

=Story Behind the Psalm=

Psalm 119

NOTE: *These lessons are designed simply as a guideline. As a Sunday School teacher part of your job is to study the lesson and develop it for the pupils in your class according to their age and spiritual development.*

Scripture: Psalms 119

AUTHOR: Unknown

The Story Behind the Psalm

This is an alphabetical Psalm. It is composed of 22 stanzas of 8 verses each. Each stanza is headed by different letter from the alphabet and each verse of each stanza begins with this letter.

In the Psalm the writer is magnifying the Word of God. He uses eight words describing the Bible: (1) law (2) testimony, (3) judgments, (4) statutes, (5) words, (6) precepts, (7) commandments, (8) and way. The first eight are used over 20 times each. The ninth is used four times.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

This was a Psalm of praise and thanksgiving for the Word of God. It is significant that this is the longest of all the psalms and is the longest chapter in the Bible. How appropriate this is that the foundation of all we believe controls the longest chapter of all!

LESSON:

Each word used to describe the bible is slightly different and gives us insight on an unique function of the Word of God.

1. **The bible is referred to as the law** (1, 18, 44, 136, 174)
 - a. Twenty five times the bible is referred to as the *law* in Psalm 119
 - b. The law refers to the guidelines on how we are to live. Teachings on right from wrong.
2. **The bible is referred to as His testimonies** (14, 46, 88, 111, 168)
 - a. Twenty three times the bible is referred to as *testimonies* in Psalm 119
 - b. Testimonies of the LORD are His doings of the past. If we share a testimony in church we are sharing what God has done for us. The bible is loaded with these testimonies of what God has done and can do.
3. **The bible is referred to as judgments** (7, 30, 75, 120, 175)

- a. Eighteen times the bible is referred to as *judgments* in Psalm 119
- b. The judgments are the decisions that God makes, His rulings. For example taking David's child from the illicit relationship with Bathsheba (II Samuel 12). God decided to give Hezekiah 15 more years (Isaiah 38), this was a judgment of the LORD.
- c. Psalm 19:9 tells us His judgments are true and righteous altogether. Whatever God decides to do is a righteous judgment.
4. **The bible is referred to as statutes** (5, 23, 26, 71, 124, 171)
 - a. Twenty two times the bible is referred to as *statutes* in Psalm 119
 - b. Statutes are rules without any particular reasoning. Often referred to as customs or manners today.
5. **The bible is referred to as words** (9, 11, 41, 81, 116, 160, 172)
 - a. Forty two times the bible is referred to as the *word* in Psalm 119
 - b. There is much emphasis by God upon the words He chose to use. We are to live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4) not every thought of God. We warned to not add of take away from the words I the bible (Revelation 22:18-19). God chose to say exactly what He wanted us to have.
6. **The bible is referred to as precepts** (4, 63, 93, 134, 173)
 - a. Twenty one times the bible is referred to as *precepts* in Psalm 119
 - b. Precepts are the moral codes of conduct. The way we are to treat each other regarding many civil issues. These are primarily found in Exodus and Leviticus.
7. **The bible is referred to as commandments** (6, 10, 47, 86, 176)
 - a. Twenty two times the bible is referred to as *commandments* in Psalm 119
 - b. The commandments of the LORD are pure and enlightening.
 - c. The commandments are the cut and dry "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not". The most popular are the 10 commandments of exodus 20.
8. **The bible is referred to as the way** (3, 15, 14, 27, 32, 33, 37)
 - a. Seven times the bible is referred to as *the way* in Psalm 119
 - b. The way of the LORD is a well trodden path. It is the "way" God does things. God operates the same in most situations. He expects us to live by faith, this is way of the LORD. God speaks to us through His Word, that is His way.

Memory Verse: *Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*

Psalm 119:33