

no sinner too guilty and defiled to be saved through His precious blood. He can wash the vilest and darkest sinner clean and whiter than snow, whoever comes to Him. Just think too if this Lemuel was actually Solomon and his mother here Bathsheba, are they not each and both such proof of God's saving and renewing grace? When you consider all that the Bible tells of Christ the Saviour you have to say, 'What a Saviour of sinners is He!' As King of kings how faithfully and royally He serves His people, as many as come to Him, giving out of His fullness grace for grace. What more could be done than Christ Jesus has done to make a way for all to come to Him for salvation rich and free?

We should mention yet our last point. In remembering his mother's oracle, and turning from sin and following after the Lord, King Lemuel's life also became shaped in serving the Lord in love to Him and in love towards others. This too was behind this "What?!" of his mom. Lemuel's mother taught him not to live in wasteful, self-indulgent ways, unhelpful and uncaring towards others, but rather to spend himself using the resources and roles God gives him in praise to God and in love and care for his neighbour. The mother of Lemuel in her "What?!" lesson given from his youth, by God's grace, helped turn him from wrong ways, lead him in wisdom's way, and guide him to live a worthwhile life in praise to God and for his neighbour's wellbeing.

King Lemuel learned from his mother's godly counsel long ago, so much so that he wrote about it and God saw fit what he wrote should become part of His inspired, infallible Word, part of His Holy Spirit directed counsel on the way of wisdom for us all. Do you have ears to hear and will you never forget this divine "What?!" message, and help also to pass it on to the generations following? "*What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?*" Oh, praise God for so much gospel and practical Christian instruction even in Proverbs 31:2 with just this "What?!" message. Amen!

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BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



THE WHAT?!

This message is based on Proverbs 31:1&2, "*The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother had taught him. What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?*" Here we learn that this mother of Lemuel kept saying this one word to her son, "What?!" as he was growing up, and he never forgot it. In fact, God worked his mother's repeated "What?!" for good in his life. Her words were used by God to turn Lemuel from wrong ways and to see and seek after wisdom's way, and to live in a worthy manner before God and people. May God the Holy Spirit be pleased so also to use this "What?!" message now for all who will be hearing it.

"*What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?*" We don't know really who this king Lemuel, who often heard these words from his mother, was. Some think he may have been Solomon himself and that his mother here was Bathsheba, but of this we cannot at all be sure, and it really doesn't matter. The point is that he had a godly mother who tried to raise her son in God's ways. No doubt it started already when Lemuel was just a small boy already. Whenever Lemuel would do things which were not showing love to God nor love to his neighbour, but only living for self and in the way of sin, this godly mother would then say, "*What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?*" Always and again it was a word spoken to check her son, to correct him, to admonish him, to warn him, to stop him, yes, from sinful and wayward ways, and not to continue in a pathway of evil, but rather to seek after God, and to walk in His ways in praise to the LORD and in love and for the good of others.

As King Lemuel grew older and gained status and position in society, he never could forget his mother's teaching even with this one word, "What?!" The text says he saw the teaching from his mother as actually a prophecy, or utterance, from God to him. What is obvious too from the text is that his mother surely loved her son and wished only always the best for him. Her "what?" time and again, was a loving warning word, a serious, kind appeal, an earnest rebuke in great care for Lemuel. "*What, my son?*" "My dear boy, is this what you came into the world for? Have I given birth to you and raised you for this, that you should spend your life in the way of sin and evil, only for wicked self-pleasure and thoughtless, shameful ungodliness?"

No, my dear Lemuel, but let it be for God and good that you live your life, even as I have taught you and have sought to show you in my own life.'

Well, when Lemuel became king later, he never forgot his mother's word. It came back to him, it served to stop him from following the pathway of sin and evil. What temptations as ruler of a land there would be, especially back in those days! But this "What?!" ringing in his ears from his mom helped give him a tender conscience against any and all sin, and he knew he must not pursue the way of evil, but rather, he was called to follow after what is right and true.

