



# THE MODES OF REVELATION

PART 1: PSALM 19 & NATURAL REVELATION



# The Modes of Revelation

- ▶ It's evident from Scripture that God **has** revealed himself
- ▶ Yet we learn from the text that God has done so using a several of **modes**
- ▶ Theologians generally categorize revelation into **two** basic classification...

**General revelation**

**Special Revelation**



# 1. General Revelation

- ▶ General revelation refers to the mode of revelation whereby God communicates himself ...to **all** persons  
...at **all** times  
...in **all** places
- ▶ There are several **means** God has used to reveal in this way...

Divine Revelation in **Nature**  
and **Human Conscience**



# Divine Revelation in Nature

- ▶ That is to say, God has expressed through the **created world** something **knowable** about himself
- ▶ From this, man can **gain knowledge** of God through an **observation** of the physical universe
- ▶ But the **clarity** and **extent** of this knowledge is a legitimate question

Two critical passages help us understand God's revelation in nature...

Scripture affirms that...

“...there is a knowledge of God available through the **created physical order.**”

- Millard Erickson

**Psalms 19**

**Romans 1**



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ Psalm 19 present one of the most **beautiful** and **clear** celebrations of divine revelation in all Scripture
- ▶ It has been called...

“...the **greatest poem** in the Psalter  
and one of the **greatest lyrics** in  
the world.”

C. S. Lewis

- ▶ In it, David extolls the beauty of God's revelation, including its **power, clarity, and effects**
- ▶ The psalm divides neatly into two parts...

God's Revelation in **Nature** (vv. 1-6)

God's Revelation in **Scripture** (vv. 7-14)



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

לְדָוִד:  
by David

מִזְמוֹר  
a psalm

לְמַנְצִיחַ Verse 1  
to the music director

- ▶ Begins with a superscription
- ▶ The first term belongs to the end of Psalm 18 (cf. Hab 3:19)
- ▶ The superscription identifies

**Genre**

**Authorship**



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

## Complete chiasmic arrangement

- Grammatical
- Semantic
- Often employed to open poems

## Focus on central elements

Introduces  
**theocentric theme...**  
links together vv. 1-6

כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים  
the glory of God  
וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו  
the works of his hands

מַסְפָּרִים  
are recounting

מְגִיד  
is declaring

הַשָּׁמַיִם Verse 1

the heavens

הַרְקִיעַ

the expanse

"The first part of the hymn...contains an affirmation that the world of nature **testifies**, by its very **existence**, to **God's glory**."  
- Peter Craigie



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ But it is not the creation as a whole that David has in mind
- ▶ He focuses on one **specific part** of nature
- ▶ Poetically, they are **synonymous**... they refer to the “sky”
- ▶ But verse 2 will reveal that David is speaking about the sky from **two perspectives**
- ▶ Thus “the heavens” speaks of the sky **at night** while “the expanse” speaks of the sky **during the day**

הַשָּׁמַיִם “the heavens”

הַרְקִיעַ “the expanse”

“By **day**, the sky is characterized by the sun and light, and by **night** its darkness is punctuated by the light of the moon and stars; both these dimensions **combine** to **recount God’s glory**.”

- Peter Craigie



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

Portrays the heavens as a **celestial choir** recounting God's glory in creation

Term often “constitutes a verbal act of **worship** or **praise**”

הַשָּׁמַיִם Verse 1

the heavens

כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים  
the glory of God  
יָדָיו וּמַעֲשָׂה  
the works of his hands

מַסְפָּרִים  
are recounting

participles

מְגִיד  
is declaring

Pictures sky as **attesting to** or **pointing to** what God has made

2 functions:

**Characteristic action**  
**Continuous action**

הַרְקִיעַ

the expanse



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

## Characteristic Action

### ► Translation:

The heavens **recount** God's glory

The expanse **declares** his handiwork

### ► Emphasis:

**Subjects** over action

### ► Example:

My horse **eats** hay

### ► Nuance:

Action occurs **often** or **repetitively**, but not all the time

## Continuous Action

### ► Translation:

The heavens **are recounting** God's glory

The expanse **is declaring** his handiwork

### ► Emphasis:

**Action** over subject

### ► Example:

Water **is running** through my yard

### ► Nuance:

Action is happening continuously—all the time



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

David likes to introduce **questions** that he will later **answer**

This is why we call it a **wisdom** psalm... it makes us **think!**

So how do we decide?

כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים

the glory of God

יָדָיו וּמַעֲשָׂה

the works of his hands

מַסְפָּרִים

are recounting

participles

מְגִיד

is declaring

הַשָּׁמַיִם Verse 1

the heavens

2 functions:

**Characteristic action**  
**Continuous action**

הָרָקִיעַ

the expanse





# GENERAL REVELATION

PART 1: NATURAL REVELATION



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation



- ▶ Line 2 progresses the thought of line 1
- ▶ Prepositional Phrases:  
Each individual phrase shows **progression**  
Parallelism shows **constancy**

**Day + Night = All the time**

(cf. Psalm 1:2)



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation



- ▶ Here we get the answer to our question about the participles in verse 1
- ▶ They indicate **continuous** action

**Day + Night = All the time**

(cf. Psalm 1:2)



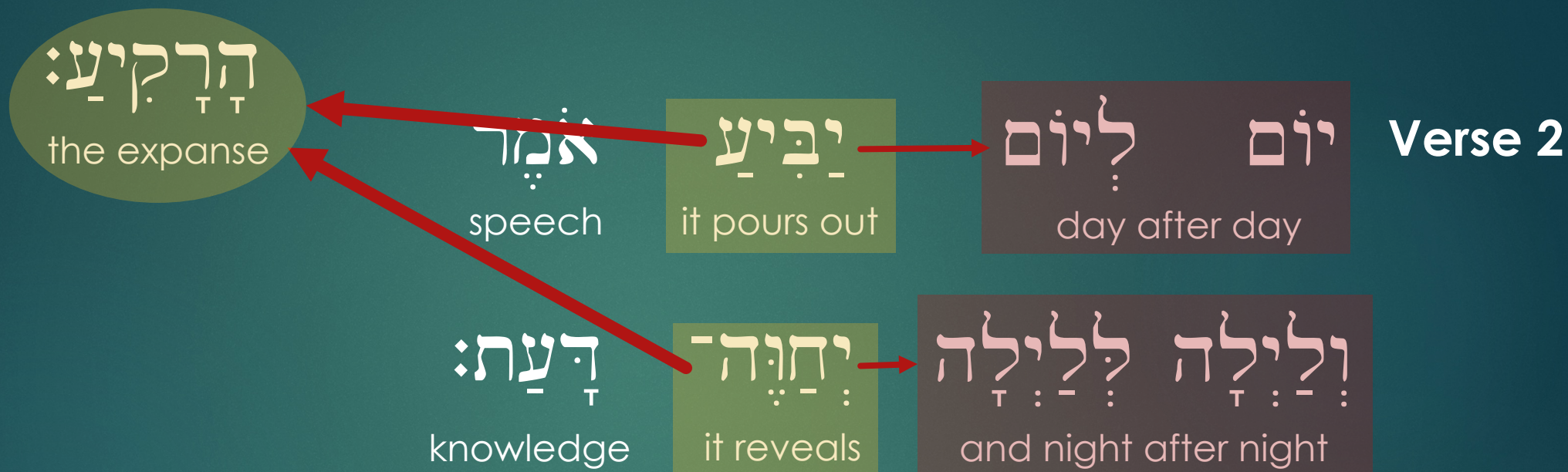
# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation



- ▶ Both verbs are masculine singular
- ▶ But what is the **subject** of the action?
- ▶ Some translations identify the **prepositional phrases** as the subject
- ▶ Cf. NASB, ESV, NRSV, NKJV



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation



- ▶ But these function better as temporal adverbial phrases—they **describe** the action of the verbs in terms of **time**
- ▶ A better option = “the expanse” (v. 1)
- ▶ Cf. NIV, NLT, HCSB



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

הַרְקִיעַ:

the expanse

אָמַר

speech

יִבֹּיֵעַ

it pours out

לְיוֹם

יוֹם

day after day

Verse 2

דַּעַת:

knowledge

יְחַוֶּה-

it reveals

וּלְלַיְלָה לְלַיְלָה

and night after night

- “Pour out” literally means to bubble or gush out

“The image is literally of a **gushing spring** that copiously **pours forth** the sweet, refreshing waters of revelation.”

