

בְּמִזְמוֹר קִיּוּם

Psalm 119

AUTHORSHIP UNKNOWN

Major theories

- Moses
- David
- Jeremiah
- Priest in the second temple
- Ezra
- Ezra's father
- Daniel

WHAT DATA FROM THE PSALM ITSELF?

He had an intense hunger for holiness and a passionate desire to understand God's Word in a deeper way.

In all but fourteen verses, he addresses his words to the Lord personally,

WHAT DATA FROM THE PSALM ITSELF?

The writer must have been a high-profile person, because he mentioned the opposition of rulers (Psa 119:23, 161).

He also spoke to kings (Psa 119:46).

There are no references to a sanctuary, to sacrifices, or to a priestly ministry.

REFERENCES TO PEOPLE:

- Lord God
- remnant of godly people (vv. 74, 79)
- the psalmist
- ungodly people who
 - Despise him (v. 141)
 - Persecute him (vv. 84, 85, 110, et al)
 - Want to destroy him (v. 95)
 - Want him to suffer (vv. 50-51, 61, 67, 69-71, 78)

WHAT DATA FROM THE PSALM ITSELF?

Date:

Just as the author is unknown, so is the time of writing unknown. There are no clues in the text that can specify its time precisely. It could be pre-exilic, exilic, or post-exilic. We have no way of knowing, given current scholarship.

THE FORM OF PSALM 119

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

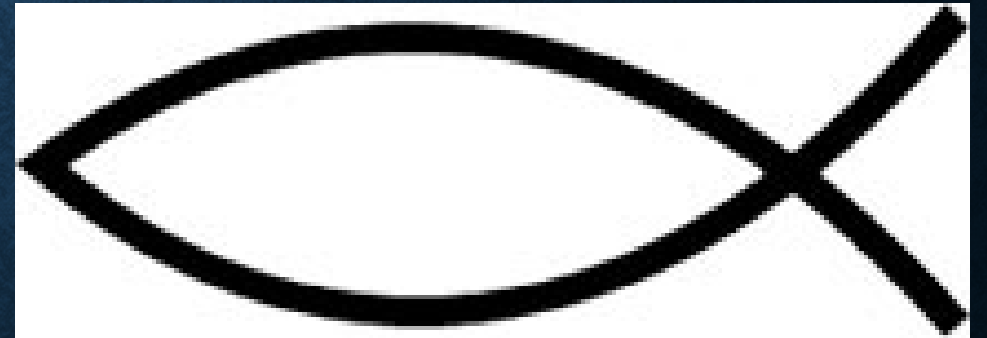
Under each of these letters are eight one-line verses, each beginning with the Hebrew letter that corresponds to its heading, yielding a total of 176 verses.

THE FORM OF PSALM 119

This arrangement is called an acrostic.

A well-known acrostic in Greek is for the phrase JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S SON [is] SAVIOR, the initial letters of which spell ΙΧΘΥΣ (ICHTHUS), which means fish:

Ἰησοῦς	Ἰησοῦς	Jesus
Χριστός	Χριστός	Christ
Θεοῦ	Θεοῦ	God's
Υἱός	Υἱός	Son
Σωτήρ	Σωτήρ	Savior



THE FORM OF PSALM 119

An **abecedarian** is an acrostic that, instead of spelling a word, spells the alphabet. Psalms 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112 and 145 are poems in which the initial letters of the lines form the alphabet in order. Psalm 119 is the most elaborate and complete.

This form is also found in the first four chapters the Book of Lamentations, as well as in the praise of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10-31.

Most of the verses are arranged in what is known as colons. (from Greek: κῶλον, pl. κῶλα, cola).

A line of Hebrew poetry is made up of two parts or cola (sometimes 3) For example: Psalm 119:1

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the LORD!

Hebrew poetry is not based on meter and rhyme as we usually have it in English, but is based on symmetry of thoughts which correspond with each other, or balance each other in some way.

