

## What is the True God Really Like?

Psalm 19:1-4, 7-11 January 26, 2019 Pastor Robert Hein

Dear Friends in Christ,

**The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”** Psalm 14:1 Today however, atheists are not just pondering this idea quietly in their heart. No, they are saying it out loud, really loud. Proud atheists today insist there is no God, and are working tirelessly to remove any references to God from public view entirely.

One of the most vocal atheists today is a man named Richard Dawkins. He wrote a best-selling book entitled, “The God Delusion” in which he ridicules anyone who believes in God as being superstitious, ignorant, unscientific and old fashioned.

A reporter once asked Richard Dawkins what he would say to God if he discovered that there really was a God, and he had to stand before him for judgment. To that Richard Dawkins smugly replied, “I would ask him why he has kept himself so hidden from us.”

That is an interesting comment that has a little bit of truth to it. The one true God is hidden from our natural senses. We can’t see God. He is a spirit, not flesh and blood. He doesn’t appear to us visibly or speak to us audibly. We can’t reach out and touch him either. The Apostle Paul reminds us, **“God alone is immortal and lives in unapproachable light. He is a God whom no one has seen or can see.”** 1 Timothy 6:16

And yet, God has not left himself without testimony. He has provided clear evidence of his existence to all people in his marvelous work of creation. That’s what King David is teaching us in our devotion today from Psalm 19. He wrote, **“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. 4 Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”** Psalm 19:1-4

David here is using a figure of speech called Personification. We know that the skies can’t talk and the heavens don’t have vocal cords. But if you listen carefully, they can send you a message, a very clear message. All of creation cries out, “There is a God! He

is awesome and wise and powerful and eternal and very creative. He designed everything in this universe and brought it into being in a marvelous way.

Look at this computer and this house up on the screen. Pretty impressive, aren't they? Do you think they just fell out of the sky that way or simply evolved one day by random chance? No, of course not! Their beauty and function are evidence of a designer, an architect, a grand engineer.

We marvel at the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and the computer design of Bill Gates or Steve Jobs. But their designs are simplistic compared to the grand design we see throughout God's work of Creation.

Want some examples? This is what the back of a computer looks like. Lots of wires and cables hooked up to different things for different functions. Pretty complicated. But now consider the human eye. God has designed 3,000 lines from your eye to your brain so you can see and comprehend objects instantly. Or consider the human brain. Your brain can hold up to 15 trillion bits of information. And if we could somehow divide up your brain fibers, and lay them out end to end, they would reach to the moon and back. Now that's impressive! And that is a testimony to the wisdom of our Creator God.

Or consider the sun. That big ball of fire is 93 million miles away from here, and yet its light and warmth sustain all life on planet earth. And the sun is just the right distance from earth, and we are moving at just the right speed and the right rotation at the right axis to provide our seasons of spring and summer and fall and winter every year without fail. Some would consider that random chance or a lucky coincidence. But God insists that anyone who attributes all this wonder and design merely to time and chance is just fooling himself. Truly the heavens declare the glory of God and the skies send a powerful message about the maker of all things, the Lord of heaven and earth.

Tragically Richard Dawkins and anyone else who denies the existence of God will have nothing to say in their defense on Judgment Day. They can't claim ignorance because our invisible God has made his existence evident to all people. The Apostle Paul writes, **"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what**

**may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”** Romans 1:18-21

Atheists don’t have an information problem. They have a heart problem and a spiritual blind spot. They suppress the truth and reject the evidence God offers of his existence because of their sinful pride and their willful disobedience. And they desperately try to silence the voice of conscience which God has placed into all people as well. We believe in an eternal, all wise, all powerful God who brought all things into being by the power of his Word. Atheists believe that time itself can somehow perform its own miracles if only given enough of it. Evolutionary scientist George Wald once wrote:“However improbable we regard evolution, or any of the steps it involves, given enough time, it will almost certainly happen at least once. Time is the hero of the plot. . . . Given so much time, the impossible becomes possible, the possible becomes probable, the probable becomes virtually certain. One only has to wait; time itself performs miracles.”

Well time didn’t build your house and time didn’t build your computer, and time didn’t build this complex universe either. Time can’t perform miracles. Only God can do that. As the writer to the Hebrews plainly puts it, “**Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.**” Hebrews 3:6

Yes, God has given evidence of his existence to all people through his marvelous work of Creation. But that knowledge of God’s existence does not tell us who the true God is or what he has done for us in Christ. Natural knowledge is a starting point, but it is incomplete. If you only rely on your natural knowledge of God, you are likely to worship an idol of wood and stone. If you only go by your human reason, you will invent a god who must be fed and honored and obeyed if you hope to get ahead with him. All man made religions are based on this faulty line of thinking.

