

The Lizard or Spider God's Teachers

We have investigated three of the four creatures mentioned in Proverbs 30:24-28. The industrious ants, the agile shephanim, and the military-like locusts. Now we will look at the fourth. *"The lizard you may grasp with the hands, Yet it is in kings' palaces"* (Proverbs 30:28).

From The Pulpit Commentary, "The ancient expositors see in these verses a presentation of the Church of God, weak on its human side and despised by men, yet exceeding wise." We add to that the strength and power given by their creator. Paul provided a similar description of the Christian in the world with these words. *"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God"* (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

The word used for this creature only occurs one time in scripture, so comparison with other context is not possible. The following quotes from two popular translations show the two possible ways to translate the three Hebrew words in this passage.

- NKJV *"The **spider skillfully grasps with its hands**, And it is in kings' palaces."*
- ESV *"The **lizard you can take in your hands**, yet it is in kings' palaces."*

From two dictionaries: *śemāmfyṯh* – Brown-Driver-Briggs Definition: - "a kind of lizard." And from Strong's Hebrew Dictionary - "Probably a sense of *poisoning*; a *lizard* (from the superstition of its *noxiousness*); spider."

The arguments for either a gecko that has a toxin in its footpads and a poisonous spider cannot be resolved with only three Hebrew words in the clause. Most probable, it is a type of Gecko that catches spiders and flies with its toxic front footpads. Although detested in many societies, the Gecko creeps into homes and bedrooms of the most powerful and influential people.

The important lesson is that the small, insignificant creature uses its abilities to gain status when everything seems to oppose it. It has the agility to maneuver around obstacles placed in its way. It achieves an advantage by placing itself in a superior position to attack an enemy or catch its food. It watches for those that would prey upon it and can run, jump, or otherwise illude them. This creature has three qualities that we should all possess: purpose, patience, and courage. Purpose, to carry the gospel to all who need it and reach the goal of a crown of victory in heaven. Patience, to wait for opportunity. And courage to stand firm in the face of the enemy.

Purpose - Looking at the people that built the Tower of Babble, the Lord commented on the determination the people demonstrated. *"Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now **nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them**"* (Genesis 11:6). With a definite purpose, the earliest people determined to accomplish their objective without consideration of the dangers. God's people today must be committed to reaching the goal of eternal life. Paul was very determined when he wrote, *"One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, **I press on toward the goal** for*

the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). What are we willing to do to reach the goal?

Patience – We tend to want things to happen and get what we want now. But God's little creatures have the patience to wait for the right time to slip through a door, pounce on prey, or escape from danger. Solomon said, "**Patience of spirit is better than haughtiness of spirit**" (Ecclesiastes 7:8). The prophet, speaking of God's help to his servant said, "*He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who **wait for the LORD** Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary*" (Isaiah 40:29-31). Paul tells Timothy and Christians today, "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, **with great patience and instruction**" (2 Timothy 4:2).

Courage – There are many small creatures in nature that display unusual courage based upon the abilities God gave them. Nature programs show small animals standing up to and harassing snakes until the snakes go away. A tiny hummingbird will defend its territory against much larger birds. We read of David, who took **courage** because of God's promise (1 Chronicles 17:25). Later Hezekiah found **courage**, in the face of the Assyrian threat, to strengthen the defenses (2 Chronicles 32:5). And Jesus encourages His disciples and us today. "*These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, **but take courage; I have overcome the world***" (John 16:33).