

GOD IS REVEALED PSALMS 19:1-14

Do you watch American Idol or America's Got Talent on TV? What would you say characterizes most of the performances? Think about the various expression of "talent" on these shows. You have magic or illusion, dance, comedy monologue, instrumental music, and singing. It seems that the majority of talent expression is related to singing. Do you have a radio, CD player, mp3 player in your car? What do you listen to most of the time? Music and singing.

Some of the most popular types of music (with words) today are "hip-hop" or rap, country-western, and religious music. Many have a message or tell a story that is a commentary on the times in which we live.

Just about every society and culture you know anything about have some form of music and singing as part of who they are. Music is a major part of what we do in the church during times when the members come together for worship. It is rather revealing to realize that much of the controversy in most churches today is not about theology but about the type of music that is used.

Why is singing and making music such a significant part of who we are as human beings? I have wondered about that and it really baffles me as why things are the way they are. We may never know the answer to that question, but it is important to realize how important such expressions are to understanding the thinking and passions of not only individuals but whole societies. We can gain insight by examining the songs of Israel that are preserved for us in the Psalms.

In God's dealing with man, He uses several means to make Himself known. In the broadest of terms, these are General Revelation (in the natural creation), Specific Revelation (the word of God), and Incarnate Revelation (the person of Jesus Christ). Psalms 19 speaks to the first two means by which God makes Himself known.

CREATION SHOWS GOD'S GLORY

¹The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ²Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. ⁴Their 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, ⁵Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. ⁶Its 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. Psalm 19:1-6 (NASB95)

{ 19:1 } The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (NIV)
The word "heavens" probably is not a reference to what we think of as the spiritual abode of God. The emphasis in the first part of this Psalm is on the physical world or universe.

In His creation of the physical universe, God has provided ample evidence for His existence. David could see the visible world around him and realize that it did not "just happen" spontaneously – there had to be a cause. The beauty, grandeur and majesty of the created physical world were done by One of even greater beauty, grandeur and majesty.

The practical application for us is that in our lives, we can declare the glory of God by pointing out what He has (created) done for us. First, we must recognize that those things that happen around us are the result of God working in our lives. Just as the humanists ignore (reject) the role of God in creation, many nominal Christians ignore the providence of God in the happenings in their lives.

The skies (firmament) show His handiwork in creation and we show His handiwork in the new creation. Ephesians 2:10 tells us “we are His handiwork.”

{2} Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. {3} There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. {4} Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Since the message of creation is repeated each day, everyone is exposed to this general revelation of God. Ancient man was in awe of the mysteries of the sun and the stars. Modern man must stand in greater awe of the knowledge of how vast and full of energy and power is the whole of the universe. Though we know so much, its infinite character is still incomprehensible. In Romans 1:18-20, Paul confirms that the invisible attributes of God are known in what He has created.

The communication that goes forth does not depend on audible speech, therefore, people of all languages get the message. They may not accept the message or they may ignore it, but the message is there.

In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, {5} which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. {6} It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

Just as all the earth is influence by the energy of the sun, all people can know there is a Creator. The faithfulness of the rising of the sun and its strength to warm the earth during the day speak to us of the faithfulness and power of God who created the heavens and the earth.

When people observe the physical creation they see the beauty of the mountain ranges, the majesty of the star-filled sky and they can also see the destruction power of a tornado, the awesome devastation of a volcano and they should be filled with admiration, wonder, awe, and fear. This range of images could cause people to wonder which of these pictures are really interpretative of the nature of the Creator. This why the general revelation also needs the specific revelation of the word of God to help us understand and appreciate Who God Is. Matthew Henry observed

“The discoveries made of God by his works might have served if man had retained his integrity; but, to recover him out of his fallen state, another course must be taken; that must be done by the word of God.”

THE WORD SHOWS GOD’S GRACE

Verses seven through eleven are similar to the very thorough exposition regarding the precepts, principles, provision, perfection and power of the Word of God that is given in Psalms 119. While creation gives ample evidence of the greatness and glory of God, the Scriptures are needed to reveal the grace of God.

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD 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. Psalm 19:7-11 (NASB95)

We find six names for the Scriptures along with descriptions with regard to the nature of this particular aspect of the word and the beneficial effects these aspects should have on us.

NAMES	NATURE	EFFECT
Law	Perfect	Restores or converts soul
Testimony	Sure	Makes the simple wise
Statues	Right	Rejoices the heart
Commandment	Pure	Enlightens the eyes
Fear of Lord	Clean	Endures forever
Judgments	True	(Fairness) - implied

{7a} The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. (NIV)

Laws (the whole of Scripture - not just the Law of Moses) provide sign posts along the way. These help us make the right turns and lead us in the right directions. The word “reviving” is sometimes translated “converting” or “restoring.” This word carries the same idea as “repenting.” This makes perfect sense in that the word of God can bring conviction (in showing us our sinfulness) and cause us to turn from ways that are harmful to us and to return to the right path in life that leads to God.

{7b} The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. (NIV)

The word translated “statutes” in the NIV is translated “testimony” in most other versions. A testimony is what a witness relates. Those who witness as to what God has done in their lives help the rest of us in our faith walk. However, just think how powerful the words are when God is the One giving the testimony!

