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Psalm 139

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Bible
at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 139.

Topics.

- God knows when I sit down, rise up and discerns all my thoughts.
- If I ascend to heaven or descend to Sheol God is there!
- God knitted me together in my mother's womb.
- How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
- I loathe those who rise up against God with complete hatred.
- Search me, O God, know my heart and lead me in the way everlasting.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

PSALM 139:1-6

To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

God Knows when I Sit Down, Rise up and Discerns all My Thoughts.

- **Psalm 139:1-6:** O LORD, you have searched me and known me! ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. ³You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. ⁵You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

This means that God knows every thought we think (good and bad, godly and ungodly) and is constantly examining the motives of our heart and the way we live. The LORD even knows what we are going to say before we even speak it. God is behind us and in front of us He is in our past and our future. It would be true to say that David's statement, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it" (or comprehend it) would be the confession of us all. Like David it matters not if we know every teaching of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation or how much we study science and the starry heavens or experience life not one of us can comprehend such breath-taking knowledge.

PSALM 139:7-12

If I Ascend to Heaven or Descend to Sheol, God is There!

- **Psalm 139:7-12:** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! ⁹If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," ¹²even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

If David ascends to heaven; makes his bed in Sheol (meaning is buried in the grave); dwells in the uttermost parts of the sea (i.e., dies in the waters of the ocean) or death comes to him in the day or the night God will be with him. Once a man or woman has been saved it matters not where they go or where or how they die God will always be with them, because God is everywhere and even more than that by His Spirit He is within those who belong to Him, so wherever they go God goes with them. There is nowhere in this mortal world or the eternal world to come that the faithful can go and God's eternal eyes are not upon them and His eternal Spirit within them. Added to this God does not give up on His children simply because they are going through some sorrowful, difficult and troublesome moments which cause them to have doubts about their faith or because their linen robes may have been stained, because of the weakness of the flesh.

The apostle Paul says:

- I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:27-39).

David sinned greatly, he committed adultery and plotted to have the woman's husband killed, but he also repented deeply. We may be faithless, but God is always faithful, He never turns away from a repentant sinner. God's forgiveness is forever available that is why David constantly thanked God for His steadfast love. David deeply regretted the dishonour and shame he brought upon to God, but he also knew the greatness of God's love. These Scriptures of Paul shine a brilliant light upon the truth that nothing external can separate the faithful from the love of God. The only thing that has any power to separate a believer from God is the same power that stopped the wilderness generation entering the Promised Land and that power was their own unbelief. As much as it grieves God when his children chose not to believe, He will not violate their free will, God does not force Himself onto anyone, He gives everyone and invitation to come to Him, today this invitation comes through the Lord Jesus Christ.

A principle we can learn concerning evangelism: witnessing is about inviting people into God's Kingdom, the same as we would invite our friends to celebrate our wedding, no-one forces their friends to come to their wedding they invite them, that is the attitude we should have when sharing our faith, God does not impose or force anyone to come to Him, neither should we. Though all who believe the message of the cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and faithfully follow the Lord will be raised to eternal life the following verses show that though all are saved, some will be rewarded while others will suffer loss.

- No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw ¹³each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

For darkness is as light with you: (v12) figuratively darkness symbolises sin, which means the following two things:

1. God is perfect in Holiness there is no impurity in His character, mind, nature and Spirit.
2. Perfect love is also Holiness there is no impurity in perfect love, we know this statement is true because John in his letters wrote:
 - Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).
 - God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

God is love and God is perfect in Holiness which means that perfect love is also perfect in Holiness. This is why Paul was able to write:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

Here Paul shines a brilliant spotlight on the truth that the spirit underpinning the law is love, because the spirit of the law is to protect the innocent from all types of harm and hurt, whoever keeps the law will do no wrong to a neighbour (neighbour embraces all mankind not just those in God's Kingdom). Those who belong to Christ aim to keep the law not to get saved, but because it honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith and it is the right and loving thing to do. The faithful in Christ's global Kingdom not only understand that righteousness that leads to eternal life is a free gift of God that comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be earned by self-effort, but also know that from the love of God dwelling within their heart and displayed on the bloodstained cross of Calvary they are called to live a lifestyle that honours the God of love and treat others with decency, respect and honest justice.

