

*Psalm 139:13-18. David rejoices that God knows him (v. 1-6), will never leave him (v. 7-12), and here he worships God for creating him.*

Jean-Paul Sartre was no friend of Christianity. He believed that life isn't a divine creation but a completely meaningless accident. He says, "Every existing thing is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness, and dies by chance."<sup>1</sup> Our existence was so unlikely that we shouldn't even be, yet somehow we are.

Think about this view in light of Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created..." This was no accident—God created. You and I are not just masses of organic chemistry "born without reason." Not at all. We are body and spirit, two parts as one person created in the image of God (Gen 1:27).

These verses in Psalm 139 express the wonder that God created man. Life is astonishingly complex and beautiful. Such thoughts lifted the psalmist's soul to praise. I believe life is worth celebrating not because it somehow defied the odds, but because it is God's marvelous handiwork on display.

## THE WONDER OF LIFE

*Psalm 139:13—For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.*

When we say that our heart is heavy or in love, we're not referring to an organ. It's a metaphor. What we call "the heart" the psalmist called "the kidneys." Kidneys... filled with love? The idea sounds funny to us, so the translators decided upon "my inward parts" in verse 13. In other words: *Lord, you formed my heart! You created me with emotions and desires!*

We have longings, don't we? We desire fulfillment and happiness. It's common to everyone and indicates something more to us than a bunch of chemical interactions in the brain. Each of us has an immaterial part that God knits together. Thus, the unborn aren't fetuses in the eyes of the Lord, but little persons He's weaving together. The mother's womb is His means, but who can explain all that happens from conception to birth? It's an inexplicable miracle.

Tendons and joints, nerves and synapses, eyes, ears, heart, lungs, and brain—it doesn't just happen to work out. From quarks and leptons to hadrons into atoms, cell after cell being knit together for each

vessel and organ in the makeup of a single person. David had no idea of all the complexity that we understand today. Sure, we know more, but even then, we've only scratched the surface of how two cells become a living, thinking, feeling, breathing person.

*Psalm 139:14-15—I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

The psalmist praised God, because His works are awesome and amazing. *The things You do, O Lord, Your deeds are breathtaking!* A sense of wonder rushed through the psalmist's soul as his thoughts soared heavenward. To him, this wasn't just the stuff of poetry; he's pouring out his heart in worship to God after being awestruck with wonder.

The intricacy of life is a good reason for praising God. It isn't that He long ago created a process and then stepped aside—the psalmist was no deist. He believed that there's a creator who's intimately involved with every little detail of every child. Life is one of God's wonderful works. His people should see it this way and praise Him for it.

Praise is the right response, but not everyone will acknowledge that God created them. Atheism is on the rise today, but many more will say that God might exist—we just can't prove it. They're agnostic. Rather than praise the creator, they want a theory to explain the inexplicable.

Consider that trillions of cells somehow knew what to do in forming a person. And somehow all of those cells formed something that desires happiness and fulfillment, pursues love and values community. Can you explain any of this only in terms of chemical interactions? It seems more reasonable to say there's a God who has always been, and He created us.

*Psalm 139:16—Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.*

Before Handel wrote the music for *Messiah*, Charles Jennens had already written the words. A surge in deism had lit a flame within Jennens to tell the world about God's sovereignty. He wrote, but he hadn't the music to go with it. That's when he turned to George

# Celebrating Life

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Frederic Handel. Jennens told him to create a composition that may surpass the beauty of all others. Tall order, but for nearly 300 years, *Messiah* has remained one of the most well-known compositions in Western history.

There was a purpose that fueled the passion of Handel and Jennens, and out of it came a thing of great beauty. Similarly, the psalmist celebrated the beauty of life saying that before it ever was, God had a purpose in mind. He created a being in His own image to uniquely display His glory (Gen 1:26-27; Rev 4:11). Out of so high a purpose, man was created.

It wasn't enough for the psalmist to say that humanity in general has a purpose—I *have one*. It's personal. David entered this world as the youngest son of an unknown family with no real opportunities in store. He was a shepherd boy. Yet, God determined long before the world was, that this shepherd boy would become king.

Is it true that man is "...alone, abandoned on earth in the midst of infinite responsibilities, without help... with no other destiny than the one he forges for himself on this earth?"<sup>2</sup> It isn't. The psalmist believed God had created him and had a purpose in mind. *Everyone one of my days was written before I ever was!*

*Written before he ever was? What about David's freewill? God couldn't have written all of his days... could He?* It seems David wasn't troubled by the thought but found great comfort in God's sovereignty. David made real choices in life, and yet, what God had written beforehand came to pass. What a mystery, but it means we are never alone. To those who know the goodness and grace of God in Jesus Christ, nothing could be more comforting than this.

## THE WONDER OF GOD

*Psalm 139:17-18—How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.*

Meditating on the wonder of creation elevated David's soul to praise the God who spoke it into existence. Like a student enjoying a

masterpiece, David wanted to know all he could of the Artist. Something glorious has been created—*what goes on in the mind of the Creator?!* He contemplated and thought upon God only to find Himself utterly overwhelmed.

Though having gold and silver, David esteemed God's thoughts as most precious. He could dwell upon them forever. We can look at creation, see God's handiwork, and worship Him; but how can we know His mind? Only by reading what He's revealed of Himself. God's thoughts were precious to the psalmist who had only a fraction of Scripture set before him. How much more precious should they be to us who have more than a thousand pages of revelation?

The Bible tells us that we are not, "a curious accident in a backwater,"<sup>3</sup> but the image of God. Men and women are created above the animals, only a little lower than the angels in heaven (Psa 8:5). So much purpose and beauty mean there is a unique dignity to human life. Word pictures such as "formed", "knitted", and "woven" were all used by David in this psalm. They remind us that life is God's great work; and to destroy it, whether inside or outside the womb, is a horrendous offense. Who has the right to end what God begins?

I appreciate a question asked by Stephen Hawking. He's devoted his life to studying the universe and asks, "What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?" Having removed God from his every equation, there isn't an answer. You and I just exist, and just existing, we aren't endowed with any higher meaning, reason, purpose, or plan.

The view of Scripture is that God is the One who breathes fire into the equations. He created life and the unending expanses of the universe. He's worthy of our worship and has a legitimate right to it. The more David thought about his own being, the more reason he found to praise the One who created him. May that be our response as well.

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<sup>1</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., *Being and Nothingness*.

<sup>3</sup>Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*.