

Torah Psalms (Psalms 19 and 119)

Psalm 19: God Speaks

1. INTRODUCING THE PSALM

- A Psalm of David
- A Psalm in 3 parts
 - God speaks in His creation
 - God speaks in His Word
 - We speak in response
- "God" is used in vss. 1-6 for the creation verse; "The LORD" (Yahweh) is used for the Torah verse
- C.S. Lewis called Psalm 19, "the most beautiful of psalms."

2. THE PSALM IN DETAIL

- God speaks in His creation (vss. 1-6)
 - Vs. 1: We look at *"the heavens"* (Hebrew, *rakia* = firmament, canopy, used only here and in Gen. 1:6 and Daniel 12:3) and talk about what we see. David looks up and writes about what He hears – God speaking through creation. Look at all the sound rather than sight language in vss. 1-4: *"declare... proclaim... pour forth speech... voice... words."*
 - Vs. 1: Note what the heavens declare and proclaim: *"the glory of God" and "the work of His hands."* For David, clues into God's nature and works are "heard" by looking up at the clouds, sun, moon, stars, and space. God's glory is both who God is and what God does. It is the fullness of His presence. The glory of God is found not just in adjectives that describe Him but in verbs that show His actions.
 - Vs. 2-4: The witness of creation to God's glory is constant and regular, "day by day" and "night after night." It is a revelation of "knowledge" of God that spans the earth, nations and languages (Romans 1:20). No place or person is without some knowledge of God just by creation's witness. See Romans 10:16-18 for how Paul uses vs. 4.
 - Vs. 4b: David begins a series of metaphors (picture words or phrases). The "tent" he mentions here is the sky from horizon to horizon. "The sun" is the supreme metaphor for God's glory moving its way across the heavens. See Psalm 84:11 and Isaiah 60:19-20.
 - Vs. 5: David adds two more metaphors for the sun as a picture of God's glory. The sun (God's glory) is like a radiant bridegroom emerging from his wedding chamber, like a warrior or athlete glowing with confidence and strength.
 - Vs. 6: The sun as a picture of God's glory is taken to another level as David shows how all humanity depends on the sun for warmth – just as we depend on God's glory for life.
 - These verses suggest some of the key arguments for the existence of God. Four of these are on page 2, Nos. 2 and 3 relating directly to creation):

1. The Ontological Argument (Anselm) Knowing God exists is like knowing a triangle exists because we have a conception of a triangle having three, not four sides. We can conceive of a perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing God and no being greater; therefore, God is.
2. The First Cause Argument (Thomas Aquinas) Cause and effect go back to a first cause. The universe simply cannot have popped into existence uncaused.
3. The Argument from Design (Thomas Aquinas) The universe is exactly what it needs to be for human beings to flourish. Christianity can explain this; atheism cannot.
4. The Moral Argument Morality consists universally of a set of authoritative commands. Who has placed this moral sense in every human being? Only God could issue such commands.

The sky above us and the moral law within us witness to the same God. Immanuel Kant

- **God speaks in His Word (vss. 7-11)**
 - "The law (Hebrew, Torah) of the LORD" refers to more than just the Ten Commandments or the first five books of the Old Testament. The word refers to God's full written revelation, which today includes the entire Bible.
 - Different words are used for the revealed Word of God in this psalm. And with each synonym for the Word comes both a descriptor and a benefit as summarized below:

Name for the Word of God	Descriptor	Benefit
Vs. 7a, "the <i>law</i> of the LORD"	"perfect"	"reviving the soul"
Vs. 7b, "the <i>statutes</i> of the LORD"	"trustworthy"	"making wise the simple"
Vs. 8a, "the <i>precepts</i> of the LORD"	"right"	"giving joy to the heart"
Vs. 8b, "the <i>commands</i> of the LORD"	"radiant"	"giving light to eyes"
Vs. 9a, "the <i>fear</i> of the LORD"	"pure"	"enduring forever"
Vs. 9b, "the <i>ordinances</i> of the LORD"	"sure"- <i>"altogether righteous"</i>	Vs. 10a, "more precious than gold "
		Vs. 10b, "sweeter than honey"
		Vs. 11a, warning
		Vs. 11b, reward

- **Humanity in Contrast to the Word of the LORD (Vss. 12-13)**
 - Undiscerning
 - Full of errors, hidden faults
 - Capable of being dominated by willful sins, *"the great transgression"* (See 1 John 3:6.)
 - Yet in God's forgiveness and protection, capable of being *"blameless"* and *"innocent."*
- **Closing Prayer for a Sanctified Life (vs. 14)**
 - Words and motives (*"meditation of my heart"*) are committed to God.
 - word (Hebrew, *dabar*; Greek, *logos*) is not just spoken but also done.
 - David wants his life to be *"pleasing"* to God as did Jesus (Jn 5:30) and Paul (2 Cor 5:9).
 - David's names for God highlight God's strength (*"Rock"*) and power to free (*"Redeemer"*).

LIVING THE PSALMS

1. God has signed His existence and many of His attributes across His creation.
2. No place or person is without some knowledge of God.
3. The glory of God is life-giving.
4. The Word of God is perfectly true and immensely practical.
5. Like a mirror the Word of God shows us our sin.
6. In motives, words, and actions we consciously seek to please God.