God Created All
Ps 104:5-9, 24-30
SS Lesson for 09/01/2013

Devotional Scripture: Jer 10:10-16

OUTLINE

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson examines how God Created All. The study's aim is to show that God is the creator and owner of all material and spiritual things. The study's application is to gratefully and willingly place ourselves under the authority of our Creator and rest in His provisions.

Key Verse: Ps 104:24

*O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions*

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The psalmist broke forth with praise to the Lord for all of His Creation, made in His great wisdom. The earth’s many living forms (creatures) are under His dominion. Ocean creatures of various sizes—including the large... leviathan (here a real animal, not a mythological creature; cf. comments on Job 41)—wait for food and other good things (cf. Pss. 103:5; 107:9) from God (cf. 104:21). But if He hides from them they are troubled, as He controls life and death in the oceans. He takes away their breath and they die; He sends His Spirit and others are born. Water is a predominant theme in this psalm (vv. 3, 6-16, 25-26). In the minds of ancient sages, water was a powerful force. This psalm portrays the Lord’s sovereignty over it.

Commentary from Treasury of David by C.H. Spurgeon

*O Lord, how manifold are thy works.* They are not only many for number but manifold for variety. Mineral, vegetable, animal—what: a range of works is suggested by these three names! No two even of the same class are exactly alike, and the classes are more numerous than science can number. Works in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, works which abide the ages, works which come to perfection and pass away in a year, works which with all their beauty do not outlive a day, works within works, and works within these—who can number one of a thousand? God is the great worker, and ordainer of variety. It is ours to study his works, for they are great, and sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. The kingdom of grace contains as manifold and as great works as that of nature, but the chosen of the Lord alone discern them.

*In wisdom hast thou made them all, or wrought them all.* They are all his works, wrought by his own power, and they all display his wisdom. It was wise to make their—none could be spared; every link is essential to the chain of nature—wild beasts as much as men, poisons as truly as odoriferous herbs. They are wisely made—each one fits its place, fills it, and is happy in so doing. As a whole, the "all" of creation is a wise achievement, and however it may be chequered with mysteries, and clouded with terrors, it all works together for good, and as one complete harmonious piece of workmanship it answers the great Worker's end.

*The earth is full of thy riches.* It is not a poor house, but a palace; not a hungry ruin, but a well filled storehouse. The Creator has not set his creatures down in a dwelling place where the table is bare, and the buttery empty, he has filled the earth with food; and not with bare necessities only, but with riches—dainties, luxuries, beauties, treasures. In the bowels of the earth are hidden mines of wealth, and on her surface are teeming harvests of plenty. All these riches are the Lord's; we ought to call them not "the wealth of nations," but "thy riches" O Lord! Not in one clime alone are these riches of God to be found, but in all lands—even the Arctic ocean has its precious things which men endure much hardness to win, and the burning sun of the equator ripens a produce which flavours the food of all mankind. If his house below is so full of riches what must his house above be, where "The very streets are paved with gold Exceeding clear and fine"?
Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

The text is a declaration of the creative majesty of our God. Throughout Psalm 104, the psalmist listed specific components of nature, including hills, trees, lions, the sun, and the moon. As he considered how amazing each part of the creation is, he could not stop himself from praising God. While this text does not directly issue a command for us to follow the psalmist, it is obvious that this is an attitude that we should emulate as followers of Christ. Indeed, the beauty of creation could come only from a God worthy of praise and adoration. Understanding the different words used by the psalmist in this verse helps us appreciate God’s creative work. Notice the word “manifold,” which indicates many different works of God. Modern science is almost overwhelmed by the number of new things being discovered. Books are overflowing with data relating to newly discovered insects, birds, fish, plants, rocks, stars, and planets. In addition, people from all over the world come to get just one glimpse of the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, or the Swiss Alps. Indeed, the world is full of countless works of God's creative hand. The psalmist further said, "In wisdom hast thou made them all." Creation manifests the wisdom of God in an infinitely great manner. Psalm 136:5 is in accord with this when it gives thanks "to him that by wisdom made the heavens." Certainly it takes the wisdom of an omnipotent Designer to hold together the motion of both small molecules and enormous planets. Such wisdom is beyond human comprehension and makes one wonder at the great love o1 God for man. Even David was overwhelmed with the beauty of creation and declared, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:4). The psalmist reiterated his first comment in the text by saying, "The earth is full of thy riches." There truly is no end to the rich supply of what God has crafted. We can be comforted that men and women are included in the list of beings made in God's wisdom and that He considers us infinitely more valuable than any animal or galaxy He has created. Those who have trusted Christ as their Saviour and who therefore are children of God can rest assured that they are valued by God as His most precious creation. The Cross proves this without a doubt. Many passages of Scripture declare that God created everything we see around us. As we gaze at and explore the wonders that surround us in this world, we should emulate the psalmist and respond with an attitude of praise, ascribing to God the glory He deserves as Creator. Such a humble attitude of praise will help us live our lives in a humble manner. Sadly, those who deny God as Creator of the universe and Savior of mankind cannot live out such an attitude of humility. Such people have "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25). Many people in today's society have ascribed the origin of created things to random chance and haphazard mutations. As believers, it is our responsibility to earnestly pray that these individuals would come to know Christ as Savior and share in the joy of being redeemed creations of God.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the outline of the lesson was adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

