

# Proverbs 30 - The Words of Agur; What's in a Name?

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## Proverbs 30

VI. The words of Agur (Prov 30:1-33)

(1) Introduction (30:1)

**1** The words of **Agur** the **son of Jakeh**, the pronouncement. The man declares to **Ithiel**, to **Ithiel** and **Ucal**:

**1** The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, the oracle. The man declares to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal:

**1** A discourse by the faithful collector. This is what this valiant man declared to the God with me, to the God with me, who then prevailed:

**1** The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

- "...Agur" - from *agar*, meaning "to collect"

— "The collector" is possibly a symbolical name (Cf. Ecclesiastes mentions the *Koheleth* - "the preacher")

— Solomon was a collector of "dark sayings" (Prov 1:6; Ps 78:2)

- Solomon was not his original name...only the royal name that David assigned him. He had several names:

- Jedidiah - "beloved by Jehovah" - the name, by Nathan, the Lord gave to Solomon at birth (2 Sam 12:25)
- Lemuel - "devoted to God" - used in chapter 31; likely a pet name used for Solomon by his mother (Bathsheba)
- "...son of Jakeh" - *yaqeh*, meaning carefully religious, obedient, or pious

- King Agur (Solomon) was the son of "the pious one"
- The father of King Agur (Solomon) would thus be David, so Jakeh is David
- "...even the prophecy the man spake" - this is an imputed translation from difficult Hebrew:
  - *ha massa*, the burden, prophecy; *ne'um*, oracle; *ha-gebber*, the mighty
  - Put together, it likely means "the mighty oracle prophesied"
  - "...Ithiel" - "God comes, arrives, is with me"; synonym for Immanuel, God with us (Is 7:14; 8:8)
  - So "Ithiel" is Jesus Christ
  - "...Ucal" - a verb: *'ukhal*, to be consumed
  - God arrives to be consumed

Prov 1:1-6:

- 1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;
- 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
- 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
- 4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.
- 5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
- 6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their **dark sayings**.

- v1 gives us the writer of the book, so we have no reason to believe anyone else wrote chapters 30 or 31

Ps 78:2-3 [KJV]:

- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter **dark sayings** of old:
- 3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."

- "...dark sayings" - *chiydah*, riddle, parable, enigma (to be guessed), enigmatic or perplexing saying or question, dark obscure utterance

So a translation of 30:1 would be: "The words gathered of the wise son of the pious father, the prophecy of the mighty oracle: that El (God) arrives to be consumed."

- This doesn't make a lot of sense until you read John 6:51-58...

John 6:51-58 [NASB20]:

51 **I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats from this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I will give for the life of the world also is My flesh."**

52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves."

54 The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

56 The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him.

57 Just as the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, the one who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.

58 This is the bread that came down out of heaven, not as the fathers ate and died; the one who eats this bread will live forever."

(2) Agur looks up (30:2-9)

(A) Agur's inadequate human wisdom in comparison to divine wisdom (30:2-4)

2 I am certainly more **stupid** than **any man**, And I do not have the understanding of **a man**;

2 Surely I am more stupid than any man, And I do not have the understanding of a man.

2 Surely I am beyond the senselessness of any man; I do not perceive things the way human beings do.

2 Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.

- "...stupid" - carnal, natural, incarnate

- "...any man" - Heb. *ish*, mankind

- "...a man" - Adam

3 Nor have I learned wisdom, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.

3 Neither have I learned wisdom, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.

3 I never acquired wisdom, but I know what the Holy One knows.

3 I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

4 Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His Son's name? Surely you know!

4 Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!

4 Who has ascended to heaven, and then descended? Who has collected the wind in his hands? Who has wrapped up waters in a garment? Who has established all the farthest points of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name? Surely you know!

4 Who has ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who has 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?

