

JOB

A MAN OF HEROIC ENDURANCE

STUDY SEVEN

Continuing the Verbal Fistfight

Selections from Job 8–10

Eliphaz ventured a word, but I'm telling you, Bildad was downright blunt. He opens with a blast.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

A FOREST fable from the frigid environs of northern Canada accurately illustrates Job's dilemma with his friends. Here's how the story goes.

A group of porcupines, or a *prickle*, faced a frosty situation. On bitter cold nights they huddled together, pushing closely next to each other to stay warm. But because their quills were sharp, they poked one another and had to move apart. When another blast of icy wind made them shiver, they'd shuffle back together, huddling once again for warmth until they could no longer endure the painful pricks, then they'd push apart once more.

On and on through the frigid nights they continued their unique dance. They would move close, then apart. Close, then apart . . . until, finally, the prickle of porcupines discovered the ideal spacing to share life-saving body heat without prickling one another.

The porcupines needed each other, but they kept *needling* each other when they came too close! Similarly, Job needed his friends, and, at first, their sympathy and shared grief warmed his soul. But then, they started needling him with their sharp verbal quills, and in response, he needled them back! So, they separated, until another prickly friend moved close and the dance went on.

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, after Eliphaz's sharp words and Job's response, a second porcupine friend, Bildad, started jabbing him with his pious theological monologue. Poor Job. He needed his friends, but they only added to his frustration, misery, and woe. Let's see how Job handled this prickly friend.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Maybe you've found yourself pummeled by the hurtful, verbal blows of another who is unaware of the damage he or she is inflicting. In prayer, bring your pain to Jesus, One who is well-acquainted with grief and pain.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

According to Eliphaz, Job's sin had produced the bitter harvest of his suffering, and Job should accept "the discipline of the Almighty" (Job 5:17) and admit his guilt so God would restore him. But Job stood firm. "Stop assuming my guilt," he retorted, "for I have done no wrong" (6:29).

Fevered, blistered from head to toe, still grieving his ten children who were buried on a hillside nearby, and with a wife beside herself in despair, Job faced Bildad next. Eliphaz was respectful in his charges, but Bildad was offensive and rude. He could have shown Job sympathy, comfort, and encouragement—but, instead, he landed blows of criticism in a verbal onslaught that only became more severe.



Observation: Look Up . . . Look Back . . . Look Around

When Pastor Chuck Swindoll studies the Bible, he consistently follows the same *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method.¹ He begins with observation, asking the question, *What does the passage say?* Read [Job 8–10](#) slowly. Poetry is meant to be spoken, so read the chapters aloud if you can and take your time as you read, allowing the words to touch your heart.

Bildad's First Speech—Job 8

Bildad loaded his bow, aimed, and launched three piercing arrows at Job—an arrow about God's character, an arrow about wisdom from the past, and a final arrow about evidence from nature. Let's observe Bildad's arguments, looking at these subjects in segments: [Job 8:1–11, 13–14, 18, 20–22](#).

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Look Up: Character of God—Job 8:1–7

Bildad pulled no punches. “You sound like a blustering wind,” Bildad blurted out, calling Job, in modern-day terms, a windbag (Job 8:2)! His insults hit even harder. In Job 8:4, whom did Bildad coldheartedly accuse? How? In 8:6–7, what did Bildad imply about Job’s life and character?

How do Bildad’s comments in 8:3, 5 reflect condescension? What assumption was he making?

Look Back: Wisdom of the Past—Job 8:8–10

Then Bildad drew from “past generations” (Job 8:8 NASB). What was his point?

Look Around: Evidence from Nature—Job 8:11–22

Driving home his argument with cause-and-effect in mind, Bildad turned to nature. How did he use illustrations from nature to indict Job in Job 8:11–18? What did he call Job by implication in 8:13 and 16? How would you paraphrase 8:20–22?

Bildad’s implication was, “Job, you are withering and dying because you’re a hypocrite. It only follows that your hope is perishing because you haven’t a pure heart and a right relationship before a holy God.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Job's Response—Job 9–10

Job silenced Bildad by countering, “Yes, I know all this is true in principle” (Job 9:2)—namely, that “God will not reject a person of integrity” (8:20). In fact, God hadn’t rejected Job. Job *felt* rejected, though, and he didn’t understand why God seemed to turn His back on him. Let’s observe Job’s response in these segments: [Job 9:1–10, 14–24, 27–29, 32–34](#); [10:2–3, 17–19](#); [13:3, 15, 18](#).

