

Title: Bye-Bye Bildad

Number: 0322Job25:1-26:14(26)

Text: 25.1-26.14

Central Idea: *God's greatness in what He does is but a whisper in comparison to the thunderous greatness of Who He is*

Date: March 6, 2022

{Read Text / Prayer}

[i] There's a little mealtime prayer some of us learned as children:

“God is great; God is good; now let us thank Him for our food”

There is actually some profundity in that simple prayer

* Includes thanksgiving

* Also God's goodness and greatness.

“God is great; God is good; now let us thank Him for our food”

[ii] Theologians have used those twin themes of “goodness” & “greatness” in answering the question of who God is

* Goodness (what He does)

* Greatness (Who He is)

Could say that what G. does & who He is are different aspects of His greatness, in that these 2 categories cannot be separated.

But they can be contrasted.

That's at least part of what we see here.

We could put it this way ==>

God's greatness in what He does is a whisper compared to the thunderous greatness of who He is.

Hear that again [^]

What G. does in His goodness (activity);
pales in cf. to Who He is (ontology)

There's some overlap here. We're told in 1 John that "God is Love"
God loves (something He does); God is love (attribute of who He is).

But when we think of works like Creation (G. created t/heavens & t/earth) we're not to equate G. w/the creation (pantheism).

Again =>

God's greatness in what He does is a whisper compared to the thunderous greatness of who He is

[iii] Clear that God's greatness is demonstrated in what He does

But what He does is but a whisper cf. to t/thunder of Who He is.
(wait until t/end of t/sermon for t/punch line; hint: v. 14)

[iv] This is a very difficult section of Job

True of chapt. 24. Even more so in our text for today.

- * Why is Bildad's section in chapt 25 so short? (it's t/shortest chapt).
- * Who's speaking in 26:5-14? Why do those words sound like B's?
- * What about parallels to ANEern creation stories in chapt 26?

[v] We can't go into all of those questions in detail

If I were simply teaching a class on Job that would be one thing.

But going too deeply into these matters in a sermon?

You would miss t/forest for t/trees.

I. The Last Words of Bildad (25:1-6)

Rem. in chapt. 22 Eliphaz kicked off t/3d / last cycle of speeches between Job & t/3 friends. Job replied to Eliphaz in chapt. 23&24.

Next up is Bildad here in chapt. 25. This is his 3d and last speech.

“Bye Bye Bildad”

It's short. Shortest of all t/speeches (6 vv.).

Length of t/3d round of speeches by t/friends corresponds to their ages

Who's likely t/oldest of t/3 friends? Eliphaz. He speaks 1st in chap. 4.

His last speech was in chapt. 22 consisted of 27 vv.

Bildad, t/middle friend speaks for a total of 6 verses here in chapt. 25.

Zophar, t/youngest, doesn't speak at all!

Bildad's brevity here shows he was running out of steam.

You can only say t/same thing so many ways b4 run out ammo.

1st thing we see in chapt. 25 ==>

A. Establishing the Greatness of God (25:1-3)

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, 2 “Dominion and awe belong to Him Who establishes peace in His heights.

1. This is the sovereign rule of God that inspires fear

Dominion = “God’s capacity to rule” (sovereignty)

“Awe” = a word often translated “fear”

a. One translation renders v. 2 ==>

2 “God rules with frightening power, with a strong hand he establishes peace in heaven.” [Germ. common lang. version]

2. Is there any lack of perfect peace in heaven?

Nature of sin is that it brings disorder. Wars . . . We pray for peace.

When we pray in keeping w/the Disciple’s Prayer (Matt. 6)

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

We are including in that, peace. KD is ultimately a peaceful KD.

Isaiah 11:6–9 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

Good news of JC is called “the Gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15)

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God.”
(Matt. 5:9)

3. Hebrew “shalom” (“peace”)

Means more than a cessation of hostility; it refers to a wholeness / completeness / health / satisfaction / contentment / blessing

2 “Dominion and awe belong to Him Who establishes peace in His heights.

