

THE REVELATION OF GOD

Psalm 19

The world in which we live is beautiful. Every season has its own peculiar beauty. In the spring the leaves appear on the trees, the early flowers bloom and all nature, after its long winter sleep, revives and carries out the duties God has imposed upon it. In the summer the world is ablaze with glory. In the autumn, when the leaves change their color, the beauty is so striking that many say that it is the most beautiful period of all, but even the winter has its own beauty.

Beauty, however, is not the only thing that distinguishes our world. It is full of riches, and even its beauties add to its riches. Men have been living on the earth for centuries, but in every generation new discoveries have been made. Many of these are so marvelous that the mind begins to wonder what more can be hidden in the earth for the benefit of mankind. But these beauties and riches have been there all along. Men have been discovering them slowly. Who has created all this wonderful beauty, and whose mind has conceived, created and stored all these things in this world for our benefit? The whole of creation shows that some great master mind must have conceived and brought all of these things into being. That some great mind has been at work is evidenced by the way in which all things are coordinated for the welfare not only of man but also of all living creatures on the earth.

I. The Revelation Of God In Nature. Psalm 19:1-6.

Psalm 19 is a hymn that portrays for all mankind the deepest feelings of man as he contemplates the creation of the natural universe and as he extols the glory of God as seen in nature. The psalmist, with his keen insight, recognized that nature is a silent, and yet eloquent, universal witness to the majestic glory and the unmeasured power of God.

The psalmist did not know as much about the heavens as we do today, but as he gazed into them he recognized that they were the work of God and he gloried in them. David recognized all of creation as a revelation of God, a testimony to His existence, greatness, majesty, power and glory. To him, the heavens in their vastness, splendor, order and mystery proclaimed the glory of their Creator. Therefore, he wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."

This word "heavens," which is in the plural, reminds us that it is used in different ways. In some cases it is used with reference to the atmospheric space just above the surface of the earth in which the birds fly. It also refers to the space which is occupied by the clouds in their various forms and which are blown from place to place by the winds with their calms and tempests. It is sometimes used with reference to that vast expanse in which the sun appears with all the glories of the day and the moon and stars appear with all the marvels of the night. It is used also with reference to the place in which God dwells.

The more that the astronomers study the heavens the greater is the wonder that floods their hearts at the works of God. They see and know that all the heavens are governed by law and, as they think of Him Who is the great Lawgiver, their whole beings go forth in reverent praise. Of course, that is as it should be. The vastness of the heavens, the innumerable stars and the glory of them, and the fact that they move in their orbits according to law all combine to create a sense of awe within the astronomers. Although men have been studying the heavens for years, with the use of instruments which were unknown to the ancients, yet they have never been able to say that they know all the stars that are in the heavens, for there are countless stars which cannot be seen even with the strongest telescopes.

The heavens are a continuous declaration of God. While they are not endowed with the power of articulate speech, their message is real, expressive and clear to the intelligent,

observant and diligent student of nature. The heavens are inscribed in view of all peoples of the world. Everywhere and constantly the heavens declare the glory and greatness of God. Blind indeed is the individual who fails to see the greatness of the Creator in the things which He has made. A workman is seen in his products. Any reasonable person who looks upon the material world is convinced and knows that there is a Creator.

Of the witness of the heavens Dr. W. Graham Scroggie said five things:

1. The witness is specific.
The heavens do not tell of God's will, grace, mercy or love; but they do declare His wisdom, power, glory and goodness.
2. The witness is incessant.
The heavens, the firmament, the days and the nights are the unfailing witnesses, ever affirming that God is the Creator.
3. The witness is inaudible.
The heavens do not have any words for human ears. The testimony which they give is inarticulate.
4. The witness is universal.
It is through all the earth, and to the end of the world. These celestial missionaries have borne their message to every land. Sun, moon and stars are God's traveling preachers; they are apostles upon their journey, confirming those who regard the Lord; the judges on circuit, condemning those who worship idols.
5. The witness is glorious.
The sun is represented as a bridegroom full of joy, and as a runner full of strength. This impersonation of creation is very impressive, and helps us to realize how all of God's works praise Him.

