

# Walk Through The Bible

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
8The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
9The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.  
10More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
11Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.  
(Psalm 19:7-11. NKJV)*

*25But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.  
(James 1:25. NKJV)*

## **Man, Who Is A Maggot**

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**Job 25**

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### **Introduction:**

Open your Bibles this morning to Job chapter 25. This morning we are going to be looking at the substance of the argument made by Bildad the Shuhite. If you are new today and are just checking in with us on this series, we are looking at the story in the Bible of a man named Job. Job is a good man, a righteous man but he is a man experiencing some serious trouble. In a very short span of time he has lost his business, his prosperity, his health and his 10 children, all of whom were killed in a freak storm. Bad things are happening to this good man and he is wrestling with that and trying to think and pray his way through it. His friends come to bring him counsel and the things they say are ultimately judged by God as being heretical. Let me give you the definition of heresy from the book by Alister McGrath:

“Heresy represents certain ways of formulating the core themes of the Christian faith – ways that are sooner or later recognized by the church to be **dangerously inadequate or even destructive**. What one generation welcomes as orthodox another may eventually discover to be heretical.”

- Alister McGrath, Heresy (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), p12.

A heresy is something that sounds orthodox, it sounds mostly true, maybe 95% true, but in the end is discovered to be deficient and unhelpful and even destructive. The advice Job gets from his

friends fits that description very nicely. Let me provide you a summary view of Bildad's three speeches to Job. You keep your Bible open to Job 25 but I'll quickly get you up to speed on some of the things Bildad has already said by this point that come to a climax in chapter 25. In chapter 8 Bildad begins with an absolutely brutal assessment of Job's situation:

“How long will you speak these *things*, And the words of your mouth *be like* a strong wind?  
3 Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice?  
4 **If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgression.**  
5 If you would earnestly seek God And make your supplication to the Almighty,  
6 **If you were pure and upright, Surely now He would awake for you, And prosper your rightful dwelling place.**  
7 Though your beginning was small, Yet your latter end would increase abundantly.  
8 **For inquire, please, of the former age,** And consider the things discovered by their fathers;  
9 For we *were born* yesterday, and know nothing, Because our days on earth *are* a shadow. (Job 8:1-9. NKJV)

So Bildad's opening argument, made with all the tact of a charging Rhino is that God killed your kids because they were sinners, he ruined your business and made you sick because you are a sinner, the solution thus is to repent of your sins, beg for mercy and God will make you even richer and happier than you were before. He supports this argument not from Scripture, but from TRADITION. He says this is the wisdom of the fathers and we are blinking idiots, born yesterday and we should never question the tradition of the elders. How's that for pastoral counsel? That's some serious bedside manner right there. Your life stinks because you're a jerk. Take that and rewind it back.

He goes on to say in chapter 18:

5 “The light of the wicked indeed goes out, And the flame of his fire does not shine...  
17 The memory of him perishes from the earth, And he has no name <sup>f</sup>among the renowned.  
18 He is driven from light into darkness, And chased out of the world...  
21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked, And this *is* the place *of him who* does not know God.” (Job 18:5-21. NKJV)

In short he says: “Bad people go to hell. They are chased out of the world into utter darkness.”

He concludes his cheery counsel in chapter 25:

<sup>1</sup>Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:  
<sup>2</sup> “Dominion and fear *belong* to Him; He makes peace in His high places.  
<sup>3</sup> Is there any number to His armies? Upon whom does His light not rise?  
<sup>4</sup> How then can man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure *who is* born of a woman?  
<sup>5</sup> If even the moon does not shine, And the stars are not pure in His sight,  
<sup>6</sup> How much less man, *who is* a maggot, And a son of man, *who is* a worm?” (Job 25:1-6. NKJV)

Bildad did not get invited to many parties, that's what I'm thinking. His counsel to Job, a man who has just lost 10 of his children in a natural disaster and who is sick as a dog and facing total financial ruin is this: "Your kids were sinners and deserved to die. You are a sinner and deserve to be sick and poor. People like you die and go to hell. People in general are maggots and worms and deserve what they get. Merry Christmas."

