

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study guide is to facilitate the study of Psalm 19 as a supplement to the sermon. It is based on my (Michael's) study and meditation on the psalm. This handout can be used for personal study or community group conversation. (I hope you join a group!)

PSALM 19:1-14 ESV

1 To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. 6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving 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 rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

12 Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. 13 Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent 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.

STRUCTURE

- I. General Revelation: God's glory in the heavens (19:1-6)
 - a. Unceasing testimony (19:1-2)
 - b. Universal testimony (19:3-4)
 - c. Specific example: the sun (19:5-6)
- II. Special Revelation: Yahweh's glory in the Torah (19:7-11)
 - a. Transforming testimony (19:7-8)
 - b. Enduring testimony (19:9a)
 - c. Righteous testimony (19:9b)
 - d. Desirable testimony (19:10)
 - e. Specific example: the servant (19:11)
- III. Worshipful alignment: revelation demands a response (19:12-14)
 - a. Prayer for forgiveness: unintentional sin (19:12)
 - b. Prayer for protection: high-handed sin (19:13)
 - c. Prayer for worshipful alignment (19:14)

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

In the history of interpretation, modern scholars have often understood the blunt transition from stanza 1 (about God's general revelation in nature) to stanza 2 (about God's special revelation in Scripture) as indicative of two separate psalms, copy-and-pasted together haphazardly. Nothing could be further from the ancient understanding or the truth of Psalm 19. The first and second stanzas are united in theme, both addressing God's revelation; together they highlight the moral force upon humanity to respond, which David exemplifies in the final stanza.

Besides the natural flow of the stanzas, one into another, they furthermore enlighten us about the unity of God's revelation in creation and Scripture. In both, God spoke, and through both, we still hear. The echo of divine speech

resounds in the heavens; the etching of divine speech is preserved in the Torah. Psalm 19 is about the revelation of God and its effect on creation—especially, His human creation. The word of God is testified eternally in both nature and Scripture because God's revelation is eternal. It never returns to Him void (Isa. 55:11).

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

19:1 *To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

—The song is by David, although we don't know the occasion. Like its theme of universal testimony, the song applies universally, in every circumstance. Divine revelation through nature and Scripture are not bound by the human experience.

—"heavens": can refer to the sky, to outer space, or to God's presence in heaven. Here, it is the second one. In outer space, the celestial bodies declare God's praise.

—"declare (1)... proclaims (1)... speech (2, 3)... reveals (2)... words (3, 4)... voice (3, 4)." The first four verses multiply terms for speech. The celestial bodies are personified as servants who testify to us about God. Some of the words—"declare... proclaim" are more forceful. The heavens do not merely whisper, but shout, the Creator's splendor.

—"declare" is normally used in the Psalter to depict liturgical worship. David thus personifies "the heavens" as entering God's temple to sing His praise. If even the stars show up for church (so to speak), how much more should we assemble for worship?!

—In ancient times, people worshiped the celestial bodies. In modern times (particularly in the secular west), people marvel at their beauty but not that of the One who fashioned them. Whether ancient or modern, the error is the same: refusing to hear the loud and clear testimony of creation (cf. Rom. 1:18-20).

—Stunningly, stars, moon, and sun display greater wisdom—acknowledging their Creator and testifying of His reality—than humans who fail to heed the revelation they receive.

—"glory": the word can literally be translated as "weight," when speaking of physical things. When applied to holy things, it connotes both importance and beauty.

—Verse 1 is an example of Hebrew parallelism, where the two halves communicate the same thing in different ways: "the heavens" is parallel to "the sky"; "declare" to "proclaims"; "glory of God" to "handiwork." The latter parallel shows the means by which the heavens proclaim God's glory: by pointing back to His hand in Creation. The vastness and splendor and complexity of the universe testifies to the vastness, splendor, and complexity, of God.

—The name "God" is used in this verse, reminding us of the Creator God, who made the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). God's covenant name, Yahweh, is saved for section 2.

—God grants general revelation through creation (section 1); Yahweh grants special revelation through Torah (section 2); divine revelation demands a response (section 3).

2 *Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.*

—Another Hebrew parallelism: "day to day" is parallel to "night to night"; "pours out" to "reveals"; "speech" to "knowledge".

