

## 7. CREATION'S DECLARATION OF GOD'S CARE, GLORY, AND WISDOM

O LORD, *how manifold are your works!*

*In wisdom have you made them all;*

*the earth is full of your creatures.*

PSALM 104:24

IT IS MANIFESTLY CLEAR FROM SCRIPTURE that nature declares the glory and wisdom of God. It is also clear that God doesn't just create man and animals to say, "You're totally on your own." He cares for man and wild beasts. In Psalm 104, it is glorious to read of God's bountiful provision of water, food, and habitat for man and beast. It is not just presented as a cold, hard fact. In Psalm 104:24 quoted above, King David (a man with plenty of experience tending his flocks in the

wilderness) is overflowing with praise and adoration to God because of His manifold works.

It is clear that David has a deep appreciation, not just for domesticated animals, but also for the beauty and glory of wild animals in their natural habitat. His gratitude and praise to God for creating and sustaining it all is a wonderful example for us. You should read all of Psalm 104, but here I just want to point out those particulars dealing with living things that remind us who the Creator and Sustainer of life is. As moderns, it is easy to lapse into the mindset that the world is a huge network of physical cause/effect relationships. As Christians we may acknowledge that God is in control, but too often we think this is only true in some abstract theological sense. But no, He is the source of all water to quench the thirst of all the beasts (vv. 10, 11, and 13) and trees (v. 16). And with those trees He provides birds with good places to nest and sing (vv. 12 and 17). He feeds and provides habitat for the wild beasts too (vv. 18, 21, 22, and 25–28) and it is His Spirit that creates them all (v. 30). God provides grass for the cattle and crops for us to cultivate (v. 14). Also, He is the source of wine and bread to gladden and sustain our hearts and oil to make our faces shine (v. 15). It's also important to consider that God doesn't obligate Himself to sustain all things. When He takes away their breath (and He does), they die and return to dust (v. 29).

Psalm 147:8-9 also says the same thing regarding the source of rain and food for wild animals, particularly lions and ravens.

He covers the heavens with clouds;  
he prepares rain for the earth;  
he makes grass grow on the hills.  
He gives to the beasts their food,  
and to the young ravens that cry.

Job 38:39-41 reinforces this thought:

Can you hunt the prey for the lion,  
or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,  
when they crouch in their dens  
or lie in wait in their thicket?  
Who provides for the raven its prey,  
when its young ones cry to God for help,  
and wander about for lack of food?

Psalm 29:9 tells us that God's word causes deer to bear young: "The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth."

And we see in Job 39:26-30 that God's wisdom created the hawk to soar and the eagle to take flight, build its nest, and spot prey from afar.

Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars  
and spreads his wings toward the south?

Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up  
and makes his nest on high?  
On the rock he dwells and makes his home,  
on the rocky crag and stronghold.  
From there he spies out the prey;  
his eyes behold it from far away.  
His young ones suck up blood,  
and where the slain are, there is he.

Consider the last few chapters in Job (chapters 38–41). Read it all and consider how animals declare God’s glory and how God is sovereign over them all. In answer to all of Job’s complaints, God does not respond with some philosophical justification for allowing Satan to afflict Job with intense, prolonged, and excruciating emotional and physical hardship, pain, and disease. Instead He simply gives Job a powerful natural history lesson including who created, controls, and sustains the earth, the sea, the water cycle, the heavens, and the animals. He also reminds Job of his inability to control the constellations and his lack of knowledge and control of the wild donkey, the wild ox, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, the eagle, and the mountain goats (including their gestational periods). His grand finale is in chapters 40 and 41 where He showcases a couple of His most awesome and mighty creatures—Behemoth and Leviathan. Why does God do this? He is showing Job in no uncertain terms

that He is Almighty God, the Creator, Controller, and Sustainer of all things, and that is the ultimate reason why He can allow bad things to happen to good people.

The more we study God's creation, the more overwhelmed we become with His majesty, power, wisdom, and intelligence. An artist that studies, teaches, and imitates great art becomes a better artist. An engineer that studies, teaches, and imitates great engineering becomes a better engineer. The same is true for cooking, sculpting, and writing; I suppose it is true for any skill. So how do we become wiser? I Kings 4:33-34 describes King Solomon's wisdom:

He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the *wisdom* of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom. (emphasis added)

What is curious about this passage is that wisdom is not just the ability to make correct moral judgments given a complicated situation. It also includes a knowledge of natural history. We may think that Solomon's plant and animal teachings were nothing more than moral lessons that we can glean from simple facts about plants and animals. For example, "Go to the ant, O sluggard;

consider her ways, and be wise” (Prov. 6:6). Ants are obviously industrious and lazy people can learn a thing or two about hard work by looking at ants. But it’s much more than that. There is no reason to think that Solomon wasn’t teaching basic truths about animal and plant biology, and this was considered part of Solomon’s wisdom. In light of the fact that God’s wisdom is revealed in creation in the same way that an engineer’s wisdom is revealed in his engineering, then to study it should make one wiser.

Great are the works of the LORD,  
 studied by all who delight in them.  
 (Ps. 111:2)

### *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS*

1. In what ways does God provide for His creatures? Give several passages that describe His provision.
2. What creatures does God use to display His glory and wisdom? What features are highlighted in each?
3. Can we gain wisdom through the study of His creatures? Explain.