

Job 8:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Bildad promises restoration to Job if he seeks God properly: 'Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.' The Hebrew construct emphasizes contrast—reshit tsa'ir (רֵאשִׁית צָעִיר, 'beginning small') versus acharit saqad meod (אַחֲרִית שָׂגָד מְאֹד, 'latter end increase exceedingly'). This prediction proves ironically correct—Job's latter end does greatly increase (42:12)—but not for the reasons Bildad assumes.

Bildad's promise follows conditional logic: IF Job seeks God (verse 5), THEN restoration follows (verse 7). This represents works-righteousness: proper seeking earns divine blessing. The Reformed understanding inverts this causation: God's grace enables seeking, and restoration comes through divine mercy, not human merit. Job will be restored not because he meets Bildad's conditions but because God sovereignly chooses to vindicate him.

The verse anticipates the gospel pattern of death and resurrection—diminishment preceding exaltation (Philippians 2:5-11). Job's 'small beginning' in the ash heap precedes restoration. Similarly, Christ's humiliation precedes exaltation, and believers' suffering precedes glory (Romans 8:17-18). Bildad speaks better than he knows, articulating a pattern he doesn't fully comprehend.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom literature frequently contrasted the wicked's ultimate demise with the righteous's eventual restoration (Psalm 37, 73). Bildad applies this general pattern specifically to Job, assuming his current suffering represents temporary purging before restoration—partially correct in outcome but completely wrong about cause and nature of Job's trial.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does confusing divine grace with human merit distort both the problem and solution in pastoral care?
2. In what ways does Job's pattern of diminishment before restoration typologically point to Christ and Christian experience?
3. What does Bildad's unwitting prophecy teach about God's ability to use even flawed theology to accomplish His purposes?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה	רֵאשִׁיתְךָ	מִצָּעַר	אֲחֵרֶיךָ	וְשָׁגָה
H1961	Though thy beginning	was small	yet thy latter end	increase
	H7225	H4705	H319	H7685
מְאֹד׃				
should greatly				
H3966				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 19:20 (Parallel theme): Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

Proverbs 4:18 (Parallel theme): But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Zechariah 4:10 (Parallel theme): For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Zechariah 14:7 (Parallel theme): But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

Matthew 13:12 (Parallel theme): For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Deuteronomy 8:16 (Parallel theme): Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

2 Peter 2:20 (Parallel theme): For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.