

PSALMS 119.WEB

A GRAND TOUR OF PSALM 119

By Pastor Bien Llobrera

May I invite you to join me on a spiritual journey. Let's go on a journey through Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible.

AN ALPHABETICAL ACROSTIC PSALM

Have you ever wondered about the strange words that serve as headings or titles to each eight-verse stanza of Psalm 119? Most Bible translations contain these strange words. The first stanza is entitled ALEPH; the second stanza, BETH; the third stanza GIMEL; and so on until you come to the last stanza which is entitled TAU or TAV. What are these strange words?

These word-titles are actually the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 119 is an alphabetical acrostic psalm. This means that Psalm 119 is made up of 22 stanzas corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Hebrew text, each line of every stanza starts with the same letter. For example, the first stanza starts each line with the letter Aleph; the second stanza starts each line with the letter Beth; and so on throughout the whole psalm until you arrive at the final stanza which starts each line with the last Hebrew letter Tau or Tav.

WHO WROTE PSALM 119?

In previous centuries some preachers, like Charles Spurgeon, believed that King David wrote Psalm 119. However, modern Bible scholars agree that nobody knows exactly who wrote Psalm 119.

The exact identity of the writer may be unknown, but of one thing we can be certain: he was a very creative and imaginative poet. This anonymous poet composed this long acrostic poem to express his deep love and admiration for the Word of God. The Word of God is the theme of this long poem. Scholars say that practically every line of this 176 line poem contains one word that refers to the Word of God.

In the commentary of Dr. J. M. Boice, he quotes one 19th century commentator as saying: "Here (in Psalm 119) we have set forth in inexhaustible fullness what the word of God is to a man and how a man is to behave himself in relation to it." He also quotes a 20th century commentator: "This giant among the psalms shows the full flowering of that 'delight... in the law of the Lord' which is described in Psalm 1, and gives its personal witness to the many-sided qualities of Scripture praised in Psalm 19:7ff."

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR GOD'S WORD

From Enduring Word (online), we quote the following:

In this psalm there are eight basic words used to describe the Scriptures, God's written revelation to us:

- **Law** (*torah*, used 25 times in [Psalm 119](#)): “Its parent verb means ‘teach’ or ‘direct’; therefore coming from God it means both ‘law’ and ‘revelation.’ It can be used of a single command or of a whole body of law.” (Derek Kidner)
- **Word** (*dabar*, used 24 times): The idea is of the spoken word, God’s revealed word to man. “Proceeding from his mouth and revealed by him to us...” (Matthew Poole)
- **Judgments** (*mispatim*, used 23 times): “...from *shaphat*, to *judge*, *determine*, *regulate*, *order*, and *discern*, because they *judge* concerning our words and works; show the *rules* by which they should be *regulated*; and cause us to *discern* what is *right* and *wrong*, and *decide* accordingly.” (Adam Clarke)
- **Testimonies** (*edut/edot*, used 23 times): This word is related to the word for *witness*. To obey His **testimonies** “...signifies loyalty to the terms of the covenant made between the Lord and Israel.” (Willem VanGemerén)
- **Commandments** (*miswah/miswot*, used 22 times): “This word emphasizes the straight authority of what is said...the right to give orders.” (Derek Kidner)
- **Statutes** (*huqqim*, used 21 times): The noun is derived from the root verb “engrave” or “inscribe”; the idea is the written word of God and the authority of His written word: “...declaring his authority and power of giving us laws.” (Matthew Poole)
- **Precepts** (*piqqudim*, used 21 times): “This is a word drawn from the sphere of an officer or overseer, a man who is responsible to look closely into a situation and take action.... So the word points to the particular instructions of the Lord, as of one who cares about detail.” (Derek Kidner)
- **Word** (*imrah*, used 19 times): *Imrah* is similar in meaning to *dabar*, yet a different term. “The ‘word’ may denote anything God has spoken, commanded, or promised.” (Willem VanGemerén)

EVERY STANZA A CITY

How are we going to go about our journey through Psalm 119?

Psalm 119 is very rich and very deep. Obviously, we could spend a long, long time studying Psalm 119. Dr. Boice mentions the following writers who wrote commentaries on Psalm 119:

- Charles Spurgeon devoted 349 pages on Psalm 119 alone in his 7-volume commentary on the Psalms.

- Charles Bridges wrote 481 pages on Psalm 119, devoting one sermon per stanza, totaling 22 sermons in all.
- Thomas Manton wrote 3 volumes on Psalm 119, totaling 1,677 pages. He wrote 190 long chapters, devoting more than one chapter for each verse.

For our study, I suggest that we consider ourselves as tourists visiting the 22 stanzas, treating each stanza as a city. When we visit the city, we will focus on one prominent tourist attraction in it. In other words, as we study each stanza, we will focus on one word or truth in that stanza.

Our goal is to visit all of the 22 city-stanzas of Psalm 119. Are you ready to begin the journey?

All aboard! Let's go!

STUDY 1:

PSALM 119:1-8 – ALEPH: CITY OF BLESSING

Key Verse: “Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD!” (Psalm 119:1).

We are making a grand tour through Psalm 119. We treat every stanza as if it were a city that we're visiting. Our first stop is the CITY OF BLESSING (Psalm 119:1-8). In this city we learn...

- A. It is God's Will to bless us. Gen 1:27, 28; John 10:10
- B. God's Word is our Manual on HOW to receive God's blessings – Vss. 1, 2.
- C. Psalm 119:1-8 shows us How to Use the Manual.
 - (1) We must LEARN God's Word (v. 7; Is 8:16; 50:4): to learn, we must look deeply into it (v. 6; Ezra 7:10; Eph 3:16; Col 3:16)
 - (2) We must OBEY God's Word:
 - (a) We must WALK in the Word, according to the Word (vv. 1, 3);
 - (b) We must KEEP God's Word in the sense of being faithful to it (v. 2; cp Ex 34:7);
 - (c) We must KEEP God's Word in the sense of guarding it, putting a hedge around it (vv. 4, 8), taking precautions not to violate it. Example: Joseph ran away from Mrs. Potiphar so that he might remain obedient to God's Word and be safeguarded from violating God's commands.

(d) Illustration: Lot's escape shows the elements of obedience (Gen 19:15-26; Luke 17:32): look straight ahead toward God and not look back.

(3) We must SEEK God (v. 2; John 5:39, 40) and WORSHIP God (v. 7) through the Word. All Bible reading and study must lead to God, help us to know God better, and as a result we are enabled to worship God more intelligently and sincerely.

CHALLENGE:

Will you take the steps to be blessed by knowing and obeying God's Word?

STUDY 2:

PSALM 119:9-16 – BETH: CITY OF CLEANSING

Key Verse: "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Psalm 119:9).

We continue our Psalm 119 grand tour, every stanza a city. We call Psalm 119:9-16 CITY OF CLEANSING.

A. CLEANSING – URGENT (vs. 9; Matt 5:8; Heb 12:14).

⁹ Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

(1) Best when young (Eccl 12:1a);

(2) Very difficult when old (Eccl 12:1b).

Illustration:

Sin is like the seed of the Banyan (Balet) Tree, once it gets deposited in a hollow place in a branch of the host tree, it will sprout and then drop roots into the soil. These roots eventually become big trunks with branches that twine around the host tree, eventually choking it.

B. HUNGER FOR GOD – INDISPENSABLE (vs. 10).

¹⁰ With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

(1) It must be a wholehearted seeking for God (vs. 10);

(2) Wandering heart, double-minded heart ever-present danger (Jer 17:9, 10; James 1:7,8)

C. WORD OF GOD – DIVINE CLEANSING AGENT – John 15:3; Eph 5:25-27.

Actions to take in order for God's Word to do a deep cleansing of our hearts.

(1) Memorize (vs. 11),

¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

(2) Analyze/study (vs. 12): God is our teacher;

¹² Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.

(3) Verbalize/share (vs. 13);

¹³ With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

(4) Prioritize (vs. 14);

¹⁴ I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

(5) Emphasize/meditate (vs. 15a);

^{15a} I will meditate in thy precepts . . .

(6) Actualize/obey (vs. 15b);

^{15b} I . . . have respect unto thy ways.

(7) Revise (British English for Review) (vs. 16).

¹⁶ I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

APPLICATION

Illustration:

Patients under anesthesia are sometimes known to speak during surgery, revealing their very personal, intimate thoughts. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matt 12:34).

I remember Navigator missionary Jim Chew testifying about how, while under anesthesia, his father preached a whole sermon on the “H’s of Heaven – Hope, Holiness, Happiness, etc.”

One of our members in Cavite City First Baptist Church sang hymns while under anesthesia.

