



Bible Studies based on Psalm 139

Study1 - Psalm 139:1-5 God's - omniscience Part 1

1. Read all of Psalm 139.
 - What new ideas or thoughts intrigue you about this psalm?
2. Psalm 139:1-5. Does the idea of God's omniscience encourage or discourage you or a little of both? Why?
3. Psalm 103:8-17
 - What do these verses tell you about God's understanding and care of you?
 - How has God shown you compassion?
 - How has God shown you grace?
 - Verse 14 says He knows how we are made-- that we are frail humans, just dust. How can you have the same kind of sympathy and understanding of others in your life?
4. Read Hebrews 4:12-16.
 - What does Verse 13 teach about how much God knows?
 - How does this make you feel?
 - It may intimidate you to think of God's all-knowing eye, but verses 14-16 paint a very tender picture of God's sympathy for you. What do these verses teach about God?
 - Some people think of God's omniscience, or all-knowing nature, as frightening. They have a mental picture of God similar to the evil all-knowing eye. How do these verses correct that impression?
5. Read Matthew 6:1-8.
 - How does God's omniscience -- that is, his all-knowing nature -- come into play in these verses (See verses 4 and 8)?
 - Believing God is all-knowing is one thing; letting it impact your daily life is another. What practical applications of God's omniscience does Jesus make in these verses?
 - How does Matthew 6:8 relate to Psalm 139:4?
6. If God knows what you need before you ask, and knows each word before it is even on your tongue, why should you pray to Him? In other words, what are the benefits of prayer to your relationship with God if He already knows your heart?

Next week Preparation:

Psalm 139:6 David is in awe and wonder of God's mysterious, powerful nature. What awes you about God?

Study 2 - Psalm 139:6 The Mystery of God - Omniscience Part 2

Psalm 139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. This is too much, too wonderful-- I can't take it all in!

Read Psalm 139.

1. Psalm 139:6.

- When you think about God, what do you find “too lofty”-- too hard to fully understand?
- Why do you think people feel the need to completely “figure out” God?

Some of the many benefits of experiencing the mystery of God include;
It gives me a sense of

1. Wonder- because God is awe inspiring
2. Humility- because God is beyond my understanding.
3. Peace- because God is in control
4. Confidence- because he knows what he's doing
5. Purpose- because God is so huge and big and yet he chose me

Discuss?

2. Psalm 46.

- How do these verses describe God?
- How have you found God to be these things in your life:
 1. A refuge:
 2. An ever-present help in trouble:
 3. A fortress:
- What is the command of verse 10? What are the benefits of doing this?
- What are the obstacles to doing this in your life? How will you overcome them?

3. Psalm 8, another psalm of wonder and mystery.

In this psalm, David is amazed that such a great God would create and care about humans.

- Do you ever wonder why that God would care about us?

4. Psalm 131.

- What do you think is the point of this psalm?
- How can your soul be “stilled and quieted” as you think of God's wonder and mystery?

5. Ephesians 3:14-21 a New Testament prayer about God's mystery and wonder!

- What does Paul pray that the Ephesians grasp (v. 18,19)?
- How would you express this prayer in your own words?

Pray this prayer for each other - Thank God for the love of Christ found in this passage.

FOR NEXT WEEK Psalm 139:7-12.

- How would you express these verses in your own words?
- How does it make you feel to know God is always with you?

Study 3- Psalm 139:7-10 The Mystery of God - Omnipotence Part 1

Read Psalm 139:7-10

1. What difference does the presence of God make in the following “places” that David and we can find ourselves?
 - Emotionally Low
 - Lonely for someone to walk beside you
 - Dark when life implodes or explodes either by you or others
 - Wrong a sinful place

2. Read Jeremiah 23:24 and Acts 17:27-28.
 - What common denominator of truth can you find in these three passages?

 - What are some practical things you can do to help you see through the optical illusion that “God is nowhere” to the reality that “God is now here”?

 - Have there been times in your life when you have been particularly aware of the presence of God? What happened?

3. Read Joshua 1:5-9. At this point in their history, the Israelites’ leader, Moses, had just died.
 - How do you think this message of God’s presence with them helped them?

 - What two attitudes will result from an awareness of God’s presence? (See verses 6, 7, and 9)

 - In what areas in your life do you need to be “strong and courageous”? How can an awareness of God’s presence help you achieve this result?

