

Revelation and Redemption

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[0 : 00] Tonight we're going to cover Psalm 19, so let's go ahead and read all 14 verses of that Psalm.

! To the choir master, a Psalm of David, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has sent a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

[1 : 11] The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned, in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.

Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

The heading tells us that Psalm 19 was written by David, but we don't know the occasion for the psalm. Some scholars actually believe that the first six verses were a separate psalm, and the reason why they believe they could be two separate psalms put together is David uses two different names for God.

Notice that verse one refers to God, and that is the translation of the Hebrew word El, which is a name for God that was frequently used when describing God as the creator of the universe.

[2 : 32] And then if you look at verse seven, David refers to God as the Lord in that verse, and that is the translation of the Hebrew word Yahweh, the name that God revealed to Moses when God made the covenant with the Israelites.

So here's the main idea for the psalm. Regardless of whether it was one psalm or two, it doesn't really matter. The main idea is that Psalm 19 summarizes how God reveals himself and summarizes God's plan for redeeming sinners.

We're going to study this psalm in three sections tonight. The first section comes in verses one through six, and those verses tell us about God's revelation in the world.

God's revelation in the world is your first blink. Let's look at verses one through six again. David wrote, The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

[3 : 54] In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Here are some statistics that show why the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims his handiwork. With the naked eye, we can see about 5,000 stars.

Now that Oscar's had his cataracts removed, he might be able to see about 5,100. With the small telescope, we can see about 2 million.

And with the Palomar telescope, we can see billions of galaxies, to say nothing of individual stars. If we traveled at the speed of light, that's 186,000 miles a second, or roughly 6 trillion miles a year, it would take us 10 billion years to reach the farthest point we can see with one of those telescopes. But this would still be far from the outermost limits of space. Now astronomers think that space may have no bounds at all, so really, when you think about it, our Earth is nothing but a tiny speck in a probably limitless expanse.

[5 : 12] So think about it this way. If it cost a penny to ride 1,000 miles, a trip to the moon would only cost \$2.38. A trip to the sun would cost \$930, but a trip to the nearest star would cost \$260 million.

That's how far away those stars are. So Psalm 19.1 says in poetry what Moses said very simply in Genesis 1.1. And of course, Genesis 1.1 says, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Psalm 19.1 is a summary statement. The majestic creation is the evidence of an even more majestic creator God.

The heavens do show or manifest the glory of God. David shows that is how the heavens proclaim to us the glory of God, namely by openly bearing testimony that they've not been put together by chance.

They were wonderfully created by the supreme architect. God did more than reveal himself in the creation of the universe. God also revealed himself through the revelation by the succession of days.

[6 : 25] Look at verse 2. It says, David hears teaching that based upon the rhythm of days and nights, that the course and revolutions of the sun, moon, and stars are also regulated by the wisdom of God.

Your handout includes this next quote from John Calvin. He said, If indeed we are as attentive as we ought to be, even one day would suffice to bear testimony to us of the glory of God, and even one night would be sufficient to perform to us the same office.

But when we see the sun and the moon performing their daily revolutions, the sun by day appearing over our heads, and the moon succeeding in its turn, the sun ascending by degrees, while at the same time he approaches nearer to us, and afterwards bending his course so as to depart from us little by little, and when we see that by this means the length of days and nights is regulated, and that the variation of their length is arranged according to a law so uniform as invariably to recur at the same points of time in each successive year, we have in this a much brighter testimony to the glory of God.

The constant and regular succession of day and night speak to the glory of God, who first divided between the light and the darkness, and we know that God has from the beginning to this day preserved that established order without variation, and that of course was according to God's covenant with Noah.

Listen to God's covenant with Noah in Genesis 8.22. In Genesis 8.22, God said to Noah, While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.

[8 : 20] So let's move on to verse 3 now. Psalm 19.3 says, There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard.

The heavens are silent, but David is saying that they still preach loudly. So when he says there are no words whose voice is not heard, we see he's talking about them being silent, but still they're preaching when they do that.

The difference in variety of languages does not prevent the preaching of the heavens and their language from being understood and heard in every part of the world. Here's another quote from John Calvin.

He said, That is interesting to think about, is no matter where a person is in the world, we still have the heavens and the earth to testify to us about the glory of God.

