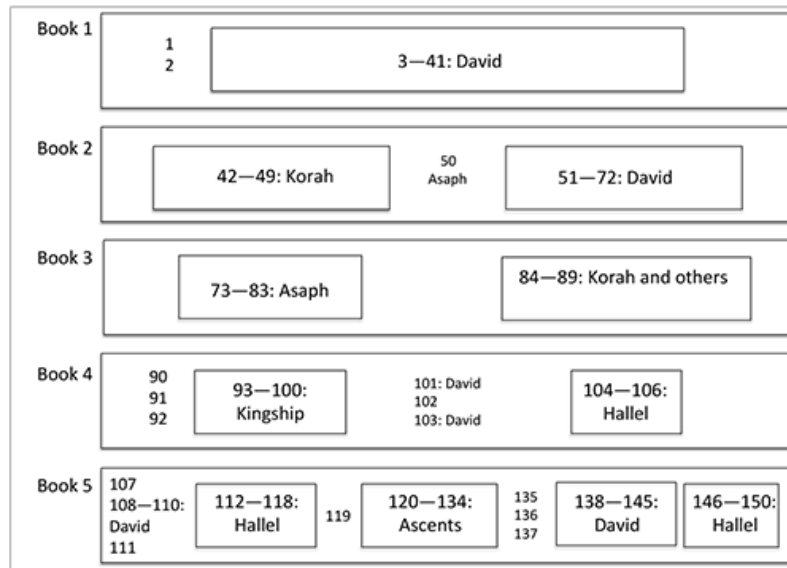


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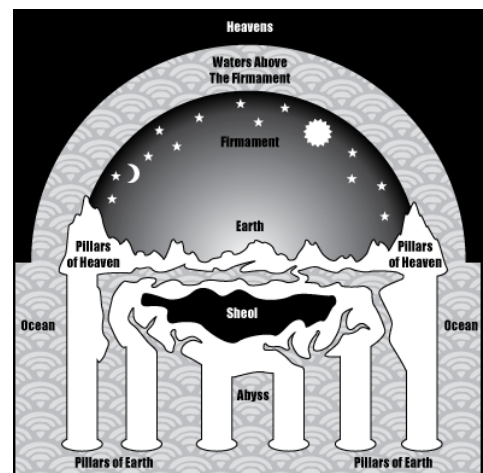
The Psalms**Psalm 139****Enjoying Psalm**

- Images and metaphors
- Parallelism (two lines together)
- Recognising the types of psalm
- Old Testament background
- New Testament “links”

**Psalm 139**

For the music director, a psalm of David.

- 1 O LORD, you examine me and know.
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I get up;
even from far away you understand my motives.
- 3 You carefully observe me when I travel or when I lie down to rest;
you are aware of everything I do.
- 4 Certainly my tongue does not frame a word
without you, O LORD, being thoroughly aware of it.
- 5 You squeeze me in from behind and in front;
you place your hand on me.
- 6 Your knowledge is beyond my comprehension;
it is so far beyond me, I am unable to fathom it.
- 7 Where can I go to escape your spirit?
Where can I flee to escape your presence?
- 8 If I were to ascend to heaven, you would be there.
If I were to sprawl out in Sheol, there you would be.
- 9 If I were to fly away on the wings of the dawn,
and settle down on the other side of the sea,
even there your hand would guide me,
your right hand would grab hold of me.
- 11 If I were to say, “Certainly the darkness will cover me,
and the light will turn to night all around me,”
even the darkness is not too dark for you to see,
and the night is as bright as day;



darkness and light are the same to you.
 13 Certainly you made my mind and heart;
 you wove me together in my mother's womb.
 14 I will give you thanks because your deeds are awesome and amazing.
 You knew me thoroughly;
 15 my bones were not hidden from you,
 when I was made in secret
 and sewed together in the depths of the earth.
 16 Your eyes saw me when I was inside the womb.
 All the days ordained for me
 were recorded in your scroll
 before one of them came into existence.
 17 How difficult it is for me to fathom your thoughts about me, O God!
 How vast is their sum total!
 18 If I tried to count them,
 they would outnumber the grains of sand.
 Even if I finished counting them,
 I would still have to contend with you.

 19 If only you would kill the wicked, O God!
 Get away from me, you violent men!
 20 They rebel against you and act deceitfully;
 your enemies lie.
 21 O LORD, do I not hate those who hate you,
 and despise those who oppose you?
 22 I absolutely hate them,
 they have become my enemies!
 23 Examine me, and probe my thoughts!
 Test me, and know my concerns!
 24 See if there is any idolatrous tendency in me,
 and lead me in the reliable ancient path!

Noticing things

- First of all: the parallelism - take out the pen...
- Then: the images used - let's make a list
- Other observations...
- Any questions?

Layout

Part 1 vv. 1-6 (God knows everything)	vv. 1-3 "you know" vv. 3-6 "you know"
Part 2 vv. 7-12 (God is everywhere)	vv. 7-10 in space vv.11-12 in time
Part 3 vv. 13-18 (God's creation of humans)	vv.13-15 creation vv. 16-18 God's knowledge
Part 4 vv. 19-24 (God's judgment)	vv. 19-22 on the wicked vv. 23-24 on the person praying

Links with the OT

Job 10:18 "Why did you bring me forth from the womb?
 Would that I had died before any eye had seen me,
 19 and were as though I had not been,
 carried from the womb to the grave.
 20 Are not the days of my life few?
 Let me alone, that I may find a little comfort
 21 before I go, never to return,

22 to the land of gloom and deep darkness,
the land of gloom and chaos,
where light is like darkness.”

