

Having considered Eliphaz's first speech and Job's response, we come this morning to the first speech of Job's second friend, Bildad. If there's any evident difference between Eliphaz and Bildad it's that, Bildad is willing to push the accusations a little further than Eliphaz. Most of what Eliphaz said was suggestive; Bildad is outright accusatory (he's much bolder in his assertions).

And yet, as we learned from Eliphaz, all that Bildad says is right in the letter of it, though wrongly applied in the spirit of it. That is, on the surface what he says is true. If we merely read Job 8 without any knowledge of the context or the inferences he's making, we would find nothing wrong in these 22 verses.

John Calvin—"In order to get the most out of what this present chapter contains, we need to remember what we have already said, namely, that Job's friends, while pleading a bad case, nonetheless offer worthy arguments and good reasons. It is true they misapply them, but the teaching in and of itself is noble and useful. Consequently, when we consider on the whole what is said here, we will find some noteworthy statements."

I. An Accusation (vv1-10)

II. A Description (vv11-18)

III. An Observation (vv19-22)

I. An Accusation (vv1-10)

1. Bildad's basic accusation is this—if Job were truly innocent, none of the things would have happened to him.
2. V2—"How long will you speak these things, and the words of your mouth be like a strong (mighty) wind?"
3. It's likely that Bildad is referring both to Job's words back in chapter 3 as well as his response to Eliphaz.
4. He accuses Job of speaking words like "strong wind"—words that were proud, noisy, and boisterous.
5. Albert Barnes—"His language of complaint and murmuring was like a tempest. It swept over all barriers, and disregarded all restraint."
6. V3—"Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice?" Doesn't God always act just?
7. I take Bildad to mean—"Wasn't God just for how He treated you? Are you suggesting He dealt with you unfairly?"
8. "If you were innocent none of these things would have happened to you. God's judgment proves guilt."
9. He then applies this principle to his children (v4), to Job himself (vv5-7), and to former ages (vv8-10).
10. (1) His children, v4—"If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgression."
11. This statement is terribly insensitive—to suggest Job's sons died because of personal sin is simply a guess.
12. Was it possible that Job's sons were great sinners? Yes. But there's no clear evidence this was the case.
13. Bildad assumes they were sinners because they were cut off—this proves they were secret (open) sinners.
14. (2) Job himself, v5—"If you would earnestly seek God" v6—"If you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you, and prosper your rightful dwelling place."

15. In other words, if Job would really be innocent and would humbly seek God, He would prosper His household.
16. Bildad believed in what's called "the prosperity gospel"—that physical blessings always reflect personal piety.
17. This way, the absence of physical blessings indicated the lack of personal piety; the two are always connected.
18. Thus, if Job were truly pure and upright, he would seek God, and God would respond by prospering him.
19. (3) Former ages, v8—"For inquire, please, of the former age, and consider the things discovered by their fathers."
20. Here Bildad appeals to former ages—it's as if he says—What I'm telling you is universally believed by others.
21. It was taught by the former age (the previous one), and their fathers (the ages that come before that).
22. Bildad acknowledges that he and Job knew nothing, but needed to lean upon the collective teaching of the past.
23. Now while he meant this as a reinforcement to his argument, it provides with a very important principle.
24. Every generation would be wise to consider the collective wisdom of the generations that came before.
25. Thus, what do we say to Bildad's strong accusation? Two things: (a) physical prosperity isn't always tied to personal piety.
26. If this were true, then those with the greatest outward prosperity, would of necessity have the greatest inward piety.
27. And, those with the least outward prosperity, would of necessity have the least inward piety—simply put, the wealthiest would of necessity be the holiest.
28. But Scripture just doesn't support these claims—there's no necessary tie between outward blessings and inward piety.
29. For example, Scripture at times describes wicked and evil men as having great riches and possessions
30. Jonathan Edwards (1741) once preached a sermon entitled – Those Whom God Hates, He Oftentimes Gives Plenty of Earthly Things To.
31. His text was Gen.27:39 (the words of Isaac to Esau)—"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above."
32. Again, this is the error of the prosperity gospel, that believes it's God's will for every Christian to be healthy and wealthy.
33. Thus, the absence of health and wealth indicates, you've done something to hinder these blessings of God.
34. What do we say about it? Well, a large part of the problem is, most people don't know how to relate the Old and New Covenants together.
35. The OC made with physical Israel was a national covenant that promised physical blessings based on obedience.
36. These outward and physical blessings typified or shadowed spiritual and eternal blessings (possession of the land and deliverance from enemies).
37. Deut.29:9—"Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do."
38. To the extent they kept the words of that covenant, they would possess the land and know external peace.

