

72 The law of Your mouth is better to me
Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.



Yod

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.
74 Those who fear You will be glad when they see me,
Because I have hoped in Your word.

75 I know, O LORD, that Your **judgments** are right,
And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.
76 Let, I pray, Your **merciful kindness** be for my comfort,
According to Your word to Your servant.
77 Let Your **tender mercies** come to me, that I may live;
For Your law is my delight.

78 Let the proud be ashamed,
For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood;
But I will meditate on Your precepts.
79 Let those who fear You turn to me,
Those who know Your testimonies.
80 Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes,
That I may not be ashamed.

KAPH

81 My soul faints for Your salvation,
But I hope in Your word.



Yod notes

The opening of this passage is identical to a line from the book of Job:

“Your hands have made me and fashioned me,
an intricate unity; yet you would destroy me.” (Job 10:8)

This is not necessarily a direct quote; but if it's a coincidence, it's not an unlikely one. Here, as in the Teth section (vs. 76-72), the psalmist deals with the theme of affliction in the life of the righteous, so it's appropriate that his thoughts mirror in some way those of a saint whose name is virtually synonymous with suffering.

But while affliction led Job to wonder if God was trying to destroy him, for the psalmist it is only another reason to turn to and trust God. In verses 67 and 71 he acknowledged the benefits wrought by affliction; here, in verse 75, he sees God's faithfulness even in the midst of his suffering. As George Zemek points out, the psalmist thus anticipates by some centuries the exhortation of Peter: “Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:19).

As always, the psalmist is more concerned with his personal holiness rather than with deliverance from his enemies; with a righteous response to difficulties rather than with their removal; with integrity rather than reputation. Will the proud twist the truth and turn others against him? Then he will respond again by turning to God's precepts. If he can keep his heart blameless, he will not be ashamed, regardless of any other effects of their attack.

Alexander Maclaren points out the strong and encouraging connection in verses 75-77. If we must suffer the judgments of God, then let them be accompanied by his merciful kindness and his tender mercies. “Sorrows still sting and burn, though recognised as sent in love, and the tried hearts yearns for these other messengers to come from God to sustain and soothe.” The grouping of verses and emphasized words in the page layout for this month reflects this thought.

You'll notice immediately that the last five verses of this section all begin, in English with the word “Let.” Be forewarned that the verses of this section are consistently longer and more complicated than what is normal for the psalm. This makes them especially difficult to memorize and retain (and particularly challenging to set to music, for those interested in that task).