- James Montgomery Boice

- “Speech” literally means “a word”



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

הַרְקִיעַ:

the expanse

אָמַר

speech

יִבִּיעַ

it pours out

לְיוֹם

יוֹם

day after day

Verse 2

דַּעַת:

knowledge

יְחַוֶּה-

it reveals

וּלְלַיְלָה לְלַיְלָה

and night after night

- ▶ As the parallelism develops, we see that as the expanse “gushes out a word”

...it actually **“reveals knowledge”**

- ▶ The “speech” is **clear** and **understandable** resulting in **“knowledge”**



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

“The speech of the heavens and firmament, of day and night, has a **twofold thrust**: it is addressed to **God as praise**, yet it is also addressed to mankind as a **revealer of ‘knowledge’** (v. 3). That is, as mankind reflects upon the vast expanse of heaven, with its light by day and its intimation of a greater universe by night, that reflection may open up an **awareness** and **knowledge** of God, the Creator, who by his hands created a glory beyond the comprehension of the human mind.”

- Peter Craigie



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ Thus as we conclude verse 2, we discover a **key characteristic** of general revelation...

...it is **continuous**

- ▶ It is **always** there
- ▶ Neither **night** or **day** obscure
- ▶ Rather, they bring it to **absolute clarity**



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

repetition

וְאֵין דְּבָרִים  
and there are no words

“knowledge”  
from v. 2

וְאֵין אֵמָר  
there is no speech

Verse 3

- ▶ We are introduced to another interpretive question
- ▶ We just read that the expanse “gushes out speech” and “reveals knowledge”
- ▶ He then seems to contradict that very assertion
- ▶ These terms are **particles of negation**—they indicate **non-existence**

How can speech gush out if there is **no speech**?

How can knowledge be revealed if there are **no words**?



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

וְאֵין דְּבָרִים  
and there are no words

אֵין-אִמֹּר Verse 3  
there is no speech

הַשָּׁמַיִם  
the heavens

קוֹלָם:  
their voice

נִשְׁמָע  
being heard

בְּלִי  
without

- ▶ David **continues** the paradox with **another** enigmatic statement
- ▶ “Their” is a masculine plural suffix which refers back to “the heavens” (v. 1)
- ▶ The ambiguity of the verse is intentional...it slows us down and makes us think
- ▶ Thus we are confronted with the paradox of “inaudible noise”



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

הַשָּׁמַיִם  
the heavens

וְאֵין דְּבָרִים  
and there are no words

אֵין-אִמֵּר Verse 3  
there is no speech

קוֹלָם:  
their voice

נִשְׁמָע  
being heard

בְּלִי  
without

“On the one hand, there is no speech, no noise, from a literal or acoustic perspective (v. 4); on the other hand, there is a voice that penetrates to the furthest corners of the earth.”

- Peter Craigie



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

וְאֵין דְּבָרִים      אֵין-אִמֶּר      Verse 3  
and there are no words      there is no speech

הַשָּׁמַיִם      קוֹלָם:      נִשְׁמָע      בְּלִי  
the heavens      their voice      being heard      without

- ▶ Craigie and others understand the verse to refer to a kind of “speech” which is inaudible—a speech which is not literally heard but still present
- ▶ We see this perspective reflected in several translations (NASB, HCSB, NET)
- ▶ On the other hand, other translations and commentators have noted the immediate context may give us a better clue of what David intends here
- ▶ NJPS: “There is no words, **whose sound goes unheard**”
- ▶ NIV: “There is no speech or language **where their voice is unheard**”



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation



“The NIV **shifts** the nuance and connects verse 3 with what **follows**. Rather than emphasizing the **silence** of communication, the phrase now becomes an indication of the **all-pervasive extent** of the testimony.”

