

Proverbs Chapter 30

This is a collection of proverbs written by an unknown sage who was likely a student of wisdom at the time of Solomon. Agur reflects humility (verse 1-4); a deep hatred for arrogance (verse 7-9); and a keen theological mind (verse 5-6).

Proverbs 30:1 "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, [even] the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,"

No one knows for sure who these names are. Some believe they are a description of Solomon and David.

Some think Agur addressed his wisdom perhaps to his favorite pupils, as Luke to Theophilus.

"Agur" means gathered (many believe this is fanciful name for Solomon). "Jakeh" means obey or obedient. Here again, many believe this to be a symbolic name of Solomon. "Ithiel" means God has arrived. This too, is believed not to be a person, but a symbolic name. "Ucal" means devoured. Here again, this name has no history before or after this mention.

Proverbs 30:2-3 "Surely I [am] more brutish than [any] man, and have not the understanding of a man." "I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy."

This could be Solomon speaking, because it appears from this that the more he learned of God, the more aware he became of how little he knew. You do not learn wisdom. Wisdom is a gift from God. I think (verses 2 and 3 above), is a sudden realization that no man truly knows God.

This is a statement of humility and recognition of the reality that, apart from divine revelation, there would be no true wisdom at all. This is illustrated in the pursuits of Job (Job 3:3-26), and Solomon (Eccl. 3:1-15).

In verse 2, he is saying that he is no more than a brutish beast in understanding. Only the very wise realize how little they know. This makes me think even more that this is Solomon speaking. No one except God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have knowledge of the holy.

Agur knew that he could not gain wisdom through human searching alone. Understanding is here associated with the holiness of God.

Proverbs 30:4 "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what [is] his name, and what [is] his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

These questions can be answered only by revelation from God. A man can know the "what" about creative wisdom through observation of the physical world and its inner workings, but cannot know the "who." The "who" can be known only when God reveals Himself, which He

has in Scripture. This is the testimony and conclusion of Job (Job 42:1-6), Solomon (Eccl. 12:1-14), Isaiah (Isaiah 40:12-17; 46:8-11; 66:18-19), and Paul (Rom.8:18-39).

The answer of course, is Almighty God, but I believe this is saying what mere man can know Him. For sure, someone bigger than you and I. Someone that mere man can only speculate about.

If we were to think of all the names in the Bible for God and could accumulate them into one name, that would be the name of the personality that created all of this. This would be the unspeakable name of God. We know that power will be given in it, over it, and under it; and that at the name of Jesus all will bow.

This is a good verse to use when witnessing to Jews. I was listening to Bott 91.5 radio recently and heard Marty Zweig, (who preaches the Christian word to Jewish people), say to read them this scripture down to the last sentence. Then ask them who this is speaking about. Of course they would answer God. Then read them the last sentence: "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell"?

How would or could they answer? Of course, God's Son's name is Jesus.

Proverbs 30:5 "Every word of God [is] pure: he [is] a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

(In verses 5 and 6), this moves from the uncertainty of human speculation to the certainty of divine revelation.

In John 1:1-3 we read. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

In Ephesians 6:16 we read: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

Our shield is our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 30:6 "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

This is a powerful statement on the inspired nature of God's canonical Word to Israel. To add to God's Word is to deny God as the standard of truth.

We are warned in the last book of Revelation not to add or take away from the Bible. Every man is a liar, but the Word of God is Truth.

Proverbs 30:7-8 "Two [things] have I required of thee; deny me [them] not before I die:" "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:"

The prayer of a true wisdom seeker. He seeks from the Lord honesty in heart and sufficiency in Him (away from the dangers posed by the extremes of poverty or wealth). If he has too much, he could cease depending on God, and if he has too little, he could be tempted to be as the sluggard.

This seems to be a prayer to God asking only 2 things for the rest of his life. Vanity and lies are one. He asked to not lie and be vain, and that he not be overcome by wealth and poverty. That he might be satisfied with whatever food the Lord provides.

This should certainly be our prayer, as well. Most sin comes because of vanity and lies and because of greed. God help us to walk in your ways and not our own.

Proverbs 30:9 "Lest I be full, and deny [thee], and say, Who [is] the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God [in vain]."

This is why he prayed to not be poor or rich. People find it easier to seek the Lord when they have needs in their life. Sometimes the wealthy feel so self-sufficient that they do not seek God.

This is a question reflecting extreme arrogance, "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?"

The very poor sometimes turn their back on God, because they feel He doesn't love them; and they steal and curse to drag themselves out of poverty.

Proverbs 30:10 "Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty."

We see that slandering a man's servant can backfire on you and bring a curse on you.

Verses 11-14: These proverbs condemn various forms of unwise behavior and are connected with this common phrase which points to the fact that certain sins can uniquely permeate a whole society or time period.

Proverbs 30:11 "[There is] a generation [that] curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother."

Proverbs 20:20 stated "he who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness."

