

QOPH

Psalm 119:145-152





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*Under Intense Pressure We Must Turn to
the Word and Prayer*

Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
QOPH				

Pictograph:

Fiber on a spindle

Meanings:

Spun fiber

Sound:

Q, K

Psalm 119

145 I cry out with my whole heart; Hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes.

146 I cry out to You; Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.

147 I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word.

148 My eyes are awake through the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.

149 Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness;
O LORD, revive me according to Your justice.

150 They draw near who follow after wickedness;
They are far from Your law.

151 You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments
are truth.

152 Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old
that You have founded them forever.

Summary:

When threatened by those who are far from God, the faithful may pray with confidence for deliverance because the LORD is near them, and His promises are sure.

In this stanza we read the psalmist's prayer to remain faithful in the midst of faithless people.

He is facing adversity, but he has victory over his circumstances by means of his fervent prayer and his awareness of the closeness of God.

Each verse in this file begins with the letter qoph and it also repeats words in pairs:

verses 145 and 146 begin with “I cry out”.

145 I cry out with my whole heart; Hear me, O Lord! I will keep Your statutes.

146 I cry out to You; Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.

Verses 147 and 148 both begin with the verb “to act beforehand” or “early”

147 I **rise before** the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word.

148 My eyes are **awake** through the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word.

Verses 150 and 151 begin with the words “draw near” and “near”

150 They **draw near** who follow after wickedness;
They are far from Your law.

151 You are **near**, O LORD, And all Your
commandments are truth.

Verse 152 begins with “before, long before,” related to the verb used in verses 147 and 148.

152 Concerning Your testimonies, I have known **of old** that You have founded them forever.

All of these strengthen the meaning of the meditation: he prays to the LORD who is near, and he prays early and often, because his enemies are drawing near.

Outline

- I. He cries for God's help and deliverance because he meditates on the Word (145–149).
- II. His enemies, who are far from the law, pursue him to do battle with him (150).
- III. He testifies that commandments of the LORD are eternally true (151–152).

THE DUAL RESOURCE: PRAYER AND THE WORD 119:145-149

When adversaries come after him, the psalmist prays for deliverance because he trusts in the Word of the LORD who is near (119:145–152).

Focus on Prayer 119:145a

The first part of this file focuses on his fervent praying. He begins by declaring that he called on the Lord with a whole heart, that is, earnestly and fervently.

His prayer was that the Lord would answer him and deliver him from the adversaries who were following after him with an evil intent (v. 150).

Psalm 119:145. I cry out with *my* whole heart; Hear me, O LORD! I will keep Your statutes.

I cry out קָרָא (qara') This word has to do with calling on the name of God. Usually, the context reveals a critical need (Psa 34:6; Psa 81:7).

God responds to all who call on Him in accordance with the Word of God:

Psa 145:18 The LORD *is* near to **all** who call upon Him, To **all** who call upon Him in truth.

Both the covenant people Israel and the foreigner gentiles are admonished to call upon the Lord (I Kgs 8:43; Isa 55:6-7).

Isa 55:6-7 Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked
forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his
thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will
have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will
abundantly pardon.

I cry out with *my* whole heart

Heart is the broadest term in the Bible for the totality of man's inner nature.

Heart may refer to the *emotions*, as in I Samuel 2:1.

Heart may refer to the *mind*, as in Genesis 6:5.

Heart may refer to the *will*, as in 2 Chronicles 12:14.

Prayer involves the emotions, the mind, and the will. His intensity in prayer (*with my whole heart*) is matched by his intensity in obedience (Psa 119:34, 69).

Hear me, O LORD! עֲנֵה (‘anah)

The most frequent meaning of this root is “to answer,” and corresponds to *qārā*’ “to call”. I cry out, hear me!

The word *hear* means *to respond, to answer*. In the context of prayer, it means to respond favorably. The psalmist has made a petition, and to all appearances, it has not been answered. At least, he has not gotten the favorable response he desires, so he asks again.

God is not bound to answer the person who calls on him. So we often see “answer me” or “Hear me” in pleading for God’s grace (Ps 4:1; 13:3).

