BIBLE GATEWAY Proverbs 30 :: NASB.

Proverbs 30 begins with the title,

> *“The Wisdom of Agur”*

and verse 1 continues with

> *“The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to Ithiel—to Ithiel and Ucal:”*

There is no indication as to whom Agur was, and the other people named cannot be identified. There is a reference to a man named Ithiel in Nehemiah 11:7, but there is nothing to indicate that this is the same person. Of course, this does not detract from the value of his words. It is part of the inspired record.

In verses 2-3, Agar wrote,

> *“Surely, I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One.”*

These words describe a man that has come to a clear understanding of how little he truly knows or understands. One cannot help but admire his confession and his humility. It sounds like the parable told in Luke 18:9-13,

> *“Also, He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”*

Jesus point was that the tax collector was justified for his humility.

However, verse 4 contain a series of questions that explain why Agar felt the way that he did. *"Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?"* These words are remarkably similar to God's questions He posed to Job beginning in Job chapter 38.

Who can answer these questions? In fact, what is truly known concerning the Lord God? He is the Creator! He is Living! He is Eternal! Yes, His creation does reveal the fact that there is a Creator, and certain aspects of His nature can be seen in His creation. But the only way that anyone can come to know anything about God is through His Word. And even then, God has only revealed what He has chosen to reveal. When one considers the infinite scope of God's creative work, His love, and His blessings, then the words in verses 2 and 3 should apply to every faithful man and woman!

Verses 5-6 state, *"Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar."* The Bible is the inspired Word of God. Both the Old and New Testament scriptures contain very clear warnings against changing His Word. Paul wrote in Galatians 1:6-9, *"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be*

accursed.”

Today, there are many newer, more “modern”, that are not based on good scholarship, and present their own “slant” on what the Bible says. Still others advertise that they are translations that are nothing of the sort. The “Living Bible” was quite popular years ago, but it was not a translation at all. It was a transliteration or a rendering in similar words or phrases. The Reader’s Digest even came out with an “abridged” version of the Bible!

Yes, there are good, different translations of the Bible. In many countries, the Bible has been translated into the local language to reach more people and that is certainly important. But the translators must always be aware of the responsibility to ensure that the translation is as accurate as possible. There are many passages that are difficult to translate from Greek or Hebrew into other languages. But the Bible IS His Word. If He gave the world His written Word, then He certainly has the power to ensure the accuracy of His Word! The is one reason that Greek and the Hebrew of the Bible are “dead” languages. They do not change or evolve with time.

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Beginning with verse 11, most of the remainder of Proverbs 30 is a set of four lines or four elements used to make a specific point.

Verses 11-14 state, *"There is a generation that curses its father, and does not bless its mother. There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes yet is not washed from its filthiness. There is a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, and whose fangs are like knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men."*

These verses describe a generation that has given itself over to worldly values. These verses are not intended for just one specific generation but describe the result for any godless generation in any age and in any location in the world. Embracing a life of sin begins a downward spiral that leads to death and destruction. That is true for individuals and societies. In modern times, the nations of Germany and Austria have been known for their work ethic, level of education, and even attendance at religious services. And yet, those nations fell into the brutal, sadistic madness of the Nazi regime just before and during World War II.

Paul described the spiritual perversion that will occur in Romans 1:28-32, *"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them."*

Verses 24-28 states, *"There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer; The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags; The locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks; The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings' palaces."* What do these four creatures do that make them wise?

Ants are small, but they combine their efforts to accomplish things well beyond their individual capabilities. In addition, they prepare ahead of time for the winter where food will be scarce. The application to Christians is obvious. Christians can accomplish wonderful things if they are together and encourage one another. A person that claims to be a Christian but deliberately separates himself/herself from a congregation will not be fruitful. Instead, that person's faithful will eventually wither and die.

Ants are also organized and prepare for the future. Christians must always live and grow in such a way to weather the storms of life. But there must always be the awareness that this life WILL end, and NOW is the time to prepare.

Some translations in verse 26 refer to conies or rabbits, but the actual animals that dwell in that part of the world are known as rock badgers. In either case, the small animals described are definitely at the bottom of the food chain. Many predators see them as easy prey, but when threats appear, the rock badgers scamper into the rocks for protection where predators cannot reach them. In fact, some rock badgers act as lookouts for danger and "sound the alarm" when it is spotted.

The application to Christians is obvious. The devil is like a roaring lion seeking to devour the weak, the naïve, and the foolish. The devil looks for easy prey. But both the Old and New Testament scriptures describe the Lord God as a fortress, an anchor, a refuge, and a rock. James 4:7 states, *"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."* Love and obedience ensures protection for any Christian. In addition, Christians look out for one another. Paul wrote in Galatians 6:1, *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."*

A locust is a small insect that does little harm by itself. But a swarm of locusts can cause great damage. Joel 2:8 describe the activities of locusts. *"They do not crowd each other, they march everyone in his path; when they burst through the defenses, they do not break ranks."* The quality being described here is discipline and order.

The devil has been very successful in sowing dissension. Even in the early days of the Church, individuals would try to gain influence over others. Some early Christians are named in the New Testament simply because they caused problems and strife. In III John 9-10, John wrote, *"I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating[d] against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church."* But faithful Christians are to live and work in harmony. Of course, misunderstandings and disagreements will occur. But they are resolved in a spirit of love. Dissension is a tool of the devil!

Finally, verse 28 states, "*The spider skillfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings' palaces.*" The actual word that should be used describes a small lizard, like a gecko, instead of a spider. Again, this is a small creature, but it is quick and can be found just about anywhere. It is very difficult to prevent these small lizards from getting inside of buildings.

How does that apply to a Christian's life? A good example can be seen in Paul's own words in Philippians 1:12-14, "*But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*" Just like the small lizard, the message of Jesus Christ will not be destroyed or contained. Seemingly bad events can actually further the cause of Christ.