

## Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Lecture 18

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This is Dr. Bruce Waltke and his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 18, Psalms of Trust, Psalms 139 and 91.

Okay. Now in this hour, we are going to, Oh, let me just, I want to share a poem with you that ends the Lament Psalms. It's one of my favorites. I think you probably all know it from James Russell Lowell.

Careless seems the great avenger. History's pages but record. One death grappled in the darkness, thick stones, systems, and the word.

Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. But that scaffold holds the future and beyond the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own. Careless seems the great avenger.

History's pages, but record one death grapple in the darkness, tricks old systems and the word. Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. But that scaffold holds the future and beyond the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

I think that's a great poem to end the Lament section. Pardon? It's from James Russell Lowell. I think maybe I have it at the end of Psalm 44.

I think I wrote it there. In fact, it should be at the end of 44. Is that where it is? Yeah.

Okay. There's the poem. It's just one stanza.

I don't know the whole poem, but it's just a brilliant poem to me. It expresses what I see so much of in the Lament Psalms and the faith we have behind it. Okay.

Now we're on page 232 and we're moving into Songs of Trust. We're going to try to do two psalms here. Yeah, it's just a piece of paper.

I'm going to try to do two psalms in the hour we have left. So, I'll be moving a bit more quickly. I'm going to be doing this because these are two famous psalms.

Well, these are two famous psalms as well. We've done 23. We've done Psalm 1. We've done 51.

So we've done 22. We've touched upon some of the great psalms in trying to specify these different kinds of psalms. The Psalms of Trust, the Songs of Trust are the favorites with the people of God because they express faith and trust.

There isn't the great lament and it's the victories. Psalm 139, it's so extensively confidence that it's called a Song of Trust. But in truth, it's really a lament psalm because it ends with a petition and a situation where he's in crisis also.

But it's a great psalm. We'll just look at it more or less quickly. Here we are at Psalm 91.

And I think most of us have heard. As for any matters of translation, it isn't out yet. This will be coming out in the third volume on the Psalms.

The Psalms says, Christian Wisdom and Praise. So, this is one I just worked on recently, who has to fall. As one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, the Most High is the name for God, Elion, El Elyon, who in the shadow of the Almighty resides.

The Almighty is El Shaddai. And you know the name Shaddai. The truth is, we don't know what Shaddai means.

When I finished my residence work at Harvard, my professor in trying to think about a dissertation suggested that I would resolve and find out what Shaddai means. I thought I'd just be coming up down a dead end and my dissertation would end. We don't know.

So I thought if it hasn't been solved by now, then we're going to have to wait for more research, more data that we don't have yet. And that's the nature of biblical studies. That's why I like biblical studies because we're constantly refining things we don't know in one generation, the next generation finds out and the church is growing in the process.

So we're not there yet on this name, but it was called in the Greek, Pantokrator, which means the All-powerful. And out of that, and then out of Jerome and so forth, we get the name Almighty. I'm sure it entails that Almighty, but certainly not.

It's, I think that's wonderful. That's how the Greek is. And I think it's great.

Who in the shadow of the Almighty resides? I say of I Am, he is my shelter, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust. Surely, he will deliver you from the fowler's trap, from the destructive plague. With his pinions, he will overshadow you and under his wings, you may seek shelter.

His faithfulness is a shield and a rampart. Do not be afraid of the terror at night, from the arrow that flies by day, from the plague that walks in darkness, from the

pestilence that rushes at noon. A thousand will fall at your side, a myriad at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

Only with your eyes will you look and you will see the retribution of the wicked. Because you proclaim, I Am is my refuge and you make the Most High your dwelling place. Calamity will not meet you and a plague will not draw near your tent.

Surely, he will command his angels for you to protect you in all your ways. Upon the palms of their hands, they will lift you up, lest your foot strike a stone. Upon the lion and the cobra, you will tread.

You will trample the young lion and the serpent. Because he clings to me, I will rescue him. I will set him on high because he knows my name.

He will cry out to me and I will answer him. I will be with him in distress. I will deliver him.

I will glorify him. I will satisfy him with endless days and I will show him my salvation." Just looking at the psalm, part of the problem of the psalm is we're just having pronouns without identification. We begin with an I as one who dwells in the secret place.

I say of I Am. Who is the I? And then we get, surely, so he's talking about I Am. And then someone's talking to you.

