

## BAD THINGS HAPPEN ONLY TO BAD PEOPLE? (Scripture: Job 8:1-4)

**Introduction:** There are certain principles we must all agree, and we must diligently preach it from the roof top. God is righteous, God is holy, God is just, and there is no evil in Him - these are faithful sayings, and we must share it to all the people all the time. But the trouble comes when we preach that to someone and insist that the person goes through terrible suffering because he or she is not righteous. That becomes a horrible judgement for that person. That was what happened in Job's life here. His friend Bildad uses the Word of God as a hammer and gives a crushing blow to Job. He teaches us clearly what not to say to those who suffer. Let us go through it carefully and avoid this kind of counseling in our life!

*Job. 8:1-4. 1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, 2 How long will you say these things, And the words of your mouth be a mighty wind? 3 Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right? 4 If your sons sinned against Him, Then He delivered them into the power of their transgression.*

Now, Bildad, his other friend, starts attacking Job! He tells Job, you are nothing but full of hot air. Then he brings God's justice into his argument. We make this same mistake repeatedly. We will make a true, general statement about God, and then using that statement, we will apply it as a hammer to blame the other person and make it specific in his or her situation! Bildad made the true statement that God is fair, and He is a God of justice. Who can refute that? But then he used that true statement to blame the cause of Job's sons' death because of their sins against God, and God just executed justice by killing them all!? What a horrible accusation! This is not counseling. This is pure condemnation! Even if Job's children had committed such grave sin, and God punished them, it may not be a good idea to bring that topic of guilt and shame to Job while he was suffering with serious illness. Self-righteous people should never counsel other people. They will inflict more harm than good.

*Job. 8:5-7. 5 If you would seek God And implore the compassion of the Almighty, 6 If you are pure and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you And restore your righteous estate. 7 Though your beginning was insignificant, yet your end will increase greatly.*

Bildad insisted on Job's repentance and confession of his sins. He believed in the traditional belief that these tragedies came as a punishment from God, and the only way to escape the wrath of God is to confess and repent! Bildad tried to be very wise, but he did not know anything about the grace of God extended to people who do not deserve it at all!

Bildad's whole theology was based on works alone. "If you are righteous, God will bless you. If not, He will kill you!" We take this knowledge of unmerited grace for granted. How precious this doctrine of grace is! Without it, we will be speaking rubbish like Job's friends! People forget what God spoke in Old Testament! I am gracious to whom I am gracious! I am gracious to whom I am gracious!

*Job. 8:8-10. 8 Please inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by their fathers. 9 For we are only of yesterday and know nothing because our days on earth are as a shadow. 10 Will they not teach you and tell you, and bring forth words from their minds?*

Bildad tells Job to search out the wisdom of their fathers. But he failed to acknowledge the Word of God that came through Moses. It tells us clearly that the original story of Job was written way before Moses or in the land where there was no Word of God preached. But then later, the rabbis kept adding speeches to reveal their wisdom, perhaps during Babylonian captivity. Before we apply righteousness, justice, and fairness, we must apply first God's Word, that insists that God is gracious to whom He is gracious! Bildad had no reference for the Word of God. He just followed the tradition of men as Pharisees did during Jesus' time. Jesus, our Lord attacked the tradition of men and pointed them to the Word of God. Tradition of men will be always tainted with sin, with selfish gratification, and pride. We must stand on the Word of God, and not on the tradition of men as Bildad foolishly suggested. From sinful people only less than perfect wisdom comes forth. Don't take man's wisdom as Word of God!

*Job. 8: 11-13. 11 Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the rushes grow without water? 12 While it is still green and not cut down, yet it withers before any other plant. 13 So are the paths of all who forget God; And the hope of the godless will perishes,"*

Here Bildad brings some examples of water plants, ie. the rush, papyrus, and reed are mentioned to prove a point. This type of grass is seen in the marshy area of Egypt, which was used to make garments, shoes, baskets, boats, and paper. This is what Bildad implied through this example. Just like these grass Intake lot of water, and grow very fast, the godless suck the wealth of the society in an illegal manner and, thrive and flourish for a short time.

