

- sy 8 Those who increase their wealth through interest and surcharges <sup>1</sup>  
 amass it for someone who is kind to the poor  
*(or, some one else will get the use of it to help the poor).*
- sy 9 Anyone who refuses to be attentive to the Law ---  
 even the prayers of those persons are an abomination.
- t 10 Those who tempt the upright into evil ways  
 will fall into a pit that they themselves have made. <sup>2</sup>  
 but those who are honest will prosper.
- a 11 A rich person has high self-esteem,  
 but a poor person with understanding sees through him. <sup>3</sup>
- a 12 When the righteous are powerful, there is great  
 celebration *(or, pageantry).*  
 but when the wicked prevail people hide themselves.
- a 13 Whoever hides *(or, conceals)* <sup>4</sup> evil deeds will not prosper,  
 but whoever confesses and forsakes evil will obtain mercy.
- a 14 Oh the happiness of those who always revere <sup>5</sup> the Lord,  
 but those who are stubborn will end up in trouble.
- sy 15 Like a roaring lion or an attacking bear,  
 so is a wicked ruler over helpless people.
- sy 16 *[A ruler]* <sup>6</sup> who lacks good sense is very oppressive; <sup>7</sup>  
 but whoever hates loot *(or, unjust gain)* will enjoy long life.
- t 17 One who is guilty of murder ---  
 let that person be a fugitive until death;  
 let no one be of help. <sup>8</sup>  
*[Teach (your) child and you will be loved,  
 and your child will give honor to your soul,  
 do not hearken to a lawless nation.]*

---

1 Literally: "interest and interest."

2 The pit referred to here is a trap that has been dug to capture an animal.

3 Literally: "examines him."

4 Literally: "covers up."

5 The Hebrew word *dsxp* is only used here and in Isaiah 51:13. The word differs from the usual word for "reverence" "awe" or "fear" for it's concept is to be fearful in the sense of being cautious. LXX: "the fear of reverence."

6 In Hebrew poetry this word, not found elsewhere in Proverbs, overloads the syllable count. It may have been added to give an explanation of who "who" is.

7 The Hebrew Old Testament Text Project suggests "multiplies extortion."

8 Hebrew uncertain. The italicized lines are found in the LXX.

- a 18 Whoever lives blamelessly (*or, honestly*) will be safe,  
but whoever has evil ways <sup>9</sup> will fall into a trap. <sup>10</sup>
- a 19 Whoever cultivates his own land will have plenty of bread,  
but whoever follows idle pursuits will have an abundance of  
poverty.
- a 20 A person who can be trusted will have an abundance of blessing,  
but whoever wants to get rich quickly <sup>11</sup> will not go unpunished.
- s 21 To show partiality (*or, prejudice*) is wrong;  
but a person will do wrong for a piece of bread.
- sy 22 A miser is in a hurry to get rich,  
but never realizes poverty will overtake him.
- sy 23 Correct someone and later <sup>12</sup> you will find more favor  
than someone who speaks flatteringly. <sup>13</sup>
- t 24 Whoever robs one's parents <sup>14</sup>  
and says, "That is no crime,"  
becomes a companion of vandals.
- a 25 A selfish (*or, greedy*) <sup>15</sup> person stirs up strife,  
but those who trust in the Lord will prosper.
- a 26 To trust in your own wisdom is foolish,  
but to live by wisdom provides escape.
- a 27 Give to the poor and you will never be needy,  
but ignore those in need and you will often be crushed.
- a 28 When the wicked are powerful, people go into hiding,  
but when they perish, the righteous take control.

<CHAPTER 29>

- sy 1 Those who are often rebuked yet remain stubborn  
will suddenly be damaged beyond repair. <sup>16</sup>

9 The Hebrew form is "dual." Thus it literally says: "two evil ways."

10 So: Syriac. Hebrew: "fall all at once" or "into one."

11 LXX, Syriac & Targums add "wicked" since it is deemed that haste in obtaining riches is not of itself a bad thing.

12 "later" is omitted in Syriac manuscripts.

