

WHAT TO DO ABOUT GOD?

Harmony M.B.C., July 17, 2016

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Psalms 139:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*.

Psalms 139:2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Psalms 139:3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.

Psalms 139:4 For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

Psalms 139:5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

This morning when I got up it wasn't but a few minutes until I saw that the world was going right along the way it had been going when I woke up yesterday morning...and the morning before...and the morning before that.

The sun had still risen, the sky was still blue, the birds were still singing, some of the people on my road were doing the same things they did last Sunday: getting ready to go to the lake, or already gone there, getting ready to mow their lawns, or already mowing them, getting ready to work in their gardens or already out there, sleeping in, doing laundry, washing their cars, down at Walmart shopping, running on some errand, or just laying back in front of the TV.

The point about all this that came home to me is that almost none of these people were dealing with the question my message asks today, "What to do about God?" Because this question is the most serious one a human being can ask during this short life-span that we live, and because this question will be answered by every human being who is ever born on this earth, I think it is one that we need to think about today. I also fully believe that if you have not asked yourself the question and started looking for how you are going to answer it, you are gambling that you won't have to answer it, or have someone answer it for you...ever. This is a gamble you will lose.

I. From the way a lot of our American citizens handle answering the question about what they will do about God, it appears that they simply imagine that He not only knows nothing about them, and further that he pays no attention to who they are, and more than that, it appears that they believe they need not do anything about God. Verse 1 of our text says differently: "thou hast searched me, and known *me*."

◆ God knows every one of us, inside and out

- I am always amazed by how people can cloak themselves in an outward personality and totally convince other folks that they are something they are not...but God cannot be tricked into thinking we are something we are not.
 - In the natural world there is a beautiful orange and black butterfly called a Viceroy. That butterfly looks just like another beautiful butterfly called a Monarch. You almost can't tell them apart on the surface. But beneath that surface, those two butterflies are two distinct species (Viceroy = *Limenitis Archippus*; Monarch = *Danaus plexippus*). More than that, these two butterflies favor two different kinds of habitat – they like two different kinds of environments.
- ◆ He searches the soul of every human being and knows every hidden corner of our minds and hearts.
 - **Heb. 4:12** For the word of God *is*... a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- ◆ What to do about a God who knows more about us than we know ourselves??

II. Some folks act like God knows nothing about their daily activities nor their motives – David says differently in v. 2. - "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

- ◆ You may have missed the fact that scripture here is talking about actions or the lack of action; it is also talking about thoughts that motivate us to do something or not do something.
- ◆ What will you do about a God who is absolutely clear about what your motives are? A God who knows what prompts you to quit doing something or who knows exactly what prompts you to suddenly be interested in getting busy about something?
- ◆ What will you do about a God who sees and understands what you are thinking about even before you do...in fact, He understands HOW you and I think, and why you think what you think...and He has from eternity.
 - In 2005, researches began to look at problem cell phone usage, especially use of cell phones in driving accidents. They looked at several personality and behavior characteristics and came to the conclusion that using some of these, they could predict which people were going to set themselves up for problems...like having a wreck while using the cell phone in the car.
 - God knew, before these researchers did, who had habits that would cause this kind of trouble. He is able to know we are thinking in a way that leads to trouble before we even identify it as a troublemaking thought.
- ◆ What will you do about a God who is completely aware of not only what type of thinking you do that will lead to trouble, but He knows when you are purposely thinking thoughts that are intentionally focused on doing wrong things?

III. What to do about God who is present at every turn of your life, every place you go, every minute you are awake and every minute of sleep you get? And what to do with God

who sifts through your every action, considering what is worthless and what is valuable in the things you and I do? The Psalmist writes, "Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways." (point out the broad meaning of "compasses." That it includes the idea of surrounding to sift or winnow).

