Praise God the Creator
Ps 104:1-4, 24-30
SS Lesson for 01/22/2017

Devotional Scripture: Ps 8:1-9

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON
Key Verse: Ps 104:24
Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary
Commentary from The Bible Expositor and Illuminator

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

THE CREATIVE GREATNESS OF GOD (PSALMS 104:1-4)
Creative greatness in majesty (1)
Greatness in majesty because nothing can contain God (1 King 8:27)
Greatness in majesty because there is nowhere we can go from God’s presence (Ps 139:7-10)
Greatness in majesty because there is no one or thing like God (Exod 15:11)
Greatness in majesty because of God’s great power and strength (Eph 1:18-21)
Greatness in majesty because God is worthy and deserves it (Rev 4:8-11)

Creative greatness in power (2-3)
Power that is great and awesome (Deut 7:21)
Power that should cause the fear of God (Josh 4:24)
Power that is known (Ps 62:11-12)
Power that causes God’s enemies to cringe (Ps 66:3)
Power that is mighty (Ps 147:5)
Power that cannot be turned back (Isa 14:27)

Creative greatness in authority (4)
Authority because God stands behind every Word He says (Jer 1:17)
Authority because God is the great “I AM” (Ex 3:14)
Authority because God is the creator (2 Cor 1:20-21)
Authority because God is the only one who has the power (Job 40:8-10)

THE CREATIVE WISDOM OF GOD (PSALMS 104:24-30)
Creative wisdom in His works (24)
Wisdom in God’s works because they are great (Ps 92:5)
Wisdom in God’s works because of the display of His power (Luke 9:42-43)
Wisdom in God’s works because they are wonderful (Ps 26:7)
Wisdom in God’s works because they are awesome (Ps 66:3)

Creative wisdom over the seas (25-26)
Wisdom over the seas because God created them (Gen 1:20-21)
Wisdom over the seas because God owns them (Ps 95:5)
Wisdom over the seas because God knew how to split them (Ps 74:13)
Wisdom over the seas because God controls them (Job 38:25-26)

Creative wisdom over provisions (27-28)
Wisdom over provisions so that all have what is needed (2 Cor 9:8)
Wisdom over provisions to do good works (Eph 2:10)
Wisdom over provisions to be generous (2 Cor 9:11)
Wisdom over provisions that come from God’s hand (1 Chron 29:14)

Creative wisdom over life and death (29-30)
Wisdom over life and death through God determining their limits (Job 14:5)
Wisdom over life and death because God is the only One who can destroy both body and soul (Matt 10:28)
Wisdom over life and death including man’s spirit (Rom 8:10)
Wisdom over life and death because God is our life (Deut 30:19-20)
Wisdom over life and death because God can put to death and bring to life (Deut 32:39)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson reminds us to see the wisdom of God in His work and to praise God the Creator. The study's aim is to understand that we will be better off if we accept God's wisdom instead of our own. The study's application is to frame our approach to the realities of life and death according to God's wisdom.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

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

Psalm 104 begins the same way Psalm 103 begins—with the words, “Praise the Lord, O my soul.” Psalm 104 is a glorious psalm in praise of God’s marvelous Creation and of His sustaining of that Creation. Whereas Psalm 103 praises the Lord’s compassion with His people in history, this psalm portrays the Lord’s power, wisdom, and goodness to all Creation. The psalmist spoke of God’s stretching out the heavens in light, His sovereign control of the deep, His adorning the earth as a dwelling place for man, His arranging night and day for life, and His preparing the sea for its life. He then praised God who gloriously reigns over Creation and renews it by His Spirit. In view of this the psalmist prayed that God would purge sinners, who are out of harmony with Creation.

104:1a. The psalmist encouraged himself to praise the Lord (cf. v. 35; 103:1, 22).

104:1b-4. In verses 1b-23 the psalmist praised the majesty of the Lord (You are very great and clothed with splendor; cf. 29:2; and majesty; cf. 45:3) as is seen in His works. The writer began with a poetic description of the heavens. Light, created on the first day (Gen. 1:3-5), is appropriate to the nature of the Lord. To be clothed “in light” means to be characterized by it. In Creation the Lord spread out the heavens like a tent (cf. Gen. 1:6-8; Isa. 40:22), that is, the skies cover the earth as a tent covers tent dwellers. God’s dwelling place is pictured figuratively as being in upper chambers on the waters. He was like a builder making a private room by laying the foundation beams above the waters of the sky. Also the Lord formed all the heavenly elements including clouds, wind, and fire. (On His riding the clouds, see Ps. 68:4.) Psalm 104:4 suggests that God arrays His angels (messengers) with physical phenomena, similar to ways He often manifested Himself.