The heavens declare the glory of God both by day and by night, or without ceasing, and that not merely in one place but everywhere. There is no place on earth where the testimony of the heavens is not given. The beautiful and magnificent heavens, which argue for both the existence and the creative power of God, publicly and repeatedly announce the knowledge of God. Each day and each night pours out to all human beings the knowledge that there is a Supreme Being Who possesses infinite knowledge, wisdom, majesty and power. Dr. Kirkpatrick said, "Day and night are mentioned separately, for each has a special message entrusted to it; the day tells of splendor, power, beneficence; the night tells of vastness, order, mystery, beauty, repose." By day and by night, in every country of the world, this message goes out.

How anyone can stand and gaze at the stars on a clear night and not sense and enjoy the greatness of God is beyond my comprehension! Regardless of how many may refuse to publish the glory of God, the heavens above will never cease to proclaim His majesty and power. They will never leave God without a witness.

The location of the sun is in the heavens. The psalmist spoke of the sun as coming forth joyously in the morning, proclaiming the splendor, power, beneficence and glory of God as it journeyed across the sky during the day, and then returning at night. The heavens reveal the handiwork of God to all as certainly as the heat of the sun is felt by all the peoples of earth. In this respect the beneficent God has made ample provision for the whole world.

The psalmist pictured the sun as an ardent bridegroom coming out of his room in gorgeous attire, his face beaming with joy, and creating pleasure and delight in all his friends who see and hear him. As the sun's power is strengthened, the sun is likened to a joyful and strong athlete who is eager to run in a race and become a hero. From the time the sun rises in the east in the morning and goes down in the west in the evening, it has beneficent effects upon the earth for "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

II. The Revelation Of God In The Bible. Psalm 19:7-11.

Now only has God revealed Himself to men in His creation, but in a far more precious and intimate way in the Scriptures. In the Bible, which is the most unique book in the world, God has spoken plainly to men about all those things which they need to know with reference to their souls. God's Word has revealed the fact of redemption, how redeemed men ought to live and what they may expect beyond this life.

In writing to Timothy, Paul had these things to say about the Bible: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:15-17).

Thus we are told that the Scriptures alone are sufficient to meet the need of those who desire to know how to live so as to please and glorify God. The Scriptures contain the mind and will of God with respect to both faith and practice.

1. The names of the Bible.

The psalmist did not have the entire Bible as we have it, but he did have that part of it which was called the law. That was the Word of God which he knew, and what he said about it applies to the complete revelation which God has given. Six titles or names of the Scriptures are set forth here:

(1) The law of the Lord. Psalm 19:7a.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." "The law of the Lord" here refers to the revealed and written account of His nature, will and way. Law tells of the divine instruction relative to character and conduct. It is God's teaching which reveals to us our duties both to God and to others.

(2) The testimony of the Lord. Psalm 19:7b.

"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." This title has reference to the divine witness as to what God is, and to what we should be. It is the witness of the Lord concerning Himself and us. It is an attestation of the divine will.

(3) The statutes of the Lord. Psalm 19:8a.

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." These statutes give directions for our earthly pilgrimage with a view to securing obedience and checking disobedience. They mean specific orders to direct us in the right way.

(4) The commandment of the Lord. Psalm 19:8b.

"The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." This title has reference to the divine decrees which are authoritative and must be obeyed. It is a revelation of the will of God for us.

(5) The fear of the Lord. Psalm 19:9a.

As we read the Word of God there comes into our hearts a rational and reverential trust in the Lord. This reverence for the Lord causes the person who thus reveres Him to try to put away anything that would displease the Lord. "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever."

(6) The judgments of the Lord. Psalm 19:9b.

"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." This has reference to His judicial decisions which are always right because they are in accordance with His character.