13 Hebrew unclear. The syllable count of line A is overloaded and thus does not fit the poetry.

14 Literally: "father and mother."

15 Literally: "to be wide of throat."

16 Literally: "a man of rebukes who hardens his neck will suddenly be broken and no healing." This verse begins with the first

- a 2 When the righteous are in power,<sup>17</sup> the people rejoice;  
but when a scoundrel (*or, the wicked person*) rules, the people groan.
- a 3 Whoever loves wisdom brings gladness to parents,  
but those who patronize prostitutes squander their wealth.
- a 4 By ruling justly a king gives stability to the country,  
but one who seeks bribes (*or, imposes heavy taxes*)<sup>18</sup> ruins the nation.
- sy 5 Whoever flatters<sup>19</sup> a neighbor  
spreads a net for his feet.<sup>20</sup>
- a 6 People become trapped by their own transgressions,  
but the righteous sing<sup>21</sup> and rejoice.
- a 7 The righteous are concerned about the rights of the poor;  
but the scoundrel does not understand such knowledge.<sup>22</sup>
- a 8 The arrogant (*or, scoffers*) inflame<sup>23</sup> a city,  
but the wise allay wrath.
- sy 9 If the wise have an argument (*or, debate*) with  
(*or, go to court against*) a fool,  
the fool will only rant and scoff<sup>24</sup> and there is no relief.
- sy 10 Murderers detest the blameless,  
but the life of the upright is sought.<sup>25</sup>
- a 11 The fool gives full vent to rage,  
but the wise quietly show restraint.<sup>26</sup>
- sy 12 If a ruler listens to falsehood,  
all the officials will be wicked.<sup>27</sup>
- sy 13 The poor and the oppressed have one thing in common:

---

letter of the Hebrew alphabet: *א* Cf. foot note 45, page 72.

17 Literally: "in the increasing of the righteous."

18 Literally: "demands contributions."

19 The Hebrew word includes the thought of deception.

20 It would be possible grammatically to say, "for his neighbor's feet."

21 Or: if emended: "run, rejoicing."

22 Literally: "a wicked man does not understand knowledge." In the LXX: the reference is considered to relate to travel.

23 The Hebrew word depicts someone blowing over hot coals to produce a flame.

24 I. e. makes light of the situation.

25 Hebrew unclear. So emended

26 Literally: "and the wise man afterward (?) stills it."

27 Literally: "a ruler listens to falsehood, all his appeals will be wicked."

the Lord gives life<sup>28</sup> to the eyes of both.

- sy 14 If a king judges the poor with honesty  
his throne will be established forever.
- a 15 Correction and discipline<sup>29</sup> produce wisdom,  
but a neglected<sup>30</sup> child brings disgrace to it's mother.
- sy 16 When the wicked are in power, transgressions increase;  
but the righteous will look upon their downfall.<sup>31</sup>
- s 17 Discipline your children, and they will give you rest;  
and they will also give delight to (*or, gratify*) your life.
- a 18 Where there is no vision (*or, authority*)<sup>32</sup> the people lose restraint,  
but happy are those who keep the law.<sup>33</sup>
- sy 19 Servants can not be disciplined by mere words,  
for though they understand, they will not respond.<sup>34</sup>
- sy 20 Do you see someone who talks hastily?  
There is more hope for a fool than for that person.<sup>35</sup>
- sy 21 A pampered slave, pampered from childhood,  
will come to a bad end.<sup>36</sup>  
*[He who lives luxuriously from childhood, will be a servant,  
and finally will be grieved over himself.]*<sup>37</sup>
- s 22 Angry people stir up disputes,  
and those given to a short temper cause much transgression.
- a 23 A persons pride<sup>38</sup> will bring humiliation.  
but one who is humble<sup>39</sup> will obtain honor.
- sy 24 To be an accessory to the crime of a thief, you are your own enemy;