104:5-9. The psalmist reiterated how God founded the earth and covered it with the waters. In poetic imagery the earth is seen as firmly established on foundations, and “covered” with water (the deep) as with a garment. The psalmist vividly portrayed the Lord’s gathering the waters into rivers and oceans with a boundary (i.e., with shorelines beyond which they cannot go; cf. Job 38:9-10; Jer. 5:22). God’s rebuking the waters suggests they were a chaotic force to be calmed and “conquered.” Some of the wording in Psalm 104:7-9 sounds like the Flood account, but the psalmist was referring to Creation.

104:10-18. In adorning the earth as a place for living, God placed springs in the valleys to give water for animals (vv. 10-12), and He makes things grow that give food for animals and man, and oil (from olive trees) to smooth man’s face (vv. 13-15). Also God provides dwelling places for animals and birds (vv. 16-18). In His wisdom God made the earth amazingly well suited for all forms of life.

104:19-23. The Lord made the moon and the sun to rule the times when various creatures on earth are active.

104:24-30. 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. 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.

104:31-32. The psalmist called for the glory of the Lord to continue since He has such powerful control over Creation.

104:33-35a. The psalmist responded to the greatness of God’s Creation by doing two things. First, he vowed to praise God with song and pleasing meditation (cf. 19:14). This is the proper response of a worshiper who remembers his Creator. Second, he prayed that sinners would vanish from the earth because they are out of harmony with God’s Creation.

104:35b. The psalmist again encouraged himself (O my soul) to praise the Lord (cf. v. 1; 103:1, 22). The final “Praise the Lord” translates the Hebrew hallelu-yaḥ (whence the Eng. “hallelujah”), which occurs here for the first of 23 times in the Psalms (104:35; 105:45; 106:1, 48; 112:1; 113:1, 9; 115:18; 116:19; 117:2; 135:1, 3, 21; 146:1, 10; 147:1, 20; 148:1, 14; 149:1, 9; 150:1, 6).

Commentary from The Bible Expositor and Illuminator

I have often encouraged Christian young people to study science. If a person enters the study of science and nature with a heart for God, he or she will find much for which to praise God. Some have made the study of science into a battleground for truth. And certainly we must seek to make a strong defense for our faith to the wider world. For the believer, however, the study of science is a life of discovering over and over the great wisdom of the divine Maker of all things. And so the first step must be to learn to give God praise. This text is an eruption of praise. It comes in the midst of a great psalm of praise. The writer is overwhelmed with a sense of God's majestic wisdom and power as he takes in all the details of Creation. So the world around us is not first of all a battleground. It is a scene for worship. God's wisdom has resulted in "manifold" works; that is, the results of God's creative wisdom are of many kinds and are shaped in many ways. This psalm mentions God's creation of light, the heavens, clouds, angels, animals, seas, and more. What depth of intelligence and creativity lies in God's nature! How can we even search it all out? We cannot do so completely, so what do we do? We praise Him, and our hearts are enlarged to worship and adore His great wisdom and power. We take in what we can, but always with a view toward adoration and giving glory to God. Our text next makes the straightforward declaration that God's immense and eternal wisdom is at the root of all the creative work of God. There is no debate. There is no consideration of scientific and worldly theories. The plain truth is that everything in the natural world reflects the wisdom of God. Any true student of the creation must become a worshipper of God. All that we see and study points to a loving being of awesome intelligence. It overwhelms the soul and the mind to think about it. Thus we give God praise for His wisdom. Finally in our text, all that God has made and created upon the earth is spoken of as "riches." They are the rich gifts of God. We should experience the world around us with this understanding. All of His creative works—whether an angel (Ps. 104:4), an animal of the wild (vs. 20), a man engaged in labor (vs. 23), or a creature of the sea (vs. 25)—are rich gifts to be received, studied, and appreciated by the worshipping heart. God has made all things for His purposes, and they fit together in His divine plan for life on earth. Let us enjoy His provision of all things, taking each one of them to heart and spending our lives living in awe of the wisdom of the Creator. If the number and kinds of created works are so varied and innumerable, what can we say about the God who is the Author of them all? We often marvel at the inventions of man, especially in this age of technology, but let us always look to the ultimate, creative Author of all things, remembering His glorious wisdom and seeking to live in harmony with Him.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Psalms 8, 33, 104, and 145 to categorize the four as “Songs of Creation.” Psalm 104 also is often paired with Psalm 103, since both feature material drawn from Genesis and both are hymns of praise (note their similar beginnings and endings in that regard). Because of these similarities, some scholars propose that the named author of Psalm 103, who is David, is also the author of Psalm 104, which bears no designation of authorship. Whether or not David wrote Psalm 104, its original concept apparently came from a pagan source: Pharaoh Akhenaton’s Great Hymn to the Sun. This praise of a fictitious sun god is traced to...
Egyptian mythology of the fourteenth century BC. The fact that the pagan sun-hymn came first means that the writer of Psalm 104 would be the borrower. Yet the two are different in vital ways! Their conclusions, the focus of their tribute, and Psalm 104’s dependence on Genesis 1 assured the ancient Hebrew that there would be no confusion between the two compositions. Even so, we may wonder why the psalmist would borrow from the Egyptian sun-hymn in the first place. Perhaps it was because his culture was already familiar with it. That possibility may lead us to theorize further that Psalm 104’s praise of the Creator is an intentional jab at the Egyptian hymn’s praise of a part of creation. We should not find such a procedure surprising. The apostle Paul, for his part, used pagan sources in his sermons and letters to uphold Christ (see Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 15:33; and Titus 1:12). Regarding tone, Psalm 104 has more of the personal element than other praise psalms. The fact that it switches in speaking of the Lord with personal address (“You”) and narrative (“He”) makes it seem suited for both public worship and personal reflection. Vividness is enhanced by the psalmist’s use of the technique called parallelism. That feature, common in Hebrew poetry, involves saying the same thing (or nearly the same thing) with different words. Our lesson today focuses on verses from the beginning and the end of this great psalm, but we should read the whole thing. In so doing, many phrases used in our worship songs will be detected. This testifies to the richness and the eternal value of this hymn of praise.

**Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

**The Creative Greatness of God (Psalms 104:1-4)**

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty,
2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.
3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, who makes the clouds His chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind,
4 Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.

**Creative greatness in majesty** (1)

*Greatness in majesty because nothing can contain God (1 King 8:27)*

27 "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

*Greatness in majesty because there is nowhere we can go from God’s presence (Ps 139:7-10)*

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

*Greatness in majesty because there is no one or thing like God (Exod 15:11)*

11 "Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you — majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

*Greatness in majesty because of God’s great power and strength (Eph 1:18-21)*

18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
Greatness in majesty because God is worthy and deserves it (Rev 4:8-11)

8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Creative greatness in power (2-3)

Power that is great and awesome (Deut 7:21)

21 Do not be terrified by them, for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.

Power that should cause the fear of God (Josh 4:24)

24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."

Power that is known (Ps 62:11-12)

11 One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong. 12 and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

Power that causes God's enemies to cringe (Ps 66:3)

3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you."

Power that is mighty (Ps 147:5)

5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Power that cannot be turned back (Isa 14:27)

27 For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Creative greatness in authority (4)

Authority because God stands behind every Word He says (Jer 1:17)

17 "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them.

Authority because God is the great "I AM" (Ex 3:14)

14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Authority because God is the creator (2 Cor 1:20-21)

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,

Authority because God is the only one who has the power (Job 40:8-10)

8 "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? 9 Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his? 10 Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty.
The Creative Wisdom of God (Psalms 104: 24-30)

24 O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions--
25 This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, Living things both small and great.
26 There the ships sail about; There is that Leviathan Which You have made to play there.
27 These all wait for You, That You may give them their food in due season.
28 What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good.
29 You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.

Creative wisdom in His works (24)

Wisdom in God’s works because they are great (Ps 92:5)
5 How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts!

Wisdom in God’s works because of the display of His power (Luke 9:42-43)
42 Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples,

Wisdom in God’s works because they are wonderful (Ps 26:7)
7 proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds.

Wisdom in God’s works because they are awesome (Ps 66:3)
3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

Creative wisdom over the seas (25-26)

Wisdom over the seas because God created them (Gen 1:20-21)
20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Wisdom over the seas because God owns them (Ps 95:5)
5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

Wisdom over the seas because God knew how to split them (Ps 74:13)
13 It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.

Wisdom over the seas because God controls them (Job 38:25-26)
25 Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, 26 to water a land where no man lives, a desert with no one in it,

Creative wisdom over provisions (27-28)

Wisdom over provisions so that all have what is needed (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.

