

PSALM 19 pt.2  
The Word Book

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

PSALM 19

The Works and the Word of God.

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

6 the sun's 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.

7 The law of YAHWEH is perfect, restoring the soul;  
The testimony of YAHWEH is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of YAHWEH are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of YAHWEH is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of YAHWEH is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of YAHWEH are true; they are righteous altogether.

10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

Many find the move from v. 6 to v 7 abrupt, but C S Lewis gives a good insight. The author goes from God being revealed in nature to God revealing Himself through His word. Just as nothing can be hidden from the heat of the sun, nothing can be hidden from the penetrating truth of God's word. Yahweh's Torah is like the all-piercing, all-detecting sunshine.

THE TESTIMONY OF NATURE: 1-6 GENERAL REVELATION – the splendor of what we See  
Ongoing, Obvious, Omnipresent,

Forget Christian 'nationalism', whatever that is supposed to be. Psalm 19 and Psalm 8 from two weeks ago teach **Christian Intergalacticism** – (CrossPolitic) God rules all the galaxies of the entire universe. If we are only focused on one or a few nations, then our God is too small. We are intergalactic citizens of Heaven.

General revelation is not sufficient for knowledge of salvation. It does leave us without excuse in reference to knowing that there is a God, but it doesn't reveal the mystery of redemption.

v. 7-14 the glory and splendor of what we Hear- God's voice in His Word

Keller: Since the Hebrew word for "soul" means one's psyche or self, the Bible has the power to show and restore your true identity. For the Bible to do all this, you must accept that it is perfectly true and trustworthy in all its parts (verses 7-9). Then don't just study it but let it search you (verses 11-14)

Keller, Timothy; Keller, Kathy. The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms (p. 33). Penguin Publishing Group.

v. 7-9 – We hear God's clearest speech as He communicates to us His good instruction for our good and His glory. God's instruction or "law" promotes human flourishing for those who follow it.

Even those who may not call themselves "believers" will find that following God's principles helps promote a greater sense of shalom or well-being in their lives and their relationships. V. 11

Who is this God whose glory is revealed? YAHWEH. His name is used 6 times in v. 7-10.

The God of glory is not just "out there"; He is near and personal. He is the God of the Word of God, and, like the Word he speaks, a God reviving the soul, making wise, bringing joy, and illuminating our hearts and minds. Through the Word, God moves from being the transcendent mystery to one who makes Himself known.

He's everything to Me- The Martins 1964 Bud John Songs

In the stars His handiwork I see On the wind He speaks with majesty  
Tho' He ruleth over land and sea, What is that to me?

'Til by faith I met Him face to face... And I felt the wonder of His grace  
Then I knew that He was more Than just a God who didn't care  
That lived away out there  
And now He walks beside me day by day, Ever watching o'er me lest I stray  
Helping me to find that narrow way, He's ev'rything to me

The text of Ps 19:7-10 shows us that Yahweh has drawn near to us through His Word.

EX: getting a written letter from a special loved one. Back before long-distance calling became rather inexpensive or was even invented, getting a written letter was the main way of communicating closeness to a loved one. It still has a special meaning today. We have a box in our closet that has letters that Linda and I wrote to each other when we were engaged. I was in Atlanta, and she was at Covenant college and phone calls were expensive. Waiting for a letter was the proto-version of "You've got mail".

V. 7-9 David describes the character and impact of Yahweh's word or torah = instruction, teaching, doctrine, law.

While David didn't have Jesus in mind per se, the Psalms as a whole did point to Him. We know that because Jesus himself in Luke 24 taught his disciples how to read the Psalms. He said, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:42).

Elyse Fitzpatrick: As we approach the entire OT, we do so with a Christ centered perspective.

God's Law begins to restore my brokenness and bring me to life when I see all its perfections and am forced to run to and rely on the mercy of Christ.

7 The law of YAHWEH is perfect, restoring the soul;

It is PERFECT or flawless= without defect, whole, complete – it provides us with all we need to know about God. it is not necessarily exhaustive, but it is sufficient to guide us in faith and life. What is necessary is clearly stated or can be deduced from scripture. It is understandable to young and old, and scripture can best be interpreted by the totality of scripture itself.

It RESTORES the soul = this is the same word in Ps 23 "He restores my soul" It is Yahweh speaking through His word that revives and energizes the weary soul. Matt 11

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

7b The testimony of YAHWEH is sure, making wise the simple.

The "testimony" is used to refer to the tablets given at Mt Sinai – Ex 31, 32, 34. The ark that contained the tablets is referred to as the ark of the testimony.

The testimony is used to make wise the simple. "The simple" is one of the terms used in Proverbs to refer to one who is foolish, i.e. naïve, imprudent, open to danger. This is one who NEEDS WISDOM that comes from Yahweh.

EX: like training wheels on a bike for kids or guard rails on a winding mountain road, the "testimony of Yahweh" keeps us safe.

8 The precepts of YAHWEH are right, rejoicing the heart;

“statutes, commandments” this word is used only in the Psalms and all but two of the 24 verses are found in Psalm 119, a Psalm which extols the author’s love for God’s ‘precepts’ or commandments and the benefits they bring.