4. Jonah 1 This is a great example of someone who tried to run from God’s presence.
 - What did Jonah discover?

 - Can you think of other examples of people in the Bible who tried to hide from God?

 - Have you ever tried to run from God? What happened?

5. Isaiah 43:1,2. What do these verses promise about God’s presence?
 - What do they not promise?

This verse promises that “you will not be drowned or burned”— but in fact Christians-- including Christ-- have been killed!

- How could this promise of God’s presence and protection be true? What does it mean?

Thank God that even when the enemy seems to triumph over you or other Christians, God will still reserve the ultimate victory. He will always bring triumph out of tragedy. Ask God for the faith to believe this truth!

Study 4- Psalm 139: 10-12 Light in Dark Times - Omnipotence Part 1

1. Read Psalm 139:10-12.
 - Many times God guides us in ways we only perceive when we look back years later (particularly in Dark Times). There are times when, even during our rebellion, He opens and closes doors in order to guide us back to paths of righteousness. Looking back how have you seen God guide you in your life?
2. Read James 1:5-8.
 - Do you ask for guidance specifically, with
 - eager expectation that God will provide guidance? If not, why
 - not?
 - How will you know if the guidance you sense you are receiving from God is truly from Him?

Review this Check list and discuss the order and possible pros and cons:

Four ways to test guidance

1. Does it agree with the Bible?
2. Does it make me more like Christ?
The wisdom that comes from God is pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy. James 3:17
3. Does my church family confirm it?
4. Do have a peace about it?

We will all be judged one day, not by each other's standards, or even our own, but by the judgment of God. It is to God alone that we will have to answer for our actions. Rom. 14:4

3. Read Psalm 23. David is guided by God specifically in the dark times of life.
 - According to this Psalm, why should you be relaxed?
 - How can this help you when you are stressed out over decision- making?
 - What decisions are you anxious about as you face the week, the month, the year?
 - How can the truths in this Psalm help you?
4. Read Psalm 119:105.
 - According to this verse, what is a great way to understand the will of God? What are some unbiblical ways by which people try to discern the will of God?
 - Have you ever fallen into any of these traps? What happened?
 - Do you ever struggle with the idea that God's will is a "dot" (a point in time from which all paths flow)-- that all the other options must be "Plan B"? What are some of the drawbacks to this approach?

5. God's will involves our free choice within the framework of his moral standards and revealed will? Discuss

6. Read Matthew 7:7-11.
 - What does Jesus say in these verses that relates to finding the will of God?

 - Does this alter any misconceptions you may have had?

7. Read Psalm 1.
 - What kind of counsel does the first verse of this Psalm warn against?

 - What would define "ungodly counsel" today?

 - According to this Psalm, what are the benefits of being rooted in God and His Word?

8. Read Eph. 5:17,18; 1 Thess. 4:3-6; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; and Matt. 28:18. You may be wondering about God's will for your life; here are some passages that lay out God's will for you in black and white. What do they say?
 - How does knowing these things are God's will help motivate you? Ask God for strength from the Holy Spirit to live out these commands in your life!

NOTE!!!!!! Next weeks study can be difficult for some to address, as the content covers life and the formation of life and can invoke questions around abortion and miscarriage.

Study 5- Psalm 139: 13-16 God Broke the Mold - Omnipotence Part 2

General Opening discussion:

Since God began shaping you before you were even born, you've had the same basic shape your whole life. Therefore, if you want to understand God's will for your future, learn from your past. What you were good at when you were 5, 10, or 15 years old you often will be good at when you're 65. Make a list of your enjoyable achievements in life. They don't have to be big. Only two requirements: They must be something you have done well and enjoyed doing. Ask yourself:

- What did I do well and enjoy doing in primary school?
- What did I do well and enjoy doing in high school?
- What did I do well and enjoy doing in college?
- What did I do well and enjoy doing as an adult?

Now look for patterns and ask yourself:

- What did I really like about this?
- What was so fulfilling about it?
- What skills are showing up here over and over --even in different situations?
- How are you using these skills in your life today?

Ask God for guidance regarding how you can use the skills He has given you to better fulfill your "shape"! Thank and praise God because YOU are wonderfully made! Thank God in specific ways for the way He created you!

