

Reveling in the Omnipresence & Omnipotence of God

The Song, Part 11

Psalm 139:1-6

The New York Times ran an article by Richard Panek a few years ago. He is a physicist and cosmologist, the author of *A Universe from Nothing*. Krauss is only one more voice arguing that the universe began from nothing. He writes, “You don’t need a deity . . . zero total energy and quantum fluctuations can produce a universe.” He does admit however, “I can’t prove that God doesn’t exist, but I’d much rather live in a universe without one.”ⁱ

At least he honestly admits the foundation for his scramble to find a way for something to come from nothing; especially something as precise and orderly and magnificent as the universe. I’d really rather not have do live with the concept of a Creator God.

For the believer, the Creator God is not a concept to avoid, but truth to rejoice in.

We have a powerful, loving Lord with whom we can worship and love and serve.

So far in *Psalm 139*, David has literally rejoiced in the omniscience of God.

Not only does God exist – not only did God create the universe – God also happens to know everything.

David writes in the *first 6 verses* that God knows everything about him too . . . when he stands up, when he sits down; where he walks, what he does and even what he thinks.

The Spirit of God has revealed to the spirit of David some of the truth about the omniscience of God and concludes by singing, in *verse 6*, ***Such knowledge is too wonderful for me . . . I can’t begin to grasp it.***

And at that point David shifts his attention from the omniscience of God to the omnipresence of God.

Notice *verse 7*; ***Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?***

David isn’t interested in running away, by the way.

He’s merely suggesting someone saying, like Professor Krauss centuries later – “Look, I don’t like the idea of accountability to God . . . I’d rather live in the universe without Him . . . so if He did exist, where can I go to get away from Him?”

And David would say, “Well, where would you like to go first?”

David writes in *verse 8*, ***“If I ascend to heaven, you are there!”***

In other words, let’s build a spaceship and go up as far as we can.

David effectively says, “If you go all the way to the end of the universe, you discover that is God’s dwelling place too.”

Well then, I’ll tunnel down and away from Him . . .

That won’t work either – *verse 8b*, ***If I make my bed in Sheol*** – the underworld (superstition held it to be at the center of the earth) guess what? God is there too!

What if I, *verse 9*, ***take the wings of the morning*** – that is, what if I go infinitely east – toward the dawning of the sun . . .

Or what if I reverse direction, *verse 9b*, and ***dwell in the furthest reaches of the sea*** – to the ancient world that was west – the Mediterranean sea was west – what if I could travel infinitely west?ⁱⁱ

Look at verse 10; even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

In other words, even there God abides and is in total control.

To the unbeliever, that’s terrifying news . . . to the believer, it is incredibly comforting news . . . you will never be out of touch or out of reach.

Even there, God can take you by the hand.

Up, down, east or west . . . God is there.

More than likely, David is countering the prevailing view of pagans around him who believed gods had territories. The pagans believed that their gods had limited jurisdiction – their authority was defined to certain areas of operation.ⁱⁱⁱ

So he pulls out all the stops and says if you traveled as high as possible and as low as possible and as far east and far west as possible, God still has jurisdiction . . . God can’t be fenced in.

David is effectively saying that the omnipresence and the omnipresent-authority of God is unlimited.

“Where can you go to get away from God?” And the answer is, “Nowhere!” There is no corner in which He is absent – in life or death.^{iv}

But wait a second . . . I have one more option . . . okay, so He’s everywhere geographically, but what if the lights are out . . . can He see in the dark?

Notice verse 11, *Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night.*

In other words, what if I live in the darkness . . . what if I pull the shades down . . . what if I sleep through the day and live it up through the night?

Listen, doesn’t mankind have this strange attitude that whatever happens in the dark is acceptable . . . he’s unaccountable.

They love the darkness because their deeds are evil (John 3:19).

It’s as if they think the darkness will hide them . . . I mean, won’t that make a difference?

One sweltering hot night in July, 1977, at 8:37, a series of lightning strikes took down New York City’s power supply.

Almost immediately tens of thousands of people poured from their apartments and homes to loot the city. Roving bands of men, women and even children pulled down steel shutters and grills from storefronts, shattered plate glass windows and hauled away everything they could carry. Some of them even rented trucks to carry their loot.

Fires were started. Firemen would end up battling over 1,000 fires and still receive nearly 2,000 false alarms to decoy them and the police away from the looting.

Thieves even robbed each other – imagine that. One teenage girl complained later that some boys had offered to help her carry some clothes and radios she had stolen and instead they ran away with it all. She actually said, “That’s not right . . . they shouldn’t have done that.” Is that twisted or what?

