**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.