

Psalms 12:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Analysis

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. After promising to arise and deliver the oppressed (v.5), God's character finds further testimony in the absolute purity of His words. This verse contrasts sharply with the corrupt speech described in verses 2-4. While human words are empty, flattering, and double-hearted, God's words are perfectly pure, completely reliable, utterly trustworthy.

"The words of the LORD" (imrot Yahweh, אִמְרֹת יְהָוָה) uses imrah, meaning saying, speech, word—often appearing in poetry parallel to davar (word). The plural "words" encompasses all God's communications—His promises, commandments, prophecies, revelations. Everything God speaks carries this quality of purity. Proverbs 30:5 declares: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

"Are pure words" (imrot tehorot, אִמְרֹת טָהוֹרֹת) uses tahor, meaning clean, pure, free from contamination. The term appears in ritual contexts describing ceremonial purity, but here emphasizes moral and spiritual purity. God's words contain no deception, error, ulterior motive, or hidden agenda. They are thoroughly reliable because they come from perfect character.

"As silver tried in a furnace of earth" (kesef tzaruf baalil laaretz, קְسֵף צָרוּף בָּאַלִיל לְאַרְצָה) introduces metallurgical imagery. Tzaruf means refined, purified, smelted. Ancient silversmiths heated ore to extreme temperatures, causing impurities

(dross) to separate from pure silver. The "furnace of earth" likely refers to clay furnaces used in ancient refining processes. The image emphasizes process of purification that removes all contamination.

"Purified seven times" (mezuqqaq shiv'atayim, מזקק שבעתים) intensifies the purity imagery. Zaqaq means refined, purified, made clear. "Seven times" uses biblical number of completion/perfection—God's words are completely, perfectly, thoroughly purified. While silver might be refined multiple times to remove all dross, God's words require no refining—they emerge from His character already perfectly pure. The metaphor emphasizes the absolute reliability and trustworthiness of divine revelation. Every promise God makes will certainly be fulfilled; every word He speaks is completely true.

Historical Context

Ancient metallurgy, especially silver refining, was well-known in Israel. Archaeological evidence reveals sophisticated refining techniques in the ancient Near East by David's time. Silver was valuable for trade, decoration, and temple service. The refining process was dramatic: ore heated until impurities floated to surface as dross, which smiths skimmed off. Multiple refinings produced increasingly pure silver.

This imagery appears throughout Scripture describing divine refining of people. Malachi 3:2-3 describes the Messiah: "he is like a refiner's fire...And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." Psalm 66:10 says: "thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." First Peter 1:7 speaks of faith "being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire." While these passages apply refining imagery to testing people, Psalm 12:6 reverses the metaphor: God's words are like silver already perfectly refined.

The contrast with human words is stark. Verses 2-4 described empty, flattering, double-hearted speech—words filled with impurity and deception. But God's words are opposite: perfectly pure, completely reliable. In Israel's history, this distinction proved crucial. False prophets spoke smooth words people wanted to hear; true prophets spoke God's pure, often uncomfortable, words. False prophets promised

peace when judgment approached; true prophets delivered God's reliable warnings.

For Christians, this verse affirms Scripture's complete reliability. Second Timothy 3:16 declares: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." Second Peter 1:21 explains: "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." If God's words are pure, then Scripture—God's inspired Word—is trustworthy. While human interpretation may err, the text itself is pure.

Modern biblical criticism often questions Scripture's reliability, viewing it as merely human words containing errors. But Psalm 12:6 affirms that God's words are perfectly pure. This doesn't mean wooden literalism ignoring genre, but does mean Scripture reliably communicates what God intends, without deception or error in original revelation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between corrupt human speech (vv.2-4) and God's pure words (v.6) affect how you view and use Scripture?
2. What does it mean practically that God's words are 'purified seven times'—completely, perfectly reliable—when making decisions and facing uncertainty?
3. How can you develop deeper confidence in Scripture's reliability when contemporary culture increasingly questions biblical authority?
4. In what ways might you treat God's words as less than perfectly pure by selectively accepting teachings you like while dismissing uncomfortable ones?
5. How should the purity of God's words shape both how you receive them (with faith and submission) and how you communicate them to others (with accuracy and care)?

Interlinear Text

בְּאָלָיל	אָמָר	וְתִּהְיוּ	אָמָר	וְתִּהְיוּ	בָּהּ רָוֶת	כָּסֶף	אָמָר	וְתִּהְיוּ	בְּאָלָיל
The words	of the LORD	The words	are pure	as silver	tried	in a furnace			
H565	H3068	H565	H2889	H3701	H6884	H5948			
מִזְבְּחַתִּים	מִזְבְּחַתִּים	לֹא כֵּן	לֹא כֵּן						
of earth	purified	seven times							
H776	H2212	H7659							

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 30:5 (Word): Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Psalms 19:8 (Word): The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalms 18:30 (Word): As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

2 Samuel 22:31 (Word): As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.

Psalms 66:10 (Parallel theme): For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

Psalms 119:140 (Word): Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.