

September 10  
Job 8-10

Bildad the Shuhite... second shortest guy in the Bible after the Philippian Jailer who slept on his watch.

So Bildad starts on the wrong foot. He says "Your kids died because they sinned. Period." Ouch...Bildad says, "Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers." From that assumption he reasons something like this: 'Since God does not reject a righteous man, we can draw a few obvious conclusions: first, the death of your children is evidence that they sinned against God and He made them pay the penalty for their sin. Second, since it is obvious that God has rejected you - the signs are all right here, Job, just look around you - then I must conclude that you are not the righteous man you keep saying you are - you are a great sinner, but if you will repent and plead with the Almighty and be pure and upright, even now He will rouse himself and restore you to your rightful place.'

This commentary is why nobody asked Bildad to write "How to win friends and influence people."

Since we are not omniscient like God is, we must be very careful about the conclusions we reach concerning other people. Since we do not know their hearts it is futile to draw conclusions about their spiritual conditions based solely upon their circumstances. Eliphaz and Bildad were dead wrong.

Before we go on, though, I want to examine Bildad's basic assumption with you - "God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of an evildoer." Let me say again that the expression 'blameless man' here does not mean a perfect man - one who is totally without sin, I know that, because back in Chapter 1 God Himself used the word to describe Job and Scripture often reminds us that no human being, save Jesus Christ Himself, has ever been totally without sin. No, 'blameless' means righteous or upright.

1<sup>st</sup>: God does not reject a righteous man. In that, Bildad is absolutely correct, but he was very wrong to jump to the conclusion that because Job was afflicted - that his suffering was evidence that God had rejected Job. Bildad's basic assumption is fine but his observation that suffering is proof of God's rejection is as far off base as it can get! Suffering is NOT always evidence of God's displeasure! All suffering is NOT judgment.

2<sup>nd</sup>: The second part of Bildad's assumption - that God will not strengthen the hand of the evildoer is only partly right. God will tear down every proud and haughty person. He will humble them and lay them in the dust. Sometimes to accomplish His purposes, and also to give them opportunity to repent, He will allow them to prosper for a season and even to oppress the righteous. Sometimes he let's evil thrive for a while so the people of God can see his deliverance AND be motivated to obey and worship him.

Sometimes God allows tough circumstances in a persons life so that he can do a deep work in their internal world.

I know that happened for me in 1993. In that year, we had two kids die in the womb. My parents got divorced and we were in the hospital with two close friends. I thought God abandoned me. I thought I deserved better cuz I decided to give up a lucrative career and go into ministry. But in that year, God did a deep work in my life that has served me well ever since.

So, observing a person's outward situation is not necessarily a very good indicator of whether or not that person is righteous or whether or not God loves them. God loved Job just as much when he was sitting on the ash heap as before when he has been dining in a mansion. Outward circumstances are not God indicators of whether or not God loves an individual.

In spite of the wrong conclusions to which he comes, Bildad does say some helpful things: I love the description he gives of the person who forgets God. Did you notice it in Chapter 8? Of that individual Bildad says: "What he trusts in is fragile, what he relies on is a spider web. He leans on his web but it gives way. He clings to it but it does not hold."

Question for you: have you forgotten God? Sometimes God let's us suffer a bit so we avoid the greater tragedy of forgetting him! (which of course leads us down dark paths and to spiritual emptiness...)

Well, Job could get out of this conundrum by cursing God, or denying his power... but he knows better. "He moves mountains without their knowing it and overturns them in His anger. He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. He speaks to the sun and it does not shine. He seals off the light of the stars. He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. He is the maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south..." 'Whatever explanation there is for the evil which has befallen me,' Job would say, 'it has nothing to do with any kind of limitation upon the power of God.'

God holds all the power. Job knows he can't compare to God's righteousness or power...so he can never confront God directly. He is weaker and guilty.

So take special note of 9:33-35

"If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot."

Yearning for an arbitrator between God and man. This is a theme that will develop as the book goes on. But it is one thing that makes me glad I am alive 2000 years after Jesus and not 2000 years before. We have that arbitrator. So we come before God clean and pleasing to him. Think about that today.