
Psalm 19

Psalm 19:1–14

God's Works and God's Word

Outline of Chapter 19:

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vv. 1–6	God's creation declares His glory
vv. 7–11	God's Word is perfect
vv. 12–14	A plea for God to accept the psalmist

Charts and Maps

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Introduction: In order to sprinkle the individual psalms throughout the Old Testament, I have placed Psalm 19 at the end of the book of Exodus. My reason here is that David often exalted the Word of God. The reason that David was so beloved of God was his constant devotion to His Word. Most pastors and Christians, at best, give verbal ascent to God's Word but do not realize its importance and they do not delve into it as they should. The *good* ones might set up a reading schedule or they might attend a Bible study wherein each person contributes what the passage in question meant to them. That's exactly how I ought to run my math class. I ought to write a problem on the board and then ask each individual to give their personal opinion of it, or ask them to tell me how they feel about that problem and whatever new symbols might be up there. The best I could hope for is that someone who had studied it would do my job for me and teach how to do it. As I have said many times, God's Word is not for amateurs. If you want to read your own Bible—fine. If you want to set up some schedule of self study—fine. However, you will never, ever—and I mean **never**—get out of God's Word even one-tenth of what is there by some personal study session or some study with a group of other ignorant believers. God from very early on in the Church Age decreed that there would be *pastor-teachers* and that they would dedicate their lives to studying and teaching the Word of God. Now I am fully aware of the sad state of affairs of the church today. I know that you could walk into 50 random churches on 50 random Sundays of any given year and never once hear God's Word carefully and properly exegeted. You usually get two approaches: the pastor has his sermon and periodically reaches into the sky, pulls out a Bible verse, reads it; and then goes on with his sermon. The second approach is that a pastor might start out with a Bible verse or a Bible passage and then let that *inspire* him to some sermon about crap. In cults and in churches which verge on being cultic, the pastor might make a theological point and back it up by quoting passages out of context (we call that *proof-texting*). All of these approaches are completely and totally wrong. There are a few great pastors in history who would start on v. 1 of chapter 1 of some book and teach it carefully from beginning to end. Now and again, the same pastor will need to cover a particular topic or subject, which he would, quoting verses in context which are pertinent. The two I always recommend are (1) J. Vernon McGee, who is on the radio several times a day on several stations in almost any area; and (2) R. B. Thieme, Jr., who has a tape ministry and whose tapes from the 60's and 70's are outstanding. Both teach God's Word verse by verse, stopping periodically to teach a doctrine or a category of doctrine. Thieme, who has developed an original theological vocabulary based upon a foundation of orthodox teaching, calls this ICE teaching. Isagogics (the study of the history and customs pertaining to any passage of Scripture); Categories (the various doctrines of God's Word broken down into separate topics); and Exegesis, (the verse-by-verse teaching of the

Word of God). Apart from these two, there are maybe a handful of churches throughout the United States where God's Word is carefully dealt with.

Since I wrote this, back in the year 2000, I have discovered nearly a half-dozen pastors who have wonderful ministries where the Word of God is taught carefully word-by-word, verse-by-verse, as well as by categories and taking into account the isagogics.

This psalm presents the character and essence of God as reveal first by nature and then by His Word. What nature tells us about God is important, but limited. His Word, however, is sufficient. We have a purpose and a place on this earth and careful observation of God's creation does not give us the information which we need in order to ascertain that purpose. God's Word, however, does. The importance and sufficiency of Scripture is clearly presented near the end of this psalm.

This psalm can be easily divided into three parts. Part one deals with that nature reveals God. His great power and wisdom is revealed by all that we see. The second part of this psalm deals with God's revelation to man—His Word, His laws, His precepts. After salvation, nothing is more important to us than what God has revealed to us. At the end, David mentions his known and unknown sins, yet declares that he will be acquitted of great transgression. The basis of his redemption, as is the basis of ours, is Jesus Christ, our Rock and our Redeemer, so-called at the end of this psalm. All three parts of this psalm are relatively dissimilar from one another. Some have even thought that there were two psalms here mistakenly combined into one psalm (this disparity of material will be explained by the time we finish this psalm).

Barnes divides the psalm into the same three parts, calling the first, *The revelation of God in his works*; the second, *The higher and more glorious revelation of himself in his law*; and the third, *The bearing of these truths on the present character and conduct of the author, and consequently their adaptedness to produce the same effect on others*¹.

Bullinger's Division of Psalm 19: Bullinger also divides this psalm up, but in a different way than most. He examines it more from a literary point of view.

Psalm 19

A | vv. 1–4 The Heavens

B | vv. 4–6 The sun *in them* םִהֶֿבָּ = bâhem, which means *in them* (v. 5)

A | vv. 7–10 The Scriptures

B | vv. 11–14 Your servant *in them* םִהֶֿבָּ = bâhem, which means *in them* (v. 12)²

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David was the author of this psalm, as the inscription tells us (we will discuss that further when we get to it). One of the very goofy theories of Old Testament authorship is that there were a variety of writers for the books of Moses.³ Even entire books are divided into pieces, and that, in part, is determined by the name for God that is used in that portion of the book. For instance, it is suggested that one writer wrote portions of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers and used the name *Elohim* for God. Another writer did other portions of these same books, but he used *Jehovah* for the name of God. Then another writer came along, wove these two documents together, adding some of his own thoughts, and the result is the Pentateuch. And very serious and academically-oriented theologians hold to this theory of authorship.⁴ In this psalm, in the first half, we find the name of *Elohim* used with respect to the creation of all things; in the second half of this psalm, we find the name *Jehovah* used seven times—however, none of these scholars suggest that the *Elohimist* wrote the first half of this psalm and that the *Jehovist* wrote the second

¹ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 166.

² *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 366.

³ There were for the book of Genesis, but we covered that in our study of Genesis.

⁴ In fact, many, if not most, seminaries teach this as truth.

half. They would not suggest such a thing because (1) it would be stupid; and, (2) it would not advance their theory, because it is a stupid suggestion.⁵ However, the exact arguments used to promote the JEPD theory could be applied to this little psalm. The vocabulary of the first half and the second half are different; there are different names used for God in each half; and the writer expresses completely different thoughts in the first and second halves of this psalm. However, there is no real reason to assume that anyone other than David wrote the entirety of this psalm. I only mention this to indicate that the general JEPD arguments are only applied as it benefits them (that is, when said theory weakens the authority of the Word of God), but they do not apply these arguments uniformly and consistently to all Scripture. Applying their theory here would make them appear silly and weaken the arguments applied elsewhere. Therefore, psalms like this are conveniently ignored⁶.

David held God's Word in the highest esteem; he studied it, he wrote it, and he was instructed in it. In this psalm, among other things, he exalts God's Word. Since we have just finished a book wherein the bulk of it was direct quotation from God (something which Moses very, very carefully does in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers), I thought this to be the ideal time to stop and examine this particular psalm.

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Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

[To an enduring one \(a melody to David\):](#)

Psalm
19 inscription

[For the director \[of music\] \(a psalm of David\):](#)

[To the choirmaster \(a psalm by David\):](#)

Although this is an inscription, it is actually a part of the Hebrew text. In fact, in the Hebrew, it is v. 1.

This psalm is written to the Piel participle of *nâtsach* (נָצַח) [pronounced *naw-TZAHKH*], a word which means *pre-eminent, enduring*. It refers to a person in a supervisory position (1Chron. 23:4 2Chron. 2:2, 18 34:13). Often, this position is related to music (1Chron. 15:21 Psalm 4:inscription 5:inscription 6:inscription etc.). This is why we have such varied renderings as *overseer* (Young), *the music leader* (CEV), *choir director* (NASB, NLT), *choirmaster* (Owens), *leader* (NRSV, NEB, NAB) and *chief musician* (Rotherham). In the psalms, this is reasonably rendered as *the director [of music]*. Strong's #5329 BDB #663. The particular inscription is found at the beginning of no fewer than 53 psalms. My thinking is that this was a title, not unlike *the director of public arts*; and that he was the receptor for the bulk of the psalms perhaps over a particular time period. It would be reasonable to suppose that he may have written the music to accompany the psalm. He certainly was the person who did the arranging of the music and the performing of the psalm.

This is followed by the masculine singular noun *mizēmōwr* (מִזְמוֹר) [pronounced *mizê-MOHR*], which means *melody, song, poem, psalm*. For a long time, I had assumed that there was one word for *psalm*; however, there are three; this is one of them which is found a little less than a third of the time. Strong's #4210 BDB #274.

Generally speaking, the lamed prefixed preposition means *to* or *for* and it is the same preposition as found prior to *nâtsach* above. The only difference is the intervening word *mizēmōwr*. In the psalm inscriptions, the lamed preposition appears to mean *of, belonging to, by*. Quite simply put, the same preposition is used in two fairly different ways in the same inscription. This makes David the author. However, we have no idea as to when he composed this psalm. There is no internal or external evidence or mention of any particular incident which would help us to place this psalm into a particular time frame.

⁵ Now, interestingly enough, some orthodox theologians have actually suggested that this is actually two separate psalms written at two separate times and then united. Rosenmüller and De Wette both took this position, although Rosenmüller later retracted his opinion.

⁶ Much of what I write is not entirely original. J. Vernon McGee made this point, albeit in a more abbreviated form, in *Psalms Volume 1; Thru the Bible Books*, ©1977, p. 100.

Barnes: *If a conjecture may be allowed, it would seem not improbably that it was composed in those calm periods of his history when he led a shepherd-life; when he had abundant time to contemplate the movements of the heavenly bodies by day and by night, and to meditate on them in contrast with the higher truths which God had made known in his law.*⁷

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God's Creation Declares His Glory

The heavens are recounting a glory of God and work of His hands make known the atmosphere.

Psalm
19:1

The heavens [continually] recount the glory of God and the [earth's] atmosphere declares the works of His hands.

The heavens themselves declare to us the glory of God and the earth's atmosphere makes clear to us His handiwork.