Surely, he will deliver you. Who is the you? Who's being addressed here? And that runs all the way through. So, we're not told who the I is and we're not told who the you is.

And then at the end, he will cry out to me. Who is the he? And who is the me? And it's all pronouns. Something's being assumed here that we have to decode.

Who are these pronouns? It's quite clear to me that the you is the I of verses one and two. Whoever's speaking in verse two says, he is my shelter. And that is God.

And then it is said to him, verse four, and under his wings, you may seek shelter. So, the you is the I. And he says I find shelter in the Lord. And someone else is saying, and you may find shelter.

You see it more clearly, I think, in the reprise in verses nine and 10, because you proclaim, I Am is my refuge and you make the most high your dwelling place, calamity will not meet you. There it's very clear because you proclaim, I Am is my refuge, calamity will not meet you. So, I feel totally confident that the I and the you are one and the same person.

At the end, when he will cry out to me and he will answer and I will satisfy him with endless days, the speaker must be God. And this person, he will cling to me. He's talking about this person.

He will cling to me and I will be with him. I will deliver him. I will glorify him.

Who can satisfy him and glorify him and exalt him other than God? So, God is speaking in the last three verses about the person who says, verses one and two, as one of I say of I Am, he is my shelter. So, I have three speakers.

I have the I in verses one and two, and then I have someone who's speaking to him, and that someone has to be a prophet. We're not identified, but he speaks for God, assuring him. So, whoever is speaking in verses three, actually, until God speaks in verse 14, he speaks for God.

So, now I have the I is speaking, someone is speaking to him. Then God is talking about him at the end of this psalm. Who is the I? I think it's quite clear to me, he must be a king.

Notice that what's happening to him. Verse five, do not be afraid of the terror at night from the arrow that flies by day. Who is surrounded by thick arrows flying around him? If it's not the king.

Or again, a thousand will fall at your side, a myriad at your right hand. Who has a thousand falling at his side and innumerable of the enemy are slain at his right hand. Who is that with arrows flying at him and thousands dying around him? That's not Mr. Everyman to me.

This is the king. Only with your eyes and you will see the retribution of the wicked. So, I think it's clear to me, again, the I is the king who is putting his trust in God as he's in the midst of a battle.

More than that, I believe it's anticipation of Christ because this king is invulnerable and invincible. No one can defeat him. That's not Psalm 44.

There the king went down in defeat. Here is a king who is invincible. It's not the ordinary saint, even John the Baptist was not invincible.

He had his head cut off. Saints today throughout history have been martyred. So it can't, this king is invincible and invulnerable.

So, therefore, as the Targum understood it, they understood it as David talking, well, they understood it as for the king that David was talking to Solomon. But I think it's a

reference to Christ who in his life was invincible and invulnerable. You could not touch Jesus until he laid down his life.

He says, no man takes it from me. So, from the beginning, you have the slaughter of the innocent, all the babies that were slaughtered under Herod's paranoia and madness. And Jesus escaped.

And all the way through when Jesus heals the leper, he could have said to the leper, be clean. He did that to others. Why does he touch the leper? It's to show he's invincible.

Not even leprosy can overcome him. He goes through the storm. When he preaches his first sermon, they want to kill him.

He walks out through the mist. John, when they want to stone him and they want to seize him, all John says, they couldn't do it. You could not touch Jesus until he voluntarily gave up his life as a ransom for sinners.

He says in John 10, no man takes my life from me. I lay it down for myself. So, for me, David is using the language of his world to speak of the invincibility of his greater son, who is the Lord Jesus Christ or whoever this king is.

But I think it's a reference to Jesus Christ who is invincible and invulnerable unless he lays down his life, which is to say to us that he's with us. When things come into our lives, it's because he willed it to be into our lives as he willingly laid down his life. It's no accident.

He is in control and we can trust him. So that's how I read the psalm. I read it as a king who is untouchable.

This king will trample on the lion and the cobra. The point is, he's not, what's the point of them? Christ walking on snakes. They're symbolic of evil and nations that are opposed to him.

He tells the disciples, you will trample on his scorpions, his snakes, and so forth. It's symbolic of his victory over evil, of his final triumph. So, interestingly enough, you see when Satan tempts Jesus in the temptation, I have this in your notes, you may want to turn there.

Well, for that it's a king. I like the quote from Kidner in page 234. This first one is by Goldingay.

