

# Proverbs 27:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

## Analysis

**Hell and destruction are never full** (שְׁאוֹל וְאַבְדּוֹן לֹא תִשְׂבַּעַנָּה, sheol va'abaddo lo tisba'edah)—שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) denotes the realm of the dead, the grave that swallows all humanity; אַבְדּוֹן (Abaddon, 'destruction, place of perishing') appears six times in Scripture, personified in Revelation 9:11 as the angel of the abyss. The verb שָׂבַע (sava, 'to be satisfied, filled') is negated absolutely.

**So the eyes of man are never satisfied** (וְעֵינֵי הָאָדָם לֹא תִשְׂבַּעַנָּה, ve'einei ha'adam lo tisba'edah)—human desire mirrors death's insatiability. John warns against 'the lust of the eyes' (1 John 2:16); Ecclesiastes declares all earthly pursuits vanity. Only in God do our souls find rest (Psalm 63:5).

## Historical Context

Ancient Israelites viewed Sheol as an ever-hungry mouth (Isaiah 5:14, Habakkuk 2:5), swallowing the dead without distinction between righteous and wicked. This proverb reflects the wisdom tradition's meditation on human mortality and desire, themes fully developed in Ecclesiastes.

## Related Passages

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What desires in your life function like Sheol—never satisfied no matter how much you feed them?
2. How does consumerism exploit the principle that 'the eyes of man are never satisfied'?
3. Where have you found genuine satisfaction that transcends the endless cycle of desire?

## Interlinear Text

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הַאֵד אֵין יְשֻׁבָּעָהּ: לֹא יֵאבְדָּהּ שָׂא וּלְ  
Hell H10 are never H3808 are never satisfied H7646 so the eyes H5869 of man H120

לֹא יְשֻׁבָּעָהּ: לֹא  
are never H3808 are never satisfied H7646

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 1:8** (Parallel theme): All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

**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.

**Ecclesiastes 6:7** (Parallel theme): All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

**Habakkuk 2:5** (Parallel theme): Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people:

**Ecclesiastes 4:8** (Parallel theme): There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither

is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

**Job 26:6** (Parallel theme): Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

**Proverbs 15:11** (Parallel theme): Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

**Proverbs 23:5** (Parallel theme): Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

**Jeremiah 22:17** (Parallel theme): But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.