

July 9

Scriptures: Read Proverbs 29 & 30

Key Verse: “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law. “ (Proverbs 29:18)

Overview

The main topic in Proverbs 29 is society and its leadership. The people are happy when righteous leaders are in authority. Such a nation will be exalted and at peace, but the opposite will occur if the city is ruled by the wicked (29:2, 8, 12-13; 11:11; 14:34). The righteous are promised that they will one day see the fall of the wicked (29:16). Indeed, when our Lord Jesus returns as King, He will overthrow all the wicked rulers and establish a glorious and righteous reign over the earth.

The wise and righteous ruler is described as being one who is just. He “judges the poor with truth” (29:14), and he seeks the Lord in all matters concerning the administration of justice for “justice for man comes from the Lord” (29:26). Thus his throne and kingdom are established by justice and truth (29:4, 14). This is the truth that is found in the Word of God, and if leaders are to be blessed by God and govern successfully, they must follow the truth of God and obey God’s Holy Word. We need to pray for more righteous believers in positions of leadership, such as in government, so that justice will prevail for all (including the unborn child), and so that the nation will be blessed by the Lord and enjoy peace.

Truly “happy is he who keeps the law” (29:18b), and joyous is he who has carefully instructed his children to do the same (29:3, 15, 17; 23:15-16). The verse, as translated in the King James Version, “Where there is no vision, the people perish,” is often quoted but misunderstood. Newer translations make the meaning clearer: “Where there is no revelation [prophetic vision], the people cast off restraint” (29:18a; N.K.J.V; N.I.V.). The Law of God, the Prophets, and Wisdom Literature all meet in this verse (29:18). Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, understood the great need for society to follow the Word of God. If Scripture is not the guidebook of society, then the majority of the people within that society live in disobedience to God. They live unrestrained, doing as they please without practicing the moral and ethical standards as set forth in the Bible; this causes the downfall of society, and the perishing of people, as we are seeing today.

Chapter 30 consists of the “words of Agur,” an unknown ancient sage. It appears that he had a burning desire to know God, to increase in wisdom, and to live in contentment (30:7-9; 1 Tim. 6:6, 10). His discourse begins by confessing his own limitations and finiteness (30:2-3), especially when compared to the great, powerful, infinite, transcendent Creator God whom Agur goes on to describe with awe through many rhetorical questions (30:4) and mysteries of nature (30:15-31).

Through his questions (30:4), Agur speaks prophetically about Jesus Christ, who both ascended into heaven and descended (John 3:13; Eph. 4:9-10), and who was also active in creation. “What is His name, and what is His Son’s name?” At the time of Agur’s writing, God, whose personal

name was too majestic to be spoken, had not yet revealed the wonderful name of His son. Redemptive history, however, revealed it to be the matchless name of Jesus.

Spoken like a prophet, Agur declares: “every word of God is pure” (30:5), literally “refined or tested”. Thus His Word is pure truth, and like the strongest of elements it can serve to be an ever-protecting, never-failing shield to those who trust in Him (cf. Ps. 12:6; 18:30). Agur warns that no one is to add to God’s Word. It is pure and undefiled as it stands. If one adds to it, claiming that it is still God’s word, he will be rebuked and proven to be a liar (Rev. 22:18-19).

Agur addresses in his warning toward four kinds of people (“generations” 30:11-14): the rebellious, the self-righteous, the proud, and those who oppress or abuse. They will stir up the wrath of God and live a life of strife (30:32-33). The Lord, however, will be pleased with the “generation of the righteous” (Ps. 14:5).

Prayer

Lord, we are marvel at Your infinite greatness and the fact that You desire an intimate relationship with us, Your lowly creatures. What great value You place on us! May we always follow Your revealed Word and be considered a “generation of the righteous.”