

Listen God Is Speaking

Psalm 19

Pastor John Miller

C.S. Lewis said that "Psalm 19 is the greatest poem in the psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world." Think about that. Psalm 19 is one of my favorite psalms, because its theme is the self-revelation of God. Psalm 19 contains profound statements of the doctrine of divine revelation.

You may say, "That sounds boring. Why do I need that? 'Divine revelation' is for theologians." But without God revealing Himself to us, we could not know Him. God is transcendent, beyond us and outside of us. God is infinite; we are finite. The King James Bible says, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job 11:7). The answer is "No; you cannot by searching find God."

And this is the thing that blesses my heart and is one of my favorite subjects in the Bible: God must come to us. God must reveal Himself to us. So if you have come to know God, you are blessed that God has revealed Himself to you.

But in creation, God has revealed Himself to everybody. And we're going to see that it is universal and continual. And specifically, God has revealed Himself in the Scriptures to us. What a precious book is the Bible!

One of the greatest heartaches that I have are Christians who neglect God's Word, Christians who don't love God's Word, Christians who don't study God's Word, Christians who don't feed on God's Word, Christians who aren't submitted to the authority of God's Word. Nothing will change your life more powerfully, wonderfully and gloriously than a right relationship with the Bible. It will transform your life.

The writer or psalmist of Psalm 19 is David. And it is "To the Chief Musician." David puts the self-revelation of God into three categories. In verses 1-6, we see God the Creator in the world around us. In verses 7-11, we see God the Instructor in the Word before us. And in verses 12-14, we see God the Redeemer by the Witness within us.

First, let's look at God the Creator in the world around us, verses 1-6. "The heavens declare the glory of God..." or "El 'I" "...and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 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, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat."

This is what is known as "the general revelation of God in nature." God has and God is revealing Himself to us in nature. If you want to see an example of that, go on a cruise to Glacier Bay and see the beauty of that part of the world. It's just amazing! At night go out onto

the deck of the ship and see the starry sky, the handiwork of the heavens that God has created. All of this speaks of the glory of God; it is a self-revelation of God to us.

Now verse 1 is a summary of the first six verses. "The heavens" here are the stars we see in the night sky. With the naked eye we don't see all the stars; there are billions of galaxies with billions of stars. We can only guess at the number of galaxies and stars there are, and they are always expanding. With stronger telescopes, we can see further and further. We think of the vastness of space and the smallness of earth. And we think of the greatness of God who simply spoke it all into existence. And the heavens are the work of His fingers; He just flung galaxies and stars into the cosmos.

Rather than there being confusion, God created the cosmos with design and purpose. Creation indicates that there is a Creator, design that there is a designer. The existence of all creation speaks of God as the source. Either you believe in eternal matter or you believe in an eternal God who created matter and is outside of time, space and matter.

You don't need to be that intelligent or smart to think, Why is there anything? Where did we come from? What started the whole thing? Scientists say, "There's the big bang."

But what caused the big bang? What banged the bang? And what banged? And where did what banged come from? How do you get order out of disorder? You can't go into a junk yard, throw dynamite in there and drive a Porsche out. My explosion created a Porsche. It's not gonna happen! It's so self-evident. It speaks so loudly.

Notice the word "declare," in verse 1. The heavens are speaking and saying something. They "declare the glory of God." This is a limited revelation. But we'll see that the Scriptures are unlimited. They're inexhaustible. So all of creation is speaking.

"And the firmament shows His handiwork." This is Hebrew poetry, and what it does is it says the same thing in different ways. It's not rhyme and meter; it repeats the same statement using different phrases or terms. And verse 1 is a summary.

So two things we see here in the general revelation. We see God's glory and God's power. When we look at creation we think, Man, is God glorious! We have a hummingbird feeder outside our kitchen-nook window. When the sunlight hits it just so, you can see the beautiful colors of the birds. They're fascinating.

This is all a reflection of the glory of God: all the colors you see, all the beauty you see. It all reflects the glory and majesty of God.

When we get to heaven, there will be colors. It won't just be all gray. There will be glory, splendor and majesty. What a blessing that will be when we're in His presence.

So we see His glory and His power conveyed in the word "handiwork." "His handiwork" displays the ability and power of God. How glorious!

