
Job 8

Job 8:1–22

Introduction: Job 8 introduces the person of Bildad. Not everyone who is successful in business is a genius. In fact, those who are successful, while not of a low IQ, also often do not possess an unusually high IQ. Bildad was one of these. Most of his Hebrew is simple—we don't have to spend as much time examining the Hebrew or other translations; and his points are fairly simple. During the latter half of the chapter, he had memorized a short poem, which he thought was applicable, and went off on somewhat of a rambling and in-eloquent analogy. His points are simple: God is righteous and God does not reject those who are spiritually mature who have personal integrity and God will not continually prosper recalcitrants. However, what God will do is temporarily prosper a man who lacks integrity and then remove it from him; then will the place where he made his stamp in the world come to a point where it no longer even knows him. Furthermore, this is not just Bildad's opinion—this is the opinion of scholars and intellects from the past. So, where Eliphaz appealed to this dream or vision of his as his authority, Bildad will point back to the opinion of the generations of the past—to the wisdom of those before them. Their conclusions will be quite similar. Their conclusions show us that the basis of their opinions are worthless—if what you appeal to as truth leads you to false conclusions, then it is a false footing, a broken rung in a ladder. In Geometry, in order to prove that something is false, we often assume that it is true and show how this assumption leads us to a conclusion which is clearly false. That means that our supposition of the truth of this premise statement was incorrect to begin with. That which is false will produce that which is false. Therefore, these two observations reveal a need in man: to what do you appeal when you have a question, a problem, a problem or if your world has just collapsed around you? Eliphaz looks to a past vision, Bildad looks to a former generation. This book of Job shows the absolute need of man to have something solid that they can go to—something upon which they can depend. Man requires a reference point, a rock of stability, a source of truth, something which holds all things in their proper perspective. God has given this to us in His Word.

Barnes: *[Bildad] is more severe and less argumentative than Eliphaz. Jahn, as quoted by the editor of the Pictorial Bible, thus characterizes him: "Bildad, less discerning and less polished than Eliphaz, breaks out at into accusations against Job, and increase in vehemence as he proceeds. In the end, however, he is reduced to a mere repetition of his former arguments."...There is evidently much harshness in the language, and much severity of reproof. He pursues substantially the same line of argumentation which Eliphaz had commenced, but he does it with much more severity. He takes it for granted, that the children of Job had sinned, and that they had been cut off on account of their crimes. Assuming that Job and his family had been guilty of great sins, the drift of the discourse is to exhort him to repent and to humble himself before God.*¹

Several commentators note that Eliphaz and Bildad begin their speeches to Job in very different ways. Eliphaz begins by saying, "If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking?" (Job 4:1). Bildad's first words will be: "Until what point will you speak these things? And the utterances of your mouth are but a mighty wind." (Job 8:2). Eliphaz is characterized as more gentle and tactful whereas Bildad is then spoken of as blunt and harsh. This is true in part, but one of the reasons for their different approach has to do with the relative intelligence of Eliphaz and Bildad. Their opinions about the condition of Job are pretty much the same. Job has sinned—nobody knows exactly what it is that Job has done, but clearly he has sinned—and they are looking to Job to repent of this sin and to return to God. However, Eliphaz is much brighter than Bildad; he has a better vocabulary, and is able to express himself therefore more eloquently. Bildad is more like the bull in the China shop. This is not to say that Bildad is a stupid man. Bildad is certainly a person of above average intelligence. He would be a "B" student who often worked for that "B." He is a successful business man whose success is predicated on hard work and pre-planning on his part. However, Bildad is one of those people that you must show him how to do it and then he will do it; what he knows, he learned out of a book. He can go from point A to point B, IF he has a road map. There is nothing wrong with this—we are all born with the intelligence that we are born with. There is no inherent merit or goodness than may be ascribed to us because we have great intelligence. I only present this side of Bildad so that you understand that he is not necessarily more cruel than

¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 196.

Eliphaz; he just lacks the complex vocabulary and the way with words to couch his thoughts in euphemistic nuances.

Scofield: *Bildad bases his counsel to Job upon tradition (vv. 8–10). His discourse abound in proverbs and pious platitudes which, though true enough, are known to everyone (9:1–3; 13:2). They are superficial and shed no light on 's problem.*²

Outline of Chapter 8:

- Vv. 1–7 **Bildad states his basic position and encourages Job to seek God**
- Vv. 8–10 **Bildad appeals to the knowledge of past generations**
- Vv. 11–18 **Bildad quotes a poem**
- Vv. 19–22 **Bildad interprets this poem and explains how God deals with the righteous and the corrupt**

Charts:

- v. 22 **A Summary of the Shortcomings of Bildad's Thinking**
- v. 22 **A Summary of the Points Made by Bildad**

Bildad States His Basic Position and Encourages Job to Seek God

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said, Job 8:1 **Then Bildad the Shuhite spoke up, saying,**

This is the first time that we have seen Bildad. Thieme pointed out that Bildad had the most superficial observations of life.

<p>“Until what point will you speak these things? And a wind of might the utterances of your mouth.</p>	Job 8:2	<p>“How long will you continue speaking? Your little speech was so much hot air.</p>
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It is hard to even fathom these as being the first words out of Bildad’s mouth. Job has poured out his heart to them, has explained how horrible his position is, and Bildad quickly informs Job that he is just flat out tired of listening to him. This is actually somewhat of a play on words, mocking what Job had said earlier. **“Teach me and I will be silent; and show me how I have erred. Honest words are not painful...Do you intend to reprove my words when the word of one in despair belong to the wind?”** (Job 6:24–25a, 26).

This verse begins with a preposition *ʿad* (אד) [pronounced *gad*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until, while*. Strong’s #5704 BDB #723. It is followed by the adverb *ʾân* (אן) [pronounced *awn*], which means *where*; with regards to time it means *to what point*; with *ʿad*, it means *how long*. Strong’s #575 BDB #33 (because this is contracted from *ʾayin* (אין) [pronounced *AH-yin*]).

The verb is the Piel imperfect of *mâlal* (לל) [pronounced *maw-LAHL*], which appears to be three different words in the Hebrew. This verb is used five times to mean *utter, speak* (Gen. 21:7 Job 8:2 33:3 Psalm 106:2). Strong’s #4448 BDB #576.

The object of the verb is the adjective *ʾêlleh* (לה) [pronounced *EEHL-leh*] and it means *these*; which is used as a substantive, and therefore means *these things*. Strong’s #428 BDB #41.

² *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; C.I. Scofield, D.D.; Oxford University Press, ©1967, p. 577.

We have the wâw conjunction and the construct of rūwach (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], means *wind, breath, spirit, apparition*. Here, it means *wind*. Strong's #7307 BDB #924. Both the Syriac and the Arabic codices render this as “the spirit of pride fills your mouth”; and the Septuagint reads: “The spirit of your mouth is profuse of words.” However, *wind* is the correct reading and understanding. The Chaldean codex gives us the better notion of what is found here, rendering this *a great tempest*. According to Bildad, Job’s complaining was like a great wind, empty of substance but powerful sounding. Barnes wrote: *His language of complaint and murmuring was like a tempest. It swept over all barriers, and disregarded all restraint.*³

This is followed by the adjective kâbbîyr (כַּבִּיֵּר) [pronounced *kab-BEER*], which is rendered *great, mighty, strong* by the various translators. This word is found only in poetry (Job, six times and Isaiah, four times), and is rendered *strong, much, most, mighty, many* in the KJV. It is similar to the noun *glory*. In general, it means *great, mighty*; with regards to quantity, it means *much, many*. Strong's #3524 BDB #460.

The second line continues with the substantive ʿōmer (אֹמֶר) [pronounced *OH-mer*] and it means *speech, word, utterance, that which came from the mouth*. Strong's #562 BDB #56. Here this is in the construct followed by *your mouth*.

Both Bildad and Zophar objected to Job going on and on about his sorrows. “Shall a multitude of words go unanswered? Should a man be acquitted because he is talkative?” (Zophar in Job 11:2). “Should a wise man argue with useless verbiage or with word which are not profitable? How long will you hunt for words? Show some understanding and then we can talk.” (Bildad in Job 15:3 and 18:2). It is likely that they are both younger than Job and Eliphaz and therefore lack their patience.

McGee: *Notice that Bildad puts the knife into Job and twists it a little. He says, “Job, listening to you is just like listening to the wind blowing. You're a windy individual.” Actually, I would say they are all a little windy, including Job. We will see a little later that there is something wrong with Job, too. So this remark by Bildad was good for a laugh at the expense of Job.*⁴

**“Does God pervert [or, distort] justice?
And does Almighty pervert [or, distort]
righteousness?”**

Job 8:3

**“Does God distort justice?
Does Almighty God distort righteousness?
He does not!”**

This is pretty clear-cut to Bildad. Job is suffering greatly, which means, ipso facto, that he is being disciplined by God. God is not going to flat out punish someone unjustly. God is not One Who perverts or distorts righteousness. As McGee simply restated Bildad’s thinking: “Job, you are getting exactly what you deserve.”

The first line begins with the interrogative particle and the noun for *God*. The verb is the Piel imperfect of ʿâvath (אָוַת) [pronounced *gaw-VAHTH*], rendered *overthrown, dealt perversely, hath made crooked, subvert, falsifying, pervert, turneth upside down* (and this is only found nine times in the Piel in eight passages). This verb properly means *to bend, to make crooked*. We will try to confine our renderings to *to deal perversely, to pervert, to distort*. This can be used in a good sense (Psalm 146:9, where God *turns* the wicked *upside down*; and in a bad sense, as the passage before us). Strong's #5791 BDB #736.

The second line has our normal wâw conjunction and the particle ʾim (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which generally means *if*. This is also used as an interrogative particle and it is probably herein used to continue the question. Strong's #518 BDB #49. Most translators translate these two together in this passage as an *or* and a question.

The Piel imperfect of ʿâvath is repeated along with the word for *right, righteousness, rightness*. Strong's #6664 BDB #841. Both of these questions demand a negative response. **“Does God distort justice? He does not! Does**

³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 196.

⁴ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 60.

Almighty God distort righteousness? Hell, no! The repetition of what is essentially the same question is done for emphasis.

