

PSALM 139

YOU SEARCH ME AND YOU KNOW ME

Psalm 139 lays out for us a beautiful description of some of the attributes of God. In the Bible, the names of God tell us *who* He is; God's attributes, or His qualities, tell us *what* He is: holy, almighty, all-knowing, etc. Each of God's attributes serve as both a warning and a source of tremendous comfort. A warning for those who disobey God; a comfort for those who trust in Him for their forgiveness and salvation. Psalm 139 is king David's personal confession of faith in the triune God, but also the people's larger confession of faith as they used this Psalm in worship.

AUTHOR

King David, second king of Israel. A forgiven sinner; a man after God's own heart. Not only the political leader of Israel, but their spiritual leader as well.

Dates

1010-970 BC

Family

Son of Jesse

Succeeded by his son, Solomon

POETRY

The Psalm is divided into four parts, six verses each (1-6; 7-12; 13-18; 19-24). Each section is summarized by the last two verses (a couplet)

The Psalm follows the path of a believer's life from repentance, to faith, to new life in Christ. Notice the great difference between David's attitude toward God's searching and knowing in verse 1 and in verse 23.

PSALM 139

- ¹ You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
- ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
- ⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe king David? What were his strengths? Weaknesses?
2. How much does God know about us?
3. A/D: Vss 1-5 are pretty scary.
4. How does God "hem" us in and lay His hand upon us?
5. What is David's attitude toward all this? (v. 6)

There are three "omni" words which we use to describe some of God's attributes. We say that God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. Which "omni" word describes God's attribute outlined in verses 1-6?

- a. Omnipotent
- b. Omnipresent
- c. Omniscient

Verses 7-12

- ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

Verses 13-18

- ¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
- ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
- ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
- ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- ¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.
- ¹⁹ If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
- ²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
- ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
- ²² I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.
- ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

6. When do we try to run away from God? What's the result?
7. Vss 7-8 have to be pretty uncomfortable for the unbeliever. Why? How are those same verses a tremendous comfort for believers?
8. Vs. 10. How is David's attitude beginning to change?
9. Which "omni" word fits for vss 7-12?
10. How do these words apply to the abortion debate?
11. A/D: According to vs. 16 all efforts to lengthen our lives are futile, so please pass the bacon.
12. Notice David's progression in vs. 17!
13. Is it proper for David to pray that God would slay the wicked?
14. A/D: It would be God-pleasing for us to put on the church sign: "We hate those who hate the Lord!" (v. 21)
15. What's the progression between what David says in vs 1 and now in vs 23?
16. What are we asking for in vs. 24? A/D: It's good that God knows our secrets.