

Text: Psalm 139

God is Both Omniscient and Omnipresent

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me.
2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 You understand my thought from afar.
3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down,
 And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.
4 Even before there is a word on my tongue,
 Behold, O LORD, You know it all.
5 You have enclosed me behind and before,
 And laid Your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 It is too high, I cannot attain to it.
7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
 Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there;
 If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.
9 If I take the wings of the dawn,
 If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand will lead me,
 And Your right hand will lay hold of me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,
 And the light around me will be night,"
12 Even the darkness is not dark to You,
 And the night is as bright as the day
 Darkness and light are alike to You. (Psalm 139:1-12)

The primary thrust that we see in this passage is that God is both *omniscient* and *omnipresent*. In other words, God knows everything, and is everywhere. In fact, if you think about it, omnipresence and omniscience go together in an interesting way—if God is everywhere, then He necessarily knows everything since He sees all of it. Going beyond this, the Word teaches us that God not only knows everything that was and is, but everything that is to come. The implication is that God exists independent of time and space. That is not to say that He is outside of time so much as it is to say that He is *beyond* it. He is not limited in His acts in any way, since He lacks neither power, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, nor place needed to accomplish His purposes.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8)

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 8:58)

8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. (2 Peter 3:8)

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (Romans 11:33)

**8 "Remember this, and be assured;
 Recall it to mind, you transgressors.
9 "Remember the former things long past,
 For I am God, and there is no other;
 I am God, and there is no one like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
 And from ancient times things which have not been done,
 Saying, 'My purpose will be established,
 And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; (Isaiah 46:10)**

Because God is everywhere present and knows everything, nothing we do—good or bad—is hidden from Him. This is a tremendous comfort to those that know and serve Him, because He promises in His Word to protect those that are His servants. Conversely, this should be a source of fear to those that disobey Him, since He fails neither to see nor to punish sin.

7The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him,
And rescues them.
8O taste and see that the LORD is good;
How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (Psalm 34:7-8)

1Those who trust in the LORD
Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever.
2As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
So the LORD surrounds His people
From this time forth and forever.
3For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the land of the righteous,
So that the righteous will not put forth their hands to do wrong.
4Do good, O LORD, to those who are good
And to those who are upright in their hearts.
5But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways,
The LORD will lead them away with the doers of iniquity
Peace be upon Israel. (Psalm 125:1-5)

9As for the prophets:
My heart is broken within me,
All my bones tremble;
I have become like a drunken man,
Even like a man overcome with wine,
Because of the LORD
And because of His holy words.
10For the land is full of adulterers;
For the land mourns because of the curse
The pastures of the wilderness have dried up.
Their course also is evil
And their might is not right.
11"For both prophet and priest are polluted;
Even in My house I have found their wickedness," declares the LORD.
12"Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them,
They will be driven away into the gloom and fall down in it;
For I will bring calamity upon them,
The year of their punishment," declares the LORD.
13"Moreover, among the prophets of Samaria I saw an offensive thing:
They prophesied by Baal and led My people Israel astray.
14"Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing:
The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood;
And they strengthen the hands of evildoers,
So that no one has turned back from his wickedness
All of them have become to Me like Sodom,
And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

15"Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets,
'Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood
And make them drink poisonous water,
For from the prophets of Jerusalem
Pollution has gone forth into all the land.'"
16Thus says the LORD of hosts,
"Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you
They are leading you into futility;
They speak a vision of their own imagination,
Not from the mouth of the LORD.
17"They keep saying to those who despise Me,
'The LORD has said, "You will have peace";'
And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart,

They say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.'
18"But who has stood in the council of the LORD,
That he should see and hear His word?
Who has given heed to His word and listened?
19"Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath,
Even a whirling tempest;
It will swirl down on the head of the wicked.
20"The anger of the LORD will not turn back
Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart;
In the last days you will clearly understand it.
21"I did not send these prophets,
But they ran.
I did not speak to them,
But they prophesied.
22"But if they had stood in My council,
Then they would have announced My words to My people,
And would have turned them back from their evil way
And from the evil of their deeds.
23"Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD,
"And not a God far off?
24"Can a man hide himself in hiding places
So I do not see him?" declares the LORD
"Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:9-24)

17'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, **18**who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God The LORD of hosts is His name; **19**great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds; (Jeremiah 32:17-19)

Life Begins At Conception, and God is the Sustainer of Life

*13*For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother's womb.
*14*I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.
*15*My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;
*16*Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there was not one of them. (Psalm 139:13-16)

In this passage we have the main concept that the nice folks over at LifeWay Christian Resources wanted us to gain from interrupting Nehemiah for this week—the idea that life begins at conception. The consistent teaching of Scripture is that God knows us from and even before the moment of conception, and has determined His purposes for our lives that early on.

4Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,
5"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
And before you were born I consecrated you;
I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:4-5)

23The LORD said to her,
"Two nations are in your womb;
And two peoples will be separated from your body;
And one people shall be stronger than the other;
And the older shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23)

In fact, the Bible teaches that God knew from the very beginning who would be His, and who would not. His Book of Life has had the names of His saints written from the very beginning of time.

8All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. (Revelation 13:8) *Him in this case refers to the Beast, or Antichrist.

