**Proverbs 29-31**

**29**Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes
    will suddenly be destroyed - without remedy.

**2**When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice;
    when the wicked rule, the people groan.

**3**A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,
    but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.

**4**By justice a king gives a country stability,
    but those who are greedy for bribes tear it down.

**5**Those who flatter their neighbors
    are spreading nets for their feet.

**6**Evildoers are snared by their own sin,
    but the righteous shout for joy and are glad.

**7**The righteous care about justice for the poor,
    but the wicked have no such concern.

**8**Mockers stir up a city,
    but the wise turn away anger.

**9**If a wise person goes to court with a fool,
    the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.

**10**The bloodthirsty hate a person of integrity
    and seek to kill the upright.

**11**Fools give full vent to their rage,
    but the wise bring calm in the end.

**12**If a ruler listens to lies,
    all his officials become wicked.

**13**The poor and the oppressor have this in common:
    The Lord gives sight to the eyes of both.

**14**If a king judges the poor with fairness,
    his throne will be established forever.

**15**A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom,
    but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.

**16**When the wicked thrive, so does sin,
    but the righteous will see their downfall.

**17**Discipline your children, and they will give you peace;
    they will bring you the delights you desire.

**18**Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint;
    but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction.

**19**Servants cannot be corrected by mere words;
    though they understand, they will not respond.

**20**Do you see someone who speaks in haste?
    There is more hope for a fool than for them.

**21**A servant pampered from youth
    will turn out to be insolent.

**22**An angry person stirs up conflict,
    and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.

**23**Pride brings a person low,
    but the lowly in spirit gain honor.

**24**The accomplices of thieves are their own enemies;
    they are put under oath and dare not testify.

**25**Fear of man will prove to be a snare,
    but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.

**26**Many seek an audience with a ruler,
    but it is from the Lord that one gets justice.

**27**The righteous detest the dishonest;
    the wicked detest the upright.

Sayings of Agur

**30**The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh - an inspired utterance.

This man’s utterance to Ithiel:

“I am weary, God, but I can prevail.
**2**Surely I am only a brute, not a man;
    I do not have human understanding.
**3**I have not learned wisdom,
    nor have I attained to the knowledge of the Holy One.
**4**Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
    Whose hands have gathered up the wind?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?
    Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what is the name of his son?
    Surely you know!

**5**“Every word of God is flawless;
    he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
**6**Do not add to his words,
    or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

**7**“Two things I ask of you, Lord;
    do not refuse me before I die:
**8**Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
    give me neither poverty nor riches,
    but give me only my daily bread.
**9**Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you
    and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’
Or I may become poor and steal,
    and so dishonor the name of my God.

**10**“Do not slander a servant to their master,
    or they will curse you, and you will pay for it.

**11**“There are those who curse their fathers
    and do not bless their mothers;
**12**those who are pure in their own eyes
    and yet are not cleansed of their filth;
**13**those whose eyes are ever so haughty,
    whose glances are so disdainful;
**14**those whose teeth are swords
    and whose jaws are set with knives
to devour the poor from the earth
    and the needy from among mankind.

**15**“The leech has two daughters.
    ‘Give! Give!’ they cry.

“There are three things that are never satisfied,
    four that never say, ‘Enough!’:
**16**the grave, the barren womb,
    land, which is never satisfied with water,
    and fire, which never says, ‘Enough!’

**17**“The eye that mocks a father,
    that scorns an aged mother,
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley,
    will be eaten by the vultures.

**18**“There are three things that are too amazing 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 on the high seas,
    and the way of a man with a young woman.

**20**“This is the way of an adulterous woman:
    She eats and wipes her mouth
    and says, ‘I’ve done nothing wrong.’

**21**“Under three things the earth trembles,
    under four it cannot bear up:
**22**a servant who becomes king,
    a godless fool who gets plenty to eat,
**23**a contemptible woman who gets married,
    and a servant who displaces her mistress.

**24**“Four things on earth are small,
    yet they are extremely wise:
**25**Ants are creatures of little strength,
    yet they store up their food in the summer;
**26**hyraxes are creatures of little power,
    yet they make their home in the crags;
**27**locusts have no king,
    yet they advance together in ranks;
**28**a lizard can be caught with the hand,
    yet it is found in kings’ palaces.

**29**“There are three things that are stately in their stride,
    four that move with stately bearing:
**30**a lion, mighty among beasts,
    who retreats before nothing;
**31**a strutting rooster, a he-goat,
    and a king secure against revolt.

**32**“If you play the fool and exalt yourself,
    or if you plan evil,
    clap your hand over your mouth!
**33**For as churning cream produces butter,
    and as twisting the nose produces blood,
    so stirring up anger produces strife.”

Sayings of King Lemuel

**31**The sayings of King Lemuel - an inspired utterance his mother taught him.

**2**Listen, my son! Listen, son of my womb!
    Listen, my son, the answer to my prayers!
**3**Do not spend your strength on women,
    your vigor on those who ruin kings.

**4**It is not for kings, Lemuel -
    it is not for kings to drink wine,
    not for rulers to crave beer,
**5**lest they drink and forget what has been decreed,
    and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.
**6**Let beer be for those who are perishing,
    wine for those who are in anguish!
**7**Let them drink and forget their poverty
    and remember their misery no more.

**8**Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
    for the rights of all who are destitute.
**9**Speak up and judge fairly;
    defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character

**10**A wife of noble character who can find?
    She is worth far more than rubies.
**11**Her husband has full confidence in her
    and lacks nothing of value.
**12**She brings him good, not harm,
    all the days of her life.
**13**She selects wool and flax
    and works with eager hands.
**14**She is like the merchant ships,
    bringing her food from afar.
**15**She gets up while it is still night;
    she provides food for her family
    and portions for her female servants.
**16**She considers a field and buys it;
    out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
**17**She sets about her work vigorously;
    her arms are strong for her tasks.
**18**She sees that her trading is profitable,
    and her lamp does not go out at night.
**19**In her hand she holds the distaff
    and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
**20**She opens her arms to the poor
    and extends her hands to the needy.
**21**When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
    for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
**22**She makes coverings for her bed;
    she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
**23**Her husband is respected at the city gate,
    where he takes his seat among 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 dignity;
    she can laugh at the days to come.
**26**She speaks with wisdom,
    and faithful instruction is on her tongue.
**27**She watches over the affairs of her household
    and does not eat the bread of idleness.
**28**Her children arise and call her blessed;
    her husband also, and he praises her:
**29**“Many women do noble things,
    but you surpass them all.”
**30**Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
    but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
**31**Honor her for all that her hands have done,
    and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.