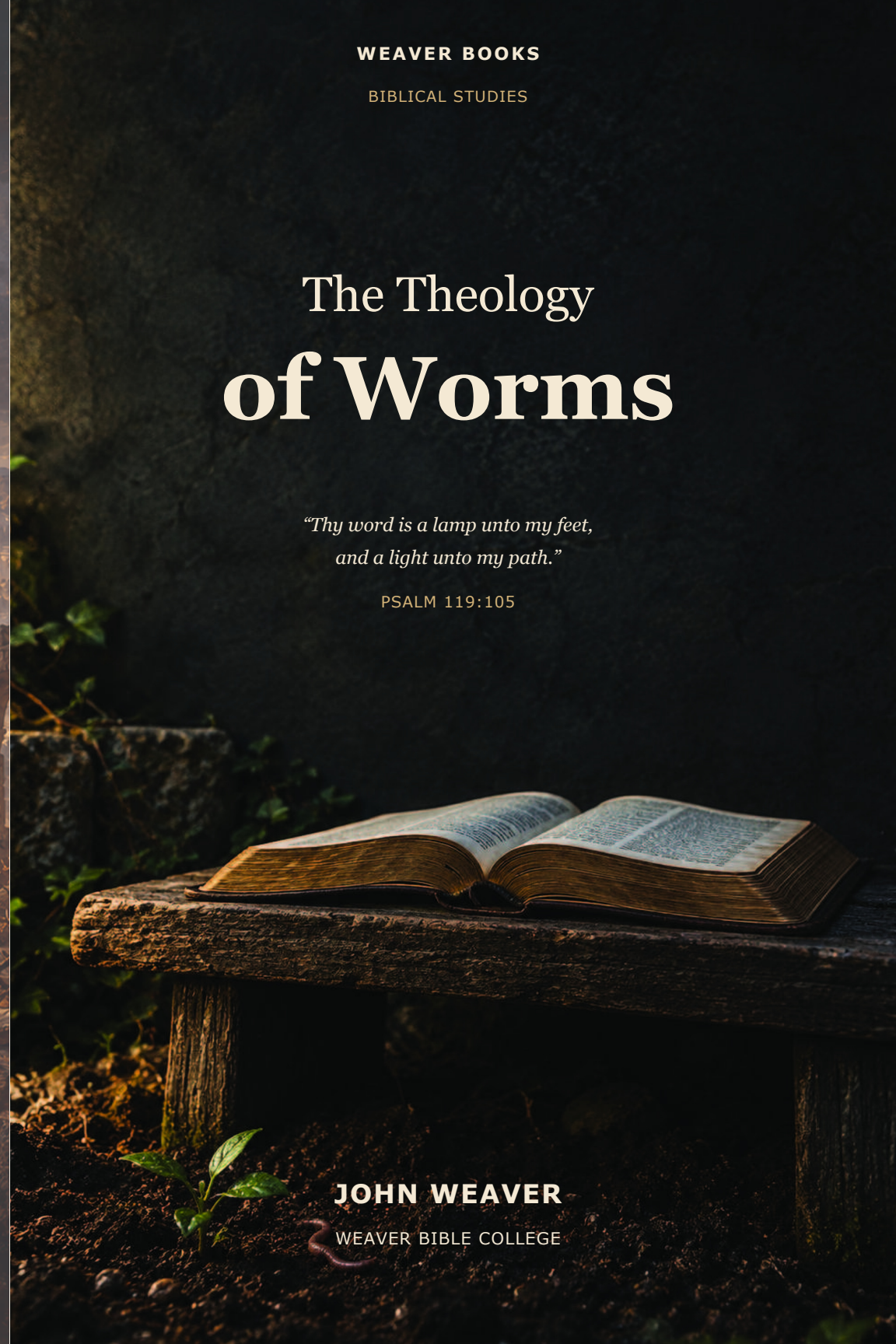
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BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Theology of Worms

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



097

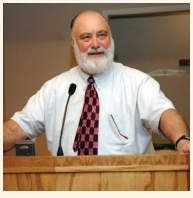
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

PSALM 8:4, EXCERPT

Even an easily overlooked creature can become the starting point for serious biblical reflection. In these two messages, John Weaver considers scriptural references to worms and the lessons he draws from them about human frailty, dependence, and God's providence. Readers are invited to follow the passages carefully and evaluate the illustrations in their biblical context.

"Worms give us excellent pictures not only of the corruption and depravity of man, but also of the humiliation and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

The Theology of Worms

Part One

Introduction: The Theology of Worms

Turn first to Job 25:6: “How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?” The title of these two messages is “The Theology of Worms.” I preached these messages back in 2009, which has been a long time. I will come back to the context, but notice that Bildad is speaking of man as a worm. Then he speaks of the Son of Man as a worm, referring to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look also at Psalm 22:6, which is a Messianic Psalm. Our Lord said, “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” If you go through Psalm 22, you will find that many of its verses are repeated in the New Testament, particularly in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, verse 14 says, “I’m poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.” All of this passage refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Worms are not necessarily an interesting subject in and of themselves to most people. Needless to say, they are not really an appetizing subject either. To some people, however, worms probably are very intriguing. I know I have told this before, but it was so funny to me because I knew the people personally.

Years ago, some dear friends had a child late in life. His name was Roger. His daddy took him fishing for the first time when he was about three or four years old, and of course they used worms. When they came back from fishing, his father took his wife, his other son, and little Roger to a nearby Italian restaurant. They ordered spaghetti. When the waitress brought it out and put it on the table, little Roger said, “Look, Mama, worms, worms, all worms.” It may have looked like worms, but it was not worms, that is for sure. Yet there is a great deal that can be learned not only from worms, but also about worms.

The Bible gives us many and varied verses concerning worms. One cannot properly understand the corruption and depravity of man, the sufferings of Christ, or the humiliation and humanity of Christ without a proper understanding of the subject of worms in the Bible. Worms give us excellent pictures not only of the corruption and depravity of man, but also of the humiliation and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It may surprise you to learn that a worm is a picture of Jesus Christ in the Bible. We can certainly understand that in reference to fallen man. That does not surprise us, and we can comprehend that fallen man could easily be compared to a worm—but Christ?

What is the Word of God teaching us when it talks about worms? We are bidden in Proverbs chapter 6 and verse 6, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." God often sends us to the insects, and He also said, "Ask the birds, and they shall tell thee," and the animals. There are plenty of animals in the Bible from which we may learn spiritual truths. When we stop and think about the lambs, the oxen, the birds, and the sheep, all of these things were pictures of Jesus Christ. Certainly, we can learn from those as well.

Lessons from Manna and Worms

The first time the words "worm" and "worms" are used in the Bible is found in Exodus chapter 16 and verse 20. There, "worms" is found in the plural form, and in verse 24 it is found in the singular form, in the discussion of manna. In Exodus chapter 16 and verse 20, the Bible says, "Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them." Then in verse 24: "And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein."

