

Psalm 119 (verses 89-104)

LAMED

“Thy faithfulness is unto all generations”

Verses 89-96: The settling of God's word in heaven, is opposed to the changes and revolutions of the earth. And the engagements of God's covenant are established more firmly than the earth itself. All the creatures answer the ends of their creation: shall man, who alone is endued with reason, be the only unprofitable burden of the earth? We may make the Bible a pleasant companion at any time. But the word, without the grace of God, would not quicken us. See the best help for bad memories, namely, good affections; and though the exact words be lost, if the meaning remain, that is well. I am thine, not my own, not the world's; save me from sin, save me from ruin. The Lord will keep the man in peace, whose mind is stayed on him. It is poor perfection which one sees and end of. Such are all things in this world, which pass for perfections. The glory of man is but as the flower of the grass. The psalmist had seen the fullness of the word of God, and its sufficiency. The word of the Lord reaches to all cases, to all times. It will take us from all confidence in man, or in our own wisdom, strength, and righteousness. Thus shall we seek comfort and happiness from Christ alone.

Psalm 119:89 "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

LAMED: The Twelfth Part.

“For ever ... settled in heaven”: God’s Word will not change and is always spiritually relevant.

Settled, in this particular Scripture, means station.

1 Peter 1:25 "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

The Word of God will never change as this Scripture and the one above clearly state.

Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

In the last lesson, we saw the affliction of the psalmist. In this lesson, we see the psalmist seeing the unchangeable nature of the Word of God. It was this same Word that created the world. God spoke ... it became.

Psalm 119:90 "Thy faithfulness [is] unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth."

Or "to generation and generation". To his people in every age, fulfilling his word, supplying their wants, giving them new mercies every morning and every day. Never leaving and forsaking them, according to his promise. His faithfulness never fails, it endures for ever, and is exceeding great and large indeed (see Lam. 3:23).

"Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth": Laid the foundation of it so firm and sure, that it cannot be removed. And though one generation has passed after another, the earth abides where it was, and will do for ever. And as firm and stable, and never failing, is the faithfulness of God, which this is designed to illustrate. So some supply it, "as thou hast established the earth", etc. (see Psalm 24:2).

God's faithfulness is like His Word. It never fails. I have said this before, but it is absolutely amazing that God could make this ball we call earth, and fling it out into space. And then tell it to stay there, and it does exactly as He said. Abideth means, continues to remain. This same God is faithful to each person, one at a time, upon this earth.

Psalm 119:91 "They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all [are] thy servants."

According to thy judgments (Hebrew); that is, thy commands. They "stand" (Hebrew), as thou hast appointed. They are what thou didst design them to be. The original purpose in their creation is carried out, and they thus furnish an illustration of the stability of thy government and the permanency of thy law.

"For all are thy servants": All worlds obey thy commands; all are under thy control. They show that they are thy servants by the conformity of their movements to the laws which thou hast impressed on them.

He is Creator, we are His creation. The Creator controls His creation. The whole universe and everything, and everyone in it is kept in order by the order established at creation. We are not only His servants, but we are His creation. He can do with His creation, whatever He wants to.

Psalm 119:92 "Unless thy law [had been] my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction."

Not the law of works, the voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more. Which is terrible, and works wrath in the conscience. Is a cursing and damning law to the transgressors of it; and so not delightful, unless as considered in the hands of Christ, the fulfilling end of it. But the law of faith, the doctrine of faith, or of justification by the righteousness of Christ, received by faith, which yields peace, joy, and comfort, even in tribulation. Or the whole doctrine of the Gospel, the law of the Messiah. The isles waited for; the doctrine of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by Christ, which is exceeding delightful to sensible sinners.

"I should then have perished in mine affliction": Referring to some particular time of affliction he was pressed with, either through the persecution of Saul, or the conspiracy of Absalom which was very great and heavy upon him. So that he almost despaired of deliverance from it; and must have perished, not eternally, but as to his comforts. His heart would have fainted in him, and he would have sunk under the weight of the affliction, had it not been for the relief he had from the word of God, and the doctrines and promises of it. He was like one in a storm, tossed with tempests, one wave after another beat upon him, and rolled over him. When he thought himself

just perishing; and must have given all over for lost, had it not been for the delight and pleasure he found in reading and meditating on the sacred writings.

Many people do not understand that the moment of our death is set by the Lord. We die, when He says it is time. We live, until He says it is enough. The psalmist had read and studied the Word of God so much, that he knew he was in the hands of God. He says, if I had not studied the Word of God, I would have just given up and died.

Psalm 119:93 "I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me."

Thy laws; thy truth. I will bear them in mind forever. To all eternity they shall be the object of my meditation.

