

Psalm 119 Introduction I

There are 22 Sections in the Psalm. Each section begins with a Hebrew alphabet letter, 22 letters.

This psalm is written in an acrostic (alphabetical) arrangement. In each paragraph (strophe) of eight verses, each line begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

The psalm is largely a collection of prayers and meditations on the Word of God, referred to by 10 synonyms.

“Law” (torah), occurring 25 times in the psalm, denotes direction or instruction. More often the word refers to a body of teaching, probably Deuteronomy and Leviticus, if not the whole Pentateuch. In fact, in John 10:34 the corresponding Greek word for “Law” seems to include the entire Old Testament.

“Word” (davar) occurs 20 times in the psalm. It is a general term for God’s revelation, but the “Ten Commandments” are called “Ten Words” (literal Heb., Deut. 4:13).

“Saying” (imrah, often trans. “promise” in the NIV) occurs 19 times. It is often a poetical synonym for davar.

“Commandment” (mitsvah) occurs (in the Heb.) 21 times in the plural (usually trans. “commands” in the NIV) and once in the singular collectively. It signifies a definite, authoritative command. It is frequently joined with the next two words.

“Statutes” (khuqqeem) occurs 21 times. In the Psalms it is always in the plural. Literally it means “things inscribed.” So, it refers to enacted Laws (and is trans. “decrees” in the NIV).

“Judgment” (mishpat) occurs 19 times in the plural (often trans. “laws” in NIV), and 4 times in the singular. It represents a judicial decision that constitutes a precedence, a binding law. In the Pentateuch it referred to the laws after the Ten Commandments. The word can also mean God’s judgmental acts on the wicked.

“Precepts” (piqqudeem) occurs 21 times. It is a poetical word for injunctions, found only in the Psalter (always in the pl.).

“Testimony” (eidah) occurs 22 times in the plural and once in the singular. It is a solemn attestation, a declaration of the will of God. It is a general word for ordinances that became God’s standard of conduct. It is usually rendered “statutes” in the NIV.

“Way” (derek), used five times in the plural and six times in the singular, is a metaphorical term describing the pattern of life marked out by God’s Law.

“Path” (orakh), used five times in Psalms, is parallel to “way.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament

Psalm 119:1-48

Sections 1-6

119:1-8 The Undivided Heart

Walking in His law is a blessed life. This parallels to Psalm 1

119:9-16 Stored Treasure

We cleanse our conduct when walking in His way.

119:17-24 Solace in Loneliness

It's in quiet times God opens our eyes to see marvelous things in his word.

119:25-32 Revive Me!

This is a prayer for understanding and to be made alive to His word.

119:33-40 Teach Me!

This is a declaration of loyalty to His word and a commitment to the corresponding action of a greement and walking in His word.

119:41-48 Words for Others

Salvation comes through His word. The word is a pattern for our life.

June 6, 2023
6:30 p.m.