

PSALM 19 - PART TWO

“Now Hear This”

Psa 19:1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Psa 19:2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.

Psa 19:3 *There is* no speech nor language *Where* their voice is not heard.

Psa 19:4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,

Psa 19:5 Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *And* rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

Psa 19:6 Its rising *is* from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Psa 19:7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

Psa 19:8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

Psa 19:9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

Psa 19:10 More to be desired *are they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Psa 19:11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, *And* in keeping them *there is* great reward.

Psa 19:12 Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse me from secret *faults*.

Psa 19:13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

Psa 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Creation is more than just a raw display of power and intelligent design. The apostle Paul understood this when he said that “since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...” (Romans 1:20).

Creation is a revelation from God to man that speaks a language understood by the eternity God has placed in every human heart.

Beginning with verse seven, there is a rather abrupt change in the psalm. With no segue, David quits talking about Creation’s language and starts talking about God’s inspired, written Word.

I’m going to suggest something that isn’t said but I think is implied. To those who respond, in their hearts, to the general revelation of God in Creation, **God works providentially in history to bring them His Word.**

If that is the case, then the transition from verse six to verse seven isn’t such a leap after all. It implies that someone God has scattered out into the world, who is groping for Him, seeking Him, thanks to the revelation of Creation... will be brought further revelation by God’s providence so he or she might be saved.

David has six names in these verses for the Word of God: “law,” “testimony,” “statutes,” “commandments,” “the fear of the Lord,” and “His judgments.”

We’re going to look at what David said as if God were bringing His Word to someone who saw Him through the revelation of Creation, and now, through God’s providence, has come into contact with His written Word.

Psa 19:7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul...

By “law” David had in mind the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch. But we’d include all the verbal, plenary revelation of God in the Bible thus far, as well as all that was written under inspiration afterwards until the Bible was complete.

God’s Word is “perfect” in every way, but especially for “converting the soul.” As the apostle Paul would put it, the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

When a heart that has been drawn by Creation meets up providentially with the Word of God, *Bam!*

This, then, describes the ideal situation. The soul seeing God in Creation, and seeking God, is brought into contact with the Word of God, and becomes a new creation in Christ.

Psa 19:7 ... The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

Adam Clarke identifies the “simple” by saying, “The simple is he who has but one end in view, who is concerned about his soul, and earnestly inquires, “What shall I do to be saved?”

Creation is a testimony, telling us some things about the one true God. The Word of God is a further testimony from Him we can be “sure” of to save us.

Psa 19:8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart...

There is a note of grace in these words. God's "statutes" are not restrictive or stern, but rather they set the "heart" to "rejoicing" in living in a manner that will be pleasing to God.

Are there things you cannot do as a Christian? Sure - *but you don't want to do them since you are a Christian.*

Psa 19:8 ... The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

In *The Fellowship of the Rings*, in the movie, Gandalf gets to a place in the Mines of Moria where he doesn't know which path to take. After a time he decides. The fellowship thinks he has remembered, but he says that the path he is choosing is the one from which he can smell pure air.

God's Word sets the convert on the pure path, "enlightening the eyes" to see clearly what is right, and what is not right.

Psa 19:9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever...

David adopts "the fear of the Lord" as a synonym for God's Word. It would be like me saying, "Open the fear of the Lord to Psalm Nineteen."

Maybe it's because Jesus is revealing Himself on every page, causing a new convert to tremble with excited fear at finding Him.

You're not afraid to see Him in the Word, but you should tremble with fear when He is revealed.

I think of it a little like play-scaring someone. It's all for joy.

The Word is “clean,” or we might say, *cleansing*. The new creature in Christ is blessed to have wave after wave of cleansing wash over him or her thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus.

“Enduring forever” in its effect. I am washed, I am clean, once-for-all. I might pick up defilement in the world, but I am white as snow in respect to my standing before God.

Psa 19:9 ... The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

While I am forever free from condemnation, God’s Word pronounces “judgements” on nonbelievers. In one sense, I am thankful - knowing God will one day right all wrongs. I can therefore be patient and endure my suffering at the hands of the wicked.

Judgment is a big subject. The Bible is filled with judgments - starting with God’s judgment on Adam, Eve, and the serpent in the Garden. Looking to the end, the Revelation of Jesus Christ is a book describing God’s future judgments being poured-out upon the earth.