This grievous sin will result in death.

The generation they are talking about is in the end times. (In 2 Timothy 3), it speaks of being disobedient to parents. This is our time. Children have no respect for parents. The commandment of God says honor your mother and father, but many in our generation do not.

Proverbs 30:12 "[There is] a generation [that are] pure in their own eyes, and [yet] is not washed from their filthiness."

Proverbs 16:2 "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, But the Lord weigheth the spirits".

Proverbs 20:9: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin."

No one can make himself sinless. Those whose sin has been forgiven are pure before God.

In this same third chapter (of 2 Timothy describing the last days), it speaks of lovers of their own selves. Our generation is a rebellious generation which has a form of godliness, but denies the power thereof. Lust of the flesh is the sin of our day.

In our generation, the churches are forgetting that to be truly clean and pure, we must be washed in the blood of the Lamb. They are trying to take the blood out of our church services. Only the blood of Jesus can wash us and make us white as snow.

Proverbs 30:13 "[There is] a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up."

Proverbs 21:4 A high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin".

This too is our generation.

In 2 Timothy 3:2 we read. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."

Some of our churches are even telling their people that they can become God. We are an evil generation. Lucifer was tossed out of heaven for these same thoughts. Prideful and arrogant people are not humble. We must be humble to have God in our lives.

Proverbs 30:14 "[There is] a generation, whose teeth [are as] swords, and their jaw teeth [as] knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from [among] men."

Proverbs 14:31 "He who oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker, but he that honoreth him hath mercy on the poor".

It offends the Creator when one neglects the poor, who are part of His creation.

In 2 Timothy, again, our generation is lacking in natural affection. We are so caught up in ourselves that we do not bother with the needs of the less fortunate. The church has turned the poor over to the state.

To truly be able to sympathize with the poor, we need to have walked in their shoes.

Proverbs 30:15-16 "The horseleech hath two daughters, [crying], Give, give. There are three [things that] are never satisfied, [yea], four [things] say not, [It is] enough:" "The grave; and the barren womb; the earth [that] is not filled with water; and the fire [that] saith not, [It is] enough."

These two blood sucking mouths of the horse leech, which lived off the blood of its victim, are used to picture the insatiably greedy.

A leech or a blood sucker hangs on until torn from the flesh. The greed for these things is over-emphasized in this "horseleech".

Four illustrations of the greedy are given, all of which are parasitic in nature and characterize the heart of human greed.

The grave always has room for more. As long as one person is alive, there is room for that one more.

All women who have not been able to have a child are never satisfied. Many of them adopt because the desire for children is so great. The Hebrews thought it to be a curse. Most women feel cheated that they have not had children.

The earth drinks in all the water that is rained upon it.

The more wood that is put on the fire just makes it burn hotter. It will take all the wood you feed it.

Proverbs 30:17 "The eye [that] mocketh at [his] father, and despiseth to obey [his] mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

This proverb vividly speaks to the tragic results of disregarding parental respect and authority and the destruction it brings.

We see here that the eye reveals what is in the heart of man. This person shall come to an untimely death, and his body will be left to the vultures. They peck the eyes of the dead out first before they eat the body.

Verses 18-20: Hypocrisy is illustrated by 4 natural analogies of concealment:

- (1) An eagle leaves no trail in the air;
- (2) A slithering snake leaves no trail on the rock;
- (3) A ship leaves no trail in the sea;
- (4) a man leaves no marks after he has slept with a virgin.

These actions are all concealed and thus serve to illustrate the hypocrisy of the adulterous woman who hides the evidences of her shame while professing innocence.

Proverbs 30:18 "There be three [things which] are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:"

He is just saying in this, that these four things are a wonderful mystery which man cannot begin to understand.

Proverbs 30:19-20 "The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid." "Such [is] the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness."

Men look at the eagle flying through the sky and wish that they might fly, as well. There is no trace from where they came, or where they go, or even how they can stay up there in mid-air.

The amazing thing in this is how the snake slithers across a rock.

A ship in a large body of water leaves a mystery as to how it floats and how it finds its way to port.

The way of a man with a maid has been a mystery for all time. How two people destined of God to become one, can single each other out in all the mass of humanity, and find the mate so right for them that they will stay together until death do them part is one of the greatest mysteries to me.

If we were to look at these four things from a spiritual standpoint, we would see in the eagle the symbol of God. In the serpent, we see the symbol of Satan. We would see in the ship, the symbol of the church or the Christian on the sea of life; and we would see in the man with the maid, Christ and his bride (the church).

We see in this adulterous woman who covers her sin, a deception of not only deceiving others, but herself as well. Her heart is so hardened that she feels no guilt and shame.

Proverbs 30:21-23 "For three [things] the earth is disquieted, and for four [which] it cannot bear:" "For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;" "For an odious [woman] when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress."

Like earthquakes, society is greatly agitated when normal roles are overturned, servants reigning, fools made rich, hated women married and maidservants becoming wives.

