

The Life and Death of Mr. Badman



A Readable Modern-Day Version of John Bunyan's
The Life and Death of Mr. Badman

Book by John Bunyan

Revision and Storyline by Alan Vermilye

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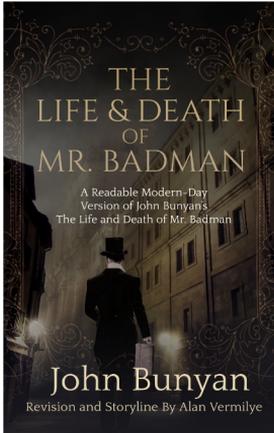
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The Bible Study Guide



The Life and Death of Mr. Badman Study Guide is a 6-week Bible study created specifically for this book.

Perfect for small groups or individual study, each weekly study session applies a biblical framework to the concepts found in each chapter of the book. Although intriguing and entertaining, much of Bunyan's writings can be difficult to grasp.

The Life and Death of Mr. Badman Study Guide will guide you to a better understanding of the key concepts of the book, the supporting Bible passages, and the relevance to our world today. Each study question is ideal for group discussion, and answers to each question are available online.

You will also find commentary, character and places summaries, discussion questions for each section, and complete answers to all questions available for free online.

You can find retailers in order to purchase this book at www.BrownChairBooks.com.

Introduction

After completing my revision of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, I was torn by which of his books I should approach next. The obvious choice would have been its sequel detailing the journey of Christian's wife, Christiana, and their children on their journey to faith. But for some reason, I was strangely drawn to another story—one quite a bit darker. It's the story I present to you now in *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*.

Interestingly enough, and unbeknownst to me, Bunyan published this book in 1680, just two years after *The Pilgrim's Progress* and before publishing the sequel with Christiana in 1685. So I was encouraged to know he, too, was drawn first to presenting a counterpart to his most famous of allegories and mentions as much in his preface.

The narrative surrounds the dialogue of two men, Wiseman and Attentive, as they discuss sin and redemption. The focus of their discussion narrows in on the life of another man, Mr. Badman, who died just the day before. As the story unfolds over the course of one long day, it depicts the stages of life—from cradle to grave—of a very wicked man in an evil age.

Many consider *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* to be the third part of the series. But unlike the journeys of Christian or Christiana, Badman took an entirely different path. It wasn't because of a bad upbringing or a lack of godly influences or opportunities, but rather a strand of wickedness that ran deep

through his heart, beginning as a child and going through the end of his life.

In my revision, you'll notice several distinctions from the original. For one, I converted Bunyan's antiquated text into simple, conversational English without being unfaithful to the original text. I invite you to compare the two versions as you'll find no key element missing. I also retained the marginal scriptural references included by Bunyan.

Second, Bunyan presented his original book in the form of a dialogue. As you will read in his preface, he actually thought this would make it more enjoyable for the reader. Perhaps it did for those of his time, but I believe today's culture is more conditioned to a storyline format. So I divided his long dialogue into chapters and wrote in a storyline that I believe helps the overall narrative flow better.

Third, there are three main characters in the story, whose names I've altered a bit. There is, of course, Mr. Badman, whom I just refer to as Badman; Wiseman, whom I refer to as Wise; and Attentive, whom I left alone. Again, it seemed to help with the flow of the story.

I'll warn you before reading: You will not like Badman. He is the antagonist in his own story. He's not meant to be liked, but rather to be repulsed by. In this deeply interesting narrative, Bunyan is clearly presenting a warning to unrepentant sinners of the judgment to come in a much more direct way than his previous attempt with *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

You might know someone like Badman or, regrettably, see some of him in yourself. But just like Christian in Bunyan's story of redemption, God actively pursued Badman too. Unfortunately, he didn't respond in the same way.

Christian's journey on the Way in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is my journey, your journey, as we traverse the road of life. But there's also another journey—one that takes you down an entirely different path in life. At some point, we're all presented with that

path and might have even walked it for a while, but by the grace of God, we found ourselves back on the Way. Many though—by their own choosing—never do. This is the story of Badman.

I don't suppose Bunyan would have cared in which order we read the books. He would probably just want you to read them, think about the stories, and discuss them with your friends. I do too! I sincerely hope this book challenges you as much as it has me.

Chapter One

A Bad Man, a Bad World

It was a beautiful summer morning. The sun was climbing over the trees as Wise sat in his usual spot, having just finished his quiet time. He loved sitting on his front porch early in the morning while taking stock of the day before him.

The *whap* of a farmhouse screen door closing on squeaky hinges interrupted his train of thought. It was his neighbor Attentive, who lived in a house across the field that lay between their properties.