Believers are challenged all the time over God’s judgments. “How can a God of love” is how those challenges often begin.

Well, in answering, remember His judgments are “true and righteous altogether.”

And not just because He is God. Here’s what I mean.

There’s a famous line of dialog between President Richard Nixon and journalist David Frost. Frost asks a bout something being illegal, and Nixon replies, “If the President does it, *it’s not illegal.*”

We sometimes think of God that way. We point to some calamity, or call something God's judgment, and say, "Since God did it, it's not unloving."

But we should not. God is no monster, living outside of morality and goodness.

If God seems to be acting, well, unloving, it is no answer to simply say, "God is sovereign." It's like Nixon excusing himself.

God is sovereign... **But He is also love** - and not just because He says so. An unloving action cannot be called "loving" just because God does it.

Our answers to these challenges must be more biblical and reasonable. We must have a theology of God's sovereignty that allows man to exercise free will - or else God becomes the de facto author of evil.

His judgments are "true and righteous." Take the Revelation, for example. It is wrath, sure; but it is deserved, and in it, through it, God's grace will continue to reach out to save.

Creation is God's 'word' to all the unevangelized. **It's a positive word.** Dale Moody once said, "It is possible to say that the general revelation of God has only a negative function that leaves man without excuse... But what kind of God is He who gives man enough knowledge to damn him but not enough to save him?"

With regard to the potential salvation of the unevangelized, you have one of three biblical choices:

1. Universalism teaches that, in the end, **all** the unevangelized will be saved.

2. Restrictivism teaches that unless a human agent preaches the Gospel, nonbelievers **cannot** be saved. All the unevangelized are thereby damned.
3. Inclusivism teaches that the unevangelized have God's general revelation through Creation, and those who respond to it can be saved, and in particular will receive additional revelation, e.g., God's Word, through God's providence.

Choose one.

How? Which one sounds more like the God Who said, "The heavens declare the glory of God?", then pointed out how His follow-up with the written Word could convert the soul?

Inclusivists would go so far as to say that while salvation is in Christ alone, the specifics of the Gospel need not be known in order for His work to be effective.

Here is a quote: "Inclusivists contend that all Christians are believers, but not all believers are Christians. They define a Christian as a believer who knows about... Jesus Christ."

It may at first sound heretical, I know; but think about it. You already think that some people can be saved without knowing about Jesus. Infants who die, for example; or children who die before they can reason. Mentally handicapped individuals, too, we think will be saved without knowing about Jesus.

But the best examples are the Old Testament saints. Can we really call Job a Christian? He knew next to nothing about Jesus. His whole theology was, "I know that my Redeemer lives." But he didn't know His name, or how he would be redeemed.

Yet he was certainly saved, because he believed God. Job was a believer, but not a Christian.

How about Abraham? Was he, the ‘father of the faith,’ in the strictest sense, a Christian? No, but he was a believer.

The majority of Old Testament believers had no conception of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection.

Thus the Inclusivist argues, “Those who never hear the Gospel may nevertheless obtain salvation before they die **if they respond by faith to the revelation they do have.**”

Ah, but today we **do** have the Gospel; and we are called to the Great Commission.

And that’s why I would say that somehow, by His providence, God will see to it that those seeking Him, who see Him revealed in Creation, will receive His Word.

They aren’t perfect examples, but I would cite both Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch. We only have time for one, so let’s take the Ethiopian.

He had God’s Word, having purchased a scroll of Isaiah in Jerusalem. But he could not comprehend it.

God arranged for Phillip to be waiting for him to pass by on his way home. The Holy Spirit prompted Phillip to go up to the Eunuch, and engage in conversation with him.

Phillip ended up leading him to faith in Jesus Christ. The Eunuch went home, and we believe evangelized Ethiopia.

God, by His providence, brought greater revelation, i.e., His written Word, to a seeking heart.

You object that the Eunuch was a rare and special case? I'd say it's in the Bible as an example of the lengths God *can* and *will* go to to bring His Word to bear upon seeking hearts.

I don't think it's an isolated case. I think it's in the Bible to remind us God is at work, not willing any should perish, but that all would come to eternal life.

Not all will come to eternal life; we are not Universalists. But many more than we sometimes think will, in fact, be in Heaven.