



Lesson 8 January 21st, 2017

Praise God the Creator

Study Scripture – Psalm 104:1-4, 24-30

Background Scripture – Psalm 104

Key Verse:

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all: the earth is full of Your possessions.

Psalm 104:24

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Psalms is an inspired collection of Hebrew lyric poems that cover a wide variety of topics relating to God and His relationship to man and the nation of Israel. While no one word or theme fully captures the array of subjects in the Psalms, worship and praise are certainly dominant themes. Poetry is a universal speech form distinct from others by its dramatic and emotive use of language. The Psalms at one and the same time, stir the emotions, are awe-inspiring and present God in his most majestic, merciful, holy and transcendent form.

Psalm 104, is regarded as poetically examining Genesis 1, echoing the history of the seven days of creation. One writer thinks of it as a **“Hymn in honor of the God of the Seven Days”**.

This psalm is clearly written in the form of an individual hymn. It was used in the corporate worship of Israel and it certainly has a distinctive Hebrew view of the cosmos. It is as one writer states.

: Here we have one of the loftiest and longest sustained flights of the inspired muse. The poem contains a complete cosmos sea and land, cloud and sunlight, plant and animal, life and death, are all proved to be expressive of the presence of the Lord.

Traces of the six days of creation are very evident, and though the creation of man, which was the crowning work of the sixth day, is not mentioned, this is accounted for from the fact that man himself the singer: some have ever, discerned marks of the divine rest upon the seventh day in Psalm 104:31”.

It is very different from the other cosmology views found in pagan religious texts and it stands today as a position which rejects non-Christian or even modern scientific atheistic views of the world and its creation.

This is no pagan mother goddess, ‘Mother Earth’ iniquity from the satanic goddess cults of the East. This is no worship of creation, the sun, birds, trees, animals, hills, mountains, or seas, but

worship of the Creator, the only true God. One can enjoy and marvel at the exquisite beauty of creation, but one should not worship the creature.

Let us listen carefully to the warning of one writer that

“In some ways, the modern emphasis on “Mother Earth” is simply a revival of the goddess cult of the ancient Middle East”.

Modern man is in this Psalm encouraged to understand, appreciate and share in the awe and trust held by the psalmist as he looked at the earth, moving through the heavens in such a way, that it is not only stable but made capable of supporting myriad forms of life.

The world of nature is a creation, for the idea is that everything that exists is created by God. The world of nature therefore cannot be deified. It is foolish and quite satanic to make and develop theories that say the things of nature and the world came into existence on its own and by some unknowable and unprovable and impossible to prove and incredibly speculative method.

But we should note that the world of nature which remains under the control of its Creator has been created with its own power and dynamic. It has an established order that must be respected but in no way, can it be worshipped by any rational thought.

In fact, man, made on the sixth day as the pinnacle of creation, has been called on to be responsible stewards of every wonderful things God has created. This was a great gift to us from God.

The writer is rapturous in his wonder when he looked at the activities of God and his wise and skilful planning behind creation.

This kind of power and wisdom demands lifelong praise and worship.

The psalm opens with what is the proper response of all of creation to God; worship! The Psalmist then used the most lofty, extravagant and fitting imagery to present God as the superlative Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

God is depicted as authoritatively setting the primordial elements of the created world in their proper place.

The entire creation is presented in broad strokes but God’s continuing active presence is seen in all acts of His creation.

The picture presented here clearly stress that God is transcendent, over all things, having made them. This psalm intends to give us a sense of the power of Yahweh. He is seen in majesty,



dressed as a king in radiant light, traveling and attended by a great number of followers, graciously coming down to create the earth and to impose His dominion and order on it.

So beyond the picture of the omnipotent, omniscient and awesome Creator, the Psalmist shows a God who lovingly tends to His creation, even to the most insignificant of His creatures.

This picture is of course different from that of those who hold that God is a remote and indifferent Creator, who created, set systems in motion and then withdrew Himself.

Note, God is distinct from creation, but not distant or remote from it. He is spirit, and in His essential being invisible, yet He makes Himself known through the natural world; its systems, cycles, events and creatures.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power...Rom.1:20.

In the particular section of Text to be studied, the writer will move from blessing and extolling God's greatness, to the heavens, to the earth and the waters and to the springs and the rain.

The wonders and marvels of God's creation in this psalm speak volumes of His wisdom, power and love. The Psalmist has poetically captured these attributes in a song of sustained praise, celebrating and revering God's worth. God is seen in His works and they proclaim Him infinitely wise and good, and attribute to Him all that is great.

