

PSALM 139

SEARCH ME, O GOD

This Psalm was written by King David for the public worship of Israel. Though written for the people, the psalm is obviously the fruit of a personal examination of David's heart. Here was a man who knew well both the depths of sin and the magnitude of grace. Notice that David's understanding of God's knowledge and searching progresses through the psalm.



THE AUTHOR

Name

King David, the second king of Israel, a forgiven sinner who was a man after God's own heart. Not just the ruler, but a leader of Israel's worship.

Dates

1010-970 BC

Family

Son of Jesse
Succeeded by his son Solomon from wife Bathsheba

History

Anointed by Samuel to be king after Saul
Defeated Goliath with a sling
Became Israel's great hero of war
King of Israel after Saul
Greatest King

Place of work

Jerusalem, the City of David

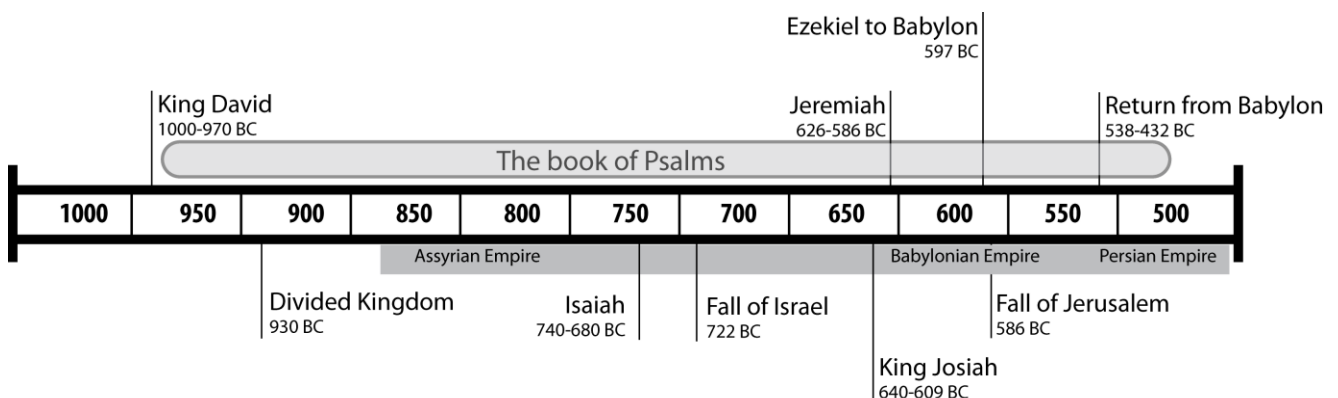
THE POETRY

Notice the poetic structure of the psalm. It is divided into four parts of six verses each (1-6; 7-12; 13-18; 19-24). Each of the parts ends with a couplet that elaborates on the section's theme.

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

THE BOOK

The Psalter, or book of Psalms, is a collection of the songs of the people of Israel written over a period of centuries, from the time of King David until after the return from Babylon. There are 150 psalms in the book that cover nearly every aspect of Christian life and worship. This book is especially suited to be used in your personal devotional life.



Read Psalm 139:1-6

1. How would you describe King David? What were his strengths, his struggles, his skeletons?
2. How would you describe God's knowledge of our lives?
3. Agree or Disagree? It's scary that God has this kind of knowledge.
4. How does God hem us in, and lay his hand upon us?
5. What is David's attitude at the beginning of the psalm?
6. Put verse six into your own words, remembering David's attitude.

Read Psalm 139:7-12

7. When do we try to flee from God?
8. What is the result?
9. In verse 8, the words "depths" can mean hell. Agree or Disagree? God is present even in hell.
10. Why are verses 7, 8, and 9, terribly disconcerting to unbelievers? Why do God's children find comfort in these verses?
11. Look at verse 10. How has David's attitude begun to change?

Read Psalm 139:13-18

12. Verse 13 is the turning point for the psalm. It occupies the most important place. Why would David put these words here? Why are they the turning point for him?
13. How do these verses speak to the abortion debate?
14. When were we "woven together in the depths of the earth?"
15. Agree or Disagree? According to verse 16, all efforts to lengthen our lives are futile, so please pass the bacon.
16. What change do we see in David's attitude by verse 17?

Read Psalm 139:19-24

17. Is it proper for David to pray that God would slay the wicked? A/D? Verse 21 and 22 could make a good motto for FLC?
18. At the beginning of the Psalm, we saw David express conflict when he considered the awesome nature of God's power and knowledge. How do we see that conflict resolved in verse 23?
19. For what are we asking in verse 24? How does God do that for us?

Conclusion:

A/D It's good that God knows our secrets.