

Bildad Speaks

Chapter Eight

Bildad

- Bildad based his argument upon the false logic of the tradition of man. He reasons from the past to the present.
- “For inquire, please, of bygone ages, and consider what the fathers have searched out. For we are but of yesterday and know nothing, for our days on earth are a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding?”- **Job 8:8-10**
- “Behold, God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers.”-**Job 8:20**
- Based upon the traditional view, Job must be guilty of a serious sin because God has shown in the past that He is just and punishes sinners and not the righteous.

- In Bildad's view, the way it has been is the way it always should be.
- God punished sinners at the Flood and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
- According to Bildad, tradition is the only way we can truly understand God and our relationship to Him.
- The statement, “those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat” is true but the fact that something was written, done, or said in the past does not necessarily make it true.

- “Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.” He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’”

- But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: "'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" -**Matthew 15:1-9**
- "You may be as orthodox as the devil, and as wicked." -John Wesley

- The traditions that are formed by the past can be helpful to guide us but extremely harmful if the tradition is elevated above the Word of God.
- Tradition and Traditionalism are not the same thing.
- Tradition is a framework in which we use to give our lives direction as we interact with others in any given culture.
- Traditionalism is the idolizing of tradition which eventually expresses itself in rigid adherence to rules and regulation formed by the tradition itself.
- “Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”-Pelikan

Job 8:1-7

“Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: ‘How long will you say these things, and the words of your mouth be a great wind? Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right? If your children have sinned against him, he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.

If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy, if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation. And though your beginning was small, your latter days will be very great.”

Bildad Rebukes Job's Words

- Bildad asks Job, “How long will you say these things...”.
- Bildad now rebukes Job for Job’s rebuked of Eliphaz, who originally rebuked Job.
- Bildad is a person who is more blunt and direct towards Job not as refined as Eliphaz.
- He calls Job’s complaining as being a great big blow-hard.

- "Bildad is objective and analytical in his speech about God and man. As a result he is a neat but superficial thinker. He is a moralist, and in his simple theology everything can be explained in terms of two kinds of men—the blameless (tam, verse 20a; used of Job in 1:1) and the secretly wicked (hanep, verse 13b). Outwardly the same, God distinguishes them by prospering the one and destroying the other." -Anderson
- If Eliphaz strikes us as the most refined member of this group, comparatively flexible and sophisticated, then Bildad the Shuhite comes across as the staunch, ramrod traditionalist, the one who sees all issues in black and white and who prides himself on his straightforward, no-nonsense approach."-Mason

Bildad's View Of Justice

- Bildad's confidence is in the justice of God.
- Bildad argues that if God is Just, and He acts towards man with justice, then God must punish injustice.
- Bildad coldly and wrongly uses Job's children for his defense of God being just and for an example of God's practice of justice.

- “If your children have sinned against him, he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.”- **Job 8:4**
- Bildad's heartless comment about the death of Job's children and his use of their death to defend his theology demonstrates his lack of understanding of God's character.
- This would have assuredly sliced at Job's heart for his children's salvation was a deep concern for Job since he would rise early and make a sacrifice for each of his children just in case they may have sinned in their heart's against God (Job 1:5).

- Bildad believes that Job is deserving of the same fate as his children if he doesn't repent of his sins.
- Although Job was suffering God has not claimed Job's life as He did with his children which Bildad views as God's mercy.
- Bildad appeals to Job to, "...seek God and plead with the almighty for mercy...".

- The context seems to indicate that Bildad did not believe Job to be blameless for he says, “...if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation.”-**Job 8:6**
- This a very deceiving philosophy that Bildad is using: If a person is right with God, then God is obligated, based on a person’s behavior, to bring that person prosperity.

Increase Abundantly

- Bildad expresses to Job that if he would get right with God, God would restore Job to his “rightful habitation” and bring Job abundance in his “latter days”.
- “He wished to prove that Job could not possibly be an upright man, for if he were so, he here affirms that his prosperity would increase continually.”-Spurgeon
- Bildad is correct in that God will restore and bring increase to Job in his latter days however it is not because Job is righteous but because of the grace and mercy of God.

- God always desires the best for man and often times does bless people with material prosperity and physical health as part of His good gifts He has for us.
- This prosperity and health are promised as an ultimate destiny for all who believe in His name.
- In this present world sometimes God, according to His all-wise plan for our lives, will use a lack of material prosperity and physical ailment to get people to humble themselves and seek Him in faith and trust as in Job's case.

