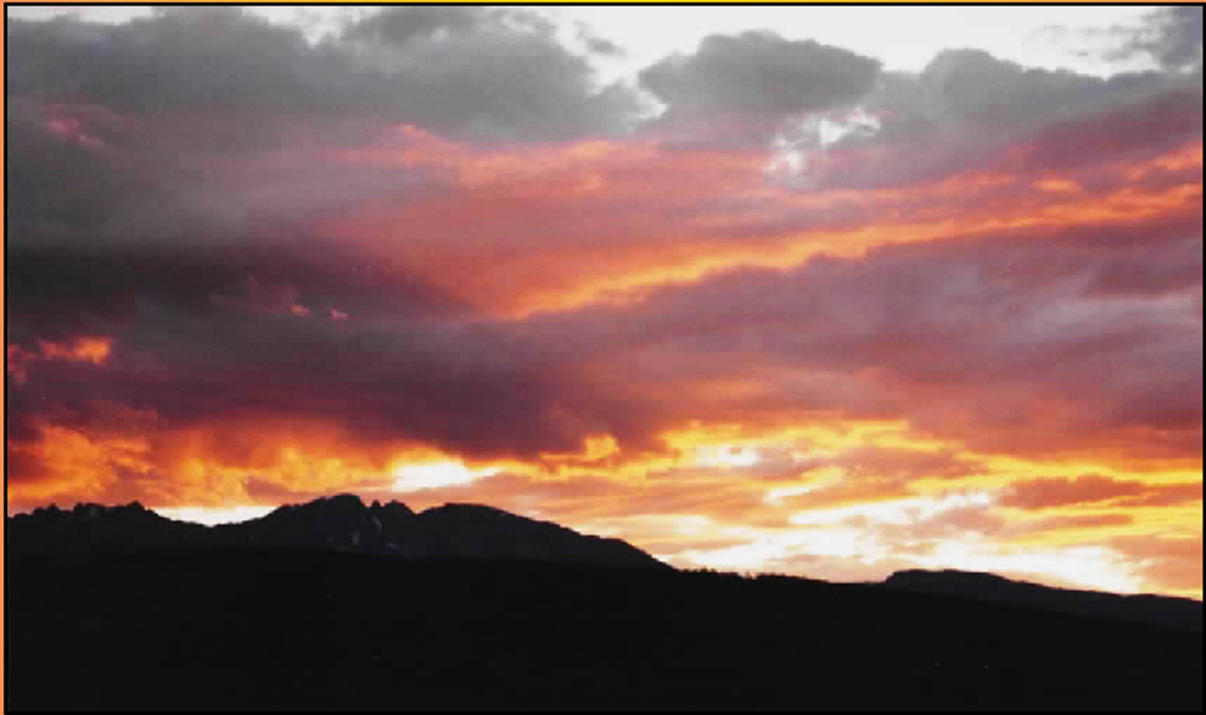


# The Heavens Declare the Glory of God



**“The heavens declare the glory of God;  
and the firmament showeth his  
handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1)**

## THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD

**“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.**

**“Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.**

**“There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.**

**“Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,**

**“Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.**

**“His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” (Psa. 19:1-6)**

In considering Psalm 19, we normally give just a literal interpretation, that is, from the natural standpoint. And it is true that as we meditate on and observe God’s working in nature, particularly as displayed in the heavens—whether the blue sky and clouds in the daytime or the stars and moon in the night

watches—we are inspired and lifted above transitory things. As a personal note, I can remember, as a boy, being so appreciative of the glory of the heavens that one night I lay on the grass and observed the heavens for a couple of hours, thinking I could comprehend God by just studying His works. However, the more I observed the heavens, the more I was lost in wonderment and praise and the less I could discern of His glory and majesty. The heavens are so tremendous that they are incomprehensible to the human mind. It is impossible for the human mind to fully grasp their power and grandeur. Nevertheless, wholesome lessons become apparent by reflecting on God’s handiwork in nature.

As a shepherd in the fields, the Psalmist David frequently observed the heavens at night. The heavens are universally appreciated. They are an international language, something like music. All nations, in spite of different tongues, can understand the meaning of nature to some extent. However, the Apostle Paul, in the New Testament, gives us the appreciation of a higher meaning to Psalm 19.