Read Psalm 139:13-16

1. How does modern culture at times attempt to contradict each of the first four points?
 - Which of these truths is most difficult for you to believe about yourself?
2. According to Psalm 139:13-16, when did God begin to plan your life?
3. Read Psalm 139:13-16. In at least three ways ("unformed body"; "in my mother's womb"; "knit together in the secret place") David teaches that God knew you and was involved with you while you were not even born.
 - How does this idea impact you?
 - How does this motivate you to persevere through tough times today?
 - How does it change the way you look at others-- street people, businessmen, neighbours, etc.-- when you think that God was this involved with each of them while they were still developing in the womb?
4. Read Psalm 139:13-16 again.
 - What may inhibit you from proclaiming that you are "fearfully and wonderfully made"?
 - How is God's definition of "wonderfully made" different from the

definition the world may try to get us to swallow?

5. Read John 9:1-11. How does this story shed light on Psalm 139?
 - How has God taken things in your life that others may see as negative and turned them into positive examples of His power?
 - Thank God for His power and presence in your development! Ask Him to help you live according to your “shape”!

6. Cor.12:28-30. If I asked a group of your Christian friends, what spiritual gifts would they say you had? (Better yet, you ask them and write down their responses here!)

7. Read Ephesians 2:10.
 - How does this verse describe you?
 - What are you made for?

Look at the acronym “SHAPE”

S- Spiritual gifts. You’re gifted by God the moment you become a believer in order to fulfill God’s purpose in your life. There are at least 20 listed in the bible and this is not an exhaustive list. Every Christian has at least one.

H – Heart. This is your drive your motivation, your interests, your core passions, the things that “turn your crank.” God gave you your heart, the things that really interest you, the things that cause you to get passionate. Why did He do that? Because He wants you to be you.

A – Abilities. There are different abilities to perform service... 1 Cor. 12:6 A lot of people don’t think you have any abilities. Yes you do you just don’t recognise them as abilities.
Researches have shown that the average person has between 500-700 different abilities.

P – Personality. God shapes you by giving you unique personality. Anyone with children knows the difference in personalities it is something that is in us from birth. Years ago people thought the environment was a major contributor to personality, now it is commonly understood that your unique personality is yours from birth and will not change. The Psalm says God created you inmost being and that includes your personality.

E – Experiences. Obviously God gives us lots of different kinds of experiences. God never wastes a hurt and sometimes your greatest ministry comes out of your pain, your tragedy, your failure, your mistakes, as well as all the good times too.

- How would you define your unique shape-- what are your spiritual gifts, heart desires, abilities, personality, and experiences, and how do they

blend together to carve out a unique niche in ministry for you?

- Ask God to help you truly believe that you are here for a reason! Ask Him to show you how you have already been used to fulfill His purpose here on earth.

Study 6- Psalm 139: 17-18 Always on His mind

1. Read Ps. 139.
 - How do verses 17 and 18 fit in with the flow of Psalm 139?
 - Spend a moment thinking about the fact that God is thinking about you. Write down five words that describe how that makes you feel:
 - Zeph. 3:17. How can you apply this verse to those emotions?
 - What does it mean to you to know that God is thinking of you with love?
2. Read Psalm 32:8, Isaiah 48:17 & Jeremiah 29:11.
 - Write down what each of these verses say about God's plans for your life:
 - How does it encourage you to know that God is thinking of your life and has a plan designed just for you?
 - Why is it difficult for you to surrender your life plans to God? How can you apply these verses to help you in your struggles?
 - Thank God today that He has a plan for you. Ask Him to empower you daily to walk on His path for you. Pray that you'll have discernment at the crossroads of life. Ask Him for a willing heart to follow after Him.
3. Write down the two things in your life that are causing you the most hurt right now.
4. Write down the two greatest needs in your life right now. Now reread
5. 1 Peter 5:7 and personalise it, pray it:
 - How does/ should this truth impact or lives
6. Read Matthew 6:4, Galatians 6:9-10 & Hebrews 6:10.
 - In what ways are you currently serving the Lord?
7. Recall a time when you felt as though you were serving God but no one seemed to notice or appreciate it.
 - What impact did that have on your service?
 - On your attitude?
 - How can these verses encourage you when you face those emotions again?
8. Read Prov. 5:21, 21:2 & Acts 15:8.
 - How have you tried to fool yourself into thinking something you knew was wrong was really right?
 - How did that choice impact your life?
 - What do these verses tell you about God's knowledge of you and your thoughts? Does that scare you or encourage you?