How about you, if you are ever put under anesthesia, what words do you think will come out of your lips? It’s time you and I put into our hearts the powerful cleansing agent of God’s Word if we wish for His Word to come forth from our mouths, whether under anesthesia or not.

STUDY 3:

PSALM 119:17-24 – GIMEL: CITY OF VISION

Key Verse: “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18).

In Psalm 119:17-24 we visit the CITY OF VISION.

This city is entirely dedicated to healing people’s eye problems – blindness, near-sightedness, far-sightedness, astigmatism, glaucoma, etc. All human beings are afflicted with spiritual blindness (2 Cor 4:3-4).

A. REVELATION – THE ONLY CURE FOR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS – vs. 18; Matt 11:25-27; 6:15-17; 1 Cor 2:12

¹⁸ Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

B. WONDERFUL THINGS THAT THE SPIRIT REVEALS TO US

(1) The wonderful blessing of being God’s servant – vs. 17; Compare Matthew 5:3; We must accept our Creator-creature relationship with God; we must surrender the CEO position to Christ.

¹⁷ Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.

(2) The wonderful blessing of being a stranger in the world – vs. 19; Compare Phil 3:20, 21; Heb 11:14-16.

¹⁹ I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

(3) The wonderful blessing of spiritual hunger – vs. 20; Compare Matt 5:6;

²⁰ My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

(4) The wonderful blessing of being persecuted – vss. 21-23; Compare Matt 5:10-12

²¹ Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

²² Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

²³ Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

APPLICATION

You may be asking: How can I receive God’s revelation? Just call on the Lord Jesus.

Rom 10:12-13:

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. **13** For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Just cry out: LORD JESUS, SAVE ME!

- Save me from acting as my own god;
- Save me from living as if this world is my home;
- Save me from pursuing the pleasures of this world;
- Save me from the fear of people's opinions and opposition.

STUDY 4:

PSALM 119:25-32 – DALETH: CITY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Key Verse: “My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to Your word” (Psalm 119:25).

In the Christian journey, emergencies threaten our spiritual well-being.

Vs. 25 – “My soul cleaves to the dust”:

The Christian & the church are always in danger of falling and failing – no power, no fruit, no influence.

Psalm 119:25-32 shows us the way to REVIVAL, to restore life, vitality, and fruitfulness in our personal life and in the church.

A. SPIRITUAL EMERGENCIES

The Seven Churches in the Book of Revelation illustrate types of spiritual emergencies.

- (1) *Loss of first love to Christ* (Rev 2:4)
- (2) *Fear of persecution* (Rev 2:10; comp Matt 24:10). Smyrna church overcame this.
- (3) *Doctrinal contamination* (Rev 2:14)
- (4) *Idolatry and immorality* (Rev 2:20)
- (5) *Formalism and hypocrisy* (Rev 3:1)
- (6) *Inferiority and timidity* (Rev 3:8). Philadelphia church overcame these.
- (7) *Prosperity and complacency* (Rev 3:17)

B. REVIVAL – THE ONLY REMEDY, vs. 25

(1) *A Picture of Revival:*

Ezekiel 37:1-13 – This vision is strictly about the rebirth of Israel as a nation, but it perfectly illustrates:

(a) The UNREVIVED CHURCH in different stages of “unrevived-ness”:

- Bones scattered everywhere, very dry (division, disunity; Christian life a burden; fruitlessness);

- Complete skeleton with no covering of flesh (correct doctrine, no changed life);
- Complete human corpse (religious organization, complete with staff, budget, programs but no spiritual life or genuine fruit), vss. 1-8.

(b) The REVIVED CHURCH: Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled, Spirit-empowered: Great Commission Army, vss. 9-10.

(2) *Steps to Revival:*

(a) Desire and prayer for revival, vs. 25;

²⁵ My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

(b) Complete confession (mind, emotion, will) of unrevived condition, vs. 26a, 28;

^{26a} I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me...

²⁸ My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

(c) Return to the Word, vss. 26b, 27;

^{26b} ... teach me thy statutes.

²⁷ Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

(d) Total renunciation of everything false and contrary to God, vs. 29.

²⁹ Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.

(3) *Marks of Revival:*

(a) Firm and clear decision to follow God all the way, vs. 30a;

^{30a} I have chosen the way of truth ...

(b) Faithful, regular personal devotions; read your Bible & pray everyday, vs. 30b, 31;

^{30b} ... thy judgments have I laid before me.

³¹ I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.

(c) Lifestyle of full & prompt obedience: RUN in God's way, not WALK (leisurely, no urgency, taking it easy; hesitantly, reluctantly, no enthusiasm; marking time, procrastinating); faith obedience unto the end, vss. 32-33.

³² I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

CHALLENGE:

We must make a firm decision to seek God and His presence and power in our lives and in our church.

(1) Decide like *Joshua: Joshua 24:15*

“And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

(2) Decide like *Elijah: 1 Kings 18:21*

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.”

(3) Decide like *Jesus: John 9:4*

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work.

One wise pastor said, “Revival starts here: Draw a circle around you and pray, ‘Almighty and holy God, in the name of Jesus, I ask that You revive me and everything within this circle.’”

STUDY 5:

PSALM 119:33-40 – HE: GAS STATION CITY

Key Verse: “Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in *Your* way” (Psalm 119:37).

We name Psalm 119:33-40 the GAS STATION CITY. We stop here to fill up our car with gas before we proceed with our tour. This city’s motto is “Input equals output.” This city is wholly dedicated to the proposition that the right kind of fuel is the first requirement for a successful and joyful journey. Another motto is “Your car is only as good as its gas.”

Psalm 119:33-40 primarily petitions God to do something in and for the psalmist so that he might be enabled to do what God wants him to do. Note how every verse, except the last, starts with a petition:

³³ Teach me, O LORD, the way of *Your* statutes,
And I shall keep it *to* the end.

³⁴ Give me understanding, and I shall keep *Your* law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

³⁵ Make me walk in the path of *Your* commandments,
For I delight in it.

³⁶ Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to covetousness.
³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in Your way.
³⁸ Establish Your word to Your servant,
Who *is devoted* to fearing You.
³⁹ Turn away my reproach which I dread,
For Your judgments *are* good.
⁴⁰ Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me in Your righteousness.

F. B. Marchant observes insightfully: The psalmist asks the Lord to set the Word before his EYES (vs 33, teach me, lit., point out to me); before his MIND (vs 33, give me understanding); before his FEET (vs 34, make me walk); before his HEART (vs. 35, incline my heart). These petitions illustrate a key principle in the Christian life.

A. YOU WORK OUT, GOD WORKS IN.

Philippians 2:12, 13: "... work OUT your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work IN you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (NASB). You can work out only what God has worked in. God expects from you only what He has put into you, nothing more, nothing less.

B. CHRIST FOR US, CHRIST IN US.

Victory and fruitfulness in the Christian life depend on two complementary truths: Christ FOR us, and Christ IN us. Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives IN me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up FOR me" (NASB).

- Christ died FOR us on the cross to save us from our sins and their consequences;
- Christ rose again to live IN us His life of love, obedience, and service to God.

CHALLENGE

Before you continue in your JOURNEY, do you have enough of the right kind of FUEL in your car?

- (1) Continually be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18);
- (2) Constantly abide in Christ (John 15:5);
- (3) Consistently let the Word of Christ abide in you (John 15:7);
- (4) Pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17);
- (5) Always do what pleases the Father (John 8:28, 29).

STUDY 6:

Psalm 119:41-48 – WAW: CITY OF LIBERTY

Key Verse: “And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts” (Psalm 119:45).

1. At the entrance of this city a replica of the Liberty Bell is proudly displayed, hanging from what looks like a grand Roman triumphal arch. Across the face of the arch, these words are etched in bold letters: “All chains are broken when you enter here!” This city is wholly dedicated to delivering people from all sorts of slavery and addictions – physical, material, financial, psychological, emotional, spiritual.
2. Psalm 119:45 gives us the key to true liberty and genuine freedom: “And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts.” True liberty and genuine freedom can be found in complete submission and obedience to the Word of God.
3. The word translated “liberty” literally means “wideness or broad place”. Hence, Psalm 119:45 may be literally translated: “And I will walk in WIDENESS (or, in a BROAD PLACE), for I seek Your precepts.” True freedom is being released from slavery in order to live in a broad place. Three places, where this word LIBERTY (wideness, broad place) is used, illustrate three aspects of true freedom:

A. FREEDOM TO BE WHAT GOD WANTS ME TO BE

1. Genesis 6:15 describes the dimension of Noah’s ark.
 - a. During the Flood, this was the ark of salvation; it was spacious enough to accommodate Noah and his family and all the animals that God commanded him to save. The walls of the ark were not a limitation but a protection. The ark was wide and broad enough for each creature to be what God meant them to be: the big elephant was free and safe to be the big elephant, and tiny mouse was free and safe to be the tiny mouse.
 - b. Liberty is being delivered from things that will destroy our true identity and purpose and being released in order to fulfill our true identity and purpose.

