

# Psalms 19:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

## Analysis

**The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.** David's celebration of God's word reaches its climax with two final characteristics and their effects. This verse synthesizes the preceding descriptions, presenting Scripture's moral purity and eternal reliability, its truth and comprehensive righteousness.

"The fear of the LORD is clean" (yir'at-Yahweh tehovah, יִרְאַת־יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה) introduces "fear" (yir'ah) as equivalent to God's word. The "fear of the LORD" is foundational wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10)—not terror but reverence, awe, worship, and obedient respect. That this fear is "clean" (tahor, pure, undefiled) indicates it purifies those who possess it. Unlike pagan religious fear that enslaves, biblical fear of God liberates by aligning us with reality and righteousness.

"Enduring for ever" (omedet la'ad, עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד) contrasts with everything temporal. Amad means to stand, remain, endure. God's word does not change with cultural shifts or philosophical fashions. Jesus declared: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Peter wrote: "The word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Peter 1:25). This permanence provides stable foundation in an unstable world.

"The judgments of the LORD" (mishpetey-Yahweh, מִשְׁפָּטֵי־יְהוָה) refers to God's judicial decisions, His righteous verdicts, His evaluations of right and wrong. These are "true" (emet, אֱמֶת)—corresponding to reality, reliable, faithful—"and

righteous altogether" (tzadqu yachdav, צַדִּיק יָחַד). Tzedek (righteousness) appears in emphatic form: they are righteous completely, entirely, in every respect. Not one of God's judgments fails the standard of perfect righteousness. Every divine verdict is just; every evaluation is accurate; every standard is right.

## Historical Context

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The term "fear of the LORD" dominated Israel's wisdom tradition. Job was described as one who "feared God" (Job 1:1). Solomon wrote: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). This fear encompassed the entire proper human response to God—worship, trust, obedience, reverence. To fear the LORD was to orient one's life around His revealed will.

The eternal quality of God's word distinguished Israel's Scripture from surrounding nations' religious texts. Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Hammurabi's Code, for example) were products of their time and culture, acknowledged as human constructions. Israel's Torah was different: divine revelation that transcended any particular era. Moses had declared: "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

The affirmation that God's judgments are "true and righteous altogether" addressed a perennial challenge: when God's ways contradict human reasoning or preference, which authority prevails? Abraham questioned whether God would judge justly (Genesis 18:25). Job struggled with seemingly unjust suffering. Yet Scripture consistently affirms that when our judgment conflicts with God's, His is right and ours is flawed. His judgments are righteous—every single one, without exception.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does 'fear of the LORD' relate to loving God—are they compatible or contradictory?
2. What practical difference does it make that God's word 'endures for ever' in a rapidly changing world?
3. Why is it significant that God's judgments are 'true and righteous altogether'—completely, without exception?
4. How should the eternal, pure, and righteous nature of Scripture shape how believers read and apply it?

## Interlinear Text

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יִרְאֵה	יְהוָה	טְהוֹרָה	עוֹמָה	לְעַד	מִשְׁפָּטֵי
The fear	of the LORD	is clean	enduring	for ever	the judgments
H3374	H3068	H2889	H5975	H5703	H4941
יְהוָה	אֱמֶת	צְדִיקָה	יַחְדָּו		
of the LORD	are true	and righteous	altogether		
H3068	H571	H6663	H3162		

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Samuel 12:24** (Truth): Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

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

**Psalms 119:1** (References Lord): Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

**Deuteronomy 4:8** (Righteousness): And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

**Revelation 15:3** (Righteousness): And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

**Psalms 115:13** (References Lord): He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.

**Genesis 42:18** (Parallel theme): And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

**1 Kings 18:12** (References Lord): And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.