The heavens is actually a metonym for all that is in the heavens—the stars, the sun and the moon—these things reveal God's incredible glory. The verb used is the Piel participle of *çâphar* (ç ֶפֶר) [pronounced *saw-FAHR*], which means, in the Piel, *to recount, to enumerate, to tell with praise, to celebrate, to recall, to declare, to narrate* (Ex. 9:16 Judges 6:13 Job 15:17). *Recount* is a good Piel rendering, as it means *to tell or declare something from memory, to declare the facts or particulars of, to tell in a specific order*. Strong's #5608 BDB #707. This is exactly the correct verb to be used here. When we look at the heavens, they do not simply *tell* us of God's glory; they *recount from memory, they tell in a specific order, they declare the facts and particulars of*.

Barnes: *The idea is, that these convey e the mind a true impression of the greatness and majesty of God. The reference here is to these heavens as they appear to the naked eye, and as they are observed by all men. It may be added that the impression is far more solemn and grand when we take into the estimate the disclosures of the modern astronomy, ans when we look at the heavens, not merely by the naked eye, but through the revelations of the telescope.*⁸

The Bible always presents the beauty and complexity of nature as a visible proof of God's glory. Nowhere in Scripture is nature ever viewed for its own beauty alone apart from God.⁹ [O Jehovah, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth; Who has placed Your splendor above the heavens](#) (Psalm 8:1).

Unknown to the psalmist, when we look into the sky, it is like looking into the past. Because of the speed of light and the distance of the stars, we are viewing these stars as they were perhaps a million years ago. We see almost a history which we cannot yet fully appreciate, of God's creation. One of the theories—and I do not know whether I subscribe to it or not—is that the constellations, when taken in order, give the story of the gospel (I first heard this as *The Gospel of the Stars* by Duane Spencer). In any case, it is the perfect verb to use with what the heavens.

The name used for God here is *Elohim*. This is the common masculine plural noun used for both *God, the Creator of the Universe* and for the false *gods* worshipped by the heathen nations. We use this word when dealing with the creation and restoration of the earth, as all three members of the Trinity took part in these events. For instance, Jesus is said to be the Creator of the Universe in Isa. 40:28 John 1:1–3, 14 Col. 1:16. However, the Holy Spirit is clearly spoken of with regards to warming the earth in Gen. 1:2. And we have the conference of the Trinity in creating man in Gen. 1:26. Therefore, with respect to the creation of the universe and the restoration of the earth, we should expect to find the plural title of God (*Elohim*) as opposed to the singular name of God (*Jehovah*).

⁷ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 166.

⁸ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 167.

⁹ Paraphrased from *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 727.

The next noun is, in the KJV, is the *firmament*. Even after being a believer for 25 years, I don't know what the hell that is. The NRSV suggests *dome*. The word is *râqîya* (רָקִיעַ) [pronounced *raw-KEE-ah*], which means *extended surface, expanse*. It is that which has been beat down and spread out above the earth and refers to the earth's atmosphere. The related verb is used to overlay something with a thin plate. The precision of this term is amazing. The earth itself is 3960 miles in radius. 99% of the atmosphere is within 100 miles of the surface of the earth.¹⁰ Now, if you go just a couple miles straight up, even then the atmosphere provides significantly less oxygen than we have become accustomed to needing. I, with the rudimentary understanding of the earth and its atmosphere, if I had to choose the best noun from the Hebrew for this word, I would have chosen *râqîya* myself. It is amazing that the writer of Genesis and the psalmist David, not having the resources and background that I have, chose the same word. Strong's #7549 BDB #956.

The verb is the Hiphil participle of *nâgad* (נָגַד) [pronounced *naw-GAHD*], which means *to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that*. This verb is found only in the Hiphil and the Hophal. Strong's #5046 BDB #616. Now, had I not had a rudimentary understanding of the earth's atmosphere, just what it is, just exactly what it is composed of, etc., I would have little or no understanding of the second portion of this verse. The fact that I walk around in what appears to be this clear emptiness is a testimony to God's great work. God has designed just the right proportion of gases. We could not live in the atmosphere of any of the other planets. Obviously their temperatures are way out of our range of comfort; but, even more importantly, their atmospheres would kill us. Not so with the atmosphere of the earth. Apart from our corruption of it, it provides us with exactly what we need. That God designed the atmosphere of the earth as He did makes conspicuous the work of His hands. Isaiah gives a similar description of the heavens in Isa. 40:22–23: *It is He Who is enthroned above the sphere of the earth, and its inhabitants are as grasshoppers. [It is He] Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in*. For the language of poetry, that is a fairly apt description of the atmosphere.

Again, modern science, if anything, gives us a much greater appreciation for the creation of God. Ancient man gave little thought to the atmosphere around him—its contents and its design. However, science has examined our atmosphere and found it to be perfectly suited for man. Now, certainly, some evolutionists teach that man became adapted to the atmosphere, rather than the atmosphere being created for man; however, conversely, the environmentalists do not think that we should *adapt* to the atmosphere as it is altered by man's pollution. The environmentalist, 99% of whom are evolutionists, would like the atmosphere of the earth to more closely approximate the atmosphere as God originally created it. Now that we have had a century or more of pollution, we don't find man adapting and thriving on polluted air; we find a great deal of asthma and allergies and other respiratory disorders. We don't even find those one or two mutations in the lungs, wherein some people change their lungs in birth to better enjoy pollution.

Paul, like the psalmist, also makes the argument that you can recognize God in His creation. *For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes [or, essence], His eternal power and divine nature, having been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For, in fact, when they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened* (Rom. 1:20–21).

Now, had you known nothing of the Bible and the history of the Jewish people, these documents would be quite interesting, particularly from a sociological standpoint. God is glorified and praised because of His creation; but His creation is not worshiped or deified anywhere in Scripture. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Moses, in Deut. 4:19, said: *“And do not lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars—all the host of heaven—and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which Jehovah your God has allotted to all of the peoples under all of the heavens.”* In fact, those guilty of such idolatry, **under the economy of Israel**, were sentenced to death (Deut. 17:2–7).¹¹

¹⁰ *The World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 by World Book, Inc.; Vol. 6, p. 11. I must admit that this was my feeling that the atmosphere of the earth was relatively thin compared to the earth's radius; however, I did have to confirm it with my encyclopedia.

¹¹ Incidentally, we do **not** do such a thing in our society because we are **not** a theocracy. I mention this because history is filled with people whose knowledge of Israel and her relationship to God was incomplete and they tried to *turn* their own government

The Bible not only encourages the worship of God, the Creator, rather than His creation, it does not even speak kindly of those who try to make predictions of human events based upon the stars. “You are wearied with your many counselors. Let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. Behold, they are like stubble—the fire burns them. They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there will be no coal to warm by nor a fire to sit before.” (Isa. 47:13–14). King Nebuchadnezzar had a vision, and the astrologers are mentioned among those who were unable to interpret his dream, whereas Daniel was able to (Dan. 4:4ff).¹²

**Day to day gushes forth speech
and night to night declares knowledge;**

Psalm
19:2

**Day to day, He pours out information
and night to night, He declares knowledge,**

**Each day, gushes forth with speech to the next
and each successive night reveals more knowledge than the previous night.**

The first verb in this verse is the masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *nâḇva* (נָבַח) [pronounced *naw^b-VAHQ*], which means *to pour out, to gush out, to gush forth, to flow, to spring, to bubble up*. It is used figuratively several times in Scripture to the gushing out of speech. Strong’s #5042 BDB #615. With each new day, there is more and more knowledge of God’s creation. It is not clear who or what the subject is.

*Barnes: The day that is passing away proclaims the lesson which it had to convey from the movements of the heavens, about God; and thus the knowledge of God is accumulating as the time moves on. Each day has its own lesson in regard to the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God, and that lesson is conveyed from one day to another. There is a perpetual testimony thus given to the wisdom and power of the Great Creator.*¹³

The second verb is the masculine singular, Piel imperfect of *châvah* (חָוָה) [pronounced *khaw-VAH*], which means *breathe out* and therefore, *to tell, to declare*. Strong’s #2331 BDB #296. Again, it is not clear who the subject is. Therefore, let’s see how others have handled the translation of this verse:

<i>God’s Word™</i>	One day tells a story to the next. One night shares knowledge with the next [without talking, without words, without their voices being heard].
NAB	One day to the next conveys that message; one night to the next imparts that knowledge.
NASB	Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.
NIV	Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.
NJB	day discourses of it to day, night to night hands on the knowledge.
NLT	Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.
TEV	Each day announces it to the following day; each night repeats it to the next.
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	Day to day uttereth speech, And night tonight sheweth knowledge.

You would think that such a simple verse would be easy to translate. We don’t have any difficult words. Our problem is the subject. Whereas the NIV and the NLT give a hint as to how it could be rendered (using *they*), the subject has to be a masculine singular noun. Most reasonably, we would take the nearest masculine noun, which would be *day* (and *night*). However, it is not out of line to simply use the pronoun *He*, to refer to *God*. This is my first preference, which I have not found elsewhere. The verbs could also refer back to the heavens and the atmosphere (although, that is more of a stretch—that is more or less what the NLT and the NIV did). What I would lean toward secondly would be the rendering given by the NAB and (of all translations) the TEV. One day pours forth information to the next, each night conveys knowledge to the next.

into a theocracy, which cannot be done. There is only one theocracy in human history, and that is Israel. There will be the rulership of God on earth in the future, but God will usher that age in—we will not.

¹² *Chaldeans* can also be rendered *master astrologers* in Dan. 4:7.

¹³ *Barnes’ Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 167–168.

If God is the subject, then He sees to it that the information of Him through His creation is revealed, more each day, more each evening. We have already discussed this insofar as our knowledge of astronomy and the earth's atmosphere increases. Our understanding of the vastness and incredibility of the universe increases with each day; our awareness of the *firmament* (or, *atmosphere*), as well as our appreciation for it, increases each day, along with our knowledge of same. With each passing night, our understanding and appreciation for God's creation increases as well.

