

GOD'S REVELATION & MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY (FOCUS: vv. 7-11 – GOD'S SPECIAL REVELATION)

Introduction

- What are you blaming your inconsistency, joylessness, apathy, rebellion, etc. on? *Victimization, poor church, lack of a model, poor motivation, etc.*
- There is one answer to all of those problems: let the powerful Word of God that created, recreate you (cf. II Corinthians 4:6). God has never worked any differently than that: using His Word to accomplish His purposes!
- See, if we're not addressing the needs mentioned above with God's Word, then you are doubly-guilty: you've failed to accomplish His will, and you're rejected His Word.
- In Psalm 19, we learn of God's self-revelation of Himself to mankind in both its general and special forms. After quickly outlining verses 1-6, let's focus our attention on God's special revelation in verses 7-11 to stir our hearts once again to become people whose delight is in God's active Word (Psalm 1:2-3).

God's Revelation of Himself (vv. 1-11)

1. God's General Revelation (vv. 1-6) – works, creation, sky

General Revelation shows us that there is a God and that He is glorious in greatness.

A. Its entirety

- Heavens (v. 1) & earth (4)
- Day & night (v. 2)

B. Its expression

- V. 1 – “declare” & “display”
- V. 2 – “speaks” & “reveals”
- V. 4 – “voice” & “words”

C. Its extent

- V. 3 – limited in its message
- V. 1 – only reveals the existence of God (“God,” v. 1), not His nature (“LORD,” vv. 7ff)

D. Its education

- V. 1 – God's creative glory
- V. 2 – God's cosmic greatness

2. **God's Special Revelation (vv. 7-11) – Word, written, Scripture**

Special Revelation tells us that God is the LORD and that He is glorious in goodness (moral goodness).

A. **Terms for God's Word (vv. 7-9)**

- *3 couplets*: v. 7 = refers to a general body of revelation; v. 8 = refers to specific instructions within that body; v. 9 = refers to the purposes of God's revelation as we actually see God in it
 1. *"Law of the LORD" (v. 7)*
 - The Hebrew word here, *torah*, means "instruction."
 - Specifically refers to Exodus 20:1-23:19 ("the Book of the Covenant"), written out by Moses in Exodus 24:4, 7.
 - By Joshua 1:8 it seems to have referred to the whole Pentateuch, which the Jews refer to as the Torah (Joshua 8:30ff – v. 31 = Pentateuch, called the "Book of the Law of Moses"; v. 32 = either the Ten Commandments or the entire Book of the Covenant, v. 34-35 = Pentateuch ["blessing and curse" seems to be Deuteronomy]).
 - Joshua, however, added to the "Book of the Law of God" in Joshua 24:26, which demonstrates an even broader understanding of what the "Law of the LORD" in our verse is highlighting. In the words of Kidner, the "Law of the LORD" is the "comprehensive term for God's revealed will"—in other words, the Psalmist has in mind here the complete revelation of God that was available to him (and by extension, to us).
 2. *"Testimony of the LORD" (v. 7)*
 - Exodus 25:16; 31:18; 32:15-16 – refers to the tablets of the Ten Commandments
 - Called a "testimony" "since the tablets were in fact a witness/testimony to the covenant, a relationship that the tablets described in writing" (NAC).
 - This body of Law depicts the covenant between Israel and God in which God effectively says, "You are My people, and you have known Me to be your God and Deliverer; therefore, you must live this way."
 3. *"Statutes/Precepts of the LORD" (v. 8)*
 - This word refers to the precise details within that general body of revelation – the individual instructions, precepts, and regulations that deal with real-life situations.
 - This word is used 21 times in Psalm 119 to summarize God's Word.
 - It demonstrates man's responsibility before God in light of the covenant, for obedience to these details shows that we are keeping the covenant (Psalm 103:18).

4. *“Commandment/Commands of the LORD” (v. 8)*
 - This is another term acting as synecdoche, that is using a part of something to refer to the whole thing (cf. Proverbs 13:13).
 - It obviously refers to the whole of the law that was commanded by God (Leviticus 4:2, 13, 22, 27; Deuteronomy 4:2), while highlighting its authoritative nature as commands from a Superior.
5. *“Fear of the LORD” (v. 9)*
 - This is a unique title for Scripture, and it highlights the purpose of God’s Word to provoke fear among the King’s creation.
 - Deuteronomy 4:9-10 states that reading and listening to God’s Word will cause us to fear God.
6. *“Judgments of the LORD” (v. 9)*
 - These refer to rulings and decisions by God. It teaches us that God is the Standard of rightness and truth, and therefore the Judge who renders a ruling on morality and ethics.
 - The Judge of the world has already rendered a decision about every situation in life, and His Word provides us with His ruling.

Discussion: In these verses, the Psalmist meditates on various aspects of God’s Word—the general body of special revelation, the specific details in that book, and its purpose to stimulate fear and godliness.