The psalm makes sense as addressed to a king. It is the king who especially needs the Lord's rescue and protection in battle. Eaton says, for a king, the air is ever thick with

deadly darts, whether of plague, often a danger on campaigns, hostile curses or weapons, but God confers safety on him day and night, though armies fall in tens of thousands at his side.

But so, it's a king, I give you some quotes there, but the eschatological messianic interpretation is how Satan understood the psalm. Jesus did not refute him on that basis. He just said you don't put God to the test.

So, you have on page 235, Luke 9-11, the devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. Now, in my mind, this whole temptation scene is in a spiritual realm. I don't take it literally.

I think it's in a spiritual realm and in the spiritual realm, he is on the pinnacle of the temple and Satan showed him all the kingdoms of the world. That's a vision. It makes the point, that even though it's a vision, it's reality.

That it's representing. And he says to him, if you are the son of God, and I want to make the point and I have it that way, eliminated all my underscoring. So, he says, he recognizes this Jesus as the son of God.

Throw yourself down from here. Now note, for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you to guard you, the son of God. And he's identifying it as the son of God, that the angels are bearing up.

Therefore, he says to him, throw yourself off the temple. Let's see the angels of God bear you up. He understood it as a reference to Jesus.

Jesus seemingly accepts that interpretation, that it refers to him. So, it's in the language of David's of the Ancient Near East of battle. It's teaching us that this king is invincible and invulnerable.

So, we have three voices. We have the king who asserts his faith. Then we have the prophet who assures him.

And then part of prophetic speech is when the Lord speaks through the prophet and talks about him that he will be protected. So let's look at what we'll just take the page. We'll just run through it on page 232.

And now the king is speaking as one who dwells, he's speaking as one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High. That means the God who is over everything, Most High, Elion. And as Kindness says, it cuts everything down to size.

Everything else is small compared to him. The secret place, means a place that is inaccessible, that only those who are allowed in on a secret, a secret message is

inaccessible to anybody else, except those to whom you wish to communicate it. So, he's referring to the temple, I think, as the secret place that's accessible only to the righteous.

And he lives in that domain in the temple, in the presence of God. The shadow is the place of protection. And in your notes, I give you the data that, so he's protected there.

He dwells there in the sanctuary. That's what he says. And now he confesses his faith.

And the Hebrew here says, I say again and again and again, is the point. I say, not just once, this is what he says for his lifestyle. He is my shelter, the place of safety and my stronghold, which means a citadel on a cliff that it's impregnable.

The Hebrew word is metzudah. And you can think of it as it's the Hebrew word, it is the word masada. Masada was a stronghold.

And he's saying, God is his Masada. It's inaccessible, impregnable. It's secure.

You are my God in whom I trust. So, the king speaks and he's confessing my hope, my trust is in God. Well, that's the point.

I'm living my life, feeling secure in God. This is a song of trust. A prophet now speaks to him.

It falls into two halves, verses three through eight. And then a second half after the transition in verses nine and 10. Then you have the second half verses, well, actually it could be nine through verse 13.

So, a prophet is speaking in verses three through 13. And that falls into two halves because you can see how it's divided up. He stops speaking.

And then he reprises the king's confession in verse nine because you say or proclaim, I am is my refuge. And you can see that goes back to verses one and two. And you make the most high your dwelling place, which is what he said in verse one, that most high is my refuge, my dwelling place.

And now the priest says, he reprises that because you say that he gives him more promises. So, it falls into two halves. The kings make a confession of faith.

The prophet gives him promises. Then the prophet repeats his faith and gives him more promises in the second half. And climatically, God himself speaks through the prophet in the last three verses, because God speaks.

I think what's happening here is it's antiphonal. You have the king speak, a prophet speaks, and then God speaks. That's in the temple.

It's antiphonal with these different speakers. I think if we had different speakers, the I being the king, the prophet speaking to the king, and then with another voice speaking, God is speaking and God is talking about the king, which is his own affirmation of faith. So what's happening here, is the king is expressing his faith and the prophet, and climatically God is giving the king confidence with the word of God, with prophecy.

So, I think it's a spiritual battle and God is bolstering the faith of his king. For us, it's because I know he's invincible. He's invulnerable.

I can have full confidence that he will triumph. Even though I have to put it together with Psalm 44, I know my king and I know God who stands behind this king and he will triumph. That's sort of the direction of the psalm.

I think once we get that, we can begin to understand this psalm. So, I say, he begins with calling God most high and the Almighty. He's over all things and he's all-powerful.

