

Proverbs 30:1-33

Ch 29 ends the sayings of Solomon that the men of Hezekiah gathered (Prov 25:1). However, when they were gathering the sayings (proverbs of Solomon) they included *these* words from a man named Agur. We know nothing of Agur outside of the fact that he seems to have been some kind of teacher, at least that's assumed from his sayings. Beyond that he's not mentioned again anywhere in the bible.

Now we know that Solomon was the wisest man to ever live (outside of Christ Himself) yet that doesn't mean he was the *only* source of wisdom in his day (or prior to it or afterward). There were other men noted for wisdom mentioned in 1 Kings Ch 4. So, there's really no reason to speculate who he is or why his words are in the bible, God has see fit to include them, therefore we do well to learn *from* them.

Vs 1

Again, we know nothing of any of these men beyond their mention here. But we note that he gave (the word is) "utterance". This word carries the sense of a prophetic or Divinely inspired word. Whether he was a prophet, a teacher, or whoever he was, God gave him a divinely inspired "utterance" that was preserved in scripture.

& What we'll discover is that it's an utterance filled w/observations on life & in the world around us. He invites us to pay attention to what's going on around us that we might learn wisdom. David wrote, "*I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.*"¹ When he looked on creation (the work of God's hands), he took the time to consider it thoughtfully. Agur did as well, & God taught him through it.

Vs 2-3

This is his way of saying, "Look, I'm not trying to put myself out there as anyone, I've never been to college, I don't have any PhDs or Doctorates/master's degrees. I've not been to the school of wisdom or seminary."

He's not approaching us from a position of superiority, but from a place of humility. & No doubt there's hyperbole in play here, "I'm more stupid than any man." David said in Ps 73, "*I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You.*"² Like a dumb animal; Bildad (one of Job's friends, Ch 25) referred to man as a maggot & a worm... The idea is that man is nothing in the sight of God; unclean & irrelevant comparatively.

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). (Ps 143:5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. (1982). (Ps 73:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So Agur here is simply saying, “I don’t claim to be anybody, but I want to share what I’ve come to learn, & the things that have ministered to me.”

Vs 4

Again we’re being brought low here. We need to understand that any revelation we have of God comes only *from* God. Any accurate knowledge of God comes to us as the result of the grace & *mercy* of God.

In the 38th-39th Ch of Job, God asks Job a series of questions that simply remind him of who he’s not & who God *is*. We have limitations of power, limitations of knowledge, limitations of revelation but God does not. Vs 4 is similar in its implications. “Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?” **Not man. “Who can control/contain the elements?” Not man. “Who established the ends of the earth?” Not man. Only the One who made all things has power, authority & control over all things.**

It’s interesting J.B. in speaking of Jesus said, **“He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies;”**³ Paul the apostle speaks of the descending & ascending of Christ in Eph Ch 4

“What is His name? What is His Son’s name?” Jesus is the One who descended from heaven to give us perfect revelation of God, His love, His redeeming grace, His power over sin & death. We have real limits regarding spiritual knowledge. We depend entirely upon God’s grace in revealing Himself to us. & Whether or not there’s prophetic implications here anticipating the Messiah we don’t really know, but in retrospect it’s certainly interesting to consider... Ultimately he’s just saying, “Look, I don’t know a whole lot about God, & neither do you.” But in Vs 5-6 he shares something he *does* know.

Vs 5-6

Vs 4 underscores the fact that man has no ability to know the nature & character of God w/in himself. But Vs 5-6 show us how God *can be* known & that’s through His word. There’s a very important principle at work here in Vs 5 & it’s important that we see it. He says, **“Every word of God is pure.”** 2 qualifying words in there, “Every” & “pure”. This is something we spoke of Sunday morning regarding the “Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” If you don’t resolve in your heart that it’s *God’s* word, then you won’t be effective in wielding the sword because you’ll never be certain it’s a word that can be trusted.

³ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 3:31-32]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

I've known people who've abandoned Christianity altogether because they're uncertain as to the validity of scripture. They think perhaps part of it may be inspired, other parts may be just inserted by man (& since man put his pen to the paper it's all subject to their scrutiny). Therefore what happens is that they become the judges of the bible (trying to determine which parts God really said) as opposed to allowing the bible be the judge of them.