It is possible to say something which is completely right and still be completely wrong. I am not referring here to what a husband says when arguing with his wife, but that Bildad has stated that which is absolutely true. In the Song of Moses, Moses wrote: **"The Rock! His work is perfect, for all of His ways are just; He is a God of faithfulness and without injustice; He is righteous and possesses integrity."** (Deut. 32:4). **"Now then, let the fear of Y^ehowah be upon you; be careful in what you do, for Y^ehowah our God will have no part in unrighteousness, nor will He show partiality nor will He overlook the taking of the bribe."** (II Chron. 19:7). Elihu will make some very similar statements in Job 33:10, 12 36:23 37:23. God is perfect justice and perfect righteousness. However, even knowing that God possesses perfect righteousness does not mean that Bildad is able to correctly interpret what has happened to Job. Most people who believe in God and in Jesus Christ have an elementary understanding that they are both righteous. However, it is at that point that man slips in his own concepts of right and wrong. I can't tell you how many letters to the editor that I have read which have stated that if Jesus Christ were on earth today, He would be championing the cause of animal rights; He would protest the proliferation of nuclear weapons; He would take a stand on preserving our environment, etc. etc. Whatever their pet cause it, they know that Jesus would be in favor of it. How absurd. Our Lord is not a rubber stamp for our personal causes. And just because you can mouth the words, God is righteous, that doesn't mean you have a clue as to the meaning or ramification of what you have said. That comes with spiritual growth, and spiritual growth comes only through the Word of God.

Part of Bildad's problem is not only has he assumed that Job has sinned big time, but he also has misinterpreted what Job has said. Job, in the previous two chapters, spent a reasonable amount of time complaining about what has happened to him and appealed to God. Bildad, not listening very well, had assumed that Job had impugned the character of God—that Job questioned God's integrity in this matter. Job fully understood God's perfect righteousness and had a reasonable understanding of his own relative righteousness and that is what confused Job. God is absolute perfection and righteousness and whatever shortcomings that were Job's appeared to be in conflict—how could a perfect and righteous God cause Job to endure the horrible suffering which he has endured? Bildad did not grasp this (recall that Bildad is not exactly MENSA material); so he thought that what Job had to say belied Job's doubt of God's perfect righteousness and justice. However, as you recall from the previous two chapters, Job has neither directly stated nor implied that God had somehow perverted justice.

Job asked the important question: **"Can mankind be justified on account of God? Can a man be pure on account of His Maker?"** (Job 4:17). Jeremiah also asks the important question: **"You are righteous, O Y^ehowah, that I would plead a case with You. Indeed, I would discuss matters of justice with You; why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease?"** (Jer. 12:1). The book of Job, in part, answers these questions. Those who sin, particularly young people and those whose sins affect primarily themselves, often ask, "Why can't you let me alone? Why can't you let me do what I want? I am only hurting myself, so what's the big deal?" These are those who are involved in sexual sins, or sins of indulgence in alcohol and/or drugs. There is no separation in this life from those around us. We are least of all separated from the angelic conflict, from the millions of unseen beings, both angelic and demonic, whose involvement in our lives is far beyond what we realize. You would think that Satan, having the world as his dominion and hundreds of thousands of men serving him, that he could let Job be—that he could allow Job to live serving God and spend his time working with those who worship him. Job, a man righteous above all others in the earth at that time, is exactly who Satan wants to deal with. Satan cannot allow Job to do his own thing. When given the opportunity, Satan exercises no restraint in his attack against Job. Our world will just not allow any person to live to himself or to die to himself. The stakes are simply too high. A white person walking through a dangerous, urban Black neighborhood in the middle of the night is not going to be safe and he will not be left alone; a young Black person found in an all white neighborhood in the south in the 50's would not be left alone. We are being unrealistic to think that life is so simple that we can somehow get away from the angelic conflict and from society. It cannot be done; we are a part of it and it is a battle which rages continually; the bloodied corpses of believers testifying to that fact. These questions of Job and Jeremiah require the understanding of the angelic conflict and our place in the world.

“Since [or, if] your children have sinned with respect to Him then He sent them away into a hand of their transgression.

Job 8:4

“Since your children have sinned against Him then He obviously removed them from this life because of their insubordination.

As you will recall from Job 1, Job’s children had a marvelous rapport with one another and regularly took meals together, rotating from house to house (Job 1:4). Job prayed on their behalf and offered sacrifices on their behalf just in case they sinned against God (Job 1:5). During one of their meals together, Satan brought a tornado against them, and collapse their house upon them, killing all of them (Job 1:18–19).

Bildad points out that which he sees as being pretty obvious. If Job’s children sinned against God, then God removed them from this life because of their sin. What Bildad thinks he is doing is dealing with all of the side issues. Job’s children all have died and this issue has not even been dealt with yet, so Bildad quickly and summarily dismisses it.

This verse begins with the hypothetical particle ʾim (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which generally should be translated *if*; however, here, when ʾim is followed by a perfect tense it means *when* or *since*. It behaves like the Greek 1st class conditional clause (*if—and it’s true*). Strong’s #518 BDB #49. Bildad’s use of the conditional particle here is, at best, an attempt at tact with a very sensitive matter. In his over-simplistic way of viewing things, Bildad takes it as a given that Job’s children died as a result of God’s applied justice. If they had not sinned, they would not be dead. Keil and Delitzsch: *Bildad could not have sent a more wounding dart into Job’s already broken heart; for is it possible to tell a man anything more heart-rendering than that his father, his mother, or his children have died as the direct punishment of their sins? One would not say so, even if it should seem to be an obvious fact, and least of all to a father already sorely tried and brought almost to the grave with sorrow. Bildad, however, does not rely upon facts, he reasons only à priori. He does not know that Job’s children were godless; the only ground of his judgment is the syllogism: Whoever dies a fearful, sudden death must be a great sinner; God has brought Job’s children to such a death; ergo, etc. Bildad is zealously affected for God, but without understanding. He is blind to the truth of experience, in order not to be drawn away from the truth of his premise...With the same icy and unfeeling rigorism with which Calvinism refers the divine rule, and all that happens upon earth, to the one principle of absolute divine will and pleasure, in spite of all the contradictions of Scripture and experience, Bildad refers everything to the principle of the divine justice, and indeed, divine justice in a judicial sense.*⁵

in the second line, we have the Piel imperfect of the verb *is shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAHKH*], which means, in the Piel, *to send out, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss*. Strong’s #7971 BDB #1018. What they are sent forth into is the hand of their *peshaʿ* (פֶּשַׁע) [pronounced *PEH-shah* or *PEH-shahg*] and it is pretty uniformly rendered *transgression* throughout the KJV, with a few exceptions of *trespass* and *rebellion*. More modern renderings might be *insubordination, disobedience, violation, rebellion, infraction*. Strong’s #6588 BDB #833.

Bildad is dealing with a couple of issues here. First of all, there is no use in crying over spilled milk—Job’s children sinned and that is obvious because God took them out in the horrible death. However, Job is still alive and Job can go to God so that the same fate does not befall him. Without stating this too crudely and harshly, in this verse and the next, we are observing the full extent of Bildad’s ability to be tactful. Don’t misunderstand what I am saying—Bildad is anything but tactful, but this is best attempt at it: **“Since your children have sinned against Him then He obviously removed them from this life because of their insubordination. If you personally would diligently seek God and petition the Almighty for His grace; If you are pure and upright, then without a doubt, He will be stirred up, because of you, to return to you your home of righteousness.”** (Job 8:4–6).

“If you, [even] you, diligently seek God and petition Almighty for grace;

Job 8:5

“If you personally would diligently seek God and petition the Almighty for His grace;

⁵ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, pp. 322–323.

Now that Bildad dealt with Job's children, he will deal with Job. You will note how everything to him falls into one neat package. He has had time to think these things out and his explanation of what has happened is quite organized and well thought out, and, as Thieme pointed out, very superficial. What is nice about this is that so far, the Hebrew has been quite easy and straightforward. There are some successful businessmen who have made it because they were brilliant and they worked hard; and there are some businessmen who simply make it because they work hard. Bildad is one of the latter. The term *deep thinker* would not be naturally applied to him. "Your kids are dead, you're still alive—so, all you have to do is to seek diligently to God." Now, while it is quite true that some believers have simply placed themselves into difficult positions due to their own rebellion and sin, and are therefore suffering, this is not the case for every single believer who is under pressure.

It occurs to me that I have spoken several times in a demeaning manner of Bildad's relative intelligence, or lack thereof. Please don't misunderstand this—it is an observation, not a condemnation, on my part. Bildad's real problem is not a low human IQ but a low spiritual IQ. We are not born a blank slate. Although our environment can play a major part on the development of our IQ (particularly in those very early years—prior to age 5), we are born with a human IQ whose higher and lower values have been fixed from eternity past and we will not fall outside those fixed boundaries. We did not choose the IQ that we have, we did not earn or deserve it, nor did we do anything wrong to deserve it. Now, we can, by our own free will, determine what we will do with our innate intelligence. Some children choose to do drugs, which inhibits the development of our mental capacities; some choose not to put any effort into school or learning, which is analogous to having a muscle but not exercising it. Still there are boundaries within which our IQ is going to fall, no matter what we do—and the uppermost boundary is more fixed than we would like. So apart from the use of our free will to either exercise or to destroy our intelligence, we don't have any say in this matter. Therefore, it is not wrong to have a low IQ and it is not impressive that you have a high IQ. That is what you were issued at birth and it is a non-issue in the spiritual life. What is an issue in the Spiritual life is your spiritual growth—your spiritual IQ. God has made it possible for all believers who have a desire to grow spiritually to fulfill that desire. This growth is not the result of *yielding* and *fervent prayer*; it is the result of growing in grace and the knowledge of God's Word. Grace is the filling of the Holy Spirit, given to all believers—it is not something you have to go look for or petition God for; you need only name your current sins to Him and God will forgive you for all of your unrighteousnesses and you will enjoy fellowship with Him, which includes the filling of the Spirit. Knowledge only comes through God's Word. I am writing this in the midst of the *holiness* movement where the next logical step has taken place: they have *enjoyed* personal contact and revelations from God for several decades now; and now they are beginning to develop new and blasphemous doctrines based upon these *revelations*.⁶

In the first line, we have the additional 2nd person pronoun, which simply means that Bildad has dealt with Job's children and now he will solve Job's problem, as Job is still alive. The verb is variously rendered *seek early* (Young), *seek eagerly* (Owen) and *diligently seek* (Rotherham). This verb is *shâchar* (שָׂחַר) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHR*], and *to look for diligently* or *to diligently seek* are a good renderings. However, Barnes makes this word most clear as he explains that *shâchar* means to make this your first business of the morning—before you plan on doing anything else.⁷ More than time or diligence, the emphasis of *shâkar* is upon relative importance. "Make this your first order of business because this is the most important thing that you will do." Strong's #7836 BDB #1007. Elihu will suggest exactly the same thing: "Then he will pray to God and He will accept him, that he may see His face with joy and He may restore His righteousness to man." (Job 33:26; see also Isa. 58:9 65:24). In some situations, this would be excellent advice.

