



# GOD SPEAKS TO THE UNCONVERTED

By Timothy L. Fan

Since God is glorious, a glorious speech about Him must resound throughout the universe. That is, if the universe is, indeed, created by a great, infinite, and yet infinitely Personal God, then the universe ought to have much to say to us about His holiness, majesty, and glory. And it does. The universe is filled with glorious speech about its glorious Creator, and this speech necessarily “*goes out*” to the very ends of the earth. Thus we hear in the Nineteenth Psalm:

*Their line has **gone out** through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun [the sun is here depicted as one of God’s evangelists from the realm of nature, whose speech is about God’s glory], which is like a bridegroom **coming out** of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. (Psalm 19:4-5)*

The natural world, itself, has a message to proclaim to us about God’s glory. Yet the Gospel is the height of that proclamation. The glory of God revealed to us in the flesh and blood of Jesus of Nazareth, both crucified and risen, both descending from Heaven and ascending into Heaven, is the Gospel. And the proclamation of that Gospel also goes out to the uttermost parts of the earth:

*But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: “Their sound **has gone out to all the earth**, and their words to the ends of the world.” (Romans 10:16–18)*

Why are we here? For what purpose do we exist? Are we here merely to survive? Or is human life only to be lived as an endless cycle of work and consumeristic play, work and consumeristic play, such that our loftiest hope is nothing more than to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die?





*handiwork.*” That is, if an uneducated tribal villager wants to know about the glory of God, he simply needs to go out of his hut at night and look up at the stars. When he sees the beauty and complexity of the created order, as revealed in the stars, he hears the message preached to him, quite plainly, that God created the stars, and that God, the Creator of the stars, is vastly glorious.

Yet the poetry gets even better in Psalm 19. Listen, for example, to the blaring silence, or, we may say, the loud quietness of the heavens in verses 2-3:

*Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language; their voice is not heard. (Psalm 19:2-3)*

Some English translations add a relative adverb to verse 3. They read verse 3 to say, “*There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,*” implying that the voice of the heavens is always heard. Yet that is not how the Hebrew text reads. The Hebrew text reads, “*There is no speech nor language; their voice is not heard.*” For, of course, the Lord made the natural realm to be quite mute and dumb. Stars are bright and luminous, but they cannot converse in human languages. Rabbits sniff and grunt, but they are not well equipped to recite the poems of George Herbert.

And yet, the heavens speak! God is so glorious that He can make even the mute things of the created order utter speech about His glory!

*Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world....*  
(Psalm 19:4a)

Do we want to hear Heavenly speech about God’s glory? If so, we need only to listen to the heavens and the firmament. Though they are silent, yet they utter much speech about God’s glory:

*Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion? Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs? **Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth?** (Job 38:31-33)*



And also,

*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?*  
(Psalm 8:3–4)

The heavens declare the glory of God. They utter speech about the vastness of God's glory:

*His lightnings light the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. **The heavens declare His righteousness**, and all the peoples see His glory.* (Psalm 97:4–6)

And yet man is sinful. Man is sinfully depraved. In his rebellion against God, he is unable to please God. In his sinful corruption, he is unable to know God. In the depths of his sinful depravity in which he was conceived, man is under God's wrath. Therefore, as the heavens utter speech about God's glory, they also utter warnings about His coming wrath:

*Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and **there is nothing hidden from its heat.*** (Psalm 19:4–6)

The creation's speech about God's glory is like the sun. It rises and sets over all of the earth. It exults like a bridegroom coming forth from his honeymoon suite, and it runs its course across the sky like a champion runner. Just as every tribe, tongue, and nation knows the need for the warmth of the sun, so too do the heavens declare their need for the warmth of God. And just as there is, for a man riding on a bicycle on a scorching hot summer's day, no escaping the heat of the sun, so too does the sun warn all peoples about the need to repent and be saved from the coming Day of the Lord's wrath. For, the sun's *heat* is very much a picture of God's *wrath*:



*Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the LORD is against all nations, and His fury/heat/wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and as fruit falling from a fig tree. (Isaiah 34:1–4)*

The creation utters Heavenly speech about God’s Heavenly glory. Yet this does not mean that peoples of different religions all worship the same God, only calling Him by different names. By no means! For there is *one* God, and *only one* God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who has revealed Himself in the flesh in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, and thus all other gods are false gods, and abominable gods. Therefore, the creation’s speech calls people to turn from their idols to serve the one, true God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, and thus it *holds the peoples of the earth accountable for their idolatrous rejections of God*. And since the creation’s speech has gone out into all of the earth, this means that on Judgment Day, all of the unbelieving peoples of the earth shall be without excuse for all of their idols and all of their sins against God:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:18–20)*

The creation, then, is full of evangelists. The vast galaxies of the universe are like cosmic billboards that read, “Fear God! Give glory to the God who created all of these!” The birds of the air are like musicians, singing their evangelistic songs, while the jagged mountain peaks above the city skyline are like street preachers, interrupting the covetous affairs of men with their bold and unashamed preaching about God. The volcanic lava that suddenly destroys a small, yet quite wealthy country town speaks to us of the fury of God against sin, even as the pure, white snow that settles silently upon the grime-covered walkways of a great, idolatrous city, speaks to us of



the mercy of God in His willingness to forgive the sins of all who call upon His name for salvation.