It occurs as part of the normal petitioning of God to be favorable in the petition section of lament psalms.

Samuel warns Israel that God will not answer their prayer for relief when distress comes upon them because they have been rebellious (1 Sam 8:18).

All the prophets record the silence of God (e.g., Mic 3:4).

Mic 3:4 Then they will cry to the LORD, but he will not answer them; he will hide his face from them at that time, because they have made their deeds evil.

When God does hear or answer, it is clear that “to answer” the prayer is equivalent to a grace response to the petition. The basis of such a petition is the righteousness, mercy, and veracity of God (Ps 69:13).

Psa 69:13 But as for me, my prayer *is* to You, O LORD, *in* the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.

Focus on the Word Psa 119:145b

I will keep Your statutes

This does not mean that the speaker is trying to make a deal with God. He is not saying, “If You grant my petition then I promise to obey Your Word.”

Rather, it is something that the one who keeps God’s Word may expect.

The answer to this prayer will mean that he will be able to continue to keep the statutes and testimonies.

It may be that the oppression he was facing hindered him from freely keeping the law, having to spend more time in with dealing with the wicked. Under any circumstance he is determined to keep God's statutes.

Psalm 119:146 I cry out to You; Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.

Focus on Prayer Psa 119:146a

The verse begins exactly as the previous verse: *I cry out.*

Save me, The verb *save* refers to either physical or spiritual salvation (sometimes both). He is asking for deliverance from a bad situation. How will God do that?

In Psa 119:126 he had told the Lord it was time for Him to act. Had the Lord acted? Or is the psalmist saying, “I called upon You to act, when are You going to do so?”

Focus on the Word Psa 119:146b

I will keep Your testimonies

His concern for the Word of God is used as part of his plea for deliverance. The salvation here is deliverance from the enemies of God who are causing him problems.

Just as in the previous verse, he declares that he will keep the Word.

The psalmist is asking for something that one who keeps God's Word may expect.

Psalm 18:6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, *even* to His ears.

Psalm 118:5 I called on the LORD in distress; The LORD answered me *and set me* in a broad place

Psalm 34:6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him*, And saved him out of all his troubles.

Focus on the Word 119:147-148

¹⁴⁷ I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word. ¹⁴⁸ My eyes are awake through the *night* watches, That I may meditate on Your word.

We cannot see it in our translations, but verses 147 and 148 both begin with the same word that means *to be in front of* or *anticipate*.

I hope in Your word.

I meditate on Your word.

Notice how the psalmist's hope is inseparably linked to God's Word. The hope was not of his own making; the hope was created by the Scriptures.

Psalm 119:147 I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word.

I rise קָדַם (qādam) “to precede someone or something either in time or geographically.”

The word *rise* literally means *to be in front of or to anticipate*. He anticipates the dawn – in other words, he is up before the sun comes up. Why? Because he needs the Lord’s help. Therefore, he will get up very early for prayer and Bible study. We should intensify our prayer time and study time during times of trouble.

And cry for help שָׁוֵעַ (shawa‘) cry out for help.

This verb *cry* is different from the word *cry* in Psa 119:145—it involves a greater intensity and urgency. It is a shout for help.

I hope in Your word. יָחַל (yachal) “waiting” and “confident expectation, trust” which for the believer is closely linked with “faith or trust” and results in “patient waiting.” The sense of expectation is positive, i.e., hoping for good in the future.

This hope is not a wish of the imagination which drowns out troubles, nor is it uncertain, but rather hope is the solid ground of expectation for the righteous.

This hope is directed towards God.

O Israel, hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is lovingkindness (*ch̄esed*), and with him is abundant redemption” (Ps 130:7; cf. 131:3).

In times of despair, the Psalmist encourages himself by saying, “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, the help of his presence” (Ps 42:5; also 42:11; 43:5).

There is no greater testimony to such confident expectation than Job crying out, “Though he slay me, I will hope in him...” (Job 13:15).

Mic 7:7, “But as for me, I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.”

The last phrase clearly demonstrates confidence in God’s future action at a time when sin is being judged. But further, the verse reflects not only the ground of faith, the Lord himself, but the saving activity of his God.

In short, that which is hoped for is not some hopeful wish arising from one’s imagination, but in God himself and whatever He should propose to accomplish.

I hope in Your word. Ps. 119:49, 81, 114, 116, 147.

This is the 5th time he has said that he hopes in God's Word. That is why he can pray with confidence.

The cause for hope is not in one's merit with God or in some sort of "quid pro quo" arrangement, but only because of God's Word, which promises His loyal love, His gracious kindness.

Here the psalmist hopes for God's Word as he meditates in the law and prays for deliverance from his enemies.

He knows the promises of God, he is asking God to fulfill His promises, and he is waiting for God to fulfill His promise.

According to verses 147 and 148 the psalmist awakens early to pray.

He first says that before the dawn he got up to cry out of his distress to God; and then second, he says his eyes were awake before the watches of the night so that he could meditate on God's Word.

There were, therefore, early meditations in the Word and early prayers to the LORD. He also prayed at night, in anticipation of the night watches – before going to sleep and frequently through the night.

Whatever the circumstances of his prayers, his meditation in God's Word prompted him to hope for God's Word to be fulfilled.

The line is similar to the statement in Psalm 130 that the psalmist waited for the LORD, more than the watchmen for the morning, and hoped in His Word, perhaps a promise of deliverance.

Psalm 130:6 My soul *waits* for the Lord More than those who watch for the morning-- *Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.*

Psalm 119:148 My eyes are awake through the *night* watches, That I may meditate on Your word

Meditate שִׁיחַ (siach) This word is found in Psa 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 148. The object of his meditation is always on the Word of God.

Psalm 119:149 Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; O LORD, revive me According to Your justice.

Focus on Prayer Psa 119:149a

He again prays: “*hear my voice,*” meaning, “answer my prayer.” But now he bases his appeal on the loyal love of the LORD, [chesed] that faithful covenant love that God has for believers.

The word *Chesed* (חֶסֶד) or “loyal love” is usually translated “mercy” or “lovingkindness.”

Deuteronomy 7:12 promises that the LORD will fulfill the covenant promise He made and the loyal love He swore.

God’s “loyal love” preserves life (Ps. 6:4).

God’s “loyal love” brings restoration to life (Ps. 109:21–26).

Surely, goodness and mercy (*chesed*) shall follow me all the days of my life (Psa 23:6).

revive me according to Your justice. חַיָּה (chayah)
*live, have life, remain alive, sustain life, live
prosperously, live forever. Also be quickened, revive
from sickness, discouragement, or even death.*

The prayer here is for God to be faithful to His covenant people and to His covenant promises.

The prayer specifies that God should *revive* him or renew his life. He wants to be delivered from his present circumstances, and he appeals to God's justice.

God's decisions are always right and true; Therefore, He should intervene to vindicate His people who are being persecuted by wicked people. He wants God to execute justice now.

If the people of God are living faithfully, then they may be confident that God's faithful love and justice will deliver them from trouble and vindicate them.

II. His enemies, who are far from the law, pursue him to do battle with him (150).

Psalm 119:150 They draw near who follow after wickedness; They are far from Your law.

The complaint is now introduced briefly. He is being hounded by wicked people who are getting closer and closer to him. He describes them as “followers of wickedness.”

They draw near קָרַב (*qarab*) being or coming into the nearest proximity of the object (or subject). A secondary meaning entails actual contact with the object.

Follow after רָדַף (*radap*) follow after, pursue, persecute.

Wickedness זָמָה (*zimmah*) The word means *plan*, and in Old Testament usage the plan is always evil.

There is a contrast here with the words “near” and “far”—these enemies draw near, that is, they are in a position to inflict evil on him.

They are far from Your law.

His enemies are capable of doing almost anything because they are far from God's law. They have no intention of obeying the law of the LORD, and so as they draw near to him, he feels the danger.

This verse shows the relationship of the enemy to the psalmist in the first half and their relationship to God's Word in the second. The farther the wicked get from the Word of God, the nearer they get to the psalmist in terms of evil plans. Men who are far from the Word draw near to persecute the believer who identifies with God's truth.

III. He testifies that commandments of the LORD are eternally true (151–152).

Psalm 119:151 *You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments are truth.*

The threat is real, but is put in proper perspective by a greater fact: “*You are near O LORD.*” This expression, like the affirmation “the LORD is with us,” speaks of divine intervention and not location.

You *are* near, O LORD

The pronoun *You* is emphatic. It shows the psalmist making a definite and dramatic turn in his thinking. He is turning his back on the enemy and is focusing on the LORD alone.

The nearness of the LORD is not an abstract thought. The LORD is present because His Word is present.

When God does not intervene, it may seem that He is far away. The psalmist is convinced the LORD is near, because his meditations in the Word have constantly reminded him of God's presence and of other interventions, and because in his own life he has experienced divine protection and deliverance.

In this situation his confidence in the LORD's presence more than nullifies the anxiety of the approaching wicked.

And all Your commandments *are* truth.

This is a parallel statement of confidence. It helps explain his confidence that the LORD is near—he knows that all the decrees from God are reliable, including all the promises of provision and protection that are part of the covenant.

Psalm 119:152 Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever.

The testimonies of God may be ancient, founded long ago, but they are not obsolete; the assurance of God's presence with the believer and all that implies is an eternally valid promise.

This verse reveals to us how the psalmist developed his doctrine of Scripture. He learned the nature of Scripture *from Scripture*. It was *from Your testimonies* that he learned that they were eternal in nature.

He believed the testimony the Word of God gives concerning itself.

The doctrine of the nature of Scripture is learned the same way any other doctrine is learned—from the Word itself.

Message and Application

The stanza focuses on the believers' response to a present danger from people who have evil intentions. He does not minimize the danger, but focuses instead on the presence of the LORD and the reliability of His Word. The message of this section may be summarized in this way:

When threatened by those who are far from God, the faithful may pray with confidence for deliverance because the LORD is near them and His promises are sure.

I used the word “faithful” to describe the believers here, because in this file the psalmist’s confidence is related to his obedience to God’s Word. In order for the people of God to claim God’s promises in times of need, they must demonstrate their faith with faithfulness.

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus declared that even though He ascended to heaven, He would be with us always (Matt. 28:20). That promise and countless others in the Word of God have given believers the confidence to live by faith in the midst of wickedness.

The word of Christ dwells in the saints, so that they are constantly made aware of His presence (Col. 3:16).

Moreover, we are reminded that the One who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world.

Prayer for spiritual victory over the world in time of distress requires a close communion with the ever-present Lord through His Word.

FOR HIS OWN GLORY AND OUR BEST GOOD

When God says, “no” to you, it’s such a blow to you.
When all your hopes and dreams unravel at the seams.
When God says, “wait” to you, when God seems late to you
It’s hard to rest within His will, It’s hard to trust and just be still
It’s hard to simply wait until it’s all made plain.

He who holds us in His hands has no problems, only plans.
He who has control of all sees the smallest sparrow fall.
He who acts where no one knows, does not sleep as we suppose
But works in all things, in great or small things
For His own glory and our best good.

When God works silently in ways we cannot see.
When troubles multiply so that we ache inside.
When God does not seem kind, When hope is hard to find
It's hard to rest within His will, It's hard to trust and just be still
It's hard to simply wait until it's all made plain.

He who holds us in His hands has no problems only plans.
He who has control of all see the smallest sparrow fall.
He who acts where no one knows does not sleep as we suppose
But works in all things, in great or small things
For His own glory and our best good.

Psa 121:1 *A Song of Ascents.* I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

² My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

³ He will not let your foot be moved; he who **keeps** you will not slumber.

⁴ Behold, he who **keeps** Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

⁵ The LORD is your **keeper**; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

⁷ The LORD will **keep** you from all evil; he will **keep** your life.

⁸ The LORD will **keep** your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.