He has unique access that only the saint has. God takes the saint into a secret council. We have access that the unbeliever, to which the unbeliever does not have access.

We are protected in the shadow. It begins with one who dwells and one who resides. This is where I live.

I live in the presence of God. That's what I want. I want to live in the presence of God, the Almighty One, in that place where his grace, most don't have access because they don't believe.

Whoever wants it can have it. God's grace is to all who will accept him. Now comes the promise of the king and he promises him that he will, in verse three, he will be delivered and he will be protected.

That's verses three and four. In verses five and six, he will be protected around the clock, night and day at the end of verse five, night in the A verse set, day in the B verse set. And that's a merismus, which means all the time.

He picks it up again in verse six, from the plague that walks in darkness, from the pestilence that rushes at noon, the highlight of light. So, you have these merisms

when you read poetry, you can put that together and you get the point. It's all the time, I'm with you on that battlefield.

You're never alone. And then guarantees him his victory, that he will destroy the wicked. He's going to see the destruction of the wicked all around him.

God is with him. So those are the, in the first half, those are the three of the four, the three quatrains. So, you have three and four, five and six, seven and eight.

And you can see they go together. Three and four, he will deliver you from the fowler's trap. That is, they'll try to destroy you secretly where you don't expect it.

And from the destructive plague. The plague is a very important point in this psalm. Notice how in verse five, it's the military.

Do not be afraid of the terror at night from the hour of day. Then verse six picks up this plague from the plague that walks in darkness from the pestilence that rushes at noon. What I argue in the psalm is that the plague is a bubonic plague.

That's a real danger in ancient Greece on the battlefield was the bubonic plague. So that in all probability when the angel of the Lord struck the Assyrian army and 185,000, talk about a myriad, 185,000 fell at that moment when they were besieging Jerusalem. Herodotus tells us that the story was repeated.

That story occurs at about 700. Herodotus, the Greek historian, was about 400. And when he's in there, he's telling his experience and adventures.

He's a historian. He goes to Egypt. He hears the story about Sennacherib and he hears about the destruction of his army.

What he gets is they attribute it to mice as he gives the account. They're trying to figure out what the mice have to do with it. They don't have any medical scientific knowledge.

So he says, well, the mice must have devoured all their quivers and devoured their weaponry and their baggage and so forth. That's the way he explains it. But in all probability, we associate rats, they carry a certain flea.

We associate rats with the bubonic plague. I think it was the angel of the Lord who used the bubonic plague to destroy the Assyrian army. It's interesting that Herodotus validates that whole story in his own way.

I think the same thing happened with the Ark of the Covenant when the Philistines captured it. In order to ward off some kind of apotropaic, they made images of rats

and tumors, both of which are associated with the bubonic plague. I think from our modern viewpoint, we would have described it as a bubonic plague.

That's what he's saying. Then that makes sense because then he says that plague walks in darkness as one soldier after another soldier dies. Then note, it says from the pestilence that rushes and now it's reached, I think epidemic proportions.

Now it's just not walking. It's fit for a plague from one to the next one to the next one. So the plague is walking in the darkness and then it's epidemic proportions at high noon.

The result is that the army falls around him as it did in the fall of the Assyrian army in the days of Hezekiah. So here's a king with the whole army at his right hand. It doesn't say he used the sword or anything.

It just says God destroyed it miraculously. It's at his right hand and he gazes at it. The whole enemy is utterly defeated at his right hand.

And then I understand verse 7, a thousand will fall at your side, a myriad at your right hand, but it, that is the pestilence will not come near you. The plague could destroy the others, but it couldn't touch the king. It will not come near you.

It's not within walking distance of you. You will look at it, but it will not come near you. You'll see the results of it, but not you.

You are protected from God and holy war. I take it as using a bubonic plague to destroy the enemy. And that puts the psalm together.

And then we move to the second half. So, reading again, I think you could see, let me just read delivered and protected. He will surely deliver you from the trap of the enemy and from the destructive plague.

Then he says that with his pinions, he will overshadow you under his wings. You may seek his shelter. His faithfulness is a shield and a rampart.

And now don't be afraid 24 hours a day. Do not be afraid of the terror at night from the arrows that fly by day. But the terror at night could be arrows because I give you data in your notes where they actually had to fight at night.

