

## 21-In Awe of the Word.docx

Psalms 119: 161-168

### To know Him and Make Him Known

In this section [Shin the 21st letter in the Hebrew alphabet] the psalmist stood in awe of God's Word and had come to love it. Because God through His Word directs him he could not be misdirected even by the rulers of this world. Thus he rejoiced in the worth of God's Word, repeatedly praised God for His Word (vv.162-164). Those like himself, who love God's Word and follow its directions find the hope of their salvation and enjoy great peace (CIT).

Treasuring or loving God's Word develops a stabilized life. The stabilizing safeguard for the heart is love for the Lord's teaching (163). A consequence of loving the Lord's teaching is a stabilized life which enjoys peace (165). The constant keeper is motivated by love of what the Lord has testified of himself (167).

The life that is determined to be constant—under pressure and in devotion—finds enrichment and peace. Yet constant devotion also encounters moral conflict, for there is no such thing as unchallenged stability. The choice is between what to love and what to hate in the battle for perseverance until the Lord acts. But it is obedience that is the hallmark of love and it is by obedience we please the Lord (168).

#### 1) THE CONSTANT HEART—vs. 161–163.

- a) what it fears, what it treasures, what it loves
- b) Who calls the **shots** in your life?
- c) For the psalmist it was not the rulers of this world.
- d) Even their persecution does not deter him. God's Word alone **directs** him as we learn in verse 161. "Princes persecute me without cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your words."
- e) The psalmist affirmed that though princes hated him without a cause he trembled in awe at God's Word (v.120).
- f) Princes are appointed to protect the innocent and avenge the oppressed, so it is great evil when they themselves become the assailants of the righteous.
- g) This man of God found himself attacked by the judges of the earth, for eminent position added weight and venom to their hostility.
- h) This sufferer could truthfully assert that their persecution was without cause.
- i) He had not broken their laws, he had not injured them, he had not even desired to see them injured, he had not been an advocate of rebellion or anarchy, nor had he openly nor secretly slandered them.
- j) and though his right behavior made their oppression inexcusable, it took away a part of its sting, and helped this servant of God to bear up.
- k) How could the writer stand up under such powerful pressure?
- l) He could stand up under such powerful pressure because his "**heart**" stood "in awe of God's Word."
- m) The word pachad translated awe in NASV can also mean "shiver," "tremble," or "be terrified."
- n) This awe is because of the **great** and **mighty** God who brought into being.

- o) He is also in awe of it because of the just demand that we will be measured against in day of judgment.
- p) There is a great treasure here that we should not lose.
- q) Since the psalmist is in awe of God, he is not in awe of anyone else.
- r) He might have been overcome by fear of the princes had it not been that a greater awe drove out the less, and he was swayed by awe of God's Word.
- s) This is our true freedom in this world.
- t) Luther puts it this way: "Let goods and kindred go. This mortal life also; The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still; His Kingdom is forever."
- u) May the word of God continually hold supreme power over our hearts also.
- v) The Word that awakens awe also brings the freedom to rejoice the psalmist confesses in verse 162. "I rejoice at Your Word, as one who finds great spoil."
- w) Awe of the Word elicits rejoicing in the Word.
- x) The verb [ptc] tense indicates constant or habitual rejoicing.
- y) The Psalmist rejoices because he found God's Word to be "great treasure" or, "much spoil." [The word shalal means "plundered goods" or "hidden treasure."]
- z) When he finds great treasure in the God's Word he experiences the joy of a warrior returning with booty from battle.
- aa) Yet the Word is a better kind of treasure for God's promise never loses their value.
- bb) The psalmist found great treasure could be taken away from God's Word.
- cc) Many times I have had a similar joy as I have heard the Lord speak to me in His Word.
- dd) A part of this joy is that in the Word of God we find eternal truth.
- ee) Do you rejoice at God's Word as one who has found great treasure?
- ff) Do I count myself blessed because I have it in my own language and hold it in my own hand?
- gg) **ILL--Scott and Mary Crickmore poured 15 years of their lives into helping to TRANSLATE THE NEW TESTAMENT in the Maasina dialect. It was for the Fulani tribe in the West African nation of Mali. After the initial draft, Mary visited nearby villages and read it to people. She sat in huts with a group of men or women listening to them discuss what they understood. That helped her to make sure the words they were using in the translation were accurate and clear. Some people would think that the Crickmores' sacrifice was too great giving up their comfortable lifestyle, changing their diet to mush and rice, and living in less-than-ideal circumstances for those 15 years. But the Crickmores say it was "a fair trade," because now the Fulani people have the Word of God in a language they can read. The Fulani people are now able to discover the "great treasure" of God's Word. Would you be willing to make a similar trade to get the word out? One measure of our love for God is our willingness to share His Word with others.**
- hh) The constant safeguards for the heart is love for the Lord's teaching with a corresponding hatred of deception.
- ii) Verse 163, "I hate and despise falsehood, but I love Your law."
- jj) The psalmist contrasts his hatred for falsehood with his love for God's directions.
- kk) The double expression "hate and despise" makes falsehood utterly detestable.
- ll) The word despise is intensive also.
- mm) He has found absolute truth and will no longer accommodate the deceptions of man.
- nn) This love comes because God is true and He is making us true.

