord and divine revelation that true understanding can enter the sinner's heart.

And though human history does afford some measure of instruction, the truly deep things of both God and life are only discovered through spiritual inspiration.

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

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

Again, Bildad states that present knowledge is insufficient; consequently, men should inquire in the past, if they desire to possess true knowledge.

Ultimately, whatever men actually trust in, is where they will search for life's answers.

Thus, he who trusts in himself, will look within himself as a means to guide his path, even as those who look to others as holding the keys to life, will place their trust in man.

To trust in man though is to depart from God.

It is also not natural wisdom, which is the true source of wisdom; rather, it is that spiritual wisdom which originates from above and is imparted through the Spirit of God.

***Job 8:11–12 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?  
12 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 their time of prosperity will be momentary and shall very quickly wither away.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:11–12*

The word “rush” here (goam) גֹּמֶה *gôme'* denotes properly a bulrush, and especially the Egyptian papyrus (puh-PIE-russ)—*papyrus Nilotica*; see the notes at Isaiah 18:2. It is derived from the verb (GAH-mah) גָּמַח *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 (ah-HOO) אֶחָז *'âchû*, flag, says (Je-sen-ee-us) 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. . . .

*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 accuse Job of only possessing outward religion, and that Job was in fact a hypocrite at heart. From Bildad's puerile perspective, Job's life had crashed because of the insincerity of his faith.

Job's life, he concludes, was like that of marshy plants, which can endure only in the wet season, when there is sufficient moisture to keep them alive, but in times of drought, will soon wither away.

And though it is true that the hypocrite's hope will perish, this surely would not be Job's end.

As for hypocrisy, God's Word teaches us that its roots stretch deep into man's past, all the way back to his beginning. Hence, even in the time of Job, religious hypocrisy was as present, prevalent, and pervasive as it is today.

Yet, Job was not such a hypocrite as Bildad implied.

In truth, if there existed religious hypocrisy, it would be found in Bildad, long before it could ever be either discovered or proved to be in Job.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:13*

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 concerning Job was not true, what he spoke of the hypocrite's end surely is.

Hypocrisy is that ostentatious behavior in man, wherein God is honored, but the heart remains estranged from Him.

Ultimately, the hypocrite's actions are purposed to please men, since it is from them that hypocrites desire to gain their true recognition.

The hypocrite also, blind to the true reality of the Lord, will set about to live his religious life seeking to gain both praise and acclaim for himself.

Hypocrites are worshipers of themselves who, remain ignorant of any true knowledge of God, as well as the divine judgment awaiting them.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 8:13*

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 when other creatures far stronger than it pass through its web, but cannot because of the weak silk it is made of. Such then is the hypocrite's life, Bildad reasons, which cannot stand up to life's trials because of 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.

Bildad continues with another comparison, and 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.***

Such is the end of the hypocrite, that even the earth which was the cradle of his birth, will one day disassociate itself from him.

*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 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. 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 confirm this future reality.

(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, that all false worshipers shall 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 and uprightness of heart will inherit the earth. This was God's promise to Israel, and it shall be fulfilled.

There is no lasting and substantial hope for any who do not love, obey, and keep the Lord's commandments out of a sincere and pure heart, but instead feign obedience to God, though their hearts are actually far from Him.

***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 reality, and though the words spoken again contain some truth, they are once more in error concerning Job.

It is amazing, as it will always be with the merely religious, that they can hold the truth, but the truth does not hold them: that though they have had exposure to God, they have no idea how their limited spiritual knowledge should be properly applied to either their own lives, or the lives of others.

*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. Bildad's words are not nearly as harsh as the judgments he uttered concerning hypocrites, but they are not based on any known wisdom on his part.

God has not revealed to Bildad Job's end, and it was presumptuous for him to think he knew it.

In the end, Bildad could (at least he thought) identify Job's sin, but he could not (as his words prove) help deliver Job from it.

Sadly, it takes very little wisdom to perceive sin in others—it is abundant, and can be observed quite easily. What is difficult, and will require divine assistance, is to find an escape from sin, and not simply utter words of condemnation, which in the end also will only result in bringing condemnation upon ourselves.