And then from the plague, and then on that a thousand will fall at your side, a myriad at your right hand, a total destruction of the enemy. Only with your eyes, you will look and you will see the retribution of the wicked. So, in other words, you will see God just decimate the enemy without you even lifting a finger.

God just destroys the enemy. Then he picks it up and goes beyond that. It's great to be under the pinions, under the shadow of God's wings that's escalated that the angels will hold you up.

So, you don't stumble and you can complete your mission. So there's a real escalation here. Calamity will not meet you.

A plague will not draw near your tent. And again, the tent suggests we're on a battlefield. Surely, he will command his angels for you to protect you in all your ways.

And I give you the data of the angels of how they protect. And then he says, on the palm of their hands, they will lift you up lest your foot strike a stone. Nothing is going to impede you in your victory.

They will just with their hands, lift you up and carry you. So, you don't stumble and fall off a cliff and bear you alone. Here's the point of the whole battle.

You're going to defeat the lion and the cobra, and they're going to be under your feet. And that's what he promised Adam and Eve in the garden. You will crush the head of the serpent.

And here he is upon the lion and the cobra, you will tread. And you remember the lion and the cobra are elsewhere used for Babylon and for Egypt, the lion and the cobra. I think you've all seen the headdress of the Pharaoh.

It always has that cobra called the Urieus. And that cobra symbolizes his sovereignty, his rulership, his deity, and his authority. It's the symbol of his dominion.

And I think when he says, you are going to tread upon the cobra, if you know anything about Egypt and you see that Urieus, you know very well what he's saying here. He's going to destroy Egypt ultimately. And then God picks it up because he clings to me.

And that means because I'm so attractive to him, I will rescue him. I will set him on high because he knows my name. He will call out to me and I will answer him.

I will be with him in distress. I will deliver him. I will glorify him.

I will satisfy him with endless days, and eternal life. There's no end to his victory. And I will show him my salvation because it is just and right.

What a tremendous promise to the Lord. What a tremendous psalm. Okay.

That would be Psalm 91. I have another psalm to go here. It makes it a really a psalm of trust.

It cannot be where you project or presume that on God. In other words, projecting and saying, you know, God, I'm expecting you to do those things. You just have to trust in him.

That's right. Well, I think it's about the Messiah. It's about the Messiah because it's not true to John the Baptist.

It's not true to what happens in Psalm 44. That's a type, but it's not. I'll put this down on page 234.

I say, first of all, it's about the king and then D eschatological messianic, the psalm's assurance that God will rescue the king from the wicked in a present round-the-clock battle is not universally true. It wasn't true in Psalm 44. It wasn't true of Paul.

It wasn't true in Matthew 14, 1 through 12. Oh, no. Yeah.

It wasn't true of John the Baptist. It's not true of the church today. It's about Christ and it's true of him.

He is an assurance that since he could be victorious and invincible, we're in him and ultimately, we will triumph in him. That's what I'm saying throughout his life. No evil ever touched, no one could touch Jesus until he laid down his life.

The psalm is true of him, but not everybody. I think that's an important distinction, very important distinction. Because otherwise, if you read it, to me, it doesn't ring true.

It just doesn't ring true. It doesn't ring true. I can't harmonize it with 44, but I can put it.

See, it's about the king and this is a unique king who is invincible. Who is that? So, for me, Jesus said, the Psalms speak about me. I think we're so interested in therapy preaching that we really don't understand the glories of Christ.

Yeah. The NIV in verse nine says if you make the most time rather than because of you. Yeah.

I disagree in my commentary. I disagree with the NIV. The word there is ki.

It's the word surely. It means because. It can mean, see, I don't think it can possibly in the legal language, it can mean if, but if you make the Most High, it doesn't fit verses one and two where he said the Most High is the shelter and security.

So, if the if is, it's just, that would be rhetorical. It's you do, if you do and you do, but you got to add, that's why I think it's better just simply to translate it because, which is its normal meaning. It's not conditional or questionable because he said, God is the Most High.

Thank you. I remember that. So, thank you.

I really like it. I like questions and I think we should ask questions. So, okay.

I think I told you that I had a friend at Harvard and he named his fifth son after me. Did I tell you that? Huh? Yes, you did. I did.

Yeah. Okay. Because I ask questions.

So, thank you when you ask questions. All right. Now we're going to page to the 139, the 250.

Thank you. Okay. Let's just enjoy the psalm, and meditate on it.

This is one of these great, great psalms again. Yeah. 139.

