

General Revelation

Scripture Focus

Psalm 19:1-6

Key Verse

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands (Psalm 19:1).

Overview

We readily and rightly confess our belief in the Bible as the written revelation of God. Psalm 19 not only asserts that the written Word reveals God's character and nature, but also that certain characteristics about God are evident in creation.

Theme

God has spoken. This one statement requires that mankind ask, "What has He said?" All that God desires man to know about His character, nature, and work is made known either through nature (general revelation) or Scripture (special revelation). Psalm 19:1-6 presents an overview of general revelation leading to the clear conclusion that no logical person can deny God's existence.

Desired Learner Response

To humbly submit to God as they develop eyes that see and ears that hear the revelation of God in nature and in Scripture.

Outline

- I. The Glory of God in Creation (1-6)
 - A. A Theater in the Sky (v. 1)
 - B. A Continuous Conversation (v. 2)
 - C. A Universal Language (vv. 3-4)
 - D. An Evident Testimony (vv. 5-6)

Getting Started

Ask: What can we learn about God by looking at creation? [Write Answers on Board]

Ask: What can we not know about God by looking at nature? [Write Answers on Board]

Searching the Scriptures

I. The Glory of God in Nature (1-6)

Any knowledge man has regarding God is knowledge that God chose to make known of Himself. When discussing God's revelation of Himself through nature we are talking about the general truths regarding God's nature, character and work that are evident in the created order. This revelation should not be confused with pantheism, which asserts that nature and God are one and the same. Nature is not to be

worshipped, but to be seen as a servant of God that testifies of His characteristics.¹ Rather, General Revelation asserts that nature is not God, but that God can be known, in part, by what man observes in nature. God has made known much of Himself through His creation, but not enough in order for man to be saved. The revelation unto salvation is called Special Revelation or Written Revelation.²

A. A Theater in the Sky (v. 1)

1. **“heavens”**: The farthest expanse of all the planets, stars, and solar systems continuously declare that there is God. They demonstrate by their order and function the impossibility that they were constructed by chance but rather the certainty that a creator must exist.
2. **“declare”**: are continuously declaring. There is not time when nature ceases testifying of God.
3. **“glory”**: throughout both testaments and in this context glory is as an umbrella under which all revelation of God stands. The glory of God is all that declares His character and work in a manner consistent with how He has made Himself known. Here the heavens provide a consistent witness to the self revelation of God. Specifically this use of glory refers to the revelation of His power, creativity and control over all creation.
4. **“firmament shows”**: The sky stretched out across all the earth was created as a massive theater screen on which the handiwork of God is continuously playing for all the world to see. The earth itself or all that is on this planet also testify of God.³
5. **“handiwork”**: His skillful, creative hands. Creation demonstrates: 1. There is a Creator; 2. He is intelligent; 3. He is creative; 4. He is planning; 5. He is in control. No unprejudiced person can deny the evidence of God’s existence when looking at the testimony of creation.

¹ Carl F. H. Henry notes, “God, who speaks in nature as the transcendent Creator, declares not only that nature is dependent upon Him but also that He is the sovereign on whom man likewise depends. He is sovereign in and over all relationships involving the created cosmos.” Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* vol. II, 98.

² Dockery states, “The light of nature is not sufficient to impart the knowledge of God necessary for salvation. The revelation of God through nature reveals His power (see Rom. 1:20), goodness (see Matt. 5:35), and righteousness (see Rom. 2:14-15); but it does not reveal His saving grace. This grace is revealed only through special revelation.” David Dockery, *Christian Scripture*, 19.

³ World famous biologist Edward O. Wilson claims there may be as many as 1.6 million species of fungi in the world today, 10,000 species of ants, 300,000 species of flowering plants, between 4,000 and 5,000 species of mammals, and approximately 10,000 species of birds. But these large numbers pale into insignificance when you start examining the heavens, as David did, and begin to calculate distances in light years. David knew none of this modern scientific data, and yet when he pondered the heavens, he was overwhelmed by the glory of the Lord. *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament* © 2001-2004 by Warren W. Wiersbe. All rights reserved.)

B. A Continuous Conversation (v. 2)

1. No moment exists in which creation ceases to testify of God's glory. The day hands the microphone to the night and as night turns back to day the microphone is passed again. Such speech is a continual reminder to all believers that never should there be a time in our day or night when thoughts of God are distant from our minds. God has placed over all of us a canopy of reminders that He alone is God; therefore, we are without excuse when our thoughts separate from Him.
2. **"speech"**: The Hebrew is translated "to utter," implies a depth of discussion beyond common dialogue.
3. **"knowledge"**: Specific facts that can be known by observation. Romans 1:20 emphasizes the obviousness of the knowledge of God in creation. It is so obvious that for anyone to reject the existence of God, Romans says that he or she are without excuse.

DISCUSSION: Ask and Discuss – Who is most noticeably missing from the beginning of Psalm 19? Humans are missing. How tragic that humans are not listed among the creation which constantly tells of God's glory. This shows us that there is a great need for redemption. Discuss how these initial verses of Psalm 19 deepen our appreciation for the gospel. Indeed, Christ died for those who were not His worshipers but were ignoring and refusing to worship Him.

C. A Universal Language (vv. 3-4)

1. Here is a picture of the universal language of creation God's revelation of Himself in creation contains no language barrier.⁴ From men and women educated in Ivy League schools to tribal people with no formal education, God's testimony of Himself in creation can be clearly understood.
2. **Verse 4**: Just as there is no language barrier, there also exists no geographical barrier. A child may be born into a family in which Atheism is strongly taught. The teachings within that household deny the existence of any god. However, when that child goes outside the day and night skies are shouting the evidence of a supreme creator.
3. **"sound"**: Every place that man may go the testimony of God's existence is evident.
4. **"tabernacle"**: The sky is pictured as a house in which the sun lives. The most powerful object in the sky, as far as the Hebrews could surmise, was the sun. They, although not privy to modern science, knew that the sun provided what was necessary for heat, crops, light and life. The Psalmist testifies that to the greatness of God by stating that it is He who placed the magnificent sun in the sky.

D. An Evident Testimony (vv. 5-6)

1. **"bridegroom"**: A groom appears out of his chamber to the world finely clothed and the countenance on his face make it obvious that he is in love.

In comparative fashion the sun comes out of darkness making obvious the powerful nature of God.

2. **“strongman”**: An athlete shows no effort to accomplish a race, but does so with consistency and effortless ease. In like fashion the sun reveals the glory of God by consistently testifying to His effortless ease in creating all that exists and sustaining with perfect regularity all that He made.
3. **“one end of Heaven”**: Again, the psalmist removes all excuse from all men in all places who would seek to reject the reality of God. Just as no man can logically deny the existence of the sun, no man can logically deny the existence of God. This verse sets the stage for the reality of the coming Son of God whose glory will be evident to all who see Him. The evidence for the Sonship of Christ is just as conclusive as the evidence for the sun’s light and heat.

DISCUSSION: Ask – How does seeing the example of proper worship in Psalm 19:1-6 inform us of how our worship needs to improve? Discuss with your class 3 ways in which their personal worship must change in order to become like the example of hearty worship seen in the creation.

Making It Personal

In the Christian life, there is a necessary discontentment. This Christian discontentment flows from the realization that we are not what we ought to be and spurs us toward rooting out what we are in ourselves and cultivating what God is making us in Christ. Encourage your class to spend time this week evaluating their practice of personal worship in light of the Scriptures. This evaluation should not be an effort to find even more Christian “things to do,” but an effort to determine areas of life which can “be more like Christ.” Encourage your class to begin with evaluating their motives, priorities, wants, desires, etc., before considering outward acts.

Review

Remind your students of the great hope of worship found in the gospel. God does not save people merely to free them from sin, but to free them to worship.

Memory Verse

Encourage your class to memorize Psalm 19:1-2.