

PSALM 19 pt.1
A Wordless Worldbook

I've never lived in an area where you could get a great view of a night sky. Growing up I'd see pictures in books or on TV of these incredible night skies with a canopy of stars, but I'd never seen it with the naked eye. Then in the summer of 1994 we went camping in the Alps and I ended up outside the tent in the early morning hours and I looked up – WOW. Where had those stars been all my life?? It was amazing. Psalm 19 verse 1 came to life.

PSALM 19:1-6

The Works and the Word of God.

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

**1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.**

**2 Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.**

**3 There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard.**

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

**In them He has placed a tent for the sun,
5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.**

**6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens,
And its circuit to the other end of them;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

For some, studying the heavens is a scientific endeavor; for others it is an unbiblical form of spirituality – horoscopes, etc, but for the Christian believer it should serve the purpose of praise, awe, and wonder at the God who has the whole world in His hands.

Psalm 19 is divided between the Wordless Book and The Word Book, so we'll take one week on each.

As we consider Psalm 19, we do have the first part deals with the book of General Revelation, or the Testimony of Nature. The second part deals with the book of special revelation, the written Word. There's a third section that is a response to this revealed truth and how it is applied to our lives. The first part is a wordless book where the encyclopedia of creation is the focus. The second part is THE WORD BOOK in which the good instruction of God, the law, is the focus. They should be read as a two-volume set with God our Father being the author of both.

This beloved Psalm has left its mark on the people of faith because it is a memorable poem and an inspiration for musicians.

C.S. Lewis, a Master of Literature, called it “the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world.” (Reflections on the Psalms)

This Psalm has been the basis for numerous hymns and praise songs.

THE TESTIMONY OF NATURE: 1-6 GENERAL REVELATION

Ongoing, Obvious, Omnipresent,

The author not only says that creation itself speaks of the existence of God but that it declares the GLORY of God.

The root idea behind the Hebrew word for 'glory' has to do with weight, so one who is glorious is weighty or heavy

(I am more glorious now than I was 43 years ago when I got married).

EX: "O dude, that's really heavy man" i.e. that is important, significant, or weighty

Biblical faith is not merely saying, "God exists". Lots of religions say that, as do many people who like to describe themselves as 'spiritual but not religious.'

Being a mere theist is not the goal of scripture. **Merely recognizing the existence of God is not the same as recognizing that He is glorious.**

Recent polls found a drop in the number of Americans who "believe in God."

I dare say that if the term God were given more definition, the number would drop even more.

People who speak of God in generalized terms are not referring to a God whose GLORY would stop them in their tracks. There is no sense of AWE AND MAJESTY associated with a generic 'God'. How many hymns have been written in praise of a generic, impersonal, force or being?

I think many people today would say they believe in God but when pressed on the point there's nothing about the God of their belief system that would be considered glorious or weighty.

When Psalm 19 gets to v.7ff we see the personal reality of this glorious God because he is identified as YAHWEH.

The God who is proclaimed by the heavens day by day is none other than Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the God of the Psalms, the Prophets, and the eternal God who became flesh in Jesus Christ.

The trajectory of the Psalm is to move us toward praise, awe, and adoration of God.

The Psalmist invokes the witness of the heavens to move our hearts to praise.

Great classics from Dickens and others were originally released in serial form, day to day or week to week.

The divine classic – The Glory of God – a wordless book is the longest running serial. A new chapter has come out every day since God set the days in motion.

TRAITS OF THIS TESTIMONY:

Ongoing "The whole world resembles a divinity school" - Plutarch

Day after day and night after night the heavens are declaring their message. The heavenly announcement was not a one-time deal like the angelic announcement of the birth of Christ to the shepherds.

This declaration of the glory of God is on continuous loop.

EX: Stone Mountain has a LASER LIGHT SHOW, but it only operates at certain times of the year.

God's "light show" happens day and night – the sun, the moon, and the stars.

The heavens are continuously telling us how heavy, impressive, and glorious Yahweh is. As such, He is worthy of our trust and worship.

The idea in the text is that the heavens are bursting to tell us of their Maker.

EX: Have you ever been so excited to tell someone some news that you were ready to explode? That's a rarity today because news can be spread so instantly. "Back in the day" when folks didn't have cell phones, internet, or email, if you had some big news, you had to wait to see the person face to face, find a land line, or write a letter.

The Wordless paradox

3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.

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

There is no speech or voice, yet their message goes to the end of the earth.

“Wait, ISN'T THAT a contradiction in scripture.” Not so fast. Remember this is POETRY. The bible is NOT teaching that the heavens really speak or that God has ‘hands’, or the sun is a bridegroom.

The psalmist isn't lying in this poem, nor is he engaged in a sort of passive-aggressive statement to make a point.

EX: Sen. Alexander Stephens railed against a colleague and said, “My opponent is not fit to carry swill to swine” There was an outcry and demands for an apology, which came out this way, “I do apologize. The Senator is absolutely fit for the duty to which I referred.” (Ralph Davis quoting Paul Boller). The statements were contradictory and yet they made the same basic point.

The Psalmist is simply trying to make a point and get us to think and hear the wordless declaration. His affirmation is that the heavens are engaged in NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION.

The Testimony is OBVIOUS

2 Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night REVEALS knowledge.

