




LAMEDH

PSALM 119: 89–96



LAMED

Psalm 119:89-96



Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
LAMED				

Pictograph:

Shepherd Staff

Meanings:

Teach, Yoke, Bind, Toward

Sound:

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Meaning: Teach or train. The name comes from the Hebrew word which means “to teach,” first found in Deuteronomy 4:1: Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you....

The training aspect can be seen in 1 Chr 5:18 which speaks of Israeli soldiers who were trained (skillful) in war.

Psalm 119:89-96

⁸⁹ Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

⁹⁰ Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.

⁹¹ They continue this day according to Your ordinances, For all *are* Your servants.

⁹² Unless Your law *had been* my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction.

93 I will never forget Your precepts, For by them
You have given me life.

94 I *am* Yours, save me; For I have sought Your
precepts.

95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me, *But* I will
consider Your testimonies.

96 I have seen the consummation of all perfection,
But Your commandment *is* exceedingly broad

The Permanence of the Word of God

- I. God's word is settled in heaven forever, proven by creation (89–91).
- II. The wicked attempted to destroy him, but his delight in the law gave him victory (92–95).
- III. God's law is unlimited (96).

God's eternal, faithful and unlimited precepts provide the believer with deliverance from the strife of life (119:89–96).

I. God's word is eternally established and faithfully displayed in his sovereignty over creation (89–91).

In this file the focus is on the Word of the LORD, its nature and its trustworthiness. It is eternal and firmly fixed forever. It was preexistent before being given to man, and it will exist forever.

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”

Psa 119:89 Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

The words *forever* (119:89) and *all generations* (119:90) establish the permanence of God's Word.

The Word of God has saved the psalmist from perishing (119:92); it has given him life (119:93). The Word of God is everlasting and powerful—this is his theme.

Verses 89 and 93 begin with the same Hebrew word, *forever*.

Forever עוֹלָם ('ôlām) forever, ever, everlasting,
evermore, perpetual, old, ancient

'ôlām is used more than three hundred times to indicate indefinite continuance into the very distant future.

But in some instances it may refer to eternity past, as in Mic 5:2

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From **everlasting**."

Word here refers to the full revelation of God's nature, purpose and will as revealed and written in Scripture. God's Word is said to be firmly established in the heavens. God created everything by His word (Ps 33:6, 9). The whole creation is evidence of God's powerful, eternal word.

settled נָצַב (natsab) stand upright, be set over, establish, stand firm. It conveys the idea of continuity and permanency. Here God's word is said to be firmly established.

in heaven The expression *in heaven* is used in two basic ways in the Old Testament.

It may refer to the physical heavens— that is, the place of the clouds and stars, etc.

It may also refer to the abode of God, as in Deuteronomy 26:15: “Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven...”

This is the use of the word in Psalm 119. The Word of God is eternally settled in the presence of God. The highest authority has ruled—the Scriptures are eternal and eternally true.

Psalm 119:90 Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.

Verse 90 affirms that God is eternally faithful. If God is constant in His creative word, then He is faithful in His revealed Word. To be faithful is to be steady. God is the only constant—all else is fleeting and changing. This leaves little doubt where our confidence should lie. The works of God are faithful (Psalm 33:4), and the words of God are likewise (Psa 119:86).

Faithfulness is frequently listed among the attributes of God (Dt 32:4; Ps 36:5; Ps 40:10; Lam 3:23). It expresses His total dependability. Why is God dependable?

God cannot lie; therefore, what He says is true.

God is omnipotent; therefore, He can do whatever He chooses.

God cannot change; therefore, He cannot become different from what He has always been.

God is righteous; therefore, He must keep His promises.

God is faithful, dependable, reliable.

Faithfulness

describes His works (Ps 33:4)

and His words (Ps 119:86; 143:1).

Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations; Notice that the word “endures” is in italics, indicating it is not in the original. So there is no verb in this statement. It is likely that the verb “settled” from the previous verse should be understood here.

There is a permanence, a constancy; God’s word is firmly established and so is His faithfulness.

to all generations – from generation to generation, literally. Just as God’s mercies are new every morning, so His faithfulness is constant, generation after generation.

God's faithfulness lasts forever. This constancy is reiterated in the last half of verse 90:

“You have established the earth, and it abides.”

God's work is dependable, because God is dependable; and the permanence of the earth, which He created, is an emblem and guarantee of His faithfulness.