The manna was miraculously and mysteriously provided for the Israelites by God Himself. I say mysteriously because originally they did not know from whence it came or how it appeared. Exodus 16:15 says, “And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.” The word “manna” actually means, “What is it?” They had no idea what it was; that is why it was called manna.

When the people disobeyed and gathered more than they should have gathered, it bred worms and stank. However, before the Sabbath, when they gathered twice as much for two days in obedience to God, it did not bring worms and it did not stink. What could worms teach us about obedience? Stop and think about this.

When the Israelites tried to hoard the manna, being selfish and taking more than they needed, it bred worms and stank. In 1 Timothy 6:7–10, the Apostle Paul says, “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

He is talking about the love of money. I have a dear friend who lives in another country. You would probably say he is an investor, but he invests in silver, gold, mines, and that kind of thing. I received

news from him today that he had just bought some stock in one of these copper or gold companies. He made a modest profit, seven percent, and sold it. He was thankful because after he sold it, the stock went back down. I emailed him, “You know, the Lord blesses us when we are not greedy and trying to take everything.” I said, “When you stop and think about this a little, numerous times add up to an awful lot.”

We have to be content. James, chapter 5, verses 1 through 6, speaks concerning the rich: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire."

"Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you."

There is a condemnation of those who are selfish, greedy, and covetous. God condemns that just as He condemned the hoarding of manna; it certainly did not help them at all. John Bunyan expressed the matter in this couplet: "There was a man, and many did count him mad; The more he gave away, the more he had." Stop and think about that. It is an absolute contradiction to James and, of course, 1 Timothy 5, where people are simply greedy. God has never condoned or commended a greedy, covetous disposition.

Psalm 10:3 tells us, "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." God tells us that He hates the covetous. Why does God hate the covetous? Ephesians 5:5 answers: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Covetousness is idolatry. Colossians 3:5 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Worms can teach us that it is unwise, unbiblical, and useless to accumulate simply for the sake of accumulation. Ultimately, all that is unsanctified and unholy will be destroyed.

Secondly, worms can teach us that disobedience brings death and destruction. What happened to that manna which they heaped up, intending to save it? The truth is, it disappeared because it became putrid and stank, and it had to be thrown out. Those who are covetous, which is idolatrous, are bringing the judgment and condemnation of God upon themselves.

The Apostle Paul said it like this in Ephesians 5 and verse 6: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." In Colossians 3 and verse 6, he says: "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." You simply cannot disobey and sin against God and get away with it. You have to be sure that your sins will find you out.

Thirdly, worms can teach us that obedience brings blessings, no matter how little we have. Look in Exodus chapter 16, beginning in verse 16: "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating." Moses said, "Let no man leave of it till the morning."

Obedience does indeed bring blessings. Those who obey God are always going to have a sufficiency. Remember the passage in 1 Kings chapter 17, where God sent Elijah the prophet to live with this widow woman for three and a half years. When he arrived, she was out in the yard, and he said, "Fetch me a cup of water." As she was going, he said, "And make me a few little cakes,

“And bring them to me.” She said, “As the Lord liveth, I’m gathering these few sticks that I may cook the last little bit for my son and myself, and then we’re going to die.” He said, “Nevertheless, do what I say, because the Lord has said, ‘The cruse of oil shall not

fail, and the meal shall not fail.'" That same cruse of oil and barrel of meal lasted until the drought was over. Those who obey our Lord are not going to be suffering a doing without.

One of my favorite verses is Psalm 37:25: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Obviously, there are blessings for obedience. Proverbs 16:8 declares, "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right." Psalm 37:16 says, "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Proverbs 15:16 likewise says, "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." Moreover, when God gives blessings, He does not add a curse to them.

When these Israelites gathered a double amount when it was not before the Sabbath, it bred worms and stank. But when they doubled it at the express command of God, it stayed fresh and usable. The Bible says in Proverbs 10 and verse 22, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." So once we are in obedience to God, it is a blessing from Him.

Although we can learn a lot about worms from the manna and what the manna represents, and what the worms represent, this message is not particularly about the manna or the worms of the manna. But it is indeed a message about worms in particular and worms in general. If you look back in Job chapter 25 and verse 6, Bildad the Shuhite is speaking, and he asks this question: "How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?" Now, man is likened to a worm, and the son of man is likened to a worm.

Man as a Worm: The Hebrew Word Rimmah

Is there a difference between these two words? The answer is yes, emphatically. The first word for worm, which I will deal with a little bit, refers to man. The second word refers to the Son of Man, which would be the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, it is the same word used in Psalm 22 and verse 6 when Christ said, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

Let me go back and remind you of something I said when we began to study this lesson. I said I would venture to say that no one can properly understand the depravity and corruption of man, as well as the sufferings of Christ, nor the humiliation, humility, and humanity of Christ, without a proper understanding of worms in the Bible. What I want to do tonight is simply take the first part. When Bildad asks this question, “How much less man, that is a worm?” I want you to note that Bildad is trying to show the difference between God and a man.

Or in verse 2, he says, "Dominion and fear are with him, he maketh peace in his high places. Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?" Then he asks, "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man..." The only thing he can say is this: I really cannot find anything that would compare to God, obviously, but here is a contrast between God and man. God is great, God is sovereign, God has all dominion, but yet he says man is a worm. He is showing us, in one sense of the word, the depravity and worthlessness of man.

Bildad did not come up with a comparison. He only came up with a contrast. Man is a worm. The Hebrew word for worm here is "rimmah," which means maggot. That is exactly what he said: "How much less man, that is a maggot?" The word maggot is used because maggots are related to decay and death. That description of man should be enough to take the wind out of our sails. When you stop and think that proud, haughty, arrogant, self-righteous man is nothing but a maggot in the face of God, it ought to humble us.

Man's Origination: Dust and Decay

Man is compared and contrasted to a worm as to our origination. It is true that God made us. It is true that we are the creatures of God. But may I remind you that in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 19, God said that since we were created out of the dust of the ground, in the sweat of our face we shall eat bread until we return to the ground: "for out of dust wast thou taken, and into dust thou shalt return."

That reminds me of a story I read years ago about a preacher who preached on this verse and said that man was made out of the dust, and to the dust he should return. They went home Sunday after church, and a little boy was playing in his room. He dropped something on the floor, looked under his bed, and hollered, "Mama, Mama, come quick, come quick." His mother ran in and said, "What is it, son?" He said, "Look under my bed. Somebody's either coming or going." Obviously, there was a lot of dust under that bed. Man was taken out of the dust, and man is going to return.

