

Psalm 119, Session 4 – Winter/Spring 2016

Week 1, v. 49

Each verse of this section of eight or octarian, begins with the Hebrew letter Zain.

" Zain describes the blessed comfort derived from God's word in evil days."
Treasury of David

"The Christian's golden A B C of the praise, love, power, and use of the Word of God." Franz Delitzsch, 1871.

Are you forgetful? What kinds of things do you do to help you remember? Do you always remember things correctly?

Our Psalmist begins verse 49 with the request that God remembers His word to him. Does this mean there is a chance that God will not remember what He has said? Since God is the author of His word, there is no chance for leaving details out or representing them incorrectly. God is perfect, He will do what He says He will do.

Think how well you remember every detail. If we put 20 people in a room and showed them a scene from a movie, we would get several different narratives. Some would remember things that others didn't even see; others might read into a scene and form an entirely different perspective on a character. Our remembrance of details is a bit sketchy and polluted by bias. Have you ever broken a promise? Either unintentionally or intentionally? Have you ever said something in passing without really having a plan to follow through? (i.e. " We' ll have to get together for dinner")

Ps 119:49 Remember the word to Thy servant, In which Thou hast made me hope.

David says, " Remember the word to Thy servant" .

remember <zakar> to mark (so as to be recognized), to remember; by implication, to mention; make to be remembered, bring (call, come, keep, put) to (in) remembrance.

It' s not that God has trouble remembering, it' s that the Psalmist recognizes his need for every promise of God in his life. David is assuring himself of God' s promises.

What about God' s timing? Can it seem to us that we have been forgotten?

Ge 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.

Ge 19:29 Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham (*Gen 18:23*), and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.

We may say something and not really mean it. Or even offer to do something and not really intend to follow through. Have you heard the saying, 'good intentions don't mean anything without action'? Why would it be more reasonable to trust in God's promises rather than men? Can you place your hope in God to remember His word to His children? Why?

Ro 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Joel 3:16 And the LORD roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel.

1Pe 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1Pe 1:21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Think of the anticipation you have for something that is promised to you. Oftentimes, we build our future on promises that are made. The love of a parent, the offer of financial help in school, the culmination of a wedding planned, escrow papers that are signed and so on.... No matter how sincere we believe in an expected promise, things don't always turn out the way we predict.

What are the promises in Psalm 119:49?

the word <dabar> commandments, oracles, message, promise, a matter as spoken of hope <yachal> to wait; to be patient, hope, trust

God will fulfill His word; God's word gives us hope, patience to wait upon Him.

How do these truths comfort you?

1Ch 17:23 Therefore now, LORD, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.

God does not change his mind; God is faithful; God will not break His promises. Because of God's character we can trust completely in Him. How does this

compare with man? Do your expectations rest in God or man? Do you have great expectations of God?

Has God kindled in us desires towards spiritual blessings more than towards any temporal good things, and will he not be so kind as to satisfy those desires? Has he filled us with hopes of those blessings, and will he not be so just as to accomplish these hopes? He that did by his Spirit work faith in us will, according to our faith, work for us, and will not disappoint us. Matthew Henry Commentary

The Christian's hope is wrought in him by the Lord himself, and it is based upon the infallible word of God; hence it is a sure hope which will never make him ashamed; for the Lord will certainly remember and fulfill his promises. Yet he does this in answer to prayer: therefore we must plead the handwriting of the Lord. Spurgeon Devotional Commentary

Ver. 49. -- Remember the word unto thy servant, etc. God promises salvation before he giveth it, to excite our desire of it, to exercise our faith, to prove our sincerity, to perfect our patience. For these purposes he seemeth sometimes to have forgotten his word, and to have deserted those whom he had engaged to succor [*give assistance in time of difficulty*] and relieve; in which case he would have us, as it were, to remind him of his promise, and solicit his performance of it. The Psalmist here instructs us to prefer our petition upon these grounds; first, that God cannot prove false to his own word: "Remember thy word;" secondly, that he will never disappoint an expectation which himself hath raised: "upon which thou hast caused me to hope." --George Horne, taken from TOD

Look carefully at how David refers to himself: Thy servant. **What is a servant?** (<ebed> a bondman, bondage); WordWeb – a person working in the service of another. To be in bondage means to be under the control of a force, influence. **Can you refer to yourself as a servant of God?** A servant of God realizes he is unworthy of God's mercies and willingly spends his life serving with gratitude for what he has been given. **What does this mean?** God is first in all things. His will trumps all.

Ge 32:10 I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which Thou hast shown to Thy servant; for with my staff [only] I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies.

Ver. 49. -- Thy servant. Be sure of your qualification; for David pleadeth here, partly as a servant of God, and partly as a believer. First, "Remember the word unto thy servant;" and then, "upon which thou hast caused me to hope." There is a double qualification: with respect to the precept of subjection, and the promise of dependence. The precept is before the promise. They have right to the promises, and may justly lay hold upon them, who are God's servants; they

who apply themselves to obey his precepts, these only can rightly apply his promises to themselves. None can lay claim to rewarding grace but those who are partakers of sanctifying grace. Make it clear that you are God's servants, and then these promises which are generally offered are your own, no less than if your name were inserted in the promise, and written in the Bible. --Thomas Manton, from TOD

Application Questions

Why does the Psalmist begin with the request that God remembers His word to him? Will God forget His promises?

What does it mean to place our hope in God? Read Romans 15:13; Joel 3:16; 1 Peter 1:13; 21

Think carefully – is your future built on the promises of men or God?

What is the condition of receiving God's promises? Genesis 32:10

How would God have you respond to Psalm 119:49? Use your 'Apply It' bookmark to help answer this question.

Jot down other thoughts and verses that God has brought to mind as you studied this section of scripture.