

## I. THE EXPOSURE OF PRETENDED WISDOM (30:1–3) – A WARNING IN THE FORM OF SELF-SPEECH

### A. 30:1 – THE ENIGMATIC SPEAKER AND HIS HEARERS

- **Introduction of “Agur the son of Jakeh”**
  - Some take this at face value: a man named Agur, son of Jakeh, about whom we know nothing else.
    - Fair enough. But that raises the obvious question: *If he's unknown, why is his work preserved in the royal archives of Solomon's Proverbs?*
  - A better explanation—rooted in both the **literary style of wisdom literature** and **rabbinical tradition**—is that this is **Solomon writing under a pseudonym**.
    - Hebrew culture, especially in reflective or poetic texts, often used **meaningful names as literary devices** (*Koheleth, Lemuel, Nabal*, etc.).
    - This is a well-established rabbinic view, and perhaps the most common among Jewish interpretations of Proverbs 30.
      - For example, the **Jerusalem Targum** and various **Midrashim** interpret Agur as Solomon.
    - This view was also **well-attested in early Christianity**.
      - **Jerome's Latin Vulgate** (4th century) reflects the Jewish identification of Agur with Solomon: it renders Proverbs 30:1 as
 

*“Verba Congregantis filii Vomentis, visio quam locutus est vir...”*

—literally, *“The words of the Collector (congregantis), son of the One Who Vomits (vomentis), the vision which the man spoke...”*
  - This shows that by Jerome's time, the **Solomonic identity of Agur was assumed**, at least in learned circles, and the **chapter was considered part of Solomon's corpus**.
  - If “Agur” is a pseudonym, then it deserves to be translated, not just transliterated.
    - *Agur* likely means “gatherer”—a collector, especially of sayings.
    - **JAKEH** is more difficult. It can be rendered “spitter” or “the one who vomits.”
      - Could it be Solomon is saying: *“I'm the collector of wisdom... and I spit it out”?*
      - That is: *I'm the man who gathered proverbs for the court, now I'm coughing them up with a sense of fear for the future.*
    - If so, it's not a confession of ignorance—it's a literary performance of warning. A father giving his son one last shot to listen before it all comes undone.
- Spoken to Ithiel and Ucal—names meaning “God is with me” and “I am able,” which may serve as ironic epithets for Rehoboam.
  - If these are symbolic of Rehoboam's mindset, then the proverb is a prophetic caution against presumptuous kingship.
  - The traits warned against throughout the chapter mirror Rehoboam's later failure: arrogance, rashness, gullibility, and injustice.

### B. 30:2-3 A PROPHETIC MIRROR FOR REHOBOAM

- Note: most take these as a confession of King Solomon himself, and not without some merit, namely in the pronouns. However, could it be that Solomon is not giving a confession but rather a prophetic portrayal, in first-person, of the future words of Rehoboam?

- If that's the case, then vv. 2–3 becomes a **portrait of the fool-king Rehoboam would become**, clothed in poetic irony. It's not Solomon saying, “*I am a beast*,” but rather, “*This is what you look like when you wear the crown without wisdom.*”
- Taking this view makes vv. 2-3 match the prophetic demands of the description of Agur's words as “prophecy.”
- There are examples of this kind of prophetic “mock confession” in the Hebrew prophets:
  - “*We have no king, for we feared not the LORD*” (**Hosea 10:3**).
  - “*I am rich, I have found me out substance*” (**Hosea 12:8**).
  - “*I shall not sit as a widow...*” (**Isaiah 47:8**) – God's parody of Babylon's self-confidence.
- Rehoboam is the immediate audience (whether directly or through epithets like Ithiel/Ucal). So Solomon's “confession” in vv. 2–3 likely serves as a **warning disguised as self-deprecation**.
  - Solomon is not really calling himself a brute or unwise. Rather, he saying: “This is where you're headed, my son, if you don't humble yourself. You will be brutish. You will lack understanding. You will not know the holy.”
  - Compare to Rehoboam:
    - He rejected the counsel of the wise.
    - He ruled like a brute—threatening the people with scorpions.
    - He split the kingdom within days.
    - He forsook the Torah that Solomon had laid out so carefully.

## II. THE SUPREMACY OF GOD'S WISDOM (30:4) – A RIDDLE AND A REBUKE

### A. 30:4 – A BARRAGE OF QUESTIONS TO BRING DOWN A KING

- Five rhetorical questions that confront the arrogance of man—and especially of a young king.
  1. “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?”
  2. “Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?”
  3. “Who hath bound the waters in a garment?”
  4. “Who hath established all the ends of the earth?”
  5. “What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?”
- The questions echo Job and Deuteronomy, pointing to **God's incomprehensible wisdom and sovereign power**.
- They also function as a **rebuke to royal pretension**:
  - Rehoboam cannot govern what he cannot comprehend.
  - He is being subtly reminded: You are not God. You are not even close.
- The final question—“What is his name, and what is his son's name?”—places Rehoboam under covenantal scrutiny:
  - Do you bear the name of God's son in the Davidic line?
  - Do you resemble the kind of son God delights in (cf. Psalm 2, 2 Sam 7:14)?
  - Rehoboam will fail this test—he will not know the name, nor act like the son.

### B. ALTERNATE VIEW: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

- Many Christian commentators take Proverbs 30:4 as a **veiled reference to Christ**, especially:
  - “*Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?*” → Seen as prefiguring **John 3:13**, where Jesus says, “*No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man...*”
  - “*What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?*” → Often read as a **hidden Trinitarian hint**, pointing to Jesus as the divine Son.
- **Problems with This Interpretation:**

- **Anachronistic:** It imposes later theological categories on a text whose immediate context is Torah-based rebuke, not messianic prophecy.
- **Contextually jarring:** The verse flows out of a lament over human ignorance (vv. 2–3) and leads into a celebration of God's flawless word (v. 5)—not into a messianic hope.
- **Disrupts genre and tone:** The proverb functions like Job's speeches—NOT as predictive oracle but as a rhetorical humbling of human pride.
- **Misses the audience:** This is Solomon (as Agur) speaking to Rehoboam, not Isaiah announcing a Davidic deliverer. It's covenantal father-to-son discourse, not eschatological vision.

In short: The Christological view imports theology that the text isn't offering.

It might sound profound in hindsight, but it **misses the thunderclap** of the original point:

**“You are not God. You're barely even wise. Start there.”**