

The God Who Reveals Himself

Text: Psalm 19:1-14

By Pastor Trent Boedicker

My kids love to hide. Charity and I will go upstairs to tuck them in, for the night, and they're nowhere to be found. Where did they go? They were just here a minute ago. I was sure I heard noise coming from their rooms, but now the rooms appear to be empty. Where could they be? Of course, there is a suspicious pile of blankets on the bed, with the faint sound of giggling underneath. But we pretend not to notice. All of the sudden they jump up from their hiding place, yelling "Boo!" And we do our best to act surprised. "Whoa! I can't believe you were there the whole time. We would have never found you. You guys are like ninjas." I have to say they are getting better at sneaking up on us. Sometimes they will duck behind the corner and wait until I walk by to jump out. I really didn't know there were hiding there and it scares me a little. They laugh, "Got you dad!" "You sure did."

That brings us to a theological question: How can we find God? Where can we go to discover the One who created us? Is it even possible for us to know anything at all about him? Or is he hidden from our eyes, beyond the scope of our comprehension?

There is a sense in which God is hidden from us, not because he is hiding, but because our human understanding is limited. He is the infinite, invisible, almighty God. He is not a part of creation, but he is above all things. Scripture tells us "[God] alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see." (1 Timothy 6:16 NASB95) How can we begin to fathom someone so great? To complicate things even further, sin has distorted our view of spiritual things, hindering our ability to see God as he truly is. Left to ourselves, no one would ever find him. But that doesn't mean our situation is hopeless; God has chosen to reveal himself to us.

That's wonderful news. It tells us that God doesn't hide in the shadows. He isn't lurking beyond our reach. He has drawn close to us, and wants to be known.

This is the message of Psalm 19. The heading tells us these words were written by David, about 1000 years before Christ. David was a man of faith, who sought the Lord, throughout his life. As a youngster, he spent a great deal of time camped along the hillside of Israel watching his father's flock. We can picture him gazing into the stars at night, pondering the one who called the universe into being. It may have been lonely at times, out in the wilderness, but he felt the Lord's presence. He would eventually compose a number of psalms, celebrating the works of the Lord. And this is one of them.

Psalm 19 focuses on two of the ways that God makes himself known to us. Theologians use the terms "general revelation," and "special revelation" to describe this. One Bible Dictionary explains,

The doctrine of ...revelation is uniquely important, because it prepares the ground for anything we want to say in the entire field of theology. The reality of God is that he can

only be known if he takes the initiative to be known. We can see this even by analogy with great people in our human experience: if you're trying to get in touch with a very important ruler, it's really not up to you. You have to await their initiative, their move toward you, to make themselves open to you. That, in an infinitely greater way, is where we stand as creatures toward our Creator.ⁱ

Isn't it humbling to think of the Almighty God taking the initiative in reaching out to us? But how does God reveal himself to us?

First of all, the passage tells us that God reveals himself to us through nature. (v.1-4)

We call this general revelation because it teaches us basic truths about God. Again, look at verses 1-3 *"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard."*

Maybe David is thinking back to his days as a shepherd, gazing at the stars on a clear summer night. You've probably done the same in your backyard or on a camping trip. Maybe you've even looked through a telescope to get a better view. It is beautiful, isn't it? You trace the constellations, as if they were patterns stretched across a canvass. We're reminded that men and women have been looking up at those same designs for thousands of years.

The more we learn about the universe, the more incredible it is. We realize that those tiny specks of light shimmering in the heavens are actually enormous spheres of hydrogen and helium gas burning trillions of miles from earth. They are intensely hot, millions of degrees at the core, which is why they are so bright. Astronomers estimate there are more than 200 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy, but there are billions of other galaxies in the cosmos which means we could never count them all. Our sun does a pretty impressive job of heating our planet and giving us light, but it's not even the biggest or the brightest. The largest stars are called red supergiants and some of them are 300 million miles in diameter.ⁱⁱ It's fascinating to study the stars, and the more we discover, the more we realize how spectacular God's handiwork truly is.

That's one of the reasons that God formed the galaxies and solar systems, to teach us about his character. They are like a neon sign glowing in the night pointing to the creator. Psalm 19 tells us: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands..."* What do they have to say?

Nature tells us that God is very powerful. He must be, to have called all of these things into existence. It takes me a lot of effort to build something in the garage, with a couple of 2x4s and a hammer. And it takes a team of construction workers a great deal of labor to build a house. But this is nothing compared the work God performed when he created the entire universe out of nothing. He spoke the words, "let there be light," and it happened. Who is mighty enough to form the planets? Who has the authority to command the stars to shine? Who has the strength to

carve the mountains or the fill the oceans with water? Only the omnipotent God. Isaiah 40:26 (NASB) says,

“Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, Not one of them is missing.

