

Eight synonyms for Scripture in Psalm 119

1. **“LAW” תּוֹרָה (torah)** 25 times: Psa 119:1, 18, 29, 34, 44, 51, 53, 55, 61, 70, 72, 77, 85, 92, 97, 109, 113, 126, 136, 142, 150, 153, 163, 165, 174.

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. The word means instruction flowing from divine revelation. In a narrow sense it refers to the law of Moses. Here it is used in its widest sense and is synonymous with the Word of God. It views God as teacher.

2. **“WORD” דְּבַר (dabar)** 23 times: Psa 119:9, 16, 17, 25, 28, 42, 43, 49, 57, 65, 74, 81, 89, 101, 105, 107, 114, 130, 139, 147, 160, 161, 169,

The idea is of the spoken word, God’s revealed word to man. Proceeding from His mouth and revealed by Him to us... This refers to anything that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. It is the broad term for divine revelation. It is the means by which God has spoken—human language. Divine revelation is not conceptual but verbal. It views God as communicator

3. **“WORD” אִמְרָה (imrah)** 19 times: Psa 119:11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76, 82, 103, 116, 123, 133, 140, 148, 154, 158, 162, 170, 172.

Imrah is similar in meaning to *dabar*, yet a different term. “This is derived from a verb meaning “to say.” It refers to anything God has said, promised, or commanded.

4. **“TESTIMONY” עֵדָה (‘edah)** 23 times: Psa 119:2, 14, 22, 24, 31, 36, 46, 59, 79, 88, 95, 99, 111, 119, 125, 129, 138, 144, 146, 152, 157, 167, 168.

It is derived from a word that means to testify or witness. When God had finished speaking with Moses on Mt. Sinai, He gave him the “two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18).” The ark was called the ark of the testimony. It views God as source of absolutes. To obey His **testimonies** signifies loyalty to the terms of the covenant made between the Lord and Israel.

5. **“PRECEPTS” פְּקֻדוֹת (piqqudim)** 8 times: always plural. Psa 119:4, 15, 27, 40, 45, 56, 63, 69, 78, 87, 93, 94, 100, 104, 110, 128, 134, 141, 159, 168, 173.

This word is used 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 details. This word is used only in the psalms and is from a root meaning to visit, to appoint. It refers to a charge and thus anything the Lord has ordered. It views God as the definer of duty and is a general term for the responsibilities that God places on his people.

6. **“STATUTES” חֹק (khok)** 21 times: Ps. 119:5, 8, 12, 23, 26, 33, 48, 54, 64, 68, 71, 80, 83, 112, 117, 118, 124, 135, 145, 155, 171.

This word comes from a root that means *to engrave* or “inscribe” and refers to something prescribed. It views God as *guide*. The idea is the written Word of God and the authority of His written word: declaring his authority in giving us laws

7. **“COMMANDMENTS” מִצְוָה (mitsvah)** 22 times: Psa 119:6, 10, 19, 21, 32, 35, 47, 48, 60, 66, 73, 86, 96, 98, 115, 127, 131, 143, 151, 166, 172, 176.

This word emphasizes the straight authority of what is said...the right to give orders. It refers to all things that God has commanded. It views God as *demanding duty*.

8. **“JUDGMENTS” מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat)** 23 times: Psa 119:7, 13, 20, 30, 39, 43, 52, 62, 75, 84, 91, 102, 106, 108, 120, 121, 132, 137, 149, 156, 160, 164, 175 (translated *ordinances* in vv 43, 91).

This word denotes legal decisions. These are the case laws that furnish the basis for Israel’s legal system. In Psalm 119 it refers to the decision made by God, the *supreme judge*, resulting in a rule of life. 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.

Other key words

“WAY” דֶּרֶךְ (derek) 14 times: Psa 119:1, 3, 5, 14, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 59, 168
The metaphorical path of uprightness or truth (Prov 4:11, Ps 25:5, 9). The best path is to “walk” God’s commandments (Ps 119:35)

“WAY” אֹרַח (orach) 5 times: Psa 119: 9, 15, 101, 104, 128
Most often *orach* is used in a figurative way, describing the way to life or to death. It often is parallel with the word *derek*, meaning “way, lifestyle.” “Teach me your way (*derek*), O Lord, and lead me in a plain (?) path (*orach*),” (Ps 27:11).

LORD (YHWH) 11 times: Psa 119:1, 12, 31, 33, 41, 52, 55, 57, 64, 64, 75

KEEP: 16 times. Two Hebrew words:

natsar 6 times: Psa 119:2, 22, 23, 34, 56, 59. protect, guard from danger; be a watchman.

shamar 12 times: to guard, to keep. Psa 119:4, 5, 8, 9, 17, 34, 44, 55, 57, 60, 63, 67 translated “take heed in verse 9, and “observe” in verse 34.

MEDITATE or contemplate (siyach) 8 times: Psa 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148

TEACH ME (lamad, yarah) 10 times: Psa 119: 12, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171

SERVANT (ebed) 15 times: Psa 119:16, 17, 23, 38, 49, 65, 76, 84, 122, 124, 125, 135, 140, 176

HEART (Lev) 10 times; Psa 119:2, 7, 10, 11, 32, 34, 36, 58, 69, 70

REJOICING (sus) Psa 119:14, 74, 162

DELIGHTING (sha’a) Psa 119:16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 92, 143, 174.