And what I'll do is I'll just read it and comment on it as we've been doing it. And everything I say is in your notes anyway. So, all right, let's read it.

It's the Psalm of David. I am, you search me and so you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise, you consider my thoughts from afar.

My going out, my lying down, you discern. You are familiar with all my ways. Surely before a word is on my tongue, I am, you know it completely.

Behind and before you hem me in, you've laid the palm of your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is too high.

I do not have the power to scale it. Where can I go to escape your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there. If I spread out my bed in the grave, behold you.

Were I to rise on the wings of the dawn and the light on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast. And then I thought,

surely if the darkness crushes me and if the light becomes night around me, even darkness will not be too dark for you.

And the night will shine like the day. Darkness is this light to you. For you gave birth literally to my kidneys, which is not great poetry.

I think of the King James, they get around this, for you gave birth, you created, they translated it, you created. And they say, reins, R E I N S. That sounds good. It's the French word for kidneys.

Okay. You gave birth to my emotional structure. You wove me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I'm fearfully extraordinary. Your works are wonderful. I know it full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was wrought in that secret place, when I was colorfully woven in the depths of the earth. My embryo, your eyes saw. And in your book, all of them were written.

My days were fashioned when there was not yet any of them. And for me, how precious are your thoughts, God? How vast is the sum of them? Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. I awake and I'm still with you.

If only you, God, would slay the wicked, bloodthirsty men, get away from me, who speak of you with evil intent. Your adversaries misuse your name. Do not I hate those who hate you? I am, I am.

And lo, those who rise up against you, I hate them with complete hatred. They have become my enemies. Search me, God, and know my heart.

Test me and know my anxious thoughts and see if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Looking at the psalm broadly, it has 24 verses. It falls into four stanzas of six verses each.

I think it's quite clear. The first stanza verses one through six speak of God's omniscience, that God knows him. You can't miss it.

Verse three, you know. Verse four, you know. Verse six, such knowledge.

So, he's talking that God, you know me, his omniscience. In the next stanza, he talks about God's omnipresence with him. Just as in verse one begins with the summary statement, I am, you search me and so you know me.

And that is this introduction to that stanza. So, we get an introduction to God's omnipresence with him. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? And the answer is, obviously, I can't.

You're everywhere. And he ends up, as you go through the stanza, that everywhere God is with him. That runs.

So, you have six verses of knowledge and you have seven verses of God's presence. God, you know me, and God you're with me. I can't escape it.

In verses 13 through verse 17, verse 18, and the next six verses, he speaks of God's omnificence. That is his making him, you made me. And that is the proof for notice verse 13, for the proof that you know me and the proof that you're with me is the fact you made me and look where you made me.

You made me in a dark watery chamber of my mother's womb. So you have four verses that substantiate because God created him and made him that God knows him and that God is with him. At the end of verse 18, he leaves the state of reflection.

And he says, when I awake, I am still with you. Now waking up, in other words, he's been thinking about God. He's been thinking about his omniscience.

He's been thinking about his omnipresence. He's been thinking about his omnificence that he made him. And therefore, all this is true.

Now he wakes up and he comes back to the real world. And we suddenly find ourselves in the real world. He's thinking about God, but now he leaves the state of reverie and looks at the world all around him.

He's surrounded with enemies and the wicked. And he says, get away from me. His reflections on God knows me and that God is present with me is fostering his confidence because he has all these wicked men around him.

And so, he says, get away from me. And he says to God, I am with you. And I hate who these men are, who misuse your name, these covenant breakers.

And they're trying to murder him. And I hate wickedness. And then he backs up.

Not only does he want the enemy dead, but now he says, I'm not so sure about myself. I want to be sure that I'm really, really aligned with you. Search me God and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts.

In other words, I want to be sure I'm your man. It would be for the lady, you are your woman. And see if there's any offensive way in me.

And if there is, let me get rid of it and lead me in the way everlasting. So, he's finding confidence because God knows him. God is with him.

God made him. And so, he comes to the real world and he says, God, I'm with you in this stage in which we find ourselves in this battle between good and evil and justice and injustice and truth and delusion. God, I'm with you.

But wait a minute, I want to make sure there are anxious thoughts. Am I all that pure? I got anxious thoughts about this. Am I really that pure? Test me.

And he would say, let me know that I'm certain that I'm on your side. It's a very honest prayer. Let's go back then having gotten the broad view of things and just look at the first stanza, the summary statement, I am, you have searched me.

