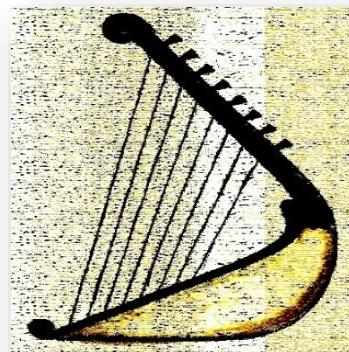


PSALM 119 vs 1

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There is no title to this Psalm, nor is any author's name mentioned. It is **the Longest Psalm**, and this is a sufficiently distinctive name for it. It equals in bulk twenty-two Psalms of the average length of the Songs of Degrees. It equally excels in breadth of thought, depth of meaning, and height of fervor. – Charles Spurgeon.



The Psalm is alphabetical. Eight stanzas begin with one letter, and then another eight with the next letter, and so the whole Psalm proceeds by eight-line sections through the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The one theme is **the word of the Lord**. Like Luther, David had shaken every fruit-tree in God's garden, and gathered golden fruit from it. It is evident, the earlier verses are of such character to lend to the hypothesis that the author was young, while the later passages suggest themselves to age and wisdom. The psalmist uses 10 different terms for the law or Word of God. Every verse except verses 90, 122 and 132 mention one of these terms: law, personal statements, ways, advisories, rules, instructions, orders, word, path and promises.

Aleph. א

¹ **All blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.**

² **All blessed are those who watch over His personal statements, who seek Him with a whole heart** / What! A second blessing? Yes, they are doubly blessed whose outward life is supported by an inward zeal for God's glory. The way of God is orderly. We must first get a thing before we can keep it. We cannot keep in the heart, what we have not taken to the heart, and firmly embraced. – Charles Spurgeon.

³ **And they also do no crime: in His ways they walk;**

⁴ **and You instructed to diligently **keep** Your advisories.**

⁵ **Ah, that my ways were aimed to **keep** Your rules;**

⁶ **and then no shame when I look upon all Your instructions.**

⁷ **always thanking You with an upright heart, to learn Your right justice.**

⁸ **All Your rules I **keep**: O forsake me not utterly** / There may be something more than fancy in the remark, that Christ's name, "the Alpha and the Omega" – equivalent to declaring him all that every letter of the alphabet could express – may have for a reference the distinctiveness of this Psalm – Andrew Bonar, 1810-1892.

It is true the verses do not begin with either the English or yet the Latin letters, but with the Hebrew, wherein David wrote this psalm.

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The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to make us understand that the doctrine contained in it is not only set for great clerks who have gone to school for ten or twenty years; but also for the most simple; to the end that none should pretend any excuse of ignorance – John Calvin, 1509-1564.

For this reason we added English words starting with “A” – R Keith; and limit commentary as each verse is clear.

In proportion as this Psalm seems to be open, so much more it appears deep to me; that I cannot reveal how deep it is. For in other psalms which are understood with difficulty, although the sense lies hidden in darkness; yet the darkness appears; but in this psalm, not even this is the case; since on the surface it seems not to need an expositor, but only a reader and a listener – Augustine, 354-430.

It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother taught me, what cost me the most to learn, and what was to my child's mind most repulsive – the 119th Psalm; has now become of all the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the law of God – John Ruskin, 1819–1900.

In the midst of a London season, in the turmoil of a political crisis; written in his diary we read – “Walked from Hyde Park Corner repeating the 119th Psalm in great comfort.” [William Wilberforce](#), 1759-1833.

Beth. **נ**

⁹ **By** what will a young man clean his way? by **keeping** Your word.

¹⁰ **Being** wholehearted I seek You: not to wander from Your instructions.

¹¹ **Before** my heart, I hid Your promise, so not to sin against You.

¹² **Before** You, O LORD I kneel; teach me Your rules.

¹³ **Boldly** with my lips, I declared all the orders from Your mouth.

¹⁴ **By** the way, I rejoiced in Your personal statements, just like in all riches.

¹⁵ **Believing** Your advisories, I meditate and contemplate Your ways.

¹⁶ **Because** of Your rules: I do not forget Your word.

/ In this very imperfect world is this young one, full of hot passions, and poor in knowledge and experience; how do you get it right and keep it right? Never was there a more important question for anyone; never was there a better time for asking it than at the start of life. It is not an easy task which this prudent one sees ahead: hoping to choose a clean way from the first step to the last; but, alas, the way is already unclean. Here then is the difficulty, first of beginning aright, next of being able to know and choose the right, and continue till perfection is reached; this is tough for anyone, how will anyone accomplish it? The way... this is the work, this is the difficulty – Charles Spurgeon.