—The focus of the verse, like the first one, is on God's unceasing testimony in creation.

—"day and night" is a merism (like "high and low") that means "all the time, without ceasing." When the sun sets, the stars testify; when the stars disappear, the sun bears witness. Just as celestial creatures sing of God's holiness in heaven "day and night" (Rev. 4:8), celestial bodies testify in the heavens "day and night" that God exists.

—The parallel of "speech" with "knowledge" suggests that we have no excuse for ignoring their testimony. Though the stars are above our heads, we can never claim their speech is over our heads. *Their* speech should be *our* knowledge. Any miscommunication is not on their part, but on ours, the listeners.

—The parallel of "pours out" with "reveals" suggests that the revelation is not just clear, but abundant. "pours out" conjures images of flooding, of gushing. Revelation streams from the heavens like the opening of Hoover Dam—but with unceasing flow.

3 *There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4* *Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

—The revelation of the heavens is not only unceasing in flow, but unlimited in reach.

—"speech... words... voice": At Babel, languages multiplied, but the heavens are multi-lingual. In every tongue, they declare the same message: our Creator God is glorious.

—Psalm 19:4 is quoted in Romans 10. Here is the full context: *14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. 18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."*

- The context of Romans 10 relates to the salvation of Israel.
- Paul's quotation of Psalm 19:4 in Romans 10:18 presents a challenge because he employs the psalm as a proof-text to show Israel has heard "the word of Christ." In its original context, however, Psalm 19:4 does not teach special revelation, but general revelation. The heavens do not proclaim "the word of Christ" in all its complexities (the life, death, resurrection, etc.); rather, they proclaim "the glory of God," which is to say, God's splendor and infinitude. So how can Paul claim in Romans 10:18 that Psalm 19:4 proves Jews have heard the Gospel?
 - Option 1: he's quoting Psalm 19:4 as a way of saying, "Read the whole psalm, and you'll see how Psalm 19:7-11 talks about special revelation in the Torah. Because the Jews have Torah, they should be able to discern the Gospel." I don't believe this is what Paul is doing because the context is not about reading Torah, but preaching the Gospel (Rom. 10:14-16).
 - Option 2: he's using an analogy. He's saying, "Just like the heavens declare the glory of God, the apostolic church has declared the word of Christ to Jews." This is how most modern commentators interpret it. Option 2 is true, but I think it understates the case. If Paul were merely making an analogy, we might have expected him to say, "This is like that." Instead, he appeals to Psalm 19:4 as proof that Israel has heard.
 - Option 3: he's appealing to typology. Typology refers to Old Testament people, events, and institutions that foreshadow a more substantive future fulfillment. For instance, Adam is a type that points to Christ, the exodus is a type that points to salvation, and the temple is a type that points to the church. "Types" must be analogous (see option 2), but they are more than analogous; they also escalate—from lesser to greater fulfillment. In other words, Jesus is not just like Adam; He is a greater Adam. In fact, he is the escalatory "fulfillment" of what Adam should have been—a ruler over the earth. Now, let's apply this to our present text. No doubt, it is analogous. But is it possible that it is also typological, as evidenced by an escalation from lesser to greater fulfillment? Here is the evidence in favor:
 - First, as mentioned, Paul does not present his quotation of Psalm 19:4 like he's introducing a mere analogy ("this is like that"), but rather as proof that what he's claiming in Romans 10:17 is true, namely, that Jews have heard the Gospel. This suggests that he sees the apostolic witness of the church not merely as analogy, but as fulfillment. That is, he saw the unceasing and universal witness of the heavens about God as a prophetic foreshadowing of the unceasing and universal witness of the church about Christ.
 - Second, this fits the definition of typology: that it must be both analogous and escalatory. The analogy is that both the heavens and the church proclaim God's glory. The escalation is that the church proclaims not just general revelation—God's glory—but also special revelation: "the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17).
 - Third, there are messianic undertones in Psalm 19:4-6: the "sun" is a biblical metaphor for the Messiah (cf. Malachi 4:2), as is the "bridegroom" (cf. Matt. 9:15).
 - Fourth, we have similar typological fulfillment communicated elsewhere, namely, that the church is like the temple. While it's true that Psalm 19 does not directly mention the temple, it is a well-established fact that the creation account (and remember, Psalm 19 is about creation) resembles the construction of a great cosmic temple. Genesis achieves this by God's establishment of three zones—heaven, earth, and sea—which match the three zones of Israel's "tent" or "tabernacle"—most holy place, holy place, and outer courts. Israel even had symbols of the cosmos inside of the temple. The point is that God created the whole universe to house His presence, not a puny tent. The latter was an accommodation for sin that entered the world, but even it became obsolete with the coming of Christ—who destroyed the temple, built it again in three days, and united us to Himself so that we might become "living stones" of a new cosmic temple, intended