Take some time to do an honest inventory of your life right now. How are you trying to fool yourself and God? Talk to God about that area(s) of your life. Be honest - he knows your thoughts anyway!

Study 7- Psalm 139: 19-24 It all comes out in the wash

Note: Because of the language used these are not easy verses.
Problems (See the attached commentary exert)

Since David was zealous for God and the things of God, he was opposed to any who were in rebellion against God. The word "loathe" means "to abhor" or "be grieved with." He was opposed to any who were opposed to God. David had the same interests, the same friends, and the same enemies as God. He did not want to be associated with any who were in rebellion against God. 1 Corinthians 15:33 warns, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'" Psalm 1:1 states, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!"

Practical Consideration: We should love the things God loves. . .and hate the things God hates.

We should love the things that God loves. We should, however, also hate the things God hates. When we love things that God hates, we will have problems in our lives. When we hate things that God loves, we will also have problems in our lives. James wrote, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). - O. Garcia.

David has declared how personally God is involved with each of us as individuals, yet David is faced with a problem—a question—that plagues many of us.

1. What is his question, phrased as a statement, from Psalm 139:19?
2. How does David feel about the enemies of God? (Psalm 139:21-22)
 - Has there ever been a time when you have been so angry at the evil around you that you have wanted to pray like this?
 - How do reconcile David's prayer here with Jesus' call to love our enemies
3. Do you ever wonder why God doesn't just immediately destroy those who are against Him? What do the following verses say about this?
 - Proverbs 16:4
 - Ephesians 1:11
4. Even more than eradicating the evil in the world, what does David desire that the Lord do for him? (Psalm 139:23-24)
 - How do you respond to the idea that God already knows and has searched us, yet we are called to ask God to search and know us?
 - Why do you suppose that is?

Note: ESV has 'thoughts' in Verse 23 but the word is LIT: 'cares' so "no anxious thoughts" NIV is a better rendering of the word

5 . Read Psalm 34:4-5, 139:23, Matt. 6:32-34 & Phil. 4:6. Write down the things - big or little - that are causing you anxiety right now.

- Why is it difficult for you to let go of fears and anxieties?

What does Psalm 139 teach us about God's concern for your fears and anxieties?
(in the light of the way everlasting)

Commentary by Dr H L White.

Verse 19: *"Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O, God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men."* From the contemplation of the thoughts of God David turns abruptly to the consideration of the fact that there are enemies of God. This must not be! These enemies have no right to exist, for if they triumph, God is not what David had considered Him to be. Therefore, David utters his conviction and assurance that God will slay the wicked. Actually David is uttering a wish, but the form of his language creates some difficulties. With this form, the words constitute a condition: *"If thou wilt slay the wicked"*. Then we expect to add a conclusion such as, *"then I shall praise thee"*. We probably can bring the best out of the thought in English if we translate it as *"Oh! that wouldst slay the wicked!"*.

Why does David give utterance to such an expression? According to a modern interpretation, David had fallen into persecution. Evil ones had accused him falsely, and sought after his life. In his own enemies, he also recognizes the enemies of the Lord.

Why is it that David utters this strong wish for the distraction of his enemies." The answer to this question is not too difficult to find. David has just come face-to-face with the reality of God. He has been spending his time engaged in the contemplation of God's infinite attributes. The thought of God's omniscience has led him to consider God's omnipresence. Then he turned to reflection upon the almighty power of God in particular as that power was manifested in His own creation and formation. Such a God is the true God and deserves the complete and wholehearted love and devotion of everyone. Yet there are those who oppose this God and, were it possible, would seek to frustrate His purposes. Such people must not succeed! Either they must change their ways and turn to God, or they must perish. There can be no other course for them. The enemies of God must be destroyed; else they will destroy the work of God. This is the fact that David realizes, and consequently cries out for the destruction of the wicked. In his honesty, he says *"Lord, it seems to me the easiest way for you to handle this problem of evil would be to slay the wicked. Why don't you do that?"* Notice he does not say, *"Why don't you let me do it?"* He recognizes that vengeance belongs to God, and that if anybody is going to do it, and do it right, God alone must do it. So he is not saying, *"Lord, let me handle this."* That is what many are saying today: *"Lord, I'll wipe out the wicked; just turn them over to me. I'll take care of them."* But David does not say that; he is saying, *"Lord, it's your problem; why don't you do it?"* So, David does not intend to kill the wicked himself, but leaves that to God. Inasmuch as God is what He is, cannot allow the wicked to continue. If He does permit them to continue with their wicked opposition and enmity to Him, He is showing that He truly does not hate sin. He must act in order that His omnipotence and righteousness may be seen by all, and that they may triumph. Before we proceed to criticize David for this prayer, we must note that we ourselves pray for the same thing, whenever we pray the words of the Lord's Prayer, *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"*. When we pray that the kingdom of God should come, we are at the same time praying that the kingdom of Satan should be destroyed. And when we pray that the kingdom of Satan be destroyed, we are asking for the destruction of all those who make up that kingdom. If God's kingdom is to come, then all that stands in the way of that kingdom must be taken out of the way. In other words, those who oppose the work of

