

OPEN DOOR BIBLE CHURCH, PO BOX 446, WEST OSSIPEE NH 03890

**Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471**

**Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399**

**Web site [todbc.org](http://todbc.org) email us at [opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org](mailto:opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org)**

September memory verse: **Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)**

Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

**Reminder on Sundays, September 13, 20, 27 and October 4 at 4 PM we will be watching video presentations on Spiritual Warfare by Dr. Karl Payne**

**Commentary on Psalms 137, 138, and 139 by, Chuck Smith,  
September 20, 2020**

### **Psalm 137**

Psalm 137 is a psalm of captivity written many years after David's time, written by one of those who were captive in Babylon.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yes, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For they that carried us away captive required us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. But how shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall be he, that rewards thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones ([Psa 137:1-9](#)).

So the psalm reflecting the Babylonian captivity where the Babylonians required them to, "Sing some of your songs." Now singing is a very important part of Jewish life. One thing I like about the Israelis even today is their music. It has such life to it. And they have big music festivals over there all the time. We always try to purchase the recordings from these music festivals, even though I don't understand Hebrew; I enjoy listening to the music. There's such life to it. Quite often our bus drivers and guides will get together in the evening and they'll have a time of singing. And it's always exciting, these evenings of song. Their songs are exciting songs. There's just a lot of action, a lot of rhythm, a lot of exuberance in their song. You know, they, "Hava nagila, Hava

nagila," you know, and they really get into it. You can feel it, and these guys just really love to sing. It's a beautiful experience.

But as in Ecclesiastes, there's a time to sing. And there are times when you don't feel like singing. And while they were captives in Babylon and they were thinking of the desolation of Jerusalem, it was hard to sing of the joys of the land, of the blessings, of the prosperity, of the goodness of God. And so while in Babylon, the songs were silent. "We hung our harps on the willow trees. We just sat down by the river and wept when we would think of Jerusalem." Their last memories of Jerusalem was the smoldering smoke ascending from a city that had been devastated. Looking back they could see Solomon's once glorious temple flattened. And as they saw the desolation, and it was implanted in their minds, now remembering it, hard to sing.

Now the psalmist, first of all, takes off against the Edomites. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. They were sort of perennial enemies of the Jews. Many battles against them and they would often join with anybody who would attack Israel. They would attack, too. Anytime Israel would be attacked by any of the aggressors from the north, they'd always attack from the south. And when the Babylonians were attacking, they came from Edom and they were encouraging the Babylonians in the destruction of Jerusalem. "Raze it, raze it to its foundation. Wipe it out!" "And God, you reward them. Take care of them for that." And then, because God's Word had predicted the fall of Babylon, the psalmist, because of all of the injuries suffered by the people at the hands of the Babylonians, the psalmist with glee actually looked forward to the destruction of Babylon, the enemy of God.

Now in the New Testament, we are taught to love our enemies. These expressions of the psalmist really are not expressions of God in the sense that God never delights in judgment. God never delights in bringing His judgment upon a people or upon a nation. And yet, we so often want to see the judgment of God fall upon the head of the wicked. We can hardly wait for the day of God's judgment. But God is not anxious to judge at all. God would much rather show mercy, for His mercy endureth forever. And God delights in mercy.

I think that we oftentimes have a false concept in our mind concerning God, that He is just sort of standing over us with a club, waiting to bash us for the first wrong move. Not so. God is desiring to show His mercy unto you and He's just looking for an excuse. He's just looking for you to give Him an excuse to say, "Well, that's all right. I forgive you." Just looking for you to say, "Oh God, I'm sorry." For His mercy endureth forever.

### **Psalm 138**

I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name ([Psa 138:1-2](#)).

Here David is expressing his praise unto the Lord. Praising God with a whole heart, praising God for His loving-kindness, His truth, and for His Word, that God has magnified His Word above His name. Now, in all the earth there is no name like the name of God.

In the Old Testament times, the Jews held this name in such high esteem that they would never pronounce the name of God. They felt that no human lips were worthy to pronounce His name. And it came to pass that as they would copy the scriptures, when they came to the name of God, they would only copy the consonants, leaving out the vowels, so that a person would not even pronounce the name in his mind as he was reading because just the consonants were unpronounceable. And so in reading of the scriptures, when they would come to this name of God, they would just bow their head and worship. Now as we've gone through the Psalms, you've noticed how often it says, "Thy name, O Lord, is above all the earth." "Thy name, O Lord, is to be magnified. Thy name." And all of the emphasis that was put upon the name of God. "The name of the Lord is a high tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" ([Proverbs 18:10](#)).

And so they would just put consonants, Y-H-V-H. Try and pronounce it. It's impossible to pronounce. They left out the vowels deliberately so that people would not be tempted to pronounce the name. This was never required of God. This was just sort of something that man by religious tradition picked up on. There are a lot of things that God does not require. Men have just made them religious traditions. And so we follow in the religious traditions of man things that are not necessarily commands or even desires or wishes of God. Man always has to make some kind of religious hocus-pocus out of things, rather than just taking it straight as God dished it out.

