

God of Wonders

Psalm 139

Introduction

In May, 2023 – a small airplane crashed in the Amazon rainforest. All seven passengers were presumed dead. Because of the remote location - it took Colombian authorities a couple weeks to locate the actual crash site. When they got there – they found 3 dead bodies that had perished on impact - - - but were surprised to not find 4 children who were also known to have been on board – 4 siblings – aged 13 years down to 11 months old. They were nowhere in sight.

Rescue efforts were dispatched – tiny clues discovered here and there. A baby bottle here / some diapers there. The children had been raised near the jungle and would know what plants not to eat – but they were just kids. Days turned into weeks - - - but still nothing. In fact – some of the rescuers began to wonder if the children were purposely hiding from the search team.

And – it turns out that was the case – the children didn't know if the rescuers were there to help or to hurt them – so they dodged them!

The Colombians finally came up with a plan. The team lowered speakers into the jungle and played a recording of the children's grandmother who told the children that the rescuers were there to help them - - - and that they should stay in one place

Grandma's friendly voice did the charm

On day 40 – all four children were found – emaciated / insect bitten / weak – but alive

Hearing the reassuring sound of their grandmother's voice - - - caused them to stop hiding - - - and to embrace their rescuers

We have been studying some of the great Psalms of the Bible - - - and Psalm 139 certainly fits that bill

In it – David marvels - - - at the nature of God

He refers to God's omniscience - - - God has all knowledge - - - He is never limited in understanding - - - wondering where someone is / what they are doing

Hebrews 4:13 - 'And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.'

There is no hiding from God or keeping secrets from Him

A.W. Tozer: 'God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being . . . all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret . . . all things

visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven and hell.'

A.W. Tozer: 'Because God knows all things perfectly . . . He never discovers anything, He is never surprised, never amazed.'

Psalm 139 – is a contemplation of God

John Perowne: 'Nowhere are the great attributes of God - His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, set forth so strikingly as they are in this magnificent Psalm.'

There is another reason – why this Psalm falls into the category of the greats

David – in this Psalm – stops to consider the marvel of human life / the birth of a baby - - - its growth in the womb - - - in such wonders - - - we are seeing the awesome power of God

Psalm 139:14 - 'I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works and my soul knows it very well.'

I. The Wonder of God's Knowledge - vv. 1-6

This is a Psalm of David

Luther once chided the humanist Erasmus by saying,

Martin Luther: 'Your thoughts of God are too human.'

One of the things David reminds us of here – God is not like us!

We cannot hide from Him / or fool Him / keep secrets from Him

Psalm 139 is a contemplation of God – and this contemplation turns to wonder and reverential awe – worship

The first wonder which David considers is God's omniscience [latin *omni* = all]

This is a very personal psalm - - David does not talk about God and people in general - - - but God in relation to David

God knows when I sit down and when I rise up

Our lives are an open book before God – nothing is hidden

God knows everything / everything you've ever said or done

He knows us better than we know ourselves

He knows all we do / say / think

He knows what we plan to do tomorrow / and He knows what we will actually do tomorrow

Of course – it is this vast knowledge that makes prophecy possible

Jesus told the disciples – ‘one of you will betray Me.’ – later that night Judas . . .

How did God know that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem – or that the Israelites would be enslaved for 400 years in Egypt - - - or that a 7 year period of plenty would be followed by 7 years of famine during Joseph’s life?

God knows the end from the beginning

Isaiah 46:9-10 - '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, 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."'

God knows what we will say before we even say it! – v. 4

There is a phrase that people sometimes use - - - ‘God only knows’

What happened to Malaysia flight 370?

March, 2014 - An entire airplane – 239 people on a Boeing 777 – disappeared – vanished without a trace

A 3-year search failed to locate the plane / any wreckage / any bodies

Many theories have surfaced – including hijacking – possible involvement of a crew member [UFO’s]– radar did show the plane changing its course radically at one point – before it disappeared

It is believed to be somewhere in the Indian Ocean

God only knows where it is

Proverbs 15:3 - 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good.'

Nadab and Abihu – were two priests - two sons of Aaron – and on one occasion – they decided to offer strange fire in the tabernacle – [Lev. 10]

They may have thought - - - Who is going to know? / see?

