

His Word. Don't think God will rise up for your defense, when you cry to Him, if you have been ignoring His cry to you for obedience. I am not saying God absolutely won't answer, if you walk in disobedience. He has His divine prerogative, for one thing. Satan will also accomplish a miracle, if it will help you feel snug in your sin. What's a little healing, or the like, if such will end up in your refusing to take serious consideration of your sin? I will tell you though, for those who take that path to soothe their consciences, and see some "blessing", be assured it will have its price. Take a look at this from a crowd of people who did just as I have described:

*16 As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. 17 But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. 18 But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. 19 And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? 20 Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying, 21 The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it not into his mind? 22 So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. 23 Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.*

*Jeremiah 44:16-23*

**174 I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.**

As this section began with an anguished cry to Yahweh, so we find that pattern repeated here in a similar form. We do not find a cry, here is simply an open yearning of heart. He has chosen, and takes delight in following God's law (torath). All God's directions for our life. It is no longer considered a burden, clearly the opposite.

The Hebrew term for "salvation" is in the plural. He has been longing for God's deliverances in this life, as well as in eternity. The trouble he is battling is not an outside enemy. It is his fallen nature.

**175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.**

His soul has strayed into the paths of death. This section is the returning heart of the prodigal. He has been brought low, has looked at where he has ended up, and gives us a walk thru on his journey back. He prays for God to give life to his soul. His body is obviously alive, but something had happened to his soul. He had strayed from the lessons found in the section "Shin". His destitute condition has brought him to his senses. The "praise" harkens us back to Shin. That abundant life, let slip, may be restored. It is such a life that will praise God.

In requesting for God's "judgments" to help him, he may be asking for one of two things. One, seeking for God to show him through His Word, the help he needed. Two, for God to render an answer to his prayer, giving His judgment, for his help.

**176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.**

This summarizing verse is gripping. The word for "lost" is a serious word. It also means "destroyed". Jesus came to save the lost sheep.

See the position the Psalmist takes. He comes like the Prodigal Son, "Let me be as one of thy servants." He takes the position of a servant who needs help to find his way back. He has learned a serious lesson. He no longer figures he will just walk back to the rest of the flock. He can't, he has been destroyed. Perhaps he has fallen down a ledge and finds himself trapped and with a broken leg. His soul is fading, but he pleads with God. He confesses his sin and returns in heart as the servant.

The whole reason he got into that mess in the first place, "he had forgotten God's Word". It is that which is the beginning of the fatal end, in a faithful walk with God. Now, he reconsecrates himself to remembering God's commandments. This shows our clear, personal responsibility in the choice of "remembering".

After a rather lengthy journey through Psalm 119, it may seem a rather sad conclusion. Being the "Omega", or the end of the Hebrew alphabet, we might have expected a more cheery, "return of the LORD" conclusion. In one way it is. This ends with a prayer for the LORD to come for His lost sheep. That is exactly what He did at His first coming. This section is Messianic in that consideration.

Another reason for finding this as the final message, is the issue of straying is a major problem. After all, look at Israel's history, and look at the prevalent apostasy from Christ today. Unless we are shown the way back, we may come to the end of ourselves, but not know what to do to turn around. We will simply wallow in the far country hungering for the pig's husks, and bemoan our trapped condition. We are never so helplessly trapped, that God cannot hear and save. That is the hope this section offers.



Hebrew reads from right to left. Notice the "Tau" that precedes each verse:

169	תִּקְרַב רִנָּתִי לִפְנֵיךָ יְהוָה	כְּדַבַּרְךָ חֲבִינֵנִי:
170	תָּבוֹא תְּחַנְּנֵנִי לִפְנֵיךָ	כְּאִמְרֹתֶיךָ הַצִּילֵנִי:
171	תִּבְעֵנָה שְׂפִתַי תְּהַלֵּלָהּ	כִּי תִלְמַדְנִי חֻקֶיךָ:
172	תִּשְׁעַן לְשׁוֹנִי אִמְרֹתֶיךָ	כִּי כָל־מִצְוֹתֶיךָ צִדְקָה:
173	תְּחַיֵּי־יָדְךָ לְעֹזְרוֹנִי	כִּי פִקּוּדֶיךָ בְּחַרְתִּי:
174	תִּאֲבִתִּי לִישׁוּעֶתְךָ יְהוָה	וְתוֹרֹתֶיךָ שְׁעִשְׂעִי:
175	תְּחַיֵּי־נַפְשִׁי וְתַהַלֵּלְךָ	וּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ יְעֹזְרוּנִי:
176	תְּעִיתִי כִּשְׂאֵה אֶבֶד בְּקֶשֶׁת עֲבָדֶיךָ	כִּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי:

Free to copy under Creative Commons-BY-NC-ND3.0 License 2009 by Darrell Farkas Reading from the King James Bible. To find this article on-line go to [www.basedintheword.org](http://www.basedintheword.org) entitled "The Return Of The Prodigal"

**Psalm 119**  
Tau

169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.

170 Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.

171 My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.

173 Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

174 I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.

175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

This is the twenty-second, and last, 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. Tau is the twenty-second letter, so each verse, in the Hebrew, begins with a word starting with the letter Tau.

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. Tau means, “A mark; by implication a signature”. 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, I believe the theme runs along a root word from which Tau comes. The [Strong’s Concordance](#) number is 8420, 8427 and 8428 and has some possible clues (See Gesenius Lexicon). There is the aspect of marks, as in designation of boundaries. Such is God’s Word. Ignoring of those marks, is the downfall of God’s people, which is seen in this section. The other consideration, is the meaning of 8428 as “to repent, to be grieved”, which is the exact theme of this section.

