



“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer,”
Psalm 19:14.

Acceptable Praise

Lesson Aim: To note that nature expresses God’s power; that His law reveals His will.

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Topic: Praise; God: Revelation of.

There are three great terms which express the miracle involved in man's comprehension of God. They are revelation, inspiration, and illumination.

Revelation refers to unveiling or uncovering truth so that it is available to man. **Inspiration** speaks of God's superintending man's writing the truth revealed so that it is expressed in human language without error.

Illumination means that work of the Holy Spirit by which He makes revealed truth known in the heart of the believer.

This study deals with the concept of revelation. There are two kinds of revelation: natural and special. (1) Natural revelation is that unveiling of God which comes through nature. It is referred to in Psalm 19:1-6. (2) Special revelation is that unveiling of God which comes by visions, inspirations, and the written Word of God. It is referred to in Psalm 19:7-10. Man's response to God's revelation of Himself is considered in Psalm 19:11-14.

Psalm 119 is one of the most extended passages in all the Bible dealing with the Word of God. Read it prayerfully, and you will prize the Word much more than ever before. How good God is to make Himself known to men. They do not know God because someone sought Him out. He is available because He sought men. This lesson should be studied with gratitude to God that He should love men, reveal Himself to them, and save them.

I. GOD IN NATURE, 19:1-6

God has revealed Himself in nature. The grass, flowers, trees, rotation of the seasons; and all created things speak of God. **“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are dearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse,”** Romans 1:20. What an amazing statement! There has been such a perfect revelation of God in nature that “the invisible things” of God have been “clearly seen” since the creation. So complete is the revelation of God in nature that men are “without excuse,” if they reject Him. Someone has observed that nature is God's message in Braille for a blind humanity.

All creation reveals God's existence. In a very special way, the heavens speak of Him. Verse 1 speaks of the “heavens,” and the “firmament.” We generally think in terms of three heavens: the atmosphere where the birds fly, the expanse of space where the stars are, and the presence of God. The Psalmist's reference is to the visible heavens—the atmosphere and the heavenly bodies. “Those,” he declared, “announce and demonstrate the glory of God's handiwork.” The grammatical form chosen indicates that the heavens are continually and unceasingly testifying to the glory of God's creative power. God's wisdom, power, skill, faithfulness, benevolence, and concern for His creation are manifest in nature. The creation announces that God is and tells what He is like. Look for God in nature about you. His message is there for those who have eyes to see.

A. Nature gives a continual revelation of God, verse 2. It testifies of His power and Godhead without ceasing. “Day unto day . . . night unto night” the message is proclaimed. “The labours of these our instructors know no intermission, but they continue incessantly to lecture us in the science of divine wisdom. There is one glory of the sun, which shines forth by day, and there are other glories of the moon and of the stars which are visible by night . . . How does inanimate nature reproach us with our indolence and indevotion!” — George Horne. What lessons can you learn of God when you consider the order, movement, beauty, and dependability of the heavenly bodies? Each day the revelation continues. Each day you should be more aware of God because of His revelation through nature.

B. Nature gives a silent revelation of God, verse 3. A key to understanding that verse is to observe the words which are in italic print. The translators added those words, which are not in the original Hebrew text, to make the translation read smoother. Leave out those added words,

and the verse reads, **“No speech nor language, their voice is not heard.”** That is what the Psalmist wrote.

Nature's revelation of God is not in human words. It speaks the universal language of demonstration. If nature spoke by human language, which of the languages of the world would be used? Since she speaks by demonstration, all language groups can understand her message. God is speaking in nature in a manner which communicates to all because He wants all people to know Him. Without words, He tells of Himself.

C. Nature gives a universal revelation of God, verse 4. Even though nature speaks of God without audible voice or human language, there is no place where her message is unknown. The message has gone through all the earth, even to the end of the world. That is the explanation of why all people upon earth, regardless of their level of culture, have some type of religion. God has spoken to men through nature so that all know of Him. So widespread and complete is His revelation of Himself that people who have never heard a gospel preacher or seen a written Bible are “without excuse,” if they reject God, Romans 1:19-20. Therein is the impetus for world missionary outreach by Christians. They should take the gospel to men everywhere and call them to faith in Christ. Otherwise, they shall be eternally lost.

D. Nature gives an impressive revelation of God, verses 4-6. The heavenly bodies all proclaim the glory of God, but He is manifested in a special manner by the light, splendor, and journeyings of the sun. Consider these aspects of the sun and relate them to God: (1) The sun determines day and night. (2) The sun is sovereign among the heavenly bodies in relation to earth. (3) The sun makes a complete circuit of the earth so that all are exposed to its light. (4) Life depends upon the light and heat produced by the sun. Can you relate those qualities to God? Yes! The sun speaks eloquently of the glory of God.

II. GOD IN LAW, 19:7-10

God has revealed himself in special ways, too. Not only does nature declare His glory, but also a written record of His revelation, called the Holy Bible, is added to the witness of nature to bring to man the clearer record of God's blessed person and work. What may be said concerning the Bible?

A. The Bible gives perfect information to guide men to God. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,” verse 7a. Nature's testimony of God is impressive but incomplete. It speaks of His existence, power and wisdom, but does not tell of His redeeming love, forgiveness, and

response to prayer. God spoke in a special way through His Word. Beyond that, He had nothing more to say to man. The Holy Spirit is available to interpret the Bible to men whose hearts are open. All they need to know about God and man, time and eternity, sin and righteousness is recorded in that Book.

What is the outcome of knowing the revelation contained in the Holy Bible? The soul is converted! Blessed consequence! Stay close to the Word of God. It lacks nothing for completeness. God's revelation therein is perfect (full, complete); it performs a blessed ministry in those who hear it.

