

## Job 25-27:6 • Man's Words vs. God's Words

### Introduction

One of the important points to understand about Job is that **nothing** he says can be found to be misrepresenting, twisting or distorting in any way, the truth of God's Word. What Job is repeatedly saying might be summed up as, "I have not sinned, so I don't know why God is doing this to me". His three friends' responses essentially boil down to, "You're either lying about or somehow unaware of your sin, and therefore we know exactly why God is doing this to you!" And that is why, even on those occasions where the substance of what they say may be true, it still does not apply. Espousing **any** truth does not make up for the lack of the **right** truth.

And so there is a second aspect of the friends' responses which comes into play: they see their arguments as more important than the person. In fact, much of their identity and self-esteem seems to become entwined with their responses to the degree that they transition from "ministry" to "debater". They wield the truth they have, even though it really doesn't apply, so that they forget the manner in which it is to be applied if it is going to be effective:

<sup>15</sup>but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, (Ephesians 4:15)

But often times what is actually going on is the use of the truth not just to establish some kind of position over someone else, but as a tool for elevating our self. While God's Word obviously has supreme authority over us, man's words—even when he is using God's Words, is not a license to ultimately treat people poorly or to raise our own standing above another's.

<sup>1</sup>Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,

**[Read 25:1-6]**

<sup>2</sup>"Dominion and awe belong to Him  
Who establishes peace in His heights.

<sup>3</sup>Is there any number to His troops?  
And upon whom does His light not  
rise?

<sup>4</sup>How then can a man be just with God?  
Or how can he be clean who is born of  
woman?

<sup>5</sup>If even the moon has no brightness  
And the stars are not pure in His sight,

<sup>6</sup>How much less man, that maggot,  
And the son of man, that worm!"

**Q: What is the contrast between God and man which Bildad is making in v.2-3?**

A: The unsurpassed superiority of God's position as expressed in "His heights", His strength (the "number to His troops"), and His divinity in the rhetorical question, "And upon whom does His light not rise?" God is over, beyond and above man in every way/

**Q: Are these particular points true? Is this an accurate portrayal of God?**

A: Absolutely. Bildad's points in these verses are scripturally supportable.

**Q: What are the attributes of man which Bildad offers in v.4?**

A: Man can never be justified or clean in comparison to God, expressions of man's sin nature. Although God is initially described as physically and literally above and beyond man, God is also in the same manner superior to man spiritually..

**Q: Are these particular points true? Is this an accurate portrayal of man?**

A: Absolutely. Bildad's points are, again, scripturally supportable, such as, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". (Rom. 3:23)

**Q: What is the comparison and contrast which Bildad makes in v.5-6?**

A: That although the moon and stars, impressive features from man's point of view, fall well short of being "pure in His sight", they are surpassing that of man's purity in God's economy. He is extending his meaning of "...how can a man be clean who is born of a woman" in the previous verse, ultimately representing his unclean spiritual state to that of a maggot and worm.

**Q: Are these particular points true? Is this an accurate portrayal of man's spiritual state?**

A: This may be a dramatic presentation of the facts, but there is no scenario by which man's natural spiritual state can approach the perfect holiness of God's.

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**Q: So if Bildad is presenting nothing but the truth, is there anything wrong with his rebuke of Job?**

A: What is generally true of the whole of mankind's status and spiritual condition is not true for Job individually. Having entered into and maintained a right relationship with God not just before this experience but while enduring it, we have to go back to the very beginning to revisit what God's assessment is of Job's spiritual state:

*The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." (Job 1:8)*

**Point:** Job personally does not fit the ultimate description of a "maggot" or "worm" in God's eyes because he has done what is necessary to address the issue of his spiritual condition to God's satisfaction. The charge of Job's sullied spiritual state exists only in the assumptions of Bildad himself.

**Application:** There is no comfort or resolution in the truth when it not only does not apply to the person or situation, but is actually misapplied.