Barnes: *Each successive night [reveals knowledge]...It is done by the stars in their courses; in their order; their numbers; their ranks; their changes of position; their rising and their setting. There are as many lessons conveyed to man about the greatness and majesty of God by the silent movements of each night as there are by the light of the successive days.*¹⁴

When this psalm was written, a man could look up into the sky and see perhaps 3000 stars on a clear night. From the other side of the earth, another 3000 stars could be seen. With a telescope that has a 3" lens, we can see about 600,000 stars. Recently, the most powerful telescopes can take in about 3,000,000,000 stars and a third as many galaxies.¹⁵ In my 1983 World Book, the number of stars is guesstimated to be 200 billion billion. The smallest star is much, much smaller than the earth. The largest would fill in the entire earth's orbit about the sun. In fact, if my computations can be relied upon, the largest star would actually fill in all of the orbit of Mars and the asteroids and almost take in the entire orbit of Jupiter. Such a size is pretty much incomprehensible. Our own sun, if we hopped in a rocket traveling at 7 miles/second, is about a five month trip away. The same rocket would get us to the nearest star in 120,000 years. Just to get a feel for the distances involved here; if the sun were a basketball, the earth would be a *bb* at the opposite end of the basketball court (actually, a *bb* is a bit too large, but this is just a rough estimate). Now, if we were to travel to the nearest star, on this same scale, would be nearly 5,000 miles away, a distance greater than the diameter of the earth.¹⁶ This great vastness is, for all intents and purposes, virtually incomprehensible. [Each successive night reveals even more knowledge.](#)

**No speech and no words;
not heard their voice.**

Psalm
19:3

**without speech, without words—
their voice is not heard.**

**They do not literally talk; there are no actual words;
there is no voice that can be audibly heard.**

Let me first give you some of the ways that this has been translated:

CEV	They don't speak a word, and there is never the sound of a voice.
God's Word™	without talking, without words, without their voices being heard.
NASB	There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.
NLT (alternate trans.)	There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.
REB	And this without speech or language or sound of any voice.
Young's Lit. Translation	There is no speech and there are no words, Their voice hath not been heard.

We begin this verse with the negative substantive *ʾayin* (אִינַ) [pronounced *AH-yin*], which means *naught, nothing*. Here, it is in the construct and I don't know that there is a difference (my sources disagree here). It can mean *in the condition of being not = without*. Strong's #369 BDB #34. This is followed by the masculine singular noun *ômer* (אִמֶּר) [pronounced *OH-mer*]; which means *utterance, speech, word*. This word is mostly found in poetry. Strong's #561 & #562 BDB #56. The negative substantive is repeated and followed by the very common

¹⁴ Barnes' Notes, Volume 4, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 168.

¹⁵ A galaxy is a system of stars, dust and gas held together by gravity (*The World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 by World Book, Inc.; Vol. 8, p. 8). We can only see three other galaxies with the naked eye—one from the northern hemisphere and two from the southern hemisphere.

¹⁶ Apart from the scale of the basketball and the *bb*, which was original, this information came from *The World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 by World Book, Inc.; Vol. 18, p. 660–661 as well as from the 1955 edition of the World Book, vol. 15, p. 7694.

masculine plural of dâ^bvâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw^b-VAWR], which means *word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter*. Strong's #1697 (or #1696) BDB #182. This is kind of an unusual thing. The psalmist is saying that these things don't literally speak. They don't have some sort of human speech; there are no words. This should be obvious to a reader of poetry, but David is making certain that we don't read into this what is not here. A second understanding of this is that they speak to all men, regardless of their speech and their words.

In the second line (or third), we have the negative and the Niphal participle of shâma^ʿ (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced shaw-MAHG], which means *to listen, listen intently, to listen and obey*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. The Niphal is the passive voice, meaning that the subject receives the action of the verb. The subject is *their voice*. David tells us that we do not hear the literal voice of these things. This is obviously to be filed under the category of *duh!* However, there is more to this verse than just the idea that the heavens and the stars are not speaking audibly to us. Our problem with rendering is that we tend to take these verses separately. By itself, this verse cries for a verb in the first line (actually, it cries for two verbs in the first line). However, the best rendering of this and the previous verse, when it comes to understanding this verse, is *God's Word™*. The first line of this verse is simply a continuation of the previous.

Barnes: *When the heavens give expression to the majesty and glory of God, it is not by words,—by the use of language such as is employed among men...there is a silent but real testimony to the power and glory of their great Author. But Barnes offers another sense in which this verse might be taken: There is no nation, there are no men, whatever may be their language, to whom the heavens do not speak, declaring the greatness and glory of God. The language which they speak is universal; and however various the languages spoken by men, however impossible it may be for them to understand each other, yet all can understand the language of the heavens, proclaiming the perfections of the Great Creator. That is a universal language which does not need to be expressed in the forms of human speech, but which conveys great truths alike to all mankind...these lessons are conveyed to them day by day, and night by night; that however great may be the diversities of speech among men, these convey lessons in a universal language understood by all mankind; and that thus God is making himself constantly known to all the dwellers of the earth. All men can understand the language of the heavens, though they may not be able to understand the language of each other. Of the truth of this no one can doubt; and its beauty is equal to its truth.*¹⁷

Bullinger: *[they, the heavens, have]...“no speech nor language; their voice is not heard,” and yet they do utter speech, they do declare knowledge; and their words go forth through all the earth.*¹⁸

**In all the earth goes out their voice
and an end of the world their words.**

Psalm
19:4a

**Their voices goes out into all the earth
and their words [go out] to the end of the
world.**

**Their voices reach out into all of the earth
and their words are made know to the ends of the earth.**

And this psalm was easy until this verse. We will initially split the verse up. Let's first see what others have done:

JPS (Tanakh)
NASB

Their voice carries throughout the earth, their words to the end of the world.
Their line [possibly, sound] has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances
to the end of the world.

The Septuagint
Young's Lit. Translation

Their voice is gone out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the world.
Into all the earth hath their line gone forth, And to the end of the world their sayings.

¹⁷ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; pp. 168–169.

¹⁸ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 118.

The disputed word in this first half of v. 4 could either be qôwl (לִקְוֹל) [pronounced *kohl*], which means *sound, voice*. Strong's #6963 BDB #876; or, it is qav (יָקַו) [pronounced *kahv*], which means *line*. Strong's #6957 BDB #876. Obviously, what has happened is that the lamed at the end was either left off or it was not. The former is easiest to explain and is what is found in the Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate codices. Throughout all the earth, the *voice* of the heavens and of the atmosphere speak to the glory of God.

The phrase, *to the ends of the earth*, is a nontechnical phrase. All that is conveyed is that the earth is finite and that it has limits.

With this line, the sense that Barnes conveys secondly seems to be the more apropos. The language of the stars goes out to the entire world and their wonderment transcends language barriers. Regardless of one's native language, the more one knows of the universe, the more one is awed by God's creation.

Paul, when dealing with the question of heathenism, quotes this verse. He uses it in a different sense. Whereas its use here is applied to a fundamental knowledge of God and His power, Paul applies it to the hearing of the gospel. **So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, certainly, they have never heard, have they? Where in fact, they have: Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world** (Rom. 10:17–18 Psalm 19:4a).¹⁹

<p>For the sun He set a tent in them and he, like a bridegroom, leaving from his chamber; he rejoices like a strong man to run a course</p>	<p>Psalm 19:4b–5</p>	<p>He set up a tent in them for the sun and it [the sun] [is] like a bridegroom leaving his bedroom; it rejoices like an athlete running a course</p>
<p>He set up a tent for resting in the heavens for the sun; in the morning, the sun leaps forth like a newly-wed man leaving his bedroom, and it rejoices as would an athlete beginning a race.</p>		

Like a significant number of verses of Scripture, these were divided all wrong. The end of v. 4 belongs with v. 5. The *he* in v. 5, along with the *bridegroom* and the *strong man*, all refer to the sun. We have very poetic language here and we should not necessarily submit it to the rigors of precise science. It reads that God has set up a tent in the heavens (*in them*) for the sun, meaning that, at night, the sun goes into his tent to sleep. Quite obviously, just as the heavens do not speak forth with actual words, the sun does not retire into an actual tent. It is poetic language and we allow some poetic license here. All of us speak of the sun *rising and setting*, but that is absolutely incorrect, from a scientific viewpoint. An astronomer will use the same language, unless he is anal-retentive. The sun going into his tent is simply a reference to the *apparent* disappearance of the sun at night. We have the same kind of language in Eccles. 1:5: **And the sun rises and the sun sets; and it hastens to its place where it rises.**

Then we have an interesting analogy. The sun is compared to a bridegroom in his rising up. Although not an expert in the field of marriage, my thinking is that many women, early on in their marriage (perhaps throughout their marriage) are always wondering if they haven't made the worst mistake of their lives and married the exact wrong person. Men, on the other hand, I believe are content with the fact that they fooled someone long enough to marry them. Therefore, when the recently married bridegroom leaves his bed chamber, it is with great vigor and confidence. This is the appearance of the sun on each and every day. The sun rejoices like an decathlon athlete running a course. At one time, early on when I began to run, I had to take some days off, just so I wouldn't injure myself. However, on those days, I would look out my window and long to be out running. An athlete, who primes himself for a race, is like that. He is ready and anxious to run on the day of the race. He often rests the day before—perhaps even for two days—and he can hardly wait to get out there and pound the pavement. There is a great feeling of invigoration and accomplishment (for those who do not run, you have no idea what I am talking about here).

¹⁹ You will note the way that Paul uses this Scripture. This is the proof of his argument (he also quotes other passages). I point that out to indicate that the Old Testament was authoritative. What it said stood as truth.

From an end of the heavens his rising and his circuit as far as their end and nothing is hidden from his heat.

Psalm
19:6

From one end of the heavens he rises and his orbit [goes] as far as the other end [of the heavens], and nothing is hidden from its heat.

The sun rises at one end of the heaven and, in its orbit, goes to the other end; nothing is hidden from its heat.

We have the masculine singular of qâṭseh (קָטֵשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-TSEH*], which means *end, extremity*. It is found twice in this verse. Strong's #7097 BDB #892. At first we have the *end of the heavens*, which again, is poetic and not strictly scientific language. Then we have *to their end* or *to an end of them*. Essentially, from the standpoint of the earth, the sun begins in what appears to be on one end of the heavens and heads along a pathway to the other end of heavens. From the standpoint of standing on the earth and making this observation, the language is apt. From the standpoint of science, this is obviously not accurate (in fact, there could reasonably be a discussion as to what going from one end of the heavens to the other would actually mean from a scientific perspective). In the first line, we also have the feminine noun t̄qûwphâh (תְּקִוּפָה) [pronounced *t̄koo-FAW*], which means *a circuit, an orbit, a course, a revolution, a coming round*. Barnes gives the meanings *a coming about, a return*, as the seasons or the year would be spoken of. Strong's #8622 BDB #880.

