

MOUNT SINAI MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 19

Unveiled Glory

Quote

“We are all starved for the glory of God, not self. No one goes to the Grand Canyon to increase self-esteem.... There is greater healing for the soul in beholding the splendor than there is in beholding self.”

John Piper

I. Introduction

Your Chief Pursuit in Life

Approach ten people randomly on the street and ask them, “What is your chief pursuit in life?” A wide variety of responses will probably follow. Money, love, marriage, sex, freedom, security, status, pleasure, peace, and happiness would top the list. But there is only one main purpose for which man was created—and that is for the glory of God. This is God’s chief pursuit in all he does—the magnification of his own glory. So this must be every believer’s pursuit.

What is God’s glory? A distinction must be made between his *intrinsic* glory and his *ascribed* glory. God’s intrinsic glory is the sum total of all his divine attributes—his holiness, **sovereignty**, **righteousness**, **grace**, **truth**, goodness, **mercy**, justice, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and more. All these divine perfections constitute his intrinsic glory, and it is this that God desires to display in all his **creation** and works. Then, as God unveils this glory to man, man is to give him glory, which is *ascribed* glory, or the glory due his name. This is man’s chief purpose in life. He is to live to make God’s glory known in the world and to ascribe glory to him.

Psalm 19 is a magnificent psalm declaring that God’s intrinsic glory is unveiled to man through two primary means: general revelation (vv. 1–6) and special revelation (vv. 7–14). General revelation is God’s self-disclosure through **creation**.

This revelation is available to all people, and it provides basic, foundational truths about God's existence and attributes. On the other hand, special revelation is God's manifested greatness to people through his inspired Word, the Bible. This revelation is special because it goes beyond the elementary truths of general revelation and testifies to how a person may know this great God and how he or she may live in a manner pleasing to him.

Psalm 19 records these two distinct means of divine revelation, both general and special. In this hymn of praise, "a psalm of David," the psalmist testifies that God has revealed himself to mankind through these two avenues—his world and his Word. David reflects on the glory of God in natural revelation and the glory God in special revelation which alone can save and sanctify.

II. Commentary

Unveiled Glory

MAIN IDEA

God has made himself known to man through natural revelation in the physical **creation** and through supernatural revelation in the Scriptures.

A God's Glory in His World (19:1–6)

SUPPORTING IDEA: The heavens proclaim the glory of God to all people around the world.

19:1. First, God has revealed himself to all people through his **creation**, more specifically, through the universe. **The heavens**, referring to the sun, stars, and planets, **declare the glory of God**. This divine glory is the sum total of all God's **holy** character and attributes which are made known to man. **The skies**, referring to the lower atmosphere, clouds, weather, and so on, **proclaim the work of his hands**. The **creation** above testifies to the existence and excellencies of a Creator, God himself, who made it. The **truth** about God—that he is who and *what* he is—is made known through the skillful **work of his hands**.

19:2. This self-disclosing communication by God of himself to man is unceasing: **Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge**. This knowledge is the general revelation of God's character, especially

his eternal power, goodness, genius, kindness, and faithfulness (Rom. 1:20). This disclosure is a “soundless sermon” continually communicated in the skies.

19:3–4a. Even though **creation** does not speak audible words that can be heard, its **voice** reaches all nations and is equally accessible wherever human **speech** and **language** is spoken. No person anywhere is without God’s self-revelation through **creation. Their voice goes out into all the earth, literally, to the ends of the world** as the entire globe is covered with the handiwork of God.

19:4b–5. David illustrated by pointing to **the sun**. He compared the sky and outer space to a **tent** in which he had placed the sun as a torch, lighting up the vast expanse above. Furthermore, this sun is like **a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion**, radiant, glowing, beaming, and bright. Also, the sun is **like a champion rejoicing to run his course**, that is, strong, tireless, enduring, always moving forward, and never growing weary. God is like the noonday sun—bright and blinding in the radiance of his glory. He is high and exalted above man, unceasing and tireless in his work, powerful in all that he does, reaching out to the ends of the earth, enlightening and empowering all people.

19:6. Referring to the motion of the sun, David concluded, **It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other**. Rising in the east, it travels every day, humanly speaking, to set in the west, and **nothing is hidden from its heat**. In other words, the sun is always at work in all places, just like God its Creator. The glory of God is clearly seen in the sun. As it makes its daily journey across the skies, it pours out **its heat** on every creature, making its presence felt. So it is with God, making himself known through the sun.

