

# Scriptural Sinner's Prayer

**M**any Christians and churches, in an effort to reach the lost, are coming up with a myriad of ways to contact the people around them. We see many means and techniques being used. Some seem more mild with an appeal like, "Are you hurting tonight? Come forward and let God heal that inner pain you are suffering." Others go as outlandish as opening up a tattoo parlor in the "church" to reach that kind of crowd!

I have an "emergency psalm of the hour" that helps see what is right in reaching the lost. After looking over it, you might realize you have never come to the Lord in the way it describes. Maybe you were supposedly converted sporting a nice new tattoo, huh?

## Psalm 25

1 <<A Psalm of David.>>

Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it *is* great.

12 What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I *am* desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: *O* bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

## Basic Structure

Before getting into this psalm, there are important details we need to see.

In the Hebrew, this is an acrostic. Psalm 119 is also of that style. This particular one begins each verse

with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. That is part of the "gotcha" the enemy uses to attack the reliability of God's Word. You see, Psalm 25 is a clear acrostic with the exception of five verses that initially appear slightly mangled.

How does one explain such breaches in structure, yet hold to providential preservation of the psalm? From the content of the psalm itself, I believe we find our answer. If we approach this psalm with a western mind-set, we face a dilemma. The answer lies in thinking with a Hebrew mind-set. The Hebrews, who pay close attention to letters, and their important combinations, will be alerted to something important by this break in structure. The break itself would cause that mind-set to consider why the second letter, "beth" didn't come at the beginning. Noting the break in structure, they would consider more diligently where it does appear. They will consider the meaning of the letter beth. It does have a meaning. Such thinking will uncover the reason for the disruption from a pure acrostic form. We will see the reasons as we go through the psalm.

Another point to touch upon, is that those who feel the psalm needs fixing, have added the name of Yahweh in one place. In verse 21b, the Greek translators of the Septuagint added His name. Such an addition adds another dimension to the word structure. If you make that little addition, it messes up two important structures found in this psalm. One is the psalm itself is disturbed and the other breaks an important pattern found in the collection of psalms comprising Book 1.

What we have in the Psalms, is a carefully balanced collection that cannot tolerate changing one word without messing up its important structure. This structure safeguards to us the knowledge that what we

have in this psalm an accurately preserved copy.

One final aspect to note before getting into the psalm, is it takes the form of an abbreviated menorah. Remember the menorah in God's earthly tabernacle? It was a candlestick with a main shaft going up and three shafts out each side. That is also an important form of literary structure used throughout Scripture. We find it used as the basis of this psalm, in addition to its being an acrostic. The form is easy to see:

Verses:

**1-7 – Prayer to God**

8-10 – *Instruction to man*

**11 – Prayer to God**

12-15 – *Instruction to man*

**16-22 – Prayer to God**

It is verse 11 that takes the center of the Hebrew structure and causes the focus to fall upon the heart of the psalm. The reason is two-fold and the two parts rotate around the name of Yahweh that divides them in the Hebrew of verse 11.

## First Gospel Outline in Prayer

1 <<A Psalm of David.>>

Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

Verse 1 starts with the simple accreditation to David. The acrostic begins after this credit. Verse 1 is the "aleph" verse.

This is a sinner's prayer, or gospel-style psalm. We need to pay attention to its outline. This first verse shows the literal beginning in a saving transaction that must take place between man and God.

We must come with our soul and present ourselves entirely before the one true God. It doesn't use the more generic term of deity. This verse shows we must bring ourselves before the throne of the true God - Yahweh in heaven.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

Verses 2 and 3 present the next step which details the involvement of faith. Unless we come to Yahweh in faith, we come in vain.

In this second verse we see the first irregularity in the acrostic. This is the "beth" verse. This letter means, "house, dwelling or tent". We find this letter buried in the Hebrew word for "ashamed". Our personal house, the dwelling of our soul, which we lifted before the throne of God is clothed in shame. The irregularity in the placement of beth, visually demonstrates this fact in the text.

We find Hebrew poetic parallelism here. In verse 2 we find the "enemies" and verse 3 the "transgress". These are connected in the parallelism.

In verse 3, which is the "gimel" verse, we find the promise of Yahweh's hearkening to all who will come to Him in the manner this psalm describes. Verse 2 shows the psalmist's approach to God, while 3 shows that all who do so will find mercy from Him.

