

to his soul. His heart rejoiced in the tender purity of God's Word.

In this first "my/Thy" unit, we are given a soul searching view of the heart response of one who has truly viewed God's righteousness. We see his response in the face of looking back from that fellowship, to behold corrupt humanity. To be totally baffled to his response, is a warning in itself that our heart needs God's immediate work.

The Stand of Humility

141 I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.

He knows his stature to be almost not even worth mentioning, but he still is committed to remembering what God has commanded. He takes his stand with God, though he does not claim to be some mighty trophy God would be proud to display. In fact, this whole section never once shows expectation of reward for doing right.

In a Messianic sense, Christ was held to be of little value, and condemned by the proud of this world. Consider another Messianic verse that applies to this:

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isaiah 53:2,3

142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

Such a clear statement of glorious divinity. In the Messianic understanding, we see Christ as eternally righteous and, "Your law (torath) faithful" (literal reading) showing the surety of the promises. The torath, showing God's directions to man, point to the Messiah. The promises are sure.

In this second "my/Thy" unit, we see the mark of humility being a chief characteristic of one who has truly seen God's righteousness.

Desire For More

143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights.

In the first half of this verse, we see the Psalmist's soul is bound up in suffering. We are shown a great distress. The second half, shows us the opposite. God's commandments (mitzvot) are his delight. It speaks of suffering, but delight continues regardless, because full focus is elsewhere.

For most, when we are bound up in grief and misery, there is nothing that can really bring us to delight. The sorrow is an overwhelming torrent. Not so with this man. God's commandments have a supernatural power that is more powerful than the griefs of this life.

This also bears a Messianic description. It touches on the Gethsemane experience. Notice these words of Christ:

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. John 12:27

Jesus suffered great anguish in the garden, yet He was committed to following the Father's commandments. In essence, they were His delight. Following the will of the Father was His choice.

144 The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

As I had said, the final half is almost a clue to more being here than initially meets the eye. That mystery lay in the text, but there is the more important mystery that is only revealed in Christ Jesus.

Jesus is, most literally, the living testimony of God the Father. Read that fact into this verse, and we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the everlasting righteousness of God. The Psalmist, receiving that knowledge, in essence is praying, "God, grant me more than knowledge. If You reveal Your understanding to me, I know it will result in everlasting life."

Now I wanted to take another look back to the left and right sides of this section. The twice used "testimonies" and the word for "word" being the only right hand side legal terms used, are instructive. Both tell of the Messiah. Jesus is the living testimony of God, and He is the living Word of God. The agonies in the right hand column are

all Messianic in experience.

The left hand side is giving direct instruction to man to help the seeker find his way to God. It most logically concludes with the instruction to seek understanding as a gift from God to gain the life.

In this last, of the three "my/Thy" units, we see the inner battle that must take place. For the godly man or woman, if we delight in God's commands, it will mean dying to self. To the flesh, that is most assuredly "trouble and anguish". This is not something that happens only once upon conversion. It is a lifelong walk of carrying the cross:

23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23

When we behold the righteousness of God, four things happen. First, we are dazzled. Second, we are repulsed by the defilement of mankind. Third, we are brought low in humility, as we see ourselves. Fourth and finally, we walk the life of the cross.

Just one final, beautiful word on God's righteousness on our behalf:

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

Praise be to God Almighty!

Hebrew reads from right to left.

Notice the "Tzaddi" that precedes each verse:

וְיִשָּׁר מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ:	צְדִיק אֶתָּה יְהוָה	137
וְאִמּוֹנָה מֵאֵד:	צְדִיק עֲדָךְ עֲדִיק	138
כִּי־שָׁחַו דְּבָרֶיךָ צְרִי:	צִמְתָּנִי קִנְאַתִּי	139
וְעִבְדֶּךָ אֶהְבֵּה:	צְרוּפָה אִמְרֶתְךָ מֵאֵד	140
פֶּקֶדֶיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:	צָעִיר אֲנֹכִי וְנִבְוָה	141
וְתוֹרֶתְךָ אֶמֶת:	צִדְקֶתְךָ צְדָק לְעוֹלָם	142
מִצְוֹתֶיךָ שִׁעֲשִׂי:	צַר־וּמְצוּק מִצְאוּנִי	143
הִבִּינִי וְאֶחֱיָה:	צְדָק עֲדוּתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם	144

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Reading from the King James Bible.