2. Illustration:

Which train is free? The train that’s securely tied to and running in its tracks? Or the train “that got off and got freed from its bondage” to the tracks, but now it lies uselessly on the side of the road?

B. FREEDOM TO ENJOY ALL THAT GOD WANTS ME TO HAVE

1. In Genesis 13:17 God commanded Abraham to walk the length and breadth of the land which God gave as a perpetual inheritance to him and to his descendants. True liberty (like the wide, broad land that Abraham received) releases us to enjoy all that God has planned to give us.

Compare: The Great Commission to Paul, Acts 26:18: the Gospel sets free from Satan in order to receive the inheritance God gives to those who submit to His rule.

2. Illustration:

The Prodigal Son pursued his freedom, but what did it bring him? The freedom to eat pig's food (Luke 15:14-17)!

C. FREEDOM FROM EVERYTHING THAT SEEKS TO HARM ME

1. In Isaiah 8:8 Israel declared independence from God, so that God punished them with exile under a foreign nation whose oppressive power like wide, broad wings would cover the entire land of Israel. But how much better to take shelter under the wings of the loving Almighty God, Psalm 91:1, 4!

2. If you are not sure of your relationship with God, and you happen to be reading this article, may I say to you: True freedom begins here – seeking shelter in Christ. Have you received Him as your Lord and Savior? Receive Him and you will begin to experience true freedom in the three aspects we have described above.

CHALLENGE

1. The key to true freedom is obedience to God's Word. The key to obedience is love. Psalm 119:47, 48. Compare: John 14:21-23, 30-31; Psalm 40:6-8, Heb 10:5-7.

2. Are you ready to live in freedom within the protection of God's Word? "And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts" (Psalm 119:45).

STUDY 7:

PSALM 119:49-56 – ZAYIN: CITY OF SONGS

Key Verse: "Your statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage" (Psalm 119:54).

We call Psalm 119:49-56 the CITY OF SONGS. As we approach the city we can already hear music resounding and reverberating from within and spreading to the whole country all around. In the City of Songs you will be encouraged to discover the songs that you have in your heart; you will be given the opportunity to sing your songs; and you will also hear and enjoy the songs of others.

Psalm 119:54 shows us the importance of songs: "Your statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." We are on a journey from this world to our eternal home in heaven. Songs of different themes will give us the strength, comfort, and courage for our journey.

A. SONGS IN THE BIBLE

- At creation – Job 38:6, 7

⁶ Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;
⁷ When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

- After deliverance – Ex 15:21

²¹ And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

- For instruction – Deut 31:19

¹⁹ Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.

- For worship – 2 Chr 5:12-13

¹² Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:)

¹³ It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD;

- For healing – 1 Sam 16:23

²³ And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

- At Christ's birth – Luke 2:13-14

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

- At the Lord's Supper – Matt 26:30

³⁰ And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

- In tribulation – Acts 16:25

²⁵ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

- In heaven – Rev 15:2-4

² And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

³ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

⁴ Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

- Etc.

B. YOUR SONGS

God's Word is our primary source of songs. "Your statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage" (Psalm 119:54). "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16).

Christians, gifted in music and poetry, have also been enabled by the Holy Spirit to write songs that we can use for different stages and situations in our life. What are the songs that have ministered to you? Here are some of my favorites:

1. Song of Hope – Psalm 119:49: "I Don't Know about Tomorrow"
2. Song in Suffering – Psalm 119:50: "Does Jesus Care?"
3. Song in Persecution – Psalm 119:51: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"
4. Song of Comfort – Psalm 119:52: "What a Friend we Have in Jesus"
5. Song of Warfare – Psalm 119:53: "Faith Is the Victory"
6. Song for the Journey – Psalm 119:54: "This World is Not my Home"
7. Song in Sorrow – Psalm 119:55: "When Peace Like a River"
8. Song of Contentment – Psalm 119:56: "This Is my Father's World"

CHALLENGE

1. Let's learn by heart Gospel hymns and songs.
2. Let's sing Gospel hymns and songs
 - To worship God and celebrate His grace and works.
 - In personal devotions, for different situations and challenges in your life.
 - In fellowship to build up one another.
 - To witness for Christ.

STUDY 8:
PSALM 119:57-62 – HETH: CHAMPIONSHIP CITY

Key Verse: “*You are my portion, O LORD; I have said that I would keep Your words*” (Psalm 119:57).

We will call Psalm 119:57-64 as the CHAMPIONSHIP CITY. What qualities do we need to become a CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM for God?

QUALITIES OF A CHAMPION TEAM

1. CORE VALUE: Vs 57 – “You are my portion, O Lord.”

God’s championship team maintains the core value of putting God first. Matthew 6:33.

2. DEEP RESOURCE: Vs. 58 – “I entreated Your favor”.

We can only become God’s championship team if we learn to continually draw on God’s super-abounding grace as our never-failing resource.

3. DISCIPLINED WORK ETHIC: Vss. 59-60 – “Thought of my ways... turned my feet... made haste, did not delay... to keep your commandments.”

Each member of the championship team must consistently and faithfully trust and obey God.

4. ALWAYS IMPROVING: Vs. 61 – Overcoming “cords of the wicked”.

God’s championship team keeps on overcoming bad habits and the negative lifestyle.

5. OVERCOMING ADVERSITY: Vs. 62 – “At midnight... I give thanks to You.”

Midnight represents times of failure and defeat. In those midnight moments we must ask God’s forgiveness, get up, and begin again and keep on going.

6. TEAMWORK: Vs. 63 – “I am a companion of all who fear You.”

The Christian life is never a one-man job. We are members of God’s family, members of Christ’s Body, citizens of God’s kingdom. God’s championship team members will always strive to work as a team, using our individual gifts in order to build up one another and in order to accomplish God’s assignment for us.

7. TRUSTING GOD’S SOVEREIGN MERCY: Vs. 64 – “The earth is full of Your mercy.”

God’s championship team must always see the BIG PICTURE: This is God’s universe, this is God’s world, He is always in control. No matter what happens, Romans 8:28 will always be fulfilled.

CHALLENGE

Will you join GOD'S CHAMPION TEAM today?

STUDY 9:

PSALM 119:65-72 – TETH: CITY OF AFFLICTION

Key Verse: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray" (Psalm 119:67).

We call Psalm 119:65-72 "City of Affliction". During our spiritual journey, as Christians we will go through many a City of Affliction. Afflictions come in varied forms (health problems, financial difficulties, strained relationships, natural calamities, social upheavals, etc.)

A. AFFLICTION: NECESSARY

1. Before the affliction, vs. 67: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray."

When we are in our comfort zone, when everything seems going well, we let down our guards, and we tend to go astray.

Illustration: When was King David most vulnerable? When he was relaxing on his rooftop while his generals and soldiers were at war (2 Sam 11).

2. After the affliction, vs. 71: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

It is "afterward" that we realize why the affliction was necessary.

Affliction (divine discipline) proves that we are God's children

Heb 12:7-8 – 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

NOTE: Everyone (Christian or non-Christian) goes through afflictions. Afflictions, per se, do not prove a person is a child of God. But for the Christian, affliction is a clear (albeit a painful) proof that we are genuine children of God. Affliction is God telling us, "My child, I love you too much to allow you to continue in your self-destructive path."

B. AFFLICTION: CORRECT ATTITUDE

1. Correct Prayer Attitude, vs. 66:

When we encounter affliction we must pray, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge" (right understanding, specially, regarding God's presence and purpose in afflictions). The best prayer to pray during affliction: "Lord, what are You teaching me through this affliction?"

2. Correct view of God:

During affliction we must firmly hold on to who God is:

- Vs 65: “You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord.”
- Vs 68: “You are good, and do good” (compare Romans 8:28)

A gospel song says: "God is too wise to be mistaken; God is too good to be unkind. When you don't understand, when you can't see His hand, trust His heart."

C. AFFLICTION: BENEFICIAL

1. Purifies us from deceitful pride, vs. 69: “The proud have forged a lie against me.”

Pride makes us believe the lie that we can manage our lives apart from God. Affliction makes us realize that God created us to live in relationship with Him (we are containers, and He is the Source of all blessings that His love plans to pour into us).

2. Purifies us from careless self-indulgence, vs. 70: “Their heart is as fat as grease.”

Affliction shatters our indifference by dislodging us from our comfort zone (pictured like a lazy, slow-flowing river of fat).

