



The Greatness of God's Word

An Inductive Hebrew Grammar

Psalm 119:17-24 - GIMEL

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Transcribed by Dr. Jim Davison

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Gary Staats is the Gale and Harriette Ritz professor of Old Testament at Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findlay, Ohio. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible at Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963; his Th.M. in New Testament Greek from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1967; his Th.D. in Biblical Studies from DTS in 1971; and his Master of Arts in Hebrew and Ancient and Near Eastern languages at Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1983. He completed his Ph.D. in Hebrew and Near Eastern Languages at New York University in 1989. Dr. Staats has been a professor and pastor for many years, serving at various schools and in numerous pastorates.

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- Gary Staats

Lesson 1: Psalm 119:171.1 Text

גִּמְלָל עַל־עַבְדְּךָ אֲחִיָּה וְאֶשְׁמְרָה דְּבָרְךָ:

1.2 Vocabulary

גִּמְלָל	verb	“to render (bountifully)”
עַבְדְּךָ	noun	“servant”
אֲחִיָּה	verb	“to live”
אֶשְׁמְרָה	verb	“to keep”
דְּבָרְךָ	noun	“word”

1.3 Grammar

Having looked at the **ב**, at verse seventeen of Psalm 119 we now deal with eight verses beginning with **ג**.

“Deal bountifully with your servant that I may live and that I may keep your Word”. **גִּמְלָל** is a Qal imperative second masculine singular from **גִּמְלָל**, meaning “to render” (in a bountiful way). **עַל** is a preposition that can be translated “upon” or “with”. **עַבְדְּךָ** is from the noun **עַבְדְּךָ**, and it is in construct with **ךָ**, the pronominal suffix, second masculine singular. So, “Deal in a bountiful way upon or with your servant”.

אֶחְיֶה becomes a use of purpose, “*that I might live*”. It is the Qal imperfect, first person singular from חָיָה, “*to live*”. He is asking that the Lord would treat him in a way that he might grant to him his ability to have life and to live.

וְאֶשְׁמְרָהּ! “*in order that...*” Again, an ongoing purpose clause, “*so that I might keep,*” and that וְ here could be used as a purposeful use of the conjunction וְ. אֶשְׁמְרָהּ is from שָׁמַר, “*to keep*”, a Qal imperfect first common singular from שָׁמַר. The הָ here is put forth emphatically, “*that I might keep Your word*”.

דְּבַרְךָ is from דָּבַר; the ךְ is the pronominal suffix, second masculine singular.

1.4 Translation

“*Deal bountifully with Your servant so that I may live and that I may keep Your word.*”

1.5 Application/Interpretation

So he is asking the Lord to deal with him in a bountiful and wonderful way, that he might live with the purpose of keeping and observing His word. We need to do this; we need to live our lives so that we can obey the word of God in every area.

And then we come to verse eighteen:

Lesson 2: Psalm 119:182.1 Text

גַּל-עֵינַי וְאַבְיָטָה נִפְלְאוֹת מִתּוֹרַתְךָ:

2.2 Vocabulary

גָּלַל	verb	“to open”
עַיִן	noun	“eye”
נָבַט	verb	“to see”
פִּלְאָ	verb	“to be wonderful”
תּוֹרָה	noun	“law”

2.3 Grammar

גַּל-עֵינַי

“Open” or “unveil” from גָּלַל, “that which obscures my view of your word.” This is a Qal imperative, second masculine singular, from גָּלַל.

“Open my eyes”, עֵינַי becoming עֵינַי, which is literally “my eyes”, adding the pronominal suffix יְ, first common singular, to the plural noun in construct.

וַאֲבִיטָה

“Open my eyes that I might see.” Again we have the purpose in the ׀ conjunction here with the Hiphil imperfect first person singular from the root נָבַט. It is a *pe nun* verb; we have אֲבִיטָה becoming אֲבִיטָה with the ׀ assimilating into the ב, causing a *daghesh forte*.

וַאֲבִיטָה נִפְלְאוֹת מִתּוֹרַתְךָ:

“so that I might look and behold wondrous things”. נִפְלְאוֹת is from פָּלָא, “things that are wonderful”. This is a Niphal participle, feminine plural, from פָּלָא.