And to put that last quote in more common language, what he is saying is that people from different parts of the world may be unable to understand each other. However, they can still marvel at the handiwork of God.

[9 : 43] Then in the first part of verse 4, David expands on his point that the entire world can marvel at what the heavens show us about God. Verse 4 begins with these words.

It says, Their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. This is a verse that the Apostle Paul quoted in Romans 10.18 to show the Jews why he preached to the Gentiles.

Every person everywhere on earth witnesses the testimony of the heavens and the sky. Their language is a visible language. It's a language which addresses itself to the sight or to our eyes. The heavens speak to people's eyes, not to their ears. So the glory of God then is written not in small obscure letters, but it's richly engraved in large bright characters which all men may read and read with the greatest of ease.

That was another quote from Calvin. And of course he's talking about reading that in the sky. In the last part of verse 4, David transitions from talking about the heavens and the sky to talking about the sun.

[10 : 53] Starting with the last section of verse 4 and continuing into verse 5, David says, In them, talking about the heavens and the sky, he, God, has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Before we get deeper into verse 5, we need to stop and consider the significance of the reference to the sun. In the ancient Middle East, the sun itself was often thought of as a god.

But in this psalm and in reality, the sun is only a stunning symbol of someone who created it.

Impressive as it is, the sun is just another creation of God.

Then in verse 5, David compares the sun to two things. He compares it to a bridegroom leaving his chamber and a strong man running his race with joy.

So when you picture a bridegroom in your mind, what comes to mind concerning how he acts and how he's dressed? Obviously, he's adorned pretty well, right, for his wedding day.

[12 : 04] At least most bridegrooms are. And Matthew Henry described a bridegroom as richly dressed and adorned, as fine as hands can make him, looking pleasantly himself and making all about him pleasant.

So how does a strong man run in a race when we move to the second comparison? Well, we see the strong man running with conviction, ready to show everybody what he can do.

And here's another quote from Matthew Henry about how the sun runs its course. He said, Though it seems a vast round which he, the sun, has to walk, and he is not a moment's rest, yet in obedience to the law of this creation and for the service of man, he not only does it, but does it with a great deal of pleasure.

That quote from Matthew Henry makes a point that we should notice, the sun does more than just testify to the glory of God. The sun provides a service to people.

And still speaking about the sun in verse 6, David says, Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

[13 : 23] The route that the sun follows is pictured as a half circle which takes it from one end of the heavens to the other. And the course begins at the eastern end of the heavens and continues down to the western horizon.

We know, of course, that the sun does not actually rise and set, but that the earth moves in relation to the sun, which creates an illusion that the sun rises and sets.

But in poetic passages, the Bible often uses the language of human appearance just as we do for our everyday speech. Watch just about any weather segment on a newscast, and you will see people talk about the sunrise and sunset using the same poetic description of what the sun does in a day.

Think about how people would consider it strange if we referred to the sunrise or the sunset like this. If you really want to make people wonder, next time you're around people on a sunrise or a sunset, just talk about what a gorgeous earth revolving we're seeing tonight.

See what kind of reaction you get when you talk about the gorgeous earth revolving. And the last part of verse 6 says one more thing about the sun. It says there is nothing hidden from its heat.

[14 : 41] Commentators differ on what David meant by this statement because the proper amount of sun does wonders for all living things, but we know that too much sun can do damage.

The sun also can expose things that people would like to remain hidden. When we get to verse 12, we'll see why it's likely that David was making a reference to exposing things which people would

like to keep hidden.

So we've seen from the first six verses how creation points to God. People thinking rationally about God see evidence of God in his creation. Lord Kelvin observed that if you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to believe in God.

And here's a quote from Immanuel Kant. He said, It is impossible to contemplate the fabric of the world without recognizing the admirable order of its arrangement and the certain manifestation of the hand of God in the perfection of its correlations.

Reason when once it is considered and admired so much beauty and so much perfection feels a just indignation at the dauntless folly which dares ascribe all this to chance and a happy accident.

[16:05] It must be that the highest wisdom conceived the plan and infinite power carried it into execution. We'd have a hard time finding anyone who would describe Immanuel Kant as a believer but even he still acknowledged that creation demonstrates the hand of God.

So this shows that simply seeing God in creation is never enough to save someone. John Greer, a Presbyterian minister in the United Kingdom says that the knowledge of God revealed in creation is never enough to save someone for one simple reason and that is because creation happened before the first sin.