Only a fraction of the looters were ever arrested. Over 2,000 stores were plundered and the loss and damages cost businesses and the city of New York more than 1 billion dollars.^v

All because the lights went out . . . for one night . . . in one city.

But there was one eyewitness to every crime, every individual, every scene – David writes in **verse 12, “even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.**

What a description of God’s omnipresence.

Now David moves to describing omnipotence.

One author divided these early verses up by suggesting that David was answering life’s most profound questions about God.

The first question is, “How well does God know me?”

And of course, in the first part of this Psalm, David answered that God knew everything about him.

The second question is, “How close is God to me?”

And we’ve just noted that at no time are you any distance away from Him.

And now a third and most profound question, “How carefully did God make me?”^{vi}

And the answer is stunning.

Notice verse 13. *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.*

Keep in mind that David is writing before any prenatal or embryonic research had been published.

There were no 3-D sonograms or even stethoscopes.

This is God’s inspired truth to David and to us and He reveals that His sovereign design is deeply invested inside every mother’s womb at the moment of conception.

In fact, we now know that by 9 weeks – just about the time a woman is convinced she’s pregnant – the baby’s heart is already beating.

The words David uses are profound – the Hebrew construction translated in **verse 13, *For you formed my inward parts***, is emphatic. The idea is “You, God, You – Yourself and no other formed me . . .”^{vii}

Listen, you are not the result of nature . . . or mother-nature for that matter. God alone crafted everything about you as He formed you in the womb.

The words translated ***inward parts*** literally translated is ***kidneys***. Sometimes it’s translated ***reigns*** . . . it actually refers to all of our vital organs – kidney, heart, lung, liver, etc.^{viii}

But that isn’t all God designed; at the end of **verse 13 David writes, “You knitted me together in my mother’s womb.”**

You could translate it, “***God weaved me together.***”

This verb suggests the idea of knitting together like an interwoven mass or thicket – more than likely a reference to the well knitted thicket of muscle, tendon, bone, veins and arteries.^{ix}

David says, “It’s as if God is there in the womb weaving away at me; this way and that, under and over and around . . .”

Which means that every strength you have is God ordained: can you run fast? God gave you that.

Like Eric Liddell, the Olympic Champion of whom the movie *Chariots of Fire* was written. He said, “God made me fast and when I run I feel His pleasure.”

That’s great isn’t it? But are you slow? God made you slow then.

When you understand that God wove every attribute into the fiber of your being, it means that God crafted not only every advantage and ability, He also crafted every disadvantage and disability.

Which means that every disability and every weakness and every problem you have anatomically or physically or emotionally including the makeup of your brain patterns, or the lack thereof – in certain subjects like math and science – God actually created that His way.

Notice what David writes in *verse 14. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

That word translated wonderfully, can be translated uniquely – differently.

I praise you, for I am uniquely made. Have you ever thought about praising God for making you different?

Probably not, because we don’t want to stick out from the rest.

David informs us through inspiration that we are all fearfully- amazingly and uniquely made.

For one thing, we are unique from the rest of God’s creatures.

Genesis 1 informs us we alone are created in God’s image – unlike the animal kingdom.

Which means we are able to exercise a will; to be objective and just;

- no animal hopes other animals have enough to live on when they get old;
- no animal draws up a magna carta to live by;
- no animal gather others out of spiritual concern for their walk with God;
- my dog certainly doesn’t;
- my dog just wants to know what other dogs in the neighborhood smell like . . . and what she smells like. We let her loose and she heads to the pasture behind us looking for one thing – dried horse manure so she can roll in it – that’s the

highlight of her day. Then she comes back to us wagging her tail as if to say, “Now pet me” . . . I don’t think so.

The fact that we have been created in God’s image sets us apart from the animal kingdom – with similarities, but unique differences above and beyond all the rest – we are eternal, volitional, self-determining, spiritual worshippers.

My dog has never crafted an idol out of her favorite bone and then knelt and prayed to it three times a day.

Mankind does that kind of thing.

We are religiously driven to answer the fundamental questions of life and the life beyond. God created us with the truth of eternity in our hearts.

Of course, a century of evolution has effectively downgraded mankind to just a little smarter animal, a little higher up on the food chain.

One news agency wrote a story about the London Zoo in 2005. The unveiled their newest exhibit in which 8 men and women were sealed in an enclosure near monkeys and other primates.

The sign read, “Humans in the Natural Environment.” The humans had been chosen from an online contest, and they spent their time sunning on a rock ledge, playing board games, and waving at spectators. A signboard informed visitors about the species diet, habitat, worldwide distribution and threats.