Yet this means that all men are without excuse. No one can say on Judgment Day, “I was not raised in a Christian home. It’s not my fault that I did not worship Jesus.” For, every time a man walks outside, the heavens are declaring to Him the glory of God, in contrast with the deadness of the idols of man. And every day that God so graciously sends His rain upon both the righteous and the wicked, the firmament is showing forth both His handiwork and His mercy. And if, like Cornelius in the book of Acts, someone outside of the Church were to respond to the voice of creation as it calls him to turn from idols and to fear the true and living God, humbling himself in repentance before his Creator, then God, who is just, would certainly send that man the Gospel, the saving message of His Son, Christ Jesus, so that that man could hear the Gospel and thus be saved from the wrath to come. It is, then, the sheer wickedness of the human heart, and not a speech impediment inherent in the creation, which causes a man to stop up his ears to the message of the glory of the Creator, and to the demands that that message makes upon his own, everlasting soul.

It is necessary, then, O unbelieving Friend, to allow the voice of creation to bring your soul under the fear of God. *Where were you* when God laid the foundations of the earth and the angels of God shouted for joy? *Were you present* when God fastened the stars in the sky, numbered them in their fullness, and named each one of them—every star in every galaxy of the universe? *Where were you* when God closed in the oceans with doors, bolting them shut, so that the ocean waves could surge upwards towards the dry ground only to a certain point, but then no further, and all at the spoken command of God? *You were not there. You did not yet exist.* Your life and breath are from God. You are *created* by this holy, holy, holy God, and made for the purpose of fearing Him and giving glory to Him. Yet your sins have put you under His righteous wrath. Do you, then, feel the heat of this? Do you understand the hideous nature of your sins against your Creator, and how those sins have plunged you into spiritual darkness and death? Do you realize that your idols, your lying philosophies of so-called spirituality and your sin-condoning blessings of supposed spiritual peace, are false and empty, being taught to you not by God, but by demons?



Do you hear the terrifying, booming thunder of the great storms of the creation calling you to repent of your idolatrous ways, which flow from your idolatrous thoughts about God?

### THE SPEECH OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We hear, then, the speech of the created order declaring to us the glory of God. Yet the speech of creation, by itself, cannot save us from our sins. It can, in a real way, convict us of our need to repent before a holy Creator, but it cannot give to us the Words of eternal life.

Yet, thanks be to God, there is a kind of speech that can save us from our wretchedness before Him. It is God's Word, written down in the Holy Bible, for all of those who have ears to hear. The best speech about God, the only speech that can save us, is the *biblical* kind of speech:

*The law of the LORD is **perfect**, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is **sure**, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are **right**, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is **pure**, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is **clean**, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are **true** and **righteous** altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (Psalm 19:7–10)*

Do you hear this much more perfect and complete speech about God? It comes from the pages of Holy Scripture. And David, the Psalmist, gives us, here, *seven* adjectives about the speech of God's holy Word: it is "*perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, true, and righteous.*" That is to say, the Bible is perfect. It is flawless. It is pristinely faithful in all that it says. It is inerrant (without error) and infallible (without any contradictions or untruths) in every way:

*The entirety of Your Word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. (Psalm 119:160)*

And again,



*All Scripture is [God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17)*

Yet Holy Scripture is not only flawless, but also *of immeasurable worth and of the sweetest taste:*

*More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (Psalm 19:10)*

The speech of Holy Scripture is eternally valuable. It is worth more than mountain land that sits on top of a great, previously undiscovered gold reserve:

*Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold! (Psalm 119:127)*

The speech of the Holy Bible is also eternally sweet. It tastes better than mint-chocolate-chip ice cream on a warm, summer evening, or than juicy peaches on a hot, summer afternoon:

*How sweet are Your Words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psalm 119:103)*

Why, then, are people in America so Bible anemic? Why do adult Americans devour movies and football games by the ton, and yet know less Bible than did most three-year-olds during the days of the Puritans? O unconverted Friend, do you not realize that God wants to speak to you, even you, if only you would humble yourself and listen to His voice in the Bible? Why, then, are you unwilling to read the very Book that He has given to you, for your salvation? A group of *little children* summoned the great Latin philosopher Augustine of Hippo to humble himself under the Bible. They called out, “Take and read, take and read!” and he did, and then he abhorred his former intellectual pride, repented of his idols and his immoralities, and followed Christ. The Bible is the only Book that has been *written by God and breathed by God*. Will you, then, neglect it to your everlasting peril? Or, will you allow God to perform the spiritual heart surgery that alone can save you from certain spiritual death? Will you do so by opening the Bible and





allowing its sharp, healing blade to operate upon your soul? Would not these be the Words of everlasting life to you?