28And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. 31What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? (Romans 8:28-31)

18So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 19You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" 20On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? 22What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (Romans 9:18-24)

Thus, knowing that God has His purposes for each life from and before the moment of conception, to have an abortion is to disobey the following Biblical admonition:

13>You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13)

I also want to briefly touch upon the first part of verse 14: *I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* I have always had trouble understanding this statement, at least the “fearfully” part. Upon studying it, though, I came upon the following truths:

3And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Hebrews 1:3)

16For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16-17)

My reason for citing these passages has to do with the following statements: **upholds all things by the word of His power, and in Him all things hold together.** To say that we are *wonderfully made* is a way of stating that the human being, this complex and even mysterious amalgamation of body and spirit, is too marvelous a creation to have been the result of anything but the wisdom, power, and act of Almighty God. However, these bodies are also fragile, capable of being seriously injured or killed by even the slightest malfunction. This is no surprise, due to the presence of sin in the world. As the Bible teaches,

23For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

What we see in these bodies is that they are *fearfully* made because we require the constant sustaining grace and power of God to remain alive. In our youth sometimes we remain arrogantly unaware of just how fragile life is, but if God truly is the Sustainer of the universe, **in [Whom] all things hold together**, then if God were for even one second to remove His sustenance from us we would die. As such, among the many reasons that we should praise, love, and serve God is that He does not strike us down the moment we commit the first sin, but instead:

9The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Treasuring the Word of God

*17How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
18If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand
When I awake, I am still with You. (Psalm 139:17-18)*

When referring to God's thoughts our attention must turn first and primarily to God's revealed Word, the Bible. Remember, those that are saved are saved to serve God:

9that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; (Romans 10:9)

15" If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (John 14:15)

Therefore, those that know, love, and serve God will desire to know His will, and long to know Him and His desires better. The Word is the primary means through which we know both Him and His will.

**10Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)**

**11Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You. (Psalm 119:11)**

**20My soul is crushed with longing
After Your ordinances at all times. (Psalm 119:20)**

While the Spirit does at times reveal truths to us directly, the Word is the standard by which any such revelation is judged. If we believe we have heard some "new word" from God that is in conflict with the teaching of Scripture, then this is not a word from God, but has its source in our own sinful minds, or is from Satan and his servants.

6" For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

8But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Galatians 1:8-9)

1Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

In contrast to the Christian's longing for God's Word, the unbeliever fears Its condemnation, and ultimately does not understand It, dismissing It as foolishness.

12For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

14But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

The Desire for Justice

*19O that You would slay the wicked, O God;
Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed.
20For they speak against You wickedly,
And Your enemies take Your name in vain.
21Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?*

*22I hate them with the utmost hatred;
They have become my enemies. (Psalm 139:19-22)*

Recall in this passage first of all Paul's admonition to remain separate from the unbelieving world. Our strong and binding relationships are to be with fellow Christians, and we should long for the company of fellow believers. Conversely, we are to avoid significant relationships (though not all contact, of course) with non-Christians.

14Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

**"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**

17"Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord.

**"AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN;
And I will welcome you.**

**18"And I will be a father to you,
And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,"
Says the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)**

Keep in mind also that the lovers of sin and enemies of God will multiply as the world spirals toward its end. Ultimately, the enemies of God are also the enemies of those that serve Him, and will persecute believers.

1But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. 9But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also. 10Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! 12Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:1-12)

Still, note in Psalm 139 that David does not say "God, let me go forth and slay your enemies," but rather *O that You would slay the wicked, O God*. The Bible teaches that although men continue to reject God and ridicule and persecute His followers, ultimately those that do not believe in and serve God Almighty will be subject to His wrath. God *will* bring retribution upon those that reject Him, and it is therefore vital that we make sure that we are "right with Him," confessing our sins and submitting to His Lordship.

17Never pay back evil for evil to anyone Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. (Romans 12:17-19)

9When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also. (Revelation 6:9-11)

22And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23" They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them. 24" For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. 25" But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26" And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28" It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they

were planting, they were building; 29but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30"It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31"On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. 32"Remember Lot's wife.

33"Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34"I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. 35"There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. 36["Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."] 37And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered." (Luke 17:22-37)

Submission Unto God, and Longing for Righteousness

23Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
24And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23-24)

After all this, we have a simple prayer from David for God's searching, cleansing, and leading. In a way, this seems strange after the foregoing verses—since God already knows everything we are and do and think, why does David *invite* God to search and know him? Remember, God wants us to be aware of, and confess our sins, as this is required for Him to forgive us, cleanse us, and restore us to fellowship with Him. Ask God to make you aware of your sin so that you can confess and be cleansed!

5This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:5-10)

Next, David asks for God's leading. This will not happen, of course, until we are cleansed from sin and restored to fellowship with Him. We have numerous examples in Scripture of requests for God's guidance, admonitions to seek that guidance, and promises that those that are God's children will receive guidance from Him.

13'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]' (Matthew 6:13)

5Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.
6In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

105Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)

14For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

I will end today with another prayer of David which captures all of these thoughts. The Psalms are full of examples of the prayers of David and other Old Testament saints that still convey our needs, desires, confessions, and supplications before God. In this particular prayer, Psalm 51, David is seeking forgiveness and restoration following his grievous sin in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite. (2 Samuel 11-12)

1Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;
According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.
2Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity
And cleanse me from my sin.
3For I know my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.
4Against You, You only, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak

And blameless when You judge.
5Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.
6Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.
7Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
8Make me to hear joy and gladness,
Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.
9Hide Your face from my sins
And blot out all my iniquities.
10Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
11Do not cast me away from Your presence
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
12Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit.
13Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners will be converted to You.
14Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation;
Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.
15O Lord, open my lips,
That my mouth may declare Your praise.
16For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it;
You are not pleased with burnt offering.
17The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
18By Your favor do good to Zion;
Build the walls of Jerusalem.
19Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices,
In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;
Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar. (Psalm 51:1-19)