

# Psalm 139:5-6

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-139/psalm-1395-6/>

*God surrounds David, protecting him. The idea of how this is possible, or why God would do it, is beyond David's comprehension, but he marvels at it.*

David continues his theme from verses 1-4 of a very personal God who cares about us thoroughly and individually. God, who is not confined by time, is also not confined by space. So wherever we are, He is with us. He is protecting us and has *enclosed* us *behind and before*. We do not need to be worried, because God has covered us from every side.

In 2 Kings 6, the people of Israel are in conflict with the nation of Syria. The Syrians send an army to surround Dothan, the city where the prophet Elisha is staying. The people wake up in the morning to see the army surrounding their city and begin to panic. However, Elisha is not worried. He tells the people:

“Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”  
(2 Kings 6:16)

He prays to the Lord to open eyes, so that they can see. The Lord responds and suddenly the people can see that the area surrounding the city is “full of horses and chariots of fire all around” (2 Kings 6:17). This passage from the psalms tells us that God is constantly surrounding His people with His power, protecting them. This is the idea David is describing in verse 5: a God who shelters His people from danger as they go out—a God who has *laid* His *hand upon* them.

The idea of “laying on hands” is very significant in the biblical text. The same word is used in the Hebrew Bible when Israel, one of the patriarchs of the Israelites, blesses his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh by laying his hands on their heads (Genesis 48:14). The leaders of Israel would lay their hands on one another as they transferred authority to their successors (Numbers 27:18-20). Levitical priests would lay their hands on the animals they sacrificed to consecrate them (Leviticus 1). In the New Testament, the apostles shared the power of the Holy Spirit in them with new believers by laying hands on them (Acts 8:17).

Thus, when David is describing that God lays His hands on us, he is implying something much weightier than a protective hand. He is describing a signal of blessing, of imbuing power, of strengthening, and of sanctification. It's a very personal gesture—God laying His hand specifically on us and having a direct involvement in our lives, to benefit our way.

However, the *knowledge* that God, the creator of the universe, would do this for us it *too wonderful* for David to understand. He does not seem to doubt that this is possible, or even that it is the reality. He simply accepts that this kind of knowledge *is too high* and that he *cannot attain it*. There are many parts of God that are wonderful to ponder, but often difficult, or even impossible, to understand. That does not make them untrue; rather it means we can take shelter in a God higher and more complexly amazing than we can imagine.

## **Biblical Text**

<sup>5</sup> **You have enclosed me behind and before,  
And laid Your hand upon me.**

<sup>6</sup> ***Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
It is *too* high, I cannot attain to it.**