3. Sometimes establishing peace requires a peace-keeping force

3a “Is there any number to His troops?

Some think this refers to the stars of heaven; others angels.

3b And upon whom does His light not rise?

God sees everything!

Heb. 4:13 ...there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

A. Establishing the Greatness of God (25:1-3)

We will return to that theme in chapter 26

B. Contrasting the Fallenness of Man (25:4-6)

1. We go from the perfections of God to the imperfection of man!

a. First two words of verse 4: “How then”

That is, in comparison to this dreadfully powerful God who is man?

Specif. “Job, who do you think you are?”

4 “How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?

2. Application to Job

“Job, you want a hearing in t/courtroom of God? Do you think you can stand before Him?” Do you really think you are w/o guilt?

a. “Born of woman” is no slight against females

This is a reflection on man’s inherent sinfulness at birth.

We are born sinful (Psa. 51:5).

“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23)

Job in ==>

9:2 “. . . how can a man be in the right before God?

Job 14:4 “Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one!

b. Contrast in verses 5 & 6

5 “If even the moon has no brightness And the stars are not pure in His sight, 6 How much less man, that maggot, And the son of man, that worm!”

Bildad may be borrowing from his elder, Eliphaz ===>

4:17–19 17 ‘Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? 18 ‘He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error. 19 ‘How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before the moth!

15:15-16 15“Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight;16 How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!

c. Man the Maggot (Maggots = death)

Isaiah 14:11 [God speaking of t/King of Babylon]

‘Your pomp and the music of your harps Have been brought down to Sheol; Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you . . .

There are a few things that creep me out. One of them are maggots. I see maggots & I run away like a little girl! I find maggots disgusting.

Esp. true when they have infested a dead body! One thing to see them laying in common household trash; another to see them feeding on a corpse!

That’s what man is in his sinfulness: a worm / maggot.

Should bring humility. We are so into being somebody.

We want to be celebrities in our little kingdoms.

We look at others who have “achieved” & we become envious.

Listen, the best of us, even as Xns (greatest preacher; greatest writer; greatest theologian; fill in t/blanks) is no more than top maggot of t/pile.

That’s apart from X. In X we are elevated from equal maggots to equal servants.

I. The Last Words of Bildad (25:1-6)

A. Establishing the Greatness of God (25:1-3)

B. Contrasting the Fallenness of Man (25:4-6)

II. Job's Reply to Bildad (26:1–14)

A. Bildad Misses the Point (26:1–4)

1. These 4 verses are straightforward and are reminiscent of Job's reply to Eliphaz in chapter 16 where he calls his friends "sorry comforters"

a. These words drip with sarcasm

1 Then Job responded, 2 "What a help you are to the weak! How you have saved the arm without strength! 3 "What counsel you have given to one without wisdom! What helpful insight you have abundantly provided! 4 "To whom have you uttered words? And whose spirit was expressed through you?"

b. The pronouns "you" here are singular in Hebrew so Job was addressing Bildad's words in chapter 25

"Bildad: you have totally missed the point. Your words may be true, but they are not helpful."

The author of Job turns an abrupt corner at v. 5

B. God's Greatness in what He Does (26:5–13)

God's greatness in what He does is a whisper compared to the thunderous greatness of who He is.

Abruptly change where we have what one commentator calls a "magnificent hymn that sings of the powers God himself revealed to [Job] at the end of the book." [Robert L. Alden, Job, NAC]

We are now looking at God's power over creation // "awesome dominion" (Bildad, 25:2). All of t/verbs here are in t/active voice demonstrating God's active administration over everything.

Issues here in this section:

* Big Question is "Who's speaking in vv. 5-14?"

+ These words sound like they are a continuation of Bildad's thoughts in chapt. 25. Some think these words are Bildad's.

