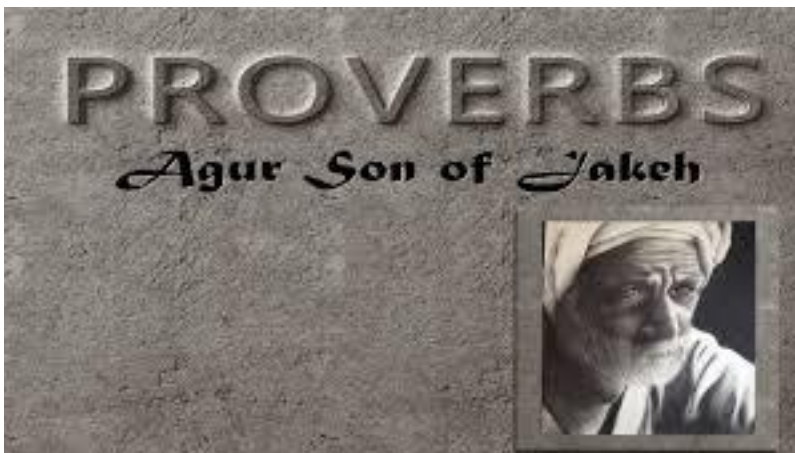


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The Sayings of Agur 30: 1-33



As Jay Payleitner relates in his book *The Prayer of Agur*: Are you, like me, caught in the middle? Being pulled in two directions? Some days, we want more. More opportunities. More responsibilities. And, yes, more stuff. Other days, we want less. Fewer distractions. Fewer responsibilities. Less stuff to take care of and worry about. We're either energized or exhausted. Confident or reluctant. Spiritually in tune or entertaining doubts. Allow me to introduce you to **Agur**. **He's** the guy inspired by **ADONAI** to unscramble this exact mystery. **Agur's** common sense approach to life and **his** strangely amusing chapter near the end of **Proverbs** reveal how to get in the center of **God's** will. And that's a wonderful place to be. Especially in today's turbulent culture. Join me as we consider living in **God's sweet spot**. Finding a balance between too much and too little. Inviting **Him** to simply love us where we are. And knowing we can trust **Him** to provide exactly what we need.

Allow me to introduce a man I am quite confident will be a new friend, colleague, and favorite author. **His** name is **Agur**. **His** identity is unknown. **He's** smart, funny, and quite perceptive. **He** loves **ADONAI**. **He's** streetwise in a good way, and **he's** not afraid to speak **his** mind. **Agur's** prayer is the *only* prayer in **Proverbs**. But **Agur** realizes there is much **he** doesn't know. Yet **he** asks good questions. **He** will

occasionally interrupt **himself** right in the middle of a stream of thoughtful teaching to deliver a seemingly random, but enlightening, truth we all need to hear. **His** sayings make for quite and wild ride.

Somehow, **Agur's** sayings made their way into **the book of Proverbs**. You have to give **him** credit for that. Three millennia ago there were quite a few authors filling papyrus scrolls with inspired reflections. Being included in the TaNaKh alongside kings, prophets, and other spiritual giants is quite the accomplishment. Bible scholars agree that **Solomon** personally wrote or compiled **Chapters 1** through **29** of **Proverbs**. But how and why the last two chapters were tacked on at the end is a bit of a mystery. No one disputes their relevance of authenticity, but very little is known about the authors.

We know that **Lemu'el**, the author of **Chapter 31**, was **a king** who received **wise** teaching from **his mother**. **King Lemuel's** celebrated description in **verses 10-31** of **a wife of noble character** has helped keep that last chapter of **Proverbs** in the limelight. Even less is known about **Agur**, author of **Chapter 30**. **He was the son of Jakeh (30:1)**, another obscure reference, and **he** may have been from northern Arabia. That's all the history we have. I suspect most of us have never thought much about **him**, **his** reputation, or **his** single puzzling appearance in the Bible. Actually, that's not unusual. There are a few historical characters who show up for a single scene or have only the briefest mention in Scripture but still leave a memorable impression. So let's look at three of them.