(B) God's word is tested and complete (30:5-6)

5 Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

5 Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

5 Everything God says is pure; he is a shield for those who take refuge in him.

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

6 Do not add to His words Or He will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar.

6 Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

6 Don't add to his words, or he will rebuke you, and you will be shown to be a liar.

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

(C) Agur prays for an absence of pride in relation to riches and an absence of temptation in relation of poverty (30:7-9)

7 Two things I have asked of You; Do not refuse me before I die:

7 Two things I asked of You, Do not refuse me before I die:

7 God, I have asked you for two things— don't refuse me before I die—

7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

8 Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion,

8 Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion,

8 Keep deception and lies far away from me, and give me neither poverty nor wealth. Feed me with food that I need for today,

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

9 So that I will not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the LORD?" And that I will not become impoverished and steal, And profane the name of my God.

9 That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.

9 so that I don't become overfed and deny you by saying, "Who is the LORD?" or so that I don't become poor and steal, and then misuse the name of my God.

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.

(3) Agur looks around him: warnings and observations (30:10-33)

(A) Warning against slandering a slave to his master (30:10)

10 Do not slander a slave to his master, Or he will curse you and you will be found guilty.

10 Do not slander a slave to his master, Or he will curse you and you will be found guilty.

10 Don't lie about a servant to his master, or that servant will curse you and you will pay for it.

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

(B) Four types of sinners (30:11-14)

(a) Disrespectful (30:11)

11 There is a kind of person who curses his father And does not bless his mother.

11 There is a kind of man who curses his father And does not bless his mother.

11 Some people curse their fathers and won't bless their mothers.

11 There is a generation that curses their father, and does not bless their mother.

(b) Hypocritical (30:12)

12 There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness.

12 There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness.

12 Some people view themselves as pure, but haven't been cleansed from their own filth.

12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

(c) Proud (30:13)

13 There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised *in arrogance*.

13 There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised *in arrogance*.

13 Some people—what an arrogant look they have!— raise their eyebrows haughtily.

13 There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

(d) Oppressive (30:14)

14 There is a kind of person whose teeth are *like* swords And his jaw teeth *like* knives, To devour the poor from the earth And the needy from among mankind.

14 There is a kind of man whose teeth are *like* swords And his jaw teeth *like* knives, To devour the afflicted from the earth And the needy from among men.

14 Some people have swords for teeth and knives for fangs to devour the afflicted from the earth and the needy from among mankind.

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.

(C) Four insatiable entities (30:15-16)

(a) Introduction (30:15)

15 The leech has two daughters: "Give" and "Give." There are three things that will not be satisfied, Four that will not say, "Enough":

15 The leech has two daughters, "Give," "Give." There are three things that will not be satisfied, Four that will not say, "Enough":

15 The leech has two daughters: "Give" and "Give". Three things will never be satisfied; four will never say "Enough"—

15 The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:

(b) Death (30:16a)

(c) Barrenness (30:16b)

(d) Land needing water (30:16c)

(e) Fire (30:16d)

16 Sheol, the infertile womb, Earth that is never satisfied with water, And fire that never says, "Enough."

16 Sheol, and the barren womb, Earth that is never satisfied with water, And fire that never says, "Enough."

16 The afterlife, the barren womb, earth that still demands water, and fire—they never say, "Enough".

16 The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that says not, It is enough.

(D) Warning against disrespecting one's parents (30:17)

17 The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

17 The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

17 The eye that mocks a father and looks with a disobedient attitude at a mother— the valley ravens will pluck it out; and vultures will eat it.

17 The eye that mocks at his father, and despises to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.

(E) Four incomprehensible and mysterious items (30:18-19)

(a) Introduction (30:18)

18 There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Four which I do not understand:  
18 There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Four which I do not understand:  
18 Three things cause wonder for me; four are beyond my understanding:  
18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:

(b) Eagle in the sky (30:19a)

(c) Serpent on the rock (30:19b)  
(d) Ship on the sea (30:19c)  
(e) Way of a man with a maiden (30:19d)

19 The way of the eagle in the sky, The way of a snake on a rock, The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, And the way of a man with a virgin.

19 The way of an eagle in the sky, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, And the way of a man with a maid.

19 The way an eagle flies in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a young woman.

19 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.

