

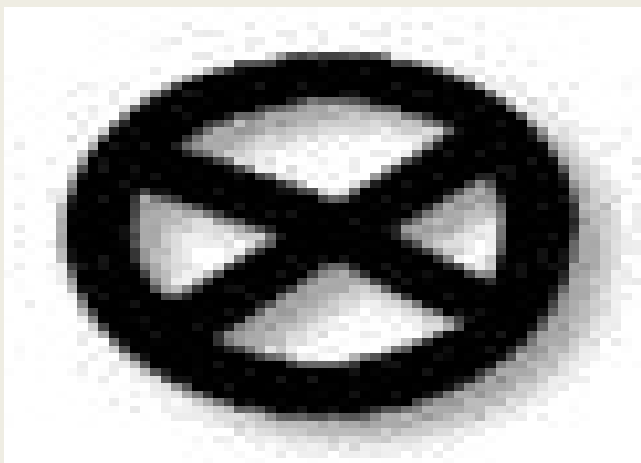


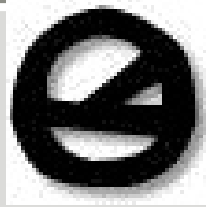

TETH

Psalm 119:65-72

TETH

Psalm 119:65-72



Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
THET				

Pictograph:

Meanings:

Sound:

Basket

Basket, Contain, Mud

T, Th

*The goodness of God drives us to His Word
through affliction.*

65 You have dealt well with Your servant, O LORD, according to Your word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge, For I believe Your commandments.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.

68 You are good, and do good; Teach me Your statutes.

69 The proud have forged a lie against me, But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.

70 Their heart is as fat as grease, But I delight in Your law.

71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.

72 The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

Summary:

The psalmist acknowledges that the LORD has blessed him according to His Word, so prays for knowledge and understanding of the Word that he believes in and obeys, even though arrogant people beset him, concluding that the affliction he endured forced him to learn more of God's ways (Psa 119:65–72).

Before God in His goodness had afflicted him, he had gone astray (Psa 119:67-68). He now concludes that it was good to be afflicted because it drove him to the Word of God (Psa 119:71). The goodness of God is mentioned five times in these eight lines. It is translated *well* in verse 65; *good* in verses 66, 68, and 71; and *better* in verse 72.

I. God is good to His servants, just as His Word says He will be

Psa 119:65 You have dealt well with Your servant, O LORD, according to Your word.

The point of this verse is that the believer's obedience brings blessing. When he says, "you have dealt well," it is an acknowledgment of the faithfulness of the LORD.

Good is the first word of 119:65, 66, 68, 71, 72.

The word *well*, literally “good,” includes everything that is beneficial for life, pleasing to life, and harmonious with life. It may mean good in the sense of God’s management of life events that make them beneficial to us. (cf., Romans 8:28).

God’s servants will experience the LORD’s provisions for life that demonstrate He is good. He is good because what He creates and what He gives is all good.

God is good

All the time

All the time

God is good

What do you mean by “good”?

Good טוב TOV

The word “good,” טוב, and all its related forms occur over 700 times in the Old Testament and has a wide range of meanings.

It can mean “pleasant, agreeable, satisfying, favorable, useful, right, pretty, handsome, fragrant, joyous, healthy, worthy” and a number of other possible translations.

It is often found as a comparative or a superlative:

“better,” or “best.” Sometimes it is translated “goodness” as in Ps 23:6

Good טוב TOV

- I. The word essentially describes anything that is beneficial for life—anything that produces, promotes, enhances, or adorns life.
 - A. It is the opposite of “evil,” which describes that which brings pain and destruction to life (Ps 34:14).
 - B. “Good” refers to practical or economic benefit.

1. Good fruit (Gen 2:9) and the grain of Pharaoh's dream (Gen 41:5, 36) were good for eating.
2. The "good" of Joseph's enslavement (Gen 50:20) included such practical benefits as food and national survival.
3. Hospitality and friendship (Gen 26:29);
4. Beneficial counsel (2 Sam 17:7, 14);
5. General economic prosperity (I Kgs 10:7);
6. Agricultural prosperity (Hos 10:1).

C. This includes things that are beneficial or appropriate for the situation, such as the king's graceful speech (Ps. 45:2) or good news (Prov. 25:25).

II. A second category uses the word to describe the **quality** of something or someone, such as a good man, a good land, or a good tree, meaning one that produces fruit and not just shade (2 Kings 3:19, 25).

A. This quality will often describe people as happy or good, and then also ethical, righteous or moral (1 Sam. 15:28).

B. It can describe appearance, such as a healthy child (Moses, Exod. 2:2), or a beautiful person (see in Song of Solomon).

C. The word can involve a decision or opinion. For example, a word (Jethro's advice) is good if it is beneficial (Exod. 18:17).

D. Sometimes the writer will make a fine distinction, that one thing is better than another (Prov. 21:9, 19; 25:24).

E. The word is also used for morality, such as "the way of the good" (Prov. 2:9), which means the right way to live.

1. The command, “Depart from evil and do good” (Ps 34:14) clearly contrasts “good” with moral evil. The “good way” which God will teach His stiff-necked people refers to moral life (I Kgs 8:36).

