

Job 31:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

Analysis

Job appeals to divine omniscience: "Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?" The verb *ra'ah* (רָאָה, "see") means comprehensive observation. The verb *saphar* (סָפַר, "count") means to number or recount—God's knowledge is exhaustive, not general. Job invokes God's all-seeing eye as witness to his integrity. This theological conviction—divine omniscience—undergirds all biblical ethics. God sees not only actions but motives (1 Samuel 16:7, Hebrews 4:13). From a Reformed perspective, God's omniscience serves dual purposes: comfort for the innocent (God knows the truth) and warning for the guilty (nothing is hidden). Job's confidence that God sees his ways demonstrates genuine integrity—he's not merely concerned with human reputation but divine evaluation. This anticipates Jesus' teaching about practicing righteousness "before your Father which seeth in secret" (Matthew 6:4, 6, 18). True piety cares about God's assessment, not human applause.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern religions included divine surveillance concepts—Egyptian Ma'at weighing hearts, Mesopotamian gods recording deeds. However, biblical omniscience is unique in its comprehensiveness and personal nature. God doesn't merely observe behavior but knows thoughts and motives. Job's appeal to divine omniscience reflects covenantal theology where God witnesses oaths and judges righteously (Genesis 31:50, Malachi 2:14).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does awareness of God's omniscience transform our behavior in private versus public settings?
2. What is the relationship between God's all-seeing eye and genuine Christian freedom?
3. How should God's comprehensive knowledge of our steps encourage us when falsely accused or misunderstood?

Interlinear Text

הָלֹא	הוּא	יְרֵא	דְּרַכֵּי	וְכָל	צֵעַדִּי	יִסְפֹּר:
H3808	H1931	Doth not he see	my ways	H3605	all my steps	and count
		H7200	H1870		H6806	H5608

Additional Cross-References

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

2 Chronicles 16:9 (Parallel theme): For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

Proverbs 5:21 (Parallel theme): For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

Job 14:16 (Parallel theme): For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

Proverbs 15:3 (Parallel theme): The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Jeremiah 32:19 (Parallel theme): 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:

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.

Genesis 16:13 (Parallel theme): And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

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.

Psalms 44:21 (Parallel theme): Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.