"The heavens" are the starry skies. "The heavens declare the glory of God." They are speaking and witnessing to us. How marvelous!

In Romans 1:20, Paul says, "For 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." Because God has revealed Himself and God is speaking in nature, men are "without excuse."

I'm always getting the question, "What about the person who lives in the jungle, who hasn't seen God or heard the Gospel?" The universal revelation of God in creation means that all of humanity is without excuse. It witnesses to the fact that there is a Creator. They may not know His name is Jesus, but if they respond to the light God has given them, God will give them more light. There is a Biblical principle that when God reveals something and we respond to it, then God gives us more revelation. If we reject it and suppress it, then we go into darkness and ignorance.

In the book of Romans it talks about the degeneration of man. In Romans 1:21, it says, "Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful." They pressed down or pushed away this revelation of God in creation.

Not only does mankind have creation as a witness of God, but they have their own consciences. God has given them a conscience to understand good from evil. God has revealed Himself in those ways.

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't take the Gospel to others and tell them about the love of God in that He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for their sins. We should try to get Scripture to them in their own language, so they have a more full and more comprehensive revelation of God.

Now note the nature of this testimony, in verses 1-6. First, the revelation of God in nature is continuous, verse 2. So in verse 1, they are declaring, and in verse 2, they are speaking. "Day unto day utters speech and night unto night reveals knowledge." There is no intermission; at night you look up into the sky, and God is speaking, and in the morning when the sun comes up, God is speaking. When you look at all of creation, God is speaking.

That's why it is so marvelous to be a Christian; you can enjoy nature as God's handiwork. It didn't just happen by accident; it's all designed by God.

The second thing about this general revelation in nature is that it is abundant. The phrase "utters speech" literally means "to pour forth like a waterfall" or "rush like a river." So it means that it is gushing forth, pouring forth. There was someone on the cruise who went up to a waterfall and saw the water gushing down the mountain beautifully. That's the picture of God pouring forth His speech. So every individual part of nature testifies to its Creator.

Nature does point to God, but nature is not divine. Nature is not God. The Bible does not teach pantheism; that the tree is God or that the bird is God or that the sun is God. God is actually

above, outside of and over creation. We know that Jesus is actually the Creator, the sustainer and the goal of all things. But be careful that you don't worship creation; you worship the Creator.

Evolution contradicts not only science, but it contradicts the Scriptures. The Bible doesn't teach that God just started the process of matter and over billions of years it evolved. That's neither scientific nor Biblical.

The man of faith, who believes the revelation of God's Word, is way ahead of those who have bought into the lie of evolution, eliminating even the idea that there is a Creator or God or that man is sinful and needs a Savior or Redeemer.

On YouTube look up Signature in the Cell, Stephen Meyer Faces His Critics. It's amazing to see this intelligent scientist explain the design of the Creator in all of creation.

Now there is no conflict between natural and special revelation. Isn't it interesting that we have God revealing Himself in creation and God revealing Himself in Scripture in one psalm? Yet so many people today think that either you believe in science or you believe in the Bible. They say that science is intelligent, rational, using your mind, while using the Scriptures is just a leap of faith, believing in fairy tales, that just some god created all things.

I like what Charles Haddon Spurgeon said about this: "He is wisest who reads both the world's book and the Word book as two volumes of the same work, and feels, concerning them, my Father wrote them both." So as you look at the glories of nature and you open your Bible and see the glory of Scripture, "My Father wrote them both." What a glorious truth that is!

The third thing about this revelation in nature is that it is universal. "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." Its language is universal. It speaks wherever you go. Years ago, I did a pastors' conference in the Fijian Islands on a little, outer island. At night you could see the stars like I've never seen before! Even on that remote, little dot of an island in the South Pacific, those Fijian natives could look up at the night sky and see the Lord's handiwork and the glory and power of God. So God's revelation in nature is universal.

Notice also, in verse 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." In verse 1, "The heavens declare the glory of God," and in verse 4, the sun declares the glory of God. The word "tabernacle" is "tent," so some believe that at nighttime, God tents the sun or covers the sun.

In verse 5, it says that the sun "...is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat." So this shows nature is universal and abundant and continuous. God is speaking through nature. As a result, in Romans 1:20, it says that man is "without excuse."

So then the question is, "Are you listening?"

