



Proverbs 30-31

Tape #7233
Proverbs 30-31
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Proverbs, chapter thirty. We have been dealing with the proverbs of Solomon, and now we have a collection of proverbs that are ascribed to Agur Benjakeh. He is the son of Jakeh. It is called a prophecy, and thus there is the acknowledgment that this is inspired of God. He is speaking through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal (30:1),

So this is a prophecy given by this man Agur, who is the son of Jakeh, or Yakeh, unto these two men Ithiel and Ucal. He begins by confessing his own sin and nothingness.

Truly I am a man, or more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man (30:2).

Paul the apostle speaking of himself said that he was the chief of sinners. This man begins by saying, "I was a brutish man, more than any other". Sort of again, the idea of the chief of sinners. "I have not the understanding of a man." That is, "The understanding that I have isn't learning, it isn't education. The understanding that I will be sharing with you is really from the Lord." He's not taking credit himself for these things, but really declaring that, "This is something that was given to me by the Lord. It isn't human wisdom that I am parting, because I am not a wise man. I do not have the understanding of a man".

I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy (30:3).

"I don't achieve, or I don't claim to have the same knowledge. I haven't learned these things."

For who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who has gathered the wind in his fists? who has bound the waters in a garment? who has established all of the ends of the earth (30:4)?

"I've not achieved, or attained to the knowledge of the holy. I don't really fully understand God. God who has ascended up into heaven or descended from heaven. God who has gathered the wind in his fists, who has bound the waters in a garment, who has established all of the ends of the earth." And, then this is interesting to me, concerning God, he said...

what is his name, and what is his son's name, if you can tell (30:4)?

Interesting isn't it? That he talks about the name of the Son of God. Now we know that His name is, "The I Am", "I am that I am", He said, when Moses said, "Who shall I say sent me?" "I am that I am, hath sent thee." What is the name of His Son? At that time the name of the Son of God was not revealed. But later to Mary, the angel, in informing her of the fact that she was going to have a son, said, "And thou shalt call His name, "Joshua". So we know the name of His Son. "Who, what is His Son's name if you can tell?" Then it goes on...

Every word of God is pure (30:5):

Now having gone from declaring, the opening of the declaration that, "The things that I am sharing with you are not from man's wisdom. They're not from me, I'm nobody. But these things really come from God, it's a prophecy. And every word of God is pure."

for he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him (30:5).

All throughout the scripture, we are encouraged to put our trust in the Lord. Throughout the scripture we are told that He will be our defense, He will be our strong tower. "As you put your trust in the Lord, He will be a shield." That is, your defense.

Now we are told that Satan is casting his fiery darts at the believer. But the fiery darts of Satan are quenched by the shield of defense. It's glorious that the bible talking about those that are born of God, "the wicked one toucheth him not", because the Lord is our defense!

I always like to keep the Lord between me and Satan. I don't like to deal with Satan. I know a lot of people get all excited about dealing with demon possessed people, and dealing with Satan and all. Not me. I, I don't like dealing with the devil at all. In fact I always make sure that I keep the Lord between me and the

devil. I want it that way, I don't want any direct dealings with him at all. I, I feel much safer when the Lord deals with him. As, as even Michael, when they were contending, when he was contending with, with Satan over the body of Moses, he didn't bring any railing accusations against him, he just said, "The Lord rebuke you man! Just the Lord rebuke you!", and he kept the Lord between him and Satan, that's a wise thing to do!

Now, "the word of God is pure", and then he tells us in the next verse...

Don't add unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (30:6).

We read in Deuteronomy, after God had given the law to Moses, He warned against adding to the words of the law. Don't add to what God has said. It is interesting that as John was finishing the book of Revelation, which was the final book of the bible, the complete revelation of God is now given to man. At the end of the book, John says, "If any man adds to the word of this prophecy, to him will be added all of the plagues that are in this book, and if any man takes away from the words of this prophecy, his name will be taken out of the book of life." I mean, that's heavy duty! Don't add to the word of God. God has given to us all that we need. We don't have to add to it. The revelation of God is complete. We don't have to add to God's revelation. There are people that say, "Well I have a new revelation from God", look out! Don't add to the word of God. Don't take away from the word of God. Just seek to understand it.