God are doing a heinous thing. They must be put out of the way. They would destroy God, if that were possible. This great God whose knowledge has caused to exclaim in wonder, is a God whom they hate. It would seem inconceivable that men should hate God, but they do. They are God's enemies, and they are violent in their hatred towards God. Surely, God will not permit them to continue their evil work. He will slay them. David proceeds to characterize the wicked as men of blood, and by this expression is identifying them as violent men. They are men who have slain innocent blood, murderers or murderous men. In taking a life they have destroyed the image of God, for man is created in God's image. This God whom David adores is a God whom the wicked despise. Inasmuch as they are what they are, David will have no part with them. Therefore he addresses them with a command, "*Turn aside from me.*" God's enemies have also become enemies of David. **Verse 20:** "*For they speak against the wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*" It is possible to translate the introductory words of this verse, "*who speak against thee wickedly*". At any rate the statement is made here that the wicked, the men of blood, speak wickedly against God. They speak of God or in some sense use His Name for the accomplishment of wicked purposes. To these wicked men, God means nothing, and they are willing to use even His holy name in order that they may attain their own evil ends. As though in conscious disobedience of the Ten Commandments, these wicked ones also take God's Name in vain. The reflection of the language upon the Ten Commandments is clear, but it is striking that no object of the verb is present. So, it could be translated, "*They take for vain*", and those who do this are the enemies of God. Perhaps, this latter phrase is intended as an explanation of the former one. The simple action of the wicked is a violation of the third commandment. David has just contemplated the greatness of God. God is not a creation of man, but the Creator who in all of His attributes is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. David has been filled with awe. How great and infinite is the Name of God! Yet wicked men treat God with disdain. It is this that David cannot abide. Such men are his enemies, for they are God's enemies also. **Verse 21:** "*Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?*" This is a strange and often misunderstood verse. Men have often turned against the utterances that are expressed here, and has condemned them as signs of a low morality. How "*righteous*" men have become, asserting vigorously that they themselves do not want to hate anyone, and that they will not sink to the level of feeling that is expressed in this verse. They say that the ideal of hating one's enemies is barbarous and wholly contrary to the doctrine of love as said by Jesus Christ. Some assert that what we have in this Psalm is ethics of a sub-Christian level. They assert that we have advanced beyond this, and want nothing to do with it. Apparently the Hebrews knew no better, but we now have the teaching of Jesus, and their view is that we have learned not to hate our enemies. Their view is that they have Jesus, and they do not need the psalm. These expressions are heard all too often. Before we comment upon them, there is one point that needs to be stressed. Modern man is in no position to condemn the teaching of this psalm. Modern man has not attained a level of ethics from which he may look down with disdain upon the teaching of Psalm 139. It is simply not true that modern man has learned not to hate his enemies. Some may pay lip service to the doctrine of loving one's enemies, but the actual fact is that, despite the so-called progress of civilization, modern men hate their enemies and even those who are not their enemies just as people did in former days. Today, the human heart is all too often filled with envy, jealousy and

