

Living in Light of our Infinite and Intimate Creator

Psalm 139:13-18

Spurgeon called Psalm 139 “one of the most notable of the sacred hymns” as bright as a sapphire or crystal. Even non-Christian writers like Plato appear to have been affected by its portrayal of God’s omniscience and omnipresence. One Jewish scholar called this Psalm the “crown of Psalm-poetry” and John Gill debated whether this might be “the most glorious and excellent Psalm in all the book.”¹

As we think of mothers on mother’s day, this passage is a beautiful reminder of our God who is not only Infinite, but also intimately involved with us, including the formation and intricate design of each of us in our mother before we were born. There is nothing in the world like a mother bringing a new human life into the world. With all the advances in science and medicine, there is still so much of a miracle and mystery about the creation and development of a child in the most secret and intimate place. When I first studied and taught this message, my wife was exactly nine months pregnant with our first child and words cannot express the emotions and feelings involved in that whole experience.

Before we were pregnant, couples from church would show us pictures of their ultrasound, and I would smile and pretend I could tell what it was, but I really had no idea what I was looking at. You can read about it in books or see diagrams in magazines, but there’s nothing like experiencing it first hand, with your own flesh and blood, especially as a first-time parent feeling the little person moving around and growing. Being able to actually see it with a live ultrasound was thrilling when it was my own child!

For us, the first several weeks of our pregnancy were exciting, but it didn’t seem real until we were able to see it with our own eyes; to get that inside peek at what is really going on in there. Witnessing the birth of Ella was one of the most emotionally moving moments of my life. You mothers know about this miracle and process in a more profound and personal way than we men ever can.

Thousands of years before technology could even dream about looking into the womb, the Bible records somewhat of a “scriptural sonogram,” an inside peek at pregnancy from God’s perspective. Psalm 139:13-15 is the most intimate and vivid portrait I know of in scripture about what was going on inside my wife, and I chose to study this passage for my seminary class because I wanted to get a deeper understanding and appreciation of what God’s Word said about this subject. Most of you have heard the verse “I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” but it was very special for me to spend a semester studying that verse in the original language while my own child was being fearfully and wonderfully created by God. I want to invite you to join me on this biblical ultrasound with our Infinite and Intimate Creator

I. God’s Personal Involvement Creating Unborn Life (13)

God made his insides

“For you formed my inward parts”

Some who study Hebrew poetry have concluded that verse 13 is the apex or climax of this poem,² which would make this a very important and emphasized section of the psalm. The grammar and word order in the original puts great emphasis on the first two words “For you” and the extra emphatic pronoun - “YOU formed.” You, God, You and You alone “formed” – a word that speaks of “originating” or “creating” by God.

This isn’t evolution, or the product of mere biology and man and a woman, the text explicitly says this is God’s work. Other ancient cultures saw conception and childbirth as dependent on idols, goddesses, and incantations, and we have record of Egyptian charms chanted for “magical protection for a child.”³ But in contrast to these pagan understandings, the biblical scriptures saw the LORD as the sole source and safety of human life from embryo to infancy and beyond. Psalm 119:73 says “Your hands made me and fashioned me.”

What was God forming / creating? “*My inward parts*” - If you are reading from NASB you may have a footnote for this word, saying it literally means “kidneys.” In the flow of this psalm, David may be emphasizing that the most secret internal part of an unborn person is not secret to God (v. 12), and in fact, even the tiniest of organs are not only seen by God but formed by God. One scholar suggests that the writer mentioned kidneys because he an embryo (mentioned on v. 16) resembles a kidney. The word can mean “the innermost, most secret part of man,” “the center of deepest human emotions, such as joy or grief” or it may represent the entire inner person being formed by God.

It’s an interesting study to learn about the different ways the ancient Israelites used internal organs to describe emotions:

“Hebrew uses the liver (*kābēd* ...) in expressions of joy, the kidneys (*kēlayôt*) for affections, the heart (*lēb*) for both affections and mind and the abdominal organs (*mēi’m*) for compassion ... In English the word “heart” is used for most of these ...”⁴

You can’t help but notice how personal this whole song is. Depending on your translation, there are at least 80 personal pronouns in this poem, including 50 times when David refers to himself personally using “I,” “me” or “my,” and here he says “*my inward parts*.” And that’s the way this whole hymn is – David is not just talking about omniscience as an abstract concept, he’s talking about God’s knowledge that knows *him* personally and completely. He’s not just discussing omnipresence as a theological concept, this is a presence that surrounds *him* constantly and intimately. And the omnipotence he’s talking about is not some stuffy definition from a textbook, it’s a power that personally created him and his most delicate and sensitive parts.