**“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**

**“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the *same Lord over all* is rich unto all that call upon him.**

**“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

**“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?**

**“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!**

**“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?**

**“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

**“But I say, Have they not heard? [Here the apostle quotes Psalm 19.] Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” (Rom. 10:11-18)**

The apostle is telling us that just as the natural heavens have been a silent and yet forceful testimony of the existence of an intelligent and wise Creator, just as they help us to discern the

invisible God by His works, and just as the things that are visible betray the things that are invisible, so the gospel of God is written in nature's handiwork, and all mankind stand condemned if they reject the Word of God, for nature testifies to His existence. If we recognize that nature has a God, then we should look for *His* book of instruction, which is the Bible, *His* Word. The apostle draws an analogy between the testimony of the heavens, by day and by night, and the preaching of the gospel message during the present or Christian Age. However, while Paul applies the analogy to the *present* age, there are certain indications in Psalm 19 that its full fulfillment will take place in the next or Kingdom Age and that whatever is occurring now is a preview or foreview of that which is to come.

Returning again to Psalm 19, we notice that verses 4 and 5 are better worded in the Leeser translation: "There is no speech [in the heavens, day or night], there are no words, their voice is not heard. (But) their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their words." The details of Leeser's description help us to discern certain facts when we read verse 4 in the King James translation. "Their *line* is gone out through all the earth"; that is, there is a *rule or direction* to the heavens. In the

marginal references of many Bibles, the word “line” is given the thought of a *governing influence*, an order to the universe. In other words, the manifestation of the heavens indicates a God *of order*.

In his statement “one star differeth from another star in glory,” the Apostle Paul informs us that there will be various degrees of honor in the Church in glory, that is, when they are raised to Kingdom honors in the next age (1 Cor. 15:41). He also indicates that the stars in the heavens represent the resurrected Church in Kingdom power and glory. Just as the literal stars exercise their influence and can be observed by all people throughout the earth, so in the Kingdom Age, the rulership and control of Christ and his Church, prefigured by that which we see in nature at night, will be realized by all.

At that time, language will no longer be a barrier. Much of the difficulty and frustration in trying to establish an international or universal order or government has been the confusion of tongues. The Book of Genesis tells that early in man’s history, all of the people spoke one language. The spirit of confusion, which was poured upon mankind following the erection of the Tower of Babel, had the effect of disunifying and scattering the people—a

condition that prevails to the present day (Gen. 11:1,4-9). Much misunderstanding among the nations and peoples has occurred because of differences in living customs and in habits of thought and expression. However, this problem will cease in the next age, when all will again speak the same language.

In Psalm 19, the end of verse 4 states, "In them [the heavens] hath he [God] set a tabernacle for the sun." In observing the heavens in the daytime, we see another phenomenon: the resurrection of the sun on earth's horizon. The sun comes forth from the east and shines unto the west; it goes on a daily journey across the vault of the heavens. The prophetic message of Psalm 19 is that "the sun" represents "*the Son*" of God. In the Kingdom Age, in the dawn of the new era soon to come, in which Christ is to be Messiah from one end of the earth to the other, the sun beautifully pictures the work and influence of his reign. As the sun comes up over the horizon, so Jesus will arise "out of his chamber" and begin to exert his authority and influence in the earth (Psa. 19:5). He will come forth "as a strong man" who rejoices "to run a race." A healthy individual in the prime of youth, even though an imperfect being, often loves to expend his energy in strenuous exercise. Here we find that our Lord Jesus

has been patiently waiting for his Kingdom rule, but he wants to bless all the families of the earth (Gen. 22:18). The resurrection of the dead is the desire of his heart, but the Kingdom has been delayed. One reason the beneficent effects of this promised universal government have not yet been manifested on behalf of the world is that the fellow members of the body of Christ have not all been developed. Even God Himself has had long patience in awaiting the development of, particularly, this Gospel Age fruit (James 5:7).

Therefore, the “bridegroom coming [forth] out of his chamber” signifies that the blessings of the Kingdom Millennial reign of Christ cannot occur until, first, the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb takes place (Rev. 19:7; 21:2,9; 22:17). After the marriage, Jesus will come forth to bless all the families of the earth. This joyous occasion is likened to a beautiful clear day with the sun appearing on the horizon and birds singing and rejoicing. The happy, glorifying influence will immediately be discernible as the sun comes over the horizon. During the Millennial day, the sun will go over the vault of the heavens, and its heat, rays, light, healing, and corrective influences will dispel all of the noxious vapors and miasma of sin below. This healing influence is



pictured in Malachi 4:2, a prophecy of the next age: “Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings [or beams]; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”

**“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” (Psa. 19:7)**

Verse 7 is a confirmation of the interpretation already given, namely, that the primary application or intent of Psalm 19 is to teach a spiritual lesson. Verses 1-6 mention the glory of the heavens and their message and liken the sun to a bridegroom (Christ) coming forth at dawn and running a race to the desired objective of redemption and victory for man here below, for the opportunity of salvation for all. Then verse 7, which is a break in thought, explains the deeper signification of why the heavens should be considered in a spiritual sense.

