

“The Analysis of the Ant”
Proverbs 6:6, 30:25

Introduction: Solomon had much to say about the ant in the book of Proverbs.

1. The Approach to the Ants: for the Sluggard Proverbs 6:6- “*Go to the ant, thou sluggard...*”
2. The Analysis of the Ants: for the Student Proverbs 6:6- “*...consider her ways, and be wise*”
3. The Ability of the Ants: for the Skilful Proverbs 30:24- “*There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise*”
4. The Accord of the Ants: for the Servants Proverbs 30:25- “*The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer*”

Body: The ant can apply to the church as seen in the phrase “consider her ways”.

I. The Outreach of the Ant

A. The Analysis

1. Today they [ants] are found everywhere—from the Arctic to the tropics, from damp forests to deserts, from seashore to the timberline of mountains, from under city pavements to the pantries of suburban kitchens. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
2. Ants occur worldwide but are especially common in hot climates. (Encyclopedia Britannica, pg. 437)

B. The Application

1. Mark 16:15- “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*”
2. Matthew 28:19- “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*”

II. The Body Structure of the Ant

A. The Outside Skeleton

1. The Analysis

- a. An ant’s small body does not suggest great durability. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
- b. However, it is encased in chitin, a tough, rigid substance, forming an “outside skeleton”. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)

2. The Application

- a. Ephesians 6:11- “*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*”
- b. Ephesians 6:13- “*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*”

B. The Trinity of the Ant

1. The Analysis

- a. Its body has three distinct parts: head, thorax, and abdomen. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
- b. Typically, an ant has a large head and a slender, oval abdomen joined to the thorax, or midsection, by a small waist. (Encyclopedia Britannica, pg. 437)

2. The Application

- a. I Thessalonians 5:23- *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”*
- b. Hebrews 4:12- *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”*

C. The Discernment of the Ant

1. The Analysis

- a. The head contains a brain, which is sometimes no more than a fraction of a millimeter in size, and supports long, flexible antennae. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
- b. The antennae are so efficient as sense organs that eyes are not of great importance. In certain species, the workers either are blind or have only enough sight to distinguish light from darkness. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
- c. If any of them are broken, the ant’s ability to take part in colony activities is greatly reduced. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 22)
- d. An ant cleans her antennae regularly and often with a brushlike structure located on each front leg. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 22)

2. The Application

- a. II Corinthians 5:7- *“(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)”*
- b. I John 4:1- *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”*

III. The Colonies of the Ants

A. The Social Life of the Ant

1. The Analysis

- a. There is great variety in the activities of different kinds of ants... [However] every kind of ant is social. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
- b. All ants are social in habit; i.e., they live together in organized colonies, and they range in size from 2 to about 25 millimeters (about 0.08 to 1 inch). (Encyclopedia Britannica, pg. 437)

2. The Application

- a. Hebrews 10:25- *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”*
- b. Acts 2:46- *“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”*
- c. Acts 20:7- *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight”*

B. The Workers

1. The Analysis

- a. There are generally three classes of ants: queens, males, and workers. (Encyclopedia Britannica, pg. 437)
- b. There may be several kinds of workers, such as supersoldiers, pigmy soldiers, and “nurse” workers. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
- c. A soldier often devotes itself exclusively to defending the colony. One kind, which lives in plant stems, thrusts its head against the nest’s entrance to keep out intruders. Soldiers usually do not take part in gathering food... (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)

2. The Application

- a. I Corinthians 12:4-6- *“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”*
- b. I Corinthians 12:27-29- *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?”*

IV. Establishing a New Colony

A. Establishing a New Location

1. The Analysis

- a. A new colony of the species *Lasius niger* is established in the spring when young winged females, the queens, and males fly out of their old home. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 19)
- b. This great exodus is a means of dispersal and is also a marriage flight, for mating takes place in the air. The ants drift or fly to a scattered number of landing places. (Encyclopedia Americana, pgs. 19-20)

2. The Application

- a. Acts 1:8- *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”*
- b. II Corinthians 10:16- *“To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.”*

B. The Abiding of the New Location

1. The Analysis

- a. The young queen’s first task is to remove her wings. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)
- b. She chews off her own wings, which she will never need again, because she has finished her only mating flight. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 487)
- c. The wingless queen examines the area in which she has landed until she finds a suitable location for a nest. Then she begins to excavate in the earth with her mandibles. When she has dug a small burrow, she shuts herself into it, completely closing the opening, and begins a lonely exile from the active world. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)

2. The Application

- a. I Corinthians 15:58- *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*
- b. James 4:4- *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*

C. The Development of the New Location

1. When her first eggs are laid, the queen does a surprising thing—she eats them. This gives her strength for the new work that soon will be necessary. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)
2. Other eggs are produced that are not eaten, and before long these develop into worm-like larvae. They are active, growing insects that must be fed promptly and often, and the young queen feeds them with her saliva. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)
 - a. Acts 20:28- *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”*
 - b. I Peter 5:2- *“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind”*
3. As a result, a few of the brood grow very quickly. As they grow, they periodically burst their skins and shed them. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)

- a. Ephesians 4:22- *“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”*
 - b. Colossians 3:9- *“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds”*
4. When they have reached almost full growth, each larva spins a cocoon about itself and enters a pupal stage. Now it needs no food or special care. For several weeks, it remains inside the cocoon, metamorphosing into an adult. As the young ants are ready to emerge from their cocoons, the queen mother helps them break free by biting at their wrappings. Then she cleans and feeds them. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)
 5. Some queens of army ants lay 30,000 eggs every few weeks. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 487) [The queen’s main obligation is reproduction.]