Now there are a lot of issues that are questions in the minds of people about, "What about God?", and, "Why did God...", and, "What about this?" They are issues in which the bible is silent. So many of the questions we are asked are questions that demand speculation on our part, because you do not have any clear revelation of the scriptures. But I have sought to make it a practice that when the word of God is silent, to remain silent myself. I figure that's safe. When the word of God speaks, then I can speak with authority, because I'm speaking what God has declared in His word. But where the word of God is silent I think, I think that my speculation is just as worthless as anybody else's. I don't like to speculate on the word of God, I don't like to speculate about God. I just seek to understand what God has said. Don't add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.

Now having the introduction, he offers his prayer unto the Lord. He says...

There are two things I desire; and I ask that you not deny them me before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lies: ["God I, I don't want to live in emptiness or in a lie!"] give me neither poverty nor riches; but just the food that's convenient for me (30:7-8):

"So Lord, I don't want to be rich, I don't want to be poor, let me just be somewhere in between.", and he had a reason for asking that. He said...

Lest I be full, and deny thee (30:9),

Now he no doubt observed, as we have observed how that prosperity has ruined many people spiritually. They were serving the Lord, they were doing great, but suddenly they began to increase, they began to prosper, and they soon, being full, got so involved in so many things that they forgot the Lord. Having observed that, he said, "Lord I don't want to be so rich that I forget you, and I say, 'Who is God?'".

nor to I want to be so poor that I'm tempted to steal, and just take the name of God in vain (30:9).

Curse God because of your conditions, because of your misfortunes and all. So, moderation, always a good place to be.

My dad used to have two mottoes that he had on his desk. The one was, "All things". That was to remind him that when things went bad at work, or seemingly bad, "all things work together for good". My father was a salesman, and worked on commission. So around our house, it was often feast, and sometimes it was sort of famine. There were times when he would have a huge real estate deal in escrow. It meant commission of several thousands of dollars. He was involved in the sale of the property to Disney Land, and things of that nature. He would have these big deals, and a lot of times you know, as they were in escrow, you think, "Oh man! It's in escrow!", and you start planning about, "You know, we can go out and get this, and we'll get that, and we'll add to this, and all!", and then it would fall out of escrow. That disappointment, you'd see all of these thousands of dollars just floating away you know. He would look at that little motto, "All things work together for good, to those that love God". It's important that we remind ourselves of that.

He had another motto, and it was, "Lord never bless me beyond my capacity to love you." Sort of like the prayer of Agur here. "Lord, I don't want to be rich and I don't want to be poor. I don't want to be rich so

that I would forget you and say, 'Who is God?', neither do I want to be poor, so that I'd be tempted to steal and take the name of God in vain."

Now he gets into exhortations, in which he exhorts us...

Not to accuse a servant unto his master, lest he curse you, and you be found guilty (30:10).

You have enough to do just to take care of your own welfare, and if you have servants to take care of your own, but don't get involved in another man's servant, accusing him to his master, lest he curse you, and you be found guilty.

And there is a generation [he said] that curses their father, and they do not bless their mother (30:11).

Now in the bible the children are commanded to honour their mother, and their father. This is the first commandment that God gave that had a promise attached to it, "that your days may be long upon the earth". But there's a generation in that time, who cursed their father, did not bless their mother, rebelled against their father and their mother. They're always a heartache to their parents when there comes this schism within the family, the breaking of fellowship.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet they're not washed from their own filthiness (30:12).

So often what we do we can justify. We can rationalize. "I had a right to do it! I had every right to do it! I was right in doing it! Even though it was wrong, I was right!" Generation that was pure in their own eyes.

And there is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up (30:13).

This generation that are so filled with pride, lofty. Then...

And then 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 (30:14).

People who are able to kill you with their tongues. It's a sharp sword, by which they cut people to pieces, and they use it to devour others.

Now the horseleach has two daughters, that are always crying, Give, give (30:15).

The horseleach was a leach that of course, hung upon a horse, and sucked the blood, and was never satisfied. "Two daughters that say, Give, give." So...