3. Imparts true, eternal values, vs. 72: “The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.”

Affliction takes away everything material and temporary on which we depend, in order to show us (in the words of a gospel song): “When I come to the place where You (God) are all I’ve got, I’ll find You’re all I need.”

CHALLENGE:

In the coming days and months and years, we will surely go through afflictions. When we do, let us trust and obey God:

1. Our Heavenly Disciplinarian

Hebrews 12:9-11: 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

2. Our Heavenly Refiner

Malachi 3:3: “He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.” In ancient times the refiner placed the special vessel (maybe of gold or silver) that he was polishing on a base that kept on rotating while the refiner’s hands applied pressure on the surface of the vessel.

How did the Refiner know when the purifying was complete? He would see his face clearly reflected back by the pure metal. In the same way, God will continue to purify us with the necessary kinds and amounts of affliction until we reflect His face, and until people see, not us, but Jesus!

STUDY 10:

PSALM 119:73-80 – YOD: CITY OF THE DIVINE POTTER

Key Verse: “Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments” (Psalm 119:73).

We call Psalm 119:73-80 “City of the Divine Potter.” The metaphor of God as the Potter and of His people as clay being molded by His hands is prominent in the Bible. We first encounter God the Potter in Genesis 2:6 when He “formed” the first human being out of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). God is compared to the Potter (Isaiah 29:16; Jer 18:6; Rom 9:20-24). God told Jeremiah that He had “formed” him in his mother’s womb (Jer 1:5). 2 Timothy 2:20-21 mentions people as vessels (handiworks of the Potter) in God’s house. Psalm 119:73-80 describes believers as vessels in God’s molding hands.

A. THE POTTER AND I, vs. 73

1. The Potter’s Twin Actions, vs. 73a

- “You made me” – God is Creator: He gave me existence;
- “You fashioned (lit. established) me” – God is Sustainer: He supplied and continues to supply resources to support that existence.

2. My Response, vs. 73b

- “Give me understanding, that I may learn your commandments.” Help me to understand and follow my “User’s Manual” (the Bible) that shows how my life should function.

B. THE POTTER AND PEOPLE AROUND ME

1. Believers will be glad to see what God is doing in my life.

- They will glorify God when they see that I hope in His Word (promises), vs. 74;

- People will see in my life that God’s judgments (specific rules of behavior) are best; that the humbling disciplinary actions are guided by His faithfulness, vs. 75;
- People will see in my life that God’s “merciful kindness” (CHESED, covenant love) gives comfort, vs. 76; God’s “tender mercies” (RAHAM, bowels of compassion, the womb) gives life (fresh courage and motivation), vs. 77. Note the fascinating combination of CHESED (which we may describe as “father love”) with RAHAM (“mother love”), cp. Psalm 103:4.
- Other believers will be challenged and encouraged to follow my example, vs. 79.

2. Unbelievers – the proud ones, those who think they can live without God; those who despise believers as weaklings who need a crutch – in the end they will admit that trust in oneself brings only defeat, and trust in God is the wisest way to live, vs. 78.

C. THE POTTER AND THE GOAL

1. To make me blameless (perfect), vs. 80a; cp. Noah, Gen 6:9; the Bride of Christ, Eph 5:25-27; Eph 3:10-11.

2. In the end (on judgment day), I will have no cause for shame, vs. 80b; cp. Paul, Phil 1:20; 1 John 2:28.

CHALLENGE

Let’s fully trust and obey our Potter.

1. Like Joseph did (Psalm 105:17-22)
2. Like Jesus our Savior did (Heb 5:8-9)

STUDY 11:

PSALM 119:81-88 – KAPH: CITY OF WAITING

Key Verse: “My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word” (Psalm 119:81).

We call Psalm 119:81-88 “City of Waiting.” This city reminds us of the truth that much of life consists of waiting. In our spiritual journey, waiting for God is a necessary and unavoidable experience. In Psalm 119:81-88 we learn from the psalmist important truths about waiting.

A. THREE CONDITIONS WHILE WAITING.

1. “My soul faints” (vs 81) – Our body and our spirit become weak while waiting.
2. “My eyes fail” (vs. 82) – Our faith and hope become weak while waiting.
3. “They almost made an end of me” (vs. 87) – We feel that we are standing on the brink of defeat and death.

B. TWO QUESTIONS WHILE WAITING

1. “When will you comfort me?” (vs. 82) – When will God fulfill His promise to me? When will God answer my prayer? When will God deliver me (health, finances, relationship)?
2. “When will you execute judgment?” (vs. 84) – When will you punish the wicked? When will you make things right? When will your righteous kingdom come?

C. THREE CONVICTIONS WHILE WAITING

1. “All your commandments are faithful” (vs. 86) – No matter what happens, I can trust in God’s Word. He will always fulfill His promises.
2. “I did not forsake your precepts” (vs. 87) – Dead or alive, I will remain faithful to God.
3. “Revive me according to your lovingkindness” (vs. 88) – I will not give up. I will not stop praying until God delivers me.

CHALLENGE

Let’s take encouragement from the experiences of some Bible heroes:

- Abraham, the father of faith, waited many, many years for the birth of his promised son Isaac.
- Joseph waited many, many years before God fulfilled the dream God gave him.
- David waited many years before God finally placed on the throne.
- Our Savior and Lord lived and waited in silent obscurity for thirty years before He received God’s signal to start His ministry.

STUDY 12:

PSALM 119:89-96 – LAMED: RESEARCH CITY

Key Verse: “Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89).

We call Psalm 119:89-96 “Research City.” In this stanza we see the psalmist doing research.

A. 3 AREAS OF INVESTIGATION

The psalmist made investigation in three areas:

- (1) Up in the heavens he saw: Forever God’s Word is settled in heaven, vs. 89.

- (2) Down on the earth he saw: God established the earth and it abides, vs. 90b.
- (3) In the experience of God's people he saw: God's faithfulness (His promises in His Word) continues from generation to generation, vs. 90a.

B. 3 OBSERVATIONS

The psalmist observed that:

- (1) There is limit to all perfection in creation, vs. 96a.
- (2) God's commandments are exceedingly broad, vs. 96b.
- (3) All things are God's servants, vs. 91.

C. APPLICATION

In his research, the psalmist could barely scratch the surface of God's creation and God's Word. But there was one truth he knew and held on to: "I am yours", vs. 94; this God of the incomprehensible creation, this God of the unfathomable Word, chose him to be His very own possession; therefore...

(1) God's part: He would surely keep the psalmist:

(a) In the midst of affliction, vs. 92; and

(b) In the face of his persecutors, vs. 95.

(2) The psalmist's part: He would make sure that:

(a) God's Word (law, precepts, testimonies) would be his continuing delight, as in holding a precious treasure close to his heart, vs. 92;

(b) He would never forget God's Word (never misplace it; never neglect it; never allow inattention toward it; never erase it from his memory), vs. 93;

(c) He would seek God's Word (inquire after it, search it out as a hidden treasure, pursue it as if after a fugitive), vs. 94;

(d) He would consider God's Word (literally, to separate mentally; hence, 2 Timothy 2:15, "rightly dividing the Word of truth"), vs. 95.

"RESEARCH CITY"
PSALM 119:89-96

A. 3 AREAS OF INVESTIGATION



B. 3 OBSERVATIONS

B1
LIMIT TO ALL PERFECTION
VS. 96a

B2
ALL THINGS ARE GOD'S SERVANTS
VS. 91

B3
GOD'S COMMANDMENTS EXCEEDINGLY BROAD, VS. 96b

C. APPLICATION

"I AM YOURS" - VS. 94

- IN THE MIDDLE OF MY... AFFLICTION, VS. 92
PERSECUTORS, VS. 95

- YOUR LAW, PRECEPTS, TESTIMONIES MY DELIGHT, VS. 92

I'LL NEVER FORGET, VS. 93

I HAVE SOUGHT, VS. 94

I WILL CONSIDER, VS. 95

STUDY 13:

PSALM 119:97-104 – MEM: CITY OF GOD'S SCHOOL

Key Verse: "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97).

In Psalm 119:97-104 we attend GOD'S SCHOOL in this city.

A. GRADUATION GOALS

(1) Vs. 98 – Wiser than my enemies

Matt 10:19,20 – 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; **20** for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Acts 6:8-10 – 8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. **9** Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. **10** And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

(2) Vs. 99 – Wiser than my teachers

Heb 8:10-11 – 10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **11** None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

1 John 2:27 – 27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

(3) Vs. 100 – Wiser than the ancients

1 John 2:13,14 – 13 I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. **14** I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

B. LEVELS LEADING TO GRADUATION

We must complete FIVE LEVELS in order to graduate.

We call these attitudes/activities as levels that seem to follow a logical sequence. However, in actual life, these activities/attitudes work together in concert to help us achieve mature godly wisdom.