Job 23:8 “If I go forward, he is not there;
or backward, I cannot perceive him;
9 on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him;
I turn to the right, but I cannot see him.
10 But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me, I shall come out like gold.
11 My foot has held fast to his steps;
I have kept his way and have not turned aside.
12 I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured in my bosom the words of his mouth.”

Jer 17:10 I the Lord test the mind
and search the heart,
to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings.

Jer 20:12 O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous,
you see the heart and the mind;
let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

Ps 22:10 I have been dependent on you since birth;
from the time I came out of my mother’s womb you have been my God.
11 Do not remain far away from me,
for trouble is near and I have no one to help me.

Ps 71:6 I have leaned on you since birth;
you pulled me from my mother’s womb.
I praise you continually.

Isa 44:2 This is what the Lord, the one who made you, says—
the one who formed you in the womb and helps you:
“Don’t be afraid, my servant Jacob,
Jeshurun, whom I have chosen!

Isa 44:24 This is what the Lord, your protector, says,
the one who formed you in the womb:
“I am the Lord, who made everything,
who alone stretched out the sky,
who fashioned the earth all by myself.”

Links with the NT

But just as it is written, “Things that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love him.” God has revealed these to us by the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man except the man’s spirit within him? So too, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God. **(1 Cor 2:9–12)**

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God’s will. **(Rom 8:27)**

The House of Heaven (Francis Thomson)

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
 Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
 Up vistaed hopes I sped; And shot, precipitated,
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbed pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

They beat - and a Voice beat More instant than the Feet -
 'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me'.

St Augustine

Late has I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new,
 late have I loved you!
 Lo, you were within
 but I outside, seeking there for you,
 and upon the shapely things you have made I wished headlong
 I, misshapen.
 You were with me, but I was not with you.
 They held me back far from you,
 those things which would have no wing were they not in you.
 You called, shouted, broke through my deafness;
 you flared, blazed, banished my blindness;
 you lavished your fragrance, I gasped and now I pant for you;
 I tasted you, and I hunger and thirst;
 you touched me and burned for your peace.

Denis O'Driscoll

Missing God

His grace is no longer called for
 before meals: farmed fish multiply
 without His intercession.
 Bread production rises through
 disease-resistant grains devised
 scientifically to mitigate His faults.

Yet, though we rebelled against Him
 like adolescents, uplifted to see
 an oppressive father banished –
 a bearded hermit – to the desert,
 we confess to missing Him at times.

Miss Him during the civil wedding
 when, at the blossomy altar
 of the registrar's desk, we wait in vain
 to be fed a line containing words
 like 'everlasting' and 'divine'.

Miss Him when the TV scientist
 explains the cosmos through equations,
 leaving our planet to revolve on its axis
 aimlessly, a wheel skidding in snow.

Miss Him when the radio catches a snatch
of plainchant from some echoey priory;
when the gospel choir raises its collective voice
to ask Shall We Gather at the River?
or the forces of the oratorio converge
on I Know That My Redeemer Liveth
and our contracted hearts lose a beat.

Miss Him when a choked voice at
the crematorium recites the poem
about fearing no more the heat of the sun.

Miss Him when we stand in judgement
on a lank Crucifixion in an art museum,
its stripe-like ribs testifying to rank.

Miss Him when the gamma-rays
recorded on the satellite graph
seem arranged into a celestial score,
the music of the spheres,
the Ave Verum Corpus of the observatory lab.

Miss Him when we stumble on the breast lump
for the first time and an involuntary prayer
escapes our lips; when a shadow crosses
our bodies on an x-ray screen; when we receive
a transfusion of foaming blood
sacrificed anonymously to save life.

Miss Him when we exclaim His name
spontaneously in awe or anger
as a woman in a birth ward
calls to her long-dead mother.

Miss Him when the linen-covered
dining table holds warm bread rolls,
shiny glasses of red wine.

Miss Him when a dove swoops
from the orange grove in a tourist village
just as the monastery bell begins to take its toll.

Miss Him when our journey leads us
under leaves of Gothic tracery, an arch
of overlapping branches that meet
like hands in Michelangelo's Creation.

Miss Him when, trudging past a church,
we catch a residual blast of incense,
a perfume on par with the fresh-baked loaf
which Milosz compared to happiness.

Miss Him when our newly-fitted kitchen
comes in Shaker-style and we order
a matching set of Mother Ann Lee chairs.

Miss Him when we listen to the prophecy
of astronomers that the visible galaxies
will recede as the universe expands.

Miss Him when the sunset makes
its presence felt in the stained glass
window of the fake antique lounge bar.

Miss Him the way an uncoupled glider
riding the evening thermals misses its tug.

Miss Him, as the lovers shrugging
shoulders outside the cheap hotel
ponder what their next move should be.

Even feel nostalgic, odd days,
for His Second Coming,
like standing in the brick
dome of a dovecote
after the birds have flown.

Conversation