

Psalm 119: Introduction

The book of Psalms is one of the five poetic books of the bible. Psalms itself consists of five books (scrolls) and structured as follows: Book 1: Psalms 1-41; Book 2: Psalms 42-72; Book3: Psalms 73-89; Book 4: Psalms 90-106; and Book 5: Psalms 105-150. Psalm 119 is the longest of all the psalms and is uniquely structured.

Psalm 119 is referred to as an acrostic or alphabetical psalm for it is divided into **22 parts** with each part representing a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. Each part has eight verses and with the first letter of each verse beginning with the Hebrew letter of that part. For example the first part of Psalm 119 is called Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. Each of the eight verses in that part begins with the letter aleph. This pattern continues throughout with all 22 letters. Though this same pattern does not hold true with English translation, the Hebrew is quite remarkable and we have on our website in the expository bible study section, an audio-visual study of each of the parts of Psalm 119. We hope to eventually have the entire bible studied and available in an AV format and available on our site at no charge.

The overall structure and theme of Psalm 119 is the efficacy and divinity of God's testimony to His people; and the urgency and necessity for His people to read, heed and live in full obedience to Him for by doing we are led to Messiah for Salvation and Eternal Life. Most every verse of Psalm 119 has a consistent message on the power of God's holy word; His testimony to His image bearers and nearly every verse uses one or more of the following words.

These first groupings are variations to express the Laws and Word of God

1. Law: **Tôrâ**
2. Commandments, Contract Terms: **Mitsvah or Miswâ**
3. Command, Charge, Ordered: **Sawâ**
4. Judgments, Rulership of beings and governments: **Mishpat**
5. Precepts, Statutes, Commandment as in leadership and oversight responsibility: **Piqqûdim**
6. Statutes, Ordinance, Prescription as written laws: **Hoq**
7. Testimony as to facts and laws: **Edâ**
8. Testimony, Testify as Witness, Remind, Warn: **Edût**
9. Word, Spoken, Speech: **Imrâ**
10. Word, Utterances, Speech, Thought: **Dabar**

This next grouping is how and in what manner we are to respond to the writings of God

1. Watch, Guard, Protect, Observe, Look after diligently and carefully **Nasar**
2. Keep, guard, observe, heed with great care: **Shamar**
3. Understand, Discern, Consider: **Bîn**
4. Meditate, Muse, Commune, Speak, Complain: **sîah**
5. Learn, Teach: **Lamad**
6. Teach, Throw, Shoot, Cast Upon, Pour out: **yarâ**
7. Way, Walk, Manner of movement: **Halak**
8. Way as on the way; Road, Journey with a focus upon the destination; Path as a worn path due to constant walking: **Derek**
9. Way, Path as in way of life or path of life, how one lives whether good or evil: **Orah**
10. Truth, Firmness, Fidelity, Faithful: **emûnâ**
11. Righteous, Just: **sedeq**

The one object and focus of Psalm 119 is YHWH, Yahwey, the Personal Name of Eternal, Self-Existent God.

Regarding the personal name of God, YHWH, (Yahwey) which is the Tetragrammaton translated into English as LORD and later when the Hebrew language developed and vowels added by the Masorites to the original Hebrew alphabet. The names of the 22 letters in Hebrew are proper words and much more than letters to form words as exists now in our Western language and most languages for that matter. Hebrew letters are not only significant of the letters of names but generally have some other meaning in that language. Regarding the Tetragrammaton YHWH, the Hebrew tradition is to never speak the word from their inception of its recording at Mount Sinai by Moses and because of that the pronunciation of YHWY was never known and now lost. When the Masorites added vowels to the Hebrew alphabet they maintained the tradition to never permit speaking of Tetragrammaton YHWH so they added the vowels for the word “Adonai” (Lord) to YHWH it becomes YaHoWaHo, thus making it almost impossible to pronounce with the nearest rendition of the word in English as **Jehovah**. Hebrews still consider the name of God too sacred to ever be spoken even or written (except Scripture) even though God gave us His personal name YHWH more than 6,500 times in Scripture as His name for His people to call Him. For this reason whenever LORD is written in Scripture we know this to not be the name of God and shall rather say Yahwey rather than LORD for that is most likely the closest rendering of YHWH according to most scholars. For more on the Tetragrammaton YHWH, please see our [topical study](#) at our website.

Now, in regard to the Hebrew alphabet and Psalm 119, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is ALEPH and corresponds to the first letter “A” of our Western alphabet. The Hebrew aleph means "ox, leader and the number one." The original Hebrew alphabet is the only alphabet that has this characteristic peculiar to it for no other alphabets have a meaning and a numerical value where it can be used independently as a word. BETH, the second letter in the Hebrew alphabet means "house and the number two;" GIMEL is the third letter and means “camel and the number three” and is the origin for our English word camel. The Hebrew alphabet is the subject matter for Psalm 119 and its meanings to us in the alphabet itself and as a divine inspiration of Scripture. This is why Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in all Scripture. I’ll list each alphabet, its generally accepted meaning and a blank column for you to insert the theme or essence for each of the eight verses for each Psalm 119 letter.

Letter	№	Meaning	Theme for Psalm 119
Aleph	1	Ox, master, leader, teacher	
Beth	2	House	
Gimel	3	Camel, bridge, wean	
Daleth	4	Door, poor, elevate	
He	5	Behold, look, reveal	
Vav	6	Hook, peg	
Zayin	7	Hand weapon-sword	
Heth	8	Fence in, destroy	
Teth	9	Spin, knot, twist, weave	
Yod	10	Hand, fist, clench, power	
Kaph	20	Hand, open palm, weak (500)	
Lamed	30	Learn, teach, ox goad	
Mem	40	Water, sea, ocean (600)	
Nun	50	Descendent, posterity, heir (700)	
Samek	60	Support, uphold, ordain	
Ayin	70	Eye, spring, fountain	
Pe	80	Mouth, speech (800)	
Tsadik	90	Hunt, fish hook, just (900)	
Qoph	100	Encompass, come around	
Resh	200	Head, lead, first rule, chief	
Shin	300	Sharpen, tooth, tongue, mind	
Tav	400	Mark, sign, impression	