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Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Being first at something is generally considered a mark of distinction. To be the first in one's family to graduate from college or to be the first runner to cross the finish line are noteworthy. Sometimes being first implies being a pacesetter or establishing a pattern that others will follow. When Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the moon, it marked a dramatic step forward in the American space program. Jackie Robinson's becoming the first African-American to play major league baseball in 1947 opened the door for other African-Americans to do the same. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, begins with the familiar "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). It is with good reason that the first "main character" in the Bible is God. As the Creator, he is the ultimate "first." In this case, it is impossible for anyone to imitate his "firstness" even remotely. Hear his words given through the prophet Isaiah: "This is what the Lord says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6). The only one who has ever made a similar claim truthfully is Jesus, who was God and "became flesh" (John 1:1, 14; Revelation 1:17; 22:13).

Today's lesson deals with God's creative activity as described in Psalm 104. The Psalms have been described as "Israel's hymnal"; as such they cover a wide range of topics, just as any church hymnal does. One of these topics is creation—and specifically God's glory and splendor as seen throughout his creation. Psalm 19:1-6 is a prime example of this; the first verse affirms, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Psalm 104 (today's text) is an especially sweeping tribute to God as Creator. Nearly all of its 35 verses highlight the ways in which he demonstrates his loving care for all he has made. When discussing authorship of the Psalms, many automatically think of King David. That is certainly appropriate since 73 of the 150 psalms are attributed to David in their titles. Two other psalms that have no title are credited to David in the New Testament: Psalm 2 (in Acts 4:25, 26) and Psalm 95 (in Hebrews 4:7). A psalm without a title is often referred to as an "orphan psalm." That is the case with Psalm 104, today's text. But that fact does not detract from its ability to instruct us about God (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

We are living in a day when the thought of God as our Creator is repugnant to many people. Science seems to have become the dominant religion in our country. The public schools and the media appear to have become the evangelistic arm of the evolutionists. There may be someone in your class who believes in evolution and does not believe that God created the world out of nothing. Sadly, many who confess Christianity do not believe that God is sovereign or that we are responsible to Him—or to anyone other than ourselves as individuals. If this lesson gets through to anyone, it will be due to a work of the Holy Spirit. In preparing to teach this week's lesson, we will engage in a spiritual battle in which our only hope of gaining any ground at all is by total reliance on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Bathe this lesson in prayer, and enter the classroom humbly, relying on the Holy Spirit. Read Psalm 104 in its entirety, as it is our background Scripture. While we will be discussing only a few verses from Psalm 104, many of the concepts found in the rest of it will be mentioned. Our commitment as Christians to the authority of the Word of God and to His authority in the universe is being questioned and even opposed by the world at-large. Even among professing Christians and in some Christian schools, there is an espousing of the theory of evolution and its implications. The theory of evolution purports that everything we see in the world just came to be out of nothing for no particular reason. But, based on the Word of God, Christians believe that God created the world and mankind out of nothing for the purpose of displaying His grace, His mercy, and all His other magnificent attributes. Our text builds on this theme and leads the psalmist to enter into praise and worship.