Despite their age difference, the two men had become good friends, and Wise considered him a thoroughly conscientious young man. It was unusual, though, to see him out so early in the morning. He must have an appointment.

“Good morning, Attentive!” Wise shouted over to him. “You’re up early!”

There was no response. *That’s odd*, he thought. Attentive was never rude and normally so friendly. Perhaps he just didn’t hear him. He hoped nothing was wrong, although he was wondering since Attentive seemed visibly upset and completely disheveled.

Wise stepped off the edge of his porch and called out to him again, this time a little louder, "Attentive! Are you all right? You seem unusually distracted this morning. You haven't lost your job, have you?"

Startled by the sound of the other man's voice, Attentive glanced over and noticed Wise standing by his porch. He waved apologetically and hollered back, "Good morning, Wise!"

He was not normally up this early, but after a restless night of tossing and turning, Attentive just couldn't stay in bed any longer. There were a million thoughts running through his head with questions he didn't have answers to. And what was worse, he wasn't sure how to express any of them.

It had occurred to him in the middle of the night that maybe God was trying to teach him something. Well, if that was the case, he was ready. *Let's get this over with.* He simply couldn't take another sleepless night.

The rustling noise of nearing footsteps in the grass broke his train of thought again. He glanced up to find his neighbor walking over to him. Knowing he must look a mess, he felt a little embarrassed being barefoot with an old pair of pants and a t-shirt on, but then again, he hadn't expected to run into anyone.

He and Wise had become good friends over the years. Wise was older and knowledgeable and had experienced much of life already. Not only that, but he was a good listener and always provided sound advice. Attentive decided at that moment to use his friend as a sounding board for the thoughts that were troubling him.

"Hi, Wise," he said, putting on his best face as his neighbor approached. "And no, I'm sorry. I've not lost my job, but you're right; I am a little distracted this morning."

He paused for a moment before his voice took on a more exasperated tone.

"To tell you the truth, Wise, I've become completely overwhelmed and depressed when I think about how evil the

world has become. Everyone knows you're an observant man. Tell me, do you also share my concern?"

Wise studied Attentive carefully. It was obvious by his appearance and demeanor that he had spent the night wrestling with this issue. Wise was all too familiar with these thoughts as he had exhausted enough mental energy of his own, not to mention sleepless nights, pondering the exact same thing. But there was no simple answer to his question and no point in downplaying his concerns. This matter was weighing heavily on his friend's mind.

"Well, Attentive, I agree with you," he stated quite directly. "The world is bad, and honestly, it's just going to continue getting worse unless people get better. The fact is, bad people make a bad world, and if they were to get better, well then, so would the world...right? But this is really foolish thinking because as long as sin runs free in the world and there are those who practice it, nothing will get any better."

Quickly realizing his words had done little to lift Attentive's spirits, he softened his approach.

"Think about it this way. If God were to bring every sinner to repentance, then your thoughts would be consumed with how good the world is rather than how bad, right?"

Attentive thought about it and nodded. Then Wise continued.

"You're struggling with why the world has to be so bad. However, I bet if the world was full of only good, you would lift your voice to the heavens with praise! Can you imagine living in such a world that makes you want to shout with praise?"

"Oh, yes!" Attentive said enthusiastically. "I've prayed long and hard for that exact world. But I fear it's like you said; it will only get worse before it gets any better."

"Let's not come to that conclusion just yet," Wise interjected. "God has the hearts of men in His hand and can change them from worse to better and the times from bad to good. Scripture

tells us that God gives long life to those who do good, especially to those who are capable of serving Him in this world.”

Wise believed that in his heart, but then remembered what had happened yesterday and sighed deeply.

“Next to God and His wonderful creation, it’s those who shine God’s light that make this world a beautiful place to live in.”

“Amen to that!” Attentive said, feeling somewhat encouraged while also noticing Wise’s sudden change of countenance. “I’m curious though. Why did you sigh? Do you now share my same concerns about the state of our world?”

Wise gave a comforting smile. “Like you, I’m also concerned about how bad the world has become, but no, that’s not why I sighed.”

His then took on a more serious tone. “I sighed when I thought about the town bell ringing for a man who died yesterday.”

Attentive’s face changed with startling suddenness. “Why, I hope your neighbor, Mr. Goodman, is not dead! Although I heard he had had been sick.”

“No, no, he’s fine,” Wise said, shaking his head. “Had it been him, I wouldn’t be concerned as I am right now. If he had died, my only concern would be that the world had lost a light.”

Tears welled up in the old man’s eyes, although he wasn’t sure why.

“The man I’m concerned about was never any good and, therefore, is not only dead, but damned. Like it says in Revelation, he died twice, going from life to death and then from death to death. He went from a natural death to an eternal death.”¹

Attentive now understood Wise’s concern.