Job's Questions to God—Job 9

Job wished he could plead his case in a divine courtroom. If he could talk with God, he would ponder four penetrating questions listed below. After each question, briefly summarize Job’s content. Remember, Job wasn’t giving a theology lecture; he was expressing how he *felt*.

If I could stand before God, what would I say (Job 9:14–19)?

If I could declare my own innocence, what good would it do (9:20–24)?

If I tried to be positive and cheerful, how would that help (9:27–29)?

If I don’t have a mediator, who will represent my needs (9:32–34)?

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Job's Cry to God—Job 10

In his confusion over God's sovereign plan, he posed Him two direct questions in Job 10:2–3, followed by rhetorical questions in 10:17–19. Summarize what Job was asking God.

Job was saying, "I've thought through what my case would be. I would love to stand before my holy Judge, but I can't do it because He's not a man to come to me, and I don't have what it takes to come before Him. I need a go-between. I need an arbitrator. I need a mediator." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Job Longs for a Mediator

Job sat before his three friends in a physically compromised, emotionally tormented, and spiritually confused condition. As Job's friend, how might Bildad have approached Job more compassionately and effectively? What could he have done differently so as not to add to Job's pain? Comment on his tone, his inability to sympathize, and the content of his counsel.

In his overwhelming suffering, Job lost hope. He longed for a mediator, an advocate who could effectively bridge the chasm between God and him—one who could plead his case and bring him together with the heavenly Judge.

How does that longing for a mediator foreshadow the coming of Jesus in the New Testament? How is it fulfilled and applied to believers today?

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When Job turned his attention from Bildad to God, he poured out heartrending words. What lessons was Job learning through his suffering that he might not have otherwise learned? Why are the lessons from his pain so applicable for all humans?

I so want Job to meet the Savior. The only way you and I can know what it is to be right before God is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if we're in the person of His Son we are as righteous as He. Job longed to know that kind of peace. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Jesus . . . Our Mediator

The mediator whom Job longed to find has now found us. The arbitrator Job longed for, who would righteously judge, has become our incarnate righteous judge. The advocate in whom Job longed to find comfort, now comforts us. *Jesus is our mediator.*

Read [1 Timothy 2:3–6](#). What specific truths did the apostle Paul teach about Christ Jesus as our mediator?

What additional points of clarification did the apostle John add about Jesus as our unique mediator, according to [John 14:6](#)?

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What additional designation is Jesus given, and what does He mediate, according to [Hebrews 8:6](#)?

If only Job could have met Jesus, our mediator!

He is identified, “there is one mediator—the man Christ Jesus.” There are not many. The way is narrow. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Lingerin

Pastor Chuck capsulized Job’s dreadful encounter with Bildad with a couple of reminders.

First, *when misery breaks our spirit, philosophical words don’t help us cope*. Bildad had nothing to offer. As hard as he might have tried, he uttered nothing that brought relief, or solace, or strength to Job in his misery. Having a close friendship with someone doesn’t give us license to verbally unload and devastate him or her.

Have you ever received hurtful advice from a friend? If so, what were the circumstances, how did that experience affect you, and how was it resolved? What guidelines would help you counsel a hurting friend?

Second, *when a mediator can’t be found, futile searches won’t give us hope*. Job was right when he said, “If only there were a mediator between us . . . I would no longer live in terror of [God’s] punishment” (Job 9:33–34).

What does it mean to you that Christ is *your* mediator?

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The good news is that everyone who places their faith in Jesus alone as their Savior has a mediator. And that mediator who *paid* your sin debt *continues* to serve as your mediator, your arbitrator, and your advocate before the living God—until He calls you home into His glorious presence! Close your study with a prayer of thanksgiving and praise.



A FINAL PRAYER

Thank You, Father, for the hope found in the Lord Jesus, and in Him alone. Thank You for the reminder that I have what Job didn't have: an umpire. I have an arbitrator, I have the precious treasure of the Savior, and it's in Him I find my reason for continuing, though my current world temporarily falls apart. Thank You for the rock, the stability that He is for me. And I find my hope only in Him. In Jesus' dear name. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Marshall F. Davis in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2002, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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