

God's Revelation

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[0 : 00] Psalm 19 is what we're going to cover in this lesson.

Let's go ahead and read all of the verses of Psalm 19 before we dig into them. 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 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. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

[1 : 13] 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. 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.

From the very beginning there, you see who wrote this psalm. Psalm 19 obviously comes from the pen of David. The exact occasion of the psalm is not indicated here, but the psalm has three distinct parts.

[2 : 23] It has God's revelation in nature, God's revelation in the law, and God's prayer for pardon, or actually David's prayer for pardon from God. Some scholars believe that originally the first six verses were a separate psalm.

The reason why they believe the six verses might have been a separate psalm is because David used two different names for God. If you notice that verse one refers to God, and that's a translation of the Hebrew word El, which is a name of God that's frequently used when describing God as the creator of the universe.

In verse seven, though, David refers to God as the Lord, and that's the translation of the Hebrew word Yahweh, the name that God revealed to Moses when God made the covenant with Israel.

Regardless of whether this psalm began as two separate psalms, the point we're going to see tonight is actually the same, and that is that the God who created the world also is the Lord who keeps his covenant with his special people.

So remember that as we study the psalm in more detail. The God who created the world also is the Lord who keeps his covenant with his special people.

[3 : 38] And we'll come to that again and again as we look at this psalm. So we'll study this psalm in three sections. Verses one through six have the revelation of God in the world.

So that's what fits in your first set of blanks there, the revelation of God in the world. Let's read those verses again.

Verses one through six say, 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 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 how and why the heavens declare the glory of God, and how the sky proclaims his handiwork.

[4 : 49] So if we travel at the speed of light, and does anybody know what the speed of light is? It's 186,000 miles a second, which equates to 6 trillion, and that's trillion with a T, miles a year.

It would take us 10 billion years to reach the farthest point we can see with a telescope. So that's a lot of time, 10 billion years, if we traveled 186,000 miles a second.

But that would still be far from the outermost limits of space. Astronomers actually think that space may have no bounds at all, and so our earth is nothing but a tiny speck in that limitless expanse.

And with our own eyes, we can see about 5,000 stars. With the small telescope, we can see about 2 million stars. But with the Palomar telescope, we can see billions of galaxies.

And of course, that doesn't have any idea how many stars may be in those billions of galaxies. We do know, though, that the stars are a long way from us.

[5 : 56] If it cost a penny to ride 1,000 miles, a trip to the moon would cost \$2.38. A trip to the sun would cost \$930.

That would be a hot ticket, too. But a trip to the nearest star would cost about \$260 million. So when you think about it, getting to the nearest star would take \$260 million, and that's just if every 1,000 miles was a penny.

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.

So Psalm 19.1 is a summary statement. The majestic creation is evidence of an even more majestic creator. And of course, that creator is the God of the Bible.

So the heavens show or manifest the glory of God. And David shows how it is that the heavens proclaim the glory of God to us.

[7 : 01] Namely, they bear testimony that they've not been put together by chance, but they were wonderfully designed by the supreme architect. And God did more than just reveal himself in the creation of the universe.

He also revealed himself in the succession of days. Look at what verse 2 says again. It says, Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

So David's saying here that based upon the established rhythm of days and nights, that the course and revolutions of the sun and moon and stars are also regulated by the marvelous wisdom of God. And your handout has this quote from John Calvin. The English is a little awkward, but you'll get the idea. 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 near 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 the 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 every successive year, we have in this a much brighter testimony to the glory of God.

[8 : 47] So the constant and regular succession of day and night speak the glory of God who first divided the light from the darkness.

And from the beginning to this day, God has preserved that established order without variation. And of course, that is in accordance with his covenant with Noah. And that covenant with Noah is summarized in Genesis 8.22.

Here is Genesis 8.22. God told Noah, While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.

And of course, here we are thousands of years later, and day and night are still going on. So let's move on to verse 3. 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. You know, the difference and variety of languages doesn't prevent the preaching of the heavens and their language from being heard and understood in every quarter of the world.

[10:01] Here's another quote from Calvin. He said, Different nations differ from each other as to language, but the heavens have a common language to teach all men without distinction.

Nor is there anything but their own carelessness to hinder even those who are most strange to each other and who live in the most distant parts of the world from profiting, as it were, at the mouth of the same teacher.

To put the quote in more common language, people from different parts of the world may be unable to understand each other, but they can all marvel at the handiwork of God.