The second verb is the Hithpael (reflexive intensive) imperfect of *chânan* (חָנַן) [pronounced *khaw-NAHN*] which is generally translated, in the Hithpael, *besought, to make supplication, to entreat*. However, all of these translations are rather dated. A better rendering would be *petition for grace, make a request for grace, appeal for grace*.

⁶ A quick example, in case you are interested, is the idea that Christ did not pay for our sins upon the cross during those three hours of absolute darkness; when His soul went into the center of the earth, that is when He paid for our sins. In case you don't recognize it, this is a blasphemous doctrine. Our Lord cried out, on the cross, prior to His physical death, "It is finished [in the past with results which go on forever]."

⁷ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 197. Barnes quotes several verse in support of this: Job 24:5 Psalm 63:1 78:34 Prov. 7:15 8:17 13:24 Isa. 26:9 Hos. 5:15.

Strong's #2603, 2589 BDB #335. Zophar later suggests the same thing to Job: “If you would direct your heart right and spread out your hand to Him; if iniquity is in your hand, put it far away and do not allow degeneracy to dwell in your tents.” (Job 11:13–14).

**“If you [are] pure and upright,
surely He will [caused to] rouse [Himself]
because of you
and He will restore a habitation of your
righteousness.**

Job 8:6

**“If you are pure and upright,
then without a doubt, He will be stirred up,
because of you,
to return to you your home of righteousness.**

In the first line, Bildad uses the adjective *zak*^e (זָקַט) [pronounced *zakhk*^e], which means *to be unmixed, free from foreign substances*; and therefore, *pure*. Strong's #2134 BDB #269. The second adjective used of Job is *yâshâr* (יָשָׁר) [pronounced *yaw-SHAWR*] which *right, correct, upright, straight, uniform, even*. When describing man, it refers to *moral stability and stable, correct behavior and thinking*. This is the word used by God to describe Job in the first chapter of Job. Strong's #3477 BDB #449. Bildad uses this word almost in sarcasm, having no clue that God had so described Job. His opinion of Job is quite the opposite (and Bildad does not base his negative opinion about Job on anything which he has seen Job do or even any rumors that he may have heard about Job—he has based his conclusion on the fact that Job has been apparently beaten down by God).

The second line is begun by the very common conjunction *kîy* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which is used as an explicative, an explanatory, a justificatory or a causal conjunction and is generally translated *when, that, for, because*. Once and awhile it can be rendered *indeed, surely*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. The verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *ʿûwr* (עוּר) [pronounced *góor*], and it is given quite a number of similar renderings in the KJV: *to awake, to raise up, to stir up, to lift up*; BDB gives its primary meanings as *to rouse oneself, to awake*. The result is that one is *incited, stirred up, induced, persuaded*. Strong's #5782 BDB #734.

The second verb is the Piel perfect of the verb *shâlêm* (שָׁלַם) [pronounced *shaw-LAME*], and it means *to be complete, to requite, to restore, to recompense, to complete*. Strong's #7999 BDB #1022. What God will restore to Job will be *a habitation of his righteousness or his righteous home*.

The matter is quite simple to Bildad, a simple man; Job need merely turn to God, and, assuming that his is pure and upright, God will be caused to realize what He has done and restore Job to his great wealth of before. When a person is often in trouble, this is the advice (or the thinking) of his fellow believers: yield, repent, pray and do penance—and promise God that you will never do it again. Eliphaz said to Job: “Yield now and be at peace with Him; thereby, good will come to you. Please receive instruction from His mouth and establish His words in your heart. If you will return to the Almighty, you will be restored; if you remove unrighteousness far from your tent and place your gold in the dust...then the Almighty will be your gold...You will pray to Him and He will hear you. Furthermore, you must pay your vows. You will also make a commitment and it will be established for you and light will shine on your ways.” (Job 22:21–24a, 25a, 27–28).

Keil and Delitzsch: [This verse]...shows that Bildad thinks it possible that Job's heart may be pure and upright, and consequently his present affliction may not be preemptory punishment, but only disciplinary chastisement. Job just—such is Bildad's counsel—give God glory, and acknowledge that he deserve nothing better; and thus humbling himself beneath the just hand of God, he will be again made righteous, and exalted. Job cannot, however, comprehend his suffering as an act of divine justice. His own fidelity is a fact, his consciousness of which cannot be shaken; it is therefore impossible for him to deny it, for the sake of affirming the justice of God; for truth is not to be supported by falsehood. Hence, Bildad's glorious promises afford Job no comfort.⁸

Barnes sees the diatribe of Bildad as being more severe than I have presented. His take on this verse: *There is something peculiarly severe and caustic in this whole speech of Bildad. He first assumes that the children of Job were cut off for impiety, and then takes it for granted that Job himself was not a pure and upright man. This*

⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 322.

*inference he seems to have derived partly from the fact that he had been visited with so heavy calamities, and partly from the sentiments which Job had himself expressed. 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.*⁹ At this point, Barnes makes some good points which are lost in his King James English, so I will paraphrase: Bildad is saying if Job's house were righteous, God would prosper it. Bildad's belief is that Job's household is one of perniciousness. Job's children were evil so God cut them off; Job is evil, so God is disciplining him. All Job needs to do is to straighten up his act and seek God—then God would prosper him. *What could more try the patience of a sufferer than such cold and unfeeling insinuations? And what could more beautifully illustrate the nature of true courtesy, than to sit unmoved and hear such remarks? It was by forbearance in such circumstances eminently that Job showed his extraordinary patience.*¹⁰

“And your beginning was a small thing and your latter end will greatly flourish.

Job 8:7

“And your younger days will appear to be insignificant; and you will greatly flourish in your later days.

The second verb gave me some trouble at first. It is the Qal imperfect of *sâgâh* (נָאֵץ) [pronounced *saw-GAW*] [= Strong's #7685; found in Job 8:8, 11 Psalm 73:12 92:12*], which appears to be equivalent to *sâgâ'* (נָאֵץ) [also pronounced *saw-GAW*] [= Strong's #7659; found in Job 12:23 36:24*], which also appears to be equivalent to *s^egâ'* (נָאֵץ) [pronounced *s^e-GAW*] [= Strong's #7680, Chaldean; found in Ezra 4:22 Dan. 4:1*]. These words occur seven times in total, and are variously rendered *to multiply, to increase, to grow*. These words are all obviously related, but it is frustrating to find one word which seems to cover all of the meanings. However, I think *to flourish* should do the trick. Strong's #7685 BDB #960. Elihu will say the same thing: *“Then he declares to them their work and their transgressions, that they have magnified themselves. And He opens their ear to instruction and commands that they return from evil. If they hear and serve Him, they will end their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures.”* (Job 36:9–11).

When Job completes this simple process, what his past was will appear to be insignificant to him and his future will be incredible. At this point in time, he has no family, save one bitchy wife, and no personal resources; so, to Bildad, this is Job's beginning. He has nothing to start with. With the correct approach to God and the cleaning of his life, Bildad assures Job that he will be blessed tremendously. To me, when in pain, I see a Christian brother encouraging me *to yield* so that everything will be alright. I hope that it is becoming clear to you what a superficial simpleton that Bildad is. I don't think that he is quite as overtly tough on Job that Barnes makes him out to be, although he certainly thinks that Job has sinned. Just because Bildad is lacking in intelligence, that doesn't mean that he completely lacks the ability to be tactful. He is just easier to see through than most. I also wonder if this statement of Bildad's is more like the one that you hear all the time when in pain and suffering; *there, there, everything will be alright*. A person is suffering greatly, and all his friends can tell him is that everything will be fine, even though they personally do not believe it.

Ironically, Bildad is correct here, but for the wrong reasons. He believes that Job has done something wrong, but if Job cleans his act up and seeks God, God will greatly bless him. *Job will seek God to inquire about his state and later we will find that: Y^ehowah blessed the latter times of Job more than his beginning, and he had 14, 000 sheep, and 8000 camels, and 1000 yoke of oxen, and 1000 female donkeys* (Job 42:12). As David wrote: *Who is the man who fears Y^ehowah? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will continue in prosperity and his descendants will inherit the land* (Psalm 25:12–13). *“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares Y^ehowah, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and you will find Me, when you search for Me with all of your heart.”* (Jer. 29:11–13).¹¹

⁹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 197–198.

¹⁰ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 198.

¹¹ This verse is specifically meant for Israel, as the next verse, v. 14, will clearly attest. However, it does have true application here and to our lives as well.

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Bildad Appeals to the Knowledge of past Generations

**“For please inquire of former generations
and establish with regards to a thing
searched out of their fathers.**

Job 8:8

**“For please inquire of the generations which
are past
and confirm the investigations of their
fathers.**

This is perhaps the first semi-complex line of Hebrew which Bildad has given us. Other translators have rendered this:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	For inquire, I pray you, of the former age, and apply yourself to that which their fathers have searched out;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For inquire, I pray thee, of a former generation, And prepare thyself for the research of their fathers;
Keil and Delitzsch NASB	For inquire only of former ages, And attend to the research of their fathers— “Please inquire of past generations, And consider the things searched out by their fathers.”
NJB	Question the generation that has passed, meditate on the experience of its ancestors—
NRSV	“For inquire now of bygone generations, and consider what their ancestors have found;
The Septuagint	For ask of the former generation, and search diligently among the race of fathers.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	For ask I pray thee of a former generation, And prepare to a search of their fathers.

The meaning is clear; Job simply needs to look at what has been uncovered philosophically over the past several generations. Note, because there apparently is no Scripture, insofar as they are concerned, there is no appeal to Scripture. Eliphaz appealed to a vision of his and Bildad here appeals to the pronouncements of those who have gone before us. Eliphaz appealed to personal revelation and Bildad to the traditions of the fathers. These two appeals tell us that man needed a standard by which to judge all things.

