

## THE GOD WHO KNOWS ALL

Psalm 139:1-6 pt. 1

There was a critical shortage in the 18th century. A shortage of linen, and everyone was starting to feel the crunch. However, that shortage challenged a certain scientist to make a careful study- and each of our lives have been changed by his work.

The scientist's name was Rene' Antoine de Reaumur. Most people have never heard of him because he normally specialized in discoveries and accomplishments that only his fellow scientists would appreciate the most. For example, he was the man who invented a specialized thermometer that is still used in biochemistry experiments. Most of us have never ever seen one.

But Reaumur's most popular contribution actually came about as he was enjoying his favorite recreational activity. Rene' loved to hike thru the forest. He loved the solitude to ponder scientific problems, but he also enjoyed observing nature firsthand- watching birds, stooping to study a flower, pausing to feel a growing moss. Insects especially fascinated him. He would regularly get down on all fours and scrutinize crawling insects by the hour.

Rene' was out on one of his wooded walks, when he noticed the handiwork of one specific insect. Marvelling at the substance that this insect was producing, he decided to take a sample home with him to study. This started a process that took months to finish. But finally, in November of 1719 Reaumur was ready to address the French Academy with his findings- and that address would relieve the shortage of linen that people were suffering, and make plentiful an item that is important to all of us. You see, back in Rene's day, linen was used for more than just making clothing. The paper that people used was also made from linen. The wasps that Reaumur observed shared a secret with him. They had made a paper like substance that they lived in for centuries- out of wood. So for the past several centuries, paper has become plentiful- because an insect taught a man how to make paper out of wood.

The more careful our study of nature surrounding us, the more we are amazed at all of the insights that we can learn. And if we are learning as we should, our study of nature leads us even further to stand in wonder at the One who created all of these marvels. For the Bible teaches us that there is a God who has formed the entire material Universe. And logic leads us to believe that there must have been an intelligent being to create an insect with the intuitive knowledge to make a paper like nest out of wood. As we would imagine to be the case, the Bible teaches us that this God is greater in knowledge than the summation of all of the learning of all of his creation. In fact, the God of the Bible is presented to us as one who is perfect in wisdom and knowledge. He is presented to us as the omniscient one- the one who knows everything there is to know. We want to look at this God this morning as we begin a new study looking at 6 pictures of God in

## Psalm 139.

Derek Kidner begins his discussion of Psalm 139 in his commentary with this sentence: "Any small thoughts that we may have of God are magnificently transcended by this Psalm; yet for all its height and depth it remains intensely personal from first to last." How true that statement is! For Psalm 139 presents some wonderful pictures of God to us. This psalm presents God as the One perfect in knowledge in verses 1-6, the God who fills the Universe with his presence in verses 7-12, the God who is the creator of the magnificent human race in verses 13-16, the God who is imminently present with his creation in verses 17 & 18, the God who is righteous in his justice in verses 19-22, and the God who is pure and holy in his character in verses 23-24. This God by his very character changes his people and leads them into a lifestyle that would please him, and the natural response of God's people to God's character is interwoven throughout this Psalm. This morning, we are going to begin a series looking at these 6 pictures of God that are presented by King David in this wonderful Psalm.

Let's look first of all at the picture of God with that David begins, the God who knows all things.

READ Psalm 139:1-6.

PS 139:1 O LORD, you have searched me  
and you know me.

PS 139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

PS 139:3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

PS 139:4 Before a word is on my tongue  
you know it completely, O LORD.

PS 139:5 You hem me in--behind and before;  
you have laid your hand upon me.

PS 139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.

1. Now there are several types of knowledge that we experience as human beings. There is intuitive knowledge, the knowledge that is built within us that causes us to act instinctively in certain situations. A newborn baby cries immediately upon entering this earth and this crying helps the baby to get a quantity of oxygen into the lungs. A newborn baby feeds shortly after being born. Nobody taught the baby to cry or feed. These are examples of intuitive knowledge. Later in life, when some strange, big furry insect jumps out at us or when we see a snake around our foot, we tend to jump away from it- some faster than others. It's intuitive, instinctive. We have an inner mechanism that causes us to stay away from animals that might be poisonous.