There are three things that are never satisfied, yes, in fact there are four that never say, It is enough (30:15):

"I'm satisfied, full." Actually, there's more than four if you want to really take a look at life. But the four things that he mentions, is the eye that mocks, or rather...

The grave: [Is never satisfied, people are always dying, it's never satisfied, there are adding to them every day.] the barren womb; [That desire to have a child, the barren womb.] the earth that is not filled with water (30:16);

It seems like you never get enough rain in, in that desert area over there, nor in southern California. There are some places that have more water than they want. In Las Vegas the last few weeks!

the fire that saith, It is not enough (30:16).

So these things that are always, it seems, not satisfied, cannot say it is enough. Then, he goes on to declare...

The eye that mocketh 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 (30:17).

Sort of yucky, but, when a person was hanged, when they die, the ravens would usually come and pluck out their eyes. That's what he's referring to.

Now there are three things which are too wonderful for me, in fact there are four (30:18),

And he has an interesting way, "there are three, yea, there are four". "Things that are just beyond my understanding, I just don't understand them."

things that I don't know: The way of an eagle in the air; [You can follow an eagle for a little while, but soon he's climbing out of sight, and you can't really follow him.] the way of a serpent upon a rock; [Now you can see the trail of a serpent in the sand, but when he gets on the rock, you, you can't follow the trail.] the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; [To follow after a ship, you know, and you can't see it, there's no way to track it or to trace it.] and the way of a man with a maid. ["A mystery that I don't understand."] Such

is the way of an adulterous woman; she eats, and then wipes her mouth, and says, I have done no wickedness (30:18-20).

So the dangers of becoming ensnared in an adulteress relationship. An adulteress woman.

For there are three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear: [There are four odious things.] A servant when he is reigning (30:21-22);

We've dealt with that before. We mentioned Felix in the new testament, who was a slave, made governor in Judea, and how corrupt he was!

a fool when he is filled with meat; An odious woman when she is married; and a handmaid that is the heir of her mistress (30:22-23).

They, they are, these things disquiet the earth. They, they seem to be always a vexation, a, a problem. A servant when he reigns, a fool when he's filled with meat, an odious woman. She's odious to begin with, when she gets married, you think, "Oh maybe she'll mellow out!", no, she gets worse. Then, the handmaid that is the heir to her mistress.

There are four things on the earth which are little, but they're exceeding wise: The ants, they are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer (30:24-25);

The ant of course is a very common insect, in fact the most populous insect in the world. They're not very strong, that is compared to you. They're very strong in ratio to us. They can carry two or three times their own weight, which you can't do. But, how easy it is to crush an ant. You know, with just your finger you can crush ants. So they're not very strong. Yet they're wise, exceedingly wise, because they prepare their meat in the summer. An ant's brain cannot be very big. Talk about miniaturization!

We've got all the you know, the whole thing in the computer industry is microchips and in TV, and so forth. Putting things in smaller, and smaller little packages, and things that can do more and more in just the small little packages. Think what a small little package the ants brain must be! An ant does have a brain, but it must be awfully small, and yet, as small as it is, it's able to communicate to the other ants.

They are able to work together in cooperative efforts. When an ant finds a piece of bread that's too big for it to carry, it'll get three or four friends, and they'll work together in carrying that chunk of bread off. It's fun to watch the ants, as they evidently communicate with each other, and they say, "Hey man the kitchen's full of crumbs! You know, they left the honey jar open!", and boy, by morning, your kitchen can be covered with ants as they communicate the good news to their friends, and they come to clean out your kitchen! Ha, ha! They prepare their food in the summer.

The wisdom is manifested by the fact that somehow, some way, this little ant realizes that during the summertime it must gather its food, because ants can't swim. Thus they cannot go out and forage for food in the winter. They more or less hibernate in the winter time, because they can't go out. They sort of hibernate within their colonies in the winter. Because the puddles of water, they wouldn't be able to cross, so the time for their gathering of the food is in the summer, and they have enough wisdom to know that. They know that the time is coming that they won't be able to gather their food. So they have enough sense to gather it when the opportunity is there in the summer, and they prepare for the future. That's where the wisdom is manifested.

