

Text: Ps 119.89-96

Our stanza in Psalm 119 this month begins with a very well known verse.

Ps 119.89 Forever, O Lord,
Your word is settled in heaven.

The theme I want to consider for our communion meditation is this:
redemption is Word-based

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. We have just moved into number 12, the beginning letter of each verse in this section is *lamedh* — it represents the “L” sound.

You may recall that Spurgeon called last month’s stanza the low point of the psalm, where the psalmist sank the deepest in his afflictions. The corner turns with this stanza.

Read Ps 119.89-96

What is it that cures the psalmist in his affliction? It is the word of God.

I’ve called our message:

The Settled Word Settles Our Salvation

Proposition: Our redemption is word-based: we trust God’s word.

I. The word of God considered in all aspects

A. The word in heaven (89)

1. God’s word is never contradicted in heaven: it is the fixed center of heaven
2. God’s word continues uncontradicted on earth [though men willfully contradict it] (90) — the very earth stands by God’s word
3. Everything depends on God’s word, he works it according to his will (91)

B. The word in my heart (92)

1. The one who delights in the word can stand in affliction
2. The one who turns to the word can revive when ready to perish (93)

3. The psalmist commits to the word though fasted with enemies (94-95)

C. The word unbound (96)

1. There are many perfections in the earth: but each has its limits
2. God's word has no limit, it is exceedingly broad

II. The key word offering confidence in God's word: forever

A. Basic meaning: indefinite continuance into the future

1. Like a Gk term, *aeon*, which means a long, long, indefinite period
2. In Heb, it gets the direction of its meaning from its attached prepositions
 - a. "since," "until," "up to" — "the age"
 - b. In certain constructions can refer to the past, which although not exactly "eternal" means "a time long before the immediate knowledge of those living"¹
 - c. In other constructions, can stand by itself meaning "since, until, to the most distant time"
3. Thus ranges from "the remotest time" and "eternity" in most uses

B. Occurs twice in our stanza

1. The forever settled word (89)
 - a. Lit, "to the most distant time ... your word is settled"
 - b. This might as well be forever as our translation has it
 - c. This expresses the supreme reliability of the word
2. The never forgotten word (93)
 - a. Lit. "to the most distant time [I] will never forget your word"
 - b. The enduring effect of the word is seen here
 - 1) Once revived
 - 2) Never shaken again

¹ Allan A. Macrae, "1631 עולם," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 672.

III. Christian testimony to God's word

A. James Montgomery Boice describes the sentiment of this stanza this way:

"It is as if he had been struggling in a pounding ocean surf, trying desperately to reach land, and had at last drawn himself up on a big rock standing by the shore; or as if he had been sinking in quicksand and had suddenly found solid ground beneath his feet. That rock, that solid foundation, is the Word of God."²

B. Boice also mentions Martin Luther describing God's word:

"The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me. The Bible is not antique or modern. It is eternal."³

C. Constable says this of Luther:

"In 1542, Martin Luther wrote the words of verse 92 on his Bible with his own hand. At this time much of his reforming work was behind him, and he lived only four more years."⁴

Ps 119.92 If Your law had not been my delight, Then I would have perished in my affliction.

Conclusion:

Proposition: Our redemption is word-based: we trust God's word.

The Settled Word Settles Our Salvation

² James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107-150: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2005), 1011.

³ Quoted by Joel R. Beeke and Ray B. Lanning, "The Transforming Power of Scripture," in *Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1995), 331–32, and cited in Boice, 1011.

⁴ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ps 119.89.