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We know: You can't keep what you don't know; and there is a difference between wholehearted and halfhearted; this one is not heartless... this one has a heart and it's a safe place where to hide God's word; this one is teachable, who knows that there is a God in heaven who has spoken in His word: His orderliness and instruction is powerful – equality, equity, justice with equal balance for men and women, rich and poor, young and old; and what this one learns is enriching beyond all gold or silver; and what this one considers, and takes to heart is more valuable than any credentialed teacher can teach; and along the way this one gladly shares with others. All the promises of God in Christ are yes and Amen -- 2 Corinthians 1.

Gimel. א

¹⁷ Confer generously with Your servant, that I live and **keep** Your word.

¹⁸ Open my eyes, that I see what is wondrous from Your law.

¹⁹ A stranger I am on the **earth**: do not hide Your instructions from me.

²⁰ Broken, my soul longs for Your orders at all times.

²¹ You rebuked the arrogant -- the cursed, who are erring from Your instructions.

²² Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I watch closely Your personal statements,

²³ while rulers also sit and speak against me: Your servant considers Your rules.

²⁴ Also, Your personal statements are my delight, like the men of my counsel.

/ here the trials of the way are manifest to the mind, and he prays for the help which will meet his case. His appeal is to God alone, and his prayer is direct and personal; he speaks with the Lord as a man speaks with his friend. C.S. Lewis was asked: how does God answer a million prayers all at the same time? Answer: God is not bound by time, He lives in eternity; and He has all eternity to pay attention to everything in His creation; including each and every one, which includes you and me.

He already walked in the way of God's instructions; but what he proposed to himself was running that way; a quickened pace, a more rapid progress, a firmer constancy, a more resolute and unflinching obedience. Isaiah said, Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings as eagles, they will run, and not be weary; they will walk and not faint. – Henry Melville, 1798-1871

Daleth. ד

²⁵ **My soul clings to the dust**: enliven me according to Your word.

²⁶ I recounted my ways, and still You answered: teach me Your rules.

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27 The way of Your advisories helps me understand: and consider Your wondrous works.

28 My soul weeps for heaviness: strengthen me according to Your word.

29 The way of lying remove from me: and instruct me in Your grace.

30 The way of truth I chose: Your orders I place before me,

31 clinging to Your personal statements: O LORD, do not allow me to do what is shameful.

32 I run the way of Your instructions, for You enrich my heart.

/ William Cowper, 1731-1800; writer of the hymn: GOD MOVES IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY; he asks, Seeing this one is alive, how is it he prays that God would enliven him? And I answer, the people of God esteem life, not according to their body, but their soul. If the soul lacks mercy, and other spiritual things, they lament over it, as a dead soul. The word: **cling** has the sense of adhering firmly to anything, so it cannot easily be separated from it. The word: **dust** may mean the earth and earthly things, considered as low and base, or even the grave, as if in danger of dying. Without the Lord's help, we will not rise in His mercy and grace. Winston Churchill said: if you think you're going through hell, don't sit down. Keep going.

[There's Victory in Jesus](#)

He. 7

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your rules; and I will watch over them to the end.

34 Give me understanding, watching over Your law; yes, I **keep it with all my heart.**

35 Help me walk the path of Your instructions; for in them I delight.

36 Bend my heart to Your personal statements, and not to greedy coveting.

37 Turn my eyes from seeing vanity; enliven me in Your way.

38 Establish Your servant in Your promises, who fears You.

39 Turn away my reproach which I dread: for Your orders are good.

40 How I longed for Your advisories: enliven me in Your rightness / a sense of dependence and an extreme need pervade this section which is made up of prayer and pleading. These eight verses tremble with a sense of sin -- unsteady with a childlike sense of weakness and folly, which caused this one to cry out for help, by which alone his soul could be preserved from falling back into sin. The song-writer does not ask the Lord to do for him what he ought to do for himself. God works in us, but it is that we may desire and do according to His good pleasure. – Charles Spurgeon.

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Vav. 1

- ⁴¹ Let Your **mercy** also come, O LORD; save according to Your word,
⁴² to respond to those who reproach me with an answer: for I lean on Your word,
⁴³ and never take the word of truth from my mouth; for in Your orders I hope.
⁴⁴ So I **keep** Your law continually forever and ever.
⁴⁵ I have gained perfect freedom; for I seek Your advisories.
⁴⁶ I will speak of Your personal statements also before kings, and will not be ashamed,
⁴⁷ and I will delight in Your instructions, which I love;
⁴⁸ lifting up hands to Your instructions which I love; meditating on Your rules.

/ **Mercy = getting what we do not deserve.** In these verses holy fear is apparent and prominent. The man of God trembles lest in any degree the Lord remove His favor. These eight verses are one continuing plea for grace abiding in his soul, supported by such holy arguments as would suggest this one burning with love for God.

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