

## Summer in the Psalms: God Reveals Himself

### Psalm 19 ABC 6/13/21

Bill Klem (1874-1951) was one of baseball's best-known umpires, working 108 world series games.<sup>1</sup> When he stood behind the plate, he was in charge of everything that mattered. He was the unquestioned authority. He had a way of looking contentious managers straight in the eye & backing them back into the dugout. It's said on one occasion, the 9<sup>th</sup> inning of a critical game, the batter hit the ball to left field & the runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> broke for home with the potential winning run. The catcher crouched to make the tag. There was a fierce collision with the catcher, the runner, & the umpire all knocked to the ground. Everyone eagerly awaited the decision. In one dugout the players were screaming, *He's safe! He's safe!* In the other dugout they yelled, *He's out! He's out!* The fans were in a divided uproar.

In the midst of the noise & confusion, Bill Klem stood up, looked directly into the stands, raised his fist & exclaimed, *He ain't nothin' 'til I've called it!* Klem was the authority & nobody was going to take that away from him!

We live in a day of spiritual & moral confusion where the mantra is, *I'm my own authority. Whatever I believe is right for me.* But we have an authoritative revelation outside of us that tells us why we're here & how we should live. If the sovereign God has spoken, & He has, then some may shout one thing & some another, but the only authority that matters is God & what He says. If God calls it, that settles it & we must submit to it. Open to Ps 19 as we continue our summer in the psalms. Here David again shows that God has spoken to us through His revelation in His world (1-6). He also tells us God has spoken to us in His Word (7-11). He speaks through His skies & through His Scriptures. There's a nonverbal revelation & a verbal revelation. There's an unwritten revelation & a written revelation. There's a revelation without words & one in words. The theme of this psalm is unified in that God reveals Himself in these 2 ways. David then concludes by showing how we must respond. **Ps 19**

**1. God's Revelation in His World** (1-6) The Scriptures plainly teach the universe was created by God. **In the beginning**, what? **God created the heavens & the earth** (Gen 1:1). The NT tells us **by the word of God the heavens existed long ago & the earth was formed...** (2 Pt 3:5). The God who created all this is glorious & all of creation is evidence of His glory. He is glorious in His size, having created something so big we can't even fathom it. He is glorious in His engineering, having created

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<sup>1</sup> [www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/Bill\\_Klem](http://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/Bill_Klem)

something so intricately interconnected. He's glorious in His artistry, having created something so beautiful. He is glorious in His goodness & kindness, having created something for all to see. We know the heavens declare God's glory but do we consciously think on that? I think one reason we pay so little attention to God's creation is because we're fallen, sinful creatures. I don't think the angels in heaven get tired of God's beauty or that God Himself grows weary of the beauty of His Son. But as sinful people we're plagued with the truth that *familiarity breeds contempt*. But surely redemption means we'll be freed from that contempt. & since our redemption has already begun in this age, we ought to have more discerning eyesight for seeing the knowledge that every day & night pours forth. David shows us at least 3 things concerning God's revelation in His creation:

**A. God's Glory in His Creation** (1, 2, 4a) **Glory** comes from a word meaning *weight* or *worth*. We see abundant evidence of God's *weight* or *worth* by looking at His creation. Every day the heavens tell about the glory of the God who spoke them into existence. The stars & the sun are so glorious that the One who made them must be more glorious still. As you look at the stars, they testify to a God of great power who made them. If you study the human body, you find it testifies to an all-wise Creator. The petals of a flower, a blade of grass, a snowflake, the intricacies of the atom, the nature of light, the laws of physics, they all testify to a divine Creator that lies behind them. This is clearly & plainly evident. So obvious that it's self-evident. The witness lies on the surface. It doesn't require extensive scientific knowledge to see it.<sup>2</sup> When people choose to ignore God's revelation in His creation, it isn't because of a lack of evidence. **Pours forth** means bubbling up or gushing forth like a spring that never stops. Vs 4 says the message extends everywhere. If you live in this universe, you have clear testimony to the God who created it. The reason people don't see it is because they don't want to. As Paul said in Romans (1:18, 20-21), they...

