

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS
Psalm Nineteen: Patterning A Polemic Against Modern Paganism
(Psalm 19:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. The Christian lives in a world full of modern pagans: Gary Wall listed 77 cults in America alone in his article, "A catalogue of cults: Where they stand on the deity of Christ," Moody Monthly, July-Aug., 1979.
- B. How does the believer respond to the distortions of the cults, particularly the modern paganism ones?
- C. David faced the problem of pagan sun-worship that predominated the Ancient Near East in his day, and he corrected its error with God's truth in Psalm 19. We can learn a lot about "correcting" cultic error from it.

II. Patterning A Polemic Against Modern Paganism, Psalm 19:1-14.

- A. Throughout the Ancient Near East, the sun was worshipped as the god who dispensed justice and moral order on the earth and in the netherworld to come, cf. B.K.C., O.T., p. 807; Z.P.E.B., v. Five, p. 540.
- B. However, David set out to write a polemic against this error, setting the record **straight**: (Ps. 19:1-6)
 - 1. In **contrast** to the pagan concept that the sun was a **deity**, David positively asserted the truth that the sun was a wonderful **creation** by the **Creator-God, Elohim** of Genesis 1!
 - a. David stated that the heavens and all that is in them rehearse the glory of **Elohim**, the name for "God" used in the creation account of Genesis 1, Ps. 19:1.
 - b. The "speech" that they pour forth is **inaudible**, declaring by **inanimate** means the glory of the living Creator-God, Ps. 19:2-3. **Note how David shows the fallacy of paganism which takes the sun to be a god when it cannot audibly speak!**
 - c. The sun, not a god, is nevertheless a **powerful** entity that displays the glory of its **Creator**, 19:4-6.
 - 2. As for the moral order issue, **Israel's** God was that God and **not** the **sun**, Ps. 19:7-11:
 - a. Though the name, **Elohim** translated "Creator-God" appears in Psalm 19:1-6 to focus on God in His creative role over the sun, Psalm 19:7-14 **changes** in its word for God to **Jahweh**, the "I Am" name God revealed to Moses as Israel's uniquely **Covenant-Keeping God**. Though Elohim is Jahweh, the name "Elohim" views God in His Creator role where Jahweh in His personal relationship to Israel.
 - b. Now, as Israel's **Jahweh**, Jahweh has given His **Law** that establishes justice on the earth, v. 7-11: **(1)** Jahweh's Law is blameless, reviving one's entire inner man (*nephesh* = life principle), 19:7a. **(2)** Jahweh's Law is trustworthy, making wise the naive, 19:7b. **(3)** Jahweh's Law is upright, rejoicing the heart, 19:8a. **(4)** His Law is morally pure, illuminating the eyes, 19:8b. **(5)** Jahweh's Law is fear-producing, and that fear is ceremonially clean, enduring forever, 19:9a. **(6)** His Law is reliably true in its judgments, being altogether righteous, 19:9b. **(7)** Jahweh's Law is more to be desired than much pure gold in **value** and more than honey from the comb in **sweetness**, 19:10. **(8)** His Law warns the psalmist, 19:11a. **(9)** That Law is the door to rewards as keeping them yields such divine blessings, 19:11b. **(10)** The Law of Jahweh is able to discern one's own faults beyond his subjective capacity even to define his faults, making it thus of inestimable value, Ps. 19:12. **(Note: David lists ten qualities of the law in correspondence to the Law's Ten Commandments!**
 - c. The **sun** in v. 1-6 is **yellow** in **COLOR** along with **gold** and **honey** which are **less** desirable or valuable than the **LAW**! Hence, the value of the sun itself, like gold or honey, is **dwarfed** by the value of God's **LAW** as that **LAW -- NOT the SUN --** establishes moral and just order on the earth!
 - 3. In keeping with this revelation, David appeals to the God of the **LAW** and **not** the **sun** to gain justice:
 - a. He asks God to forgive his hidden faults that are revealed by the discerning Law of God, 19:12a,b.
 - b. He asks God to keep him from willful sins, that they not rule him so that he might be upright, 13.
 - c. David finally asks **Jahweh**, his Redeemer-Kinsman (Savior) to accept his words and meditation to God's glory over the sun as mentioned in this psalm, Ps. 19:14.

Lesson: David shared his appreciation for the sun's brightness and power, but revealed that it was not a god, but a created testimony to the **CREATOR-GOD'S** power and glory. In effect, he showed how Israel's **Covenant-Keeping God** has used His **WORD** to establish order, an order **NOT** by a sun-god!

Application: Like David, we counter cultism by (a) positively asserting the correct creation order set forth in Genesis, and (b) show the God of Scripture as being the One to obey instead of the false deity!