Some times the word “simple” is used to describe the “foolish.” In this case being “simple” is the same idea that would be used to describe a child or someone who is teachable. This is in agreement with the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:15 where we find

Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

Since parallelism is used in Hebrew poetry, we know that David was saying somewhat the same idea in both parts of this verse. Putting the two parts together we can conclude two things: The laws of God are His witness to us that result in drawing us to Him which causes us to be wise. We could also conclude that in hearing (and heeding) God’s witness we are made wise and then we repent and experience restoration. Both conclusions have the same outcome in that we are restored in our relationship with God.

This is somewhat a picture of the first steps in what we would call the plan of salvation. The following verses build on this idea.

{8a} The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.

In our relationships, there are various specific instructions from God that should be applied.

Living by His precepts would eliminate much of the strife we have in our society and in our individual lives. Strife in relationships produces the opposite of joy.

Notice that we move from restoration or conversion of the soul to becoming wise and then we see a natural progression to joyfulness. This should be the testimony of each and every Christian.

{8b} The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

The commandments of God are special instructions that are pure and clear - which could be considered “radiant” as used in the NIV. The idea of purity would imply that the commands are free from error. The idea that the commands are clear would cause us to realize that we do not need to wonder what a commandment means.

We can see another step in the progression: We start with restoration or conversion and move into being a disciple that produces wisdom which brings joy to our souls and clear vision or discernment regarding spiritual things.

{9a} The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.

Most commentaries make the statement that the word “fear” is intended to be the word of the Lord. Recall that we had noted that the creation showed not only grandeur and beauty but also awesome power and destruction as in a tornado or volcano. Now we see a hint that the written revelation of God has both the goodness and severity of the Lord. If we disobey man’s laws, then we “fear” the police. If we disobey God’s laws, then we should fear Him even more. We should not play games with God regarding keeping his commands.

{9b} The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.

The ordinances (or judgments) are the just decisions rendered by a court. If we ignore the general revelation of God and His direction, if we scorn his promises and settle for man’s way in civic and interpersonal relationships instead of following God’s statutes and if we disobey His command because we do not fear the Lord, then judgment will be the outcome.

{10} They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. {11} By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

The law, testimony, precepts, commands, fear and the judgments of God have eternal value and satisfy the longing and hunger of our heart more than anything else.

PRAYER FOR GOD’S GRACE IN OUR LIVES

¹² Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. ¹³ Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:12-14 (NASB95)

In contrast to the perfection of God’s word we see our own inadequacies. We see such things as errors, faults, willful sins and rebellion. One possible interpretation of the question posed in verse twelve regarding our ability to discern or understand our errors is to consider errors as acts we commit that we may not even know are sins. In our ignorance or just from oversight we fail to do what is right. If the sin is from ignorance of what the standards are, then we cannot correct the “error of our ways.” However, this is a correctable situation. Recall that the heavens give testimony to the existence of a Creator and the invisible attributes of God can be known.

Therefore, the wise person will seek to know these attributes and to learn the precepts and principles of God. Another possibility is that we are aware that the things we do are errors and we seek to understand why we do them anyway. This problem is reminiscent of the theme of Romans Chapter 7. “The good that I would (do), I do not. The evil that I would not (do), I do in

spite of my best intentions.” The understanding or discernment of this is easier than its correction. The unsaved may seek to vindicate themselves through morality and good works and yet they encounter inevitable errors or sins in their life. The problem is in their very nature that is “bent” toward sinning. Those who have been born again of the Spirit of God and have a new nature will experience the same situation if they are relying on their own strength rather than walking by the Spirit.

The plea for forgiveness of “hidden faults” is a reference to sins that we fail to recognize as sins and consequently they are “hidden” from us but not necessarily from others and certainly not from God. Another possibility is that if we are not diligent, then we may find that we will do something we know is wrong simply because no one will know about it. These hidden sins may not be outright and overt sins (murder, stealing, lying, etc.) but sins of conscious (to know to do right and to do it not, that is sin). While these “hidden” faults are unknown to those around us, they are known to us and to God.

On the other hand, willful (presumptuous) sins are those things we do with the full knowledge of its violation of God’s will but we do so on the basis that we “know that we can get forgiveness for it.” These are termed presumptuous because they “presume” upon God’s grace. Such sins may be hidden or out in the open. The word translated “willful” in the NIV and “presumptuous” in the KJV is usually translated as “proud.” We should never presume on the goodness and grace of God treating it as something we deserve.

The consequence of sin that is not restrained is being controlled and dominated by sin. This is exactly what God warned Cain about in Genesis 4:7 “If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

David’s desire was to be “blameless” in his relationship with God. That should be our desire also. This condition is what God offered to Cain “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?” Having experienced the utter frustration of striving and failing to “get it right” apart from God or by operating in our own strength, we can appreciate the joy expressed by Paul in Romans 8 where he stated, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

To be blameless or upright is to be judged innocent of the many possibilities of sin in our life. While no one (except Jesus the Christ) has lived in sinless perfection, we can experience the forgiveness of sin and sins and know the joy of being declared righteous in Christ.

Having been cleansed and forgiven, then our desire is to express our gratefulness to God by being pleasing to Him. We see this desire expressed by David in verse 14.

{ 14 } May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Our first priority is typically to say the right things since we are concerned with the effect of our word on others. We tend also to be concerned about the opinions of others. We may be (self) satisfied if we can control our tongue but our thoughts may be undisciplined. The root of the problem is in our thought life. If we bring that into alignment with the “mind of Christ,” then our words will take care of themselves.