To know who the true God is and what he is like, and to appreciate the great blessings he has in store for you and me, God needs to reveal this good news to us in his holy Word, the Bible. We call the last book of the Bible Revelation, but in truth, all of the

Bible is revelation. Our hidden God pulls back the veil to reveal his true identity and his gracious character. The Apostle Paul put it this way, **“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” — the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.**” 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

If you think God is awesome based simply upon his Creative power, I have to tell you, you haven't seen anything yet. Just consider what great things God has done for us in Christ. In our devotion, King David writes, **“The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”** Psalm 19: 7-8

Sometimes the words “law” and “statutes” refer to rules and commands. But in Psalm 19 these terms refer to God's Word in general, to his commands and his promises, in fact, especially to his gracious promises.

You see, in the Bible, God answers the great questions of life. He reveals sacred truths which we could never discover by human reason or the scientific method. In the Bible we discover our Creator God is a personal caring divine being who dearly loves us and is always seeking our best interest. Natural knowledge can tell us there is a God. But revealed knowledge shows us how God made the universe and everything in it in six days, as described in the book of Genesis. Not only that, we also discover how precious we are to God as the crown of his creation. Think of the care that first time parents demonstrate to their newborn child. Everything revolves around caring for their prized possession. Well, in the Bible, we learn that we are God's prized possession and he continues to lavish his blessings and gracious favor upon us every single day.

Martin Luther taught us to confess, “I believe that God made me and all that exists and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my mind, and all my abilities. And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I

own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil.”

Yes, God’s love is evident in his gracious care for us. But the most incredible revelation of God’s love is found in his plan of salvation, carried out for our benefit. You see, although God is always faithful to us, we are not always faithful to him. Like wayward sheep, we have gone astray. Each one of us here must sadly admit our many grievous sins and acts of disobedience. Because of the evil we have done, and the good we have failed to do, we deserve to be cursed and cut off from God forever.

But God does not treat us as our sins deserve. In the Bible, we discover that God promised and sent his Son Jesus Christ into this world to serve as our perfect substitute, in life and in death. Jesus fixed what we broke. He met the requirement of God’s law in our place and he died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. In Christ, we now enjoy peace with God, freedom from guilt, and the cancellation of our sins. In Christ we enjoy life as members of God’s own family of believers. In Christ, we are heirs of all God’s blessings, and we await a glorious eternity with our dear Father in heaven.

This is the good news David was writing about in Psalm 19 which refreshes our soul, makes wise the simple, gives joy to our hearts, and brings light to our eyes. That is why we treasure this book above all others, regard it as holy, and gladly hear and learn it.

But you know something? God went even further to reveal his precious truths to us. He didn’t just give us his written Word. God also sent the living Word, Jesus Christ into this world to reveal God’s truth to us in a visible personal way. I said that God is invisible and lives in unapproachable light. Well, that all changed on Christmas. That’s when the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, took on human flesh and blood. We can’t see Jesus today, but during his earthly ministry, many people did see Jesus, and listen to him, and witnessed his miracles and interacted with him in a personal way. They were seeing God in the flesh. God among us. John tells us, **“No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known.”** John 1:18

Then the Holy Spirit verbally inspired these eyewitnesses of Jesus' majesty to write down what they saw and what they heard in the Bible so that today we too can sit at Jesus' feet and take in his life giving truth.

Do you want to know what the true God is really like? Do you want to bask in the security of his love for you? Do you want to know how to enjoy a close personal relationship with your heavenly Father right now and enjoy a glorious eternity with him in Paradise when you die? Listen to Jesus! Cherish his Word! Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! Like newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation!

Don't let the rants of the atheists trouble you. There are some people who believe the only things you can know for sure are by observation and experimentation. Now the scientific method is useful, but it is also limited. It can't answer all the great questions of life, and it can't discover the one true God of the Bible. This saving knowledge is found only in Christ and his holy Word. The Apostle John tells us, "**These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**" John 20:31

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Even though it doesn't have vocal cords, all of creation is doing a wonderful job of proclaiming God's eternal nature and divine power just by doing what God made it to do. The sun shines, the world spins, the rain nourishes the earth, and the crops grow, just as God designed them to do.

If all of Creation is singing God's praises don't we, the recipients of God's favor, want to praise him all the more? As God's beloved children, we want to let our light shine, so that others may see our good deeds, and praise our Father in heaven. I love the way CW Hymn 260 puts it," The hills and the mountains, The rivers and fountains, The deeps of the ocean proclaim him divine. We too should be voicing Our love and rejoicing. With glad adoration a song let us raise. Till all things now living Unite in thanksgiving: "To God in the highest, hosanna and praise!" Amen.