

Job 25-26
August 16, 2026

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: What happens when someone gives you theologically correct advice that completely misses what you're actually experiencing? [Let people engage]

Transition: Job brushes off Bildad's latest reply as irrelevant, and this moment captures something many believers recognize painfully. Bildad shares sound doctrine: God is the Creator, God is the just one, God is omnipotent—a God of might, majesty, dominion and strength. Yet Bildad has not helped Job!

Job nowhere complains that his friends are not telling the truth. His complaint is that they simply do not meet him where he is. Similar examples of a current day Bildad might be:

A pastor might preach a sermon on God's sovereignty that is perfectly sound, yet leave a grieving widow feeling abandoned.

A counselor might offer biblical principles about trust that are entirely correct, yet fail to address the specific anxieties someone faces. Let's read the text and see what we can learn from it.

BOOK:

Bildad

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

² “Dominion and awe belong to God;
he establishes order in the heights of heaven.

³ Can his forces be numbered?

Upon whom does his light not rise?

⁴ How then can a man be righteous before God?

How can one born of woman be pure?

⁵ If even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not pure in his eyes,

⁶ how much less man, who is but a maggot—
a son of man, who is only a worm!”

Job

26 Then Job replied:

² “How you have helped the powerless!

How you have saved the arm that is feeble!

³ What advice you have offered to one without wisdom!

And what great insight you have displayed!

⁴ Who has helped you utter these words?

And whose spirit spoke from your mouth?

⁵ “The dead are in deep anguish,

those beneath the waters and all that live in them.

⁶ Death (Sheol) is naked before God;
Destruction lies uncovered.

⁷ He spreads out the northern skies over empty space;
he suspends the earth over nothing.

⁸ He wraps up the waters in his clouds,
yet the clouds do not burst under their weight.

⁹ He covers the face of the full moon,
spreading his clouds over it.

¹⁰ He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters
for a boundary between light and darkness.

¹¹ The pillars of the heavens quake,
aghast at his rebuke.

¹² By his power he churned up the sea;
by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.

¹³ By his breath the skies became fair;
his hand pierced the gliding serpent.

¹⁴ And these are but the outer fringe of his works;
how faint the whisper we hear of him!
Who then can understand the thunder of his power?"

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Distinguish Between Correct Doctrine and Pastoral Presence

The friends' theological explanations failed to bring relief because they were unable to turn their knowledge into helpful counsel.¹ This exposes a critical gap in many faith communities: sound theology does not automatically translate into compassionate care. The friends operate with a static, unchanging picture of God that they apply mechanically to every situation, resting on detached theology that never actually touches Job's needs.² The application demands honest self-examination: When you counsel someone in crisis, are you primarily defending your theological system, or are you genuinely listening to their specific pain? When dealing with people, it is more important to love and understand them than to analyze them or give advice—compassion produces greater results than criticism or blame.¹

Recognize That Suffering Requires a Living, Dynamic Faith

The friends work with theoretical knowledge of God, while Job presents a picture of God that is dynamic and alive, constantly struggling with his relationship with God, incomprehensible though it seems.² Faith for Job is the gift God has given him to enable him to go on living in his uncertainties—faith does not provide answers, but it is a hand in the darkness keeping alive that trust that despite all appearances, God is still on his side.² This challenges believers to move beyond memorized answers and instead develop a faith that can hold both doubt and trust simultaneously.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W.W. (1996). Be Patient. (pp. 100-102) Victor Books

Bildad's speech in Job 25 is the shortest in the book and focuses on God's power (vv. 1–3) and justice (vv. 4–6). It is disturbing to see how Job's friends speak so knowingly about God when, in the end, God revealed that they really didn't know what they were talking about. Too often, those who say the most about God know the least about God.

God's power is inherent in His nature (vv. 1–3): He has all dominion and fear (“awe”) and reigns sovereignly in the heavens. He has everything under control and sees what is going on in all places. His army of angels is at His command and ready to obey His will. Who can resist Him?

