

TSADHE





Psalm 119:137-144



The Nature of the Word Demands Reverence

TSADHE
(Psalm 119:137–144)



Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
TSADE				

Pictograph:

Man lying on his side, Trail?

Meanings:

Side, hunt, sack

Sound:

Ts

137 Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are Your judgments.

138 Your testimonies, which You have commanded, Are righteous and very faithful.

139 My zeal has consumed me, Because my enemies have forgotten Your words.

140 Your word is very pure; Therefore Your servant loves it.

141 I am small and despised, Yet I do not forget Your precepts.

142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, Yet Your commandments are my delights.

144 The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; Give me understanding, and I shall live.

The Nature of the Word Demands Reverence

The psalmist announces that because the Lord is righteous, the law is everlastingly righteous, and this is a comfort in time of affliction (Psalm 119:137–144).

Notice how the Word is described in this file:

- upright (Psa 119:37)
- righteous and faithful (Psa 119:38)
- pure (Psa 119:140)
- true (Psa 119:142).

Reverence for the Word is displayed

- by zeal (Psa 119:139)
- by love for it (Psa 119:140)
- by delight in it (Psa 119:143)

- Antagonism is seen in those who ignore it (Psa 119:139).

Outline

I. Because the LORD is righteous His law is righteous (137–138).

II. The psalmist has zeal for the Word, which is pure (139–142).

III. In time of affliction he finds comfort in the righteous law (143–144).

I. God's word is righteous because God is righteous (Psalm 119:137–138)

Psalm 119:137 Righteous *are* You, O LORD, And upright *are* Your judgments.

Here is focus on the righteousness of God: the righteousness and reliability of God's Word inspire love and reverence in those who are faithful.

Righteous *are* You, O LORD צַדִּיק (tsaddiq) *just, righteous.*

“Righteous” essentially has the meaning of corresponding to the standard, which is the Law of God. Righteousness is the fundamental attribute of the Author of the law, and this determines the character of the law in all its aspects.

“The Lord is righteous (*ṣaddîq*) in all his ways and holy in all his works” (Ps 145:17).

The rightness of the Word is derived from the righteousness of the One who gave it. The character of God determines the character of His Word.

Therefore, trust in the reliability of God's Word is in direct proportion to one's trust in the LORD Himself.

If we believe His Word, we are saying, "God is righteous and true." If we do not believe His Word, we are saying, "God is a liar."

Our opinion of God's revelation is identical to our opinion of God.

And upright *are* Your judgments. יָשָׁר (yatsar)
Upright.

This statement, “and upright *are* your decisions” is the natural result in the revelation of the One who is righteous.

The basic meaning of “righteous” has to do with conforming to the standard; that standard is divine perfection.

Upright is used to emphasize an attribute of God, describing His reign over His people:

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. (Deut 32:4)

Upright is used to emphasize an attribute of God,
describing His ways:

Who is wise? Let him understand these things. Who
is prudent? Let him know them. For the ways of the
Lord are **right**; The righteous walk in them, But
transgressors stumble in them. (Hos 14:10)

Upright is used to emphasize an attribute of God,
describing His words:

... All His precepts *are* sure. They stand fast
forever and ever, And are done in truth and
uprightness. (Ps 111:7-8)

Upright is used to emphasize an attribute of God,
describing His judgments:

Righteous *are* You, O LORD, And upright *are* Your
judgments. (Psa 119:137)

Psalm 119:138 Your testimonies, *which* You have commanded, *Are* righteous and very faithful.

Testimonies – what God has declared. God has commanded the Law.

commanded צִוָּה (tsawah) *command, charge*

What gives God the right to command?

God has the right to command His creatures because He is Creator. God “commanded” the world into existence (Ps 33:9; Isa 45:12).

Psalm 33:9 “For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

God created by command, and He has the right to rule His creation by command.

God ensures the truth of His Word by commanding it; He commanded the covenant (Ps 105:8; 111:9) and will command blessing to those faithful to the covenant (Deut 28:8; Ps 133:3).

Psa 119:138 Your testimonies, *which* You have commanded, *Are* righteous and very faithful.

The words “righteous” and “faithful” are here taken adverbially, “in righteousness” and “in faithfulness,” indicating the manner and purpose of the law that God established.

God’s commandments are the expression of His absolute righteousness and His faithfulness to His covenant. The Word of the LORD is always right and completely dependable.

very faithful.

The words *very faithful* are literally *they are fully trustworthy*. The basic meaning of *faithful* is *to be steady*.

Deuteronomy 32:4 lists it as one of the attributes of God.

It is also used to describe those who have been stabilized by the Word of God. God is steady; His Word is steady, and we are steady when we learn to depend upon it.

II. The psalmist has zeal for the Word, which is pure (139–142) even though the world has forgotten it.

Psalm 119:139 My zeal has consumed me,
Because my enemies have forgotten Your words.

zeal קִנְיָהּ (qin'ah) ardor, zeal, envy, jealousy.

Zeal means an intense desire to have something or do something. It can be used in either a positive or negative sense. This verb can be translated as “to envy, be jealous,” or “to be zealous.”

In the positive sense to be zealous is to safeguard something, and in the negative sense to burn with desire for something.

The word is used here to denote a zeal focused on God that results in doing His will and maintaining His honor in the face of the ungodly acts of men.

has consumed me צָמַת (tsamat) put an end to, cut off, destroy, consume.