I never really thought about it that way but when you think about it, creation did happen before the first sin so it revealed what God can do but it didn't show his plan of salvation.

So if creation alone is incapable of saving someone, what is powerful enough to save someone?

Well, the answer to that question is the heading for the second section of the study and the thing that is powerful enough to save someone is God's revelation in the word.

So God's revelation in the word is your second heading. Listen to verses 7 through 11 again. Notice how David refers to the Lord now and again we talked about how that is the covenant name for God that he revealed to Moses.

[17:35] Starting in verse 7, David said, The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned, in keeping them there is great reward.

The God who created the world also is the Lord who keeps his covenant with his special people. So once again, the God who created the world also is the Lord who keeps his covenant with his special people.

So think about why that statement was worth repeating. Creation reveals God as the mighty one, the God of power, but his word reveals him as the one who enters into covenant relationship with his people.

[18:48] God's works reveal his knowledge and power, but his word reveals his love and grace. Scientific truth, like the statistics we looked at earlier, may stimulate our intellect, but spiritual truth convicts our hearts and our conscience.

In verses 7 and 8, David follows a pattern. Each of four parallel lines contains a synonym for God's word.

Each describes then what God's word is and each pronounces what God's word accomplishes. So look at the first half of verse 7. It says, The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

So what's the synonym for God's word here? Right? The law is what he uses there. So what's the description of God's word?

Perfect. He says, The law of the Lord is perfect. And then what's the result of God's word? Reviving the soul. Right.

[19:54] Reviving the soul. So law could be better translated his teaching, his direction, or his instruction. And perfect there means flawless, without defect or error.

And of course, it means it's a guide which can neither mislead nor fail. So like food for the hungry, the law can refresh and restore the soul.

So check out the second half of verse 7 now. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. So what's the synonym for God's word there?

Testimony. And then what's the description of God's word? It's sure. And then what's the result of God's word? Making wise the simple is how the ESV puts it.

So God's word is a testimony to God's will and man's duty. So it's sure, meaning that it's fixed or certain. And when he talks about simple, that's not an insult there.

[21 : 00] The simple means those that have not closed their heart to instruction. It means those that are willing to have the instruction of God. Nobody has correct understanding until that person has made progress in the study of God's word.

So David shows by the word simple what kind of scholars God requires. And those are people who are fools in their own estimation. Listen to how Paul conveys the same idea to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 3.18.

Paul said, Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

So when we give ourselves up to be guided and governed by the word of God, we are never in danger of going astray. This is the path that God securely uses to guide his people to their salvation and also into their sanctification.

Moving on to the first half of Psalm 19.8, David wrote these words, The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. So what's the synonym for God's word here?

[22 : 15] Precepts. And then what's the description of God's word? Says that it's right. And then what's the result of God's word? Rejoicing the heart.

Rejoicing the heart. So the precepts of the Lord then are the various special injunctions by which man's obligations are set forth. So these provide the heart with the joy of moral satisfaction.

We need to remember that to David the law wasn't a burdensome restriction of his freedom but a gracious reflection of the holiness of God designed to lead man in the way of life and peace.

Look at the second half of verse 8. It says, The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. So what's the synonym for the law here? Well, ESV has it as commandment and then what's the description of the law?

Pure. And then what's the result of the law? Enlightening the eyes. Yes. So only in the commandments of God do we find the difference between good and evil laid out.

[23 : 25] Whatever men devise of themselves is mere filth corrupting the purity of the life. And David here says that men are blind and always wonder in darkness until they turn their eyes to the light of heavenly doctrine.

Verse 9 follows a similar pattern to verses 7 and 8 but it first speaks of the fear of the Lord. The first part of verse 9 says the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

Fear is not technically a word for the word but it does reflect the reality that scripture is the manual for how to worship God. The aim of the law was to implant reverence for God in the hearts of men. And then how is the fear of the Lord described there? It's described as clean or pure in contrast to the immorality of unsaved people.

Here's another quote from Matthew Henry. He said, The fear of the Lord, true religion and godliness prescribed in the word, reigning in the heart and practiced in the life, is clean, clean itself and will make us clean.

[24 : 34] It will cleanse our way. We also see that the fear of the Lord endures forever. So the fear of God is always the same. Time will never alter the nature of moral good and evil.

