

# DIGGING DEEPER

## Revelation and Salvation

TEXT: Ps. 19:1-6, Romans 1:18-23

INTRODUCTION: This morning as we looked at Psalm 19, we saw that from verse 7 on the psalmist talks about the Word of God, the Bible.

Psalm 19:7, 10-11

<sup>7</sup> The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

<sup>10</sup> More to be desired *are they* than gold,  
Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

<sup>11</sup> Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
*And in keeping them there is great reward.*

**When theologians speak of the revelation God gives through His Word, they call it Special Revelation or Specific Revelation.**

This morning I raised some questions for us to consider as we dig a little deeper into the question of “How does God reveal Himself and His ways to man?”

- 1. Does God give revelation to people who do not have the Bible?**
- 2. Does God, Who is altogether righteous and just, hold people accountable for the standards in the Bible when they do not have the Bible?**
- 3. Can a person be saved by means of another kind revelation?**

**The first part of Psalm 19 begins to answer these questions.**

**Romans 1 completes the answers.**

Psalm 19:1-6

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God;  
And the firmament shows His handiwork.

<sup>2</sup> Day unto day utters speech,  
And night unto night reveals knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> *There is no speech nor language  
Where their voice is not heard.*

<sup>4</sup> Their line has gone out through all the earth,  
And their words to the end of the world.

In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,  
<sup>5</sup> Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

<sup>6</sup> Its rising *is* from one end of heaven,  
And its circuit to the other end;  
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

### Psalm 19:1–6

<p><sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the <b>glory</b> of God; And the <b>firmament</b> shows His handiwork.</p>	<p><b>Revealed presence</b></p> <p><b>Another word for heavens or space</b></p>
<p><sup>2</sup> <b>Day unto day utters speech,</b> <b>And night unto night reveals knowledge.</b></p>	<p><b>This testimony of God's presence goes out every day and every night.</b></p>
<p><sup>3</sup> <b>There is no speech nor language</b> <b>Where their voice is not heard.</b></p>	<p><b>This testimony transcends language.</b></p>
<p><sup>4</sup> <b>Their line has gone out through all the earth,</b> <b>And their words to the end of the world.</b></p>	<p><b>The message, as in the line of a poem, goes out over the entire earth.</b></p>
<p><b>In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,</b></p>	<p><b>For instance, the sun travels across the sky so that everybody can see it and</b></p>
<p><sup>5</sup> <b>Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,</b> <b>And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.</b></p>	<p><b>Such is the pervasiveness of the testimony of God's presence that is given by His creation.</b></p>
<p><sup>6</sup> <b>Its rising is from one end of heaven,</b> <b>And its circuit to the other end;</b> <b>And there is nothing hidden from its heat.</b></p>	

So let's ask our questions?

## I. DOES GOD GIVE REVELATION TO PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE BIBLE?

Psalm 19 gives us the answer.

**There are two kinds of revelation**, two ways we learn about God and the things of God:

**General Revelation (also called Natural Revelation)**

**Special Revelation (also called Specific Revelation)**

**A. General revelation is that which can be known about God by observing what God has created.**

1. **The naked eye can see plenty of the grandeur, majesty, beauty, complexity, and order in creation.**
2. **The telescope reveals both the magnitude of God's creation and the fact that the order we observe in our world extends into the heavens**, far beyond what the unaided eye can see. The universe is filled with more galaxies than can be numbered. Each one has its own uniqueness, yet each testifies of consistency of design and operation. Within each galaxy solar systems revolve in elegant patterns, and within each system planets, moons, asteroids, and meteors rotate and revolve with intricate symmetry.
3. **The microscope reveals more again.** Looking into the structure of living beings fills the mind with awe and wonder. The inside of a living cell is a mini world all its own. The cell has an exterior membrane that permits entrance by chemicals or entities that benefit its enterprises, but exclude all other would be intruders. The cell continually remanufactures its own parts, installing the new and disposing of the old. It metabolizes its food and discards its own waste. It does all of this while also performing the function for which it was designed, like a red blood cell carries oxygen to other cells. And each cell not only maintains itself and performs its function, it does it in harmonious concert with other cells through intricate means of chemical communication.
4. **There is an argument no one denies in their everyday life.** They may deny it when talking about philosophy or religion, but they acknowledge the truth of it every day that they live. Let me illustrate. If you unearthed an ancient axe with a wooden handle and stone blade, what would be one of your chief curiosities about this ancient tool? Most certainly, one question you would ask is, "Who made that?" Anyone would ask that question. The staunchest atheist would ask it. The most strident evolutionist would ask it. The most learned skeptic would ask it. Why would they all ask that question? Because we all know that **design comes from a designer**. No one would theorize about how the rock was randomly chiseled to a fine edge by wind and water. No one would hypothesize that the handle was a mere circumstantial piece of a tree that fell cut and polished into place at just the right time. No one would waste time wondering how the strips of hide jumped off the cow to provide strands for binding the blade to the handle. Everyone would consider the presence of the axe as definitive proof of the presence of man who was the designer of this simple tool.
5. This is the reason that the doctrine of creation is important. While some people will certainly argue that the complexities we observe in the world

around us are the result of random processes, most people are very receptive to the valid argument that design comes from a designer.