PSALM 139:13-16

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God Knitted Me Together in My Mother's Womb.

- **Psalm 139:13-16:** For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.

Again, this is knowledge too wonderful and too high to be able to understand, David says his unformed substance was written in the LORD'S book before he was even conceived, and even more amazing the days of his life were already planned. Sometimes we stress, lose sleep and fret over choices we have to make and yet God already knows the choice we will make. Sometimes it will be a right and good choice, but at other times it may not be. This is why we are saved by God's grace, mercy and His love and not by our choices. God already knows what choice we will make before we even make it and yet with this knowledge, he still sent His Son to lay down his life down that we might be saved.

Paul wrote:

- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8).

Sadly, some today do not perceive the love of God and because of this lack of perception of God's love and grace tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes, they feel God has withdrawn his love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this

world. When anyone today who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with his royal and majestic robe of righteous so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions. This truth should comfort every faithful brother and sister in Christ since it is certain if God was prepared to sacrifice his Son for us, while we were indifferent and apathetic toward Him and uninterested and unconcerned about what honoured Him and what didn't He will with great joy do everything to keep us for eternal life now we love His Son. (He does this by daily lavishing us with grace).

PSALM 139:17-18

How Precious to Me are Your Thoughts, O God!

- **Psalm 139:17-18:** How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸If I would count them; they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

Here we have the complete opposite to the truth of the previous verses in that God's eye searches out the mind of man and discovers the most intimate thought while man try as he may to discover the secrets of God finds them incomprehensible. Concerning the nation of Israel, the prophet Jeremiah wrote:

- I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jer. 29:11).

The thoughts and counsels of God are impenetrable and unsearchable; He knows our thoughts but we do not know His they are infinitely beyond ours, but even more humbling than this, is the fact that it is marvellous that God should think of us at all.

God's precious thoughts toward David would embrace all the following:

- God's kind thoughts toward him for his good and not for harm
- God's thoughts to preserve provide and bless all he set his hand to do.
- God's thoughts to care provide and defend him and his Kingdom.
- God's thoughts to establish a kingdom for him in this world and a glorious future eternal kingdom in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

How great is the sum of God's thoughts? (v18) If any one of us attempted to count the numberless thoughts of God toward us it would be like attempting to count the number of grains of sand upon the seashore which clearly would be a task beyond us all.

When I awake, I am still with thee: (v18) God's wonderful plans, purposes and works concerning David come constantly into his mind, not only in the day-time, but even during the night whenever he is awake. These thoughts would include David's anointing to the throne, his troubles, and his triumphant victories,' his reflections of the past (good and bad) and of the glorious future promised to him as he lay down at night, when he awoke in the morning and as he went about his daily duties and responsibilities. God's plans and purposes concerning our welfare and circumstances in this world are mysteries that cannot be known. No matter how much we may search it out we cannot know how many mercies we have received from God or how vast the grace is that He daily covers us with. If it were not for His precious thoughts of love toward us, our reason and our living would forever be through our sins and we would be lost to the darkness of the grave never to rise again. The sum of God's

love to sinners in Jesus Christ exceeds all reckoning. In many things we are strangers to ourselves, whereas God knows us thoroughly. This is why David being fully aware he was born (as we are all are) with a nature of sin and knowing God delights in truth (i.e., righteousness) in the inward being prayed the following five things:

1. God would purge him with hyssop so that he would be clean, and wash him whiter than snow so that he would be filled with joy and gladness and the bones God had broken would rejoice.
2. God would hide His face from David's sins and blot out all his iniquities.
3. God would create in him a clean heart and renew a right spirit within him.
4. God would cast him not away from His presence, or take His Holy Spirit from him.
5. God would restore to him the joy of his salvation and uphold him with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:5-12).

NOTE: the following words of David's prayer give us some insight into one of the ways God chastises the faithful in His Kingdom. David prayed:

- Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. --- NOW GO TO VERSE TWELVE --- ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:7-12)

When those who believe in God and Israel's Messiah the promised Christ the Son of God and Saviour of the world as David did, but live a lifestyle of sin as David did concerning Bathsheba and the planned killing of her husband Uriah God withdraws His Spirit of joy, excitement and happiness, so that the inner most being of those who live a lifestyle that brings dishonour to God's name lacks joy. This lack of joy and dullness of Spirit should motivate those who are feeling such lack to take an honest look at the lifestyle they are living and ask themselves are they bringing honour to God and a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith or dishonour and shame.