It deals with a penetrating, diligent, difficult probe. That is God, it's very hard to know your own heart or the heart of another person. What's really going on inside of the person?

I'm not always sure I know what's really going on inside of myself, but God, you know, and he says, you did that diligent, difficult search of getting to my very core being. God knows your basic core right to the pith of it, who you really are. God knows who you are in a way no one else knows.

Maybe even you don't know fully, but God knows. He knows who you are. And then he develops it.

And he says, you know me all the time by this merism, merismus. You know when I sit, you know, when I arise. And even though you're far off, you consider my thoughts from afar.

So, even though you're in heaven, you know exactly what I'm doing. He knows the cattle on the hillside. He knows the hairs of our head.

He knows everything, the sparrow that falls. And he knows beyond that the depths of our being. And he knows us all the time.

So, from the moment we got up this morning to when we go to bed at night, God knows you. He really knows you all the time. And furthermore, not only in time, but in space, you know, my going out and my lying down.

So, and actually the going out is public. The lying down is often used for coitus, my most private moments. In other words, you know me publicly, you know me privately, my most private moments, you know me, God is there.

In fact, I haven't even articulated what I'm going to do. You know me so completely that at the very point where I'm verbalizing what I'm going to do, you knew it already ahead of time. That's knowledge.

Before a word is on my tongue, you know exactly what I'm about. Now that can be very comforting, but it can be somewhat disquieting. David backs off a bit and he realizes I can't escape this.

I never have a private moment. I am never. And so, he feels now hemmed in by this knowledge.

You hemmed me in behind you, behind, and before you hemmed me in, you have laid your palm over your head. I can't escape you. And such knowledge is too wonderful for me.

It's beyond all comprehension. And then it's too high. I don't have the power to scale it.

In other words, I can't climb out from under this awareness. So, like it or not, God knows you all the time, everywhere, all your thoughts, everything about you, God knows. And if your heart is right, that's comforting.

If your heart is not right, it can be disquieting. The second one is a summary statement is God's universal presence. He's summary, where can I escape your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? And there he looks at it, first of all, on the vertical axis.

And then he looks at it on the horizontal axis. So, he looks at it on the vertical axis and looking at it up and down. If I ascend to heaven, you are there.

If I spread out my bed in the grave, look, you're there too. And that's not only in space, that's in quality because heaven is bliss and the grave is hell. So, whether it's good or bad, God is present.

So, whether you're in bliss or you're in pain, God is there. That's our God. And looking at it on the horizontal axis, where are to rise on the wings of the dawn.

That is, he sees the morning light as wings flying across the sky. And where are to get on the wings of the dawn and fly with that speed across the sky and a light on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, and your right hand will hold me

fast. So vertically, quantitatively, height, depth, qualitatively, heaven, hell, quantitatively, east, west.

But in that world, the Orient where the sun rose, that was life. And in the West where the sun set, that was death. So, if you go to Egypt and you go down the Nile, for example, you might point out that all the temples of life are on the east bank of the Nile and the pyramids and the Valley of the Kings, the Karnak temple, for example, is on the east side of life.

But Hatshepsut's tomb is in the West. So, all the tombs are in the West where the sun sets and it's dark. So symbolically, the East is life, the West is death.

And that's what he's talking about here. So, whether I go to heaven above or hell beneath, if I go to the morning light, or I go to the setting sun in the darkness, it's all the same to you. I can't escape it.

Even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me first. And then he thinks of it differently. And then he said, now I'm in darkness, utter darkness.

And darkness, of course, symbolizes death, danger, fear, everything, chaos, everything. You stumble around. You don't know where you are.

You bump into things. That's where thieves are and so forth. And I said, surely if the darkness crosses me, and if the light becomes night around me, it would make no difference to you.

Even darkness will not be too dark for you. And the night will shine like the day. Darkness is this light to you.

So it makes no difference to God, no matter how dark it may be. To God, it makes no difference whatsoever. Now comes the proof, the validation.

For you gave birth. He's not denying the biological realities of life. He goes to ultimate cause.

Behind those biological realities, which the natural man only sees, behind all that, there is God who is the one who's giving life. This says a lot about the unborn. For you gave birth to my very basic emotional structure.

You wove me together in my mother's womb. And then I praise you because I am fearfully extraordinary. Your works are wonderful.

