

Fearfully and wonderfully made!

Intro: “The fairest thing we can experience is the mysterious. He who knows it not, can no longer wonder, no longer feel amazement, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle”. (Albert Einstein)

By that definition many people in this world might be called “snuffed out candles”; for they have lost their wonder—wonder at life itself, wonder at the God who made it all. In the 139th psalm we see an example of the wonder of David as he contemplated God and even himself as God’s creation. In this psalm we see David extol:

The wonder of God’s knowledge

The wonder of God’s omnipresence

The wonder of God’s power

The wonder of God’s holiness

Let’s probe more deeply into David’s description of God’s knowledge and presence in the creation of each of us (v. 13-18).

God’s knowledge, presence, and power is seen in His creation of life in the womb.

First, David’s stress lies upon the mysterious and hidden nature of our personal creation.

He had just spoken of how God clearly sees what occurs in the darkness (v. 12). And now he takes us into that darkness—into the “secret” place, into his “mother’s womb”, and even deeper into his own body inside the womb to those “inward parts”, into what David calls the “depths of the earth”. (Some commentators see it as a reference to the creation statement that God formed man from the dust of the earth; but perhaps we should just see it as a metaphor for a place of total obscurity.)

Second, even here in this place of total obscurity, God is performing His creative work! Look at the verbs David uses:

God forms inward parts

God weaves a body

God makes a human being

God skillfully works (this term and the former one suggest the picture of the meticulous and careful work of embroiderer or weaver).

Each of these in its own way reveals God’s awesome power as creator.

Third, in this obscure place, God sees what is being formed and brings about what He has already planned (v. 16)

What God has seen, what God has ordained, what God has written in His book—these expressions call attention to how the creative work of God in the womb is the result of His vision for each created person.

These expressions sanctify the formation of the child in the womb as the work of God Himself. When we take the life of the unborn, we interfere with His role as creator, His plans as God, and bringing to a violent end what He has purposed!

The contemplation of God's creation of ourselves should evoke wonder and praise!

I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are thy works and my soul knows it very well.

Consider JB translation: *"For all these mysteries I thank you; for the wonder of myself, for the wonder of your works"*.

Medical science makes us aware of the wonder of the human body in all its parts. Consider:

The human brain

It consists of a 100 billion nerve cells powered by 100 billion "batteries" called glia cells. Over 120 trillion connectors tie these cells together. It sends out electrical impulses at a speed of 393 feet/sec. and receives nerve impulse at a rate of 2000/sec. It coordinates the activities of 130,000 light receptors, 100,000 hearing receptors, 3,000 tastebuds, 30,000 heat spots on the skin, 250,000 cold spots, and 500,000 touch spots. It uses 25% of the oxygen in our blood supply. It has its own built in defense system. 4 arteries that keep up the blood supply, the outer skull bone, a protective lining around the brain, and fluid that absorbs the shock of the brain's movements inside the head in cases of bumps and falls. Someone once estimated that it would take a computer the size of the Pentagon to do what the human brain does and would require the power of Grand Coulee Dam to operate and all the water of Columbia River to keep it cooled down!

The human spinal column

Here is a bundle of nerves 1/2 inch in diameter that sends impulses to and from the brain. South Central Bell once estimated that if you used the smallest wire available it would take a cord a half a mile thick to duplicate what the spinal column does in the human body!

The human eye

It is a motion picture camera with remarkable features. It is composed of over a hundred million cells. It has its own light meter & shutter that automatically alters the inflow of light. And then a lens that automatically changes shape to focus the light on the back of the eye. It is so sensitive that only 6 quanta of light can be perceived by it. There are 300,000 nerve lines taking the responses of the eye to the brain which in turn processes these messages to produce the image. 7 million cones to allow us to see in living color;

100 million rods to enable to see shades of black and white. We have an eye-brow to protect the eye from moisture coming down from the forehead, & eyelashes to protect from the bits of trash that would fall into it, and a saline solution that continually washes the eye, and a little hole in each one leading to the nose to drain and evaporate this solution and keep us from crying all the time. Could all of this have come in being by accident?

The human cell

In the average adult there are over 100 trillion of them! Strung end to end they would circle the earth 200 times! Each one is composed of a membrane or wall that allows certain chemicals to go in, and certain things to go out! Inside are bodies that make possible the functions of communication, waste disposal, nutrition, repair, and reproduction. It has its own transport system, the endoplasmic reticulum; its own power source, the mitochondria; and an information center, the nucleus, containing the chemical DNA that holds the chemical code or blueprint that makes all life possible. The nucleus contains a helix shaped strand of DNA a yard long capable of triggering 6 billion biochemical steps and responsible for the development of every cell in the human body. And somehow each cell in the human body knows what kind of organism it is a part of and/or what it is making because of the instructions contained in the DNA of the cell. In the time I have talked about this approximately 3 billion cells have died and been reproduced in your body!

What becomes abundantly clear in our own person is the infinite knowledge, presence, power and love of the Creator who made us just in bringing us into this life! We are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made!

How precious also are thy thoughts to me, Oh God!

Maybe the better translation is “of me”. And the point is well stated by Kidner:

David has moved on from contemplating his own thoughts and their nakedness before God to considering God’s innumerable thoughts toward him. He is not exaggerating. Even in his own body there is an unimaginable wealth of detail, every point of it from the mind of God. Such divine knowledge is not only “wonderful” but “precious”, since it carries its own proof of infinite commitment: God will not leave the work of His own hands, either to chance or to ultimate extinction. Already the metaphor of “thy book” has ruled out so casual a divine attitude; and the words “I am still with thee” taken with the vast background of verses 7-12 can be given no limit, even by death.

“When I awake” may there have its strongest sense, a glimpse of resurrection.

What are you doing with the God who made you? These two statements call for each person to see the wonder of God’s creation of ourselves. They urge us to honor and serve Him as the giver of it all rather than exalt ourselves. They should cause us to praise Him daily, to love Him fervently, to obey Him willingly.

Conclusion: There is a deep irony about man’s self-knowledge. The more we penetrate the mysteries of our own existence and life, the more casual people seem to be about God. We lose our wonder, as if because we’ve discovered something about God’s work causes us to lessen our appreciation for it. Instead this knowledge should cause us to be filled with increasing wonder and love for the Creator.