First, there's **Simeon**, the aging **prophet** who met **Mary** and **Joseph** in the Court of the Women (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click [Au - Jesus Presented in the Temple](#)**), soon after the fortieth day following **His** birth. **The Ruach Ha'Kodesh** had promised **Simeon** he would not die before seeing **the Messiah**. Taking **the infant** in **his** arms, **the old man** prophesied that **Yeshua** would be **a light to the world, causing the fall and rise of many people**. **His** memorable account takes up a mere **eleven verses** in **Luke 2**.

Secondly, the name **Jochebed** is mentioned only twice overtly - both times in long genealogies (**Exodus 6:20** and **Numbers 26:59**), and once subtly in **Exodus** (see the commentary on **Exodus [Ak - A Man of the House of Levi Married a Levite Woman](#)**). But we could make the case that **her** actions *launched* biblical history. **The mother** of three heroes of faith - Moses, Aaron, and Miriam - **Jochebed** had the foresight and courage to send the three-month-old Moses floating down the Nile in a papyrus basket to rescue him from the Egyptian death squads. We may not

remember **her** name, but **she** should be revered as a beacon of hope for anyone living under oppression and for mothers who love their children enough to let them go.

A third unforgettable biblical character mentioned ever so briefly is the repentant thief on the cross. On that history-making Friday in **Golgotha** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ [Ls](#) - Then They Brought Jesus to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull**), one criminal hurled abusive taunts at **Yeshua**, but the other recognized the divinity of **Messiah** and confessed **his** own brokenness (see **The Life of Christ [Lu](#) - Jesus' First Three Hours on the Cross: The Wrath of Man: The Conversion of One of the Criminals**). We don't know **his** name, but that **thief's** insight at the triple crucifixion brings hope to those who come to **Messiah** late in **their** life, even in **their** final moments. In addition, **Yeshua's** promise to **the thief: Truly, I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise (Luke 23:43)**, suggests there is no lag time between our time on earth and our entrance into heaven. That's good to know.

It's also good to know that modest lives like yours and mine can still make an impact. Can you identify with **a guy** who was moved to tears when he held a new baby, **a mother** who saw a great leader when **she** looked at **her** infant **son**, or **someone** whose eyes were opened upon meeting **Yeshua** for the first time? Like **Agur**, these were real people. **Simeon, Jochebed**, and **the thief on the cross**, were simply living **their** lives.

Therefore, I appreciate that **Agur's** sayings, all **thirty-three verses** of **Proverbs 30**, made the cut. Since this chapter is included; then clearly, the Bible would be incomplete without it! Which means we have a responsibility to spend time reflecting on how **Agur's** sayings apply to our lives. What's more, **his** voice and his message desperately need to be heard today by anyone who longs for a friend and a dose of reality.

In this chapter, and especially in his prayer, **Agur** admits **he** doesn't have all the answers and asks for help. **He** confesses that falsehoods occasionally flow from **his** mouth. **He** can't always discern between the truth and lies **he** hears from others. **He** knows **he** needs a certain amount of money to live, but **he** doesn't want too much or too little. In other words, **he** wanted to find **God's sweet spot** in life (see **[Du - The Prayer of Agur](#)**).

The idea that **a prophet** and contributor to the Bible lives with a bit of angst and

uncertainty should be a comfort. In this life, it's okay if we don't have all the answers. **ADONAI** welcomes our doubts and questions. Our **Lord** said: **Whoever comes to Me I will never cast out (John 6:37)**, and: **Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)**. Like us, **Agur** has all kinds of questions and makes several quirky observations. That's why **Proverbs 30** is so engaging. **Agur** is the real deal, flaws and all. The Bible is filled with people who make mistakes, then turn to **God** and find answers, then still attempt to do life under their own power. Thankfully, **God's** mercy, grace, and discipline override their failures and ours. So bring your doubts, questions, fears, and suspicions. **God** is big enough to handle them. You won't hurt **His** feelings; **He** already knows them anyway.⁵⁴⁹

The difference of style, language and content in this chapter, as compared with the rest of Proverbs, is too striking to escape notice. That it is an addition is evident from the heading, but equally so from the author's mode of thought and expression. The feeling created is that the reader is transported to a later age than Solomon's, when the life of the nation had matured and inquiring minds were exercised with mysteries and problems of human existence. The questions in the prologue are reminiscent of passages in the book of Job.