

God Is There And He Is Not Silent

Psalm 19

Intro. 1) Francis Schaeffer lived from 1912-1984. He was one of the Christian intellectual giants of the 20th century. He taught us that you could be a Christian and not abandon the mind. One of the books he wrote was entitled *He Is There And He Is Not Silent*. In that work he makes a crucial and thought provoking statement, “The infinite-personal God is there, but also he is not silent; that changes the whole world...He is there and is not a silent, nor far-off God.” (*Works of F.S.*, Vol 1, 276).

2) God is there and He is not silent. In fact He has revealed Himself to us in 2 books: the book of nature and the book of Scripture. Francis Bacon, a 15th century scientist who is credited by many with developing the scientific method said it this way: “There are 2 books laid before us to study, to prevent us from falling into error: first the volume to the Scriptures, which reveal the will of God; then the volume of the creation, which expresses His power.”

3) Psalm 19 addresses both of God’s books, the book of nature in vs 1-6 and the book of Scripture in vs. 7-14. Described as a wisdom Psalm, its beauty, poetry and splendor led C.S. Lewis to say, “I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world” (*Reflections on the Psalms*, 63).

Trans. God is there and He is not silent. How should we hear and listen to the God who talks?

I. Listen To God Speak Through Nature

19:1-6

God has revealed himself to ever rational human on the earth in two ways: 1) nature

and 2) conscience. We call this natural or general revelation. In vs. 1-6 David addresses the wonder of nature and creation. Two observations are highlighted.

1) The heavens speak of His glory

19:1-4

- “The heavens declare the glory of God.” Petersen in *The Message* says, “God’s glory is on tour in the skies.” The heavens, referring to the moon, planets, sun and stars announce or speak of the greatness and awesomeness of God.
- “And the firmament shows His handiwork (*NIV*, “the work of His hands). The firmament or “skies” refer to the lower atmosphere where the clouds float and the birds fly. They show or “proclaim” the work of His hands, the masterpiece of this divine craftsman. Both the word declare and the word shows express continuous ongoing revelation. “The heavens keep on declaring...the skies keep on proclaiming...”
- Verse 2 expands upon the idea of a constant and continuous revelation from creation.
 - Day and night utters (*NIV*, “pour forth”) speech. “Utters” means “to bubble forth!” Revelation just keeps bubbling up like a spring, day and night.
 - “And night unto night reveals knowledge.” Without the night we would not see with the naked eye the stars, the Milky Way, the great galaxies. The night shouts to us God is there, and what a glorious God He is.
- Indeed v. 3 informs us, “there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.” This “wordless word” is visibly given to every hemisphere, every

continent, every nation, every people. The message is for all. It is denied to none.

- Verse 4 caps off the universality of this revelation from the skies, “Their line (better “voice”) has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” All have seen it. All have heard it.

Trans. The heavens speak of His glory!

2) The sun speaks of His glory

19:4-6

David now speaks of the greatest stellar light from earth’s perspective: the sun.

Located 93.2 million miles from the earth, we are dependent upon its regularity, its faithfulness, for our very existence on this, the 3rd planet removed from it. David uses 2 striking metaphors or images to describe how the sun appears to we mere mortals on planet earth.

- With the sky as its backdrop, likened unto a tent (v.4), David says the sun is like a bridegroom coming out of his bridal chamber on his wedding day headed for his lover. It is brilliant, joyful and exuberant. It is radiant and magnificently adorned. It is something to see, something to behold.
- Second, the sun is like a strong man (*NIV*, “champion”) rejoicing to run its race (v.5). It rises or starts on one end and makes its way to other. Nothing is hidden from its heat. All see its brilliance. All feel its warmth. Here God’s glory, power, wisdom and greatness is made visible for all to see.

Points of Application

- 1) Rom 1:19-20 says, “because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

From creation we can know God exist and that God is great.”

- 2) Nature bubbles forth the knowledge of God day and night. This knowledge is not verbal but visible, heard with the eyes not the ears.
- 3) This visual, pictorial knowledge is given to all people anywhere and everywhere. It informs all that God is a powerful and glorious Creator.
- 4) Among modern and post-modern persons, superstitious people (like the pagans and idolaters of ancient world), see and hear more by means of astrology, than the heavens are truly saying, while the secularist and humanist see and hear less than what the heavens are saying.

Trans. No, we should listen to God through nature, but we must be sure to listen clearly and carefully, accurately and truthfully.

II. Listen To God Speak Through Scripture

19:7-14

- Revelation from nature leaves men without excuse. It is enough to condemn them. It is not enough to convert them. The theoretical man on the island is neither safe nor innocent. He is a condemned lost sinner. He needs the gospel. He needs the Scriptures.
- It is an interesting and instructive exercise to scan the Bible and see what various persons say about the inspiration and inerrancy, the authority and sufficiency of Scripture.

Peter – 2 Peter 1:20-21, “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Paul – 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Jesus – Matt 5:17-18, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

John 10:35, “(and the Scripture cannot be broken).”

John 17:17, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

- Now, here in Psalm 19:7-14, David highlights and draws our attention to no less than 12 marvelous truths about the Holy Scriptures. Six stand out like beacons of light in vs. 7-9. Six more are beautifully and devotionally embedded in vs. 10-14.

We will simple note all too briefly all 12 with a quick comment or two.

- In the first six we find declarations that tell us what the Bible is and does: 6 nouns, 6 adjectives, 6 verbs. The focus is on the identity, the quality and the function of Holy Scripture.

1) It is perfect and strengthens. 19:7

First, “the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul” (v.7a).

“law” (torah) = lit., instruction, in whatever form God sends it; all that God wants us to know about Him.