---

28 Literally: "luster," or "light."

29 Literally: "rod and reproof."

30 Literally: "sent away."

31 Some scholars feel the Hebrew word for "will look them up" connotes "to look with triumph" or "to gloat."

32 A possible reading.

33 The LXX translated the Hebrew word with: εζήγητης "guide" or "interpreter."

34 Literally: "there is no answer."

35 Haste impairs the sequence of perception, reflection and repose.

36 The Hebrew in Colon B is difficult.

37 This verse is found in LXX in place of the Hebrew thought found in verse 21.

38 Literally: "swelling up, rising."

39 Literally: "lowly in spirit."

for upon hearing the victim's curse you dare not disclose anything.<sup>40</sup>

- a 25 The fears of people<sup>41</sup> become their trap  
but those who trust in the Lord are secure.<sup>42</sup>
- a 26 Many seek the favor of a ruler,<sup>43</sup>  
but it is from the Lord that one receives justice.
- a 27 The unjust are an abomination<sup>44</sup> to the righteous,  
but the upright are an abomination to the wicked.<sup>45</sup>

<CHAPTER 30>

<The Words of Agur><sup>46</sup>

1 The words of Agur, son of Jaker, an oracle.<sup>47</sup>

Thus says the man (*or, the oracle of the man*):

I am weary, O God,

I, myself, am weary, O God.

How can I prevail? (*or, I am exhausted.*)<sup>48</sup>

2 Surely I am too brutish<sup>49</sup> to be human,

I have not the common sense (*or, intelligence*) of a human.<sup>50</sup>

3 I have not learned wisdom,<sup>51</sup>

nor do I possess the knowledge of the Holy One.<sup>52</sup>

4 Has anyone ascended to heaven and come back down?

Has anyone caught hold of the wind in the hollow of his hand?

Has anyone wrapped up the sea in a garment?

Has anyone determined all the extremities of the earth?

What is that person's name, and what is the name of that person's son?

---

40 Hebrew uncertain

41 The Hebrew word implies craven fear.

42 Literally: "shall be set on high."

43 Literally: "face of a ruler."

44 The Hebrew word is used 22 times in Proverbs and signifies unacceptable temple rituals, objects or actions which are an abomination to God.

45 The two lines of this verse begin with the letter tau *z* the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Cf. foot note 16, page 69.

46 Scholars are divided as to how many verses are to be attributed to Agur. Some scholars attribute verses 1-14, others 1-5 leaving the remaining verses to an unknown author. The LXX divides the chapter into two sections: 1 - 14; 15 - 33 which are moved to follow 24:23-34. The Hebrew text is surely damaged, thus making it difficult to translate. Many scholars feel chapters 30 and 31 are possibly additions or appendices to the book.

47 Some read: "of Massa."

48 Revocalized it could read with Syriac and the Targums: "The message (*or, oracle*) of Ithiel; to Ithiel and Ucah." A difficult verse. Some scholars translate: "I am weary, O God, I am exhausted" or "I am too weary to hold it in. I am exhausted." or "I am not God, I am not God, that I should perish." The LXX reads: "Fear my words son, and receiving them, repent. These things says the man to those who believe God; and I cease."

49 A rare Hebrew word meaning "brutish" or "inhuman."

50 Such self-abasement is also found in the Qumran Thanksgiving Hymn 11:24-25.

51 LXX: "God gave me wisdom." Syriac, Targums and Vulgate: "God did not give me wisdom."

52 Grammatically it could be read: "Holy Ones."

Surely you know!<sup>53</sup>  
 5 Every promise of God proves to be true (*or, is pure*);  
 for God is a shield to those who also seek refuge in him.  
 \* \* \* \*

6 Do not add anything to his words,  
 or else he will indict you, and you are proven to be a liar.

7 Two things I ask of you,  
 provide them within my lifetime!

8 Distance me from falsehood and lying;  
 give me neither poverty nor wealth;  
 grant me sufficient<sup>54</sup> food for my needs.

