

# Open My Eyes ....

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Let's turn back then to the passage that we read, and particularly at verse 18.
- In the third section of the Psalm, beginning at verse 17, deal bountifully with your servant that I may live and keep your word.
- Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. And particularly the words that we find in verse 18.
- Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
- Unlike many of the other Psalms that we have in the book of Psalms, there is no inscription at the beginning of this Psalm.
- [ 1 : 03 ]     We don't know for sure who actually wrote it. But the majority of commentators agree and think through the experience that is shown throughout the Psalm that it was David, in fact, who wrote it.
- That may be so, we can't be a hundred percent sure, but it certainly would not surprise me if that were the case. But it's a Psalm like no other Psalm.
- There is nothing else like it throughout the other 150 Psalms. And not just because of its length.
- As you can see, it is the longest Psalm, the longest chapter, if we take it that way, throughout the scripture. It's as long as the following 22 Psalms put together, the Psalms of a cent that follow on from this.
- And perhaps something that helps us to understand the Psalm is that we see that there are strange words at the beginning of every section.
- [ 2 : 23 ]     Can't remember if we saw that on screen. I think we did, but if you're looking at the text at the moment, you will see that each section begins with a Hebrew word.
- So the first section is Aleph and the second Beth and the third Gimel and so on. And these are, in fact, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
- Notice why the Psalm is 22 sections long. And each section in the original in Hebrew has eight verses or eight lines.
- And we have to bear in mind, of course, that the Psalms are written as poems. In the original language, they are pieces of poetry.
- But this is a most unusual Psalm. Why is that? Because in the original language, every line begins with the letter of the alphabet of the section that it's in.
- [ 3 : 31 ]     So for example, in dealing with the first section with the letter A, Aleph, every line in Hebrew begins with A, with a word with the letter A. And the second section, Beth, beginning with the letter B, exactly the same way, and so on throughout the Hebrew Psalm.
- So that in actual fact, the Psalm is what we call anacrostic. Why was that? Well, some commentators think, and they may well be right here, that David wrote it this way for Solomon to be able to learn it and to remember it.

And acrostic is basically a memory tool. It helps you to learn things. And it would seem that it's much easier to learn things if they are laid out in a certain structured order.

And remember my father telling me many years ago of a man in Shobost, the next village for those of you who are visitors, who used to walk up to the top of Bint Raiqlech, one of the hills near to Shobost, and he would sing the whole of the Psalm in Gaelic from memory, from memory, having learnt it off my heart.

I have no idea who that man was. Maybe some of the older members of our congregation might have heard that story as well and be aware of it.

[ 5 : 17 ] Whether David wrote it in this way as a memory tool for Solomon is very possible. And certainly you and I require all the memory tools that are at our disposal to be able to memorise and to remember scripture.

And it is a Psalm that shows amazing things, like all the Psalms. Every single Psalm is a piece of the writer's experience.

The majority of David, others by Asif, one by Moses, one or two by Solomon and so on. And each one of them brings to us different things about the Word of God.

It's clear from the verses that we read, the first 24 verses, that the focus of the Psalm is God's law.

Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. It's interesting, isn't it, when we come to think of the law, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law, that our conception of law in biblical terms turns to be on the ten commandments.

[ 6 : 50 ] What we refer to normally as the moral law, the ten commandments. But we have to bear in mind that when David is referring, or whoever wrote the Psalm is referring to the law here, what he's actually referring to is the first five books of scripture.

What we call in English quite often the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. And what the Jews refer to as the Torah, the five books of the law, God's law.

And that the law was not just something that was given on two tables of stone at Mount Sinai. The law existed before that.

In fact the law existed before God created anything. And we have to remember again that when we look at the creation itself, that the word that is used in the first few chapters of Genesis, although in English it's usually as God, in Hebrew it's plural, Elohim, it's a plural term.

And it refers to the Trinitarian Act, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all being involved in the creation.

[ 8 : 29 ] God's law existed before the creation. We tend to forget that. It existed in the Garden of Eden before Adam is placed in it.

It existed in heaven before the world was created. God's law exists as an intricate, as an essential part of the attributes and the beings of God.

Now perhaps it's difficult for us to get our heads round exactly what that means. And that's why the psalmist says here, open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

When there is a request to open your eyes, open my eyes, it suggests in the first place that there is a blindness involved, that I am not seeing in the way that I should.

And of course that is what happens to the human being when he is born in sin.

[ 9 : 52 ] He is spiritually blind. We'll come to look at that in more detail in a moment.

But as we look at the law of God, the whole council of God, it exists with God himself in all eternity prior to anything being created.

You and I tend to have the concept that the law enters from Mount Sinai and not just the moral law but the ceremonial law which is given there as well.

Perhaps some might be more familiar with the terms in Gaelic, loch na mogenan agus loch na esgra, the moral law and the ceremonial law.