Have you been taught you can't be saved unless you are one of the "elect"? You may have thought, "If I am not one of God's elect, there's nothing I can do to avoid eternal damnation in the lake of fire." Let me show you something from verse three. If you come and "wait" on God in the manner of lifting your soul before Yahweh, facing the shame you are clothed with, your shame will be removed. After anyone has entered the path of waiting on God, the shame will no longer be upon them. We are told those who will be ashamed are those who continue in transgressions.

A thing to note from these two verses, is that those who become "waiters upon God" will enter a path where they will have "enemies". These enemies will be enemies without having to do anything to justly cause that hatred. Those in the path of death are those who transgress without having a reason to seek our harm.

Something else about the gimel verse, this letter tells of taking on a burden, like a camel carrying a load. When one comes before Yahweh for

salvation, one leaves his shameful house behind and takes on the burden of the yoke of Christ. One now takes Him as Lord and receives the charge of a Spirit-led discipleship.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Verses 4 and 5 take us to the next step in this sinner's prayer. They demonstrate the position of a disciple. A disciple is one who is dedicated to being a student, following the Master.

Verse 4 is the "dalet" verse. Dalet means, "something swinging, the valve of a door (two-leaved)". It pictures an openness to God. Dalet is also a letter that speaks of brokenness. That is the state a disciple must come with. His own will must be broken, his own spirit of rebellion and self-will. In such a condition, notice what he is saying, "Shew me thy ways".

He is seeking God's revelation of what He is like. This disciple is teachable. In seeking to know God's "ways", he is seeking to know and understand the character of God. If we do not understand the true character of God, we will be serving a God of our imagination. I have seen many today who call themselves Christians who do just that. Just look at the liberal denominations for example.

Such a desire for revelation of Yahweh is followed by the desire to be taught His "paths". This shows the heart of obedience. We must know Him and we must know how He will have us walk.

Verse 5 uses the Hebrew letters of "he" and "vau". The vau begins in an irregular position and holds another lesson.

First look at the he. This letter has uncertain meaning, but likely that of "Lo! Behold, Lo; possibly original form represents a window". Its meaning would carry the idea of "wake up and pay attention" and/or the idea of letting light in. This is the heart of a disciple!

We see his request for God to lead him in truth and teach him. Here we see that the issue of truth is not irrelevant. Truth is absolute and is critical to being taught of God and not man.

We see the reference to God being the, “*God of my salvation*”. Like I said, this is a sinner’s prayer of conversion. That conversion results in the much coveted position of standing in God’s salvation. To be in that position. To be lead of Him in truth and be taught of Him (v. 5) is intertwined with the knowledge of Him as one’s “*God of my salvation*”. This has a continued, unceasing walk with Him and waiting on Him “*all the day*”. Such doesn’t mean we don’t see to personal interests of life, it means we conduct those interests with Him as Lord over them.

Now let’s consider the unusually placed *vau*. It is the “*and*” in “*and teach me*”. This letter means, “a nail or a hook, as in hooks for hanging curtains”. It was specifically used in regards to the hooks used in the “*mishkan*” or the “*tabernacle*” Moses built in the wilderness. Consider: the nails and hooks serve to make the dwelling place of God an assembled reality that stands for His glory. Without these nails and hooks, there would be no attachments to hold it up. We are important in God’s sight and even necessary. Also consider these nails and hooks are either buried out of sight or slightly significant in the visibility of the tabernacle. If the hooks are holding the curtains of the walls up, do we admire the hooks or do we admire the wall? The wall is what we will be paying attention to. Such is the place of humility. We have our place, but our work is exclusively for the glory of the God of our salvation. What’s more, we do our work all the day. If we quit, the curtain will sag where we were one of the necessary pegs. That little sag will stand out more noticeably than all the work of the faithful pegs who are doing their job.

May I suggest, the reason the he and *vau* are uniquely bound together in verse 5, is because our beholding Him, letting in the light and being the humble, obedient servant are tightly bound together in the true knowing of Him as the God of our salvation.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.  
7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness’ sake, O LORD.

We have two more verses in this first sinner’s prayer section. They go together

as a unit. Verse 6 is the “*zayin*” section and 7 the “*cheth*.”

*Zayin* means, “a weapon” but has also been seen (Psalm 119) to carry the significance of the important word that begins with *zayin*, “remember.” That is how this verse begins. The Scripture makes an appeal to us to reflect upon and remember God’s dealings with man historically. That is why we were told to remember Passover annually. Such reenactment reminds us of God’s mercy of redemption from Egypt.

This sinner’s prayer comes to its first close with the remembrance of God’s grace. Hebrew has three commonly used words for grace. We find all three used in this psalm. In fact, we find two of them in verse 6.

