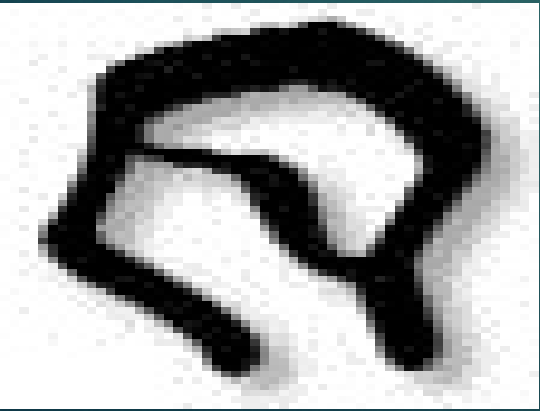


RESH

Psalm 119:153-160




**RESH**

**PSALM 119:153-160**



**“Amid Fierce Opposition the Believer Must  
Look to God for Revival”**

Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
RESH				

**Pictograph:**

Head of a man

**Meanings:**

Head, first, top, beginning

**Sound:**

R

RESH.

153 Consider my **affliction** and deliver me, For I do not forget Your law.

154 Plead my cause and redeem me; **Revive** me according to Your word.

155 Salvation is far from the wicked, For they do not seek Your statutes.

156 Great are Your tender mercies, O LORD; **Revive** me according to Your judgments.

157 Many are my persecutors and my enemies, Yet I do not turn from Your testimonies.

158 I see the treacherous, and am disgusted, Because they do not keep Your word.

159 Consider how I love Your precepts; Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.

160 The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

When wearied by the affliction of those who reject God's Word, you may confidently pray for God to vindicate and revive you.

The lament of the psalmist in the Resh file is intensified with more urgent prayers for deliverance from the oppression of the wicked.

There are five references to affliction and opposition in these lines. He speaks of *affliction* (119:153), *the wicked* (119:155), *persecutors* and *enemies* (119:157), and *the treacherous* (119:158).

- I. The psalmist prays for God to plead his cause and to deliver him (Psa 119:153–154)
- II. The righteous know that God will not save those who refuse His Word (Psa 119:155)
- III. The righteous may pray for reviving because of God's tender mercies (Psa 119:156)
- IV. The righteous who are faithful to God's word will be opposed by faithless adversaries (Psa 119:157–158)
- V. The righteous who affirm their love for the truth of God's eternal Word may appeal to God's faithful love to revive them in their faith (Psa 119:159–160)

Three times the psalmist will make his appeal to God for life, indicating that the oppression is great.

Three times he cries out to God saying, “revive me,” (Psa 119:154, 156, 159).



- I. The psalmist prays for God to plead his cause and to deliver him and revive him (Psa 119:153–154).

**Psalm 119:153.** Consider my affliction and deliver me, For I do not forget Your law.

**Psalm 119:154** Plead my cause and redeem me; Revive me according to Your word.

In the first two verses he uses five imperatives. His situation has become intense.

The first calls upon God to take notice of his affliction and the desired result of that attention is expressed in the second, “and deliver me”.

The basis for his appeal is his continued obedience to the law.

Consider -- רָאָה (ra'ah) see, look at, inspect – this is the common word for seeing with the eyes, but used metaphorically it means to regard, perceive, understand, learn. He is asking God not simply to see, but to consider, to think about what He sees. Take notice.

my affliction עָוִי (‘oni) — to punish or inflict pain upon. It is used of what one does to his enemy and what the lawless do to the defenseless (Ex 22:22). It is what Egypt did to Israel (Ex 1:11–12, which was more than slavery).

The primary meaning is “to force,” or “to try to force submission,” and “to punish or inflict pain upon.” We have seen this word previously in verses 50 and 92. He is facing strong opposition because of his testimony of faith in the Word of God. This is causing him great distress. So he cries out to God.

and deliver me חָלַץ (chalats)

This is very intensive. It is a cry for God to rescue him from a situation over which he has no control.

He is in trouble and calls on the Lord to “rescue” him, “deliver” him, “pull him out” of his distress.

For I do not forget Your law.

The verb *forget* does not mean *lapse of memory*. It rather points to a careless and frivolous attitude toward something. You just don't think about it.

