

Psalms 94:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

Analysis

The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity (הָיָה יְדֻעַ מְחַשְׁבֹת—אָדָם פִּיהָמָה הַבָּל)—Divine omniscience penetrates human interior life. Machshavot (thoughts/plans) before Yahweh are hevel (vapor, breath, emptiness)—the same word used 38 times in Ecclesiastes for life's futility.

Paul quotes this verse in 1 Corinthians 3:20 during his rebuke of Corinthian factionalism around human wisdom. The self-congratulatory schemes of the wicked—and even believers' proud strategies—dissolve like morning mist before God's eternal counsel. This isn't mere intellectual humility but ontological reality: creature thoughts lack substance compared to Creator wisdom.

Historical Context

This verse directly addresses the psalmist's opponents who believe God neither sees nor cares (v. 7). The assertion of divine knowledge contradicts the practical atheism of Israel's oppressors who act as though human schemes operate autonomously.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'solid' plans in your life might God see as vapor—and what does that reveal about your trust?
2. How does God's knowledge of your thoughts comfort rather than terrify you in Christ?
3. Where are you tempted to act as though your inner life is hidden from God?

Interlinear Text

בְּלֹא: מִתְּהִלָּה וְעַד כִּי מִחְשָׁבֶת מִתְּהִלָּה
The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity
H3068 H3045 H4284 H120 H3588 H1992 H1892

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 3:20 (References Lord): And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

1 Corinthians 1:19 (Parallel theme): For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

1 Corinthians 1:25 (Parallel theme): Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1 Corinthians 1:21 (Parallel theme): For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.