The goal of the exhibit, according to the Zoo spokesperson was predictable: she said, “the exhibit was to downplay the uniqueness of human beings as a species and teach members of the public that the human is just another primate.” One of the human participants agreed, saying for the reporter, “When people see humans here [at the zoo], it kind of reminds them that we’re not that special.^x

Listen, the Bible clearly presents another story. David sings, *I am fearfully – amazingly – and uniquely made.*

We are different . . . and we’re not just different from the animal kingdom – we are different from each other. Similar, yet unique.

In other words, you happen to be an original – there’s no one exactly like you; there never has been and there never will be.

You are wonderfully and uniquely made.

One of the most overlooked, simple proofs of your uniqueness is your fingerprints. No one else on the planet has a thumbprint like yours . . . that’s how creative God is in His unique design of you.

Even twins and triplets have different fingerprints.

God's has crafted more than 7 billion fingerprints belonging to people on the planet today and He's not run out of ideas to prove His point that you are a unique, one of a kind, original.

The implication of what David is saying here is incredibly broad.

This means, among other truths, that you actually have woven into your body for purposes perhaps yet unknown – not only every ability, but every disability – uniquely designed as God who knitted you together wants to demonstrate in and through us His power and creativity and sustaining grace in helping us all to bring Him glory not only by our unique strengths, but by our individual weaknesses . . . so that our boasting is not in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ. (*2 Corinthians 12:9*)

In the meantime, we surrender to God for grace and strength to take one day at a time in utter dependence upon Him.

And the most disabled among us becomes the most powerful testimony that God's grace is sufficient – and God's heavenly future is to be anticipated with great joy.

Several years ago, Nick Vujicic was born with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare genetic disorder. Nick has no arms or legs, although he has two small feet which grew at the base of his torso. Growing up, Nick struggled emotionally and physically to accept his condition. Today, he is a devoted follower of Jesus Christ and has what he calls, "a ridiculously good life."

When I'm asked how I can claim such a thing when I have no arms or legs, [people] assume I'm suffering from what I lack.

They inspect my body and wonder how I could possibly give my life to God, who allowed me to be born without limbs. Others have attempted to soothe me by saying that God has all the answers and then when I'm in heaven I will find out his intentions. Instead, I choose to live by what the Bible says, which is that God is the answer today, yesterday, and always.

When people read about my life or witness me living it, they are prone to congratulate me for being victorious over my disabilities. I tell them that my victory came in surrender. And it comes every day when I acknowledge that I can't do this on my own! Once I yielded to Christ [as my Lord and Savior, He] took my pain and turned it into something good

. . . He gave my life meaning when no one and nothing else could provide it. [And] if

God can take someone like me, someone without arms and legs, and use me as his hands and feet, he can use anybody. It's not about ability. The only thing God wants from us is a willing [surrendered] life.^{x1}

David would say, "You're singing my song!"

Verse 14. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

That's David's way of saying, "Amen!"

What a statement of faith.

To accept God's design and demonstrate trust in a Creator God who displays His glory through both human strength and human weakness is to declare to your Creator God, trust and faith and humility and surrender.

And the good news, for all of us, is that one day we all get perfect bodies, perfect minds, perfect operating emotions, perfectly functioning brains, and perfectly communing souls with our Creator God.

Can you imagine: glorified in everlasting, unending immortality; perfected in uninterrupted holiness and worship.

That's what God has in store for you, by faith in Jesus Christ.

And for those who reject their Creator God?

They volunteer for a Zoo exhibit next to chimpanzees; and they wander in their futile speculations (Romans 1); and they struggle with insignificance in the face of a staggering universe.

I mentioned at the outset of our study the writings of Lawrence Krauss, the atheistic physicist who wrote that he would rather live in a universe without God anyway. Where does his view take him?

To its logical conclusion – let me read how he put it: Human beings are just a bit of pollution. If you got rid of us, and all the stars and all the galaxies and all the planets and all the aliens and everybody, then the universe would be largely the same. We are completely irrelevant.

Not so, David sings – we are so incredibly precious to God; He personally crafted us in the womb – from the moment of life to the conclusion of life – from the womb to the tomb, we are His unique creation.

We are destined for the glory of a new immortal body and a newly designed heaven and a newly created earth.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 4/6/2014 by Stephen Davey.

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- iv Donald Williams, *Mastering the Old Testament: Psalms 73-150*, Lloyd J. Ogilvie, General Editor (Word Publishing, 1987), p. 482
- v John Phillips, *Exploring the Psalms: Volume Two* (Loizeaux Brothers, 1988), p. 596
- vi Adapted from Charles R. Swindoll, *Living Beyond the Daily Grind: Book II* (Word Publishing, 1988), p. 369
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- xi Nick Vujicic, *Limitless* (Waterbrook, 2013), pp. 147-14: citation, preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2013/april/7041513.html