It’s been said this is “one of the grandest psalms in the entire collection, if not, indeed, the best of them all ... the O.T.’s highest conception of the relationship of God to the individual soul.”⁵

In the prior verse, David just finished talking about the immensity and inescapability of God’s massive presence that fills the whole universe. If I was going to turn the corner and talk about how all-powerful God is, I would maybe talk about how He created the vast galaxies, or hundreds of billions of stars, or the majestic mountains. But David instead focuses on his tiniest internal parts and the tiniest stage of human life.

There's another passage where God's forming of the inward man is put on the same level as God's grand works: "*Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him...*" (Zechariah 12:1). Another powerful section introduces God like this in Isaiah 44:2 "Thus says the LORD who made you, and formed you in the womb, who will help you, do not fear ..." The comfort and the most amazing thing to David in this context is not God's creation of the Universe, it's His intimate and providential knowledge, His delicate working in the smallest details, and His caring for him personally.

God not only made his insides, God made him inside and out

"You wove me in my mother's womb"

The verb here has the idea of shaping, knitting together or weaving. The imperfect tense of this verb is emphasizing continual action over a period of time, so the original language may be explaining that God is constantly weaving the unborn body together throughout the entire pregnancy.

The imagery is beautiful - the developing skin, sinews, bones, and muscles are the fabric being delicately and intricately wound together by the master Weaver with as much painstaking care over its formation as a woman laboring over important tapestry.⁶ To weave or sew requires the maximum amount of light possible, but the God of David does the most delicate sewing and prenatal operations in the darkest possible place. This fits with the end of verse 12: "darkness and light are alike" to God.

II. God's Praise Should be the Response of our Life (14)

"I will give thanks to you" – David will continue talking about his unborn body in a moment, but here he can't help but interrupt himself. He can't continue this thought without bursting into irresistible thanksgiving. Much like the Apostle Paul in many of his epistles, he can't talk very long about God and His Works without breaking into spontaneous praise. One lesson we can learn from this psalm is the appropriate response to learning about God – worship. God's attributes and character are not just to be intellectually *analyzed*, they are to be *adored*.

I like what one writer said:

Indeed, one cannot think of God and His wondrous works without bursting forth into praise. This is the reason why in so many textbooks of theology, even in the midst of their exposition of the truth, the author allows his feelings of love and praise to God to break through. It is well that such is the case. To be pitied is the man who can discourse about the greatness of God without emotion. He who knows God and loves Him cannot speak of Him without feeling ... If we are not moved to praise by the contemplation of God's attributes, we may well examine our hearts whether we possess the true knowledge of God. When the devout heart begins to contemplate the greatness of God, it loses itself in wonder, love, and praise.⁷

Unlike the way many churchgoers think today, there is no dichotomy here between doctrine and practice, between theology and life. To the scripture writers, doctrine is immensely practical, and theology should have a great impact on how we live our life. Spurgeon rightly said this song “warns us against that practical atheism which ignores the presence of God, and so makes shipwreck of the soul.”⁸

“For I am fearfully and wonderfully made” – this is what makes him praise God. This is one of the most familiar phrases in this section, and also is among the most heavily emphasized by the original pen. David uses several literary devices⁹ to make this statement especially intense. There are three consecutive passives in this verse, which perhaps stress that all of the action was done by God alone (divine passive). Each human being is marvelously unique, and we should give God all the glory: “Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.”

David doesn’t say “my *mind* knows” – he says that his soul knows. Clearly David is talking about more than an intellectual knowledge. Notice that he doesn’t have to give a laundry list of extra blessings in his life to say, “Wonderful are Your works,” nor does he need to recount God’s works in Israel’s history. Simply the miracle of life itself and God’s involvement is enough.

In discussing amazing recent advances in prenatal science, Stanford University biologist Matthew Scott says we understand a lot more now than ever before, but it still “just seems marvelous.”¹⁰

A Scottish Christian writer named Alexander MacLaren wrote: “the psalmist cannot contemplate his own frame, God’s workmanship, without breaking into thanks, nor without being touched with awe. Every man carries in his own body reasons enough for reverent gratitude.”¹¹

Read verses 17-18. It’s a staggering thought how much our Infinite God intimately cares – what a precious truth for a believer!