39. But brethren, these things merely shadowed the spiritual and inward blessings that come from the NC.
40. It's for this reason, the OC had an earthliness to it—there was physical land, deliverance, and blessings.
41. Now, this in no way suggests the OC people of God didn't have spiritual and inward blessings, but they didn't have these by virtue of the OC.
42. Every spiritual blessing enjoyed by the OC people of God was in virtue of Christ and His new and better covenant.
43. By the way, neither does this deny God blesses His NC people with physical blessings, but it simply affirms, the blessings of the OC were physical and temporal, and the blessings of the NC are spiritual and internal.
44. Furthermore, the NT Scriptures make very clear, that relatively few rich and famous people are called.
45. Jas.2:5—"Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"
46. (b) Spiritual prosperity is almost always tied to personal piety—by spiritual prosperity I mean joy and peace.
47. Notice I said, spiritual prosperity is *almost always* tied to personal piety because there might be times when God sovereignly withholds these for a variety of reasons.
48. This is true in the case of Job—Job was blameless and upright and yet, he obviously lacked peace and joy.
49. Isa.50:10—"Who among you fears the LORD? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God."
50. To "walk in darkness and have no light" doesn't refer to moral darkness—these people fear and obey God.
51. But to "walk in darkness and have no light" refer to the lack of joy and gladness—to walk without the sense of God's presence.
52. Notice what God tells them to do—"Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely upon his God"—trust God even though you have no present light (joy and peace).
53. But ordinarily, spiritual prosperity (joy and peace) is intimately connected with inward piety and purity.
54. Prov.13:4—"The soul of a lazy *man* desires, and *has* nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich."
55. Everyone wants to be rich, but few people want to work; everyone wants to be fit, but few want to exercise.
56. So too, everyone wants a healthy marriage, but few want to work at it, and everyone wants peace and joy, but few want to labor for purity.
57. Peace and joy (what I'm calling spiritual prosperity) aren't to be sought as an end in itself—they are the result of purity of heart.
58. A pure heart enjoys peace and joy, and thus, if you desire peace and joy you must labor for a pure heart.
59. In this sense, v6 is very true—"If you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you, and prosper your rightful dwelling place."
60. He would bless and prosper your soul with all manner of spiritual blessings (such as peace, joy, and contentment).

## II. A Description (vv11-18)

1. Verses 11-18 describe the tragic end of the hypocrite (he uses three illustrations – a papyrus, spider's web, and a vine.
2. (1) A papyrus (vv11-13a)—papyrus and reeds are similar if not identical—they both live in or near water.
3. The point being, there's no way they can live without it—they will soon wither before any other plant.
4. V13—"So are the paths of all who forget God"—this is the sober application of the prior illustration.
5. Just as a reed starts off green, it soon withers because it has no water—"so are the paths of all who forget God."
6. By "paths" is meant "a person's life"—the path or life of a hypocrite starts green but it quickly withers.
7. (2) A spider's web (vv13b-15)—"and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, whose confidence shall be cut off, and whose trust is a spider's web."
8. Here we learn at the heart of true hope is confidence or trust—these three words are closely connected.
9. Wherever our hope is, so is our confidence and trust—we place our hope in that which we trust (hope = trust).
10. The hope (confidence or trust) of the hypocrite shall perish, because it's weak, just as a spider's web.
11. Let's say you lost your balance and you're about to fall over, and you reach out to lean on a spider's web.
12. A spider's web is not able to save him, and so too, that which the hypocrite trusts is not able to save him.
13. What is the hope, confidence, or trust of the hypocrite but his own merit! He ultimately trusts in himself.
14. V15—"He leans on his house (that is the hypocrite), but it does not stand. He holds it fast, but it does not endure."
15. The two phrases "to lean" and "hold fast" are two common OT ways to describe the nature of true faith.
16. The point being—the hypocrite will trust in his house, which will prove as reliable as a spider's web.
17. Thus, by "house" is meant possessions and wealth (his physical house) or his works and merit (his spiritual house – as our Savior described those who built their house on sand).
18. (3) A vine (vv16-18)—Bildad includes a third illustration to describe the plight or dilemma of the hypocrite.
19. Verses 16-18 describes a vine with many branches, but who's roots wrap around rocks and find no soil.
20. V18—"If he is destroyed from his place (the vine), then it will deny him, saying, 'I have not seen you.'"
21. That is, soon after the vine perishes in the rocks, the very place it dwelt, will have little evidence of its existence.
22. The same is true of the hypocrite, who when he is gone will be forgotten; he will have left little behind.
23. In summarizing this 2<sup>nd</sup> section, Bildad has provided a very clear description of a hypocrite (and though this isn't true of Job, it is true of many people).
24. And so, as we consider three marks of a hypocrite, let us examine ourselves to ensure they're not true of us either.