In the first part of verse 4, David expands on this point that the entire world can marvel at God's handiwork. 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. The Apostle Paul actually quoted these words in Romans 10.18 to show the Jews why he preached to the Gentiles.

[11:05] He was making the point to them that they already knew about God in some respects based on just what they could see in nature, and now he needed to proclaim the gospel. Every person everywhere on earth witnesses the testimony of the heavens and the sky.

Their language is actually a visible language, a language which addresses itself to the sight. So the heavens actually speak to our eyes and not our ears.

The glory of God is not written in small letters, but it's richly engraved in large and bright characters, which all men may read with the greatest ease. And in the last part of verse 4, David transitions from talking about the heavens and the sky to talking about the sun.

Starting with the last section of verse 4 and continuing on to verse 5, David says, In them, he's talking about the heavens and the sky here, 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 into verse 5, we need to stop and consider the significance of the reference to the sun. In the ancient Middle East, especially in that time, the sun was often thought of as a God itself.

[12:27] In this psalm, and also in reality, the sun is just a symbol of the creator. Impressive as it is, the sun is just another creation of God.

In verse 5, David compares the sun to two things, a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and a strong man running a race with joy. So when you picture a bridegroom in your mind, what comes to mind concerning how the bridegroom acts and how the bridegroom is dressed?

Generally in their best clothes, and excited and happy. Yep. Generally in their best clothes, and excited and happy. Here's how Matthew Henry described it. He described it as richly dressed and adorned, and as fine as hands can make him, looking pleasantly himself, and making all about him pleasant.

It is kind of hard to be sad when you're around somebody who's genuinely happy, and that's the point here. So think about the second comparison.

How does a strong man run a race? The ball is over to you. Well, everything's pumping well if he's a strong man.

[13:42] You know, the heart, he's got his heart going at the right space. He's able to breathe and pace himself, and it's a joy to him that I've never been able to relate to.

They tell me it's a high. The endorphins, the adrenaline. You're exactly right. It makes it look easy and almost makes it look fun.

Yeah. But here's another quote from Matthew Henry about how the sun makes his rounds. Much more poetic quote than what I could say. He said, So that quote from Matthew Henry makes a point that we should notice too.

The sun does more than just testify to the glory of God. The sun also 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.

So the route that the sun follows is pictured as a half circle which takes it from one end of the heavens to the other. We know that the course begins at the eastern end of the heavens and continues on down to the western horizon.

[15:10] We also know, of course, that the sun doesn't actually rise and set, but the earth moves in relation to the sun, creating this illusion. But in poetic passages, the Bible often uses the language of human appearance, just as we do in our everyday speech.

If you want proof of that, just watch every weather segment on a newscast, and almost every one of them will use the same poetic description of what the sun does in a day.

They talk about the sunrise and the sunset. So next time you're with some people when a beautiful sunset happens, you might want to test out that theory and just tell them what a beautiful earth revolving is going on.

I don't think, I think they might wonder what you'd actually been eating and drinking if you did that. But the last part of verse 6 says one more thing about the sun.

It says, there is nothing hidden from its heat. So the sun enjoys universal exposure and it pervades every corner and crevice of the world.

[16:23] Commentators actually differ here on what David meant by this statement. We know that the proper amount of sun can do wonders for all living things, but too much sun can do damage.

And the sun also can expose things that people would like to remain hidden. And I think that's what David is really saying here. When we get to verse 12, we'll see why it's likely that David was making a reference to the sun exposing things which people would like to keep hidden.

So we've seen from the first six verses how creation points to God. And people thinking rationally about God see evidence of God in that creation.

Lord Kelvin observed that if you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to believe in God. And then here's a quote from Immanuel Kant.

He wrote, 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.

[17:31] 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 happy accident.

It must be that the highest wisdom conceived this plan and infinite power carried it into execution. We actually would have a hard time finding anyone who would describe Kant as a believer but he still acknowledged that creation demonstrates the hand of God.

And this shows that simply seeing God in creation is never enough to save someone. I was kind of thinking about why that is and I ran across a sermon from John Greer who's a Presbyterian minister in the United Kingdom and he said the reason why the knowledge of God revealed in creation is never enough to save someone is because of one simple reason and that is that creation happened before the first sin.

I hadn't thought about it that way but there might be something to that argument. So if creation alone is incapable of saving someone what is powerful enough to save somebody?

