

PSALM 119

from "The Peerless Poems of David, the King"

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ALEPH

How bless-ed are the undefiled, in life's uncertain way,
Who walk within God's holy law, nor from His precepts stray.

Thrice blest are they that always keep His testimonies true;
That follow Him with all the heart, and His commandments do.

They also no iniquity do practice, but they try
To walk in God's most righteous ways, and serve with single eye.

Thou hast commanded us, O Lord, Thy precepts all to keep —
O that my ways directed were to know Thy statutes deep.

Then shall I never be ashamed, when I have due respect
Unto Thy just commandments, Lord, nor do Thy laws neglect.

Thee will I praise with upright heart, when I Thy truth have learned —
To understand Thy judgments, Lord, my soul hath often yearned.

Thy holy statutes I will keep; forsake me not, I pray;
Be Thou my guard and my defense through life's uneven way.

BETH

How shall a young man cleanse his way and shun the paths of sin?
By taking heed unto Thy Word, and truths inscribed therein.

Thee have I sought with all my heart; Lord, let me never stray;
From Thy commandments let me not depart by night or day.

Thy Word I've hidden in my breast, so that I might not fall:
How bless-ed art Thou to incline my heart to hear Thy call.

I with my lips have long declared the judgments of Thy Word;
And I've rejoiced along the way, as I Thy truths have heard.

I in Thy holy precepts will now meditate and pray;
I'll have respect unto Thy laws, and follow in Thy way.

In all Thy righteous statutes, I will now my pleasure take;
Thy Word I never will forget, nor Thy commands forsake.

GIMEL

Deal freely with Thy servant, Lord, that I aright may live;
Incline mine eyes, that I may see the precepts Thou dost give.

Lo! I'm a stranger in the earth; hide not Thy law from me.
My soul doth break with longing that it may Thy judgments see.

Thou hast rebuked the proud that do from Thy commandments stray:
O Lord, remove from me reproach; Thy law hath been my stay.

For princes, also, sat and spake against me in the gate;
Thy servant in Thy statutes, then, did stop and meditate.

Thy testimonies truly are my constant, sure delight;
They also are my counsellors to guide my steps aright.

DALETH

My should doth cleave unto the dust; me quicken and revive:
According to Thy holy Word, make now my faith alive.

My ways I have declared, O Lord, and Thou hast heard my prayer;
Teach me Thy statutes, so that I Thy blessed truths may share.

Make me to understand the way of all Thy precepts, Lord;
So shall I then, with thankful heart, Thy wondrous works record.

My soul doth melt in heaviness; O strengthen me, I pray;
According to Thy holy Word, uphold me in the way.

Remove afar from me false tongues; Thy law grant unto me:
The way of truth I've chosen now; Thy judgments I would see.

Unto Thy law my soul hath held: O put me not to shame;
All Thy commandments I will keep, and magnify Thy name.

HE

Teach me, O righteous Lord, the way of all Thy statutes true,
And I will keep it to the end, and Thy commandments do.

Give understanding unto me, and I will keep Thy law;
It I'll observe with all my heart and comfort from it draw.

Make me to walk within the path of Thy commandments right —
My soul, O Lord, would seek the truth; therein is my delight.

Unto Thy testimonies true, my heart, O Lord, incline;
Remove me far from selfishness; from love of what is mine.

Turn Thou mine eyes from vanity. Me quicken in the way.
Thy Word establish in my heart; be it my guide and stay.

Turn from me that reproach, which I now tremble at and fear —
But, Lord, Thy judgments all are good, if they but bring Thee near.

Behold, O Lord, how I have longed Thy precepts here to find.
O quicken me in righteousness. Thy law about me bind.

VAU

Thy tender mercies, let them come unto me now, O Lord;
And Thy salvation may I have, according to Thy Word.

So shall I have wherewith to speak to him who is unjust;
To him who still reproacheth me; for in Thy Word I trust.

Take not Thy Word of truth away, but let me it declare;
So shall I keep Thy holy law, and Thy rich blessings share.

And I will walk at liberty, for I Thy precepts seek;
I of Thy testimonies shall before high rulers speak.