bitterness, even when there is no excuse for such things. Men do not love one another. They know what they ought to do, but they do not do it. And often it seems that those who proclaim most strongly that they are above the "low ethics" of this psalm are the ones who speak with bitterness and hatred of other people. The "do-gooders" of this world, as they are sometimes called, are not at all above misrepresentation and mental persecution. They have the same faults and failures as all mankind do. So it is well to remember that today, just as much as any past day, people hate their enemies and, all too often, even hate their friends. Whatever else may be said about the modern age in which we live, it is not advanced to such a point that it can look down upon the teaching of Psalm 139. However, there is a more profound consideration. Have those who condemn what they believe to be the teaching of this psalm really understood the Psalm? Is David sinking to a sub-Christian standard of ethics? Is he giving in to hatred toward those whom he personally dislikes? Is he speaking from motives that are impure and unworthy? It would have been well if those who so readily condemn the psalm would take the trouble to find out what the psalm actually teaches before they pour out the vials of their scorn upon it. There is a lesson here for all those who study the Bible. When we hear criticisms raised against this or that point in the Bible, the best thing to do is to turn to the Bible and to discover what it actually says. It is not always easy to do this, but it is always profitable. When we have learned what the Bible says upon the particular matter, the objection that we have will often disappear. Much criticism of the Bible is based upon ignorance of its contents, and when this ignorance is dispelled, and the Bible is allowed to say what it actually does say, the difficulty vanishes. And that is true in the present case. Before we look more closely at the verse, we can assert at the outset that David is not giving vent to personal feelings of hatred against those who may be his personal enemies. David was a magnanimous man, and despite his great sinfulness and his many shortcomings, David was a man willing to forgive. He did not hold grudges. What we read in this verse is not an expression of personal vindictiveness. In the first place, we may notice that David appeals to God to corroborate his assertion that he hates those who hate God. If there was anything unworthy in David's hatred, he could not, and would not, appeal to God for corroboration. When a person engages in simple action or entertain sinful thoughts, he does not go to God to support him, unless he himself is so deceived that he thinks that even in sinning he is doing the will of God. It is true that some people may be so deceived that in doing wrong that they think they are pleasing God. Can that be true of David? The answer to that question is not difficult to determine. David's entire soul is overcome with a loathing against wickedness. David has just been contemplating the attributes of the great God whom he serves and his soul has been bowed down in deepest awe and reverence. When a man is like this in the presence of God, it is difficult for him to look with favor upon sin. It is this very fact of the majesty of God which causes David to realize that he must oppose those who are God's enemies. If we say that David's utterances in this verse betray a low ethical standard, what we are really saying is that the contemplation of the majesty of God leads one to actions that are ethically low. There is no escape from this conclusion, for it is out of the contemplation of God Himself that the expressions of this verse flow. We cannot say that David was deceived into thinking that he was doing right when he actually was doing wrong. Everything in this Psalm speaks against such a thought. It is an impossible interpretation. And its impossibility is further shown in that David appeals to God to search his heart and to

know even his inmost thoughts. If there is any wicked way in David, he wants it removed. He desires for God to lead him in the way everlasting. People who are sinning are not concerned that God should search their inmost thoughts and try their hearts. We cannot be satisfied with such an interpretation of this verse. However, is there another possibility? May it not be after all that the appeal to God is without meaning? Was not the God of David a tribal God, the God of the Hebrews? At this stage in their religious development, would the Israelites have had an exalted conception of God? Had they learned that He was Himself of an ethical nature? Was God not bound up with the fortunes of Israel? In answer to this argument, we would say that the whole Psalm speaks against it. The God to whom David prays here is no local tribal deity. He is the almighty Creator of heaven and earth. No higher conceptions of God have appeared anywhere than those which are found in this psalm. Therefore, it is that very fact that has led some to think that this psalm was too "*advanced*" for David's time. The God to whom David prays here is the same God that appears in the latter chapters of the prophecy of Isaiah, and also in the pages of the New Testament. If David had been left to his own devices and had not been the recipient of special revelation, we have no way of knowing what kind of an ideal of God he might have had. David was a sinful man. He was, to say the least, guilty of theft, of adultery, and responsible for murder and for deception. Had he not heard the voice of the living God, we do not know what his ideas of God would have been. They probably would have been upon the level with those of the men of his time. However, what we have in this psalm are not simply David's ideals of God. What we have here are the heartfelt expressions of a man who knew the one living and true God, and who had been the recipient of Divine revelation. So, we cannot seriously consider the objection that the God of David's day was a local deity. This Psalm stands before us, and we must ask in all seriousness what it means. That attempt to deprive the language of its meaning have not proved to be satisfactory. Therefore, let us examine more closely the expressions of this verse. The verse is a question addressed to God. Therefore it could be translated into word for word as follows, "*Is it not that thy haters, O Lord! I hate, and against those who rise up against thee do I feel loathing?*" The question is almost equivalent to saying, "*Behold!*" It certifies the truthfulness of what David is saying. David wants men to know that he does actually hate God's enemies. These enemies are mentioned first, and therefore placed in a position of emphasis. They are the objects of David's hatred. They are described by the words, "*those who hate thee*". What shall be said about this hatred of the enemies of God? Is it, like David's hatred, a thing to be commended? Obviously it is not. It springs from a heart that is deprive and fallen into an estate of sin, a heart from which evil flows. This hatred is cloaked in evil and has a desire to banish God from one's thoughts. It is the God of the Bible that stands in the way of the the designs of fallen man. Without God, man thinks he can solve the problems of this life. Without God, man thinks he can do all that he wills to do, but God keeps getting in the way. Therefore, he would suppress the knowledge of God, and keep God from all his thoughts. With religion as such, he can afford to be quite tolerant. He's willing for every person to go to the church of his own choice, as long as God does not come into the picture. The wicked hate God, and they would destroy Him if that were possible. Those who hate God, no matter how moral their lives may appear, are wicked people. They have set themselves against God, and their hatred of God is an emotion in which the evil is love and the good is hated. In speaking to God, David reverts to the word which he had begun the psalm. He addresses God again as "*Lord*", and