But there are also other types of knowledge. There's analytical knowledge. These are certain facts that we all learn to be true. We would all say that we know that 5 plus 5 equals 10. How do we know that? Well, we learned this fact to be true. That's analytical knowledge. Then, there's inductive knowledge that we learn in life. This is knowledge that we gain ourselves thru our experiences and reasoning process. We all learn in life that when certain circumstances occur, then other consequences will happen. When we solve a problem, we have learned thru inductive knowledge. In our opening illustration, the scientist Rene' Reaumur gained inductive knowledge as he reasoned thru his observation of the wasp's intuitive knowledge. And we can gain analytical knowledge as we learn the conclusions that Reaumur derived. All knowledge that is gained, whatever kind it might be, is mysterious and wonderful. We can't fully understand even how we can understand- but none of us would deny the fact that we have knowledge. And how thankful we are for the ability that we have to know.

As mysterious and wonderful as human knowledge is, God's knowledge is even more incomprehensible. God has, as part of his very nature, perfect and absolute knowledge of everything. He does not have to memorize any facts, he does not have to reason things thru by observation, He knows all things completely and perfectly. And he not only knows what has already happened in the past, he also knows exactly what is happening now, and even more wonderful is the fact that God knows everything that is going to happen in the future thruout all eternity. Augustus Strong says in his theology about God's omniscience, "By this we mean God's perfect and eternal knowledge of all things which are objects of knowledge, whether they be actual or possible, past, present or future."

Now God's knowledge is remarkable. And it becomes even more fascinating to us when we consider the world that God has created. He has placed in this world creatures who have the capacity to express themselves with a free will. He has created beings in his own likeness and image who can not only know but also make determinative choices for themselves based upon their knowledge. Yet, God already knows what those choices will be in the future and the consequences of those choices.

The Psalmist indicates this in amazement when he says in verse 4- "Before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely, O Lord." Before we utter a word- and we recall James' reminder that the tongue has the capacity to both bless and curse God- before we choose to utter that word of blessing or cursing, God already knows what it will be. Now we don't even know what that word is going to be. Many times we utter words without really thinking about them or planning for them. But even though we don't know what words we are going to utter, God already knows them. No wonder, David exclaims "such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain."

2. Now what specific implications does God's knowledge of all things have upon us as human beings.

Notice with me that David brings out 3 of these:

a. he says in verse 2 how that God knows all of his actions. READ 139:2 "You know when I sit and when I rise;"

Sitting indicates the times of rest, inactivity. Rising indicates the times of work, activity. David here is saying that whatever his activity might be, whether he be working or resting, whether he be active or inactive, God already knows all about it.

We have a tendency to think that nobody knows about the actions that we perform in secret. When the foreman is not around, and we are all by ourselves in the shop, when we are sitting out in the deer blind all alone, when we are driving down the road all by ourselves in the car we have a tendency to think and act like nobody else knows what is happening. We need to be reminded that we are never totally alone- for God knows all things. In part, He knows all things because he is there, everywhere- we are going to see more about this next week, the Lord willing. But there is nothing that escapes his knowledge. David says he knows when we are resting or when we are active.

b. In verses 2 & 4 , the Bible says that God knows what we are thinking. "You perceive my thoughts from afar. . . Before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely, O Lord."

This carries God's knowledge even a step farther, doesn't it? I mean, we are familiar with those who were surprised thinking nobody else was there watching. America's Funniest Videos has made a popular TV series soliciting videos of people doing crazy things being captured with cameras with many of them thinking that they were all alone. But then they turn on the TV and realize that they weren't alone, there was a camera watching their every move. But nobody has yet devised a camera that can take pictures of what a person is thinking in their minds. We have CAT scans that can determine what part of the brain is working. But nobody to my knowledge has come up with a way to determine exactly the content of what a person is thinking in his or her private thoughts. Even our closest friends and family members really don't know what we are thinking. I can see your eyes looking at me, but I have no idea what thoughts are going through your heads. Some of you might be on a sunny beach in the Bahamas right now – and I would never know. Because of this, we have a tendency to think that our hidden thought lives are completely our own domain. They are our private world where nobody else can enter. But this passage reminds us that God even knows our thought life. In fact, he knows it more fully than we know it ourselves. He not only knows what we are thinking- you perceive my thoughts from afar- but he also knows what we are going to say before we say it- before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely. There are times when we don't know what we are going to say, when like the Bible says of the Apostle Peter that he answered not knowing what he said. But God knows. He knows our thought life more completely than we know it ourselves.

c. God not only knows our actions, and knows our thoughts, but he knows all of our ways. READ verses 3 and 5. "You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. . ."