Nature also tells us that God is good and compassionate. He causes the sun to shine, and sends the rain to water the earth. The physical world was designed to produce food, and to supply what we need to survive. And it is more than an adequate dwelling place. Nature is filled with beauty that we are able to enjoy. God must care about us a great deal to give us such a beautiful place to call home.

Nature tells us that God is be wise and intelligent. Things are not thrown together haphazardly, in the universe, but the forces of nature work together in such a way that makes life on this planet possible. Everywhere we look there is evidence of design.

Think about gravity. It is the force that keeps our feet firmly planted on the ground. We take it for granted, but the gravitation pull of the earth has to fall within a specific range: too little and we would float off into space, but too much and we would be crushed. It is exactly where it needs to be.

Or consider the location of the earth in our solar system. If we were any closer to the sun the planet would be too warm to support life, but if it were any further away the temperature would be too cold and we would freeze. Again, it is exactly where it should be.

Or what about the mixture of gasses in the atmosphere. If the level of oxygen was off just a little we wouldn't be able to breathe. These are only a few examples, but there are many others. If we were to look at all the variables and calculate the odds of everything being just right, there is no way it could be a coincidence. Only someone of great wisdom and intelligence could have designed such a universe.

Tim Keller says, “For organic life to exist, the fundamental regularities and constants of physics... must all have values that together fall into an extremely narrow range. The probability of this perfect calibration happening by chance is so tiny as to be statistically negligible... Some have said that it is as if there were a large number of dials that all had to be tuned within extremely narrow limits – and they were. It seems extremely unlikely that this would happen by chance... This has been called the fine tuning argument, namely that the universe was prepared for human beings.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Our passage in Psalm 19 tells us that **the testimony of nature is constant.** Verse 2 says, “*Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.*” It is as if the universe cannot stay silent. During the daytime we feel the warmth of the sun and are reminded of God's compassion and care. But even when the sun sets, we see the beauty of the stars at night, telling us of his glory. Their message is continuous.

Maybe you know someone who never seems to run out of words. There is never a quiet moment, when you are together. They are an excellent conversationalist. You talk about all kinds of interesting things, and it is always fascinating. That is the kind of witness that we have in nature. It is always speaking to us about God, if we are willing to listen.

And **the testimony of nature can be understood by everyone**. It doesn't matter what language you speak or where you live. The message is ringing out loud and clear around the world. Verse 3 tells us, *"There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard."* When you gaze through a telescope into the heavens you hear a compelling sermon about the glory of God, without a single word being spoken. This message reaches out to people across the globe. As verse 4 puts it, *"Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world..."* (NIV)

And so there is no excuse for us when we choose to turn away from the Lord. No one can complain, "How was I supposed to know anything about God? I haven't witnessed any miracles like the men and women of the Bible." The truth is, we see miracles every day. Nature's testimony is more than adequate to make us accountable before our creator.

Skeptics demand some kind of evidence or proof that God exists. All we need to do is open our eyes and look around at the universe in which we live. The beauty of nature is like a giant billboard pointing to the creator. Job 12:7-9 (NIV84) says *"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?"*

General revelation teaches us a great deal about God. We stand in awe gazing at the stars, and we marvel at the majestic mountains. We are inspired by the ocean depths. All of these things tell us that there is a good, and powerful, wise and glorious creator who brought all of these things into being and that we owe our existence to him. This is a powerful witness, but it isn't enough. It can spark within us a longing to know God but it cannot show us the way to enter a personal relationship with him. It tells us that life is meaningful and we are a part of something bigger than ourselves, but it doesn't explain what that purpose is. We need more information if we are to know God, and so he reaches out to us in other ways.

Our passage shows us that God reveals himself through Scripture. (v.7-11)

Look at verse 7.

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey

and the drippings of the honeycomb.¹¹ Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

Throughout his life, David came to appreciate the glory of God revealed in nature. But he also longed to hear the voice of the Lord speaking to him through the pages of Scripture. The people of his day didn't have the complete Bible as we have today, OT and NT, but they had a collection of books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges). Over the course of history, God appeared to men and women delivering his message to his people, and he directed them to record these words in writing, to be passed down for future generations. He spoke through prophets and apostles, placing his words in their mouth. And they committed these words to memory to share with their children. These writings taught them what it means to follow God, showing them where they had come from, not just their nation but all of humanity. They speak of God's mighty works, as our creator and redeemer. David understood that these writings were not merely the ideas of holy people, but these were the very words of God.