God's justice is the outworking of His holy nature (vv. 4–6), for “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Since God is holy and just, how can mere man claim to be righteous before Him? (Remember, Job was holding fast to his integrity and refusing to confess that his sins had brought God's judgment on him.) Since man is born of woman, he is born with a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5). In the East, the moon and stars shine with great brilliance; but even they are not pure in God's sight. How can a mere man claim to be righteous before God, man who is nothing but a maggot and a worm? (See Job 4:17–18; 8:20; 9:2.) Now, we listen to Job's reply.

1. Job acknowledges God's power (Job 26)

Before magnifying God's great power in the universe, Job first rebuked Bildad for giving him no help (Job 26:1–4). Job had no power, but Bildad didn't make him stronger. According to his friends, Job lacked wisdom; yet Bildad didn't share one piece of wisdom or insight. “Who has

helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth?” (v. 4, NIV) If Bildad’s words had come from God, then they would have done Job good; for Job had been crying out for God to speak to him. The conclusion is that Bildad’s words came from Bildad, and that’s why they did Job no good.

Then Job extolled the greatness of God (vv. 5–13). God sees everything, even the realm of the dead (vv. 5–6). Job used three different names for the place of the dead: the waters, Sheol, and “destruction” (Abaddon, Rev. 9:11). If God sees what’s going on in the world of the dead, then surely He knows what is happening in the world of the living!

God not only sees everything, but He made everything and controls it (Job 26:7–13). Job began his hymn of praise with a statement about God’s power in *the heavens* (vv. 7–9), and he described the earth with remarkable scientific accuracy (v. 7). God also controls the clouds and the rain.

Job then moved his attention to *the earth* (vv. 10–11) and praised God for marking out the horizon where the sun rises and sets. He is the God who controls day and night, land and water. The “pillars of heaven” is a poetic phrase for the mountains; they rest on earth, but they seem to hold up the heavens. All God has to do is speak, and the mountains tremble (9:6).

The last stanza of Job’s hymn centers on God’s power in *the waters* (26:12–13). God can stir up the sea or still it as He desires, and He has power over sea creatures (“Rahab” and “the gliding serpent,” NIV). He can blow the storm clouds away and clear the sky after the storm. The three friends must have listened impatiently because they already knew the things Job was talking about; *but they hadn’t drawn the right conclusion from them*. Because they saw God’s handiwork in nature, they thought they knew all about God; and therefore they could explain God to Job.

Job said that just the opposite was true. “Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; and how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?” (v. 14, NASB) What we see of God in creation is but the fringes of His ways, and what we hear is but a whisper of His power! You may read The Book of Nature carefully and still have a great deal more to learn about God. Knowing a few facts about the creation of God is not the same as knowing truths about the God of Creation.

The fourteenth-century British spiritual writer Richard Rolle said, “He truly knows God perfectly that finds Him incomprehensible and unable to be known.” The more we learn about God, the more we discover how much more there is to know! Beware of people who claim to know all about God, for their claim is proof they know neither God nor themselves.

Zuck, R. B. (1985). *Job*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 748-750) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

3. Bildad’s third speech (chap. 25)

Bildad's brief lecture shows he was running out of arguments with which to answer Job. Like Eliphaz in his third speech (chap. 22) and unlike his own previous speeches (chaps. 8; 18), Bildad said nothing about Job's windy words. The majesty of God, in contrast with the insignificance and iniquity of *all* men, not just of Job and the wicked, is the theme of this speech. Possibly this was a last-ditch effort to get Job to see how useless it is for an impure human to try to schedule a court hearing with the majestic God.

25:1–3. Since **God** rules (has **dominion**) He should be respected (**awe**), and Job, **Bildad** may have hinted, was not doing that. In His greatness God **establishes order** or harmony in **heaven** (so He is just; cf. 8:3). He rules over countless **forces**, probably referring to angels (so He is omnipotent). Also, **His light** (the light of the sun) pervades everything, picturing His omniscience.

