

TERM TWO PART TWO

# UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

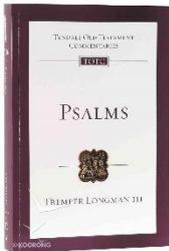
THE **PSALMS** ON SEASONS OF CHANGE

SMALL GROUP RESOURCE

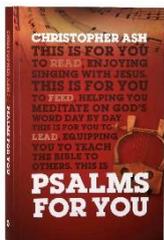
## SERIES SUMMARY

PREACHING DATE	TITLE	PASSAGE
14/6/20	Understanding power	Psalm 2
21/6/20	Understanding our place	Psalm 8
28/6/20	Understanding our path	Psalm 23
5/7/20	Understanding our planet	Psalm 46
12/7/20	Understanding our Provider	Psalm 139

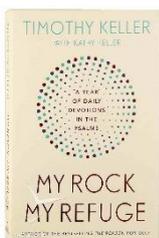
## RESOURCES



Longman III, T. *Psalms* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)



Ash, C. *Psalms For You*



Keller, T. *My Rock, My Refuge: A year of daily devotions in the psalms*

## STUDY FIVE

# UNDERSTANDING OUR PROVIDER | PSALM 139

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### OVERVIEW

Psalm 139 is one of the best known and loved Psalms. It is often read as a reflection on God's omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence eliciting wonder and comfort. This simple reading ignores the final stanza (vv. 19-24) which is an intense statement of hatred towards the psalmist's dangerous enemies and includes an appeal to God to realise that the psalmist is innocent.

The first three stanzas (vv. 1-6, 7-12, 13-18) express ambivalence about God's pervasive knowledge, presence and power. In the light of the final stanza (vv. 19-24) the psalm is best considered a lament.<sup>1</sup>

The Psalmist was anxious about wicked people who threatened his life. He understood that God knew him thoroughly and intimately. He knew that God was present with him wherever he went and that God was all powerful, although initially he expressed ambivalence about the fact that God hemmed him in and he could not get away. At the end of the Psalm, he surrenders to God and puts his hope in him.

Our Heavenly Father knit Jesus together in Mary's womb to work His will in every way. He shaped and ordered the days of Christ; Jesus the incarnate Word, to carry out his work on the cross. This work ushers in the ending of evil and gifts God's people everlasting life.

In Christ, the beloved Son, each and every believer comes to be known by God (Galatians 4:9). He knows all about us but also he knows us relationally. There is no place in the universe that can separate us from the Father's love and care. We treasure the infinite wisdom that he has knit us together, that he has ordained every day of our life on earth and we look forward to his searching eyes that will purify us and lead us into the way everlasting, where evil will be ended.

Like the psalmist, Paul knew that the Christian life was difficult and that the Christian faced many threats. In response Paul reminds his readers 'nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:39).

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<sup>1</sup> Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Psalms, Tremper Longman III, IVP, 2014

## GETTING STARTED

1. When things go wrong in your life, how often do you stop to consider if it is God lovingly showing you something that needs to change?

## INTO THE TEXT

### Read Psalm 139:1-12

2. Is life about humankind's search for God? (vv. 1-2)
3. How is the Psalmist seen by God?
4. If you're a Christian, how does God see you? (Phil 3:9)
5. How would you respond to a Christian who shared 'I don't feel close to God' (in light of v. 7?)

### Read Psalm 139:13-24

6. What do we learn about humanity in vv. 14-16?
7. What do we learn about God in vv. 17-18



## TAKE AWAY

10. How could you remind yourself day by day that you are living in the presence of God?

11. What 'offensive way' do you want to ask God to remove from your heart, your mind, or your life?

12. What good works has God planned for you (Eph 2:10)? Share what you are doing in the life of your family, church and community?