As we study Psalm 104 lets us contemplate God the Creator and like the psalmist, break-out in spontaneous praise and worship. As God's glory in His works of creating, maintaining and governing we should never forget we are dependent creatures.

Remember that those who know this and live for Him, praising Him and blessing Him, will have an incredibly rich ending in complete contrast to the awful end of the rebellious and wicked.

In this poetic hymn of the God ordained creation, in which the writer acknowledges that evil has intruded (Verse 35) we are taught many lessons and several warnings follow.

We will list them here and develop these themes as the lesson progresses. First, we note that the writer adored God as he looked to God's created universe. This is in contrast to those who foolishly despise the creating work of God, having prejudiced themselves against the beauty of the material universe and the delights of nature, ignoring the fact that the book of nature is the first book that God wrote.

Second, note that God has not only prepared different places, but that He has prepared a suitable life-form for every single place that He made.



This would lead us to think that in the spiritual arena, in every place and in every age, God has prepared His suitable people to show His divine life as a witness to His greatness.

Third, every creature created by God has been placed in his own suitable place. This teaches a lesson which is important for interpreting our Christian experience; this would suggest to us that God has placed His people in certain positions that are best for them. Believers are not out of place and should seek direction from God and should be careful about seeking different positions without His approval.

Fourth, God has provided for every creature that He designed and He has provided a shelter for them also.

Fifth, the shelter He made for all His creatures is appropriate for each one. He has also provided a shelter suitable for us, for everyone.

We can look at this in a spiritual way, understanding that God has provided a shelter or refuge in Jesus Christ, for those who believe His word and trust in Him.

Sixth, every creature makes use of the shelter that God has provided, but sadly as Isaiah 1:3 reminds us, the people of God tend to neglect God and do not “consider” Him.

When we examine this psalm in its entirety, it is to be hoped that we come to understand and celebrate the goodness of God, His power, wisdom and His tender mercy and compassion.

God is the only Creator, the only true God. Verse 31 tells us that the “*Lord shall rejoice in his works*”.

We should never despise anything that God has made, for that is a sin. If God rejoices in His creation, we who are children of God must rejoice in His works also and have pleasure in them. We should take care of His works, adore and praise Him, always meditating on His awesome nature and Being.

THE TEXT

Verse 1. *Bless...* is to speak well of, to praise, because God is *very great*. The Psalmist recognized and acknowledged the infinite proportions of God’s perfections; so powerful, so wise, so great. Yet God is personal, He is *my God*.

Note the spontaneous, sincere and genuine self-exhortation which bursts out from the psalmist when he began to consider the great and sovereign nature of his Creator, his God.

He was in deep awe and reverence and set the stage for everything he was about to say and so he put his conclusions up front.

He is the LORD, (the specific name for YHWH), a personal God and greatness belongs to Him.



The royal nature of God is now brought into focus, for majesty and splendour means this is the King. Earthly kings are recognized by their royal regalia and the splendour of their robes but the emblems of God's greatness are on a totally different plain; He is clothed with *honor and majesty*, (Psalm 21:65). This is God; He is clothed in glory.

In light of this glorious God who has shown some of what He is by His works, should we not follow David and hold onto Him joyfully, praising Him and rejecting the creature, his pleasures, and all that it stands for?

Should we not always be thinking of Him, praying and displaying His guidance as we do our daily activities so that His light shines in the world?

Should not our lives be characterized by reverence and holy awe?

Verse 2. In many places in the Scriptures *light* is directly linked to God, His appearance, His truth, the gospel and is set forth as the antithesis of sin and darkness. (God *is light* (1 John 1:5); the *Father of lights* (James 1:17); He *dwells in light* (1 Timothy 6:16); first of the visible manifestation of God's creation, (Genesis 1:3).

It is very easy to imagine God wearing light as a garment, wrapping Himself in it, though He Himself is *light*. In His self-manifestation, we see the light, glorious light. One writer is amazed at this and states:

“The conception is sublime: but it makes us feel how altogether inconceivable the personal glory of the Lord must be; if light itself is but his garment and veil, what must be the blazing splendour of his own essential being! . We are lost in astonishment and dare not pry into the mystery lest we be blinded by its insufferable glory

The faithful will have all eternity to learn more and more about the unspeakable glory of God.

