

Psalm 119:111

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

Analysis

"Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart." The Hebrew *nachalti edvotekha le'olam* (I have inherited/taken as heritage your testimonies forever) uses inheritance language. *Nachal* means to inherit, possess as property. God's *edot* (testimonies/statutes) become permanent possession, valued treasure passed to succeeding generations. "For ever" (*le'olam*) indicates eternal value—this inheritance never depreciates. The reason: *ki sason libi hemah* (for the rejoicing of my heart they are). *Sason* means joy, gladness, exultation—God's Word produces heart-level delight. This inverts worldly values: people typically rejoice in material inheritance (land, wealth), but the psalmist finds supreme joy in spiritual inheritance (God's revealed truth). Echoes Psalm 19:10 (God's judgments more desirable than gold) and Jeremiah 15:16 (God's words the joy of heart).

Historical Context

Israel's primary inheritance was the Promised Land (Canaan), distributed by tribe and family (Joshua 13-21). Land inheritance was sacred, protected by Jubilee laws preventing permanent sale (Leviticus 25). Yet Levites received no land inheritance—"the LORD is their inheritance" (Deuteronomy 18:2). This verse spiritualizes inheritance: God's Word becomes the believer's permanent possession, more valuable than real estate. In exile, Jews lost land but retained Torah. Dispersion scattered Jews globally, yet Scripture united them across centuries and continents.

Christians inherit similar spiritual wealth—not earthly Canaan but heavenly promises (Ephesians 1:11-14, 1 Peter 1:3-5).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. In what sense is Scripture your "inheritance," and how do you value it compared to material possessions?
2. How can believers pass the "inheritance" of God's Word to the next generation?
3. What aspects of God's testimonies produce genuine rejoicing in your heart?

Interlinear Text

נָּסַּת לִתְּנִי	עֲדָתֶךָ יְהִי	לְעוֹלָם	כִּי
have I taken as an heritage	Thy testimonies	for ever	H3588
H5157	H5715	H5769	
שָׁשׁ וְ	לִבְּ	בְּנֵה:	
for they are the rejoicing	of my heart	H1992	
H8342	H3820		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 15:16 (Parallel theme): Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Psalms 119:174 (Parallel theme): I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.

Psalms 16:5 (Parallel theme): The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

Psalms 119:92 (Parallel theme): Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

1 Peter 1:4 (Parallel theme): To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Hebrews 9:15 (Parallel theme): And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Psalms 119:74 (Parallel theme): They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.

Psalms 19:8 (Parallel theme): The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalms 119:14 (Parallel theme): I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

Psalms 119:127 (Parallel theme): Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.