

"Psalm 19: God Revealed" Psalm 19

The heavens, under the dominating influence of the sun, declare the splendor of God's handiwork. The psalmist extends this observation to the dominating and enlightening influence of the law of the Lord and then prays for cleansing so that he may be acceptable before *YHWH*.

Psalms Bible Study: Evening

Week 1 Intro & Psalm 6

Week 2 Psalm 19

Week 3 Psalm 30

Week 4 Psalm 51

Week 5 Psalm 73

"The heavens are telling of the glory of God..."

"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul..."

—Psalm 19:1a & 7a

"I take this to be the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world."

—C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*

The Heavens Reveal...

- Earth is in the Milky Way galaxy
- The average galaxy size...
 - = 600,000,000,000,000,000 miles
 - = Six hundred thousand trillion miles
 - = 100,000 light years
 - = Contains 100-200 billion stars
- Nearest galaxy = 2 million light-years away
- There are 60 galaxies for every person on earth.

Psalm 19: A Hymn of Praise

Background: the many days and nights which David spent in the wilderness watching sheep and the heavens.

Psalm 19: Message

The heavens, under the dominating influence of the sun, declare the splendor of God's handiwork. The psalmist extends this observation to the dominating and enlightening influence of the law of the Lord and then prays for cleansing so that he may be acceptable before *YHWH*.

Psalm 19

- 1. Superscription**
- 2. Natural Revelation (1-6)**
- 3. The Law of the Lord (7-11)**
- 4. Prayer for Cleansing (12-14)**

Psalm 19

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

- 1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
- 2 Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.
- 3 There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.
- 4ab Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world.

- 4c In them He has placed a tent for the sun,
- 5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.
- 6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

- 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.

- 12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.
- 13 Also 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.
- 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

2. Natural Revelation (1-6)

Natural Revelation: The psalmist observes that the heavens, under the dominating influence of the sun, declares the splendor of God's work (1-4a).

Natural Revelation (1-6):

Summary statement: the heavens declare the glory of God's work (1-4b).

- Glory (*kabod* = "heavy; large") = important
- Expanse – extends "large" imagery
- The character of the heavens' declaration...
- The work of His hands (creation/personal)
- Day to day/Night to night = Continually
- Visual only, but revealing = Wordless Speech
- To all the earth/End of world = Universally

Summary statement: the sun has universal dominion over the creation (4c-6)

- A tent for the sun = night time cover/home
- Bridegroom (eager); strong man (vigorous)
- The sun's completes it's full circuit
- Key: nothing is hidden from its heat

Natural Revelation: Romans 1:18-23

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

3. The Law of the Lord (7-11)

The Law of the Lord: The psalmist describes the dominating and enlightening influence of the law of the Lord (7-11).

Note: unique structure of 19:7-9...

- Each verse contains 10 words in Hebrew
- Each verse cites Yahweh twice (six total)

Six all-embracing aspects are cited:

- Law (*torah* = instruction)
- Testimony (truth telling)
- Precepts (appointed instruction)
- Commandment (*mitsvah* = command)
- Fear (*yirah* = reverence; awesome)
- Judgments (decisions)

Six dimensions are cited:

- Perfect (complete, sound)
- Sure (firm, strong) >*aman* = faith
- Right (straight)
- Pure (purified)
- Clean (without defect)
- True (firm, strong) >*aman* = faith

Six results are cited:

- Restoring the soul ("returning the life")
- Making wise the simple (skill to the naïve)
- Rejoicing the heart
- Enlightening the eyes
- Enduring forever
- They are righteous altogether (the standard)

The Law of the Lord (7-11):

- The unique structure (7-9)
- The psalmist's reaction to the law (10-11):
- The statutes of the law are desirable & enjoyable (10).
- The statutes of the law enlighten him so that he may live right before God (11).

4. Prayer for Cleansing (12-14)

Prayer for Cleansing: The psalmist prays for complete cleansing so that he may live an upright and acceptable life (12-14).

The key to understanding this section is to see its relationship to the law in 19:7-11.

- The relationship: the law reveals the lofty standards of God and thus the need for cleansing to be right before the Lord.
- Q: "Who can discern his errors?" (19:12)
- A: No one without the light of the law

- David asked God to use His Word to bring sins to his attention so they would not dominate him (19:13a).
- This would result in his being blameless in God's sight and free from a life dominated by sin that would be his without the revelation of Scripture (19:13b).

