



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Psalms 104:1-4 & 24-30

New International Version

January 22, 2017

The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 22, 2017**, is from **Psalms 104:1-4 & 24-30**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the **International Bible Lesson Forum**.

(Psalms 104:1) Praise the LORD, my soul. LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty.

To praise the LORD is to honor the LORD and show our love and thankfulness toward God for who God is and how God thinks and acts especially toward His creation and us

personally. Our soul connects us with God and for Christians our soul connects us directly with the indwelling Holy Spirit. Our soul enables us to think, feel, and make decisions. The psalmist thinks about the truths he has learned about God from the Scriptures and observation. The psalmist feels love for God. The psalmist has decided to praise God as his Almighty King. Everyone has a god or one or more idols, and everyone serves the LORD or idols. The psalmist says the LORD (Yahweh or Jehovah) is his God, the One he worships and serves. His praise to God in this Psalm includes his description of God and reasons for worshiping and serving the LORD. He uses words that the people of his day would associate with a mighty king dressed in festal array or holding court with his subjects. The LORD is great and the King over all creation.

(Psalms 104:2) The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent

When the LORD began to create, we learn from the Scriptures, “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:3-4). The LORD wraps himself in light so He can be seen or so the creation as He creates can be seen and serve as a part of His garment with all of creation in the light revealing God’s splendor and majesty. From observation of creation, we see something of God’s splendor and majesty, and

learn more about God. The “Light” can also mean the “Truth.” When we “see the light” we understand the truth. When we look at the heavens above us, they may look like a tent that covers us. God’s abode is above this tent or above the heavens.

(Psalms 104:3) and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.

In the psalmist’s day, people knew rain fell from heaven or the firmament. They saw clouds in the sky. In poetic imagery, the psalmist described the fact that God’s “upper chambers” or abode and throne room was above the waters or firmament. In the vivid imagination of the psalmist, the clouds can serve as God’s chariots as they move across the sky and God can use the wind to do his bidding. The psalmist wants us to know that the rain, the clouds, and the wind are God’s servants, because God is King over all. God is greater than all creation. And the heavens above the psalmist were full of mystery.

(Psalms 104:4) He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.

Storms and lightning flashes can serve as messengers and servants of God. Angels can be changed into flames of fire and God can change flames of fire into angels. The Scriptures teach, “In speaking of the angels he says, ‘He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire’”

(Hebrews 1:7) and “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14). As the Almighty King, God has the power to do what He knows is loving and wise in any situation, and God can use messengers and angels as His servants and to serve us whenever He sees they can meet our needs. The New Testament tells us that Jesus is greater than the angels, for Jesus is the Son of God: “And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him’” (Hebrews 1:6).

(Psalms 104:24) How many are your works, LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Before the psalmist began to declare some of the marvels of the fifth day of creation, he cannot contain himself and he breaks forth in praise to God. God’s works are so manifold that even today researchers are finding new species of animals, plants, and fish. The earth is full of microscopic creatures up to the largest animals and plants. In addition, God created human beings in His image. Every creature that God has created reveals the wisdom of God, and every scientific study of God’s creation can reveal God’s wisdom to researchers and those who study their writings.

(Psalms 104:25) There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small.

God parted the seas and separated lands and mountains from the seas. Live coral reefs and other forms of sea life often grow slowly among innumerable varieties of plants, fish, and mammals that live in the ocean. Small microscopic shrimp can feed tiny seahorses. Dolphins, squid, sharks, and whales take their place as some of God's great sea creatures. God has created all things, small and great things.

(Psalms 104:26) There the ships go to and fro, and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

Whereas faraway lands once separated people of various nations and races, ships now cross the oceans as a highway to bring people together and enrich kingdoms through trade. The Leviathan is mentioned also in Psalm 74:13-15. God intended the Leviathan to enjoy the sea and be a creature that God and those in ships would enjoy watching when it broke forth above the waters.

(Psalms 104:27) All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

Human beings, human beings on land and sea, animals on land and animals that live in the seas, all human beings and animals depend on God to survive. A person may think he depends on his resourcefulness alone to live and prosper, but all depend on God to supply them with food and oxygen. Intelligent human beings, those with understanding, look to God for their provisions, and they

know the seasons that God has provided for the planting and harvesting of the variety of foods they eat. Here the psalmist praises God not only for creating, but also for sustaining life.

(Psalms 104:28) When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

The Bible teaches that God is personally involved in His good creation throughout all history (someone has said that “history” is “His story”). God did not just create and then decide to sit back to watch and let the world be totally self-sustaining. God personally gives us what we need. We “work” to gather our food, but God has provided the food and God has given the growth to a farmer’s field. The good things we enjoy come from God’s open hand — a sign of love: God is not selfish.

(Psalms 104:29) When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.

For good and sufficient reasons, God sometimes allows or causes His creatures to not have everything they need or want. For example, Job was dismayed at his losses, but God revealed His faithfulness to Job. The psalmist praises God for the cycle of life and death. For good reasons, God sometimes seems far away, but God is still personally involved in all life and death. Jesus said that God even

cares for every sparrow that falls to the ground.

(Psalms 104:30) When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

During various seasons, the face of the ground changes, God brings the springtime after fall and winter. God brings forth the green trees, grasses, flowers, and crops in their seasons. God creates by Word and Spirit, and God's Spirit gives life to all living things. From the Scriptures, we learn, "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2). From the New Testament, we learn with certainty about life after death and the future that God has promised His children, all those who love God through faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do believers need to praise God as the Creator of all things and people?
2. Name one or more acts of Jesus during His public ministry on earth that show He is powerful over creation.
3. Describe some ways that God brought order into His creation instead of disorder.
4. Name one or two of God's creations that demonstrate God's wisdom.

5. Give an example of where the psalmist implies that God enjoyed creating and enjoys His creation.

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
International Bible Lesson.

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