How are we fearfully and wonderfully made? I need to make a disclaimer here that I’m not an expert when it comes to pregnancy and the science of and stages of embryonic development (until we had kids, I thought “placenta” was a city in Southern California). But what I have read from those who are experts in this field is amazing. Look at the word “inward parts” in verse 13. Do you see the tiny dot over the letter “i” in the word inward? We’re told that in a speck of watery material smaller than the dot over this i, all the future characteristics of the child are programmed—the color of his skin, eyes and hair, the shape of his facial features, the natural abilities he will have. All that the child will be physically and mentally is contained in germ form in that fertilized egg. From it will develop.¹²

60 trillion cells, 100 thousand miles of nerve fiber, 60 thousand miles of vessels carrying blood around the body, 250 bones, to say nothing of joints, ligaments and muscles. God formed our inward parts; each one a marvel of divine engineering. Think of the brain, for instance, with its capacity for recording facts, sounds, odors, sights, touch, pain; with its ability to recall; with its power to make computations; with its seemingly endless flair for making decisions and solving problems.

The language of knitting together is appropriate in describing the marvelous weaving of the muscles, sinews, ligaments, nerves, blood vessels and bones of the human frame. The more we think of the marvels of the human body, its orderliness, its complexity, its beauty, its instincts and inherited factors—the more we wonder how anyone trained in natural science can fail to be a believer in an infinite Creator.¹³

Even Charles Darwin, said this in *The Origin of Species*, the book which largely launched the naturalistic evolution theory:

“To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree possible.”

Another writer discusses how much more complexity has been learned about the eye since Darwin wrote this: “Consider for a moment the incredible complexity of the human eye. It consists of a ball with a lens on one side and a light-sensitive retina made up of rods and cones inside the other. The lens itself has a sturdy protective covering called a cornea and sits over an iris designed to protect the eye from excessive light. The eye contains a fantastic watery substance that is replaced every four hours, while tear glands continuously flush the outside clean. In addition, an eyelid sweeps secretions over the cornea to keep it moist, and eyelashes protect it from dust. It is one thing to stretch credulity by suggesting that the complexities of the eye evolved by chance; it is quite another to surmise that the eye could have evolved in concert with myriad other coordinated functions. As a case in point, extraordinarily tuned muscles surround the eye for precision motility and shape the lens for the function of focus. Additionally, consider the fact that as you read this document, a vast number of impulses are traveling from your eyes through millions of nerve fibers that transmit information to a complex computing center in the brain called the visual cortex ...¹⁴

III. God’s Perfect Care applies to all of Life (15-18)

“My frame was not hidden from you”

The word “frame” literally is the word for “bones” and has the idea of “skeleton” or “bony framework” or “the total body.” This psalm says God can see everything and can see through you, and what God sees in this poem is more than any X-ray or MRI will ever be able to see; God sees the immaterial and invisible and his vision includes an intimate knowledge of the soul, emotions, and thoughts.

“When I was made in secret”

“And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth”

These are 2 figures of speech referring to where the unborn are formed - a metaphor for ultimate darkness or a survey of life from the womb to the grave.¹⁵

Chuck Swindoll has an interesting comment regarding this imagery “depths of the earth”:

When priceless treasures in ancient history of Israel were put in a place of safety, they were usually buried, tucked away in a dark place away from peering eyes, and greedy minds. So with the treasured work of God as He works on every embryo ... each baby gives undeniable evidence to the handiwork of God.”¹⁶

The idea could also be that of an artist or worker who patiently works on his masterpiece in secret and doesn't bring it out until it's ready and perfect.

There are several different words this section uses to describe God's creative involvement: "formed ... wove ... fearfully made ... made ... skillfully wrought." The last one is perhaps the most interesting – it means to "embroider" like with fabric. This beautiful word picture describes the amount of care and detail with which God forms unborn life. This term would have probably meant even more to the Hebrews who were well-known for beautiful needlework.¹⁷

The same Hebrew term for "skillfully wrought" is used in Exodus 26:36 of one who wove or embroidered the beautifully colored fabric for doorway of the tabernacle. After weaving with a shuttle and colorful threads (indigo blue for cotton, red most popular for wool), skilled embroiderers might sew a pattern or figures right onto the fabric, and the most sophisticated embroidery was reserved for priestly garments. Many villages in the ancient Near East were famous for their weaving and dyeing industries, for example, archeologists found a well-known dyeing workshop at Tell Beit Mirsim.¹⁸

