

~ANT (118)

[Hebrew, *nema-lah'*]

.. A People

.. Instinctive Wisdom

.. Exemplary Characteristics

- A small, but extremely numerous and widespread insect, living in colonies, and noted in the Bible for its industriousness and instinctive wisdom.

- Go to the **ant**, **you lazy one**, see its ways and become wise. (**Proverbs 6:6**)

- Although it has no commander, officer or ruler. (**Proverbs 6:7**)

- It prepares its food even in the summer. It has gathered its food supplies even in the harvest. (**Proverbs 6:8**)

- There are four things that are the smallest of the earth, but they **are instinctively wise**. (**Proverbs 30:24**)

- The **ants** are a people not strong, and **yet in the summer they prepare their food**. (**Proverbs 30:25**)

- It is estimated that there are over 10,000 varieties of **ants**, these insects being found in all parts of the earth with the exception of the polar regions.

.. A People

- The ants are called a people **Hebrew, 'am** in,

- The **ants** are **a people not strong**, and yet in the summer they prepare their food. (**Proverbs 30:25**)

- Even as Joel referred to the locusts as a nation.

- For there **is a nation that has come up into my land**, mighty and without number. Its teeth are the teeth of a lion, and it has the jawbones of a lion. (**Joel 1:6**)

- And this expression is very suitable for these small creatures. While some **ant** colonies may contain only a few dozen **ants**, others have a huge population running into the hundreds of thousands. Although generally of moderate size, the nest or tunneled area may grow until it is as much as an acre in size.
- Within each colony there are three basic castes, the queen or queens, the males, and the workers, sexually undeveloped females. Yet, as the proverb states, the **ant** has **no commander, officer or ruler**.
- Although it has no commander, officer or ruler. (**Proverbs 6:7**)
- The queen is not such in a governmental sense and more fittingly can be called the **mother ant**, for her **essential function is that of egg laying**. Whereas a **queen ant** may live as much as **15 years**, the males **live only long enough to mate and then die**.
- The worker **ants**, whose life span may reach six years, have various duties to perform, such as searching for and gathering in food for the colony, feeding the queen, acting as nurses for the larvae, cleaning the nest, digging new chambers as expansion is needed, and defending the nest.
- Worker **ants** may be of different sizes and proportions, even within the same colony, in some cases the larger one's acting as soldiers in the event of invasion of the nest. Still, despite the fairly precise division of work, which in some colonies is arranged according to the age of the workers and in others according to size, and the relatively complex social organization existent, **there is no sign of any superior officer, or taskmaster**.

•• Instinctive Wisdom

- The **wisdom** of the **ants** is not the product of intelligent reasoning but **results from the instincts with which they are endowed by their Creator**. The Bible makes reference to the **ant** as **preparing its food in the summer and gathering its supplies in the harvest**.
- It prepares its food even in the summer, it has gathered its food supplies even in the harvest. (**Proverbs 6:8**)
- One of the most common varieties of **ants** found in Palestine, the **harvester, or agricultural, ant, *Messor semirufus***, stores up a large supply of grain in the spring and summer and makes use of it in

seasons, including winter, when the obtaining of food becomes difficult. This **ant** is often found in the vicinity of threshing floors, where seeds and grain are plentiful.

- If rain causes dampness to reach the stored seeds, the **harvester ant** will thereafter carry the grains out into the sun for drying. It is even known to bite off the germ part of the seed so that it will not germinate while stored. Colonies of **harvester ants** are made conspicuous by well-worn paths as well as by seed husks that are left outside the entrance.

· Exemplary Characteristics

- Thus, a brief investigation of the **ant** gives force to the exhortation;

- Go to the **ant**, you lazy one, see its ways and become wise. (Proverbs 6:6)

- Not only is their instinctive preparing for the future notable but also their persistence and determination, often carrying or tenaciously dragging objects weighing twice their own weight or more, doing everything possible to fulfill their particular task, and refusing to turn back even though they may fall, slide, or roll down some steep precipice.

- Remarkably cooperative, they keep their nests very clean and show concern for their fellow workers, at times assisting injured or exhausted **ants** back to the nest.