

Proverbs 15:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

Analysis

Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men? She'ol va'avaddon neged YHVH (שְׁאוֹל וְאַבְדּוֹן נֶגֶד יְהוָה, Sheol and Abaddon before the LORD). She'ol (שְׁאוֹל, the grave, realm of death) and Avaddon (אַבְדּוֹן, destruction, place of ruin) lie open (neged, נֶגֶד, before, in front of) God's sight. Af ki levey veney-adam (אֲפֹכִי לִבֵּי בְנֵי-אָדָם, how much more the hearts of sons of man). If even death's hidden realm is visible to God, certainly human hearts are. Nothing escapes God's omniscience—an awesome and sobering truth. Hebrews 4:13 declares all things are naked and open to Him.

Historical Context

Ancient peoples viewed Sheol as mysterious and inaccessible—the realm beyond death's door. This proverb asserts God's complete knowledge penetrates even there. Job 26:6 states: "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." Psalm 139:7-12 celebrates inability to hide from God. This truth comforted the righteous (God knows their faithfulness) and warned the wicked (hidden sins are fully known).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How should God's complete knowledge of your heart—every thought, motive, desire—affect your daily life?
2. Does God's omniscience bring comfort (He understands you fully) or fear (He sees all sin), and why?
3. How does Jesus' atonement address the problem of God seeing all your heart's wickedness?

Interlinear Text

שָׁא וּלְ	וְאַבְדּוֹן	וְגֵד	יְהוָה	אֶל	כִּי
Hell	and destruction	H5048	are before the LORD	H637	H3588
H7585	H11		H3068		
	לְבָב וְ	בְנֵי	אָדָם:		
	how much more then the hearts	of the children	of men		
	H3826	H1121	H120		

Additional Cross-References

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

Psalms 139:8 (Parallel theme): If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

Job 26:6 (Parallel theme): Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

2 Chronicles 6:30 (Parallel theme): Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:)

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.

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.

Revelation 1:18 (Parallel theme): I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Psalms 7:9 (Parallel theme): Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

Proverbs 27:20 (Parallel theme): Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Jeremiah 17:10 (References Lord): 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.