9 If I have too much<sup>55</sup> I might deny you,  
 and say, "Who is the Lord?" (*or, "I do not need you."*)  
 or if I became impoverished I might steal,<sup>56</sup>  
 and disgrace<sup>57</sup> the name of my God.

10 Do not slander<sup>58</sup> a servant (*or, slave*) to the master,  
 lest that servant (*or, slave*) curse you, and you incur guilt.

<Collections of more wise sayings>

11 There are those who curse their fathers,  
 and do not bless their mothers.

12 There are those who look upon themselves as being pure,  
 but are not even cleansed of their filth.

13 There are those --- what haughtiness they possess,  
 how overbearing are their glances.

14 There are those whose teeth are swords,  
 whose jaws<sup>59</sup> are knives,  
 to exploit the poor, ridding them from the earth,  
 the needy from the human race.

<Numerical sayings><sup>60</sup>

15 The leech<sup>61</sup> has two daughters;  
 both are named "Give me."<sup>62</sup>  
 \* \* \* \*

Three things are never satisfied;

---

53 Omitted by LXX Codices Aleph and A.

54 Literally: "my prescribed portion."

55 Literally: "I be full."

56 The reference in the Hebrew word is repeated or habitual activity.

57 Hebrew uncertain.

58 The Hebrew word has the concept of "to gossip about."

59 The Hebrew word for "teeth" in A differs from the word in B, hence the translation "jaws" though one translator uses "molars." The exact meaning of the word in line B is unclear.

60 This is a rhetorical device to give a sense that the things named are not necessarily the only ones to fit the description.

61 Hebrew uncertain.

62 An obscure text.

- four never say, "Enough":
- 16 Sheol (*or, death*), the barren womb (*or, the barren woman*),<sup>63</sup>  
the earth that is always thirsty for water,  
and the fire which never says, "Enough."<sup>64</sup>
- 17 If you make fun by mocking your father,  
and disdain your aged mother, treating her with contempt,<sup>65</sup>  
your eyes will be pecked out by the ravens in the valley,  
and scavenged by vultures (*or, eaglets*).
- 18 Three things are beyond my comprehension;  
four that I do not understand:
- 19 How an eagle flies in the sky,  
how a serpent glides across a rock,  
how a ship is able to sail on the high sea,<sup>66</sup>  
and the way of a man with a girl.  
\* \* \* \*
- 20 This is how an adulteress acts:  
she eats, and wipes her mouth,<sup>67</sup>  
and says, "I have done no wrong."
- 21 There are three things in the earth that are unbearable  
(*or, that cause the earth to tremble*);  
four that cannot be tolerated:
- 22 a slave who becomes king,  
and a fool when he is gorged with food,<sup>68</sup>  
a loathsome<sup>69</sup> woman who gets married,  
and a slave girl who supplants (*or, takes the place of*) her mistress.
- 24 Four creatures on earth are smallest,  
yet they are exceedingly wise:<sup>70</sup>
- 25 ants as a species, are not strong,  
yet during the summer they store up food for themselves,  
26 the rock badgers<sup>71</sup> are a species without might,  
yet they make their homes among the rocks;

---

63 Possibly: "a woman's desire."

64 Hebrew obscure. Perhaps "wealth" or "sufficiency."

65 The words "aged" and "treating her with contempt" are found in the LXX.

66 Literally: "the heart of the sea."

67 These are figures of speech describing a sexual act. In the Talmud "to eat" can mean "to have sex with" and "mouth" refers to the vulva. This verse apparently seems to be attached to verses 18 & 19 making a fifth item beyond comprehension. The nonchalance of the woman rather than her cunning is beyond comprehension.

68 The hidden reference is no doubt the feeling of virtue.

69 Literally: "hated." Commentators are divided in their understanding. Some consider the woman to be an aged spinster, others a divorced woman.