Listen, every word of God is pure. It's not that "this" part is inspired, "that" part really isn't. It *all* is, every word. Paul said that like this, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*"⁴ Peter said it like this, "*...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*"⁵ Every word of God is pure. (& We might add it has a purifying effect in our lives, it washes over us). The word "pure" speaks of gold or silver having been refined in the fire. It's been put to the test, tried & proved. It's not just a bunch of fanciful hoopla that has no basis in reality. It's been tried, tested & proven, therefore it can be trusted. It's infallible, it's inerrant.

He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. His pure word serves to protect His people, leads them where they *should* go, keeps them from where they *shouldn't* go.

This is 1 reason it's important that we don't add to His words, read into them & make them say something that's not being said. Because God will expose you as a liar. God has a real problem w/those who say, "Thus says the Lord" when the Lord hasn't spoken. Of course we might be prone to think of the book of Mormon & the prophets of the Mormon church or the J.W.s But really it's just as true in a Christian context when someone says they have a word for you from God but God didn't say anything. We have to be real careful when say, "God said".

If our words stray in anyway than God is true & we're the liars. We don't need to search out the deep *mysteries* of the word & go beyond the text... Just let God's word be God's word.

Vs 7-9

The wisdom in being found upright, honest & content. Again, having just spent time Sunday morning having examined the "belt of truth" we see it here.

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Ti 3:16-17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). [2 Pe 1:21]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He says, "Remove falsehood & lies far from me." He wanted to *know* the truth (Vs 5-6) & be a man of truth & integrity. If we serve a God of truth, than we don't want lies or deception anywhere near us. We want to be about the truth, we want to learn truth & speak the truth in love.

"Give me neither poverty or riches." He's recognizing his personal tendency & the propensity of all of us. When life is too easy we might feel as though we don't need God, but if life is steeped too deeply in poverty we might question the love of God or His ability to help us & turn away from Him. Or use it as justification for sin, "lest I steal".

Now neither of those *may* happen. People love God in poverty & serve God in prosperity. He's seeking (however) to avoid the temptation of either extreme. But rather that he would simply be satisfied w/God's portion & provision in his life (give him each day his daily bread).

Of course the secret to contentment isn't found in *what* we have, but *Who* we have. Paul said, *"I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*⁶ At the end of the day, Agur is more concerned for the glory of God than he is his personal need.

Vs 10

In short; stay out of other people's business. If it doesn't pertain to you, than don't weigh in on it. For w/the measure you use it'll be measured back to you. If you're slandering or accusing someone else (especially not knowing what you think you know), it'll come back on you.

Vs 11-14

A presumptuous, impure, prideful, predatory type generation... Sounds like the news feed on any given search engine today. The word of God teaches us to honor our parents. Lev 19:32, *"You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord."*⁷ But ours is the generation that rather than being kind & blessing parental oversight, there's a general despising of authority, a putting forth of contempt for imposing standards on me. Yet all the while being blind to their own need to be washed of their sinful, presumptuous, prideful, self-seeking patterns.

⁶ The New King James Version. (1982). (Php 4:11-13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ The New King James Version. (1982). (Le 19:32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

That was one of the big problems Jesus had w/the Pharisees. They observed outer ritual, but paid no attention to the need for inner cleansing. They were prideful, arrogant. Yet they experienced the Lord's resistance & rebuke because God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble...

What does it mean, teeth like swords, fangs like knives? He tells you in the next sentence there in Vs 14. It speaks to greediness, devouring everything & everyone who stands in their way, never satisfied, it's never enough; they're parasitical & predatory in nature. It's all about serving myself.

& That's what leads him into this next thought of never being satisfied, never having enough, *discontented*.

Vs 15-16

The leech becomes the picture of never having enough, bleeding something dry. The only thing that greed gives birth to is more greed (give & give).

Now we're going to see this pattern of 3, even 4 & the idea behind that type of phrase is that though the list may be specific it's not exhaustive. He hasn't listed everything that exists that has an appetite that refuses to be satisfied (like the flesh is never satisfied) but he's pointing to examples that paint that picture.

The grave is never satisfied, there's never a day when death takes a holiday because the grave has enough. The barren womb feels unfulfilled, (especially in ancient Israel, women derived a sense of worth through having children, the barren felt unfulfilled).

Your yard never says, "You know what, you never need to water me again. I'll just be satisfied & produce lush green grass from here on out." The earth will always receive more water. & Fire will burn for as long as you feed it. It's never enough. We're not to be like these things (Vs 7-8, godliness w/contentment is great gain).

Vs 17

Speaking of the generation that doesn't honor it's parents... The idea behind this is that, that individual is disgraced & the picture here is of a dead body, unburied, in the open becoming food for the birds because no one is there to care for it.

