

Psalm 119 v 113 to 176

Prayer: “Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.” Thank you, Lord. (Psalm 119 v 165)

Introduction: This is a special ‘acrostic’ psalm, in that each stanza is assigned a sequential letter of the Hebrew alphabet, with every verse in the stanza beginning with that letter. Thus each of the eight verses in the first stanza begins with the letter *aleph* א, all verses in the second stanza begin with *beth* ב, and so on. Part 3 of our study of Psalm 119 covers *samech* ס through to *tau* ת, the last eight x 8-verse stanzas...

Vocabulary: Almost every verse contains at least one of the following handful of words:

1. Way = דֶּרֶךְ, *derek* (705), or אֶרֶץ, *orach* (58) – road, direction, habit, manner or course of life (used in New Testament – see John 14 v 6, Acts 9 v 2)
2. Law = תּוֹרָה, *torah* (219) – instruction, teaching, revelation (more general than just the Law of Moses)
3. Testimonies = עֲדוֹת, *edot* (26) – witness, faithfulness, dependability – see Deuteronomy 31 v 26
4. Precepts = פְּקֻדִים, *piqqudim* (24) – detailed instructions, after root word פָּקַד, *paqad*, which means to pay attention to, look after, care about, look closely and take action (like a military officer or overseer)
5. Statutes = חֻקִּים, *chuqim* (127) – engraved (in stone), inscribed, permanent – see Isaiah 30 v 8
6. Commandments = מִצְוֹת, *mitzvot* (181) – the authority of God’s word (unconditional, not optional)
7. Judgments = מִשְׁפָּטִים, *mishpatim* (421) – the decisions of a wise and righteous Judge (Exodus 21 v 1), God’s righteous justice – see Psalm 119 v 137
8. Word = דְּבָר, *davar* (1,439) – general term, God’s truth stated, promised or commanded
9. Promise = אִמְרָה, *imrah* (49) – after root word אָמַר, *emer* (to say), utterance, saying, word, speech

Notes and questions for discussion:

- *Samech* ס, (v 113 to 120) – “I hate vain thoughts” is the King James translation of v 113 – what sorts of things do you think the psalmist hates? What does he love? Which phrases suggest that the psalmist is struggling and under pressure? What does he say God does for him? Is this true for you?
- *Ain* ע, (v 121 to 128) – “It is time for the Lord to act” (v 126) – why is this verse particularly relevant to this nation and the world today? How does the psalmist express his dependence upon God, and the importance of obedience? With v 127 see Psalm 19 v 10.
- *Pe* פ, (v 129 to 136) – Spurgeon summarizes the ‘pe’ (= p) stanza as “precious, practical, profitable, powerful and peculiarly so” – is this good summary? How does the psalmist express his appreciation of God’s word? What tests and demands does it stand up to?
- *Tsade* צ, (v 137 to 144) – This theme of this stanza is the “righteousness” (צְדִיקָה, *tsedekah*) of God – what does the psalmist say about this? The psalmist also tells us about himself (v 139, 141) – how does he contrast himself with the attributes of God?
- *Koph* ק, (v 145 to 152) – This and the next stanza gives us a ‘primer’ on earnest prayer. What do these verses teach us about prayer? How does the psalmist pray? When does he pray? Why does he pray, and what does he ask God for? What does he say about God? Are we as disciplined and definite in our own prayers?
- *Resh* ר, (v 153 to 160) – The phrase “give me life” or “quicken me” in the King James version (חַיִּי, *chayani*) occurs 16 times in this psalm, three times in this stanza (v 154, 156, 159). What does the psalmist say about his troubles and his enemies, and how does he pray about these problems? What positive things does he say about the Lord and his word?
- *Shin* שׁ, (v 161 to 168) – “Love... praise... peace... hope...” – how do these verses show the psalmist’s victory over persecution and falsehood? “Seven times a day” (v 164) is a Hebraism meaning ‘more than expected’. With verse 165 see also Romans 8 v 6b: “to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”
- *Tau* ת, (v 169 to 176) – What are the positive notes of praise in this final stanza? Are there any warnings here? Why do you think the psalmist asks God to help him (v 173, 175)? With verse 176 see also Isaiah 53 v 6 and John 10 v 11 – the Good Shepherd is looking out for his “lost sheep”...