

Psalm 119:160

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

Analysis

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." The Hebrew *rosh devarekha emet* (the sum/beginning of your word is truth) affirms Scripture's total truthfulness. *Rosh* means head, beginning, sum, chief—encompassing both initial principle and comprehensive totality. *Emet* (truth/faithfulness/reliability) indicates absolute correspondence to reality, complete trustworthiness. "Every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever"—*u'le'olam kol mishpat tsidkekha* (and forever all the judgment of your righteousness). God's *mishpat* (judgments/ordinances) possess eternal validity because they flow from His *tsedek* (righteousness). This totalizing claim—"every one"—permits no exceptions. Jesus affirmed: "thy word is truth" (John 17:17) and "scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Reformed confessions assert Scripture's infallibility and inerrancy in all it affirms.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Hammurabi, Hittite treaties) claimed divine authorization but were limited to specific times and contexts. Israel's Torah claimed universal and eternal authority as direct divine revelation (Exodus 20:1, Deuteronomy 5:4-5). When kings revised or ignored God's law, prophets condemned them (1 Samuel 13:13-14, 1 Kings 11:9-13). Josiah's reform centered on recovering Scripture's authority (2 Kings 22-23). Jesus battled religious leaders who elevated tradition over Scripture (Mark 7:6-13). Early church fathers defended Scripture against Gnostic claims of secret, extra-biblical revelation.

Church history's battles over sola scriptura reflect this verse's claim: God's Word alone possesses eternal, absolute authority.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does affirming Scripture's complete truthfulness affect how you approach difficult or culturally unpopular passages?
2. What competing authorities (tradition, reason, experience, culture) tempt you to qualify Scripture's truth claims?
3. In what practical ways do you demonstrate trust in the eternal validity of God's righteous judgments?

Interlinear Text

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|--------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-------------------|------------|-----------|
| רָאשׁ | דְּבָרָךְ | אָתָּה | תִּדְבֹּר | וְלֹעֲזֵל | מִלְּאָכֵל | מִשְׁפָּט |
| from the beginning | Thy word | is true | | endureth for ever | | judgments |
| H7218 | H1697 | H571 | | H5769 | H3605 | H4941 |

אֶל-אֶת-

and every one of thy righteous

H6664

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 30:5 (Word): Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

2 Timothy 3:16 (Righteousness): All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Psalms 119:144 (Righteousness): The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

Matthew 5:18 (Word): For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Psalms 119:142 (Righteousness): Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

Ecclesiastes 3:14 (Parallel theme): I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

Psalms 119:138 (Righteousness): Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.

Psalms 119:152 (Parallel theme): Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

Psalms 119:75 (Judgment): I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

Psalms 119:86 (Word): All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.