The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that Adam was taken out of the earth and therefore is earthy. The second man, of course, is the Lord from heaven. It is amusing, in one sense, to think of all the high and mighty, all the rich and wealthy, all the highfalutin high-society people, and consider that they are absolutely nothing but maggots. That ought to break you down to size. That is what the Word of God says. No matter what their station in life, they are nothing more than worms.

Man may boast himself and elevate himself above the clouds, but soon he will be returned to dust and eaten by the worms. As worms love the earth, so does man by nature—unsaved and unconverted man—pant after the world and all that is within it.

The Apostle Paul said it like this in Philippians 3:18–19: “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” That is man. Amos 2:6–7 shows how corrupt and worldly man is: “Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof.” It continues: “...because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name.” They pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor. They sell the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes.

Look at those involved in kidnapping and selling people into slavery. Look at sex trafficking. This is exactly what Amos is talking

about. Man, then, is compared to a worm, first of all, in his origination. Here is the second thing: man is also compared and contrasted with a worm to obfuscation.

Man's Degradation

Man's Obfuscation: Spiritual Blindness

The word obfuscate literally means to darken, to obscure; hence it reflects a lack of understanding and a lack of comprehension. What can a worm understand? What can a worm comprehend? Have you ever seen a trained worm? When you think about a worm, you think about something steeped in abysmal ignorance, impossible to learn. You know what the Bible says in Ephesians 4:18 concerning the ungodly? "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

Fallen man by nature is blind. He is absolutely—I will use the word stupid, because that is exactly what God calls him—a fool. A foolish man is not someone who happens to be mentally incompetent. A foolish man, or fool, in the Bible is someone who will not listen, someone who will not be taught, someone who will not comprehend the truth. So what did our Lord say in John chapter 3? "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Neither will they come to the light, lest their deeds be reproved."

Fallen man is compared to a worm because of his darkness, because of his lack of understanding. Jude 13 tells us that unsaved and unconverted men are the children of darkness, to whom is reserved a blackness of darkness forever. When you stop and think about man being a worm, being a maggot, his origination is bad, but his lack of understanding is even worse.

Here is the third thing: man is compared and contrasted with the worm in his degradation. I could use another word instead of degradation: putrefaction. Man has fallen from his original state, degraded himself, and become dumber than the beasts. Think about this: man, who was created in the image of God, has fallen and degraded himself so that he is compared to animals, and sometimes below animals. Because in Isaiah chapter 1, what did God say? "The

ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

Man's Degradation: Putrefaction and Sin

God likens the unsaved to those dumber than beasts. Look in your Bibles at Psalm 49:20: "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish."

In other words, he is as dumb as a beast. In Psalm 49:12, he says, "Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." Solomon said it this way in Ecclesiastes 3:18: "I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts." That is dumb. However, a worm is lower than a beast. Can you think of anything lower than a worm? Can you think of anything lower than a maggot?

There are some worms, I am sure, that are more beneficial than others. Certainly, earthworms are good for your garden. But I do not know what use a maggot is except to eat dead flesh. That is what it amounts to. Whether you are aware of this or not, that used to be a medical procedure: if you had rotting flesh on your arm, they would put maggots on your arm to eat that rotting flesh. A maggot would be considered the worst of all, as far as I am concerned.

Bildad, in Job 25:6, asks, "How much less man, that is a worm?" At least a beast has some understanding. I quoted Isaiah chapter 1 earlier, but I do not know of any trained worms, nor how you could communicate with a worm. Worms are simply ignorant—as far as I can say, abysmally ignorant.

When Bildad says that man is a maggot, he is describing man as depraved, wicked, and rebellious. There are numerous pictures in the Bible concerning our sin, and none of those pictures are beautiful. They are all what we would call repulsive. In Isaiah 1:6, God says, "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it;" speaking of man, "but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Picture someone eaten up with putrefied, running sores.

I was preaching in Leesville, South Carolina. Just a few minutes before I got up to preach, a man walked in wearing huge, baggy overalls. The pastor leaned over to me and said, “I’m really thankful to see that man here.” We had no time to talk because the song was ending and I had to preach.

After the service, he took me to the man, called his name, and said, “I want you to show Brother Weaver why I told him I was so thankful to see you and to have you here.” The man pulled up his pant legs. They were covered with putrefying sores. You could not find a place to put your finger on his legs. I do not even know how the man was walking.

When I saw that, I immediately thought of Isaiah 1 in verse 6. I thought to myself, Look how repulsive, how gagging that is to me. I was raised on the farm; then I thought, What must my sins be like to my heavenly Father?

So God tells us about our worms. Look in your Bibles to the book of Job, chapter 17. I hope this will help you understand. I have several messages I have not yet preached on understanding the book of Job. I am going to be doing that, Lord willing, in the not-too-distant future. I have one more message to finish.

In Job 7:5, Job says, "My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome." In Job 17:14 he says, "I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister." Why did Job say to corruption, "Thou art my father," and to the worm, "Thou art my mother and my sister"? When Satan smote Job from head to foot, Job was literally being eaten alive by worms. Thus, corruption was his father, and his mother and his sister happened to be those worms of which he was constantly scraping out and scraping off of his skin.

He sat down with a potsherd to scrape himself. When you stop and think about that, you say, “That is repulsive. I do not want to think on a subject like that.” I can assure you the picture is only loathsome. It is repulsive. It is nauseous. But on the other hand, it is a very accurate picture of our sins and what we are in the sight of God in and of ourselves. That is why God said in Jeremiah 44:4, "Oh,

do not this abominable thing that I hate." God hates sin, and God hates idolatry.

We think flippantly and lightly of our depravity, and we think flippantly and lightly of all of our sins. As the Psalmist said, "Is it not a little one?" It was like Lot speaking of Zoar: "Is it not a little one?"—just a little city. Solomon said there are little foxes that spoil the vines. It is those little things. We do not think they are as bad as other sins, and yet they are all wicked and wrong.

But let me tell you what sin is. Sin is nothing less than the dare of God's justice, the rape of God's mercy, the jeer of God's patience, the slight of God's power, the upbraiding of God's providence, the scoff of God's promise, the reproach of God's wisdom, and the despisement of God's person and his word. This is why God gives such loathsome and repulsive pictures concerning us. None of these pictures of us in the Bible are pretty.

If you will turn in your Bibles to Ezekiel chapter 24 and verse 6, here is another picture of what our sin is likened unto: “Wherefore thus saith the Lord God; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! Bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.”

God told Ezekiel to set on the pot. He was not to put any water in it, but simply put wicked, wrong, and dirty pieces of bone and meat in it and let it seethe. Because there was no water in it, the pot became coated with scum. This is what God likens our sin to: the scum of a boiling pot containing a detestable carcass. It stinks. It sticks. It is absolutely nauseous. But that is what God likens it unto.