70 Literally: "wise, they are made wise."

71 The species Hyrax Syriacus, a small, hare-like mammal.

27 the locusts: they have no king,  
yet all of them march in formation,<sup>72</sup>  
28 and lizards:<sup>73</sup> you can grasp them in your hand,  
yet they are found in kings' palaces.

29 Three things are stately in their stride;  
four are stately in their gait:  
30 the lion, which is the mightiest among the wild beasts,<sup>74</sup>  
and does not retreat before anyone;  
31 the strutting rooster,<sup>75</sup> the he goat, [*who leads the flock*].<sup>76</sup>  
and a king striding as he leads his army (*or, addresses his people*).

32 If you have been foolish enough to be arrogant,  
or if you have been scheming to do evil,  
keep silence (*or, don't say anything*).<sup>77</sup>  
33 for, just as churned milk produces butter (*or, curds, ghee*).  
and wrenching the nose produces blood,  
so stirring up anger produces strife (*or, there will be fighting*).<sup>78</sup>

<CHAPTER 31>

<The Teachings Received by Lemuel from His Mother>

sy 1 The sayings of King Lemuel,<sup>79</sup> an oracle,<sup>80</sup>  
by which his mother admonished him.

s 2 No my son! No my son to whom I gave birth!  
No, my son for whom I prayed (*or, my son, the answer to my prayers!*)  
(*or, My child, I gave birth to you and I love you,*  
*I asked God and he gave you to me.*)

s 3 Do not devote your energies to women,  
your vigor (*or, money*) to those who have destroyed kings.<sup>81</sup>

t 4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel,<sup>82</sup>  
it is not for kings to get drunk

72 Literally: "dividing."

73 A house lizard or gecko according the LXX, Syriac, Vulgate and some Targums. The Hebrew word is simply "lizard." Two Targums, Z and W use the Hebrew word for "spider."

74 Literally: "the mighty one among beasts."

75 Hebrew obscure, possibly a corrupted text. Another possibility is "greyhounds." "Rooster" is supported by LXX, Syriac, Targums and with a similar word in the Vulgate.

76 Added by LXX.

77 Literally: "put your hand on your mouth."

78 In Hebrew all three stichs have a play on the word "pressing" translated "to churn," "to wrench" and "to stir up." The reference with respect to milk may be the vigorous wringing of a large skin bottle of milk, suspended from a tripod, to produce a form of butter or ghee.

79 The name "Lemuel" is not found in the LXX.

80 With other vowels it could read: "of Massa."

81 "Vigor" and "kings" are uncertain in Hebrew. The reference apparently is to courtesans.

82 "O Lemuel" is possibly a dittography.

(*or, kings should not make a habit of drinking*),  
nor should they crave becoming intoxicated,<sup>83</sup>

s 5 or else they drink and forget about what has been ordained as their duty,  
and violate the rights of the afflicted.<sup>84</sup>

s 6 Give strong drink to someone who is dying,<sup>85</sup>  
and wine to those who are in great anguish (*or, who are embittered*).

s 7 Let them drink and forget their poverty,  
and no longer remember their misery.<sup>86</sup>

s 8 Speak up on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves,  
for the rights of all are left destitute.<sup>87</sup>

sy 9 Speak up for them and give righteous judgment,  
champion (*or, defend*) the rights of the poor and wretched.

*<Praises for a Good Wife>*  
*<or, An Encomium of the Capable Wife>*<sup>88</sup>

*a*

sy 10 What a rare find is a good wife.<sup>89</sup>  
She is worth far more than jewels.<sup>90</sup>

*f*

sy 11 Her husband has complete confidence in her,  
and because of her he never lacks anything.

*g*

sy 12 Through out her lifetime  
she is good to him and never harmful.

*d*

sy 13 She looks for (*or, selects*) wool and flax,<sup>91</sup>  
and makes cloth with eager hands.<sup>92</sup>

*h*

s 14 She is like a merchant fleet,  
bringing her food from afar.

