

and develop “pat” answers for the difficulties they present. The adherents learn those responses and rehearse them whenever confronted with the Biblical truth. For such methods to work, the culties never “understand” the texts. They can’t, for they have already determined their position, and the truth of the passages contradicts them. They learn, but they do not understand.

The Psalmist wants to “know” God’s “testimonies”. The testimonies being that which bears witness to the character of God. He wants to know more of God. His desire is for a deeper relationship with God.

## Sudden Strength of a Warrior

**126 It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.**

Following the change of direction, presented in the previous two verses, I perceive a new vigor infusing this servant of God. Like a warrior preparing for battle, he takes a battle ready position in view of the King’s enemies. He sees the violations as not just being against himself, he views them as being against the King. He is looking after the King’s interests.

God has answered the prayer of those previous verses, in giving him that knowledge and understanding. He perceives the crimes, committed against His servants, are actually committed against God.

The word translated as “they have made void” also means “they have broken”. The proud have violated God’s “torath”. His directions have been cast aside as they perceived they could do as they please, with no accountability. The Psalmist, enraged as King Saul was in his early days, and empowered by the Spirit:

*5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. 6 And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. 7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. 1 Samuel 11:5-7*

In his Spirit-filled perception, he rose like Saul. “How dare they arrogantly defy God! Arise LORD,

for the time of their iniquity must cease!”

This is the only place we find God’s name used in this section. I believe we see it manifest here, because of the Spirit filled rage that arises in the Psalmist’s heart. At this moment, how close he stands to his King!

**127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.**

Verses 127 and 128 are verses dependent upon the fact the proud have broken God’s law, of verse 126. They both begin with “therefore”.

We see another reason God allows the proud to oppress for a time. This verse tells us the Psalmist’s heart clings dearly to God’s commandments (mitzvot). They are more valuable to him than the greatest riches of this earth. This is stated as coming about because of the proud violating God’s laws. If you examine any good story, you will notice there is always the element of some evil foe. It is that foe that enhances the clarity of the good. To our eyes, it is that contrast and threat that enable us to see how great is the good. Such in this world helps us to realize how great God’s Word is.

**128 Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.**

Here we see the second, and final “therefore”. The empowered servant has also had his eyes opened to the total reliability of God’s Word. Until he got a good look at the outcome of the proud, he might have thought some laws too harsh. It was his sight of the wicked that opened his eyes to the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Then he knew, whether he understood the why of all things, he knew God’s judgments were right. He knew, that if there was error in perception, it was his view and not God’s Word. He had grown to the perception of hating the evil. God had granted his request for “knowing” and “understanding”.


We do not see the hand of God move, in this section, but we do see the transforming of His servant. It is that transformation that is of primary importance. The trial has proved the man to be of the right heart. It has been the tool to purify him as the valued servant. Though this Psalm doesn’t show the provisions God had in store, in answer to his trial, we can get a glimpse of a similar account in Psalm 18. There we find the wonderful answer

of deliverance God gave:

*16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. 18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. 19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. 20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. 23 I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. 24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye-sight. 25 With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; 26 With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. 27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. 28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. Psalm 18:16-28*

Hebrew reads from right to left. Notice the “Ain” that precedes each verse:

בִּלְתִּיחֵנִי לְעִשְׂקֵי:	עֲשִׂיתִי מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק	121
אֶל־יַעֲשִׂקֵנִי וְדִים:	עָרַב עִבְדְּךָ לְטוֹב	122
וְלֹא־מִרַת צֶדֶקְךָ:	עֵינַי כָּלוּ לִישׁוּעָתְךָ	123
וְחִקֶּיךָ לְמַדְנִי:	עֲשֵׂה עִמ־עִבְדְּךָ כְּחֶסֶדְךָ	124
וְאִדְעָה עִדְתֶיךָ:	עִבְדְּךָ־אֲנִי הִבִּינִי	125
הַפְּרוּ תוֹרָתְךָ:	עֵת לַעֲשׂוֹת לִיהוָה	126
מִזֶּהָב וּמִפָּז:	עַל־כֵּן אֶהְבֵּתִי מִצִּוְתֶיךָ	127
כָּל־אֶרֶץ שֹׁקֵר שְׁנֵאתִי:	עַל־כֵּן כָּל־פִּקּוּדֵי כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל	128

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Psalm  
119



Ain

# Needy Servant Transforms Into Warrior

## Psalm 119

Ain

121 I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.

122 Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.

123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

125 I *am* thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

126 *It is* time for *thee*, LORD, to work: *for* they have made void thy law.

127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.

This is the sixteenth 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. Ain is the sixteenth letter, so each verse, in the Hebrew, begins with a word starting with the letter Ain.

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. Ain means, “Eye, a fountain”. 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, we see the sorrowful heart. The eye that looks for God’s help, and the eye as the fountain of tears. This section presents the faithful, but confused servant.

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 Godly Face Suffering Too

### **121 I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.**

There will come a time for most, in our walk with God, when we will encounter unexplainable oppression of one kind or another. The oppression I am talking about is not a sign of “backsliding”. It is not God’s way of telling us, “we have departed from the narrow way”. It is not due to a lack of faith or immaturity. Though we enter such an oppression, it is always well to examine ourselves to see that we have not strayed from the path. Paul gave similar counsel:

*5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. 2 Corinthians 13:5a*

The Psalmist begins this section having done that very thing. The following context tells of the oppression. He has been suffering and has examined himself, to be sure he stood on God’s side. He does not present himself like that Pharisee Jesus warned about, who was giving a glowing report of himself in the temple before God. His opposite being the humble publican, who saw his sin and simply asked for mercy. This prayer is not from a self-righteous, self-sufficient man. We will clearly see that in upcoming verses.