These four things make living very uncomfortable. They really are things which should not be. These four causes much pain to all parties involved.

A servant is really not suited to be a ruler, and sudden power many times turns the head of the person elevated.

This fool, who suddenly has more than he needs, over-indulges and makes himself even more of a fool.

This "odious woman" is an undesirable woman, perhaps because she is not attractive or has unattractive ways. If she does get married, she is ill-tempered and possibly will drive her mate away.

This handmaid, who obtains the wealth of her mistress, whether by death of the mistress or some trickery, would certainly cause her to be arrogant and difficult to get along with.

Proverbs 30:24-28 "There be four [things which are] little upon the earth, but they [are] exceeding wise:" "The ants [are] a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;" "The conies [are but] a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;" "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;" "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

These verses picture 4 creatures which survive due to natural instinct. The wisdom seen in each of these reveals the beauty of the wise Creator and His creation and becomes a model for the principle that labor, diligence, organization, planning, and resourcefulness are better than strength, thus implying the superiority of wisdom over might.

These four are little in stature, but not in accomplishments. The natural instincts of all four make them very wise. We could take a lesson from each of them.

Ants live in communities and work together as a unit and survive through planning and labor. They are the opposite of the sluggard or slothful man. They are very industrious. Man could take a lesson from them in that they store in summer for use in winter.

These animals called conies live in the rocks for security. These probably refer to rock badgers who, though weak, survive by being diligent enough to climb and find sanctuary in high places.

The locusts act as one body and work together. These survive through careful organization.

The spider (actually this is a lizard), works with its hands and winds up in palaces. These creatures are resourceful and can make their home in inaccessible places, even in a palace.

Proverbs 30:29-31 "There be three [things] which go well, yea, four are comely in going:" "A lion [which is] strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any;" "A greyhound; a he goat also; and a king, against whom [there is] no rising up."

The three creatures and the king all picture wise, stately and orderly deportment. Each offers a glimpse of the Creator's power and wisdom and illustrates the dignity and confidence of those who walk wisely.

We see in these four that they go with great poise and have no fear.

The "lion" is the king of the beasts and fears nothing in the jungle. He is king of the forest.

A "greyhound" is very graceful in running and has great speed so that no other animal can catch him.

The "he goat" proudly leads the other goats.

The "king against whom there is no rising up" is because he has the confidence of his people and they follow him willingly.

Proverbs 30:32 "If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, [lay] thine hand upon thy mouth."

We see here, that the proud, arrogant person will only make matters worse, if he begins to talk and is warned to guard the words of his mouth even to shutting his lips by putting his hand over them.

The thoughts of the heart, if they are evil, must never be allowed to pass the lips, as well. The best advice in both cases is keep the mouth shut until you reconsider. Words can destroy you, if they are the wrong words.

“Hand on your mouth” means “stop your scheming and talking”, a gesture of awestruck, self-imposed silence.

Proverbs 30:33 "Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife."

In all three cases, these are natural causes and effects to show that anger pressed beyond certain limits produces conflict.

In all three things above, pressure is being applied and bringing inevitable results in each case.

Wrath or anger forces strife between the angered persons.

Proverbs 30 Questions

1. What does "Agur" mean?
2. What does "Jakeh" mean?
3. What does "Ithiel" mean?

4. What does "Ucal" mean?
5. Who do most believe these are symbolic of?
6. What is meant by "being more brutish than any man"?
7. Why did he say, "I neither learned wisdom"?
8. What is suddenly realized in verses 2 and 3?
9. Who has the only true knowledge of the holy?
10. In verse 4, what questions are asked?
11. What name could we give in answer?
12. Every word of God is _____.
13. What is our shield?
14. Who created everything?
15. Why are we not to add to His words?
16. What did he pray for?
17. What does most sin come from?
18. What was he afraid of doing if he were poor?
19. Who should you not accuse to his mother?
20. In verse 11, the generation curses whom?
21. When will this generation be?
22. What is meant by being pure in your own eyes?
23. What is the only way to be really white as snow?
24. What 2 types of people are not humble?
25. What are the teeth of those who devour the poor like?
26. What is said to have two daughters crying, "Give, give"?

27. What 4 things are never satisfied?
28. What shall happen to the eyes of one who mocketh his father?
29. What reveals what is in the heart of man?
30. What pecks the eyes out.
31. What 4 things are too wonderful to know?
32. What can we see symbolically in the eagle?
33. What do we see in the serpent?
34. What is the symbol of the ship on the sea?
35. What is the symbolic meaning of the man and maid?
36. What does the adulterous woman say when she thinks her sin is hidden?
37. What 4 things are hard to bear?
38. What 4 things are little, but exceedingly wise?
39. What 4 things are stately in their going?
40. If you have lifted yourself up too highly, what should you do?
41. The churning of milk brings forth _____.
42. The wringing of the nose brings _____.
43. The forcing of wrath brings what?