That nothing is hidden from the heat of the sun certainly applies to the earth and the visible planets, as well as our moon. Bear in mind, this is not a scientific treatise, even though some of the language ends up being very accurate.

As has been mentioned before, the treatment of the sun in Scripture is wholly different than its treatment by the heathen. The heathen often worshiped the sun, deifying it. Scripture recognizes its awesome power, but not as some sort of a living being, but as a created thing. The sun was simply one of the things created by God.

*The Open Bible: David singles out the sun as an example of nature's testimony. Other nations might worship the sun, but God had shown the Hebrews that it only pointed to one infinitely greater than itself.*²⁰

It was magnificent and it provided heat throughout the world—however, it was never to be an object of worship (Deut. 4:19 17:3 Jer. 8:2 Ezek. 8:16).

*Barnes: ...all things,—vegetables, birds, beasts, men,—all that lives,—feel the effect of his vital warmth, and are animated by his quickening influence. Thus the sun in his goings illustrates the glory of God. The psalmist was fully alive to the splendour, the glory, and the value of this daily march over the heavens, and show that while, as in the remainder of the psalm, he dwells on the law of the Lord as having another sphere, and in its place more fully illustrating the Divine glory, he is not by any means insensible to the grandeur and beauty of the works of God as showing forth the Divine perfections.*²¹

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God's Word Is Perfect

[The] teaching of Y^howah [is] complete, restoring the soul; a revelation of Y^howah is faithful [and trustworthy], making wise [the] simple.

Psalm
19:7

The Law of Y^howah is sufficient [and without blemish], restoring the soul; the revelation of Y^howah is [perennially] faithful, making wise the open-minded.

²⁰ *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 727.

²¹ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 170.

**The Law of Jehovah is sufficient for the restoration of the beleaguered soul;
the revelation of Jehovah can be depended upon; it causes the simple to become wise.**

With this verse, we will see a serious change of pace, so abrupt as to cause some expositors to think that this psalm was actually two psalms. However, we are still dealing with the same God, Who is over all. We have gone from His creation to His Word. Recall that He merely spoke and what He wanted came to pass. Similarly, **the works of His hands are truth and justice; all His precepts are certain. They are upheld forever and ever; they are performed in truth and uprightness** (Psalm 111:7–8).

We have gone from the creation of God testifying to His great essence to the Law of God, to what He has revealed to man—which is what we find in this verse. We have moved from general revelation to specific revelation. In fact, it is this movement which ties these two otherwise disparate halves of this psalm together. The *Law of Jehovah* is synonymous with the *Word of God* or with the term *Scripture*. At the time that David wrote this psalm, there was the Law of Moses, as well as the books of Job, Genesis, Joshua and probably Judges. Whether it was well-known as to which books were divinely-inspired is unclear; however, David recognized that some, if not all, of these books, were inspired by God. The word used is the feminine singular construct of *tōwrah* (תּוֹרָה) [pronounced *TOH-rah*], and it means *instruction, direction, law, protocol*. The corresponding verb means *to teach*. Strong's #8451 (and #8452). BDB #435. This is not a reference simply to the Ten Commandments nor even to Pentateuch, but to the entire teaching of God. It is *revealed truth as contradistinguished from the truth made known by the works of creation*²².

There is no verb in this first line. The adjective applied to the Word of God is *tāmîym* (תָּמִיִּם) [pronounced *taw-MEEM*] means *complete, whole, entire, sufficient, without blemish*. This adjective is used most often when referring to a sacrificial animal being *without blemish* (Ex. 12:5 29:1 Lev. 1:3, 10 3:1, 9 4:3). It is an adjective used of Noah (Gen. 6:9) and God ordered this of Abram (Gen. 17:1). This word refers to the *completion* of seven Sabbaths in Lev. 23:15. When spoken of a man, it means a man who operates on the basis of spiritual integrity; i.e., they are spiritually mature and in fellowship. When spoken of God, it is a reference to His character or His works being perfect integrity, which means perfect justice and perfect righteousness are key to what is being examined. Strong's #8549 BDB #1071.

What the Word of God is capable of doing is the feminine construct, Hiphil participle of *shûw* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^bv*]; which means *to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution*. In the Hiphil stem, it means *to be caused to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, or to be caused to return*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. The idea is that the soul is worn out and *defeated*²³ and the study of God's Word restores the soul's strength and vigor. The soul is in opposition to God; His teaching turns the soul toward Him. **He restores my soul; He guides me in the path of righteousness for His Name** (Psalm 23:3). **How happy is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked nor does he stand in the path of sinners, nor does he sit in the seat of the verbally derisive. His delight is in the Law of Jehovah and in His Law he meditates day and night** (Psalm 1:1–2). **The man looks intently at the perfect Law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does** (James 1:25).

Barnes: *The glory of the works of God—the heavens, the firmament, the sun, as described in the previous verse—is, that they convey the knowledge of God around the world, and that the world is filled with light and life under the genial warmth of the sun; the glory of the law, or the revealed truth of God, is, that it bears directly on the soul of man, turning him from the error of his ways and leading him to pursue a life of holiness.*²⁴

²² Barnes' Notes, Volume 4, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 171.

²³ Pronounced *dee-frah-BEE-agh-tid*.

²⁴ Barnes' Notes, Volume 4, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 171.

Now it is important to recognize that it is not scientific truth which converts man. The wonders of the universe reveal God to man—just as observation of a watch implies that there was a watchmaker; observation of this universe, which is trillions of times more complex, implies that there is a Creator. The universe brings God into man's consciousness. However, it is the revealed Word of God which converts man's soul. **Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God** (Rom. 10:17).

The next item that David mentions is the feminine singular construct of *ʿēdūwth* (עֲדוּת) [pronounced *gay-DOOTH*], which means *a precept, law, revelation, testimony*. It is rendered *testimony* most of the time in the KJV, and occasionally, *witness*. This word properly means *that which is borne witness to* and is applied to revealed truth as that *which God bears witness to*. This refers to all that has been revealed as true, whether about man, God's perfect righteousness, the way of salvation, the state of the fallen world—all these things have been revealed in His Word and His Laws.²⁵ This term is used several times in reference to the decalogue (Ex. 31:18 32:15). This, when in conjunction with God's Laws, appears to be a synonym for His Laws or His Word. Strong's #5715 BDB #730.

The David tells what this *testimony* is: the feminine singular, Niphal participle of *ʾāman* (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], which means *to stand firm, to believe, to trust*. In the Niphal, or the passive voice, it means, among other things, *to be well-founded, firm, stable, of long continuance, perennial, faithful, trustworthy, sure, certain; something that someone can lean upon*. Strong's #539 BDB #52. **The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the stupid** (Psalm 119:130). God's testimony—His revealed truth—is reliable, true and dependable; it is not unsettled, vacillating or uncertain.²⁶

David has shown himself to be very different from the rulers of surrounding areas. Many of them worshipped the sun or encouraged the worship thereof; David worshipped the creator of the sun. The pharaoh of Egypt was a law unto himself; the Mesopotamian kings adopted codes of human viewpoint ethics. David, on the other hand, constantly pursued the already revealed will of God for his guidance and for his standards.²⁷

What the revelation or testimony of God does is the feminine singular, Hiphil participle of *châkam* (חָכַם) [pronounced *khaw-KHAHM*], a word which means *to be wise*. Generally, the Hiphil (the causative stem) is used *to teach wisdom, to make wise, to cause one to be wise*. Strong's #2449 BDB #314. *Who* is caused to be made wise is the adjective *pethîy* (פֶּתִי) [pronounced *PEH-thee*], which means *simple, easily -led, or, possibly, open-minded*. After looking at a few of the passages where this is found, I will go with the latter meaning. Strong's #6612 BDB #834. Now, there are two types of open-minded: there is the person who is open to truth and there is the person who is open-minded to anything but absolute truth. Scripture will convince the former, but not the latter.

Commandments of Y^howah [are] right—a rejoicing of [the] heart; a prohibition of Y^howah [is] pure, bringing light [to the] eyes.

Psalm
19:8

The commandments of Y^howah [have] internal integrity—a rejoicing of the heart; the prohibition of Y^howah [is] morally right—giving light to the eyes.

**The things which Jehovah commands have internal integrity—
they cause the heart to rejoice;
what Jehovah prohibits is based upon that which is morally correct—
such a prohibition causes one to be enlightened.**

We now have another term for the Word of God: the masculine plural of *piqqûwdîym* (פִּקּוּדִים) [pronounced *pik-koo-DEEM*], which means *commandments, mandates, precepts*. These are rules given by God which may be used to guide one's life. This word is only found in the psalms. Strong's #6490 BDB #824. What they *are* is the adjective *yâshâr* (יָשָׁר) [pronounced *yaw-SHAWR*], which means *right, correct, accurate, lacking in contradictions,*

²⁵ Much of this is taken directly from *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 172.

²⁶ Partially paraphrased from *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 172.

²⁷ Paraphrased from Charles A. Clough, *Dawn of the Kingdom*, ©1974, p. 115.

upright, straight, uniform, having internal integrity, even. When teaching non-Euclidian geometry to my students, I taught them the concept of internal uniformity—that is, there could be no internal contradictions. When used of God and the things pertaining to Him, *yâshâr* means *no internal contradictions*. His commandments have no internal contradictions. Rotherham suggests *fair* or *equitable* as possible renderings. Strong's #3477 BDB #449. One would have a great deal of difficulty defining what today's morality is, even under the most simple of scenarios. And people would line up on both sides, vociferously proclaiming the rightness or the wrongness of the behavior in question. God's commandments set up perfect standards which have no contradiction. It is not difficult to determine what is right or wrong on God's scale. What this causes is a rejoicing to the heart. There is a comfort and a pleasure found in knowing what is right and what is wrong. There is pleasure and comfort to be derived from adhering to a system which is perfect and uniform. One of the things which drew me to mathematics was its tremendous beauty due to its uniformity, its internal integrity within the individual mathematical systems. David rejoices in the commandments of God for the same reason. [The Word of Jehovah possesses integrity and all of His works are faithful](#) (Psalm 33:4).