2. In fact, seeking “good” and seeking “God” express almost the same thing. Amos 5:14: Seek good and not evil, that you may live;

3. A person can be called good in the sense of being righteousness (Ps. 125:4).

III. Good describes God. The liturgical formula calls for people to praise the LORD, because

- A. He is good, because his loyal love endures forever (see Ps. 118:1),
- B. He is a stronghold in the day of trouble (Nah. 1:7);
- C. He can turn evil into good (Gen. 50:20).
- D. God is intrinsically good or He would not do good things.

1. Everything that God created was very good (Gen. 1:31).
2. He also gives good gifts to his people (Ps. 145:15, 16). For example, He gave the Law to Israel (Deut. 6:24); He gave them the good land (Deut. 9:4, 5); He gave them good words, i.e., promises (Jer 29:10);
3. James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

*Psa 107:1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever.*

*Psa 107:8 “O that men would praise the LORD for his
goodness and for his wonderful works to the children
of men!”*

Note: Psa 107:15, 21, 31

Psa 119:65: You have dealt well with Your servant, O LORD, according to Your word.

Or, “You have done good.” The word “well” here is a noun, not an adjective, not an adverb. So it is talking about what God has done and not how He has done it. It isn’t saying that God did a good job, but rather, that God brought good into his life.

according to Your word means according to the *teaching* of the Word. God always acts in accordance with His Word. This grace was directed to God's servants, just as the LORD's Word had promised (Deut. 30:15–16).

What he had received from God was exactly as the Word of God had taught him to anticipate. The Word of God never creates false expectations. We should always measure our expectations by God's Word. Is what I expect biblical? Is it truly something the Bible says I can expect?

In order to orient to life, to understand what is going on around us, we must look at the world and our circumstances through the lens of Scripture.

Both goodness and affliction are mentioned repeatedly in these lines. These two ideas have a definite connection with one another. Affliction is truly a blessing of God because it drives us to the Word of God, and nothing is better than this.

The psalmist reviews his life and sees the good hand of God in everything he has experienced. This is the perspective of maturity. Ability to see the hand of God in every event in one's life is the consistent viewpoint of the mature Christian.

II. God's people desire to understand more of His Word because He is the source of all good things (Psa 119:66–68).

A. They pray for knowledge and understanding of the Word which they believe (66)

Psa 119:66: Teach me good judgment and knowledge, For I believe Your commandments.

Teach me לָמַדְתִּי (lamad) to teach.

As one of the twelve words for teaching in the Old Testament, *lamad* has the idea of training as well as educating. It is not merely transmission of knowledge, but teach me what to do and how to do it.

The principle use of this verb is illustrated in Ps 119. Here we have the repeated the refrain, “Teach me your statutes” or “your judgments” (vv. 12, 26, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171).

Good is the first word in this verse in the Hebrew text. The psalmist's prayer is for God to teach him "good judgment and knowledge."

Judgment טַעַם (ta'am) taste.

The word judgment may be translated *taste*. It is used in Exodus 16:31 of the manna provided by God; its "taste was like wafers with honey." Here it is used in the sense of discernment, sense, judgment, meaning that when he has been taught then his preferences and decisions will be appropriate to a godly life.

knowledge דַּעַת (da'at) knowledge, discernment. It does not simply refer to intellectual knowledge, but the experience of that knowledge.

This is a practical prayer for spiritual growth and not just information. People who know the LORD and His way are people who have put their faith in Him and experienced His grace.

Knowledge belongs to God, and He teaches discernment to those who want it (Ps 94:10). See also Jas 1:5.

Ecc 2:26: For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight.

The petition is explained by his affirmation of faith:
“for I believe in your commandments.”

This kind of faith includes a commitment to live according to the revealed word of the LORD that is believed.

Psa 101:6 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land,
That they may dwell with me; He who walks in a
perfect way, He shall serve me.

*B. They testify that even though they once wandered
they now keep God's word (67)*

*Psa 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, But
now I keep Your word.*

The psalmist's personal experience is related in verse 67—an experience shared by many believers.

The opening line conveys a “before-after” contrast.

Before God brought affliction his way, he went astray.

“Before I was afflicted” clarifies his present situation: He is being afflicted by the hostility of enemies. Prior to this affliction, he had wandered.

Afflicted עָנָה (‘ānâ) afflict, oppress. The primary meaning is “to force,” or “to try to force submission,” and “to punish or inflict pain upon.” It is used for what one does to his enemy. So he is being afflicted by his enemies. But before that, he went astray.

I went astray שָׁגַג (shagag) *go astray, err.*

The verb here includes rationalized, deliberate sins because he was wandering from the way of God. He was not walking by faith in obedience to the Word, and so he suffered some affliction at the hands of the wicked.

But now I keep Your word.

Keep (found 22 times in this psalm) means to guard, to watch over, and therefore the careful observance of all that God required in His Word.

The affliction had good results because it brought the psalmist to obedience.