There are many people that have brains that are larger than an ant's brain, but they don't have as much wisdom as an ant. Because, we know that death is coming. We know that the time that we are able to labor, and work for the Lord is coming, when the end of that time is coming. The Bible exhorts us to work, "for the night cometh when no man can work". The Bible exhorts us to, "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, to make use of the unrighteousness of mammon, so that when we come to the end of the road, we'll be received into the eternal habitations". Yet, there are people so foolish as to make no eternal preparation. Now you can't do that after you die. Once death comes, the opportunity to lay up treasure in heaven, the opportunity to do something for the Lord, is over.

Now the ant exercises, and demonstrates its wisdom, in laying up its food in the summer. Interesting how they do it. The little cut ants, cut the leaves off of trees and plants. Of course during the winter time, the deciduous plants and all, no leaves, and so they can't do that in the wintertime anyhow. Then they gather those leaves, they chew em up and deposit them in one of the rooms of their colony, and that mesh that is

formed, sprouts little mushrooms. They tend their garden, and eat the mushrooms that sprouts from the chewed up leaves.

The other ants, they gather the nectar. They have these little storage ants that hang from the ceiling, and just bloat as the ants deposit all the nectar in them. They blow up like a balloon, until they get so fat they can't even move. They just hang there, and have the nectar all stored for the winter time, then they go and drink out of the mouth of that ant. Let it regurgitate its product for them. They're a little feeble folk, but I'll tell ya, they're wise.

The coney is just a feeble folk, the hyrax (30:26),

No defensive mechanisms, it's a easy prey to the coyote, or the bobcat, the other predators. The coney knows that it can't defend itself against its predators.

and so he makes his home in the rocks (30:26).

Burrows back in the rocks, makes his home in the rocks, demonstrating its wisdom. We know that we are no match for Satan, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. If we were as wise as the coney, we would make our home in the Rock, Christ Jesus. So that the enemy can't get to you, because you're as strong as the rock. I don't need to have a strong defense, I don't need to be able to defend myself. The Lord is my defense, my home is in the Rock, Satan can't get to me. He may, like the coyote, stand at the entrance and bark all he wants, but he can't get to me, because my home is in the Rock.

The locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands (30:27);

The locust conquers by the vast numbers. By itself, a locust is no problem. Easy to kill a locust. They're sort of a stubby grasshopper, and they have a tremendous appetite. They can move through and eat a lot of vegetation. But what they do is they gang up. They come in such vast numbers that they cover the whole land. You can't even see the ground! It looks like the whole earth is just moving as the locusts devour all of the plants, and all of the vegetation. It's by sheer force of numbers that they, that they conquer an area, a territory. They work together, and their wisdom is manifested in, in that use of combined, cooperative effort.

There is, of course, where the weakness of the church is. If the church can ever combine its efforts. If we could quit fighting with ourselves and with each other, if we could lay aside our differences, and just join together in a common cause, we could accomplish so much for the kingdom of God. But Satan has used the old strategy of, divide and conquer, and so he divides the church, and he conquers the world, because the church cannot seem to become united in its effort against him. Too many lone rangers in the church, guys that are out doing their own thing, and not willing to work together. Finally, the gecko, called here...

The spider [But the Hebrew is lizard, or gecko.] takes hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces (30:28).

Each little toe of the gecko has a little pad that has several thousand tiny, tiny little hooks. The gecko can climb right up a pane of glass, holding on. Now that, that to me is amazing, how a gecko can hold onto a pane of glass. He can run upside down on the ceiling. That's always fascinated me seeing a gecko running across the ceiling. You wonder you know, he's holding on with three feet at least, while he's putting the next foot down, But to run across the ceiling is a fascinating thing to observe! But he's able to do so because of all of these little claws. He can hold on with these little claws that are in each pad that is on his toe. And, due to the fact that it can climb up glass, climb up smooth walls, run across the ceiling, the little gecko can invade your house. In Hawaii they do invade the houses, the mansions, king's palaces. The wisdom is manifested by its ability to just hang on.

God has given to us exceeding rich, and precious promises that we need to hold onto. If we hold onto the promises of God, one day, we're gonna dwell in a king's palace. The Lord is gonna say, "Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom", and with David, I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, for God has promised me salvation. I'm gonna hold on to that promise! Don't let go of the promises of God!

