

PSALM 104

This hymn of praise celebrates the power of Yahweh displayed in the creation of the world, and may be called a poet's version of that account given in Genesis. It also describes the dependence of all nature upon Yahweh's providence. The Psalmist breaks forth into wondrous praise at the variety and magnificence, as well as the harmony and proportion, of the works of God in this outward, visible, and perishing world. As we read this psalm, let us contemplate with wondrous praise the miracle of redemption provided for sinful man, provided by the blood of the Lamb, who washed us from our sins in his own blood.

- 1 Bless YAHWEH, O my soul! O YAHWEH my God, You are very great;
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
- 2 covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain.
- 3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot;
He walks upon the wings of the wind;
- 4 He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers.

- 5 He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever.
- 6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters were standing above the mountains.
- 7 At Your rebuke they fled, at the sound of Your thunder they hurried away.
- 8 The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which You established for them.
- 9 You set a boundary that they may not pass over,
so that they will not return to cover the earth.

- 10 He sends forth springs in the valleys; they flow between the mountains;
- 11 they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
- 12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they lift up *their* voices among the branches.
- 13 He waters the mountains from His upper chambers;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works.

- 14 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man,
so that he may bring forth food from the earth,
- 15 and wine which makes man's heart glad,
so that he may make *his* face glisten with oil, and food which sustains man's heart.
- 16 The trees of YAHWEH drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
- 17 where the birds build their nests, *and* the stork, whose home is the fir trees.

- 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge for the shephanim.
- 19 He made the moon for the seasons; the sun knows the place of its setting.
- 20 You appoint darkness and it becomes night,
in which all the beasts of the forest prowl about.

- 21 The young lions roar after their prey and seek their food from God.
22 *When* the sun rises they withdraw and lie down in their dens.
23 Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until evening.
- 24 O YAHWEH, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all;
the earth is full of Your possessions.
25 There is the sea, great and broad, in which are swarms without number,
animals both small and great.
26 There the ships move along, *and* Leviathan, which You have formed to sport in it.
- 27 They all wait for You to give them their food in due season.
28 You give to them, they gather *it* up; You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good.
29 You hide Your face, they are dismayed; You take away their spirit,
they expire and return to their dust.
30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the ground.
- 31 Let the glory of YAHWEH endure forever; let YAHWEH be glad in His works;
32 He looks at the earth, and it trembles; He touches the mountains, and they smoke.
33 I will sing to YAHWEH as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
34 Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; as for me, I shall be glad in YAHWEH.
35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth and let the wicked be no more.
Bless YAHWEH, O my soul. Praise YAHWEH!

PRAYER

Almighty God, you are exceeding glorious, clothed with majesty and honor. You have created all things with infinite wisdom and provided for them all with providential sustenance. They are a beacon of your glory and should draw all men to you in rapturous praise. But, alas, man is determined to give your glory to another. He has set himself as his own king. And when all the beasts of the field look to you for provision, it is man alone who boasts of his own power and holds you in contempt. Send your Holy Spirit, we plead, upon the nations of this world, that proud and sinful man may see his utter folly and wickedness before he is called before your throne of judgment to answer for them. We ask in the name of our precious Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.