And so we do not know for sure the exact pronunciation, but it is thought to be Yahweh. There are some who say Yahovah. And there is theological debate on what is the correct pronunciation, whether it be Yahovah or Yahweh. It seems that Yahovah is more recent type of a pronunciation dating from maybe the sixteenth century and that Yahweh is indeed the correct pronunciation for the name of God. We don't know, but Yah is the contracted form. They would refer to as Yah. And thus, there were many names that had this Yah in it. Yahosaphat, Joshua, Yashua, actually, our Yashua. And this Yashua, the contracted form of Yahweh is salvation, is the name Jesus in Greek. So He was given one of the names of God, Yashua, Jehovah is become our salvation.

Now in the New Testament, we read that, "God has given to Him," that is, Jesus Christ, "the name that is above all names. That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father" ([Philippians 2:10-11](#)). A name above all names.

Yet, as important as is the name of Jesus, as glorious as is the name of Jesus, yet God has honored His Word. "Thou has magnified Thy Word above even Thy name." Now, as I say, there's nothing more important than the name of God, and yet, He has put His Word even above the name, as far as magnifying His Word. Jesus said, "Heaven and

earth shall pass away, but My Word shall never pass away" ([Luke 21:33](#)). We need also to honor the Word of God, even as He has honored it.

In the day [the psalmist said] when I cried you answered me, and you strengthened me with strength in my soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth ([Psa 138:3-4](#)).

And so referring to the Word of God.

Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD. Though the LORD be high, yet he has respect to the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off ([Psa 138:5-6](#)).

Here is, again, a good example of Hebrew poetry. The contrast, "The Lord is high, yet He has great respect to the lowly. But the proud," so you have the contrast here, "He knoweth afar off."

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will revive me: you shall stretch forth your hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me. The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endures for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands ([Psa 138:7-8](#)).

I love this verse. "The Lord will perfect that," and the word perfect is to complete. God's going to complete that which concerns me. Those things that are of concern to you in your relationship with God, God's going to take care of it. The Lord is going to perfect that which concerns me. For His mercy endures forever. And then the prayer, "Lord, don't forsake." I'm the work of His hands. "God, don't forsake the work of Your own hands."

### **Psalm 139**

Psalm 139, another psalm of David to the chief musician. As David offers this prayer really unto God, declaring, first of all,

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me ([Psa 139:1](#)).

Recognizing that God knows me completely and fully.

You know my downsittings and my uprisings ([Psa 139:2](#)),

Or you know my ups and my downs.

you understand my thoughts afar off ([Psa 139:2](#)).

The Hebrew is, "You understand my thoughts in their origins." Before I even think them, You know them. You know the processes by which they are formed.

You compassed my path and my lying down, you're acquainted with all my ways ([Psa 139:3](#)).

"When I'm walking, I'm encircled by You. When I'm lying down, I'm encircled by You. I'm encompassed by You in everything." Paul the apostle said, "For in Him we live, we move, we have our being" ([Acts 17:28](#)). The all-prevailing presence of God surrounding my life, God's omnipresence.

There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, you know it altogether ([Psa 139:4](#)).

So God knows me so completely.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and you've laid your hand upon me ([Psa 139:5](#)).

I look back and I see the hand of God on my life. I look ahead and I see God's plan. And right now I feel the hand of God upon me. You see, I'm surrounded. My past, present, and my future is all wrapped up with God. "You've beset me behind and before, and Your hand is upon me." The psalmist declared,

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it ([Psa 139:6](#)).

What knowledge? Self-knowledge. Very few people really know their selves. We have hidden the truth about ourselves so long that we don't even know the truth about our own self. "The heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked: who can know it?" ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)) Yet God said, "I do search the hearts of man." But who really knows the motive, the true motive behind our actions? And yet, it is God who weighs the motives. We put so much emphasis upon a person's actions. God puts the emphasis upon the attitudes, the motives from which the actions spring. And it is possible, very possible for people to have right actions with wrong motives. And God's looking at the motive.

"Take heed to yourself," Jesus said, "that you do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of men" ([Matthew 6:1](#)). In other words, that should not be your motive, to be recognized by men. That's why I'm doing my righteous thing, so people can see me. You've got to be careful that that isn't your motive. For Jesus said, "I say unto you, you have your reward" ([Matthew 6:2](#)).

Now he tells about people who were doing the right thing. They were giving to God. They were praying. They were fasting. But yet, they were doing it always with the wrong motive, and thus, no reward from God. No recognition from God for what they were doing. For God weighs the heart. God is checking the attitude, the motives by which I do things. And the Bible says that one day, "we are all to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things that we've done in our body, whether they be good or evil" ([II Corinthians 5:10](#)). And our works are all going to be tried by fire, of what manner or sort

they are. So all of the works that a person has done for God. "Oh Lord, weren't we doing this? Weren't we doing that? Weren't we big stars and we were on TV and we were doing all these wonderful things for You." And Jesus said, "Hey, I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity." The whole motive was wrong. The motive was to receive the recognition and the glory, the applause, the praise of man. "So take heed to yourself," Jesus said, "how you do your righteousness, that you don't do it with the motive of being seen of men."