**One way to distinguish a Spirit renewed believer from a churchgoer or religious moralist is that the true believer sees the precepts of Yahweh and rejoices.** Over the years in ministry, I’ve heard variations on this common refrain :

*“I grew up in church, but the bible didn’t make sense and I found it boring, but something happened and I came to really know Christ as my savior and the bible came alive. It brought me great comfort and insight. It made sense out of life. What had been a catalog of rules has now become something delightful to my heart.”*

**Wm Cowper \_ Love constraining to Obedience**

**To see the law by Christ fulfilled And hear His pardoning voice,  
Changes a slave into a child, And duty into choice.**

**8 b The commandment of YAHWEH is pure, enlightening the eyes.**

The commandment as a singular whole gives light to the eyes. The word is also used in 1 Sam 14 when Jonathan dips his staff in honey and eats it. His “eyes brightened”. So too, the Torah renews and strengthens the weary.

**9 The fear of YAHWEH is clean, enduring forever;**

This is a change of focus for this verse refers to the disposition of the heart of the one who hears the Torah. It is an attitude of “fear” or reverence and trust that is clean i.e. not polluted or perverted and it endures forever.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccles. 12:13). In fact, the fear of God is so important a theme in Scripture that Professor John Murray wrote simply, “The fear of God is the soul of godliness.”<sup>1</sup> The seventeenth-century Puritan John Owen likewise argued that in Scripture, “the fear of the Lord” means “the whole worship of God, moral and instituted, all the obedience which we owe unto him.” Reeves, Michael. Rejoice and Tremble (Union) (p. 15). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

The fear of God never goes out of style before the throne of heaven. There is no expiration date on the fear of Yahweh no matter what the culture says.

\*\* don’t be bullied or silenced by a culture that is constantly redefining words and won’t acknowledge what a baby is or what a man or woman is. The pagan or demonic mantras of our age DO have an expiration date, but not so the fear of Yahweh.

**9b The judgments of YAHWEH are true; they are righteous altogether.**

As Dr. Davis points out, the judgements of Yahweh are the particular applications of the principles.

David lays out these various aspects of the torah, but the goal is not to expand our vocabulary or get a basic meaning of each term. The goal is so that we would see the soul satisfying, joy-inducing spiritual energy that comes from God’s Word.

We are not to sit back and analyze the Word; we are to DESIRE it and see its value.

HOW DESIREABLE ARE THE COMMANDMENTS AND PRECEPTS OF YAHWEH?

**10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;**

Have you noticed the uptick in ads for investing in gold over the past few years?

It is seen as a hedge against inflation and an up and down economy. It always has value.

It is desirable. People have gone crazy to get it. Explorers gave their lives and took the lives of others to find gold and riches. While many got rich and many didn’t do so well, the CA Goldrush promoted the advancement of California statehood as people flocked there from around the world. It also gave us the name of an NFL TEAM – ‘49ers;

We are to 'desire' or 'covet' the Torah of Yahweh. It's the same word used in the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment. This is a HOLY COVETING that should consume our hearts.

Psalm 119:36 teaches us to pray, "Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to gain."

Psalm 119:18 teaches us to pray, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law."

Psalm 86:11 teaches us to pray, "O Lord, I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name."

The result should be satisfaction. If only Mick Jagger understood this

Psalm 90:14 teaches us to pray, "O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days."

Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

More desirable than gold and sweeter than honey...

Is that our response to the Word of God?

Do we value it, desire it, and long for it like that?

Wm Tyndale did

William Tyndale was the man who had given England a Bible in its own tongue had taken refuge in Antwerp. He was betrayed by a false friend and handed over to the tender mercies of 'the church' for eventual execution.

He was imprisoned and many years later a letter was discovered in Belgian archives. It was written to the governor of the prison:

I entreat your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head.... A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings.... I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible.... (Sketches from Church History, 121-2).

Davis, Dale Ralph. Slogging Along in the Paths of Righteousness: Psalms 13-24 . Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

That should NOT just be the attitude of bible translators held in prison awaiting execution. The intergalactic God who spoke the worlds into being has drawn near to us through the Written Word. How should we respond?

What would a response be that can only be explained by the Holy Spirit – Psalm 19:7-10 – COVET THE WORD.

If we are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, how should we respond to the Word? The way Jesus did.

"Man does not live by bread alone but by EVERY WORD that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

**11 Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.**

For some reason, warnings have taken on a negative connotation when they are actually for our good. The heart of man is such that we see a warning and we are tempted to ignore it.

EX: mountain trail – "DON'T GO BEYOND THIS POINT" What do we want to do???

If warnings weren't needed, we wouldn't see so many in the Word.

**We must never use the assurances of the bible as an excuse to avoid its warnings – Ralph Davis.**

God gives us warnings so that we don't fall for fool's gold. He knows that we are created for so much more than what the shiny baubles of sin can provide. His Word, his precepts, and His commands guide our hearts toward the true riches of a relationship with Him.

C.S.LEWIS: P. 53 pointed out in 1958 that this idea of the Law's beauty, sweetness, or preciousness, arose from the contrast of the surrounding Paganisms, and we may soon find occasion to recover it.

Believers who uphold core values in the areas of life, image of God, gender, and marriage are rapidly being surrounded by a rising tide of a Proud neo-pagan religion that has its own alphabet label, precepts, symbols and even flags.

I doubt that 1958 C.S. Lewis would have predicted the current cultural climate. But with a prophetic voice he said,

*Perhaps we shall all learn, sharply enough, to value the clean air and 'sweet reasonableness' of the Christian ethics which in a more Christian age we might have taken for granted.*

In order to guard against the potential danger of self-righteousness, the Psalmist moves to a prayer at the end of Ps 19.

We'll pick up there next week.

The reason that we can find the 'law' of God so desirable and sweet is because Christ fulfilled it for us.

Let us come to Christ knowing that our words and the meditations of our hearts are made acceptable to God through the sacrifice of Christ, and let that lead us to being honest with God about our sin and our need for Him.

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