

Wisdom Psalms Genre: Psalm 19

Author: Dr. Bruce Waltke

Session 27

Sponsored by Biblelearning.org by Ted Hildebrandt

Keywords

Psalm 19, Torah, general revelation, special revelation, creation, law, Bruce Waltke, wisdom, apostasy, petition

Abstract

In this lecture, Dr. Bruce Waltke provides an exegesis of Psalm 19, examining its dual focus on general revelation through creation and special revelation through the Torah. He demonstrates how the wisdom thinker unifies God's omniscience displayed in the heavens with the moral perfections and life-giving rewards of God's written law. Waltke explores the christological application of Christ as the creator and word, as well as the psalm's practical relevance to the believer. Finally, he analyzes the psalmist's closing petitions for forgiveness of hidden sins and protection from apostasy, relating them to the humble posture of the Lord's Prayer.

Outline

I. Introduction to Psalm 19 and Wisdom/Torah Genre

A. Recapping Wisdom and Torah Psalms

1. Wisdom Psalms provide positive admonition and address theodicy (e.g., Psalm 49, Psalm 73).
2. Torah Psalms provide instruction and moral admonition (e.g., Psalm 1).

B. The Logical Unity of Psalm 19

1. Dual revelation: Praise for God in creation (general revelation) and Torah (special revelation).
2. Wisdom logic: God's comprehensive knowledge in creation grounds His authority to give moral revelation in Holy Scripture (cf. Job 28, Proverbs 30).

II. God's Omniscience Displayed in Creation (Verses 1–6)

A. First Strophe: The Firmament Declares God's Glory and Knowledge (Verses 1–4a)

1. Temporal universality: Day to day pours out speech and night to night reveals knowledge continuously (Verse 2).
2. Spatial universality: Their voice goes throughout all the earth to the ends of the world (Verse 4a).

3. Communication characteristics: Verses 1 and 3 emphasize silent yet universal declaration without physical speech or sound.

B. Second Strophe: The Sun's Universal Scope and Energy (Verses 4b–6)

1. Universal circuit: Rising from one end of the heavens to the other (Verse 6).
2. Metaphor 1: A bridegroom reflecting freshness, beauty, vigor, and joy (Verse 5a).
3. Metaphor 2: A strong man/racer running a course with exuberance, strength, and speed (Verse 5b).

C. Theological, Christological, and Personal Applications of Creation

1. Christological connection: Christ as the Word and agent of creation (John 1).
2. Personal obligation: Creation's revelation renders humanity without excuse for not responding to the Creator (cf. Psalm 8, Romans 1).
3. Poetic reflection: Addison's paraphrase highlighting that to reason's ear, silent creation sings of its divine maker.

III. The Moral Excellence and Rewards of Torah (Verses 7–11)

A. The Seven Moral Perfections/Essence of the Law (Verses 7–9)

1. Perfect: Complete and flawless (Spurgeon: crime to add, treason to alter, felony to take away).
2. Sure: Totally reliable, grounded in God's universal knowledge.
3. Upright: Faultless, straight, without bend or twist.
4. Pure: Scoured until it shines, enlightening the eyes.
5. Clean: Free of impurities, enduring forever without decay.
6. True: Firm, steady, unchangeable, unlike human judgments.
7. Righteous: In total conformity to God's holy character.

B. The Benefactions and Rewards of Torah (Verses 7b–11)

1. Revives the soul: Restores life, vitality, and comfort to the sad and discouraged (e.g., Obed to Naomi).
2. Makes wise the simple (peti): Gives life-giving skills to those open to God's instruction.
3. Rejoices the heart: Brings deep joy to a right and receptive heart.
4. Enlightens the eyes: Imparts spiritual insight through its radiant purity.
5. More desirable than fine gold: Offers true life, home, and fellowship that material wealth cannot buy.
6. Sweeter than honey: Nourishes spiritual taste and warns the servant against sin.

IV. The Psalmist's Petitions and Conclusion (Verses 12–14)

A. Petition 1: Forgiveness for Hidden Sins (Verse 12)

1. Unconscious depravity: Recognition that human depravity causes hidden sins that cannot be specifically named or confessed.

2. Assurance of pardon: Inclusion in canonical Scripture assures believers of divine forgiveness for hidden sins.

B. Petition 2: Protection from Insolent Men and Apostasy (Verse 13)

1. Human vulnerability: Believers are susceptible to wandering and cannot match demonic/satanic forces without divine grace.

2. Preserved from the 'great transgression' (pasha): Request to be kept from rebellion, apostasy, and breaking faith with Yahweh.

3. Parallel to the Lord's Prayer: Humble plea corresponding to 'deliver us from evil' and 'lead us not into temptation.'

C. Concluding Prayer and Court Protocol (Verse 14)

1. Protocol for acceptance: Asking that words of mouth and meditation of heart be pleasing to the King.

2. Dependence on God: Invoking Yahweh as 'my Rock' (protection/salvation) and 'my Redeemer' (deliverer), rejecting legalistic self-reliance.

3. Divine acceptance: The prayer's inclusion in Scripture confirms that David's petition found favor with God.