- Gerald Wilson



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

וְאֵין דְּבָרִים  
and there are no words

אֵין-אִמֵּר Verse 3  
there is no speech

נִשְׁמָע קוֹלָם:  
their voice being heard

בְּלִי  
without

- ▶ Part of the difficulty lies in the use of this special particle
- ▶ Usually it indicates negation, meaning “without”
- ▶ But in Isaiah 28:8, it is used to mean “so that there is no place untouched,” meaning “in every corner”
- ▶ Thus, the particle is wide enough that it can mean...
  - ▶ “their voice is unheard” – meaning **no** sound is actually heard
  - ▶ “**where** their voice is unheard” – meaning their voice is heard everywhere in every language



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

וְאֵין דְּבָרִים  
and there are no words

אֵין-אִמֵּר Verse 3  
there is no speech

בְּלִי נִשְׁמָע קוֹלָם:  
their voice being heard without

- ▶ So which is it?
- ▶ Is David emphasizing a kind of speech which isn't actual speech, yet still there?
- ▶ Or is he saying that there is nowhere and no language where their speech does not reach?
- ▶ How do we decide?



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

## Synonymous Parallelism

קִנּוּם  
their line  
מִלִּיהֶם  
their utterance

יֵצֵא  
goes out  
(ellipsis)

בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ  
in all the earth  
וּבְקֵצָהּ תֵּבֵל  
and unto the end of the world

Verse 4

- ▶ The first two lines are written with **synonymous parallelism**
- ▶ Both lines open with **spacial** phrases
- ▶ They **answer** the question from verse 3
- ▶ Now we see that David isn't talking about **inaudible noise**
- ▶ He's speaking of the **universality** of the message
- ▶ There is **nowhere** that their voice goes unheard and there is **no one** who does not receive the message



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

**Synonymous  
Parallelism**

קָוָם  
their line  
מִלִּיהֶם  
their utterance

יֵצֵא  
goes out  
(ellipsis)

בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ  
in all the earth  
וּבְקֵצָהּ תֵּבֶל  
and unto the end of the world

**Verse 4**

► It transcends all...

**national**  
**ethnic**  
**social**  
and **language** barriers



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation



- ▶ “Their” refers back to “the heavens”
- ▶ “Line” literally refers to a “measuring line” (cf. Zech 1:16)
- ▶ But here it is synonymous with “utterance”
- ▶ This has led some commentators to suggest that we need to amend the text since the idea of a “measuring line” makes no sense here



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation



- ▶ But this isn't necessary!
- ▶ We see a similar use of the term in Isaiah 28:13  
“Order on order, order on order, **line** on **line**,  
**line** on **line**, a little here, a little there.”
- ▶ Here, the term is used with reference to lines of **text** from which one slowly learns



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

קִנּוּם

their line

מְלִיָּהֶם

their utterance

יֵצֵא

goes out

(ellipsis)

בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ

in all the earth

וּבְקֵצָה תֵּבֶל

and unto the end of the world

Verse 4

- “Their utterance” literally speaks of a vocalization of the mouth



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ Thus as we conclude verse 3, we discover another **key characteristic** of general revelation...

...it is **universal**

- ▶ It is **everywhere**
- ▶ There is **nowhere** that it does not reach
- ▶ There is **no one** that does not hear it
- ▶ There is **no language** in which it is not communicated



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ Yet a question may remain in the mind of a discerning reader
- ▶ Sure, natural revelation may occur **continuously** and **universally**
- ▶ But what about someone **incapable** of observing the heavens?
- ▶ What about the **blind** person
- ▶ What about a slave working in the **salt mines**?
- ▶ Are they somehow **exempt** from the knowledge revealed?
- ▶ We're left with another question to ponder...



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**

in them

he placed a tent

for the sun

מִחִפְתּוֹ

from his chamber

יֵצֵא

going out

כַּחֲתָן

like a bridegroom

וְהוּא

and it

אַרְחַ:

a course

לָרוֹץ

to run

כַּגִּבּוֹר

like a strongman

יִשְׂשֵׁ

it rejoices

- ▶ Thus far, David has discussed natural revelation in terms of its overall characteristics
- ▶ Now he drives home his assertions with a concrete illustration—**the sun**
- ▶ As the principle light in the natural world, it is a perfect means of illustrating his overall point of God's glory revealed in nature



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

TRICOLON		בָּהֶם׃	שֵׁם-אֱהֹל	לְשֶׁמֶשׁ	Verse 4
		in them	he placed a tent	for the sun	
	מִחִפְתּוֹ	יֵצֵא	כַּחַתָּן	וְהוּא	Verse 5
	from his chamber	going out	like a bridegroom	and it	
	אֶרֶח׃	לָרוֹץ	כַּגִּבּוֹר	יִשְׂשֵׁ	
	a course	to run	like a strongman	it rejoices	