It was just the two of them in the tabernacle

But God did see - - - [He knows when we sit down and rise up – v. 2] - fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them

Someone summarized God's knowledge of us this way

'God knows everything – don't try to fool Him!'

Such knowledge amazes David - - - 'It is too wonderful for me.' – v. 6

This knowledge of God makes silent prayer possible - - -

When Hannah was praying in the temple - - - her lips were moving but no sound was coming out - - - 'she was speaking in her heart'

Eli – thought she was drunk - - - but she explained that she was praying to God for a son

And – God heard her silent prayer

II. The Wonder of God's Presence - vv. 7-12

God's omnipresence refers to the fact that God is present everywhere

When Solomon built the temple – the place where God would be worshiped in Israel

He referred to this attribute of God

I Kings 8:27 - 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee. How much less this house which I have built.'

David says

Psalms 139:8, 9 - 'If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there . . . if I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea.'

Buzz Aldrin – was one of the first men to step on to the surface of the moon – 238,000 miles from earth

Later in life - - - he went on a submarine excursion to the location of the Titanic wreckage - 12,500 feet below sea level

He travelled to the greatest heights – and the greatest depth that human beings have traveled -
- - and David says - - - Buzz - - - God was there!

All created things have a place or location in the universe

We have an address where we live
If someone wants to see you - - - you can tell them where to find you – or meet you

I'll be at the Coffee Cup

God is unlike His creation – He is everywhere

You and I cannot go anywhere where God is not

Ronald Reagan memorialized the Challenger Disaster – in 1986 - - - when he referred to the
astronauts – quoting a phrase from a poem

Ronald Reagan: 'They slipped the surly bonds of earth to touch the face of God.'

If I take the wings of the dawn - - - God is there

Night / day / darkness / light

Somebody created a meme – about Gen X from the Challenger disaster – trying to explain
what is wrong with the generation

"If you ever wonder why Gen X is the way it is, remember that teachers hyped
a rocket launch and astronauts that then exploded in front of us. No counseling,
no hugs or reassurances. They just assigned more homework.'

"I'll never forget this. I was in Spanish class, watching when it exploded, there
was gasps and silent confusion....Silence for what felt like forever. Spanish
teacher broke from her rule of Spanish only in class. She looked at us with
tears rolling down her face and said, "I can't believe that just
happened....(turns off TV, wipes tears) please pull out your book and turn to
page (whatever it was)". And that was that." - Kelli L.

Of course – our greatest comfort in tragedy is the presence of God

God sees every tear / every sorrow – He is a God of all comfort – invites us to look to Him in
our sorrows and know that He is there – He is present

Jesus was present at the grave of Lazarus – wept with Mary and Martha - then called
Lazarus from the grave

You and I cannot go somewhere where God is not

Corrie Ten Boom found this out - - - She and her sister Betsie felt the presence of God with them even in a concentration camp – being able to smuggle a bible in / etc. / able to share a vitamin dropper long past its natural use / able to show mercy to others in the name of Jesus

Corrie Ten Boom: 'No pit is so deep that Jesus is not deeper still.'

For the Christian – the omnipresence of God is a great comfort

For the rebellious sinner – the omnipresence of God is not a good thing – it means:

***** All sin is committed before the face of God**

When Cain killed Abel – God says, 'I saw' – your brother's blood cries up to me from the ground

God's presence should be a motivation for holiness and a deterrent to sin

III. The Wonder of Human Life - vv. 13-18

Here we come to this amazing section of the Psalm that celebrates the wonder of human life and the development of a baby in the womb

For women – one of the great privileges and gifts in life – is to carry a baby / bring another human being into the world

It's such a common thing - - - that we don't often stop to think of the marvel of conception and the growth of a baby in the womb – new life

In fact – pregnancies are often viewed as something negative - - - something to put a stop to

David reminds us of the right perspective - - - it is a wonderful thing - life is a gift from God / an amazing product of God's creative power

Psalm 139:14 - 'I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works and my soul knows it very well.'