The fool who is morally/spiritually blind will have a just end. It's a description of ruin for the one who mocks & scorns their parents.

Vs 18-19

He doesn't really give us any advice here, simply things that he stands in awe of.

Nor does he elaborate on what it is that they have in common that he'd have us think through. There's lots of speculation, but we don't really know.

He speaks of air, land, sea &... a young woman 😊. I'll leave it to you to think through. He speaks of the vastness of the atmosphere & the majestic flight of the eagle (how it navigates it's course w/precision). The vast earth, the way of a serpent on a rock (again navigating its course). The vast ocean & how a ship can navigate its course, & the uncharted territory of young love...

Now when he speaks of a man w/a virgin, he's not necessarily speaking sexually (though he might be). But there's also the element to think on of, who can begin to explain how or why people fall in love? All of these things are majestic in their own way.

Vs 20

So in Vs 19 we see the purity of young love (the way a young man interacts w/his new found love) & in Vs 20 the impurity of the adulterous. She eats, or gratifies her hunger for adultery & then thinks nothing of it. Ruins lives w/out a thought for anyone else (I've done no wickedness). She sins against God, against her marriage, her family, her community & whomever it is w/whom she's committed adultery & yet doesn't see the harm in it really. There's no sense of guilt in her heart or mind.

Vs 21-23

Some things that have fundamental flaws in them. A servant when he reigns (not someone w/a servant's heart or like Joseph who worked his way up through integrity or God's plan for him personally) one who's placed in a position for which they aren't prepared.

The fool filled w/food. The picture is of someone receiving validation even though they were inappropriate or foolish in their course of action, it's not right. It reinforces him in his foolishness.

The quarrelsome, contentious woman who makes life miserable for everyone around her, & the maidservant who succeeds her mistress. Kind of like when the servant when he reigns. The whole picture here is of people assuming or being placed in positions that they're incapable of handling. It's doesn't help anything, but it can hurt a lot of things.

Vs 24-28

Think about how small the head of an ant is... Now think how small the brain inside that head must be... yet there's an incredible amount of wisdom we can glean from the ant.

If the ant can navigate life in wisdom, what kind of rebuke is that for you & me who've been created in the image of God?

There hasn't been any human training of the ant, they're not big & powerful... Size doesn't determine wisdom, age doesn't always determine wisdom... & notice wisdom is tied to coping skills here, learning to survive & navigate life fruitfully despite things that might limit them physically.

The ant has it in them somehow to prepare for their future, they work while they're able knowing that there will be a time (winter) when they can no longer work so they live off of the work they did in advance. They work while work can be done.

It's wise to prepare for the future, to have a retirement plan, to work while you can so that you're taken care of when you can't. But beyond that, now is the time to prepare for your *eternal future* & wise is the one who works w/a view toward laying up treasure in heaven (Matt 6:19-21). You can't take anything w/you, but you can send it in advance.

The rock badger is fairly feeble. Kind of like a rabbit, but they know enough to make their homes in rocks so that the predators can't reach them. We're not much against the roaring lion who came to steal, kill & to destroy. But you can abide in the Rock, even J.C. who is your shield & your protection from the enemy.

We see incredible unity & structure in the swarms of locusts who by themselves aren't much more than a grasshopper, but together overwhelm anything that stands in their way... We're to strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, moving together as one (the body of Christ). 1 will place 1,000 to flight, 2 will send 10,000, exponential gains as we work together.

The spider (or perhaps gecko) isn't much, but it uses what it has to be found even in the palace of kings. Using the gifts God has given you (even if to you they don't seem like much) can take you anywhere. Let God use your life.

Vs 29-31

Each of these things move at a majestic pace, swiftly, powerfully, w/a certain tenacity. Be confident in God's calling upon your life.

Vs 32-33

In the 2nd Vs of this Ch Agur expressed his personal humility. Here he advises against exalting yourself foolishly. But rather we're to humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord & let Him lift us up as He sees fit.

If you've been one who makes sure everyone knows how great you are, he says, "Put your hand on your mouth." Stop promoting yourself. It brings conflict & strife, just let your life speak for itself & trust the Lord to promote you.

Don't strive to exalt yourself. Strive for peace & harmony through humility & righteousness.

Prayer Points:

God, may the wisdom of Your word sink in to the soil of our hearts. Be glorified in our lives. Help us to walk in humility, to trust You implicitly & to be content in where You've called us to be...