

2001

Psalm 19: To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

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Recommended Citation

Keller, Walter E., "Psalm 19: To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David." (2001). *Walter E. Keller's Devotional Studies of Psalms*. 20.
<https://scholar.valpo.edu/kellerpsalms/20>

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Psalm 19

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

(ESV)

- ¹ 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.**

Psalm 19 consists of two poems, the first (verses 1-6) presenting the revelation of God through nature (the heavens), and the second (verses 7-14) presenting the revelation of God through the Law (law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear, rules). Luther writes of Psalm 19, “A prophecy. It speaks of how the Gospel would spread to all the world, as far as the heavens extend. Day and night it would be spread, not only in Hebrew but in all languages.”

The Creation, the heavens, the rhythm of day and night, and especially the marvel of the sun – all join in a sound of silence to declare the glory of God non-verbally. We are surrounded by a tremendous display of God’s artistry and craftsmanship. The heavens give dynamic evidence of God’s power, love and care. The apostle Paul was likely thinking of this Psalm as he explained that everyone knows about God because nature proclaims his existence and power (Romans 1:19, 20).

In the Torah (the Teaching) of the LORD, we receive divine written instruction for our soul and wisdom for our life (verses 7-11). Rather than viewing the law as restrictive, the Psalmist professes the opposite. The law revives us and makes us wise (verse 7), it enlightens us and gives us reason to rejoice (verse 8), it is sweeter and more desirable than worldly riches (verse 10), and there is great reward resulting from keeping the law (verse 11).

Verses 12-13 is a prayer for cleansing from sins, both known and unknown, and especially the sin of presumption before God which can so easily enslave us. Verse 14 will have wide application as an introduction or conclusion to many types of worship.

Prayer to accompany Psalm 19:

Heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty. Open our eyes to see your gracious hand in all works, that rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness, for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Linger longer over verses 13a & 14:

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

**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**