25:4–6. Here Bildad, rather than responding to Job's concerns about injustice (chaps. 23–24), simply repeated Eliphaz's twice-trumped-up theme (4:17–18; 15:14–16) that **man** ('ēnôš, "weak, mortal man"; cf. 25:6 with comments on 4:17) cannot possibly be **righteous** or **pure**. (In using the phrase **one born of woman** as a synonym for weak man, Bildad intentionally picked up Job's wording in 14:1; cf. 15:4.) As Eliphaz had said (15:15), "Even the heavens" in all their brilliance "are not pure." **The moon** only reflects light, **and the stars** (cf. 22:12) lack purity before God because, in comparison with His glory, they are dim. How then could puny **man** ('ēnôš; cf. 25:4) or **a son of man**, suggesting man's creation from mere dust, hope to stand before God? Man is so much smaller than the starry universe and is only **a maggot** and **a worm**. This disgusting suggestion may have intentionally harked back to Job's words about his many sores being covered with worms (7:5).

Bildad sought to humiliate Job, to awaken him to his own unworthiness. But this unkind speech accomplished nothing because Job had already admitted the facts of God's majesty and of universal sin.

A review of the speeches of Job's associates shows that they were poor counselors. They failed in several ways: (1) They did not express any sympathy for Job in their speeches. (2) They did not pray for him. (3) They seemingly ignored Job's expressions of emotional and physical agony. (4) They talked too much and did not seem to listen adequately to their advisee. (5) They became defensive and argumentative. (6) They belittled rather than encouraged Job. (7) They assumed they knew the cause of Job's problems. (8) They stubbornly persisted in their views of Job's problem, even when their ideas contradicted the facts. (9) They suggested an inappropriate solution to his problem. (10) They blamed Job and condemned him for expressing grief and frustration. Counselors today do well to be sure they do not fail in similar ways.

4. Job's third reply to Bildad (chap 26)

In contrast with the shortest speech in the book (chap. 25) chapters 26–31 comprise the longest. Job replied first to Bildad ("you" in 26:2–4 is singular) but later (in chaps. 27–31) to all three ("you" in 27:5, e.g., is plural)

a. Job's description of God's majesty in nature (chap. 26)

Here Job sought to show Bildad that he, Job, knew more about God's majesty than his pugilist did. But first he sarcastically rebuked Bildad, hinting that Bildad, not Job, was the puny one.

26:1–4. In stunning irony, **Job** mocked Bildad's futile attempt to help him. Bildad had treated Job as if he were **powerless ... feeble** (cf. 18:7), and **without wisdom** (cf. 18:2). But Bildad, Job asserted, had not supported him, or strengthened him, or given him any helpful **advice** or **insight** at all. About all Bildad could think about was what happens to the wicked (8:8–19; 18:5–21) and about man's debased condition (25:4–6). No one **helped** Bildad with his **words**, which obviously were of no value. He and his cohorts were "worthless physicians" (13:4) and "miserable comforters" (16:2).

26:5–6. Some commentators ascribe verses 5–14 to Bildad, to make his third speech longer, or to Zophar to give him a third verbal assault. However, it was typical of Job to outdo his disputers in statements about God's transcendence. Did Bildad think he knew something of the majesty of the Almighty? (25:2–3) Then he ought to listen to what Job knew of the Lord's supremacy! **God** is over **death** (26:5–6), outer space and the earth (v. 7), the clouds (vv. 8–9), light and darkness (v. 10), things on the earth (mountains and the sea, vv. 11–12), and the sky (v. 13). Before God **the dead** are lying in **anguish** (an indication of conscious torment; cf. Luke 16:24) **beneath the waters**, where the dead were envisioned to be, and in *še'ōl* ("sheol") or **Destruction** ("Abaddon," a synonym of sheol; cf. Job 28:22; 31:12).

