

Bildad, the Bonehead

Job 8

In Job 8 Bildad takes his turn to bash Job further into the ground. [Being a “Shuhite” he was shorter than another small man in the Bible—Knee-High, my-ah.]



Bildad’s counsel is not any better than Eliphaz, maybe worse. Bildad sticks the knife of criticism into Job and then twists it a little.

Job opened himself up to criticism by his complaining in previous chapters.

I. **The coldness of Bildad’s accusations** (vs. 1-7).

A. Having heard Job’s confession and complaint—*“I have sinned... why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?”*—Bildad asked, *“How long wilt thou speak these things?”*

Job, are you accusing God of being unjust???

- Since Job called Eliphaz’s words just “wind” (6:26), Bildad counters by accusing Job of being a ‘wind-bad.’

➡ **Three ifs** (vs. 4-6):

B. Bildad suggests Job’s children were killed because they sinned (v. 4)!

- This is hitting Job “below the belt.” What a boneheaded thing to say! Bildad was not only wrong, it was cruel and unkind to say such a thing at that moment! It would like going to a grieving parent whose children were just killed in a car accident and say, “Your kids were killed because they sinned against God.” How could anyone be so uncaring?

C. “Job, **IF** you prayed earlier, everything would be OK” (vs. 5-6).

1. Job did seek the Lord and make supplication to Him (1:5). It is a mistake to believe praying will always make your situation better or prosperous. Prayer, for the present, may *not* change anything. Things may get worse before it gets better!
2. At this point Job thought that even if God did answer, he would doubt the answer was really from the Lord (9:15-16).

- D. “Job, **IF** you were as pure and upright as you claim, God would hear your prayer and restore you. You must be hiding something. Job, your continued suffering is evidence you must be a hypocrite” (cf. 8:13). [God does restore Job, but not “ .”]
- The truth is, Job was upright before God (1:8, 20).

➡ vs. 6b-7—True. Things usually start out small and gradually increase towards the end of a person who lives right (churches, finances, knowledge, families, etc.)

➡ vs. 6-7—Bildad will eat his words, for this is exactly what will happen to Job (Job 42:10).

II. **The basis of Bildad’s assumption.**

➡ **He bases his case against Job on three things:**

A. THEOLOGY—An appeal to the theological truth of God’s justice—*“Doth God pervert judgment?”* (v. 3 cf. vs 13, 20, 22). The obvious answer is of course not (Gen. 18:25).

➡ Bildad assumed Job’s suffering was God’s judgment on his sin. God would be perverting His justice to judge Job for something he was not guilty of. Bildad is blind-as-bat concerning what was really behind Job’s suffering. It was not sin!

1. Much of what Bildad said was true (vs. 3, 7, 9, 11-20).

- Bildad was theologically right, but his application to Job was totally wrong.
- In his zeal to defend the justice of God—which needs no defending—Bildad forgot all about the grace and mercy of God.
- Some Christians have just enough *vertical theology* to make them *horizontally dangerous*. When you have a friend who is undergoing great pain, our primary objective should be to extend comfort, not expound theology. Theology has its place in a classroom or pulpit, but not at someone’s sickbed. Bildad has poor bedside manners.

2. Truth must be spoken in love (Eph. 4:15). Bildad failed miserably in that respect. He demonstrated no love for Job.

➡ When God exercises judgment, it is done in love.

- Habakkuk prayed, “...*in wrath remember mercy*” (Hab. 3:2).
- Lamentations 3:32—...*though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.*
- Psalms 78:38—*But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*

- B. TRADITION (8:8-10). This is Bildad’s response to Job’s request “*Teach me...*” (6:24).

1. Bildad is saying Job has forgotten how God dealt with sinners in the past (“*the former age*”—The flood.¹) Doesn’t God’s nature demand sin to be judged? The answer is yes. God does judge sinners. God does not allow sin to go unpunished.

➡ BUT, Job is not suffering because of sin!

2. It is always wise to seek to learn from those who have gone on before you (Dt. 32:7; 44:1).

- C. NATURE (8:11-19). Believing Job is a hypocrite, Bildad uses three examples from nature to illustrate hypocrisy.

1. **The need for water.** Nature teaches plants will perish without water. If a plant dries up, it is because it is lost contact with its water supply.
 - Job is the plant and water was God’s blessing of prosperity that gave him hope.
 - Likewise a hypocrite’s hope will perish when his prosperity is cut off (8:11-13). “Job, when you lost your wealth,

¹ This dates Job to the time after Noah’s flood. In “*the former age*,” prior to Noah’s flood, people lived over 900 years. Therefore their accumulated knowledge was greater than in Job’s time. This explains v. 9.

you lost your hope, because you were trusting in material things instead of God.”

2. **The weakness of a web.** Trusting in one’s wealth is as weak as a spider web (8:14-15). Bildad is implying Job’s security was in his house that has caved in.
3. **The refilling of a void** (vs. 16-19). Nature abhors a vacuum. Root out one plant, and another will rise up to take its place — Bildad is saying “Job, God is uprooting you, so someone else can fill your place.

III. **The conclusion of Bildad’s argument** (8:20-22).

Verses 20-22 are “syntaious” sayings—euphemisms that everyone accepts as being true, but they don’t solve or prove anything (e.g. 1 John 4:4; Rom. 8:28). It is an expression of a truth that has been repeated over and over again, but changes nothing in a practical sense.

- A. *“God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers.”* True, but misapplied to Job. God has not cast Job aside because he was not perfect and done evil. Of course this is not true (see 1:8).
- B. *“Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing”* (v. 21). True. God fills the righteous with joy. However, Bildad concludes Job’s lack of joy is because Job is wicked. Otherwise, he’d be laughing.
 - Living righteously does not exempt one from afflictions and sadness—*“Many are the afflictions of the righteous”* (Ps. 34:19). There is a time for laughing and weeping.
- C. *“They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought”* (v. 22). True. The wicked **do** hate the righteous. They eventually will be brought to shame and their *“dwelling place...shall come to nought.”* But applying this to Job as proof that he was wicked is a false conclusion.

SUMMATION: What Bildad said was true, but it was spoken with a “judgmental attitude.” The bottom line: **No one** knows why a righteous man suffers! Therefore, what should you and I do?

1. Pray for the person suffering.
2. Only open your mouth to comfort and encourage, not to explain. Otherwise keep it shut.