To forget God's law doesn't mean that it is gone from your memory, only that you ignore it in your life. So here "forgetting" is not a slip of the memory, but a deliberate act of ignoring God's goodness and disobeying His will.

**Psalm 119:154** Plead my cause and redeem me;  
Revive me according to Your word.

The words *plead* and *cause* are the same Hebrew word. It was used in legal contexts.

In this verse the appeal to God to plead his cause is a call for vindication; the language used is that of a lawsuit, for God will make His case. Of course, God wins every case that He argues.

The effect of God's pleading the psalmist's case is that he will be redeemed from bondage.

This word for “redeem” in this context means to set someone free from bondage and adversity, here caused by the wicked.

The word *redeem* was usually found within contexts of God’s action toward the nation of Israel. The psalmist never hesitated to claim national blessing as a basis for personal blessing.

His reasoning was this: God redeemed the nation; I am part of that nation; I may therefore claim national blessing as my own personal blessing. God redeemed the nation, and He also desires to redeem me personally.



This has New Testament application also. In Ephesians 5:25 we are told “... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

Using the same rationale as the psalmist, we may say, “Since He loved the *church* and gave Himself up for *her*, this also means that He loved *me* and gave Himself up for *me*.”

This request to be redeemed is joined with the request for God to *revive* him. The verb could be translated “preserve my life” or “restore my life”.

In either case he wants deliverance from the oppression of the wicked so that he can live his life fully in the service of the LORD.

To be *revived* means to be able to exercise one's powers to the fullest extent. The psalmist repeatedly asks for the removal of things that he believes will hinder this kind of living.

One can experience life at its fullest only in obedience to the Word of God.

His appeal is not based on his faithfulness to the Law, but on the LORD's fulfilling the promises in His Word.

The law declared that the LORD would protect and defend His covenant people if they lived faithfully—and since he is a faithful covenant member, his prayer appeals to the promises of God – he expects God's promises to be carried out.

## **II. God will not save those who refuse His Word (Psa 119:155)**

**Psalm 119:155** Salvation is far from the wicked,  
For they do not seek Your statutes.

The wicked do not seek God's statutes, that is, they are far from the law (see v. 150), therefore, deliverance is far from them.

Salvation is far from the wicked, For they do not seek Your statutes.

*Seek* means “to seek with care,” “to care about.” To seek God also connotes an inquiry about knowledge, advice, or insight into a particular problem.

This solution comes from God; it will not come to those who reject God’s authority, but to those who trust in Him and seek to live in harmony with His will, who seek His statutes.

The verse opens with a permanent truth—an axiom. But why is salvation always far from the wicked?

Is it because they are wicked? Not at all. It is because they reject God's Word. Their deliverance is far removed because they are removed from God's Word.

The measure of one's distance from God is determined by one's relationship to God's Word. To be near one is to be near the other.

### III. The righteous may pray for reviving because of God's tender mercies (Psa 119:156)

**Psalm 119:156** Great are Your tender mercies, O LORD; Revive me according to Your judgments.

He knows God has compassion on the weak and oppressed, so he appeals to God's tender mercies to revive him according to His *judgments*, or His *decisions* (cf., v. 149). Using “decisions” to refer to the law, he is carrying forward his appeal for God to plead his cause—in his case the decisions of God will bring deliverance.



## Great are Your tender mercies

In the Hebrew text, the word *great* means both *many* and *great*. When these two ideas are combined, they seem to be well expressed by our word *abundant*. The psalmist reiterates his appeal to God to revive his life based on God's compassion.

Your tender mercies, רַחֵם (racham) refers to that tender care and protection God has for those who are helpless and dependent—like a mother for her child.

This root refers to deep love rooted in some “natural” bond. It is used for the deep feelings we know as compassion, pity, mercy.

Just as a father has *compassion* on his children, so the LORD has *compassion* on those who fear Him.  
(Psa 103:13)

The psalmist is pleading for tender father-like treatment from the LORD.