- What have these verses taught us about the way God’s people relate to Him? *God has designed our relationship with Him to go through His Word. Our relationship to His Word pictures what is the state of our relationship with Him. His Word is the codification of our covenant relationship with Him and to treat it trivially is to treat our relationship with Him as trivial.*
- In light of just this information, what responses to God and His Word should those who claim to be in a covenant relationship with Him have? *reverence, obedience, trust*

B. Qualities of God’s Word (vv. 7-9)

1. *“Perfect” (v. 7)*
 - In quality – without flaw in condition or quality: impeccable, complete
 - In purpose – conforms absolutely to its purpose: un-improvable, unimpaired (cf. Isaiah 55:11)
 - *The Point:* There is absolutely nothing wrong with any of God’s *Law*, either in its content and quality or in what it is to accomplish.
2. *“Sure” (v. 7)*
 - “Firm, therefore confirmed” (Kidner); unchanging, consistent, proven
 - *Illustration:* individual buttresses on a dock – if they are firm, then the dock is trustworthy
 - *The Point:* God’s *Testimony* is sure, because He is sure. This is a covenant-issue, and God is not a man that He can lie.

3. "Right" (v. 8)
 - "straight, smooth, proper"
 - *Illustration*: straight ruler vs. crooked ruler; smooth road vs. a rough road – the latter isn't proper...rulers are supposed to be straight and roads are supposed to be smooth; when they are not, they are not right.
 - *The Point*: God's *Instruction* is right, fulfilling what laws and instructions are supposed to – the knowledge of right and wrong. God's instruction is never laborious, inconsistent, deficient, misleading, or manipulative.

4. "Pure" (v. 8)
 - Morally and ethically pure
 - *The Point*: God's Word is itself pure, and its *commands* lead to moral and ethical purity.

5. "Clean" (v. 9)
 - This is the word you would use to refer to "pure gold" – uncontaminated, uncompromised, refined.
 - *The Point*: God's Word is unique, completely without error. Therefore, it certainly does lead us to *fear* its Author.

6. "Enduring" (v. 9)
 - "to remain/stand"
 - *The Point*: God's Word will always stand on its own merit and will remain forever, further provoking the *fear* of God in us.

7. "True" (v. 9)
 - "true, genuine, faithful, trustworthy"
 - *The Point*: God's judgments are indeed *truth*, for He is the standard. We never have to doubt the veracity of what God has said.

8. "Righteous" (v. 9)
 - "right, just; to be in the right"
 - *The Point*: God's judgments are in the right and are just and equal. We never have to fear the unpredictable, for God's Word is a perfect standard.

Discussion: So, (1) God's Word is perfect and proper in its ability to do what He has designed it to do; (2) It is without error in any part, but is the pure standard of truth and moral righteousness; and (3) It is eternally established in these qualities, for it represents the very nature of the covenant-making God.

- In light of these qualities, what should be your attitude toward God's Word?
confidence, obedience, exposure, learning

C. *Actions of God's Word (vv. 7-8)*

1. "Preserves one's life" (v. 7, NET) – SPIRIT/HEART (it makes us alive)
 - "to restore, refresh, return" (cf. Psalm 23:3)
 - *The Point:* God's Word has the ability to give life (to the spiritually dead) and sustain/restore life (to the spiritually dry).
 - Isn't this what the Incarnate Word came to do?
2. "Imparts wisdom to the [immature]" (v. 7, NET) – DECISIONS (it makes us wise)
 - "to make wise" – trained, experienced, taught (cf. II Timothy 3:15)
 - *The Point:* God's Word matures the immature with Its instruction and commands, as that one simply learns and obeys by faith.
3. "Makes one joyful" (v. 8, NET) – EMOTIONS (it makes us joyful)
 - "to gladden, make merry"
 - *The Point:* God's Word "educates our emotions" (NBD) and provides us with joyful satisfaction.
4. "Gives insight for life" (v. 8, NET) – FAITH/WORLDVIEW (it makes us enlightened)
 - "to give light, illumine" one's eyes
 - *The Point:* God's Word gives heavenly perspective to those who read it, so that they view life through God's lens.

Discussion: So, God intends His Word to give and maintain spiritual life, to provide discernment and wisdom, to lift up and encourage, and to provide a heavenly perspective on life.

- Which of those four is your need? It will be met in the pages of God's special revelation. God's Word is not just an option to try; it is the plan of God to accomplish His recreation of you!

D. *Conclusions about God's Word (vv. 10-11)*

1. *It has great value (v. 10). – greater than _____?*
2. *It has great delight (v. 10). – greater than _____?*
3. *It has great guidance (v. 11). – warning/guidance in _____?*
4. *It has great reward (v. 11). – for those who obey*

Discussion: Ultimately, then, your relationship to God, which is enjoyed through a relationship with God's Word, is ultimately a faith-thing. Will you believe what God has designed His Word to do and the intrinsic worth it has, and will you respond in obedient exposure?

Man's Responsibility before God (vv. 12-14)

We'll suffice our comments to say that when a person understands God's revelation in creation and Scripture, he will be overwhelmed with his own moral culpability before God.

Conclusion

- Read Psalm 1:2-3 – Do you believe this description of what naturally happens when you saturate your mind and life with God’s Word? Then why are you so shallow and inconsistent with it? Why have you forsaken God’s Word? Why are you not listening to and obeying it?
- God’s powerful Word created everything from nothing, and His plan is to use that same Word to recreate you (cf. II Corinthians 4:6). Will you chose to shine it into your heart?