

Series: God Reveals Himself #1637

Title: Psalm 19.1-6; Romans 1.18-23
Being Accountable to God

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Last time we turned in our Bibles to Psalm chapter 19 and examined verses 1-6. You can open to that chapter again, if you would like. Psalm 19. Also, find Romans chapter 1. In the New Testament, Romans 1.

We are talking about the General Revelation of God to us; that is how God speaks about Himself through His creation. This Psalm teaches us that God communicates truth about Himself in and through nature. What I will do is read these verses again to get them back on our minds, then add just a little more to what was said as we ended our last time together.

This is Psalm 19, beginning in verse 1. **“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ² Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their 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, ⁵ which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. ⁶ Its 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.”**

We walked through this verse-by-verse, not in depth but with enough details to satisfactorily get at the meaning, and in verses 4b through 6 we heard Paul Enns describe the harmony and order God brought to this whole universe, the Psalmist pointing us to the sun for such an example. And I brought up pagan religions of old and of today – those that worship the creation rather than the Creator. I was telling you about my reading in this book *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt* by Toby Wilkinson. One of the prevailing themes is how idolatrous the Egyptian people were. For the Egyptians, the sun itself was a god in many iterations.

And they turned animals into gods and goddesses as well. For example, the falcon was worshiped as one of the most significant ancient Egyptian deities. The god’s name – with the head of a falcon bird and the body of a man – was named Horus. He was positioned as a guardian, patron, and protector. If you have seen ancient Egyptian art or have visited the country and observed what’s been etched into bricks and walls and rocks and of course if you have looked at the paintings, then you’ve seen this god. The Pharaohs themselves were eager to pay homage, even to transform themselves into Horus, making themselves gods to be worshiped both while alive and ruling and in also in the afterlife. Pagan theology is a big part of Wilkinson’s history.

If this is of interest to you, do some research online. One of the best examples of this is the diorite (diorite is a kind of rock) the diorite statue of King Khafra (the Fourth Dynasty) from his valley temple at Giza. The god Horus, accurately sculptured as a falcon, perches behind the king’s head in a gesture of divine protection. This amazingly well made and life like statue oozes royal authority and makes the king god-like. That falcon bird, imagined as god, is ubiquitous!

But there is only One God and we worship only Him above and beyond all that He has made. This is what the Bible, which is the Word of God, clearly teaches us. This is what Psalm 19 means. The Egyptians were...*wrong*. It is idolatry to worship the sun or the falcon or *anything* that is not God Himself. The sin of idolatry was rampant in ancient Egypt and God judged them for it. Hey, the sin of idolatry is rampant in the modern world and God will judge us for it.

In just a moment we will come to Romans chapter 1. But let me quote from it here related to this point. Romans 1, verses 22 and 23, **“Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”** Boy, did they ever! Well, friends, the final point to be made from Psalm 19 is that we worship the God *of* creation, not the creation itself or the creatures themselves.

This Psalm talks about God's General Revelation of Himself through nature. Verse 2 uses the words, "reveals knowledge." It reveals that God exists and reveals God's glory. And Romans 1 reveals God is all-powerful and reveals God will judge. Please turn in your Bibles to the New Testament letter of the Apostle Paul to the church at ancient Rome. We go from Egypt, in a sense, to Rome.

I am reading again in Romans 1, this time verses 18-21. **"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."**

The Apostle says a lot here of incredible value, but let me try and focus us on the General Revelation in this text. Verse 18 tells us in no uncertain terms that God will judge all ungodliness and all unrighteousness of all people who suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness. Paul is not afraid or ashamed to use the word "wrath." He is writing about God's wrath – His holy and justified anger - against sinners. And note the word "because" at the beginning of verse 19. Why is God coming in His wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men and women who suppress the truth in unrighteousness? Why? *Because* that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. That is God's General Revelation at work in the lives of everyone. No one has an excuse before God – an excuse for ungodliness and unrighteousness - *because* God has made evident to every person what God reveals about Himself.

I said this in the opening statement I shared with you last time. God's General Revelation is not adequate for salvation from our sin. For salvation we need God's Special Revelation. However, while General Revelation cannot convert sinners, it can and does keep sinners accountable to God. And these verses address the accountability of which I have spoken. That word "evident" is strong. God has sown into the hearts of every single person strong, irrefutable evidence for who He is. We have no excuse for not knowing God as we look to God's creation.

And then the twentieth verse of Romans 1 really hits on General Revelation. Let me re-read that verse. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." Ah, God's invisible attributes have been clearly seen. Invisible indicates that which cannot be seen, but what the Lord does is He takes that which we cannot otherwise see and *He* makes it visible to us. God's eternal power is clearly seen. There is the omnipotence (the all-power) of God. And, listen, His divine nature, God makes sure this is clearly seen. If you want to know something of the divine nature of the Living God, look to His creation. Watch and learn.

And I will have you note that Paul uses the phrase "clearly seen." Not just seen, but *clearly* seen. There is no doubt about this: God makes Himself known through the General Revelation of nature. Each and every one of us should have an awareness of who God is, and if we do not, then we are guilty before God. Also, in my statement I said this: God's General Revelation is given to all people. Most people reject God's General Revelation. This sad truth is found right here in Romans 1, verse 21, "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

We all know people like this. Maybe you are like this? You know something true about God. You know Him as you observe His creation. You have His General Revelation. But you do not honor God as God. You do not give Him thanks. Instead, you have become futile in your speculations (in your theories without firm evidence, maybe even agnosticism or atheism) and your foolish heart is darkened. If this describes you, I urge you to open yourself up to the God who reveals Himself in what and who He has made. Pry open your dark heart to the light of His glory and His love for *you*. God is real. God exists. And, as we will continue to see next time, He has revealed Himself to all people.

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