## **IV. The righteous who are faithful to God's Word will be opposed by faithless adversaries (Psa 119:157–158)**

**Psalm 119:157** Many are my persecutors and my enemies, Yet I do not turn from Your testimonies.

To make his appeal stronger the psalmist affirms his loyalty to God in the midst of adversity. He is assailed by many persecutors and adversaries, but he remains loyal to God—he does not turn from his testimonies.

Nothing his opponents can say or do will make him abandon the path of righteousness laid down in God's Word.

The word *persecutors* was used of those pursuing others for the purpose of taking revenge or making war. In most contexts it refers to the pursuit of good men by evil men.

However, it is used in a good sense in Psalm 23:6 where we read, “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life ...”

David was “pursued” by the goodness and grace of God from cradle to grave and then forevermore!

The word *enemies* is vividly illustrated by its use in Numbers 33:55 where it is translated *trouble*.

It says,

*But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them will become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they shall **trouble** you in the land in which you live.*

Many are my persecutors and my enemies,

Yet I do not turn from Your testimonies.

The word *turn* literally means *to bend*. When one is associated with the minority opinion, as Christians always are, one is faced with the continual temptation to shift allegiance, to bend, to give in. In maintaining truth, we are never to bend.

**Psalm 119:158** I see the treacherous, and am disgusted, Because they do not keep Your word.

The psalmist not only follows God's way, but also he is grieved to see those who do not. He sees people who are treacherous—who cannot be trusted to keep their word, and he is disgusted (see Psa 139:21 and 95:10).



*Treacherous* describes behavior which is deceitful. The word describes unfaithfulness to a covenant, meaning the people had not kept faith, but went back on their word.

The verb is used to denote unfaithfulness in several different relationships: unfaithfulness in marriage; Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord; Israel's revolt against the Lord and His covenant.

Disgusted קוט (qut) be grieved, loathe. This is used for God's attitude toward the Canaanites

Lev 20:23: And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them.

Ps 139:21. Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

People who violate God's covenant disturb the psalmist tremendously. No doubt he was grieved over their behavior, but he was also disgusted by it—the Word of God is being ignored and violated every day!

It is important to note that his disgust does not flow from anything personal. It is not because they afflict him; he is disgusted because they despise God's Word. His attitude toward them flows from his strong identity with the Lord.

**V. The righteous who affirm their love for the truth of God's eternal Word may appeal to God's faithful love to revive them in their faith (Psa 119:159–160)**

**Psalm 119:159** Consider how I love Your precepts;  
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.

Consider רָאָה ra'ah the common word for seeing with the eyes, but used metaphorically it means to regard, perceive, feel, understand, learn.

Consider how I love your precepts.

In the last two verses of the file, he returns to his appeal for God to “consider / look on.”

In verse 153 he wanted God to see (become involved with) his affliction; here he wants God to see (recognize and approve) his faithfulness, which is not due to a forced obedience, but to his love for God’s precepts.

The Psalmist “loved” God’s commandments (Ps 119:47), law (v. 97), testimonies (v. 119), and precepts (v. 159).

Using this terminology is an expression of faithfulness to the covenant, for “love” is the foundation and motivation of obedience to the Word of the LORD.

Deut. 6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Obedying the law of God is not an unpleasant, burdensome task; it is the natural lifestyle of those who love the LORD and His Word.

The psalmist's appeal for God to revive him is based on God's faithful, covenant love.

At the heart of the covenant is love — the Lord's faithful love — to His people.

Every believer in any difficulty may appeal to God to act on His faithful covenant love for His people to vindicate them by delivering them from affliction and restoring their lives.

But you need to know what God has promised.

**Psalm 119:160** The entirety of Your word is truth,  
And every one of Your righteous judgments  
endures forever.

He concludes the stanza with a summary statement:  
The word translated “entirety” is literally “head”; here  
it means that the chief characteristic of God’s Word is  
truth.

Everything God has said is reliable, because He  
Himself is the truth (see John 14:6; cf, 17:17).



And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

*Every one* means totality, all. He says, “All of your Word is truth; all of your righteous judgments are eternal.”

Here is a comprehensive statement of the psalmist’s view of the totality of Scripture.

This is not simply a reality for the writer’s current predicament—the Word of God is eternal, and therefore eternally true. The Word never changes. Depend on it.