**suppress the truth in unrighteousness... For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power & divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, & their foolish heart was darkened.**

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<sup>2</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1-41: An Expository Commentary*, p 163

The evidence is there. The problem is people don't want to submit to God as Lord; they want to be their own lord.

**B. Everyone Can Grasp the Evidence** God's glory is evident to all. It speaks without speech to everyone alike. It's wordless speech. The message of God through the skies reaches our minds & hearts without words or speech. This is hard to explain. David struggles to say it. Notice the paradox between vss 2 & 3. Vs 2, **Day to day pours forth speech**. Vs 3, **There is no speech**, same word in both vss. In other words, God means for there to be communication from His mind & heart to our mind & heart, but the communication isn't by written or spoken words. Instead, it's light & color & contrast & shape & proportion & design & motion & magnitude & beauty. Vs 3 says, **There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard**. Yet, vs 4 goes back & says the same thing as vs 2. **Their line has gone out through all the earth, & their utterances**, their voices, **to the end of the world**. Wordless words, speechless speech, voiceless voice. The point is clear: God is pouring forth communication to us through His creation. He's telling & proclaiming & speaking & writing & declaring knowledge to everyone on earth. Think about God's wordless communication & compare it to when you look at a painting. 2 things come to our minds when we see a painting, they are intuitive & immediate. The 1<sup>st</sup> is we know it's a painting. It's not alive nor real. It's the work of a human hand. We see it & know someone made it. The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing we sense immediately is some assessment of it; it's beautiful or ugly or confusing or whatever. There's an immediate communication to our hearts without words or extended reasoning. God's creation is a wordless book that everybody can read because it needs no translation. Staring at a gnarled & weathered tree, contemplating a rose, relaxing beside a brook, or marveling at the ocean waves are ways of experiencing the revelation of God's might & seeing His deity in His creation. But in a lifetime one can't sit long enough under that tree to hear words from it. The rose will wilt without ever speaking to you. The stream & waves are incapable of verbal speech. God's creation is a nonverbal communication of who He is. & this isn't a private or secret knowledge. The sun you see today is the same sun that shines on Paris, Addis, & Hanoi. It's the same sun that David was under when he wrote this psalm. The result is that all men can be held accountable for acknowledging the truth

of what nature communicates. What does creation communicate? God's glory. The voiceless, visual, universally available knowledge is that behind it all is a glorious God as Creator of all things. The heavens' message is inarticulate, though very real. It's a silent eloquence that reaches all around the world to every person of God & His glory.

**C. Some of God's Attributes are Revealed in Creation** The heavens declare the glory of God but they can't declare all He is. But we can see at least 5 things about God from vss 1-6:

**1) God is infinite in His power** The next time you step outside on a starry night & look up into the sky & think about the Creator, be overwhelmed with His power. All that you see is just **the work of His hands** (1). God spoke this universe into existence. What does that tell you about His power?

**2) God is consistent & faithful** Just as the sun faithfully & consistently rises in the east every morning & sets in the west every evening, so God is faithful & consistent. You can count on Him to keep His Word. He never fails.

**3) God is exuberant in His joy & strength** David poetically compares the sun to a bridegroom coming out of his bridal chamber, overflowing with exuberance & joy. & like a **strong man running his course**. Both images carry the ideas of youthful strength, energy, & joy.

**4) God is omnipresent & omniscient** Just as the sun's rays shine everywhere upon the earth & nothing is hid from its heat, so God is. He searches you out & knows all there is to know about you, so there's no escaping Him.