God weaves us together in the womb

'Depths of the earth' – is an idiomatic expression referring to a secret place / the hidden nature of what takes place inside the womb

Now that we have ultrasound imaging - - - we are enabled to see something of what is taking place in the mother's womb! - - - and it is amazing

There are ministries that seek to provide every pregnant woman with a free ultrasound - - - because women seeking an abortion are far less likely to get one after seeing an ultrasound image of life in the womb

Some Amazing facts about birth / babies

A baby's genetic code, or DNA - all the genetic information needed for the baby to develop, including instructions for how the cells will grow and divide [what color of hair / what color of eyes] is present from the moment of conception.

Around 5 weeks – the baby’s heart starts beating

At 5 weeks - - - Your baby, or embryo, is around 2mm long (about the size of a sesame seed). The face is starting to take shape, with a tiny nose and little eyes, which stay closed until around 28 weeks. Your baby's brain and spinal cord are forming rapidly inside you.

5 to 8 weeks - - - Over these next few weeks, your baby will grow to be about 1 inch long and develop arms, legs, muscles, and skin. If you could see your little one, you’d notice that their head is much bigger than the rest of their body. That's because their brain is growing faster than any other organ.

Week 7 – the baby is about as big as a blueberry

A baby hears sound at 18 weeks – gets used to her mother’s voice / taste in music

If you listened to certain songs during your pregnancy -- - those songs will be recognizable to your child after birth - - - and often have a calming effect upon them

Babies – when born - - - have the ability to swallow and breathe at the same time [adults cannot do that] – so baby can binge guzzle milk without stopping - - - but if they get a stuffy nose - - - look out - - - baby rage!

Mom’s nurturing of her newborn - - - breastfeeding - - - if a baby has harmful bacteria in his body - - - the mother’s body picks up on that thru the process of breastfeeding - - - and will produce the right enzymes to counter that

Who did this marvel of creation? God did

Since the marvel of reproduction is so common - - - we often fail to appreciate the wonder of it

Someone once said - - - if the moon and stars were only visible one day out of the year - - - we would all mark our calendars - - - probably turn it into a holiday - - - but since they can be seen almost all the time - - - we don’t marvel

People get pregnant every day / babies born every day – seems common / ordinary

David says it's a marvel – this should lead one to oppose abortion – the killing of babies

Randy Alcorn makes the comparison on abortion numbers

During the Vietnam War – 58,000 Americans died and their names are etched on the Vietnam wall - - - every 2 ½ weeks the same number of abortions take place in America.

Since 1973 – 63 million abortions have occurred in the US

If we were to make a wall for them – like the Vietnam wall – it would be 43 miles long

'Ever since 1991, high school graduating classes have been missing up to a third of the members they would have had if they had not been killed by abortion.'

Abortion itself is an ugly business – but it gets worse – as abortion fetal parts are sold to research firms for biological research

A Dr. Deborah Nucatola – Director of Planned Parenthood's Medical Services Department was speaking off the cuff - - - not knowing she was being recorded – spoke of this aspect of the industry

Deborah Nucatola: 'I'd say a lot of people want liver. And for that reason, most providers will do this case [abortion] under ultrasound guidance, so they'll know where they're putting their forceps . . . we've been very good at getting heart, lung, liver because we know that, so I'm not gonna crush that part, I'm gonna basically crush below, I'm gonna crush above, and I'm gonna see if I can get it all intact.' [p. 115]

It is actually illegal to alter any practice in abortion for the purpose of procuring a body part – or to make a profit from the sale – [so these matters are not spoken of openly]

But – there is no question that the practice of using fetal body parts for research is real – and defended by the NIH

That process should be disturbing to all people

IV. Search Me O God - vv. 19-24

David prays for God's judgment

To pray for God to judge the wicked – is simply to pray for God's kingdom to come

Bring in your righteous kingdom – do away with evil

Then David closes with a prayer for God to search him and lead him in the right way

If this God who we once fled from - - - loves us / and wants what is best for us - - - and whose ways are ways of life and peace - - - then we won't try to hid from Him

Tozer: 'The voice of God is a friendly voice. No one need fear to listen to it unless he has already made up his mind to resist it.'

This is a prayer of trust – 'God – show me your ways!' / we don't need to fear following God - - - His ways are good!

Conclusion

When Jesus told Peter what sin he would commit later that night [deny 3X] - - - He also handed him a cup and said - - - this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus saw the sin - - - He also provided the remedy for sinners - - - His shed blood

He sees our every sin - - - He provides the remedy

Guilty stains are washed away thru the blood