

Proverbs 20:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

Analysis

Human autonomy is an illusion; 'Man's goings are of the LORD.' God sovereignly directs human steps, even when people are unaware. The rhetorical question 'how can a man understand his own way?' emphasizes our inability to comprehend or control our paths. This doesn't eliminate human responsibility but establishes divine sovereignty over all things. We plan, but God determines outcomes (Proverbs 16:9). This should produce both humility (recognizing our limitations) and trust (knowing God guides). The wise person commits his way to the Lord and trusts His direction rather than leaning on personal understanding. God's providence governs all events, working all things for His glory and the good of His elect.

Historical Context

Pagan thought attributed human fortunes to fate, luck, or capricious deities. Biblical wisdom asserts Yahweh's comprehensive providential control, giving both comfort and accountability.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Do you try to control your own path, or do you trust God's sovereign direction?
2. How should recognizing God's control over your steps affect your planning and decisions?

Interlinear Text

מִתְחִילָה מִצְעָדִי בָּרָא יְהִי מִתְהִלָּה יְהִי מִצְעָדִי
are of the LORD goings Man's how can a man then understand
H3068 H4703 H1397 H120 H4100 H995

דֶּרֶךְ:
his own way
H1870

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 16:9 (References Lord): A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

Jeremiah 10:23 (References Lord): O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Psalms 25:12 (References Lord): What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

Psalms 37:23 (References Lord): The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

Psalms 25:4 (References Lord): Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

Acts 17:28 (Parallel theme): For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Proverbs 14:8 (Parallel theme): The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

Daniel 5:23 (References Lord): But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

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