There are two fundamental truths found in the Old Testament concerning God which are evident here:

1. He is always viewed as the Creator-God;
2. He is consistently seen as the Sustainer-God.

He created all things and He maintains all things. The verb *establish* focuses on God as creator, whereas *it abides* focuses on Him as sustainer.

Paul asserts the same truth about Jesus Christ in Colossians 1:16-17. “For by Him all things were created...all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

You established the earth, and it abides.

Established כִּוַן (kûn) established, prepared, made ready, fixed.

The earth has been established or prepared. God prepared it to be man's domain. It was established with purpose. Therefore, it will remain until God's purpose is fulfilled.

Abides עָמַד (‘āmad) stand, remain, endure.

The emphasis on creation abiding is repeated in verse 91 where the word “continue” is the same word translated in this verse as “abide.”

Psalm 119:91 They continue this day according to Your ordinances, For all *are* Your servants.

They refers to the heavens and the earth.

continue עָמַד (‘āmad) stand, remain, endure.

Exactly the same word that was in verse 90, translated “abides.”

This emphasizes that what God created is fixed and permanent.

according to Your ordinances מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat).

This is one of the key words in this psalm, occurring 16 times and usually translated “judgments,” indicating that God has made judicial decisions about our behavior. Here it is translated *ordinances* and refers to what are erroneously called laws of nature or scientific laws.

Charlie Clough pointed out in his Framework series that there are no scientific laws. They are merely man's observations of the manner in which God usually operates, how God usually functions in relation to His creation.

Of course, He may choose to change things up from time to time, and then we have what is called a miracle.

“for all are your servants.”

Everything functions according to God’s decrees concerning the universe.

All of creation exists because of God’s word. All of creation, therefore, exists to do His will. Whether the highest of angels or the lowest of insects, whether the whirling of the galaxies or the gravitation of a particle of dust, the glory of every created thing lies in the obedience to their Creator and not to any property which they may possess.

Psa 103: ²⁰ Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word.

²¹ Bless the LORD, all *you* His hosts, *You* ministers of His, who do His pleasure.

²² Bless the LORD, all His works, In all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Psa 148:3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all
you stars of light!

4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters
above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He
commanded and they were created.

6 He also established them forever and ever; He made
a decree which shall not pass away.

II. Delight in obeying God's Word brings preservation from the wicked who would destroy the faithful (92–95)

In the next part of this file, he returns to his affliction. He declares that his delight in the Word of God is what sustained him when people sought to destroy him.

The point is that if God's Word created and controls everything, then living in harmony with that Word enables the believer to not only survive but overcome opposition.

Psalm 119:92 Unless Your law *had been* my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction.

delight שֵׁשׁוּעִים (sha`shua`)

The verb *delight* indicates extreme pleasure in something. It is used five times in this psalm; and in each case, the Word of God is its object (Psalm 119:24, 77, 92, 143, and 174).

It occurs in every conceivable context, including the most intense persecution. Delight in the Word of God was the major constant in the psalmist's life.

I would then have perished אָבַד ('ābad) perish, be destroyed; or to go astray as animals do.

Psa 119:176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep;

Psa 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish *in* the way,

I would then have perished in my affliction

He states clearly that he would have perished in his affliction had it not been for his delight in the law of the Lord.

This doesn't necessarily mean that he would have died physically, but that he would have been defeated by his circumstances.

in my affliction עֲנִי (‘ōnî) affliction. This is a state of pain, humiliation, subjugation. This is a reference to the persecution he is suffering at the hands of wicked men.

If you take your eyes off the Lord, you may be destroyed – and that destruction may take many forms. Or you may go astray, that is, you leave God’s ways and seek to deliver yourself by your own devices, and that leads to affliction.

Your protection is to delight in the Word of God. The fact that he takes great delight in the Word of God is what keeps him going, keeps him from despair and depression, keeps him from sin.

We must keep in mind the purpose for our lives and the divine provision for fulfilling that purpose. God has given us His Word. It must become our delight. The word “delight” signifies also that he meditated in the Word (cf., Ps 1:2). This inspired further loyalty to God: “I will never forget your precepts.”

Psalm 119:93 I will never forget Your precepts, For by them You have given me life.

I will never forget Your precepts,

If he “*forgot*” it would mean that he did not study and apply the Word of God to his life—but he will not forget.

It is like the verb “remember,” which usually means to act on what is remembered. The psalmist determines that he will not forget—he will remember and do what the Word says because they are the source of life to him.

