

Psalm 139:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

Analysis

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. Unperfect (וְנִירָא, golem) means embryo, unformed mass—God sees value in the earliest stages of human development. **In thy book** (בְּסִפְרְךָ, be-sifrecha) references divine foreordination: God's plan existed before physical formation began.

All my members were written describes predetermined design—God doesn't improvise human creation but follows His eternal blueprint. In continuance were fashioned (וְיִצְרָא, yutsaru, from יָצַר, yatsar—to form, potter's work) echoes Genesis 2:7. **When as yet there was none of them** emphasizes God's planning precedes existence: you were in God's mind before you were in your mother's womb. This verse is foundational for understanding divine providence and the sanctity of life from conception.

Historical Context

The concept of God's 'book' appears throughout Scripture (Exodus 32:32-33, Malachi 3:16, Revelation 20:12). For David, this meant God's sovereign record and plan. The idea that God predetermined each person's 'days' (some translations) appears in Ephesians 2:10—works prepared beforehand.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 – God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. If all your days were written in God's book before one of them came to be, how should this truth affect your response to unexpected circumstances?
2. What comfort or challenge does it bring to know God saw you as valuable even in your most unformed, 'unperfect' state?
3. How does God's predetermined design for your life relate to human responsibility and choices?

Interlinear Text

גָּלַם יְ	בְּ אֵל	עִינֵּךְ יְ	וְעַל	סְפִּירָה
my substance yet being unperfect	did see	Thine eyes	H5921	and in thy book
H1564	H7200	H5869		H5612
כָּל מָ	יְכָתֵב בְּ	יְמִים יְ	אֵל רֹ	לְאֵל
H3605	all my members were written	which in continuance	were fashioned	H3808
	H3789	H3117	H3335	
אֵלָךְ	בְּקָם:			
when as yet there was none	H0			
H259				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 56:8 (Parallel theme): Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

Malachi 3:16 (Parallel theme): Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

Revelation 20:12 (Parallel theme): And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

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