

Psalm 139:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

Analysis

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. The attempt to number God's thoughts is futile—sand (שָׂנָא, chol) was the ancient world's symbol for the uncountable (Genesis 22:17, 32:12). God's attentiveness never exhausts itself. **When I awake, I am still with thee** has rich meaning: whether waking from sleep or from spiritual stupor, God's presence remains constant.

Some interpret 'awake' eschatologically—even awakening from death's sleep, God is there (verse 8 affirms this). The phrase emphasizes the unbreakable nature of covenant relationship: David cannot outlast, outrun, or exhaust God's faithful presence. This verse moves from meditation on God's thoughts to the practical reality of abiding fellowship—theology always leads to relationship.

Historical Context

The sand metaphor was used throughout Israel's covenant history (the promise to Abraham, Genesis 22:17). For David, constantly pursued by enemies, the assurance of God's unwavering presence was essential. Paul later echoes this in Romans 8:38-39—nothing separates us from God's love.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does it mean practically to 'awake' each day with consciousness of being 'still with thee'?
2. How can remembering the innumerability of God's thoughts toward you combat feelings of being forgotten or overlooked?
3. In what ways do you try to 'count' or measure God's care, and how does this verse challenge that impulse?

Interlinear Text

מִתְהַלֵּךְ	אֲסָפֶרֶם	רָבֶב	וְ	כִּיְצַחַת
If I should count	than the sand	them they are more in number	when I awake	
H5608	H2344	H7235		H6974
I am still				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 3:5 (Parallel theme): I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

Psalms 139:3 (Parallel theme): Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

Psalms 40:5 (Parallel theme): Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Psalms 17:15 (Parallel theme): As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

1 Thessalonians 5:10 (Parallel theme): Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Isaiah 26:19 (Parallel theme): Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Daniel 12:2 (Parallel theme): And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

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