

Jeremiah 32:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

Analysis

Great in counsel, and mighty in work—The Hebrew gadol etsah (גָּדוֹל עֵצָה, great in counsel) emphasizes God's perfect wisdom and purposeful planning, while rav aliliyah (רַב עֲלִילָיָה, mighty in work/deed) highlights His power to accomplish His purposes. God doesn't merely plan wisely—He executes His plans effectively. This combination assures that nothing catches God by surprise, and nothing thwarts His purposes. **For thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men**—Einekha pekuchot (עֵינֶיךָ פְּקֻחוֹת, Your eyes are open) indicates constant, attentive observation. God sees and knows all human activity, both public and private. The phrase **all the ways** (kol-darkei, כָּל-דַּרְכָּי) encompasses both actions and character—the Hebrew derek (דֶּרֶךְ, way) often means lifestyle or conduct.

To give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings—This articulates the biblical principle of divine retribution: God judges based on actual conduct (derakav, דַּרְכָּיו, his ways) and results (peri ma'alalav, פְּרִי מַעֲלָלָיו, fruit of his deeds). The agricultural metaphor of 'fruit' suggests that actions produce inevitable consequences—we reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7). This isn't mechanical karma but personal divine judgment. God's omniscience (seeing all ways) ensures His judgments are perfectly informed; His wisdom (great in counsel) ensures they are just; His power (mighty in work) ensures they are executed. This terrifying accountability is also comforting—injustice doesn't escape God's notice, and faithfulness will be rewarded.

Historical Context

Jeremiah articulates these attributes of God while Jerusalem faced imminent destruction for its covenant unfaithfulness. The generation experiencing judgment might question God's wisdom or justice: Why now? Why so severely? Jeremiah's prayer acknowledges that God's judgments are neither capricious nor excessive—they correspond precisely to the people's ways and the fruit of their doings. For generations, Judah had worshiped idols, oppressed the poor, and rejected prophetic warnings. The exile was the 'fruit' of those persistent choices. Yet this same principle assured that God also saw the faithfulness of the righteous remnant (like Jeremiah and Baruch) and would reward them according to their ways. The return from exile vindicated God's perfect knowledge and justice—seventy years of judgment gave way to restoration as promised. This principle reaches its ultimate expression in Christ's judgment seat (2 Corinthians 5:10), where believers' works will be evaluated (not for salvation but for reward), and in the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:12-13), where all humanity will be judged according to their deeds.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's perfect knowledge of 'all the ways of the sons of men' provide both warning and comfort?
2. What 'fruit' are your current 'ways' (lifestyle and choices) producing, and how does this align with what you hope to reap?
3. How should the certainty that God 'gives every one according to his ways' shape daily decisions and long-term priorities?

Interlinear Text

גָּדֹל	הָעֵצָה	וְכֹחַ	הַעֲלִילָה	אֲשֶׁר	עֵינֶי יְיָ	פְּקָחוֹת
Great	in counsel	and mighty	in work	H834	for thine eyes	are open
H1419	H6098	H7227	H5950		H5869	H6491
עַל	כָּל	פְּדֻכָּיו	בְּנֵי י	אָדָם	לִתְּתֵה	לְאִישׁ
H5921	H3605	according to his ways	of the sons	of men	to give	every one
		H1870	H1121	H120	H5414	H376
	פְּדֻכָּיו	וְכֹפְרֵי	מַעֲלָלָיו:			
	according to his ways	and according to the fruit	of his doings			
	H1870	H6529	H4611			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 17:10 (Parallel theme): I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Matthew 16:27 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Isaiah 28:29 (Parallel theme): This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

Psalms 62:12 (Parallel theme): Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

Job 34:21 (Parallel theme): For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

Jeremiah 16:17 (Parallel theme): For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

Revelation 22:12 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Revelation 2:23 (Parallel theme): And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Hebrews 4:13 (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Isaiah 9:6 (Parallel theme): For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

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