

Proverbs, Lecture 18: Proverbs 30:15-16 and 18-20

Author: Dr. Knut Heim | **Session** 18

Sponsored by Biblicalelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Keywords

Proverbs 30, Knut Heim, Agur, Greed, Humility, Modesty, Leech, Tracelessness, Adultery, Fidelity

Abstract

In this lecture on Proverbs 30:15-16 and 18-20, Dr. Knut Heim examines Agur's poetic reflections on human greed and moral modesty using humor and biting sarcasm. The first sequence compares insatiable ambition to a leech and other unquenchable phenomena, illustrating the necessity of humble reliance on God for contentment. The second sequence explores four mysterious things that leave no trace—an eagle, a snake, a ship, and illicit intercourse—warning against the illusion that secret wrongdoing or infidelity goes without accountability.

Outline

I. Introduction to Lecture 18

- A. Context within Agur's reflections in Proverbs 30
 - 1. Following the opening prayer sequence in chapter 30
 - 2. Focus on key themes of humility and modesty
- B. Purpose of the lecture
 - 1. Highlighting two specific poetic verse sequences (Prov 30:15-16, 18-20)
 - 2. Demonstrating vivid, lively, and evocative poetic techniques

II. The Problem of Insatiable Human Greed (Proverbs 30:15-16)

- A. Imagery of the leech and unquenchable phenomena
 - 1. The leech crying "Give, give"
 - 2. Four things never satisfied: Sheol, barren womb, thirsty earth, unquenchable fire
- B. Rhetorical device and moral application
 - 1. Biting sarcasm and irony opposing selfish ambition
 - 2. Metaphors for insatiable human greed and desire ("More, more, more")
 - 3. Contrast with Agur's prayer for humble contentment and reliance on God

III. The Delusion of Traceless Sin and Infidelity (Proverbs 30:18-20)

- A. Four incomprehensible path-based phenomena (vv. 18-19)
 - 1. The way of an eagle in the sky (leaves no visible trace)
 - 2. The way of a snake on a rock (formidable stealth leaving no trail)
 - 3. The way of a ship on the high seas (waves close up instantly)

4. The way of a man with a girl (progression of secret sexual intercourse)

B. Connection to the adulteress (v. 20)

1. Essential link between vv. 18-19 and v. 20

2. Imagery of "eating" and "wiping her mouth" to claim no wrongdoing

3. False illusion that secret illicit behavior will not be discovered or held accountable

C. Theological and ethical exhortation

1. Warning against infidelity and marital deceit

2. Call for sexual modesty and trust in God for true, right partnership

IV. Conclusion

A. Summary of Agur's core teaching on contentment and modesty

B. Final encouragement to abandon deceit and depend upon God