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 Pathway Back

**169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.**

The first two verses form a Hebrew parallelism. They repeat each other with slight variation. The singular difference, in the first portion of each, is our finding the name of Yahweh in this section. We will find it again in verse 174. In both, it marks the longing cry addressing God. It certainly carries the note of the intimacy with God that is not known simply in the title “God”.

We are not told here what the trouble is, but verse 176 shows us he has wandered from the LORD. No specific “enemy” is mentioned in this section.

Between these two verses, we find the alternate used of the two common terms for “*word*”. This verse, using that more common for the written word. It is also in the singular. When we face trouble, it is not our usual concern to seek understanding of Yahweh’s Word first. We tend to lift up the threat first. This Psalmist’s battle plan is different. He knows something we need to learn. He needs answers, he needs understanding from the Bible, and he doesn’t trust himself for being able to find the answers.

What I am seeing as glaringly absent from so much preaching today, is an understanding. Many preachers preach, but they seem unaware they miss the entire point, or major issues in the pertinent passages they are preaching from. I believe the primary reason, is they feel competent enough from their training in college. Most do not seem to sense their inability to understand without God’s special hand of revelation.

**170 Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.**

Here we see the mirror of verse 169. The point to really pay attention to, is the variation in the second half of this verse. This has that term for “*word*” which predominantly leans towards speech. It is in the plural, so we literally find, “Your words”.

What I perceive we are seeing here, is a partial answer to the first verse. Initially, he asked for understanding, now we see his prayer based upon that understanding. The written Word had been opened to him, so they became living words to him. Before he could read facts, but now he could pray according to an understanding of what promises were for him. This second verse shows a distinct progression in intelligent prayer.

**171 My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.**

Something important here, is the use of the same Hebrew word at the beginning of the second half of verse 171, 172 and 173. That word is generally translated “*for*”, as you can see in 172 and 173. There is no reason to change it to “*when*” for 171. Such a change distinctly changes the meaning of the verse. Read the whole verse with the variation, and note the important difference.

We have seen the prayerful cry for an unspecified help. Here we are beholding the joyful heart that

has received the answer of gaining understanding. It is because the LORD has given him understanding, that he can make the confession of having been taught. If we study a book, we generally don’t credit the writer of the textbook as having taught us. If we learn in a class setting, we give credit to the teacher of the class. Such is a sample of what the Psalmist is recognizing. He didn’t just read the Bible and accredited his understanding to being taught from a book. He recognizes there must be a teacher, to gain understanding. Only then, can he be sure he is even understanding the text accurately. Such is the desperate need of today.

He has used his lips in a wonderfully progressive manner. Too often, we use our lips to speak without ever having been taught. Shame on us. The Psalmist initially uttered a “*cry*” to Yahweh. That should be the starting point for all of us. Let it be an ignorant cry. At least then, we know to start by asking for the intelligence to be able to pray in a way that isn’t wearying to God! Next, we see he presented an understanding petition. God had answered the first prayer, so he could pray an intelligent second prayer. Now, those lips utter praise. We are being given a clear lesson on how to pray effectively and how to properly use our ability to speak. Now behold the next step in the development.

**172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.**

As you may have noticed, the progression in the use of the vocal cords reaching out to testify. How wonderful. Prayer for understanding, intelligent petitioning, praise, then sharing what God has taught us.

The term for “*word*” here is that same one used in verse 170. These are those words of revelation and understanding he had been granted. Too many do speak of God’s Word, but have never been given the understanding. They pass on the written Word, void of the Spirit’s opening understanding and teaching them. The Psalmist is not going to pass that kind of word on. He has been taught, and from that source of life, he is going to pass on that same living word.

Notice the primary characteristic of what God had taught him. God’s commandments (mitzvot) are righteous. When God teaches, He will teach

about righteousness. The Psalmist also knows that ALL God’s commandments are righteous. He not only understands their character, he has received the understanding, as a part of that answered prayer, that God’s written Word is trustworthy. His heart doesn’t waver in an inability to know if it is accurately God’s Word. He simply knows, for he has been taught of the Spirit. When he sees God’s Word, he recognizes it right off. If we compared it to some fine, French cooking, after tasting the sampling, “Ah, do I know real French cooking or what? That is the real thing! The quality is superb. It is clear there have been no short-cuts taken in preparing that dish.” Such is the flavor of God’s Word. Once one has learned what the real quality stuff is like, you won’t be able to pull the wool over that person’s eyes.

## The Return of the Prodigal

**173 Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.**

This verse takes us back to verse 170, in its asking for deliverance. The term for “*hand*” is that for the working hand, designating power. He is furthering his plea for God’s needed help.

Now pay attention to the second part. He has been taught and grown in his knowledge of God’s Word. God has given him an understanding heart and mind. From such a position, he appeals to God for help “based upon” his having chosen God’s precepts. The term “*chosen*” might sound a little unusual to you. Considering that each of us either chooses to obey God’s Word, or we choose to ignore it, we can see what is meant by “*chosen*”.

Consider this for a minute with the gift of King Solomon’s wisdom. Solomon had been given understanding and great discernment. Though he had received such enlightenment, he eventually failed to keep choosing it. Such is the position each of us must decide. After prayer for teaching, and receiving God’s gift of understanding, we must actively choose to follow. Just because the LORD has answered our prayer, doesn’t mean we are “Christians”. He is waiting to see if we choose.

Going back to the grounds for the Psalmist’s expecting an affirmative response from God. We are not saved by works, but most assuredly God is paying attention to whether or not we obey