So here the psalmist declares, "Such knowledge too much for me; I cannot attain it."

Now whither shall I go from thy presence or from thy Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there: but if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there ([Psa 139:7-8](#)).

The omnipresence of God filling the universe. There is no place that you can go and escape the presence of God. "In Him we live, we move, we have our being" ([Acts 17:28](#)).

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night will be light about me. Yea, the darkness does not hide from you; but the night shines as the day: and the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee ([Psa 139:9-12](#)).

In other words, with God there is no darkness. There is no hiding in darkness. It makes no difference to God. He can see just as well at night as He can during the day. Turn the lights out and hide from God. No, it doesn't make any difference. God can see us. Light and darkness are the same to Him.

For you have possessed my reins: you cover me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: and marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well ([Psa 139:13-14](#)).

Fearfully and wonderfully made. More and more we're discovering how wonderfully made we are made. The human body. There's a new book entitled, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made. I recommend the book. It's just excellent reading for you. Written by a doctor who spent many years as a missionary doctor in a leprosarium and has done his most recent work back at Carville, Louisiana in the leprosarium there, which they no longer call leprosarium. It's an institute for the study of Hansen's disease. And it's an excellent book. I think you'll enjoy it as he, from a medical standpoint, delves into the marvels of the human body. I'm fearfully and wonderfully made, and the title of the book is Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.

My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect;



and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them ([Psa 139:15-16](#)).

In other words, God knew me completely before I was ever born. When I was still just chemicals. God knew me completely.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with you ([Psa 139:17-18](#)).

God's thoughts for me, how precious they are. How great is the sum. If I should number them, more than the sand. I love to go down to the beach and just take and get a handful of sand and just open up the bottom of my hand and let it just drop on down and form a pile. And watch those grains of sand fall. I think there's something therapeutic about it. Just feels good. But also as the grains of sand are falling, I think, "Wow, God's thoughts concerning me, if I could number them, are more than the sand of the sea." Each one of those little grains of sand represent one of God's thoughts concerning me. God's thinking about me all the time. And then God said, "My thoughts towards you are good, not evil" ([Jeremiah 29:11](#)). And so I drop a few little piles of sand on the beach and then I just look up at the beach and see all the grains of sand and think, "Oh my, how wonderful, Lord. How precious are Thy thoughts of me."

The psalmist then speaks of the wicked. God is going to destroy the wicked. Therefore I want to depart from wicked men. I don't want to keep company with evil men.

For they speak against God wickedly, they take his name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate you? am I not grieved with those that rise up against you? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies ([Psa 139:20-22](#)).

The psalmist said. And then his prayer, that is, his petition. The whole thing is prayer. This is now the petition:

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts ([Psa 139:23](#)):

Who is the man who prays, "Search me, O God?" He's the man who understands and knows that he doesn't know himself. The man who recognizes that he really doesn't know himself is the man who prays, "Search me, O God, and know my thoughts. And know my heart. Try me. My heart is deceitful. My heart is desperately wicked. Lord, know my heart. Try me. Know my thoughts."

And see if there be some wicked way in me ([Psa 139:24](#)),

Because You're going to destroy the wicked. I don't want to be wicked. See if there is something there, Lord, that is displeasing to You.

Now the work of the Holy Spirit is not only revealing Christ to us, but revealing ourselves to us. How often the Holy Spirit reveals to me the truth about myself. My reaction, my response to a situation. The Holy Spirit will say, "All right, Chuck, now that was wrong. That wasn't Christ-like. That wasn't a Christ-like spirit. You weren't responding in love. You were angry with them." And I usually say, "Yes I am, and I have a right to be." Then He starts dealing with me as He reveals these areas of my life that are not yet brought to the cross. Not yet brought into conformity to Jesus Christ. Those areas of self that are still there that He is desiring to give me victory over. The Holy Spirit's work is that of revealing to us those areas of our lives that are displeasing to God. And then the prayer ends.

lead me in the way everlasting ([Psa 139:24](#)).

Lead me in the path of life. Lead me in the way of everlasting life. There's one thing I don't want to be deceived about, and that is my eternal destiny. How many, many people are deceived concerning their eternal destiny because they're trusting in the word of some man. They're trusting in the word of some religious leader. Some maybe charismatic leader who has a lot of charisma, personal charisma, and personal magnetism and whatever these things are. And they are encouraging people to follow after them, engaging in brainwashing techniques. Making zombies out of their followers. And how many people are blindly following them today thinking, being assured that this is the path of life.

"Everybody else is wrong. We're the only ones who have the truth. We're the only ones walking in the light. All of the churches are wrong. They're all lying to you. None of them are telling you the truth. We're the only ones who have discovered the truth." And people blindly following them. And even within the churches, how many people have come to just trust in the church, church membership, or infant baptism. And they're deceived as to their eternal destiny. "Lead me in the way everlasting." I don't want to be fooled on this. I don't want my heart to be deceived on this issue. I want to make sure that I'm in the way everlasting. "For there is a way that seems right unto man, but the end of it is death" ([Proverbs 14:12](#)). I don't want to be in that way, thinking that I'm right and landing up in the pit.