Our sin is also likened unto the vomit of a dog and the wallowing of a sow in the mire. Everybody is familiar with the passage in 2 Peter, but look in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 48, verse 26: “Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the Lord: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision.”

I have often said that, out of all the alcohol commercials, they always show beautiful young women and handsome young men drinking and having a good time, but they never show a drunk wallowing in the spew of his own vomit and filth. I am pointing out

the fact that God is not playing with us. Of course, you know the passage in 2 Peter 2:22: “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

You cannot keep a wild hog clean. That is all there is to it. A dog will return to his own vomit. God is giving this as a picture of our sins. Look at the people who have said, “Well, I’m going to quit this. I’m not doing this anymore,” and then, the next week, do the same thing all over again—just like the dog and just like the sow. There is another picture in the Bible.

If you look in your Bibles to the book of Romans, chapter 7, notice what the Apostle Paul said in verse 24: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Now what in the world is he talking about? “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Did you know that in the ancient world, especially in Roman times, if a man murdered another man—let us say that I murdered Warren Luke—and they caught me in a timely fashion, they would tie my living body to his dead body: my face to his face, my chest to his chest, my arms and hands to his arms, and my legs to his. Then they would leave me tied until the worms from his body ate me alive. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul is talking about. He is talking about his own sinful nature: “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

He said, “I am corrupt.” Have you ever come to the realization that your flesh hates God? That is why flesh and blood is not going to inherit the kingdom of God. You cannot sanctify your flesh. Your flesh is enmity against God; it hates God. That is exactly what the Apostle Paul was crying about: “O wicked man. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Again, the picture is one of total putrefaction. In Isaiah, chapter 1, from the top of the head to the bottom of the foot, you are full of sores, putrefying sores, which had neither been mollified nor bound up with ointment. It is complete and total putrefaction.

Then, if you look in your Bibles through the book of Isaiah, chapter 64, notice verse 6: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and

all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Now look at this: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Wow.

Everything in the Bible concerning our sins is repulsive. The filthy rags are actually menstrual cloths. That is exactly what Isaiah is teaching. Let me show you another picture. In Ezekiel 16, did you know that we are likened unto the blood and pollutions of a newborn child? Beginning with verse 4, God says, "And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live."

No one cared for us. We were filthy and wicked. If God had not sovereignly and mercifully saved us, we would have just been dead. That is all there is to it. Clearly, then, there is no picture that shows us being good and upright. It always shows us how wicked, ungodly, and lost we were.

One more picture is found in Matthew 23:27–28. Our Lord says, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Here men are likened unto the noise of stench and the poisonous fumes from an open grave. Many people have never seen an open grave—one torn up after someone has been buried for a little while. I was preaching in Cairo, Georgia, many years ago, and just before I reached the church building that night, a tornado hit the graveyard and tore all the graves up.

There were graves that were open. I am simply pointing out the fact that this is what God likened us to. This should remind us of the

curse of God that is upon sin and disobedience. God said in Deuteronomy 28:39, "Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them." That was part of the curse.

In the book of Jonah, chapter 4, verse 7, when the gourd grew up and shaded Jonah, he was happy, but God prepared a worm, and it smote the gourd. Worms, then, are associated with a curse because fallen man is referred to as a worm, which means also that he is under the curse of God. Proverbs 3:33 tells us, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just." Galatians 3:10 tells us why we are under the curse of God: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

No wonder man is compared to a worm. He is full of corruption, and he is under the curse of God. In light of man's comparison to a worm and his corruption, understand Job's statements. Job 21:26 says, "They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." Job 24:20 says, "The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree."

Isaiah 14:11 speaks concerning the king of Tyre: "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." Fallen man shall be destroyed by worms.

Man's Destination: Physical and Eternal Decay

Man is compared to and contrasted with a worm as to his destination. It is true that worms shall sweetly feed upon our mortal bodies, because we shall all die physically. The body of flesh shall decay and return to the dust from which it originated. However, there is far more to those who die than simply being eaten by worms physically.

Turn in your Bibles to the book of Acts, chapter 12. We will come back to another Old Testament passage momentarily. Look at Acts chapter 12, beginning with verse 20, and find out about King Herod.

The Bible says, “And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.”

“And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.” So King Herod was eaten alive by worms.

Isaiah 66:24 says, “And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” So God says their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched. Isaiah 66 and verse 24 must be held in mind as we consider the passage in Mark.

Our Lord uses this Old Testament passage in Mark 9:44: “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” He continues, “And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Verse 48 repeats, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Thus Mark 9 connects the undying worm with the fire that is not quenched.

The figure denotes great misery and certain and terrible destruction. Isaiah 66 and Mark 9 go beyond the grave. This is not merely talking about worms feeding sweetly upon you as your physical body rots and returns to dust. I want to give you two quotes, in fact. The first is by John Gill when he is discussing Isaiah 66:24.

He says, “For their worm shall not die, with which their carcasses shall be covered, they lying rotting above the ground, or figuratively, their consciences, and the horrors and terrors that shall seize upon them, which they will never get rid of, as they will not, though their bodies may, but were made to suffer the wrath of God to all eternity, neither shall their fire be quenched in hell.” He says, “Those wicked men, the followers and worshippers of Antichrist, will be cast into

the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, they will forever suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up forever and ever."

Then John Trapp says this: "As out of the corruption of our bodies worms breed, which consume the flesh, so out of the corruption of our souls this never-dying worm. This worm is nothing else but a continual remorse and furious reflection of the soul upon its own willful folly and now woeful misery. Oh, consider this before thy friends be scrambling for thy goods, worms for thy body, devils for thy soul. Go not dancing to hell in thy bolts, rejoice not in thy bondage, as many do, whom the preaching of hell is but the painting of a toad, which men can look on and handle without fear."

So he is saying that where the worm dieth not is the conscience. I've often said that I think one of the greatest miseries and terrors of hell, eternal destruction, is that you don't remember all of your sins. You'll remember, I believe, every sermon you've ever heard and every scripture you ever read. And you will think, "What a fool, what a fool, what a fool I was," over and over and over. And there's nothing but torment.

The Doctrine of Worms demonstrates all too clearly the origination, obfuscation, degradation, and destination of fallen man. If we understand the Bible teaching of worms, we can understand the corruption and depravity of man.

Applications: Humility and Gratitude

I want to make a couple of applications. First, if we grasp even a tenth of what I said tonight, it should tend to make us humble, lowly, and meek. When we stop and think, we have nothing to boast about in our lives. Everything we are and everything we have, God has graciously and mercifully given unto us.

We're compared to maggots. What is pride to a maggot? Is a maggot in the head of a carcass any less than a maggot in the rear of a carcass? A maggot is a maggot. It doesn't matter where you are in the body of life; a maggot is a maggot. If we understand that, there should not be ostentatious displays of pride, arrogance, and haughtiness in our lives.