The psalmist’s standing with God and standing secure in God’s salvation must be based in Yahweh’s remembering His “*tender mercies*” or “*rachem*” in Hebrew. *Rachem* speaks of “tender loving mercy” and “compassion”. The security must also be based in Yahweh’s remembering his “*lovingkindnesses,*” or “*chesed*” in Hebrew. That term is a wonderful match to *rachem*. It speaks of clear-cut mercy. This carries a definite legal aspect. One can dispense mercy without feeling all warm and fuzzy. The *chesed* speaks of a sure provision of security provided by the Judge Himself. We truly need both God’s *rachem* and His *chesed*.

Verse 7 takes an interesting twist with that “*Remember.*” He asks God *NOT* to remember something.

Verse 7 is the “*cheth*” verse. *Cheth* likely meaning, “a hedge or fence.” What is our “hedge” or “fence” in regards to God’s salvation? Does it lie in our living really good lives? Does it lie in a very disciplined, religious life? Does it lie in being the very best disciple we could possibly be? The answer is, “No!” It lies in God’s not remembering our sins, our transgressions of His righteous standards. That is the appeal of verse 7. He asks God to apply the forms of grace mentioned in verse 6 to him in verse 7. He calls for God to deal with Him solely on the basis of, “*according to thy mercy*”. His *chesed*.

Take a close look at the way this prayer closes. It is a virtual, pre-Christian era, “in Jesus’ name.” It uses the name of God, being Yahweh. It appeals, “*for thy goodness sake.*” That Hebrew for “goodness” is the word for “good”. The closing appeal of this prayer in asking for mercy is for His good sake. Our salvation is not for our glory, it is for God’s glory. All

the glory is to go to Him. In paraphrase this prayer closes, “Your mercy upon me will be for Your glory, sealed with the covenant name of God, my Saviour.” The virtual, “in Jesus’ name!”

This first prayer has shown serious transactions with God. It certainly dealt with brokenness and true commitment to discipleship, but ultimately a standing in the fear of God and trusting His grace.

We will proceed shortly with the next branch of this menorah where we find instruction directly addressing us. Verses 8-10 are not verses of prayer addressing God.

Due to the repetitive structure of this psalm, we have a safeguard to see we are interpreting the verses accurately. With many twistings of the Gospel today, many are confused as to what is truth and error. Someone could come along and tell you some other explanation for the verses we have looked at. How would you know what was right? That is where the remainder of this psalm will shine a light on the proper understanding of these verses. We shall see it repeats the basic principals, with similar parallel phrases. They lay over each other in their instruction. The puzzle can go together and line up ONE WAY. If someone alters the message of 1-7, then 8-10, 12-15 and 16-22 will just bring chaos.

## First Gospel Outline in Instruction

8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Verse 8 is our “*teth*” verse. *Teth*’s meaning is uncertain, but possibly, “serpent; something rolled or twisted together”. I have also seen this letter used for the significance of it being the first letter for the Hebrew word “good” (Psalm 119), which is what this verse actually starts with. As we find in the gospels, “who is good, none is good, only God.”

The word translated “*upright*” is a Hebrew word that carries the meaning of “righteous”. The first principal instruction of God starts with who He is, for it addresses Him here by name in verse 8. It starts with the clear understanding of His character. He is good and He is righteous. Part b of verse 8 gives a significant connecting



word of “*therefore*.” It is because of His character we, as sinners, need be instructed in His path at the very beginning. This verse shows the absolute need for holiness preaching.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Verse 9 is the “yod” verse. Yod means, “a hand, indicating power, means, direction”. This verse tells who will receive the power, means and direction of God. It tells us the “*meek*” are the ones God will teach. Built upon verse 9, we see those who lift their souls to God and trust in Him, those who wait upon Him (looking back to verses 1-3) are meek.

The request of “*lead*” and “*shew*” of verses 4 and 5, is shown to only be answered to the “*meek*.” We are told that if a person is meek before God, he will be taught God’s “*mishpat*” - “*judgment*” and he will be taught His character. Meekness is an absolutely necessary character trait to proceed further with God.

As I mentioned earlier, if you wonder about being, or not being, one of God’s elect, let me ask you, “Have you waited on God in meekness?” We find here the promise that God WILL guide and teach the meek.

10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Verse 10 is the “caph” verse. Caph means, “a wing; the hollow of the hand or palm.” This letter speaks of being open to God in worship and surrender.

