

The Witness of Nature

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Imagine Drinking in the Serenity and Beauty of Eden

Do selective thinking and reflection. Block out all unpleasant events, facts and experiences. Block out wars, block out poverty, block out sickness and death and block out pain. And the world is a beautiful place. Focus on the beauties of nature: the dazzling rays of the sun, flora and fauna, the soothing breezy air, the twinkling stars in the night sky, the shimmering orb called the moon, the azure of the sea and its rhythmic undulations. Men, women, and children. Beautiful families. Father, mother, son, daughter, grandpa, grandma, great-grandparents, niece, nephew, new-born baby! Nutritious food to help man grow and to keep him strong and healthy. Sweet apple, potatoes, pasta, *fufu* and groundnut soup. The world is a beautiful place. The sheer beauty and orderliness of the creation leaves the thinking observer agape: "O LORD, how manifold are thy works!" the Psalmist exclaims, "in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches" (Ps. 104:24).

The Wonders of Creation Call for Praise to God!

The natural world reveals God's unfathomable wisdom and calls for exultation and hope in Him. Not only for His handiworks but for Who He is - His eternal majesty as the unapproachable light! With the evidence of His majesty and power before our eyes, we need to praise Him from the depth our being for all He is. Our praise song is Psalm 104:

Ps 104:1-4

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, Thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

² Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

³ Who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds His chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

⁴ Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire.

He's awesome in nature and majestic in power. He has dignity and greatness in Himself--not a mere honorific conferred on Him by another! And He's a resplendent, dazzling Light, for Himself is light and the Father of it. When He set out to create the universe, it was an effortless exercise. He "stretched out the heavens like a curtain". The whole boundless arched expanse of the sky was suspended in space from one end of heaven to another within a twinkle of an eye by His word of command. And on the rain clouds - 'the waters above the firmament' - Gen. 1:7

- He built his heavenly palace, the same clouds serving as His vehicle whereby He "walks on the wings of the wind"!

God is not limited to the world above the sky or beneath it. He's omnipresent; wherever the wind blows, there He is. He makes His angels [heavenly messengers] '*ruach*', spirits or wind, and his human ministers flames of fire by His ever blazing Holy Spirit! So then, when He travels on "the wings of the wind", He's accompanied by myriads of angels (winds, Heb. 1:7; Ps 18:10; 68:17), while on earth He announces His presence among His ministers by the fire of the Spirit which falls on them! On the day of Pentecost both phenomena associated with God's presence were present:

Acts 2:1-4

¹ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

How the truth of God rings from every corner of the scriptures! First mentioned in a particular scripture, it's reaffirmed and validated and vindicated elsewhere!

The Creator is a Being my soul will bless! It was He who made the earth to be such a wonderful fruitful place. And so our song continues:

Ps 104:5-12

⁵ Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

⁶ Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

⁷ At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

⁸ They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

⁹ Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

¹⁰ He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

¹¹ They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

¹² By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

Ah, "the foundations of the earth", they are such a wonder! They are the ether (the air), for as Job 26:7 clarifies, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing". The earth is also suspended in space, for "He upholds all things [the universe] by His word of power" (Heb. 1:3) for "in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17 ESV).

If the universe has not gone haywire with the planets and stars and comets crashing into one another and erupting into massive fireballs, rest assured that He that keepeth thee neither

sleeps nor slumbers; none of your steps shall slide (Ps 121:3-4; 37:23,31). It's He who says to you, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). You can count on Him; you can gamble your life and future on Him and not have a scintilla of reason to doubt or fear. He upholds you never to abandon you until all He has fulfilled all His goodness in you: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24). "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth" (Isa. 40:22) and has planted its foundations in the atmosphere never to be removed by anyone else as long as He holds it in place!

Once upon a time, the earth itself was in distress--submerged under a blanket of water up to the mountaintops--but the LORD sprung into action and made it habitable and functional. Gen 1:2 reports, "And the earth was without form [Heb. *tohu*], and void [*bohu*]; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters". Some versions say, "And the Spirit of God was brooding over the waters", in the wake of the devastations that had befallen the earth as a result of the "war in heaven" in which Satan was defeated by Michael and cast down to earth together with his rebellious angels (Rev. 12:7-9).