Major Theme Analysis

(SCRIPTURAL TEXT FROM THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION; CROSS-REFERENCES FROM THE NIV)
Creation of the Earthly Realm (Ps 104:5-9)

You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever,
6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.
7 At Your rebuke they fled; at the voice of Your thunder they hastened away.
8 They went up over the mountains; they went down into the valleys, to the place which You founded for them.
9 You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth.

God establishes the foundations (5-6)

An established foundation that was tested and sure (Isa 28:16)
16 So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

An established foundation that is the only foundation (1 Cor 3:11)
11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

An established foundation that is the Head and supporter (Eph 4:15-16)
15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

An established foundation that was built on the work of the apostles and prophets (1 Cor 3:9-10)
9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.

An established foundation that has been sealed (2 Tim 2:19)
19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

God establishes the boundaries (7-9)

Establishes the boundaries of the earth (Ps 74:17)
17 It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter.

Establishes the boundaries of the widows (Prov 15:25)
25 The LORD tears down the proud man's house but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact.

Establishes the boundaries of nations (Isa 10:13)
13 For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings.

Establishes the boundaries of expansion (Mic 7:11)
11 The day for building your walls will come, the day for extending your boundaries.
The Wisdom of the Creation (Ps 104:24-26)

24 How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
25 There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small.
26 There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

The wisdom of vastness

God’s wisdom made possible all life and the forces of nature (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

God’s wisdom made possible all life and the forces of nature of which we know—and those we are yet to discover! The ancient Greeks knew only of four “elements”: earth, air, fire, and water. Modern chemistry’s “periodic table of the elements,” however, contains over one hundred entries, with more presumably to come. In light of these impressive discoveries, humans often think themselves to be wise. But if humanity—which has yet to cure many diseases—is wise, then how much wiser must be the One who created all the intricacies of the universe in the first place! On the timetable of human history, we have only recently begun to explore the wonders of outer space and the complexities of the life forms found in the depths of the oceans. God’s wisdom in creating the universe is beyond our ability to comprehend fully. We look around and continually find new things to astonish and confound us. How sadly ironic to see humans congratulate themselves for their intellect in these matters, and yet ignore their Creator whose wisdom makes their own possible.

Vastness of the heavens (Ps 8:3-5)

3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

Vastness of God’s wonders (Ps 40:5)

5 Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

Vastness of God’s love (Ps 136:5)

5 who by his understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever.

Vastness of God’s knowledge (Prov 3:19-20)

19 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth’s foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; 20 by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

Vastness of God’s judgements (Rom 11:33)

33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

The wisdom of interdependence

Eat or be eaten (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

While we might not think of God in terms of personally arranging every daily feeding schedule for the animals and fish, there is a sense in which He is very much in control of these processes. God placed within these creatures instincts that drive them to certain places at certain times. For some, those instincts will lead them to find food. For others, those instincts lead them to be food. (Most know this as the food chain.) God can personally direct and override these instincts anytime He wishes, as He did in the case of the giant fish that swallowed Jonah. Some may ask, “But how is God caring for some creatures when He
provides them to be food for others?” This concern arises because humans tend to look at members of the animal kingdom in terms of a hierarchy of “values.” Cute, furry animals seem to draw our compassion, while insects are swatted! But in God’s plan insects can be food for some animals (such as bats) just as certain mammals and fish can be food for others (such as seal pups for killer whales). On certain occasions when humans have removed predators from an environment, the result has been overpopulation and starvation of the prey remaining. God has worked out the various orders of creation according to His own priorities and values, not ours.

**Interdependence of the human body** (1 Cor 12:21-26)

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

**Interdependence of saints** (Luke 9:3-4)

3 He told them: “Take nothing for the journey--no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. 4 Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town.

**Commentary from the Life Application Notes**

Why were the disciples instructed to depend on others while they went from town to town preaching the gospel? Their purpose was to blanket Judea with Jesus' message, and by traveling light they could move quickly. Their dependence on others had other good effects as well: (1) it clearly showed that the Messiah had not come to offer wealth to his followers; (2) it forced the disciples to rely on God's power and not on their own provision; (3) it involved the villagers and made them more eager to hear the message. This was an excellent approach for the disciples' short-term mission; it was not intended, however, to be a permanent way of life for them.

