

A Few Famous Psalms

Psalm 119

This psalm, mostly known for being the longest, is a psalm of praise for God's Word. It has a particular structure as a poetic acrostic. Each letter in the Hebrew alphabet is used in sequence at the start of eight verses (EG Aleph א, is the first letter of the first eight verses, Beth ב, is the first letter of the second group of eight verses, etc. etc.).

Aleph:

Promised blessing to people – vs. 1-3

Blessed are those who live the Word of God.
Blessed are those who live in purity.

Praise to God – vs. 4-8

You have commanded, I long to obey that I will not be ashamed. I will praise when I learn your ways. I will obey, but don't forsake me.

Beth:

A question and answer – vs. 9

Question – How can a young man keep his way pure?
Answer – By guarding it (his way) according to your word.

A commitment to live the answer – vs. 10-16

I seek you. I have stored your word in my heart. I declare your rules. I delight in the way of your testimonies. I will meditate upon, and fix my eyes upon your ways. I will delight in your statures. I will not forget your word.

Gimel:

My lifestyle bespeaks my commitment – vs. 17-20

Three requests from God – Be generous, open my eyes, and do not hide your law.
Three acknowledgments of need – to live, to see, to sustain by God's Word.

My commitment has kept me true – vs. 21-24

True out of recognition that God chastens those who do not live the Word.
True though enemies are set against me.

Daleth:

I faint and fail on my own, but Your Word restores and sustains. – vs. 25-28

I pursue Your Word, and I am removed from error as I grow in You. – vs. 29-32

He:

Nine requests are made for teaching, leading, and turning me – vs. 33-40

Seven statements of commitment to follow the hand of God – vs. 33-40

Vay:

Plea for God's love in giving truth in His Word – vs. 41ff

Acknowledgment of love for the truth of God's Word – vs. pp48

Zayin:

The Word of God has brought comfort – vs. 49-56

The ways of the wicked cause anger, and their ways are contrary to ours. – vs. 51-53

Heth:

The commitments of the psalmist are to do better – vs. 57-63

The requests of the psalmist are for enablement to do better – vs. 58 and 64

Teth:

The pious saint is one who learns and asks for instruction – vs. 66, 68, and 71

The law that I kept has sustained and blessed me – 65, 67,69-70, and 72

Yodh:

Six requests made to increase understanding – vs. 73, 76-80

Two statements acknowledging God's help and chastening – vs. 74-75

Kaph:

The persecution is becoming overwhelming. This section finds the psalmist pleading for God's help – vs. 81-88

Lamedh:

Observations of God's provision and goodness – vs. 89-96

A single request for salvation because he sought God's Word – vs. 94

Mem:

Through the learning of God's Word we prosper over our enemies. – vs. 97-101

The Word of God is a steady guide and delight – vs. 102-104

Nun:

God's Word is illuminating – 105

God's people pledge allegiance to His Word because of its illuminating work – 106-112

Samekh:

The righteous despise the wicked for their lives in error – 113; 115; 118; 119

The hope of the righteous is in the Word of God – 113; 114; 116; 117; 120

Ayin:

God's people yearn for righteousness – 121; 123-125; 127-128

God's people live in an environment of wickedness – 121; 122; 126

Pe:

There is a great love for the Word of God – 129-131

There are requests made for God's help in this life – 132-136

Tsadhe:

The psalmist recognizes the greatness of God – 137-138; 140; 142; 143; 144

The psalmist recognizes his own frailty – 139; 140b-141

Qoph:

A cry for help – 145-147;

Four characteristics of God give comfort – 148-149; 152

The enemies are approaching, but God is close at hand – 150-151

Resh:

A plea for the mercy of God to be effective – 153-154; 156; 159

A difference between the wicked and holy God – 155; 157-158; 160

Sin:

The psalmist responds to the wonderful word of God – 161-168

Tav:

The psalmist pleads God's help as His Word works – 169-176