**5) God is eternal** If God made the universe, then there was a time when only God existed. That in itself staggers the mind. We might think that besides God there was only nothingness. That may make us think of of an infinite space with God by Himself in the middle. But that's wrong. Once there was only God. God was all there was. There was no room for anything else, not even nothingness, for all that was, was God. This drives us even further & we realize this God never had a beginning. He never came into being. That baffles us. Every aspect of our character or personality is explainable as the result of some genetic trait or environmental or spiritual influence. You became the person you are. You grew, learned, changed, & matured. But not God. He is good, holy, long-suffering, reliable, honest, righteous, just, & merciful. But He never became that way.

He never learned anything from anybody; He never grew; He never changed; He never matured. He simply always was what He is. As unimaginable as it is, it tells us He cannot cease to be what He's always been because there are no forces at work on Him. He is the eternal, unchanging, glorious Creator.

Let's draw 3 quick applications: #1 – Let God's creation humble you. The Bible is clear that the sinful tendency of fallen mankind is to exalt ourselves, to think we're like God. But the truth is, we aren't like God. He alone is the almighty Creator. Try speaking anything into existence, let alone the entire universe, & you'll see that, compared to God, you're nothing. That's why David asked in Ps 8, **What is man?** God doesn't exist to make you happy as you pursue your selfish goals. He's the Sovereign of the universe, who alone is great. We need to humble ourselves & submit to our awesome Creator.

#2 – Don't let evolutionary theories infect or affect your thinking. Evolution is a belief that enables men to act as their own gods. It's almost always presented as fact, not theory, even though evolutionists can't explain how the complexities of the natural world came to be, except through incredible odds of random chance. Don't let evolutionary theory cloud your awe of the Creator who designed such an intricate creation. Instead...

#3 – Worship God the Creator. Don't worship the creation, but let your view of the created world direct you beyond itself to worship the infinite God who designed & created it. John Piper had a professor by the name of Clyde Kilby who wrote 11 resolutions, practical steps to actively see the beauty of God's creation. I won't take the time to read them to you, but there's a printed copy in the back if you'd like one.

The psalmist concludes his thought by saying **there is nothing hidden from the sun's heat**. For CS Lewis this is the key line of Ps 19.<sup>3</sup> It marks the transition from the works of God to the Words of God & links them both together. As the sun rules the day, so God's Law rules us. Both the sun & the Law radiate the light of the God. Vss 1-6 reveal the God who communicates His glory to us through His creation. His continual communication is a witness to His desire always to be known

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<sup>3</sup> Reflection on the Psalms

& worshiped by us. He's also the universal God claiming all people for Himself. There's a problem, however; sin has darkened our perception of Him. We have **errors, hidden faults, & presumptuous sins** (12–13), therefore we need more than the witness of creation. We need God's words so we can understand the works of God. General revelation holds us accountable, but it also condemns us because in our sin we deny the Creator. But in our darkness, God speaks.<sup>4</sup> Creation tells us much about God, but His Word tells us much more. Creation doesn't testify to God's moral qualities, His attributes like justice, mercy, love, wrath, goodness, grace, & compassion. But the creation certainly declares God's existence & power. In the skies we see His glory. In the Scripture we see His greatness. In our soul we find His grace. God reveals Himself through creation. But He doesn't reveal all He is or all He's done or planned through creation. What we need are His words & these come only in His Scriptures. Interestingly, David only names **God** once in the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 vss, using the Hebrew, *EI*, God's Creator name. But in vss 7-14 he uses *Yahweh*, **Lord**, the personal covenant name of the God of Israel, 7x. We can know God in a general sense as the Almighty Creator through His creation, but we can know Him personally in a much fuller & perfect way through His Word.

**2. God's Revelation in His Word** (7-11) There is no conflict between natural & special revelation, nor can there be. The God of the world is the same God found in His Word. In a beautiful section of Hebrew parallelism, David tells us of the majesty of God's Word. He calls it **the law, the testimony, the precepts, the commandment, the fear, & the judgments**. Together, these are comprehensive & show us the purpose of God's revelation. After each title, we find 6 descriptions; the Bible described in 6 ways: **perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, & true**. The last 6 phrases tell us what the Bible does: **restores the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, endures forever, & are righteous altogether**.