V. Expanding the New Colony

A. The Work at the Colony

1. The Analysis

- a. Once there is a working group, the colony becomes thoroughly organized; and from this point on the colony develops rapidly. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)
- b. The queen no longer has to carry all the responsibilities; and her sole activity is egg laying. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)

2. The Application

- a. II Timothy 2:2- *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*
- b. Titus 1:5- *“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee”*

B. The Care at the Colony

1. The Analysis

- a. The life cycle of the ant has four stages—egg, larva, pupa, and adult—and spans a period of 8 to 10 weeks. (Encyclopedia Britannica, pg. 437)
 - (1) II Peter 3:18- *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”*
- b. After the larvae reach their pupal stage, the workers are concerned with providing proper temperatures for them. During the heat of the day, the worker “nurses” move the pupae deeper into the ground; with the coolness of evening, they carry them up again nearer the warmth of the earth’s surface. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)

- c. The nurse workers also keep the pupae clean and protect them if the nest is attacked. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)
- d. Wherever ants live, the care of the nest is of vital importance. Good housekeeping is necessary not only for convenience but also for sanitary reasons. With all species, bits of unused food, bodies of dead members of the colony, remains of pupal wrappings, and all other types of refuse are carried a distance away from the living quarters. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 22)

(1) I Corinthians 5:7- *“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us”*

2. The Application

- a. II Timothy 2:3- *“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ”*
- b. I Timothy 6:12- *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses”*

C. The Expansion of the Colony

- 1. The length of time required for the development of a colony’s first workers varies with the species. With some, it is as long as 10 months before the queen first receives assistance from the workers. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 20)
- 2. In perhaps four or five years, a colony is large and strong enough to send out a batch of winged males and females on a marriage and dispersal flight. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 21)

VI. Miscellaneous Ant Facts

A. Church Hoppers

- 1. Each ant colony has its own characteristic odor. Thus, each ant can recognize the members of her own nest. If an ant from one colony strays into another, even though they are of the same species, she is attacked and killed or driven away. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 22)
- 2. II Timothy 4:10- *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia”*

B. New Nest Locations

- 1. The members of a colony do not always live in complete harmony. In a well-established group, there are times when certain members take the initiative of moving to a new location. The enterprising ones work together to start a new location. Then, they return to their original home and seize members of the original colony. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 22)
- 2. This back-and-forth shuttle may go on for weeks and months until one side—usually the side that has resisted a change—becomes discouraged and gives up. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 22)

C. Ants Follow

1. Many ants will follow a trail that other ants have made. However, if the trail accidentally goes in a circle, the ants do not know enough to leave it. They may keep walking around the circle until they fall dead. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 482)
2. As the ants move about, they frequently touch the tips of their abdomens to the ground. Glands in the tip leave droplets of liquid that make an odor trail for other ants to follow. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 486)
3. I Thessalonians 5:15- *“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men”*

D. Universities and Bible Colleges

1. Some species of ants have slaves, which are obtained when a weaker species is overcome and captured. [interesting story on pg. 26] (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 26)
2. Amazon ants make slaves of other ants. Their long, sharp jaws are so curved that they cannot feed themselves or dig nests. The Amazon ants need the slave ants to do these jobs for them. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 483)
3. Some ants let others do their work for them without pressing them into “slavery”. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 26)

E. Pastors

1. The honey ants, in preparation for times of scarce food, will store honey in their nest. They do not make cups of wax or paper as bees and wasps do. Instead, they use their own bodies to store the honey. A few young ants keep swallowing honey until they become round as peas. They are too fat to walk or work. They hang from the ceilings while drinking more of the sweet juice. Soon they are unable to move because of the size of their swollen abdomens. For the rest of their lives they hang by their feet from the ceiling. When hungry ants come for food, the storage ants give up honey through their mouths. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pgs. 483-484)
2. Jeremiah 3:15- *“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”*

F. Working Together

1. No single ant rules the colony. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 485)
2. The ant colony has no government, although the tasks are divided among the workers. Some collect food and bring it back to the nest. Others make the nest bigger or clean out the rooms. Still others tend the queens and the growing ants. Nurse ants feed and clean the larvae. The nurses often carry larvae to different parts of the nest if the room they are in becomes too wet or cold. If the colony is attacked by enemies, the worker ants defend it. When nestmates

meet, they usually stop to share drops of food or to touch antennae. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 485)

3. I Corinthians 3:9- *“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”*

G. Hibernation

1. Ants cluster together and spend the winter sleeping inside their nests. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 483)
2. II Timothy 4:10-11- *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry”*

H. Strength

1. An ant can carry loads many times heavier than itself. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pg. 483)
2. Galatians 6:2- *“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”*

I. Different Types of Ants

1. There is no “typical” ant. The types of ants vary so that one can name only a typical primitive ant, a typical army ant, a typical “harvester,” or a representative of one of the other distinctive groups. (Encyclopedia Americana, pg. 22)
2. Scientists state that there are 15,000 species of ants. (The World Book Encyclopedia, pgs. 482-483)
3. Some different and interesting types of ants are Ponerines, Army, Leaf Cutter, Tailor, Carpenter, Driver, Honey, Harvester, Carnivorous, Cattle-tending, and Fire ants. (Encyclopedia Americana, pgs. 22-26)
4. II Corinthians 10:12- *“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”*

Conclusion: May God's church be like the ant and stay busy in the last days.