

The Word of the Lord in Psalm 119

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Introduction: The Word of the Lord in the Psalms

The Structure of Psalm 119

From A to Z

Balance, yet Movement

The Words for the Word in Psalm 119

Torah – teaching/instruction (*living* revelation)

Word – spoken word

Saying – written word (promise)

Testimony – reminder/sign (e.g., “The Ark of the Testimony”)

Judgment – justice/vindication (see Isaiah’s Servant and Jeremiah’s Righteous Branch)

Precept – record/list (e.g., The Book of Numbers)

Statute – prescription/law/ordinance

Commandment – commandments

The Word and Its Benefits (“Top 5”)

Blamelessness

“Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!” (1)

“May my heart be blameless in your statutes, that I may not be put to shame!” (80)

(See also the closely related terms in “Others” below...)

Guidance

“A lamp for my feet is your Word, and a light to my path” (105)

“Keep my steps fixed [established like a foundation] in your promise, and let no iniquity overpower me” (133)

“I have gone astray like a lost [perished] sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments” (176)

Understanding

“I have more understanding than all my teachers, because your testimonies are my meditation” (99)

“I understand more than the aged, because I watch [keep] your precepts” (100)

“From your precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way” (104)

“The opening of your words gives light, giving understanding to the simple” (130)

“Let my cry come before you, O Lord, give me understanding according to your word” (169)

Salvation

“Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord, your salvation according to your promise” (41)

“My soul fails [with longing] for your salvation; I wait for [hope in] your word” (81)

“My eyes fail [with longing] for your salvation and for the promise of your righteousness” (123)

“Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek your statutes” (155)

“I wait/hope for your salvation, O Lord, and I do your commandments” (166)

“I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight” (174)

Life

“Deal with your servant that I may live, and I will keep your word” (17)

“My soul clings to the dust; give me life [revive me] according to your word” (25)

“Turn my eyes from seeing vain/empty/worthless things; give me life [revive me] in your ways” (37)

“Behold, I long for your precepts, give me life [revive me] in your righteousness” (40)

“This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life [revives me]” (50)

“Give me life [revive me] according to your steadfast love, and I will keep the testimony of your mouth” (88)
“Never will I forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life [revived me]” (93)
“I am severely afflicted; give me life [revive me], O Lord, according to your word” (107)
“Uphold/Sustain me according to your promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope” (116)
“Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding and I will live” (144)
“Hear my voice according to your steadfast love; O Lord, give me life according to your judgment/justice” (149)
“Defend my case and redeem me; give me life [revive me] according to your promise” (154)
“Great are your mercies, O Lord; give me life [revive me] according to your judgment/justice” (156)
“See how I love your precepts; O Lord, give me life [revive me] according to your steadfast love” (159)

Others: No Shame (6, 31), Upright Heart (7), Purity (9), Avoidance of Sin (11), Strength (28), Wide Place (45), Comfort (52, 82), Favor (58), Goodness (65), Knowledge (66), Steadfast Love (76), Wisdom (98), Joy (111, 162), Refuge (114), Safety (117), Peace (165), Deliverance (170), Praise (171), Help (175)

The Word and Human Activity

1-9; 11; 13-16; 20; 22-23; 30; 44-48; 51-52; 55; 57; 59-62; 69-70; 74; 78-79; 81-83; 87; 95; 97; 101; 106; 109-10; 112-15; 119; 121; 123; 127-29; 131; 140-41; 143; 147-48; 157; 161-64; 166-68; 172; 174

Past

“I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I set [laid before me] your judgments” (30)
“I have sworn [an oath] and confirmed it, to keep your righteous judgments” (106)
“I have done justice and righteousness; do not leave me to my oppressors” (121)
“My soul has kept your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly” (167)
“I have kept your precepts and your testimonies, for all my ways are before you” (168)

Present

“I remember your name in the night, O Lord, and I will keep your law” (55)
“I hasten and do not delay to keep your commandments” (60)
“I hold back my feet from every evil way, so that I will keep your word” (101)
“I incline my heart to do your statutes forever, to the end” (112)
“I hate and abhor falsehood; I love your law” (163)

Future

“I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!” (8)
“I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word” (16)
“I will keep your law continually, forever and ever” (44)
“I will lift up my hands to your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes” (48)
“At midnight I will rise to praise you, because of your righteous judgments” (62)

The Word and Divine Activity

10; 12; 18-19; 24-26; 28-29; 35-37; 39; 43; 49-50; 64-66; 68; 75-77; 80; 93; 98-100; 104-05; 107; 116; 122; 124-26; 133; 135; 149; 154; 156; 169-70; 175

Examples

“Take away from me false ways, and grace me with your law!” (29)
“Turn my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish/dishonest gain!” (36)
“Remember the word to your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope” (49)
“You are good and do good; teach me your statutes” (68)
“Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love, and teach me your statutes” (124)
“Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes” (135)
“Let my plea come before you; deliver me according to your word!” (170)
“Let my soul live and praise you, and let your judgments help me” (175)

The Word and Divine/Human Activity

17, 27, 31-34; 38; 40-42; 56; 58; 67; 71; 73; 88; 94; 102; 108; 117; 132; 134; 144-46; 153; 159; 171; 173; 176