There are three things that go well, yes, there are four that are beautiful is they go: The lion which is the strongest among the beasts, and just doesn't turn away from anything (30:30);

Oh to watch a lion going through. It's just a beautiful sight, the grace, the power!

The greyhound (30:31);

Which some have, and in the margin of some of the Bibles, is the horse. To see a horse running, to see a

horse prancing as they go, it's beautiful!

the he goat also; [To see that goat as it's going up the side of the steep cliffs, and you wonder how in the world it can get up that cliff! Then finally,] the king, against who there is no rising up (30:31).

The demeanor, and the all with which the king goes. Final exhortation is...

If you have done foolishly in lifting up yourself, or if you have thought evil, lay your hand upon your mouth (30:32).

The exalting of one's self is always foolish. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." If you've done that, or if you've thought evil, just lay your hand on your mouth. Then...

Surely the churning of milk brings forth butter, the wringing of the nose brings forth blood: and so the forcing of wrath brings forth strife (30:33).

That sort of speaks for itself doesn't it?

Chapter 31

Now, the final chapter are...

The words of king Lemuel (31:1),

Some think that the name Lemuel is Bathsheba's sort of pet name for her son Samuel. Now we have a little grandson whose name is Charles, but his little sister couldn't say Charles when he was born, and so she called him Charlo. And, the name Charlo has sort of stuck with him. It's sort of just a family pet name for him. We call him Charlo, and that's for Charles, which his sister couldn't say. In the family, quite often there is sort of a pet name in the family for one of the members. Don't tell my son that I told you this! Ha, ha! But, Chuck Junior, it was our family pet name, we called him Chuckles. Ha, ha! As he got into high school and all, he didn't appreciate that name anymore, so we sort of dropped it.

But there is that tendency to just sort of have a sort of a little pet, private name, and so there are some commentators that suggest that Lemuel was sort of the pet, private name for Solomon, that his mother Bathsheba had for him. Perhaps, we don't know. But notice again, this is declared to be a prophecy. Thus inspired of God. Both chapters thirty, and thirty one are declared to be prophecies, thus, inspired.

the prophecy that his mother taught him (31:1).

So king Lemuel, is sharing some of the lessons taught to him by his mother. Now if this indeed is Solomon, it is interesting in that in the earlier part of the proverbs, we have many proverbs that were taught to him by his father. His father David instructed him in many things. So many of the earlier proverbs were addressed to, "my son", as David, as he talks about his father's instructing him. If this then, and it would only be fair that he would include instructions that he received from his mother. Because both mothers, and fathers have a great input into a child's training. The mother has of course, the early influence upon the child. Some of the earliest influence and training of a child comes from the mother. But the training of a child should be a cooperative effort always of the mother, and the father. Thus it would only be appropriate that he would include some of the things that his mother taught him as he was growing up.

What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? [It's sort of the idea is, "What shall I say to you son? What are you doing the son of my youth?"] and what are you doing the son of my vows (31:2)?

Now, so often it was the custom of that day for women to desire to have a son. Boys were a prize, highly prized. In fact when a woman was in labor, the whole neighborhood would gather at her house waiting for the child to be born. The local band would be there, the caterer would be there, waiting for the child to be born, so they could have a party. And, when the child was born, if the midwife would come out and say, "It's a boy!", then the party would start, the band would start, and they'd have a big time! If it was a girl, they'd fold up their tents and go home. What a shame! So having a son was so important in that culture, that if your wife could not bear a son, if she only could bear girls, then you could divorce her, find one that could give you a son.

Now this happened even recently in Jordan, the king, his first wife couldn't give him a son, had a couple daughters. So, got rid of her, and got a wife that could give him a son. It was accepted. Common practice. The boys were so important.

Now for that reason, the girls would pray, "Oh Lord, please give me a son!", and quite often they would

make a vow to God, “Lord if you’ll just give me a son, then I’ll do this, and I’ll do that...”, and all. They would make these vows to God.