- 6. God has given us natural revelation for this very reason. The complexity and design of the things that God has made testify of His existence. They say to people every day, “There is a God!”**

**So, DOES GOD GIVE REVELATION TO PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE BIBLE?**

**YES. GOD REVEALS HIS EXISTENCE AND POWER TO ALL MEN EVERYWHERE IN THE EARTH THROUGH HIS CREATION.**

Second Question:

**II. DOES GOD, WHO IS ALTOGETHER RIGHTEOUS AND JUST, HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE STANDARDS IN THE BIBLE WHEN THEY DO NOT HAVE THE BIBLE?**

- A. The General Revelation of God’s existence to all men makes all men responsible.**

Romans 1:18-20 <sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. <sup>20</sup> 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,

1. **Natural revelation is to all men everywhere.**
2. **Acknowledgment of God (His existence) is evident among all men.**
3. **His creation reveals His power and His deity.**

- B. General revelation prepares man’s heart to receive special revelation.**

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- C. General revelation makes man accountable.**

1. **This revelation is sufficient to cause men to seek God.**
2. **A search with all of one’s heart and soul will lead to more revelation.**

Deuteronomy 4:29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

2 Chronicles 15:1-2 <sup>1</sup> Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. <sup>2</sup> And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: “Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

#### D. Therefore, general revelation is sufficient for condemnation.

Romans 1:18-20 <sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. <sup>20</sup> 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,*

Let me repeat the question in a form often heard from believers and unbelievers: How can a just, righteous, loving, merciful God pour out His wrath on people who have had no opportunity to know the truth about Him? How can He condemn people to hell for not trusting in Jesus when they have never heard the gospel or even the name of the Savior?

In the final clause of verse 18 and the explanation of it that follows, God gives a clear and convincing answer. The fact is that **people suppress the truth in unrighteousness.**

**These words can be rendered “constantly are suppressing the truth by persisting in their sin.”**

**The problem is not that men and women know nothing of God and truth; the problem is that they hide the truth from themselves and others because they love sin.**

John 3:16-19 <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. <sup>18</sup> “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

1. **People are condemned to hell even though they have never heard the gospel, because they have received the revelation of God’s existence and rejected it.**
2. **If they had responded to this natural revelation, they would have known there is a God who created the heavens and the earth. Then God would have sent them special revelation so that they would know of Christ.**
  - a. **The promise of the Almighty to every person is that if they will seek Him with their whole heart, He will see to it that they find Him. The Lord spoke through Ezekiel in**

Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live...

Peter testified in **2 Peter 3:9** **The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

- b. God does not cause people to be born in places where there is no knowledge of Himself and no gospel so that He can then throw them in hell.**
- c. In the most obscure place, God provides a witness through the things He made in the creation that say to each man and each woman, "There is a God, and He is all powerful."**
- d. If they then seek God with all their heart, God sends them more revelation, ultimately the gospel.**
- e. If they continue to seek, they will come to faith in Jesus Christ and be saved.**
  - 1) We see that exact scenario with the Ethiopian eunuch.** He was seeking God. Somehow, God had allowed him to have a copy of the scroll of Isaiah, which shows the lengths God was going to in order to save this man who was seeking Him. The eunuch came to the place where he was ready for the gospel. God sent an angel to Phillip and sent Phillip to the desert where the Ethiopian was reading Isaiah in his chariot. Then the Holy Spirit directed Phillip to the Ethiopian. Meanwhile, the Spirit has directed the Ethiopian's attention to Isaiah 53, which speaks of the Suffering Servant Messiah. His question about the passage opens the door to the sharing of the gospel, and the Ethiopian believes and is baptized.
  - 2) Cornelius was a centurion in the Roman army.** The Bible describes him as devout and as one who prayed often. He was a God seeker, and God sent Peter to him to explain the gospel, and Cornelius was saved.
  - 3) Lydia was a God seeking woman.** The Lord sent Paul to share the gospel, and she was saved.

**So, DOES GOD, WHO IS ALTOGETHER RIGHTEOUS AND JUST, HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE STANDARDS IN THE BIBLE WHEN THEY DO NOT HAVE THE BIBLE?**

**YES, BECAUSE IF THEY RESPOND TO THE REVELATION SENT THROUGH CREATION, THEY WILL BE GIVEN SUFFICIENT REVELATION TO BE SAVED.**

Final question for tonight:

**III. CAN A PERSON BE SAVED BY MEANS OF ANOTHER KIND OF REVELATION? Or**

## **CAN A PERSON BE SAVED BY MEANS OF NATURAL REVELATION, THE REVELATION THAT COMES THROUGH CREATION?**

**A. Natural or General revelation does not reveal Christ.**

**B. Therefore, general revelation is not sufficient for salvation.**

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**C. What happens to the person who responds to general revelation?**

1. His response leads him to seek God.
2. His seeking, in and of itself, will not save him.
3. The God seeker is not given salvation; he is given special revelation.
4. That special revelation is the Bible which tells them of Christ and the gospel by which they can be saved.

**Conclusion: This teaching of how God has revealed His existence, power and deity to all men everywhere is of great consequence to us.**

1. **We are all responsible.** Do not think if you do not know Christ that you will escape judgment by saying, "I did not know."
2. **All men everywhere are condemned apart from Christ.** This is why it is imperative for us to obey the commission of our Lord to go into all the world, from our Jerusalem to the end of the earth to tell them of Jesus, their Creator and their Savior!
3. It is also an encouragement to us. For **God has God seekers all around the planet, and He is sending us to them to bring them the revelation through His Word of Christ who can save them.**