thereby shows his own close dependence upon his God. This Lord is the God who brought the Israelites out of the bondage of Egypt, and who had chosen them to be His people. God's great electing love had brought the nation into being. Indeed it was God's electing love that had called David himself from the darkness of sin into the light of salvation. It is to God, the covenant God, that David appeals. This is David's own God whom wicked men hate. Then comes the verb, and this verb possesses different connotations. We may render, "*do I not hate*", or "*should I not hate*" or "*must I not hate*". David knows that there can be but one reaction to such men. He must hate them. However, it is clear from the context itself that when David expresses himself like this, he has employed the word "*hate*" in a different sense from that which applied to wicked man. Wicked men hated God, and their hatred was an evil emotion. David hated, but his hatred was like God's hatred. His hatred did not proceed from an evil emotion, but rather from the earnest and thoroughly sincere desire that the purposes of God must stand and that wickedness must perish. If David had not hated, he would have desired the success of evil and the downfall of God Himself. It is well to keep this thought in mind when we consider the nature of the hatred of David. This point needs to be stressed. Before we assume that there was something unworthy in David's attitude, we must see precisely what that attitude was. His attitude is that anything less than your hatred of the enemies of God is acknowledging that God is not what He should be. It is an agreement with the position that God and His purposes need not tolerate. If those purposes are fulfilled in part, but not entirely, then one need not hate God's enemies. God and the enemies of God are arrayed in earnest combat. God's purposes of salvation must be carried through. Indeed, all of God's holy counsel must come to pass. Should it fail of accomplishment even in the least detail, then God will seem to be something less than the God that He claims to be. Therefore, if one desires that God's purposes are to be fulfilled, and to see God's holy name exalted, he will turn wholeheartedly and absolutely against all who stand in the way of God and would, if it were that possible to tear God from His throne. One must either hate the enemies of God and count them as his own enemies or else he must acknowledge that he does not desire the purposes of God to come to pass and that he does not wish God to receive the glory that God is due. One cannot be wholly devoted to God unless he hates the enemies of God. Martin Luther was on scriptural ground when he wrote: "*Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word. Curb those who fain my craft and sword Would wrest the kingdom from Thy Son And set at naught all He had done.*" We, too, must hate God's enemies. And we will do this not by personal vindictiveness, nor by malice and envy. Rather we will do it to the diligent use of the means of grace and the determined purpose of living for the glory of God and enjoying Him forever, and we will show the hatred that God requires. All of my life I have heard that Satan fears when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. And that is so, if we are to speak of the practical appellation of this truth. Let us go to Jesus in true devotion, meditate upon and study His word, and live as those whom He has redeemed with His precious blood. In the parallel expression, David speaks of those who rise up against and attack God. It is against these that David has such a loathing. We must understand these expressions in the same manner as those concerning the hatred of God's enemies. These are strong words to indicate that the believer in God must be separate from those who hate God. A misunderstanding is likely to arise at this point. It may be asked how can we win other men to Christ, if we stay away from them, hating and loathing them? Those who ask this question, show by the very asking of it that they