We see that in **Numbers 12:5-8** (NIV84) where it says,

Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward,⁶ he said, "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams."⁷ But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house.⁸ With him I speak face to face..."

God was dealing with these two people because they were grumbling against Moses, but this was a serious thing. By rejecting the words of Moses they were actually rejecting the Word of God. The Lord spoke through Moses, so the words he recorded were not merely his own thoughts or opinions, but the very message of God.

We see that again in Jeremiah experience. He describes his calling to serve as a prophet of God in **Jeremiah 1:7-9** (NASB).

⁷ The Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak." ⁸ "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord. ⁹ Then the Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth."

The Moody Handbook of Theology of Theology explains,

The Bible is an entirely unique book, quite unlike any other. The unique claims within the Bible itself bear witness to its unusual character. Some thirty-eight hundred times the Bible declares, "God said," or "Thus saith the Lord." [The apostles] also recognized that the things [they were] writing were the Lord's commandments, and... to reject this teaching was to reject God.^{iv}

Maybe you have read a book in the newspaper or in a magazine that peaked your interest and made you want to go and read it for yourself. The review gave you a summary of what the book is about, and told you whether or not it was worthwhile. Or maybe you've had a friend share one of their favorite books with you. It really touched their heart and meant something to them, and they wanted you to have the chance to experience it as well. And so their endorsement was all you needed to open the pages and read it for yourself.

In a way that's what David does for us in Psalm 19. He gives a brief review, telling us what kind of book we have in the Bible. It is a special book, unlike anything else you've ever read.

Verse 7 tells us that "The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." There are no flaws or imperfection in all its pages. God doesn't lie, so we wouldn't expect his Word to affirm something that isn't true. He never needs to go back and issue a retraction: "Oops, I really messed that up, better go back and correct myself." He doesn't make mistakes. Scripture always tells the truth, even when it isn't easy for us to hear.

Verse 8 tells us that "the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple." That means we can build our lives on its teaching, confident that it will never lead us astray. It gives us the wisdom we make good decisions and lead lives that are pleasing to him. If you're going to build a home, you need a solid foundation. Scripture provides a firm foundation for our lives.

Verse 8 also says, "the commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes." So often, in life, it feels as if we are stumbling around in the dark. We need someone to show us the way, and that's what God does through His Word. The Bible exposes our need for the Lord, showing us how lost we are without him, but then it goes on to lead us toward a right relationship with God through Christ. Ultimately, this is what the message of the Bible is all about, it points us to Jesus and his work of salvation. The OT looks anticipates his ministry and the sacrifice he would make to save us from our sin. The NT looks back at the significance of his death, burial and resurrection. God reveals himself to us in a personal way through his Son, calling us into fellowship with him.

What kind of book is Scripture? David tells us in verse 10 that the Scriptures are "...more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb." As he spent in God's Word, he discovered that it satisfied the deepest desires of his heart. The Lord speaks to us through Scripture, revealing his love for us, pointing to his salvation, showing us what it means to be a child of God. There is no other book that has ever been written that can compare.

God Is Speaking, Are You Listening?

David closes the psalm with a prayer, asking God to lead him, as he responds to the revelation he had received. David witnessed God's glory in nature. Everyday, when he saw the sun shining in the sky, he was reminded of God's faithfulness. Every night he looked at the stars shining in the heavens, he rejoiced at God's glory. David also listened to the message of God's Word. He didn't want to walk away the same person that he was before. He wanted to his heart to be transformed.

May our prayer be that of David in verses 12-14

¹²Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. ¹³Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. ¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.

Sometimes we can be slow to respond to the message we hear. A child is watching his favorite cartoon on television and is not paying attention to his father who is standing right beside him. His father is trying to carry on a conversation, but he doesn't hear a single word that he says. It's possible that we might respond to God the same way. He is speaking to us through nature, trying to get our attention, but we fail to see him. He is speaking to us through his Word, but we ignore his message. The Almighty God reaches out to us, and many are not interested in drawing close to hear his voice. What a tragedy it would be to go through life oblivious to his presence. Don't let that be your response.

If God has revealed himself to us, we should seek him with all our heart. Trust in his word. Obey his voice. Share the message with others.

ⁱ Sanders, F. (2018). [The Doctrine of Scripture and Revelation](#). In M. Ward, J. Parks, B. Ellis, & T. Hains (Eds.), *Lexham Survey of Theology*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/all-about-stars/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Keller, Timothy J. "The Reason for God," P.130

^{iv} Enns, P. P. (1989). [The Moody handbook of theology](#) (p. 154). Chicago, IL: Moody Press.