NOTE: David in this prayer shines a light upon one of the major keys to enabling God to answer his prayer and that key is revealed in the words, "God uphold me with a willing spirit," (Psalm 51:12). If we are not willing to forsake those things that bring dishonour to God and shame to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith God cannot answer the prayer, because He will never force Himself or His will upon anyone. God's thoughts are so high and vast that our mortal mind cannot comprehend such knowledge.

Loving parents spend many thoughts concerning their children in providing for them; teaching them, counselling them and anticipating their needs for now and the future. How many more thoughts are required in the eternal mind of God concerning each one of us, attempting to count them would be like attempting to count the stars of the heavens which our astrologers not only tell us number in the billions, but also say that our universe is forever expanding.

How precious are God's thoughts to us: who of us could even begin to estimate the number of God's thoughts toward us thoughts of peace and reconciliation in His Son, thoughts of salvation and eternal life, and of the way and means of bringing it about for all the faithful, thoughts of care, love, mercy, grace and forgiveness to provide for all our needs that is supplied to secure the eternal salvation of all the faithful.

- You have multiplied, O LORD my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told. (Psalm 40:5).

I Loathe those who Rise up Against God with Complete Hatred.

- **Psalm 139:19-22:** Oh, that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! ²⁰They speak against you with malicious intent; 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 complete hatred; I count them my enemies.

David's passion and deep love for God cause him hate the LORD'S enemies and pray that God would slay them because they are full of murder and speak evil of God. This may seem like a harsh prayer to pray, but remember the Psalms are not written to be nice and appeal to our Christian calling they are the honest expression of the writers' heart before God. Added to this these people were under the law that stated, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," this was their mindset so it is easy to understand why David would pray such a harsh prayer. It should also be noticed that he is not saying he will go out and administer such vengeance, but praying that should such things come upon his enemies God would not do anything to stop them.

Before judging David too harshly ponder for a moment how you would feel in your heart if a pagan group of people attacked your family, destroyed your home and abused your daughters, or you were standing with the crowd watching the religious leaders of Jesus generation smiling as they watched with glee the Roman soldiers mocking, whipping and brutally forcing a crown of thorns on Jesus head then cruelly nail his broken, suffering and bleeding body to the cross perhaps we might pray the same prayer with tears in our eyes. Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is a very high calling and only one man has attained to its perfection and he gave his life so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

PSALM 139:23-24

Search me, O God, know My Heart and Lead Me in the Way.

- **Psalm 139:23-24:** Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

David prays that there would be no motive behind what he does or thinks that would be offensive to God. This is one of the reasons God said of David:

- I have sought out a man after my own heart to be prince over my people. (1 Samuel. 13:14).

Paul after the reading from the Law and the Prophets said:

- God raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, "I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will." ²³Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus, as he promised. (Acts 13:22-23).

Imperfect as David was in his own personal life he was not only earnestly grieved and filled with deep sorrow and humbly repented before God because of the shame and dishonour he had brought to His name, but also had a heartfelt passion and desire to honour God in his outward behaviour and in his inner most being.

The Scripture says, "God knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14). God not only understands that our nature is flawed with sinful dysfunctions and aberrations, but is also mindful that we are but dust, meaning we are mortal and prone to sickness, disease, grief's and sorrows etc. Scientist today know that everything that exists is made up of trillions and trillions of molecules, everything at a Nano-level (one thousand millionths) is made of the same stuff. How humbled would the prideful who consider themselves superior to others be if they understood the foundational truth that all humanity are Nano molecules made from the same stuff that dust and the dirt of the earth is made of (humbling is' ant it) held together by the ever present power of God.

How foolish to think we are better than others and that we have any hope of eternal life apart from God who holds all the Nano molecules of dust together. David wrote, God knows all our thoughts, he knows when we sit down and when we stand up and even knows what we are going to say before we say it, he then humbly states, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.," (Psalm 139:1-6). Truly before the invisible, immortal, Holy Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life we are but dust.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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