We have seen the observing and keeping of God’s “mishpat” (judgment) in this Psalm. Here we see the Psalmist telling God he has *done* “mishpat”. This tells us he has learned God’s commands. He has understood them, and he has lived according to them. He has put them into living practice, decided the right and wrong of a course, and followed through. This would be the application of “mishpat”.

We are told he had walked in the path of “*justice*”. In this verse, the word translated “*justice*” is the word for “righteous, righteousness”. To do righteousness is more than just to decide rightly and walk that way. Righteousness in a man, tells of his facing different paths, and taking the consideration first of what is right to do. It may mean personal loss. It may mean being more considerate of other’s needs and losses. It will mean being sensitive to offenses caused to others. It will see such, and carefully look for such, and will do that which is right. It faces various temptations, and does what is right, no matter the personal loss. Above all, it is humble. The praying Pharisee at the Temple, Jesus told of, may make many true statements of various good deeds, but he could not honestly say, “I have done righteousness”. A man, due to his fallen nature and corrupt flesh, is incapable of doing “righteousness” apart from humility. It simply won’t happen.

This Psalmist, having confidence of walking faithfully with God, presents his plea. This man knows oppression. It is a weight he is unable to do anything about on his own. Physically speaking, he is no match for them. They have the means to afflict him and are doing so. He cries to God, knowing the matter is ultimately whether or not God takes action for his deliverance. He has no doubt God can take care of the situation. He is asking for God to act on his behalf for deliverance in physical suffering of some kind. The salvation he is seeking is now, not that of the soul in an eternal perspective.

### **122 Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.**

“*Surety*” is to “take on pledge or give in pledge”. The Psalmist is asking God to stand in the gap on his behalf. He is seeking for God to basically say, “I will cover you, I will make good for your protection.” Such a petition shows us he sees himself as needy. If he was self-confident, or self-sufficient, he wouldn’t be seeking for another to be “surety” for him. He also is seen taking the position of “*servant*”. A servant certainly is not one with the power to demand. He appeals on the basis of belonging to God.

Here he names his “*oppressors*”. They are “*the proud*”. Again, if he was a proud one, such as the previously mentioned Pharisee, he dare not pray for help against other proud! He’d be bringing down his own judgment! No, he knows his walk has been true before God. This godly man is suffering unjustly from those who truly know nothing of righteousness. They know nothing of considering the needs of others above their own. They don’t even know compassion. It has not only been within their power to oppress, they choose to do it. To the proud, it is their pleasure. To suffer by them is no indication of failing God. It simply is an opportunity to seek God, lean upon Him more closely and look to behold the glory of God for our deliverance in our time of pilgrimage.

### **123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.**

We encountered “*Mine eyes fail*” back in verse 82. There they failed “for God’s Word”. Here they fail for His salvation. As we saw, “*fail*” meant “consumed”. It was indicative of the suffering. There is one other place in the Psalms where we find this expression:

*3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. Psalm 69:3*

From this, we can see an indication of mourning and looking with expectation for help. The description of being long with weeping and coming to an end of hope.

The Psalmist is looking desperately to God for, literally, “to Your salvations”. His cry is urgent, desperate and revealing. In the second half of the verse, we find “*word*” which is that Hebrew word more indicative of speech. It is in the plural. He is clearly showing his absolute dependence upon God. He is not counting upon God to “pay him back for his good deeds”, in this provision of salvation. In verse 121, we saw his righteousness, but from the failing heart of the obedient servant, his trust is upon God’s salvation and His words of spoken righteousness.

One aspect in the mention of “*righteousness*” here, as I expounded on some characteristics I mentioned considering the needs of others. Though God is never tempted to self-satisfaction in neglecting proper care of another, He is very concerned about the needs of those who walk in His fear. In appealing for God’s righteousness, he is appealing to God’s compassion for the afflicted, godly and humble servant.

## Reaffirmation of the Servant Heart

### **124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.**

This servant has learned God’s Word. He knows God’s dealings with His people in the past. With that knowledge, he appeals to God’s mercy. Notice he is not appealing based upon being such a “good servant”. He knows that the only solid ground to stand before God is based on mercy.

The second half of this verse seems to be almost unrelated. He suddenly switches to the seeking heart of the thirsty disciple. His concern changes from self seeking, to God seeking. The problem of oppression has not been changed. He still is under the burden of such suffering. Now the prayer for help is certainly appropriate, but it is an important lesson to learn that it should not become “all consuming”. Look at this Psalmist. Even with the weight of oppression upon him, he does not fail to look away from that suffering, and focus upon ongoing discipleship. After presenting our case before God, we need to take this position of putting aside that all encompassing thought and refocus on being taught of God. After all, isn’t this the heart of a true servant? A servant who eagerly looks to the instructions of his master is the only real servant. If we forget that, “Uh, what about our duty?”

Something I want to pay attention to, is the Psalmist making a turn around. Not necessarily in seeing deliverance, but in strength of heart. The plea for help must come first, but the heart of the disciple must likewise be manifest. Even in need, the focus must stay on God. This will also be a method by which “self-pity” is kept at bay. All Glory be to God! All longing be for God!

### **125 I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.**

Maybe more comforted now and at rest, the Psalmist reaffirms belonging to God. He is clearly standing in the position of a disciple. Previously he asked for teaching, here he seeks more earnestly in asking for “*understanding*”. A true servant, and disciple, is not content with learning facts, he must understand. We cannot become “as the Master” without understanding.

Consider cults that claim to be using the Bible. A common basis in cults is to work on people’s confusion. Since their teachings are distorted from truth, they go through relative Bible passages