

Revelation in Sky and Scripture

Psalm 19

August 27th, 2023

1. God's powerful _____ silently speaks about Him.
(19:1-6)

2. God's perfect _____ continually transforms us. (19:7-11)

3. Our responsive _____ (19:12-14)

4. Applying the Word

a. Listen to what creation says about our
_____.

b. Take in God's _____.

c. Pray that God would transform your _____
and _____ life.

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on Psalm 19

1. What active verbs are used to describe what God's creation is doing in vv. 1-2? What surprising contrast is given in v. 3?
2. Read Romans 1:18-20. What is God described as doing in these verses? How is that similar to Psalm 19:1-6? What are people described as doing?
3. What repeated ideas do you observe in vv. 7-9?
4. What are the benefits of scripture as described in vv. 7-9? What are some of the ways that you have experienced those benefits yourself?
5. How does the pattern start to change in v. 9? If patterns in Hebrew poetry sometimes change for emphasis, what appears to be emphasized in v. 9 as the culmination of vv. 7-9?
6. What specific requests do you see in vv. 12-14? How do those requests flow out of the rest of psalm? In other words, what has David written in vv. 1-11 that leads to the prayers in vv. 12-14?
7. What could be the benefit in a believer's life from regularly praying these requests?

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Big idea: The Lord speaks broadly in the sky and specifically in the Word to convict and redeem.

Intro

Have you ever wondered about people who have not heard about Jesus? What can they know about God? How can God hold them accountable to a message they haven't heard?

The sheep herder in Mongolia 700 years ago

The pacific island woman 1000 years ago

The 2 Billion people today who are considered unreached, many of whom live in the 10/40 window

Psalm 19 speaks to this.

It explains what everyone can know about God.

But it also explains what is so precious about God's Word that we should want to get it into every hand.

1. God's powerful creation silently speaks about Him (19:1-6)
 - a. God's creation in the sky continually pours out speech (vv. 1-2)
 - i. The first set of parallel lines sets the stage:
 - ii. The heavens are telling, the expanse is declaring
 - iii. Our eyes are turned upward to God's creation above – heavens and expanse are both used here of the sky above us as day and night we observe the sun, moon, and stars.
 - iv. Both lines use present tense verbs to describe how what we observe in the sky above is continually telling and declaring – v. 2 – pours forth.
 - v. Poetic language as if the heavens are speaking – they go on doing this – they keep doing this – they have been since creation – you look up at the same stars as Adam, Abraham, Sarah, David, Mary.
 1. They get obscured by light pollution so they seem to whisper until you get out and away.
 2. Wake up in the middle of the night when camping and you see the milky way spread along the sky and realize that most people throughout history probably saw that every clear night until cheap lighting erased the darkness from city nights.
 - a. Example of using a star map on the shores of Flathead Lake and identifying the different constellations.
 - vi. And what are they continually, day after day, night after night telling us about?
 1. The glory of God, the work of His hands
 2. "Glory" has the idea of Weight – someone weighty and important and impressive – evidence and outward display that goes along with such importance
 - b. Without any speech or words they pour out speech everywhere on earth (vv. 3-4)
 - i. The three negatives emphasizes that this speech is silent.
 1. It's telling, declaring, pouring forth speech and yet there is no speech, no words, their voice is not heard.

2. It's their very existence that "speaks." It is God's silent splendor (Davis)
3. You might call it non-verbal communication.
4. Davis – non-verbal communication – mute communication that still communicates
 - a. Rolling of the eyes, a quick glance, a nod of the head – there are so many ways we communicate without words.
5. **Romans 1:20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
 - a. When we see a great work of art or architecture, we know something about the artist – skill, creativity, patience, technique
 - b. Michelangelo's statue of Moses carved from marble in 1505 shows intricate detail, including a muscle in the forearm that is only visible when the pinky is lifted.
 - c. "The Release from Deception" by Italian sculptor Francesco Queirolo - completed in 1759 after 7 years of work. It depicts a fisherman being released from netting by an angel, allegorical to the man being liberated from his sins.
 - i. How do you carve net from marble?
 - d. God's creation tells us about His eternal power and His very existence so we are without excuse.

ii. Their line has gone out through all the earth.

