

Proverbs Collection VI: The Sayings of Agur son of Jakeh (c. 969t – 932t BC)

Proverbs 30

Agur's Autobiographical Confession

1 The words of Agur, son of Yakeh, the oracle.

Thus says the man to Ithiel, to Ithiel, and Ucal:

- 2 Certainly I *am more* stupid than a man,
and the understanding of humankind *is* not for me.
- 3 And I have not learned wisdom,
nor will I know knowledge of the Holy One.
- 4 Who has ascended *to* heaven and come down?
Who has gathered *the* wind in the hollow of his hand?
Who has wrapped water in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What *is* his name and what is the name of his child?
For *surely* you know.
- 5 Every word of God *is* flawless;
he *is* a shield for him who takes refuge in him.
- 6 Do not add to his words
lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.
- 7 Two things I ask from you;
do not deny me before I die:
- 8 Keep falsehood and a lying word far from me;
do not give me poverty or wealth;
provide me *with* food *only* for my need.
- 9 Or else I will be satisfied and will deny *him*
and say "Who *is* Yahweh?"
Or I will be poor and will steal
and profane the name of my God.

Agur's Evil Generations

- 10 Do not slander a servant to his master,
or else he will curse you and you will be guilty.
- 11 *There is* a generation *that* will curse its father,
and its mother it will not bless.
- 12 *There is* a generation *that is* pure in its own eyes,
but from its filthiness it will not be cleansed.
- 13 *There is* a generation—how lofty *are* their eyes!
And their eyelids they will lift.
- 14 *There is* a generation whose teeth *are* swords,
and its jawbones, knives,
in order to devour the poor from the earth
and the needy from humankind.

Agur's Numerical Proverbs

- 15 For the leech, *there are* two daughters;
"Give, give!" *they cry*.
As for three of these, they are not satisfied;
as for four, they do not say enough.
- 16 Sheol and barrenness of womb,
the land is not satisfied *with* water,
and fire does not say "enough!"
- 17 The eye *that* mocks a father
and scorns the obedience of a mother—
the ravens of the valley will peck it out,
and the offspring of vultures will eat it.
- 18 Three of these are *too* wonderful for me,
and four, I do not understand them:

- 19 the way of the eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship in the heart of the sea,
and the way of a man with a young woman.
- 20 This is the way of a woman committing adultery:
she eats and wipes her mouth,
and says “I have not done wrong.”
- 21 Under three *things* the earth trembles,
and under four, it is not able to bear up:
- 22 under a slave when he becomes king,
and a fool when he is satisfied *with* food;
- 23 under an unloved woman when she gets married,
and a maid when she succeeds her mistress.
- 24 There *are* four small things on the earth,
and they *are* exceedingly wise:
- 25 The ants *are* a people *who are* not strong,
yet they prepare their food in the summer;
- 26 the badgers *are* a people *who are* not mighty,
yet they set their house on the rock;
- 27 there is no king for the locust,
yet it marches in rank;
- 28 a lizard you *can* seize with hands,
yet it is in palaces of kings.
- 29 There *are* three *things* that are magnificent of stride,
and four that are magnificent *when* moving:
- 30 a mighty lion among the beasts,
but he will not turn back from any face;
- 31 a strutting rooster or he-goat,
and a king *whose* army *is* with him.
- 32 If you have been foolish by exalting yourself,
and if you have devised evil, *put your* hand to *your* mouth.
- 33 For pressing milk produces curd,
and pressing the nose produces blood,
so pressing anger produces strife.

Proverbs Collection VII: The Sayings of Lemuel (c. 969t – 932t BC)

Proverbs 31

1 The words of Lemuel, *the* king—an oracle that his mother taught him:

The Noble King

- 2 What, my son? And what, my son in my womb?
And what, son of my vows?
- 3 Do not give your strength to the women,
and your ways to destroy kings.
- 4 *It is* not for the kings, O Lemuel;
drinking wine *is* not for the kings,
nor *is* strong drink for rulers.
- 5 Or else he will drink and forget what has been decreed,
and he will pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
- 6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
and wine to those in bitter distress.
- 7 He will drink and forget his poverty,
and his misery he will not remember *any* more.
- 8 Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all the needy.
- 9 Open your mouth, judge righteousness,
and defend *the* poor and needy.

The Noble Wife

- 10 A woman of excellence, who will find?
For her worth *is* far more than precious jewels.
- 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and gain he will not lack.
- 12 She does him good, but not harm
all the days of her life.
- 13 She seeks wool and flax,
and she works with the diligence of her hands.
- 14 She is like the ships of a merchant;
from far off she brings her food;
- 15 And she arises while *it is* still night,
and gives food to her household,
and tasks to her servant girls.
- 16 She considers a field and buys it,
from the fruit of her hand she plants a vineyard.
- 17 She girds her waist in strength,
and makes her arms strong.
- 18 She perceives that her merchandise *is* good;
her lamp does not go out in the night.
- 19 Her hands she puts onto the distaff,
and her palms hold a spindle.
- 20 Her palm she opens to the poor,
and her hand she reaches *out* to the needy.
- 21 She does not fear for her house *when* it snows,
for her entire household is clothed *in* crimson.
- 22 She makes for herself coverings;
her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known at the gates,
in his seat among the elders of the land.
- 24 Linen garments she makes and sells,
and she supplies sashes for the merchants.
- 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing,
and she laughs at the future.
- 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and instruction of kindness *is* upon her tongue.
- 27 She looks after the ways of her household,
and the bread of idleness she will not eat.
- 28 Her children rise and consider her happy,
her husband *also*, and he praises her;
- 29 “Many daughters have done excellence,
but you surpass all of them.”
- 30 Charm *is* deceit and beauty *is* vain;
but a woman who fears Yahweh shall be praised.
- 31 Give to her from the fruit of her hand,
and may they praise her works in the city gates.

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