- Note the "mouth-heart" connection in v14
- Meditation (*hagah* = deep inner musings; see handout)
- "Rock" was a familiar imagery for David (also found in Psalms 18, 27, 28, 31, 61, 62)

- David viewed his words and thoughts as sacrifices to God (“acceptable/pleasing”).
- As he closed the psalm he now regarded God not as his judge, but as the foundation of his life and the One who had purchased him for special purpose.

There could be no life on this planet without the sun; likewise, there can be no true human life without the revealed word of God.

Peter C. Craigie, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Psalms 1-50

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God...”

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul...”
(Psalm 19:1a & 7a)

CHRONOLOGY OF DAVID'S LIFE¹

Event	Date	Age	Reference
Birth	1041	0	2 Sam. 5:4-5
Anointing by Samuel	1026	15	1 Sam. 16:1-13
Defeat of Goliath	1024	17	1 Sam. 17
Exile from Saul	1020-1011	21-30	1 Sam. 21—31
Anointing as King over Judah	1011	30	2 Sam. 2:1-4
Anointing as King over all Israel	1004	37	2 Sam. 5:1-3
Philistines Wars	1004	37	2 Sam. 5:17-25
Conquest of Jerusalem	1004	37	2 Sam. 5:6-10
Mephibosheth's Move to Jerusalem	996	45	2 Sam. 9:1-13
The Three Year Famine	996-993	45-48	2 Sam. 21:1-14
The Ammonite Wars	993-990	48-51	2 Sam. 10—12
Adultery and Murder	992	49	2 Sam. 11
Birth of Solomon	991	50	2 Sam. 12:24-25
Rape of Tamar	987	54	2 Sam. 13:1-22
Death of Amnon	985	56	2 Sam. 13:23-36
Exile of Absalom	985-982	56-59	2 Sam. 13:37-39
Absalom's Return to Jerusalem	982-980	59-61	2 Sam. 14:21-24
Construction of Palace	980-978	61-63	1 Chron. 15:1
Construction of Tabernacle	977	64	1 Chron. 15:1
Move of Ark to Jerusalem	977	64	2 Sam. 6:12-19
Absalom's Rebellion & David's Exile	976	65	2 Sam. 15—18
Rebellion of Sheba	976	65	2 Sam. 20:1-22
The Census	975	66	2 Sam. 24:1-17
Purchase of Temple Site	973	68	2 Sam. 24:18-25
The Davidic Covenant	973	68	2 Sam. 7
Co-regency with Solomon	973-971	68-70	1 Chron. 23:1
Rebellion of Adonijah	972	69	1 Kings 1:5-37
Coronation of Solomon	971	70	1 Chron. 29:22-23
Death	971	70	1 Kings 2:10-11

¹Based on Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, p. 244.

. . . Not for Christians?

by Buck Anderson

Meditation. The word probably brings to mind a dimly lit, incense-filled room. On the floor sit several dedicated disciples in what must be very uncomfortable positions. Together, hoping to become "one" with their god, they incessantly chant their secret mantra: "Ommm." "Ommm." "Ommm."

No Christian wants anything to do with the scene just described. We know the one true God is reached only through the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5, NIV). We recognize that any attempt to reach God outside of Christ is pagan. Regardless of the sincerity and dedication of the people involved, regardless of the religious pomp and circumstance, meditation that seeks union with God but bypasses Jesus Christ is nothing more than pagan ritual.

In recognizing this fact, however, I wonder if we have tossed the proverbial baby out with the bath water. I wonder, by our *correctly* rejecting meditation as described above, we have incorrectly believed that any form of meditation is wrong and not for Christians. I wonder if we have done such a good job of unmasking the dangers and trappings of meditation that we have made the term "meditation" itself into a bad word. Skeptical? OK, when was the last time you used "meditation" in a sentence? We simply don't use it because we fear being linked to some cultic group of Eastern mystics.

There is a worse error of which we believers may be guilty. Not only are we not saying the word

"meditation" but, even worse, we are not *doing* what the word implies. This error is understandable if we have decided that "meditation is bad" or "meditation is not for Christians." Yet this error will prevent us from engaging in and enjoying one of God's choicest privileges for believers, namely, biblical meditation.

