

- ***READ Psalm 119:1-8*** For 1,000 Bible trivia points...what is the longest chapter/division in the entire Bible, Old or New Testament? If you have said Psalm 119 then you would be correct! Psalm 119 with all of its 176 verses is indeed the longest chapter or division in the entire Bible, but...what else do we know about Psalm 119?
- A quick skimming through the text will obviously leave us with some puzzled looks on our faces because Psalm 119 is quite different from other chapters or Psalms in the Bible. Firstly, the Psalm is divided into 22 stanzas containing each verses each. Then if your Bible is like mine then you will see that each of the 22 stanza starts off with a funny shape followed by a word that more than likely isn't familiar to you at all. Those little shapes are actually Hebrew and those words are the english pronunciations of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm 119 is actually an acrostic poem meaning that each verse within the differing stanzas being with the same Hebrew alphabet letter. Of course for us this is seen with our Bibles being translated into English, but it was possibly written this way so that it would be easier to memorize by the Jew reading this Psalm.
- We would probably assume that such a long Psalm would cover a wide range of different subject and convey many different thoughts, but interestingly enough, this Psalm really focuses on one particular thing, and that thing is God's Word...what we refer to as the Bible. In fact, I would say that this Psalm could be referred to as the Bible Psalm because it is a celebration of God's mind being given to us. It is a Psalm that expresses the writer's and hopefully the reader's desire to be fully invested into these words that God has given to us through inspired men.
- In order to keep things fresh and exciting, the unknown author of this Psalm substitutes eight different synonyms all referring to what we know as the Bible. These eight words are used 175 times in these 176 verses, and only six verses in the entire Psalm do not contain one of these six words. Throughout this Psalm, the author continually brings attention to the goodness of God and His will given to mankind, and he expresses and encourages the reader to grown in our appreciation for this great blessing of what God has given us. What we will do this evening is take some time to look at these eight words that are all found in the first nine verses of Psalm 119 and focus on unique aspects of each of them so the we can come to view and understand the Bible in a more appreciative and precise manner. Again, these are synonyms, but I have tried to really focus in on what makes each of these words unique and why the author thought it best to use these words 20+ times each throughout this great Psalm.

8 Synonyms To Help Us Understand The Bible

I. **Law:** God's vast reaching will for man. (v.1)

- A. Of course, the Jew would read this word, "torah" and have his or her mind go to the Law of Moses, but for us this is referring to something much grander in nature. This word should bring to our mind God's vast reaching will for all of mankind, and He is certainly the one who as the ability and right to establish such law because He is the one who possess all authority.
- B. As God, as the Creator of the universe who continues to allow this world to operate as it does, He has the right to give us such a book of writings that expresses His sovereign will for us, His greatest creation. Not just anyone has the right to hand down such Law that every man is responsible to adhere to. God alone has that power and authority, and what we hold in our hands is that Law and will for us.

II. **Testimonies:** The evidence of God and our purpose. (v.2)

- A. What we hold in our hands isn't just a law book like we might be able to find at our local courthouse, but it is a book of history and fact of what has happened throughout the age. In fact, the very beginning of this book details history, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" (**Genesis 1:1**)

- B. This book reveals to us details concerning the God who created us, His character, His power, and, again, His will for us. In fact, this book of testimony was recorded as it was and it contains ways to authenticate its claims so that the reader can read, understand, and believe what is said. This book was given for our benefit so that we might come to know God and what he would have for us to do in this life through the stories, narratives, and testimonies recorded herein.

III. His Ways: The road which leads to God. (v.3)

- A. When we come to read this book, what we quickly discover is that God didn't just create this world and then leave it be so that we could go on our merry way without any purpose...but it gives us the purpose of living for God, and it gives us the way in which we can do such a thing.
- B. Contrary to popular believe, not all roads lead to God and heaven. In fact, in **Matthew 7:13,14**, we read, *"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."* Thankfully, this book goes on to tell us that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and we can come to the Father through Him and Him alone. (**John 14:6**) This book is law, it is testimony of God, and it is the only way in which we can get to God.

IV. Precepts: God's description of man's faith. (v.4)

- A. This word translated precepts gives the idea of something that has been entrusted to someone else. So what is there that God seeks to instill within man that can be found within this book? It must be our faith. This book is a book that teaches us what faith is, and that is needed because man is obviously not capable of coming to a consensus concerning what faith is.
- B. So this book teaches us what the faith is that Paul proudly declared that he had kept throughout his life as a disciple of Jesus that he was confident would bring him the crown of righteousness when he stood before God in judgment. (**II Timothy 4:6-8**) It is the same faith that was entrusted to Timothy that Paul exhorted him to guard at all cost. (**I Timothy 6:20,21**) This book is the book that can lead man to possess the same faith that was found in these two men.

V. Statutes: That which is to be written on man's heart. (vv.5,8)

- A. That faith is to be a faith that doesn't just go skin deep, but it is to be something that is written on our very hearts and that is the idea that is given when the author refers to this book as God's statutes. The words from which statutes is derived gives the idea of something that is engraved or definitely and clear drawn onto something.
- B. So what statutes are to be engraved into our hearts? This book shows us that the covenant of Christ is to be put upon our hearts and is to be written on our minds. *"And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them."* (**Hebrews 10:15,16**) This book and the covenant with which is contains is to touch us to our very hearts and minds...it is not to just be something that is known, but it is to touch and change us.

VI. Commandments: God's orders for His people. (v.6)

- A. While many might not like to think of the Bible as such, we cannot ignore the fact that this book contains many commands from God that He expects for His people to know and obey. This book contains God's orders for His army of faithful men to follow in this life.
- B. We know from this book that our love for God is shown by our willingness to follow His commandments that He has put forth for us. *"If you love Me, you will keep my commandments."* is what Jesus said in **John 14:15**. We would not know God's commandments had He not given us this book that contains His commands and will for us. We ought to be so thankful that He has blessed us with such a thing because it is surely for our benefit so that we can be pleasing to God.

VII.Judgments: The standard by which we are held accountable. (v.7)

- A. We shouldn't be thankful simply because we can know God's commandments. It isn't just about knowing commandments, but we ought to be thankful that we are made to know of the way that God will judge us because this book contains the judgments of God. It contains the standard by which our lives will be judged in the last day.
- B. Think for just a second about what it would feel like to not know what it is that God expects from man concerning whether or not he will be pleased with us. That would be a scary way to live never knowing whether or not we were doing that which was right and pleasing. But thankfully, God's love is shown towards us through this book that sets the standard for us so that we can know exactly what God would have us to do if we want to please and glorify Him in this life.

VIII.His Word: That which is of God, not man. (v.9)

- A. Then finally, in **v.9** we see the author referring to this book a His Word, meaning God's Word. This means that while these words might have been written by the hand of man, we must recognize that these words are written by the hand of men but they are produced by the mind of God.
(II Timothy 3:16,17 & II Peter 1:20,21)
- B. This book isn't just like any other book. It isn't on par with the highest of man's knowledge and wisdom. It is far superior to what might be produced by the mind of men. With this being the case, we should feel obligated to be committed to loving this book and having it as a center piece in our lives. This Book of God is special and it should be special to us.

This book that we hold in our hands isn't just some other book. It isn't just an ordinary book. It is something that has the power to transform us by being all of the things that we have discussed this evening. Some books might contain law. Some might contain commands and judgements. Some books might contain one, or two, or a few of these things, but no other book can compare to what is true about this book because no other book can claim all eight of these things. May God help us to always be mindful of the precious nature of this book, and may we hold it always in the highest esteem. ***PRAYER***