For by them You have given me life—meaning either “preserve life,” or “renew life” or “revive”—it is not always easy to know which nuance to use.

But he does say, “by them (God’s precepts) you have preserved my life” or “you have renewed my life.”

Psalm 119:94 *I am* Yours, save me; For I have sought Your precepts.

The word that he received from God and which sustained him is in itself a confirmation of the relationship he has with God. Therefore, he states, “*I am yours!*”

Deliverance is requested on the basis of an intimate relationship.

He is still in difficulty and praying for God to save him. We may say that he has been sustained in the midst of the persecution, but his life has not been fully restored. Therefore he prays:

Save me. Because of his awareness that he belongs to God, the psalmist has confidence to pray for deliverance. The prayer, “Save me” is a prayer to be delivered from the people who were trying to destroy him. This is temporal deliverance from a difficulty.

for I have sought your precepts. The verb to seek is used five times in this psalm (Psa 119:2, 10, 45, 94, 155). It means to search for something carefully.

He has been diligent in studying the Word, and therefore he knows that he belongs to the Lord, and he knows that he can pray for deliverance.

Your confidence must be in the Lord, in what He has said in His Word.

If you start to focus on your circumstances you may forget, you may go astray, you may lose your way and be destroyed.

There are people who begin to doubt God because they are suffering. Does God really love me? Does God really care? Does God even exist? How can we know what is true?

God's Word is truth.

Psa 119:160 The entirety of Your word *is* truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments *endures* forever.

Joh 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Psalm 119:95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me, *But* I will consider Your testimonies.

In verse 95 he reiterates his affliction: proud, scornful, slanderous enemies eagerly wait for the opportunity to destroy him. They were almost succeeding, according to verse 92.

Wait קָוָה (qāwâ) wait, look for, hope. It can mean to wait for something with steadfast endurance, as in Isa 40:31. But it is also used for the wicked who make an attempt to destroy the life of the righteous (Ps 56:6).

His enemies are waiting, looking for opportunities.

But I will consider Your testimonies. בִּין (bîn) understand, consider, perceive, regard.

Understanding does not come automatically. It requires diligence. It is more than IQ; it connotes character. One is at fault if he doesn't have it and in fact, not to pursue it will incur God's punishment (Prov 2). When you consider God's revelation, His testimonies, then you obtain the benefits.

During his time of trouble the psalmist was considering God's testimonies. This verb has the connotation of trying to understand them and their relevance to his life. On the outside the wicked were lying in wait to destroy him, but he was discerning and faithfully following God's revealed plan for him.

Prov 2: ¹⁰ When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,

¹¹ Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you,

¹² To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things,

¹³ From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness;

¹⁴ Who rejoice in doing evil, *And* delight in the perversity of the wicked;

¹⁵ Whose ways *are* crooked, And *who are* devious in their paths;

¹⁶ To deliver you from the immoral woman, From the seductress *who* flatters with her words,

The wicked wait for me to destroy me, *But* I will consider Your testimonies.

He refuses to allow himself to be distracted from the Word of God. This is an important motif throughout Psalm 119—no matter what the affliction or pressure, he maintains his focus on the Scriptures.

In contrast to the limitations of earthly things God's word is boundless (96)

Psalm 119:96 I have seen the consummation of all perfection, *But* Your commandment is exceedingly broad.

The last verse is the summary statement of this file.

I have seen the consummation of all perfection,

The word “*consummation*” means that there is a limit; and the word “*perfection*” refers to the completion of something.

Everything that comes from man has limits. Human beauty, strength, intelligence, ingenuity all are limited.

You may trust in the things of this world to make you happy, but they have limits and can never satisfy.

This verse has two contrasting parts. The first half refers to all the excellent things he has seen compared to the Word of God. He says, “I see the limit to everything that I might bring to completion.”

But, no matter how complete they are, however perfected, they all come to an eventual end.

On the other hand, the commands of God are not limited but boundless.

But Your commandment is exceedingly broad.

It is broad in the sense that its perfections go in all directions. God's word is unlimited in its scope and perfection—nothing else comes near it.

All earthly perfection is limited—God's Word is not. His commands have no limits, because His Word is eternal and established.

Exceedingly מְאֹד (mě'ōd) exceedingly, much, abundance.

Broad רַחֵב (raḥab) breadth, broad expanse, wide. It covers every circumstance

God's Word can supply everything you need if you will meditate on it, remember it, trust it, use it, live by it.