

“Receiving Truth to Live”

Proverbs 30:4-9

Truth is reveals in the carrying out of what is said to be true.

Christ is God's Son

God's Word is Perfect

Contentment Proclaims Truth

Christ is God's Son

Proverbs 30:4, NKJV

Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?

Who has gathered the wind in His fists?

Who has bound the waters in a garment?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is His name, and what is His Son's name,

If you know?

The Proverbs are often thought of having been written by King Solomon exclusively, but in reality there are three contributors who make up the entire collection of proverbs. Solomon was the one God inspired to write or say the majority of the proverbs which are found in the Bible today (1-29). Agur the son of Jakeh (30) and King Lemuel who recorded the inspired words of God which conclude the book of Proverbs (31).

It has been said that the book of Psalms is a devotional book of prayers and songs to God, and the book of Proverbs is the ethics book of the Bible for practical living (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, 1965, pg. 269). The proverbs found in the Bible have been used individually and can often be without violating the context since they are basic stand alone sayings that can be applied practically to a person's life. It is in the proverbs people can learn the importance of holding their tongue instead of saying everything that comes to their mind in Proverbs 11:12, "*He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor, But a man of understanding holds his peace*" (NKJV). Proverbs 11:27 teaches people that seeking good will ultimately lead to favor instead of bringing trouble, "*He who earnestly seeks good finds favor, But trouble will come to him who seeks evil*" (NKJV).

It is important to remember that all of Scripture points us to Christ and redemption in Him. Even here in the practical ethics of proverbs there can be found references to the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. The first and last questions asked here in this passage would be left unanswered for centuries until Jesus answered it while speaking to Nicodemus about being born again. Jesus said, "*No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven*" (John 3:13, NKJV). Jesus proclaims Himself as the Son of God and the Son of Man being with God in heaven and having come down from heaven to mankind.

Jesus was born of woman in fulfilling the first initial prophesy of a Savior given in Genesis 3:15, "*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel*" (NKJV).

Jesus is the Son of Man being born of woman because of His physical birth, and the Son of God having no earthly father, but conceived of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 4:4). Christ is the only One who has ascended and descended to and from heaven. God the Father has made His name known above all other names that at His name every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11; John 13:13).

The idea of God having a Son seemed controversial since one of the first statements of the Shema prayer begins with, "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!*" (Deuteronomy 6:4, NKJV). For those of Israel, the fact that God can be Triune (Father, Son, and Spirit) and still undivided is astounding to even consider let alone thought about as a reality. Yet, here in the Proverbs there is found evidence of the reality of God having a Son whose name could be known.

Jesus gives further evidence of His divinity and humanity in His prayer recorded in John 17:5, "*And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was*" (NKJV); and in His confidence in facing the brutality of His death that was awaiting Him, "*...Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father...knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God*" (John 13:1,3, NKJV). It would be impossible for any mere human to go into the crucifixion with the grace and submission to the Father's will as He did.

Ignoring the clear evidence of Scripture simply because there is no Biblical record of Jesus saying the specific phrase, "I am God" is to stubbornly deny the clear evidence of Scripture. The religious leaders wanted to stone Jesus for claiming to be God and the Son of God (John 10:30-33). They clearly understood what Jesus was saying, but many will do anything to deny the truth in their attempt to hang onto their sin and false gods they have loved for so long. This alone is not the only evidence that has been provided about Christ's deity.

The other three questions in this verse are also answered by Jesus in the things that He did more than the things He said. The second question asks, "*Who has gathered the wind in His fists?*" The Hebrew word used here for "fists" is *ḥōpen* which is used as a metaphor describing the Lord's fists containing the wind (ISBN: 9780899576671, pg. 364). It symbolizes control over something. In this case it would be control over the wind. Jesus demonstrated this on different occasions when the disciples found themselves upon the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:25-33; Mark 4:35-41). Jesus identified Himself as the one who was in control of the wind simply by speaking and having it obey His command to be still.

The next two questions asked are, "*Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth?*" The idea of having the waters bound in a garment is to be restrictive to the waters. God made it clear that boundaries have been placed upon the waters that prevent them from permanently consuming all land as it once did in the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:2, 9-10; Job 38:9-11). It was accepted that God had established all things in His perfect will which had no other choice but to obey the voice of their Master.

Christ was present with God throughout eternity, from the binding up of the waters to bringing about all that was physically created in the world to reflect the

Father's glory (John 1:1-2). Jesus was the spoken Word of God which brought all things into being (Colossians 1:16-18). Jesus' earthly ministry displayed the character of God by following all the moral laws of the Old Testament and fulfilling all the sacrificial laws of the sacrificial system. During His life, few recognized what they were witnessing. Those who came to faith in Christ came to their stance through witnessing the Word of God manifest in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Coming to the realization that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah of God, has a profound and far reaching impact on the person who accept this. Jesus is no longer someone who has good teachings alongside other wise people who have lived in history, but His teaching and commandments supersede all other teachings and authorities because He is Almighty God come in the flesh, God with us. Public opinion, culture climate, progress of any kind all must be measured by and evaluated with His Word being the ultimate and only source of truth. God's Word alone is perfect and must always have the final say in the life of those who claim Jesus as the Christ of God and the Savior of their lives.