But these things, although they are not given until Mount Sinai, have existed in the mind of the Trinity from all eternity.

[ 11 : 02 ] How do we understand that? Is it possible there are so many things in Scripture that we cannot understand? And yet we have to believe them by faith because without faith it is impossible to please God.

That's what Scripture tells us. And therefore it is only through the eyes of faith that we are able to see and understand many of the things that are written in Scripture but we won't understand all of them.

There are things that you and I as believers even although we study all the theology that's available and we have it at our fingertips, there are things that we will never understand in God's Word.

How can you understand the virgin birth? We believe it by faith but we cannot understand it.

How can you understand God's mystery of election? That you were brought to faith while perhaps the person beside you was not?

[ 12 : 23 ] These are things that no matter how much our eyes are opened by the Holy Spirit in dealings with God's Word that we just cannot understand.

And yet because Scripture tells us that it is so by faith we believe them. And this is the situation that the psalmist is in.

He sees himself as blind. Open my eyes. And so it is with every human being that comes into this world.

They are blind to the principles of Scripture. They are blind to God's law. They are blind to the Word of God.

In fact they are born in original sin. In original sin. Isn't that what David confesses in Psalm 51 and again in Psalm 145 where he says that I was conceived in sin.

[ 13 : 32 ] And it's hard, isn't it, for us to imagine a beautiful young child, a baby being born that is still conceived in sin, that is guilty of the sin of Adam.

How did that happen? How do you and I understand the origin of sin? Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

But if you look at God's law before that, God's law seems to have been broken in heaven even before the creation of the world.

How was that? By the angels that rebelled. We don't know. We can't understand.

Why Satan, the adversary, rebelled against God. Scripture doesn't tell us. But it makes it clear to us in a couple of passages and you see Kiel and Isaiah, if that's what it refers to and there's great argument about that, that it was through pride that Satan fell.

[ 14 : 58 ] And when he fell, as the book of Revelation tells us, he drew a third of the angels with him who fell with him.

Again if you calculate for the number of angels mentioned in the book of Revelation, there must have been well over a million that fell along with Satan. Perhaps several million.

We don't know. But that sin that happened in the heavens, in the realms of the spirit world, became transferred to Adam in the garden.

When Adam was created, he was sinless. He knew God's law. He did not need his eyes opened because God's law was written on his heart.

You all know the story of what happened. That Eve was deceived but Adam fell through his own choice.

[ 16 : 16 ] It was his decision, his free will that led him to sin. And from then on in Adam as our federal head, the head of the covenant, all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God.

That's what original sin is all about. And although you and I have been created in the image of God, let us make man in our image, he says.

What remains in us of that image has been marred by my sin. Only our conscience tells us at time and again when we are doing wrong before our eyes are opened.

And it is in the garden that we see wonderful things in the law. We take the law as being the first five books of the Old Testament.

There we see amazing things. When Adam and Eve are cast out of the garden, you remember that God provides for them.

[ 17 : 36 ] They have fallen. The way to the garden is now barred by the cherubim, the presence of God, the symbols of the presence of God and the flaming sword that is there.

But in the first act of mercy, in the covenant of grace with Adam and Eve, God clothes them in animal skins.

We are not told which animal, it doesn't matter. What matters is the fact that the animals had to be sacrificed in order for the skins to be provided.

And God's first act of mercy towards human beings, towards fallen sinners is through the shedding of blood.

You remember that the writer to the Hebrews says that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. There is no forgiveness of sin.

[ 18 : 43 ] Wonderful things in the law, in the first five books of the Old Testament, of the Torah. When you start to think of all the amazing things that took place even in creation, in creation itself, we don't have time to go into all of them.

But then we see that God is so clearly a God of order and not a God of chaos. There is an order in creation.

There is an order in the natural laws that govern the world. And so often we find that difficult to understand and yet it's quite easy.

All you have to do is think of something as simple as a triangle. Why do the angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees?

Hey, nobody can explain that, it just does. That's the way it is. It's a natural law. Why is the law of gravity natural?

[ 19 : 57 ] If I pick up and drop my mask, it will fall to the floor. No matter how often I do it, it will fall to the floor unless somebody puts a fan under it so that it blows up, but it will still eventually fall.

Why? Because of the law of gravity. And as we go on and seek through the scientific world and the principles involved in science, we find that there is an order to all of them.

And it is God's order. The world was created through order in the same way as the law was given through order.

It wasn't given by chaos, it was given as a piece of order to enable us to live or to try to live up to the standards that God requires.

But at the same time as that law was given, it became evident that it was impossible for us to fulfil the law.

[ 21 : 14 ] All you have to do is think of the first commandment. You shall love the Lord your God with what? One day a week, a few minutes every day.

No. With all your heart and all your soul and all your mind.

