

“It Is What It Is”

1 Thessalonians 2:13

with Psalm 19

*“When you received the Word of God,
you accepted it not as the word of men,
but for what it really is,
the Word of God.”*

The Bible: Holy Scripture:
Inspired, Inerrant, Authoritative, Sufficient



Psalm 19: General & Special Revelation

"...not the word of men, but what it really is, the Word of God..." 1 Thess. 2:13

- A. General Revelation: God reveals Himself in natural creation (19:1-6)
General Revelation cannot result in salvation

(1a) "God" – "Elohim" – "great power, especially in creation"

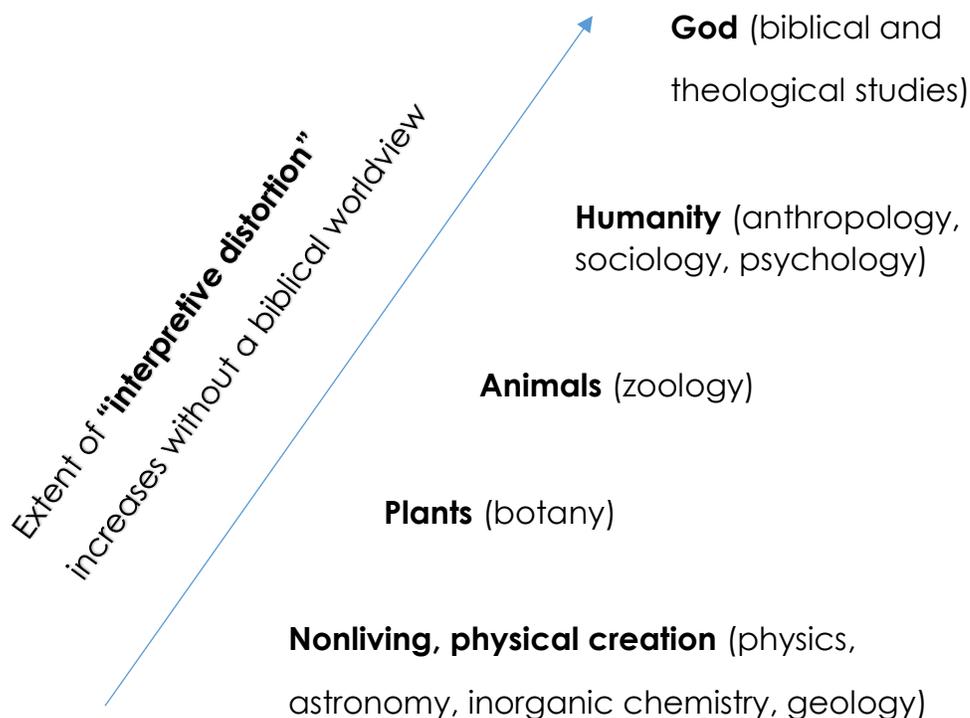
Romans 1:20-23 – creation is a "wordless book"

Romans 1:18b – man's response to this "wordless book"

- Suppression of obvious Truth
- Search for alternative so-called truth (**Romans 1:22-23**)
- Science has become king (**Romans 1:23**)
- Soul as utmost importance ignored (**Mark 8:36; Hebrews 4:12**)
- Social sciences now exalted (anthropology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, therapy), even though these are not "science" as defined by the scientific method.
- Strive to legitimize social science as biological/medical science; reclassifying and labeling "social ills" with biological/medical labels, terms, and phrases and attempting to cure social ills with biological/medical approaches; ignoring the source of all social ills: sinful heart (**Matt. 15:19; Jer. 17:9; Romans 3:10-18, 22-25a**)
- Sin of the Church: integrating Scripture, God's inerrant, authoritative, sufficient Word with man's philosophies about who man is, where man came from, where man is going, what man is looking for, what man needs, and how man can solve his problems (**Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 1:18-21; 2 Cor. 10:5; Prov. 4:7; 9:10; Psalm 111:10; Psalm 1**).
- Sign of the times is the slogan "All truth is God's truth," even though this is misleading. Many Christians in the social sciences, especially counseling and psychology, appeal to their studies as part of general revelation that reveals God's glory and power, and attempt to justify the integration of their field of study with Scripture. Christian Integrationist Psychologist Gary Collins says, *"All truth as God's truth has equal warrant, whether truth from nature or Scripture. Therefore, the truths of psychology (general revelation) are neither contradictory nor contrary to revealed truth (special revelation) but are integrative in a harmonious whole."* (Quoted in the excellent book *"Scripture and Counseling: God's Word for Life in A Broken World"* by Kelleman and Forrey, p. 71. Another good resource is *"Is All Truth God's Truth?"* by Jay Adams)