LEVEL 1: LOVE GOD’S WORD

A choice of the will leading to pleasure in the emotions.

97a Oh, how I love Your law!

103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, *Sweeter* than honey to my mouth!

LEVEL 2: MEDITATE CONTINUALLY ON GOD’S WORD

Practical, habitual discipline of “chewing” on the Word.

97b *It is* my meditation all the day.

LEVEL 3: AVOID & HATE EVERY FALSE WAY

Negative action

101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

104 Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

LEVEL 4: STICK TO THE RIGHT WAY

Positive action

102a I have not departed from Your judgments,

LEVEL 5: GOD HIMSELF, MY TEACHER: 102b (John 3:28-30; Rev 2:17; 3:12)

102b For You Yourself have taught me.

John 3:28-30 – 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ **29** He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. **30** He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

Rev 2:17; 3:12 – 17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.”

Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name.

STUDY 14:

PSALM 119:105-112 – NUN: CITY OF LIGHT

Key Verse: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:104).

We call Psalm 119:105-112 the City of Light. Please study figure below.

1. GOD’S WORD, MY LAMP & LIGHT

God’s Word shows me where to go and how to live.

Verse 105:

¹⁰⁵ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

But note: The WRITTEN WORD (the Bible) must always be joined to the LIVING WORD (Christ) by the Holy Spirit (John 6:63, 68, 69)

2. MY COMMITMENT:

I am committed to live by God's Word to the end.

Verses 106, 112:

¹⁰⁶ I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

¹¹² I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.

3. GOD'S WORD SHOWS ME

The true end and purpose of life, and the daily steps toward that end.

Verse 112:

¹¹² I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end. (Compare 1 John 1:7; 2:6)

4. GOD'S WORD SHOWS ME

The true eternal inheritance in the future, and the values I must live by in the present.

Verse 111:

¹¹¹ Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. (Compare Luke 10:20; 1 Peter 1:3-9)

5. ALONG THE WAY

I will encounter afflictions (vs. 107), life threatening dangers (vs. 109), and persecutions (vs. 110).

Verse 107:

¹⁰⁷ I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

Verse 109:

¹⁰⁹ My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

Verse 110:

¹¹⁰ The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

6. BUT, BY GOD'S GRACE, MY RESPONSE WILL BE:

(a) I will trust God to give me power to overcome

Verse 107:

¹⁰⁷ I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.

(b) I will trust God in everything and for everything

Verse 108:

¹⁰⁸ Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments. (compare 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:20).

(c) I will learn what God is teaching me

Verse 108b: ... teach me thy judgments.

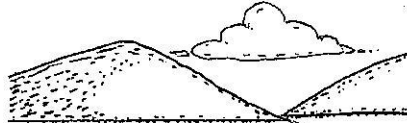
(d) I will obey God no matter what

Verse 109:

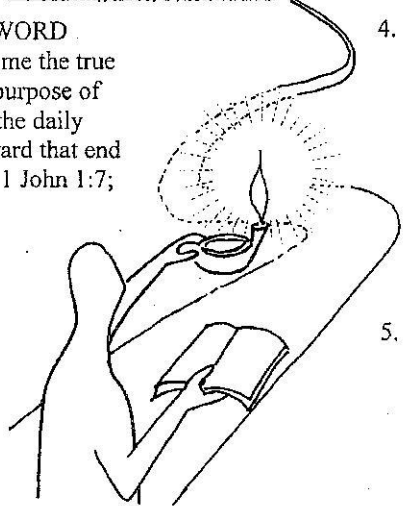
¹⁰⁹ My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law. (compare Daniel 3:16-18)

THE CITY OF LIGHT – PSALM 119:105-112

1. GOD'S WORD, MY LAMP & LIGHT – Shows me where to go and how to live (vs. 105). But note: The WRITTEN WORD (the Bible) must always be joined to the LIVING WORD (Christ) by the Holy Spirit (John 6:63, 68, 69).
2. MY COMMITMENT – To live by God's Word to the end (vss. 106, 112)



3. GOD'S WORD SHOWS me the true end and purpose of life, and the daily steps toward that end (vs. 112; 1 John 1:7; 2:6)



4. GOD'S WORD SHOWS me the true eternal inheritance in the future, and the values I must live by in the present (vs. 111; Luke 10:20; 1 Pet 1:3-9)

5. ALONG THE WAY I will surely encounter afflictions (107), life-threatening dangers (109), and persecutions (110).

6. BUT, BY GOD'S GRACE, MY RESPONSE WILL BE:

- (a) I will trust God to give me power to overcome (vs. 107b);
- (b) I will thank God in and for everything (vs. 108a; 1 Thess 5:18; Eph 5:20);
- (c) I will learn what God is teaching me (vs. 108b);
- (d) I will obey God no matter what (vs. 109b; Daniel 3:16-18).

STUDY 15:

PSALM 119:113-120 – SAMEK: CITY OF REFUGE

Key Verse: "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word" (Psalm 119:114).

We call Psalm 119:113-120 the City of refuge.

A. WHO ARE OUTSIDE THE CITY OF REFUGE?

(1) Their identity

- (a) The double-minded, vs. 113a; Gen. 19:17, 26; Luke 9:61-62

- (b) The evildoers, vs 115; they break God's laws and end up breaking themselves and hurting others, Acts 26:14
- (c) Those who go astray, vs 118; 3 reasons: wine, Prov 20:1; Matt 24:48-51; women, Prov 5:20,23; reject instruction, Prov 19:27

(2) Their destiny

Thrown away as dross, vs 119; Matt 5:13

B. WHO ARE INSIDE THE CITY OF REFUGE?

(1) Their identity

- (a) Those who love God's Word, vss 113b, 119b
- (b) Those who hope in God's Word, 114b, 116b
- (c) Those who obey God's Word, vss 115b, 117b

(2) Their blessings

- (a) Upheld by God, vss 116, 117
- (b) Receive life from God, vs 116
- (c) Kept safe by God, vs 117

(3) Their attitude: Godly fear

- (a) Fear of who God is, vs 120a; 1 Pet 1:15-17; Heb 12:29
- (b) Fear of God's judgments, vs 120b; 1 Pet 4:17-18; 2 Pet 3:10-14

CITY OF REFUGE – PSALM 119:113-120

Key Verse: "You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word" (vs. 114)

WHO ARE OUTSIDE THE CITY OF REFUGE?

- (1) The double-minded, vs. 113a; Gen. 19:17, 26; Luke 9:61-62
- (2) The evildoers, vs 115; they break God's laws and end up breaking themselves and hurting others, Acts 26:14
- (3) Those who go astray, vs 118; 3 reasons: wine, Prov 20:1; Matt 24:48-51; women, Prov 5:20,23; reject instruction, Prov 19:27

THEIR DESTINY
 Thrown away as dross, vs 119; Matt 5:13

WHO ARE INSIDE THE CITY OF REFUGE?

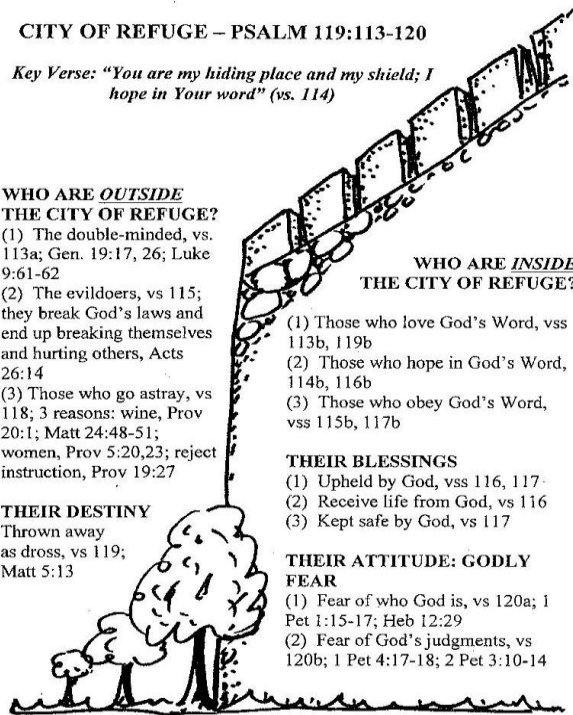
- (1) Those who love God's Word, vss 113b, 119b
- (2) Those who hope in God's Word, 114b, 116b
- (3) Those who obey God's Word, vss 115b, 117b

THEIR BLESSINGS

- (1) Upheld by God, vss 116, 117
- (2) Receive life from God, vs 116
- (3) Kept safe by God, vs 117

THEIR ATTITUDE: GODLY FEAR

- (1) Fear of who God is, vs 120a; 1 Pet 1:15-17; Heb 12:29
- (2) Fear of God's judgments, vs 120b; 1 Pet 4:17-18; 2 Pet 3:10-14



STUDY 16

PSALM 119:121-128 – AYIN: CITY OF SERVANTS

Key Verse: “I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies” (Psalm 119:125).