(F) Warning against involvement with the adulteress (30:20)

20 This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, "I have done no wrong."

20 This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, "I have done no wrong."

20 This is what an immoral woman is like: she eats, wipes her mouth, then says "I've done nothing wrong."

20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eats, and wipes her mouth, and says, I have done no wickedness.

(G) Four unfair things (30:21-23)

(a) Introduction (30:21)

21 Under three things the earth quakes, And under four, it cannot endure:

21 Under three things the earth quakes, And under four, it cannot bear up:

21 Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot remain steady:

21 For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear:

(b) Slaves becoming kings(30:22a)

(c) Fools filled with food (30:22b)

22 Under a slave when he becomes king, And a fool when he is satisfied with food,  
22 Under a slave when he becomes king, And a fool when he is satisfied with food,  
22 Under a slave when he becomes a king, a fool when he is overfed,  
22 For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

- (d) An unmarried and unloved woman (30:23a)
- (e) Maid servant displacing a mistress (30:23b)

23 Under an unloved woman when she gets a husband, And a female servant when she dispossesses her mistress.

23 Under an unloved woman when she gets a husband, And a maidservant when she supplants her mistress.

23 an unloved woman when she finds a husband, and a servant girl who inherits from her mistress.

23 For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

(H) Four wise though small animals (30:24-28)

- (a) Introduction (30:24)

**24** Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise:

**24** Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise:

24 Four things on earth are small, but they are very, very wise:

24 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:

- (b) Ants (30:25)

25 The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer;

25 The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer;

25 Ants aren't a strong species, yet they prepare their food in the summer.

25 The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;  
[Prov 6:6-8]

- (c) Badgers (30:26)

26 The rock hyraxes are not a mighty people, Yet they make their houses in the rocks;

26 The shephanim are not mighty people, Yet they make their houses in the rocks;

26 The rock badgers aren't a strong species either, yet they build their dens in the rocks.

26 The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;

- (d) Locusts (30:27)

27 The locusts have no king, Yet all of them go out in ranks;

27 The locusts have no king, Yet all of them go out in ranks;  
27 Locusts have no king, but they all swarm in ranks.  
27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;

(e) Lizards (30:28)

28 The lizard you may grasp with the hands, Yet it is in kings' palaces.  
28 The lizard you may grasp with the hands, Yet it is in kings' palaces.  
28 Spiders can be caught by the hand, yet they're found in kings' palaces.  
28 The spider takes hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

(I) Four strutting entities (30:29-31)

(a) Introduction (30:29)

**29** There are three things which are stately in *their* march, Even four which are stately when they walk:

**29** There are three things which are stately in *their* march, Even four which are stately when they walk:

29 Three things are stately in procession, four which are stately in their gait:  
29 There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going:

(b) Lion (30:30)

30 The lion, *which* is mighty among animals And does not retreat from anything,  
30 The lion *which* is mighty among beasts And does not retreat before any,  
30 The lion, mighty among the beasts, retreats before nothing.  
30 A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turns not away for any;

(c) Rooster (30:31a)

(d) Eagle (30:31b)

(e) King (30:31c)

31 The strutting rooster or the male goat, And a king *when his* army is with him.  
31 The strutting rooster, the male goat also, And a king *when his* army is with him.  
31 The strutting rooster, as well as the goat, and a king with his army.  
31 A greyhound; an he goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up.

(J) Warning against pride and anger (30:32-33)

**32** If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, Or if you have plotted *evil*, *put your* hand on your mouth.  
**32** If you have been foolish in exalting yourself Or if you have plotted *evil*, *put your* hand on your mouth.

32 If you've foolishly exalted yourself or if you've plotted evil, put your hand over your mouth.

32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.

33 For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose produces blood; So the churning of anger produces strife.

33 For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife.

33 Just as whipping milk produces butter, and twisting the nose causes bleeding, so also stirring up anger produces contention.

33 Surely the churning of milk brings forth butter, and the wringing of the nose brings forth blood: so the forcing of wrath brings forth strife.