To find this article on-line go to

www.basedintheword.org entitled

"Righteousness: Being Exposed To God's Glory"

Righteousness:

Psalm

119



Tzaddi

Being

Exposed To

God's Glory

18

Psalm 119

Tzaddi

137 Righteous *art* thou, O LORD, and up-right *are* thy judgments.

138 Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded *are* righteous and very faithful.

139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

140 Thy word *is* very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

141 I *am* small and despised: *yet* do not I forget thy precepts.

142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and thy law *is* the truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: *yet* thy commandments *are* my delights.

144 The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

This is the eighteenth section of Psalm 119. Having covered a more detailed overview of the Psalm, it is my intention to go more thoroughly through each section. Briefly, each section is according to the letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each letter contains 8 verses that begin with that specific letter. Tzaddi is the eighteenth letter, so each verse, in the Hebrew, begins with a word starting with the letter Tzaddi.

In Hebrew, unlike English, each letter was originally also a word. We do not know the meaning of every letter today, but we do know most. Tzaddi is one of the letters there is uncertainty on. Possibly its meaning is, “To descend, to bow down, to be prosperous, meat, provision, hunt”. Since the Psalmist built the Psalm based on the letters, it is likely the meaning of each letter played in his thoughts as he composed each section. In this section, though possible meanings of the letter are good to keep at the back of the mind, I believe the layout is based upon a word that starts with the letter Tzaddi. That is the word for “righteousness”.

This Psalm is also based upon the usage of a host of words that are “legal” terms in the Hebrew. I have gone into a more thorough definition of each word, as it has been encountered, in the previous sections. I would recommend going there to find those expansions. I will cover additional words as we come across them.

The Worship of God

137 Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.

This section launches with that treasured word for “righteous” and continues to run on that beloved theme. It begins in a direct tie of righteousness and God. This is the only place the name of Yahweh is used in this section. For flowing on the theme of righteousness, it is most appropriate that His holy name is matched with that pure condition as the first words of consideration.

In the second half, we find those “*judgments*” which are the “*mishpats*”. Those *mishpats* being God’s just responses to different situations. The second half flows from the first. Yahweh’s judgments are upright because He is righteous.

This verse is a statement of pure praise. It is straight worship. The focus remains totally upon God. God’s judgments are God’s interactions with man.

138 Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.

Next, we see the confession of God’s “*testimonies*”, being righteous. Since the testimonies are those laws which show us the character of God, it is notable it includes the word “*commanded*”. God frequently told Moses to build all things according to the pattern he was shown. Aaron’s two sons died because they attempted to perform their priestly duty according to their own ideas. In relation to testimonies, man has no right to adjust them to his tastes by so much as a hair. Because they are righteous, they can only be that which God has commanded.

The final part of this verse being, “*very faithful*”, we find the words literally, “and faithful (true) exceedingly”. Those laws which show us the character and nature of Yahweh, bare a perfect witness.

In this verse, the Hebrew has a sandwich formation around “*testimonies*”. We find “*righteous*” preceding it, and “*faithful*” following. God’s testimonies are framed by these clear aspects of their character, which testimonies reveal God.

This verse is also showing a clear praise of God and the acknowledgment of His greatness.

On the subject of God’s righteousness, we do not tend to perceive it in its true beauty and glory. All Christians will have some degree of appreciation for God’s righteousness. We will at least possess the appreciation from the aspect of having seen our corruption and condemnation. We have seen Christ Jesus lived righteously and died as a substitute for us. We can appreciate what was done, but we don’t really comprehend the exquisite beauty of his righteousness.