## 2) THE CONSTANT LIFE—vs. 164–166.

- a) Such love for God's Word leads to constant **worship** as verse 164 indicates. "Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous ordinances."
- b) The psalmist reinforces his love for God's directions by praising God often throughout the day.
- c) This verse influenced the practice of **daily** prayer in Jewish and Christian traditions.
- d) Compare 119:62.
- e) Seven here is probably to be taken as the number of perfection [God created the world in seven days, and it was perfect].
- f) We can paraphrase this thought, "Perfectly or constantly I praise You."
- g) Why such an outpouring of devotion?
- h) His constant **praise** and thanksgiving to God is because of God's divine Word that dictates His righteous actions.
- i) Verse 165 indicates that those who **love** God's Word enjoy great **peace**. "Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble."
- j) An additional blessing that comes from loving God's Word is that it brings "great peace."
- k) Peace is s lôm, meaning "well-being, wholeness, security."
- l) Modern man longs for peace of mind.
- m) Here are clear-cut instructions on how it is attained.
- n) If we love God and His Word we will have "great **peace**," a transcendent peace that does not come from this world not is it dependent on our circumstances in this world, but on God.
- o) We must trust in a Sovereign God who alone stands above the pressures of daily life and gives us full assurance.
- p) God's great **peace** passed all human understanding (Phil. 4:7).
- q) The psalmist describes how those who follow God's directions experience stability.
- r) Stumble is a biblical expression for disaster.
- s) The idea is that the best constant against temptation is to love God's law.
- t) When God's Word is loved, sin must depart.
- u) As the old saying goes, "Sin will either keep you from God's Word, or God's Word will keep you from sin."
- v) Loving the Word of God and walking in obedience to it brings peace with God, peace within yourself and peace with others.
- w) As we come into a deep relationship with the Prince of peace so our peace grows.
- x) In His Word Jesus gave His Word to us. "These things have I said to you that in Me you may have peace" (Jn. 16:33).
- y) Do you have this salom peace?
- z) If not then you must not truly be abiding in the Word and the Word must not be abiding in you.
- aa) **ILL—Two men had been out deep-sea fishing when NIGHT BEGAN TO FALL. As they headed back toward land, the more experienced seaman got sleepy and turned the helm over to his friend. The veteran sailor pointed out the North Star and said, "Just keep the boat going in that direction." The man had not been at his task very long before he too fell asleep. When he awoke he was thoroughly confused. He shook his friend frantically and shouted, "Wake up -and show me another star! I've sailed clear past that first one!"**

- bb) Many people today are looking for something new to guide their lives because they've lost sight of God's standard.
- cc) They regard the Bible as a relic from the past. But God's laws are just as relevant and practical now as when He first gave them.
- dd) His standards are more constant than the North Star and as unchanging as the law of gravity.
- ee) They are not arbitrary rules like the traffic laws that tell us whether to drive on the right side of the road or the left.
- ff) To violate God's commands brings destruction to individuals and chaos to society.
- gg) But to observe His words brings this comforting result: "Great peace have those who love Your law."
- hh) God's Word is the **compass** that keeps you on course.
- ii) Those who develop through a **love** for God's Word demonstrates a sense of **hope** in God's "salvation which we find in verse 166. "I hope for Your salvation, O Lord, and do Your commandments."
- jj) The psalmist expresses his hope for God's "salvation" (or "deliverance").
- kk) Salvation is translated from yeshu'ah which can also mean "help" or "deliverance."
- ll) God's help is viewed as deliverance from real hazards and problems.
- mm) Since this is future, it may refer to the final salvation of heaven.
- nn) Those who follow God's directions experience hope for the future.
- oo) As he observes God's commandments or directions he finds the hope of God's "salvation," or deliverance, demonstrating that his trust is genuine.
- pp) David's hope was fixed upon God alone for salvation and then he endeavored most earnestly to fulfil His commands.
- qq) The verb I hope [sibbar,] is a less common word for "to hope" in Ps 119 [compare yichal; in 119:43, 116].
- rr) It is used here because it fits the starting letter pattern of the acrostic for Stanza 21.

### 3) **THE CONSTANT KEEPER—vs. 167–168.**

- a) The writer then said he observes God's testimonies out of **love** for them in verse 167. "My soul keeps Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly."
- b) The repetition of the term keeps [shamar"observe, guard"] at the beginning of verses 167 and 168 separates this pair of verses from the previous unit.]
- c) He observes God's testimonies by letting them **direct** his daily life.
- d) He first internalize God's precepts in his soul so that he might follow them with his thoughts and actions or his external behavior.
- e) The psalmist **loves** God's directions.
- f) The more we fill our minds with heavenly truth, the more deeply we will be in love with it.
- g) The more we see the great riches of the Bible the more our love will grow for it.
- h) With repetition for emphasis in verse 168, the writer wants to please God by of **keeping** or **obeying** His precepts. "I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, For all my ways are before You."
- i) But what is the motive for such obedience?
- j) He concludes, "For all my ways are before You."
- k) In other words, God sees him and knows his walk, the way in which he goes.
- l) The Psalmist has a deep sense of being known by God.
- m) "All my ways"[ derekh] meaning his way [walk] of life or conduct.

- n) The idea of total transparency before God has a sense of accountability, but also a sense of God's guidance (119:1).
- o) God's total insight seems to prompt a sense of trust and accountability, which likely explains why he is not intimidated by the "princes" in v. 161.

#### IN CLOSING,

What would you think of a person who possessed a priceless treasure but treated it as something of little value? Well, that's the way many people treat their Bible. They don't study it, meditate on it, or even spend a few minutes a day to hear what the Lord has to say to them. It is evident that the Psalmist loved God's Word and treasured it highly. He stood in awe of the Word of God.

That should be true of us. It certainly was the case with Job. He said in Job 23:12, "I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."

Treasuring or loving God's Word develops a stabilized life. The psalmist delighted in God's Word. He stood in awe of it, rejoiced over it, loved it, and obeyed it (Ps. 119:161-168). He found great peace and hope in the Word. It was like great treasure or booty to him (v. 162). Could you share a treasure that God has given you from His treasure chest today?