**Interdependence of food sources** (Genesis 1:29-30)

29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

**Interdependence of nature** (Psalm 104:10-14)

10 He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. 11 They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. 12 The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. 13 He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. 14 He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate--bringing forth food from the earth:

**The Leviathan** (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Of special interest here is the mention of the *leviathan*. This creature is also noted in Job 41:1; Psalm 74:14; and Isaiah 27:1, although no one really knows what a leviathan is (or was). From the psalmist’s perspective, it may simply refer to a large marine creature, such as a whale. The psalmist’s point is that it was God and no other who created this beast and gave it vast bodies of water to play in. We are thus impressed again by God’s creative power and His desire to provide for His creation.
Mayberry Sea Monster (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Andy Griffith’s TV neighbors (especially Barney Fife) were terrorized by sightings of what appeared to be a huge water dinosaur in a local lake. Barney’s antics, as usual, were hysterical as he “fished” for the monster using whole chickens for bait. The episode concluded with the discovery that the lake creature was merely a fake—carved from wood and used by the owner of a resort restaurant to create publicity for his business. Human nature is fascinated by “believe it or not” reports of new and unusual discoveries. The mystery of unknown elements of creation is intriguing. Perhaps the psalmist actually had never seen “leviathan,” but reports of large sea creatures surely had drifted inland. Since he already believed in a God great enough to create such beings, his mind was open to new evidence. Barney Fife was hardly a credible witness, but the God-breathed testimony of Holy Scripture is reliable. Even centuries ago, the Spirit convinced believers of the limitless power of God to create mighty whales as well as aquatic microbes (and everything in between). “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14).

The Power Used For The Creation (Ps 104:27-30)

27 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time.
28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.
29 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.
30 When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

God’s sustaining power (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

Psalm 104:27-30 speaks of God’s sustaining power. Not only has God created all living things, but He also provides their daily sustenance in two particular ways. Verses 27-28 emphasize first that all of God’s creatures are dependent on Him. Like a great master of a household, God gives His creatures all that they need. His responsibility is to open His providing hand, and their task is to gather what He provides. Second, God is the One who sustains their very lives (Ps. 104:29-30). If God hides His “face” from them, that is, withdraws His care and power, they are troubled. The extent of this trouble is that death results. By God’s power, however, a new generation of creatures takes the place of the old. Through God’s power, life on earth is continually renewed.

Power of provisions

Provisions for both physical and spiritual needs (Psalm 104:15)

Wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.

Personal Commentary

God provides physical blessings to me through food that I need, products that improve my existence (wants), then luxuries that provide me with my desires. God provides spiritual needs for body, soul and spirit. For the Body - "Oil" which is God’s Holy Spirit that provides refreshment and illumination. For the Soul - "Wine" which is God’s Power that provides joy because of contentment and lack of worry. For the Spirit - "Bread" which is God’s Word that provides nourishment

Provisions when I am weak (1 Kings 19:5-8)

5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” 6 He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. 7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.
Provisions when I am needy  *(2 Kings 4:2-6)*

2 Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil." 3 Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. 4 Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." 5 She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. 6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

Provisions that are supernatural  *(Matthew 14:17-21)*

17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. 18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Provisions for good works  *(2 Cor. 9:8)*

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Power of life

Life that God has total control over  *(Job 34:14-15)*

4 If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, 15 all mankind would perish together and man would return to the dust.

Life that only God can destroy  *(Matt 10:28)*

28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Life that only God can give  *(Rom 4:17)*

17 As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed-the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

Life that only God can redeem  *(Rom 5:18)*

18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

The indwelling life through the Holy Spirit  *(Rom 8:11)*

11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Life that is supplied by God's Divine power  *(2 Peter 1:3)*

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
Power of control

Control of all destiny (Ps 135:6-7)

6 The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. 7 He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

Control of creation (Amos 4:13)

13 He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth- the LORD God Almighty is his name.

Control of all authority (Matt 28:18)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Control of time and places (1 Cor 12:18)

18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

Power of enablement

God enables me to do everything (Phil 4:13)

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

God enables through grace (2 Cor 12:9)