It's possible that the psalmist's language in verse 15 alludes to the veins and arteries which are woven through the human body like colored threads, or the "variegated colouring ... of the inward parts ... the colours of the outline following the undeveloped beginning, and of the forming of the members."¹⁹ An ancient Jewish writing called the Talmud used a similar word to refer to the egg of a bird or reptile when the outlines of the developed embryo are visible in it, along with the mole (*mola*) when traces of human organization can be seen.²⁰ Embroidered garments and fine embroidery signified considerable value,²¹ and this is a picture of how valuable human life, even unborn life is to our God. As special fabric was intricately and skillfully woven, so David was exquisitely fashioned by YHWH.

Some friends got to see their baby at 9 weeks on the newest 3-dimensional ultrasound machines. They were able to see all the details and parts, and could even see the blood pumping to the brain. *TIME* magazine had a feature cover story a few years ago on the dramatic new revolutions in color and 3D imaging.

There are now various types of "4D" color scans, MRIs, and sonograms for the unborn. In a few-week-old embryo it says they can clearly see the "liver, lungs, a bulblike brain and the tiny, exquisite vertebrae of a developing spine."²² The articles uses words like "marvel," "extraordinary," and "marvelous" and even uses the term "weaving together" to describe how babies are formed!²³ Listen to some of these statements from a secular perspective:

We now know that the most important developmental steps – including laying the foundation for such major organs as the heart, lungs and brain – occur before the end of the first three [months]. We also know that long before a child is born its genes engage the environment of the womb in an elaborate conversation, a two-way dialogue ... Scientists can now describe at the level of individual genes and molecules many of the steps involved in building a human, from the establishment of a head-to-tail growth axis and the budding of limbs to the sculpting of a four-chambered heart and *the weaving*

together of trillions of neural connections.²⁴

It's amazing how modern science has now determined the best description of the developing body is "weaved together" because God told us that in His Word 3,000 years ago! Besides Psalm 139, there is very similar imagery and language in Job 10:8-12.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 says, "Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones *are formed* in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things." The greatest learning and technology in the world can only observe more than we used to, but we will never fully grasp the miracle of life and *how* God forms the unborn and weaves those trillions of neural connections together. We can say with David, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made!"

All of us should praise God when we reflect on the care He takes in creating and sustaining us. The delicacy of life is just as much in his hands now so we should trust Him and His providential care.

As you read verse 16, we must ask the question when does life begin? I think the Bible is pretty clear that there is not only life but a person in the womb. David repeatedly refers to his unborn state with very clear language – *personal pronouns* - "I" a person was being made, not a tissue. He uses another personal pronoun - "me" – to say it was me in my mother from the earliest time, not "an embryo or fetus that later became me." He even speaks of his soul in verse 14, and I think there is every reason to believe the soul is created the same moment each human life is created.

In verse 16, he says God even sees his unformed substance (perhaps the fertilized egg before it even grows) – you can't get any earlier than that! In fact, before any of our days transpire God has a plan written for each person in His book. This is a powerful text for God's involvement in the womb and His care for unborn life.

God told Jeremiah that even *before* He formed him in the womb he knew him as a person – even when the egg has not been formed yet.

David similarly in Psalm 51:5 says, "I was ... a sinner when my mother conceived me" (NRSV). The context there is that David had a sinful nature even from day one, but it also affirms that he was a person from the moment the biological act of conception took place.

Exodus 21:22-25 also shows the penalty in God's Law for injury or death to unborn children. In Job 39:13-17, God is giving a speech about the many things man can't understand and one of the inconceivable examples He gives is how ostriches leave their eggs, cruelly leaving them where they can die. The point is how unthinkable and puzzling it is that even a stupid animal would be unconcerned about her unborn children.

It's ironic that there are modern laws against killing an unborn eagle, but laws that allow us to kill an unborn human with the help of a doctor who has taken an oath to help and not harm! Our society thinks it's noble to argue for women's rights to abort, but killing baby seals is seen as an

unforgivable sin by some activists, and even worse, killing trees in certain forests is sure to cause a massive uproar.

With all the emotional speeches about the rights of women, you don't hear a lot of talk about the rights of unborn women. As one Christian has said, "I especially don't believe in taking the life of a little girl, because after all, I believe in a woman's right to choose."

