

Psalm 19 - God revealed

1. Housekeeping
2. Observation and exposition of Psalm 19

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2. Psalm 19 is a profound and finely-crafted poetic statement of the doctrine of divine revelation, both general and special.

3. General revelation (1-4)

- a. What is "general revelation?"
 - i. The revelation of God in nature, also called "natural revelation"
- b. What does general revelation as described in **verse 1** tell us about God?
 - i. That he is, that he exists.
 - ii. He is glorious, far more so than the heavens themselves, which are amazing to behold.
 - iii. He is the Creator - "proclaims his handiwork."
 - iv. He is powerful, or all-powerful, to have created the universe.
 1. And, as **Genesis 1** tells us, he simply spoke it into existence.
- c. What does general revelation **not** tell us about God?
 - i. His moral attributes such as "justice, mercy, love, wrath, goodness, grace, compassion." (Boice, 162)
 - ii. How to be made right with this God who made the universe.
 - iii. His name, Yahweh.
- d. So is general revelation enough? Is it sufficient?
 - i. James Boice says that "glory" in verse 1 is "a revelation of God's existence and power so great that it should lead every human being on the face of the earth to seek God out, to thank him for bringing him or her into existence, and to worship him." 162
 - ii. See **Romans 1:18-20**
- e. What do **verses 2-4** tell us about this general revelation?
 - i. It is continuous (2)
 1. "Day to day" and "night to night"
 - ii. It is abundant (2)
 1. "pours out speech" - "the image is literally of a gushing spring that copiously pours forth the sweet, refreshing waters of revelation." Boice, 163
 2. No matter where you look, you can see God's handiwork.

3. The deeper you look, i.e. scientifically, you see the wisdom and complexity of his design.
- iii. It is universal **(3-4)**
 1. "This is the basis for the universal ascription of guilt to humanity by Paul in Romans 1....It is because of this general revelation (and not a special revelation which, of course, numerous peoples and cultures do not have) that God is just in punishing the heathen as well as those who, having the special revelation, also sin against their greater light." Boice, 165

4. The glory of the sun **(4-6)**

- a. Now David points to the sun as a "particular example" of general revelation (John Stott)
- b. Perhaps more than that, David is thinking of the sun as "the crowning achievement of God's creation," at least from a human perspective. (P. C. Craigie)
 - i. Life as we know it could not exist without the sun.
- c. What is meant by:
 - i. "a tent for the sun"
 - ii. "a bridegroom leaving his chamber"
 1. Either the "wedding canopy" or the "bridal chamber"
 - iii. "a strong man [who] runs its course with joy"
- d. "and there is nothing hidden from its heat"
 - i. There may be a sense here where the sun is being compared to special revelation, and is a transition into the next part of the psalm.
 - ii. Compare **2 Peter 1:17-19**, where Peter says he heard the voice of God on the mountain with Jesus, but the prophetic word (Scripture) is even more sure than that.

5. Special revelation **(7-11)**

- a. What is "special revelation?"
 - i. The revelation (revealing) of God, by God, in written form, or Scripture.
 - ii. "This book is coherent, progressive, historical, and theological revelation."
- b. Some scholars think Psalm 19 was originally two different psalms, 1-6 and 7-14.
 - i. Why?
 1. The name of God changes from *El* in **verse 1** to *Yahweh* in **7, 8, 9, and 14**.
 2. The style of writing changes.
 - ii. Why might this be a problem, if they are right?
- c. **Verses 7-9** are a classic, nearly-perfect example of Hebrew poetic parallelism
 - i. Six parallel statements

- ii. Each contains three parallel elements
 - 1. Six terms for Scripture
 - 2. Six adjectives that describe it
 - 3. Six statements of what it does

- iii. We'll look at each of these synonyms for special revelation in turn, but consider what VanGemeren says, "The synonyms are not to be studied in abstraction but give a comprehensive emphasis that *all* of the words of the Lord are beneficial." (181)
 - 1. Compare **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

- iv. "The law of Yahweh is perfect, reviving the soul" **(7)**
 - 1. Law = literally "Torah," instruction, "everything God has revealed or says" (Boice, 171), Scripture, the Word of God

- v. "the testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple" **(7)**
 - 1. Testimony = statutes, "an aspect of truth attested by God himself" (Boice, 171)

- vi. "the precepts of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart" **(8)**
 - 1. Precepts = "'order,' indicating the precision and authority with which God addresses us" (Boice, 171)

- vii. "the commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes" **(8)**
 - 1. Commandment = "anything ordained by the Lord" (VanGemeren, 185)

- viii. "the fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever" **(9)**
 - 1. Fear = "not strictly a synonym for law, though it is used as such. It describes the Scriptures by the effect they produce in those who respond to the revelation," **verses 12-14** are an example of this "godly fear or reverence" (Boice, 171)

- ix. "the rules of Yahweh are true, and righteous altogether" **(9)**
 - 1. Rules = judgments or verdicts, "the divine evaluation of our thoughts and actions" (Boice, 171)
 - 2. Delayed and/or expanded parallelism?
 - a. **Verse 10** gives the psalmist's personal evaluation of the "rules of Yahweh," telling how valuable they are
 - b. **Verse 11** completes the parallelism, telling what the rules do
 - i. "warned" against what? "Sin and its harmful effects" (Boice, 174)

- ii. “This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book.” John Bunyan
- iii. the reward is **in the keeping of**, not just a reward **after** keeping the rules or because we have kept them

6. Prayerful reflection (VanGemeran), or self-evaluation, or life application **(12-14)**

- a. Three categories of sins
 - i. “errors” = “wrongs innocently committed” (Boice, 174)
 - ii. “hidden faults” = “faults unknown to himself because [they are] so deeply ingrained in his personality, [though] certainly not hidden from God” (Boice, 174)
 - iii. “presumptuous sins” = or “willful” sins, “sins of deliberate presumption” (Boice, 174), and probably the equivalent of “great transgression” in **13b**
- b. In other words, we are comprehensive sinners, or sinners in every respect (total depravity)
- c. These verses show a dependence on Yahweh and his grace and mercy for forgiveness for sins already committed, and protection from sins that we might commit in the future.

Resources

1. *ESV Study Bible*
2. *Psalms, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Volume 5)*, Willem A. VanGemeran
3. *Psalms: An Expositional Commentary, Volume 1*, James Montgomery Boice