Here is the start of a section presenting God as the wise 'Master-builder'. The infinite scope of His creative power and wisdom is captured in the image of one that stretches a curtain before a door; to a tent, etc. and the heavens do in fact give the appearance of a canopy over the earth.

The image is of God majestically showing Himself, dressed as royalty in radiant light, surrounding Himself with powerful forces, casually and effortlessly creating the heavens just like one would stretch out a curtain. This was such a simple thing for Him, for it is no heavy task.

Verse 3. *Who layeth...* the term would rightly refer to the proper fitting together of the different members of a structure. *His chambers* would be His personal abode, like a loft, an *upper-room*, a penthouse.

This reference is likely an attack on the beliefs of the idolaters who worshiped Baal, who they thought was a victor over the waters. Here God is pictured as being the true victor who is above the waters, a similar idea as in Psalm 29:10, and Amos 9:6.



The idea is that since God is spirit and all powerful, for Him fluids are solid and can be used to serve His purposes just like everything else. The reference to *waters* likely recalls Genesis 1:6-7 and one writer comments in part:

The allusion here is to the waters above the firmament; and the meaning is, that God had constructed the place of his own abode-the room where he dwelt-in those waters; that is, in the most exalted place in the universe. It does not mean that he made it of the waters, but that his home-his dwelling-place-was in or above those waters, as if he had built his dwelling not on solid earth or rock, but in the waters, giving stability to that which seems to have no stability, and making the very waters a foundation for the structure of his abode.

Note this is poetic language giving the idea that what God is and how He moves cannot be made clearer than with a simple use of an easy to understand picture from the nature we see.

Remember however the idea is that God exists in upper rooms and secret palatial residences far above what we can understand, for He has the power and ability to make what is unsubstantial stable. He does not need our kind of material places, but will visit us from His secret and unknowable places.

The all-powerful God uses the clouds, the upper waters, riding along on them to make everyone see His power. God is often shown riding on a cloud, especially when he comes for purposes of vengeance or punishment; (Ps 18:10, Dan 7:13, Matt 24:30).

Who walketh... this is familiar imagery and speaks to God's majesty and command of all the elements of nature.

Riding indicates a dazzling display of power and activity, while walking indicates that God can be gentle, royally moving gently on the wings of the wind.

All the elements of nature then are at His pleasure and so He commands and directs all of nature as He pleases. This God is in total control and is definitely not like the impotent gods in which the pagans believe.

Verse 4. Creation and all of creation do His bidding including the angels. God created them and determined their form and function. This verse is quoted in Hebrews 1:7 where angels were being compared to Christ and they are shown to be servants, quick to execute God's commands.

The angels are immaterial or spirit beings and are as light and mysterious as wind, coming and going quickly and suddenly and are as powerful and glorious as a flame and fire. We are told that one class of angels are called 'seraphim' or "burning ones". But they all are made by God, are all under His control, lovingly serving and doing whatever He pleases. That is the nature and power of the true God.



Note that these beings are created for His purposes. They are a most suitable kind of life and a masterpiece, created for the most suitable activities. They fit into God's creation and they live in heaven with Him. That is their abode. Heaven is a suitable habitation for them and they are the most appropriate kind of life for that kind of habitation.

The holy Angels do not complain about their position, for they know that that is foolish. They know about the wisdom of God and they themselves are wise, always working to please God and never grumbling or complaining.

It is the unholy angels which we call "demons" that were discontented, and foolishly challenged the wisdom of God. They found themselves in rebellion, into the wrong place and their doom was set. They did not accept the appropriate place, work and position in which God had placed them.

We should look at their situation and heed the warning. God has made us in a particularly way, with particular abilities and has placed us in particular positions as He wills.

When we become discontented, strive for positions in which God did not place us, claim gifts that we do not have and do not display the grace of God as we ought to, we are like those wilful rebellious creatures placing ourselves outside of God.

Note now the manifold works of God.

God set the earth on its moorings, gave it a foundation that is forever fixed, permanent and solid. Unlike structures built by men which all have an expected life-span, the earth *abides forever*.

Then here we see the restraining power of God, for the lower waters are restrained, the land stands out of the water and the earth hangs free in space because it has the appropriate internal supports made by God.

See Job 26:2.

Genesis 1:2 of the creation account is in view and this was before God separated the dry land from the waters. At the creation, the waters ruled over the land, so man could not live on that kind of earth. That was the earth in embryo form.