This kind of sums it all up doesn't it. God knows everything about us. He is familiar with all of our ways. His knowledge is complete and perfect. Nothing is hidden from him.

3. Now it is interesting to note David's response to his realization of God's omniscience.

We might think that this understanding would strike uneasiness, even fear into his heart. After all, the knowledge that someone knows every hidden thought or act in our lives could bring a sense of concern to us. David wasn't a perfect man. He sinned, even sinned greatly. But isn't it interesting that David's response was not negative, but it was rather quite positive.

\*David was struck with the wonder of such knowledge as God has. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain."

\*David was comforted by his realization that God knows all about him. "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God. . .When I awake, I am still with you." vs. 17,18

\*David was lead to realize the importance of his honesty and openness before God. He ended this Psalm with a prayer for God to search his heart and know his thoughts to see if there might be anything offensive in them.

You see, David realized the proper implications of the attribute of God's omniscience in his life, and he avoided a pitfall common to many people.

When we realize the sinful thoughts and actions in our life in comparison to the perfect holiness of God, our natural reaction is to run and hide from God pretending that the sin doesn't exist. Like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, we feel that if we can find a bush and run and hide behind it, then we can avoid the scrutiny of God's presence in our lives. So we are lead to try to bury our sin. To sweep transgressions under the rug. To deny the existence of any imperfections in our lives thinking that with our denial, just maybe they will somehow go away.

We need to realize that succumbing to such a temptation in life practically denies this very attribute of God. We are not only fooling ourselves- but we are making the dreadful mistake of trying to fool God. How incredible is it to try to fool one who is omniscient?

King David is called a man after God's own heart in the Bible. He is not called this because he was a man who never sinned. David sinned, and sinned grievously against God. David had periods in his life when he was totally out of fellowship with God. He had one such time early in his life when he so drifted over to God's enemies, the Philistines, that he almost fought against the nation of Israel himself. What a strange turn of events- for the annointed King of Israel to attack his own nation with God's enemy. During

his prime years of life, when very successful from all outward appearances, David committed adulterous acts with Bathsheba, and then ordered the murder of her husband, a very faithful and loyal soldier named Uriah, in order to cover up his treacherous deed. Later in his life, motivated by pride, David order a census of his military forces to be made, even though he knew that God would be displeased with it. Even his general Joab who was generally not a spiritually sensitive man tried to dissuade David from this action, but David would not listen to him. So even a casual reading of David's biography in the bible reveals many flaws and weaknesses. David was certainly far from a perfect man.

But the difference between David and many others in his day was his recognition of the omniscience of God as revealed in this Psalm that he wrote. David realized that God was a God who knows all things. He really understood in a practical way the fact that he couldn't hide anything from God. So after David sinned in weakness, he was always ready to confess that sin and admit it before God. When Nathan the prophet pointed out David's sin to him, rather than becoming defensive and evasive, David, realizing that God was one who knew all things, freely admitted his faults to God. This response pleased God, and allowed David to have restored fellowship with him.

You see, the one thing that God cannot tolerate in his people is a denial of their sins. The one thing that God cannot tolerate in his people is a feeble attempt to cover up sins. For a denial of sin is in reality a denial of the person and character of God. When we deny our sins, we are in essence saying that God is not a God who knows all things. We are saying that we can in fact hide something from him. We are claiming that we are able to keep hidden actions or thoughts from his attention. So then, we are not acknowledging the God of the bible, but we are worshipping a far lesser being, a being who becomes an idol of our own making.

True fellowship with God begins with loving God with all of our hearts. True love is the acceptance of a person for who he is. To love God, we must accept him for who he is. God is the omniscient one, the one who knows all things. As we accept the God who knows all things, we are filled with wonder and amazement at the greatness of his being. And we are also lead to realize that we can't hide anything from him. So we invite him to search our hearts and our thoughts, as David did. As we do so, God is delighted to grant us his forgiveness and cleansing in our lives. The sense of cleansing and presence that he gives to us brings joy and peace into our lives. Then, with David, we can glory in the knowledge that God knows all things- for with that understanding great comfort and assurance come into our lives.