

Proverbs 24:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

Analysis

This proverb addresses the connection between thought and sin. 'The thought of foolishness is sin' (זִמְמַת חַטָּאת אֶלְעָת/zimmat iveauth chatta't, the scheme/devising of folly is sin) makes clear that sin begins in the mind, not merely in action. Jesus taught this: anger is heart-murder (Matthew 5:21-22); lust is heart-adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). Sin's root is internal—evil thoughts precede evil deeds (Mark 7:21-23). 'The scorner is an abomination to men' (עִזּוּבָת אֶלְעָת יְצָרָת/veto'avat adam letz, and an abomination to mankind is the scoffer/mocker) describes the scorner—one who mocks wisdom, righteousness, and God. The 'scorner' (עִזּוּבָת/yetz/letz) appears throughout Proverbs as archetypal fool (Proverbs 1:22; 9:7-8; 13:1; 14:6; 15:12; 19:25). Mockers are 'abomination'—detestable, repulsive. Even unbelievers recognize mockers as odious. This warns that mocking attitude toward wisdom makes one universally despised.

Historical Context

Israel's wisdom tradition recognized thought's moral dimension. The tenth commandment prohibits coveting (Exodus 20:17)—a heart attitude, not external action. David confessed: 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts' (Psalm 51:6). God evaluates hearts, not merely actions (1 Samuel 16:7). The 'scorner' appears prominently in wisdom literature, representing the antithesis of the wise person. While the wise accept correction, the scorner rejects it (Proverbs 9:7-8). While the wise fear the LORD, the scorner mocks Him (Proverbs 14:2; 19:29). Scorners brought judgment: those who mocked Noah perished in the flood

(Genesis 7:21-23); Israelites who scorned the Promised Land died in the wilderness (Numbers 14:23). In the New Testament, Jesus faced mockers at the cross (Luke 23:35-39). Peter warned that scoffers would arise in last days (2 Peter 3:3). Mocking God or His truth demonstrates hardened hearts deserving judgment.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What thought patterns—lust, greed, pride, contempt—need confession and transformation?
2. Do you recognize any 'scorner' tendencies in your attitude toward God, Scripture, authority, or wisdom?
3. How can you guard your thought life, recognizing that sin begins in the mind?

Interlinear Text

לֹא־
לְעָמֵד תְּ
אָוֶלֶת
The thought of foolishness
H2154 H200

מְפָט אַת
is sin
H2403

וְתוֹעֵב תְּ
is an abomination
H8441

לְאַד־
to men
H120

לְ
and the scorner
H3887

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 15:19 (Parallel theme): For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

Isaiah 55:7 (Parallel theme): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

2 Corinthians 10:5 (Parallel theme): Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Acts 8:22 (Parallel theme): Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Proverbs 29:8 (Parallel theme): Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.

Proverbs 24:8 (Parallel theme): He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.

Matthew 9:4 (Parallel theme): And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

Jeremiah 4:14 (Parallel theme): O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

Matthew 5:28 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Genesis 6:5 (Parallel theme): And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.