The second area of God's revelation is called the special revelation of God in Scripture. So there are two categories: the general revelation of God in nature and the special revelation of God in Scripture. Verses 7-11 say, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes 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 judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward."

When I read these verses, I'm blown away by their glory and majesty. I want to pull out the treasures and the truths that are lying within these verses, because they are so marvelous. We are struck by the glory, majesty and wonder of nature, but how much more glorious is God's Word.

So David moves from God's general revelation in nature to God's special revelation in Scripture or from God's world to God's Word. Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, also speaks of how great the Scriptures are. Psalm 19, along with Psalm 119, is one of the greatest summations of Scripture in the Bible—Old Testament or New Testament. So if you want to study the Bible about the Bible, Psalm 19:7-11 is where you go in the Scriptures about the Scriptures.

These verses speak of the Scripture's inspiration, inerrancy, authority, clarity and sufficiency. God's greatest revelation is found in Scripture, in the Bible.

"The B-i-b-l-e;

Yes, that's the book for me.

I stand alone on the Word of God;

The B-i-b-l-e."

Satan's greatest area of attack is against the Bible. The number one thing the devil doesn't want you to do is to read your Bible. He wants to keep you from believing the Bible and obeying the Bible. And we get suckered into it all the time.

You say, "I'm too busy to read the Bible. I don't believe the Bible." So we neglect the Word of God.

All the way back in the book of Genesis when Satan appeared on the scene, his first recorded words in the Bible were "Has God indeed said...?" (Genesis 3:1). Satan will say, "Did God really say that? Don't you think that's just a fairy tale? That was just written by men; that's not really the Word of God. You can't believe the Scriptures." Ever since Genesis, Satan has "one string on his guitar": to attack the Word of God. Why? Because it's the greatest revelation of

God, and he's trying to keep people from knowing God and the Savior. Thomas Watson, the great Puritan preacher, said, "The devil is always trying to blow out the light of Scripture." I like that.

In Psalm 19:7-9, David is making six statements about the Scriptures, and each contains three characteristics. First, it tells us what Scripture is called, its titles. Second, we are given what Scripture is, its nature. And third, we are given what Scripture will do, its power or benefit.

First, we look at what the Scriptures are called, its titles. In verse 7, it's called "the law of the Lord" and "the testimony of the Lord." In verse 8, it's called "the statutes..." or "precepts" "...of the Lord" and "the commandment of the Lord." And in verse 9, it's called "the fear of the Lord" and "the judgments of the Lord." These are the titles of Scripture.

Secondly, we have the nature or characteristics of the Scriptures. In verse 7, it is "perfect" and "sure." In verse 8, it is "right" and "pure." And in verse 9, it is "clean" and "true."

Thirdly, we see the power of the Scriptures or what they will do. In verse 7, it is "converting the soul" and "making wise the simple." There are a lot of simpletons out there who need some wisdom. In verse 8, it is "rejoicing the heart" and "enlightening the eyes." And in verse 9, it is "enduring forever" and is "righteous altogether." The Scriptures will endure forever; that's its power.

The phrase "of the Lord" is used six times in these verses. And it is used in all capital letters, because it means Jehovah or Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God. So the Bible is the Word of the Lord, Jehovah or Yahweh.

The Scriptures is God's Word written. In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Every Christian should memorize this verse. We know John 3:16; we should also know 2 Timothy 3:16. What Paul says is one of the greatest statements about the Bible. What does "inspiration" mean? It literally means that God breathed it out; it's the breath of God. In the Greek, it literally means "breathed out." God superintended the human authors, so that the very words they wrote were the words of God.

Jesus has two natures: human and divine. The Bible also has two natures: human and divine. It was written by men but given by inspiration of God. Men wrote it as they were carried along. But God breathed, and the very words they wrote were the words of God.

This is why I believe in verbal, meaning "the words," plenary, meaning "all of them" are given by inspiration of God. This is why we look at words in the Scripture; it's the Word of God.

In 2 Peter 1:20-21, Peter says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

I saw a lot of sail boats out on the ocean this past week. That's the picture of 2 Peter 1:20-21.

The wind blows, the sails fill and the boat skims over the water. So as the writers of the Scripture wrote, they were carried along. But even though God superintended the human authors, even though He carried them along, He still used their own styles and personalities. He still used the historical settings.