"For with them thou hast quickened me": By them thou hast given me life, spiritual life (compare notes at James 1:18). This is stated as a reason why he would never suffer the truth of God to pass out of his mind. By that truth he had been made really to live. He had been brought from spiritual death to spiritual life. He saw before him now, as the result of that, an endless career of blessedness. How could he ever forget what had worked such a change in his character and condition. Which had inspired such hopes; and which had opened before him such an immortal career of glory!

How many of us have been sick unto death (seemingly), and then God came along, and put that extra spark of life in us and we lived? That extra spark is His Spirit. At the moment, it is fresh in his memory, but he is promising himself and God that he will never forget.

Psalm 119:94 "I [am] thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."

From all troubles and afflictions; from all enemies, temporal and spiritual. From Satan, and his principalities and powers, from sin, and all the wretched consequences of it. From hell wrath, and damnations. Salvation from all which is by Christ. And this is a prayer of faith with respect to him, founded upon his interest and property in him. Whose he was by choice, by covenant, by gift, by purchase, and by grace. And this is a plea for salvation; thou hast an interest in me, I am one of thine, therefore let me not be lost or perish.

"For I have sought thy precepts": To understand them better, and observe them more constantly. And which sense of interest and relation, and of salvation, will influence unto.

Precepts in this particular instance, means appointed mandate, or commandments. The Psalmist here is giving back to God, that which already belongs to Him. He is committing himself to God. This is total commitment to God. He has studied the commandments of God and has totally given himself to that teaching. We cannot save our self. He speaks correctly, when he asks God to save him.

Psalm 119:95 "The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: [but] I will consider thy testimonies."

That is, they have lain in wait; or, they have laid a plan. They are watching the opportunity to do it.

"But I will consider thy testimonies": I will think of them; I will adhere to them. I will find my support in them. I will not be driven from my adhesion to them by an apprehension of what man can do to me.

The wicked may wait to destroy, but they cannot get near those who are covered in the blood of the Lamb. He is placing all his trust in the Word of God, which he has hidden away in his heart.

Proverbs 16:7 "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Psalm 119:96 "I have seen an end of all perfection: [but] thy commandment [is] exceeding broad."

There is nothing so perfect in earth, but it has an end, only God's word lasts forever. I have observed that all human things, how complete whatsoever they may seem, such as wisdom and power, glory and riches. And the greatest and most perfect accomplishments and enjoyments in this world, are exceeding frail, and soon come to an end.

"But thy commandment": Thy word, (one part being put for the whole,) is exceeding broad. Or large, both for extent and for continuance. It is useful to all persons, in all times and conditions, and for all purposes, to inform, direct, quicken, comfort, sanctify, and save me. It is of everlasting truth and efficacy; it will never deceive those who trust to it, as all worldly things will, but will make men happy both here and for ever.

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The psalmist is aware that even though he loves God, and studies God's Word, he is not perfect. Only One who ever lived upon this earth was perfect, and that was Jesus Christ. The Word of God is so broad that it speaks of perfection. It also shows the way to perfection. In this imperfect world with imperfect people, we are not perfect. He is suddenly aware that he is not perfect, just forgiven.

MEM
"How I love thy law"

Verses 97-104: What we love, we love to think of. All true wisdom is from God. A good man carries his Bible with him, if not in his hands, yet in his head and in his heart. By meditation on God's testimonies we understand more than our teachers, when we understand our own hearts. The written word is a surer guide to heaven, than all the fathers, the teachers, and ancients of the church. We cannot, with any comfort or boldness, attend God in holy duties, while under guilt,

or in any by-way. It was Divine grace in his heart, that enabled the psalmist to receive these instructions. The soul has its tastes as well as the body. Our relish for the word of God will be greatest, when that for the world and the flesh is least. The way of sin is a wrong way; and the more understanding we get by the precepts of God, the more rooted will be our hatred of sin; and the readier we are in the Scriptures, the better furnished we are with answers to temptation.

Psalm 119:97 "O how love I thy law! it [is] my meditation all the day."

MEM: The Thirteenth Part.

This commences a new division of the Psalm, indicated by the Hebrew letter Mem (מ m, "m"). The expression here, "O how love I thy law," implies intense love, as if a man were astonished at the fervor of his own emotion. His love was so ardent that it was amazing and wonderful to himself. Perhaps wonderful that he, a sinner, should love the law of God at all. Wonderful that he should ever have been brought so to love a law which condemned himself. Any man who reflects on what his feelings are by nature in regard to religion, will be filled with wonder that he loves it at all. All who are truly religious ought to be so filled with love to it, that it will be difficult for them to find words to express the intensity of their affection.