In Thy commandments, Lord, always I will myself delight;
Yea, Thy commandments, that I've loved, I will with joy recite.

My hands also I will lift up unto Thy holy law;
My soul from Thy pure statutes shall sweet meditations draw.

ZAIN

Remember, Lord Thy former word unto Thy servant, now:
That which hath caused my soul to hope - as I before Thee bow.

In my affliction, this doth bring me comfort and support:
Thy Word hath quickened me, O Lord; my waywardness cut short.

The proud have long derided me — I their derision saw —
Yet have I not declined to keep Thy just and holy law.

Thy judgments I've remembered well - Thy judgments of the past -
And I have comforted myself, and unto Thee held fast.

Great grief hath taken hold of me, because of those that stray:
Of those that do forsake Thy law and wander from the way.

Thy statutes, Lord, have been my song in this my pilgrimage;
Thy law I've kept, as 'tis inscribed upon the sacred page.

Thee I've remembered in the night, and then securely slept —
This blessing, Lord, I had because Thy precepts I had kept.

HETH

Thou art my portion, O my God, and I have truly said
That I would keep Thy holy words, and by Thy law be led.

With my whole heart, Thy favor I entreated have, with tears;
Be merciful to me, O Lord, and banish all my fears.

I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy law;
All Thy commandments holy are — they did Thy servant draw.

The wicked have me robbed oftentimes, but I Thy law possess;
At midnight I will rise, and will with thanks Thy throne address.

All my companions are of them that fear Thy holy name;
Of them that keep Thy precepts, and Thy sacred truth proclaim.

The earth, O Lord, is full of all Thy mercies ever kind;
Teach me Thy statutes; and Thy law around Thy servant bind.

TETH

Thou hast in kindness dealt with me; Thou hast Thy servant led;
According to Thy word, Thou hast his soul with manna fed.

Endow me with good judgment, Lord, and knowledge teach to me;
For Thy commandments I've believed; I will Thy servant be.

Before I was afflicted, I oftentimes went far astray,
But since I now have kept Thy Word, I've followed in Thy way.

Lord, Thou art good and doest good: teach me Thy statutes true.
Help me to understand Thy Word; my faith and hope renew.

The proud have lied against me, and against me taken part;
But I will keep Thy precepts with an undivided heart.

Their mind with worldliness is fat; I in Thy law delight.
'Tis good that I've afflicted been, that I might walk aright.

Thy law, it better is for me to understand and hold,
Than wealth, by thousands multiplied, of silver and of gold.

JOD

Thy hands have made and fashioned me as Thou wouldst have me be;
Give to me understanding, Lord, that I Thy truth may see.

All they that fear Thee will be glad when they my faith perceive,
Because I've trusted in the Lord, and do His Word believe.

I know, O Lord, Thy judgments are all righteousness and truth,
And that in faithfulness I was afflicted in my youth.

Let now Thy lovingkindness be my comfort and delight,
And let Thy tender mercies come to cheer me in the night.

Let all the proud be well ashamed, that hurt me without cause;
But I will meditate upon Thy just and holy laws.

Let those that fear Thee turn to me - those that Thy laws have known;
And let my heart be always sound in statutes Thou hast shown.

CAPH

For Thy salvation, Lord, my soul doth faint and fall away;
But in Thy Word I still have hope: it is my trust and stay.

Mine eyes fail for Thy Word, O Lord. When wilt Thou comfort me?
My faith is dim, because of doubt; yet I Thy statutes see.

How many are the days, O Lord, that I shall thus be tried?
When wilt Thou judgment place on them that do my name deride?

The proud have digged their pits for me, against Thy holy Law;
They persecute me wrongfully, and would me from Thee draw.

Help me, O Lord, and be my strength! To help me, now awake!
They had me sorely tried, but I did not Thy law forsake.

In tender mercy quicken me, and raise me up again;
So shall I keep Thy holy law, and worship Thee! Amen.

LAMED

Thy Word doth stand forever, Lord. 'Tis fixed, nor can it move.
Thy faithfulness is unto all — Thy works this truth doth prove.