Sometimes it doesn't seem like that in our current society but we need to remember that. Time will never alter the nature of moral good and evil because that's the standard set out in God's word.

Consider how different this world would be if more people realized the truth of that last sentence.

And of course that again was time will never alter the nature of moral good and evil.

So look at the last part of verse 9 now. It says, The rules of the Lord are true and righteous all together. So how does David describe the rules of the Lord?

He talks about them being true and righteous and the rules of God are all righteous from the greatest to the least without a single exception. And by this David distinguishes the law of God from all the doctrines of men.

[25 : 41] No blemish or fault can be found in the law of God. It's absolutely perfect. Verses 7 through 9 give us more of the most concise statements on the sufficiency of scripture.

And in verses 7 to 9 we see that the Bible has everything we need to guide our behavior. Listen though to what else David has to say about the rules of God. These are verses 10 and 11 of Psalm

19.

Psalms 19:10 and 11 say, More to be desired are they than gold even much finer gold sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is your servant warned in keeping them there is great reward. Here's another quote from John Calvin. He said, The psalmist now exalts the law of God both on account of its price and sweetness.

The commendation depends on the commendations given in the preceding verses. For the many and great advantages which he has just now enumerated ought justly to make us account heavenly truth the highest and most excellent treasure and to despise when compared with it all the gold and silver of the world.

[26:57] The values of God's word cannot be computed in terms of gold but the word does have one thing in common with gold and that is that people must dig for that treasure.

Great wealth is hidden in the pages of God's book and our best interests are served when we search God's word for his wisdom. When we see what the law can accomplish we'll also savor it like we enjoy a sweet treat.

So, so far we've seen God's revelation in the world and God's revelation in the word. In this last section we'll see verses that tie the entire psalm together and verses 12 through 14 show us believers redemption through the word.

So, believers redemption through the word is your last section. Something may have been nagging at you as we talked about the benefits of the law that is that none of us can keep God's law perfectly unless somebody wants to admit to doing that.

Does anybody want to offer that they can keep God's law perfectly? We know that none of us can keep God's law perfectly and that's because without Christ there is in the law nothing but rigor.

[28:16] And that's rigor that we can't meet. John Calvin said it this way. He said, Without Christ there is nothing in the law but inexorable rigor which judges all mankind to the wrath and curse of God.

And further, without Christ there remains within us a rebelliousness of the flesh which kindles in our hearts a hatred of God and of his law. He continues by saying David in praising it as he does here speaks of the whole doctrine of the law which includes also the gospel and therefore under the law he comprehends Christ.

I like that quote from Calvin but there's one sentence in there that bothers me a little bit. He says, Without Christ there remains within us a rebelliousness of the flesh. I think we probably need to realize that even with Christ there remains within us a rebelliousness of the flesh and that's why it's even more important to spend time in God's word.

Even though Christ's incarnation happened centuries after David wrote this psalm verses 12-14 show that David rejoiced because David already knew that he had a redeemer.

So let's read verses 12-14 and follow them up with another quote from John Calvin. In verse 12-14 David wrote, Who can discern his errors?

[29:38] Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight. O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. So here's that next quote from Calvin.

He said, David's discourse is not to be understood simply of the commandments and of the dead letter, but that he comprehends at the same time the promises by which the grace of God is offered to us.

If the law did nothing else but command us, how could it be loved? Since in commanding it terrifies us because we all fail in keeping it. Certainly, if we separate the law from the hope of pardon and from the spirit of Christ, so far from tasting it to be as sweet as honey, we will rather find it in a bitterness which kills our wretched souls.

So with the grace of God through Christ in mind, let's look at verses 12-14 in more detail. And here's just the first part of verse 12 that says, Who can discern his errors?

[30:55] David here is asking a question that all of us should be able to ask sincerely. Because, say, people have a sin nature, none of us is capable of knowing every sin we do.

Some of us may use the law as a means of self-promotion, but that's not what the psalm teaches. Instead, the psalm is leading the singers to reflect on their own moral failures, both known and unknown.

David wants us to rely on God's forgiveness and to seek protection from sin's domination. Look at the second part of verse 12 and the first part of verse 13.

These have a prayer to God and David makes some requests here. He says, Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.