The next noun is the feminine construct of *mits^evâh* (מִצְוָה) [pronounced *mits^e-VAH*], which means *prohibition, commandment, precept, that which is forbidden, constraint, proscription, countermand*. Strong's #4687 BDB #846. What it is called is the feminine singular of the adjective *bar* (בָּר) [pronounced *bahr*], and it means *pure, clean* [often in a moral sense]. It means to be *free from impurities, free from stains, free from corruption*. This is a word found rarely in the Bible and only in poetry (Job 11:4 Psalm 19:8 24:4 73:1 Prov. 14:4 SOS 6:9, 10). Strong's #1249 BDB #141.

What a prohibition of God is said to do is the Hiphil participle of *ʿōwr* (אָוַר) [pronounced *ohr*], which means *to be light, to become light*. In the Hiphil, it means *to bring light, to cause to be light, to give light, to enlighten*. Strong's #215 BDB #21. *Enlightening the eyes* is simply a poetic way to refer to the enlightening or the teaching of the soul, as the eyes are the light of the soul.

There are certain things which God prohibits. These are not prohibitions based upon them being way too fun, and therefore, need to be prohibited (some children think that the things their parents forbid fall into such a category). However, God forbids certain activities because it is morally correct to be forbid such things. In what I have observed in my life with regards to problems of the heart—about 80% of them would be solved had the participants declined to engage in sex outside of marriage. Such prohibitions often cause certain moral issues to suddenly make sense. The prohibition brings light to the eyes.

**A fear of Y^ehowah [is] clean, standing forever;
judgements of Y^ehowah [are] true—
they are righteous altogether.**

Psalm
19:9

**A reverence for Y^ehowah is pure, enduring
forever;
the judicial verdicts of Y^ehowah are
dependable—
they are altogether just.**

**One's reverence for Jehovah is morally pure—it endures forever;
the judicial decisions of Jehovah are stable [true and dependable]—
they are altogether just [and righteous].**

We have come across the first noun several times—it is the feminine construct of *yir^eâh* (יִרְאַה) [pronounced *yir^e-AW*], which means *fear, dread, terror, reverence, piety*. This word is often, but not exclusively, used in poetry. And it is often, but not exclusively, used for the fear-respect of God. Scofield, along with hundreds of other theologians, will tell you that *yir^eâh* means *reverential trust*; don't kid yourselves—it also means *fear*. This is clear in passages like Psalm 55:5 Jonah 1:10, 16. Strong's #3374 BDB #432. If you don't believe that the God of the Universe—Who will cast billions of people and billions of fallen angels into the Lake of Fire where they will burn forever—if you don't believe that you ought to fear Him, then you are way confused. David, who will spend eternity with God, transgressed God's commandments several times and God brought the hurt on him so bad that David wrote psalms that we have to this day which indicate that God caused him great pain and suffering on earth. Now, if you are a growing believer who is in fellowship a great deal of the time, you have little to fear in this life. If you are an

unbeliever, the best you can hope for is eternal pain and misery beyond any that you have ever experienced. If you are a believer who stays out of fellowship or a believer who is not growing by means of His Word, then your life will be a personal study in pain and frustration. Now, the fear/respect of God is not something which you decide on having one bleak day. It is learned. **Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of Jehovah** (Psalm 34:11). **The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; all those who fear Him have a good understanding** (Psalm 111:10). **The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline** (Prov. 1:7). **What we can conclude after all has been said and done, is that we should fear God and keep His commandments, for this is to every person** (Eccles. 12:13). Fear of God is not only an Old Testament concept. **Slaves, in all things, obey those who are your masters according to the flesh, not with external service, as those who please men, but with personal integrity of the heart, fearing the Lord** (Col. 3:22). **“I certainly understand that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation, the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him. The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ.”** (Acts 10:34b–36a; see also Rom. 3:18 2Cor. 5:11 Heb. 12:28 1Peter 2:17).

Now, what such a fear is, is described as *ṭâhōr* (ט ה ר) [pronounced *taw-WHORE*], which means *clean, pure*; it can refer to something which is ceremonially clean or that which is physically pure, like refined gold. Strong's #2889 #2890 BDB #373. What we should recognize is that a beginning, healthy fear of God is an indication that we have some concept of His power and perfect holiness. Once God has called us His Own, then we no longer have to fear Him with respect to eternity, nor do we need to fear man. **There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love** (1John 4:18).²⁸

What this reverence for God does is the Qal active participle of *ʿamad* (א מ ד) [pronounced *gaw-MAHD*], which means *to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand*. Strong's #5975 BDB #763. The message is clear. There isn't a lot that you can take with you. However, David tells us that a reverence/fear of Jehovah is one of the things which can be taken from this life to the next.

The first noun in the second line is *mishpâṭ* (ש פ ט) [pronounced *mish-PAWT*], which means *judgement, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, the judgement of the court; as well as the act of deciding a case, the place where a judgement is rendered*. Strong's #4941 BDB #1048. One of the reasons that we are called upon to *fear* God is His judicial verdicts—His judgements. God has determined that the devil and his angels will burn forever in the Lake of Fire. God has determined who will be saved and who will suffer eternal damnation. Therefore, we should naturally associate the fear of God with the judgements of God.

What God's judicial verdicts are, are the feminine singular of *ʿemeth* (א מ ת) [pronounced *EH-meth*], which means *firmness, faithfulness, truth, certainty, stability, perpetuity, fidelity, reliable, stable, dependable*. Strong's #571 BDB #54. Then we have the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *tsâdaq* (צ ד ק) [pronounced *tsaw-DAHK*], which means *to be righteous, to be just, to be justified*. Strong's #6663 BDB #842. This is followed by the adverb *yachad* (א ח ד) [pronounced *YAH-khahd*], which means *together, alike, all together*. Strong's #3162 BDB #403. With some moral systems, if you do not look at them too carefully, there are bits and pieces of them which appear to be just; however, when you look more carefully and examine the system from its whole, it is not altogether just and righteous. It has flaws. God's Laws and His judicial decisions can be taken as a whole and determined to be altogether perpetual, stable, righteous and just. **You commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are forever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Your precepts** (Psalm 119:98–100).

²⁸ We are not speaking of fear of God in this passage, but fear in general.

Psalm 19:7–9: The impact of these last few verses is lost in the exegesis, so let me put them all together:

The **Law** of Yehowah is sufficient [and without blemish], restoring the soul;
 The **revelation** of Yehowah is [perennially] faithful, making wise the open-minded.
 The **commandments** of Yehowah [have] internal integrity—a rejoicing of the heart;
 The **prohibition** of Yehowah [is] morally right—giving light to the eyes.
Reverence for Yehowah is pure, enduring forever;
 The **judicial verdicts** of Yehowah are dependable—they are altogether just.

Bullinger: *Here, there is neither gradation nor opposition of words in the several lines; which are independent, and depend for their parallelism on their construction.*²⁹

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**Desired more than gold
 and more than fine gold much;
 and sweeter than honey
 and dripping honey of honeycombs.**

Psalm
 19:10

**More desired than gold
 even more than much refined gold;
 and sweeter than honey
 even the fresh dripping honey from the comb.**

**His precepts are more desirable than gold—
 in fact, more desirable than an abundance of refined gold;
 and they are sweeter than honey,
 even the fresh dripped honey from the honeycomb.**

This verse begins with a definite article and the masculine plural, Niphal participle of *châmad* (חָמַד) [pronounced *khaw-MAHD*] means *to desire, to covet, to take pleasure in*. Strong's #2530 BDB #326. The commandments, the ordinances, the precepts, the judgements of God are desired things—they are desired *more than* (the comparative use of the *mîn* preposition) *zâhâ^bv* (זָהָב) [pronounced *zaw-HAW^BV*], which means *gold*. Strong's #2091 BDB #262.

Then we have the masculine singular adjective *paz* (פַּז) [pronounced *pahz*], which means *refined, pure gold*. This word is only found in poetry. Strong's #6337 BDB #808. It is followed by the adjective *ra^bv* (רַב) [pronounced *rah^bv*], which means *many, much, great* (in the sense of large, not acclaimed; Gen. 6:5 7:11 21:34 50:20 Ex. 19:21). Strong's #7227 BDB #912. Here we are speaking of having a tremendous abundance of gold—and God's precepts and commandments are to be more desired than this. In the first instance, we are speaking of gold bullion; actually, I should say, unrefined gold. In the second instance we have gold which has been made into coins, into necklaces, into jewelry, etc.

People of all ages have an intense desire for wealth and the trappings of wealth. That is the sense of the nouns for gold. However, the Bible throughout calls our attention that the Word of God is greater than wealth. *The Law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces...therefore, I love Your commandments above gold; yes, above fine gold* (Psalm 119:72, 127). *Seize my instruction, father than silver, and knowledge rather than the finest gold. For wisdom is superior to jewels and all that which may be desired cannot be compared with her...my fruit [the fruit of wisdom] is better than gold, even refined gold, and my production is greater than the most refined silver* (Prov. 8:10–11, 19). One of the simple reasons for the value of God's Word being greater than that of precious metals is that His Word is eternal and will travel with us into eternity. That is, the doctrine that we know stays with us in eternity; whatever gold and wealth that we possess in this world will remain in this world. Surely, you have had the dream when you have acquired certain possessions or wealth or some such, and then

²⁹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 351. It was Bullinger's work which convinced me that I ought to put these verses together.

you wake up and it's gone—this is what dying will be like for many believers. What they have gathered in this life will all be gone at death.

Then we have the adjective *mâthôwq* (מְתוֹק) [pronounced *maw-THOHK*], which means *sweetness, sweet, sweet* [thing]. Strong's #4966 BDB #608. We then have the comparative use of the preposition *mîn* again and the Hebrew word for honey. In the next line, we have the masculine singular construct of *nôpheth* (נֹפֶת) [pronounced *NOH-feth*], which means *flowing honey, dripping honey from the comb*.³⁰ This word is only found in Psalm 19:10 Prov. 5:3 24:13 27:7 SOS 4:11. Strong's #5317 BDB #661. This is followed by the masculine plural of *tsûwph* (צֹופִים) [pronounced *tzoof*], which means *honeycomb*. This is obviously an onomatopoeic word—it sounds like a glop of honey dripping to the ground. We only find this word in Psalm 19:10 Prov. 16:24.* Strong's #6688 BDB #847. **Your word I have treasured in my heart that I might not sin against You. You are blessed, O Jehovah. Teach me Your statutes. With my lips, I have told of all the ordinances of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts and I will regard Your ways. I will delight in Your statutes and I will not forget Your Word...how sweet are Your words to my palate—sweeter than honey to my mouth** (Psalm 119:11–16, 103).