The “law of the LORD” is being likened to the Sun of righteousness. There is perfection in the physical organization of the heavens and the earth. This law and order have the effect of reviving or healing us, of giving us confidence that God is capable not only of sustaining us but also of bringing order out of chaos.

When the power manifested in the heavens is directed to correct mankind and the ordered arrangement on earth, it will bring into alignment with God the influences that now exist, so that all things will become obedient and subservient to the rule of Messiah.

“The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” The Lord’s people are made wise in their understanding of His Word concerning future intents and purposes of the divine will. They are made knowledgeable in regard to the Kingdom arrangements that have been prophesied. And they realize, also, that as surely as God is Lord, so surely will these prophecies be fulfilled.

**“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.” (Psa. 19:8)**

How do the right statutes of God rejoice the heart? When a Christian meditates upon the works of God—whether in nature or pertaining to the principles of divine government as manifested in His Word and character—he sees a beauty of justice, of arrangement, of harmony, that creates joy in his heart.

Furthermore, God's pure commandments enlighten the eyes. At the present time, conditions of sin and confusion prevail on the earth. The beauty of God's handiwork is both marred and distorted; for example, disorderly buildings and unsightly billboards and advertisements have a disruptive influence. But when we lift our eyes up to heaven, we behold an atmosphere of purity and nobility. Exaltation comes with a meditation of the heavens. Even those who do not study the Bible usually have some appreciation of the beauty of nature, and their lives are bettered somewhat by observing the God of nature and His laws. However, the deeper significance is that when we see the same Being operating in the Word of God, the beauty and harmony there are far more wholesome than the revelation displayed in nature.

**"The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.**

**"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (Psa. 19:9,10)**

The orderliness manifested in the heavens—the fixity and precision of the orbits of the various suns and planets, as well as

the mathematical certainty of eclipses, of the length of days, and of the travel of the celestial bodies—makes us realize the orderliness of God. We can depend on Him and know with surety that all things will work together for good if we put our trust in Him (Rom. 8:28). The commandments or ordinances that God has designed are manifested in the laws of creation, so that once the planets are placed in their orbits, they continue on because of certain fixed arrangements. And so it is with the commandments in His Word and the principles of His government. When they are properly discerned, the fixity and harmony and beauty of God’s Word can so influence the life of an individual that it can be said God’s judgments are “true and righteous altogether” and “more to be desired ... than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey.”

The celestial bodies stay in their orbits and are under the beneficent control of the Creator. They are obedient and submissive to the divine will as displayed in the laws of gravity, etc., and only the wandering stars or comets go to doom and destruction. In Scripture, those individuals who go into “second death” or oblivion because of departing from the way of the Lord and sinning willfully after having received a knowledge of the truth, after having tasted of the heavenly gift (Jesus), and after

having been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, are likened to wandering stars (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26,27; Jude 12,13; Rev. 2:11; 20:6). The destiny of those in this wandering condition is ultimate destruction. Conversely, those Christians who keep themselves in the center of God's will, those who are suppliant in the hands of their Creator, as manifest in the gospel of Christ, secure their eternal future. A personal lesson, therefore, becomes apparent in Psalm 19:13, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins ... from the great transgression." In spite of our faults and failures, we pray for God's overruling that we may be kept in *His* orbit, in the circle of *His* love, and in *His* will, and that we will fix our hearts on doing *His* arrangements and being compliant therewith (Jude 21). What powerful lessons we can learn by observing and gathering information from the physical heavens!

**"Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.**

**"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.**

**"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.**

**“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.” (Psa. 19:11-14)**

Thus in reading Psalm 19, starting with verse 1, we see that the spiritual aspect is the most desired interpretation or understanding. If the glory of the natural is awesome, how much more is the spiritual application! The magnificent pageantry of the heavens day and night should elicit our praise and adoration and should inspire in our hearts a holy and reverent devotion to the Almighty God. May we let the noiseless activity, the perfect obedience to divine law, and the blessed shining of the heavenly hosts impress their wholesome lessons upon us of zealous activity without commotion or ostentation, of perfect obedience to the will of Him who doeth all things well and who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind, and of letting the glory of the Lord, which has illuminated us, shine from us, in turn, on every beholder. No wonder David exults in Psalm 8, as follows:

**“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.**

**“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.**

**“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;**

**“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?**

**“For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.**

**“Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:**

**“All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;**

**“The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.**

**“O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”**

David realized that this prophecy will come true, that it will have its fulfillment in the Kingdom soon to come: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

Thank God!

Frank Shallieu