Because we realize who we are and what we are, go back to the book of Job and consider also the absolute greatness, mercy, and wonderful, wonderful grace of God. Job asks, “What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?”

How can God, who is the infinite, sovereign, holy, righteous, perfect God, condescend to love a maggot? Think about that. “What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?” Why would God set his heart upon us, as wicked, as depraved, as rebellious, as sinful as we are? The psalmist asked the same question in Psalm 8: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” Why would God stoop to pay attention to us?

Yet we have hated him, despised him, rejected him, and refused him. Psalm 113 is one of my favorite Psalms. It is absolutely astounding, and it tells us why we should be praising Him: “Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!”

What is that? He humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth. “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;” That is where maggots are. “That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.” Can you imagine that God looks down upon we poor maggots, snatches us out of the dunghill, and makes us kings and priests unto him?

My goodness, my goodness, what grace and mercy. Those who have been lifted from the dunghill, made princes, and made sons of the King shall certainly see our Heavenly Father. Job asks, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Though worms eat this body, yet in my flesh, in a glorified body, I will see the Lord. Those that have been lifted up from the dunghill are princes, are kings and priests unto our God.

One last passage, Isaiah 51 verses 7 and 8. God says, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." So we who have been lifted up by the grace of God will see the worms destroy the enemies of God and his people.

That hymn written by Isaac Watts should have new meanings: "Alas! and did my Saviour bleed? And did my Sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?" "Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?" If you really want to understand the depravity, the corruption, and the fall of man, you need to study worms. If you want to see the greatness and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we will cover next week, you need to study worms. There is a theology of worms.

What is humility? The Bible tells us that we are to walk humbly with our God. Real biblical humility is when we know who God is, and we know who and what we are. How could a maggot be arrogant and haughty and proud and rebellious? The fact that God has visited the dunghill and raised us up should make us give Him constant and continual praise. For it is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him.

CHAPTER 2

The Theology of Worms

Part Two

Review of Part 1: Man as a Worm

The theology of worms begins in Job 25, verse 6, where Bildad says, "How much less man that is a worm, and the Son of man which is a worm." In Psalm 22, verse 6, Christ says, "But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people." In Exodus chapter 16, the manna bred worms when the people disobeyed and it did not breed worms when the people obeyed.

We can learn three things from the worms in the manna. First, anything that is done in lust and covetousness and disobedience is bound to putrefy and bound to destroy. It's all of that manner that they laid up extra and above when God told them not to, bred worms and stink. Secondly, when they obeyed, they did not bring worms and stink, and so therefore obedience is commended while disobedience is condemned. The Bible also says, "He that gathered little lacked nothing, and he that gathered much had nothing left over." In other words, God can bless the least that we have when we're obedient, and God can make that little go a mighty long way,

just like he did the widow's cruse of oil. And the widow's meal there. So there are very obviously lessons that can be learned just from a cursory study of worms in the Bible. However, when I look at this passage in Job 25 and verse six, where Bildad says, "How much less man that is a worm," the word worm there in reference to man is the Hebrew word Rimah, which literally means maggot. So he's likening man, therefore, to a maggot.

And since maggots are indeed agents of disease, destruction, and decay, they're certainly a perfect picture of the fallen nature of man. Maggots are compared and contrasted to man in four specific ways. First of all, by way of origination. Since worms are of the earth, earthy, so is man. Our origination is from the earth. God created us out of the dust of the earth. And God said, since we were taken from the dust, unto dust that we shall return. Since man is a worm, basically speaking, he's going to be eaten by worms. The second thing is obfuscation. Obfuscation is a word which means basically something that is darkened, something that is not capable of understanding. So man is not only compared to a worm by way of origination, but by way of obfuscation. What can a worm comprehend? What can a worm understand?

God's Condescension to Worms

And the answer is absolutely nothing. It has no understanding at all. Ephesians 4, verse 18 says that fallen man is alienated from God through the ignorance that is in him. He does not and he cannot understand the things of God. He's totally and absolutely ignorant. So just like a worm is ignorant, so man by nature is ignorant. Thirdly, man is compared to a worm by way of degradation. That is, corruption, depravity. As low as it gets, that's what man is by nature. He sins, he's wicked, he's vile. Fourthly, worms are compared to man by way of destination. Job was literally being eaten of worms and how the Bible declares that man shall be eaten of worms, not just physically, but then spiritually. In Mark and Isaiah, our Lord said, the worm of their conscience, or the worm, not the fires not quenched, and the worm there referred to the consciousness of man, and how that man would be tormented, those who die without Jesus Christ. Psalm 113 shows the absolute sovereign grace and mercy of God and how God condescended to save us. Verse 1: "Praise ye the

Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun and going down to the same, the Lord's name is to be praised." "The Lord is high above all nations and His glory above the heavens." So here's the sovereign, omnipotent, glorious, majestic God. Verse 5 said, "Who is likened to our God, who dwelleth on high."

There is none like Him. "Who humbleth himself," that is the marvelous condescension of God, "who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth." And what does God do in this marvelous and gracious condescension? He raises up the poor out of the dust and lifts up the needy out of the dunghill. He visits the worms. He visits the maggots.

And what does he do? "That he may sit with princes, even with the princes of his people." And the Bible tells us that he hath made us kings and priests under our God. So here's the marvelous, gracious condescension of God, where God condescends, not only to behold the things in heaven and earth, but also to deliver us and to raise us up and to make us kings and priests unto Him.

In the second half of Job 25, verse 6, Bildad says, "How much less man that is a worm, and the son of man which is a worm." Having seen man compared to a worm, we now look at Christ compared to a worm. Now, no believer would ever dare suggest that Christ, the sinless Son of God, should be compared to a worm unless there was a specific biblical warrant to do so. Now, the term, the Son of Man in Job 25 and verse 6, points to Christ specifically. Even if one wants to object and say, well, how can you get Christ out of Job 25 and verse 6? There can be absolutely no objection to Psalm 22 and verse 6. Here is what you and I would call a messianic psalm. And in Psalm 22 and verse 6, Christ says, "But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

Introduction to Christ as a Worm

Psalm 22, Psalm 23, and Psalm 24 are a trilogy. That is, they go together. They all have basically the same subject, and the same subject is Jesus Christ Messiah. Psalm 22 gives us Jesus Christ as the good shepherd who gives his life for the sheep. Psalm 23 gives us

Christ as the great shepherd who provides for his sheep. And then Psalm 24 depicts Christ as the chief shepherd who promotes his own to glory. So when you get to Psalm 22, it's almost as obvious as you would say the nose on someone's face not to recognize Psalm 22 as a messianic psalm. That is a psalm that speaks concerning the Messiah. Psalm 22, verse 1 says, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

"Why art thou so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring?" These words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," are quoted by Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter 27.

