

"The Glory of God"

Psalm 19

This psalm has a simple title which tells us that it was written to be sung in the temple worship ("To the chief Musician") and was written by David. Other than that, we have no indication of when it was written nor at what point of worship it was intended. What we do find are great truths about creation, the Creator (and His Word), as well as the "creature" (that's us).

There is a text in Romans chapter one that tell us that because of creation unsaved man will be "without excuse" at the judgment, and the first six verses of this psalm speak to that very point.

Romans 1:20-23

²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Verses seven through eleven of Psalm 19 show us that the believer will be without excuse when we give account before God at the judgment seat because the Word of God gives us all we need to follow Him, both positively and negatively (what TO do, and what NOT to do).

Verses twelve through fourteen finds the psalmist (David) praying for help in following the good of Scripture and

disregarding the sin of the flesh so that when he stood before the Lord, he would be able to do so with confidence that what he had done would be acceptable to God. The only way we will be able to do that is if we follow God's Word.

All of this is done to give all the glory to God.

I. THE STATEMENT OF CREATION - VS. 1-6

A. All of creation gives glory to the Creator - to God. The word for "God" (אלה) is that defining Him as the Mighty One, or the Almighty, showing His authority over all things, including creation.

B. "The heavens declare" - "the firmament sheweth"
The skies above, both our atmosphere and then on into space (the firmament) declares God and His glory.

C. "The glory of God" - "his handywork"
By his "handywork" is meant the work of His hands, speaking of actively creating, not being a spectator to it or getting things going and then taking a "hands off" approach. "His handywork" is what glorifies Him.

Scientists at Kitt Peak National Observatory southwest of Tucson recently reported the discovery of a supercluster of galaxies believed to be the largest known entity in space: one billion light years across! When we realize that light travels almost six trillion miles in one year, the vastness of that galaxy supercluster staggers the imagination.

But instead of inspiring mere surprise, these reports of the vastness of space should evoke from us praise and wonder,

for the heavens speak of God's glory. The whole earth has a front row seat for the heavenly display of God's handiwork. While the stars and moon utter no audible words, their instruction is easy to understand.

- D. Vs. 2-4a point back to the heavens and the firmament and show that day after day, one day leading to the next until eternity begins demonstrates the glory of God, the Creator. The "line" spoken of in verse four is the measuring rule by which property is marked. The creation of God is measured and recorded for all of mankind to see.
- E. Vs. 4b-6 are speaking of the son in anthropomorphic terms, giving it personal pronouns and speaking of it as a person. It is a very unique poetic structure to show the purpose of creation: to give God the glory directly and to point mankind to the God of glory.

II. THE SCRIPTURES OF THE CREATOR - VS. 7-11

A. Descriptions of the Scriptures - vs. 7-9

1. "The law of the LORD"

"Law" - תּוֹרָה - term that means instruction, direction, and in verb form means to teach or to instruct. This speaks of the whole of the law of God, and for us today speaks of the entire Bible as an instruction manual and teacher.

- a) Its attribute - "perfect" - without defect or error, as the animals used as sacrificial offerings. The Word of God is a guide that cannot fail.

- b) Its purpose - "converting the soul" - not just for salvation, but in its context here it is also speaking of restoring a child of God back to a right relationship with Him. The Hebrew word for "converting" is translated "restoreth" in Psalm 23:3 and helps us understand its use here.

If we follow the perfect law of God, it will keep us from falling and if we fall it will help convert or restore us back to where we should be.

2. "The testimony of the LORD"

The term translated "testimony" here - **עֵדוּת** - is most frequently used in association with the Tabernacle, with the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments being identified as God's testimony.

Exodus 25:16

¹⁶ And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.

Exodus 31:18

¹⁸ And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus 32:15

¹⁵ And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.

The term shows us that the Word of God bears witness of Him to us, giving us the guidance to follow as well as a warning if we don't. This

follows closely the term "law" in the first part of the verse. The law teaches, the testimony warns.

- a) Its attribute - "sure" - provides stability and confidence, "like a baby would find in the arms of a parent" (The Complete Word Study). We can be confident in the Word of God because it is trustworthy.
- b) Its purpose - "making wise the simple" - "the man whose mind is open to the entrance of good or evil. He has not closed his heart against instruction, but he has no fixed principle to repel temptation. He needs to be made wise" (Cambridge notes).

3. "The statutes of the LORD"

This is a unique word at its root, expressing the idea that God is paying attention to how He wants things ordered. "The appointments, or charge delivered by God to man for his regard and observance" (Clarke).