There is an odd tradition which came out of this. Gower writes that a boy in New Testament times left early in the morning while it was still dark to go to school to learn about how Moses receive the Law. Afterwards, he went to his teacher's house for breakfast, where he was served cakes with letters of the law written on them. When in school, he has given a slate with passages of Scriptures written on it and it was smeared with honey. He was to trace through the letters with his own pen, which would mean that he would pause now and again and lick the honey from the end of his pen. *The idea was that he would realize that the purpose of his going to school was to absorb the Scriptures. This learning practice seems to have been based on an old custom that David refers to in the psalm.*³¹

**Moreover, Your servant is enlightened in them;
in keeping them—a reward, great.**

Psalm
19:11

**Furthermore, Your servant is instructed by them;
[and there is] great reward for keeping them.**

**Furthermore, Your servant has been admonished [and instructed] by Your teachings;
and there is a great reward to those who keep them.**

Let's just see what some others have done with this verse:

CEV	By your teachings, Lord, I am warned; by obeying them, I am greatly rewarded.
NASB	Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.
The Septuagint	For Your servant keeps to them; in the keeping of them [is] great reward.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Also—Thy servant is warned by them, 'In keeping them is a great reward.'

The verb in the first line is the Niphal participle of *zâchar* (זָכַר) [pronounced *zaw-KHAHR*], which means *to admonish, to instruct, to teach, to be warned, to give a warning*. It properly means *to shine, to cast light upon*; and comes to mean *to cast light upon a subject*. *To enlighten* would be a good translation. *Zâchar* is only found in the Hiphil and the Niphal. Strong's #2094 BDB #264. This means that David takes seriously the Laws of God.

In the second line, David adds that there is great reward for those who obey the mandates of God. The rewards would be of two types: (1) eternal rewards; God blesses us with His grace in eternity for our obedience on earth; and, (2) temporal rewards, which come in two classifications: (a) natural consequences and (b) divine blessing. When we follow God's laws, we are naturally blessed, even if we do not believe in His Son. One group which shows great evidence of this is the Church of the Latter Day Saints (the Mormons). They adhere quite carefully

³⁰ Had this been, say, chocolate, then we would have had reason to question the authenticity of this passage.

³¹ Quoted and paraphrased from *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*; Ralph Gower; ©1987 by Moody International; © by Moody Press; p. 86.

to the Bible’s teachings about family and finances, and their members are blessed within the family unit as well as in the realm of finances. When you choose to obey God’s laws, there are natural blessings which follow. Furthermore, when you choose to obey God’s mandates as a believer, you receive temporal blessings over and above those which follow by natural consequence. Most believers who have pursued God’s Word and remain in fellowship can attest to that. Throughout Scripture, there are often specific promises which accompany the various mandates of God. One example of this is: [Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be extended in the land which Jehovah your God gives you](#) (Ex. 20:12).

Throughout the previous few verses of this psalm we have a list of what appear to be synonyms for the Word and/or mandates of God. Let’s look at these as a whole and examine what the psalmist says about them:

A Summary of God’s Word and Our Reaction to It (vv. 7–11)	
Near the end of his exegesis of this psalm, J. Vernon McGee summarized the important points made concerning the Law of God as presented in this psalm. I took many of his points and expanded on them. Direct quotes, of course, will be properly footnoted.	
The Law of God is complete, sufficient and without blemish (v. 7a)	The Law of God is perfect and complete. The moral standards by which we need to live are all summarized in God’s perfect Law. We have made some serious mistakes in our own laws; we continue to add to our laws unnecessarily. There is no lack in God’s Law; the lack is within us. We do not measure up to His Law. There is no blemish in God’s Law; the blemish is within us.
The revelation of God is faithful, trustworthy and dependable (v. 7b)	McGee: <i>Don’t bank of God changing to the “new” morality. God is not reading some of the new views of psychology, and He is not listening to the decisions that some judges are handing down. God is going to punish sin—He says that is what He is going to do. The testimony of the Lord is sure. Judgment is coming. The commandments reveal that.</i> ³² One of the few dependable things in this world is the revelation of God.
The commandments of God are right, correct, accurate and have internally integrity (v. 8a).	McGee: <i>“The statutes of the LORD are right.”</i> Someone says <i>“There are certain commandments I don’t like.”</i> Well, maybe you don’t like them, but God does. They are right. What makes them right? In a college sociology class years ago, I had a professor who was always saying, <i>“Who is going to determine what is right? How do you know what is right?”</i> I didn’t know the answer then, but now I know that God determines what is right. This is His universe; He made it, and He made the rules. Maybe you do not like the law of gravitation, but I advise you not to fool with it. That is, if you go to the top of a ten-story building, don’t step off, because God will not suspend the law of gravitation for you. It operates for everyone. ³³ Now, there are some people who love the rush of gravity and enjoy roller coasters or bungee jumping. However, there is no one this side of a mental institution who vociferously objects to certain aspects of the law of gravity. It is simply a fact. God’s commandments in the moral realm are just as absolute; however, because we possess an old sin nature, we often object to them.
The prohibitions of God are pure and morally correct (v. 8b)	As a youngster, I didn’t much care for some of the restrictions that my parents put upon me. I strongly voiced my opposing opinion; I must admit, that I rarely, if ever, realized that what they prohibited was morally correct and for my own good. God does not prohibit arbitrarily or out of spite. What He prohibits is for our own good. When I occasionally flip through the channels and run across a talk show with civilian guests who have problems—about 90% of the time, their problems would have been solved had they not been involved in premarital sex. All sexually transmitted diseases could be virtually wiped out in one generation if there was no premarital sex.

³² J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Volume 1*; Thru the Bible Books, ©1977, p. 104.

³³ J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Volume 1*; Thru the Bible Books, ©1977, p. 104.

A Summary of God’s Word and Our Reaction to It (vv. 7–11)	
<p>Reverence for Jehovah is morally pure and clean (v. 9a)</p>	<p>McGee: <i>We are told that this words “fear” means “reverential trust.” I believe it means more than that. It means fear. We do well to fear God, my friend. I loved my Dad, but I sure was afraid of him. He kept me in line, and I think, in the final analysis, that is what kept me out of jail. I knew that when I did wrong there would be trouble...Fear of my Dad made me a better boy, but I still loved him.</i>³⁴ McGee makes an interesting point. Churches, in their desire to make God palatable to the hoi polloi, have forgotten that there is more to reverence of God than simple reverence. Jesus spoke of a loving God, but He also spoke of a God to be feared: “And do not fear those who are able to kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but, rather, fear Him Who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matt. 10:28). There is no mistaking this use of <i>fear</i> for simple <i>reverential trust</i>.</p>
<p>The judicial verdicts of God are true, stable and dependable (v. 9b)</p>	<p>One of the judicial verdicts upon which we can depend is that we stand condemned before a righteous God. There is nothing more true or stable than the fact that All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). There is no one who is righteous—not even one. There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks for God (Rom. 3:10b Psalm 14:1b, 2b).</p>
<p>God’s Word is more desirable than gold and sweeter than honey (v. 10)</p>	<p>The three greatest men of history were Moses, David and Paul—all three of them fully understood the importance of God’s Word. Moses painstakingly recorded it, being careful not to mix his words with God’s (it was not until the book of Deuteronomy that Moses realized that he himself was writing Scripture). David continually pursued God’s Word and was continually blessed because of it.</p>
<p>We are instructed and admonished by His Word (v. 11a)</p>	<p>There is but one true standard in this life and that is God’s Word. When I first became a believer and began church hopping (which some believers do), I noticed that each church seemed to have its own <i>hook</i>. Some were holy roller churches who specialized in so-called healings and tongues; other churches had various groups so that you could get with your own kind; others provided free counseling (many did, in fact); and, when I began attending a Berachah taper’s group, it seemed as though their <i>hook</i> was the Word of God. I want you to understand that this is the only true basis for a church’s function—the dissemination of God’s Word. Your church may have other things—e.g., a young married’s group, great day care facilities, outings and events—however, if it lacks that foundation of the teaching of God’s Word, then it is a worthless organization with regards to the spiritual realm.</p>
<p>There is great reward in keeping His Word (v. 11b)</p>	<p>What King Solomon stood for at the beginning and the end of his life was the Word of God. For this, Solomon was blessed with material possessions almost beyond our imagination. When he pursued that which was not God’s Word, the pain and misery was overwhelming (such things can be found in the Song of Solomon and in the book of Ecclesiastes). David found the same to be true. When he obeyed God’s Word, he was thoroughly and completely blessed. When he rejected that which was right, he was placed under severe discipline.</p>

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A Plea for God to Accept the Psalmist

**[Inadvertent] errors—who can discern from hidden things?
Clear me.**

Psalm
19:12

[There are] inadvertent transgressions—who can discern [these] hidden mistakes?

³⁴ J. Vernon McGee, *Psalms Volume 1*; Thru the Bible Books, ©1977, p. 104.

**I have committed inadvertent transgressions against God—
can anyone know all their hidden errors?**

We had better look at a few other translations first:

CEV	None of us know our faults. Forgive me when I sin without knowing it.
God's Word™	Who can notice every mistake? Forgive my hidden faults.
JPS (Tanakh)	Who can be aware of errors? Clear me of unperceived guilt,...
NASB	Who can discern <i>his</i> errors? Acquit me of hidden <i>faults</i> .
Young's Lit. Translation	Errors! who doth understand? From hidden ones declare me innocent.

Once we see the other translations, the meaning of this verse is clear. We begin with the feminine plural noun which means *inadvertent error*. Strong's #7691 BDB #993. It is found only here, but it is closely related to the verb *shâgag* (שָׂגַג) [pronounced *shaw-GAHG*], which means *to go astray, to wander, to commit a sin or error inadvertently*. The implication is unintentional, inadvertent, unwittingly. Strong's #7683 BDB #992. Strong's #7691 BDB #993. We all commit sins knowingly; however, we also commit transgressions against God unintentionally or, better, unknowingly. When it is a sin and we wanted to do it and we did it—it is still wrong, it is still a sin against God and we have no excuse, even if we did not know it was a sin. You cannot commit a traffic violation and get out of it simply because you did not realize that it was a violation. God's laws are no different. This is followed by the interrogative *who* and the Qal imperfect of *bîyn* (בִּין) [pronounced *bean*], which means *to discern, to perceive, to consider, to understand*. Strong's #995 BDB #106. Then we have the preposition *mîn* and the feminine plural, Niphal participle of *çâthar* (חָתַר) [pronounced *saw-THAHR*] and it means *to hide, to conceal*. In the feminine plural, Niphal participle, this would mean *the hidden things, the concealed things*—specifically, one's hidden faults, sins and transgressions. Strong's #5956 BDB #761]. Strong's #5641 BDB #711.