Job 8:8-10

“For inquire, please, of bygone ages, and consider what the fathers have searched out. For we are but of yesterday and know nothing, for our days on earth are a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding?”

Inquire Of The Fathers

- Bildad instructed Job to seek the knowledge passed down from ancient fathers who, according to Bildad, teach that God is just; sinners get punished and the righteous get prosperity.
- Ancient Biblical history contradicts Bildad's theology which is often the case when man thinks they know more than God.
- The Bible does not teach a connection between righteousness and blessing.
- In the book of Genesis, at the beginning of time, Abel was righteous but was rewarded with being murdered by his brother Cain.

- “ Righteous are you, O LORD, when I complain to you; yet I would plead my case before you. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all who are treacherous thrive?”-**Jeremiah 12:1**
- “For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For they have no pangs until death; their bodies are fat and sleek. They are not in trouble as others are; they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.”-**Psalm 73:3-5**

Life Is Transitory

- Bildad tells Job that he believes man needs the tradition of the ancient fathers to guide him because life is transitory and man knows nothing.
- The teachings of the ancient fathers may or may not have been true but often the problem is not with the teaching but the misinterpretation of the truth contained within the teaching.
- “To be sure, we can today learn from the past, but the past must be a rudder to guide us into the future and not an anchor to hold us back. The fact that something was said years ago is no guarantee that it is right. The past contains as much folly as wisdom.”-Wiersbe

- Paul said there are people in this world who are “always learning and never able to arrive at knowledge of the truth.”-2 Timothy 3:7
- Paul also said that teachers will teach “...a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness... these teachers, “...are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.”-1 Timothy 6:3,5

Job 8:11-18

“Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh? Can reeds flourish where there is no water? While yet in flower and not cut down, they wither before any other plant. Such are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of the godless shall perish. His confidence is severed, and his trust is a spider’s web.”

“He leans against his house, but it does not stand; he lays hold of it, but it does not endure. He is a lush plant before the sun, and his shoots spread over his garden. His roots entwine the stone heap; he looks upon a house of stones. If he is destroyed from his place, then it will deny him, saying, ‘I have never seen you.’”

Evidence From Creation

- Bildad uses the law of cause and effect in creation to bolster his argument of the ancient fathers against Job.
- If the law of cause and effect applies in creation then it must also apply in human life as well.
- Bildad uses a papyrus plant as an example. If the plant doesn't receive water it withers and dies.

- Job is withering and dying so there must be a cause:
Job is a hypocrite with a mere show of faith without true trust in God.
- Job according to Bildad has forgotten God and is on the path to destruction.
- When men forget God and His sustaining grace they sink deeper into a desperate state of hopelessness and perish like the reed without water.

The Spider's Web

- A man who forgets God has his confidence broken like a man leaning up against a spider's web.
- A spider spins a web, works diligently to secure it, only to have it easily torn to pieces in a moment as the spider falls. So is the man who trusts in anything other than God for his confidence.
- Bildad is more than likely implying that Job had depended on the confidence of his innocence but since his house had collapsed and all his children were gone it demonstrated that Job was guilty.

Job's Roots

- Job's life was like the “lush plant” flourishing in the sun only to have its roots tangled in stones.
- A good plant is not pulled up for no reason so there had to be something wrong with Job for God to uproot him.
- Something had happened to Job's roots and sin was the cause in Bildad's interpretation.

Job 8:19-22

“Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the soil others will spring. Behold, God will not reject a blameless man, nor take the hand of evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with shouting. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the tent of the wicked will be no more.”

Job Needs To Repent

- Bildad's basic message was the same as Eliphaz: Job could once again come to a place of **Joy** and **laughing** if he would repent and turn to God again.
- Bildad reminded Job of God's integrity and assured him that God would restore him if he would only repent.
- "In his simple theology everything can be explained in terms of two kinds of men – the blameless (*tam*, Job 8:20a; used of Job in 1:1) and the secretly wicked (*hanep*, Job 8:13b). Outwardly the same, God distinguishes them by prospering the one and destroying the other." -Andersen

- “People with problems get little help from rigid, closed-minded Bildads who refuse to reevaluate their theories in the light of new evidence but simply reaffirm traditional answers. We must always stay open to new evidence, new insights, and the possibility that not only we ourselves but those we follow may have interpreted the facts incorrectly.”-Constable