Wisdom over provisions to do good works (Eph 2:10)
10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
Wisdom over provisions to be generous (2 Cor 9:11)

11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Wisdom over provisions that come from God's hand (1 Chron 29:14)

14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

Creative wisdom over life and death (29-30)

Wisdom over life and death through God determining their limits (Job 14:5)

5 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

Wisdom over life and death because God is the only One who can destroy both body and soul (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.

Wisdom over life and death including man's spirit (Rom 8:10)

10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Wisdom over life and death because God is our life (Deut 30:19-20)

19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Wisdom over life and death because God can put to death and bring to life (Deut 32:39)

39 "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verse 1
1. Prologue104:1a

The unnamed psalmist exhorted himself to bless God. The reasons he should do so follow.

Verses 1-4

The writer pictured God creating the heavens. Splendor and majesty clothe God in the sense that they manifest Him as clothing makes a statement about the person who wears it. Light is good because it brings life and blessing. When God created light He communicated part of His nature to His creation (Genesis 1:3-5). God created the sky as a tent above man’s head.

"As a camper readily pitches his tent somewhere, so God without exertion prepared the earth for habitation." [Note: VanGemeran, p658.]

The writer pictured God building a loft for Himself beyond the water above, namely, above the clouds. Riding on the clouds and wind symbolize God’s majestic authority (cf. Psalm 68:4). Psalm 104:4 is a poetic description of the angels (cf. Hebrews 1:7). Angels do His bidding as wind and fire carry out the will of God on earth.

Verses 1-23
2. Praise for the creation104:1b-23
Verses 1-35
This psalm of descriptive praise is quite similar to Psalm 103. Both begin and end with similar calls to bless God. However, God’s dealing with people is the subject of praise in Psalm 103, whereas His creation and sustenance of the world are the theme of Psalm 104.

"The structure of the psalm is modelled fairly closely on that of Genesis 1, taking the stages of creation as starting-points for praise. But as each theme is developed it tends to anticipate the later scenes of the creation drama, so that the days described in Genesis overlap and mingle here.... One of our finest hymns, Sir Robert Grant’s "O worship the King", takes its origin from this Psalm, deriving its metre (but little else) from William Kethe’s 16th-century paraphrase, "My soul, praise the Lord" (the Old 104th)." [Note: Kidner, Psalm 73-150, p368.]

Verses 5-9
The psalmist described God creating the earth and then covering it with a blanket, as one would cover a newborn infant. He pictured the earth as though it were a building and stressed the stability of what God had made. He did not mean that the earth has literal foundations and is flat. God proceeded to separate the waters on the earth from those above the earth (Psalm 104:6-7; cf. Genesis 1:6-8). Then he separated the dry ground from the waters on the earth (Psalm 104:8-9; cf. Genesis 1:9-13). The seas are humanly unmanageable, but God set their boundaries and prohibited the waters from crossing them. The frequent references to God controlling water in this psalm demonstrate His sovereignty over all that is difficult to manage in creation.

Verses 10-18
God also caused springs to gush forth in the valleys so that the animal world could find water and drink. In other words, God provided graciously for His creatures’ needs. The song of the birds appears to be a song of praise to God for His provision (Psalm 104:12 b). God causes the vegetable world to produce for the benefit of His creatures as well. Clearly man’s ability to grow food depends on God’s more basic provisions. Wine makes people feel good, olive oil makes them look good, and food enables them to produce good things of all kinds. All of God’s provisions are for our welfare. He desires to bless humankind. He even provides for the welfare of trees, birds, and insignificant animals. God has indeed made the earth a remarkable habitat for humanity.

"Baal was supposedly the source of life’s staples, bread (Ugar. lhm), wine (yn), and oil (smn). In direct contradiction to this, the psalmists asserted that the Lord softens the earth with showers (Psalm 65:10) and brings forth "food [Heb. lehem] from the earth; wine [yayin] that gladdens the heart of Prayer of Manasseh, oil [semen] to make his face shine, and bread [lehem] that sustains his heart" (Psalm 104:14-15)." [Note: Chisholm, "A Theology . . .", p261.]

Verses 19-23
God’s creation of daytime and nighttime were also provisions for God’s creatures, especially humankind (cf. Genesis 1:14-17).

Verses 24-30
The psalmist broke out in praise to Yahweh for His wisdom in creating as He did. He also acknowledged that all things God created belonged to Him. This even included the sea with all its hidden treasures. Leviathan probably refers to a large sea animal (cf. Job 41). [Note: A. Ross, p869; Roy B. Zuck, Job, p180.] In the ancient Near East it symbolized chaotic evil. [Note: Marvin H. Pope, Job, pp329-31. For an extensive study of the motif, see John Day, God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament.] This whole psalm is a polemic against the Canaanite gods who supposedly controlled the earth and the sea.

