

GOD REACHING AND SPEAKING

From the beginning of time, God has been reaching to communicate with His creation of mankind. John 1:1 tells us that “*in the beginning was the Word*” who was God Himself. And that word “Word” indicates a God who speaks and seeks to communicate. And how does God do that? Well, in Psalm 19 David reminds us of the two primary ways God speaks to us – one, through His magnificent creation of nature; and two, through His blessed Holy Scripture.

I first learned of these two revelations of God back when I was in high school. Our Sunday School teacher had just returned from seminary and he was bursting with all he had learned and wanted to share with his class all this recently acquired knowledge. For me this outpouring of Biblical information was welcome, for I was at a place in my life as a relatively new Christian where I hungered to absorb all I could about the Bible. God had clearly brought us together, he to “dump” and I to receive the “dump.”

I remember one of his very first classes he taught about General Revelation and Special Revelation. I had never heard of these before, but was anxious to hear. I soon learned that these were the two primary ways that God communicates with humanity. General Revelation, I learned, was God speaking through nature, where He revealed His creative genius. The apostle Paul spoke of this to the Romans:

***Romans 1:20** 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.*

Who is without excuse? – those who reject God as existing, suppressing what should be obvious in their observance of nature’s wonder. What should be observed about God through nature? – (1) that there is an invisible God behind creation (“invisible attributes”), (2) that this God pre-exists all that we see and is powerful enough to invent and create it (“eternal power”) and (3) He must have a personality and being far greater than we, and therefore is worthy of being worshipped (“divine nature”). Thus it is that every earthly civilization ever discovered has been found to have some awareness of and worship of an almighty deity. The psalmist was right when he said, “*The fool has said in his heart ‘there is no God.’*” (Psalm 14 :1, 53:1) Why? – because it is the fool who denies the existence of God, seen so obviously in nature.

My Sunday School teacher then taught us that Special Revelation was God speaking through His divinely inspired Word of the Bible. God speaking through nature could never reveal His love, compassion and plan of salvation through Jesus His Son. So He gave us His written Word, the Bible to do so. My teacher taught us these verses:

***Hebrews 1:1-2** God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.*

***2 Timothy 2:16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

PSALM 19 – HOW GOD SPEAKS

Lastly, my teacher took us to Psalm 19, where we find these same two communications of God through General and Special Revelation. Some who have studied this Psalm have been troubled by the apparent abrupt shift from verses 1-6 talking about God speaking through nature, to verses 7-11 where David, the psalmist, speaks of the many ways God speaks through His Word. It is rather abrupt. But the putting of these two thoughts together is obvious when we realize these are the two specific ways that God spoke to King David, and still speaks to us today.

And then the conclusion of the Psalm in verses 12-14 is application, or how we are to respond to these two divine communications. So let us now dig into this marvelous Psalm 19 with expectation.

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH NATURE - verses 1-6

In verse one we find, the heavens are "telling" and their expanse is "declaring" – both descriptions of speech. Then in verse two we read that day by day there is "speech" and night to night is revealed "knowledge" – again, both descriptions of communication. Verse three declares this is silent speech and communication, saying "there is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard." Then, verse four tells us their "line" (NASV) or better, "sound" has "gone out through all the earth, and their utterance to the end of the world." So this silent, but very real "sound" has been an "utterance" to all the world. Clearly David is teaching us the God "speaks" and communicates continually and globally through nature.

And what does verse one tell us specifically that this communication reveals about God?

(1) of His "glory." That would tell us first of all that God exists, and then that He is a powerful, super-creative and magnificent being.

(2) the "work of His hands." This tells us that God in His creativity gives amazing attention to detail, to grandeur, to color, to abundance of forms and textures, to meticulous synchronization of function and to extravagance of variations. In short, God is a wondrous inventor and creator of our universe.

THE SUN and SON

Then in verses 4b-6 we get descriptions of the sun and its amazing practical functions for us as humans. And notice the clear comparisons of the SUN to the SON of God – Jesus.

- √ "tent" - ever present with us; in close proximity; "tabernacling" or abiding with us
- √ "bridegroom" - the bride's delight; ever appearing daily; bringing "new mercies" every morning (Lamentations 2:22-23)
- √ "strong man" - of power and strength; we can "do all things through Him" (Phil. 4:13)
- √ "run his course" – steady; dependable, determined, consistent
- √ "one end to another" - for all; to all; universal
- √ "nothing hidden from its heat" - provision for all; longsuffering

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE BIBLE - verses 7-11

As David speaks of the Special Revelation of God through Scripture, there is perfect symmetry in verses 7-10 of (1) 7 nouns to describe Jehovah's Word, (2) 7 adjectives to amplify its meaning, and (3) 7 verbs that indicate what the Word does for us. Note:

In verses 7-10, note the DESCRIPTION of the Word

<u>7 nouns (Nature)</u>	1. Law	2. Testimony	3. Precepts	
	4. Commandment	5. Fear	6. Judgments	7. (as) Gold
<u>7 adjectives (Quality)</u>	1. Perfect	2. Sure	3. Right	
	4. Pure	5. Clean	6. True	7. Sweet
<u>7 verbs (Benefit)</u>	1. Restoring	2. Making wise	3. Rejoicing	
	4. Enlightening	5. Enduring	6. (Making) righteous	7. {Made} desirable

Focusing on the adjectives and verbs, we can compare the written Word of God with the living Word of God who is Jesus:

1. Perfection, that restores the soul
2. Sure-ness (or confidence), that makes one wise
3. Right-ness, that make us rejoice in its correctness
4. Purity (morally untainted), that enlightens us to deeper joys
5. Clean-ness (without defect) that endures with longevity
6. True-ness, giving absolute clarity of what is right
7. As gold, being irresistibly desirable

And then in verse 11 we get a "moreover," indicating of all the previous descriptions and benefits this is the "topper" -that the Word warns us of moral dangers, so we will not miss the "great rewards" of life.

COMPARING THE TWO REVELATIONS

Before we move on to examine the final important verses of application, let me relate a couple hidden “tidbits” in comparing verses 1-6 with 7-11.

1. In verses 1-6 on the General Revelation of God through nature, David used the Hebrew “Elohim” in verse one, translated “God” and referring to the transcendent, almighty nature of the creator. In contrast, in verse 7 through the remainder of the psalm, David uses the Hebrew “Jehovah,” translated LORD, which is the loving, personal name for God which God gave Himself to Moses at the burning bush., as “I AM.” This name of “Jehovah” or “LORD” is used a perfect 7 times in the remainder of this Psalm. “God,” revealing Himself through nature is impersonal, whereas “LORD,” revealing Himself through the written and living Word is very personal.

2. In the Hebrew text these 6 verses on General Revelation give us exactly 14 lines (2 times the perfect number 7). And there is a matching 14 lines in verses 7-11 on Special Revelation. So there is perfect Hebrew symmetry between the two passages on God’s communications to us. And we will see that the application verses 12-14 have exactly a perfect 7 lines. (Note: all verse has 2 lines in Hebrew except: v. 4, 6, 9 and 10 have 3 line; v. 13 has 4 lines and v. 14 has only one. Add them up for yourself!)

PERSON APPLICATION OF GOD’S REVELATIONS - verses 12-14

v. 12-13 speaks of how the revelation of God – whether by general revelation through creation or special revelation through Scripture - should always make us aware of our smallness and weakness compared to Him. In His light, our SIN always becomes more evident.

1. **We cannot know the depth of our sinfulness.** “*Who can discern his errors?*” is a question demanding a “no one” for an answer, for sin is universal and we are blind to its depths. The revelation of God should always leave us in a state of smallness and desperateness for God.

2. **Both “hidden faults” and “presumptuous sins” need to be addressed.**

- a. “Hidden faults” * can be those we hide, or most likely those we are not even aware of. Either way they need to be “acquitted.”
- b. “Presumptuous sins” ** are those acts of rebelliousness – either in our ignoring of God’s commands or outright disobedience of what we know is right. These specifically tend to “rule over us” because we become slaves of their guilt and their power.
- c. It is not enough to have our sins confessed and forgiven. We must not let them rule over us. This is accomplished by cooperation with the indwelling Holy Spirit. Only then will I be truly blameless and not fall into great transgression.

The revelation of God should always lead us to contrition and confession – then accepting the forgiveness and cleansing that God promises (1 John 1:9)

3. **I must ever seek to make my life acceptable and pleasing to God.**

v. 14 prays that both our words and thoughts be acceptable to God. Clearly this is not just asking God to accept whatever we say and think, but that we conform to His standard of appropriate words and thought. Also – we discover this transformation occurs when we immerse ourselves in both general and special revelation – meaning spending time observing Him in his creation and in His Word. The prayer, then, is a prayer to be people who actively observe God in both creation and the Bible.

THE ULTIMATE “R & R”

We think of R & R as being rest and relaxation. God thinks of the ultimate R & R as Jesus, “*my Rock and my Redeemer,*” because in Him alone is my ultimate rest and my ultimate relaxation.

The supreme revelation of God is that Jesus is the One upon I can stand confidently and surely in times of trouble or confusion as MY ROCK. And that same Jesus is the One who has bought my soul back from slavery to sin with His precious blood and given me a new life in Him as MY REDEEMER.

The wonder of nature and wonder of the Word of God are both revelations given to point me to these two most astounding and comforting revelations! Grateful and eternal thanks to my senior high Sunday school teacher who long ago taught me these precious truths!

* “Secret faults” (Clarke)

- √ Those which I have committed and have forgotten
- √ Those from which I have not repented
- √ Those which have been committed in my heart, but have not been brought to act in my life
- √ Those which I have committed not knowing they were sins (in ignorance)
- √ Those which I have committed in private, for which I should blush and be confounded were they to be made public

** “presumptuous sins” (Guzik)

- √ when we know better
- √ when others have warned us
- √ when God has warned us
- √ when we have warned others of the same sins
- √ When we plan and relish our sin