But when the water recedes and dries up, these bulrushes dry also. Likewise, the wicked may prosper and bloat, but suddenly they will fall down and dry up!

A good example is stimulus bill. There are some wicked people who have schemed and received a lot of money from the Government. Some of them did not even own a business! The government tried to distribute this money so quickly, and it did not check the borrowers. Now they are checking one by one and arresting the fraudulent ones! These wicked folks flourished for a short time, but now they are drying up just like the papyrus grass! Bildad seems to link Job along with these wicked people!

In the following passage, Bildad brings another example.

*Job. 8:14-19. 14Whose confidence is fragile, And whose trust a spider s web. 15 He trusts in his house, but it does not stand; He holds fast to it, but it does not endure. 16 He thrives before the sun, and his shoots spread out over his garden. 17 His roots wrap around a rock pile; He grasps a house of stones. 18 If he is removed from his place, then it will deny him, saying, I never saw you. 19 Behold, this is the joy of His way; And out of the dust others will spring.*

This time he brings the example of a spider's web! It may look elegant, but it can be easily broken into by anyone, and that web gets destroyed completely. Again, it is a true statement about the wicked. In our time, the mafia gang may build strong houses, surround themselves with bodyguards, but their security will be like spider web. Police, and FBI will demolish their empire just like breaking a spider web and destroy those wicked. You cannot even track where that spider web was. It was a true statement for Job's time, as well as for our time! But how does it relate to Job's life? Was Bildad subtly accusing him that Job was a wicked man and therefore his children's houses and households were wiped out like spider's web? Again, Bildad speaks the truth about the destiny of the wicked but he seems to imply that Job was wicked also!

*Job. 8:20-22. 20 Lo, God will not reject a man of integrity, nor will He support the evildoers. 21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouting. 22 Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, And the tent of the wicked will be no longer.”*

According to Bildad, Repentance was too late for Job’s children, but Job had some hope left because he had not died yet!

Bildad speaks real wisdom here! Most of it is true!

1. God will not reject a man of integrity.
2. He will never support an evil doer.
3. He will fill your mouth with laughter, and lips with shout of praise (in His time).
4. Those who hate God will be clothed with shame, and the tent of the wicked will be destroyed?

We must be careful with the last statement! Many wicked are filthy rich and stay rich till they die! Or is it about their health? The wicked seem to be healthy also until they die, and they seem to live longer!

But if we compare the wicked and righteous in their next life beyond death, we will see a huge difference! The righteous will be the only ones who will have eternal, abundant life! No one can take that away!

Let me quickly summarize what Bildad was saying in this chapter:

God will judge the wicked and reward the righteous.

Consider the wisdom of our ancestors: they say that God is just, and that people suffer because of their sins???

Know the destiny of the godless: They will perish!

Place your hope in God, and repent.

These are wrong advice for the wrong person. What can we really learn from this crazy talk of Bildad? Plenty! Let me conclude with these real-life lessons from Bildad’s speech!

## **Conclusion:**

Be careful about applying God’s universal Truth to specific person or specific situation.

Stop making hasty judgement and conclusion without knowing all the details of a person.

Bildad brought God’s handling of the wicked, then he judged Job, and finally condemned him as a wicked person. Do not be too rash.

It may be dangerous to judge someone based upon what happened to him rather than judging them by their fruits as Jesus advises. We must judge people by their actions, and not by their tragedies and sorrows.

Does Bad thing happen to bad people only? Not really! Death can visit anyone anytime. Tragedy can hit even good people. e.g. Joseph Story.

We must not conclude about things we do not know, or things we do not understand!

We will make a fool of ourselves, if we try to give answer for every suffering, as Bildad did. Sometimes, the best answer may be, "I don't know!"

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***9.13.20***

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