מִתּוֹרַתְךָ:

“things that are wonderful from having its source in Your law.” תּוֹרָה is a noun meaning “law”, with ךָ, the pronominal suffix, second masculine singular.

2.4 Translation

“Open my eyes that I might see wonderful things from Your law.”

2.5 Application/Interpretation

He is asking that the Lord would roll away anything that would keep his eyes from not having twenty-twenty vision. He wants to behold the wonderful things from the Lord’s Torah. He wants to see the wonderful teachings that the Word of God has. One of the things that we need to understand is that God’s Word is wonderful in what it teaches us and what it

brings to us. Our goal is to ask that our eyes might be illumined to understand those wonderful things, the wonderful things about Christ. Jesus said, Search the Scriptures (or you are searching, whichever way we translate it) and you think you have eternal life, but they really are about me. Jesus opened the eyes of those on the road to Emmaus and found Himself in the Torah, the prophets, and the writings. We are to see Christ so that our eyes can be opened to worship Him as we study His Torah.

Lesson 3: Psalm 119:193.1 Text

גַּר אֲנֹכִי בָאֲרֶץ אֶל־תַּסְתֵּר מִמְּנֵי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

3.2 Vocabulary

גַּר	noun	“sojourner”
אֲנֹכִי	personal pronoun	“I”
אֶרֶץ	noun	“earth, land”
סָתַר	verb	“to hide”
מִצְוָה	noun	“commandment”

3.3 Grammar

גַּר אֲנֹכִי בָאֲרֶץ אֶל־תַּסְתֵּר מִמְּנֵי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

“I am a sojourner on the earth”. אֲנֹכִי is a noun meaning “sojourner”.

אֲנֹכִי is a personal pronoun, first person singular. It is followed by בָּ, the inseparable prefix “on”, and the definite article – “on the earth”. I am a stranger in the earth.

אַל־תִּסְתֵּר מִמֶּנִּי מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:

“Do not hide from me Your commandments.” In other words, in this life, I am staying here as a sojourner in a temporary way. He is asking the Lord not to hide from him His commandments. אַל is the negative particle “not”, and תִּסְתֵּר is the Hiphil imperfect second masculine singular from סָתַר, “to hide”. Notice the A-sere vowel pattern, indicative of the Hiphil imperfect morphologically. “Do not hide from me...”

מִמֶּנִּי

Notice the מִן here – “from”. The ך has assimilated into the מ, causing a *daghesh forte*. ך is a hinge type of construction with the *sere nun*, and the ך is the pronominal suffix, first person singular. “Do not cause to hide Your commandments.”

מִצְוֹתֶיךָ

is from מִצְוָה, becoming the plural feminine מִצְוֹת with the ם ending, and the ך. It is a feminine plural noun in construct with ך, the pronominal suffix, second masculine singular.

3.4 Translation

“I am a sojourner on the earth; do not hide Your commandments from me.”

3.5 Application/Interpretation

I am a stranger in the earth, and I need your word. I am a sojourner here. My kingdom is not of this world. We are heavenly people. We as

Christians believe that our citizenship is in heaven. We would want to ask that God not hide His commandments from us. As we search the Scriptures, we will find them embedded in them like a treasure in the field of God's word.

He continues in verse twenty.

Lesson 4: Psalm 119:204.1 Text

גְּרָסָה נַפְשִׁי לְתַאֲבָה אֶל־מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ בְּכָל־עֵת:

4.2 Vocabulary

גָּרַס	verb	“to be crushed”
נַפֶּשׁ	noun	“soul”
תַּאֲבָה	noun	“longing”
מִשְׁפָּט	noun	“judgment”
עֵת	noun	“time”

4.3 Grammar

גְּרָסָה נַפְשִׁי לְתַאֲבָה

“My soul breaks for longing” גְּרָסָה is the Qal perfect third feminine singular from גָּרַס, meaning “to be crushed”. “My soul is crushed; it breaks, as it were. It is overwhelmed with longing for You”. נַפְשִׁי is the feminine noun נַפֶּשׁ, which means “soul” in construct with the pronominal suffix first common singular “my”. The word תַּאֲבָה is a feminine noun meaning “longing”, preceded by the preposition לְ. “My soul breaks or longs for You”.

אֶל־מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ

“Unto Your judgments”. אֶל is the preposition, מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ is the plural masculine noun in construct with יך. “Unto Your judgments”.