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

[18:54] So your second heading is the revelation of the Lord in the Word. Listen to verses 7-11 again and notice how David now refers to God as the Lord.

He says 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.

Remember what we said earlier the God who created the world also is the Lord who keeps his covenant with his special people. And we need to keep that statement in mind so I'll say it one more time here the God who created the world also is the Lord who keeps his covenant with his special people.

[20:07] 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.

God's works reveal his knowledge and power but his word reveals his love and grace. Scientific truth may stimulate our intellect but spiritual truth convicts our heart 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 what God's word is and each pronounces what God's word effectively accomplishes.

So look at the first half of verse 7 the law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul. So what's the synonym for God's word here?

Law. Law. Yes. What's the description of God's word? Perfect. And what's the result of God's word?

[21 : 15] Reviving the soul. Yeah. I said converting the soul. Reviving the soul converting the soul actually converting the soul may be a better translation there too. And law could also be translated his teaching or instruction or direction and perfect there means of course flawless without defect or error and a guide which can never mislead or fail.

And of course like food for the hungry the law can refresh and restore and convert 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 what's the description of God's word?

Sure. And what's the result of God's word? Making wise the simple. So God's word is a testimony to God's will and man's duty.

It's sure and by sure it means fixed or certain. And simple there is not a bad term. The simple are those who have not closed their heart to instruction.

[22 : 27] Nobody has correct understanding until they've made progress in the study of the law. So David shows by the word simple what kind of scholars God requires.

He requires those who are fools in their own estimation and look to God's word for clarity. And Paul contains the same idea in Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 3.18 says, Let no one deceive himself.

If anyone among you thinks 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're in no danger of going astray.

This is actually the path by which God guides his own people to salvation. Moving on to the first part of verse 8 of Psalm 19, David wrote this, The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

So what's the synonym for God's word here? Precepts. And what's the description of God's word? Right.

[23 : 34] And the result of God's word is what? A happy heart or rejoicing the heart, yes. And by precepts of the Lord, he's talking about the various special injunctions that set forth man's obligations to God.

And these provide the heart with the joy of moral satisfaction. To David, the law wasn't a burdensome restriction of liberty, but a gracious reflection of the holiness of God designed to lead man in the way of life and peace.

So look at the second half of verse 8. This is the last of the four. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. So what's the synonym of the law here?

Commandment. What's the description of the law? And the result of the law is what? Enlightening the eyes. So only in the commandment of God do we find the difference between good and evil laid down.

Whatever men devise of themselves is mere filth compared to God. We corrupt the purity of life. David says that men are blind and always wonder in darkness until they turn their eyes to see the light of heavenly doctrine.

[24 : 47] 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 technically not a word for the word of God but it does reflect the reality that scripture is a manual for how to worship God. The aim of the law was to implant reverence for God in the hearts of men.

And how is the fear of the Lord described here in verse 9? Clean. So fear of the Lord is clean or pure in contrast to the immorality we see in this world especially from the unsaved.

Matthew Henry wrote this, he said the fear of the Lord and then he said 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.

It will cleanse our way. We also see like what Doylene just mentioned the fear of the Lord endures forever. The fear of God is always the same.

[25 : 55] Time will never alter the nature of moral good and evil. Just a side note, consider how much different this world would be if more people realized the truth of this last sentence which also was a quote from Matthew Henry.

Again that sentence was time will never alter the nature of moral good and evil. Look at the last part of verse 9. He says the rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

So how does David describe the rules of the Lord? True and righteous altogether. So the rules of God are all righteous from the greatest to the least without a single exception.

And by this commendation David distinguishes the law of God from all the doctrines of men. No blemish or fault can be found in the law. It's absolutely perfect. Verses 7 through 9 give us some of the most concise statements about the subspeiciency of scripture that you'll find anywhere in the Bible.

And by that we mean the Bible has everything we need to guide our behavior and guide us in any situation. Listen to what else David has to say about the rules of God in verses 10 and 11.

[27 : 08] He says more to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold. sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them your servant is warned.

In keeping them there is great reward. So 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.

This commendation depends on the commendations given in the preceding verses. For the many great advantages he has just 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.

We know that the values of the word can't be computed in terms of gold, but the word of God does have one thing in common with gold, and that is that we must dig for its treasures.

Great wealth is hidden in the pages of God's book, and man's best interest are served in searching for that. So when we see what the law can accomplish, we'll also enjoy it like a sweet treat.