In Psalm 119:121-128 we find ourselves in the City of Servants. Service to God is the theme of this stanza. Three times in this stanza we encounter the word SERVANT.

Verse 122 – Be surety for Your servant for good; do not let the proud oppress me.

Verse 124 – Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, and teach me Your statutes.

Verse 125 – I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies.

EVERYONE IS A SERVANT

1. The psalmist was blessed to know that he was GOD’S SERVANT.
2. This fact confronts you with a life-and-death question: Whose servant are you? If you do not know for sure that you are GOD’S SERVANT, you can be sure that you are the servant of God’s enemy.
3. Later on in the New Testament we find that Christ made this fact very clear. He offered freedom and deliverance to the Jews; He said in John 8:32-36:

32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’”
34 Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

4. Christ made two very penetrating statements:

(a) Statement 1: Everyone is a slave – John 8:34; the solution: verse 36

34 Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

- The problem: Are you habitually doing any of these things? 1 Cor 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21
- The solution: Romans 6:23; John 8:36

(b) Statement 2: You can serve only one master – Matthew 6:24:

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

- The problem: To serve MAMMON means to do everything for personal fleshly, earthly gain. Luke 4:5-7
- The solution: To serve God is to do everything for God’s glory. 1 Corinthians 10:31; Col 3:22-24

PERSONAL APPLICATION

(1) Satan’s servants are actively opposing God’s word:

(a) News Item: Christian track athlete won and raised his hands to God. He was disqualified!

(b) News Item: One military officer at the Pentagon is changing rules for religious freedom in the military. If you mention the name of Jesus, you will be court martialed for violation! Even chaplains are forbidden to share Jesus.

(2) Time for God’s servants to arise!

(a) DO GOD’S WILL

1 Peter 4:1-4: 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

(b) BE MORE AND MORE LIKE CHRIST!

Ephesians 4:13: till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

(c) HELP MORE AND MORE PEOPLE TO KNOW CHRIST!

Follow Paul’s example: Romans 1:14-16: I am a DEBTOR... I am READY... I am NOT ASHAMED!

14 I am a DEBTOR both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. 15 So, as much as is in me, I am READY to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. 16 For I am

NOT ASHAMED of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

STUDY 17:

PSALM 119:129-136 – PE: CITY OF GUIDANCE

Key Verse: “The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

1. We call Psalm 119:129-136, CITY OF GUIDANCE.

2. All of us need guidance, constant guidance, because:

(a) We cannot see the future; we see only the present;

(b) We can only see the step we are taking right now, and we cannot predict the outcome of this step;

(c) We can only see the small picture of our immediate surroundings, we cannot see the big picture.

Illustration:

The ant is my favorite illustration. Imagine an ant crawling from the left end of the table to the opposite end. For the ant, the right end of the table is still future, and it doesn't see the obstacles (if any) that lie on the way to the other end. But for me (a human being), the entire table, both the left end and the right end, is covered by my single view, and in one glance I can see the beginning and the end of the table and everything in between. For the ant the distance behind it is the PAST, its present location is the PRESENT, and the distance in front of it is the FUTURE. But for me everything is the PRESENT.

Spiritually, I am that ant, making the journey from one end of life to the other end, and God is looking down from above and sees all my past and present and future as one ETERNAL PRESENT. I need guidance because I am that ant and God can give me guidance because He is the One big enough to encompass my life from the beginning to end and everything in between.

3. We absolutely need guidance for daily, practical life. For example, mothers need wisdom in dealing with their children. Mothers would like to keep their children within their arm's reach and within view of their eyes, if possible, tied permanently to their apron strings. They want to protect and help their children. They need guidance in how to relate to their children when their children take a road far away from their reach and sight.

4. But all of us, not only mothers but also fathers and sons and daughters and grandfathers and grandmothers and everyone in between – all of us need guidance.

A. THE KEY TO GUIDANCE

Psalms 119:129-136 gives us the key to guidance. God's Word is the key to guidance, vs. 129.

(1) Vs. 129a: Your testimonies are wonderful... full of wonders and does wonders, amazing, magical, works! God's Word is the instruction manual for life; you'll be amazed at the amount of information and wise advice that it contains.

(2) Vs. 129b: Therefore my soul keeps them. Keep God's Word handy, always in your hand and in your heart, and follow it. "If all else fails, follow instruction."

B. STEPS TO GUIDANCE

But to receive God's guidance from His Word, you must follow these steps:

- STEP 1: God's Word must ENTER your mind and heart.

Vs. 130a: The entrance of your word gives light...

For the Word to enter HUMILITY is required: Vs. 130b: It gives understanding to the simple. Christ said, "Unless you become like little children..." To be SIMPLE means to admit your limitations and your need. "Lord, I don't know what to do."

A very clear illustration of this kind of humility is found in 2 Chron 20:1-3, 12: It happened after this that the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which is En Gedi). 3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You."

This is the truly humble prayer: "Lord, I do not know what to do, but my eyes are upon you."

And the truly humble, child-like attitude is expressed below with equal force:

Psalms 131:1-3: Lord, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.

2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me.

3 O Israel, hope in the Lord From this time forth and forever.

- STEP 2: OPEN your mouth and soul to receive God's Word with intense hunger and thirst.

Vs. 131: I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for Your commandments.

- STEP 3: LOVE the God of the Word; God will surely guide those who love Him.

Beware of BIBLIOLATRY, loving the Book rather than the Author of the Book. Whenever we read and study the Bible we must make sure that it leads us to a closer relationship and fellowship with God.

Vs. 132: Look upon me and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your name.

- STEP 4: GET RID of secret favorite, habitual sins.

Vs. 133: Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.

God cannot and will not guide you if you keep on holding to secret favorite, habitual sins. Luke 6:46: "But why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

- STEP 5: Resist PEER PRESSURE, OBEY GOD ALONE:

Vss. 134, 135: Redeem me from the oppression of man, that I may keep Your precepts. Make Your face shine upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes.

John 5:44: How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

Acts 5:29: But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

- STEP 6: Maintain a BURNING PASSION for God's glory:

Vs. 136: Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law.

It is not about our honor but God's glory. John 2:17: Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

APPLICATION

1. The greatest achievement of a mother, who is truly guided by God, is to give birth to and nurture a soul for heaven.

The mother and grandmother of Timothy were such blessed mothers.

2 Timothy 1:5: 5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

2 Timothy 3:15: and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to

make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2. The greatest blessing for the Christian who is guided by God is to be assured of his eternal destiny.

Jesus said, “Do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)

3. God will give us the guidance to help us journey successfully to heaven, and to help others to find their way there through faith in Jesus the only Way, Truth and Life.

STUDY 18:

PSALM 119:137-144 – TSADDE: CITY OF THE RULER

Key Verse: “Righteous *are* You, O LORD, and upright *are* Your judgments” (Psalm 119:137).

At the gate of the city is a RULER – not the master of the city but a measuring rod. Everyone who wants to enter the city will be measured. Those who fall short of the required standard will not be allowed to enter the city. Psalm 119:137-144 shows the absolute importance of RIGHTEOUSNESS – straightness and measuring up to God’s standard.

A. Righteousness is GOD’S CHARACTER, vs. 137:

B. Righteousness is the message of GOD’S WORD, vs. 142:

C. Righteousness is required of MY CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOR, vs. 144:

D. Compare Psalm 24, which dramatizes the importance of righteousness.

(1) Vss. 1-6: The whole world is God’s house. Who is qualified to approach God?

(a) The person with clean hands – righteous outward behavior,

(b) The person with a pure heart (righteous thoughts and motives),

(c) The person who has not lifted up his soul to an idol (puts God first and last in all areas of life),

(d) The person who has not sworn deceitfully (a man/woman of his/her word).

(e) In other words, one who is perfect (Matt 5:48). Problem: Nobody is perfect (Rom 3:23; Isa 64:6). Solution: The King of Glory will give you righteousness.

(2) Vss. 7-10: The King of Glory is knocking at the gate – the gate of your heart.

(a) The Lord mighty in battle: He has the right and power to knock your gate down, but he won't. He knocks, He respects your decision today. At His second coming, He will batter down all gates and walls (Rev 6:12-17).

(b) Today, He knocks as the Lord who battled on your behalf.

- On the cross He defeated Satan, sin and death for you.
- As the risen, reigning Lord, He will enable you to live a completely righteous life.

APPLICATION

(1) Will you open the gate and let the King of Glory in?