**A. God's Word is Authoritative** Notice the words David uses for God's Word: **law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear** (the response produced in the sensitive reader), & **judgments**. Notice too that each one says, **Of the Lord, of the Lord, of the Lord, of the Lord, of the Lord, & of the Lord**. Why? Because Scripture comes from God. It is God-breathed. This isn't a human book; it's a divine

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<sup>4</sup> Donald Williams & Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Psalms 1–72*, vol. 13, The Preacher's Commentary Series, p 160

book. Beyond that, this indicates authority. God doesn't timidly tap us on the shoulder & say, *Excuse me, but may I suggest that you think about obeying Me?* He doesn't mumble when He tells us how we're to live. He didn't give us a handful of tips on how to be happy. No, God speaks, & we'd better listen. These aren't suggestions. These aren't merely good ideas. These are absolute truths.

**B. God's Word is Adequate** It's sufficient for all the needs of the human soul. **The law of the Lord is perfect** (7), meaning complete & whole. Nothing can be taken from it; nothing can be added to it. It is everything it needs to be. It lacks nothing, but more importantly, it possesses everything we need. It's flawless & completely sufficient for **restoring the soul**. God's **testimony ... is sure** & makes **wise the simple**. The word **simple** shows us that to receive God's wisdom, we must humble ourselves by setting aside our pride. God's Word shows us how our infinitely wise Creator has designed for us to live a blessed life, as seen in the next phrase, **rejoicing the heart**. God's Word isn't a burden to take away our fun, but a blessing to give us real joy in every circumstance. When Satan huffs & puffs & tries to blow out the flame of our joy, we have an endless supply of kindling in the Word of God to keep our joy going. True & lasting joy comes through the Word of God when it is known & obeyed. God's **commandments are pure, enlightening the eyes**, so we don't stumble & hurt ourselves in the snares Satan sets for us. God understands you better than anyone else. God is wiser than any writer. God is more caring than any counselor. & He's more creative than any composer. Therefore, what God says is more useful to us than what anyone else in the universe has to say. Not to sit at His feet & soak our minds with His wisdom is insane, if not outright suicidal.<sup>5</sup> No matter what our sins have been or our problems are, the Bible is able to turn us from our sins, lead us through our problems, & both feed & enrich us so that we're able to enjoy the full benefits of a relationship with God through Christ.

David goes on to tell us that God's Word is better than **gold**. **Gold** is good & **fine gold** is better & **much fine gold** is better yet. But God's Word is better than **much fine gold**. It's better than the best. & there's great pleasure in it for those who seek it. Why? Because God's Word isn't only our

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<sup>5</sup> John Piper, [www.desiringgod.org/messages/sweeter-than-honey-better-than-gold](http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/sweeter-than-honey-better-than-gold)

treasure, it's also our delight as it's **sweeter than honey**. God's Word is a treasure to be claimed & a taste to be enjoyed. Honey is good & the drippings of the honeycomb are very sweet, but the Word of God is sweeter still. God's Word is authoritative & abundantly adequate to meet our deepest needs.

**C. God's Word is Accurate** Note the adjectives: **perfect**, meaning complete or having integrity. **Sure** is a solid foundation for life. **Right** means morally correct. **Pure** has no unwholesome elements. **Clean** means free from impurity. **True** is total dependability. If there's any seeming error in God's Word, it's due to our limited knowledge, not to God's mistake. Therefore, we can entrust our lives to following God's Word & we won't be led astray.

**D. God's Word is Absolute** It endures forever & is **righteous altogether**. It applies in every culture in every age to every person. God's standards aren't relative & shifting (Mt 24:35). We aren't to be tossed around by every wind of doctrine but to live by God's unchanging standards, revealed in His unchanging Word. It's authoritative, adequate, accurate, absolute, & ...