1. Balance or Parallelism. A line of Hebrew poetry is made up of two parts or cola which may be designated A and B. For example: Psa 119:160

A. The entirety of Your word *is* truth,

B. And every one of Your righteous judgments *endures* forever.

Psa 19:7

A. The law of the LORD is perfect,

B. converting the soul;

A. The testimony of the LORD is sure,

B. making wise the simple;

2. Antithetical Parallelism: The second colon will state the opposite of the first. For example: Psa 37:21

- A. The wicked borrows, and cannot pay back,
- B. but the righteous is generous and gives;

Other relationships between A & B

A makes a statement, B provides a reason:

For example: Psa 119:173

A. Let Your hand become my help,

B. For I have chosen Your precepts.

Other relationships between A & B

A asks a question, B balances with an answer.

For example: Psa 119:9

A. How can a young man cleanse his way?

B. By taking heed according to Your word.

Other relationships between A & B

A makes a statement; B balances with a quotation:
For example: Psa 32:5

- A. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden.
- B. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"

Other relationships between A & B

A sets forth something “better than” B:

For example: Psa 119:72

A. The law of Your mouth is better to me

B. Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

Other relationships between A & B

A may provide a simile, B balancing with reality:
For example: (Psa 103:13; cf. 103:11–12; 42:1).

A. As a father pities his children,

B. So the Lord pities those who fear him

THEME: The Word of God is all-sufficient

This Psalm is an expansion of Psalm 19:7–9:

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN PSALM 119

- 1. Righteousness (Psa 119:7, 62, 75, 106, 123, 138, 144, 160, 164, 172)**
- 2. Trustworthiness (Psa 119:42)**
- 3. Truthfulness (Psa 119:43, 142, 151, 160)**
- 4. Faithfulness (Psa 119:86)**
- 5. Immutability (Psa 119:89)**
- 6. Eternality (Psa 119:90, 152)**
- 7. Light (Psa 119:105)**
- 8. Purity (Psa 119:140)**

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

1. SCRIPTURE IS CALLED THE “LAW” תּוֹרָה (torah) 8

Times: Psa 119:1, 18, 29, 34, 44, 51, 53, 55, 61, 70, 72

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 indicates 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.

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

2. “WORD” דְבָרָה (dabar) 11 times: Psa 119:9, 16, 17, 25, 28, 42, 43, 49, 57, 65, 74

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

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

3. “WORD” מִרְהָ (imrah) 7 times: Psa 119:11, 38, 41, 50, 58, 67, 76

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. Notice there are two distinct words translated “word” in English. Word, utterance, speech, saying.

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

4. “TESTIMONY” עֵדָה (‘edah) 8 times: Psa 119:2, 14, 22, 24, 31, 36, 46, 59

It is derived from a word that means to testify or witness. God, on Mt. Sinai, gave Moses the “two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18).” The ark in the tabernacle 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.

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

5. “PRECEPTS” פְּקֻדֹתַיִם (piqqudim) 8 times: always in the plural. Psa 119:4, 15, 27, 40, 45, 56, 63, 69

This is a word drawn from the sphere 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.

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

6. “STATUTES” חֹק (khok) 11 times: Ps. 119:5, 8, 12, 23, 26, 33, 48, 54, 64, 68, 71

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

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

7. “COMMANDMENTS” מִצְוָה (mitsvah) 11 times: Psa
119:6, 10, 19, 21, 32, 35, 47, 48, 60, 66, 73

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.

EIGHT SYNONYMS FOR SCRIPTURE IN PSALM 119.

8 . “JUDGMENTS” מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat) 9 times: Psa 119:7, 13, 20, 30, 39, 43, 52, 62, 75 (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 Ps 119 it refers to decisions 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” The words for *way* can also be descriptive of the Scriptures in that Scripture defines the way.

“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)

OTHER KEY WORDS

“WAY” אֶרֶח (orach) 5 times: Psa 119: 9, 15, 101, 104, 128

Most often 'ōrach 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 smooth path ('ōrah),” (Ps 27:11).

Truth אֱמוּנָה 'emunah (5 times) is descriptive of the Scriptures. Ps 119:30, 43, 142, 151, 160

OTHER KEY WORDS

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

KEEP: 16 times. Two Hebrew words: natsar (6x), shamar (12 times), to guard, to keep. Shamar is translated “take heed” in verse 9, and “observe” in verse 34.

MEDITATE or contemplate (siyach) 4 times

TEACH ME (lamad, yarah) 6 times

SERVANT (ebed) 6 times

HEART (LEV) 15 times