An important reference that a lot of people miss is in Luke 1:30-43. Verse 39 makes it very clear that within a few days of conception she went to visit Elizabeth, and John the Baptist leaped in her womb in response to the mother of Jesus. In verse 42, Elizabeth blessed "the fruit of [her] womb" which was a Jewish way to refer to a child (cf. Ps 127:3). Even at this early stage, Elizabeth recognized Mary was the "mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43), obviously recognizing the child was fully a person.

We have seen the news about recent Supreme Court rulings about partial birth abortion, and future presidential candidates of both parties will continue to be grilled about their views on the unborn, using stem cells for research, and other ethical issues on the forefront. The media will continue to recycle human views and opinions, but as Christians the only thing that really matters to us is what God has to say. And this passage is as clear as any.

When Roe vs. Wade legalized "womb infanticide" over thirty years ago, there was a lot prenatal science didn't know about when life begins and the earlier stages of pregnancy. The *TIME* article I quoted early talks about recent discoveries and pictures that show what is really going on in there, and says that "activists may interpret them as evidence that a fetus is a viable human being earlier than generally believed."²⁵

The miracle of life does not kick in at birth – in fact I would refer you to the DVD title "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" which I listed on your note sheet there, which is a speech by Dr. Menton detailing the numerous miraculous details from a scientific and biological level that utterly defy evolution and abortion arguments.

What the Bible says is enough for me, but there are also many statements from those in the medical profession who know about unborn life more than any lawyer or feminist or politician: Paul E. Rockwell, M.D.: "Years ago while giving anesthetic for a ruptured tubal pregnancy at two months, I was handed what I believed to be the smallest human being ever seen [with the naked eye, at the time, presumably excluding modern sonogram use]. The embryo sac was intact and transparent; within the sac was a tiny 1/3 inch human male swimming extremely vigorously in the amniotic fluid ... this tiny human was perfectly developed with long tapering fingers, feet, and toes. It was almost transparent as regards the skin, and the delicate arteries and veins were prominent to the ends of the fingers. The baby was extremely alive and did not look at all like the drawings of embryos which I have seen."²⁶

Chuck Swindoll's family "OBGYN" was an evolutionist whom he quotes:

"After years I find myself having to *force* myself to believe the theories. I had to *make* myself ignore that there must have been a God. You see, I'm right there, I'm even before

the mother as that baby finally comes from that secret place and is introduced to the world with my hands. I finally realized each one in its own unique way, is a miracle.”²⁷ The happy ending to the story is that this particular doctor finally gave his life to Christ, after reading the Scriptures and determining they were more reliable than the unproven opinions and theories of biased scientists and his secular training.

There is much more that could be said, but I want to challenge some of you in regards to what I’ve talked about. It is one thing for you to nod your heads and say “Yes, we believe that life begins at conception and that unborn humans are just as much a person as anyone else?” But do you really believe that? When someone you know loses a child before its born, do you think of it just as a loss of life and as much a person as if it died in infancy or when bigger or older? You might say “Yes, I believe abortion is murder,” but are you honestly concerned about the millions of murders?

I’m not going to show graphic pictures, I don’t want to manipulate anyone’s emotions, and I’m not promoting political activism or law-breaking in front of abortion clinics. But have you ever done anything or even been really concerned? When was the last time you even prayed about this mass murder of children?

I’ve asked Judy (who attends here and is one of the volunteers at Placerville Pregnancy Counseling Services) to have a table in the foyer with more information about their pro-life ministry to crisis pregnancies in this area, which is one way we can support or get involved or pray. The last women’s coffee shared about this.

Of course we are to pray for government officials as well, which I know I am guilty of failing to pray for our leaders.

Honestly, I don’t know exactly how God would want each of us to do in regards to this issue, and it may be different for some. Maybe some of you will be led to support a Crisis Pregnancy Centers or ministry one-time or regularly, or even volunteer for counseling at the center, as I know those types of ministries need help.

Maybe some of you God will use to teach the younger generation about the sacredness and sanctity of human life through one of the ministries here at the church or in your sphere of influence. Maybe God might be leading some of you towards adoption. I am still thinking through these implications in my own life, but in studying this material I can’t help but bring up this issue. Don’t be discouraged or feel like you can’t make a difference. But remember that the ultimate goal of the church is the gospel and seeing people born *again*, not just changing laws but also hearts. It’s amazing to learn medically about the miracle of birth, but an even more amazing miracle is rebirth. The same power that was involved in our first creation is also required in our re-creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Convincing you to be pro-life is not my ultimate goal, I want you to have eternal life by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for God’s Glory alone.