by God to proclaim the Word of Christ as constantly and universally as the moon and stars pour forth general revelation.

- Fifth, and in support of my fourth reason, Psalm 19:4 employs the word “tent” to describe the sun’s “home” in the heavens, and this is the normal word for “tabernacle” (198x).
 - Martin Luther agrees with typological interpretation: “This is a prophetic and didactic psalm. It prophesies that the Gospel will be preached in the whole world. Secondly, it talks about the manifold and great value of the Gospel, how it acquired this, and what it works and accomplishes.”
 - Bruce Waltke also agrees: “For him (Paul), and so for the church, the universal proclamation of the heavens and the rising of the sun typifies the Dayspring from on high who reveals all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the Sun of righteousness who was raised from the dead to marry his bride, and whose gospel is proclaimed by his church from one horizon to another (cf. Mal. 4:2; Lk. 1:78; Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:32).”
 - If I am right about the typology, Psalm 19:1-6 is fulfilled in this age by the apostolic witness of the church. Just as the heavens gushed incessantly, abundantly, and clearly about the glory of our Creator, the church does the same about the glory of Christ. Applicationally, we must aim to gush incessantly, abundantly, and clearly about beauty of Christ.
 - This typological fulfillment is realized already through the apostolic witness of the church but is most fully realized at the return of Christ. At that time, the church will not just be a “temple” outpost on a godless earth, but rather the entire universe will become God’s temple (Rev. 21-22), just as God originally created it to be.

In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. 6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

—These verses focus on the “sun,” which belongs to the “heavens” of 19:1. Why?

- Some interpreters believe this was intended as a polemic against the “sun god” of ancient near eastern religions, which is depicted by similar imagery. If so, David is saying, “Your so-called god is merely a creation of the God I worship.”
- As Christians, we should not be afraid to dismantle the “gods” of the nations. We should not persecute or chastise worshipers of false gods, but we should openly portray their falsehood to the world. Jesus is the only way.

—David’s Psalm in its original context is about creation, but if my typological interpretation is correct (above), there is a deeper layer of meaning. In such a case, God’s people would fulfill this verse as the “tent” or “tabernacle” that houses the “sun”—Jesus—who emerges through the testimony of the church like a “bridegroom” wooing His lover, and like a “strong man” who delivers them from death. His “rising” could be a typological pointer to resurrection. “nothing is hidden from its heat” would allude to His omniscience, and it would foreshadow His return—like the rising sun—to shine on unrighteousness.

—“there is nothing hidden from its heat”:

- For the first time we learn why it is significant that God testifies of Himself so universally and so constantly. The last phrase—“there is nothing hidden”—carries a double-meaning. Not only is nothing hidden from the heat of the sun, but likewise nobody is hidden from the heat of God’s judgment for turning a deaf ear to the warning speech of creation (again, see Rom. 1:18ff).
- For similar phrasing, Heb. 4:13: “*And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*”
- CS Lewis (*Reflections on the Psalms*, pg. 64): “As he has felt the sun, perhaps in the desert, searching him out in every nook of shade where he attempted to hide from it, so he feels the Law searching out all the hiding places of his soul.” This is Lewis’ comment on the seemingly abrupt, though truly seamless, transition from the first stanza about creation to the second about law.
- Waltke: “The physical light of the sun that exposes the hideaways of the wicked corresponds to the spiritual light of the law that exposes hidden sins.”
- 19:6 and 11 are each the final line of the first and second stanzas, respectively, and they appear to match. Observe:
 - *6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.*
 - *11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

- Both verses conclude a section about God's revelation on a sterner note. The first stanza concludes with the heat of the sun, a figure for judgment. The second stanza concludes with a similar note of warning (although it also mentions "reward" which we'll soon address).