- ◆ Imagine the shock of some folks who will get into eternity to learn that as God sifted through their ways, it was discovered that not one thing they did was substantial. Imagine how folks will feel to be told by the all-knowing God that every act of their lives was nothing but vapor.
 - There is a kind of fad today that I will call "smoke sculpture" and "smoke photography." People have studied making shapes out of smoke and photographing them. Some of those images really look real and the amazing thing is that in a photograph they look very substantial...like you could pick them up in your hand and touch and feel them. But they are only so many objects of vapor! They have no substance! They have no life to them, and they fade away into nothing in a few seconds.
- ◆ It is going to be an unbearable shock to much of humanity to have to deal with a God who looks at all their doings as so much smoke sculpture.

IV. What to do about a God who knows the ins and outs, the intent and purpose, the purity or corruption of every word we speak? **V. 4** - For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

- ◆ Human beings are famous for saying things they do not mean, saying things in a way that does not really express what they are thinking, saying things that are totally contradictory to the way they feel. But God knows the truth from the lie, the genuine from the fabricated, the deceptive from the plain and honest.
- ◆ What to do with God who knows everything you mean in the words you speak?
 - Benjamin Franklin once commented about the contradictions in humans related to lessons taught versus practice: "The people heard it, and approved the doctrine, and immediately practiced the contrary"
 - Some of the most contradictory material in existence has to do with how folks will be yes-men to religious teachings and yet live lives that absolutely deny or spit in the face of those truths.
- ◆ What to do about God who marks every contradiction between what we say and what we do?

V. What to do with God who, whether we are comfortable with it or not, has a controlling interest and effect upon our lives: **V. 5** - Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

- ◆ From the most wicked man on the planet to the most God-fearing man on the planet, the Lord exercises a certain supervision over each one of us.
 - **Psalms 76:10** Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

- ◆ I have met souls in this world who imagined that they were totally independent of any influence but what they themselves exercised on themselves. They are deluded. What will they do with God in that great day?
- ◆ God deals with the after effect of men's pasts and He limits the outcome of men's future actions ("behind and before"). **Psalms 75:6-7** For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. 7 But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.
 - I've told this story before, but it serves well here to demonstrate that God has something to say about what people do and about how they do it, or whether they are successful:
 - A few years ago, a couple of Palestinian bombers decided to bomb an Israeli target. They built their bomb, and set the time on it. What they forgot was that Palestinian time was one hour behind Israeli time and so they set the bomb to go off on Palestinian time and then the driver of the vehicle timed his planting of the bomb on Israeli time. The bomb went off in the vehicle an hour early, killing both of the would-be-murderers.
- ◆ Our culture is full of stories about people who had one idea about how they would live, and God had another idea...guess who won.
 - Paul the apostle was a murderer of Christians, but the intervention of Jesus Christ changed it all
 - He testifies himself about this: **Acts 26:9** I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
- ◆ What to do with God who is able to insert Himself into the life of every human soul on earth; He who is able to tailor the doings of men to fit His purposes and to glorify Him.

VI. So, now, let's deal with the question: what to do with God?

- ◆ First, I would caution everyone to acknowledge Him
 - **Psalms 10:4** The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: God *is* not in all his thoughts.
- ◆ Second, I would caution everyone to acknowledge the message that He has sent to mankind. Here is the message: **John 3:16-18** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- ◆ Third, I would caution everyone to really believe the warning of God about rejecting His offer. There is a day when all people will have the question I have been asking answered for them.
- ◆ What to do with God? It will be God who will be deciding what to do about Him, and I can answer that in one short phrase: each of us will answer to God personally for what we did about Him while alive here on earth.

- ◆ In our text chapter, **Psalms 139**, David writes something that tells us that God cannot be avoided, none of us will escape His all-encompassing presence: **Psalms 139:7-8** Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. There is a very sobering account of the great day of judgment found in **Revelation 20**. I want us to look at that now:
- **Rev. 20:11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.
 - **Rev. 20:12** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.
 - **Rev. 20:13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.
 - **Rev. 20:14** And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
 - **Rev. 20:15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.