

*C H R I S T O U R T E A C H E R*

*CHRIST'S PSALMS OUR PSALMS*

*Bible Study Workbook*

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**Prayer.** *What changes in your life does today's study call for? Or the life of your family, church, or the world around you? And what reasons to extol the LORD come out of your work today? Jot them all down and then offer to God a prayer of thanksgiving and intercession.*

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# Chapter 3



## *Week 3 Psalm 19*

► Psalm 19

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above<sup>1</sup> proclaims his  
handiwork.  
<sup>2</sup>Day to day pours out speech,  
and night to night reveals knowledge.  
<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words,  
whose voice is not heard.  
<sup>4</sup>Their voice<sup>2</sup> goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.  
In them he has set a tent for the sun,  
<sup>5</sup> which comes out like a bridegroom  
leaving his chamber,  
and, like a strong man, runs its course with  
joy.  
<sup>6</sup>Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them,  
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.  
<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect,<sup>3</sup>  
reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure,  
making wise the simple;  
<sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure,  
enlightening the eyes;

<sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is clean,  
enduring forever;  
the rules<sup>4</sup> of the LORD are true,  
and righteous altogether.  
<sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey  
and drippings of the honeycomb.  
<sup>11</sup>Moreover, by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.  
<sup>12</sup>Who can discern his errors?  
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.  
<sup>13</sup>Keep back your servant also from  
presumptuous sins;  
let them not have dominion over me!  
Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.  
<sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the  
meditation of my heart  
be acceptable in your sight,  
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.



Day 1 – Context

► Preparation

If the weather is suitable, consider finding a quiet spot outdoors where you can enjoy creation while meditating on God’s word. It’s an excellent fit for Psalm 19. Once you are settled, first pray for Christ’s Spirit to illumine your mind with understanding and then read over the psalm slowly. Let the sights and sound of nature help you soak up especially the opening six verses before you tackle the questions below.

► Author and OT Background

As with nearly all the psalms in Book One, Psalm 19 was written by David. Can you picture David as a shepherd-boy watching over his flocks on the hills near Bethlehem? The Spirit of Christ may well have used that experience to later move him to reflect on how God shows himself to us in his created works (Ps 19:1–6).

But David also learned about God and his creation from Scripture itself. Compare the following passages and identify the connection:

1. Psalm 19:1–6 with Genesis 1:1–8 –

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2. Psalm 19:7–11 with Deuteronomy 4:5–6 –

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<sup>1</sup>Hebrew *the expanse*; compare Gen 1:6–8

<sup>2</sup>Or *Their measuring line*

<sup>3</sup>Or *blameless*

<sup>4</sup>Or *just decrees*

**3. Psalm 19:14 with Deuteronomy 32:30–31 –**

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**► Placement within the Psalter**

When looking at the whole book of Psalms, you can see that the second half of Psalm 19 develops Psalm 1’s exhortation to meditate on God’s law. It also anticipates the much fuller and more detailed meditation on the law in Psalm 119, the Psalter’s longest poem. Closer by and as mentioned in the previous lesson, Psalm 19 is the centre-piece of a grouping of psalms bookended by Psalms 15 and 24. Look closely at the following texts in nearby psalms and identify what links them together:

**4. Psalm 18:2, 46 with 19:14 –**

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**5. Psalm 18:13–15 with 19:1–2 –**

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**6. Psalms 20:4, 21:4 with 19:10–11 –**

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**Prayer.** *Psalm 19 contains plenty of praise for God. In your thanksgiving, make use of the psalm’s own reasons for glorifying God, then add to it any needs you perceive for yourself and anyone you may know. Has this psalm’s mention of law and faults brought to mind some of your own sins which you need to confess? Mark all these things down for use in today’s closing prayer. Consider finishing your prayer by reciting the last verse of Psalm 19.*

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# Day 2 – Observations

## ▶ Preparation

Psalm 19 ends with the prayer that the “meditation of my heart” may be acceptable in the LORD’s eyes (v. 14). Before starting today’s study, echo that prayer to the LORD as you seek the illumination that only his Spirit can provide. Next, take your time in re-reading Psalm 19 so that it is fresh in your mind.

## ▶ Type/Genre

In the Bible’s wisdom books, the Spirit of Christ regularly teaches a variety of lessons drawn from either creation or the law (torah or word) of the LORD. In Psalm 19, Christ teaches us to learn from both God’s creation and God’s word. Spot this pattern in the following wisdom passages and explain the point being made:

### From God’s creation

#### 1. Job 8:11–14 –

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#### 2. Proverbs 6:6–11 –

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### From God’s word

#### 3. Proverbs 1:32–33 –

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#### 4. Proverbs 6:23 –

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## ▶ Key Words

Identify the key words pointed out below and write down their basic meaning.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5. Psalm 19:1–2 – Four verbs used in parallel (i.e. as synonyms) –

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<sup>1</sup>As always, try to come up with ideas here yourself. For further thoughts, consult *Key Words* and *Unusual Words or Expressions* in *CPOP — Study Resource*, Vol. 1, p.263.

6. Psalm 19:7-9 – Five nouns used in parallel (i.e. as synonyms)<sup>2</sup> –

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7. Psalm 19:14 – Two words that describe God –

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8. Any other words you believe to be important –

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▶ Your Questions & Comments

As you've read and re-read Psalm 19, what struck you as intriguing? What leads would you like to follow-up to better understand God's message here? Put down your queries plus anything else that caught your eye. There is no wrong answer here!

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<sup>1</sup> The expression "the fear of the LORD" is in parallel with the others and may well be a sixth synonym.