Following the promise of being taught in verse 9, we have the substance of that teaching, that which the meek will receive in their open hands. It starts with the fact that “*All*” His ways are consistent. His character is pure with not one bit of hypocrisy. The core of His ways are based on the “*chesed*” mercy and “*truth*”. We know how important His mercy is to us. How can we take any less seriously that “*truth*” is also critically tied to mercy. Truth is not subjective. It is absolute.

This mercy and truth are only to a specified group, “*such as keep his covenant and his testimonies*”. Here is a good place to reflect upon the passage in Revelation where we are told that

the faithful are those who hold to His Word (the Bible) and hold the testimony of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the living testimony of God. It is on these that the grace of God will fall:

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: Revelation 6:9

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:17

## Heart of the Psalm

11 For thy name’s sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

We find ourselves at the pivotal heart of the psalm. This is the “lamed” verse. Lamed means, “to goad; to teach; learn,” it also means “to; of”. It is used in the “to” form as it leads this verse being “to” or “*For*” his name’s sake. This whole psalm is ultimately “to” His glory.

This verse falls center in the original Hebrew in two ways. The “*For thy name’s sake*” is the mathematical center of the psalm. The “*pardon mine iniquity; for it is great*” is the meaningful center based on the 45 colas of the psalm. It is interesting the two types of centers fall on both sides of the holy name of Yahweh. The first focuses on His glory. The second focuses on our fallen state. This is the heart of this psalm. The sinner’s prayer comes from this position if it comes from a truly broken and meek heart. A true convert is concerned with the glory and name of the Lord being lifted high while at the same time is personally broken, beholding one’s filth in the light of His glory.

Finding this verse after the content of the preceding verses, we see our psalmist basically gasps this single verse prayer. Who can but help to look upon God and not tremble in the revelation of our sinful nature?

We see this short prayer is also in the, “in Jesus’ name” format of verse 7.

## Second Gospel Outline in Instruction

12 What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

Verse 12 is the “mem” verse. Mem means, “water.” Water is one of the two most basic elements we need for life. Such is the message of this verse. (The other is air, which is a type of heaven.)

As this new portion starts, it details another characteristic to be found in the person whom Yahweh will accept as His disciple. We saw the requirement of meekness in verse 9, now we see, “he that feareth Yahweh.” This fear is necessary to being one of His disciples.

Again the question, “Do you wonder if you are one of God’s elect?” I ask you, “Do you fear Yahweh?” Terror is not fear. Terror comes to those who know what their fate in unrepentant sin is, but won’t change. They have no hope. All that is waiting for them is terror. Godly fear must be found in the presence of knowing His mercy. Godly, saving fear has hope, consider:

3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? 4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Psalm 130:3-4

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

Verse 13 is the “nun” verse. Nun means, “propagate by shoots; figuratively - to be perpetual”. We clearly see the meaning of nun in this verse.

The soul lifted to God, who fears Him, is promised peace. The “*his seed shall inherit the earth*” reflects the meaning of nun in propagation and in perpetuity.

An important point in this verse speaks of comfort. It is interesting we see this in the second half of the psalm. Part of the new method of evangelism used today is the, “Come to God, He will heal you of your hurts.” God will heal hurts, but those who come to God based on that will likely be short-lived in profession. Let’s just say a convert for comfort does appear to continue in a profession of faith. What

you might be seeing is someone who is religious, but the promise of salvation they have been told they obtained, may never become reality the rest of their life. Following a teaching that does not provide the reality, simply acts as an inoculation against the truth that brings life. One comes to God through the details we have seen listed of brokenness over our sins, meekness, fear of God and waiting on Him. Ease from the burden of conviction and ease for comfort are different things.

To those who come in the right way, there will be the ease for their soul. Notice, in this verse, this ease is a result, not the basis upon which he came to God.

14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

Verse 14 is the “samech” verse. Samech means, “lean upon or take hold of; bear up, establish; stand fast”. This verse shows this theme in addressing who takes hold of God’s salvation.

We are told here there is a “*secret of the LORD*”. I believe we can safely deduce that what is being talked about is something man cannot find via his intellect. This is referring to revelation from God. For this secret to be found, one must “*fear him.*” God’s part is revelation, our part is to fear God. The revelation we will be privileged to see is His covenant. That covenant is His salvation.

15 Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

Verse 15 is the “ain” verse. Ain means, “eye, a fountain.” This verse begins with the word for the letter ain. It is clear the psalmist’s thought was resting upon the meaning of the letter. The eye speaks of our sight. The eyes have been used elsewhere to speak of the proud who have lofty eyes and haughty eyes. The eyes of the saved are not like those of the proud.