“perfect” = whole, complete, lacking defect of any kind.

“converting or restoring the soul” = it renews, refreshes, revives and brings the soul back to where it belongs. It restores and renews my life, my inner self.

2) It is sure and gives wisdom. 19:7

Second, “the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (v.7b).

“testimony” = Scripture is God’s own witness to who He is what He requires of us.

“sure” = true in principle and verifiable in life’s situations; they are trustworthy, neither fallible, unstable or undependable.

“making wise the simple” = the Bible takes the undiscerning, naïve and gullible person and makes him/her wise.” “Every fork in the road does not have a biblical arrow” (Piper, 123).” We need wisdom for decision making. It comes from the Bible. We will see life as God sees life and decide accordingly.

3) It is right and brings joy. 19:8

Third, “the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart” (v.8a).

“statutes”, “precepts” = rules, regulations, guidelines for living. (cf Ps 119:16, 97, 111; Jer. 15:16).

“right” = never wrong; always can be counted on to provide truth and accuracy.

“ rejoicing the heart” = if your heart needs joy, dive into God’s word.

4) It is pure and provides direction. 19:8

Fourth, “the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes” (v.8b).

“commandment” = do’s and don’ts.

“pure” or “radiant” (*NIV*) = devoid of sin or malice or corrupting influence; not dark, vague, unclear or mysterious.

“enlightening the eyes” = it brings understanding so that we can see how to live, what to do, etc. (cf Ps 119:105).

5) It is clean and endures forever. 19:9

Fifth, “the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever” (v.9a).

“fear of the Lord” = a reference to the fear of God that the Bible produces in us; this is right and holy reverence and respect for God.

“clean” = both in terms of its essence and its impact on our hearts.

“enduring forever” = its power and purpose never end; we can always count on God’s Word to do its work; God’s Word never changes; it is never out of style or out of season.

6) It is true and righteous altogether. 19:9

Sixth, “the judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether” (v.9b).

“judgments” = divine decisions about human conduct.

“true” = never false; never off the mark; the only barometer for reality.

“righteous altogether” = the Word of God provides us with the standard of righteousness; there is never any guesswork.

7) It is valuable and priceless. 19:10

Better than gold. No. Better than fine gold. No. Better than much fine gold. Take the best this world can offer. It is as nothing when compared to the Word of God.

8) It is delicious and sweet. 19:10

Honey is sweet to the tongue.

The Bible is sweet to the soul.

Honey satisfies for a moment our taste buds.

The Bible satisfies forever the desires and longings of the heart.

9) It is helpful and rewarding. 19:11

- The Bible alerts us to sin, warns us of spiritual danger. Like a perfect watchdog, it barks furiously at the sight of evil and wickedness.
- The Word warns us how to live and not live, how to walk and not walk, how to find joy and avoid sorrow. Obeying the word brings not just reward. It brings great reward.

10) It is instructive and cleansing. 19:12

David addresses 2 avenues of sin in vs. 12-13. He follows each by providing a strategy for overcoming each one.

The first way to sin is addressed in verse 12, “Who can understand or discern his errors? Cleanse me from secret or hidden faults.” This way of sinning has

two characteristics. First, it's confusing or baffling. That's what David means when he says, "Who can understand his errors?" Who can figure out his own sinning? Who can fathom the tangled web of self-deceit? There is a way of sinning that deceives and fools us. We look at ourselves and say, "What was I thinking? I cannot believe I said that, I did that."

The second characteristic of this first way of sinning in verse 12 is that the sinfulness of it is often hidden from us. "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults." Secret or hidden. This doesn't mean hidden from others. It means hidden from us. Our errors are often hidden from ourselves. We don't feel the sinfulness of it. We just don't see our sin as sin. We need the light of God's word to reveal them, bring them into the light of day. Note the posture of prayer David says is essential to overcoming such sin. It is a prayer for cleansing, forgiveness, pardon and acquittal.

11) It is protective and liberating. 19:13

The second way of sinning comes out in verse 13. John Piper addresses this well. "Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins. David sees a difference between, on the one hand, sins that we commit because they fool us and sneak up on us, and on the other hand, sins that we commit because we presume to know better than God or presume that sin is no big deal. The point is not that there is a special category of extra-bad sins, like murder, rape, treason, etc. The point is that there is a special category of sinning-namely, sinning in arrogant defiance of a known law. It's not so much what you do that

puts sinning in this category as whether you do it with forethought and defiance and rebellion. This is what David calls presumptuous sins. They are fully intentional, with our eyes wide open, and with a heart that says, “I know God says this is wrong and harmful, but I just don’t care what God thinks, I am going to do it anyway.”

How is this type of sin combated and defeated? David shares several essential insights:

- “let them not have dominion or rule over me.” A prayer for spiritual strength and power is important.
- “then I shall be blameless.” A confession of confidence in God’s gracious and full forgiveness is crucial.
- “and I shall be innocent of great transgression.” A declaration of assurance that great sin (idolatry?) will not be able to slap a guilty sentence on him and cut him off from the community of God’s people (cf Num 15:30-31) is vital.

12) It is transforming and saving.

19:14

- One of the classic and most memorable verses in the Bible. It is a beautiful and appropriate prayer to close out this great psalm.
- Words from my mouth/thoughts and emotions from my heart: there is only one goal for both. They must be acceptable (*NIV*, “pleasing”) in Your sight, the only eyes that matter.
- Any why only His eyes? Because they are the eyes of Jehovah, the eyes of his rock, the eyes of His Redeemer (*goel*).

Conclusion

- It was well said by John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, “sin will keep you from the Bible or the Bible will keep you from sin.”
- King David would add from Psalm 119:11, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”