[28 : 20] So, so far we've seen the revelation of God in the world, and the revelation of the Lord in the word. We've got one more section that ties the entire psalm together.

Verses 12 through 14 show us the grace of God through Christ. So the grace of God through Christ. Perhaps something has been nagging at you as we talked about the benefits of the law.

None of us can keep God's law perfectly. And listen to this other quote from John Calvin. He said, Without Christ there is nothing in the law, nothing but inexorable rigor, which adjudges 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. David, in praising it as he here does, speaks of the whole doctrine of the law, which includes also the gospel, and therefore under the law, he comprehends Christ.

So even though Christ's incarnation happened centuries after David wrote this psalm, verses 12 through 14 show that David rejoiced because he knew that he had a redeemer.

[29 : 39] Let's read the verses one more time and then I have another quote from Calvin. David said, 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.

So here's that next quote from Calvin. 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 sweet as honey, we will rather find in it 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. The first part of verse 12 says just a simple question, who can discern his errors?

[31 : 05] David asked a question here that all of us should be able to sincerely ask. Even saved people we know have a sin nature and so none of us is capable of knowing every sin that we do.

Some may use the law as a means of self-promotion, but that's not what this psalm instills. Instead, this psalm leads the singers who sing it to reflect on their moral failures, known and unknown. It leads them 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 requests start a prayer to God. David wrote, Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me.

The word hidden here shows the flow of thought in the psalm. Remember back in verse 6 we said that just as the sun's heat scorches every nook and cranny so that there is nothing hidden from its heat.

[32 : 08] We see here that the law searches all the hiding places of the soul. The honest Christian can only ask God to declare him innocent. And this prayer includes a request for forgiveness even from hidden sins.

And those of course are sins that we don't remember or may not even know that we committed.

David also requests that God protect him from presumptuous sins.

Presumptuous sins are sins that are committed in arrogant disregard of divine commands. And these when repeated come to have dominion and enslave the soul.

So because of his hidden sins and his presumptuous sins, David recognizes he needs justification. Simply put, justification is a theological term meaning to be declared righteous.

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.

[33 : 12] He says, Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. So how can David be justified? How can he be declared righteous?

Well, those of you who have sat through Tom's men's night studies already know the answer, but tonight we'll just look at two passages that show how God can justify a sinner without compromising God's holiness and sinlessness.

The first is Romans 3, 21 through 26, and it's a longer passage, so you might want to turn to those verses and follow along. So again, that's Romans 3, 21 through 26.

And of course, the Apostle Paul wrote these words and starting in verse 21 of chapter 3, 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, 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.

[34 : 31] 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.

We won't spend much time looking at this Romans passage, but we do need to highlight a few things. Verse 24 says that people are justified by God's grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

For God to remain just, a sinless person had to pay the penalty for believers' sins. We know that Jesus paid the penalty for us, and because Jesus paid the sin penalty for believers, look what verse 26 says.

God remained just while also becoming the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. And that, of course, is very good news, and we know that as the gospel.

The other place we can look at for a summary of justification is 2 Corinthians 5.21. That's just a single verse. And, of course, in this verse, the pronoun he refers to God and him refers to Jesus.

[35 : 47] 2 Corinthians 5.21 is the verse that says, for our sake he, God, made him, 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 actually gives us the proper response in the final verse of Psalm 19.

And 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.

Be acceptable there comes from the language of sacrifice. David used the term that's often associated with God's acceptance of a properly offered sacrifice.

So David asked for grace and enablement as he really lays his life and his lip on the altar. So who was David's rock?

[36 : 52] His rock was Christ. And who was his redeemer? The answer is the same there. It's Christ as well. And of course, we know that Christ also is our strength and our redeemer.

He becomes that through the grace of God. So remember the point of this psalm again. The God who created the world also is the Lord who keeps his covenant with his special people.

All believers are part of God's special people because of the grace of God through Christ. And that might make you think of 1 Peter 2.9. 1 Peter 2.9 is where 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.

So let's consider real briefly how we should apply this lesson to our daily lives. And we can summarize that exactly the same way that David did.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Let's pray. Father, we thank you that even though we didn't deserve it, you provided a way from before the foundation of time so that we could be redeemed and that we could proclaim the excellencies of you and your word.

[38 : 20] Help us use this truth to be more willing to do that proclamation as we go through our daily lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.