(2) If you have already received Him as King in your life, will you trust Him to make you completely righteous like He is (Heb 2:10-11; 7:25)?

STUDY 19:

PSALM 119:145-152 – QUOPH: CITY OF PROMISES

Key Verse: “I cry out with *my* whole heart; Hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes” (Psalm 119:145).

We are nearing the end of our extended tour of Psalm 119; after this stanza there are just three more to go. When we began this tour we said that we would visit each of the 22 stanzas as a city. Stanza 1 was *City of Blessing*; we call the present stanza (number 19) the *City of Promises*.

A. THE PSALMIST CRIES FOR HELP

1. In this stanza the psalmist finds himself in trouble. He cries out to the Lord for help. The intensity of his prayer is seen in the triple repetition of the word CRY (vss. 145, 146, 147).

145 I cry out with *my* whole heart; Hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes.

146 I cry out to You; Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.

147 I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word.

2. Two different words for CRY; verses 145 and 146 use the same word; verse 147 uses a more intense word.

Verse 145: HELP! Anybody there?

Verse 146: HELP! Just anybody, please!

Verse 147: HELP! I'm at the end of my rope!

B. THE PSALMIST MAKES A PROMISE

1. Note his promise:

145 I cry out with *my* whole heart; Hear me, O Lord! ***I will keep Your statutes.***

146 I cry out to You; Save me, and ***I will keep Your testimonies.***

2. Very human to make promises to God in times of trouble.

(a) We admit we've not been as good and as faithful as we should have been, so we promise God to do better from now on.

(b) We suspect that God is probably punishing us for being bad and unfaithful, so we ask God for a second chance.

(c) We realize that the problem is bigger than we are, and we need God's help; so we promise to repay God if He helps us.

C. MAKING PROMISES IS SERIOUS AND DANGEROUS

1. Ecclesiastes 5:1-5 warns us against rash promises.

1 Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

2 Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.

3 For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool's voice *is known* by *his* many words.

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For *He has* no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

2. Two examples:

- *Jephthah* made a rash promise which brought sorrow to his family.

Judges 11:30, 31: **30** And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, **31** then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

- *Jacob* made a covenant (promise) with God, which he forgot and which God came to collect later. Genesis 28:18-22.

18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. **19** And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. **20** Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, **21** so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. **22** And

this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

A. God's part:

- (1) God will be with me;
- (2) God will protect me;
- (3) God will supply my needs;
- (4) God will bring me back home safely.

B. Jacob's part:

- (1) I will make the Lord as my God;
- (2) I will build God's house;
- (3) I will give my tithes to God.

C. Jacob forgot and God came to collect. Genesis 35:1-3

1 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."

2 And Jacob said to his household and to all who *were* with him, "Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. **3** Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."

They had to:

- (1) Throw away their idols;
- (2) Repent (cleans themselves, take off their dirty clothes, put on clean clothes);
- (3) Return to Bethel and fulfill their vows.

APPLICATION

1. What promises have you made to God in times of trouble? What commitments have you made during revival services?

2. What idols (ambitions, relationships, stuff) have made you forget your promises? Repent of your unfaithfulness; renounce your idols and everything that made you forget your promises; return to the Lord and to your first love. Remember there is forgiveness and restoration through God's grace and mercy.

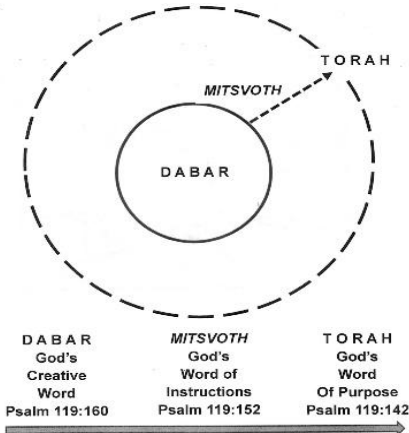
3. Today begin to fulfill your vows.

4. But remember: You stay faithful to your promises not in your strength but by the grace of God and with the strength God supplies. Philippians 2:12, 13:

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; **13** for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

STUDY 20:

PSALM 119:153-160 – RESH: CITY OF TRUTH



Key Verse: “The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever” (Psalm 119:160).

The last three stanzas of Psalm 119 help us to summarize the major themes of this long psalm. Admittedly, our studies gave only a bird’s-eye-view tour. Compared to the great expositors, we learned only the kindergarten version of Psalm 119. As we have noted at the beginning of our study, according to Dr. James Montgomery Boice:

- Charles Spurgeon devoted 349 pages to Psalm 119 in his devotional commentary on the whole Psalms.
- Charles Bridges wrote a sermon for each 22 stanzas of Psalm 119 in a book of 481 pages.
- Thomas Manton wrote a 3-volume work with a total of 1,677 pages, consisting of 190 long chapters, devoting more than one chapter per verse of Psalm 119.

We are in no way putting ourselves in a class with these mighty expositors. Our study series which we titled a “grand tour” should have been more humbly called a “week-end” get-away in Psalm 119! Nevertheless, if our study helps us to remember at least one truth from each stanza, our modest effort would not be entirely wasted.

Based on the final three stanzas, we see three themes:

- Stanza 20: vss. 153-160 – City of Truth: The Word of God.

- Stanza 21: vss. 161-168 – City of Peace: The Quest of our Lives
- Stanza 22: vss. 169-176 – City of Restoration: The Human Condition

Let's now look at Stanza 20: vss. 153-160. We call this stanza City of Truth, and it deals with the theme of the Word of God. As we have seen, the entire Psalm 119 is actually dedicated to extolling the Word of God. In Stanza 20, God's Word is described as Truth in three verses (vss. 142, 151, 160), but each verse uses a different term for the Word of God. Putting these three verses together we see the Word of God as the complete revelation of truth that ministers to us in three important aspects.

A. DABAR: GOD'S CREATIVE WORD

Psalm 119:160: "The entirety of Your word (DABAR) is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever." (NKJV)

The 1611 KJV translates this verse as follows: "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."

Though this verse comes at the end of the stanza, we take it up first, because the Hebrew for God's Word in this verse is DABAR, the creative Word that brought everything into existence in the beginning (Psalm 33:6).

The spoken Word of God brought into existence the entire visible creation. In our diagram (please see above) this is the inner circle bounded by a solid line. God's DABAR explains to us how this visible universe came to be. Someone said, "The mystery is why there is something rather than nothing." Only in the Bible, God's DABAR, can we find the answer to the origin of everything, including your origin and mine (Hebrews 11:3).

B. TORAH: GOD'S WORD OF PURPOSE

But it is not enough to know HOW the universe came to be. It doesn't help us very much to know that you and I were created by God.

We need to know WHY the universe is here, WHY you and I are here. The Word of God explains to us the INVISIBLE reason (in our diagram, the outer circle bounded by the broken line) behind the VISIBLE creation (the inner circle bounded by the solid line).

Psalm 119:142: "Your righteousness is everlasting righteousness, and Your law (TORAH) is truth."

In this verse the Hebrew for the Word of God is TORAH. In its specific application, TORAH refers to God's laws, particularly the Five Books of Moses. But in its wider meaning TORAH means God's will and purpose; hence, it is the TORAH that shows us God's ultimate purpose for why He created you and me and the whole universe.

God's DABAR explains our present EXISTENCE. God's TORAH reveals our ultimate future SIGNIFICANCE.

C. MITSVOTH: GOD'S WORD OF INSTRUCTIONS

But how do we move from EXISTENCE to SIGNIFICANCE?

God's Word (MITSVOTH) guides us in our journey from existence to significance. In our diagram this is represented by the dotted line arrow that connects DABAR and TORAH.

Psalm 119:151: "You are near, O Lord, and all Your commandments (MITSVOTH) are truth."

MITSVOTH means God's commandments and instructions in how to get from here to there. God's Word tells us HOW to conduct our lives so that we might realize God's purpose. And in realizing God's purpose we attain our significance.

APPLICATION

A. CHRIST AND GOD'S WORD

It is more than coincidental that these three aspects of God's Word in Psalm 119 are embodied in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. In John 14:6 He said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me."

1. CHRIST THE LIFE: HE CREATED ALL LIFE AND CREATION.

John 1:1-4

The visible universe is here because Christ (God's DABAR) brought it into existence. You and I are here because Christ gave us our life and existence.

2. CHRIST THE TRUTH: HE REVEALED THE TRUE PURPOSE OF LIFE

John 17:3

Why did Christ give us life and existence? That we might know God and Christ and thus receive and enjoy eternal life.

There is something wonderfully better than just being here now and gone tomorrow. On June 5, 2013 there appeared this news item with an ironic twist: The co-hosts of the radio show "The Pursuit of Happiness" committed suicide. ... The couple were found dead in their home each with a plastic bag around their head. The woman was a psychotherapist and the man was a motivational speaker; they were in the business of telling people how to live.