Note that this was not a kind of pre-existent chaos over which God had no control. This was not a battle scene as proposed in the pagan myths, where there was a divine war against chaos and where all kind of foolish beings fought. Any sensible person will reject that kind of fable, as well as reject the modern speculations about a chaos created and redirected so fortuitously by the forces of evolution, as to produce the infinitely complex and exquisite structure and life that we now see. People must be blind and close their eyes to the beauty of nature and exquisite design of nature to believe that there is no God.

This was an architectural masterpiece, with God doing His work one step at a time, in order to create a world fit for His people. At the word of God, the powerful cry of God, the waters



obeyed and moved without question into their designated area, so that the dry land and the mountains and valleys would appear.

This is a poetic description of the power of God stated so factually in Genesis 1. It is as if the waters were subdued by the word of God and simply moved where He wanted. Note that God had set bounds for the waters and had promised that they would never again overflow to cover the earth. God reigns and rules over all of nature and there is no disorganization in what He does.

Note that the voice of God is powerful and the Book of Revelation and other books of the Bible tell us about the mighty voice of even the angels of God. (See Daniel 10:6, 1 Thess 4:16; Hebrews 12:26; Rev 19:17 etc.)

The Creator's benefits flow continuously. He never stops showing His gracious activity. There is a shift here to quietly praising God for His order. God sends life giving water to every one of the *beasts of the field*. The lowliest of animals and the birds benefit from the plants and irrigation given by the Blessed God.

God is the cause of all. He is presented as the true provider of rain. Every creature has been provided for. God gives shelter and He gives food to His creatures. He cares for the animals. God cares even for the plants. The rains come, the rivers flow. The grass and the vegetation grow and the birds fly, and receive a place to live, and food and drink. The moon and the sun and the stars maintain their course at the behest of God.

How much more, says Jesus, does He care for man! Best of all, He provides to take away the guilt of man's sin.

Verse 24. After showing the works of God the psalmist praises God for showing His wisdom in His creation and in how He created. All of the created world belongs to Him and to Him alone. The gods of Canaan did not control anything on earth, or in the sea, or in the air. Satan can roar and tempt all he wants but he too is only a creature and he lives at the permission of God.

The works of God last. They are not like the neglected, half-way done, unsuccessful works of man that are swept away by the forces of nature.

Verse 25. How can we get a good picture of the innumerable works of God? Where can we see the variety?

The psalmist points us to the sea. The sea stretches for a great distance and sits beside many countries. It swarms with the great number of life God had created. The waves and the deep have millions of beings, some huge, some large, some small, and some pretty minute. But they exist and are kept by God. God is responsible for them.



Verse 26. The ships go everywhere plying their trade. Man needs the ships to travel and to trade, and the ships need the sea, which God had created for their use. They do this though Leviathan is also there. These large monsters of the sea play about in the sea. They live there and enjoy their lives there.

Verses 27-28. The minnows and the whales, the birds large and small, the large sea monsters come and knock at the door of their Creator for they rely on God to care for them. The Creator gives them all their daily bread.

God is liberal in His provisions. He is a lavish God.

Verse 29. All of the created beings want to see God's smile continue, for His frown means they will suffer. When God does not open His hand and He takes away their breath they simply die.

The rule is that they are completely dependent on God. All come under that law. The breath of life is under the control of God and He determines the life span of all creatures, including those on the land, those in the air, and the innumerable inhabitants of the sea.

Baal was rejected as the source of life and food.

Verse 30. The Spirit of God provides life. It is God's decision to make creatures die or to make them live. When creatures die, God acts to multiply the survivors and to make the world continue to thrive.

Despite the efforts of Satan and his team, and the work of ungodly men at his direction, there will always be life on earth

The call therefore is made to trust God. His ways are perfect. His decisions are made in holiness and righteousness.

Blessing belongs to God. Praise therefore belongs to God the Creator.

CONCLUSION

The Psalmist saw God in all His works, and they proclaimed Him infinitely wise and good and all that is great.

God's work is good and He was satisfied with it.

God is clearly a MOST GENEROUS GOD. So we say with the famous preacher Spurgeon:

“O dear brothers and sisters, do not be standing out against the generosity of a sin-pardoning God, who bids the sinner come and welcome. Come, believe in Jesus, and find salvation now. O that you would come, it is what God has provided for your wants. Come, take it, for He bids you come.



“The Spirit and the bride say come, and whatsoever will let him come and take the water of life freely.”

To believe is to trust Jesus, to trust his suffering, to trust his atonement, and rely upon him alone for salvation. May God enable you to do it for Christ’s sake. Amen.”