- Subtle departures from biblical Truth are rampant in today's Christian integration teachings because they call so-called scientific discoveries in the social sciences general revelation. Collins and his cohorts are wrong; they equate scientific discoveries (and assume social sciences can be studied scientifically when in reality they cannot) with general revelation; they have redefined what "general revelation" is. For them, general revelation is about the creation – "new discoveries" and new insights into man's being and needs, based on so-called scientific research (as if the human nature can be objectively, scientifically observed in a predictive way), not about God (**Rom. 1:23**). The Apostle Paul taught that general revelation was complete and effective, not still being discovered, when he says in **Romans 1:20**, "...*for ever since the creation of the world God's attributes can be seen...*" Furthermore, David in Psalm 19 says the same thing about general revelation as Paul says in Romans 1, though they lived centuries apart! According to the Bible, general revelation is *complete* and *clearly observable in the nature of creation*; general revelation is not a matter of progressive, scientific discovery. Forrey says in *Scripture and Counseling*, "*General revelation impresses itself upon the human consciousness. Having been made in God's image and having been born into His world means that general revelation is an immediate and automatic aspect of people's lives. We are always 'without excuse' before our Creator*" (p.71). He is correct; what can be known about God by observing sun, moon, stars, planets, plants, flowers, trees, animals, fish, weather, and every other facet of creation, has been clearly observable since day six of creation; man can see it; man is accountable to God.
- Science does have value when it serves the purposes of God by studying the mechanics ("how to's") of His creation; how it operates according to His intended purposes and structures, and does not venture into the arena of ideas, philosophies, and worldviews. Proper science fulfills the **Genesis 1** command to "*subdue the earth and rule over it.*" Furthermore, we must recognize that the Fall of man into sin and the resulting depravity of the human nature impacts the study of creation, the world, and man. The problem is not with science, but with the scientist. The human heart rebellious against God seeks to explain the world and explain man apart from God. So Christians must be careful about integrating fallen man's philosophies and worldviews with Scripture to explain man's existence and needs.
- Slippery slope of science is that eventually it ventures into spiritual matters. As science moves up the chart of inquiry from the

nonliving to the living, it begins asking questions that only Scripture can answer, such as “Where did man come from? Why is man here? What does man need spiritually, mentally, emotionally?” The unregenerate mind is predisposed to interpret what it observes in a manner that denies the reality of God’s existence and humanity’s accountability to Him. There are many questions that only Scripture can answer (**Jer. 2:13; 6:14; 1 Cor. 1:20**).



- B. Special Revelation: God reveals Himself in His Word (19:7-11)
Special Revelation is required for salvation

(7-9, 14) “LORD” – “Jehovah” – “personal, relational, covenant”

1. Psalm 19:7-11, Six Attributes & Six Ministries of God’s Word
Inspiration, Inerrancy, Authority, Sufficiency

- a. “...Law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul...”

“law” = “torah” = “instruction, direction, teaching” = “to shoot an arrow” = as a teacher aims to hit the target and achieve specific goals in the lives of the students

“perfect” = “blameless, flawless, complete, no need of revision, improvement, supplement”

“restore” = “to revive, to give new life” (Psalm 23:3)

God's Word not only has life, but it imparts spiritual life to all who receive it, and it sustains life as well (**Acts 7:3; Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 119:25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 156, 159**)

b. *“...testimony of LORD is sure, making the simple wise...”*

“testimony” = “bears witness to” = God's Word is a witness to us of who He is, what He has said and done, and what He wants us to be and to do

“sure” = “reliable, trustworthy, inerrant, without error, sufficient”

*“wise” = “application of knowledge to living” = Through God's Word we become wise concerning salvation and wise concerning the principles of successful living (**2 Tim. 3:15-17; Prov. 2; 8:33; 10:8**)*

*“simple” = Doesn't refer to mentally deficient people or naïve people who believe everything, but refers to childlike people who humbly receive God's Truth (**Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21-24**).*

c. *“...precepts of LORD are right, rejoicing the heart...”*

“precepts” = “detailed instructions concerning the practical matters of everyday life”

“rejoicing” = God's rules for living are not burdensome but liberating and obedience results in joy

d. *“...commandment of LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes...”*

*“command” = “orders, authority” = Because God loves us, He commands us what to do and what not to do, and how we respond is a matter of life and death (**Deut. 30:15-20**)*

*“pure” = “clean, holy” = God's commands are pure and lead to a pure, holy life; God's Word is called “Holy Scripture” (**Rom. 1:2**)*

“enlightening” = “to illuminate, to shine light upon” = God's commands are meant to be obeyed, and so we are

enlightened by God's Word only when we obey it, not just when we read it or study it (**John 7:17; 17:17; James 1:22-25**) We are strangers on this earth and we need the Word of God as a road map to guide us (**Psalms 119:19**). Like a traveler on the highway, if we deliberately make a wrong turn, we go on a detour and fail to reach our destination.

e. "...*fear of LORD is clean, enduring forever...*"

An unusual name for the Scriptures, but it addresses the importance of the Scriptures as the manual for worship of God. We cannot learn the Word of God unless we show reverence and respect for the God of the Word. Scripture is God's Word to man in written form – it carries supreme authority and must be obeyed. We dare not treat God's Word cavalierly or as a trifle, for it is a reflection of His very character, His Divine attributes. The mark of a true Bible student is a burning heart, not a big head (**Luke 24:32; 1 Cor. 8:1**).