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;

—The contrast between first (vv. 1-6) and second stanzas (vv. 7-11) is sharp. There are changes in theme, language, and meter.

—The shift of theme from general to special revelation highlights the "specialness" of special revelation. All of us are called to heed revelation in every form. But Israel was beyond blessed to possess Torah. Torah could do things—enumerated in this stanza—that general revelation never could.

—The first stanza addressed the dominance of the sun over all of life. The second stanza addresses the dominance of God's word over all of life. Since we are moving from the lesser to the greater (from general to special revelation), David implies an analogy between the sun and the Bible: both are light, but the Bible is brighter—"enlightening the eyes" (19:8) not only of our heads, but our hearts. Torah enables us to behold with inward eye the glory of Yahweh.

—Without the sun, we cannot live; without the Torah, we cannot live.

—Yahweh's name is not once used in the first stanza, but it appears seven times in this one. Yahweh is God's personal name, shared with His covenant people. God's worshipers are a people of covenant and of Torah.

—There is a multiplicity of terms for God's word—"law", "testimony", "precepts", "commandment", "rules". Each means "God's word," but they also contain nuance, explained separately in each verse below. The reason for variation is rooted not merely in artistry, but also in a desire to extol the worth of God's Word in its manifold beauty.

—"law of the LORD": Yahweh's "law" can refer to a specific command, group of commands, to the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible), or the whole Bible. In this case, it refers to the latter.

—God's word is "perfect." It is without error because God does not lie or make mistakes. For this reason, it is utterly reliable. God is not the Bible, but to trust Him is to trust the Scripture. God's Word, like His nature, is error-free.

—"reviving the soul":

- Paul says the law kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3); David says that the law revives our souls. Do these contradict? No, they use "law" in two different ways. David employs the word in its broadest sense, as shorthand for Scripture; Paul uses it in the narrowest sense, to depict commandments we failed to keep.
- Each of us has a soul, an inner being, and that inner being needs renewal, revitalization, reinvigoration, resurrection. The world aims for these through the latest "clean" diet or through the right workout routine or even meditation. But unless we meditate on God's Word, our soul cannot be renewed. As Paul says, "outwardly we are wasting away, but inwardly we are renewed day by day." How? By beholding Christ—the one to whom God's law points.
- Nobody ever says, "I found atheism, and stopped getting drunk!" But they often say this of Christ. He alone, by the power of His word, revives our soul. Falsehood entangles, but truth sets us free (Jhn. 8:31-32).
- Waltke: "The first-cited and most essential benefit of the Torah is that of renewing vitality... in a context pertaining to evil, it means, 'to convert.'"

—What is it about the perfection of God's Word that revives the soul? If God's word had imperfections, even if they be small, it would be like bitter herb inserted in an otherwise delicious stew. The entire pot would be ruined on account of a small error. Likewise, God's word revives our soul like a perfect meal refreshes our bodies.

the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

—"testimony": can be translated, "covenant." It refers to the commands that comprised Yahweh's covenant with His people. God's commands are not arbitrary, but worthy to stake our lives on—they are "sure."

—"making wise the simple":

- Not only do God's commands revive us with strength and energy; they also make us wise. Wisdom is skill at living life, and the beginning of wisdom is the fear of Yahweh (Pr. 1). Without God's word, we cannot grow in godly wisdom.

- “the simple” are what we would call naïve. They are teachable—a good thing—but they are also gullible. Like children, the simple are sponges for whatever comes along. If “the testimony of the LORD” is presented before them, the simple gain wisdom and cease being simple. In short, Scripture gives us discernment so that we can live life to the fullest (cf. Jhn. 10:10).
- A deep love for God’s word is not just for scholars; it is for even the “simple.”
- What is it about the sureness of God’s Word that makes wise the simple?
 - Foolishness vacillates, one day claiming this, and another, that. Furthermore, it promises a future of light and delivers darkness. Every good and perfect gift, however, comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation of shadow or turning (Jm. 1).
 - God’s word could not make us wise if it was unreliable like the counsel of fools. God’s word is the anchor that prevents us from being driven by the latest winds of godless doctrine and secular counsel. To be driven by such wind is foolish, as evidenced by the constant and senseless redirection.