You see, if all you can tell people is how to live a happy life only here and now (with no eternal future), life soon becomes boring and then a meaningless burden. Trapped in this cul-de-sac of meaninglessness, many people choose suicide as the quickest way out.

But Christ (God's TORAH) came to tell us there is infinitely more than this life. He came to tell us that God wants to share with us His eternal life to be enjoyed with Him in a forever place. Actually, the place is only secondary; the primary wonder is the Person we will spend eternity with – God, our own Creator Himself.

St. Augustine caught something of this wonder when he wrote: “O God, you have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.”

Jim Elliot, a modern missionary martyr, wrote: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

3. CHRIST THE WAY: THROUGH HIM THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS FULFILLED

Christ came to tell us not only how we are here, and why. As God's MITSVOTH, Christ also came to show us the way to fulfill God's purpose in our lives.

John 10:10

It is through faith in Christ and in continuing relationship with Christ that these three deepest needs of the human heart come together: Our need to know our origin, our need to know our purpose, and our need to know how to attain the meaning of our purpose. All three needs are fully satisfied by Christ the Life (God's DABAR), and in Christ the Truth (God's TORAH), and through Christ the Way (God's MITSVOTH).

B. YOUR CHOICE:

1. But we must choose. This choice confronted the multitudes who heard Christ in John 6.

Please read John 6:53-58, 66-71.

2. The choice: To eat Christ's body and drink His blood. What does this mean?

It means to make Christ the source of everything that will sustain our life. Christ explains His meaning in John 6:57: “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.”

(a) I live because of Christ. Henceforth, I will receive life only from Christ.

(b) I live because of Christ. Henceforth, this life will be spent entirely to love and serve Christ.

3. Where does the written Word of God come in? Peter said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68).

- (a) We know God and Christ only through the written Word.
- (b) We understand the written Word only as Christ, through His Spirit, reveals the meaning to us.
- (c) Therefore: The written Word must always lead us to personal experience with Christ; and more personal experience with Christ must lead us to deeper study of His Word.
4. Have you made your choice?

PSALM 119_STUDY 21

PSALM 119:161-168 – SHIN: CITY OF PEACE

Key Verse: “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (Psalm 119:165).

We call Psalm 119:160-168 as City of Peace. We focus on verse 165: “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.”

Peace –SHALOM – this is what we cry for from the depths of our hearts.

We seek happiness; we long for joy; we hunger for love. But we know that there cannot be true joy or love until we experience true peace.

What is peace? Peace is the opposite of:

- Conflicts between individuals, groups, nations; individuals even experience inner conflicts between their good side and bad side;
- Broken relationships that result from conflicts;
- Fear, worry, anxiety, and insecurity arising from the sense of threats and danger
- Restlessness that is rooted in sin and wickedness.

Psalm 119:165 tells us that the Word of God shows us the way to peace. We will find peace as we follow the three-step prescription that the Word of God gives:

- **STEP 1: PEACE WITH GOD**

(1) The Bible reveals that the loss of peace is rooted in a broken relationship with God. Therefore, the first step to peace is to find peace with God.

(2) The sinful heart is in rebellion against God. We have set up a rival kingdom in our heart, and we are at war against God (Romans 8:7, 8).

(3) God has pronounced the judgment of death on the rebels (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23). Even if we wish to lay down our weapons and surrender, how shall we escape the punishment of death? God Himself provided the way (Romans 5:8-10).

(4) God now announces peace – forgiveness and reconciliation – to all His enemies (2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:12, 13).

(5) God's terms of peace: Believe in and submit to His Son Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord (Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9-11; Romans 5:1).

- STEP 2: PEACE WITH OTHERS

(1) The Bible also reveals that God brings peace between individuals and peoples by incorporating those who believe in His Son into one Body and one Family (Ephesians 2:14-22).

(2) God brings peace between individuals by laying down this double law in His family: forgiveness and love:

- Forgiveness: Forgive others as God has forgiven you (Matthew 6:12; Ephesians 4:32).
- Love: Love others as Christ has loved you (John 13:34, 35; 1 John 4:19 20)

- STEP 3: PEACE IN THE WORLD

(1) The Bible reveals that sin has also disrupted the peaceful relationship among all other creatures, animate and inanimate. This is described as bondage to futility and decay and death (Romans 8:20-22).

(2) At Christ's Second Coming He will bring together everything in heaven and on earth under His complete control and create a new heaven and new earth where universal peace will be restored at last to the whole creation (Ephesians 1:10; Philippians 3:20, 21; Revelation 21:1; Isaiah 2:4; 11:6-9).

(3) In the meantime, no matter what happens in the world, God promises to give us His peace (John 16:33; Philippians 4:6,7).

APPLICATION

Do you already have:

(1) Peace with God?

(2) Peace with others?

(3) God's peace in your heart?

STUDY 22:

PSALM 119:169-176 – TAU: CITY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Key Verse: “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments” (Psalm 119:176).

Congratulations! You’ve made it to the final city of our tour.

All through this long psalm (22 stanzas, 8 verses per stanza, totaling 176 verses) the psalmist magnified the greatness of God’s Word. More importantly, he magnified the greatness of the God of the Word. In practically every verse in this long psalm he declared his love for God and for His Word. Again and again he expressed his earnest desire and firm determination to obey God’s Word completely in every department of his life. And yet in the very last verse (176), he confessed one sad fact: he failed.

In spite of his high ideals concerning God, concerning God’s Word, and concerning his passion to be a man of God’s Word, he admitted that he fell short of his ideals. He did not deny that, left to himself and left to his human wisdom and abilities, he could end up ultimately straying.

However, after admitting his unfaithfulness, he discovered something marvelous: God would always be faithful! God would remain as the faithful Good Shepherd who, with His Word, would bring His straying sheep back to the fold. This is why we call this final stanza, Psalm 119:169-176, the *City of the Good Shepherd*. Our key verse is verse 176: “I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments.”

A. THE GOOD SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP

1. He knows His sheep by name (John 10:3, 27);
2. He knows their nature, that they tend to stray (Psalm 103:14; 95:10; Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 9:36).

B. THE GOOD SHEPHERD SEEKS HIS LOST SHEEP

1. He values each sheep (Luke 15:4);
2. He valued His sheep with His life (John 10:11; 2 Corinthians 8:9).

C. THE GOOD SHEPHERD KEEPS HIS SHEEP

1. He prays for His sheep (John 17:9-12; Hebrews 7:25);
2. He protects His sheep:
 - (a) With His Spirit, the “parakletos” (John 14:16-18);
 - (b) With His Word (Acts 20:32);
 - (c) With His Church (Ephesians 4:11-16).

APPLICATION

1 Peter 2:25: “For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

1. Have you returned to the Good Shepherd?
2. Are you under the protection and direction of the Holy Spirit?
3. Are you feeding on the Word of God?
4. Are you in the supportive fellowship of Christ’s flock, His Church?

Review...

Praise the Lord! We have completed our grand tour of Psalm 119. We treated each 8-verse stanza as a city. Below is a review of the “cities” we visited.

1. CITY OF BLESSING - Psalm 119:1-8
2. CITY OF CLEANSING - Psalm 119:9-16:
3. CITY OF VISION - Psalm 119:17-24:
4. CITY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES - Psalm 119:25-32,
5. GAS STATION CITY - PSALM 119:33-40
6. CITY OF LIBERTY - Psalm 119:41-48
7. CITY OF SONGS - Psalm 119:49-56
8. CHAMPIONSHIP CITY - Psalm 119:57-64
9. CITY OF AFFLICTION - PSALM 119:65-72
10. CITY OF THE DIVINE POTTER - PSALM 119:73-80
11. CITY OF WAITING - PSALM 119:81-88
12. RESEARCH CITY - Psalm 119:89-96
13. CITY OF GOD’S SCHOOL - PSALM 119:97-104
14. CITY OF LIGHT - Psalm 119:105-112
15. CITY OF REFUGE - PSALM 119:113-120
16. CITY OF SERVANTS - Psalm 119:121-128

17. CITY OF GUIDANCE - Psalm 119:129-136
18. CITY OF THE RULER - Psalm 119:137-144
19. CITY OF PROMISES - Psalm 119:145-152
20. CITY OF TRUTH - PSALM 119:153-160
21. CITY OF PEACE - PSALM 119:160-168
22. CITY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD - PSALM 119:169-176

CLOSING BENEDICTION

Titus 24, 25

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present *you* faultless

Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

²⁵ To God our Savior,

Who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty,

Dominion and power,

Both now and forever.

Amen.