You say, "How does that work?" I don't know, but it's awesome! He uses their own styles and personalities. This is so often forgotten today as people approach the Scriptures, the Word of God. It's so very important.

Now let's look at verses 7-9 individually. Verse 7 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." So number one, the title of the Scriptures is "the law of the Lord." It's God law for life. You've heard of the Ten Commandments. A woman in our church told me on the cruise that a sermon I preached on the Ten Commandments changed her life. She was sitting in the front row of the church when I preached on "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12).

I said, "That transformed your life?!"

She said, "Yes, because I was estranged from my mother, and God spoke directly to me from that sermon and told me I had not been honoring my mother; that I needed to call her and reach out to her." And when she had reached out to her mother, she found out that her mother had cancer. So she went to take care of her mother, and six weeks later she died. She was restored to her mother and reconnected with her before she died. So she doesn't have to live with regrets, because she took care of her mother.

How amazing it is that God's Word can have that kind of power and effect on people's lives! It can transform a person's life.

It's the "law of the Lord." "You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:13-16). It's in the Bible. And this is the supreme law and manual for life. The highest authority is God and His Word. The Bible trumps every other authority. The greatest authority is the Scriptures.

What is the nature of the Scriptures, verse 7? It is "perfect." This word "perfect" means "comprehensive." It means "complete, all-sided, nothing lacking." It covers all aspects of life. This speaks of Scripture's sufficiency.

Then notice its power, verse 7. It is "converting the soul." It means "restoring the soul." It's a total transformation of the soul, changing the inner person. For you to be born again, it's the Word of God and the Spirit of God transforming you into the image of the Son of God. In 1 Peter 1:23, it says, "...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever." It's the starting point of all things.

In verse 7, the title is also called "the testimony of the Lord." God is giving His testimony. Can you imagine putting God on the witness stand to give His testimony and asking Him, "Do You

solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help Yourself?" How does that work? God doesn't swear by anything, because He's God! He swears by Himself. "By Myself, I have sworn, says the Lord" (Genesis 22:16). He's the God of truth; He does not lie. God's Word is true. It's a true witness of the self-revelation of God.

Now its nature is also "sure," verse 7. That means "reliable" or "trustworthy." This speaks of the inerrancy of the Word of God. It does not err. It is not mistaken or wrong. It is incapable of being wrong.

And its power, in verse 7, is that it also is "making wise the simple." This is one of my favorite statements in this psalm. The word "simple" means "ignorant." One "does not know." We get our word "ignoramus" related to it. Some people say that they are an agnostic; that they just don't know if there is a God. The word "agnostic" comes from the word "ignoramus." So why would you boast about being an ignoramus? God has revealed Himself in His Word; you don't need to be ignorant of who God is.

It also has the idea of "shutting the door" in the Hebrew. How does that play in? Once the truth comes to you, what do you do with it? You shut the door to keep it there. People say, "I just want to be open-minded." It might be smarter to shut the door, because otherwise, nothing stays. You're so open-minded that it comes in and goes right out. Once the truth comes to you—the truth of God—you close the door so no other supposed "truth" comes in. The Word will make you wise about life if you're simple. You might have a high IQ, but the Word makes you wise about life.

Verse 8 says, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." So in verse 8, the title for the Scriptures is called "the statutes of the Lord." "Statutes" means "precepts, propositions or principles." God has given you principles for life in His Word.

The nature of the Scriptures, in verse 8, is that they are "right." The Scriptures set you on the right path. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

And notice its power, in verse 8. It is "rejoicing the heart." It is part of the joy that comes to you through the knowledge of God and His Word. Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." When the Word of God dwells in you, it brings joy. If you go without reading your Bible for some length of time, you lose your joy. If you have not had joy lately, open the Bible. It will make your heart happy. It will bring joy to your heart. It's the discovery of God's precepts, God's laws and God's truths that rejoices the heart. Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart."

In verse 8, another title for the Word is "the commandment of the Lord." It means that we must obey. It's not called "the suggestions of the Lord." They're called "commandments."

Its nature is that it is "pure." That means "clean, clear." This is what's called "the clarity of Scripture." Some people complain that "I don't understand the Bible; it's not clear."