C. Because the LORD is the source of all good things, they ask for direction (68)

Psa 119:68 You are good, and do good; Teach me Your statutes.

The psalmist's desire to learn the statutes of God is based on the realized truth that God is good and does good things. To live according to the Word of God is to experience the goodness of God; but when wandering from God there is no such realization of goodness.

He therefore repeats, "teach me." This teaching could come through the ministry of priests who were to teach the laws of God (Deut. 33:10); but it could also include the LORD's impressing the reality and significance of His Word on the heart of the psalmist in times of meditation.

III. God's people delight in doing God's word even though arrogant unbelievers lie about them (69–70)

The next two verses provide information about both his affliction and the goodness of God.

The focus turns to the arrogant, godless people around him who have created a lie against him. Their attempt to smear him with fabricated lies is set in stark contrast to God's goodness.

The Nature of the Affliction 119:69

The proud have forged a lie against me, But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.

Proud זָדִי (zed) proud, arrogant. This word is used frequently to depict people who oppose those who try to do the will of God (Ps 19:14; Ps 119:51, 69, 78, 122; Jer 43:2).

Forged טָפַל (ṭāpal) smear or plaster over.

A lie has been *forged*. The verb is colorful and paints a graphic picture. It means *to glue, to plaster over, to smear*. A “smear campaign” had been lodged against the psalmist.

However, the psalmist did not try to correct, utter complaint against, or rebuke the liars. In the midst of it all, he reaffirmed his loyalty to the Word of God.

When sinned against, the believer needs to reaffirm his loyalty to God’s Word; he does not need to attack the one who sinned against him.

The personal pronoun *I* found in verses 69 and 70 is emphatic. The psalmist draws a strong contrast between the wrong done to him and his reaction to it. They are lying about me, but *I* concentrate on obeying God's Word; they have joy in material things, but *I* delight in God's Word.

But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.

Keep נָצַר (natsar) watch, guard, keep (found 10 times in this psalm). To escape this danger and enjoy God's goodness, the psalmist will keep or treasure God's precepts wholeheartedly—no doubting, no wavering, no divided loyalties.

Psa 119:70 Their heart is as fat as grease, *But* I delight in Your law.

Fat טַפַּשׁ (*tapash*) be gross. be unfeeling, calloused, i.e., lose all sense of shame -- implying unresponsiveness to God's Word.

The word also means to be insensitive and stupid.

Fat heart is a figure of insensibility and hardness. Ps 17:10

The heart of the arrogant, in contrast with his heart which is loyal to God, is as unfeeling as fat. They have no sensitivity to the things of God, no inclination to keep His precepts, and no concern for those who do.

This verb (טַפַּשׁ) occurs only here in the Hebrew; but its cognate in the Aramaic Targum of Isaiah 6:10, “make fat,” clearly signifies unbelief and indifference to God’s message. They are the arrogant unbelievers. His delight, his belief and enjoyment, are in God’s instructions.

But I delight in Your law. שְׂעֵעַ (sha'a') take delight in. *I delight* means to take great pleasure in something, to delight oneself in something, to enjoy (See also Psa 119:16, “I will delight myself in your statutes”).

We should delight ourselves with God’s revealed truth.

IV. God's people acknowledge that affliction forces them to learn more of God's revealed ways (71–72)

The psalmist acknowledges that his affliction worked for his good because it forced him to learn more of God's plan revealed in His Word.

In learning through adversity, he discovered that the Word which God personally revealed in human language was far more valuable than silver or gold.

These last two verses begin with the words *Good for me*. Affliction has driven him to the Word of God! This is blessing of the highest order; this is ultimate good—worth more than any material possession one could own!

Psa 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.

The word *good* describes what God does for those who are in a close relationship to Him. The word pervades the book of Deuteronomy and is usually in a context that says, “Be careful to obey the Word ‘that it may go well with you.’”

See Deuteronomy 4:40; 5:16, 29; 6:3, 18; 12:25, 28; 22:7.

That I may learn Your statutes.

For some, adversity drives them to seek God; for others adversity drives them away from God as they become angry with God or seek to solve their problem in their own way – which usually compounds the problem as well as their misery

*Psa 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better to me
Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.*

This verse also begins with the words, “Good for me.”

The law of Your mouth – God has spoken to us in human language. This expression also gives us the ultimate source of Scripture. (Cf., Matt 4:4)

The psalmist often expresses his love for the Word of God by means of comparison to other things:

- He loves the Word more than riches (119:14).
- He loves the Word more than the sweetness of honey (119:103).
- He loves the Word more than an earthly inheritance (119:57, 111).
- He loves the Word more than gold (119:127).
- He loves the Word more than great treasure (119:162).
- Than thousands of *coins* of gold and silver.

The Teth file focuses on the goodness of God—He is good, He does good things for His people, and even the afflictions we endure are for our good.

When we study God's Word and pray to understand His ways, we realize that His Word is good—better than riches.

Because the LORD does good things for His people in accordance with His Word, even through affliction, the faithful believer prays for more knowledge and understanding of His revealed ways.