

Clarke: "This Psalm has no title either in the Hebrew or Chaldee; but it is attributed to David by the Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Syriac.... The Syriac says it is 'A Psalm of David when he went with the priests to adore the Lord before the ark.'"

Psalms 104:1 ¶ Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

To bless the LORD is to adore Him, to praise Him. To bless the "LORD" is to acknowledge Him as the self-existent eternal God. The soul is the very essence of our being. The psalmist identifies the LORD as "my" God. He claims a personal relationship with God even as he acknowledges that God is very great; in fact, He is clothed with honor (grandeur, beauty, glory) and majesty (magnificence, beauty, excellency). As we continue to read the psalm, it will be clear that His magnificent creation testifies to His greatness.

The psalmist claims a relationship with the sovereign God that he adores and honors. When he praises God, his whole being is involved; he is not just going through the motions of an outward ritual.

Psalms 104:2 Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Psalms 104:3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

Psalms 104:4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Psalms 104:5 Who laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.

The psalmist proceeds to describe God as the creator of heaven and earth and all that includes. He is wrapped in the light of His glory like a beautiful robe. Spurgeon made a beautiful observation: "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!"

He has stretched or spread out the heavens as one would a curtain. The prophet Isaiah tells us that He did this with the span of His hand—unfathomable!

*Isaiah 40:12 "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and **meted out heaven with the span**, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?"*

The roof or floor of the heavens (depending on the perspective of man or God respectively) are in the waters. In looking at the Hebrew for clouds, I got the impression that the psalmist is making reference to how the chariot of God is hidden from our view. To say He walks on the wings of the wind I think is reference to His power, especially over the forces of nature.

Verse 4 is confusing to me. Because of the context, most translations reference how God uses the wind and fire to serve as messengers from God to accomplish His purposes. In looking at the Hebrew, it could also be a statement of God's creation of the angels as

rational beings that serve Him with a burning desire. The writer of Hebrew affirms the latter in presenting Jesus as greater than the angels.

Hebrews 1:7 "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."

God has established or fixed the earth in a permanent place in the heavens forever.

Psalms 104:6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

Psalms 104:7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

Verse 6 is a reference to the flood that God sent to give man a fresh start. Wickedness prevailed throughout the earth—except for one man.

Genesis 6:5–8 "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

The flood waters covered the whole earth—to the point of covering the mountains.

Genesis 7:19 "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered."

Once His purpose had been fulfilled, the LORD commanded the flood waters to recede.

Many commentators make reference to the original creation rather than the flood.

Psalms 104:8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

Psalms 104:9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

As they receded, the waters, the mountains appeared to rise up and the valleys were revealed as they went to the places God had appointed for them. He set boundaries that they are not allowed to cross to the point of covering the whole earth again (identifying the flood in context).

Psalms 104:10 ¶ He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills.

Psalms 104:11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

Psalms 104:12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches.

God has put springs in the valleys between the hills to provide water for the beasts of the field, such as the wild asses. They provide places to live for the birds of heaven that

live in the trees that are planted along the banks of the streams and rivers fed by these springs.

Psalms 104:13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

Psalms 104:14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

Psalms 104:15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart.

God, our Creator, waters the hills from the heavens and satisfies the needs of the earth. He causes the grass to grow to feed the cattle and herbs to provide for the needs of men as they plant and grow food by tilling the earth. He provides the fruit to make wine that gladdens the hearts of men and oil to make him rejoice. The Hebrew for "oil" makes reference to grease as well as olive oil and fruitfulness or richness. Though the context is referencing food, I think that application can also be made to the riches that come from the oil from deep in the earth. God also provides for the grains to make bread, a primary food that supports life.

Note from Jewish Study Bible: "The three main crops of the agricultural year: grain (for *bread*, May–June), grapes (for *wine*, August–September), and olives (for *oil*, October)."

Clarke: "In the germination and growth of a grain of wheat there is a profusion of miracles. God takes care of man, and of all those animals which are so necessary to the convenience and comfort of man."

Spurgeon: "Where man cannot reach the Lord can, whom none else can water with grace he can, and where all stores of refreshment fail he can supply all that is needed from his own halls."

Psalms 104:16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

Psalms 104:17 Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house.

Note that "of sap" are words added by the translators. I think the main thought is that the LORD satiates (from the Hebrew for "full") or fills the trees with what is needed for their growth. One reason He planted the trees, such as the great cedars of Lebanon, was to supply homes for the birds of the air.

Psalms 104:18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies.

The high hills made by God provide a refuge for the wild goats and conies ("rock-rabbits" from the Hebrew).

Psalms 104:19 ¶ He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

The psalmist turns his attention to the heavens as he notes that God appointed the moon to mark the seasons or appointed times according to His purposes. This would be especially important to the nation of Israel and determining the times God established for the feasts they were to observe in obedience to His command. He also established the pattern for the rising and setting of the sun. This is important in maintaining the rhythm of life on planet earth.