In another psalm, we see God is concerned that we behave like well-trained servants whose eyes are attentively on their lord (Ps. 32:8-9; 123:2). Consider the waiter in the rich lord’s house who is standing to the side of the table, while his lord entertains dinner guests. Suddenly one of the guests has an accident. The well-trained waiter is both watching the table, his charge and the lord of the manor. He quickly catches his lord’s glance and instinctively knows what to do. He is at the guest’s side pronto, giving him

all the help he can. Such are the eyes of the man or woman who fears God.

There is another detail to see in this verse, how his eyes are focused on the Lord and of getting caught in a net, speak of a journey. To get caught in a net, one generally has to be travelling. If one is travelling, the generally smart thing is to keep one’s eyes on the road. Isn’t that how you avoid falling into nets? The case is not so here. We are told that he who keeps his eyes on Yahweh is the one whose feet will be spared from the net. A net also speaks of an enemy. A pothole doesn’t, but a net does. There are enemies seeking our destruction. The promised way to avoid their net is to keep our eyes on God.

One last important lesson here. Many come to Yahweh and get involved in some religion. They consider this religion the path of God and take their eyes off Yahweh, focusing them on the religion. That is one of the nets laid by the adversary. Remember the Ephesian letter we find in the book of Revelation? The Ephesian church had their act together. Their doctrine was perfect, but for one fatal mistake. They had grown cold in love for God. Flee that situation. Repent and turn back to God. Keep your eyes on Him alone. He will take care of the net.

## Second Gospel Outline in Prayer

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I *am* desolate and afflicted.

Verse 16 is the “pe” verse. Pe means “mouth, figuratively speech”.

At verse 16, we see the beginning of the final prayer. I believe there is a break in form between verses 18 and 19. This first part is a prayer like the former, on the personal level. The final portion is on a national level.

Like the first verse, 16 begins being the sinner’s prayer. A sinner who turns to God will notice the same thing we see here. When someone has seen their lost state, they look to God and see not His face, but the back of his head. God’s face does not shine upon the sinful man. The sinner, upon such working conviction of the Holy Spirit, will cry out, “What must I do to be saved?” He has come to the realization God is not happy with him. When he looks to God, he sees His back turned on him. Such a man is “*desolate and afflicted*”. He has begun to see his condemned state. It is then he cries what we see here, “*Turn thee unto*

*me*”. The first Hebrew word we find in the verse carries the idea of facing. Notice the meaning of the letter pe is reference to the mouth. To see the mouth is to see the face.

Consider this sinner gets his request of God turning to face him, then what? God’s wrath? No. That prayer continues in asking for His “*mercy*”. The word translated “*mercy*” here, is that third word I said we found in this psalm. It is the closest word Hebrew has to match “*grace*”. These details give a further outline of the true sinner’s prayer. With an awakened conscience, one asks for grace.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

Verse 17 is the “tsaddi” and “koph” verse. Tsaddi’s possibly meaning is, “to descend, to bow down, to be prosperous, meat, provision, hunt”. Koph’s meaning being, “the hole of an axe; monkey, ape”.

This sinner turned “seeker of God,” perceives his desperate state. Note the sorrow has grown in his heart. Our heart is that part of us where we ultimately make our choices. It is that part that God’s condemnation will fall upon, for it is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). The psalmist knows where this sorrow of conviction has taken lodge. It is such a working upon our hearts that must take place for repentance to come about.

The koph is in an irregular place. It is buried in the Hebrew word for “*distresses*”. This is much like we saw in verse 2, where the beth was buried in “*ashamed*”. In the sinner’s need of salvation, he is seeking to be brought out of the distresses that have come upon him. It is because of those distresses that he lifted his soul to God, in verse 1.

I read a lengthy piece on koph. To be short, this letter makes a connection between imitative behavior and the back of the head. If your head is buried in distresses, that’s as bad as it gets. The prayer is for God to pull him out.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

Verse 18 is the first “resh” verse. The meaning of resh is, “head, beginning, chief; shake.”

This is the final verse of the “personal” part of this last prayer. It starts with the Hebrew word for “look” or “behold.” It is the exact same word verse 19 begins with. I believe this repeat of the resh was done as

an indicator of the change from personal to corporate. I suspect the significance of *resh* is not in its definition, but in the word it leads with. It is the same for both 18 and 19. It is the cry of, “look God”.