There is in scripture that which is known as prophetic telescoping. Prophetic telescoping, what do I mean by that? That is, when you have a passage where the author may be talking about himself or someone else in the immediate context, but the text also refers to another individual in the future.

Prophetic Telescoping in Scripture

Second Samuel chapter 7, beginning in verse 12, illustrates prophetic telescoping. God makes a covenant with David. This is known as the Davidic covenant. David wanted to build a house for God and God said, look, you wanted to build me a house, but David, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to build you a house. And so he enters into this covenant and says to David in 2 Samuel 7, verse 12:

> "And when thy days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom."

Who is verse 12 referring to in the immediate context? Who was David's son? Solomon. So very obviously he's talking about Solomon. Jesus Christ is also referred to as David's son. And what was he called? "Thou son of David, have mercy upon me." So actually, what you have in this passage, you have the immediate context speaking of Solomon, but really Christ is being spoken of as well, because Jesus Christ is the true seed of David and God the Father is going to establish his kingdom.

"He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Now, who is it that built a house for

God? Solomon did. But whose kingdom is it that's established forever? Jesus Christ. In this context, there is a double reference. When you get to verse 14, "I will be his father and he shall be my son." Of course, that's Christ. And, of course, referring to Solomon. But when he says, "If he commit iniquity," now we're talking about Solomon.

"I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee." So that passage is referring directly then to Solomon. And so when he says in verse 16, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."

He is talking about the greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 22 was written by David. And Psalm 22 has an application of David, but it has a greater application to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true seed and the true son of David. So when you look at verse one, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" David may have said that. David was being chased by Saul. David was left out in the wilderness. These words are applied directly to Jesus Christ. Verse 4 says, "Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou didst deliver them." How many times did God deliver Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Over and over. "They cried unto thee, and were delivered. They trusted in thee, and were not confounded." What does Christ say concerning himself?

> "But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn. They shoot out the lip. They shake their heads, saying, He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

These words are spoken directly concerning Christ in the New Testament. So it's not just David who is in the context here. Verse 12: "Many bulls have compassed me. Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths as a ravening and roaring lion." Christ says, "I am poured out like water. All my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax." "It is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd. And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws. Thou hast brought me to the dust of death."

He's speaking primarily of Christ. In verse 16, he says, "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me." There he is at the crucifixion. "They pierced my hands and my feet." So we're talking directly of Jesus Christ. Verse 22, "I will declare thy name unto thy brethren in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Christ speaks these words in the book of Hebrews.

> Verses 27 through 31: "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon the earth shall eat and worship. All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him, and none can keep his own soul alive."

"A seed shall serve him." That's Christ. "It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come and declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born that he hath done this." So here is an example of prophetic telescoping because David in Psalm 22, of course, speaks concerning himself immediately, but in the future he is speaking concerning Jesus Christ.

Job 25, verse 6: "How much less man that is a worm and the son of man, which is a worm." Another indication that Job 25 in verse 6, that is the latter half, speaks concerning Christ can be found in the title "the son of man." Christ referred to himself as the Son of Man more than any other title used in the New Testament that refers to Christ. For instance, it is true that usually this term refers to Christ. Occasionally it is used to refer to other men, but when it does, it pictures them as a representative of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament man referred to as the Son of Man more than any other is Ezekiel.

The Title 'Son of Man' and Christ's Humiliation

He wrote the book named for him. Ezekiel is called the Son of Man. In that sense of the word, Ezekiel is a picture of Jesus Christ. Remember that Ezekiel was a priest who was called to be a prophet as well. So there are two of the offices of Jesus Christ right there, priest and prophet. Now, the title Son of Man occurs 196 times in our Bibles. And it occurs in 192 verses, some verses Son of Man is referred to more than once. But when you get to the New Testament, the New Testament has the title Son of Man 88 times. And in each

and every instance, the title Son of Man refers directly to Jesus Christ. So he says, "How much less man that is a worm and then the Son of Man, which is a worm."

The question is, How can the word worm apply to Jesus Christ, the Son of God? How could the Son of God be referred to as a worm? And the answer is, it is used to refer to our Lord's humiliation.

You may read in theological books about the humiliation of Christ. You hear preachers preach about the humiliation of Christ. What exactly is the humiliation of Christ? The humiliation of Christ consists in the fact that our Lord laid aside his divine majesty, which was his as the sovereign ruler of the universe, and assumed human nature, that is, he assumed the form of man and came in the form of a servant who himself was the supreme lawgiver and yet he came in the form of a servant and now is made subject to the very law that he gave and has become subject to the curse of that law.

So the humiliation of Christ then actually refers, first of all, to his incarnation, that is to his birth, to his sufferings, both active and passive, also to his death and to his burial. So when you talk about the humiliation of Christ, you're talking about basically the whole time that Christ was on earth from his incarnation, from his birth to his death, to his resurrection. Now the resurrection actually begins as glorification. But that whole time in between is known as his humiliation.

First Timothy 3, verse 16 says, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." God was manifest in the flesh. Now, when you say God was manifest in the flesh, that refers to His incarnation. But the incarnation is the beginning of His humiliation.

Because that is where He laid aside His divine splendor and became man and came in the form of a servant. And that one who gave the law is now made under the law. And therefore, he's now under the curse. Galatians 3, verse 13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "For it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." How did Christ redeem us from the curse of the law? He became a curse for us. In order to be made a curse for us, he must be made under the law.

Galatians 4, verses 4 and 5 speak of the humiliation of Christ: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." What did God do? God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

We know that he was made under the law and made a curse for us. Philippians 2, beginning in verse 5, summarizes our Lord's humiliation: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Now what was the mind?

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." In other words, he was God. He was with God. But what did he do? Verse 7: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

That is his humiliation. When you get to verse 9, that is the beginning of his glorification.

Now what did Christ do? He was God. He created the world. He gave the law, but he became man. He became a servant and was made under the law, became a curse of the law. And the Bible said he made himself of no reputation. Now, the word reputation is very important. The Greek word is the word Kenoo. This passage is usually referred to as the Kenosis passage. But literally, it means he emptied himself. That is, he emptied himself of his divine splendor and his divine glory. Now, he was still God, but he emptied himself. He laid all that aside and took upon himself the form of man and the form of a servant.

Christ as the Worm: Weakness and Reproach

I read an excellent illustration of what one of the old Puritans said. The Puritan said that the fisherman doth not cast in a bare hook. But he wants to catch a fish. But he hides the hook with a worm. And then, of course, he catches the fish. And he said, likewise, Christ hid his divinity with the worm of human flesh. Christ hid his divinity

with the flesh of man. He made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a man.

Now, in simple words, he became a nothing. He became a worm.