8 the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

—“precepts”:

- Ross: “The verb means ‘appoint’ (cf. Ps. 8:4) among other things; it often has an emphasis on changing someone’s position or destiny. The LORD’s statutes are like divine appointments to higher service with additional responsibilities and duties.”
- In other words, “statutes” communicate that God’s word reveals His appointed plan for our lives. Destiny finds its meaning inside of God’s word.

—“right”:

- What is it about the rightness of God’s precepts that rejoices our heart?
 - If God’s Word advocated moral perversion, it could not rejoice the heart. Sure, we all have wicked hearts (Jer. 17:9), and we all at times delight in foolish ways. But this perverted delight falls short of the divine joy available to us in verse 8.
 - The desires of the wicked are short-lived and they end in a hangover. The joy of God is forever, and forever increasing (cf. 1 Pet. 4:13).

—“rejoicing the heart”:

- If we lack life and vitality, God’s word is the solution (19:7a); if we lack discernment, God’s word is the solution (19:7b); if we lack joy, God’s word is the solution (19:8a). All the things the world seeks, God provides, through His word.
- The joy God provides is not superficial, touching only the outer being. Any afflicted person can be happy while eating ice cream. The joy of God, however, runs like an underwater river beneath the desert of affliction; His word is a well of access to divine joy.

the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

—“commandment”: the singular usage of this word references the entire law. See Deut. 8:1: “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do...”

—“pure”: The whole of God’s law is without contamination.

—“enlightening the eyes”:

- On the surface, this seems identical to “making wise the simple,” but it is not. The latter refers to gaining discernment, but the former to reveling in beauty.
- When our eyes are enlightened, we behold the mysterious wonders of God’s word. Our hearts are dazzled.
- Every human longs for beauty, and we behold it simply by glancing up (19:1-6). But greater beauty is beheld by inward eyes that see beyond the cosmos to the one who created it (19:1). Greater still is the beauty beheld by inward eyes that see beyond words on a page to the One who inscribed them (19:7-11).

—What about the purity of God’s word enlightens our eyes to behold God’s beauty?

- Beauty stands out beside starkness like a garden in the desert, or as we read in the Song of Songs, “like a rose among the thorns.” Likewise, the purity of God’s word contrasts with the impurity surrounding us. Impurity pervades not only our perverse culture—which celebrates promiscuity as if it were beauty—but even the old creation, which has been stained by sin and cursed with futility. Despite the corruption of the rest of creation, God’s word remains undefiled.

9 the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;

—“the fear of the LORD”:

- On the surface, this would appear to be the only statement in the stanza celebrating something other than God's word.
- This is a metonymy. These are common in Psalms, and we use them in everyday speech. For instance, when we say, "Oklahoma City celebrated," we mean, "the people who live in Oklahoma City celebrated." Metonymies communicate related ideas to speak of the whole idea. Here, "the fear of the LORD" is a related idea, but the whole idea—the idea to which it relates—is God's word.
- The question, now, is how does God's word relate to His fear? When we fear God we tremble at His word (Isa. 66:1-2; cf. Ex. 20:19-20).

—"clean": what does it mean that the fear of the LORD is clean?

- This is the word normally used to describe ritual cleansing for worship in the temple. The fear of the LORD is not unclean, like a blemished lamb's blood. Rather, it is ritually clean. That is, it enables us to enter the presence of God.
- Since "fear of the LORD" is a metonymy for God's word, we might say that the word of God, in cooperation with the fear of God, creates in us a heart that is "clean" for worship. This does not suggest, of course, that it is by works that we enter God's presence. The fear of God is merely the other side of the coin from faith in God. Fearing God is not a work, but rather a heart-response to God and His word. You cannot have faith if you do not have fear—fear of God.

the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

—"rules": can be translated as "judgments" (NKJV, NASB) or "decrees" (NIV). It relates to God's righteous decisions, laid down as judgments from the divine lawgiver.

—The variety of language for depicting God's word—law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear of the Lord, rules—not only communicates the diverse beauty of Scripture, but also the nature of it. Most of the words relate directly to obedience.