<sup>1</sup>Then Job responded,

<sup>2</sup>What a help you are to the weak!  
How you have saved the arm without strength!

<sup>3</sup>What counsel you have given to one without wisdom!

What helpful insight you have abundantly provided!

<sup>4</sup>To whom have you uttered words?  
And whose spirit was expressed through you?

**[Read 26:1-4]**

**Q: What might be an overall irony in Job's response? How are their roles reversed?**

A: Job is rebuking the rebuker. Bildad intended to put Job in his place as a sinner in denial, but Job instead puts Bildad in his place for being at best a comforter in denial.

**Q: What is the object of Job's rebuke? How does this show he is justified in his response and not just being purely sarcastic?**

A: Job is focusing on the content of the message Bildad delivered as evidenced by specifying what is wrong with Bildad's "counsel" (v.3), "insight" (v.4) and "words" (v.4) This defines the kind of "help" (v.2) which is falling short of its intended effect.

**Point:** These are all terms referring to a form of man's words, which in turn are falling short of the effectiveness they would have if they were actually based on God's Word.

**Q: How has Bildad fallen short according to Job?**

A: He has actually been no "help" in a time of weakness (v.2), no source of strength (v.2) and ultimately provided no insight at all. (v.3) In Job's estimation, Bildad has failed on every level where Job's suffering is concerned: physical, emotional, and spiritual.

**Q: But what are the devastating charges being made by Job concerning Bildad?**

A: "To whom have you uttered words?" (v.4) is a charge that Bildad is really only seeking to satisfy himself, "And whose spirit was expressed through you?" (v.4) amounts to an accusation that instead of being an instrument of God, Bildad is instead a primary tool of either Satan or the flesh.

**Application:** There is no comfort in the truth when it is actually an attempt to elevate one's self in a pretense to support and benefit others. A false minister often speaks from the flesh to satisfy or even elevate himself in the course of appearing to minister to a need.

<sup>5</sup>The departed spirits tremble  
Under the waters and their inhabitants.  
<sup>6</sup>Naked is Sheol before Him,  
And Abaddon has no covering.  
<sup>7</sup>He stretches out the north over empty  
space  
And hangs the earth on nothing.  
<sup>8</sup>He wraps up the waters in His clouds,  
And the cloud does not burst under  
them.  
<sup>9</sup>He obscures the face of the full moon  
And spreads His cloud over it.  
<sup>10</sup>He has inscribed a circle on the  
surface of the waters  
At the boundary of light and darkness.  
<sup>11</sup>The pillars of heaven tremble  
And are amazed at His rebuke.  
<sup>12</sup>He quieted the sea with His power,  
And by His understanding He shattered  
Rahab.  
<sup>13</sup>By His breath the heavens are  
cleared;  
His hand has pierced the fleeing  
serpent.  
<sup>14</sup>Behold, these are the fringes of His  
ways;  
And how faint a word we hear of Him!  
But His mighty thunder, who can  
understand?"

### **[Read 26:5-14]**

#### **Q: In v.5-6, how is God's sovereignty being expressed?**

A: He has authority overall all things in the heavenly or spiritual realm such as "the departed spirits" (v.5), "naked is Sheol before Him" (v.6), and "Abaddon has no covering". These are all expressions of His sovereignty over all things pertaining to the afterlife, something completely beyond man's control or influence.

#### **Q: What are the illustrations of God's sovereignty in v.7-10?**

A: They all belong to the realm of Creation and are also completely beyond even the remotest possibility of man's influence:

- (v.7) "...stretches out the north..."
- (v.7) "...hangs the earth..."
- (v.8) "...wraps up the waters..."
- (v.9) "...spreads His cloud..."
- (v.10) "...inscribed a circle...at the boundary of light and darkness."

#### **Q: How do v.11-14 emphasize something different about God's sovereignty over the things in these venues from the opening verses?**

A: Throughout these points, the focus is shifted to how God controls them with His Word. It is a stark contrast to the previous observation of the ineffectiveness of Bildad's words.