However many of us are able to do that, to say that we comply with that. Isn't that what the psalmist has in mind here in the very first verse of the psalm?

Blessed are those whose way is blameless. Who among us can say that our way is blameless?

Who walk in the law of the Lord? And you and I say that we really do walk in the law of the Lord.

[ 22 : 09 ] It's impossible for us to do so. What do we see after that in the books of the law? Or very quickly after the expulsion from Eden, we see the first murder taking place.

A man murders a man. Man has murdered man to satisfy his own greed throughout the ages of history.

Isn't that the story of history? We're supposed to learn from history so that we don't commit the same mistakes again. But in fact if you study history you'll see that it's a repetition of the same mistakes being made over and over and over.

Man's inhumanity to man. And it starts at the very beginning of our existence, at the beginning of scripture.

Man's inhumanity to man. How throughout history those with power have exploited those who do not for different reasons?

[ 23 : 24 ] I'm not going to do a quick ten minute resumé in up world history for you. You can do that yourself. So how do we see these things tying together?

The psalmist asks the question in verse nine. How can a young man keep his way pure by guarding it according to God's word, to your word?

And yet at the same time there is acknowledgement that we are incapable of doing this. Throughout the psalm the psalmist uses different words for the law and for God's word.

He uses statutes, righteous rules, judgments, testimonies and so on. And as you read through the psalm you'll find that these words exist in every single verse.

Throughout the whole psalm, just checking to see 176 verses. Can't remember. He's going as I get older so I can't remember exactly how many verses there are.

[ 24 : 39 ] In 176 verses there are only two that do not refer to one of the words for law.

Statutes, judgments, precepts, etc. and so on. So what do we see? I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

The law that was given as Sinai, the moral law, the first four commandments showing man's duty to God and then the next six showing man's duty to man.

But then along with that is given the ceremonial law. How much did Moses understand of the law that was given to her?

How much did David even understand of the books that he had of the law? You remember in David's time the only books that he would have had in scripture would probably have been the first five books, the Torah.

[ 25 : 41 ] He may have had the book of Joshua as well but the other books probably weren't written until after that. So that is all that he had to meditate on God's law.

And yet there are wonderful things in these books. Isn't it amazing how God appears to Moses in the burning bush?

The bush that was not consumed. And the name that is given. Who shall I say has sent me?

I am. I am that I am has sent me. We mustn't think that during the 3000 plus years before Moses in which mankind existed or whatever your concept of man's existence prior to Moses is, we mustn't think that God's law didn't exist.

Abraham knew God's law, Noah knew God's law, Enoch knew God's law. In fact he walked with God and was no more.

[ 26 : 59 ] And as we heard this morning when we were speaking about the year when Mr. Campbell was speaking about the transfiguration, Enoch is one of the two people who was taken directly to heaven.

Who never died, Enoch and Elijah. Isn't that not wonderful in itself?

How did Elijah and Moses appear on the mount of transfiguration? One who had died and one who had never died.

And yet they are both there on the mount of transfiguration. Those things in your law, the time will not permit to go through all the wondrous things in the ceremonial law, in the tabernacle, in the sacrifices, on the mercy seat, in the holy of holies, on the day of atonement, on the vestments and the dress of the high priest and the Levites who served.

All these things, the writer to the Hebrews tells us, were symbols and shadows of what was to come.

[ 28 : 21 ] You see it's impossible for you to understand the New Testament unless you have a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament.

The letter to the Hebrews is impossible to understand unless you are familiar with the first five books of the law, with the Torah.

Because it opens up all the detail there of the symbolism and the shadows that were given. Why?

Because they point to one thing. They point to something even more wonderful that was to come.

They point to the Messiah, the Anointed One of Israel, the promise that was given to Jacob before he died, that he himself prophesied that out of Shiloh would come the law giver.

[ 29 : 28 ] Shiloh was simply a symbol of the tabernacle to come, which in turn was a symbol of the temple to come.

And yet it was a symbol of the spiritual temple, not just the physical building. Remember so often that when we speak of the church we are not referring just to the building, but we're referring to the people.

That is the church without hands. And Peter refers to this in the opening chapters of his letter, the first letter, which you can look at when you go home.

He refers to the fact that so much of the Old Testament figures were given to people who wrote them down, but who didn't understand what they were writing.

Go to Psalm 22, written by David. Do you think David really understood what he was writing about when he wrote all the details of the crucifixion there?

[ 30 : 39 ] The parting of the carols, the nailing of the hands and feet. I doubt if he understood what he was writing.

But Moses even understand many of the wonderful things that he saw happening, of the shadows that he was given. When he was told to raise up the serpent, the brazen serpent on the pole, so that anyone who looked on it would be healed.

And you remember that our Lord himself, prior to his crucifixion, says just that, that he has to be raised up as Moses raised the serpent in the wilderness.