After the verb in the first line, we have the lâmed preposition (*to , for, in regards to, of*), followed by the very common Hebrew word dôwr (דָּוָר) [pronounced *dohr*], which is rendered *generation, age*. It is a time slice out of a group of people, a slice of a people (the Jews as versus other national groups) or just a time slice in general. It might be considered the *time period of a specific generation*. It is translated *age, generation, period*. Strong's #1755 BDB #189. Barnes: *Attend to the results of observation. Ask the generations which have passed, and who in their poems and proverbs have left the records of their experience...it was common to make these appeals to the ancients. The results of observations were embodied in proverbs, parables, fables, and fragments of poems; and he was regarded as among the wisest of men who had the fruits of these observations most at command. To that Bildad appeals, and especially as would appear, to the fragment of an ancient poem which he proceeds to repeat.*¹²

Dôr is modified by the adjective rîshôwn (רִשׁוֹן) [pronounced *ree-SHOWN*], and it can be rendered *first, chief, former, beginning*. With reference to time, it refers to what has passed; with reference to rank, it can refer to being pre-eminent. Strong's #7223 BDB #911. Now, the idea of looking back into history is not a bad one; in fact, God's dealing with man in the past as recorded in His Word is what we examine to understand His dealings with us today. “For Y^ehowah your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor will He destroy you nor will He forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. In fact, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on this earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other—has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it?” (Deut. 4:31–32). “Recall the days of old; consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders and they

¹² Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 198.

will tell you.” (Deut. 32:7). And, although this is somewhat of a tangent, what should be the attitude of the former generation? **And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me until I declare Your strength to this generation; and your power to all who are to come** (Psalm 71:18).

The evolving of this appeal to generations past should be of some interest. You see, at one time, there were people who were alive who had actually witnessed the flood and God’s great judgment against the earth—Noah and his sons. Then there were people who had been alive in the days of Noah and his sons—their descendants, who spoke second hand of what God had done. However, after a few more generations passed, then the appeal was simply to those from past generations. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, this reveals a need in man to have an absolute authority upon which man can depend. It is out of this need that God provided for us His Word, which is, for the most part, eyewitness accounts of God’s direct dealings with man. And God saw to it that His Word was recorded in such a way that the very words of the Bible carry with them the stamp of God’s full authority. Chafer: *The verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture has been asserted by faithful theologians from the early church until now. Verbal inspiration means that the original writings were guided by the Spirit of God so that the choice of words expressed God’s point of view. In this activity of the Holy Spirit, human authorship is respected to the extent that the writers’ characteristics were preserved and their style and vocabularies are employed, but by the work of the Holy Spirit, their writings were kept from any intrusion of error. The Scriptures are therefore inerrant. Plenary inspiration means that the accuracy secured by verbal inspiration is extended fully to every portion of Scripture so that in all its parts Scripture is both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority.*¹³ This means that every word is inspired by God and this inspiration extends to all portions of the Bible. The act of inspiration is a process and it is dynamic; God spoke in diverse ways and in sundry manners to prophets, poets, fishermen in various times and places, so that they recorded in their own language, in their own vocabulary, without waving their intelligence, literary style or personality, God’s complete and coherent Word to man so that the very words used are simultaneously their words and God’s words.¹⁴

In the second line, we have the verb Polel imperative of kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced *koon*] and its definition seems to be a little obscure, despite the fact that this word occurs in the Old Testament almost 250 times. It appears to mean *erect (to stand up perpendicular)* and by application, *to establish, to prepare, to be stabilized*. In this verse, we could possibly even stretch the meaning far enough to mean *confirm*. That is, Job is to examine what has been the opinion and experience of the past and confirm that it is true. By this confirmation, he *re-establishes* the truth of the matter. Gesenius also gives additional meanings as *to confirm, to set up, to maintain, to found [a city]*, among others. Strong’s #3559 BDB #465.

That which Job is to establish is the substantive chêqer (חֶקֶר) [pronounced *KHAY-ker*], which is *a thing searched out or searched for*. Barnes points out that the searching implied is done by digging or boring into the earth; the portion of the earth which lies outside of man’s ordinary observation.¹⁵ Unfortunately, there does not appear to be a simple, one-word modern translation, although we are probably close with the renderings *research, investigation, inquisition, study, examination, survey*. Strong’s #2714 BDB #350. Chêqer is in the construct, so it is properly followed by *of*. The final words of this verse are *their fathers; their* referring to the theologians of the past generations.

**“(For yesterday we [were]
and we did not know
for our days were a shadow upon earth).**

Job 8:9

**“(For we are but of yesterday, and our
knowledge is limited,
for our days are but a passing shadow on
this earth).**

Bildad’s Hebrew is getting a little tougher now. Let’s see what other translators have done with this verse:

¹³ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology; Vol. 1*; abridged edition, Victor Books, ©1984, pp. 70–80.

¹⁴ This is quite close to the definition given by Thieme, which definition I cannot locate without going into my notes.

¹⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Vol. IV, book 3, p. 37.

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i> Keil and Delitzsch	For of yesterday are we and cannot know, For a shadow are our days upon the earth; For we are of yesterday, without experience, Because our days upon earth are a shadow—
NEB	...for we ourselves are of yesterday and are transient; our days on earth are a shadow.
TEV	Our life is short, we know nothing at all; we pass like shadows across the earth.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	(For of yesterday we <i>are</i> , and we know not, For a shadow <i>are</i> our days on earth.)

The meaning is clear; Job and his friends have been on this earth a relatively short time and their knowledge is limited due to their short existence. For that reason, Bildad has pressed upon Job to inquire of the knowledge from past generations. I believe that Young and the KJV are correct in interpreting this verse as parenthetical.

This verse begins literally *for yesterday we*. This is followed by the wâw conjunction, a negative and the 1st person plural, Qal imperfect of yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHG], which is the very common verb meaning *to know*. Strong's #3045 BDB #393.

The verse ends literally with *for a shadow [are] our days upon earth*. It is true that our existence on this earth is a comparatively short time. “Observe, You have made my days as handbreadths and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight. Certainly every man at best is a mere breath.” (Psalm 39:5). Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow (Psalm 144:4). And Job will agree with Bildad's assessment here: “Man, born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers. Furthermore, he flees like a shadow and does not remain.” (Job 14:1–2). When Bildad says that the life of man is but a shadow, indicating that it is transitory and fleeting, he was not referring to mankind in general but their generation of man, as compared with generations in the past. One of the most striking parts of Gen. 11, is the list of the descendants and their rapid decline in longevity, going from about 500 years in age to around a hundred years of age in a handful of generations. This is Bildad's point—He and Job are in a generation of men who survive a mere 100-200 years and they are not in the position to make judgments of great wisdom as those who have gone before, their lives spanning in excess of five centuries. McGee's comments: “*We are but of yesterday and know nothing*” is a true statement. Of course, Bildad doesn't really feel that he know nothing; he means that Job knows nothing.¹⁶ This is because Bildad has the sense to depend upon the wisdom of those who have gone before us.

Barnes on the dating of the book of Job: *There can be no doubt that Bildad here refers to the longevity of the antecedent ages compared with the age of man at the time when he lived; and the passage, therefore, is of importance in order to fix the date of the poem. It shows that human life had been reduced in the time of Job within comparatively moderate limits, and that an important change had taken place in its duration. This reduction began not long after the flood, and was probably continued gradually until it reached the present limit of seventy years. This passage proves that Job could not have lived in the time of the greatest longevity of man.*¹⁷

**“Will not they, [even] they, inform you?
[Will they not] say to you?
And out of their heart they bring forth words.”** Job 8:10

**“Will not even they communicate to you?
Will they not speak to you?
For from their wisdom they speak.”**

Let's get the gist of this verse from other translators:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Shall not [the forefathers] teach you, and tell you, and utter words out of their heart [the deepest part of their nature]?
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¹⁶ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 61.

¹⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 199.

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Shall they not teach thee—tell thee, And out of their memory [heart] bring forth words?
NEB	Will not they speak to you and teach you and pour out the wisdom of their hearts?
NJB	...but they will teach you, they will tell you, and their thought is expressed in these sayings,...
TEV	But the ancient wise men teach you; listen to what they had to say:
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Do they not show thee—speak to thee, And from their heart bring forth words?

V. 10 begins with the interrogative particle, a negative, and the 3rd person plural personal pronoun *hêm* (הֵם) [pronounced *haym*]. Strong's #1992 BDB #241. The reference is to their forefathers. This is followed by the 3rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect with a 2nd person masculine singular suffix of *yârâh* (הֵרַח) [pronounced *yaw-RAWH*], which means, in the Qal stem, *to throw, to shoot, to throw down, to throw out*. In the Hiphil, this means *to teach, instruct, enumerate, to inform*. I believe that the implication of this verb in this verse is that Bildad will quote something which he learned in Philosophy 101. Strong's #3384 BDB #434

Bildad immediately jumps into a second verb, the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *ʿâmar* (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MARH*] which means *to say, to utter*. Strong's #559 BDB #55. I believe that the negative and the emphatic use of the pronoun should be continued with this verb. I also believe that this is an Hebrew dramatics (throwing two verbs together like this, back-to-back), indicating that Bildad is going to introduce a quote. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if, throughout the speech of Eliphaz and of Job that Bildad searched his mind for this quote and mentally ran through it so as not to screw it up. This verb is followed by the prepositional phrase *to you*.

The next phrase is literally *and out from their heart*. This is followed by the 3rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of *yâtsâʿ* (אֵצְא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which does not mean *to speak* or *to utter*; it means, in the Hiphil, *to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. What they bring forth is the masculine plural of the substantive *millâh* (מִלָּה) [pronounced *mil-LAW*] and it means *speech, utterance, that which was said*. It is in the plural here, meaning that *sayings* or *words* would be good one word renderings. Strong's #4405 BDB #576.

Now, the appeal to the wisdom of the ancients is reasonable and even Biblical, to a point. *Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching* (Prov. 1:8). *My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom and incline your heart to understanding* (Prov. 2:1–2). *Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father and give attention that you may gain understanding* (Prov. 4:1). Even among unbelievers, a father or mother tends to possess greater wisdom than their children, and their parents greater wisdom than they. Although I had a strong interest in God's Word at salvation, and a reasonable one for the first fifteen or so years, that interest has been recaptured as if in the zealotry of my youth and I have gained great insights in my personal study over the years. I am in a much better position to give guidance and advice now than I was twenty years ago. I also have a more accurate recognition of all of the things which I do not know, which far exceeds that which I know.