have not properly understood the meaning of the Psalm. David's hatred and loathing are not necessarily directed against particular individuals. This hatred and loathing must be shown in a positive manner. It is by serving and loving God and keeping His Commandments that we are manifesting our hatred of the wicked. At times this may bring us into conflict with those who oppose God, but our dealing with them as individuals must always be in love, even where we are called upon to oppose them. By opposing them, and loving them, we are showing them that we hate. Of course, we are in no position to pass an infallible judgment upon what individuals are God's and what individuals are God's enemies. All we can do is to oppose evil wherever we find it, and to deal in love with those individuals who are doing wrong and apparently opposing God. There is an example that might make the matter clearer. A modernist probably never will understand why the conservative opposes him. Does the the modernist desire to do good? Should he not be commended for what he is doing? However, he who believes the Bible knows that the modernist, whatever his intentions may be, is in fact hurting the work of Christ. Instead of exalting Jesus Christ as the only Redeemer of lost sinners, the modernist minimizes sin and assures man that he can save himself, if there is any saving work to be performed. This is a perversion of the gospel, and it dishonors God. The conservative must oppose the modernist. However, he must do it in love. He may do it forcefully and strongly, and he must do it clearly. However, he must do it in love. He has no right to stoop to abuse, or in any other way to do evil in order that good may come. It is through speaking the truth in love that shows an earnest concern for the truth of God, and that God uses him to make the truth known. So, in earnestly contending for the faith, the Christian is hating the enemies of God. It may sound paradoxical, but the deeper our love to God, the greater will be our hatred of God's enemies. In the light of these considerations, it will be seen how far short of the mark is that interpretation which claims that this psalm has not gone beyond the limits of the Old Testament. According to this interpretation, it would have been more in keeping with the awe due to God if David had realized that in the enigma which divine inscrutability supposedly raises, the wicked were also included. There are those who believe that David should have stopped at this point, and simply have remained content with the truth that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts. Or that he should have realized that the fact that God permits His enemies to remain alive points to God's forbearance and compassion and that just as God's greatness transcends all human standards, His goodness does also. This divine compassion was exhibited by Jesus upon the cross. However David is not able to follow it, for, we are told, that David is under the influence of the cultic ideology of his time. Of course this interpretation is based upon the principles of form-criticism that many have touted. It is not a satisfactory interpretation which should be obvious to all of us. It completely misunderstands what David is saying here. The principal that one must hate the enemies of God, as we have indicated above, is not incompatible with the love of God manifested toward sinners, nor with God's sincere and earnest offer of the gospel of redemption to all men everywhere. **Verse 22:** "*I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*" David does not change or tone down his statement. Rather, he seeks to indicate the nature of his hatred. He says, "*With completeness of hatred I hate them.*" The first word refers to the end or extremity, so that David is saying in effect that he hates them as far as it is possible for him to do so. His hatred is complete. The first word is used as an adjective, so that we might translate it as "*with complete hatred have*

I hated them." A partial hatred would be no hatred at all. It would be like saying that David did not care for God and God's purposes. He who only partly hates the enemies of God is one who completely hates God, and is opposed to God. This would not be David. His devotion to God is extreme. We need to add a word of caution. We live in a day when people speak of extremism as an evil thing. Yet, extremism in the service of God is required. We are to love God, not partially, but with all our heart, soul and mind. Our entire being must be consecrated to God, and all our energies and efforts must be devoted to the service of our God. This is what David possesses. His hatred toward God's enemies is not lukewarm. It's not the middle of the road hatred. It is a complete hatred in which he hates the enemies of God. "*Enemies they have become to me.*" Now David injects himself into the picture. God's enemies are also his enemies. This is like saying that whatever God loves, David will love, and whatever God hates, David will hate. We must be cautious that we do not use a verse such as this as an excuse for any wrong attitudes on our part. If we hate, we must be sure that God also hates the same object. We cannot choose our objects for hatred on our own. We learn what to hate from God and from God alone. And this we learn through the constant, deep study of God's revealed Word, the Bible. Unless we walk with God, depending upon God for all things, our hatred will be the wrong kind of hatred, and the wrong kind of hatred is sin.