

© Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study, www.intothyword.org

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Psalm 19:1

Main Idea: Everything in the universe points us to a Holy and Sovereign God, Creator and Lord. Our very sky shows us His wonder and proclaims His Glory. The fingerprints of a real involved careful Creator are evidently illustrated. Each day shows us more of His work and each night tells us of His voice and deeds. Everyone will see and know there is a God Who creates and sets everything in place. This is clearly displayed without doubt, like the victory of a championship game or state wedding. There is no secret or mystery of creation; there is only our inability to set aside our pride and look. As the day goes into night and again into day, as we see all the wonders of nature and the stars, we see the work of our God. Nothing and no one is hidden from Him. In this, we see the order of God, His attention to detail and how precisely and integral everything is. The more we study, the more we can see Him. All of creation points us to Him, so we know our place and His Sovereignty. We can take heed and comfort in His trustworthiness. As His universe is accurate and exact, so are His precepts also perfect, so that we can revere His Holiness and trust in His Word. There is nothing more needed or greater in His creation than His Word. We need to seek His forgiveness and walk in His Way. Seek His guidance and principles. So, let every thought, word, and deed that comes from us reflect His precepts and be pleasing back to Him, our Redeemer, Protector and LORD.

Contexts and Background:

Imagine David, the shepherd boy, gazing up at the bright starry night and wondering. God inspires Him. Psalm 19 is theology set to poetry and tells how God has revealed Himself to humanity and gives us the testimony of God's wordless creation, gives credence and clarity to God's written Word. This testifies to not only His existence, but also to His character and spoken Word. This is called "General Revelation," that God's influence, glory and presence is all around us. That in nature, there is an order that points to a Maker. Nature makes God known and in so doing, calls us to seek a higher purpose and order, which is our Lord God, Redeemer.

This Psalm also lets us know from whence our direction in life comes. Also, we are directed to search our own hearts and minds to our direction in life, our mindsets and worldviews, so we can be aligned to His Truth and precepts. Psalm 19 helps Paul from Romans 1:18-20 and its underlying argument, and it is then quoted in Romans 10:18-20.

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Director of music / choirmaster.* Perhaps a musical or liturgical symbolization for worshiping congregation and or choir. As the Psalms were used as a hymn book in the Temple and by early Christians, some still use it this way, the Psalter (Hab. 3:19; 2 Sam. 22:1; 1 Chron. 23:5, 30, Neh. 11:17; Psalm 36).
- **Verses 1-6:** A wholehearted praise to the Lord for His creation and gift of His unspoken Word to humanity. This is contrasted with man's conceit and unwillingness to look up to the heavens and see Who is Lord and respond with reverence and submission.
- *Heavens / expanse declare the glory of God.* In the style of the beginning of Genesis, God's created nature is testifying that God is the Creator. That God reveals Himself through creation (General Revelation), thus we have no excuse not to know about Him. His moral character and duty is in all humankind, even without knowing Scripture. ("Special Revelation" is the Word of God.) Thus, we are truly blessed to have such an abundance of both revelations and we can't say, *I did not know* (Gen. 1:1-8; Duet. 32:21; Isa. 65:1; Rom. 1:18-20; 10:5-21)!
- *Skies proclaim.* God is pronounced in nature. He is not hidden in the rays of the sun or the starry nights; rather, He is announced! The celestial bodies are not markers of our destiny; they are made by the hand of God. Yet, people look to astrology and refuse to look to Him (Rom. 1:18-20).

- *Work of his hands.* Ancient cultures would kiss the hands of architects and builders who built something grand. Or, they would kiss their own hands and lift them up to worship the sun and the moon and give thanks to a created thing and not the Creator (Job. 21:26-f; 2 Kings 23:5; Rom. 1:19).
- *Pour forth / pours of speech.* A metaphor of God's goodness and power. The image is that of a spring, giving forth water from an unknown source (Job chaps 37-38).
- *No speech.* Meaning wordless speech as no words are needed to prove God. That there is no boundary or limitation to God's witness from His own creation. The awe of the majestic nature shows a creator, not an accident or random act (Rom. 10:18; 2 Cor. 10:13).
- *Ends of the world / all of the earth.* God's revelation is in creation too. All may see it, yet will seek to oppress it (Rom. 10:18).
- *Pitched a tent for the sun.* Referring that the sky, the earth's atmosphere, as a tent to make our planet habitable and functional for life. Meaning the universe was designed and created from nothing. The order and precision of creation denote an intelligent design and cause, from the micro to the macro, the sun and all heavenly bodies are obedient to God's plan. This testifies that God created the universe and we are not here by accident, happenstance, or by a process of natural selection. That's because of the "irreducible" and "specified complexity" of biology, quantum mechanics, and the laws of physics cannot explain the immense, intricate, information-rich structures. Also, that matter itself cannot come from nothing. Some form of conception and direction must have accounted for their design and origin, which is testified by this Psalm as being God (Gen. 1:1-31; Job 10:9-12; 26:14; Psalm 139:14-15; Isa. 48:13; John 1:3; Heb. 3:4).
- *Bridegroom.* The groom sets the house, then claims his wife in community, with music and festivities. The biggest feast in those days, a wedding feast would last seven days or more. The groom's whereabouts was often heralded to the waiting guests by announcers, and they would carry out the ceremony under a canopy, where the marriage was consummated. Then, it was a much greater honor, as it united family's and the local residents. Here's a metaphor for God making creation, then seeking us as His guest to live in it (Joel 2:16).
- *Champion / strongman rejoicing.* Creation is robust and strong, but nothing is stronger than God.
- *Makes its circuit.* How one views the sun and stars from earth, not an astronomical statement. The observation is that all the heavenly bodies are directed in assigned paths and order. In contrast, pagan cultures viewed the sun as a god who was in charge of heat, light, provision, and justice. This Psalm makes it clear that the sun is created and God is in charge of such things, including law, order, and justice.
- *Nothing is deprived.* As nothing can escape the heat of the sun, nothing can escape God. There is no chaos; everything has an order and purpose. In contrast, human reason is flawed with illogic, absence of True facts, riddled with compromise, causing us to make unwise decisions (Psalm 23:3).

Verses 7-14: This part of the Psalm focuses on "special revelation," God's law and written Word--the Torah then, and the Bible now. God has a precise purpose for each person, object, and relationship that He creates.

- *Law of the LORD is perfect.* Means sacred Scripture. The comprehensive, authoritative precepts and judgments of God are True, clear, trustworthy, dependable, and practical for a right relationship with God and others as well as for good living. The response of humanity is to be in awe and then worship God with praise and gratitude (Gen 42:20; Ex. 25:16; Le. 3:17; Deut. 9:9; Psalm 12:6; 18:22; 119; James 1:21-27; 1 John 5:9).
- *Refreshing / reviving the soul.* God's Word renews and transforms people lives for the better, everyone and everything is subject to it (Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 4:12).
- *Statutes of the LORD* are trustworthy. Referring to God's moral law revealed in His written Word.

- *Precepts of the LORD are right.* Referring to the Mosaic Law and God's distinctions of what is right and what is sin. God's Word is superior to humanity's feeble wisdom.
- *Light to the eyes.* This means the gift of life, and human beings have the ability to understand Who God is and respond to him and follow His commands (Psalm 13:3; 38:10; Prov. 29:13).
- *Sweeter than honey.* Refers to the natural resource cultivated by people for commerce and the main sweetening ingredient (along with dates) at that time. It represented essential commerce and well as pleasure of taste. *Honey* can also refer to God's goodness, grace, and mercy, and that through His Word, both written and unspoken, we have "good news" from God's promises and our communion with Him through which we receive His instructions and the knowledge of His nature inducing His grace, mercy, and goodness (2 Chron. 31:5; Psalm 119:103; Ezek. 2:3; Rev. 10:8-11).
- *Servant is warned.* Meaning all of humanity have a valid explanation or justification, as God's instructions are written now in His creation and in our hearts, so all know better; we have no excuse (Psalm 19:1; Isa. 44:9-20; 5; Luke 12:41-46; John 10:34; 15:18-27; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 15:42-49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:10)!
- *Discern.* God's motivation is pure and helpful, humanity's is riddled with fault. Thus, a wise person seeks God council through His Word to make wise decisions (Num. 15:27-36; Psalm 14:1).
- *Hidden faults... willful sins.* Not considering the gravity of sin. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Thus, we must be aware of our depravity and seek God's forgiveness of all our sins, known and unknown. And, being overconfident that in our knowledge of God, we declare ourselves clean. Never consider any sin as trivial ones that are worse than others, as all, even the smallest separates us from God (Ecc. 5:4-f).
- *Meditation of my heart.* That we can go to God as sinners, and we can become His servants, by repenting and offering ourselves to Him and He accepts us (which is by the work of Christ). Our offering to God of thankfulness to Who He is, what He has done and yet to do while we deliberate on His directives. An affirmation of trust and promise to obey. (Lev. 25:25; Job 19:25; Psalm 18; Hos. 14:2).
- *Pleasing.* How to make God happy. Our main purpose in life is responding to a loving God Who created us and then saved us when we did not deserve it. To realize our depravity and seek forgiveness and respond with gratitude. How do I glorify God? By surrendering to His Lordship, being in prayer, committing and trusting Him, making our spiritual growth and maturity our main priority (Psalm 39:7; 16:5-11; 62:5; 87:7; 86; 144:15; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36.; 1 Cor. 6:20, 10:31; 6:20, 10:31; Phil. 4:4; 1 Pet. 4:11).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

The theme of Psalm 19 is God's creation, pointing us to Him, and His written Word which gives us His precepts. The Psalm ends with a call for us to respond. That call is *meditation*, meaning to focus, ponder, and reflect upon Christ. We need to take our gratitude for Who He is and focus our thoughts on Him! We also need to know His love and care and what He has called us to do and not do. Knowing who God is will enable and help us to focus on our trust in and relationship with Christ!

This will allow us to praise Him and live for Him more effectively! To clear up the confusion presented by cults and the New Age movement, "biblical" Christian *meditation* means we commit to paying attention to Christ, giving Him our total concentration as LORD over us. It is a call, so we can redirect ourselves to Christ; it is the clear-minded, attentive reflection and reaction to His instructions such as encountering Him by anchoring ourselves to His Word, pursuing and obeying His principles and applying them to our lives. We live these so that they are not just academic ideas, but a lifestyle we endeavor and delight to fulfill. The outcome is to become more mature in our faith; that helps us seek Him first so we can enter His living presence to commune with Him. This is a great tool for the Psalms (Joshua 1:6; 1:2; 19:7,14; 63:6; 77:10-12; 119:11, 17-18, 97-102, 148; Isa. 55:8; Jer. 17:5-10; Matt. 6:33; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:17; Phil. 4:8; 1 Thess. 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:1; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Christian Life Principle: Christ has a particular purpose for each person, including you. Then, as you become more aware of His presence, you will be more able to learn and know His precepts and then be more strengthened for what He has for us.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Where does your direction in life come from? What does this Psalm tell you about that?
2. How have you seen an intelligent cause for the universe and your life? Why do some people fight so hard to say no?
3. Since God has a **precise purpose for each person, object, and relationship** that He creates. How does help you in your fulfillment in life?
4. How have you seen human reason flawed with illogic, the absence of true facts? How does this cause most people to be riddled with compromise, causing us to make unwise decisions?
5. What is the testimony of God's wordless creation? How does it give credence and clarity to God's written Word?
6. Have you ever given wholehearted praise to the Lord for His creation and gift of His Word?
7. How do you explain humanities pride and unwillingness to look to the heavens and see Who is Lord and respond with reverence and submission?
8. Can we say, we have no excuse not to know about Christ and salvation from this Psalm?
9. Have you ever considered that God made His creation for us, then seeking us as His guest to live in it? How does this affect our reverence of God? What about the stewardship of our planet?
10. How do you respond to God when we can't see what Christ is doing in you? What can you do to be better at a proper response?
11. How can your affirmation of trust and promises lead to obedience?
12. What can you do to search your heart and mind to make sure that your direction in life, mindsets and worldviews, are aligned to God's Truth and precepts?

"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 19:14