You remember the story of Hannah, in the book of Samuel, who was there in the temple praying, “Lord if you will just give me a son, I will give him back to you all the days of his life!”. She was making this vow to the Lord, because she was so desperate to have a son. So it was not at all uncommon for mothers, or young ladies to pray that God might give them a son, to carry on the family name, the family honor. So she calls him, “the son of her vows”, no doubt, having made certain vows to God, if God would just bless her with a son.

Now, her instruction to him.

Don’t give your strength to strange women, [“Don’t get involved in sexual affairs with strange women, stay away from that.”] *nor thy ways to that which destroys kings* (31:3).

The Bible tells us that, “An adulterous woman can bring a man to a crust of bread.” So many leaders have been destroyed because of adulteress women. Mother is properly warning her son. Now his dad warned him about these things, going back, basically his dad was warning him constantly about these, these gals that are out there to just hook a guy. So the mother gives the same kind of warning.

It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes to drink strong drink (31:4):

It is interesting that in the new testament, as Paul gives the requirements for the bishops in the church, those men who are to oversee the affairs of the church, Paul tells us that they are not to be given to wine. It’s not for kings, it’s not for those who are in a position of leadership, spiritual leadership. The reason being...

Lest they drink, and forget the law, [They forsake the law.] *and they pervert the judgment of any of those that are afflicted* (31:5).

I think that our nation would be in a much better condition, if we had some kind of prohibition that applied to those who were in congress, and in the senate, and all. I, I’m afraid that many of the decisions are coming from too much time with the lobbyist in the bar. I think that it is a rather tragic statistic that Washington D.C. has the greatest percentage of alcoholic consumption, per person, of any city in the United States. When I read of some of the laws that they are making, I can understand it.

Speaking of that, this week they are going to, or supposed to be voting on their funding of the national endowment for the arts. Pray about this. A hundred and seventy five million dollars! Now, we’re talking about budget shortages, we’re talking about raising taxes, we’re talking about balanced budgets and so forth. Then we’re talking about a hundred and seventy five million dollars to endow the artists of the nation. When you read some of the works of so-called art, that are being endowed by the government, which is you, because it’s your taxes they’re gonna raise to pay for these things!

When you read of some of the things that they are painting, and some of the works of art that they are creating, they are so blasphemous, and they are so perverted that I could not speak of them here in a mixed audience. And yet we, are gonna be being taxed higher, because they need a hundred and seventy five million dollars to produce a lot of this junk. I think that if they endow the arts, that they definitely need to put restrictions. I’m not afraid of censorship on absolute rotten pornography. I think it should be censored. I think that when our forefathers framed the first amendment they weren’t thinking about the freedom of a person to utter every fowl, filthy thing that they had in their polluted minds, and hearts. I think that’s a total perversion.

Let’s also pray that the Lord will guide Bush in the selection of the new supreme court judge. I’m so thrilled that Brennan is out of there! We’ve been praying for a long time for the supreme court, and it’s exciting to see God move those senile old men off the bench! Who don’t have enough sense to know what obscenity is! Maybe we’ll get some with a little sense, and they will know what obscenity actually is!

So your mind, you see, alcohol destroys brain cells, and that’s one of the problems with I think, some of these people. They’ve drunk too much, and their brain cells have been destroyed. So they pervert the judgment of those that are afflicted.

Give strong drink to those that are ready to perish, [I mean, put them out of their misery, you know, if they’re, if they’re dying and they’re suffering, give them a shot to get em out of their misery.] *but wine to*

those who are of heavy heart, let them drink so that they can forget their poverty, and not remember their misery (31:6-7).

Now I think that, that's poor advice. Too many people have done that, and their condition only gets worse! You know, they, they drink to forget their problems, and the drinking only compounds their problems. Surely not for kings!

Open thy mouth for the dumb in his cause and of all that are appointed to destruction. ["Speak up for those who are the underdogs, speak up for those that are the oppressed."] Open your mouth, and judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and the needy (31:8-9).

Because you know that you'll be cooperating with God, who is interested in the poor and needy.

Now in the beginning, she warns him about the strange women, but now she tells him the kind of a woman he should look for, but how hard she is to find.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies (31:10).