1. Their line indicates that all the earth is the territory assigned to the heavens to bear their witness – to give their speech.
2. A campus might have a free speech zone where you could stand, set up a microphone and speaker, and proclaim the gospel and all within earshot could hear. But those sound waves would dissipate and a few hundred feet away they couldn't hear anymore. But there is no where on earth that the message of creation is not pouring forth speech.

c. The sun (vv. 4c-6)

- i. The sky is his tent, he wakes like a groom on his honeymoon with a joyful skip in his step, he crosses the sky like a powerful runner, it goes from one end to the other and is unstoppable – there is nothing hidden from it's heat.
- ii. Dale Ralph Davis makes a great observation – David has fun with the sun – he describes it with a tent around it, coming out of the tent it runs across the sky without getting tired. But it's important to realize you couldn't have fun with the sun like that if you were one of the many pagan people groups around Israel who worshipped the sun. In Egypt it was represented by the god Ra, in Mesopotamia it was Shamash, the guarantor of justice. But none of that here. He deified the sun – it's simply God's daily courier.
- iii. God, if you recall from last week is not represented by the sun or moon. He can't be captured in an image. He just IS. He is "I am" YHWH – the LORD. And the blazing sun that will begin to damage your eyes in 30 seconds if you stare at it, that will blister your skin after a day in it, that causes your garden to grow and the grass to wither – but that's not God! It's just carrying a message from God about Himself.

- d. The psalm makes such a pivot here that some have argued they were originally two different psalms that were combined into one.
 - i. But I don't think that's what's happening here.
 - ii. Rather David is moving from the general to the specific, from the silent but pervasive "speech" in creation to the written and detailed speech in scripture.
 - iii. There are no words when God speaks in creation. There ARE words when He speaks in scripture. (Davis)

2. God's perfect **Word** continually transforms us (19:7-11)

a. Overview

- i. 6 statements
- ii. Each statement uses a different word for Scripture
 - 1. Having many words for something tells us a little about what a language/culture values – we have dollars, money, cash, dough, bread, mullah, benjamins, loot, bucks, smackers, bills,
 - 2. The parallelism is not so much so that we would ask the question, "what is different about each word/concept/idea?" but rather "what is the total picture of God's Word that is given here?"
- iii. Each statement is "of the LORD"
 - 1. Sudden and repeated use as if to make very clear who this communication is coming from.
 - 2. In creation anyone can learn that a powerful, creative God exists. But it takes His self-revelation for us to know His name and His character.
- iv. Each describes a positive attribute of scripture
 - 1. Perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true – repeated idea of accurate, reliable, truthful, trustworthy – don't you want that? Don't you want something you can lean on and believe in?
- v. Each describes the action that scripture performs
 - 1. 4 of the 6 actions describe the aspect of the person that is affected

b. His "law" is perfect restoring the soul

- i. At David's writing, it would include what God had revealed about Himself in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the OT. More narrowly it would be what we think of as God's Law – the "thou shall/shall not" portions – but it is also the broader revelation of YHWH through the narrative of deliverance and in the progress of revelation, all that we know about God through the rest of the OT and now the NT could broadly be included in these terms.
- ii. Davis – broader than law – it refers to doctrine, teaching, instruction.
- iii. Restoring the soul as in Psalm 23:3 where the Lord restores my soul as my shepherd, is not so much about conversion as it is an expression of how the Lord revitalizes and reinvigorates the weary soul.

c. His testimony is sure, making wise the simple

- i. Testimony has an undertone of warning, which is just what the simple needs – warning to make him or her wise.