Now, do you know what is interesting about Bildad and his arguments? No one responds to him by saying: "Bildad, you are crazy! Who put sand in your saltshaker? Why are you so negative? Why do you have such a pessimistic view of life?" No one said that. They all seem to agree that people are sinners and sin leads to death and separation from blessing in this life and God in the next. There is wide spread agreement on that. Job never denies that he is a sinner. In answer to Bildad's speech in chapter 8 Job freely admits:

"Truly I know *it is* so, but how can a man be righteous before God? (Job 9:2. NKJV)

Job says: "I'm with you man, no one is righteous before God." Job agrees with the general thrust of Bildad's argument but disagrees with his conclusion, that the case is helpless and with his application, that it must be Job's gross sin that has caused his particular suffering. John Calvin said that Job's friends, which would include Bildad, make a poor case very well, meaning that they say things that are mostly true, but ultimately inadequate to explain Job's situation. So Calvin thought Bildad was **MOSTLY RIGHT** in his assessment of the human condition. So here is the question I want to wrestle with this morning. How bad are we? Are human beings really maggots? Are we worms? Are we so depraved as to be destined for ruin in this world and darkness in the next? How bad are we?

Now, maybe you are wondering whether this is an appropriate topic for a sermon. Shouldn't a sermon focus on how good God is rather than how bad we are? Well, actually the two conversations are altogether related. The Bible says that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over <sup>f</sup>all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

<sup>27</sup>So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-27. NKJV)

So if we are created in the image and likeness of God we can learn about God by studying MAN. That is absolutely true. That makes the assertion of Bildad very significant. If humans are maggots then what does that say about God? So this is a pretty important discussion and one that Christians have been having in the church for a very long time. Many of you will know that John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, which is sort of Ground Zero in Evangelical Systematic Theology actually begins its discussion of God by discussing man created in the image of God. Let me provide you just a few snippets from this text to help us frame this conversation. Calvin said:

Our wisdom, insofar as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot aspire to Him in earnest until we have begun to be displeased with ourselves.<sup>2</sup>

No man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts toward the God in whom he lives and moves.<sup>3</sup>

We study mankind because in studying ourselves we stoke up our desire to know God and to find ourselves in him. So this is a good place to be and a good conversation to have. Unlike Bildad, we will look not to tradition or the wisdom of men, we will look to the Bible and ask of it: how bad are we? What is the real state of humankind? Are we maggots? Are we worms? Or are we sons and daughters of God Most High? Let's begin at the beginning.

## **In The Beginning...**

We've already read where the Bible says in Genesis:

<sup>27</sup>So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27. NKJV)

From this verse we believe that men and women – all of humankind, are created in the image of God and have unspeakable worth. Listen to me friend, before you do anything, before you

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Massachusetts: Hendriksen Publishers, 2008),4

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

accomplish anything, before you achieve ANYTHING, you are the most valuable thing in all the created universe. You can fail at everything, you can be considered a loser by every standard of society and this verse says, none of that impacts your exalted worth. You are immensely WORTHY because you are created in the image of God. That is why the killing of a human being is treated so seriously in the Bible. In Genesis 9 it says:

<sup>6</sup> “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man. (Genesis 9:6. NKJV)

Murder is not treated as an offense against a man in the Bible it is treated as an assault upon the image of God. A man is worth more than an animal, this is where we part company with the radical environmentalists. We agree with them that human beings are supposed to steward the earth but we disagree with them that mankind are just another species of animal upon the earth. Not so. It was our lips that God touched when he breathed his spirit into us. We are the only creatures that can say that. We may share 95% of our DNA with a chimpanzee but we do not share with them the image of God and I would imagine that has an awful lot to do with why I have never visited a city built by chimpanzees or listened to one of their sonatas or studied in their universities. The image of God separates us from the animals and gives us unspeakable worth and dignity.

This is where we also part company with the radical feminists. We agree with them that men and women are equal in value and dignity. We read the verse that says: MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED THEM. We see that and we joyfully declare that men and women are equal in worth, equal in dignity and equal in glory. We do not agree however that in order to celebrate a woman’s worth we have to permit her the right to kill the life that grows inside her womb. For that life too is created in the image of God, whether male or female. The radical feminists hate us for that. They say that we do not respect a woman’s right to choose. Let me be very clear. I am an equal opportunity sexist then because I do not support a man’s right to choose either. I do not believe that your dignity and worth as a person gives you the right to be God over any other person and to take that life because you find its existence inconvenient. I love women and have 5 of them living in my house but let me be very clear, my love and esteem of them would never allow me to encourage any one of them to abort a human child. If I haven’t offended you yet, let me try a little harder. I do not believe

even in the rape exception. Rape is a tragedy and a sin and I think rapists should be treated with the same severity as murderers but I also believe in a God who brings beauty out of even the most brutal of tragedies and who works life into even the valley of death. Killing that child will not make your pain go away. It will only add to it. That child, fathered by a rapist is still blessed by a God. That child, born of tragedy can be CHOSEN FOR ETERNITY! I am not trying to be political and I am not advocating for a person in a political race in a country I do not even belong to, but I have found it fascinating how Rick Santorum has been crucified in the American media for being such a caveman that he does not support abortion even in the case of rape. Let me be very clear. I must be a caveman then because I believe EVERY LIFE, EVERY CHILD no matter their earthly father has UNFATHOMABLE WORTH in the eyes of the Lord because he was created in the image of Almighty God. That foetus is not garbage, he is a son of God; she is a daughter of God! Will you say amen if you still believe that? Amen.

