

## [ Ucal ]

## :: proverbs 30.1-6 ::

Proverbs 30, verse 1. Our one-verse-wonder is found at the end of this verse:

**Proverbs 30.1 - The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to lthiel - to lthiel and Ucal.**

We know that David's son, Solomon, wrote the Proverbs. In his writings he often referred to himself using other names or descriptions. Scholars will point out that Agur, which means 'gathered' or 'received' is a name Solomon is using for himself.

Now, the other names, scholars are split on. Jakeh means 'obedience', lthiel means 'God has arrived' and Ucal means 'to devour.'

So, some scholars say that all 4 names are being used for Solomon, others indicate that the names lthiel and Ucal refer to 2 of his students or disciples.

I tend to take that position. That Solomon, calling himself Agur, declared the following statements to 2 students: lthiel and Ucal.

We should always try to place ourselves into the Bible. We do this often in different ways. One of the more famous examples is to take 1 Corinthians 13, the 'love' chapter, and put your name in place of the word *love* in order to see how we're living up to the lifestyle that God wants for us.

Reading about Bible characters gives us another simple way we can evaluate our lives personally, but placing ourselves in the verses to see how we measure up to the people of the text.

Especially in a passage like this one, where there's very little background, almost no context and not much specific information, it's very easy to take this and apply it directly to ourselves so that we can prepare our hearts to hear a message from God, not just read some words on a page.

**Proverbs 30.1 - The words of Solomon, this man declared to Geno, to Geno and you guys.**

So what did he declare to us?

**Proverbs 30.2-3 - Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have knowledge of the Holy One.**

This is a strange and interesting statement from Solomon, who the Bible tells us is the wisest man to ever live. Even by human standards, no one has come close to his accomplishments or credentials or brilliance.

So how can he who built the Temple of the Lord say that he has no knowledge of the Holy One?

We find the answer by remembering what God said to Job in chapters 38-40 of his book.

**Job 38.3-4 - Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.**

The idea is not that Job or Solomon don't know anything about the Lord. The point is that they are not the **source** of that knowledge. God must reveal Himself to us, and reveal wisdom to us. We cannot create wisdom ourselves, we only hear from God and then share that wisdom with others.

Many teachers in the Emergent Church movement take a different approach. They would agree with Solomon's statement, that we don't have knowledge of God and that we really *can't ever* know Him.

That's not what God said to Job and it isn't what Solomon is saying to us. Instead, the point is that we are devoid of understanding, but God, by His grace, comes and reveals Himself to us, reveals wisdom and truth to us, gives us life and breath and the ability to think and to reason. He is the Author of knowledge and wisdom and understanding.

This is exactly what Solomon says next:

**Proverbs 30.4 - Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?**

Obviously Solomon knows *something* about God. He knows that He is a creator, He knows that He is a personal God who has a name and he knows that God has a Son.

But he only knows that through **revelation**. That knowledge has been shared with us by God by His word.

**Proverbs 30.5 - Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.**

Why are we laboring over this point?

Because God has given us the whole counsel of His word for each aspect of our lives. His revelation, His word, His wisdom is pure and it is a shield for us if we are willing to trust in Him and apply His will to the whole of our life.

We have no problem believing that God exists and that He has a Son named Jesus and that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, 3 days later He rose again, sitting at the right hand of the Father. That's all been revealed to us and we get it. We lock into that.

But so often, I know that I fail to apply other parts of God's revelation to my decisions or my attitudes or my opinions or my activities.

Yes, *THIS* revelation over here is powerful and life-changing and necessary, but often times I take some other parts of God's word and find myself thinking, "well that *might* work, but it might not, so it doesn't really matter if I do that to the T. God **MIGHT** have some wisdom for my marriage or my parenting or my finances or my job or my hobbies, but most of what I read about those things probably doesn't apply to me for the following reasons..."

It's human nature. Something each of us are prone to. I know I am.

And in response to that tendency we have to receive some parts of God's revelation and ignore others, Solomon said this:

*(Remember, we've put ourselves in the place of Ucal, his student, and in his lecture to us he says:)*

**Proverbs 30.6 - Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.**

So here in these verses we get a very comprehensive lesson on how we are to view the Scriptures, the word of God.

First, we understand that God's word is the source for our understanding and wisdom. Wisdom being the application of knowledge.

Second, we understand that within ourselves is nothing that supersedes God's revelation or His principles.

Third, we recognize God's word as pure and inerrant, a shield and protection for our lives and a tool that we use in order to accomplish God's will.

Fourth, we remove any addition or subtraction that we or others might try to put in the Bible, which perverts the wisdom God has revealed to us.

So where does our man Ucal fit in?

Remember that his name means *to devour*.

As students of the Lord, as disciples, we feed upon God's word.

Man shall not live on bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Paul compared the Bible and Biblical teaching to milk and meat.

The Psalmist said that the word of God is sweeter than honey.

If we want to measure up to the example of Ucal, then we must be men who *devour* God's word.

Can you remember seeing someone really devour their food?

This past weekend, Alex Nava and I were in Salt Lake City. At one point we came across a couple of homeless guys and we brought them over to a local hamburger place where Alex bought them lunch. We shared the Gospel with them and one of those men, his name is Nate, accepted the Lord.

But when the food came, man, they **devoured** that food. They were hungry. Nate hadn't eaten in quite a while. It was interesting to me because that's not something I usually see every day, someone devouring their food like that.

In fact, my daily experience is very different.

I'm a picky eater and it's a drag. I don't want to be a picky eater. I really don't. But I am. It's a bummer for me, it's a bummer for anyone who is hosting me for a meal, it was a bummer (I'm sure) for my poor parents who were trying to make sure I was being nourished properly as I grew up.

No one likes a picky eater.

But if we're not careful, that's how we feed on the word of God.

We take certain parts as absolute essential revelation that we cannot live without, but other parts we say, "well, maybe. Maybe that's true. Maybe that matters. Maybe that works. I've got my own idea about relationships. I've got my own idea about compassion. I've got my own idea about service. I've got my own idea about these things over here and my wisdom/God's wisdom...it's all the same."

Solomon very simply and very passionately explains to us that every word of God is pure and we have nothing wise within ourselves. The world has nothing wise within it. The only wisdom and shield we have is found in God's word, which He has revealed to us so that we can know the one who created the world and so we can have a life abundant in His will.

A. W. Tozer spoke on this topic of God revealing His wisdom. He said:

*"An intelligent, plain man, untaught in the truths of Christianity, [could come upon John 1 verse 1] and would likely conclude that John meant to teach that it is the nature of God to speak, to communicate His thoughts to others. And he would be right.*

*...God is forever seeking to speak Himself out to His creation. The whole Bible supports the idea. God is speaking. Not God spoke, but **God is speaking**. He is by His nature continuously articulate. He fills the world with His speaking voice.*

So today, as we go out, let's make the Scriptures of prime importance. Let's grab our Bibles and read a verse or two and devour them, so that these words can be nourishing and powerful to our lives. Let's remember that our God is offering us wisdom so that we can live Spirit-led lives instead of flesh-led lives. God is speaking. Let us listen.