1. **Proverbs 14:15** The naive believes everything, But the sensible man considers his steps.
- ii. What does it mean for testimony to be sure?
 1. Trustworthy – new ideas come and go so quickly. There's good in some of it, in that as image bearers of God we are asking questions about meaning and studying the world around us, and as moral beings with the law of God written on our hearts, we are probing moral questions about right and wrong, but apart from God's Word we're like a broken compass bouncing all around. Nothing sure and sound and trustworthy. But the Word of God is trustworthy.
- d. His precepts are right, rejoicing the heart
 - i. Precepts has the idea of authority
 1. **Psalms 119:4** You have ordained Your precepts, That we should keep *them* diligently.
 - ii. Counterintuitive that God's authoritative word rejoices our hearts.
 1. His authoritative teaching about life leads not to drudgery or irritation or feeling trapped in, the way a middle schooler may feel trapped by her parent's rules that she perceives as too strict.
 2. That only happens when we realize that God's rules are right and that His way is the way to life.
- e. His commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes
 - i. Not insight or guidance but a fresh burst of energy. YHWH commandment refreshes and invigorates and gives strength to the weary
 1. **1 Samuel 14:29** Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.
- f. Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever
 - i. Could be a change in direction that now focuses on the attitude and disposition the Word creates in us, but I think the pattern suggests this is still talking about the same thing – God's revelation of the way He is to be feared by keeping His commandment.
 - ii. Clean – acceptable in the presence of God because it is not in any way polluted or perverted – Ross Allen – the idea is of ceremonial purity
 - iii. Endures forever - it never goes out of style or out of relevance.
- g. His judgments are true, righteous altogether.
 - i. The patterns changes here at the end to emphasis the attributes of God's judgments – they are righteous completely.
- h. What is necessary for me to desire God's Word more than gold?
 - i. To believe and experience what these verses have said about God's Word.
 - ii. You need to know the experience of being dried out by life and restored by the Word, of being frustrated at ever-changing value systems and resting on something that has been sure for a 100 generations.
 - iii. It isn't an imperative but an indicative – they ARE more desirable than gold.
 1. They are sweeter than honey, they warn us

- iv. The piling up of different words for God's Word (law, testimony, precepts, judgments) and descriptions of His word (perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true) and the benefits to us (restores, makes wise, rejoices, enlightens) drive toward this goal – want His Word.

3. Our responsive **prayer** (19:12-14)

- a. An acknowledgement that we won't ever be able to see all of our errors and faults (v. 12)
 - i. I think the idea is that they are hidden not from others but from ourselves. We're blind to them.
 - 1. Contrasted with presumptuous or deliberate sins in the next verse, which is why I think the idea is these are sins we are oblivious to.
 - ii. We've probably all been in situations with people that we think, "How can you not see that what you're doing is wrong?"
 - 1. The problem is, there are aspects of that for ourselves as well. Others are thinking, "how can YOU not see?"
 - iii. But we ask for God's expansive grace to cover these things we aren't even aware of.
- b. Keep me back from presumptuous sins (v. 13)
 - i. Deliberate sins, willful – sins that you know and see and yet do, in contrast to those that are hidden.
 - 1. **Numbers 15:28** 'The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven.
 - 2. **Numbers 15:30** 'But the person who does *anything* defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.
 - ii. The danger is those can "rule over" you.
 - 1. When you repeatedly say, "I know this is wrong, but I'm going to do it anyways" it has a hardened effect on the conscience.
 - 2. You might "regret" it (a new word I learned for something you know you will regret afterward but you do it anyways), but eventually the conscience is dulled.
- c. Let my words and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you (v. 14)
 - i. What I SAY and what I THINK
 - 1. Shaped and informed by the reality of God's existence that all of creation silently shouts and by the detailed revelation in God's Word about who He is and what He wants from us.
 - 2. Meditations of the heart is more than just casual thinking – it's what you chew on, dwell on, are motivated by.
- d. Only Jesus perfectly kept this:
 - i. **John 8:29** "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."
 - ii. There were no hidden sins that He was blind to. There were no deliberate sins. There were no words or meditations of His heart that were unacceptable.

4. Applying the Word

- a. Listen to what creation says about our **Creator**.
 - i. You might be taking biology, physics, chemistry, earth science. And it might be from someone who teaches the science but sees the origin as random chance not a Creator. Learn what you can, be respectful, but also let it be an opportunity to marvel.
- b. Take in God's **Word**.
 - i. Read, read it with your family, listen to it taught, memorize it, think about it.
- c. Pray that God would transform your **words** and **inner** life.
 - i. God's Word is not merely for information but transformation.



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