Barnes: The friends of Job maintained that the righteous would be rewarded in this life, and that the wicked would be overtaken by calamity. It may seem remarkable that they should have urged this so strenuously, when in the actual course of events as we now see them, there appears to be so slender a foundation for it in fact. But may this not be accounted for by the remark of Bildad in the verse under consideration? They appealed to their fathers. They relied on the results of experience in those ancient times. When men lived nine hundred or a thousand years; when one generation was longer than twelve generations are now, this fact would be much more likely to occur than as human life is now ordered. Things would have time to work themselves right. The wicked in that long tract of time would be likely to be overtaken by disgrace and calamity, and the righteous would outlive the detractions and calamities of their enemies, and meet in their old age with the ample rewards of virtue. Should men now live through the same long period, the same thing substantially would occur. A man's character, who is remembered at all, is fully established long before a thousand years have elapsed, and posterity does justice to the righteous and the wicked. If men lived during that time instead of being merely remembered, the same thing would be likely to occur. Justice would be done to character, and the world would, in general, render to a man the honour which he deserve. The fact may have been observed in the long lives of the men before the flood, and the result of the observation

*may have been embodied in proverbs, fragments of poems, and in traditional sayings, and have been recorded by the sages of Arabia as indubitable maxims. With these maxims they came to the controversy with Job, and forgetful of the change necessarily made by the abbreviation of human life, they proceed to apply their maxims without mercy to him; and because he was overwhelmed with calamity, they assumed that therefore he must have been a wicked man.*¹⁸

It is interesting, but this appears to be the case for shorter periods of time as well. As one who has taught school for several decades, I have noticed that those who have been brought up with some sense of personal honor and morality tend to do quite well in school; they are generally happier and better adjusted. Those who tend to pursue hedonism have a tougher time dealing with school, their parents and their lives in general. Those who are partaking of drugs and alcohol, whether on the weekends or more regularly, tend to be strikingly less happy and well-adjusted to their lives. Once in college and in the real world, there can be more forceful and successful demonic attacks against these same ones; they are often ambushed by fellow Christians (or people who also had the higher values). So it takes awhile for things to level out again to produce the general results that one would expect. However, even in this world, those who continue with a sense of morality and personal character tend to have more satisfying lives than those who pursue hedonistic pleasures.

Like the NEB and TEV, I will translate this as a prelude to what follows, which should be a quotation. Now logic would dictate to me that, since what follows is not Bildad's own personal thoughts, but a quotation, that the Hebrew might be different and more complex. The Hebrew will turn out to be different, but not necessarily more complex; and the poem will be short, as we would expect of someone of limited intelligence.

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Bildad Quotes a Poem

Barnes: *This...poem...is adduced by Bildad as an example of the views of the ancients, and, as the connection would seem to imply, as a specimen of the sentiments of those who lived before the life of man had been abridged. It was customary in the early ages of the world to communicate knowledge of all kinds by maxims, moral sayings, and proverbs; by apothegms and by poetry handed down from generation to generation. Wisdom consisted much in the amount of maxims and proverbs which were thus treasured up; as it now consists much in the knowledge which we have of the lessons taught by the past, and in the ability to apply that knowledge to the various transactions of life. The records of past ages constitute a vast storehouse of wisdom, and the present generation is more wise than those which have gone before, only because the results of their observations have been treasured up, and we can act on their experience and because we can begin where they left off, and, taught by their experience, can avoid the mistakes which they made.*¹⁹ I have personally taught a the significant portion of a generation who has given no thought whatsoever to learning from the mistakes of the past. I was raised in a generation which began using drugs and there have been hundreds of casualties which resulted from that choice. People of my generation turned to crime, lost their families, lost their homes, ruined themselves financially, emotionally, and mentally, and gave little or no thought for tomorrow until suddenly, middle age was upon them. Their fundamental problem was an old sin nature trend toward hedonism, which they stimulated through the abuse of drugs. There have always been homeless people and there will always be homeless people. However, a great many of them, prior to my generation, were homeless due to alcohol abuse. With my generation, the homeless population multiplied significantly because we could add thousands upon thousands of drug-addled individuals. However, many people of the generations that followed, learned absolutely nothing from this. They too fell into the hedonistic nightmare of drug and alcohol abuse. From a simple human perspective, this would seem easy to grasp: the experiences of former generations drug abuse is going to result in life changes that no person would desire. Therefore, it would seem that a little education would solve this problem. That is often our answer to everything. Educate the children about drug use, about teen pregnancy, about education, and that will solve their problems. Certainly, a great many children are helped and guided by education, but because everyone possesses

¹⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 199.

¹⁹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 200.

an old sin nature, what people do with what they have learned is often antithetical to the outcome that human viewpoint would expect. So it is absolutely true that we can learn from the wisdom and from the mistakes of previous generations—it is equally true that we rarely do.

**“ ‘Can papyrus rise up in no marsh?
Can wetland flora flourish in no water?’**

Job 8:11

**“ ‘Can papyrus grow without a marsh?
Can reeds and other flora of the wetlands
flourish in no water?’**

Bildad tries to get very scientific here but any third grader would know the answer. I've learned the answers here in California. I need to water my flowers out by my back fence or they will not grow. That is not very profound wisdom. Who doesn't know this!²⁰

The word translated papyrus comes from a Hebrew word meaning *to drink up, to absorb*; this is because the papyrus drinks up or absorbs moisture in great quantities. As I recall from my youth, where I lived, you could see where a stream of water was by the tall papyrus which grew along side of it. Once you moved away from the stream a dozen or so feet, there would be no more papyrus. Papyrus: Strong's #1573 BDB #167. Verb: Strong's #1572 BDB #167. The Egyptians used papyrus to make their clothing, shoes, baskets and, of course, writing material. The Greek word is papuros (πάπυρος) [pronounced *PAP-u-ross*] from whence we derive our word *paper*.

The first verb is the Qal imperfect of gâ`âh (גָּאָה) [pronounced *gaw-AW*], which means *to rise up*. Strong's #1342 BDB #144. The Egyptian papyrus, as most of you realize, grows in the marshes

The second line's subject is `âchû (אֲחֻ) [pronounced *AW-khoo*], and it is only found here and in Gen. 41:2, 18, and it signifies the *marsh-grass, reeds, bulrushes* and those flora generally found in marshy areas and wetlands. I will render this *wetland flora*. Strong's #260 BDB #28. The second verb is the Qal imperfect of sâgâh (סָגַח) [pronounced *saw-GAW*], which we just looked at earlier in this chapter; it means *to flourish*. Strong's #7685 BDB #960. Human nature being what it is, and Bildad, being of lesser intelligence than his other companions both memorized this saying, thought of it during their discussion, thought it out while Job and Eliphaz spoke, and then used one of the words from it when he began to speak. He has a limited vocabulary, so it would make sense that when running through a poem or a saying in his mind that he would use some of the vocabulary from that saying.

The point of this verse is best expressed in that old song *Love and Marriage* which has the line *goes together like a horse and carriage*. You must have a marsh in which to grow papyrus and water to grow reeds; since we see Job under tremendous pressure, it is obvious that there was a cause, which would be some great sin or set of sins which Job has committed.²¹

What is particularly interesting about this verse, and those following, is that this is likely the earliest recorded fragment of a secular poem found in literature. This indicates that during the time of Job, people did write, they did create, and there was some means of distributing their works to the public, whether through education, whether handed down, spoken or sung by memory by parents to their children.

**“ ‘Still it in its budding [or, freshness] it is
not cut down
and before the faces of all of grass, it
withers.**

Job 8:12

**“ ‘Still it in its budding [or, freshness] it is
not cut down
and before the face of all grass, it withers.**

Although most translations render the first word *while*, the adverb `ôwd (עוֹד) [pronounced *gohd*] does not mean *while* unless it have the bēyth prefixed preposition. `Ôwd is used as both an adverb and as a substantive. In both

²⁰ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 62.

²¹ I did not quote from Barnes here because he, surprisingly, is not very certain of the meaning of this analogy, and supposes that it has to do with the hypocrite being spongy and unsubstantial like the plant categories herein named.

cases, it carries the idea of continuation. As an adverb it means *still, yet, again, besides, in addition to*. Strong's #5750 BDB #728. The adverb does carry with it the 3rd person singular suffix.

The first prepositional phrase is *in its freshness*, translated by Young as *in its budding*; this is the only time this word occurs, although we find a very similar word in Exodus for *young ears of barley*; so the idea of youngness is implied. *Freshness, budding* = Strong's #3 BDB #1; *young ears of barley* = Strong's #24 BDB #1.

A negative precedes the first verb, which means *to pluck off, to pluck*. It is in the Niphal (passive) stem. Strong's #6998 BDB #882. Just as a plant is not cut down prematurely, God does not take out believers prematurely.

The second prepositional phrase is *lâmed plus pâniym* (לפני) [pronounced *paw-NEEN*], and together they mean *in the sight of, in the presence of, in your face, before the face of*. Strong's #6440 BDB #815. This is followed by *all of* and the word *châtsiyr* (חציר) [pronounced *khaw-TSEER*], which means *green grass, herbage*. The Arabic root of this word means *green*. Strong's #2682 BDB #348.

In this second line, God does not take out those under discipline prematurely in order to make some sort of an example of them. The meaning behind this poem, as applied to Job, could be seen as being rather vicious. If Job remains in this state of discipline, as his friends have assumed, then he is kept alive so that God can make him suffer on this earth. Even Job recognizes that he stands as a sorry visage to others: **But God has made me a byword of the people and I am one at whom men spit.** (Job 17:6). The other option is that God has kept Job alive in order for Job to return to him. Job has withered before his friends under discipline, but God has not removed him prematurely so that Job can seek God. Zophar also will agree, pointing out that the profane will prosper for awhile, but then they will fall into God's hand: "Do you know this from of old, from the establishment of man on earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short and that the joy of the profane man is but momentary?" (Job 20:4–5).

Barnes sees Bildad's opinion as being that God in a less active role, and views this as more of a series of natural events. Certain plants require a great deal of water, and even when they are not cut down, they wither away. Barnes still sees Job as the plant withering away, as is obvious by the next verse. He writes: *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 of his prosperity is withdrawn, his religion droops and dies like the flag without water.*²²

Now, what is true and Biblical is that all accounts are settled at the last judgment (apparently, time is given prior to this, between death and the judgment, for the profane man to reflect upon his ways. **But transgressors will be destroyed; the posterity of the wicked will be cut off; and the deliverance of the righteous is from Y^ehowah. He is their strength in time of trouble** (Psalm 37:38–39).