Let us be very clear then, human beings are created with immense dignity and worth. God looked at the humans he had created, male and female as the climax of his creative work and he declared:

<sup>31</sup>Then God saw everything that He had made, and **indeed it was very good**. (Genesis 1:31. NKJV)

## After The Fall...

Why then is the world of men the way it is? If we were created very good, why then do we behave very bad? The Apostle Paul gives us the answer in Romans 1:

<sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

<sup>21</sup>because, **although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God**, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and **their foolish hearts were darkened**.

<sup>22</sup>Professing to be wise, they became fools,

<sup>23</sup>and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

<sup>25</sup>who **exchanged the truth of God for the lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

<sup>26</sup>For this reason **God gave them up to vile passions**. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.

<sup>27</sup>Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

<sup>28</sup>And even **as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind**, to do

those things which are not fitting;

<sup>29</sup>being filled with all unrighteousness, <sup>£</sup>sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers,

<sup>30</sup>backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

<sup>31</sup>undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, <sup>£</sup>unforgiving, unmerciful;

<sup>32</sup>who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:20-32. NKJV)

The Bible says that when we made the decision to not honour God as our Creator and therefore as our Lord, our hearts began to darken. Did you know that the Bible says that all of human sin and depravity is traced back to the denial of a Creator? See, if there is no Creator then everyone is really their own God and can decide right and wrong for themselves. If this isn't God's world, then it must be our world and we should craft a moral code that works for us, something that allows us to pursue pleasure without feeling judged. Sound familiar? The problem is that the harder you try to lose the memory of God, the further you slide into pleasure driven madness and depravity. You slide back to the level of the beasts. My friends, all the brilliant talk show hosts, the Bill Mahers, the Jon Stewarts, the Anderson Coopers, they all sound so brilliant with their God denying, pleasure driven ideologies, but all they are serving to do is to drive humanity back to the level of the beasts! They want us to eat, sleep, have sex, and die and call it LIFE! How is that any different than how pigs live? A pig eats whatever is put in front of him, has sex with whoever the farmer puts in the mud with him and then ends up on your breakfast plate because he is of far less worth to us than a human being. But the wise of this world would make us beasts. They tell us to do vile things and they throw parades for those who do what they tell them to do and they want us all to line the streets and clap our hands. They want us to not only do the same, but to approve those who practice these abominations. God forbid.

Sin has closed our eyes to truth and to righteousness. We cannot see the things that make for life. Human beings, having rejected the Lordship of God and having lived so long at the level of the beasts, have lost our ability to SEE TRUTH. We were created with a compass that pointed true north. It pointed in the direction of God and his holiness. But sin SMASHED IT. Now, when we follow our instincts, we end up in death and ruin! Your instincts CANNOT LEAD YOU HOME! The homosexuals cry out and say: "I cannot accept a religion that challenges how I feel and the direction my instincts would point me! I was born this way! Why cannot God accept me as I am?" My dear friend, you are no different than anyone else who would embrace the Lord. My instincts do not lead me here either. The way of the cross seems very alien to my flesh as well. I am an adulterer and a murderer according to the instincts of my flesh and believe me you,

I was born that way. But anyone who would follow Jesus has to DIE TO THE FLESH. He has to abandon that broken compass and he has to be born again. It is no different for you than it was for me, than it was for anyone who has been born from above. It is blessedly alien to us all.

The truth is, my friends, Bildad was not far wrong. We are sinners. We have fallen far from the heights we once enjoyed. And as a species, we are falling fast. The wise of the world say we are getting better, we are EVOLVING. How's that working out by the way? Does it feel like humanity is getting better? That we are standing taller? That we are reaching higher than our grandparents or our great grandparents? Not so much. Claiming to be wise, we have become fools. The Bible says:

<sup>1</sup>And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

<sup>2</sup>in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

<sup>3</sup>among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath, just as the others.** (Ephesians 2:1-3. NKJV)

The Apostle Paul says to a group of new converts that they were previously DEAD in their sins and that they were BY NATURE, or FROM BIRTH children of wrath just like everybody else. The Bible says that we are born into a trajectory. Meaning that the sin of our parents and grandparents creates downward momentum that we are born into. Each generation corrupts faster than the one before. Each generation is born further down the road to hell, moving faster on the path to ruin. We are born this way, Lady Gaga is exactly right. We are born this way and it gets worse every day. We are children of wrath and we cannot find our way home.