—Kidner: "Together these terms show the practical purpose of revelation, to bring God's will to bear on the hearer and evoke intelligent reverence, well-founded trust, detailed obedience."

—"true, and righteous altogether":

- Here, David shifts from addressing the effects of God's word to the nature of it. This is not to say that he hasn't already been addressing its nature all along; he has. He simply seems to place more focus on it starting here in 19:9b.
- The word of God is true rather than false, and it is righteous rather than unrighteous. These are not necessarily new ideas in the psalm. He has been saying this basic thing throughout. The variety of language for saying the same thing communicates, "The goodness of God's word is beyond words."

10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

—"more to be desired": because God's word is perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, and righteous—seven adjectives that together communicate completion—God's word is desirable. Why? It completes us. By it we are redeemed and one day glorified.

—Because God's word completes us, it is more desirable than gold and honey.

—People work very hard for money. Some endure years of hardship for it; some choose a lifelong marriage partner for it; some even kill for it. If God's word is more valuable than money, then our pursuit of the treasures of God's word should be drastic. We should pour countless hours and gallons of sweat, mining the splendor of God's word.

—Desserts were not readily available in ancient times; honey was the choice sweet. God's word is our most flavorful dessert. We should desire it as much as our favorite one. Not only is it valuable to our mind and soul, like money; it also just tastes good. We should derive pleasure from consuming it.

—Why does it seem that so many of us don't derive such pleasure?

- The problem can't be with God's word; it is with us.
- 1 Peter 2:1-3 tells us to crave the spiritual milk of God's word. This means that even spiritual babies (not just scholars and teachers) can crave it like a newborn wants milk. But the opening verse suggests that our desires are dulled by "malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander"—in short, by the world.
- Like one who fills his belly with tortilla chips before the enchilada arrives, as God's children, we fill our spiritual bellies so much with the world that we have little remaining space for the Word. Our problem is not intellectual, but spiritual.

11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

—As noted above, verses 6 and 11 seem to match in that not only do they conclude a major stanza about divine revelation, but they also warn. Verse 11 takes us further than verse 6, however, in that there is also a “great reward” for heeding Torah.

—The contrast between verses 6 and 11 suggest that heeding general revelation is wise and necessary, but heeding special revelation is additionally blessed.

—“moreover”:

- David is adding to what he just said about the desirability of God’s word. Not only is it valuable like money and honey; it also both warns and rewards us.
- Verse 11 abandons the metaphor (gold, honey) and speaks directly to the value of God’s word. Reward and consequence are a part of everyday life, but only God’s word can inform us in such a way that we profit eternally.

—“your servant”: In this second stanza, God’s covenant name—Yahweh—has been used seven times to communicate God’s special relationship with His people. Here, David says, “your servant,” which highlights the same reality, but from our end.

12 Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.

—The final stanza opens with a question, focused on hiddenness of “errors” and “faults” from the servant of Yahweh. This contrasts strongly with the theme thus far, where David has extolled the glory of God in general revelation and the glory of Yahweh in special revelation. The whole Psalm has celebrated God’s communication of Himself through nature and Scripture. Now the Psalmist laments (this is why the verse takes the form of a question—to lament) his inability to know himself.

—What is the connection between the third stanza with the other two? In light of God’s revelation of Himself, the servant of Yahweh desires to align himself with who God has revealed Himself to be.

Revelation demands a response. To stare into space and feel no responsibility before a Creator—but instead to turn and worship the creation—is the height of foolishness. Our response should be not only to worship the Creator, but to seek to know more about Him. Has this Creator revealed more about Himself? He has—through His holy word. Natural revelation leads us to seek written revelation, which in turn leads us away from sin and toward Him. The connection between the stanzas is that David reflects our proper response to divine revelation.

— When David pleads with God to declare him innocent, he goes to the only One capable of forgiving sin. We cannot just “do better next time,” paying back bad behavior with good. We need the Judge of the Universe to declare us innocent. Proper response to revelation is to go to God for forgiveness.

—Furthermore, we go for forgiveness, not merely as a “transaction” that “gets us to heaven when we die”; rather, we go in humility, realizing that even if our conscience is clean, that does not make us clean before the Judge who sees all. Humility is likewise the proper response to God’s glory revealed in both nature and Scripture.

