

Exposition on Psalm 19

by St. Augustine

The sermon explores the glory of God as declared through the heavens, the law of the Lord, and the judgments of the Lord, emphasizing the importance of fearing and loving God.

Scripture: Psalm 18:1-7, Psalm 18:10, Psalm 18:14, Matthew 5:17, John 1:1, 1 John 4:18

Topics: "Divine Revelation", "Gods Law"

Description

St. Augustine preaches on the glory of God revealed through the heavens and the works of His hands, as well as the proclamation of His Word day and night. He emphasizes the universal reach of the Gospel, declaring that the Evangelists' voices have been heard in every language. St. Augustine reflects on the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, His divine nature, and the eternal wisdom and knowledge He imparts. He delves into the purity and wisdom found in God's law, the fear of the Lord as a chaste reverence, and the enduring truth and desirability of God's judgments.

Transcript

To the end, a psalm of David himself.

1. It is a well-known title; nor does the Lord Jesus Christ say what follows, but it is said of Him.
2. The heavens tell out the glory of God Psalm 18:1. The righteous Evangelists, in whom, as in the heavens, God dwells, set forth the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the glory wherewith the Son glorified the Father upon earth. And the firmament shows forth the works of His hands. And the firmament shows forth the deeds of the Lord's power, that now made heaven by the assurance of the Holy Ghost, which before was earth by fear.
3. Day unto day utters word Psalm 18:2. To the spiritual the Spirit gives out the fullness of the unchangeable Wisdom of God, the Word which in the beginning is God with God. John 1:1 And night unto night announces knowledge. And to the fleshly, as to those afar off, the mortality of the flesh, by conveying faith, announces future knowledge.
4. There is no speech nor language, in which their voices are not heard Psalm 18:3. In which the voices of the Evangelists have not been heard, seeing that the Gospel was preached in every tongue.
5. Their sound is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world Psalm 18:4.

6. In the sun has He set His tabernacle. Now that He might war against the powers of temporal error, the Lord, being about to send not peace but a sword on earth, Matthew 10:34 in time, or in manifestation, set so to say His military dwelling, that is, the dispensation of His incarnation. And He as a bridegroom coming forth out of His chamber Psalm 18:5. And He, coming forth out of the Virgin's womb, where God was united to man's nature as a bridegroom to a bride. Rejoiced as a giant to run His way. Rejoiced as One exceeding strong, and surpassing all other men in power incomparable, not to inhabit, but to run His way. For, He stood not in the way of sinners.

7. His going forth is from the highest heaven Psalm 18:6. From the Father is His going forth, not that in time, but from everlasting, whereby He was born of the Father. And His meeting is even to the height of heaven. And in the fullness of the Godhead He meets even to an equality with the Father. And there is none that may hide himself from His heat. But whereas, the Word was even made flesh, and dwelt in us, John 1:14 assuming our mortality, He permitted no man to excuse himself from the shadow of death; for the heat of the Word penetrated even it.

8. The law of the Lord is undefiled, converting souls Psalm 18:7. The law of the Lord, therefore, is Himself who came to fulfil the law, not to destroy it; Matthew 5:17 an undefiled law, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, 1 Peter 2:22 not oppressing souls with the yoke of bondage, but converting them to imitate Him in liberty. The testimony of the Lord is sure, giving wisdom to babes. The testimony of the Lord is sure; for, no man knows the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him, Matthew 11:27 which things have been hidden from the wise and revealed to babes; Luke 10:21 for, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. James 4:6

9. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart Psalm 18:8. All the statutes of the Lord are right in Him who taught not what He did not; that they who should imitate Him might rejoice in heart, in those things which they should do freely with love, not slavishly with fear. The commandment of the Lord is lucid, enlightening the eyes. The commandment of the Lord is lucid, with no veil of carnal observances, enlightening the sight of the inner man.

10. The fear of the Lord is chaste, enduring for ever Psalm 18:9. The fear of the Lord; not that distressing fear under the law, dreading exceedingly the withdrawal of temporal goods, by the love of which the soul commits fornication; but that chaste fear wherewith the Church, the more ardently she loves her Spouse, the more carefully does she take heed of offending Him, and therefore, perfect love casts not out this fear, 1 John 4:18 but it endures for ever.

11. The judgments of the Lord are true, justified together. The judgments of Him, who judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son, John 5:22 are justified in truth unchangeably. For neither in His threatenings nor His promises does God deceive any man, nor can any withdraw either from the ungodly His punishment, or from the godly His reward. To be desired more than gold, and much precious stone Psalm 18:10. Whether it be gold and stone itself much, or much precious, or much to be desired; still, the judgments of God are to be desired more than the pomp of this world; by desire of which it is brought to pass that the judgments of God are not desired, but feared, or despised, or not believed. But if any be himself gold and precious stone, that he may not be consumed by fire, but received into the treasury of God, more than himself does he desire the judgments of God, whose will he prefers to his own. And sweeter than honey and the honey comb. And whether one be even now honey, who, disenthralled already from the chains of this life, is awaiting the day when he may come up to God's feast; or whether he be yet as the honey comb, wrapped about with this life as it were with wax, not mixed and become one

with it, but filling it, needing some pressure of God's hand, not oppressing but expressing it, whereby from life temporal it may be strained out into life eternal: to such an one the judgments of God are sweeter than he himself is to himself, for that they are sweeter than honey and the honey comb.

12. For Your servant keeps them Psalm 18:11. For to him who keeps them not the day of the Lord is bitter. In keeping them there is great reward. Not in any external benefit, but in the thing itself, that God's judgments are kept, is there great reward; great because one rejoices therein.

13. Who understands sins? Psalm 18:12. But what sort of sweetness can there be in sins, where there is no understanding? For who can understand sins, which close the very eye, to which truth is pleasant, to which the judgments of God are desirable and sweet? Yea, as darkness closes the eye, so do sins the mind, and suffer it not to see either the light, or itself.

14. Cleanse me, O Lord, from my secret faults. From the lusts which lie hidden in me, cleanse me, O Lord. And from the faults of others preserve Your servant Psalm 18:13. Let me not be led astray by others. For he is not a prey to the faults of others, who is cleansed from his own. Preserve therefore from the lusts of others, not the proud man, and him who would be his own master, but, Your servant. If they get not the dominion over me, then shall I be undefiled. If neither my own secret sins, nor those of others, get the dominion over me, then shall I be undefiled. For there is no third source of sin, but one's own secret sin, by which the devil fell, and another's sin, by which man is seduced, so as by consenting to make it his own. And I shall be cleansed from the great offense. What but pride? For there is none greater than apostasy from God, which is the beginning of the pride of man. Sirach 10:12 And he shall indeed be undefiled, who is free from this offense also; for this is the last to them who are returning to God, which was the first as they departed from Him.

15. And the words of my mouth shall be pleasing, and the meditation of my heart is always in Your sight Psalm 18:14. The meditation of my heart is not after the vain glory of pleasing men, for now there is pride no more, but in Your sight always, who regardest a pure conscience. O Lord, my Helper, and m

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