**“ ‘So [are the] paths [or, the latter end] of all
of forgetting of God;
and the hope of profane [man] will perish.**

Job 8:13

**“ ‘And so it is with the paths of all those who
forget God;
the hope of a profane man will perish.**

The first line is filled with constructs and there is no verb. Such structure jumps out at you, after the reading of a poem. At my first read, I had assumed that Bildad was no longer quoting poetry, but explaining why he quoted this piece. However, the later verses appear to be too poetic and too filled with imagery for simple Bildad to have thought of himself. I believe the correct understanding is that the poet that Bildad is quoting is, within his poetry, helping us out by interpreting it for us. There is no little disagreement on this. Barnes wrote: *Schultens supposes that the quotation from the ancients closes with ver. 13, and that these are the comments of Bildad on the passage to which he had referred. Rosenmüller and Noyes continue the quotation to the close of ver. 19; dr. Good closes it at*

²² Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 201.

ver. 13. *It seems to me that it is extended farther than ver. 13, and probably it is to be regarded as continued to the close of ver. 18.*²³ Given Bildad's rather simplistic view of things and limited vocabulary, it is easier for me to believe that he used three verses to comment upon a poem quoted in nine verses rather than vice versa.

Job has not been cut down before his friends (i.e., had his life ended), but he has withered before them. Zophar will later say, "But the eyes of the wicked will fail and there will be no escape for them; and their hope is to breathe their last." (Job 11:20). Job has already agreed with him, to a point, right here: "Would that God were willing to crush me; that He would loose His hand and cut me off!" (Job 6:9).

Rotherham offers a slightly different word rather than *paths*; he believes that the word for *latter end* should be found here (as per the Septuagint).

Barnes writes: *They who forget God are like the paper-reed. They seem to flourish, but they have nothing that is firm and substantial. As the paper-reed soon dies, as the flag withers away before any other herb, so it will be with the wicked, though apparently prosperous.*²⁴

The word rendered *profane* is *chânêph* (חַנְּפִי) [pronounced *khaw-NAYF*], and this word is pretty consistently rendered *hypocrite* in the KJV. However, BDB lists its meanings as *profane, irreligious, godless*; and therefore, *heathen, apostate*. Gesenius renders this *profane, impious*. For those with a limited vocabulary, *godless* is good; for those whose vocabulary is more extensive, we will go with *profane*. Strong's #2611 BDB #338.

A man who is without God certainly has no hope at all. He will have a life filled with frustration and pain; it will be a life that he cannot think too much about, because it would appear to futile. And his life will end in death, a death totally apart from God. His hope is in himself and mankind, both of which have failed him. And when he dies, he no longer has reason to even hope because of himself. And he will die. So Bildad is going quite a bit further than accusing Job of committing some terrible sin; insofar as Bildad is concerned, Job isn't even a believer! Perhaps Job had a head belief but not a heart belief, in Bildad's way of looking at things. To Bildad, with what has happened to Job, it is obvious that Job can't be a believer—God would never do this to a believer.

in theory, Job believes much of what Bildad is saying. He knows for the recalcitrant that death removes all hope. "For what is the hope of the profane man when he is cut off, when God requires his life?" (Job 27:8). For regardless of what occurs in this life, there is a judgment which stands for all time which is to come. *The hope of the righteous is gladness but the expectation of the wicked perishes. The way of Y^ehowah is a stronghold to the upright, but ruin is to the workers of iniquity. When the recalcitrant man dies, his expectation will perish* (Prov. 10:28–29 11:7a). What is interesting is that this was a belief found in very ancient man, correctly proffered as the wisdom of that time. Barnes points out that this poem could have even been from ante-deluvian times, preserved by Noah and his family (if Job is five or more generations removed from the flood, then it would just as easily been written by an early descendant of Noah's).

“ Whose confidence [or, in that his confidence] is loathsome [or, has rotted and become putrid] [or, is gossamer thread]; and a house of a spider [is] his trust.

Job 8:14

“ ‘In that his confidence is gossamer thread; and he places his trust in in a spider’s web.

V. 14 begins with a relative pronoun *ʾăsher* (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which means *which, when, whose* or *who*. Although a fairly specific particle of relation in other Semitic languages, it has been weakened considerably in the Hebrew and it demands another word to define more precisely the relation. *Confidence* has a 3rd person suffix, which better defines this relative pronoun. *ʾĂsher* also functions as a particle of relation, a sign of relation or a connecting link. As a connective, it can mean *so that, in that, since, for that, inasmuch as, forasmuch*. I don't know

²³ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 202.*

²⁴ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 201.*

how you would tell the difference. In this passage, we have the renderings *whose* (NASB, Rotherham, Young) and several translators flat out ignore the relative pronoun here (NAB, NRSV, REB, NJB). Strong's #834 BDB #81.

The verb is the Qal imperfect of *qûṭ* (קִטַּ) [pronounced *koot*], which means *to loath, to nauseate, to be disgusted with*. However, in the Qal, this makes little or no sense—a passive meaning might, where the confidence of a godless man is *loathed*. Furthermore, generally following this verb, we would find the *bêyth* preposition , which is not here. BDB suggests an intransitive use of the verb, giving its meaning as *break, snap*; but this is the account for its use in this one place. Gesenius gives this verb a second meaning, in this passage only, as *to cut off*, from an Arabic word. Dr. Good (as often quoted by Barnes) says that this first portion of the verse has never been understood and translates it *thus shall his support rot away*. Noyes: *whose expectation shall come to naught*. Keil and Delitzsch were no help here. Barnes goes along with Dr. Good, and gives the sense that something *rots and becomes putrid* causing that something to be *vile and loathsome*. Barnes: *The rigure is continued from the image of the paper-reed and the flag, which soon decay; and the idea is, that as such weeds grow offensive and putrid in stagnant water, so shall it be with the hope of the hypocrite.*²⁵ For some reason, several translations render this as a noun, *thread, gossamer* or *gossamer thread* (NRSV, NAB, NEB, NJB, REB, TEV). NASB goes with *is fragile*, *The Amplified Bible* and the KJV go with *to break off, to cut off.*, and Rotherham and Young both go with the passive use of *loathsome*. Contextually, the *gossamer thread* sounds good; however, I don't know where they get this translation from. Strong's #6962 (see also Strong's #5354) BDB #876.

The final noun of v. 14 is *miḏv'êṭâch* (מִדְּבַעַח) [pronounced *miḏviTAWKH*], means *trust, confidence*; the concept is something that you lean on, place your weight upon, take refuge in, trust in, place your confidence on. With this noun, we have the concept of certain and firm confidence as well as complete security. Strong's #5009 BDB #105. Job agrees, sometime later, that the temporally successful recalcitrant has based his trust upon a spider's web: *“He has built his house like the spider's web, or as a hut which the watchman has made.”* (Job 27:14).

The last phrase of this verse is actually pretty good and quite the poetic image. The house of a spider is his web, which is both transparent and very fragile. Here, Bildad describes his perception of Job's life perfectly. Bildad thinks that it is obvious that Job is either an unbeliever or someone who has committed some horrible sin. Furthermore, Job's actually life at this time is held together by a thread. It would take very little for Job's life to dissolve to nothingness. Whatever it is that Job is holding onto is very unsubstantial, in the opinion of Bildad. *The spider's house is the web which it forms, a frail, light, tenuous substance which will sustain almost nothing. The wind shakes it, and it is easily brushed away. So it will be with the hope of the hypocrite...How little the light and slender threat 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!*²⁶

**“ ‘He leans against his house
and it does not stand;
he strengthens himself in it, and it does not
stand up.**

Job 8:15

**“ ‘He leans up against his house
but it will not stand under him;
he strengthens himself in it, and it does not
endure.**

The first verb is the Niphal imperfect of *shâ'an* (שָׂאֵן) [pronounced *shaw-AHN*], and it means *to lean against, to support oneself against*; it can be used figuratively for *faith*. Strong's #8172 BDB #1043. This is followed by the prepositional phrase *against his house*. Much of this poem is dead-on accurate in terms of what it teaches. Our Lord, in the sermon on the mount, said: *“And every one who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall.”* (Matt. 7:26–27). Psalm 49:11 reads: *Their inner thought is that their houses are forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they have even called their lands after their own names.* People who are rich often do have the tendency to place all of their faith upon their riches, not realizing that their time on earth is very limited and that the impressions that they leave

²⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 202.

²⁶ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 202–203.

are quite fleeting. Bildad is supposing that Job has, all of this time, placed his faith upon his riches, and ignored his own basic flaws because of his wealth. Bildad needs a mirror.

The second verb is the Qal imperfect of ʿamad (אָמַד) [pronounced *gaw-MAHD*] which means *to take a stand, to stand*. Strong's #5975 BDB #763. It is combined with a negative. Recall, this is the house which has the same strength as the spider's web, so when he places any trust upon it, it crumbles—just as when Job depends upon his righteousness before God, it crumbles as well. Barnes: *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.*²⁷

The verb of the third line is châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*] which means, in the Qal, *to be strong, firm, to strengthen*. In the Hiphil, this can mean *to seize, to hold fast to*; however, it still means *to make strong, to strengthen*; context determines how it should be rendered. Strong's #2388 BDB #304.

The third verb with the negative is the Qal imperfect of qûwm (קוּמ) [pronounced *koom*], which means, in the Qal stem, *to stand, to rise up*. Strong's #6965 BDB #877.

“He [is] moist [or, fresh] before the faces of the sun; and his shoots over his garden spread.

Job 8:16

“He thrives in the sun; and his shoots spread over his garden.

At first glance, I don't know what point Bildad is making, so let's see how other translators have dealt with this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He is green before the sun, and his shoots go forth over his garden.
The Chaldean Codex	His is green before the rising of the sun and his shoots fo out over his garden.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Full of moisture he is before the sun, And over his garden his shoot goeth forth:
NEB	He is the lush growth of a plant in the sun, pushing his shoots over the garden;
NRSV	The wicked thrive [lit., he thrives] before the sun, and their shoots spread over the garden.
REB	His is the lush growth of a plant in the sun, pushing out shoots over the garden;
The Septuagint	For it is moist under the sun, and his branch will come forth out of his dung heap [or, corruption].
TEV	Evil men sprout like weeds in the sun, like weeds that spread all through the garden.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Green his <i>is</i> before the sun, And over his garden his branch goeth out.

This verse begins with a 3rd person masculine singular personal pronoun (which implies the verb *to be*) and a word found once in the Old Testament, variously translated *green, lush, thrive, moist*; BDB gives the meanings *moist, juicy, fresh*. We have a related verb, also found but once in Job 24:8. Strong's #7373 BDB #936.