Now, Christ is called a worm not because he is mean and contemptible in and of himself, but because he was mean and contemptible in the eyes of others. You see, the Bible said he came into his own and his own received him not. Well, the Jews in Christ's time viewed him as a worm and treated him as such. He was viewed as loathsome to them and hated by them, and everyone trampled upon him and trod him under their feet, just like multitudes do today. Hebrews 10, verse 29 uses that very phrase:

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God?" when you're walking down the sidewalk and you see a worm, do you go around the worm normally? No. Most of the time, you don't. You just walk on. A worm is insignificant. He's nothing. You just tread upon him and keep right on going. Well, here Christ is likened to a worm and that he was trod under the foot of unbelievers. Now, there is an agreement in some things between the worm and Christ in a state of humiliation, as in its uncomeliness and disagreeable appearance. So Christ was not discerned to have any form or comeliness to be desired by people. Isaiah 53, verse 1 says, "Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Now we're talking about Christ. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." How many of you really enjoy looking upon a mass of writhing, wiggling worms? You don't. No one does. And a worm has no form nor comeliness. No one wants to be around worms.

You might fish with them, but that's the exception. You don't want to necessarily be around them. You don't keep them in your house. Well, here's the Christ compared to a worm. He has no form nor

comeliness that when we see him that we should desire him. Think about a worm. In its weakness, the worm is impotent, unarmed, and a defenseless creature. And though Christ, who is the mighty God and also the Son of Man, whom God made strong for Himself, yet there was a weakness in Him through which He was crucified. Now, I'm not saying that Christ was sinful.

By weakness, I mean only what Scripture means. Second Corinthians 13, beginning at verse 3 says, "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." So there was a sense in which he was crucified through weakness.

In other words, he came as a man. He assumed the nature of man, and therefore he came to die as a man.

Isaiah 53, beginning in verse 7, says concerning Christ: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

> "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

Think of what Christ suffered in weakness, being made a man and suffering reproach and death. If Christ had not been made a worm, so to speak, He could have never suffered and died. How else could the omnipotent, sovereign God of heaven and earth be made to suffer? Christ said in Psalm 22 in verse 6, "But I am a worm and no man."

Those words are a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement not only to be lower than the

angels, but to be lower than men. Who could trample the mighty Son of God under His feet if Christ had not made Himself a worm? And the answer is no one could have. I believe there is an awesome contrast between when Christ told His people and those who came to get him and his enemies there in the garden, when they asked who he was, he said, "I am."

They just went backwards and fell down. All he had to say is "I am." What was the name of God? "I am that I am." What a contrast between the "I am" and "I am a worm." The only way Christ could have ever been made to suffer and die was he had to become a worm. And yet you see, our Lord was one person with two natures. He was perfect God and he was perfect man. And yet as perfect man, he came to die.

And he felt himself to be compared to a helpless, powerless, defenseless, downtrodden worm, passive, crushed, and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon him. Our Lord, when he likens himself to a creature, selects the weakest of all creatures, a worm, which is all flesh. What happens to a worm when you step on it? Well, he just simply becomes a writhing, quivering piece of flesh. A worm is devoid of all power and has no strength except to suffer and to die. And our Lord likens himself to a worm because in his body and in his soul, in his sufferings, he became a mass of misery, the very essence of agony in the dying pains of his crucifixion. Our Lord said that he was a worm and no man. And when he says that, in one sense of the word, he actually places himself beneath man on account of the scorn that is heaped upon him. And of course, the sufferings that he endured.

Psalm 22, verse 4: "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them."

Now think of all the deliverance that God gave Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all the patriarchs, all the believers. "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." But, he said, "I am a worm and no man." In other words, the privileges and the blessings which belonged to the fathers, he could not obtain while deserted by God.

And common acts of humanity were not allowed him, for he was rejected of men. He was outlawed from the society of earth and shut out from the smile of heaven. How utterly and completely did our Lord empty himself of all glory and become of no reputation for our sakes.

When the Lord says in verse six of Psalm 22, "But I am a worm and no man," He explains that phrase "no man" as "a reproach of men and despised of the people." When he says that he was not man, that does not mean that he was not really and truly a man. He was really and truly a man because he assumed a true body and a reasonable soul.

The Meaning of 'No Man' and Christ's Rejection

He partook of the flesh and blood of the seed of Abraham. Hebrews 2, verse 16 explains what he does not mean: "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren." So he was in reality a real, genuine man. He was flesh and blood. Hebrews 4, verse 15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." In other words, Christ was a real, genuine man.

He went through everything that we go through. Sin excepted. That is, he never sinned. He was the perfect, sinless Son of God. Well, what does it mean then when Christ says that he is a worm and no man? It means that he was a man of no figure. He was a man who bore no office. He had no title of honor. He was not a recognized rabbi.

He was not a member of the Sanhedrin. He had no share in government, either ecclesiastical or civil. He was a carpenter's son, and he was a carpenter. He was not even treated as a man. But he was treated in the most inhumane manner. He was despised and rejected of men. He was called a madman. He was said to have a devil. He was a reproach of men. He was reproached by men as the worst of men. And even the reproaches of God and His people fell on him.

Psalm 69 is so heart-rending. If you ever see and comprehend this, you will grasp in some manner the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Beginning in verse 7, he says, "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children."

Even his own half-brothers and sisters at first despised him. They did not believe him. They mocked him. So he says, "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me."

Whoever reproached God reproached Christ. Anyone who mocked the Father mocked the Son. "When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them."

"They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards." Can you imagine that he was the song of drunkards? So despised, so rejected. Verse 19: "Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor." "Mine adversaries are all before thee." Verse 20: "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." None would comfort him. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." No one comforted our Lord. No one consoled him.

He was basically treated as a worm. He was despised, rejected, counted absolutely worthless. He was reckoned a reproach to men and to be seen in his company or to be thought to belong to him or to be a disciple of him was to nothing but to heap scorn upon oneself. Many times in the Bible you will find out about individuals who

might have believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, but they would not confess Him publicly. Why? Because they loved the praises of men more than the praises of God.

John chapter 12 gives an illustration. In other words, they could not put up with the scorn and the reproach of having them converted and saying they belonged to Jesus Christ. In John chapter 12, verse 42, the Word of God says this: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." Why? "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." In John chapter 9, the blind man was converted and healed by our Lord and tried to preach to these Pharisees.

They said, "Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples." In other words, nothing but scorn and unbelief. He was a reproach of men. He was their common jest. He was a byword and a proverb to them. He was a sport to them. He was rabble to them. He was a scorn of their rulers. Most of us have never thought about the caustic power of reproach.