And all these things point us to the one who wants to come, to the great High Priest, to the Lord Jesus Christ, the man who knew no sin, but was made sin for us, so that you and I would eventually be restored through faith to the way that we were in the garden before the fall, to have communion with God, perfect communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Something that we are unable to do here on earth. But we get glimpses of it every so often. You get glimpses of God's presence through the Holy Spirit, sometimes in your own devotional time, sometimes in our service, sometimes in communion season, sometimes in fellowship.

[ 32 : 27 ] You are given glimpses of heaven on earth. And as you are given these glimpses, how you long for so much more.

You see, man longs for the presence of God that he lost through his federal head, through Adam in the garden.

And you and I long for the presence of God in our lives. But there are many whose eyes are still shut, who have no interest whatsoever in the things of God.

But if you're here this evening and if you're listening online this evening, it's because you have an interest in the things of God. And you may not have had your eyes fully opened as yet.

But surely this will be the prayer of every believer. And it should be the prayer of every unbeliever.

[ 33 : 38 ] Every believer is praying continually for God to open his eyes to see wonderful things in the law, in the scriptures every single day.

He wants more and more of the experience of being with God and feeling the Holy Spirit's presence with Him.

You can say David says that so often in several of the Psalms that he faints like the heart faints as he pants after living water.

Isn't this the living water that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the Samaritan woman about? As he opened her eyes to see who he was and to see what he was.

It's fascinating isn't it, that his first admission in scripture of Jesus being the Christ, the Messiah. Remember that Christ and Messiah, the same word in two different languages, one in Greek and one in Hebrew, he who wants to come is to a Samaritan woman, to a Gentile.

[ 34 : 58 ] Not to a Jew, but to a Gentile. What a wonderful thing, an amazing thing it was that the Lord Jesus would come to go to the cross and to die for sin and sinners such as you and I.

And that he would be able to make that sacrifice. A sacrifice seen throughout the Old Testament in the symbols there, but which David and Isaiah saw so clearly, David and Sam 22, Sam 16, Isaiah 53 and others as well.

Their eyes were opened through the outpouring of the Spirit and yet in the Old Testament these things were only revealed partially.

Perhaps they had an excuse for not understanding, but you and I have no excuse because we have both the Old and the New Testaments, one incomplete without the other.

But our eyes can be fully opened with both. It is through both that we see the full revelation of the passion and the glory of Jesus Christ.

[ 36 : 24 ] That we see the Messiah fulfilling the death on the cross.

How wonderful is the resurrection that took place. Wondrous things out of your law. And yet Paul tells us as he comments on the curse of the law and Galatians 2, that if it hadn't been for the resurrection we would have no hope whatsoever.

Aren't you thankful this evening that you have a hope? That you have a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who thought it not robbery to be made under the law, but who through the fulfilling of the law was able to rescue us from the curse of the law.

That's the promise of Scripture. That's the purpose of God's plan of redemption conceived in all eternity between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, brought to a culmination on the cross so that through the blood that is shed you have no excuse this evening except your own blindness not to see your need for a Savior.

Shouldn't that be your prayer? The prayer of everyone here this evening? Whether you're a believer or not?

[ 38 : 08 ] Open my eyes. Open my eyes for the believer to see more and more of the glory of Christ shown through the Scriptures.

And for those who have not yet come to faith that through the work of the Spirit your eyes would be open to see the wondrous things, the salvation that has been provided, the atonement that was rendered and the work of the cross.

Time has gone by. There are so many other wonderful things that we could see. The visions that John is given of the heavens to come when we shall be like him.

John tells us that in his letter. We know not. Beloved, he says, we know not what we are. But we know that we shall be like him.

How is that? Or that is something for you to meditate on at home. How will you be like Christ?

[ 39 : 16 ] Through all eternity in heaven. Eternity will be a learning process for the believer. And you will never stop learning during that eternity.

But a prayer would be that you would never stop learning here on earth. We all have to look forward to eternity.

Some of us have a very sad eternity perhaps to look forward to. But others have a glorious eternity.

Glorious in the Passion of Christ. Glorious in the presence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Where you will spend eternity in praise and water.

And getting to know more and more about this wonderful Savior revealed in the law. May the Lord bless these few thoughts to us.

[ 40 : 22 ] Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you allow us to open our eyes and to see wonderful things in your law.

We pray that you would open our eyes more and more, that your people would be given glimpses of the glory that is still to come. To see the Shekinah glory that descended in the Transfiguration.

To see it in its fullness once again. We pray for an outpouring of your spirit throughout our district, our island and our land.

That people would come to have their eyes open and see their need for salvation. For a Savior who rendered a full atonement on the cross that we might be saved.



We thank you for these meditations. Bless us now as we conclude our worship and pardon sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.