

**Israel's Songs of Hope**  
***The Book of Psalms***

**Being Known by God**  
***Psalms 139***

*For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
You understand my thought from afar.

<sup>3</sup> You scrutinize my path and my lying down,  
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup> Even before there is a word on my tongue,  
Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

<sup>5</sup> You have enclosed me behind and before,  
And laid Your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
It is too high, I cannot attain to it.

<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, You are there;  
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.

<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the dawn,  
If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

<sup>10</sup> Even there Your hand will lead me,  
And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

<sup>11</sup> If I say, 'Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,  
And the light around me will be night,'

<sup>12</sup> Even the darkness is not dark to You,  
And the night is as bright as the day.  
Darkness and light are alike to You.

<sup>13</sup> For You formed my inward parts;  
You wove me in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Wonderful are Your works,  
And my soul knows it very well.

<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from You,  
When I was made in secret,  
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup> If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.  
When I awake, I am still with You.

<sup>19</sup> O that You would slay the wicked, O God;  
Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed.

<sup>20</sup> For they speak against You wickedly,  
And Your enemies take Your name in vain.

<sup>21</sup> Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD?  
 And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?  
<sup>22</sup> I hate them with the utmost hatred;  
 They have become my enemies.

<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
 Try me and know my anxious thoughts;  
<sup>24</sup> And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
 And lead me in the everlasting way.

#### Questions

1. How does the prayer hold together? Do you agree with where I put the section breaks? How would you title each section?
  - a. How do the sections connect?
  - b. What are the strongest points of this Psalm? Notice that the most active requests or statements are in v.14, 17, and 23. The climax seems to be in v.23 – 24.
2. When might David have written this?
  - a. This Psalm seems to me to be from a young David, because an older David would have said more about having sinned deeply and having been forgiven.
  - b. *When* is it important to remember that God knows us? When people forget your birthday, etc.!
3. We're not sure when David wrote this Psalm, but if this is in the context of his anointing and earliest days in Saul's court, then how does that help us understand why David might have prayed this?
  - a. David lacked recognition, respect, and understanding from others (his family), so he had to cultivate a sense of identity in God alone.
  - b. He also saw firsthand in Saul someone who had no solid sense of identity.
  - c. He also was anointed by Samuel as king, and then can't tell anyone about it while he's at the court of Saul. He's in a delicate situation that requires God's guidance.
  - d. He needs to actively invite God to actively search his thoughts and shape them. There can't be something offensive to God in David's thoughts: bitterness against God for putting him in this situation, bitterness against Saul and other opponents, etc.
4. Why is David glad for God to know him, and not be afraid?
  - a. Why are we sometimes afraid? What is our view of God?
  - b. Because God never leaves us. Nothing surprises Him. This is a contrast to the idea of us wandering away from God, and then coming back where God has to discover what we've done and who we are.
5. What are some aspects of God's care and love that David recognizes?
  - a. Active, personal knowing (important for internal processors who find it hard to articulate things that aren't in a place of being closed)
  - b. Guidance, leading
  - c. Protection
  - d. Having a purpose for His creation before He formed it (past, present, future)
  - e. Already having shaped our bodies
6. For what situation are you offering up your thoughts to God for Him to shape? God already shaped your bodies, and knows our thoughts. Now we need to allow Him to shape our thoughts and decisions.
  - a. Unresolved situations
  - b. Tense situations
  - c. Difficult interpersonal situations
    - i. ? Illustration of what it's like to invite God into our processes for decisions