**Thanks Be To God...**

Bildad was right about a lot but he was wrong about the most important thing. Bildad did not know God enough to believe that he would have a solution to this problem. Bildad's view was that God is Holy, men are maggots, therefore most of us will live under the fierce and angry wrath of God and experience horrible pain, destruction and ruin. If you are really good, really careful and really fearful in your righteous conduct, God might throw you a bone from time to time but that is the best you can hope for. Job longed for something better and saw the hope of it in the character of God. We'll talk about Job's hope next week. This week let me show you how



Paul described his EXPERIENCE of what Job had only longed for. Paul agreed with Bildad about the state of natural man.

<sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

<sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

<sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

<sup>21</sup>So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

<sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,

<sup>23</sup>but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

<sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

<sup>25</sup>**Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!** (Romans 7:18-25. ESV)

The Apostle Paul agrees that all of his instincts are unreliable and lead to death and ruin. Has anyone else experienced that? Has anyone else tried to live their life according to their instincts and best judgement only to discover that you really should not be in charge of ANYTHING let alone a human life? The great fallacy of our species is that we are capable of deciding right and wrong for ourselves. Today we say that everyone should do what they feel is right as long as you don't hurt anyone else. The problem is that most of the time the things that feel right to us DO HURT other people and eventually they hurt us. Pleasure is a bad compass. You may FEEL like sleeping in but then that causes everyone else at work to have to cover for you, the boss gets angry and he FIRES you. You might feel like doing some drugs – let's be honest, drugs don't sell so well because they are sinful, they sell well because they are pleasurable. Is there anyone honest enough in the house to admit that drugs are pleasurable? Of course they are or no one would use them. But pleasure is a bad compass. The drugs that made you feel so good on Friday night end up ruining your life. They steal your mind, your capacity to work, they steal your home, your income, your health and often your kids. How many people in this city have had their kids taken by CAS because of drugs? What feels good on Friday night is not a good compass for your life! Paul admits this. He says: "Nothing good dwells in me. All of my instincts are different flavours of STUPID! Who will rescue me from all of my stupid, all of my destructive instincts and inclinations? Thanks be to God for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!"

Bildad had the middle of the story right but he left out the beginning and the end! We were made in the image of God, we are little better than maggots now in our flesh and in our instincts, but God would not leave us in that state, HE LOVES US! He is the same God who set his people free from slavery in Egypt and that same God took on human flesh in the person of his Son Jesus

Christ and he defeated sin and death and STUPID on the cross and he rose again and he offers to SET US FREE!!!! The same God who loved slaves then, loves them now in Jesus Christ! We can be again who we were created to be. 1 John 3 says:

<sup>1</sup>Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

<sup>2</sup>Beloved, **now we are children of God**; and **it has not yet been revealed what we shall be**, but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is**.

<sup>3</sup>And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:1-3. NKJV)

Bildad didn't get it. He saw the middle but he had forgotten the beginning and he did not see the end in the character of God. The Bible says that if you are in Christ Jesus, if your sins are covered by his blood, if your heart has been born of his Spirit than you are God's CHILD RIGHT NOW! Right now you are back where you were created to be. But it gets even better. You are God's child NOW but there is something even more incredible yet ahead. When Jesus comes back, when we are resurrected and when Jesus begins his eternal kingdom we SHALL BE LIKE HIM for we shall see him as he is. The story of the Bible is SO MUCH MORE than that men are maggots. That is just not enough true to be true. The story of the Bible is that we are created in the image of God! We have infinite worth and value and dignity, praise the Lord. And yet we fell because God allowed us to decide whether to honour him as our Creator and Lord or to try and build a world around our divinity and wisdom. We chose poorly and we fell deeply. Yet God, while we were yet sinners sent Jesus Christ to DIE FOR US and to set us free from our slavery to sin and stupid and to lift us up IN HIM to our created dignity. My friends, if you are in Christ, you are no maggot. You are no beast. You are a child of God. You are joint heirs with Jesus and you will see his face and you will be changed. This is the Gospel. This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Levi will you come and lead us?