**E. God's Word is Abrasive** By God's Word, His **servant is warned** (11). **Warned** against what? Against sin & its harmful effects & against the lies & errors of this world. God doesn't always pat us on the head & say, *That's OK. Nice try*. His Word often grates against our sinful grain & says, *That is wrong & you'd better stop it!* God's Word confronts us. But it does so for our benefit. There is great profit in the Bible for those who will obey it. In the **keeping** of it **there is great reward**, not only in the future but even here & now.<sup>6</sup> Virtue, godliness is its own reward. Though the ungodly don't think so, the godly are blessed in their uprightness. Goodness itself is joyful. *To be holy is to be content.*<sup>7</sup> Thus, God's revelation always demands a response. So David concludes with the proper response.

**3. Our Response** (12-14) David's response to God's revelation was to face his own sin & call out to God for help in overcoming it. God doesn't reveal Himself & give us His Word for speculation, but for application. Having begun with the vast reaches of creation, David ends with his own heart. It's

<sup>6</sup> David Jeremiah, *Ten Burning Questions from Psalms: Study Guide* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994), 47–48.

<sup>7</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary*, p 174



God's intention in communicating through nature & through His Word to reach us. God speaks or shouts at us in order that we might hear & respond.<sup>8</sup> David mentions 4 types of sin:

**A. Errors** (12) are oversights, wrongs innocently committed.

**B. Hidden Sins** (12) These are faults unknown to us because they're so deeply ingrained in us, but they're not hidden from God. Sin is so much a part of us that we don't even realize much of our own sin. God has to reveal them & deal with them in us.

**C. Willful Sins** (13) This is outright disobedience, the **great transgression** at the end of vs 13. There are times when you know what God wants you to do & you act like a defiant child & say, *I don't care. I'm going to do what I want!* For these sins the OT didn't provide a way of atonement. Murder & adultery were the 2 particular sins that excluded a person from obtaining forgiveness through sacrifice in the OT, the 2 sins David committed with Bathsheba & Uriah. But here both kinds of sin are covered by the mercy & grace of God! **I will be blameless, & I shall be acquitted of great transgression** (13). Since our sin prevents us from seeing God's glory in creation & His love in His Word, it's only God who can help us out of our dead end. He does so by taking us as we are & forgiving our sin. Only *then*, says the psalmist, *shall I be blameless* &, by implication, able to hear the words of life. David doesn't want sin to dominate his life, so he prays God would deliver him. **Let them not rule over me** (13).

**D. Sins of Words & Thought** (14) David is aware that sin lies deeper than our actions, & so he prays that **the words of his mouth & the meditation of his heart** would be **acceptable to God**. God's Word searches our innermost being & shows us wrong thoughts which are the source of wrong words & wrong deeds. **The word of God is living & active & sharper than any two-edged sword, & piercing as far as the division of soul & spirit, of both joints & marrow, & able to judge the thoughts & intentions of the heart** (Heb 4:12). If David, who calls himself here God's **servant** & whom God called a man after His own heart (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22), if he knew he was so inclined toward sin as to pray like this, how much more must we continually confront ourselves with God's Word & call out to Him for our sanctification? We've got to let God's revelation shine into the dark recesses of our

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<sup>8</sup> Donald Williams & Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Psalms 1-72*, vol. 13, The Preacher's Commentary Series, p 157

heart & scrape away the sin we so often try to hide. Because God has spoken in His world & in His Word, we must respond by facing our sin & submitting to His revelation.