Yet notice one more thing about the Heavenly speech of Holy Scripture. That is, in describing the Word of God, David makes “*the fear of the Lord*” synonymous with the Words of God:

*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever....* (Psalm 19:7-9)

It is impossible to know the Word of God without the fear of God. One cannot understand the commandments of the Lord without the fear of the Lord. For, just as the Holy Bible is as precious as fine gold, so too is the fear of the Lord that precious:

*[Wisdom] cannot be purchased for gold, nor can silver be weighed for its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. Neither gold nor crystal can equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold.... And to man He said, “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.”* (Job 28:15-17, 28)

Like *whole*-grain, honey-wheat bread, the only healthy way to eat the Bible is to read the *whole* Bible, cover to cover, over and over again. Yet people who do not understand the sweetness of Holy Scripture have lost their sense of spiritual smell and have fed so much on the red-hot, poisonous sweets of sin that they have developed seared spiritual taste buds. They lack the fear of the Lord, and so they do not understand the honey-like sweetness of the whole Bible.

Do you want to know the sweetness of the Bible’s speech about God’s glory? Then, read it in the spiritual humility of the fear of the Lord. Be willing to let the Bible impoverish your spirit by putting your selfish pride to death. Also, surrender yourself to the afflictions of the cross, so that sin can be mortified in your body and that Christ’s power made known through your weaknesses.



Tremble, O Friend, at the Word of the Lord. Read the Bible fearfully, with trembling, before the throne of a thrice-holy God. Then, you will begin to taste its sweetness. Then, you will begin to see the Heavenly gold hidden within its pages.

#### HUMAN SPEECH ABOUT GOD'S GLORY: A BROKEN, REPENTANT HEART

We have, then, two different kinds of speech about the glory of God. Firstly, there is the speech of creation, which speaks to all men, so that all are without excuse. Secondly, there is the speech of Holy Scripture, which speaks particularly to the elect of God, such that those who are being saved come to understand both the worth and the sweetness of God's holy Word. Yet there is one more kind of speech about God's glory in Psalm 19. It is the speech of the human mouth, which is the speech of the human heart:

*Moreover by them [God's commandments] Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let **the [speech] of my mouth and the meditation of my heart** be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:11–14)*

God is vastly glorious, so He delights in the kind of speech about His glory that goes out through all the earth. He takes pleasure in the speech of creation, which proclaims His glory. He rejoices in the speech of Holy Scripture, which draws the elect from all nations to fear Him. Yet the Lord takes particular delight in the God-glorifying speech of a broken, repentant human heart:

*Who can understand his errors? **Cleanse me** from secret faults. (Psalm 19:12)*

Human speech is tainted and stained by human sin. Yet our speech can be made clean, and holy, and "innocent" (v. 13) through *repentance*. When we *beg God for the forgiveness of our sins*, not through a righteousness of our own, but *through the righteousness of Christ, who was the Lamb of*



God, slaughtered upon the cross for the just penalty of our sins, then, by faith in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are born again, born of God's Spirit. Then, and only then, our speech is purified:

*Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. **Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.** (Psalm 19:13)*

The Lord takes particular delight in the speech of a human heart that worships Him. He listens, with gracious compassion, to the speech of the penitent heart. He rejoices in the speech of a redeemed heart (a born-again, born-of-the-Holy-Spirit heart), which in its redeemed state cries out for jubilant freedom from sin and joyful slavery to righteousness. And this speech of the human heart is, no doubt, very much a form of speech. For it purifies the *mouth* of a man, and it is *from the heart that the mouth speaks*:

*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For **out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.** (Luke 6:45)*

It is, then, with much wisdom that David prays:

*Let the [speech] **of my mouth** and the meditation **of my heart** be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)*

God is glorious, and so He has ordained much speech about His vast glory. In the speech of creation, in the speech of the Holy Scriptures, and in the speech of the redeemed human heart, God is glorified.

What, then, is the greatest form of speech about God's glory? Is it not the speech that God uttered when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us? Jesus, the Creator, entered into the creation, in real flesh and blood, so that the speech of creation could declare the fullness of the Father's glory. Jesus, the God-man, fulfilled all of the Scriptures, so that the speech of the *written* Word of God might bring much glory to the Person of the *incarnate* Word of God.



Jesus, the Lamb of God, was tortured, spit upon, and nailed to the tree at Calvary, so that repentant sinners, upon seeing His shed blood and believing in Him, might give glory to God, through the new birth in the Holy Spirit.

O Sinner, you who have strayed far from God by neglecting His Word and breaking His holy commandments, do you see your Creator, in the Person of God the Son, bleeding for you upon the cross? Do you see Him lifted up on the cross, pouring out His blood and dying for your sins? If so, do you *hear* His divine *speech*, His saving Word and the convicting voice of His Holy Spirit, calling you to turn from your evil ways, to call upon His name for the forgiveness of your sins, and to worship Him, with tears of love, by knowing His divine love for you, revealed at the cross, and by receiving Him as your Lord and your God?

This is how the whole universe is designed and created to declare the glory of God. The majesty of creation declares His glory. The pristine purity of Holy Scripture declares His glory. And the humbled, regenerate, redeemed human heart overflows with declarations of His glory. So, then, let us employ this sacred speech, this God-fearing speech, as we pray:

*Let **the [speech]** of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,  
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)*

Amen.



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