The word "dead" ("departed spirits," NASB) translates the Hebrew word *repā'im*, which sometimes is used of a people known as the "Rephaites" and sometimes is used to refer to the dead. The Rephaites were tall like the Anakim (Deut. 2:20–21). At least four giant Rephaites are mentioned by name in the Old Testament: Og (Deut. 3:11; cf. Josh. 12:4; 13:12); Ishbi-Benob (a descendant of Rapha; 2 Sam. 21:16); Saph (2 Sam. 21:18; spelled Sippai in 1 Chron. 20:4); and Goliath (2 Sam. 21:19). Second Samuel 21:20 refers to another tall Rephaite, who is unnamed.

Rephaites are mentioned in Genesis 14:5; 15:20; Deuteronomy 2:11; 3:13; and Joshua 17:15. In Ugaritic, Rephaites were the chief gods or aristocratic warriors, apparently called that because both groups were seemingly giant-like in their power. When *repā'im* in Ugaritic was used of the dead it seemed to suggest "the elite among the dead." In Hebrew it may suggest the elite among the dead (cf. Isa. 14:9, "those who were leaders in the world") or it may simply be a synonym of other common words for the dead. *Repā'im* occurs in Psalm 88:10b, "those who are dead"; Proverbs 2:18, "the spirits of the dead"; 9:18, "the dead"; 21:16, "the dead"; Isaiah 14:9, "the spirits of the departed"; 26:14, "departed spirits"; 26:19c, "dead." Job's point in Job 26:5 seems to be that even the elite dead are in anguish because God knows and sees them.

26:7–10. God sustains the **skies** (cf. v. 13) **over empty space** and supports **the earth** on **nothing**—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), and He can cover **the ... moon** with **clouds**. At the **horizon ... light and darkness** seem to separate. The horizon is circular, for the verb **marks out** translates the word *hūq*, "to draw a circle," and suggests the curvature of the earth. This too accords with the facts known by scientists only in recent times.

26:11–14. Not only is God awesome in His control over space and the earth in space. He also is majestic on the earth. He causes earthquakes and **sea** storms, which He then calms. **The pillars of the heavens** figuratively refer to mountains that seem to support the sky (cf. 9:6). The raging sea is pictured as a sea god named **Rahab** (cf. comments on 9:13), whom God defeated. **The gliding serpent** may be another description of this sea god, also known as Leviathan (Isa. 27:1). God is over the sea, and He is also superior to all mythological representations of evil. By the wind, God's **breath**, He clears the sky of clouds after a storm. This reveals **His power** and **wisdom** (cf. Job 9:4).

All these evidences of God's power over nature (of things below, above, and on the earth) are only meager indications (**the outer fringe**) of what He does. People are so distant from God that they **hear** only a **whisper** (cf. 4:12) and obviously then cannot possibly fully comprehend all God's activities in His **power**.

Garrett, D. A. (1998). *The Poetic and Wisdom Books*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (p. 209). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Bildad's Third Response (25:1–6). Bildad began a third discourse in which he returned to the idea of God's holiness against human lowliness. His very short speech appears to have been cut off. Job likely interrupted him.

Because Bildad's third speech was so short and Zophar had none at all, many scholars suppose that 26:5–14 concludes Bildad's speech and 27:13–23 is Zophar's missing third speech. This approach is unnecessary. The friends really had nothing more to say, and Job had no intention of listening to them anymore. Having interrupted Bildad, Job in effect gave Bildad's and Zophar's speeches for them. He did this for two reasons. First, Job somewhat sarcastically showed that he knew their theology better than they. Second, Job suggested that he agreed with them in principle but was dumbfounded by what had happened to him. He knew he was innocent.

Job's Last Address (26:1–27:23). Job interrupted Bildad with bitter sarcasm. He described the power of God and the end of the ungodly, but he defiantly maintained that he deserved nothing of what had happened to him. He had nothing more to say to them.

1. [*Life Application Bible Notes*](#) (Tyndale, 2007), [817](#).
2. [*NIV Bible Speaks Today: Notes*](#) (London: IVP, 2020), [693](#).

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Job 25-26). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.