The verb *consumed* is literally *to put an end to*. The psalmist's zeal is so intense that it has exhausted him. We might say “drained me” or “worn me out.”

The psalmist is consumed with this passion: it has almost destroyed him; but he could not stand idly by while the Word of God was being denigrated.

His zeal for the Word of God has roused the opposition of those who are irritated by it. They have forgotten God's words.

The reliability of the Word of the LORD is not simply something he had heard or had been taught—it has been proven by him.

He had been in situations where he was forced to rely on the promises of the LORD, and he discovered that the Lord keeps His Word.

Because my enemies have forgotten Your words.

It is zeal to defend God's Word because the enemies have forgotten it, meaning they have not paid attention to its revelation or regulations.

“Forgotten” means that they do not have regard for it, they do not obey it.

Psalm 119:140 Your word *is* very pure; Therefore Your servant loves it.

He could state therefore that God's Word is "very pure." By his application of the Word, he has proven it to be pure, like silver that has been refined (see Ps. 12:6).

The word *pure* means *to be thoroughly refined*. It was used of smelting metals to obtain the genuine product. Silver is refined to remove all that which is not silver. The metaphor points to authenticity—the Word of God is the Word of God—nothing less!

Because it is perfect, he loves it. Love for the Word of God is seen in Ps 119:47, 97, 119, 159.

Psalm 119:141 I *am* small and despised, Yet I do not forget
Your precepts.

Why does the psalmist call attention to his insignificance? He does so because it expresses the way the world feels toward those who embrace God's Word.

In the opinion of the world, he is considered insignificant and treated as worthless. He is viewed in this way because of his zeal and love for the Word of the Lord, which the wicked treat as worthless; but he remains faithful.

To be thought insignificant by your peers would create a temptation to lessen your devotion to the Word in order to enhance your reputation or to avoid ridicule.

He has not done this. Don't you do this!

Yet I do not forget Your precepts.

Even though he is insignificant, yet he remains faithful to God's Word. He seeks no applause for his zeal and no revenge for the attacks by his enemies.

He wants the Word of God to be vindicated. He will never forget God's precepts because he knows that God's righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and that God's law is true.

God does not change; and His Word does not change—it is truth.

Psalm 119:142 Your righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, And Your law *is* truth.

Once again, we are reminded that the truthfulness of God's Word is rooted in the truthfulness of God Himself. To understand who God is, is to understand what His Word is.

God's righteousness is an everlasting righteousness – eternal, unchanging.

III. In time of affliction, he finds comfort in the righteous law (vs. 143–144).

Psalm 119:143 Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, *Yet* Your commandments *are* my delights.

Trouble and anguish have overtaken me.

Embracing the Word of God has brought the psalmist trouble and anguish. Adherence to the Word is not an *exemption* from affliction; it is a *guarantee* of affliction.

He does not state what the difficulty is, but the cause of his problem is “trouble” and the result is “anguish.”

Yet Your commandments are my delights.

The word *commandments* indicates a specific kind of speech—a superior giving commands to subordinate.

It is used in general for the commandments that God gives in the law (Deut. 4:40; 6:2, 6).

God's commands are not limited to the law code in the Old Testament:

He also commanded creation (Ps. 33:9), redemption (Ps. 68:28), and blessing (Ps. 133:3).

Many people don't like the fact that God has given commandments. They want to be free to do as they wish without any consequences.

It is actually a wonderful thing to have His commandments, because now we know what He wants and expects of us.

How horrible it would be if we knew that God existed and that it was necessary for us to please Him, but we didn't have any idea as to how to do it.

Therefore, His commandments are a delight to us. They are the object of pleasure and joy.

Psalm 119:144 The righteousness of Your testimonies *is* everlasting; Give me understanding, and I shall live.

The Word of God is of little value to those whose viewpoint is only earthly and temporal. Knowledge of the Word of God has eternal repercussions. It enables the believer to honor God on earth and prepares us to honor God with worship forever.

When he meditated on God's Word he knew that he was living in harmony with God's righteousness and truth; he knew also that the promises of God revealed in it would be fulfilled eternally because God's righteousness is eternal.

The testimonies of the LORD were not simply right for his time; they are righteous forever.

The psalmist concludes with the prayer for God to give him understanding in order that he might live. He desires a fuller understanding of divine revelation, because through it he will truly live—fulfill the purpose for his existence.

This file stresses the integrity and reliability of the Word of the LORD: it is eternally righteous because the LORD is righteous; it is true and faithful because the LORD is true and faithful. Because God is righteous, His Word is everlastingly righteous and a comfort in times of anguish.

For the psalmist anguish comes from people who ignore and violate the word of the Lord; when he is zealous for the Word, his adversaries oppose him and cause him grief.

Nevertheless, it is the Word that brings him comfort and joy, and so he will not abandon it. Jesus declared that the word of the LORD is truth and the means of salvation and sanctification (John 17:17; see also 2 Cor. 6:7 and 1 Pet. 1:23).

If believers build their lives on the Word, they often find that people around them are uncomfortable with it.

If you are zealous to defend and proclaim the Word, you will find strong opposition. But you must do as this psalmist did, prove it to be true by relying on it, so that in times of opposition the Word will increase your joy and comfort.