—Ross summarizes: “Having contemplated the glory of God through natural revelation and the will of God through special revelation, believers pray for cleansing and preservation from sin so that they might be acceptable to the LORD (12-14).”

—Kidner: “A fault may be hidden not because it is too small to see, but because it is too characteristic to register.”

13 Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me!

—“presumptuous sins” (13) contrast with “hidden sins” (12). The former are sins of rebellion, but the latter, of ignorance. Hidden sins are trap doors we fall into, but presumptuous sins are double doors we sprint through. God views each differently.

—These two categories for sin—presumptuous and hidden—harken back to the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible):

- [Exo 21:14 ESV] 14 But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him by cunning, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die.
- [Num 15:30-31 ESV] 30 But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him."
- [Deu 17:12-13 ESV] 12 The man who acts presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people shall hear and fear and not act presumptuously again.

— Since “presumptuous sins” carries the biblical background of “high handed” (premeditated) sin, “hidden faults” are not just those we are unaware of presently, but also those we were unaware of at the time of sinning when we were caught like a trap. David calls them “hidden” faults, but that doesn’t mean they are still hidden. They were hidden at the time, but now, after having fallen into the trap, they are revealed.

—In response to God’s revelation—the theme of the first two stanzas—David asks for forgiveness. The more in touch we are with the glory of God in nature and Scripture, the more we realize we “have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,” (Rom. 3:23).

—“presumptuous” is usually translated as “arrogant.” Pride is the root of rebellion.

—David wants to be declared innocent of hidden faults, but with regard to rebellion, he asks for protection. In Numbers 15, a sacrifice is made available to the one who sins unintentionally, but for the one who sins with a “high hand,” no sacrifice is made; he is cut off from his people. This is not because God is unwilling to forgive, but because the high-handed sinner (the sinner who shakes his fist at heaven) is unwilling to be forgiven.

—Ashley: “The sinner with a high hand feels no guilt; therefore the offense is not sacrificially expiable.”

—Waltke: “Without God’s help the human spirit alone is no match for Satan, who energizes insolent men, as the failure of Adam and Eve to resist the Satan’s rule instructs us.”

Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

—David doesn’t mean “blameless” and “innocent” in the sense of ethical perfection. He intends it rather in a relative sense. If God answers his prayer—to be declared innocent of hidden faults and kept from great transgression—then he will be truly free from sin.

—In contrast, if God does not forgive him of hidden faults or keep him from presumptuous sins, then he will be guilty of “great transgression.” Some understand this to refer to adultery, and it should include that, but I think it more broadly applies to all presumptuous, high-handed, rebellious, sin. In its most catastrophic form, it is apostasy.

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.

—“words of my mouth”: we have just learned about how the “mouth” of the cosmos is filled with God’s glory; how much more should ours be?! We are made in God’s image. Should we not declare His praises far more than lesser creation?

—“meditation of my heart”:

- Ideally, we meditate proactively on God’s word and God’s works, as the Psalms everywhere teach us.
- Even if we don’t, however, we meditate. To meditate is to think about things. Meditation is our thought life, our daydreams, our fantasies, our amusements, and our long streams of worry. Christians have an obligation to cut these off, and instead, to meditate on God’s word and God’s work. Where we fail, we ask God to declare us innocent (19:12), and we ask God to save us from where this river of sin leads—if left unchecked (19:13).

—“acceptable in your sight”:

- This is the language used throughout Scripture to depict sacrifices that are “acceptable” to God (cf. Lev. 22:19-21). David thus presents his mouth and meditation to God in worship. This is the proper response to revelation.
- Worship that God accepts goes beyond what we physically give (although it includes that); worship is life. It is a mouth and heart yielded to Him.

—“O LORD, my rock and my redeemer”

- Yahweh is a rock because He, like His word, is reliable.
- Yahweh is a redeemer because He forgives our hidden faults and saves us from our sins. As much as Psalm 19 focuses on obedience, it is first about salvation. Natural and Scriptural revelation lead us to the conclusion that we are slaves to sin in need of a redeemer. In Christ, we have one.

Waltke: “David’s response exemplifies the appropriate response: prayer for salvation, not a resolve to obey, as one might expect. David’s response is that of the tax collector: ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’”