"*clean fear*" = Some fears people have are distressing, debilitating, and destructive, but the fear of God is healthy and matures the believer. We will not decay or deteriorate as we walk in the fear of the LORD (**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**). To walk humbly before God, revering and honoring Him in love and obedience, is what it really means to be living.

f. "...*judgments of LORD are true, altogether righteous...*"

"*judgments*" = "*judicial language, verdicts, rendered decisions of a judge*" = God passes judgment on what people and nations do; He also rewards, rebukes, and punishes; all in order to help us understand what pleases Him; God's judgments are always correct, good, and holy.

C. Implications and Food for Thought – "*God's Word is sweeter than honey drippings from the honeycomb.*" **Psalms 19:10**

1. Holy Scripture is **Inspired** (**2 Timothy 3:16a; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:16; John 14:26; 16:7, 12-15**). The Inspiration of Scripture means that God supernaturally guided the human writers of Scripture via the Holy Spirit to record His Words to man in written form, exactly as He wanted.

2. Holy Scripture is **Inerrant** (**Psalm 19:9; Revelation 19:2, 9; Titus 1:2**). The Inerrancy of Scripture means that the Bible's teaching is true in everything about which it speaks.
3. Holy Scripture is **infallible** (**Isaiah 55:11**). The Infallibility of Scripture means that the Word of God is effective, it cannot fail in achieving its purpose.
4. Holy Scripture is **authoritative** (**John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Peter 3:16; Matthew 28:18**). The Authority of Scripture means that all the written words in Scripture are God's Words and to obey them is to obey God, and to disobey them is to disobey God. All Scripture is binding upon man to obey for they carry the authority of God Himself in written form.
5. Holy Scripture is **sufficient** (**Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; James 1:21**). The Sufficiency of Scripture means that the Scriptures are all the Words of God that He intended His people to have; and His Words are all that we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, for obeying Him perfectly, for solving all of life's problems, and for understanding our deepest personal, social, mental, and spiritual needs (**Romans 15:4** – "admonish" = "to counsel").

Questions to Chew On

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 uses two different words for "receive." The first means simply "to accept from another, or to hear with the ear." The second word ("accept" in many Bibles) means "to welcome, or to hear with the heart." What does it mean to hear the Word of God with your heart? How is that different than merely hearing the Word of God with your ears?
2. How is the Bible different from any other book ever written? Use Scripture to support or describe your answer.
3. What does the Authority of Scripture mean? How does this affect you personally each day of your life?

4. The way a Christian treats his Bible is how he regards God and Christ, because the Bible is God's written Word and Jesus is the Living Word (**John 1:1, 14**). How can we treat our Bible to demonstrate our honor and respect for God and Christ? How can we disrespect our Bible to demonstrate how we disrespect God and Christ?

5. **Hebrews 4:12** says the Word of God is living and active, and Paul was thankful that the Word of God was "performing its work" in the Thessalonians. How is Holy Scripture "living, active, and performing?"

6. Read the following verses of Scripture and record what it is doing or producing in the life of the believer: **Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 19:7-8, 11; 119:11, 24, 28, 97-100, 105, 154; Hebrews 4:12; John 8:31-32; 17:17; Colossians 3:16; Joshua 1:8-9.**

7. In the process of growing in the Christian life and deepening your relationship with God, approximately how much emphasis have you placed on reading the Bible itself and how much on reading other Christian books or materials? If the Scriptures are sufficient in giving us the answers for living life, what importance do the following play in our Christian walk: advice from others, sermons or Bible classes, our feelings, our conscience, our inward impressions and hunches, or changes in our circumstances?

8. Anthropology is the study of man. List everything the Bible teaches about man. What are some beliefs of modern psychology about man and how do they differ from what the Bible teaches (**Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18, 23; Ephesians 2:1-10; Isaiah 1:4-6**).

9. Some Christian teachers promote the worldly idea that high self-esteem is one of man's greatest needs. How do the following Scriptures refute that idea: **Matthew 16:24; Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; Mark 12:28-31; Philippians 2:3; Romans 12:3; 1 Peter 5:5; Galatians 5:13; 1 Timothy 3:2.**