- ▶ The most significant change that David introduces is a shift to a **tricolon** stanza
- ▶ Up to this point, each stanza has comprised 2 lines—**bicolons**
- ▶ But as he begins to wrap up his discussion of natural revelation, he employs 3-line stanzas--**tricolons**
- ▶ He does this again when he closes out his discussion of special revelation in vv. 13-14



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

TRICOLON		בָּהֶם׃	נִשְׂמְ-אֵל	לְשֶׁמֶשׁ	Verse 4
		in them	he placed a tent	for the sun	
	מִחִפּתּוֹ	יֵצֵא	כַּחַתָּן	וְהוּא	Verse 5
	from his chamber	going out	like a bridegroom	and it	
	אֶרֶח׃	לָרוֹץ	כַּגִּבּוֹר	יִשְׂשֵׁ	
	a course	to run	like a strongman	it rejoices	

- What we find out is that David strategically employs **tricolons** as a way of dividing the psalm into major sections



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation



- ▶ He opens his illustration with its principle actor—**the sun**
- ▶ But the sun is simply a **beneficiary** of the creator God
- ▶ God placed “a tent” for the sun “in them”—meaning **the heavens**



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

	בָּהֶם׃ in them	נִשְׁמַח אֱלֹהִים he placed a tent	לְשֶׁמֶשׁ for the sun	Verse 4
מִחֻפְתּוֹ from his chamber	יֵצֵא going out	כַּחֲתָן like a bridegroom	וְהוּא and it	Verse 5
אֶרֶץ׃ a course	לָרוֹץ to run	כַּגִּבּוֹר like a strongman	יִשְׂשֹׁן it rejoices	

- ▶ “Tent” refers to a shelter where one retreats
- ▶ It poetically refers to the sun’s place of rest beneath the horizon at night
- ▶ The sun is personified as one who enters its “tent” in the evening only to raise again and resume its tasks in the morning



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחֻפְתּוֹ      יֵצֵא      כַּחֲתָן      וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
from his chamber      going out      like a bridegroom      and it  
אֶרֶץ:      לָרוֹץ      כַּגִּבּוֹר      יִשְׂשֵׁ      **Verse 5**  
a course      to run      like a strongman      it rejoices

- Next, the psalmist moves to describe the sun as it rises each morning

“The psalmist paints an unforgettable scene of the horizon **exploding** in **vigorous, radiant sunrise**.”

- Konrad Schaefer



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לְשֶׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחֻפְתּוֹ      יֵצֵא      כַּחַתָּן      וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
from his chamber      going out      like a bridegroom      and it  
אֶרֶץ:      לָרוֹץ      כַּגִּבּוֹר      יִשְׂשֵׁן  
a course      to run      like a strongman      it rejoices

- ▶ Next, the psalmist moves to describe the sun as it rises each morning
- ▶ He does this by comparing the sun's daily emergence with two common and familiar scenes



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחַפְּתוֹ  
from his chamber

יֵצֵא  
going out

כַּחֲתָן  
like a bridegroom

וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
and it

אַרְחַ:  
a course

לָרוֹץ  
to run

כַּגִּבּוֹר  
like a strongman

יִשְׂשֵׁ  
it rejoices

- ▶ First comparison: **a bridegroom going out from his chamber**
- ▶ “Chamber” = *huppah*
- ▶ Canopy used in traditional Jewish wedding ceremonies
- ▶ Symbolizes the house which the couple will build



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לְשֶׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחִפְתּוֹ  
from his chamber

יֵצֵא  
going out

כַּחֲתָן  
like a bridegroom

וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
and it

אַרְחָ:  
a course

לָרוֹץ  
to run

כַּגִּבּוֹר  
like a strongman

יִשְׂשִׁי  
it rejoices

- ▶ Only found 2 other times in OT
- ▶ Isaiah 4:5 – refers to cloud overshadowing God's glory in eschatological Zion
- ▶ Joel 2:16 – refers to bridal chamber
- ▶ The context in Joel indicates it is the place where the marriage is consummated



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחִפְתּוֹ  
from his chamber

יֵצֵא  
going out

כַּחֲתָן  
like a bridegroom

וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
and it

אַרְחָ:  
a course

לָרוֹץ  
to run

כַּגִּבּוֹר  
like a strongman

יִשְׂשֵׁי  
it rejoices

“Originally referring to a special **nuptial tent**, it later came to designate the **bridal bed**, richly adorned with canopy and curtains.”