- (V.11) "His rebuke"
- (V.12) "His understanding"
- (V.13) "His breath"

#### **Q: How is Job summarizing this from man's point of view in v.14?**

A: We can see the evidence of these things, but what we actually know and understand is extremely limited, and in any case, they are completely beyond our control or influence.

#### **Q: How might this apply to Bildad?**

A: He speaks as if he knows God's mind and intentions and as if he in possession of all the facts, but like his example of man's spiritual state falling well short of that of God's, Bildad's understanding is limited to that same degree as well. Bildad's words fall well short of God's Words.

**Application:** A false attempt to minister presents itself as knowing God's working and intentions where His Word is concerned. It proceeds from an assumption of understanding far more than that which God has actually revealed, and in any case, man's words fall well short of God's Words.

<sup>1</sup>Then Job continued his discourse and said,

<sup>2</sup>“As God lives, who has taken away my right,  
And the Almighty, who has embittered my soul,

<sup>3</sup>For as long as life is in me,  
And the breath of God is in my nostrils,

<sup>4</sup>My lips certainly will not speak unjustly,

Nor will my tongue mutter deceit.

<sup>5</sup>Far be it from me that I should declare you right;

Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.

<sup>6</sup>I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go.

My heart does not reproach any of my days.

## **[Read 27:1-6]**

**Q: What are the expressions of speaking or words used in this passage?**

A: “My lips ill not speak” (v.4), “nor will my tongue mutter” (v.4), and “that I should declare” (v.5).

**Q: What is the difference between Job’s words and Bildad’s words?**

A: Not only will Job “not speak unjustly” or “utter deceit”, but neither will he “declare you right”—that is, Bildad.

**Point:** Man’s words are not only often found to be “unjust” in that they are accusatory and unfair, and not only “deceitful” in being accompanied by lies or distortions of the truth, but are often simply the source of someone’s fleshly desire to elevate their own self instead of authentically representing God.

**Q: What is most valuable to Job? What does he see as being at risk where man’s words are concerned?**

1. “...I will not put away my integrity...” (v.5) The biblical concept of “integrity” has to do with consistently putting God’s Word and ways into practice all the time, to be in full and complete obedience in all things. Job will not stop acting appropriately where his own words are concerned.
2. “I hold fast my righteousness...” (v.6) This meeting the God’s standard of what obedience to His Word is supposed to accomplish. Job will not stop acting appropriately where God’s Word is concerned.
3. “My heart does not reproach any of my days.” (v.6) This a way of stating that Job’s conscience testifies to the absence of personal sin, which would be present if had compromised either his integrity or righteousness.

**Application:** The true spiritual litmus test that God’s Word is actually at work is proven in our behavior. The authentic does not merely “talk the talk”, but “walks the walk”.


## **Overall Application**

One of the reasons Job’s “friends” are so bad at what they assume Job has sinned even though they have not witnessed it. They assume that the results of Job’s situation can only result from the exclusive cause of sin.

- How genuine is your desire to minister to someone’s need? Are there times when we are actually elevating our self in the guise of speaking about someone else’s condition?
- Do we sometimes use God’s Word as a platform to actually present what is essentially our own words or opinion? Have we ever used the truth of God’s Word to dress up what is really our own word?
- How often is biblical sin present in the absence of parallel bad behavior, especially where relationships with others are concerned?
- Have your impressions of something or someone ever been wrong, but you contrasted them to God’s Word anyway? What should you do to prevent that from happening in the first place?

But what IF you’re dealing with someone who will not acknowledge sin or perhaps that they are holding to irrefutable error where the truth of God’s Word is concerned? What is the properly way for you to engage in such a situation?

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*<sup>24</sup>The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, <sup>25</sup>with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup>and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. (2 Timothy 2:24–26)*

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