"It is my meditation all the day" (see notes at Psalm 1:2).

To study the law of God is a very good thing. In our study on Leviticus, we could see types and shadows of Jesus, the Lamb of God. We see from the following Scripture, that there was a definite need for the law.

Galatians 3:24 "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

No one could perfectly live up to the law. It just made all of mankind very aware that they needed a Savior. He is saying, that he thinks on the law of God all the day long. When a person meditates upon something, it is their choice. That is what is meant by my meditation.

Verses 98-101: God's written Word ("Thy law"), was His wisdom for the Israelites (Deut. 4:5-6). Its purpose was to shape Israel into a just and righteous society that would reflect His goodness to the surrounding nations who lacked such a source of wisdom. God's Word gives, not just the psalmist but all believers, wisdom that exceeds that of their enemies and teachers.

Verses 98-100: The wisdom of God always far surpasses the wisdom of man.

Psalm 119:98 "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they [are] ever with me."

By the teaching and power of thy law.

"Hast made me wiser than mine enemies": I have a better understanding of thee, of thy law, of the duties of this life, and in regard to the life to come, than my enemies have. Not because I am naturally better, or because I have higher endowments by nature, but because thou hast made me wiser than they are. The rendering of this first clause of the verse now most approved by interpreters is, "Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies" Though this requires a singular verb to be construed with a plural noun (Professor Alexander). So DeWette renders it.

"For they are ever with me": Margin, as in Hebrew, "it is ever with me." The reference is to the law or commandments of God. The meaning is, that that law was never out of his mind. That he was constantly thinking about it; and that it unfolded such wisdom to him as to make him superior to all his foes. To give him a better understanding of life, its design, its duties, and its obligations, than his enemies had. The best instructor in true wisdom is the revealed word of God, the Bible.

The people who do not study the Word of God, have no perfect example of how to live before them. The Word of God is very helpful in our day to day affairs of life. We are told who to marry, and who we should not marry. Husbands are told how to be a good husband. Wives are taught how to be a good wife; children are told how to treat their parents. We are even told how to conduct day to day transactions in business. In fact, a government could run its affairs with no problem at all with the laws God set up in Leviticus. It would make a person very wise, if he studied the Word of God every day. If a problem arose that he did not know how to handle, he would just grab the Bible and look up the answer in God's Word. How much wiser could you be than to have the knowledge of God at your fingertips?

Psalm 119:99 "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies [are] my meditation."

"Understanding" is used to speak of knowledge that brings about good results. It is often translated as "success" and frequently refers to the benefits of knowing and obeying the written Word of God (Deut. 29:9; Joshua 1:7-8; 1 Kings 2:1-3).

Unless the teacher spent as much time in the Word as he has spent, this would be true. Absolute Truth is in the Word of God. The teachers' opinions are not always correct. Sometimes the teacher is basing what they believe on some other textbook, which is not necessarily so. The type of understanding that the psalmist is speaking of here is a gift from God through the Holy Spirit, who is the true Teacher.

Psalm 119:100 "I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

Than those that had lived in ages before him. Having clearer light given him, and larger discoveries made unto him, concerning the Messiah, his person and offices particularly, as it was usual for the Lord to do. Or than aged men in his own time. For though wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, may be reasonably supposed to be with ancient men. Who have had a long experience of things, and have had time and opportunity of making their observations, and of laying up a stock of knowledge. And this may be expected from them, and they may be applied to for it. Yet this is not always the case. A younger man, as David was, may be endued with more

knowledge and understanding than such; so Elihu (see Job 8:8, Job 32:6). Or, "I have got understanding by the ancients"; so Kimchi; though the other sense seems preferable.

"Because I keep thy precepts": Keep close to the word. Attend to the reading of it, and meditation on it. Keep it in mind and memory, and observe to do the commands of it; and by that means obtained a good understanding, even a better one than the ancients. Especially than they that were without it, or did not carefully attend unto it (see Psalm 111:10).

He has the benefit of learning from the mistakes that the ancients made. Learning the teachings of God, and then keeping His commandments would put him in a place of more knowledge. As I said, this type of knowledge would have been taught him by the Holy Spirit of God. The lesson opened unto him would be the Word of God. God will not just open your brain and pour in this knowledge. He will give you the ability to understand it more and more as you study. The Holy Spirit brings it to remembrance. That means you had to read and study it first, then He makes you remember. It takes some effort on your part. Hide God's teachings deep within your heart. They will be there, when you need them.

Psalm 119:101 "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word."

I have walked in the path which thy law marks out. I have avoided the way of wickedness, and have not yielded to the seductions of a sinful life.