Finally, David confesses who God is. He prays that his words may **be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock & my Redeemer**. He will only live in the Word of God by the power of God, & that power is the power to deliver & redeem. Our God is the God of redemption in the Exodus & on the cross. David refers to God as **my rock & my Redeemer** (14). He didn't say, *my accuser & my judge*, but **my rock & my Redeemer**. A **rock** refers to a place of refuge, where a sinner can run for protection & rest. A **Redeemer** refers to one who has protected or rescued another from bondage & slavery by paying the required price. & **my** means David fled personally to God for redemption. God wants to be your **rock** of refuge & your **Redeemer** who rescues you from bondage to sin & death. Jesus is both **Rock & Redeemer** because He not only paid the price to set us free, but He also keeps us safe eternally. God paid the price to rescue you from bondage to sin by sending His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He died in your place, so that God's judgment for your sins fell on Him. God is now free to forgive & accept you if you'll accept the pardon He offers in His Son. Instead of being the God who accuses & condemns you, He can now be the God who forgives & welcomes you to take refuge in Him.

Jesus lived an absolutely perfect life, which is what we were required to do & couldn't do. But Christ did it for us. He bears our curse & He provides our righteousness. All our sins are covered & the curse is gone. Our righteousness is provided if we put our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior & Lord. Remember David & Bathsheba? He's king & does anything he wants. He gets Bathsheba pregnant & now he's got a problem. She's married to Uriah, one of his valiant soldiers. David tries to solve this by bringing Uriah home. But Uriah won't sleep with his wife while his fellow soldiers are risking their lives for David. David tries to get him drunk & that doesn't work either. So he has him killed, making sure he dies in battle. Then he takes Bathsheba & makes her his wife. Now the baby looks legit. But that's not the end of the story. God comes to Nathan the prophet & says, *I have a message for David. Go tell him a story about a man who had many sheep & a man who had one sheep. The man with lots of sheep stole the other man's sheep so he could have a BBQ with his*

*friends. See what David says about this.* Nathan tells David the parable, & David says, *Let's get that guy!* Nathan then tells him, *You are that man.* David repents & Nathan says, *The Lord has taken away your sin* (2 Sam 12:1-15). What sin? Adultery & murder. Picture yourself as Uriah's dad. You'd say, *That's not right! He killed my son, raped my daughter-in-law, & you're just going to say, 'Your sins are forgiven'?* Any judge down at the courthouse who did that would be lynched. It would be called a travesty of justice. But that's what God does for us every day. Do you see the problem God has in justifying sinners like us? What does He do to solve the problem of the glory of His justice being compromised in the forgiveness of sinners like us? He kills His Son. He puts His own Son in our place so that all would see that God takes sin seriously. When David tramples God's glory with his sin & God comes along & says, *I forgive you*, & all the universe cries out, *No!* But 1,000 years later we see God saying, *This is how seriously I take My forgiveness of David. I slay My Son in his place. That's what I do about sin.*<sup>9</sup> & that's how seriously He takes your forgiveness & mine. He sends His Son to die in our place. That could never be communicated nonverbally through creation, but only through His revealed Word. All of God's communication to us, verbal & nonverbal, have but one goal. God wants us to know Him, worship Him, love Him, & obey Him. If we value creation we should cherish God's written Word even more. If we value nature, we should value God's verbal revelation even more & make it the object of our careful, searching, devout, thankful, & obedient meditation every day. God's world shows us how awesome He is. But God's Word shows us how we can be right with Him & how we can live a truly **blessed** life (Ps 1). The most perfect revelation of God to us is Jesus Christ Himself. As the author of Hebrews puts it, **God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions & in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world** (Heb 1:1-2). Our response should be to face our sin & submit to the living & true God who has made Himself known through His world & His Word. The heavens tell us He exists & that He is all-powerful. The Bible shows that He is our **Redeemer** from sin, that is, the One who's

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<sup>9</sup> [www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-blazing-center-part-1](http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-blazing-center-part-1)

able to break sin's bonds & set us free. He's the **Rock** upon which the redeemed person can take refuge & find strength. God alone is the umpire who makes the calls. Make sure you're safe in Him.