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*Prayer.* Day 2 is all about taking note of things and asking questions with a view to understanding the psalm. As you've been busy listening to Christ speak in Psalm 19, what praiseworthy things have come to mind? What needs for others or for yourself pop up in your thoughts? Make a list of them here and then bring them to the Lord in thanksgiving prayer.

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# Day 3 – Meaning

## ▶ Preparation

With solid introductory work behind you, you are well-positioned to answer the question: what is Christ telling us through David’s poem? At the same time, only the Spirit of Christ can give us understanding, so begin with a prayer for insight (it need not be long). Then read the psalm over with care so that you are ready to seek answers.

## ▶ Seeking Answers

1. Examine verses 1–3 where there is mention of proclaiming, speaking, and revealing.

a. Who or what specifically is doing these things?

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b. What is their message?

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2. Examine verses 7–11 where there is mention of reviving, making wise, rejoicing, and enlightening.

a. Who or what specifically is doing these things?

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b. How do they accomplish such things?

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4. After exalting the law of the LORD and holding out the excellency of keeping God’s decrees, David prays for cleansing from his sins (vv. 12–13).

a. What does this say about David’s limitations? And yours?

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b. What does the law (torah) itself teach as the only way for anyone to be found acceptable in God’s sight (Exod 34:6–7)?

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5. What lesson is Christ teaching us in this psalm?

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 **Diving Deeper** *(optional)*

6. According to Psalm 19:1–6, what can be learned about God from his created works? Compare this with Romans 1:19–21 and Acts 14:15–18. Implicitly, what *cannot* be learned about God from creation but can only be learned from God’s word? (See also Belgic Confession Article 2.)

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***Prayer.** Pick out one thing from each half of the psalm for which to praise God (if possible, one you haven’t noted before now). Add to that one need of your own, a need for the church as a whole, and a need for the furtherance of the Father’s kingdom, all as prompted by Psalm 19. Take all these points and weave them into a prayer of thanks and intercession to your heavenly Father. Consider (again) ending with verse 14 which perhaps you’ve already memorized.*

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 **Day 4 – Messiah**

▶ *Preparation*

Until now you have been *hearing* the voice of the Lord Jesus speaking in Psalm 19. Have you begun to *see* him in its content as well? That may take more thought and also the assistance of later revelation. It also takes the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds. Take a moment to pray for that now. Then take the time to read every word of the psalm again, looking for your Saviour.

▶ *Seeking the Saviour*

1. Psalm 19:1–6 makes clear that creation reveals or speaks a message about God.

a. What role did the Son of God play in creating the universe (John 1:3)?

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b. What role does he exercise now toward all creation (Eph 1:20–22)?

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2. How does the incarnation of the Son of God bring about a fuller revelation of God than what David could experience in his time (John 1:14–18; 14:9–10; Heb 1:1–2)?

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3. We saw earlier (Day 2) that the OT wisdom teachers, led by Christ's Spirit, often used creation and providence to teach lessons. Explain how the Lord Jesus did the same in these instances:

a. Matthew 5:43-46 –

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b. Matthew 10:29-31 –

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4. How is David's prayer in verses 12-14 answered in the Lord Jesus Christ? (Think both of what Christ's blood and Christ's Spirit do for believers; see Heb 9:22-26; Rom 8:9-14; 12:1-2.)

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## Diving Deeper (optional)

5. What does Jesus teach about God's law (torah) in Matthew 5:17? Is the law still applicable to Christians today? (See Rom 7:7-12; James 1:22-25.)

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*Prayer.* What did you learn about Christ from Psalm 19 (considered also in the light of the New Testament)? What thoughts or emotions does this evoke within you? This psalm speaks also of confessing sins — what sins can you lay before your covenant God? After making your notes, turn them into a prayer of confession and thanksgiving.

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# Day 5 – Application

## ► Preparation

It's your last day on Psalm 19 but resist the temptation to jump in without praying. We're always dependent on God to help us grasp his will. So, press on with a short prayer for exactly that. Then read the psalm one more time and start thinking about what changes this word of God may be calling you to make with respect to your thinking, speaking, or acting (or all three!).

## ► Seeking Transformation

**1. The Spirit of Christ in Psalm 19 urges us to consider creation and how it declares the glory of God (for e.g. also Pss. 8, 29, 104, etc.).**

**a. What benefits come from such reflection?**

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**b. How could you as an individual (or family) take fuller advantage of creation in this respect?**

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**2. Look at verses 7–8. List the four different effects God's law has on the person who follows it. For each one consider: do I experience these effects? Why or why not?**

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**e. What help does our Saviour offer so that we can grow in these things?**

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**3. Why is it important that creation's testimony to the glory of God "goes out through all the earth" (v. 4)? What is the consequence for all people? (See Rom 1:19–22.)**

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## Diving Deeper *(optional)*

4. a. Why are some of our faults “hidden” even to ourselves (v. 12)? How can we uncover them?

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b. What help does Jesus Christ provide to us to be rid of the guilt of our sins? (See 1 John 2:1–2.)

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c. What help does Christ give for us to become more and more free from sin’s powerful influence over us (Ps 19:3)? (See Rom 6:12–14; 8:9–14.)

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***Prayer.** For this week’s closing prayer, draw at least two points of application from Psalm 19 that you need to work on for yourself. Now think about what specific help your Saviour Jesus Christ holds out for you to make progress. Bring these needs to your Father in prayer, ask him for that particular aid, and then thank and praise your Rock and your Redeemer for his mercy and grace.*

# Chapter 4

## *Week 4 Psalm 37*