25. (a) He forgets God—this is really fundamental—a hypocrite is someone who slowly loses sight of God.
26. They may start off on fire! They love to discuss religious things! They attend all the meetings of the church.
27. But over months and years they slowly begin to forget something—they gradually begin to forget God.
28. They don't first forget morality! No, they can live a strict life. They still outwardly live a decent life.
29. They don't first forget doctrine! No, they can still talk about theology. They can still debate the truth.
30. But in the midst of all this, they begin to forget God! They talk about morality and theology but rarely God.
31. Let me say something at this point that's very profound—it's impossible to live the Christian life without God.
32. We go to church but we forget God; we read our Bibles but we forget God; we teach our children but we forget God.
33. John Calvin—"We will not, then, forget God, for we will acknowledge that we have to receive all good things from His hand because we, for our part, possess none of them. But those who trust in their own qualities, those who think they improve themselves by their own efforts, those who somehow think that it all depends on them, they are the ones who forget God."
34. John Calvin—"Our true memory of God is in feeling that all our being lies in Him, that we must look for salvation only in Him, and that without His goodness and mercy we can but go to hell. Not to remember that, then, is what it means to forget God."
35. (b) He has no root in himself, Matt.13:20—"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while."
36. When Jesus says "he has no root in himself" it means, there's no root in him that goes into the ground.
37. There's no vital and saving relationship between his soul and the soil of God's grace as found in Christ.
38. This is why a hypocrite simply cannot walk in heart obedience to the law of God—he's not rooted in the truth or in Christ.
39. Again, he may give the appearance of obedience—"He grows green in the sun, and his branches spread out in his garden."
40. But he unable to bear the fruit of the Spirit, because he doesn't have the Spirit, as he doesn't have Christ.
41. (c) His confidence will fail—this ultimately refers to the final day—the day he stands before God (this takes place in two stages – at death and the final judgment).
42. That which he trusts will in those two instances fail him—they will prove as helpless as a spider's web.
43. But to be more specific—what does the hypocrite trust in? First, he may trust in his outward possessions, Prov.11:28—"He who trusts in his riches will fall."
44. Second, he may trust in his personal gifts and abilities, Matt.7:22—"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'"
45. Third, he may trust in his own morality, Rom.2:17—"you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God."
46. But either way, he's in for a very rude awakening—all of his possessions, gifts and abilities, and merit are all but a spider's web.

47. Though he may lean on these, they will not sustain him—they will prove no stronger than a spider's web.
48. But in contrast to the hypocrite, the poor Christian never fully forgets God, has roots in the truth and Christ, and places all of His confidence in the person and work of Christ.
49. 1Tim.1:1—" Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope."

### III. An Observation (vv19-22)

1. In these final verses, Bildad provides a basic observation—God blesses the way and life of the blameless.
2. V19—"Behold, this is the joy of His way, and out of the earth others will grow"—the meaning of this verse is unclear.
3. One of the biggest problems is that many of the older interpreters, understand the "his" to refer to the hypocrite.
4. They understand the verse like this—"Behold, this is the joy of the hypocrite, and other hypocrites will replace him."
5. But the new translations, such as the NKJV and NASB, capitalize the "His" because it refers to God.
6. This fits the remaining context and helps us understand v19—"Behold, this is the joy of His way, and out of the earth others will grow (that is, the blameless, in contrast to lifeless and withered hypocrite)."
7. In other words—within vv19-22, Bildad contrasts how God blesses the righteous but shames the wicked.
8. V19—"Behold, this is the joy of His way"—this is the joy God bestows on those who walk in His way.
9. (1) He will never cast you away, v20—"Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers."
10. (2) He will fill you with laughter, v21—"He will yet fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing."
11. (3) He will shame your enemies, v22—"Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing."
12. Now again, as I've said before, while these three things are true, it's unclear what Bildad meant by them.
13. Thus, in closing I want to answer this question—in what way did Bildad intend these final statements?
14. (a) As an encouragement—that is, he described the joyful and blessed way of God to encourage Job.
15. I personally find it difficult to believe, after all that Bildad has said (or implied) he ends his first speech by encouraging Job.
16. (b) As a motivation—that is, Bildad spoke these final words to motivate Job to repent and enjoy them.
17. This view is more possible—having spoken about the benefits of purity and the dangerous of hypocrisy, he now exhorts him to pursue the one, shun the other, and enjoy the blessings.
18. (c) As a judgment—that is, Bildad spoke these final words not to help Job, but to wound and hurt Job.
19. Matt.27:43—"He trusts in God; let God deliver Him"—the fact that He's suffering, means He's a sinner (this is again, fundamentally what Bildad said of Job—because you are suffering who must be a sinner).