

## PSALM 104

### CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND JUDGMENT

AUTHOR: Anonymous

INTRODUCTION: Much good work has been done in recent decades, especially by godly men of science, to recover and give appropriate emphasis to the recent, direct, *ex nihilo* creation of this universe by God (Gen1:2; Job38:1-7; Ps33:6-9; Matt19:4; Jn1:1-3; Act17:24-26; Col1:15-16; Heb1:2,10; 11:3; Rev4:11). Included in this is God's past world-wide judgment at the time of Noah's flood (Gen7:11-8:14; Matt24:38-39; 2Pet3:5-6), with all its implications both scientific as well as theological (2Pet3:7).

God's present work of providence, however, seems to be less recognized. Our "modern", secular, humanistic, and scientifically-minded world today seems to think that our universe is self-sustaining and ever operating according to so-called natural laws; sadly, even Christians are susceptible to this kind of thinking. The Bible reveals, however, God is at work moment by moment sustaining and directing His creation (Gen8:21-22; 9:9-17; Isa46:9-11; Jn Act17:28; Col1:17; Heb1:3). This work of God in sustaining and directing His creation theologians call providence, and if God's work of providence ceased for one moment, the universe would end. Scripture teaches, however, that God's work of sustaining this universe will not continue forever; a judgment is coming which will destroy this fallen and cursed creation to make way for "new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness" (2Pet3:10-13).

Psalm 104 praises God for His work of creation, His moment by moment sustaining work of providence over the creation, and His sovereign judgment of the creation (both past and future).

### GOD'S PAST WORK OF CREATION

Note that the verbs describing God's work of creation are all active-voice.

- [1] The greatness of God cannot be comprehended in its fullness by the creature, but we are certainly overwhelmed by a sense of it when we meditate upon God's works of creation, providence and judgment.
- [2] "Who coverest... Who stretchest..." God's divine nature is utterly unlike our own (i.e., Creator-creature distinction). In God's work of creation, He says repeatedly that He "stretched out the heavens" (Isa40:22; 45:12; Zech12:1); as all celestial bodies exhibit red-shift, there may be scientific content in these statements that goes beyond merely poetic language.
- [3] "Who layeth... Who maketh..."
- [4] "Who maketh..." The innumerable angelic host is part of God's/Christ's creation (Cp., Col1:16).
- [5] "Who laid..." Quotation of Job 38:4.

## GOD'S PAST WORK OF JUDGMENT

- [6] In His providence, God judged the world for wickedness and ungodliness at the time of Noah's flood (Gen6:5-7; 2Pet2:5). The flood was world-wide, covering the top of every mountain (Gen7:19-20); as will be seen in v8, however, the mountains before the flood were probably much smaller than those we see today.
- [7] God caused the flood to come, and at His command it ended.
- [8] The KJV translation of this verse obscures the important point in poetic language. The NASB reads, "The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which Thou didst establish for them". After the flood, God dramatically altered the topology of the earth, raising certain land masses to form the present continents and depressing much of the surface to form the present ocean basins. Where did all the water from Noah's flood go? Today it is in our oceans, which cover ~75% of the earth's surface.
- [9] After the judgment of the flood, God established a covenant with Noah, with his seed after him (this includes us), and with the entire animal kingdom. God promised two things: 1) never to bring again a world-wide flood that would destroy all flesh (Gen9:11), and 2) to sustain the post-flood world according to a regular, predictable, seasonal pattern (Gen8:21-22), which makes possible all our scientific endeavors.

The Noahic covenant is still in effect with this present earth and will endure until God's next (and final) judgment by fire (2Pet3:7).

## GOD'S PRESENT WORK OF PROVIDENCE

Note in the verses that follow regarding providence that God is the subject, and the verbs that describe His works are all active voice, as were the verbs describing His creative work (and most are present tense). God is not passively allowing the universe to run its course according to so-called natural law, but rather is actively sustaining and directing His creation each and every moment up to and including the present time.

- [10] "He sendeth..."
- [13] "He watereth..." It is God Who works to provide the water needed to sustain all life on earth. In vv10-13, the psalmist says that God does so in order to care for and sustain the animals He has created. Man is not an animal, but by the principle of argument from the lesser to the greater, He cares for man in the same way (Luk12:22-24).
- [14] "He causeth..."
- [15] In God's work of providence, He has not merely provided that which we need to survive, but He has in grace supplied abundantly more than we need in order to make our lives joyful.

- [16] "He hath planted..."
- [17] Birds have nests by the providence of God (Matt8:20).
- [18] Similarly, God has provided for the shelter of all his animals (Luk9:58).
- [19] "He appointed..." The regular operation of the sun and the moon are necessary for sustaining life on earth, and God has promised to preserve them (Gen8:21-22).
- [20] "Thou makest..."
- [21] When the lion finds the prey it needs for food, it is by the providence of God; "God feedeth them" (Luk12:24).
- [24] "Thou hast made..."
- [26] Leviathan, a large sea creature, the subject of much discussion between God and Job (Job 41).
- [27] "God feedeth them" (Luk12:24).
- [28] "Thou givest... Thou openest..."
- [29] "Thou hidest... Thou takest away..." Every creature alive exists only according to the providence of God.
- [30] "Thou sendest... Thou renewest..." This verse teaches that the Spirit of God is involved today in procreation (Ps139:14-16).
- [31] Note that it says "the glory of the LORD shall endure forever"; it does not say that this creation will endure forever, because it will not (1Cor7:31; 1Pet1:23-23; 1Jn2:17; Rev21:1).
- Nevertheless, the LORD will rejoice in His completed works of creation, providence and judgment of this universe.

#### GOD'S FUTURE WORK OF JUDGMENT

- [32] "He looketh... He toucheth..." As God's providence in the past brought judgment on the world at the time of Noah's flood, so a future judgment is promised to come (2Pet3:10-13).
- [35] The LORD is to be praised even for this coming work of judgment, which is His perfect solution to "the problem [so-called] of evil".