All things continue day by day, according to Thy Word,
For they Thy willing servants are, and Thy commands have heard.

Unless Thy holy Word had been my comfort and delight,
I should in my affliction then have perished in my blight.

Thy precepts I shall ne'er forget; To Thee they have me brought.
Save me, O Lord, for I am Thine; Thy precepts I have sought.

The wicked — long in wait for me — have sought me to destroy,
But I Thy testimonies shall for their defeat employ.

Mine eyes have seen an end of all that perfect is, and good —
May Thy commandments, righteous God, be fully understood.

MEM

Oh, how I love Thy holy law! It is my constant stay;
It is my meditation sweet through each succeeding day.

By Thy commandments Thou hast made me wiser than my foes;
Through them I have more knowledge than my wisest teacher knows.

Because Thy testimonies are my meditations deep,
I understand them, for I do Thy holy precepts keep.

My feet I have refrained from ways that evil are and wrong; I've not
departed from Thy path, for Thou hast made me strong.

How sweet Thy words are to my taste! Yea, sweeter far are they
Than honey is unto my mouth! — They are my joy and stay.

'Tis through Thy precepts that I get an understanding mind;
Therefore I hate each false, dark step, where Thee I cannot find.

NUN

Thy Word is as a lamp unto my halting, stumbling feet;
A light it is unto my path, whose rays my footsteps meet.

I have declared, e'en with an oath, that I Thy laws would keep;
I am in trouble! Quicken me, in my affliction deep.

Accept, O Lord, I Thee beseech, the offerings I bring;
Teach me Thy judgments, Lord, and let me of Thy mercies sing.

My soul is in my hand; yet I do not Thy law forget.
My foes have laid a snare for me, but I've escaped their net.

Thy testimonies, Lord, have been a heritage most sweet;
For the rejoicing of my heart, they have been found complete.

I have inclined my heart always Thy statutes to perform.
Yea, I will keep them to the end: through sunshine and through storm.

SAMECH

I hate vain thoughts that in me rise, but I Thy law do love.
Thou art my hiding place and shield; Thy Word my hope doth prove.

Depart from me thou evil ones! for I will keep God's law.
According to Thy word, O Lord, my soul unto Thee draw.

O let me never be ashamed - of this, my hope and trust.
Hold Thou me up, and I'll be safe; for Thou, O Lord, art just.

Lord, Thou hast trodden down all those that from Thy statutes erred;
For their deceit is falsehood, and their end is not deferred.

Thou puttest far away from Thee the wicked and profane;
Therefore Thy holy truths I love, nor shall my hope be vain.

My flesh doth tremble sore in fear of Thee whene'er I sin;
I of Thy judgments am afraid — Me from all evil win.

AIN

I've judgment done, O Lord, and have in justice dealt with all;
To mine oppressors leave me not, lest in their trap I fall.

Be sur-e-ty for me, O Lord, as I Thy throne address;
Let not the proud and prosperous Thy servant now oppress.

Deal with Thy servant graciously, in mercy and in love;
Teach me Thy statutes and Thy truth with wisdom from above.

I am Thy servant: give to me an understanding heart,
That I Thy testimonies may to darkened souls impart.

'Tis time for Thee to work, O Lord, for they've made void Thy law;
In error they are gone astray, and others with them draw.

Therefore, I Thy commandments love above the finest gold;
Yea, far above all earthly wealth, I do Thy statutes hold.

And I esteem Thy precepts, Lord - concerning all things - right,
While ev'ry way that's false and dark is hateful in my sight.

PE

Thy sacred testimonies, Lord, are wonderful to me;
Therefore, my soul doth keep them, and doth beauty in them see.

The entrance of Thy holy Word doth unto me give light;
Unto the simple it doth give an understanding, right.

I opened wide my mouth in thirst, and panted for Thy Word;
I longed for Thy commandments which my willing ears had heard.

Look Thou on me, O Lord, and be most merciful to Thine,
As Thou hast looked on those that loved Thy holy name divine.

My steps now order in Thy Word: let not iniquity
Rule over me nor draw my soul from searching after Thee.