Let's go back to the traffic example. While walking across a parking lot of mostly slow-moving vehicles, I began to slip in between two cars. The one behind almost ran me down. He sped up, in fact, so that I could not get through. Now, did they think that they had the right-of-way? Did they think that pedestrians could only walk where there is a crosswalk? (Some young person told me that once). Obviously, this was a gross, but inadvertent error. They probably thought they were right in almost running me over. Similarly, there are believers who are living in sin with other believers—apart from being married, either formally or as a common-law marriage. There are believers who sue other believers. I have even heard of a firm, which specializes in damage lawsuits, advertise to Christians on a *Christian* radio station. Some of these understand that they are doing wrong, but many of them, because their church teaches them little or nothing, do not even realize that they have done wrong. You might be a very sincere Christian who desires to do God's will—this does not mean that you, in all of your day-to-day activities actually accomplish His will. You might spend weeks or months out of fellowship because of some sin that you committed that you did not even realize was a sin. David asks about these things. How can we know of all the varieties of sins?

Barnes: In view of a law so pure, so holy, so strict in its demands, and so extended in its requirements—asserting jurisdiction over the thoughts, the words, and the whole life,—who can recall the number of times that he has departed from such a law? ...Who can make an estimate of the number of impure and unholy thoughts which, in the course of many years, have flitted through, or found a lodgment in the mind? Who can number up the words which have been spoken and should not have been spoken? How can recall the forgotten sins and follies of a life—the sins of childhood, of youth, of riper years? There is but one Being in the universe that can do this. To him all this is know. Nothing has escaped his observation; nothing has faded from his memory. Nothing can prevent his making a full disclosure of this if he shall choose to do so. It is in his power at any moment to overwhelm the soul with the recollection of all this gild; it is in his power to cover us with confusion and sham eat the revelation of the judgment-day. Out only hope—our only security—that he will not do this, is in his mercy; and that he may not do it, we should without delay seek his mercy, and pray

*that our sins may be blotted out that they shall not be disclosed to us and to assembled worlds when we appear before him.*³⁵

When David calls out and asks God to cleanse him from these secret faults, these are faults of David's which are not just concealed from the world, but from himself as well. Now, those who have been brought up under Thieme's ministry (or even spend some time under his teaching) have had this beat into your heads: 1John 1:9: **If we name our [known] sins, He will forgive us our [known] sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness** [known and unknown sins]. There is but one way to get back into fellowship and that is by confessing one's sins to God. And certainly recall David's great psalmic confession: **Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your grace; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me** (Psalm 51:1–3). Unconfessed sin simply escalates out of control. For evils beyond number have surrounded me. My iniquities have overtaken me so that I am not able to see. They are more numerous than the hairs of my head; and my heart has forsaken me (Psalm 40:13). **God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil** (Eccles. 12:14).

**Moreover, from arrogant [and insolent] [acts],
hold back Your servant;
not let them reign over me;
then I will be complete and be acquitted from
insubordination great.**

Psalm
19:13

**Furthermore, restrain Your servant from
proud [and insolent] [acts];
do not let them reign over me;
then I will come to an end and be declared
innocent from great disobedience.**

**Furthermore, restrain Your servant from acts of arrogance—
do not let them reign over me;
then I will come to the end of my life and be acquitted from my great disobedience.**

Let's just look at a couple of different renderings here:

CEV	Don't let me do wrong on purpose, Lord, or let sin have control over my life. Then I will be innocent, and not guilty of some terrible fault.
God's Word™	Keep me from sinning. Do not let anyone gain control over me. Then I will be blameless, and I will be free from any great offense.
JPS (Tanakh)	...and from willful sins keep Your servant; let them not dominate me; then shall I be blameless and clear of grave offense.
NASB	Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous <i>sins</i> ; Let them not rule over me; Then I shall be blameless [lit., <i>complete</i>], And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.
NLT	Keep me from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin.
TEV	Keep me safe, also, from willful sins; don't let them rule over me. Then I shall be perfect and free from the evil of sin.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Also—from presumptuous ones keep back Thy servant, Let them not rule over me, Then am I perfect.

It is quite unfortunate that, in an effort to dumb down Scripture, some verses hide the meaning of verses like this. *Don't let me do wrong on purpose? Or, Keep me safe, also, from willful sins?* I do not mind various versions of the Bible which lower the vocabulary level in order to reach a different audience, but it makes me grit my teeth when the Bible is completely mistranslated to achieve this result. A person who reads the Good News Bible (TEV) is easily warped and misled by a verse like this. One could mistakenly believe in the sinless perfection of a believer after reading and meditating on this verse. However, we are not speaking of intentional sins here as contrasted to unintentional sins of the previous verse. We begin this verse with the adverb *gam* (גַּם) [pronounced *gahm*],

³⁵ *Barnes' Notes, Volume 4*, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 175.

which means *also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover*. Strong's #1571 BDB #168. Then we have the preposition *mîn* (*from*) and the masculine plural adjective *zêd* (זַד) [pronounced *zayd*], which means *arrogant, proud, swelling up, insolent, presumptuous*. This is consistently rendered *proud* in the KJV. This word is found only eight times in the psalms, six times in Psalm 119, in Prov. 21:24 Isa. 13:11 Jer. 43:2 Mal. 3:15 4:1. Barnes: *The word does not mean open sins, or flagrant sins, so much as those which spring from self-reliance or pride*.³⁶ Strong's #2086 BDB #267. This gives us, so far, *furthermore, from arrogant [and insolent] [acts]...* These are the acts of man which are in contrast to those named in the previous couple verses. Those were inadvertent or unknown sins. These are known and intentional sins, specifically those which emanate from the source of pride. These are the sins involved when you perceive yourself as being better than others, whether they are poorer, from a lower social standing, of a different race, or they lack your beauty, charm, wit and/or intelligence. David—as a ruler over a great nation; or, if this psalm were written earlier, as a man who others looked up to as a leader—could be particularly prone to these kinds of sins. Anyone who has power, prestige, wealth or is attractive, intelligent and charming, has a tendency toward arrogance and pride. David fought such feelings as well as the actions, verbal and mental attitude sins which are often committed as a result of such feelings.

The verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperative of *châsak* (חָשַׁק) [pronounced *khaw-SAHK*], which means *to hold in, to restrain, to preserve, to keep safely from something, to withhold, to refrain*. Strong's #2820 BDB #362. This is followed by *Your servant*.

A False Analysis of Psalm 19:13

I have been ruminating over a statement made by one of my sources that I am trying to determine if I should just let it go. Zodhiates writes: *Inadvertent sins are compared here with “presumptuous sins,” which are offenses against God carried out with a conscious knowledge that they are wrong. It is possible for believers to commit such sins. Because they continually receive grace from God, they may be tempted to use it as a license to sin. However, individuals who sin proudly, knowing the wrongness of their actions, all too often have never really been born again. It is for this reason that Scripture challenges believers to be sure of their salvations (Rom. 6:1, 2; 2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Pet. 1:10).*³⁷

The Correct Analysis

I read statements and particularly hear things like this all of the time by people who, on many other issues, are generally correct. However, this is a popular notion in Christendom that once we are born again, we will strive to be *good Christians*; or that we will strive not to sin. And if we sin knowingly, then we might not be saved. This is just so much crap. All believers, before and after salvation, possess an old sin nature with areas of strength and weakness. For that reason, there are specific sins and categories of sin that we will commit until the day we die. And these sins and categories of sins that make up our weakness are sins that we will commit again and again will be sins that we often commit knowingly. We don't just run through our sins for a few years and then stop them entirely and move onto other ones. One of my weaknesses is not profanity. I use expletives regularly, and an occasional obscenity (rarely in public), but the use of profanity makes me cringe.³⁸ It is unlikely that I will completely stop committing the sins which I commit and eventually use profanity and then gain victory over that. No, the sins which are a part of the makeup of my character and old sin nature are the ones which I will commit again and again. This does not mean that I am not disciplined for them nor does it mean that I don't have occasional victories over them (as well as occasional lapses). There are believers who sin proudly and openly, as well as many who would prefer to call their sins something other than sins. This is not an indication of a problem with their salvation; this is a problem with their spiritual lives. These two aspects of our lives are separate. Obviously, we cannot have a spiritual life without having first been saved, but we can have almost any kind of a spiritual life after being saved.

³⁶ Barnes' Notes, Volume 4, F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 176.

³⁷ The Complete Word Study Old Testament; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 1408.

³⁸ I hope that you grasp the fact that profanity is not the same as using an expletive now and again; nor is it equivalent to using obscenities. Profanity is using God's name capriciously; an expletive is like *hell* or *damn* (two perfectly good words, which should, nevertheless, not be overused); and obscenities are sexual language or language connected to *bathroom* humor.

What is often done, when making a misleading statement, is Scripture is quoted, and the less-than-discerning reader might look up the Scripture and, sometimes, even fall for the principle even though the Scripture does not really support that view. Therefore, we are going to look at these passages and analyze them one-by-one.

Misquoted and/or Misinterpreted Scriptures

Rom. 6:1–2: **What shall we conclude, therefore? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? Hell, no.³⁹ How shall we who have died to sin still live in it?** We are saved by grace apart from our works and despite our sins. This is incredible grace that God has given to us. One wrong conclusion someone might make is that the more we sin, the more grace we receive. Or that it is permissible to sin because of the grace that we have received. Obviously, this is wrong. What Zodhiates correctly states is that we do not have a license to sin. There is no encouragement anywhere in Scripture for us to sin. When we sin—and people seem to be completely oblivious to this—God punishes us (as well as the fact that there are natural consequences for these actions). It is possible that our behavior, at some point, could be so bad as to warrant the sin unto death, e.g. the example from 1Cor. 5 where a young man is proudly living in an incestuous relationship with his father's wife (apparently not his mother). Paul doesn't question the young man's salvation, but he does order the local church to separate from him and Paul places him under the sin unto death (which means that the believer in question is put under dying discipline; that is, he will die a painful death unless he turns away from that particular sin or group of sins).

