

## June 13

**Scriptures:** Read Psalms 137, 138 & 139

**Key Verse:** “Search me, O God, and know my heart... and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23, 24)

### Overview

In Psalm 137 we hear of the lament of some of the Levitical musicians who went away into captivity. It is very sad at the beginning as they reflect on their past, but suddenly the tone changes and it becomes very upsetting in the end as the captives talk of the future revenge they desire on their captors. In their exile, they mourned and wept at the destruction of the Temple, the Holy City, and their own misfortunes. Their captors ridiculed them, asking them to sing, but they would rather lose their ability to play, than to play the songs in the foreign land that once belonged to the Lord’s House. They would rather be paralyzed with the loss of their right hand than to forget Jerusalem, the centre of worship to God where they had once joyously played and sung.

Suddenly, their tears of sorrow changed to great anger and words of cursing for their oppressors that do not reflect the principles of the New Testament but which purport “an eye for an eye”. They vented their fury against Edom who were their brothers, (descendants from Esau), who had helped and supported Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of Jerusalem (Amos 1:11; Ezek. 25:12-14). They prayed in bitterness that God would do the same to Babylon, as they had done to them and their babies. Yet such an imprecation can never be justified. They did not have the love and forgiveness of God in their hearts.

In Psalm 138, David expresses his resolve to boldly praise the Lord. He praises God before all the kings of the earth, and before all their gods, so that all will be ashamed of themselves and their idolatry when they hear him sing praises toward God’s Holy Temple and when they hear the words of the Lord. He envisions all the heathen kings joining him in singing praises to the One and only true God. This was not fulfilled during his reign, but will be during the Messianic reign of Jesus. It will be the great glory of the Lord which will cause them to worship Him. God’s glory is especially revealed in His condescension to revive, stretch out His hand, and save wretched mankind. Because of His truth and lovingkindness we are to praise Him because we can be confident that He will fulfill His purpose in our lives. He is glorified in His concern to complete “that good work in us... until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6; 138:8).

Psalm 139 is one of the most profound psalms. It deals with many aspects of theology and God’s relationship to man. David is awestruck by God’s omniscience (all-knowing) and admits that his own knowledge is limited, for man can never fully comprehend God. However, with the divine revelation in this psalm, God gave new and revolutionary understanding about Himself to David’s generation and each successive one, that we also might learn more about our wonderful Lord. The psalmist is convinced that God knows everything about him. God even knows his inner most thoughts before he utters a word. Truly God looks upon the heart and knows the motivation behind all our words and deeds (139: 1-6; Heb. 4:13).

Yet another attribute of God that causes the psalmist to be awestruck, is His omnipresence (all-present). In every place upon the earth, under the earth, or above the earth, God is there. He is before us, in front of us, underneath us, above us, and around us. His divine all-seeing eyes are ever watchful for mankind (Amos 9:2). He is near so that people may find Him and experience His salvation (Act 17:27-28). Wherever His children are, even in the remotest or darkest of places, we can be sure that He is with us to guide us when we call upon Him. The brilliant light that radiates from God's presence casts out all darkness.

Yet another marvel that the psalmist expresses is God's omnipresence, omniscience (including His foreknowledge) and omnipotence (all-powerful) which are evident in the formation of the unborn child within the womb. The psalmist is aware that God knew him even before he was born; in fact He knew him from the moment of conception. God was there with him in the dark and secret place, and God was the power and infinite wisdom behind His formation and growth. How precious is the unborn child in God's sight that He would be so watchful and caring over that undying soul, and that He would have a pre-ordained plan and purpose for each new life that is conceived. The psalmist's mind has been illuminated by God's Spirit, and yet he stands in awe at the incomprehensible nature of God's thoughts which are innumerable and so very precious to him.

Reflecting upon the power and marvelous deeds of the Lord, causes the psalmist's righteous indignation to rise against the wicked sinful people of the world who speak against God to mock and curse Him. He who only magnifies and praises God wants nothing to do with such people. He wants to see divine wrath consume them so that upon the earth there will only be those who love and praise God. One day, this will come, but it will be in the Lord's perfect timing and plan. As David began the psalm, he now concludes with a similar prayer request, (that should be prayed by all believers) for God to test, search out, and probe our hearts so that all impurity will be gone. The end result of God's cleansing will be everlasting life.

## **Prayer**

Father, we join our hearts together with David in praying, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23, 24).