

Matthew 6:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Analysis

The promise that God 'seeth in secret' provides powerful motivation for private piety. The omniscient Father observes what no human sees and 'shall reward thee openly'—whether in this life or the final judgment. This establishes divine rather than human audience as the proper focus of obedience. The reward may come in transformed character, God's pleasure, eternal recompense, or visible vindication, but it is certain and surpasses any earthly acclaim.

Historical Context

Ancient patronage systems operated on reciprocal obligation—gifts created public debt and enhanced donor status. Jesus radically reorients giving toward vertical relationship with God rather than horizontal social dynamics. The Father's reward transcends temporary human honor.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does knowing God sees and rewards secret obedience transform motivation for hidden acts of service and righteousness?
2. What does this teach about trusting God's future vindication rather than demanding present recognition?

Interlinear Text

ὥπως	ἥ	σου	τῷ	ἐλεημοσύνη	ἐν	τῷ	κρυπτῷ	καὶ
That	may be	thine	which	alms	in	which	secret	and
G3704	G5600	G4675	G3588	G1654	G1722	G3588	G2927	G2532
τῷ	πατὴρ	σου	τῷ	βλέπων	ἐν	τῷ	κρυπτῷ	αὐτὸς
which	Father	thine	which	seeth	in	which	secret	himself
G3588	G3962	G4675	G3588	G991	G1722	G3588	G2927	G846
ἀποδώσει	σοι	ἐν	τῷ	φανερῷ				
shall reward	thee	in	which					
G591	G4671	G1722	G3588	G5318				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:18 (Parallel theme): That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

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 6:6 (Parallel theme): But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

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

Luke 14:14 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Jeremiah 23:24 (Parallel theme): Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Luke 8:17 (Parallel theme): For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

1 Samuel 2:30 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

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 139:12 (Parallel theme): Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.