In this verse, the psalmist asks God to look upon his “*affliction*”. That word for affliction also means “poverty”. This man has seen his utterly destitute state.

He asks God to look upon his “*pain*”. That Hebrew word also means “toil, trouble and labor”. He has become a completely broken man. These verses, 16-18, show the state of a truly broken sinner. When was the last time you saw such a troubled individual go forward at an altar call?

Look at the final part of verse 18, “*forgive all my sins.*” For those doubting the reasons for this man’s grief, behold these final words. Here lies the reason. He saw his sinfulness. The psalmist did not come to conversion because, “God knows your hurts so wants to be a therapist and help you recover. You’re a victim you know.” NO! This man was not responding to that version of the gospel! His response was a hurt that came from his own shame and wickedness. The difference is a world apart and the fruit of the two gospel versions is a world apart.

19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

Verse 19 is the second “*resh*” verse. I see this as a prayer of Israel in his affliction. It is a prayer for salvation.

It is also prophetic of the suffering we see this very day. Like the verse says, “*Consider mine enemies*”. The present enemies of Israel are truly “*Hamas*”. That is the Hebrew word used here translated as “*cruel*”. Israel’s enemies are cruel and they are also *Hamas*.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

Verse 20 is the “*schin*” verse. *Schin* means, “a tooth (as sharp)”. I have seen the *schin* used in the acrostic of Psalm 119 focusing on a word beginning with the letter *schin*. That word for “*keep*” or “*kept*”. Here we actually find this verse

begins with that word. The cry of this verse is for God’s keeping.

The “*trust*” we find here is not the same Hebrew word as was translated “*trust*” in verse 2. I believe this particular word was used due to its leaning to the meaning of mercy. He puts his trust in God, trusting upon His mercy.

It is of note, we find the concern of shame. Shame is inherent for both men as individuals and for men as a nation. The only remedy for our shame is in God’s keeping a watch over us and delivering us. Such a prayer with hope comes from those who humble themselves before God. They see their need and seek God in the manner He has prescribed.

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

Verse 21 is the “*tau*” verse. *Tau* means, “a mark; by implication a signature”. I have done more extensive study on *tau* before. That mark carries a lot of meaning. It designates a signature to a contract that is in the shape of a cross.

Someone has made His *tau* upon a paper of debt laid against us. His signature – cross, signed off on our debt. That is a brief outline of its significance, but consider it in this verse. The psalmist makes the prayer for “*integrity and uprightness*” to preserve him. That is exactly what God’s answer is for mankind’s debt. The psalmist does not say, “Let *my* integrity and uprightness” now does he? It is not his, but God’s provided in Christ Jesus that will be his preservation. Look, the psalmist knows this for he continues, “*for I wait on thee.*” The Hebrew word for “*wait*” here also means “*hope*”. The *tau* is in Christ our hope and the hope of all Israel.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

Verse 22 is after the last letter of the alphabet and uses a *pe*. This strange, apparent tag-on is part of the planned arrangement of this acrostic psalm. Its extra appearance would have waved a flag of “take note” to any Hebrew reader. It speaks of the hope for Israel

yet to come. This verse, beginning with *pe*, should bring us back to the thoughts of verse 16, the other *pe* verse. Remember God’s face was turned away in that verse. For God’s face to turn upon us is to find His grace. How do we or Israel find grace? We find it through redemption. This verse starts with the word for “*Redeem*”. That word begins with *pe*. So we see this concluding portion of verses 19-22 ending with that corporate plea for the salvation of Israel. The plea for Israel to behold God’s face in redemption. A redemption not only temporally and nationally, but spiritually and eternally.

## Stand on the True Gospel

The understanding of this psalm is a crucial need of the hour. It makes the principals of the gospel sharp, and instructs in the way of sound biblical conversion. This psalm gave us a true sinner’s prayer with instruction to see what the words really mean. It leaves us with no doubt as to the kind of interaction with God that must take place. In only 22 short verses, we find such surefire instruction. Learn the principals found in this psalm and apply them in telling others of the way of life.

Maybe you are the one who got a tattoo at that swinging relational church. Now that you have heard the truth of the Gospel, make your conversion true with a broken spirit of repentance and humility before the Almighty. I would also recommend you remove the tattoo!

Some may laugh at my example of the tattoo, but I use it to point out the ridiculousness of these new-style preaching techniques. Many will not be as wild as the tattoo technique, but they are just as deplorable. They lead people into false confidence of being saved. This further acts to inoculate them to the true gospel. Why should they worry? They have been falsely led to believe they are saved because they “say a prayer.”