

## 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, the son of Jakeh; an oracle:

This man says to Ithiel, to Ithiel and to Ukal:

- 2 Surely I am more brutish than any other human being,  
and I do not have human understanding;
- 3 I have not learned wisdom,  
nor do I have knowledge of the Holy One.
- 4 Who has ascended into heaven, and then descended?  
Who has gathered up the winds in his fists?  
Who has bound up the waters in his cloak?  
Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What is his name, and what is his son's name?—if you know!
- 5 Every word of God is purified;  
he is like a shield for those who take refuge in him.
- 6 Do not add to his words,  
lest he reprove you, and prove you to be a liar.
- 7 Two things I ask from you;  
do not refuse me before I die:
- 8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me;  
do not give me poverty or riches,  
feed me with my allotted portion of bread,
- 9 lest I become satisfied and act deceptively  
and say, "Who is the LORD?"  
Or lest I become poor and steal  
and demean the name of my God.

#### Agur's Evil Generations

- 10 Do not slander a servant to his master,  
lest he curse you, and you are found guilty.
- 11 There is a generation who curse their fathers  
and do not bless their mothers.
- 12 There is a generation who are pure in their own eyes  
and yet are not washed from their filthiness.
- 13 There is a generation whose eyes are so lofty,  
and whose eyelids are lifted up disdainfully.
- 14 There is a generation whose teeth are like swords  
and whose molars are like knives  
to devour the poor from the earth  
and the needy from among the human race.

#### Agur's Numerical Proverbs

- 15 The leech has two daughters:  
"Give! Give!"  
There are three things that are never satisfied,  
four that never say, "Enough"—
- 16 the grave, the barren womb,  
land that is not satisfied with water,  
and fire that never says, "Enough!"
- 17 The eye that mocks at a father  
and despises obeying a mother—  
the ravens of the valley will peck it out  
and the young vultures will eat it.
- 18 There are three things that are too wonderful for me,  
four that I do not understand:
- 19 the way of an eagle in the sky,

- the way of a snake on a rock,  
the way of a ship in the sea,  
and the way of a man with a woman.
- 20 This is the way of an adulterous woman:  
she eats and wipes her mouth  
and says, "I have not done wrong."
- 21 Under three things the earth trembles,  
and under four things it cannot bear up:
- 22 under a servant who becomes king,  
under a fool who is stuffed with food,
- 23 under an unloved woman who is married,  
and under a female servant who dispossesses her mistress.
- 24 There are four things on earth that are small,  
but they are exceedingly wise:
- 25 ants are creatures with little strength,  
but they prepare their food in the summer;
- 26 rock badgers are creatures with little power,  
but they make their homes in the crags;
- 27 locusts have no king,  
but they all go forward by ranks;
- 28 a lizard you can catch with the hand,  
but it gets into the palaces of the king.
- 29 There are three things that are magnificent in their step,  
four things that move about magnificently:
- 30 a lion, mightiest of the beasts,  
who does not retreat from anything;
- 31 a strutting rooster, a male goat,  
and a king with his army around him.
- 32 If you have done foolishly by exalting yourself  
or if you have planned evil,  
put your hand over your mouth!
- 33 For as the churning of milk produces butter  
and as punching the nose produces blood,  
so stirring up anger produces strife.

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

### Proverbs 31

1 The words of King Lemuel, an oracle that his mother taught him:

#### **The Noble King**

- 2 O my son, O son of my womb,  
O son of my vows,
- 3 Do not give your strength to women,  
nor your ways to that which ruins kings.
- 4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine,  
or for rulers to crave strong drink,
- 5 lest they drink and forget what is decreed,  
and remove from all the poor their legal rights.
- 6 Give strong drink to the one who is perishing,  
and wine to those who are bitterly distressed;
- 7 let them drink and forget their poverty,  
and remember their misery no more.
- 8 Open your mouth on behalf of those unable to speak,  
for the legal rights of all the dying.
- 9 Open your mouth, judge in righteousness,  
and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

**The Noble Wife**

- 10 Who can find a wife of noble character?  
For her value is far more than rubies.
- 11 The heart of her husband has confidence in her,  
and he has no lack of gain.
- 12 She brings him good and not evil  
all the days of her life.
- 13 She obtains wool and flax,  
and she is pleased to work with her hands.
- 14 She is like the merchant ships;  
she brings her food from afar.
- 15 She also gets up while it is still night,  
and provides food for her household and a portion to her female servants.
- 16 She considers a field and buys it;  
from her own income she plants a vineyard.
- 17 She begins her work vigorously,  
and she strengthens her arms.
- 18 She knows that her merchandise is good,  
and her lamp does not go out in the night.
- 19 Her hands take hold of the distaff,  
and her hands grasp the spindle.
- 20 She extends her hand to the poor,  
and reaches out her hand to the needy.
- 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household,  
for all of her household are clothed with scarlet.
- 22 She makes for herself coverlets;  
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- 23 Her husband is well-known in the city gate  
when he sits with the elders of the land.
- 24 She makes linen garments and sells them,  
and supplies the merchants with sashes.
- 25 She is clothed with strength and honor,  
and she can laugh at the time to come.
- 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
and loving instruction is on her tongue.
- 27 She watches over the ways of her household,  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed,  
her husband also praises her:
- 29 “Many daughters have done valiantly,  
but you surpass them all!”
- 30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is fleeting,  
but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised.
- 31 Give her credit for what she has accomplished,  
and let her works praise her in the city gates.

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