“‘You shall not bear false witness.’ What’s the problem?”

“I just don’t understand the Bible. It’s too complex.”

“No; you’re a liar and don’t want to repent. ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ You don’t know what that means?!”

It’s so clear. The problem is not the Scriptures you don’t understand; the problem is the Scriptures you do understand that you don’t want to keep. God didn’t stutter in His Word. God is clear in what He said. The Bible is very clear. It’s not hard to understand. It’s just hard to obey. So you must be born again, and then you will understand Scripture, and He will give you strength.

And its power is that it is “enlightening the eyes.” It helps you to see in the dark world. How would you understand anything in this complex world without the clarity of seeing clearly in Scripture? It helps you understand the world around you.

And verse 9 says, “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Its title is “the fear of the Lord.” It means that the Bible teaches us how to reverence God, how to worship God, how to respect God. If you want to have “the fear of the Lord,” open the Bible. The Bible says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10).

All I want from my kids, my grandkids and any great-grandkids I might have is that they read the Bible, love God, fear God and walk with God. That’s the most important thing. If you veer off that path, you’ll have nothing but heartache, problems and misery. Live by the Book. Build your life upon the Book. It’s the solid rock of Scripture.

And its nature is that it is “clean,” meaning it has no spots. It’s the holy Word of God. There is nothing evil about the Bible. Its power is that it is “enduring forever.” It is unchanging and eternal. So it doesn’t change with culture, with the world. God’s standards never change. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

Again in verse 9, the title for the Scriptures is “the judgments of the Lord.” It means “God’s verdict on all matters.” God judges from His divine throne. His is the final authority. The nature of Scripture is that it is “true.” Jesus said, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). And its power is that it is “righteous altogether.” It brings about a comprehensive righteousness. It is able to comprehensively make you righteous in the way you live. That doesn’t mean you’ll be perfect. Only God’s Word can completely transform your life.

So how are we to respond to these six statements? In three ways. Desire it, feed on it and obey it. First, we are to desire the Scriptures. Verses 10 and 11 say, “More to be desired are they...” that is “the Scriptures” “...than gold, yea, than much fine gold.” God’s Word is even more valuable than gold and all the bling-bling of gold and jewelry. It’s so very important.

Second, we are also to feed on the Word. "Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." The Word is priceless and sweet. Feed on it.

Third, we are to obey it, verse 11. "Moreover by them..." that is, "the Scriptures or the law of the Lord, the testimony of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the commandment of the Lord, the fear of the Lord and the judgments of the Lord" "...your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward."

So we desire it, we feed on it, we obey it and it is priceless and sweet, it rewards us and warns us.

Verses 12-14 speak of the witness within us. They are in the context of the two kinds of revelations of God. "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults." The only way to understand God and be cleansed from our secret faults is by responding to God's revelation in nature and in the Scriptures.

Then David prays, "Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins" or "willful disobedience." "Let them not have dominion over me." What a beautiful prayer. "Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression." David is basically saying, "Lord, if I follow Your precepts, if I live by Your Word, if I honor You and Scripture and obey, then I will be innocent from 'great transgression.'" And David's closing prayer continues, "Let the words of my mouth..." which should be Scripture "...and the meditation of my heart..." which should be Scripture "...be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." So He is the revealer and the Redeemer.

The theme of all Scripture is redemption. Cut the Bible anywhere and it bleeds with redemptive truth. It starts in Genesis and goes all the way to Revelation. It's all about the Cross of Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus Christ, being redeemed by the work of Christ. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We are redeemed from sin, or bought back by God. So when we respond to God's revelation in nature and in the Scriptures, we come to know Jesus as Savior and Redeemer.

There is a story in the Gospels which illustrates all three of the divisions in Psalm 19. It is the story of the magi, the three wise men. What brought them to the Savior? The star. They followed the star, God's revelation in nature. When they got to the area where the star was, they went to the scribes, Pharisees and religious leaders. And they opened the Scriptures. "The Bible says here in Micah that He will be born in Bethlehem, 'the house of bread.'" So they began to hear the Scriptures. Then they went to Bethlehem and saw the Savior, worshipped Him and gave Him gifts of "gold, frankincense and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11). Isn't that a beautiful picture?! The star lead them to the Scriptures and the Scriptures to the Savior.