

Psalm 139

*for soprano, baritone
and choir SATB*

by

F L Dunkin Wedd

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Psalms Chapter 139

Text and translation from www.mechon-mamre.org

- א למנצח. לדוד מזמור: יהוה חקרתני. ותדע.
- ב אמה ידעת. שקבתי וקומי: בנתה לרעי. מרחוק.
- ג ארחי ורבעי וריתי: וכל-דרכי הספנתה.
- ד כי אין מלה. בלשוני: הו יהוה. ידעת כלה.
- ה אחור נקדם צרתני: ותשת עלי כפכה.
- ו פלאיה (פליאה) דעת ממני: נשגבה. ל'א-אוכל לה.
- ז אנה. אלך מרוחק: ואנה. מפניך אברח.
- ח אם אסק שמים. שם אמה: ואציגה שאול הנג.
- ט אשא כנפי-שחר: אשכנה. באחרית ים.
- י גם-שם. ירך תנחני: ות אחוני ימינך.
- יא נא מר. אך-ח' שך ושיפני: ולילה. אור בעדני.
- יב גם-ח' שך. ל'א-וחשיך ממך: ולילה. פיוס נאיר-- פחשיכה. כאורה.
- יג כי-אמה. קנית כלי-תי: תספני. בבטן אמי.
- יד אודך-- על פי נוראות. נפליתי: נפלאים מעשיך: ונפשי. י' דעת מא' ד.
- טו ל'א-נכחד עצמי. ממך: אשר-עשיתי בסתר: רשמתי. בתחתיות ארץ.
- טז גלמי. כאו עיניך. ועל-ספרך. כלם יכתבו: ימים נצרו: ולא (ולו) אחד בהם.
- יז גלי--מה-יקרו רעיך אל: מה עצמו. קאשיהם.
- יח אספספם. מחול ורבון: הקיצ' תי. ועודי עמך.
- יט אם-תקט' ל' אצות רשע: ואנשי דמים. סורו מני.
- כ אשר י' מרויך. לזמה: נשוא לשוא עריך.
- כא הלוא-משנאיך יהוה אשנא: וכתוממיך. אתקוטט.
- כב תכלית שנאה שנאתים: לאונבים. היו לי.
- כג חקרני אל. ודע לבבי: בהנני. ודע שרעפי.
- כד וראה. אם-דך-ע' צב בי: ונהני. בדרך עולם.
- 1 For the Leader. A Psalm of David. O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me.
- 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off.
- 3 Thou measurest my going about and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether.
- 5 Thou hast hemmed me in behind and before, and laid Thy hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; too high, I cannot attain unto it.
- 7 Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?
- 8 If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in the nether-world, behold, Thou art there.
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
- 10 Even there would Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand would hold me.
- 11 And if I say: 'Surely the darkness shall envelop me, and the light about me shall be night';
- 12 Even the darkness is not too dark for Thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness is even as the light.
- 13 For Thou hast made my reins; Thou hast knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 14 I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
- 16 Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance, and in Thy book they were all written-- even the days that were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.
- 17 How weighty also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!
- 18 If I would count them, they are more in number than the sand; were I to come to the end of them, I would still be with Thee.
- 19 If Thou but wouldest slay the wicked, O God--depart from me therefore, ye men of blood;
- 20 Who utter Thy name with wicked thought, they take it for falsehood, even Thine enemies--
- 21 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate Thee? And do not I strive with those that rise up against Thee?
- 22 I hate them with utmost hatred; I count them mine enemies.
- 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts;
- 24 And see if there be any way in me that is grievous, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139

To the Chief Musician
For Sister Claire Edith de la Croix

Tanakh:

Bar 1
Ped D

1. Adonai hakatani vatedah
2. ahtah yedahta shivtee vekoomee, bantah leruh-ee mayrahokh
3. orhee verivree zereeta, vekhol derakhai hiskantah
4. kee en milah bilshonee, en Adonai yadahtah khoo-lah
5. a-horr vakaydem sarrahnee, eevatahshet alai ka-pay-hrah
6. pelee-ah dah-aht mim-men-nee, neesgebah loh-oo-khal-lah

KJV

Bar 28
Ped F

- [7] Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
[8] If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
[9] If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
[10] Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
[11] If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
[12] Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

Koran:

Bar 64
Ped G

58:7 Ahlam tarah ahn* Al-lah-ha yah-yuh-lamoo mah fee samaah wahtee wama fee lah-oo,
ma yakoonoo meen* nahjeewa thalah-tha-teen il-lah hoo-wah rahbee-oo-hoom walah hom-sateen il-lah
hoowah sah-deesoooom, walah adernah meen* tha-leeka walah ak-thara il-la huwa mah-oooom ah-hee-
nah mah kahnoo, oom ma yoonah-bee-oooom* beemah ahmeeloo yah-ooma lookay-yahmah, inn* Al-lah-
ha beekoollee shah-ee-een aleem.

th = soft th as in *them*, not as in *thanks*

* sing with a short vowel and a long hummed consonant - *meennn* not *meen*.