From the oppression of vain man, deliver me, O Lord:
So will I keep Thy precepts true; so will I keep Thy Word.

Make, Lord, Thy face to shine upon Thy servant here below.
Teach me Thy statutes; give me grace their wondrous truths to know.

Mine eyes with tears exhaust themselves, because of wickedness;
Because men do not keep Thy law, but do in sin transgress.

TZADDI

Thou, only Thou, art holy, Lord: Thy judgments are upright;
Thy testimonies righteous are, and faithful to give light.

My zeal for Thee and for Thy cause hath me consumed, O Lord,
Because my foes forgotten have Thine everlasting Word.

Thy Word is very pure: it doth a sacred love beget;
Therefore Thy servant loveth it, and cleaveth to it yet.

I'm small and I'm despised, but I unto Thy precepts hold;
Thy righteousness undying is; Thy truth is never old.

Trouble and anguish, Lord, have laid their hold upon me now,
Yet I, in glad submission, do to Thy commandments bow.

The righteousness of all Thy laws has ever been the same;
Give understanding unto me to live, and it proclaim.

ROPH

With my whole heart I cried to Thee, "Hear me, O Lord, I pray,
And I will keep Thy statutes true, and serve Thee on the way!"

I cried to Thee in my distress, "Save me, and I shall keep
Thy holy testimonies, Lord, and Thy commandments deep!"

The hours of night were lengthened, and the morning light was stayed,
While I unto Thee cried aloud, and supplication made.

The watches of the night passed by, and I observed them not,
That I might meditate upon the truths Thy Word hath brought.

Hear Thou my voice, according to Thy lovingkindness, Lord:
To quicken me, according to Thy judgment, help afford.

All they that follow mischief are not far from me removed,
But Thou, O Lord, art near, and all Thy statutes have been proved.

And of Thy testimonies, Lord, I have them known of old,
That Thou hast brought them forth, and dost their deep foundations hold.

RESH

O Lord, on my afflictions look! Deliver me, I pray:
For I Thy law do not forget; it is my guide and stay.

Plead Thou my cause: deliver me! Help me, for I am weak.
The wicked are afar from Thee, nor do Thy statutes seek.

Great are Thy tender mercies, Lord; me quicken and reclaim.
Mine enemies are many, yet I still hold to Thy name.

My heart was grieved when I beheld the path the wicked trod,
Because they did not keep the truth, nor follow after God.

Consider how I love Thy law! Me quicken by Thy Word;
According to Thy tender love, help unto me afford.

From the beginning, Lord, Thy Word was ever true and pure,
And all Thy judgments shall for evermore endure.

SCHIN

Princes have persecuted me, O Lord, without a cause;
But yet my heart doth stand in awe and reverence of Thy laws.

As one that findeth richest spoil, I at Thy Word rejoice;
All falsehood doth my soul abhor — Thy precepts are my choice.

Yea, seven times a day, my soul doth rise to Thee in praise,
Because Thy righteous judgments do attend my steps always.

Great peace have they who love Thy law; naught shall their trust offend;
I've hoped for Thy salvation, Lord — my will to Thine I bend.

My soul, by help divine, hath kept Thy testimonies true;
I love them all exceedingly; they do my strength renew.

Thy testimonies I have kept; Thy precepts guide my heart,
For all my ways before Thee are; I ne'er from Thee shall part.

TAU

Let now my cry come near to Thee, O Lord, I humbly pray;
Give me an understanding mind to know what Thou dost say.

Let now my supplication come before Thee, O my Lord;
Deliver me according to Thine own most gracious word.

My lips shall utter praise when Thou hast me Thy statutes taught;
My tongue shall praise Thee for the truth Thou hast unto me brought.

Help me, for I have chosen, now, Thy precepts pure and right;
I've longed for Thy salvation, Lord; Thy law is my delight.

Let now my soul awake to Thee, and it shall give Thee praise;
And let Thy judgments give me help through all the coming days.

Like a lost sheep, I've gone astray; Thy servant seek and find,
For I do not forget Thy laws and Thy commandments kind.