

Explore the Bible: God Revealed

June 28, 2017

• *The Explore the Bible lesson for July 16 focuses on Psalm 19:1-14.*

Growing up on the South Plains of West Texas, I often found myself marveling at all creation. Our tiny town, Brownfield, had few native trees and was built on ground as flat as a tabletop. You could see for miles and, with very little artificial light, the stars at night were simply stunning.

God reveals himself through his handiwork

I fully resonate with the words of David: “The heavens are telling the glory of God.” It’s worthy of note that David uses the present tense verb, “telling.” God’s revelation of Himself to humanity is not a past tense event. Every night, when the stars and the moon appear, we can trust God still is revealing himself. “The firmament (the sky that is the earth’s life-giving canopy” proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech” (vv. 1-2).

The Apostle Paul echoed this thought. “Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things (God) has made” (Romans 1:20). Of course, from that point on, Paul begins laying the groundwork for man’s moral and spiritual response to the unseen God. There is no place on earth where God has not made his presence known.

We are accountable for how we respond

Mankind is responsible for whether or not he listens to the voice of God that is uniquely heard through God’s creation. The Psalmist does, as well.

The unknown author of Hebrews certainly was familiar with this cornerstone of faith. “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and

various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being ..." (Hebrews 1:1-3).

We will not be held accountable for how much of God we don't know. All that we know of God put together is so very little. We trust more than we know. However, we will be held accountable for how we respond to what has made known of himself to us. No one who ever lived will be able to claim ignorance as an excuse before Holy God. Every place on the planet is, by its very nature, an expression of the living God.

Some years ago, I was driving to Austin. I'd been on the road about three hours and was eager to get there. Suddenly, I saw the flashing lights of a police car in my rearview mirror. I didn't think I was speeding. However, what I didn't know until the policeman told me was that I had driven through a school zone way above the posted speed.

I tried explaining I hadn't seen the sign warning of a reduced speed in the zone. He still wrote me an expensive citation. I learned a valuable lesson that day. The signs of God are everywhere, in good times and bad, in health and sickness, in wealth and poverty. It is our job to look for them and seek their meaning for our lives. The late British theologian and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge once wrote, "Every happening, great and small, is a parable whereby God speaks to us, and the art of life is to get the message."

Have open hearts

The choice not to respond in faith to God is not an intellectual problem first. First, it is a moral problem, the symptom of a closed heart. That's why it is virtually impossible to argue someone into believing in God. Only unconditional love makes the same imprint on others Christ has imprinted

on us, the very nature of God.

That's why it is equally important that we take good care of that place in our being where all our decisions are made and all our actions are given birth. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer" (v. 14).

There have times in my life when I doubted God, especially when facing horrific injustice and unanswered evil. It is in times like those I find that simply taking a walk or a long drive in silence can restore my faith. Everything I see may not answer all my questions, but it does lead me back to faith in the presence of all existence.

It may be that faith is harder for us than for our ancestors, even before there was a published Bible. We spend so much time inside, getting most of our information through television or social media, not enough from the world God created.

Words written by Swedish poet Carl Gustav Boberg bear witness of the experience of being out in nature and there discovering the presence of the God of all creation, thereby restoring one's soul.

"O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,

Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made;

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,

Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,

And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.

When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur,

And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.”
(Boberg, “How Great Thou Art,” 1885)

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