I gave Kay, on our anniversary, a couple of years ago, a ruby ring as a symbol of the virtuous woman that God has given to me. Also gave them to my daughters, and even to my little granddaughter. I love giving rubies to my girls, as a symbol of the virtuous women that they are. Her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband can safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. [She's trustworthy.] She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life (31:11-12).

Now it tells of her industry. She shops at Target.

She seeks wool, flax, works willingly with her hands. She is like the merchant's ships; she brings her food from afar. [She shops for bargains, and goes around to gather her food.] She rises also while it is yet night, and gives meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. [She looks over the affairs of the, the family, she's very industrious, she's also very wise.] She considers a field, and buys it: and with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She girds her loins with strength, and strengthens her arms. [She's a strong woman, plants her own vineyard, buys the field.] And she perceives that her merchandise is good: [She looks for good merchandise, good bargains in merchandise.] and her candle goes not out by night (31:13-18).

Boy! Her price is above rubies, I mean, and she is rare! She gets up before it's dark, and she stays up late at night, she works all day in the field, and shopping for bargains, and the whole thing! Besides raising the kids!

When we go to Israel, it's rather amusing as we go past the fields, and we see the ladies out tilling the fields. We see the ladies out taking care of the sheep. We see the ladies out working hard, carrying these big bundles of sticks for their fires, they're carrying bundles of food for the house and all, and you see the ladies working so hard! You say, "Where are the men?" Well the men are back at the tent drinking coffee, talking about the affairs of the world. Important things, they're solving a lot of problems. But those women have been liberated. Talk about women's lib! They're free to work in the fields, to move the tents when they want to change positions, to take care of the sheep, to cook the meals, and to get the beds, kids tucked into bed at night. Sometimes our men become envious of the Bedouin culture.

We went down to Beersheba, where they have sort of a flea market, and even to the present day down there, they say that on sort of a black market, you can still buy a wife. So when we went down there, a couple of us fellows went in, and looked around a flea market, and we bribed a couple of Arab women to come back to the bus with us, and we told them, "We got a real good bargain on these gals! They're really hard workers, they have good teeth, and..." Kay didn't buy it!

Well, she's not through yet!

She lays her hand to the spindle, her hands hold the distaff. [I mean she weaves her clothes, her cloth and so forth.] She stretches out her hand to the poor; oh yes, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. She's not afraid of the snow: for she has clothed her household with scarlet. She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband he's known in the gates, [I mean, he can stand in the gates all day long, and talk with the fellows!] he sits among the elders of the land (31:19-23).

Oh man! You've come a long way baby!

She makes fine linen, and sells it; and delivers girdles to the merchant. Strength and honour are her

clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. Then she opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looks well to the ways of her household, and she doesn't eat the bread of idleness. [No coffee klatches.] Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all (31:24-29).

Now the final word, and of course I guess you go back to the beginning. "Who can find a virtuous woman?" That's a good question! One that would do all of those things, I doubt if you could find today. But I think that really the, the crown of a virtuous woman is when her children rise up and call her blessed, and when her husband praises her. We're talking about cultural things in all of these, but there are other marks of virtue today. Characteristics that are to be sought for in a wife, in a woman.

Favour is deceitful, [Flattery it's deceitful.] beauty is vain (31:30):

There's an old Swedish proverb, "Good looks don't last, good cooking does!" Beauty is vain. I feel sorry for a person who has made beauty their big thing in life. They just can't stand growing older. I mean it just really is devastating to them. It takes longer, and longer for them to be beautiful. It, it's just so devastating for them. But it's vain. The true beauty isn't the outward beauty. The true beauty is of the heart, and that, that only increases with the years. So Peter exhorts the women not to be interested, or to prat themselves on the outward beauty, the adornment of jewelry, and garments and so forth. But seek for that inner beauty of the heart, because that's what lasts, and that's what becomes more valuable all the time. Beauty is vain.

but a woman that fears the Lord, [Walks with the Lord, walks in fellowship with God.] she shall be praised. [Therein is the true beauty!] Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates (31:30-31).

So an interesting observation of life, and of the virtuous woman.

Next week we start the book of Ecclesiastes, man's wisdom, and Solomon in his quest for meaning in life.