

'THE B.I.B.L.E.'
('Know Your Bible (and God) Better!')
Studies in Psalm 119

The Go(o)d Book

We believe that the Bible (*Scriptures of 37 Old Testament and 29 New Testament books*) is inerrant and infallible; inspired by God in the original manuscripts (autographs) both plenary (*whole context*) and verbal (*individual words*). We furthermore believe the Bible to be the Word of the living God that is *authoritative and final* in everything to which 'It' speaks past, present and future.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration (Greek 'theo-pneup-tos' / 'God breathed') of God, and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the (child) of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

"Forever, O LORD, Your Word is settled in heaven" **Psalm 119:89**

"You have magnified Your Word above all Your Name" **Psalm 138:2**

"...the Word that I have spoken will judge (everyone) in the last day" (Jesus) **John 12:48**

Course purposes: *To know, understand, love and reverence the Word of God contained in the Bible more, to the end that obedience to it, and sharing of it, will come naturally and easily as a blessed privilege every true child of God (2 Timothy 3:15).*

To become committed to interpretation of the Bible according to the literal, grammatical, historical, dispensational method of understanding God's Word as it was originally intended (2 Peter 1:20-21).

To become tactfully skilled in graciously defending the faith, properly using God's Word (Titus 1:9).

Course objectives: *To understand the origins of the written Scriptures (authorship, manuscripts used in translations, versions and paraphrases, canonization, etc.). To understand and appreciate and use accurately the terms 'revelation', 'inspiration', 'illumination', etc. in regard to God's conveyance of His heart to readers. To comprehend the Holy Spirit's usage of Scripture in all phases of a disciple of Christ's salvation, growth in grace, filling for service, and progression in holiness.*

Psalm 119

'The 'Alphabet Psalm'

The '*base text*' for this course in *bibliology* will be **Psalm 119**, the centerpiece of the Psalms and the masterpiece of God about His Word, spoken and written, since the creation of the world. 176 verses all mention or refer to God's holy Word in some way. Its arrangement of 22 sections uses the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and has a brilliance not seen in English translation, for all 8 verses in each section begin with that letter heading that section. Seemingly there is also a progression from '*youthfulness*' in the opening verses (*v 9, etc.*) to '*older age*' in the later verses (*v 152, etc.*), perhaps implying that over time God's Word affects faithful students more deeply and wisely and powerfully over a lifetime of commitment to obedience to what God has spoken in Scripture. We will aspire to study at least one or two sections of **Psalm 119** each week in conjunction with the study of some theological aspect of *bibliology* in general.

Authorship & Placement of Psalm 119

Psalm 119 is anonymous as to authorship. This is appropriate because of its grandeur and brilliance which should be attributed to God Himself alone. Certainly, someone was 'inspired' by Him to write it out but we are uncertain as to whom that may be. Most scholars assume, due to similarities with so many other Psalms written by him, that David was the penman of this literary work of art. It is possible, as some believe, that this may be one of the 1,005 other songs of Solomon (*1 Kings 4:32/ only Psalm 127 has been preserved in Scripture*). Certainly, before his demise, Solomon's great brilliance was capable of a masterpiece like **Psalm 119**. Maybe it was a father-son work combining a heart-love for God's Word as David possessed with the artistic genius of Solomon. Nobody knows but God who the musician-theologian genius was that wrote the score and penned the lyrics of the awesome '*Alphabet Psalm*'.

It is also of note that **Psalm 119** is positioned between *'the Great Hallel Psalms'* (*Psalms 113-118*) sung at Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles just prior, and *'the Ascents Psalms'* (*Psalms 120-134*) sung by those coming to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. The symmetry is beautiful, in that whether it's the season for special celebration or normal worship for God's people, the Word of God is to always be central to everything said, sung, prayed, and celebrated, to maintain the sense of His preeminent power and presence among those who belong to Him (*Psalms 135-150*).

Terms for God's Word

(5 Synonyms for Scripture in Psalm 119:1-8)

A Pentateuch of terms:

(Hebrew language definitions)

- (v 2) *'testimonies'* = 'ay-daw / witness to a group; like **Genesis** stories about God's works
- (v 4) *'precepts'* = 'pik-kood' / mandated pillars of truth; like the Law of God in **Exodus**
- (v 5) *'statutes'* = 'k-hoke' / signs, boundaries, no trespassing; like **Leviticus** ministry rules
- (v 6) *'commands'* = 'mitz-vah' / the OT Law 'marching orders'; as God's leading in **Numbers**
- (v 7) *'judgments'* = 'mish-pout' / judicial decisions & actions; God's precedents (**Deuteronomy**)

(Aleph) = The Way of an 'A' Student

(A word from the wise: 'I want to do it His way')

Psalm 119:1-8

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way,

Who walk in the law of the LORD!

Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,

Who seek Him with the whole heart!

They also do no iniquity;

They walk in His ways."

A wise

observation:

(note 3rd person
pronoun 'they')

- Talk about the importance of having an inspiring example of virtuous Christian living in causing you to desire a close 'walk with the Lord'. Who are some examples that seem to have a good life that God is blessing?
- Do you aspire to be someone God will use to inspire others to be disciples of Christ? What does it take for this?

"You have commanded us

To keep Your precepts diligently.

Oh, that my ways were directed

To keep Your statutes!

Then I would not be ashamed,

When I look into all Your commandments."

A wise

meditation:

- Discuss the absolute necessity of knowing God's Word well and having an earnest desire to 'diligently' obey. Talk about the difference between the words 'precepts', 'statutes' and 'commandments' used for God's Word.
- From these verses what can be done to become more 'diligent' about God's Word if you aren't already?

"I will praise You with uprightness of heart,

When I learn Your righteous judgments.

A wise

ambition:

I will keep Your statutes;

Oh, do not forsake me utterly!"

- From these lines how can you tell that God is already blessing this writer, even before his prayer ends? How has this new enhanced attitude about God and His ways changed the writer's worship, Bible study and 'walk' with the Lord?
- Talk about that last line that seems to imply fear that this new attitude might not last. Would God forsake you if you are learning, obeying, worshipping, and serving Him 'diligently'? (Why? or Why not?)