"Rather than being viewed as forces that oppose God, the sea and its creatures, including Leviathan, are presented as prime examples of God’s creative skill (Psalm 104:24-26)." [Note: Chisholm, "A Theology . . .", p259.]

Psalm 104:27-30 describe how dependent all of God’s creatures are on Him for their lives. He supplies or withholds food. They live or die. The writer viewed God as creating new creatures whenever they come to life. This is the work of His Spirit (cf. Genesis 1:2). God is responsible for the birth of all animal life forms, indeed of all life forms. Whereas the Son of God is the agent of creation (Colossians 1:16), the Spirit provides life. For
this reason God often described the Spirit as His breath (Genesis 2:7). The translators have rendered the Hebrew word ruach "breath," "spirit," "air," and "wind," depending on the context.

**Verses 24-32**

3. Praise of the Creator 104:24-32

**Verse 31-32**
The psalmist prayed that God’s glory would continue forever since He wields such powerful control over creation. He also wanted God to rejoice in His great works of creation. Only a touch or even a look from God makes creation respond violently.

**Verses 33-35**

4. Proper responses 104:33-35a

The psalmist vowed to praise God with his mouth and with his mind because of God's creative and sustaining sovereignty. He also prayed that wicked sinners would perish from the earth. They are out of harmony with all of creation that responds submissively to the Creator’s commands.

"The psalmist is not vindictive in his prayer against the wicked but longs for a world fully established and maintained by the Lord, without outside interference." [Note: VanGemeren, p664.]

**Verse 35**

5. Epilogue 104:35b

The psalm concludes as it began, with the psalmist reminding himself to bless the Lord by praising Him. "Praise the Lord" translates the Hebrew halleluyah. The translators often simply transliterated this Hebrew expression as "hallelujah." There are occurrences of this term in the Psalm, and this is the first (cf. Psalm 105:45; Psalm 106:1; Psalm 106:48; Psalm 112:1; Psalm 113:1; Psalm 113:9; Psalm 115:18; Psalm 116:19; Psalm 117:2; Psalm 135:1; Psalm 135:3; Psalm 135:21; Psalm 146:1; Psalm 146:10; Psalm 147:1; Psalm 147:20; Psalm 148:1; Psalm 148:14; Psalm 149:1; Psalm 149:9; Psalm 150:1; Psalm 150:6). The only four occurrences of "hallelujah" in the New Testament are in Revelation 19:1; Revelation 19:3-4; Revelation 19:6, the context being the second coming of Christ.

This psalm is an exposition of Genesis 1. It stresses the sovereignty of Yahweh over all creation. All creatures should honor God and submit to Him because He is the source and sustainer of life.

(Adapted from URL: http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/psalms-104.html#1)

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Many Christians believe that science is an enemy of faith. This does not need to be so. Some elements of Psalm 104 are the ancient version of scientific observations, but these observations drive the psalmist and the reader to greater faith in God, not less. Science has done a fantastic job of documenting the intricacies and interrelated nature of things. Science increases our knowledge of our world daily. As the ancient psalmist marveled at what he could see on the ocean’s surface, today we look in awe at the life-forms on the deepest ocean floor. As with the psalmist, however, a modern person should pause and ask, “Just how did all of this happen?” The explanation that our complex earth and its ecosystems simply developed through random chance over billions of years just doesn’t ring true or seem plausible to most people. For example, why do plants and animals reproduce? Science can help us see how this happens, but cannot answer the basic question of why. Even if just one single-celled life form developed from unplanned processes, why did it develop with the capability of reproduction, which even amoebas have? Since scientific observations offer no answer to this question, we are driven to the conclusion that there must be intentionality undergirding our world. We cannot help but see the hand of the transcendent Creator, who is greater than and distinct from his creation. May we, like the psalmist, recognize God in his mighty power to create as we offer praise and thanks of his care for us.
Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. The majesty of God leads to reverence of Him. We must appropriately respond to God's greatness (Ps. 104:1-4)
2. The variety and magnitude of God's creation are on display in the world around us. God's wisdom and power call for our admiration (vss. 24-26)
3. It is God who provides for the survival of His creation (Ps. 104:27-28; Matt. 6:26)
4. It is God who sustains and upholds the created order and who continues to renew it. The earth is the Lord's. Evolution cannot explain its origin or operation (Ps. 104:29-30)