

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN HIS WORK AND HIS WORD

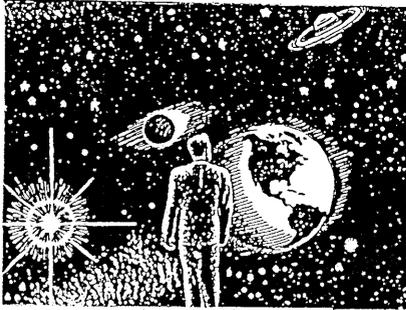
PSALM 19

The heavens declare the glory of God



and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
-Psalm 19:1

men. (George, Lord Bishop of Norwich, *A Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 1822, 118.)



- 4d. It is universal:
The witness of the natural universe is accessible to everyone. Thus, as Paul says, they are without excuse. W. Graham Scroggie has well said:

These celestial missionaries have borne their message to every land. Sun, moon and stars are God's travelling preachers; they are apostles upon their journey, confirming those who regard the Lord; and judges on circuit, condemning those who worship idols (*The Psalms*, 124, 125).

- 5d. It is glorious:
The sun is represented as a bridegroom full of joy and a champion full of strength. The sun, as seen below, is represented.

- 2c. The witness of the sun: 19:4c-6
In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,
⁵Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.
⁶Its rising is from one end of heaven,
And its circuit to the other end;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.



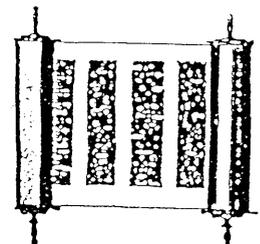
As Unger demonstrates, the psalmist accents the prominence of the sun in his thinking. The sun is made prominent in this witness of creation, because of the symbolic and supreme authority ruling over the day (Gen. 1:16; see Rev. 12:1-4) and in its brightness is the source of light, its healing powers and splendor being used as a figure of Christ, "The Sun of Righteousness," who will "arise with healings in its [His] beams" to usher in the Kingdom (Mal. 4:2, BV).

The sun is metabolically compared to a bridegroom and a champion. The bridegroom coming from the wedding chamber represents the radiance of the sun. The champion, a warrior or valiant man, rejoicing in the strength, represents the power of the sun.
(Unger's *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 770.)

2A. THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN SPECIAL REVELATION: 19:7-11

Psalm 19:7-11

- ⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
⁸The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.
¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
¹¹Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them there is great reward.



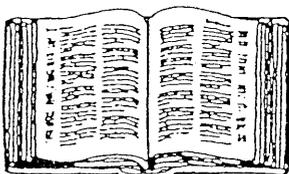
Besides the witness of God's works, there is the witness of God's Word. In David's day (1011-971 B.C.) the sacred writings consisted principally of the five books of Moses plus Joshua, Judges, Ruth, a number of ancient Psalms and possibly the book of Job. The terms used anticipated the future completed canon of Scripture.

1b. The value of the Word:



- 1c. It is perfect: 7a
The word carries with it the idea of "faultless" in the sense of being completely reliable as a moral and spiritual guide. It also suggests the idea of "complete," in the sense of being all we need to save us and enable us to have fellowship with God. Just as an aside, in this present day of apostasy we always need to remember that it is God's Word that is perfect and men's theories must always be tested in light of God's perfect Word. It is without any error. (See also point 10c.)
- 2c. It is restoring to the soul: 7b
Literally the Word "draws the soul back from the downward pull of sin."
- 3c. It is sure: 7c
It is firm and faithful (Psalm 93:5)
- 4c. It makes wise the simple: 7d
The Word makes wise one susceptible to sin (2 Tim. 3:15).
- 5c. It is right: 8a
The term "straight" "upright" suggests a sense of righteous in line with God's will.
- 6c. It brings rejoicing to the heart: 8b
The literal meaning is that the Word is "making the heart glad."
- 7c. It is pure: 8c
The Word is free of any taint of imperfection.
- 8c. It is enlightening to the eyes: 8d
It enables the individual to see what is truly good and worthwhile.
- 9c. It instills the fear of the Lord: 9a
The Word engenders godly reverence and reverential trust in the Lord and an abhorrence of evil.
- 10c. It is true and righteous altogether: 9b
In its original manuscripts has no admixture of error and is thus inerrant and infallible and totally trustworthy