Yet none of us enjoy having what we call our feelings hurt. We do not like to be ridiculed. We do not like to be scorned. We do not like to be made fun of. Matthew 27, verse 39 shows Christ crucified, hanging on the cross. "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads." They cast all kind of slurs and ridicules and made motions with their heads, and said, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

What were they doing? Mocking. Ridiculing. Scorning. Despising. What did he say in Psalm 69? "I sought for comforters and found none." Why? Because everyone that walked by him reviled him. "You said you were the Son of God? Let's see if God will have you now. You said you were the King of Israel? Come off that cross and we'll

believe you." He was reproached as a bad man, as a blasphemer, as a Sabbath breaker, as a liar, as a false prophet, as an enemy to Caesar, and a confederate with the Prince of Death. He was despised of the people as a mean, contemptible man, not worth taking notice of.

He had no honor in his own country. His friends were poor men, fishermen. None of his followers came from the Sanhedrin. He was ridiculed as a foolish man. And he was said not only to have deceived others, but also to have deceived himself. Those who saw him hanging on a cross laughed him to scorn. So far were they from pitying him or concerning themselves for him, they added to his affliction with their gestures, with their expression of insolence, upbraiding him and mocking him, making merry over him and making jest at his sufferings.

They shoot out the lips. They shake the head. All of these things were literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Why? Because he was counted as a worm. The interesting thing is that our Lord's crucifixion, even the common people were against him. The very people who once tried to crown him, now condemned him. That shows you what man is. The very people who had been cured by him and benefited by him now sneered at him in his woes.

Sin is worthy of all reproach and contempt, and for this reason, Jesus Christ, the sin-bearer, was given up thus to be unworthily and shamefully entreated, because he was bearing the sins of his people. Christ was trodden underfoot, trampled on, maltreated, buffeted, spit upon, mocked, and tormented and seemed to me more like a worm than a man. All the contempt that was cast upon him. Hebrews 12, verse 2 says:

The Scarlet Worm (Tola'ath) and Redemption

"He despised the shame enduring the cross." He despised the shame enduring the cross for the joy that was set before Him. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." What was the joy that was set before him? Number one, his obedience to his father. Number two, the salvation of his people. He endured the cross, despising the shame, the reproach for the joy that was set before him.

In a state of humiliation, our Lord redeemed His own. Part of that humiliation involves our redemption.

When Bildad said that man was a worm, he used the term maggot. There is a totally different word. When he said in the Son of Man, who is a worm? And in Psalm 22 and verse six, when Christ said, "I'm a worm and no man," it is the same word that Bildad uses. In Job 25 and verse six, it is certainly not the word maggot. The word that describes Christ as a worm is Tola'ath. Tola'ath is translated in our Bibles as scarlet 34 times. It's translated as worm eight times and crimson as one time.

Think how prominently and often the word scarlet or the color scarlet is associated with the tabernacle, the temple and the priestly garments. And of course, all of those things were typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. So in Psalm 22 in verse 6, and in Job 25, the latter part of verse 6, when it refers to the Son of Man as a worm, it's the same word that is translated as scarlet. Now my question has to be, why would a color be associated with a worm?

And the answer is very simple. Because the Tola'ath worm is also known as the Coccus ilicis, better known as the scarlet worm. This unusual worm was designed by our Heavenly Father to securely and permanently attach her body to the trunk of a tree when she was ready to give birth to her young. She deposited her eggs under her body. And they stayed there until they hatched. However, when she attached herself to that tree, when she gave birth, she would die. And when the scarlet worm died, the color scarlet would stain her body and the bark of the tree. Commercial dyes were derived from the dead bodies of the scarlet worms.

First Peter 1 says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ." First Peter 2, verse 24 says, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." The Bible says that Christ died on the tree. And the blood that flowed was the blood that gave life to his children. We have peace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Blood stains are among the most difficult stains to remove from clothes. They are

really tough to remove. However, I suggest that really the most difficult stains to remove are what you and I would call sin stains.

Application: Sin Stains and the Blood of Christ

Because they are of a much deeper dye than simple bloodstains. Sin stains us in our hearts and in our consciences, and nothing can remove those stains other than the blood of Jesus Christ. Moreover, those stains are open and they're flagrant and notorious to all and especially to God.

Isaiah 1, verse 18 is a wonderful verse: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Now, if you take a scarlet stain and then you put a different scarlet stain on it, can you see the original stain? No. Our Lord says here, are your scarlet and crimson stains. They're bold, they shine. But when my scarlet and crimson blood covers them, you can't see the original stain. And therefore, in the eyes of God, they're white as snow. They're pure, whiter than snow. God's pardon of our sin does not necessarily take the sin out of our nature, nor does it change the nature of the sin, nor does it cause it to cease to be sin. But what it does, it purifies us in the eyes of God and justifies us with his law so that we're clean and white and we're said to be without spot and without wrinkle in him.

Matthew 27, verse 28 tells the color of the robe placed upon our Lord during his humiliation and crucifixion: "And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe." And they clothed him with a scarlet robe. Second Corinthians 5, verse 21 says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." That's why the Bible says that the saints were clothed with clean linen, pure and white. Because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Isaiah 41, verse 14 is a passage that excites me. God says to Jacob, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

Jacob the Worm and God's Promise

"Fear not, thou worm Jacob." Now, God calls Jacob a worm. You remember, Bildad said man was a worm and he used the word maggot. The lowest. The stinkiest. The worst. Now, God calls Jacob a worm. Tola'ath, the scarlet worm. He says, "Fear not, thou scarlet worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will help thee, saith the Lord." Why? Because Jacob and his people had been covered with the blood of Jesus Christ. And I said, "I'll help you. I'll not be against you."

For those who tend to be discouraged, verse 15 says, After God tells Jacob and the men of Israel that He will help them, He says, "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel."

He called him a worm. A mountain is representative of a kingdom in the Bible. He says, "You worm, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to make you a threshing instrument, having sharp teeth. And you will thresh the kingdoms of the earth." God will take a worm and destroy the kingdom of man. God will take the smallest, most powerless, most insignificant creature and destroy the proud, haughty, arrogant, New World Order. Because he takes a worm that's covered with the blood.

Verse 10 says, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." I'd rather be a worm like Jacob and covered with the blood of Christ than be the richest, most powerful man in the entire world without Christ. Our Lord is a worm, but a redeeming one, one from whom we derive our purity, our whiteness, our righteousness. He's the scarlet worm who redeems us from sin. Father, we thank you for Jesus Christ. We thank you, Father, that he was made a worm, that he might redeem us and bring us unto Thee. We thank Thee that He was made a worm, that He might suffer and bleed and die. For how else could the Lord of glory ever, ever been in the hands of men except He be made a worm? And Lord, in being made a worm, He conquered. And now He makes by His blood conquering

worms. Worms who are a new, threshing instrument and who will ultimately tread down the kingdom of man and bring all into submission to Jesus Christ by His Word and by His Spirit and for the honor and glory of the great God of all the earth. We give Thee praise in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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