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11 October 2017

Proverbs 3 - Part I

Do not be Forgetful

Long before the Proverbs were written Job asked the question: *But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell? No mortal comprehends its worth; it cannot be found in the land of the living.* After asking the question a second time, he gives an answer: *God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells, for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.* Job 28:12-13; 23-24, NIV And the Bible teaches that God has put His wisdom and power in His only Son, 1Cor 1:24.

Read Proverbs 3:1-2:

1. How would you explain verse one if a person asked, "What law, what commandments?"

{*Torah*^{h8451} is rendered as *law* all 219 times in the OT by the KJ, and most of the time by other versions. The idea is also found in the Greek NT - *nomos*^{g3551}. The Hebrew root *yara*^{h3384} is properly *to flow as water (to rain)*; transitive: *to lay or throw (an arrow - shoot)*; figurative: *to point out (as with the finger for direction)*; *to teach*; *to instruct*. The concept of the *torah* became perverted by man's understanding the Bible to be a rule book. God's commandment is explained by Job 23:12; Pr 13:13.}

2. When God speaks to us, how is it that we generally hear? Rom 7:22-25; 12:2

{In the past I thought God spoke to mankind through the conscience. However, I find this is not true. We have a storage of info we have been taught & some learned on our own. When we face a moral decision, it is the conscience that guides us. If the info stored is wrong, we likely will make a bad decision. This is why the conscience needs to be purified, trained. Cf Rom 2:14-15; 2Cor 1:12; 1Tim 4:1-2; Heb 9:9, 14; 10:22. The Lord speaks to the mind directly, via another person, in dreams, Job 33:14-18; or in visions, Dan 1:17.}

3. What are the two ways life, mentioned in verse two, can be explained? Jn 5:24

{Physical life, because seeking to know God & living a righteous life reduces stress & worry, which may shorten life. Spiritual life because it is a way of living according to God's thoughts & ways.}

Read Proverbs 3:3-4; 19-26:

4. Mercy (kindness), truth along with other things are grace to the neck. What does it mean to bind them about your neck? Hab 3:13; Ps 75:5; Act 15:5, 10.

{The neck is the foundation on which the head sits. While the brain/mind controls the physical body; the spiritual body is controlled by who we allow to rule in our thoughts, which also affects the physical as well.}

{Proverbs 3:19-26: In context verse 19 has to be inward. He is making a new heaven & earth inwardly, Isa 65:17; 66:22-23, which will be manifested outwardly when the physical earth is made new. Verse 20: depths = waters of the sea, Isa 51:10 - thoughts of the world; clouds are people, Heb 12:1, who share the dew, Dt 32:1-2 of God's word. Verse 21: keep wisdom in your understanding (eyes), preserve sound judgment and discretion, because they are (spiritual) life to the soul, verse 22. When this is done, we will stay on the narrow path, & not stumble, Mt 7:14; Jn 12:35, verse 23. Then you will have no fear, your rest in Christ will be sweet & confident, verse 24-26.}

Read Proverbs 3:5-12 (cp verse 5 to Proverbs 28:26)

5. In what are we trusting when we trust in our hearts? Ps 139:23; Jer 4:14; 23:20

{Only when the heart contains the thoughts of God can it be trusted, Gen 6:5; Mk 7:21. The root of the Hebrew word for heart means *become intelligent, get a mind*^{h3823}. It is the inner person. So lean not to our understanding}

6. In verse 8, to what does "it" refer? Hint - verse 5.

{From the Latin Vulgate - *healing*; the LXX - *health*, which leads one to look at verse 8 instead. Trusting in God is to our spiritual health as the umbilical cord is to the unborn child in the womb, & marrow, which produces blood cells daily & is a key component of the lymph & immune systems, is a metaphor of supporting life to the soul - i.e. life is in the blood, Lv 17:11.}

7. What do "barns^{h618} filled with plenty" and "presses bursting forth with new wine" represent spiritually?

Barns: Dt 28:8 storehouses^{h618}; 1Tim 6:17-19; Pr 7:1 (retain God's words in the storehouse of the mind - be rich in good works). New Wine: Mic 2:11; Lk 5:37-39; getting rid of old teachings is like purging the old leaven with the new.

Verse 11 - *despise not the chastening*^{h4148} *of the Lord*; verse 12 - *whom the Lord loves he corrects*.

8. How does the Lord chasten those He loves? Pr 22:15; Isa 11:4; Pr 14:3

{The Hebrew word *musar*^{h4148} appears 30/50 times in proverbs & rendered as *instruction* 26 times (i.e. Pr 1:2, 3, 7, 8); yet, the proper meaning is *chastisement*. To understand *musar*^{h4148} the roots must be considered: the *child* root^{h5620} means *to turn the head*; the parent root^{h3256} means *to make a change in direction through instruction*. If a person continues to do wrong, by not listening to the impressions of the heart, often God will rebuke them through another person. If the rebukes are rejected enough, God will step back & let them fail until they repent, or the heart is hardened until it cannot be changed (examples: Cain - Gen 4:3-7a; Peter - Mk 8:31-33; also Pharaoh; Esau). How many times have you heard another Christian say that God punished them with an accident, illness, etc. Cain blamed God for his act of violence against his brother Able, Gen 4:11-14: verse 13 (Cambridge Bible margin: *my iniquity is greater than may be forgiven*, from the influence of the LXX & Latin Vulgate; the Hebrew literally reads: *my perversity is greater than I can lift up* - i.e. man cannot correct perverted thinking without God's help.)