

May 24 Answers

- 1) Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the longest book of the OT. This psalm is a “**Torah** Psalm,” and along with Psalms 1 and 19, its focus is on God’s **law**. It was written in acrostic form: each of the eight verses in the twenty-two stanzas begins with the same letter of the Hebrew **alphabet**. There are a total of 176 verses and all of them are exultant in their **love** of God’s word. In almost every verse, the psalmist makes some reference to Scripture: law, testimony, precept, statute, commandment, promise, judgment, and word. The terms have different shades of meaning (e.g., God’s instruction, decisions, truth, commands, rules, etc.), but they all center on the same theme: God’s **revelation** in written word. As we read Psalm 119, we hear the voice of a man who is under **attack** by the wicked. They are bent on destroying him (v. 95), and their attacks have taken the form of derision (v. 22), slander (v. 69) and intrigue (vv. 23, 85). The psalmist is a **young** man (vv. 9, 99), and he is sensitive to their scorn (v. 39). His isolation makes him feel “small and despised” (v. 141), and he describes himself as drained and dried up (vv. 25, 28, 83). He vacillates between being saddened and infuriated by his experience, reacting first with **tears** (v. 136) and then with “hot indignation” and “**disgust**” (vv. 53, 158). Yet the persecution has driven him closer to God. He knows that at times he has strayed, but he accepted God’s discipline with gratitude, and the practice of his life is to keep God’s precepts (vv. 67, 71, 75). He is determined to live by God’s word, and his two repeated requests, “Give me **understanding**” and “Give me **life**,” show that he is eager to learn and to be renewed by God’s life-giving law. In all, he is a man we identify with and understand. He is also a man that we look up to and want to be like.