- Irvin Busenitz



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחִפְתּוֹ      יֵצֵא      כַּחֲתָן      וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
from his chamber      going out      like a bridegroom      and it  
אֶרֶץ:      לָרוֹץ      כַּגִּבּוֹר      יִשְׂשׁ  
a course      to run      like a strongman      it rejoices

- ▶ But the real comparison is not the bridegroom or his chamber, but on the **way he goes out of it**.
- ▶ The verb is a participle—denotes **characteristic** action
- ▶ The sun emerges from its heavenly “tent” with the kind of exuberant emergence expected of a bridegroom as he exists the marriage chamber the morning after the consummation



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

Same term as in v. 4:  
“their line **goes out**”

בֵּהֶם:

in them

נִשְׁמָה־לֵּה

he placed a tent

לְשֶׁמֶשׁ

for the sun

Verse 4

מִחִפְתּוֹ

from his chamber

יֵצֵא

going out

כַּחֲתָן

like a bridegroom

וְהוּא

and it

Verse 5

אַרְחִי

a course

לָרוֹץ

to run

כַּגִּבּוֹר

like a strongman

יִשְׂשֵׁי

it rejoices

- ▶ Note the repetition of “going out”
- ▶ David is connecting the **universality** of nature’s message with the **rising** of the sun each morning



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֵׁם-אֵהָל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחִפְתּוֹ      יֵצֵא      כַּחֲתָן      וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
from his chamber      going out      like a bridegroom      and it

אֶרֶץ:      לָרוֹץ      כַּגִּבּוֹר      יִשֵּׁשׁ  
a course      to run      like a strongman      it rejoices

- ▶ Second comparison: **rejoicing like a strong man to run a course**
- ▶ “Strong man” = strong, virile young man, often skilled in athletics and combat
- ▶ David himself is described as a *gibor* (1 Sam 16:18)
- ▶ He was also accompanied by them during his kingship (2 Sam 23:8f)



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחֻפְתּוֹ      יֵצֵא      כַּחַתָּן      וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
from his chamber      going out      like a bridegroom      and it

אֶרֶץ:      לָרוֹץ      כַּגִּבּוֹר      יִשְׂשֵׁן  
a course      to run      like a strongman      it rejoices

- ▶ “Running a course” = portrays the sun’s course across the sky
- ▶ Key term of comparison = “rejoices”
- ▶ It describes the sun as **rejoicing** to accomplish its God-given task
- ▶ A strongman **rejoices** to run a course...he’s doing what he **loves** and what he’s **made for**



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

בָּהֶם:      שֶׁם-אֹהֶל      לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ      **Verse 4**  
in them      he placed a tent      for the sun

מִחֻפְתּוֹ      יֵצֵא      כַּחֲתָן      וְהוּא      **Verse 5**  
from his chamber      going out      like a bridegroom      and it

אֶרֶץ:      לָרוֹץ      כַּגִּבּוֹר      יִשְׂשֵׁן  
a course      to run      like a strongman      it rejoices

- ▶ In the same way, the sun **rejoices** to rise each morning
- ▶ It finds absolute delight in fulfilling its **God-ordained function**
- ▶ The sun's **explosive entrance** each morning demonstrates the same kind of **virile strength** and **joyful delight** as a strongman has when he is running a course
- ▶ Both do **exactly** what God has **intended** for them



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ The chief operating concepts behind both comparisons is

***exuberant joy* and *obedience*.**

- ▶ The enthusiastic joy experienced and displayed by a newly-married bridegroom perfectly captures the glorious light that explodes across the eastern horizon as the sun first appears each morning
- ▶ The delight and enthusiasm expressed by a mighty man as he runs a course and exercises his physical strength perfectly describes the sun's enthusiasm to run *its* daily course just as God intended for it
- ▶ The sun is thus pictured as “an **exuberant, enthusiastic, and obedient** servant of the **Creator**.”  
- William Barrick



