

Proverbs 30:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.

Analysis

There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. This verse begins Agur's prophetic condemnation of four corrupt dor (דור, generation)—not merely age groups but character types perpetually recurring in human history. The Hebrew ramim (רָמִים, lofty) and nasa'u (נִשְׁאָו, lifted up) describe haughty eyes, the quintessential biblical symbol of pride.

Scripture consistently associates raised eyes with arrogance that precedes judgment. Psalm 131:1 contrasts the humble: "my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty." Isaiah 2:11 warns "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled." Physiologically, looking down one's nose communicates superiority and contempt—body language revealing heart attitude. This generation exalts self above others, refuses correction, and despises those deemed inferior. Pride, the first sin (Isaiah 14:12-14), remains the root of all other sins, generating the violence (v.14), greed (v.15-16), and rebellion (v.17) that follow.

Historical Context

Proverbs 30 is attributed to Agur son of Jakeh (v.1), an otherwise unknown sage possibly from Massa, an Arabian region associated with Ishmael (Genesis 25:14). The inclusion of non-Israelite wisdom in Israel's canon demonstrates God's common grace—truth can emerge from unexpected sources when rooted in the fear of Yahweh. The numerical proverb form ("there are three...yea four") appears throughout ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature but reaches its fullest

expression in Proverbs 30. These graduated numerical sayings create rhetorical emphasis and mnemonic structure. Agur's four "generations" may have described specific groups in his historical context (oppressive ruling class, violent merchants, insatiable materialists, rebellious youth), but the Holy Spirit's inspiration ensures the text addresses every era.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does pride—"lofty eyes"—manifest in your thought life even when outward behavior appears humble?
2. What contemporary 'generations' exhibit the haughty spirit Agur condemns: influencer culture, political tribalism, academic elitism, or religious pharisaism?
3. How does Jesus's teaching on humility (Matthew 23:12, Luke 18:9-14) and His own example (Philippians 2:5-8) counter this generation's proud spirit?

Interlinear Text

There is a generation	H1755	מֵה	H4100	רְמֵם	וְרַמֵּם	עַלְיָן	H7311	עַלְיָן	H5869	וְעַלְיָן	H6079
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are lifted up
H5375

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 6:17 (Parallel theme): A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Isaiah 2:11 (Parallel theme): The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Psalms 131:1 (Parallel theme): LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

Psalms 101:5 (Parallel theme): Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

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