

Psalm 119: For The Love Of Scripture!

Psalm 119:49-56

Psalm 119:49

(KJV) ZAIN. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

(NIV) Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope.

Zain! Now you may be asking, what is *Zain*, and why does it matter? Well, if you have been following our series through Psalm 119, you already know that each eight-verse stanza, and indeed each verse of that stanza begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This week, number seven - oh so significant number seven - or *Zain*.

So why is the seventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet so significant?

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The human race has a nasty tendency to attribute success in art, commerce, health, industry, and relationships to their seven day a week god, called *self*. This is why God rested on the seventh day - for us! To show us the better way, the way of attributing glory to *Him* for the successes we enjoy during our life down here on earth. We rest on the seventh day each week to take time out to worship God and thank Him for creating us, gifting us, sustaining us, and blessing us.

So, yes, this seventh Hebrew letter Zain is significant. Even it's shape, like a sword, or another version depicting a crown, points to the might and majesty of God. And Zain's literal meaning - crown, sword, sustenance. Hold on, sustenance? Yeah, like food. Crowns, swords, and food? Yes! Psalm 119 is *all* about the attributes of God's Word!

It is power:

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is authority:

2Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

It is food:

Matthew 4:4

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

God's Word has given our psalmist hope.

When we were dead in our transgressions, living apart from God and His Word, we had hope also, didn't we? Until that hope gave way to hopelessness, and our dreams were dashed against a rock. We became as Solomon in Ecclesiastes:

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. "Laughter," I said, "is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?" I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives. I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

A man who tried everything apart from God.

And this: our psalmist who commits everything to God, placing his hope in God's promises alone.

Psalms 119:50

(KJV) This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

(NIV) My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.

Those of us who have lived a few years and travelled a few miles know that life is not a seamless series of *once upon a times* and *happily ever afters*.

Job 5:7 *Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.*

The psalmist is suffering at the hands of his mockers, who have no regard for God or His Word. But he has hidden God's promises in his heart, and they are coming to his rescue like sweet comfort. Beloved, to whatever degree you may experience trouble at the hands of your enemies, know that God's Word is your strategic weapon and comprehensive comfort. Make it your meditation all night and day. (Psalm 1:2)

*QUESTION FOR MEDITATION: Recall a time in your walk with Jesus when God's Word provided supernatural comfort in a time or season of trouble. Now take time to give God thanks and praise for His Word and His timely rescue through it.

Psalm 119:51

(KJV) The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

(NIV) The arrogant mock me unmercifully, but I do not turn from your law.

I remember as a young boy during my public school years being welcomed into the schoolyard daily with stones and snowballs and taunts from a group of bullies whose primary goal was to hurt and humiliate me because of my bright red hair and shy demeanour. The bullies mocking the psalmist here are *making mouths* and *scoffing* (Hebrew word *luts*) at him because they see God in him. Even so, our champion for God's Word is unmoved:

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

What a lesson we learn here. Even in the presence of his enemies, the psalmist is about *revelation* not *retaliation*:

Romans 12:19

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Psalm 119:52

(KJV) I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

(NIV) I remember, LORD, your ancient laws, and I find comfort in them.

The Bible is an old book. But in a very real sense was inspired through the Holy Ghost from *beyond* time and space. How do we know that?

Matthew 6:5-15

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

*STUDY POINT: Find three passages in the Old and New Testament where God was able to bless His people because of His divine position outside of time and space.

Psalm 119:53

(KJV) Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

(NIV) Indignation grips me because of the wicked, who have forsaken your law.

I love the King James rendering of this verse as it communicates the *horror* that the psalmist feels in the presence of those who mock God and His Word. What tragedy and disaster await those who knowingly abandon God's perfect law:

Romans 1:18-23

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Psalm 119:54

(KJV) Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

(NIV) Your decrees are the theme of my song wherever I lodge.

Thank you Jesus for providing anointed words for the song of my life, wherever I go...

Psalm 40:3

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Proverbs 6:20-23

My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

Psalm 119:55

(KJV) I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.

(NIV) In the night, LORD, I remember your name, that I may keep your law.

While, like the psalmist here, we used to be children of the night, hiding our sin and shame in darkness, the memory of the faithfulness of God and the illumination of God's Word (Psalm 119:105) now lights the way for each believer in the darkest of nights.

1Thessalonians 5:1-11

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Psalm 119:56

(KJV) This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

(NIV) This has been my practice: I obey your precepts.

Concluding here, we have our psalmist defining the true worship of Yahweh: obedience to His Word!

John 14:15 *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Amen.

- Reverend Darren McClelland