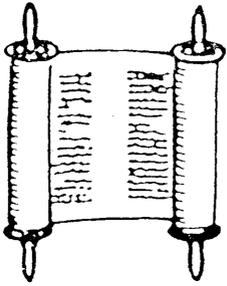
I personally found it helpful, while studying at the neo-orthodox University of Erlangen, to remind myself of God's truthful Word with a small slip of paper I carried in my wallet, containing the words below.



To prove an error in the Bible, one would have to demonstrate the following:

- 1. That the translation of the passage is the only correct translation.**
- 2. That the interpretation of the passage is the only proper interpretation.**
- 3. That a harmonization of the apparent contradiction of the passage is impossible.** – Since God's Word is inerrant – breathed out by Him – no fault will ever be demonstrated.

- 2b. The vocabulary of the Word:
Psalm 19 and 119 employ at least eight distinct Hebrew words denoting God's revelation and accent the divine splendor connected with this written revelation. Six synonyms for the word of God are mentioned in Psalm 19:7-9.



- 1c. Law:
Law tells of the divine instruction relative to character and conduct.
- 2c. Testimony: the witness borne of God's character toward the obedient and disobedient.
- 3c. Statute:
Statute tells of divine directions designed to secure obedience or check disobedience.
- 4c. Commandment:
Commandment tells of the divine decrees, authoritative and imperious.
- 5c. Fear:
Since all the other topics are terms for the law of God, the intended meaning would relate to God's law. Fear tells of the settled habit of the soul which is informed by God's commandments. The psalmist has put the effect of the law – that of fear -- for the law since a proper understanding of God's law results in fear or reverential awe.
- 6c. Judgments:
Judgments tell of the judicial decisions and sentences of Jehovah.
- 7c. Word:
Divine speech is distinct from human speech in that it has the power to create (Psalm 33:6, 9). The psalmist exalts the divine speech as everything proceeding from the mouth of God.
- 8c. Decrees:
Decrees refer to the royal sovereignty in establishing His divine will.

3A. A RESPONSE TO DIVINE REVELATION: Psalm 19:12-14

After rehearsing natural revelation which provides to everyone evidence of the majesty and glory of God, and after delineating various aspects of the Word of the Lord in specific revelation, David responds with an acknowledgement of his waywardness and a request that he be cleansed from sin and be preserved from sinfulness, in order that he might lead a life that is acceptable to his Creator God.

May THE words
 OF MY mouth AND THE
 meditation OF MY
 heart
 be pleasing TO YOU
 O Lord, MY rock
 AND MY redeemer.
 PSALM 19:14

1b. The believer must pray for cleansing from hidden faults: 12

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

2b. The believer must pray for preservation from presumptuous sins: 13

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.

For sins of ignorance the O.T. individual could offer a sacrifice. For presumptuous or willful Sins, the individual could only cast himself on God's mercy (as did David in Psalm 51).

3b. The believer must consistently pray that his words and thoughts are acceptable to the Lord: 14

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.

4A. CONCLUSION:

1. Psalm 19 is a remarkable song extolling God's revelation in nature and in His Word.
2. The knowledge of God gleaned in nature and through His Word should lead to spiritual reflection.
3. The believer who reflects upon God in His creative power and saving grace should respond as did the psalmist in recognizing his sin and asking for cleansing.
4. The believer will maintain that God's written revelation is complete and perfect and use that as a guide for his belief and conduct.
5. The splendid message of this well-known Psalm has been ably summarized by Allen P. Ross:

The careful contemplation of the revelation of the Lord in creation and scripture will inspire greater adoration and renewed spiritual commitment to the believer (*A Commentary on the Psalms*, Vol. 1, 487.)



