

Psalm 119

There are 8 different words used throughout Psalm 119 to describe God's "law" or "Word". Make note of their individual definition, each time they are used, and the context in which they are employed. These are not all synonyms with the same meaning, but communicate something very specific.

1. **Commandments.** ("mitsvah", used 22 times)
Those things which God has spoken which detail the responsibilities of human beings to live in a covenant relationship with Him. Especially in the Old Testament, commandments defined how Israel was to live in a covenant relationship with God, this being expanded upon in the New Testament. It was the means of consecrating God's people to Himself. God specifically states that those who observe His commandments are "those who love Me". (Ex. 20:6; Dt. 5:10)
2. **Law.** ("torah", used 25 times) While this most certainly can mean Scripture in general, it is important to note that "torah" is not just the formal name of the Law given through Moses but also means "teaching" or "instruction". One of the amazing things is to consider that God provided Scripture as His instruction and personal teaching on how to live. Some scholars make the distinction between the "ceremonial" law (the OT rites and ceremonies of worship), the "judicial" law (civil policy of the nation of Israel), and the "moral" law (God's binding of human conduct at all times). (Dt. 17:18-20)
3. **Ordinances/Judgments.** ("mishpat", used 20 times)
In modern terms we might call this "case law". These are the verdicts, outcomes, or formal decrees established based on resolving a situation brought before the court. It describes the practical application of the Law in situations not specifically detailed word for word so that we may understand how God's Word is applicable in every situation and that it provides no loopholes. It describes a third party who presiding over the mediation of a dispute which may include decisions of approval as well as condemnation.

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