

Proverbs 23:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

Analysis

Riches are compared to an eagle flying away, emphasizing their temporary and unstable nature despite appearing substantial. The rhetorical question 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' exposes the folly of fixing hope on wealth that will inevitably vanish. This vivid imagery warns against covetousness and materialism, teaching that true security cannot be found in possessions.

Historical Context

Solomon himself experienced unprecedented wealth (1 Kings 10) yet recognized its fleeting nature. His observations of wealthy neighbors and trading partners would have confirmed that riches provide no ultimate security against death, political upheaval, or divine judgment.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What possessions or financial goals are you tempted to 'set your eyes upon' as sources of security?
2. How can we pursue honest work and provision without making wealth an idol?

Interlinear Text

וְעַיִן יְךָ	עֵינֶיךָ	בְּ	וְעַיִן יְךָ	כִּי	יַעֲשֶׂה	יַעֲשֶׂה	לְ
Wilt thou set	thine eyes	H0	H369	H3588	make	make	H0
H5774	H5869				H6213	H6213	
כָּנְפֵי	כִּי כְּ	וְעַיִן יְךָ	הַשָּׁמַיִם:				
themselves wings	as an eagle	Wilt thou set	toward heaven				
H3671	H5404	H5774	H8064				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 27:24 (Parallel theme): For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

1 John 2:16 (Parallel theme): For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Matthew 6:19 (Parallel theme): Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

1 Timothy 6:17 (Parallel theme): Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

Ecclesiastes 12:8 (Parallel theme): Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

Genesis 42:36 (Parallel theme): And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