(damage to the text)

+ Could be that Job is quoting the others.

(Quote marks are not in t/original MSS)

+ Could be that Job is directly speaking for himself.

Also allusions to ANE legends, which is tricky, but to me a non-issue. (something we've talked about before such as in chapter 9:13.

That's a simple overview. Like I said, I would address these ?s in more detail if I were teaching a class. Not really appropriate for a sermon. So we are going to quickly move through these verses;

I don't want you to miss t/grand theme of God's greatness:

1. God's Greatness Over Death and the Underworld (vv. 5-6)

2. God's Greatness Over Life and the Creation (vv. 7-10)

3. God's Greatness Over Adversaries and the Satan (vv. 11-13)

1. God's Greatness Over Death and the Underworld (vv. 5-6)
5 "The departed spirits tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. 6 "Naked is Sheol before Him, And Abaddon has no covering.

a. Questions from verse 5

(1) “Departed spirits” (Hebrew *reḫā’îm*)

Could refer to the once powerful dead such as kings, rulers.

May be a parallel here to Job’s words in chapter 24 where he bemoaned the wickedness of powerful people.

(a) Those who ==>

24:2–4 2 “ . . . remove the landmarks . . . seize and devour flocks. 3 “They drive away the donkeys of the orphans; . . . take the widow’s ox for a pledge. 4 “ . . . push the needy aside from the road . . .

(b) Here they are dead and ==>

5b . . . Tremble under the waters . . .

That is, they exist in fearful judgement. They “tremble” / fearful.

These are t/dead who in NT terms are in hades.

Rich Man in Lk 16 who is descr. as “in agony in a place of flame.”

b. Verse 6

6 “Naked is Sheol before Him, And Abaddon has no covering.

(1) Sheol (Hebrew)

- * Simply the grave
- * Afterlife in general
- * Place where the wicked go after death
- * Place where the righteous go after death

(2) Abaddon (Hebrew “destruction”) used 6x in OT (3 in Job)
Place of punishment (Hades in the NT; Luke 16).

1. God’s Greatness Over Death and the Underworld (vv. 5-6)

2. God’s Greatness Over Life and the Creation (vv. 7-10)

a. These verses seem to parallel the creation account in Gen. 1

(1) The earth (v. 7)

7 “He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

Some see here an allusion to the fact that the earth is suspended in space; something unknown until more recent times.

(2) Atmosphere (v. 8)

8 “He wraps up the waters in His clouds, and the cloud does not burst under them.

Water, heavier than the air, that is nonetheless suspended in the air.

Genesis 1:6–7 6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.

(3) Verse 9 raises a question

9 “He obscures the face of the full moon and spreads His cloud over it.

(a) “Obscures the face of the full moon”

i. Other translations have “His throne”

AV 9 He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.

HCSB 9 He obscures the view of His throne, spreading His cloud over it.

Does God obscure the face of the moon or the view of His throne?

It depends on how you vocalize or pronounce the Hebrew word.

IOW - it’s about the vowels. If you know anything about biblical Hebrew you know that it’s a consonantal language that didn’t originally have vowels. They were added later — centuries after X — by the Massoretic scholars.

LXX = θρόνος

JPS (Jewish Publication Society) English Translation ==>

9 He shuts off the view of His throne, spreading His cloud over it.

I think “throne” is a better option here.

9 He obscures the view of His throne, spreading His cloud over it.

Several times in t/book of Exodus you have a cloud associated with God's glory [shikinah glory]

Exo. 16:10 “. . . the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud.”

Jesus was received into a cloud when He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9); He will return in clouds of glory (Rev. 1:7)

(4) I think we go from the throne of heaven in verse 9 back to the creation event in verse 10

10 “He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary [horizon] of light and darkness.