God's Word is Perfect

Proverbs 30:5-6, NKJV

*Every word of God is pure;
He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.
Do not add to His words,
Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.*

The Bible has been many things to many people throughout the centuries. It is an ancient text to be studied to learn of culture along with other ancient texts and manuscripts. Others see it as a book of fables and myths, allegories and stories which are interesting to read. Some have viewed the Bible as just one religious text in a sea of many religious writings which populate the world's religions. There is one view that is held by few around the world which I happen to personally ascribe to about the Bible. It is stated here in the first part of these two verse, "*Every word of God is pure*".

The reason it is pure and void of any error and is right on everything that is written in the sixty-six books is because it is the written, inspired Word of God which was with God in the beginning and was God Himself. The Bible you hold in your hands today, whether it is an actual book or electronic on your phone, iPad, or tablet, reveals the character of God and points people to the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, who is the living Word of God. The text itself is not to be worshiped, but the One the text points directs people towards must be the object of praise, worship, and surrender.

Therefore, reading the Bible is more than an academic or mental act to gain knowledge. Reading the Bible is to listen to the voice of God speaking directly to the one reading it. This simple line of this verse is God expressing to hearts that are reading it that what they are reading is pure. Those translations and versions that are unfaithful will reveal themselves in their inability to bring change into the lives of those who read

the Word of God. The Lord made it clear that His Word does not come back to Him void; when it goes out it produces a harvest (Isaiah 55:10-11). The person reading God's Word will be changed as they humbly submit to its eternal truth that all other information is measured by and compared to in order to judge its trustworthiness. Those things that agree and support God's Word are to be accepted. Those things which undermines and disagrees with the Word of God is to be discarded as a lie and rejected by God's people.

The next line might seem kind of strange since a personal pronoun is used, "*He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.*" Remember the Word of God is living and active like a double-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is Christ and trust must put in Him, and in the Words of the Bible. God's Word is a shield that guards a person's heart against lies and falling into temptation that leads to sin. Trusting God's Word as the truth and authentic as the voice of God in the heart of His people is of the utmost importance, especially now when everything is called into question.

In the Bible there are different types of laws. The ceremonial laws and sacrificial laws have all be fulfilled in Christ. These were the laws given to the priest for worship in the Tabernacle/Temple (Leviticus 1-10). The dietary laws and civil laws were meant specifically for the Israelites in their time. This would regulate the conduct of the people among the nations to set them apart as holy to the Lord (Leviticus 11-15). The moral laws that were given are still in affect today and must be followed. These would include the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21) and sexual/moral laws in Leviticus 18:1-30, 19:15-18, 33-36.

Knowing the will of God and His character is best done through reading His Word. There have been many over the centuries who found the strength to face immeasurable challenges and accept death because they knew the great love of God and His calling upon their lives through reading the Bible. King David is thought by many to have written the acrostic Hebrew poem speaking about His love for and importance of God's Word to him.

Psalms 119:9 asks and answers the question about keep oneself pure, "*How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word*" (NKJV). Taking the entirety of God's Word in both the New and Old Testaments is vital to understanding the fullness of Almighty God who created all things and has provided redemption and reconciliation through Christ. Having one testament without the other leaves a person lacking the whole picture. Many things in the New Testament are quoted from the Old Testament or referring back to what pointed people to the Messiah which helps them to understand the fullness of what Christ has truly done for mankind.

The completeness of God's Word gives people a clear picture of the character of God and knowledge to live each day of their life before the Creator in a pleasing, submissive manner to Him. This perfection must never be added to or subtracted from in any way. The sixty-six books of the Bible is known as a closed canon. This means it is complete with nothing missing and nothing that should be added that could possibly enhance the Bible.

It did not take long before mankind started adding to the things God commanded. The woman speaking with the serpent in the Garden of Eden was first to do this. Genesis 3:2-3 records, "*And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of*

the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die'" (NKJV, emphasis added). God's original command was simply to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). The religious leaders throughout the centuries would create over six hundred laws or traditions around the law of God in an effort to keep people from breaking God's law. This brought more sin into the people's lives since following the traditions and external laws caused them to sin against God's laws (Mark 7:9-13).

There are things being removed and changed in Scripture today to accommodate the views in culture. Each time this is done, either by addition or subtraction, God's Word is violated. Even though this takes place, do not be discouraged. Jesus promised that the slightest mark of the pen will not pass away from the law until all is fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). God protects His Word. Bad translations will fade away and be unused by the Church because they will be quickly revealed to be flawed. Faithful versions/translations be read and studied by God's people to bring about life change through the living Word living within them and the written Word of God they hold in their hands.

