

Proverbs 30:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:

Analysis

The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough. Agur shifts from corrupt generations to insatiable appetites using the numerical proverb formula. The alukah (עַלְקָה, horseleach/leech) may be literal bloodsucker or metaphorical vampire. Its "two daughters"—likely the two suckers or the endless cry "Give! Give!" (hav hav, הַב הַב)—personify ravenous greed.

This introduces the "three...yea four" pattern, a rhetorical device building suspense before revealing the climactic fourth item. The four that are "never satisfied" (lo sava, לֹא שָׁבֵע) represent natural forces or conditions exhibiting insatiable desire, illustrating spiritual truth through natural observation. This wisdom method—learning divine principles from creation—reflects Solomon's approach: "he spake of trees...of beasts, and of fowl" (1 Kings 4:33). The leech's insatiable nature mirrors human greed that destroys both possessor and prey.

Historical Context

Numerical proverbs appear throughout ancient Near Eastern literature. Ugaritic texts use the same formula. Amos employs it prophetically: "For three transgressions...and for four" (Amos 1:2). The device creates memorable teaching through rhythmic repetition. In oral cultures before mass literacy, such mnemonic structures preserved wisdom across generations. The specific images Agur selects

(grave, womb, earth, fire) would resonate universally across cultures while carrying particular significance in Israelite thought. Each represents a fundamental human experience—death, barrenness, drought, destruction—familiar to agrarian societies dependent on fertility and vulnerable to natural disasters.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 – Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What modern 'daughters of the leech' constantly cry 'Give, give' in consumer culture, addiction patterns, or relational dynamics?
2. How does the gospel address insatiable human desire—not by denying legitimate longings but by redirecting them toward Christ (John 4:13-14)?
3. Where in your life do you struggle with the 'never enough' mentality rather than cultivating contentment in God's provision (1 Timothy 6:6-8)?

Interlinear Text

לעלוֹק הָ	שְׁתִּי	בְּנֹות	בְּ	בְּ	בְּ	שְׁלֹשָׁ
The horseleach	hath two	daughters	crying Give	crying Give	There are three	
H5936	H8147	H1323	H3051	H3051		H7969

לְאֵתֶה	תְּשַׁבַּעַתָּה	עֲזָבָתָה	אָרְבָּעָתָה	לְאָמָרָתָה
H2007	H3808	things that are never satisfied	yea four	H3808

וְאֵת

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 30:21 (Parallel theme): For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear:

Proverbs 30:29 (Parallel theme): There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going:

Proverbs 6:16 (Parallel theme): These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

2 Peter 2:3 (Parallel theme): And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

Romans 16:18 (Parallel theme): For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

John 8:44 (Parallel theme): Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

John 8:39 (Parallel theme): They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

Proverbs 30:24 (Parallel theme): There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:

Matthew 23:32 (Parallel theme): Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

Amos 1:11 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: