

Series: God Reveals Himself #1636

Title: Psalm 19.1-6

God's General Revelation

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. I remind you that we are going to be talking about two aspects to the revelation of God. God reveals Himself to us and He does so in two primary ways. The first is through what we call General Revelation and the second is through what we call Special Revelation. These are our terms, as we understand the Bible. And as we take a closer look at the General and Special Revelation of holy God we are going to do a Bible study. So let me encourage you to have your Bible with you and open for the next several days so you can read these passages along with us.

If you are driving or otherwise occupied, that is you cannot look down and read the Scripture, then please make a point of reading these and studying them further for yourself later on your own time. There's nothing like seeing the Word of God for yourself – for those of you who are blind, feeling the Word of God for yourself – following along in the text. And the first passage you can turn to is Psalm chapter 19. (Psalm 19.) As you find your place I want to make a statement that you need to grasp and a statement that, because of its importance, I will repeat.

Here it is: First, God's General Revelation is given to all people. Most people reject God's General Revelation. Second, 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. You will see the truth of this statement unfold as we walk through the Bible. Let me repeat it off the top. First, God's General Revelation is given to all people. Most people reject God's General Revelation. Second, 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.

Now, Psalm chapter 19. I will read verses 1-6. **"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."** That was Psalm 19, verses 1-6.

This Psalm beautifully reveals that God exists and God reveals His glory. Immediately we dive into the Creator God and His creation. Verse 1, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." This reminds us of Genesis chapter 1, verses 1 and 8. Genesis 1.1 reads, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** We have the *heavens* in Psalm 19.1 and in Genesis 1.1. And Genesis 1, verse 8 reads, **"God called the expanse heaven."** We have the *expanse* in Psalm 19.1 and in Genesis 1.8. Please notice the parallels between this Psalm and Genesis 1. This is intentional on the part of the Psalmist who is David. He wants us to know that he is writing here about God the Creator.

And highlight these words "telling" and "declaring." Both of these words are descriptive of God giving us His revelation. To tell something, to declare something is to reveal it. God is telling all people; God is declaring to all people who He is by the work of His hands. The heavens and their expanse teach people about *God*. And the creation is a continuous revelation. It is ongoing and never ceases. That's verse 2, "Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge." Day to day. Night to night. Continuous. Ongoing. Never ceasing.

And this is a revelation without the use of literal words. So says verse 3, "There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard." That is, the sun, the moon, and the stars (for example) speak to us. They say a lot about who God is, but they do not speak to us in audible, human language. The literal voice is not heard.

Some see a contradiction between verses 2 and 3. Verse 2 says, "Day to day pours forth speech..." But verse 3 begins, "There is no speech." This is only an *apparent* contradiction. All the Psalmist means is that no literal words are spoken or heard (there is no human speech), but nevertheless the creation speaks (day to day pours forth speech).

We are talking about Psalm 19 (God's General Revelation) and we come to verse 4. This verse speaks directly to the worldwide, global scope to the revelation of God. No one is excluded from God's General Revelation. Not one single, solitary person. All people experience this. The Psalmist is clear. Look at the text. "Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world." The revelation of God goes to everyone, everywhere through the creation, through nature, how God has made the world. So, at the end of verse 4, David mentions the sun and writes about the order God gave to this universe.

Listen again to verses 4b through 6. This is in Psalm chapter 19. Please follow along with me. "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." Let me say a couple of things here. And I want to begin with a quotation from theologian Paul Enns (last named spelled E-N-N-S). He writes,

"Wherever [people] peer at the universe, there is orderliness. At a distance of ninety-three million miles from the earth, the sun provides exactly the right temperature environment for [people] to function on earth. Were the sun closer, it would be too hot to survive, and were it further away it would be too cold for [us] to function. If the moon were closer than two hundred forty thousand miles the gravitational pull of the tides would engulf the earth's surface with water from the oceans. Wherever [we] look in the universe, there is harmony and order. Similarly, God has revealed Himself on earth (*The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 156)." Close quote. He is absolutely right. Friends, the Creator of creation is *God*. And God uses the creation to tell us about *Himself*.

Are you watching? Are you observing? Are you paying attention? And, most importantly, are you worshipping the God behind what you capture? When you go out on a hot summer's day and soak in the sun, do you praise God for creating it? When you are out late on a cloudless, cold winter's night and you see the moon and the stars, do you thank God for them? When you go to the beach and walk on the sand and look out across the vast ocean waters that seem never ending, do you pray to God and tell Him how awesome is all that He has made? The reality is most people do *not*.

And this leads to my second comment. In pagan religions to this day, and of course in the ancient world the sun, the moon, and the heavens themselves are/were worshiped as deities. But in the Bible God is the Creator and He *rules over* His creation. There is not a sun god and a moon god and a god of the heavens and a god of the sea (or a goddess of any of this). 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.

This past weekend I finished reading a very good book about ancient Egypt. The author is Toby Wilkinson and the title is *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt*. It is a captivating and well told story of the history of Egypt by someone who is not a Christian, but is a competent Egyptologist and a fine writer. It's 515 pages taking the reader in and out of many Pharaohs and their reigns across an epic span of human history. And one of the prevailing themes is how idolatrous the Egyptian people were. Pagan religion is a central theme to the book, especially in the worship of the sun as deity. The sun itself is a god.

I'll start off next time with more on this, the point being the creation was worshiped *over* the Creator. We have this today, too, by the way. I'll say more, so I hope you will join us. We are talking about God's General Revelation and focused on Psalm 19. And we do so, as always, because the One True God Is.

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