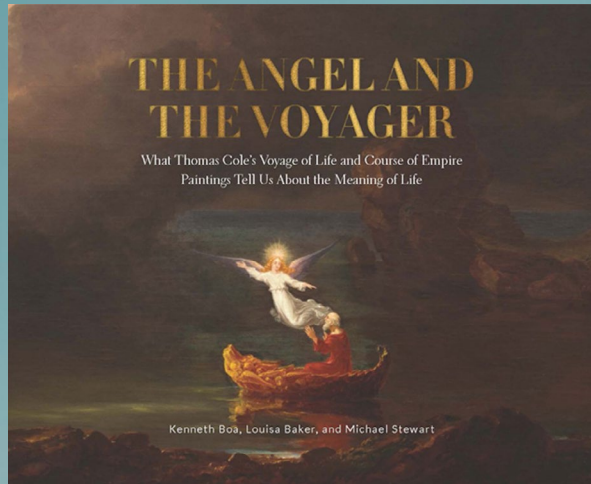


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## TELLING TIME GOD'S WAY

Think back to a time when you went through a particularly trying set of circumstances. Maybe it was military boot camp, several months of a particularly distasteful summer job, or a school math course that induced fear and trepidation. Or perhaps it was a more emotionally stressful time: struggling with a wayward child, the death of a best friend, or the failure of a marriage.

Whatever time in your life you are recalling, you probably remember that minutes seemed like hours, hours dragged like days, and days became more like months. The seemingly glacier-like movement of time only exaggerated the pain, discomfort, or evil you were experiencing. You might have wondered how you could possibly make it even one more day. Looking back now on that difficult period of your life, it's likely that you have a completely different perspective. What amounted to the torturous passage of minutes, you now view as a single block of time. Things that once loomed like Mount Everest now only appear as part of life's landscape—in context not nearly so overwhelming.

When the perspective of distance allows us to view a period of days or weeks as a single unit—as a “day” in our life rather than a series of days—we are close to seeing life as God sees it. Peter explains this best when he says that, with God, “one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.” That means that God does not measure time as we do—He sees all of history at once. There is no past or future with God—everything is “present.” While we view experiences as a string of occurrences—usually a long, tedious string—they are a single reality to Him. He is not perplexed

or intimidated, as we often are, by the evil or discouraging events of history. These events are merely the individual pixels on a screen that at once pictures the Technicolored totality of God's purposes.

Whenever you feel caught in a slough of slow-moving, sinister events, remember two things: First, the day will come when you will see it differently; second, God sees it differently already. The evil that seems to dominate our age has already been dominated by God's design for time—and for eternity.

### God's Promise:

The world's past, present, and future are ever before Him.

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# REFLECTIONS

A teaching letter encouraging believers to develop a clear mind and a warm heart

## THE LOVER OF OUR SOULS

What we could not have learned from the glories and marvels of Your world, You have revealed through Your Word. We know from the heavens and the earth that You are all-powerful, utterly wise, and everywhere present; Your eternal power and divine nature have clearly been revealed. But it was only through Your special revelation in Scripture that we could know that the One who has dominion over all things is also the Lover of our souls. Your Word is a love letter to the people You created to enjoy forever in loving communion with You. May I be a diligent student of Your Word so that it will renew my mind and give me an eternal perspective as I meditate on Your timeless truths.

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# “The greatest poem in the Psalter”

In the opinion of C. S. Lewis, Psalm 19 is “the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world”<sup>1</sup>. This wisdom hymn wedds poetic beauty with theological depth, resulting in a rich and relevant message for today.

## *The World of God (The Skies)*

The psalm begins with a poetic description of God’s general revelation in the world of nature (vv. 1–6). “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge” (vv. 1–2). The brilliance of the sun by day and the wonder of the stars by night combine to communicate the glory of the One who made and rules over them. Although the sun, moon, and stars are silent, they are

eloquent in their utterances which extend “to the end of the world” (v. 4).

The poet describes the sudden flashing of the sun’s rays at dawn from east to west with the metaphor of a splendidly dressed bridegroom who has prepared the nuptial chamber and leaves to seek his bride (v. 5). His final portrayal of the sun anticipates the theme of the rest of the psalm: “and there is nothing hidden from its heat” (v. 6).

## *The Word of God (The Scriptures)*

The second part of Psalm 19 is a hymn extolling the riches of the Lord’s special revelation in His Word (vv. 7–10). While the creation reveals God’s “eternal power and divine nature” (Rom. 1:20), the Scriptures reveal His holy and loving character. Turning suddenly from the world to the Word, the

psalmist depicts the beauty of the Torah, or law of the Lord, in a style reminiscent of the imagery of Psalm 119. Six facets of the diamond of the Torah (law, testimony, precepts, commandment, fear, judgments) refract the dazzling light of God’s goodness and grace. Those who learn and apply it discover that its perfection, purity, and truth restores the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, endures forever, and reflects the righteousness of God (vv. 7–9). It is more precious than fine gold and sweeter than honey because it reveals the good and acceptable and perfect will of the Lord (v. 10; Rom. 12:2).

## *The Way of God (The Soul)*

Psalm 19 concludes with a personal response to God’s revelation in the world and the Word (vv. 11–14). David expresses his intention to follow the way of God in his actions and attitudes. Just as there is nothing hidden

from the heat of the sun, so no soul can hide from the penetrating rays of the law. “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). This psalm begins with the immensity of the cosmos, narrows down to God’s revelation in human history, and then focuses in on the heart of the individual. Suddenly aware of how the radiance of revelation exposes his sinfulness and unworthiness before the living God, the psalmist cries out, “Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me; then I shall be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression” (vv. 12–13).

The Word is a moral mirror that exposes the true character of the soul (James 1:23–25). David recognized his need for

forgiveness not only from obvious sins, but also for flaws too subtle for him to see. Even while we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

One characteristic of spiritual growth is a growing awareness of both the holiness of God and the destructiveness of sin. The maturing believer understands that regular exposure to the light of revelation, along with a commitment to respond to the illuminating and convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, is not optional but essential to personal and spiritual vitality.

The psalmist closes by offering up the fruit of his speech and his thoughts to the One who delivers him from the penalty and power of sin. “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer” (v. 14). David’s greatest desire should be ours as well—to know and love God and to reflect His character. “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity” (2 Peter 3:18).

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1. Lewis, Reflections on the Psalms (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2017), 63. All Scriptures quoted in this newsletter are from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation), as found on BibleGateway.com, except where another translation is indicated.