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

God enables through His presence (1 Cor 5:4)

4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,

God enables for endurance (Col 1:11)

11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

God enables me from within (Eph 3:20)

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

In the classic movie Mary Poppins, a very proper nanny offers her services to the Banks household, where two rather impudent children live. One of the chores the children need to attend to is cleaning their rooms. To encourage the children to get this task done, Mary presents it as a game—a game she calls, "Well Begun Is Half-Done." Her point is that starting any job properly is the key to completing it well and on time. The importance of the "well begun" principle can also be applied to the understanding of one's purpose for living. If we have no sense of beginnings or origins or cannot with confidence answer the question, "How did we get here?" then the reason for our existence is shrouded in mystery. So, for that matter, is the issue of our future. If
we do not know where we came from, how can we know for sure where we're going? But if we know our beginnings, then we are more than "half done": we are well on our way to grasping our purpose for living and to knowing what the future holds. This lesson begins a series of studies entitled "First Things." We should think of first not just in terms of things that happened first (in a chronological sense), but also in terms of what is of first importance. If God is in control of "first things" (creation), then "middle things" (the present) have purpose, and "last things" (the future) are in his hands as well.

**Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

The psalm studied in this lesson highlights the truth of God's creative work in nature. Everything in this psalm is in direct opposition to today's Big Bang theory of how the world, with all of its design, detail, and beauty, came to be. In some ways, Psalm 104 is a poetic parallel to Genesis 1. In the first four verses of Psalm 104, God is said to have created the heavens. In verses 5-9, the psalmist declared that the same God also created the earth. As we look at verses 24-30, we see the responses to God of what He created. These responses all speak of the mighty power of the Creator.

There is so much for us to learn about our God. Many of the truths in these verses we study this week apply to us today. We all get so busy sometimes that we forget how great and awesome our God really is. The Holy Spirit of God led and guided the psalmist to write about the work of God in the creation of the world we live in. In light of His great power, we know that surely He is able to meet our every need. In fact, He has promised to do so in His Word. He wants us to trust Him for everything. The psalmist's heart was filled with praise to God for His work of creating the world and all that is in it. In another psalm he wrote of the heavens declaring the very glory of God and the firmament announcing His handiwork (Ps. 19:1). People, especially Christian people, should take care of God's creation. That is what God told Adam to do in the Garden of Eden. He was to "dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Mankind still has that responsibility. I read recently that the Pacific Ocean has been called the Pacific garbage patch. This name was given to the ocean because it has been estimated that close to fifty thousand pieces of plastic float on every square mile of ocean. How did all those pieces of plastic get there? Careless, thoughtless humans put them there. That is hardly the way to care for God's creation! Let us all be more careful how we dispose of all our junk.

All of Psalm 104 is like a hymn or poem to God the Creator. It seems the psalmist was led to show how elements of the earth respond to God's greatness in order to remind us how we should respond. The work of God in nature brought the psalmist to praise and worship God. The text for this week's lesson does not tell us about the singing of the birds that God created, but in verse 12 we are told of the birds who dwell in the heavens and lift up their voices "among the branches." It has been said that all of nature is like a grand symphony conducted by God the Creator. Mozart, famous for his musical compositions, is said to have been inspired by the melody of a bird. He even had a pet starling. That bird's "song" moved him to write a piece of music based on the melody he insisted he heard as he listened to its chirps. In these verses the abundance of God's works in nature is acknowledged. "The earth is full of thy riches" (Ps. 104:24). All the creatures on the earth, in the heavens, and in the waters are dependent upon God to supply their needs. We too are told to wait upon Him so that we might be strengthened by Him (Ps. 27:14). To sum up the heart of this lesson, it is that one of our responsibilities is to care for God's creation and to do so with grateful hearts for His bounty.

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. God's majesty is clearly displayed in His marvelous creation (Ps. 104:5-6)
2. Because of His almighty power, God need only speak, and His will is done (vs. 7)
3. Our wise God set limits for creation (vs. 8-9)
4. Praise to God is the proper response of the careful observer when he views the myriad forms of His creation (vs. 24-26)
5. The God who creates always provides for His creation (vs. 27-28)
6. The life and death of all created things are in the hands of the Creator (vs. 29-30)