B God’s Glory in His Word (19:7–14)

SUPPORTING IDEA: God most fully reveals himself to man through his written Word, known as special revelation.

19:7. Suddenly shifting focus, David gave attention to the glory of God revealed in his Word. He gave six descriptions of the sufficiency of God’s written Word (vv. 7–9) which goes far beyond what natural revelation does. While the sun and the skies above reveal the existence and infinite power of God, Scripture reveals the only way to know God personally. **The law of the Lord is perfect** (Heb. *tamim*), meaning whole, complete, sufficient, lacking nothing, or comprehensive, **reviving**

the soul. It is so perfect that it can convert, transform, and refresh the entire inner person.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, meaning they are neither unstable nor fallible but unwavering and immovable. Not like shifting sands, God's commands cause a person to stand firm while **making wise the simple.** The Hebrew word for *simple* comes from a root meaning "an open door" or one who is gullible to false teaching, failing to shut his mind to error. Only Scripture can make a person wise, or skillful, in the issues of daily living.

19:8. Furthermore, **the precepts of the Lord are right;** they lay out the proper path through the intricate complexities of life, steering a person to the right course in life. God's Word always directs God's people in the right way, the way that pleases God. Thus, it gives **joy to the heart,** exciting and empowering the inner person with divine **truth.** **The commands of the Lord are radiant,** not dark and mysterious but clear and lucid, brightly shining, revealing **truth, giving light to the eyes.** They enlighten everyone who follows them; they are a lamp and light for life's travelers (Ps. 119:105).

19:9. Moreover, **the fear of the Lord is pure;** it has no impurity, filthiness, defilement, or imperfections. Scripture is flawless, unadulterated **truth,** without any error, **enduring forever.** The Bible will never pass away (Mark 13:31), nor will it ever need amending, updating, or editing. Instead, it will remain permanently relevant and eternally true. **The ordinances of the Lord are sure** (Heb. *emet*), meaning reliable, stable, **and altogether righteous,** presenting the divine standard for daily living and designed to cause believers to obey God with righteous lives.

19:10–11. Regarding the Scriptures, the psalmist declared, **they are more precious than gold, even pure gold.** This means God's Word is infinitely more desirable and valuable than anything this world has to offer. Likewise, the sacred writings are **sweeter than honey,** fully satisfying our spiritual hunger and a source of great pleasure and enrichment.

By the Scriptures, David declared, is **your servant warned** against temptation, **sin,** error, and every other spiritual threat to his spiritual well-being. Yet, positively, **in**

keeping them there is great reward. Obedience to God's Word results in rich spiritual blessings (cp. John 13:17).

19:12–13. A rhetorical question, **Who can discern his errors?** implies an obvious answer: only the person who reads, studies, and meditates on God's Word.

Scripture is a lamp that reveals **hidden faults** which must be confessed while asking God to forgive. Scripture is also a powerful restraint that prevents believers from participating in **sin**. Keep also your servant from willful sins, a preserving effect that the Word has upon the hearts of those who obey it.

19:14. David concluded this psalm by expressing to God, **May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight.** Only the Word of God applied by the Spirit of God could make his mouth and heart so pleasing before God's all-knowing gaze. This God, in fact, was David's Lord, Rock, and Redeemer. Such a great God demands obedience and personal holiness from all worshipers.

MAIN IDEA REVIEW

God has made himself known to man through natural revelation in the physical **creation** and through supernatural revelation in the Scriptures.

III. Conclusion

The Right Response

In a PBS documentary entitled *Chariots of the Gods*, the well-known scientist and author Carl Sagan commented on the new optimism that there is life elsewhere in the universe. "It's nice to think that there is someone out there that can help us," he said. Unfortunately, this remark implied that he believed there was no God. His "religion" caused him to look out on the starry splendor of the universe and say, "The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be." His hope to receive help from other beings in the universe is a blind hope.

The **truth** is God *does* exist and has revealed himself to mankind in ways that are unmistakable and undeniable. Natural revelation in the world has disclosed the fact of God's existence and his attributes. But more than that, the supernatural revelation in his Word has made known the way to know him through the plan of **salvation**. What is important is that every person should respond appropriately to

this divine self-disclosure. This response, as required by Scripture, is for a person to repent of his or her **sin** and turn to God, believing on his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.