בְּכָל־עֵת:

“At all times” or “in all seasons”. בְּ is the inseparable preposition “in”. כָּל means “all” or “every” time (the noun עֵת).

4.4 Translation

“My soul breaks for longing unto your judgments at all times.”

4.5 Application/Interpretation

I am continually wanting and longing and really crushed in my inner being (so to speak, it is breaking) for Your commandments at all times. How we need the commandments of the Lord to sustain us in every time of life! It is that which nourishes and ministers to us. Our soul breaks, as it were, is crushed, overwhelmed, longing to hear God’s word and what it teaches. It is like an oasis in the aridity of this world.

He goes on in verse twenty-one.

Lesson 5: Psalm 119:215.1 Text

גְּעַרְתָּ זֵדִים אַרְוֵרִים הַשְׂגִּים מִמְצוֹתֶיךָ:

5.2 Vocabulary

גְּעַר	verb	“to rebuke”
זֵד	noun	“proud/arrogant/insolent”
אַרַּר	verb	“to curse”
שָׁגָה	verb	“to err/stray from”
מִצְוָה	noun	“commandment”

5.3 Grammar

גְּעַרְתָּ זֵדִים אַרְוֵרִים

“You have rebuked the proud that are accursed”. גְּעַרְתָּ is from גְּעַר, “to rebuke”, Qal perfect, second masculine singular. זֵדִים is a plural noun (notice the ם ending) meaning “the arrogant ones” or “the proud ones”. אַרְוֵרִים is a Qal passive participle with the masculine plural ם ending from אַרַּר “to curse”. Notice the ם gives it away in the second vowel as a Qal passive participial form. “You have rebuked the arrogant/proud that are accursed...”

הַשְׂגִּים מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ:

“*Who err from your commandments.*” הַ is the definite article, and שְׂגִים is from the root שָׁגַה, “to err” or “to stray from”. This is a participle, “*those who are erring*”, from שָׁגַה. The final הַ has elided, and there is the O-class vowel. In לְהַ, the article historically the ל has assimilated into the שׁ.

“*...those that err from your commandments.*” There is also the מִן, “from”, the inseparable preposition, followed by מִצְוֹת (feminine plural) “from your commandments”, with the pronominal suffix ךְּ, second masculine singular.

5.4 Translation

“*You have rebuked the proud that are accursed, who err from Your commandments.*”

5.5 Application/Interpretation

You have rebuked the proud that are accursed, who err, who turn away, and do not follow your word, who falsely defect from your commandments. The thought is, “Help me not to be like the proud that err, from your teaching, from your commandments.”

The text moves on the next *gimel*:

Lesson 6: Psalm 119:226.1 Text

גַּל מִעַלַּי חֲרָפָה וְבוֹז כִּי עֵדוּתְךָ נִצַּרְתִּי:

6.2 Vocabulary

גַּל	verb	“to roll”
חֲרָפָה	noun	“reproach”
בוֹז	noun	“contempt”
עֵדוּת	noun	“testimony”
נִצַּר	verb	“to keep watch”

6.3 Grammar

גַּל מִעַלַּי חֲרָפָה וְבוֹז

גַּל is from גַּלַּל, “to roll”, Qal imperative, second masculine singular.

“Roll away or take away from upon me”. The word מִעַלַּי is the מֵן with the preposition עַל and the personal pronoun first person singular אֲנִי. “Roll or take away from me reproach and contempt”. חֲרָפָה is the noun meaning “reproach”, and בוֹז meaning “contempt”. “Take away reproach and contempt, remove it from me.”

כִּי עֲדוֹתַיךָ נִצַּרְתִּי:

“For I have kept your testimonies”. He is giving the cause in this clause, introduced by the preposition כִּי, “for”, with “your testimonies”, עֲדוֹת becoming עֲדוֹת in the feminine plural with the ת ending, followed by יך, the pronominal suffix second masculine singular. “For your testimonies I have kept.” נִצַּרְתִּי is from נִצַּר, “to keep watch”. It is Qal perfect first person singular from נִצַּר.

6.4 Translation

“Roll away from me reproach and contempt, for I have kept Your testimonies.”