---

83 Hebrew unclear. Many emendations have been suggested but none is popularly accepted.

84 The LXX makes all verbs plural while Hebrew has singular verbs.

85 Presumably someone in bodily pain.

86 Cf. foot note 84, above.

87 Hebrew: "are sons of passing over."

88 An acrostic. The "good wife" is presented here, the "contentious wife" having been referred to in 19:13; 21:9; 25:24; 27:15. Other non-complementary comments about women are found in chapters 1 - 9; 22:14; 23:27; 27:13; 29:3; 31:3.

This is the most complementary passage in Hebrew Scriptures concerning women. In the LXX this section is separated by five chapters from verses 1-9 due to a different order of verses in the LXX after Chapter 25.

89 The Hebrew concept seems to be one of being a woman of ability.

90 Literally: "Her value is far beyond pearls (or, coral).

91 The implication is that she raises the flax and shears the sheep herself.

92 Literally: "in the delight of her hands" i.e. "whatever her hand chooses."

*w*

t 15 She rises before dawn  
to supply food <sup>93</sup> for her household  
and tasks for her servant girls. <sup>94</sup>

*z*

sy 16 She carefully inspects a field and purchases it;  
She plants a vineyard with her own hands  
(*or, out of her own earnings*). <sup>95</sup>

*x*

s 17 She gathers up her skirt and sleeves for serious work, <sup>96</sup>  
and performs her tasks with vigor. <sup>97</sup>

*j*

sy 18 She perceives <sup>98</sup> that her business is thriving,  
and she works late into the night.

*y*

s 19 She puts her hand to the material side of life, <sup>99</sup>  
and her fingers work the spindle.

*k*

s 20 She is generous to the poor,  
and stretches out her hands to the wretched.

*f*

sy 21 She is not concerned for her household because of snow,  
for all her household is closed in double layers (*or, garments*). <sup>100</sup>

*m*

sy 22 She, herself, makes coverings (*or, quilts*),  
and her clothing is of fine linen and purple.

*n*

sy 23 Her husband is a prominent citizen at the city gates, <sup>101</sup>  
taking a seat among the elders of the land.

*s*

s 24 She makes linen garments <sup>102</sup> and sells them;  
and supplies the merchants <sup>103</sup> with sashes.

93 @*ij* = prey. Some translate: "a portion."

94 This line is not in the LXX.

95 If this is to be taken literally the position of the woman has an unusually high status in the economic world of the time.

96 Literally: "She gathers her loins and sleeves with strength."

97 Hebrew uncertain.

98 Literally: "tastes."

99 Hebrew uncertain. Apparently "distaff." S. R. Driver suggests "mending."

100 The LXX reads "double" as do several Hebrew MSS, Syriac and Vulgate. "double layers" is recommended by the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project. The traditional translation is "scarlet" implying costly garments.

101 Cf. Ruth 4:1 ff.

102 Possibly a large cloak worn over a dress or used at night.

103 Literally: Canaanites."

/

sy 25 She is strong and dignified  
*(or, The clothing she makes is sturdy and in good taste),*<sup>104</sup>  
and she looks cheerfully toward the future.

p

s 26 She speaks with wisdom,  
and her words always teach with kindness *(or, in a loving manner)*.

c

sy 27 She oversees the activities of her household,  
and is always busy.<sup>105</sup>

q

sy 28 Her children<sup>106</sup> rise up and call her blessed *(or, happy),*<sup>107</sup>  
her husband also praises her.

r

sy 29 "Many women have done excellently *(or, virtuously)*  
but you are superior to them all."

X

sy 30 Charm is deceptive and beauty disappears,  
but a woman<sup>108</sup> who reveres *(or, honors)* the Lord should be praised.

t

sy 31 "Exalt her for the results of her labor,  
and let her labors be recognized by everyone."

---

104 Hebrew unclear.

105 Literally: "does not eat the bread of idleness."

106 Literally: "sons."

107 i. e. show appreciation.

108 LXX: "an intelligent woman."