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

Verse 6

TRICOLON

מוֹצֵאוֹ

its going out

וּתְקוּפָתוֹ

and its circuit

מִמְּקֵצָה הַשָּׁמַיִם

from one the end of the heavens

עַל-קְצוֹתָם

unto their ends

מִחֲמַתּוֹ:

from its heat

נִסְתָּר

hidden

וְאֵין

and there is nothing



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

Focus on central  
elements

מוֹצֵאוֹ  
its going out  
וּתְקוּפָתוֹ  
and its circuit

מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם Verse 6

from one the end of the heavens

עַל-קְצוֹתָם  
unto their ends

- Note the **chiastic** arrangement



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

Same word as bridegroom  
“going out” from chamber (v. 5)

מוֹצֵאוֹ

its going out

The strongman's  
“course” (v. 5)

וּתְקוּפָתוֹ

and its circuit

Sun's “tent” (v. 4c)

מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם

from one the end of the heavens

Verse 6

עַל-קְצוֹתָם

unto their ends

Same word as in v. 4:  
“their utterance to the  
**end** of the world”

- ▶ David applies the previous comparisons directly to the sun's daily actions
- ▶ “It's going out” = sunrise
- ▶ “from one end of the heavens” = far east horizon
- ▶ “It's circuit” = its trajectory across the sky
- ▶ “unto their ends” = far western horizon



# Psalms 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ Closes the tricolon with a final statement
- ▶ This line clarifies exactly what he intends to communicate
- ▶ This is the answer to our question, “Is anyone exempt from the message?”
- ▶ Even the blind man can feel the sun’s heat
- ▶ Even the slave in the mines will feel it at times

מוֹצֵאוֹ  
its going out  
וּתְקוּפָתוֹ  
and its circuit

מִחֲמַתּוֹ  
from its heat  
נִסְתָּר  
hidden

מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם Verse 6

from one the end of the heavens

עַל-קְצוֹתָם  
unto their ends

וְאֵין  
and there is nothing

Takes us back to v. 4:  
“There is no voice/words



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ Nature's message expands **past** the visual realm
- ▶ The message is **seen**
- ▶ The message is **felt**
- ▶ In either case, it testifies to the God who created

מוֹצֵאוֹ

its going out

וּתְקוּפָתוֹ

and its circuit

מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם Verse 6

from one the end of the heavens

עַל-קְצוֹתָם

unto their ends

מִחֲמַתּוֹ

from its heat

נִסְתָּר

hidden

וְאֵין

and there is nothing

Takes us back to v. 4:  
"There is no voice/words"



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ So we've seen that natural revelation is...**continuous  
universal**
- ▶ There's one more characteristic we see in Psalm 19
- ▶ Even a cursory reading of the psalm reveals a gross imbalance in the references to God between the two major sections



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

כְּבוֹד-אֱלֹהִים

the glory of God

מְסַפְּרִים

are recounting

הַשָּׁמַיִם

the heavens

Verse 1

הַרְקִיעַ

the expanse

מְגִיד

is declaring

וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו

the works of his hands

- ▶ In vv. 1-6, only a **single reference** to God occurs
- ▶ It is the most **generic** term for **deity** in the Hebrew language
- ▶ It is used for both the **true** God and **false** gods
- ▶ It only occurs **here** in Psalm 19



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ But once David transitions to the topic of special revelation (vv. 7-14), his terminology **shifts**
- ▶ 7x the psalmist employs the **covenant** name “Yahweh” (יהוה)
- ▶ Meanwhile, the term “God” (אל) **doesn’t** appear at all
- ▶ The shift is **critical** to demonstrate a key distinction between **general** and **special** revelation
- ▶ While natural revelation provides **continuous, universal knowledge** of God’s glory, it is...

...**limited**



# Psalm 19 and Natural Revelation

- ▶ Special revelation, on the other hand, is very **specific**
- ▶ What it provides that natural revelation lacks is a **personal** knowledge of the **covenant** God
- ▶ Special revelation gives **saving** knowledge of the **covenant God**
- ▶ Natural revelation gives **moral** knowledge of the **creator God**
- ▶ In other words...

Natural revelation provides enough knowledge to **damn...**  
...but not enough to **save.**