Try to look at it this way: You’ve seen those fancy glass punch bowls with all the little diamond cut patterns and fancy designs. You think, “how pretty”. Maybe you’ve seen those plastic imitations that also look pretty. You notice the difference when you knock the side with the ladle, but it is still pretty. You appreciate both. They both gain some degree of approval. Finally, you are shown the original leaded glass bowl they are patterned after. You are allowed to handle it and examine it. You notice it even has a special ring the others simply can’t produce. After a close examination of that glassware, you laugh at how impressed you were with the imitations. Such is the way we see God’s righteousness. Until we have

grown, and had a greater experience and understanding of our LORD, we won’t be able to size up a proper appraisal. If we read a verse like 137 and go, “ho hum”, we have never beheld the leaded crystal original! Maybe that is why we are so easily impressed by the good deeds of some cults. They perform some charity and we go ooh and ahh. We are impressed by the plastic imitations!

As I have gone through these sections, it should be noted they are progressive. This should help us to see that the more we grow in our walk with God, the more our gaze will desire to behold God. God’s righteousness is not only the milk of the Word for babes. It is part of the meat for the more mature as well.

This section shows some of that deeper intricate beauty. In a look at the Hebrew verse, there is a distinctive intertwining pattern. It is more than simply words developing a theme. It is composed more like some mathematical composition. When you see a glimpse of that, you might begin to grasp what hidden glory extends beyond our ability to comprehend. Such is the righteousness of God.

Some of the layout artistry looks like this:

It breaks up into four sections of two verses each. The first two, as a unit, both focus on God. Each of the three remaining units have the first verse primarily “my” and the second verse “Thy”. The very last two Hebrew words of this section turn back to “my”. Such a structure will naturally draw our eyes to examine each as a unit of thought. That is the flow in the most natural form.

The second pattern is the vertical. If you have the tract form of this, you may see the left and right side of each verse. The right repeatedly mentions God’s righteousness, but never on the left. The left lists many of the “legal” terms, but never “*testimonies*”. On the right we find “*testimonies*” twice, but never on the left. Likewise we find “words”, the term more specifically for speech, on the right but not the left. On the left, the word for “*words*”, is different from that on the right. At the end, there is what might be a clue to a riddle being laid here with those words “*give me understanding, and I shall live*”. We will look at more of this pattern shortly.

We gaze at God’s righteousness. The more we behold, the more we are amazed at the intricacy we seemed to have missed.

A Gut-Wrenching View Back At Man

139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

In this first “my/Thy” unit we see this Psalmist gripped with almost overwhelming jealousy for God, rage for His honor and paralyzing grief.

A more literal reading being, “Has put an end to me my zeal (ardor), because have forgotten Your word my enemies.”

Get a hold of this please! This saint of God cannot help but have these overwhelming feelings when he turns from beholding God’s righteousness. The sign of a spiritually sick person, is their not being gripped when they see the Bible simply forgotten. We cannot say we are truly seeing God’s righteousness and not be revolted, and I mean revolted, by the sight of the Bible being treated like simply another book.

Look at the Psalmist’s words, he calls those who do such, “*mine enemies*”. Does our beholding the man who blaspheme’s God’s holy name, not bother us? Do we inwardly rise in rage at such dishonor spat at a righteous God? Maybe it is the opposite, and such are our dear friends? Remember, Jesus ate with harlots to minister to them, he did not hang around the brothel!

From the Messianic aspect, we saw Jesus chase out the merchants in the Temple. He called them thieves and that is a direct accusation of forgetting God’s Words in such disobedience. In the Gospel of John we read:

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.
John 2:17

140 Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

After beholding the vile enemies, we can almost fall back with this man into the comfort and restoration he found. His soul is comforted and given strength to go on, when he turns his listening ears to hear God’s “*word*”. This being the more commonly spoken word. In verse 139, the enemies forgot the “*words*”, being that most commonly for written. They had the Bible, but could not see more than written words. These had no hold on them. The Psalmist, on the other hand, heard more than simply pen on parchment, he heard the very word alive in his heart. Those precious words were balm