Examples

- “Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wonderful works” (27)
“I will run in the way of your commandments when you widen/enlarge my heart” (32)
“Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I will keep/watch it to the end” (33)
“Confirm to your servant your promise, which is [for the sake of] your fear” (38)
“This has happened to me: that I have kept your precepts” (56)
“Your hands have made and fashioned me; make me understand that I may learn your commandments” (73)
“Give me life [revive me] according to your steadfast love, and I will keep the testimony of your mouth” (88)
“I do not turn from your judgments, because you have taught me” (102)
“Uphold/Sustain me, that I may be saved and have regard for your statutes continually!” (117)
“Redeem me from man’s oppression, that I may keep your precepts” (134)
“I call to you; save me, that I may keep your testimonies” (146)
“My lips will pour out praise, because you teach me your statutes” (171)

The Word and Persecution

Authorities

- “Even though princes sit and plot against me, your servant will meditate on your statutes” (23)
“Princes persecute me without cause, but my heart is in awe of your words” (161)

Wicked/Evildoers

- “The cords of the wicked ensnare me; I do not forget your law” (61)
“The wicked have set a trap for me, but I do not wander from your precepts” (110)
“For me the wicked wait to destroy me; I will consider your testimonies” (95)
“Turn away from me, evildoers, that I may keep the commandments of my God” (115)

Miscellaneous

- “Take away from me *scorn* and *contempt*, for I have kept your testimonies” (22)
“Let your steadfast love come to me, O Lord, your salvation according to your promise; then I will answer a word for him who *taunts* me, for I trust in your word” (41-42)
“The insolent utterly *deride* me; I do not turn away from your law” (51)
“The insolent smear me with *lies*; I, with my whole heart, will keep your precepts” (69)
“Let the insolent be ashamed, for they have wronged me with *lies*; I, I will meditate on your precepts” (78)
“They have *almost finished me* on earth, but I have not forsaken your precepts” (87)
“I am *small* and *despised*; I do not forget your precepts” (141)
“*Many* are my persecutors and my adversaries; I do not turn away from your testimonies” (157)

Others: 39, 84-86, 121, 122, 134, 150

The Word and Suffering

- “My soul melts away because of *grief/sorrow*; strengthen me according to your word!” (28)
“This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me [revives my] life” (50)
“Before I was afflicted I was straying/wandering, but now I keep your word” (67)
“It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes” (71)
“I know, O Lord, that your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me” (75)
“If your law had not been my delight, then I would have perished in my affliction” (92)
“I am severely afflicted; give me life [revive me], O Lord, according to your word” (107)
“*Trouble* and *anguish/stress* have found me; your commandments are my delight” (143)

The Word *and* the Lord

“I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me!” (19)

*Ps. 27:9; 69:17; 102:2; 143:7 (“hide not *your face*”) and Ps. 55:1 (“...hide not *yourself*...”)

“My soul is consumed/crushed with longing for your judgments at all times” (20)

“I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments” (131)

*Ps. 38:9 (the Lord); 84:2 (the courts of the Lord); 107:9 (the Lord)

“I cling to your testimonies, O Lord, let me not be ashamed” (31)

*Ps. 63:8: “My soul clings to *you*...” / Dt. 4:4: “But you who are clinging to *the Lord*...”

“I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I set [laid before me] your judgments” (30)

*Ps. 16:8: “I have set *the Lord* always before me...”

“I will lift up my hands to your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on your statutes” (48)

*Ps. 63:4: “...*in your name* I will lift up my hands” / Ps. 134:2: “Lift up your hands to *the holy place*...”

“My portion, O Lord, I have promised: to keep you words” (57)

*Ps. 16:5; 73:26; 142:5 – *The Lord* is my portion

“Teach me good taste and knowledge, for I have believed in your commandments” (66)

*Ps. 34:8: “*Taste* and see that *the Lord is good*...” / *Gen. 15:6: “Abraham *believed in the Lord*...”

“All my heart” (34, 69) + Love of *Torah* (47, 48, 97, 113, 119, 127, 140, 159, 167)

*Dt. 6:5: “You shall *love the Lord your God* with *all your heart*...”

The Word...Made Flesh

“*I am the way [14, 27, 30, 32, 33], the truth [43, 142, 151, 160], and the life [17, 25, 37, etc.]*” (Jn. 14:6)

No Shame (6, 31) – “Everyone who believes in him *will not be put to shame*” (Rom. 10:11, quoting Ps. 25:3)

Upright Heart (7) – “But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of *uprightness*...’” (Heb. 1:8, quoting Ps. 45:6)

Purity (9) – “And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as *he is pure*” (1 Jn. 3:3)

Wonders (18, 27) – “...signs and *wonders* are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus” (Acts 4:30)

Strength (28) – “I thank him who has given me *strength*, Christ Jesus our Lord...” (1 Tim. 1:12)

Comfort (52, 82) – “For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in *comfort* too” (2 Cor. 1:5)

Knowledge (66) / *Wisdom* (98) – “...the *knowledge* of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge*...” (Col. 2:2-3)

Light (130) – “I am the *light* of the world...” (Jn. 8:12)

Peace (165) – “*Peace* I leave with you; *my peace* I give to you” (Jn. 14:27)

Deliverance (170) – “Jesus...*delivers* us from the wrath to come” (1 Thess. 1:10)

Lost Sheep (176) – “I am the *Good Shepherd*” (Jn. 10:11, 14)

Conclusion: Psalm 119 as “A Sanctuary for the Soul”