In the second line, we have the prepositional phrase *over [or, beyond] his garden*. The subject is *a shoot*; perhaps a *young plant*. Strong's #3127 BDB #413. The verb is the Qal imperfect of yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*] and it means *to go out, to come out*. Strong's #3318 BDB #422.

What Bildad is describing is the occasional and the temporary growth of the wicked. **I have seen a violent, wicked man, spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil** (Psalm 37:35). They do well at first, showing growth in the sun, thriving and growing in the garden. Bildad assumes that this is Job, a man of evil, temporarily thriving

²⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 203.

in this world. Keil and Delitzsch wrote: *the wicked in his prospertiy is like a climbing plant, which grows luxuriantly for a time, but suddenly perishes.*²⁸

Shakespear wrote: *This is the state of man! Today he puts forth the tender leaves of hope; tomorrow blossoms and bears his blushing honours thick upon him. The third day comes a frost, a killing frost, and when he thinks good easy man, full surely, his greatness is a ripening, nips his shoot, and then he falls, as I do.*

“Over the stone-heap his roots are interwoven; between stones he sees.

Job 8:17

“But its roots become entangled in a stony patch and run up against a bed of rock.

Let's check the other translations here:²⁹

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[Godless] his roots are wrapped about the [stone] heap, and see their way [promisingly] among the rocks.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Over a heap his roots are entwined, a place of stones he descrieth;
Keil and Delitzsch	His roots intertwine over heaps of stone, He looks upon a house of stones.
NASB	“His roots wrap around a rock pile. He grasps [lit., sees] a house of stones.”
NEB	But his roots become entangled in a stony patch and run against a bid of rock.
NIV	It entwines it s roots around a pile of rocks and looks for a place among the stones.
REB	But its roots become entangled in a stony patch and run against a bed of rock.
The Septuagint	He lies down upon a gathering of stones, and he will live in the midst of flints.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	By a heap his roots are wrapped, A house of stones he looketh for,

In the Massoretic text, this is: *a house of stones he sees*; however, it is read *between stones he sees*. The difference between the word *house* and the word *between* is the last letter. We are not certain of the remainder of this verse either. It may be the very poetical word for *to see*, which can almost mean *to behold*. Strong's #2372 BDB #302. However, there is the possibility that we should have the verb *to live* here instead.³⁰

In any case, his roots are not in the soil getting the proper kind of moisture and nutrients, but they are wrapped around rocks crushed between stones. For a short time, such a plant will grow, but it will wither eventually. Bildad is using this analogy to explain why Job did enjoys some prosperity at first. Barnes gives several very different translations and different interpretations as to the meaning of this verse, but finally writes: *the hypocrite is like a plant that has no depth of earth for its roots, that wraps its roots around any thing, even a heap of stones, to support itself; and that consequently will soon wither under the intense heat of the sun...the true sense is, that the prosperous wicked man or the hypocrite is like a plant which stands in the midst of rocks, rubbish, or old ruins, and not like one that stands in a fertile soil where it may strike its roots deep. The reference is to the fact that a tree or plant which springs up on a rock, or in the midst of rocks, will send its roots afar for nutriment, or will wrap them around the projecting points of rocks in order to obtain support.*³¹ Barnes then quotes from *Stillman's Journal* of January 1840: *About fifteen years ago, upon the top of an immense boulder of limestone, some ten or twelve feet in diameter, a sapling was found growing. The stone was but slightly imbedded in the earth; several of its sides were raised from four to six feet above its surface; but the top of the rock was rough with crevices, and its surface, which was sloping off, on one side, to the earth, was covered with a thin mould. From this mould the tree had sprung up, and having thrust its roots into the crevices of the rock, it had succeeded in reaching the height of some twelve or fifteen feet. But about this period the roots on one side became loosened from their attachments,, and the tree gradually declined to the opposite side, until its body was in a parallel line with the earth. The roots on the opposite side, having obtained a firmer hold, afforded sufficient nourishment to sustain their plant; although they could not,*

²⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 320.

²⁹ I assume that you notice, as we examine this poem, there is more of a necessity to examine other translations and to more carefully examine the Hebrew. Bildad would be unable to write such poetry—even its vocabulary outstrips him!

³⁰ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1996, p. 302.

³¹ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 203–204.

alone, retain it in its vertical position. In this condition of things, the tree as if “conscious of its wants,” adopted (if the term may be used) an ingenious process, in order to regain its former upright position. One of the most vigorous of the detached roots sent out a branch from its side, which, passing round a projection of the rock, again united with the parent trunk, and thus formed a perfect loop around this projection, which gave to the root an immovable attachment. The tree now began to recover from its bent position. Obeying the natural tendency of all plants to grow erect, and sustained by this root, which increased with unwonted vigour, in a few years it had entirely regained its vertical position, elevated, as no one could doubt who saw it, by the aid of the root which had formed this singular attachment. But this was not the only power exhibited by this remarkable tree. After its elevation it flourished vigorously for several years. Some of its roots had traced the sloping side of the rock to the earth, and were buried in the soil below. Others, having embedded themselves in its furrows, had completely filled these crevices with vegetable matter. The tree still continuing to grow, concentric layers of vegetable matter were annually deposited between the alburnum and liber, until by the force of vegetable growth alone, the rock was split from the top to the bottom, into three nearly equal divisions, and branches of the roots were soon found, extending down, through these divisions into the earth below. On visiting the tree a few months since, to take a drawing of it, we found that it had attained an altitude of fifty feet, and was four and a half feet in circumference at its base.” The image here shows that the author of this beautiful fragment was a careful observer of nature, and the comparison is exceedingly pertinent and striking. What more beautiful illustration of a hypocrite can there be? His roots do not strike into the earth. His piety is not planted in a rich soil. It is on the hard rock of the unconverted human heart. Yet it sends out its roots afar; seems to flourish for a time; draw nutriment from remote objects; clings to a crag or projecting rock, or to anything for support—until a tempest sweeps it down to rise no more! No doubt the idea of Bildad was, that Job was just such a man.³²

Keil and Delitzsch have an interesting take on this: As the creeper has stone before it, and by its interwindings, as it were, so rules them that it may call them its own (v. Gerlach: the exuberant growth twines itself about the walls, and looks proudly down upon the stony structure); so the ungodly regards his fortune as a solid structure, which he has quickly caused to spring up, and which seems to him imperishable.³³

**“ If he swallows him up from his place
and he [or, it] disavows him; “I have not
seen you.” ‘**

Job 8:18

**“ If He swallows him up from his place
then it will disavow him, saying, “I have not
seen you.” ‘**

Let's again see what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But if [God] snatches him from his property, [then having passed into the hands of others] it will forget <i>and</i> deny him, [saying,] I have never seen you [before, as if ashamed of him—like his former friends]. ³⁴
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	If one destroy him out of his place, Then will it disown him [saying], I have not seen thee.
NEB	Then someone uproots it from its place, which disowns it and says, 'I have never known you.'
NJB	Snatch him from his bed, and it denies it ever saw him.
NIV	“But when it is torn down from its spot, that place disowns it and says, 'I never saw you.'”
The Septuagint	If one should destroy him, his place will deny him. Have you not seen such things?
TEV	But then pull them up—no one will ever know they were there.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	If one doth destroy him from his place, Then it hath feigned concerning him, I have not seen thee!

³² Barnes' Notes, *Job*, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 204–205.

³³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 320.

³⁴ You see what I mean about some Bibles functioning as commentaries—not that that is wrong, and, in this particular instance, it is very helpful. Here, the translators of *The Amplified Bible* give a brief, but very accurate concept of what is being said to Job.

This verse begins with the hypothetical particle, *if*. Barnes claims that it can function as an emphatic particle and also mean *certainly*. I didn't seem to find much of a case for that in BDB, but Gesenius writes: *Its primary power I regard as demonstrative, lo! Behold!*³⁵ This changes the meaning of the verse considerably. It would then read: *Certainly he swallows him up from his place and he [or, it] disavows him; "I have not seen you."* Seeing that we begin the next couple verses with an emphatic interjection, I don't know that we should allow this word to be an emphatic interjection as well. I think that we could see this as a 1st class condition type *if*, as found in the Greek, if this were followed by the perfect tense, but it is not. Therefore, I think that we should stick with *if*. Strong's #518 BDB #51.

Then we have the 3rd masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 3rd masculine singular suffix of *bâla* (עָלַהּ) [pronounced *baw-LAHG*], and it means *to engulf, to swallow up, to swallow down*. Strong's #1104 BDB #118. This is followed by the prepositional phrase *from his place*.

The second verb is a difficult read; it is the 3rd masculine singular Piel perfect of *kâchash* (כָּחַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-KHAHSH*], a word which generally means *to lie, deceive, defraud*. In the Piel, this means to deny, to disavow. Strong's #3584 BDB #471.

Just a few minutes ago, Job had said: ["He will not return again to his house nor will his place know him any more."](#) (Job 7:10). I am wondering if this was the phrase which reminded Bildad of this poem which he shares with Job and their friends. He heard Job say this, the poem came to his mind, and he looked for a place to insert it (it is certainly apropos, to his way of thinking).

To paraphrase *The Amplified Bible*: [But if God snatches him from his property, and it then passes into the hands of others, it—his property—will disavow him, saying, 'I have never seen you](#) [as if ashamed of him—like his former friends]. Again, the idea is that Job has enjoyed some temporary tranquility and prosperity and now he is receiving his due. Some are removed so completely from their property that it is as though their property never knew them. Keil and Delitzsch: *He who has been hitherto prosperous, becomes now as strange to the place in which he flourished so luxuriantly, as if it had never seen him.*³⁶ Surely you have had the experience of returning to the home where you were raised and your home had been razed—as though you had never lived there. Although I can still picture in my mind the driveway and the house and the yard where I lived at age 1 and 2, if I returned there, I am certain that the house has been long demolished and it would be as if I had never lived there. [As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more and its place acknowledges it no longer](#) (Psalm 103:15–16). Eliphaz promises the same thing to Job: ["He will not escape from darkness. The flame will wither his shoots and by the breath of His mouth he will go away."](#) (Job 15:30).

One last remark on this verse. This is eerily like those who belonged to a *Christian* cult or even religion, but are not born again. ["Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'"](#) (Matt. 7:21–23).