- a) Its attribute - "right" - to be straight as opposed to being crooked in thought and/or action.
- b) Its purpose - "rejoicing the heart" - the statutes of God, the direction He gives through His Word are meant to contribute greatly to our happiness. They are not meant to discourage us nor cause us anguish as we follow them.

4. "The commandment of the LORD"

This one simply points to the Word of God giving direction for what man is to do and not to do.

- a) Its attribute - "pure" - not only is the Word of God absolutely pure and clean, but it's also meant to purify us. If there were errors in it, it could not be trusted to be pure or make us pure.
- b) Its purpose - "enlightening the eyes" - pointing to its purity and purifying purpose, those commandments are given to open our eyes and give us the light by which we can walk with the Lord.

Psalm 119:105

¹⁰⁵ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalm 119:130

¹³⁰ The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

5. "The fear of the LORD"

The use of the term "fear" here as it relates to the Word of God is pointing out that the Bible is meant to cause us to recognize who God is and as we do that, we will fear Him. The very words of the Bible in this passage are spoken of as "the fear of the LORD," leading me to consider that if we believe the Bible is God's Word, that in and of itself shows that we understand who He is and that we should fear Him. Our actions then must go with that belief.

- a) Its attribute - "clean" - similar to the previous point and the term "pure." There's nothing in it that will lead us away from following God and fearing Him as we should.
- b) Its purpose - "enduring for ever" - the fear of God that we are to have will never end, even in

eternity.

6. "The judgments of the LORD"

This phrase points to "everything that is right and constitutes right according to the decision of Jahve" (K&D).

- a) Its attribute - "true and righteous" - it is truth and its truth is righteous and leads to righteousness if followed.
- b) Its purpose - "altogether" - everyone of God's judgments, all of God's words are true and righteous, without exception, and as such are meant to make us righteous and honest as well.

B. Our attitude toward the Scriptures - vs. 10-11

1. Desire it more than anything else - vs. 10

The parallel in this verse is showing that the Word of God is more valuable and more desirable than any treasure on earth, and more pleasurable to us than the most delicious food we could eat.

2. Learn all we can from it and put all we can into practice in our lives - vs. 11

By the principles of the Word of God as described in the previous verses, there is instruction given clearly and the child of God is sufficiently instructed to know the rewards for obedience and the consequence ("warned") for disobedience.

III. THE SUPPLICATION OF THE "CREATURE" (THAT'S US) - VS. 12-14

(2 Cor. 5:17 refers to the believer as being a "new creature.")

These verses are a prayer by David that was caused by what he just gave on the Creator and His Word. It is one of the clearest texts in the Bible that shows a direct correlation between the convicting power of the Scripture and how we are to respond to that conviction.

- A. In view of the Creator and creation, and especially in view of the Word of God, the only way we can know our sins, our "secret faults" (the parallel to "errors" – a moral mistake hidden from the sight of others) is through and understanding and fear of God and His Word – vs. 12.
- B. The Word of God will help keep us from "presumptuous sins" – those done in the open, on purpose out of pride and arrogance, demonstrating that the person committing those types of sins is one who has a complete disregard for God and His Word. If we're not careful, even as a child of God we can get to the place where that kind of sin rules over us. The only way to avoid that is to stay focused on God and His Word – vs. 13.
- C. There are two aspects of prayer in verse fourteen: words spoken out loud in prayer and the right attitude of heart. These can be at the same time or, as we've seen in previous psalms, prayer can either be out loud or silently in the heart. Both come from and attitude that is right towards God's Word.

Conclusion: As the last three verses of the psalm show, if we are going to know God as He would have us, we need to get to know His Word and desire it more than all the

treasure in the world.

H. A. Ironside told of visiting a godly Irishman, Andrew Frazer, who had come to southern California to recover from a serious illness. Though quite weak, he opened his worn Bible and began expounding the deep truths of God in a way that Ironside had never heard before. Ironside was so moved by Frazer's words that he asked him, "Where did you get these things? Could you tell me where I could find a book that would open them up to me? Did you learn them in some seminary or college?" The sickly man gave an answer that Ironside said he would never forget. "My dear young man, I learned these things on my knees on the mud floor of a little sod cottage in the north of Ireland. There with my open Bible before me I used to kneel for hours at a time and ask the Spirit of God to reveal Christ to my soul and to open the Word to my heart. He taught me more on my knees on that mud floor than I ever could have learned in all the seminaries or colleges in the world."