Let them not have dominion over me. The word hidden there shows the flow of thought in the psalm. Just as the sun's heat searches every nook and cranny so that there's nothing hidden from its heat like we saw in verse 6, so too the law searches all the hiding places of the soul.

[32 : 04] The honest faithful can only ask God to declare them innocent. We know that we ourselves can never be innocent of our own merit. That is why we need God to declare us innocent.

So this prayer includes a request for forgiveness even from hidden sins. Those are sins which we don't even remember or maybe sins that we committed in ignorance.

Then David also requests that God protect him from presumptuous sins. Presumptuous sins are sins committed in arrogant disregard of divine commands.

In other words, those are sins that we know are wrong but we still go ahead and do them anyway. Those types of sins, when repeated, come to have dominion over us and to enslave us.

So that's what David is getting at. He wants to be protected from the dominion of presumptuous sins. And because of his hidden sins and his presumptuous sins, David recognizes he needs justification.

[33 : 04] And simply put, justification is a theological term meaning to be declared righteous. David knows he can't be righteous on his own, but he also knows what will happen if he's declared righteous.

Look at the end of verse 13. He says, then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. So ask yourself a couple of questions.

How can David be justified? How can he be declared righteous? Well, we're going to look at two passages that show how God can justify a sinner without compromising God's own holiness and sinlessness.

The first is Romans chapter 3 verses 21 through 26. It's a little bit longer passage, so you might want to go ahead and turn there. Again, it's Romans chapter 3 verses 21 through 26.

So here's what Paul wrote in those verses. He said, but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it.

[34 : 13] The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

So Christ came so that God would be just and still be the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. We won't spend a lot of time looking at this Romans passage but we do need to highlight a few things about it.

Verse 24 says that all people are justified by God's grace as a gift when they put their trust in Jesus and that comes through the redemption that is in Christ.

For God to remain just a sinless person had to pay the penalty for a believer's sins. And of course we know that sinless person was Jesus. Jesus paid that penalty for us.

[35 : 32] Look at what verse 26 says. Again that is where God remained just while also becoming the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. That of course is good news and that is the gospel.

And the other verse we'll look at tonight is 2 Corinthians 5.21. Of course 2 Corinthians 5.21 gives us a one verse summary of how God can justify believers without God becoming unjust himself.

Look at 2 Corinthians 5.21 it says for our sake he talking about God made him talking about Jesus to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

So what should be our response to this undeserved justification that believers have received because of the grace of God through Christ? Well David provides us with a proper response in the

final verse of Psalm 19.

Verse 14 says let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight O Lord my rock and my redeemer. The phrase translated be acceptable there comes from the language of sacrifice using a term often associated with God's acceptance of properly offered literal sacrifices David asks for grace and enablement as he lays his lip and life sacrifices on the altar.

[37 : 04] When he talks about O Lord my rock and my redeemer who was David's rock? Well he didn't know that person yet but that rock was Christ and then of course who was his redeemer?

It's the same answer it's Christ again right? And Christ also is our rock and our redeemer and he becomes that for us by the grace of God.

All believers are part of God's special people because of the grace of God through Christ and that should make us think of first Peter 2 9 here is first Peter 2 9 Peter wrote that you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light Psalm 19 reminds us that the God we serve is the God who created the world God He's the God who's revealed himself through that creation more importantly though Psalm 19 reminds us that God has revealed himself through his word the most significant thing we see from Psalm 19 is that the God who created the world and revealed himself through his word is the God who provided a redeemer for us and that redeemer is God himself that brings us back to the main idea

Psalm 19 summarizes how God reveals himself and summarizes God's plan for redeeming sinners we need to consider how to apply this lesson to our daily lives that application is simple to understand and simple to say but sometimes harder to do we should praise God for his power that is revealed in creation and we should thank God that he further revealed himself in his word knowing that none of us can live up to God's standards on our own we should be even more thankful that God himself provided a redeemer who is God himself ponder those things and then ask God to help you the same way that David did when David said let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight oh Lord my rock and my redeemer let's pray father we thank you for this reminder tonight of how you revealed yourself let us never take for granted that you've chosen to reveal yourself both in the world and through your word let us especially remember how you provided a redeemer for us so that we can enjoy eternal life with you for all of those who believe help us as we go through the week apply these truths through our hearts and let us be more willing to tell these truths to others in Jesus name we pray amen