“Yes, to think about going from your deathbed to hell is frightening. Please tell me, Wise, who was this man, and why do you consider him damned?”

“Well, I’d be happy to share his story with you this morning if you have time.”

Attentive had nothing but time today. As a matter of fact, he had planned on clearing the rest of his day anyway. Besides, he had a real sense that spending time with Wise would lift his spirits; it had already.

“Absolutely!” he said, keenly interested. “I really want to hear more about this man’s life. Perhaps God will use his story to both teach and encourage me.”

Teach, yes. Encourage...well, Wise was not so sure.

1. Revelation 21:8

Chapter Two

A Horrifying End

The two men walked over to a nearby tree and sat down underneath it on a bright patch of green grass that was shielded from the morning dew. A cool summer breeze and the shade from the big tree provided relief from the bright morning sun. It was a comfortable and pleasant morning for such a hard conversation, but Attentive was eager to hear more about this man whom Wise considered to be damned.

“The name of the man who passed is Mr. Badman,” Wise said as he recalled the story. “He’s lived in our town for quite some time and died yesterday. But the reason I’m so concerned about his death is not because he was a family member or that any good died with him. Far from it! As I mentioned before, my fear is that he died two deaths at once.”

Attentive could relate to that fear. In fact, he had spent most of the last night thinking about this very topic.

“I know what you mean, and to tell you the truth, it’s utterly terrifying to have the grounds to even consider anyone dying like this. But as difficult as it is for us to think about the death of the ungodly, to die in such a state has to be more dreadful and fearful than we can even imagine.”

Both men remained sunk in thought for a full minute; then Attentive broke the silence.

“If we had no soul and our state was not truly immortal, then I guess it wouldn’t matter so much. But the fact is, we are spiritual beings appointed to live forever. It’s sad and horrifying to think about falling into the hands of an intelligent, discerning being who will extract His justice then dispose of us into the dismal dungeon of hell. But that’s exactly the punishment our sin deserves.”

Wise nodded his agreement.

“If you understand the value and significance of one man’s soul, how can you not be overcome with grief when you hear of an unbeliever’s death? Like you said, we’re spiritual beings destined to live forever. This is what makes it such a weighty punishment.”

As a believer, this fact was obvious to Wise and, quite frankly, scary. For a damned soul to have the capacity to understand why they’re being punished amid their torment was a lot to take in.

“You see, Attentive, after one’s death, the soul of the damned encounters both knowledge and understanding. In other words, they experience profound sorrow for their punishment and, at the same time, realize why they’re being tormented.”

Wise caught the young man’s questioning gaze. “Let me see if I can clarify what I’m trying to say,” he said with a slight smile. “First, the damned will ask, ‘Why am I being tormented like this?’ They will easily find their answer in that corrupt and filthy thing—sin. And now their sin combined with their punishment will greatly increase their suffering.

“Secondly, they will ask, ‘How long will I be punished like this?’ But as quickly as they ask, they will understand this to be their eternal state. And that, too, will once again greatly increase their suffering.

“Finally, they will ask, ‘What more have my sins caused me to lose besides my present comfort and peace?’ Their answer will come quickly: ‘I’ve lost a relationship with God, Jesus Christ, the saints, and angels and a share in heaven and eternal life.’ This,

too, will greatly increase the suffering of these poor, damned souls. And this, I believe, is the case with Badman.”

Attentive shuddered at the thought. “It’s terrifying to think of ever coming into such a state as hell! No one alive today fully knows what the torments of hell actually are. Even the word ‘hell’ itself sounds dreadful.”

Wise just nodded quietly. To believers like him and Attentive, the very name of “hell” did sound truly dreadful. He couldn’t imagine what the place was actually like, and he certainly didn’t want to spend time this morning discussing the punishments inflicted on those damned there for eternity. For some reason, though, he thought it might be a hard topic to avoid.

Chapter Three

A Wicked Beginning

Attentive had to admit that Wise had awakened his curiosity. He hadn't known Badman, but felt a strange feeling that the stage was now set for a much larger and most likely disturbing story. He knew it would also be true because Wise was not one to spread rumors or cast such dire aspersions lightly, especially without proof.

He plucked a blade of grass and stuck it between his teeth.

"My good friend, I have plenty of time this morning, so please tell me why you think Badman has gone to hell."

"I'll try to tell you everything I know," he said, "but first, do you know which of the Badmans I'm referring to?"

Attentive looked puzzled because he didn't know any of them. "Why, was there more than one?"

"Oh yes, quite a few in fact, including many siblings all raised by godly parents, which makes it even sadder."

"Which one was it who died?"

"The eldest, both old in years and old in sin. But like it says in the book of Isaiah, even the sinner who lives to a hundred is still cursed."¹

"So what makes you think this particular Badman has gone to hell?"

