

144 The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting;
Give me understanding, and I shall live.



Qoph

145 I cry out with my whole heart; Hear me, O LORD!
I will keep Your statutes.

146 I cry out to You;
Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.

147 I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help;
I hope in Your word.

148 My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.

149 Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness;
O LORD, revive me according to Your justice.

150 They draw near who follow after wickedness;
They are far from Your law.

151 You are near, O LORD,
And all Your commandments are truth.

152 Concerning Your testimonies,
I have known of old that You have
founded them forever.

Resh

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



Qoph notes

The first line of the Qoph section contains the last occurrence of one of the psalmist's favorite themes, "my whole heart" (vs. 2, 10, 34, 58, 69).

The section includes three obvious pairs of verses:

145-146, with their identical "I cry out"

147-148, which move from the dawning of the morning through the night watches

150-151, with consecutive lines featuring *near*, *far*, and *near* again.

Verse 149 is a pair on its own--it is the only instance in the psalm of two *according to*'s in one verse.

And the whole section is itself part of a pair, the other half being Resh, the section which follows it. The two sections share similarities in both content and structure; each contains "intense lament," each moves "from agitation to adoration."¹

In the second pair of verses, we can safely assume that someone who is thinking of God before dawn and after dark is probably giving him serious thought during the rest of the day as well. This consistent pursuit of God must have many positive benefits, as is evident even in these two verses. From morning to night, a great change has taken place in the psalmist's perspective. His early morning plea is transformed into late night meditation; his focus has shifted from himself to God. No wonder he reaches a conclusion of peace and trust in verses 151 and 152.

Zemek: "Deeply internalized recognitions of the presence of God and the purity and perpetuity of His Word are very practical sufficiencies in the face of all kinds of suffering."²

Derek Kidner on vs. 150-151 "Note the realism of the double statement, *They draw near. . .but thou art near*. The threat is not glossed over; it is put in perspective by a bigger fact."³

Alexander Maclaren on vs.152: "The convictions of a lifetime were too deeply rooted to be disturbed by such a passing storm. There is, as it were, a calm smile of triumphant certitude in that 'Long ago.' Experience teaches that the foundation, laid for trust as well as for conduct in the Law, is too stable to be moved, and that we need not fear to build our all on it. Let us build rock on that rock, and answer God's everlasting testimonies with our unwavering reliance and submission."⁴

¹ George J. Zemek, *The Word of God in the Child of God*, p. 325

² *Ibid*, p. 332.

³ *Psalms 73-150*.

⁴ The Psalms, in *The Expositor's Bible: A Complete Exposition of -Isaiah*; ed. W. Robertson Nicoll; Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI, 1982; p. 257.