The most important message I can leave with you from Psalm 139 and from this series is that

your understanding of God should change your heart. Who God is dramatically affect the way you live, pray, and praise. God intimately cares about the littlest details, and we have the privilege of being a part of His work.

It's been so encouraging for me to see God at work in our church since we began this series on the attributes of God:

- God has been growing us and our expanding our view of how big God is
- shrinking our view of man and self
- pursuing God-centeredness as a church and individuals
- realizing just how sovereign God is
- how His glory is the central goal of all things
- how His holiness and wrath and justice should cause repentance, then rejoicing for His undeserved forgiveness
- His supremacy should demolish pride and change the way we pray and think and speak
- His amazing mercy should astonish us and the doctrines of grace should cause us to be gracious and merciful to others
- God's providence should comfort us
- His absolute sovereignty and power should humble us
- His faithfulness and goodness should strengthen us

As we studied in Psalm 139, His omniscience and omnipresence should convict us

And all of these truths should change our lives in some way

If you are faithful to the Lord, this psalm will encourage you. What a great comfort it is to know that God is sovereign in every detail and is with you everywhere! Sinners try to hide *from* God, but believers hide *in* God. If you are trying to hide from the Lord, this psalm should make you realize your hopelessness. These verses are familiar, but I hope you will never look at them in a superficial way again. If we can grasp and honestly *believe* the message of this psalm, I have to believe it would soon put an end to our secret sins, it would revolutionize our praise life and prayer life, and would affect the way we live every moment. I'm not really there yet, but studying this passage has challenged and affected my thinking and I pray it will affect my living. I still have a long way to go, but I hope you'll join me in efforts to live more in light of God's attributes.

¹ As cited by Spurgeon in *The Treasury of David*, vol. III (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.) 256, 258. Gill concludes “whether the most excellent, it is hard to say.”

² John C. Rankin, “The Corporeal Reality of *Nepes* and the Status of the Unborn,” *JETS* 31 (1988): 159. Rankin says this psalm is “not only structured with poetic parallelism and edifying hyperbole; it is also chiasmic in structuring the theme ... The apex of the chiasm is the verses quoted above” [13-16]. Gunkel (29-30) considers v. 14 as an example of the “main part” of the hymn.

³ James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament with Supplement*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955), 99, 329.

⁴ Victor P. Hamilton, “*m’h* – inward parts / bowels” in *TWOT*, 2:519.

⁵ Glenn, 161, quoting W.A. Shelton.

⁶ Glenn, 175.

⁷ Edward J. Young, *Psalms 139: A Study in the Omniscience of God* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 70-71.

⁸ Spurgeon, 258.

⁹ E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1968), cites this verse as example of “heterosis” - using the plural for the singular when great excellence or magnitude is indicated, i.e., “I will confess thee, because that (with) wonders (*i.e.*, with *great* wonder) I have been distinguished ...,” [529-30]; “antimeria” – using a noun in the place of an adverb, i.e., “with fears and wonder = *fearfully* and wonderfully” [496]. There may also be noun-verb parallelism and assonance (intentional similar sounds) in verse 14 (פְּלִאָה [noun] and פְּלִאָה [verb]) which could add further emphasis along with the aforementioned heterosis and plural form for intensity.

¹⁰ J. Madeleine Nash, “Inside the Womb,” *TIME*, vol. 160/20 (November 11, 2002): 71.

¹¹ MacLaren, 325.

¹² *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1997), Ps 139:13.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Darwin as quoted by Hank Hanegraaff, *The Face that Demonstrates the Farce of Evolution* (Nashville, Tenn.: Word Publishing, 1998), 62-63.

¹⁵ Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), 252.

¹⁶ Charles R. Swindoll, “A Careful Analysis of the Unborn, part 2,” 2001. Audio sermon available from Insight for Living Ministries Broadcast Archives, June 12, 2001 (www.insight.org)

¹⁷ J.I. Packer, and M.C. Tenney, eds., *Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), 291.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 478-79.

¹⁹ F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, trans. by James Martin, Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes (reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976) 5:349.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 158.

²² Nash, 71.

²³ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, italics added.

²⁵ Nash, 71.

²⁶ As quoted by Swindoll (audio message mentioned above)

²⁷ *Ibid.*