The image of “pours forth” is like that of a gushing spring that pours out the obvious reality of a Creator.

The heavens are not the only obvious evidence of the glory of the Creator. We know things that David did not, such as the DNA molecules that make up life.

. Norman Geisler explains,

A single DNA molecule, the building block of all life, carries the same amount of information as one volume of an encyclopedia. No one seeing an encyclopedia lying in the forest would hesitate to think that it had an intelligent cause; so, when we find a living creature composed of millions of DNA-based cells, we ought to assume that it likewise has an intelligent cause. (Norman Geisler: When Skeptics Ask p. 21 Baker Books)

Unless one has a prior commitment that rules out the reality of a Created order, *it would seem obvious that the integrated complexity of the physical universe and the integrated complexity of life itself can only be explained in terms of an intelligent Source.* Such was the conclusion of the late philosopher Anthony Flew, who had been a lead spokesman for atheism. He shocked the atheist community when, shortly before his death, he announced that he had come to believe in some sort of divine intelligence.

(To the Source, Exclusive Flew Interview, Benjamin Wiker, October 30, 2007.)

Flew's announcement is in line with what God's word says in **Romans 1:19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. **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.

While all of creation is good non-verbal communication, it can be misinterpreted, so we need something more to get a clearer understanding of our situation. (That will lead us into the next part of the Psalm)

The Testimony is OMNIPRESENT

It is everywhere we look in the entire universe

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

Every corner and aspect of creation bears witness to the creative hand of God – the stars, your hand, flowers, a blade of grass, snowflakes, the changing seasons, the various laws of physics- they all give testimony of the Creator.

As Dr Boice points out, the evidence is right there in front of us; it is low hanging fruit that is easily accessible – Rom 1:19 “it is evident to them”. God is not trying to hide His existence. He made it so plain that it can be grasped by a child or by an atheist philosopher like Anthony Flew.

EX: common question in faith conversations- “Why doesn't God reveal Himself in a way that is more obvious?”

WHAT MORE DOES HE NEED TO DO, write it across the heavens? O Wait.....He does that everyday!!

That question verifies the truth of Rom 1:18

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

It's not an issue of enough evidence. It's an issue of our hearts that suppress the evidence.

While many scientists have embraced a divine design, others have resisted because if there is a creator, they feel like their science plays second fiddle to God. Their theories and tests cannot penetrate the essence or the mind of the Creator.

It's not just that the evidence is low hanging fruit accessible to all, the evidence is even stronger the deeper you investigate the various areas of evidence- the heavens, biological life, laws of nature, etc.

The more you investigate, the more you encounter the evidence that is gushing forth. It amazes me that experts in science, medicine, astronomy, physics, etc would NOT believe in God. The more they study, the more the evidence is pouring out all over them. And the more they SUPPRESS it.

Robert Jastrow – NASA's Goddard Institute - God and the Astronomers- he was amused by the reactions of some fellow scientists regarding evidence for a creative design...

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance, - he is about to conquer the highest peak, as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries. P. 107

THE KEY WITNESS OF THIS TESTIMONY – THE Sun and the SON.

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

In them He has placed a tent for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them;

And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Davis loc 1113 – While the sun was deified in ancient (and modern) paganism, here it is seen as God's messenger. The sun was like an ancient Pony Express galloping across the heavens declaring the message of the glory of God.

The images of a bridegroom and a champion portray youthful exuberance and strength.

David didn't know as much about the sun as we do, but he saw it as God's glorious handiwork.

How often do we see its presence or absence as a mere detail in our weather forecast?

How often do we (I) complain about it being too hot or too cold rather than hearing the declaration of the glory of God?

While creation is a witness to the existence and glory of God, it is not sufficient to bring one to a full knowledge of salvation. While it is compelling and leaves us without excuse, it is also limited.

The natural world points to God but it is NOT God itself. There is a Creator/creature distinction that is very important biblically which, is being suppressed today. This shows up on the fringes of religion and culture, but it has also made inroads into the mainstream of our society.

EX: EARTH DAY is one small example of this mixture of spiritual values. The world is on board for Earth Day and some might use Ps 19:1-6 as a justification. But the same folks are NOT on board for Bible Day – Ps 19:7- 14

Another cultural saying that reflects a quasi-devotion to the planet are the simple expressions "Mother Earth" or "It's not nice to fool mother nature." At best these are mindless harmless expressions. At worst they

represent a sort of nature worship. NOTE**Historic and modern paganism are geared toward getting rid of the Creator – creature distinction. Paganism is oriented towards a “Oneism” in which all is God and God is all.

*ONEISM – Dr. Peter Jones

Scripture clearly promotes a Creator / Creature distinction in which God alone deserves the glory. To what degree should God be praised? Psalm 57

11 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth.

The God who made it all is revealed in general revelation. But He is not bound by space and time, so He also gave us the special revelation of the Written word – the Psalm’s theme for next week.

Beyond the written word we know that The Word became flesh and dwelt among us to solve our problem of alienation from God.

WHILE WE need the sun for life, God gave His only SON so that we might have eternal life.

The Word made flesh is the creator of the wordless book of creation...

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being

The heavens declare the glory of God, and glory has a Name – Jesus.

The mysterious GOOD NEWS of the gospel is that through union with Christ by faith, we too are partakers of glory when Christ returns.

Now that’s HEAVY!!

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