The faithfulness of the version/translation is rendered useless if it is not internalized and employed in the life of those who claim Christ as Savior and Lord. God warns people about this through the inspired Words He gave to James to write, "*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*" (James 1:22, NKJV). The internalization and application of God's Word proves its trustworthiness and truthfulness beyond the shadow of a doubt by bringing contentment and peace to those who make it part of their lives.

Contentment Proclaims Truth

Proverbs 30:7-9, NKJV

*Two things I request of You
(Deprive me not before I die):
Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches—
Feed me with the food allotted to me;
Lest I be full and deny You,
And say, "Who is the Lord?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.*

The next three verses in the passage we are looking at here is the reality of having God's Word in the position of authority over all other sources of information. Agur makes a request of God in poetic form. "*Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die):*" Many things are asked of God by people at any given time. Health, prosperity, protection, and things to go smoothly in life seem to top the list for most people who are asked what they would like from God. All these things are focused on self and the desire to live eternally.

Sickness is unavoidable in this world. Illness touches everyone at least once a year and most times multiple times within any given year. A majority of people deal with pain and sickness for most of their lives. Few experience the end of their lives without some kind of pain or receiving medication to dull the pain at the close of their lives upon this earth. Health is something that seems reasonable to ask for in light of these facts in the minds of those outside the body of Christ, and sometimes an expectation of those inside the Church.

Prosperity is often equated with money, but sounds less selfish to say. Wealth is seen as a legitimate request since money is viewed as fixing everything. Money will buy the best medical care and medicine available when dealing with sickness. Money allows people to purchase whatever it is they are lacking, or at least pay someone else to provide it for them. Prosperity is used by many in the world to manipulate and influence circumstances to make them conform to a person's, group's, or nation's liking.

Protection and the lack of conflict and trials are two other areas people ask of God. Nearly everyone would rather avoid the struggles of life or being hurt physically, mentally, or emotionally. Requesting this is just as self-centered since personal comfort is placed above growth and experiencing the power of God that can only be witnessed and known when tribulation enters a person's life. These things all sound authentic and pious on the surface, but show themselves as nothing but looking for self-preservation. Agur asks for know of these things.

“Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches—Feed me with the food allotted to me” Agur first asks God to remove from his life everything that does not have meaning. The Hebrew word translated *falsehood* or *vanity* is *šāw'* which means emptiness, vanity, evil, ruin, uselessness, deception, worthless, without result, fraud, deceit (ISBN: 9780899576671, pg. 1107). Life is short and there are many things which then and now simply took up time, space, and resources which gives nothing of value to life. Emptiness and lies are things which devastate people on a daily bases with a person's permission.

The enemy of God and those who follow Him seek to distract and bind to render them powerless to be of any significant impact for the kingdom of God in the world. There are things which are beautiful, sentimental, and precious to people that in themselves are not evil or destructive; yet if those things prevent people from answering the call of God on their lives they are things which must be purged from the life of God's children or placed in their proper perspective. Anything that drains resources having no real impact on the kingdom of God needs to be examined as worthwhile or not.

Please understand that is not saying whether or not impact or dividends are recognized by a person. God can do much more with insignificant things in life when they are surrendered to Him than some of people's greatest efforts. Remember, Agur is asking God to remove things from his life and not looking to do this in his personal strength. We need to ask God to remove the waste and in order to be mobile and effective in ministry. God's people must seek His truth through His Word to know how to view everything in life so all things can be used to their greatest potential for the kingdom of God.

The second requests Agur makes is to give him only what is needed for each day. *“Give me neither poverty nor riches—Feed me with the food allotted to me”*. Jesus

expressed this in the prayer He used when teaching them how to pray, “*Give us this day our daily bread*” (Matthew 6:11, NKJV). There is a danger with storing us an abundance of things. Jesus told the parable of the rich fool who had so much he planned to build bigger barns to hold it all, but God called his life into account and it was all left to others (Luke 12:16-21).

The things of this world that are seen are merely temporary (2 Corinthians 4:18). We must take care that the things of this world do not distract us from the things which are of greater value. Abundance in this world is fleeting since nothing material is taken with a person when they die, but rich in God means an eternity of blessing and peace that carries a person through the worst circumstances in the present with the greatest hope for the future. Too much is as dangerous as having too little. Poverty often persuades people to take matters into their own hands rather than trusting the Lord’s provision.

These two wise requests of God are not arrived at on a person’s own understanding. They are conclusions which can only be come to as a person acknowledges the trustworthiness of God’s written Word, and the strength and protection of the Living Word of God, Christ, who is with all who believe on the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, our view of the Bible must change for it to experience the greatest impact of God’s Word in a this life.

Each of God’s children must turn to God through the Bible to hear His voice speaking directly to them to prepare them for the things He has prepared for them each day to reflect His glory in the way they speak, respond to others, and attitudes they show in joy and tragedy alike. It is time to see the Bible once again or maybe for the first time as the holy, inspired, inerrant, infallible written Word of God that points us to the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ.