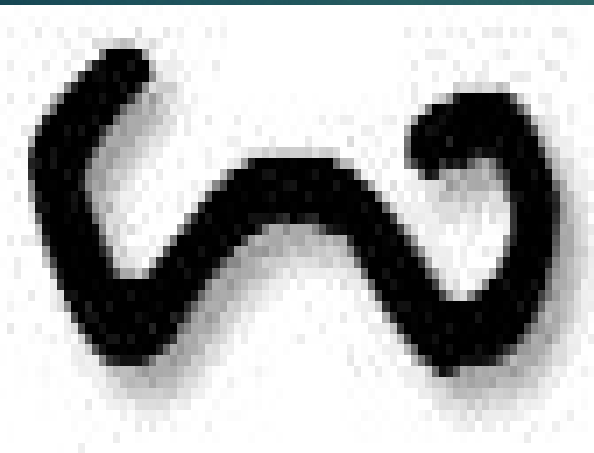


SIN/SHIN
(Psalm 119:161-168)





SIN/SHIN

Psalm 119:161-168

*The Results of Loving and Obeying
God's Word*

Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
SHIN				

Pictograph:

Two front teeth

Meanings:

Sharp, Press, Eat

Sound:

S, Sh

The Ancient picture for this letter is of female breasts. It also has the meaning of "two," "again" and "both."

The Middle Semitic script is also the origin of the Greek letter Σ and the Latin S.

Psalm 119:161–168

¹⁶¹ Princes persecute me without a cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your word.

¹⁶² I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.

¹⁶³ I hate and abhor lying, *But* I love Your law.

¹⁶⁴ Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments.

165 Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

166 LORD, I hope for Your salvation, And I do Your commandments.

167 My soul keeps Your testimonies, And I love them exceedingly.

168 I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, For all my ways *are* before You.

Summary:

When powerful leaders persecute them unjustly, committed believers remain faithful to God's Word, for in it they find peace and the promise of deliverance.

Brief Outline:

- I. The faithful remain in awe of God's Word even when powerful leaders persecute them unjustly (Psa 119:161)
- II. The faithful rejoice in the truth of God's Word and regularly praise Him for it (Psa 119:162–164)
- III. The faithful find great peace and the promise of salvation in God's Word (165–166)
- IV. The faithful affirm that they love and keep God's Word (Psa 119:167–168)

Overview:

In spite of being persecuted without a cause, the psalmist rejoices in the Word of God, declaring that it brings peace to those who trust and obey (Psa 119:161–168).

The stabilizing effects of God's word are seen in 119:163 where the Word of God had given the psalmist a set of divinely established absolutes.

Right was right and wrong was wrong. He hated the wrong and loved the right.

Verse 164 shows how the Word had established his worship. He had learned to honor the Lord “around the clock.”

The words of verse 165 describe stability perfectly—
“nothing causes them (him) to stumble.”

His love for God's Word is stated three times in this file (Psa 119:163, 165, and 167).

His obedience is expressed by the verb “do” in Psa 119:166 and “keep” in Psa 119:167-68.

**I. The faithful remain in awe of God's Word even
when powerful leaders persecute them unjustly
(Psa 119:161)**

Psalm 119:161. Princes persecute me without a
cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your word.

The stanza begins with a lament about powerful
persecutors.

Princes שַׂר (sar). Prince, chief, captain, ruler, governor, keeper, chief captain, steward, master. *Sar* also appears frequently as a word representing royal rulers and officials of sundry ranks and titles, hence, nobles and courtiers.

These princes appear to be civil authorities, Israelite nobility, so the persecutors of whom the psalmist speaks were also men of great power and number (Psalm 69:4) who concocted multiple charges (Psalm 109:3)

persecute רָדַף (radap) be behind, follow after,
pursue, persecute

The key idea in the word *persecute* is *pursuit*, such as in the hunting of animals. When used of men, it always indicates hostile intent.

When this word is used of God's providence indicates His rescuing His people from pursuit.

Psalm 23:6 says, "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me." This is really not strong enough for the sense of the word. It should be more active. "Goodness and mercy shall pursue me" is a better translation. It is a strong and active statement.

without a cause חִנָּם (chinnam) – this word actually comes from the root word for grace. It means “freely,” “for nothing.”

They were also men *without a cause*, meaning that what they were doing to the psalmist was not because he had done anything wrong. Undeserved suffering is the most common type of suffering found in the Psalms. Psalm 35:7 says, “*For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my soul.*”

Their continuing persecution of him was hostility without a cause. However, this note of lament quickly changes as the second part of the verse records the psalmist's deeply felt awe over God's words ("my heart stands in awe").

my heart stands in awe of your Word

פָּחַד (pachad) fear, tremble, revere.

It refers to a strong emotion of fear because of circumstances and the fear of sinners before God's judgment (Isa 33:14).

Here the word contrasts his attitude toward his persecutors with his attitude toward the Word of God. The psalmist fears God more than he fears man! (cf., Ps 119:120.) Here it has the connotation of reverential fear or awe, a combination of fear and faith.

1 Peter 4:12–16 is a companion passage from the New Testament. It views two kinds of suffering:

1. inevitable and undeserved (1 Pe 4:12–14), and
2. preventable and deserved (1 Pe 4:15–16).

Our attitude toward suffering because of our relationship to Christ is to be expected and joyful.

That which comes upon us because of our own wrongdoing is to be avoided.

**II. The faithful rejoice in the truth of God's Word
and regularly praise Him for it (Psa 119:162–164)**

Psalm 119:162 I rejoice at Your word as one
who finds great treasure.

I rejoice שׂוֹשֵׁן (sus) rejoice, exult. In Ps 119, the Psalm that glories in God’s written Word, the psalmist in exultation declares, “I rejoice at Your Word” (162). Likewise in the prophets the people rejoice in the Lord’s salvation (Isa 61:10; 66:14).

Isa 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels.

treasure שָׁלַל (shalal) plunder.

The great joy and the exuberant celebrations that accompany the division of spoils (cf. I Sam 30:16).

The division of spoil is used as a symbol of the fulfilled triumph of Jesus the Messiah (Isa 53:12).

The Psalmist rejoices over the treasure of God's Word as others rejoice over spoil.

Not only does he stand in awe of God's Word, but he has great joy, comparing his joy to finding great treasure.

The word "treasure" connotes the spoils of victory. He may have chosen this word with a view to expected victory over his persecutors. However, his joy is a present reality and is both the motivation for and the result of his obedience to the law (cf. Ps. 1:2).

Psalm 119:163 I hate and abhor lying, *But* I love
Your law.

I hate שׂנֵא (śānē') hate, to be hateful.

It expresses an emotional attitude toward persons and things which are opposed and despised and with which one wishes to have no contact or relationship. It is therefore the opposite of love. Whereas love draws and unites, hate separates and keeps distant. The hated and hating persons are considered foes or enemies and are considered odious.

In verse 163 the psalmist states his hatred of falsehood with the strongest of terms: “hate” and “abhor.”

These terms are used in other places for rejecting paganism and things declared to be an abomination to the Lord. So reference to falsehood was more serious than ordinary dishonesty.

Abhor תֵּעַב (ta'ab) abhor, loathe

Lying שֶׁקֶר (sheqer) Lie, falsehood, deception.

This word is used of words or activities which are false in the sense that they are groundless, without basis in fact or reality.

In some cases, the word is used for covenant breaking, i.e., breaking God's laws which they had promised to keep.

Psa 44:17: But we have not forgotten You, Nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant.

This is also the word used in the 9th commandment:
Exo 20:16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

In our verse he does not specify what the lie is, but, since he makes a contrast between what is false and God's law, whatever the falsehood was, it was contrary to God's Word.

By affirming his love for God's law, he affirms his love for God.

But I love Your law

Jn 14:23–34 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.”

Psalm 119:164 Seven times a day I praise You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.

His love is demonstrated by his constant praise for God for giving him His righteous decisions. He expresses this with “seven times a day I praise you.”

Praying seven times a day indicates a full and complete life of praise. So that the psalmist probably means he praises God repeatedly, all day long, and not necessarily a specific number of times. It is “around the clock.”

Praise הָלַל (halal) boast. This root connotes being deeply thankful for and/or satisfied in praising a superior quality or great acts.

Synonyms are: “to praise,” “give thanks”; “to sing or shout joyfully”; “to sing (praises)”; “bless”; “to magnify”; “to exalt”; “to sing, play, praise”

Praise is a major doctrine of the Old Testament and is conveyed by at least eight distinct Hebrew verbs. Praise may be defined as the believer's response to the character and works of God—praise of who He is and what He has done.

Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments.

The teachings in God's Word that provide proper guidance in making decisions are righteous, because they come from His righteousness and therefore have the character of righteousness.

To reject God's righteous decisions would be to follow the wrong choices and the wrong way, wrong because they are unrighteous and therefore false.

**III. The faithful find great peace and the
promise of salvation in God's Word (165–166)**

Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love
Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

Great peace שְׁלוֹמַם (shalom)

Here is the familiar “Shalom” used in greetings. The most instructive passage on this word is Numbers 6:24-27: “The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; ²⁶ The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.” ’ ²⁷ “So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.”

“Peace,” in this case, means much more than mere absence of hostility or consternation.

Shalom is the result of God’s activity and is the result of righteousness:

Isa 32:17 The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

In nearly two-thirds of its occurrences, *shalom* describes the state of fulfillment which is the result of God's presence. This is specifically indicated in those references to the "covenant of peace" (*berit shalom*), Num 25:12; Isa 54:10; Ezek 34:25; 37:26; Mal 2:5

The one who has peace is blessed. The one who has peace is guarded. The one who has peace is graced.

Shalom is the result of God's activity and is the result of being in a right relationship with God .

Isa 26:3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose* mind *is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You.

People are desperately seeking peace, but they reject the very One who gives peace, and they reject the means to having peace. Our verse says that those who love God's law have great peace.

When the Word of God is one's highest priority, other things become irrelevant.

Great peace is available in this life. There are burdens and afflictions of life which we must leave in the hands of the Lord.

Meanwhile the issue must be obedience to God's Word.

Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

to stumble מִכְּשׁוֹל (*mikshol*) stumble, fall

The verb is usually used of physical falling, but several times it is used figuratively for failing or ruin (Ps 64:8; 2 Chr 25:8.)

It can be used in the sense of a stumbling block, that is, to cause one to fall into sin (Mal 2:8; Jer 18:1).

Mal 2:7–8 “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And *people* should seek the law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. **8** But you have departed from the way; You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,” says the Lord of hosts.

Jer 18:15 “Because My people have forgotten Me, They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways,”

Psalm 119:165 Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

Your orientation to the Word of God is the basis for your peace and joy in spite of circumstances.

If you love the Word, it will also protect you from foolish decisions that lead to ruin.

Psalm 119:166 LORD, I hope for Your salvation,
And I do Your commandments.

There are at least 11 different Hebrew words translated “hope.”

This hope looks to that life and deliverance which alone has power to make a person safe (Ps 119) and happy (Ps 146).

I hope שִׁבַּר (sabar) wait, hope — a confident expression of hope, waiting for God’s deliverance.

Ps 145:15 declares that “the eyes of all wait expectantly for You and You give them their food in due season.”

Your salvation יְשׁוּעָה Yeshuah

The word implies a need – the need to move from a condition of distress to a condition of peace or security.

Generally, the deliverance must come from somewhere outside the person who is oppressed. In the OT the kinds of distress, both national and individual, include enemies, natural catastrophes, such as plague or famine, and sickness. The one who brings deliverance is known as the “savior.”

Yahweh is the Savior. In the OT this is usually deliverance from a temporal problem and is not used for salvation from the penalty for sin.

Exo 14:13 And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the **salvation** of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.”

Psalm 119:166 LORD, I hope for Your salvation,
And I do Your commandments.

The Bible does not promise that you will be free from problems, but it does promise deliverance.

The Lord may not deliver you from your problems immediately. Still, we can have hope or confidence in the plan of God. In the meantime, we must keep our focus on the Word of God and be obedient.

Believers can possess peace and the hope of salvation. They have peace because of their faith in the Word of the LORD; and they have hope for deliverance because they trust in the promises of the Word of the Lord.

First, he announces that those who love God's law have great peace, which in this context indicates protection from oppression. Knowledge of the Word keeps them from stumbling or doing things that would interrupt or hinder spiritual progress.

The faithful have great peace because they know that they are walking according to God's Word. When believers love God's law instead of struggling against it, the conscience is at peace. You focus on your duty and do it, free from those things that so often cause the unfaithful to stumble.

Hoping for deliverance from the Lord is based on the promises of the Word. But those who hope must also be obedient to His Word—how can you expect what the Word promises but refuse to do what the Word requires?

Thus, the psalmist affirms his loyalty with his trust: “I hope for Your salvation” is followed by “I do Your commandments.”

**IV. The faithful affirm that they love and keep
God's word (Psa 119:167–168)**

Psalm 119:167 My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.

My soul – that is, his being, not just the inner man.

His claim to obedience is not pride or self-righteousness. These claims are modestly laid before God as evidence of sincerity of purpose; they are not attempts at self-aggrandizement.

I love them exceedingly.

I love אָהַב ('aheb) love – the common word for love
– God loving man, man loving God, man loving others
or loving things.

Exceedingly מְאֹד (me'od) exceedingly, much, very,
greatly, deeply. Used more than 300 times in the OT,
this adverb always expresses something which is beyond
what you might expect, often expressing the superlative.

Psalm 119:168 I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, For all my ways are before You.

The absence of pride is indicated by the words *all my ways are before You*. He invites inspection and anticipates that the Lord will know the sincerity of his devotion to Him and His Word.

For all my ways all my ways דֶּרֶךְ (*derek*). *Way, road, journey*. A path worn by constant walking. Figuratively, it often refers to the actions and behavior of men, who either follow the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked (Ps 1:6).

For all my ways are before You.

are before You נִגַּד (neged). Prominently before,
conspicuously before.

There is no basis for pride or false humility. God sees.
God knows.

“Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall
not see him?” says the Lord;
Jer 23:24.

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Matt 6:6.

The Word of God is a critic of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

The Word of God is a mirror, which, if we look into it, reveals what we are like on the inside (Jas 1:23).

Knowing this should also motivate us in our lives. If I know that my ways are conspicuous before God, how can I think that I can get away with anything?

167 My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.

168 I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies,
For all my ways *are before You.*

The last two verses of the file continue the affirmation of loyalty

Both verses begin with the verb “keep.”

Psa 119:167 has “your testimonies” as the object, while Psa 119:168 has “your precepts and your testimonies.”

In his appeal for deliverance he is coming to the Lord with a clear conscience—he is at peace with God and is obedient to God's Word; and he is appealing to God's conscience about him—God knows that his persecution is unwarranted because he is obedient to the Word.

The expression “*all my ways are before you*” means that everything he does and everywhere he goes is fully known to God. This would be true even if he were sinful because he could not hide from God; but here his “ways” refers to his obedience in the midst of trouble.

He lives obediently because God knows everything about him. God keeps His eye on us. In this passage the psalmist says he kept God's Word because his ways were before God. It was another motivation for faith and righteousness.

The writer of Psalm 119 finds great comfort in the Word of the Lord and is able to commit his difficulty to the LORD in a prayer for deliverance and rest in the peace of God and the promise of salvation.

These same ideas concerning persecution and deliverance are confirmed in the New Testament, but with greater detail.

Persecution comes from a world that does not believe in Christ (John 16:1–4), but if it is endured it will bear fruit and increase joy, especially when Jesus comes again (John 16:20–22).

In the meantime, He has given us a peace that is beyond what the world can understand (John 14:27).

2 Timothy 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

1 Peter 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are* blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

1 Peter 4:14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, *blessed are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.