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Bildad Interprets this Poem Explaining How God Deals with the Righteous and the Corrupt

["Behold, this \[is\] a joy of His way,
and from dust, others spring up!](#)

Job 8:19

["Observe, these tactics are a joy to God
and out from the dust, other men will spring
up!](#)

³⁵ Gesenius *Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, Baker Books; ©1979; p. 55.

³⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 320.

One of the most difficult things to do in this portion of Bildad's little speech is to distinguish all of the 3rd person masculine singulars. I recall walking in on a conversation where there had been an original analogy and the two sharing this conversation passed it back and forth to where it lost its meaning. Bildad is certain of what he is saying, and we can decipher it with a little work. Whether Job or not understood him fully, or whether he even cared to, is another matter. Luckily, Bildad covered what he needed to and finished up rather quickly.

After flip-flopping on this several times, I would place the end of Bildad's quotation in v. 18, and here, with the repeated emphatic interjection (here and v. 20), begin Bildad's interpretation and application of same.

What he is speaking of here is that this is a joy to God to do things this way. A man thinks that he is successful and blessed, despite the fact that he is a no-good, rotten ass; and then suddenly, God knocks him for a loop. This is a joy to God and Bildad thinks that this is what has happened to Job. From the dust where Job will go, others will spring forth. Solomon expressed this in Eccles. 1:4: [A generation goes and a generation comes; but the earth stands forever.](#)

The other interpretation is that this is the joy of the way of the *place* which rejects this man or that this is the joy of the *plant* which has been rejected—therefore, this line is sarcastic (this is how Barnes perceives it to be).

“Behold, God will not reject a [man of integrity and He will not strengthen the hand of morally reprehensible ones.

Job 8:20

“Obviously, God will not reject a man of personal integrity and He will not prosper and bless people who are morally reprehensible.

The sort of man that God would not reject is one who is *tâm* (טַם) [pronounced *tawm*], an adjective that refers to one who has *personal integrity*. This is the very word used by God to describe Job in Job 1:1, 8. This word also means *perfected, completed, finished, integrity in terms of intending to do no evil, innocence, blameless, upright*. The corresponding verb means *to complete, to consume, to finish up*. When you have sinned, you have a defect, you are incomplete before God. Therefore, the adjective has to do with remaining in fellowship without evil intentions. Strong's #8535 BDB #1070.

God will not strengthen the hand of the Hiphil participle of *râ'â' (רַעַר)* [pronounced *raw-ĠAHĠ*] and it means *to be evil or bad, displeasing, morally reprehensible*. Strong's #7489 BDB #949.

McGee: *Now wait a minute—is that actually true? God has certainly helped me although I have been an evil doer. He saved me, my friend.*³⁷ In this verse, Bildad essentially says, “So, I agree with Eliphaz.” Eliphaz had said, “Remember now, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?” (Job 4:7).

“Even yet, He will fill your mouth with laughter and your [two] lips [with] shouting.

Job 8:21

“In fact, He will still fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with joyful shouting.

This verse begins with the conjunction³⁸ *ad* (אֲד) [pronounced *gad*] which means *until, until that, to the point that, so that even, while*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. What has been suggested is that the vowel pointing is incorrect (this is not a part of the original Scripture). It is likely that the true word is *ad* (אֲד) [pronounced *ghod*], a word which means *still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet*. Strong's #5750 BDB #728 The idea is that God will bless greatly those who have personal integrity and he will cause Job to enjoy his life, which is the complete antithesis of Job's feeling about his life right now. Bildad's point is that Job is still alive; if he is still alive, then God will still bless him—as long as he is morally upright. Recall that Eliphaz has already told Job, “You will laugh at

³⁷ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 62.

³⁸ Owen incorrectly lists it as a preposition, but that is not its function here. Owen also indicates that there may be some disagreement as to the correct reading of this word.

violence when it comes.” (Job 5:22a). We have a very similar feeling in the Jews who were returned by their captors to the land: “When Y^ehowah brought back the captive ones of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with joyful shouting.” (Psalm 126:1–2).

What we have here is the alternative, which must be taken with the previous verses. Bildad gives assumption that Job is morally fit in God’s eyes, and describes how his life would be under those circumstances: “Observe, these tactics are a joy to God and out from the dust, other men will spring up! Obviously, God will not reject a man of personal integrity and He will not prosper and bless people who are morally reprehensible. Even yet, He will fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with joyful shouting. Those who hate you will be clothed in shame and the dwelling places of malevolent and corrupt people will disappear.” (Job 8:19–22).

**“Those hating you are clothed with shame
and a tent of wicked ones is not.”**

Job 8:22

**“Those who hate you will be clothed in
shame
and the dwelling places of malevolent and
corrupt people will disappear.”**

Here, not only is Job blessed, but those who had problems with Job, those who disliked Job, will be shamed. And it has been so long ago, that you probably don’t remember, but the last thing that Job said was *and my nothing*, meaning, *and I will no longer exist*. Here, Bildad uses Job’s words to describe the tent of the wicked ones and says that *it will no longer exist*. What we have here is the substantive of negation (that is, *naught, nothing, in the condition of being not = without*). Strong’s #369 BDB #34. Here, it has with it the 3rd person masculine suffix (in Job 7:22, it was affixed to the 1st person suffix). The tents of those who are not are the masculine plural adjective *râshâ* [pronounced *raw-SHAWĠ*], and it is usually translated *wicked, wicked ones*; however, a more up-to-date rendering would be *malevolent ones, lawless ones, criminals, the corrupt*. Strong’s #7563 BDB #957.

Here we have a metonymy; it is the evil ones who will actually become naught, not their tents, per se. As has been stated in previous verses, their tents, their dwelling places, will fall into the hands of the righteous and it will be as though they never lived there. Therefore their previous homes (here, tents) will become the homes of the righteous. It is the same home, only the occupants have changed. Since the occupants have changed, the designation of the home has changed.

King David, as a man of God, a man in politics and a man in leadership, also had a great many enemies. For this reason, he often prayed for the destruction of his enemies: *Let those be ashamed and humiliated altogether who rejoice at my distress. Let those be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves over me* (Psalm 35:26). *Let those who are adversaries of my soul be ashamed and consumed. Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor, who seek to injure me* (Psalm 71:13). *Let my accusers be clothed with dishonor and let them cover themselves with their own shame as with a robe* (Psalm 109:29).

Again, these thoughts of Bildad, that Job’s enemies would be clothed with shame and that God would remove them from their homes—this is all predicated upon Job forsaking his secret sin and pursuing God. Don’t forget that back in vv. 5–6, Bildad said: *“If you would seek God and implore the compassion of the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, then certainly now He would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate.”*

You will note that to Bildad, life is quite simple and all those who have come before him will also testify to the fact that if you are a person of integrity, God will bless you; if you are corrupt, God will take you down. He may bless you for a short time, but that is a joy to God to temporarily bless the corrupt and then suddenly take it all from him and place in his stead of man of integrity. There is some truth to this, as we have seen. *The house of the corrupt will be destroyed, but the tent of the one with integrity will flourish* (Prov. 14:11). In general, that is the case. However, blessings are not all temporal nor are all temporal blessings the same. Not every person who believes in Jesus Christ will receive a large house, a successful business and their right woman (or right man). God’s plans and ways are somewhat more complex than that. We sometimes face suffering, we sometimes face trials and tribulation. This too shall pass. And all accounts are settled in eternity. That is, there are some people who are unregenerate, corrupt and evil, who have enjoyed some kind of prosperity on this earth. There are some

businessmen who have become successful and wealthy due to the application of Biblical principals and God's blessing; and there are some who have gathered a significant portion of their wealth through means which are less than honorable. God has a purpose in all of this and sometimes this purpose may extend through several generations. Generally speaking, the growing believer will receive some prosperity superior to that which he would have received as an unbeliever—in fact, often he will receive a great deal more prosperity and blessing than he would have had he remained an unbeliever. However, all of this has been prepared for us by God and we do not all receive the same package of blessings. Some are blessed with suffering—you may have a hard time grasping that—and this all falls within God's plan and His purpose.

A Summary of the shortcomings of Bildad's thinking:

- ▶ Bildad is a man of limited intelligence and he has found himself in the company of those who have a greater ability to deal with complex issues and whose vocabulary is greater and more complex.
- ▶ Bildad either does not recognize or does not acknowledge his own limitations.
- ▶ Bildad assumes that God punishes the corrupt and blesses those with integrity while they are on this earth. He believes in God and believes that God is righteous, but assumes that if we are good, God will bless us and if we are bad, God will discipline us—and that this will be something which is observable by those around us.
- ▶ In Bildad's over-simplistic view of things, he equates acute human suffering with the exercise of God's justice. To his way of thinking, the mysteries of human life are so simply explained.
- ▶ Bildad misinterprets what Job has said. Job questioned what God has done to him within the context of God's perfect character. Bildad thinks that Job has questioned whether God is righteous or not. This is a fine line that is too complex for Bildad to grasp. Job asks why would a righteous God do this to him. Bildad thinks Job has called into question God's righteousness in that He has done this to him.
- ▶ Finally, and most obviously, Bildad assumes that Job has committed some horrible sin against God which Bildad has not identified, but knows Job has committed.

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Finally, Let me take from the introduction of Barnes and summarize the points which have been made by Bildad:

- Bildad first compared the speech of Job to a sweeping and violent tempest which levels everything in its path. *How long will it continue*, he asks (v. 2).
- He asked Job if God would pervert justice, as he *thinks* Job's speech has implied (v. 3).
- Bildad took for granted that the children of Job died for their own person sins. Making such a statement would cut right to the heart of a grieving father (v. 4)
- If Job was a man of integrity, he would seek God in a humble and reverent manner, and grace might still be given him from God and some of his prosperity returned to him (vv. 5–7).
- To support his views, Bildad appealed to the ancients, to those who had lived longer than they, and therefore had more opportunities to make accurate observations of the way of the world. Then Bildad quotes a poem, which allows him to describe the earthly condition of those who do evil and their eventual outcome. The most succulent plants will soon wither, and, in like manner, the hope of the recalcitrant would fail (vv. 8–17).
- Whatever prosperity the wicked enjoys, it is temporary—and God takes particular joy in removing it from him (vv. 18–19).
- Bildad concluded by saying that God would not throw aside a man of integrity (v. 20).
- Bildad finally stated the happy effects which would result from placing one's confidence in God (vv. 21–22).¹

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1.This was substantially taken from the introduction to this chapter found in *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 196. There has been some expanding, some editing and a great deal of paraphrase.