2Cor. 13:5: **Test yourselves, if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test.** You should never ignore context. The Corinthians were questioning Paul's authority and were seeking proof of his commission by our Lord. Paul turns the tables in this chapter and questions their faith—actually, to be accurate, he urges to question themselves and their own weaknesses. All believers possess the power of God. All believers possess the Holy Spirit, Who can and will give us victory over individual sins at specific times. This strength, while we are weak, is certainly one test of our faith. Furthermore, it is never wrong to make certain that we are in the faith. However, the fact that we may willfully or proudly sin is not that test. Obviously, a person who sins willfully and proudly may not really be a believer. But, a person who leads an overtly moral life may not be a believer as well. The test here is whether we are *able* allow God's strength to overcome our weakness.

2Peter 1:10: **Therefore, members of the family of God, be all the more diligent to confirm the spiritual reality of your calling and election, for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.** What Peter is speaking of practicing is an increase of certain spiritual qualities. The fact that Peter herein encourages his readers in this way indicates that they are not necessarily practicing these things which he is encouraging.

Conclusion

Obviously, my intention here is not to encourage you to sin. That would be stupid. However, the fact that you adhere or do not adhere to some minimum standard of morality is not the key to determining whether or not you have been saved.

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Then we have the negative and the Qal imperfect of *mâshal* (לָשַׁל) [pronounced *maw-SHAHL*], which means, in the Qal, *to rule, to have dominion, to reign* (see Gen. 3:16 Ex. 21:8 Psalm 103:19 Isa. 40:10 Ezek. 19:11). This second meaning is by far the most widely used (it's other Qal meaning is *to speak in parables*). Strong's #4910 (see #4911) BDB #605. This is followed by the *bêyth* preposition, which means *in, among, into, against, with, at, through, by*. Strong's #none BDB #88. However, when *bêyth* follows this verb, the *bêyth* preposition means *over*.⁴⁰ Affixed to the preposition was the 1st person singular suffix. We have a similar sentiment expressed in

³⁹ Thieme's rather loose but effective translation.

⁴⁰ H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 517. Gesenius cites Gen. 3:16 4:7 and adds that 'al (לָ) [pronounced *gahl*] is found following this verb—just much less often.

Psalm 119:133: **Establish my footsteps in Your Word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.** Also, Rom. 6:12–14: **Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not continue presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin will not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.**

Then we have the preposition *then* and the 1st person singular, Qal imperfect of *tâmam* (תָּמַם) [pronounced *taw-MAHM*] means *to completely use up, to complete, to finish, to consume, to exhaust, to accomplish, to spend, to be (spiritually) mature*. The meanings are all related, but it is difficult to come up with a word which can be used consistently. It is used when strength or money has been completely used up (Gen. 47:15, 18 Lev. 26:20 Jer. 37:21). This word is used in connection with war, or any disaster, when a group of people have been completely killed (or *consumed* by war or disaster—Num. 17:13 Joshua 5:6 Jer. 44:12, 18). This word is used in connection with *finishing, completing or accomplishing* something (Lev. 25:29 Joshua 4:1, 10 Job 31:40). It is finally used to describe reaching maturity (2Sam. 22:26 Psalm 18:25). Finally, there does not seem to be a well-defined correlation between these meanings given and the stem of the verb (most of these meanings occur in the Qal stem). Strong's #8552 BDB #1070. The next verb is the 1st person singular, Piel perfect of *nâqâh* (נָקָה) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*], although said to mean *to clean, to empty*, it really means *to be acquitted, unpunished, declared free or declared guiltless* (Niphal, or passive, stem—Gen. 24:8 Ex. 21:19 Jer. 2:35), and *cleansed, acquitted, declared innocent* (Piel, or intensive, stem—Ex. 20:7 Psalm 19:12 Joel 3:21). This verb is found in the Qal stem only in Jer. 49:12. Strong #5352 BDB #667. The first verb, if you will note, was an imperfect, which meant that this was an ongoing process, this *coming to an end*, this *finishing up*, this *becoming complete*. However, *being acquitted or being declared innocent* is in the perfect tense, which speaks of a completed action. What is happening is that when the psalmist comes to the end of his life, he will ultimately be declared innocent of his great transgressions.

The noun is preceded by the *mîn* preposition and is the masculine singular of *pesha'* (פֶּשַׁע) [pronounced *PEH-shah* or *PEH-shahg*], which means *insubordination, disobedience, violation, rebellion, infraction*. Strong's #6588 BDB #833. This is followed by the adjective *ra'v* (רַב) [pronounced *rah'v*], which means *many, much, great*. Strong's #7227 BDB #912. *Pesha'* is in the singular, so that we are not drawn into the many individual acts of rebellion, but into the singular act of being rebellious to God, which is our nature; as well as the ultimate rebellion against God, which is to refuse to believe in His Son.

David, the psalmist, is not claiming himself to be innocent of what he has done. He asks God to keep him from his acts of arrogance and pride and for these things not to rule over him—this has both an experiential and an ultimate result. That is, in his own life, he asks God to keep him from committing these acts, but his plea is also one for eternity—for what occurs ultimately. We cannot undo the past. What we have done, we have done. David pleads with God to separate him from these things, including what he has done in the past. When he comes to an end (progressive, incomplete action), he will be declared innocent or acquitted (completed action), **not** because he is innocent, but because God can do so. He asks to be declared innocent of great transgressions or from great acts of disobedience or from great rebellion. This actually takes in two things: his own manner of life and his own great rebellion against God and man's greatest rebellion against God—the ultimate act of rebellion or infraction—not believing in His Son. **For Your name's sake, O Jehovah, pardon my iniquity, for it is great** (Psalm 25:11).

**Let be to acceptable words of my mouth
and contemplation of my heart in your faces,
O Y^howah, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Psalm
19:14

**Let the words of my mouth be acceptable [to
You]
and the contemplation of my heart before Your
face,
O Y^howah, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

**Let the words that I say be acceptable to you, as well as the thinking of my soul, which is before You,
O Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Again, let's see what others have done first:

CEV	Let my words and my thoughts be pleasing to you, LORD, because you are my might rock and my protector.
JPS (Tanakh)	May the words of my mouth and the prayer of my heart be acceptable to You, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.
NASB	Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.
Young's Lit. Translation	Let the sayings of my mouth, And the meditation of my heart, Be for a pleasing thing before Thee, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer!

We have the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect jussive of *to be*, the lamed preposition, and the masculine singular noun *râtsôwn* (ר צוֹן) [pronounced *raw-TSOWN*]. *Râtsôwn* is given a variety of renderings in the KJV: *self-will, accepted, voluntary will, good will, favor, desire, as they would, pleasure, delight, desire*. The verbal cognate, *râtsâh*, means *to be acceptable, to be pleased with, to enjoy*. What appears to be involved is *free will, acceptance*, and even *pleasure* on the part of the recipient. This is why the CEV and the JPS both add *to You*, to indicate that the volition of the recipient is a part of this. Strong's #7522 BDB #953.

What David is asked for God to accept is the masculine plural construct of *ʿêmer* (אָמַר) [pronounced *AY-mer*]; which means *utterance, speech, word*. Strong's #561 & #562 BDB #56. This is followed by *my mouth*. We also have the masculine singular construct of *higgâwôwn* (הִגְיֹן) [pronounced *hig-gaw-YOHN*], which means, according to BDB, *resounding music, meditation*. This word is only found in Psalm 9:16 19:14 92:3 Lam 3:62. It is the sound of striking a harp. My thinking is that the best rendering would be either *contemplation* or the literal *striking of the harp*. Strong's #1902 BDB #212. Then we have *of my heart*.

After this, we have a fairly common phrase, which makes little sense when rendered literally. It is the preposition lamed, and the masculine plural noun *pânîym* (פְּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which means *faces* (usually referring to one face, however). Together, they mean *in the sight of, in the presence of, before the face of*. The most simple rendering is *before*. Lamed = Strong's #none BDB #510. *Pânîym* = Strong's #6440 BDB #815. Here, we also have the 2nd person masculine singular suffix. This would therefore be rendered *before You* or *before Your face*.

Let's see if I can properly interpret this, as the interpretation is moderately difficult. We, as believers, have two options—we can be controlled by our old sin nature or by the Spirit of God. David, as a writer of Scripture, also had that option—he could be controlled by his old sin nature or by the Spirit of God by endowment. God had given him the Spirit, but God could remove the Holy Spirit from him. When David sinned, just as when we sin, he also lost the Spirit's control and assistance. What David has done is called for his sins to be forgiven; he has asked God to acquit him of his great iniquity, and here he asks God to make even his thoughts and his speech acceptable. This requires the work of the Holy Spirit in his life, which, like us, requires David to be in fellowship. Many of David's psalms involved specific sins which he had committed and his asking God for the forgiveness of same. In this verse, he gives the result.

Then God is called the Rock due to His stability and strength. **For who is God, but Jehovah? And who is a rock, except out God?** (Psalm 18:31). God becomes David's strength, stability, defence and refuge when in fellowship. He is called the Redeemer, as He has purchased Israel and all of those who belong to Him. At the time that David wrote, he did not fully realize with what God would use to purchase him. **Into Your hand, I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O Jehovah, God of truth** (Psalm 31:5). **"I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. Furthermore, I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments."** (Ex. 6:6b). **"I know that my Redeemer lives. And, at the last, He will take His stand on the earth."** (Job 19:25b). We can learn some of God's character from His creation. That He has redeemed us is taught only in Scripture. What we have in this psalm is what should be a natural progression for the saved person—our thinking about God is originally ignited by the observation of His creation. It's incredible beauty, complexity and order demands a Creator. When we pursue this Creator, looking for some meaning in our shattered existence, we find that He has also redeemed us—and this we learn in Scripture. I personally knew of God's existence for some time (even though I may have vacillated at times in this belief)—for perhaps for 15–20

years—before I believed upon His Son as my Savior. It is this typical order of things which ties this psalm together as a unified whole.

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