One resource commenting on these verses ==>

“These are “statements amazingly in accord with facts not known or agreed on by scientists till a few hundred years ago. In the clouds in the sky God gathers up water (evaporation) . . . At the horizon . . . light and darkness seem to separate. The horizon is circular, for the verb “marks out” [“inscribed”] translates [a Hebrew word meaning], “to draw a circle,” and suggests the curvature of the earth. This too accords with the facts known by scientists only in recent times.” [Bible

Knowledge Commentary]

1. God's Greatness Over Death and the Underworld (vv. 5-6)

2. God's Greatness Over Life and the Creation (vv. 7-10)

3. God’s Greatness Over Adversaries and the Satan (vv. 11-13)

11 **“The pillars of heaven tremble and are amazed at His rebuke.**

12 **“He quieted the sea with His power, and by His understanding**

He shattered Rahab. 13 “By His breath the heavens are cleared;

His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.

a. We saw a reference to Rahab (v. 12) back in chapter 9

9:13b . . . “Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab.”

Some scholars ID Rahab with Leviathan in 3:8 (ANE mythical creature that stood for destruction).

Rahab was also a symbol of the sea (what we also see in v. 12).

b. The “sea” and “Rahab” stand for destruction - personified in the forces of evil (namely Satan)

Isaiah 27:1: “In that day [eschaton; end of t/age] the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and will slay the dragon that is in the sea.”

Here, in v. 13 ==>

13 **“By His breath the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent.**

Jonathan Edwards: “It might have been translated, ‘His hands have wounded or tormented the crooked serpent,’ that is, the devil.” [Jonathan

Edwards, *The “Blank Bible”*: Part 1 & Part 2, ed. Stephen J. Stein and Harry S. Stout, vol. 24, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 451]

3. God’s Greatness Over Adversaries and the Satan (vv. 11-13)

On verses 12 and 13, Christopher Ash writes:

These verses speak, in storybook language, that would be recognized all over the ancient Near East, of the conquest and subjugation of supernatural evil. “The sea” is a picture of the forces of chaos and disorder that threaten to swamp the moral order of creation with injustice (v. 12). “Rahab” (v. 12), also called “the fleeing serpent” (v. 13), is a storybook name for the gigantic sea monster or sea serpent that lives in the sea and embodies all the anti-God forces of evil in the universe. [Ash, 265-66]

B. God’s Greatness in what He Does (26:5–13)

1. God’s Greatness Over Death and the Underworld (vv. 5-6)

2. God’s Greatness Over Life and the Creation (vv. 7-10)

3. God’s Greatness Over Adversaries and the Satan (vv. 11-13)

God's greatness in what He does is a whisper compared to the thunderous greatness of who He is.

C. God’s Greatness in Who He is (26:14)

14 “Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; and how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?”

All of these powerful observations of God’s glory in creation are but a ‘whisper’ compared to the “thunder” of who He is.

Rom. 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

1. God's Glory!

John Piper, in answering the question "What is God's glory" writes:
. . . I believe the glory of God is the going public of his infinite worth. I define the holiness of God as the infinite value of God, the infinite intrinsic worth of God. And when that goes public in creation, the heavens are telling the glory of God, and human beings are manifesting his glory, because we're created in his image, and we're trusting his promises so that we make him look gloriously trustworthy.

The public display of the infinite beauty and worth of God is what I mean by "glory," and I base that partly on Isaiah 6, where the seraphim say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of his—" and you would expect them to say "holiness" and they say "glory." They're ascribing "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of his—" and when that goes public in the earth and fills it, you call it "glory."

So God's glory is the radiance of his holiness, the radiance of his manifold, infinitely worthy and valuable perfections.

[<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-gods-glory>]

That is what we woefully fall short of ==>

Rom. 3:23 "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

2. Go back to Bildad in chapter 25

25:4 “How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?”

Rom. 3:23 “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:1–2 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

"When I stand before the throne
Dressed in beauty not my own;
When I see thee as thou art,
Love thee with unsinning heart;
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe."

“Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.”