



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Psalm 19: God Speaks

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David proclaimed this message of God's existence in what is one of the most treasured psalms and one of the world's most beautiful poems. C. S. Lewis called this Psalm, "the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world.

As I read this beautiful Psalm, I picture David, the shepherd boy tending his sheep, looking into the heavens, and communing with God, and the Father speaking to him in the heavenly bodies. The Holy Spirit moved upon him to record this remarkable message (2 Pe. 1:21).

The spectacular stars witnessed to David the existence of the Creator and His glory. Paul may have had this Psalm in mind when he wrote Romans 1:18-32. Paul said, "....Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19, 20).

The nature of this general revelation revealed to man in the heavens would be great enough, but we also have some profound statements about its nature and extent. Consider verses 2 and 3 where the psalmist says of the heavens that "day after day they pour forth speech and of the skies that 'night after night they display knowledge." He is telling us that the skies reveal the glory of God every single night of the week, every week of the year, year after year, and they have done this since Creation.

I love the hymn based on Psalm 19 by Joseph Addison:

What though in solemn silence all Move round this dark terrestrial ball?

What though no real voice nor sound, Amidst their radiant orbs be found?

In reason's ear they all rejoice, And utter forth a glorious voice;

Forever singing, as they shine, The hand that made us is divine."

When David penned the phrase "it pours forth speech (v. 2) the Hebrew text is much stronger than in the English: literally it is "a gushing spring that copiously pours forth the sweet, refreshing waters of revelation.

It is my opinion that the general revelation, God speaking through nature and revealing Himself as the great Creator, points us to the grace of God displayed in the Bible, beginning at verse 7. This psalm makes a significant distinction between natural and special revelation. In discussing the witness of the skies, David used the name God (El), which is a general name that means strong, powerful one. When he discussed the witness

of the Scripture, He referred to God as the Lord—Yahweh or Jehovah—His personal name. While nature, general revelation, reveals there is a God, who is powerful, intelligent and who created everything, the Scriptures reveals who this God is and His incredible love and plan for humanity.

In verses 1-4 David tells us that the heavens speak of God's glory. The Hebrew word (kabode) means weightiness or heaviness and can be described as honor, splendor, or greatness. Therefore, to give glory to God is to assign Him the weight of honor He is due. God's glory is the theme of the sermon of the skies and tells us that God manifested in Creation is universal. Everyone throughout the world has been given this magnificent message from God: "there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (vv. 3-4).

David then spoke of the glory of the Sun (vv. 4-6) as the crowning achievement of God's creation. It is important to understand that David wrote poetically, not scientifically. David compared the sun to a vigorous young man, as a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, and also as a champion athlete rejoicing to run his course. In each of these comparisons he was emphasizing youthful strength, energy, and physical joy. C. S. Lewis was right when he pointed out that the key line is "nothing is hidden from the sun's heat. This line links the witness of the physical creation to the witness of the Scriptures which begins in the next verse (v. 7).

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## The Power Observation

We can learn so much by simple observation. Clearly if we will observe creation alone we will know there is a God, Romans 1:20. Psalms 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork."

Look how often Jesus used what was going on around Him in His teaching. The poor widow who cast into the Lord's treasury two mites was used to teach an object lesson on genuine self-sacrificing love for God, Luke 21:1-4. What a person does when they lose something of value was clearly observed and understood by Jesus because He used it to teach the value of the soul and God's happiness when one repents, Luke 15:8-10. No doubt He saw how a King must count the cost before going to war and then taught His followers the great cost of following Him, Luke 14:31-33. The barren fig tree of Mark 11, is a lesson to His disciples on the power of their faith.

No doubt Jesus had observed the truths of agriculture because He used these truths often to teach valuable spiritual lessons. The Parables of the Sower, Luke 8:4-15; The Laborers in the Vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16; The Mustard Seed, Mark 4:30-32; The Tares, Matthew 13:24-30. Jesus understood by observation the power of leaven in meal, because He used that truth to teach about the spreading of His Kingdom, Matthew 13:33.

What we see all around us should remind us of God, but if we are too busy to look, then we are too busy to learn. Slow down and see the valuable spiritual lessons learned by the power of your observation.

STACY

## God's Plan

- by Bill Walton

In the first century, God's plan for saving the lost and caring for the saved was made known through the apostles and put into practice by the disciples. God's plan was simplicity itself. And its success was the marvel of all the world. The gospel was sent to the lost. The poor and needy were cared for. And the church was

edified.

How was the gospel sent to the lost? By congregations (1 Thess 1:2-8) and individual Christians (Gal 6:6) supporting evangelists to carry the gospel message all over the world, and by every faithful Christian “who (would) teach others also” (2Tim 2:2).

How were the poor and needy cared for? By each congregation caring for its own needy (Ac 4:34-35, 1 Tim 5:16) and receiving help from other congregations when needed (Rom 15:25-26), and by each individual Christian “doing good unto all men” as there was opportunity (Gal 6:10).

How was the church edified? By the elders of each congregation “feeding the flock of God which is among them” (1 Pet 5:2), and by Christians “exhorting one another” and “provoking one another unto love and good works” (Heb 10:24-25).

This plan is tried and proven. It worked in the first century, and it will work in the twentieth century. We do not need a new plan. We do not need an improved plan. But we do need renewed zeal for executing God’s plan.