



The Second Sunday in Advent

The Collect.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The First Sunday in Advent

The Collect.

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

¶ This Collect is to be repeated every day, after the other Collects in Advent, until Christmas Day.

Job 8

King James Version (KJV)

- 1** Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
- 2** How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?
- 3** Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?
- 4** If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;
- 5** If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication

to the Almighty;

6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

8 For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)

10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

11 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

12 Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.

13 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.

15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

16 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

17 His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.

18 If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

19 Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:

21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

Eliphaz was gracious in his accusations against Job in comparison with those of Bildad in this chapter. The interchange between Job and his three friends are profitable to us in understanding the failures so apparent in human logic and

reason. In many cases, reason and logic contrasts with the grace and mercy of God. Were we God, I am sure our harsh judgments would have taken care of the alleged overpopulation of the world. We would snuff out lives, left-and right, of those whom WE considered evil and without merit of forgiving or redeeming. Bildad, like Eliphaz, mentions many cardinal points of human logic and wisdom of ancient times, but antiquity does not establish right. Regardless of how remote in antiquity an idea is advanced, if that idea is wrong now, it has been wrong from the beginning. It is not the wisdom of the wisest and most brilliant philosophers of the world that lights our path, but that wisdom only that descends to us from God. If a principle of life is based on God's Word, properly interpreted, then it is our fine gold of purposeful living. (The wisdom of the so-called *Purpose Driven Church* is not God's wisdom, but the wisdom of a corrupt and decadent old man named Rick Warren).

For Bildad, and men like him, the only measure of God's anger finds its expression in sickness, poverty, or depression. He is quite sure of himself in calling to the bar ancient wisdom as well as presumed Godly counsel in condemning Job for his calamity. He does not know, as we know, the ending for this Book, so he rambles on with the energy from the winds of ignorance that fills his sails. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind? Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?* (Job 8:1-3) It is not contrary to reason that those whom we love most, and who know our hearts best, can deliver the most hurtful darts to our souls. Remember the words of Mark Antonius in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar regarding the wound of Brutus delivered to his 'friend' Caesar: "For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel. Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him! This was the most unkindest cut of all; For when the noble Caesar saw him stab, Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms, Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart..."

Julius Caesar Act 3, scene 2, 181–186

You will see now how gifted is Bildad in piercing Job's fatherly heart over the death of his sons and daughters: *If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression; If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.* (Job 8:4-7) See how God's poetry surpasses that of Shakespeare? Though fully meritorious of beautiful prose, it possesses the added authority of pure truth. The heart of Job grieves more for his sons and daughters than it does for his present misery. Bildad accuses not only Job for past sins, but also his children. He attributes to God the fault that belongs to Satan alone. What blasphemies we may incur out of pride and ignorance of God's truths! One major fact Bildad and Eliphaz have omitted is the precise sins of Job that have led God, according to their presumptions, to send these terrors upon him.

We see, in these next three verses, the attempt of Bildad to establish his point by appealing to the established wisdom of the ancients: *For enquire, I pray*

thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow :) Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart? (Job 8:8-10) Instead of appealing to the ancient fathers and denouncing the present wisdom, perhaps Bildad would have profited more in appealing to the wisdom of God and not that of man. If antiquity made us wise, surely Adam (the most ancient of all men) would have had better sense than to partake of the forbidden fruit in disobedience to the commandment.

Bildad compares the life of Job to that of the rush plant or the water lily. These are like the wicked that grow up suddenly from the marshes and swamps of Egypt, and perishes even in its greenness before all other (righteous) plants. Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. (Job 8:11-14) This is a clear case of the "pot calling the kettle black." Who is the hypocrite here? It is not Job!

Bildad grasps at the vaporous pillars of the air to blame Job (who is blameless before God). He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones. If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee. Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow. (Job 8:15-19) Again, Bildad speaks without specifics – only eerie gestures of sin. The spider builds by webs that are sinewy and of enough substance to hold himself up, but not enough to hold up Job. He clings desperately, according to Bildad, to his house, yet it falls miserably. He compares Job's tenacious hold to his belongings (perhaps out of Bildad's former envy) to that of a spider whose web is over come by weight of his catch. An old Arab saying goes: "*Time destroys the well-built house, as well as the spider's web.*"

Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers: Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing. They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought. (Job 8:20-22) Here closes this episode of Bildad's unwarranted disclamations against Job. Finally, Bildad, perhaps by chance alone, hits upon a true principle of God's Word. Bildad, quite rightly, considers Job to be a righteous man who has fallen into sin from which he has not repented. He is right in the first instant and wrong in the second. All who hate the righteous will come to shame – many even in this life. Those who hate the righteous man also hate his LORD. "...*Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.* (2 Chronicles 19:2) Do you help the ungodly and love those who hate the LORD?