“Well, there are many reasons, but to sum it up, his death was similar to how he lived—wickedly and fearfully.”

“Do you know how he died?”

“I was there when he died, but” Wise stared out at the field before them, motionless, his face like granite, “for as long as I live, I never want to see another person die like he did.”

Attentive had been at the bedside of friends and family in their last moments on Earth. All were Christians and their passing was peaceful. Wise seemed to refer to something much different, much darker.

“Tell me about it,” he urged cautiously.

“I will...but I want to present his story in an orderly fashion, beginning with his life and then working our way toward his death. I believe a better understanding of how he lived will help you make more sense of his death.”

Attentive nodded, thinking that sounded logical. “Did you know him well?”

Wise gave a sigh of despair. “It feels like I’ve known him forever. You see, I was already a man when he was a boy, so I witnessed his entire life.”

Attentive quickly interrupted. “Please be as brief as you can about his life, because I really want to hear about how he died.”

“I’ll certainly do my best,” he responded with a slight grin, knowing his young friend to be respectful but also a little impatient.

Wise paused briefly to consider how to undertake this very tragic yet interesting story. He decided it was best to begin with Badman’s horrible childhood.

“Well, to start, his childhood was the very foreshadowing of evil, a warning that nothing good, in all likelihood, would come of it.”

As soon as the words left his mouth, he knew it sounded dramatic, but it was nonetheless true. So he resumed his story.

“Even as a child, he was inclined to do bad things, proving he was notoriously infected with original sin. It was so bad that it affected his entire nature. I’m confident this bad behavior was not learned from his parents, nor was he allowed to socialize with other children and learn their bad behavior. Actually, it was quite the opposite. Whenever he was around other children, he was the one teaching them profanity and being the poor example. All the other children considered him the ringleader, ‘a master sinner,’ they would say.”

Attentive thought it unfair to assume a child’s bad behavior was directly related to bad parenting. That was certainly the case at times, but there were still many other mitigating factors. Overall, it was an unfair assessment. Despite that, there was something else Wise said that bothered him.

“From what you’ve said, it sounds like Badman was a wicked child, which certainly proves he was corrupt and polluted in his very nature. But can I speak freely, Wise?”

“Of course!” Wise said without hesitation.

“I believe all children are born into this world polluted by original sin. And often their youthful indiscretions, especially as a child, happen because they’re naturally inclined to sin, not because they’re following a bad example set by others. I’m not suggesting that we don’t learn to sin by following the example of others—we do. But it’s not the root cause. I believe it’s our natural tendency to evil behavior—in other words, the sin that lives within us. I believe it’s in Mark, where Jesus said that our evil thoughts come from within our own hearts.”²

Wise beamed with satisfaction at seeing this young man whom he’d mentored over the years growing in his faith. He was gaining a good grasp of Scripture, and Wise wanted to encourage his efforts.

“I’m so glad to hear you say this, and I couldn’t agree more! The Bible certainly backs this up in Job when it compares man being born as a sinner to an ignorant wild donkey and then again

in Ezekiel when it compares a sinner to a newborn flailing about in their blood. Neither are aware of their sinful nature.³

“What’s more, in biblical times, the firstborn was offered to the Lord by being redeemed at one month old. This was clearly before a child could even think of imitating another’s sin. And we know that by one man’s sin, judgment came on all, and for this reason, all have sinned.

“Some might have us think Christ did away with original sin by His death on the cross. This is completely false and not found in Scripture anywhere. Also, if this were true, salvation through Christ would be impossible. Salvation is received only once we recognize how sinful we actually are!”

Wise was getting worked up, and he knew it. He always did when he thought of the gospel message being perverted.

“There are other valid points we could make, but since we both agree, I think the evidence supports our discussion. But,” he said quite adamantly, with a quick wink to his friend, “if someone were to come along who disagreed and wanted to challenge us...well, then we’ll be ready with even stronger arguments for them, that is, if they’re an adversary worth debating.”

Attentive grinned at the old man’s confidence. However, truth be told, he would relish the opportunity to see his mentor in a heated debate over Scripture.

“Earlier you mentioned that Badman was considered the ring-leading sinner or, as I believe you called him, ‘the master sinner.’ But this seems like an overgeneralization. Can you be more specific about his childhood sins?”

Attentive was right. It was an overgeneralization to simply claim that someone was bad as a child and now they’ve gone to hell. The fact is, we’re all sinful at birth. But the entirety of Badman’s wicked life, which Wise would eventually get to, proved to be so much more.

He leaned against the tree and wondered where to begin.
Then it hit him, and he knew.

1. Isaiah 65:20
2. Mark 7:21
3. Job 11:12, Ezekiel 16:22