

# Proverbs 30:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:

## Analysis

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**There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise.** Agur's final numerical proverb celebrates small creatures exhibiting extraordinary wisdom. Qetanim (קֶטֶנים, little/small) yet chakamim m'chukamim (חֲכָמִים מְחֻקָּמִים, wise, exceedingly wise). This proverb counters cultural assumptions equating size/power with significance. God often works through small, weak, despised things to accomplish His purposes (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

The phrase "exceeding wise" intensifies the superlative. These creatures display sekel (wisdom, prudence) beyond what their size suggests. The proverb teaches observational wisdom: study creation to learn spiritual principles. Romans 1:20 declares God's "eternal power and Godhead" are "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Job 12:7-8 commands: "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee." Nature reveals wisdom to those who observe carefully. The following verses (25-28) detail four examples: ants, conies, locusts, spider.

## Historical Context

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Ancient wisdom literature frequently drew moral lessons from nature. Egyptian wisdom texts used animal behavior for instruction. Jesus employed natural observation: lilies, birds, fig trees, wheat and tares (Matthew 6:26-30, 13:24-30). The medieval bestiary tradition continued this approach, though sometimes allegorizing excessively. Modern culture, disconnected from agricultural life,

struggles with these metaphors. Yet the principle remains: creation reveals Creator; natural wisdom points to supernatural Wisdom. Paul uses it (1 Corinthians 9:9 citing Deuteronomy 25:4); so does Proverbs repeatedly (6:6-8, ants; 30:25-28, these four creatures). Observing God's design in nature cultivates humility, wonder, and practical wisdom.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What can you learn from observing nature carefully—seeing God's wisdom in design, providence, and natural order?
2. How does God's pattern of using small, weak things to accomplish great purposes encourage you when feeling inadequate or insignificant?
3. In what ways does modern disconnection from nature hinder spiritual formation, and how might you recover attentiveness to creation's wisdom?

## Interlinear Text

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רְאֵבֶת	עָה	בְּ	אֶת	כָּלִילִים	עַל	הָרִזְעָן	בְּ	מְהֻמָּם	וְ	יְמִינָה	בְּ	מְנֻמָּד
<b>There be four</b>	H1992		<b>things which are little</b>	H6996		<b>upon the earth</b>	H776		H1992		<b>wise</b>	H2450

רְאֵבֶת עָה בְּ אֶת כָּלִילִים עַל הָרִזְעָן בְּ מְהֻמָּם וְ יְמִינָה בְּ מְנֻמָּד  
but they are exceeding  
H2449