"That I might keep thy word": I have avoided all those allurements which would turn me from obedience, and which would prevent a right observance of thy commands. This indicates a purpose and a desire to keep the law of God, and shows the method which he adopted in order to do this. That method was to guard against everything which would turn him from obedience. It was, to make obedience to the law of God the great aim of the life.

He is speaking of the Bible teaching him the importance of living holy before the Lord. He says, I have disciplined my walk to match up with the Word of God. Many today do not believe it is necessary to walk holy before the Lord. The Bible teaches that you must walk the salvation that you have received. When you repent, it means that you have turned away from your life in the flesh and are walking in the spirit.

Psalm 119:102 "I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me."

From the precepts of the word, from the ways and worship and ordinances of God. He had not wickedly and on purpose departed from them. Whenever he did, it was through inadvertency, the weakness of the flesh, and strength of temptation. Nor from the doctrines of the word, which he held fast, knowing of whom he had learned them. As follows:

"For thou hast taught me": The nature, excellency, and use of these judgments. He had taught him, by his Spirit, experimentally to understand the doctrines of the word. And practically to observe the precepts of it. And this preserved him from an apostasy from either of them.

I really believe that this is the secret. To walk in the will of God for your life, you must know what that will is. The psalmist has not departed from God's judgements, because he knows what God's judgements are. He has diligently studied the Word of God, and is using what he learned to guide his life. Most people who do not believe it is important to walk the holy life, spend very little, if any time, truly studying God's Word. They are not familiar with what the Bible says. They have taken someone else's word for what the Bible teaches.

Psalm 119:103 "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! [yea, sweeter] than honey to my mouth!"

Who had a spiritual one. And could discern perverse things, and could taste how good and gracious the Lord is. And so his words were sweet unto him. The doctrines of grace, the truths of the Gospel, were delightful and pleasant to him. Like unadulterated milk, desirable by him: and like good wine, that goes down sweetly. Like good food, that is exceeding palatable; or like honey, and even sweeter than that, as follows. And that words "may be tasted and eaten", is not only agreeable to Scripture language (Jer.15:16). But to classical writers;

"Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth": Not only had they the nourishing nature and the refreshing virtue of honey, but the sweetness of it; yea, exceeded it in sweetness (see Psalm 19:10).

Have you ever had the sensation that the psalmist is speaking of here? He has read it so much, that it is sweetness to his inner most being. This reminds me of the book that John was told to eat, that was sweet in his mouth as honey. The sweetness of the Word, to me, is that as I study it, it seems to be so personal to me. It is so ageless, that it is current today. Look with me at what Jesus said about this.

Matthew 4:4 "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

We are to partake of the Word of God (Bible), as often as you would physical bread. The Word feeds the soul of man.

Psalm 119:104 "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

A true understanding. A correct view of things. A knowledge of thee, of myself, of the human character, of the destiny of man, and of the way of salvation. The best, and the only essential knowledge for man. This knowledge the psalmist obtained from the "precepts" of God. That is, all that God had communicated by revelation. This passage expresses in few words what had been said more at length in Psalm 119:98-100.

This is speaking of those who love the Truth, and despise the lie. The false way is the wide way that leads to destruction. Not only is the psalmist thankful that he learned the way of God and would not be led into this false way again, but he hates this way that others might be deceived into falling in. This false way is the path that leads to the father of all lies, Satan. Again, I must

stress, the thing that kept the psalmist here, from getting in that false way was his understanding of the Word of God. The Word of God contains life. The false way leads to death.

Psalm 119 (verses 89-104) Questions

1. In verse 89, we read that God's Word is settled where?
2. What does settled mean in this particular Scripture?
3. In Matthew 24:35, we read that _____ and _____ shall pass away.
4. What does abideth mean?
5. What is amazing to the author about the earth?
6. What keeps all of God's creation in order?
7. What did the psalmist say, caused him to live in verse 92?
8. Who sets the moment of our death?
9. What quickened the psalmist in verse 93?
10. What is the extra spark of life that God gives us?
11. What does precepts, in verse 94, mean?
12. Who is the only One who ever lived perfect upon the earth?
13. The psalmist is not perfect, just _____.
14. Where is the law of God given in the Bible?
15. Why should Christians study the law?
16. In verse 98, what had made him wiser than his enemies?
17. What are some very important things about how to live, that the law in Leviticus tells us?
18. What would make a person very wise?
19. What could possibly make him wiser than his teacher?
20. What advantage did he have over the ancients?
21. The Holy Spirit causes us to remember what?
22. What had the psalmist refrained his feet from?

23. What does repent really mean?
24. How can you walk in His will?
25. Why do people not understand that you must lead a holy life?
26. His Word is sweeter in his mouth than what?
27. Through Thy precepts, I get _____.