Before we begin our look into God's Word about meditation, let's reassure those who still feel uncomfortable with the word "meditation." Here is a list of acceptable synonyms: thinking deeply, pondering, musing, examination, contemplation, speculation, reflection, weighing, considering, concentration. Now let's glean from God's Word what He says about meditation.

Interestingly, the bulk of the biblical data dealing with meditation appears in the Old Testament, primarily the Psalms. The Psalms offer some of the deepest devotion and loftiest sentiment of the human heart and mind found anywhere in the Bible. In fact, it is fitting that such an important word as "meditation" be found so often in the Psalms.

Two key Hebrew terms for meditation merit our attention. The first term, *siach*, basically means "to go over a matter in one's mind." The expression of this action may be either inward (meditation) or outward (talking, or as we might say, "thinking out loud"). We should note the *object* of this key term. By far, the most common object of this Hebrew verb is God, specifically God's works and God's words. Consider

these verses that attest to "going over God's works in one's mind":

- Psalm 77:12—"I will meditate on all Thy work."
- Psalm 145:5—"On the glorious splendor of Thy majesty, and on Thy wonderful works, I will meditate."

We failed to meditate on the principles of the Scriptures, so their truths simply got away from us.

Now consider the following verses that attest to "going over God's words in one's mind":

- Psalm 119:15—"I will meditate on Thy precepts and regard Thy ways"
- Psalm 119:27—"Make me understand the way of Thy precepts, so I will meditate on Thy wonders."
- Psalm 119:48—"And I shall lift up my hands to Thy commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on Thy statutes?"
- Psalm 119:97—"O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day."

This word for meditation should hold a powerful, important place in believers' lives. It describes the activity of a believer seriously thinking and talking of God's mighty works and words.

The second term for meditation is the Hebrew term *hagah*. It often refers to expressing deep inner meditations or longings of the heart and mind. Old Testament writers use *hagah* and related words in several ways:

1. *The mind-heart connection.* Hagah often expresses a strong

connection between the mind, where meditation takes place, and the mouth, where it is expressed. Perhaps Isaiah 59:13 best reveals this connection: "conceiving in and uttering (*hagah*) from the heart." Psalm 19:14 ["let the words of my mouth and the meditation

(*hagah*) of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD"] provides an excellent model for expressing our deepest meditations about our wonderful Lord.

2. *Wailing and sadness of the heart.*

The books of Lamentations, Jeremiah, and Isaiah use *hagah* to mean wail or moan, in keeping with the often sad and tragic settings of these books.

Isaiah, for example, tells the terrible results of the nation's sin: "All of us growl like bears, and moan sadly like doves" (Isa. 59:11).

3. *Reflecting on God's words and works.*

In two very well-known passages, *hagah* means to reflect deeply on what God has spoken and done:

- Psalm 1:2- "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."
- Joshua 1:8-This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night. so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

Psalm 9:16 includes a term at the end of the verse telling readers to pause and meditate on these words they have just read or sung.

Sometimes the Psalmist gives us a double dose of "meditation" in using both *siach* and *hagah* in the

same verse (Ps. 77:12; 143:5). In these verses the authors describe being so filled with God's deeds and words as to have Him at the very core of one's being.

We live in a world of incredible biblical ignorance and, frankly, it shows. Biblical principles no longer form the standard of our general social and legal morals. The terms "right" and "wrong" have gone by the wayside with the ousting of age-old standards of living. What happened? Dare we say that we as believers are to blame? Have we raised an entire generation outside the authority of God's Word? Could God's scathing words through Peter apply to us: "For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God" (1 Pet. 4:17a)?

I am afraid we are to blame. I am afraid we dropped the ball by not passing on a heritage of truly and deeply knowing the Word of God. I am afraid we failed to meditate on and proclaim boldly the principles of Scripture, so its truths simply got away from us.

I truly believe it is not too late to begin anew a life of true biblical meditation—of deep thought and serious talk about our wonderful God as revealed in the Scriptures. I truly believe its not too late to start a life that is anchored in God and His Word. The teaching of Scripture remains clear—the knowledge of God as revealed in the Bible is the most important knowledge we can gain.

It is my deep hope and prayer that we all will strengthen our love for God's Word and works, meditating on them day and night.

- Psalm 119:23—"Even though princes sit and talk against me, Thy servant meditates on Thy statutes." ■

An Overview of Old Testament History

