

International Bible Lesson Commentary
Psalm 104:5-9, 24-30

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, September 1, 2013
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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 1, 2013**, is from **Psalm 104:5-9, 24-30**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **International Bible Lesson Commentary** website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught and in *The Oklahoman* newspaper.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Psalm 104:5-9, 24-30

(Psalm 104:5) You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.

Psalm 104 describes the six days of God's creation in Genesis 1, and verses 5-9 describe God's creation on the third day. The Psalm gives good reasons to praise

God as the Creator of all things. God is the foundation of all that exists. God holds in existence all that continues to exist. Because of God, the earth as a whole will never be shaken, even though we may experience natural disasters such as devastating earthquakes and floods.

(Psalm 104:6) You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.

At one time waters covered the entire Earth. All landmasses were underwater, including the mountains. A garment covers or hides from view whatever is underneath of it. The waters hid the land and the mountains from view, but God had put them under the waters. The Creator put the mountains under the seas, and then He revealed what He had hidden when He chose to do so. There are still some mountains under the seas today, and some islands are mountain tops.

(Psalm 104:7) At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.

God created by speaking, "Let there be ..." The Gospel of John tells us that the Word of God created everything, and the Word was God and the Word was with God. Poetically speaking, God "rebuked" the water and it fled exposing the land, the continents, and the mountains. God's voice could sound similar

to, or as loud as, thunder. The personified water or seas heard and “fled” or took “flight” as God commanded. Later, Jesus would quiet a storm and bring peace at His command, because He is the Son of God, the Word of God, who with His Father created all things.

(Psalm 104:8) They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.

As the waters fled, many times they went into the valleys and became rivers, lakes, and streams. God created an orderly world for people, animals, and plants to live. God chose where the lakes, rivers, and streams would reside and run in their courses.

(Psalm 104:9) You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

When God created the continents and set the boundaries for the oceans, He did so in such a way that all the continents would never be covered again as they were before He began to create. Even during the Great Flood in the days of Noah, God provided for the human race, the animals, and the fish in various ways. God will not allow the world to return to a time of primeval chaos, though God will cleanse the world by fire someday.

Psalm 104:24-30

(Psalm 104:24) O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have 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.

(Psalm 104:25) Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great.

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.

(Psalm 104:26) There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

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.

(Psalm 104:27) These all look to you to give them their food in due season;

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.

(Psalm 104:28) when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled 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.

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

(Psalm 104:30) When you send forth 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 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.

Five 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.

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