KJV

115
Ped E

- [13] For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.
[14] I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.
[15] My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Tanakh:

139
Ped E

16. gol-mee rah-oo enaykh ah, vay-al seeprekha koo-lahm yee-katayboo, yameem yoot-saroo vaylo ekhad bahem
17. veele mah yahkairoo re-aykha el, may ahtsimoo rrahshayhem
18. esperem maykhol yeem-boon, hekeetsotee vay-o-dee em-mak
[19-22 removed]
23. hokraynee el vaydah levabee, bayhahnaynee vaydah sarr-a-pai.
24. oorr-ay im dayrekh ot-say vee, oona-haynee bedayrekh olahm

kh=Scots kh like *loch*

leruh-ee like French *fauteuil*

hr (*ka-pay-hrah*) = a very soft h or mid r (like Portuguese *rodar* or Spanish *jamón*)

rr = Scots rolled r

ai as in *pie*

The transliteration above is my own, and so are any errors. But I acknowledge gratefully all those who generously helped me with pronunciation and transliteration - especially Sister Claire Edith to whom this work is dedicated. The juxtaposition of words from the holy books of the three great monotheistic religions is intended to celebrate their commonalities - a musical equivalent of the paintings of Chagall where Christ, Ibrahim and the rabbi share a canvas.

Psalm 139

To the Chief Musician

For Sister Claire Edith de la Croix

Text from the Tanakh, Koran and King James Bible

S $\text{♩} = 66$ *f*

solo A - do - nai ha - ka - tan - ee va - te - dah ah - tah ye - dah - ta shiv - tee ve - koo -

A

T

B

Pedal

Performance notes

The drone (*pedal*) may be played on organ, cello, symphony (hurdy-gurdy) or whatever is available. The notes should be held, although for simplicity the ties have not been marked. The drone may be lengthened at the start and end of each section, to taste.

In the choral parts close attention should be paid to note lengths: coming off together is crucial to the effect. The soprano and baritone soloists however may take their time, lengthen pauses or sing *recitativo* to taste. Arabic words marked * should be sung with a short vowel and a long hummed consonant, the opposite of usual classical singing practice – *mimmi* not *meeen*.

S

Pedal mee ban - tah le-ruh-ee may-ra - hokh or - hee ve - ri-vree ze -

S

Pedal ree - ta ve - khol de-ra-khai his - kan - tah kee en mi -

S

Pedal lah bil-sho-nee en A- do-nai ya - dah - tah khoo - lah khoo -

S

Pedal lah a-horr va - kay - dem sarr - tah - nee va -

S

Pedal tah - shet a - lai ka - pay - hrah pe - lee - ah dah - aht mim -

S

Pedal men - nee nees - ge - bah loh - oo - khal - lah

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S *mf*
Whi-ther shall I go from thy spi-rit? or whi-ther shall I flee from thy

A *mf*
Whi-ther shall I go from thy spi-rit? or whi-ther shall I flee from thy

T *mf*
Whi-ther shall I go from thy spi-rit? or whi-ther shall I flee from thy

B *mf*
Whi-ther shall I go from thy spi-rit? or whi-ther shall I flee from thy

Pedal
Whi-ther shall I go from thy spi-rit? or whi-ther shall I flee from thy

S *f*
pre- sence? If I as - cend up in - to hea-ven thou art there

A *f*
pre- sence? If I as - cend up in - to hea-ven thou art there

T *f*
pre- sence? If I as - cend up in - to hea-ven thou art there

B *f*
pre- sence? If I as - cend up in - to hea-ven thou art there

Pedal
pre- sence? If I as - cend up in - to hea-ven thou art there

S *ppp* *fp*
If I make my bed in hell be - hold thou art there

A *ppp* *fp*
If I make my bed in hell be - hold thou art there

T *ppp* *fp*
If I make my bed in hell be - hold thou art there

B *ppp* *fp*
If I make my bed in hell be - hold thou art there

Pedal
If I make my bed in hell be - hold thou art there

S *f*
If I take the wings of the mor - ning and

A *f*
If I take the wings of the mor - ning and

T *f*
If I take the wings of the mor - ning and

B
If I take the wings of the mor - ning and

Pedal
If I take the wings of the mor - ning and

S
 dwell in the ut-ter-most parts of the sea E-ven there shall thy hand

A
 dwell in the ut-ter-most parts of the sea E-ven there shall thy hand

T
 dwell in the ut-ter-most parts of the sea E-ven there shall thy hand

B
 dwell in the ut-ter-most parts of the sea E-ven there shall thy hand

Pedal
 dwell in the ut-ter-most parts of the sea E-ven there shall thy hand

S
 lead me and thy right hand shall hold me If I

A
 lead me and thy right hand shall hold me If I

T
 lead me and thy right hand shall hold me If I

B
 lead me and thy right hand shall hold me If I

Pedal
 lead me and thy right hand shall hold me If I

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S
say, Sure-ly the dark-ness shall co-ver me e-ven the night shall be