I know them well. And I think all of us have felt the marvel of a human being and of birth. It's just awesome.

And that's God. And how you can destroy that is awful to me. This is his magnum opus.

I praise you because I'm fearfully extraordinary. Your works are wonderful. I know that full well.

And my frame was not hidden from you when I was wrought in that secret place, which is in the brother's womb. When I was colorfully woven together as it would have been as in the depths of the earth, God produced his magnum opus in utter darkness. And that's the analogy that the dark doesn't hide from you.

God designed it so that we are formed in utter darkness and water. And that's where he makes his magnum opus. And my embryo, your eyes saw.

And if his hand is on us, we now know a lot about nature. But he's saying in your book, all of them were written. That is, my days were fashioned when there was not yet any of them.

Talk about sovereignty. That is sovereignty. God has designed all of our days beforehand.

He has his own purposes. And then he says that these thoughts, and here's the oxymoron, that there's so many, I can't count them. But usually, when you have a lot of something, it's cheap.

But then he puts it together. As for me, how precious are your thoughts? How vast is the sum of them? So, I can't count them all, but each one is precious against the law of supply and demand. They're vast, but each one is precious.

Where I had to count them, they went out number the grains of sand. And so, he's marveled at all this. And now he comes back to the real world and he wishes God would get rid of the wicked that are surrounding him.

If only you, God, would slay the wicked, bloodthirsty men, the murderers, get away from me. I think you can picture this a bit. If you think about David during the time of Saul, they were bloodthirsty men.

They took God's name to vanity. He can't touch them. And he says, Oh God if only you would get rid of them and slay them.

Now it's not the prayer for us today, but a prayer for David in his day. I can understand that in the Saulide period. Oh God, just get rid of them.

And he loathes them. He doesn't just dislike them. I hate murderers, blasphemous, those who misuse your name, who take innocent life, who commit adultery.

And I have no part in that. I know who I am. But then he backs off and he says, he started out, Oh God, you search me.

And now he says, opens his heart. I want you to really search me and let me know what's really in there. Search me, test me, know my anxious thoughts and lead me in the way everlasting.

So, he wants to know if there's something in there that isn't right, that he may be sure I am really your person, your man, or your woman. And that's what made him the king he was. So, I think that's a good note on which to end this session.

That's our God. All right. Songs of Confidence.

May I share with you that I use these verses as I counsel women who have a question about abortion. Or contemplating abortion or are not settled on the right or wrong of it. And when I show them here, God's involvement in the wound and his knowledge of that one, even before one day was lived before one breath was taken, that God was there and involved.

And that there's a plan for every child that is conceived in the womb. The days are planned. Then that brings a whole new perspective to taking life that God is involved with.

And that's the problem that it isn't recognized that God, when you get rid of God, you really are at sea. And if you really recognize that God gave conception, whatever, it's precious. The whole thing is precious.

It's not just so much mother tissue. It's a spiritual being. And in Psalm 51, he said, I was in a state of sin in my mother's womb.

And you were teaching me conscience. This is just not the mother's body. This is another person.

And that person has dignity. And this whole idea that a woman's rights, and I want to protect women, but I also want to say, God created a new being here and used your body to do it. What a privilege and how awesome to kill that God gave you the privilege to bring his image into the world.

What a privilege. And then to destroy it. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you, Sufi, for sharing that. Thank God that you're there to counsel and protect life.

It is because I believe God is just. I don't know what's going to happen in the Western world. I don't know.

You know, abortion is illegal almost any place in the world except here. We're the only nations that's literally legalized. Utilizing? Utilizing.

Legalizing. Legalizing in America. I think it's being done more in Western Europe, isn't it? Yeah.

But it's, I believe, codified. Yeah. None of the Islamic nations.

No, no. I think that's what makes, the reason Islam grows amongst youth is they have absolutes. And I think youth is looking for absolutes and in our democracy, we don't have any absolutes.

And they see how it has become decadent. So that liberty has been transferred into libertinism of doing whatever you want, an immorality. And I think something intuitively says that's wrong.

And you'd rather latch on to something like Sharia, which has absolutes, but what horrible absolutes. So, one extreme to the other of non-absolutes to, I mean, certainly Satan is strong in our world. We're fighting against principalities and powers, spiritual darkness. Amen. Well, amen.

This is Dr. Bruce Waltke in his teaching on the book of Psalms. This is session number 18, Psalms of Trust, Psalm 139 and 91.