

Psalms 10:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

Analysis

The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. After questioning why God seems distant (verse 1), David now describes the wicked person who actively distances himself from God. This verse anatomizes the psychology of practical atheism—living as if God does not exist or does not matter.

"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance" (rasha begovah appo, אָשָׁר בְּגֻבָּהּ אָפָּה) literally reads "the wicked in the height of his nose/face." Govah means height, haughtiness, pride. Aph (nose, face) is used idiomatically for pride—the person whose nose is lifted high in arrogance. This pride is not momentary emotion but defining characteristic. The wicked person's entire orientation is prideful self-sufficiency, disdaining dependence on God.

"Will not seek after God" (bal yidrosh, בְּלֹא יַדְרֹשׁ) uses the emphatic negative bal with darash (to seek, inquire, require). The proud person refuses to seek God—not because God is hidden but because pride makes the wicked unwilling to acknowledge need, submit to authority, or admit dependence. In contrast to verse 9:10 where those who know God's name seek Him, the wicked deliberately avoid seeking.

"God is not in all his thoughts" (ein Elohim kol-mezimotav, אֵין אֱלֹהִים כָּל-מְזִימֹתָיו) employs mezimmah (thoughts, plans, schemes, devices). This is not theoretical atheism but practical atheism—God is not factored into decisions, plans, or values.

The wicked may acknowledge God's existence intellectually but exclude Him from practical consideration. Life is planned and lived as if God were irrelevant.

This verse diagnoses the root of wickedness: pride that refuses to seek God. Wickedness is not merely bad behavior but a theological orientation—living without reference to God. This produces the injustice described in surrounding verses. When God is absent from thought and planning, other people become mere obstacles or resources rather than image-bearers deserving dignity.

Historical Context

The connection between pride and godlessness runs throughout Scripture. Proverbs declares: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). Isaiah condemned those who were "wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight" (Isaiah 5:21). Nebuchadnezzar's pride led to his humiliation (Daniel 4). Pride is the original sin—Satan's "I will" rebellion (Isaiah 14:13-14) and humanity's desire to "be as gods" (Genesis 3:5).

The phrase "God is not in all his thoughts" describes what later philosophers would call "practical atheism"—functionally living without God regardless of stated beliefs. This characterized many in Israel who offered sacrifices while oppressing the poor (Isaiah 1:10-17), who honored God with lips while their hearts were far from Him (Isaiah 29:13). Jesus later condemned the same hypocrisy (Matthew 15:8).

Paul's description of human rebellion in Romans 1 echoes this psalm: people "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Romans 1:28) and became futile in their thinking. The trajectory from pride to practical atheism to moral corruption that Psalm 10 describes matches Paul's analysis of human depravity.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does pride function as the root that produces unwillingness to seek God?
2. What is the difference between theoretical atheism (denying God exists) and practical atheism (living as if He doesn't)?
3. In what areas of life might believers also fail to include God in their thoughts and plans?
4. How does excluding God from one's thoughts lead inevitably to the exploitation and oppression of others?

Interlinear Text

רָשָׁע	בַּגְּבָרָה	אַפּוֹ	בְּלִ	אַדְּרָשָׁ	אַיִל
The wicked	through the pride	of his countenance		will not seek	
H7563	H1363	H639	H1077	H1875	H369
אַלְמָנָתִים	כֹּל	אַלְמָנָתִים	כֹּל	אַלְמָנָתִים	כֹּל
after God God	H3605	is not in all his thoughts	H4209		
	H430				

Additional Cross-References

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

Romans 1:28 (References God): And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Genesis 6:5 (Evil): 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.

Romans 1:21 (References God): Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Isaiah 65:2 (Parallel theme): I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

Psalms 53:1 (References God): The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.

Job 22:17 (References God): Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

Exodus 5:2 (Parallel theme): And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Deuteronomy 8:14 (References God): Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

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