A
say, Sure-ly the dark-ness shall co-ver me e-ven the night shall be

T
say, Sure-ly the dark-ness shall co-ver me e-ven the night shall be

B
say, Sure-ly the dark-ness shall co-ver me e-ven the night shall be

Pedal
say, Sure-ly the dark-ness shall co-ver me e-ven the night shall be

S
light a - bout me Yea, the *mp*

A
light a - bout me Yea, the *mp*

T
light a - bout me Yea, the *mp*

B
light a - bout me Yea, the *mp*

Pedal
light a - bout me Yea, the

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S
dark - ness hi - deth not from thee but the night shi - neth as the day the

A
dark - ness hi - deth not from thee but the night shi - neth as the day the

T
dark - ness hi - deth not from thee but the night shi - neth as the day the

B
dark - ness hi - deth not from thee but the night shi - neth as the day the

Pedal
dark - ness hi - deth not from thee but the night shi - neth as the day the

S
dark - ness and the light are both a - like to thee.

A
dark - ness and the light are both a - like to thee.

T
dark - ness and the light are both a - like to thee.

B
dark - ness and the light are both a - like to thee.

Pedal
dark - ness and the light are both a - like to thee.

T $\text{♩} = 55$ *mf*

solo

Pedal

Ah - lam ta - rah ahn* Al - la - ha ya - la - moo mah fee sa - mah -

T

Pedal

wah tee wah - mah fee lah - oo mah ya - koo - noo meen*

T

Pedal

na - ji - wah tha - lah - tha - teen il - lah hoo - wah rah - bee - oo - hoom

T

Pedal

wah - lah hom - sa - teen il - lah hoo - wah sah - dee - soo - hoom

T

Pedal

Wah - lah a - der - nah meen* tha - lee - kah wa - lah ak - tha - ra il -

T

Pedal lah hoo - wah mah - oo - hoom ah - hee - nah mah

T

Pedal kah - noo oom* mah yoo - nah bee-oo - hoom*

T

Pedal bee - mah ah - mee - loo ya-oo-mah loo-kay-yah - mah

T

Pedal inn* Al - lah - ha bee - koo - lee shah - ee - cen ah -

T

Pedal leem

Tempo primo

S *f*
For thou hast possessed my reins thou hast covered me in my mother's

A *f*
For thou hast possessed my reins thou hast covered me in my mother's

T *f*
For thou hast possessed my reins thou hast covered me in my mother's

B *f*
For thou hast possessed my reins thou hast covered me in my mother's

Pedal
For thou hast possessed my reins thou hast covered me in my mother's

S
womb I will praise thee for I am fear-ful-ly and won-der-fully

A
womb I will praise thee for I am fear-ful-ly and won-der-fully

T
womb I will praise thee for I am fear-ful-ly and won-der-fully

B
womb I will praise thee for I am fear-ful-ly and won-der-fully

Pedal
womb I will praise thee for I am fear-ful-ly and won-der-fully

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S
made mar - vel - lous are thy works and that my

A
made mar - vel - lous are thy works and that my

T
made mar - vel - lous are thy works and that my

B
made mar - vel - lous are thy works and that my

Pedal
made mar - vel - lous are thy works and that my

S
soul kno - weth right well My sub - stance was not hid from

A
soul kno - weth right well My sub - stance was not hid from

T
soul kno - weth right well My sub - stance was not hid from

B
soul kno - weth right well My sub - stance was not hid from

Pedal
soul kno - weth right well My sub - stance was not hid from

S *mf* *f*
thee when I was made in se - cret and cu - ri - ous - ly wrought

A *mf* *f*
thee when I was made in se - cret and cu - ri - ous - ly wrought

T *mf* *f*
thee when I was made in se - cret and cu - ri - ous - ly wrought

B *mf* *f*
thee when I was made in se - cret and cu - ri - ous - ly wrought

Pedal
thee when I was made in se - cret and cu - ri - ous - ly wrought

S *solo*
in the lo - west parts of the earth

A
in the lo - west parts of the earth

T
in the lo - west parts of the earth

B
in the lo - west parts of the earth

Pedal
in the lo - west parts of the earth

S *mf*

Pedal Gol-mee ra-hoo en - ay - khah Vay - al see - pray - kha koo - lahm yee - ka -

S

Pedal tay - boo ya - meem yoot-sah - roo vay - loh e khad ba -

S

Pedal hem ve - lee mah yah-kay-roo re - ay - khah el may ah - tsi-moo

S

Pedal rrah - shay-hem e - spe-rem may khol yeerr-boon he-kee - tso - tee vay - o -

S

Pedal dee em-mak ho - kray - nee el vay - dah le - va - bee bay-ha -

S

Pedal nay - nee vay-dah sarr-a - pai oo - rray im day - rekh o - tsay vee oo-na -

S

Pedal hay - nee be-day - rekh o - lahm

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