PSALM 19

THE heav'ns declare thy glory, Lord,
In every star thy wisdom shines
But when our eyes behold thy word,
We read thy name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light,
And nights and days, thy power confess
But the blest volume thou hast writ
Reveals thy justice and thy grace.

Sun, moon, and stars convey thy praise
Round the whole earth, and never stand:
So when thy truth began its race,
It touched and glanced on every land.

Nor shall thy spreading gospel rest
Till through the world thy truth has run,
Till Christ has all the nations blest
That see the light or feel the sun.

Great Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Bless the dark world with heav'nly light;
Thy gospel makes the simple wise,
Thy laws are pure, thy judgments right.

Thy noblest wonders here we view
In souls renewed and sins forgiv'n;
Lord, cleanse my sins, my soul renew,
And make thy word my guide to heaven.

PSALM 19

To the tune of the 113th Psalm.

The books of nature and of scripture.

Great God, the heav'ns' well-ordered frame
Declares the glories of thy name:
There thy rich works of wonder shine;
A thousand starry beauties there,
A thousand radiant marks appear
Of boundless power and skill divine.

From night to day, from day to
night,
The dawning and the dying light
Lectures of heav'nly wisdom read;
With silent eloquence they raise
Our thoughts to our Creator's praise,
And neither sound nor language need.

Yet their divine instructions run
Far as the journeys of the sun,
And every nation knows their voice:
The sun, like some young bridegroom dressed,
Breaks from the chambers of the east,
Rolls round, and makes the earth rejoice.

Where'er he spreads his beams abroad,
He smiles and speaks his Maker God
All nature joins to show thy praise:
Thus God in ev'ry creature shines;
Fair is the book of nature's lines,
But fairer is thy book of grace.

I love the volumes of thy word;
What light and joy those leaves afford
To souls benighted and distressed!
Thy precepts guide my doubtful way,
Thy fear forbids my feet to stray,
Thy promise leads my heart to rest.

From the discoveries of thy law
The perfect rules of life I draw;
These are my study and delight:
Not honey so invites the taste,
Nor gold that hath the furnace past
Appears so pleasing to the sight.

Thy threat'nings wake my slumb'ring eyes,
And warn me where my danger lies;
But 'tis thy blessed gospel, Lord,
That makes my guilty conscience clean,
Converts my soul, subdues my sin,
And gives a free, but large reward.

Who knows the errors of his thoughts?
My God, forgive my secret faults,
And from presumptuous sins restrain:
Accept my poor attempts of praise,
That I have read thy book of grace,
And book of nature, not in vain.

Rev. J. W. Consterdine

from

Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon

he bought ^{it} however.

May the Treasury prove
a "treasure" indeed

Nov 6. 79.

THE

TREASURY OF DAVID.

While I was a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, As fellow student sol me Charles Haddon Spurgeon's *The Treasury of David*, his multi-volume commentary on the Psalms. I paid a mere 50 cents a volume. Back in my dorm room I happily start to peruse the ancient set. As I opened the front cover of volume 1 I noticed with real delight that none other than Spurgeon's wife Susannah had written a dedication to a Rev. J. W. Consterdine dated November 6, 1879. As one can see above, she wrote, "May the Treasury prove a "treasure' indeed."

Immediately upon this discovery I took the volumes back to Tony, from whom I had purchased them and urged him to take back but he graciously insisted that I should keep them. Needless to say, I cherish the *Treasury* as one of my favorite commentary sets!