6.5 Application/Interpretation

I have kept your testimonies faithfully, so take away from me any reproach and contempt that might come to me, that is, those who would be ridiculing me and attacking me, for I have kept your testimonies. I have been true to your word. This is what I believe he is saying: protect me, in that sense.

In verse twenty-three, another *gimel*:

Lesson 7: Psalm 119:237.1 Text

גַּם יֵשְׁבוּ שָׂרִים בִּי נִדְבָרוּ עַבְדְּךָ יִשְׁיחַ בְּחֻקֶיךָ:

7.2 Vocabulary

גַּם	adverb	“even, indeed”
יֵשֵׁב	verb	“to sit”
שָׂרִים	noun	“prince(s)”
דָּבַר	verb	“to speak”
עַבְדְּךָ	noun	“servant”
שִׁיחַ	verb	“to meditate”
חֻק	noun	“statute”

7.3 Grammar

גַּם יֵשְׁבוּ שָׂרִים בִּי נִדְבָרוּ

“Even though princes sit and talk against me”. “Though they sit against me, they speak”. יֵשְׁבוּ is from the verb יֵשֵׁב, Qal perfect third masculine singular. שָׂרִים is the noun with the masculine plural ending in the ם . .

בִּי נִדְבָּרוּ

“Princes sit, against me they speak”. בִּי “against me” is the preposition with the pronominal suffix, first common singular. “They speak amongst themselves”. נִדְבָּרוּ is probably a reciprocal use of the Niphal here. דָּבַר is the root “to speak”, with the נ prefix, indicating a Niphal perfect third masculine plural from דָּבַר. “They are speaking among themselves against me”.

עֲבַדְךָ יְשִׁיחַ בְּחֻקֶיךָ:

“As for your servant, he meditates in your engraven statutes”. עֲבַדְךָ is from the root עָבַד, “servant”. It is in construct (עֲבַדְךָ) with ך here, pronominal suffix second masculine singular. יְשִׁיחַ is from שָׁח, a middle weak verb, Qal imperfect third masculine singular from שָׁח. “Your servant meditates on your statutes”. בִּי is the preposition, חֻקֶיךָ is the plural noun meaning “statutes”, with the pronominal suffix second masculine singular.

7.4 Translation

“Even though princes sit and speak among themselves against me,
Your servant meditates in Your engraven statutes.”

7.5 Application/Interpretation

Your servant keeps meditating on your statutes, even though princes sit and talk against me. As for me, I am going to keep meditating on your statutes, and that gives me encouragement or hope.

And to the final verse in this section on *gimel*, verse twenty-four:

Lesson 8: Psalm 119:248.1 Text

גַּם־עֲדוֹתֶיךָ שְׂעִשְׂעִי אֲנֹשִׁי עֲצָתִי:

8.2 Vocabulary

עֲדוֹת	noun	“testimony”
שְׂעִשְׂעִים	noun	“delight”
עֲצָה	noun	“counsel”

8.3 Grammar

גַּם־עֲדוֹתֶיךָ שְׂעִשְׂעִי אֲנֹשִׁי עֲצָתִי

“Surely (or yea), your testimonies...” from עֲדוֹת, with the feminine plural תֹּ ending, coupled with the pronominal suffix ךָּ. “Your testimonies are my delight”. This is a beautiful noun, שְׂעִשְׂעִים, meaning “delight”. The ךָּ is the pronominal suffix added to the plural noun, first person singular. “Your testimonies are my delight”. “I take delight in your testimonies”. As a matter of fact, they are:

אֲנֹשִׁי עֲצָתִי

אֲנֹשִׁי is the plural from אִישׁ, אֲנָשִׁים. It is here with the ךָּ in the masculine plural. They are “men (literally) of my counsel”. עֲצָה,

“*counsel*”, becomes עֲצָתִי with the pronominal suffix י, first person singular.

8.4 Translation

“Surely Your testimonies are my delight, men of my counsel.”

8.5 Application/Interpretation

They are like men of my counsel. They help me even though I am being critiqued by princes. I take delight in your testimonies. I love to be in your word, and your word becomes like counselors to me. They speak to me. They give me wisdom. They help me through life.

So it is as we are in the word of God. It should give us sheer delight through all of life’s vicissitudes, and all that we go through, and should be like those men that counsel us and give us comfort in their counsel. That is what the word of God does, the Psalmist is teaching us here.