Note the following comments by [Sally Pobjewski from the "Michigan Today Archives."](#)

"Life on Earth is connected to the daily rhythm of the rising and setting sun. This ancient cycle of light and dark is so familiar it's easy to forget how much it influences our body, our behavior, and even our health. Like all animals, human beings have rhythmic patterns of activity that affect every aspect of our daily lives....Scientists call them circadian rhythms — changes in physical activity, metabolism, hormone production, cell activity, organ function and body temperature — that rise and fall at fixed intervals over roughly a 24-hour period." [end quote]

Psalms 104:20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*.

Psalms 104:21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

Psalms 104:22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

Psalms 104:23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

It is our Creator that has determined the cycle of day and night. The darkness of night is the time when the beasts of the forests come out to seek their prey, their provision of food from God. When the sun rises, they go back to their dens to rest while man takes advantage of the light of day to do the work necessary to his survival and comfort.

Spurgeon: "Darkness is fitter for beasts than man; and those men are most brutish who love darkness rather than light. When the darkness of ignorance broods over a nation, then all sorts of superstitions, cruelties, and vices abound; the gospel, like the sunrising, soon clears the world of the open ravages of these monsters, and they seek more congenial abodes."

Psalms 104:24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

At this point, the psalmist breaks into praise for the many works of the LORD. He notes that it is in wisdom that the LORD made them all—even the ones that I can't help but wonder why, such as mosquitoes, spiders, lizards, fleas, etc. In fact, the earth is full of His creations (from Hebrew for "riches").

Psalms 104:25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

Psalms 104:26 There go the ships: *there is* that leviathan, *whom* thou hast made to play therein.

Not only is the earth or land filled with many creatures of God's creation, so is the sea—from the psalmist's perspective, reference would be to the Mediterranean. It is filled with creatures beyond number, both small and great. The ships that travel the sea share it with the mighty leviathan that makes his home there.

Leviathan cannot be specifically identified, but scripture references him as a great serpent, a dragon, that seems to be connected to Satan. Consider this excerpt from my journal on Job 41.

Leviathan is described as a striking creature to behold. Though tempting to try, he cannot be captured. He is covered with rows of scales that are interlocked so close together as to prevent even air coming between them. He has powerful jaws and teeth. When he sneezes, it produces flashes of light; and he shoots fire from his mouth and smoke from his nostrils. To further emphasize this point, we are told that he can kindle a fire in coals with his breath. He has a very powerful neck and causes terror wherever he goes. The implication is that his skin is so thick and his heart so well protected that no weapon of man can pierce it. He has no fear of man or his weapons. The scales on his underbelly are not only dense, but sharp. His powerful movements in the water make it look like the water is boiling and he leaves a great white wake behind him. He is the proudest of creatures and fears nothing on earth. There is no other creature like him in this regard.

Again, we can note that this is a very powerful creature whose primary domain is the sea. His demeanor is fierce and combative compared to the quiet confidence evidenced by the behemoth. As I have continued to meditate on this section, I think it is possible that these two animals can be seen as types in the creation of the contrast between the Creator and Satan. Behemoth is pictured in peace and at rest in the confidence of his superiority over the other creatures. Leviathan, however, is pictured with great pride and arrogance; he seems to need to bolster his confidence by inciting fear and terror everywhere he goes.

The prophet Isaiah connects the dragon in the sea with leviathan.

Isaiah 27:1 "In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

The coming antichrist is also pictured as coming from the sea and coming in the power of the dragon—Satan.

Revelation 12:9 "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Revelation 13:1–2 "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

Psalms 104:27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.

Psalms 104:28 *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

The psalmist is basically saying that all the creatures of God's creation depend upon Him for providing the food they need to survive. They have to go out and gather or work for what He so abundantly provides; it doesn't just fall into their hands/mouths.

Psalms 104:29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Psalms 104:30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

During times of famine or great need, times when the Creator is seen as "hiding His face," His creatures tremble with fear. They die and return to dust when He takes away their breath—a consequence of the curse of sin.

Genesis 3:19 "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

It is God that sends forth the spirit of new life to renew or continue the cycle of life on planet earth.

Psalms 104:31 ¶ The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

Psalms 104:32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

As the psalmist meditates on the LORD as Creator, he realizes that the glory of the LORD will endure forever; and He will ever rejoice in His works. He is sovereign over His creation and can cause it to tremble in fear before Him with but a look.

Psalms 104:33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

Psalms 104:34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

The psalmist is committed to singing the praises of the LORD as long as he lives, as long as he has being—which means for eternity where he will join all other men that have placed their faith in Him. His meditation of the LORD is sweet and makes him glad.

Several translations impart the idea that the psalmist is praying that his meditation will be sweet to the LORD, e.g. the NIV: "*May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.*"

I think that any time we meditate on the LORD with joy and praise in our heart, it is sweet to his ears.

Psalms 104:35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

The psalmist closes with a prayer for sin and wickedness to be cleansed from planet earth—and I really relate to the psalmist in this desire. I can hardly wait to see Jesus on the throne! He then declares His praise to the LORD with repetition for emphasis.