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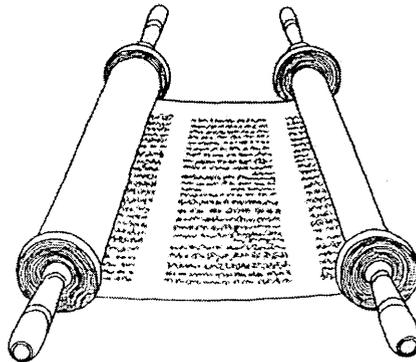
Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

C. H. Spurgeon, the prince of preachers, has a fine introduction to Psalm 19 in his timeless *The Treasury of David*:

SUBJECT.—It would be idle to enquire into the particular period when this delightful poem was composed, for there is nothing in its title or subject to assist us in the enquiry. The heading, "To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David," informs us that David wrote it, and that it was committed to the Master of the service of song in the sanctuary for the use of the assembled worshippers. In his earliest days the Psalmist, while keeping his father's flock, had devoted himself to the study of God's two great books—nature and Scripture; and he had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of these two only volumes in his library, that he was able with a devout criticism to compare and contrast them, magnifying the excellency of the Author as seen in both. How foolish and wicked are those who instead of accepting the two sacred tomes, and delighting to behold the same divine hand in each, spend all their wits in endeavouring to find discrepancies and contradictions. We may rest assured that the true "Vestiges of Creation" will never contradict Genesis, nor will a correct "Cosmos" be found at variance with the narrative of Moses. He is wisest who reads both the world-book and the Word-book as two volumes of the same work, and feels concerning them, "My Father wrote them both."

DIVISION.—This song very distinctly divides itself into three parts, very well described by the translators in the ordinary heading of our version. The creatures show God's glory, 1-6. The word showeth his grace, 7-11. David prayeth for grace, 12-14. This praise and prayer are mingled, and he who here sings the work of God in the world without, pleads for a work of grace in himself within.

(C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, (Passmore and Alabaster. 1878), 304.



THE PROGRESSION OF PSALM 19		THE REALM	THE REVELATION	THE ASPECTS OF RELIGION	ACCESSIBILITY
19:1-6	God Revealed in Nature	The Skies	God's Glory	Natural	To All
19:7-11	God Revealed in Scripture	The Scriptures	God's Greatness	Revealed	To Many
19:12-14	God Revealed in Human Experience	The Soul	God's Grace	Practical	To Some (the Redeemed)

Diagram based on W. Graham Scroggie, *The Psalms* (1965), 123.

PSALM 19 – THE REVELATION OF GOD IN HIS WORK AND HIS WORD

David from his childhood days on studied the two books of God's creation, the book of nature and the book of Scripture.

1A. Natural Revelation: 19:1-6

To David, creation reveals God's royal majesty and sovereignty. Nature gives evidence of God's existence, His majesty and wisdom and this should elicit faith. Paul expands on the thoughts of the Psalmist:

Rom. 1:19-20

¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰For 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,

Rom. 10:18

But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

1b. The Revelation of the Skies: 1-4b

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.

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

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

⁴Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.

1c. The witness of the heavens:

1d. It is specific:

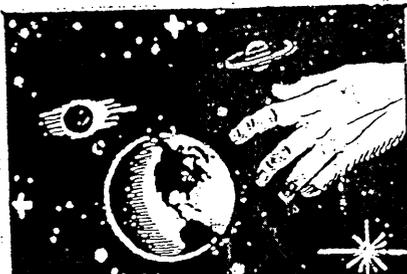
The heavens do not speak of God's mercy, love, and grace, but of His wisdom, power, and glory.

2d. It is perpetual:

Both day and night evidence God's creative power.

3d. It is inaudible:

The phrase "there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard" (verse 3) is best rendered "no speech, no words, their voice is not heard." The point of this statement, as well stated by Lord Bishop George is this:



Although the heavens are thus appointed to teach, yet it is not by articulate sounds that they do it; they are not endowed, like man, with the faculty of speech; but they address themselves to the mind of the intelligent beholder in another way, and that, when understood, in no less forcible way, the word picture or representation. So manifold is the wisdom of God; so various are the ways by which He communicates to