B. The Bible gives a dependable witness concerning God. “The testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple,” verse 7b. The Bible testifies concerning God. What it says is dependable, to the point of infallibility, in all its directions and information. You can trust the Bible. It is the Word of God as surely as if He had written it without using human writers. God’s Word is as true as He is true.

What happens to a man when he honestly exposes himself to the written Word of God? He becomes wise! A man without knowledge of God is not truly wise, regardless of how many academic degrees he may have. A man of God is wise when he has been indoctrinated, reproved, corrected, and instructed in righteousness by the Word of God, II Timothy 3:16.

C. The Bible gives dependable guidelines to keep man in the truth. “The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart,” verse 8. Statutes are rules that are given to guide. God included them in the written Word because He has authority to tell men what to be and how to behave. No one is ever misled when he walks in the light of God's Word, Psalm 119:11, 105.

What happens when a man follows God's rules? His heart rejoices. The Word becomes to him a never-failing source of inspiration, consolation, and holy joy. An ancient prophet testified, “. . . **thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart . . .**” Jeremiah 15:16. Psalm 1:2 says of the blessed man, “**His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.**” Keep close to the Bible.

D. The Bible gives specific instruction to keep man from sin. “The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes,” verse 8. God's commandments are those things which He has ordered of men. The divine requirements are free from any stain, imperfection, defect, or corrupt tendency whatever. No man practices sin when his life is directed according to the ordained will of God. God's instruction concerning right and wrong “enlightens the eyes” of His believing children. They are enabled to make ethical distinctions. Through the Holy Bible, they can know what is right and find the desire to do it.

E. The Bible creates a reverence for God which will keep the life clean. “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever,” verse 9. The Biblical revelation creates a sense of holy awe toward God. It makes men regard His name with respect and fear Him.

What effect does that attitude have upon a man? It does not debase him. In no way does it corrupt him. It cleanses him and makes him holy. There is nothing in the revelation of God which defiles the soul or corrupts the morals. Because of its purity, it is not temporary; it will never decay. The Word of God abides forever, Matthew 24:35. Stay close to the Word of God which will make you pure; it will never pass away.

F. The Bible gives a verdict which is true and righteous in all ways. “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether,” verse 9. “Judgments” are laws passed out of experience. They are those which are judged to be right and best. God knows all about all things. He sets forth judgments based upon that knowledge.

The verdicts of God are not arbitrary. They are according to what is truly right. Not a single one lacks one whit in being just and proper. What God commands in each instance is what should be. His verdicts are worthy of full confidence and obedience.

G. The Bible gives a message from God which is valuable above all else. “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb,” verse 10. How does the Holy Bible estimate its own value? (1) It is of more value than earthly riches. It is better than pure and precious gold, for it satisfies the soul and enables a man to live and to die. (2) It is better than sensual satisfaction. Honey was a great delicacy to the Hebrews. The Psalmist said that the Word of God is better than honey, for it pleases the spirit, not just the flesh.

The Word of God is not only good for you (like medicine!), but is delightful to receive. It makes the heart rejoice. It provides spiritual wealth. Nothing of earth is of greater value than the Word of the living God.

III. GOD IN MAN, 19:11-14

A. God's presence keeps man from sin, verse 11. The perfect law of God opens man's eyes to the imperfections of sin. The sure testimony of God makes man wise in spiritual things. The blessed statutes of God enables man to rejoice in holiness. The studied verdicts of God enables man to see aright. The deep reverence for God causes a man to keep in the way of righteousness. In all ways, God's Word causes believing men to walk the true and righteous way.

The Word of God warns man of sin. He who obeys the word of God follows the ways of righteousness and reaps a great reward of peace and happiness plus receiving God's approval. Do you experience that ministry of God in your life day by day? To do so is the normal Christian life. Only reckless rebellion would persist in sin in the face of God's Word.

B. God's presence makes man aware of hidden sins, verse 12.

Depraved human beings can never see sin as God sees it. Even the most careful self-examination is not sufficient. The Holy Spirit is here to convict men of sin and to direct them to forgiveness. In that ministry, He uses the instruction of the Word of God.

Blessed is the person who opens his heart to God that all hidden sin may be revealed. The faults and errors lying deep within and hidden from human perception are laid bare by the spiritual and pure Word of God. The Holy Spirit then leads one to confession, and he is cleansed. The closer one stays to the Word of God the more aware he is of His indwelling presence, and the purer he is.

C. God's presence restrains man from presumptuous sins, verse 13.

As man needs to seek forgiveness of hidden sins, so he needs to be kept from known (presumptuous) sins. As he needs forgiving and cleansing grace, so he needs restraining grace. Sin is such a master that it will dominate a person's life. The only free man is the person who is restrained from sin by the free grace of God.

The alternative to such protective grace is the presumptuous sin which may lead to "the great transgression." (That may refer to the sin of a high hand for which no sacrifice could be offered, but only judgment could remedy, Hebrews 10:26.) Sin is too serious for carelessness. Do not insult God's personal presence in you by living carelessly. Ask for restraining grace to keep you pure from sin.

D. God's presence creates a hunger for spiritual purity, verse 14.

David prayed, "Let all that I say and all that I think be such as you will approve, O Lord." That is the ultimate in true spiritual commitment. The Apostle Paul wrote his desire for a like dedication: "**Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,**" II Corinthians 10:5. Has God kindled such a desire for full commitment in your heart?

What privileged people we are. Not only is God revealed to us through nature, He is revealed through the completed and perfect Word of God. We live in a country where copies of the Scriptures are readily available. We

live in communities where Bible-believing churches abound. What a privilege!