Have you learned this first lesson of the "What?!" from King Lemuel's mother? Or do you and will you live in sin and disobedience before God and people around you? Oh, this "What?!" of our text is a loving earnest word from a Christian mother, and even more, it is a loving caring word from God Triune to us from the days of our youth, especially also covenant children, not to go in the way of sin and disobedience and certainly not to continue in that way of self-indulgent, godless, lawless living before God and others. To live in sin is the way of rebellion and death, even eternal death if there is no true conversion to God and His ways.

"What?!" is a very simple word, but do you hear and receive its divine message to you now? Lemuel's mother applied it specifically to special temptations her son would be facing. Even so, is there any area in your life where this "What?!" message now may serve to help stop you from wrong choices and wrong pursuits and practices in your life? If God now would take Proverbs 31:2 and scan your life and mine, (and isn't He in fact doing that now with this message), where would He stop, maybe to your utter embarrassment and shame, to say, "*What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?*" What are you doing being into this or that, and defending and excusing yourself even here and there, etc? Wherever our text hits home now, will you be led to repentance through it? Or will you continue in sin and hardness of heart, continue with indifference and lack of commitment before God and under His Word? Will you respond also to this message continuing unmoved and unawakened, and careless and carefree still? Oh, I am praying this simple "What?!" message will stir and awaken you in a way that you can't forget this "What?!" from our inspired text of God's Word and that it spoil any pursuit of sin you may be tempted to go in or that you presently are in. May God use it to bring conviction and conversion before Him.

Saying that brings me now also to our second main point, for notice this "What?!" of Lemuel's mother to him as he was being raised in his godly home was not only to stop him in sin's track, but to guide him in God's way, yes, to save him by God's grace. King Lemuel's mother taught him how while we are born in sin and evil, God calls us to seek and serve Him, and He promises a Saviour from sin for us, and in His ways, living in repentance of

sin and trust in Him, God will show Himself as the gracious, glorious, almighty Saviour God! With the LORD God is redemption rich and free, and God promises so to lead all who trust and obey Him! For this godly mother, her greatest desire was that her son too would come to know and love the Lord and have Him as his first priority in life, and that he know the blessings of God as revealed in His promises. You might say her "What?!" to Lemuel as he was raised and as he made certain choices, was always directed to him seeing the incomparable riches and blessedness of seeking and knowing the Lord above all else. Her "What?!", you could say, was like the appeal of David in Psalm 34:8&11, "*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man that trusts in Him!. Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*"

Do you see and hear this too behind the "What?!" in our text? Lemuel was both stopped from wrong ways and led in wisdom's way, by God's grace, also through this "What?!" that he heard repeatedly from his mom. How about you now? Does this word also serve to point and guide you in wisdom's way? Will it draw you to Christ and to trust Him and to know and enjoy Him as the only comfort in life and death? Escape from sin and foolishness and grace and truth, and wisdom's way is found in and through Christ Jesus and knowing and following Him as Saviour and Lord. Lemuel learned this at some point. Have you learned it too? "*What my son, and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?*" Will you chase after shadows and not receive and follow after Jesus Christ? What? Will you dig for yourselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water, and refuse and forsake Christ, the endless fountain of pure living waters? Oh, seek and follow after Christ Jesus, let Him be your only Saviour and Lord and live your life in a God-honouring way and most upbuilding, helpful, and loving way towards all others. This is what King Lemuel's mother so wanted to impress on her son, and her "What?!" time and again was uttered to point Lemuel ever in this way of divine wisdom which the whole book of Proverbs is also all about.

When King Lemuel in our text writes down his mother's testimony and influence on his life, it is obvious at that stage and in his role as king now, he was a saved man. He saw the divine wisdom and way of grace and truth in all that his mother taught him, and he is so thankful and blessed through her godly instruction to him. Clearly it led him, by God's grace, in the way of salvation and godliness and holiness. We don't know when Lemuel became truly converted. It could be as a young child already that his mother's "What?!" took hold of his heart, and that from a young age he trusted in the Lord and would live to His praise. You can't begin too early, and God calls for your and my heart and life being all for Him without delay!

If any should think, 'But how can I know God will receive also a sinner like me?', you need to know through Jesus Christ the Saviour there is