

thoughts." Some commentators think the verb "I shall punish" is understood. Both our English versions insert "know." The previous three verses have described punishment. If this simply means, "I shall punish their works and their thoughts," it adds neither idea nor emphasis to what has just been stated. The specific mention of thoughts suggests that the fairness of God's justice and the penetration of His insight is what is meant, and this fits excellently into the preceding context. In any event, the phrase undoubtedly connects with what precedes rather than with what follows.

God has said that He will punish, not only those who are openly hostile to Him, but also those who falsely claim to be religious. No hypocrisy will escape His piercing eye. He stresses the fact that He knows the thoughts of the heart. No one can hide anything from Him. When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth people were astonished because He knew their innermost thoughts. Everything that is hidden from others was fully apparent to Him. In John 1:47 He described the character of Nathanael, and Nathanael was so amazed at His knowledge that he cried out: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

There is no mistake in the judgments of God. In this age it sometimes appears as if the fate of the righteous is to suffer, while the unrighteous seem to have everything their own way. But God declares that this age is not the end. In His economy all unrighteousness will receive its just reward. There can be no miscarriage of justice with Him, for He knows the works of all men and even their thoughts.

God knows which individuals are using religious forms to express their love of Him, and which are using them simply as a means of expressing their own vainglory. He knows which are seeking their own desires instead of presenting before God the offering of a pure and contrite heart. Some times even the best of forms may represent an utterly false attitude. Here is the God who is omniscient, who sees the very center of man's being. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. God's judgment is not based upon what people think of us or upon our external attitude, but upon our true heart attitude toward Him. God alone knows His own. He knows those who have been born again through the Lord Jesus Christ and regenerated through