God does not take kindly to mayhem, especially one which bears the traces of the arch-enemy! He ordered the earth into order, and the compliance was immediate! The waters fled at His rebuke, His thunderous voice echoing like a trumpet (Rev. 1:10; 4:1), and the waters hurried to retreat from both the highs and the lows causing the topography of the earth to appear -- mountains rose and valleys descended. And where did all the massive waters go? They gathered unto the place God had found for them - the oceans (Gen. 1:9-10). And He used the sand on the seashore to set a barrier, charging them not to flood the earth again (Jer. 5:22). And mighty as they are, they dare not trespass the porous sand boundary established by His decree!

When God Almighty springs into action, there's no opposing of His will or purpose, whether the obstruction is a mountain or a valley. He will "have His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet" (Nah. 1:3). You have no opposition if this very God is the God fighting your battles for you! Hear His word in Isaiah 51:12-13:

¹² I, even I, am He that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

¹³ And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

Indeed, "where is the fury of the oppressor?"

The fury of the primeval waters vanished at just the roar of His voice, as He commanded them to gather into one place!

Yet He did not drain the earth of all water. He caused springs of water to gush out in the valleys and to run down the hills. Because He's so thoughtful: "They provide water for all the animals in the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the sky live beside them; they chirp among the bushes (vv. 11-12 NET Bible).

He even makes a place for the singing birds!

God Continues to Bless His Creation

The springs He made provides man and beast with a ready and clean source of water. But what if the springs dry up? Lest His creation suffer from thirst and hunger, the LORD made a provision for replenishing the earth's water reserves by sending down rain at periodic intervals to keep the earth fertile and productive:

Ps 104:13-17

¹³ He watereth the hills from His chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works.

¹⁴ He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

¹⁵ And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted;

¹⁷ Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.

God has not stopped blessing His creation; He continues to work 'until now' (John 5:17). No inhabitant of the earth has cause to complain of need because their needs were overlooked or ignored by the Creator. His works of creation and His continuing works of benevolence satisfy all creation. As Eccl. 5:9 points out "the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field".

Grass for the cattle, food for man for his health and nourishment. And a rain-fed, nutrient-rich forest where birds and wild beasts have their habitats. God keeps the ecology whole and intact. No environmentalist can outdo Him!

He even cares for the tiny, fragile creatures and the free-range quadrupeds as well as the nocturnal animals and beasts of prey. And, yes, for man too, His crowning creation:

Ps 104:18-23

¹⁸ The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

¹⁹ He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

²⁰ Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

²¹ The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

²² The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

²³ Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

The Lord God provides the needs of all His creation, including the tiny rock badger for whose sake He made the rock! If you are weak and powerless, you are in good company. David, the warrior king, felt the same and sought defence and safety in the ROCK who made the rock for the rock badger: "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower' (Ps. 18:2). Most of us love to quote Prov. 18:10: "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe".

But what purpose could the night possibly serve?

Well, some animals are creatures of the night and He has their interests at heart too.

He regulates the seasons by the moon, and the sun rises and sets automatically as He has predetermined for it. And one of their blessings is that nightfall allows nocturnal animals to prowl by the light of the moon, as they depend on God for their food. As soon as the sun rises, however, they retreat into their dens so man can peacefully attend to his work and labour until the evening.

Here's perfect wisdom and flawless planning at work. A master Creator of supra intelligence is Yahweh. The Psalmist is overawed and bursts into praise at this point:

O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches" (v. 24).

In wisdom (who is Christ, 1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3) He made all the works of His hands. Not only the things on the earth but also the sea and the things in it:

Ps 104:25-31

²⁵ So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

²⁶ There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom Thou hast made to play therein.

²⁷ These wait all upon Thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

²⁸ That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

²⁹ Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

³⁰ Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth.

³¹ The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in His works.

God foresaw man's need for ships and made the sea! And the whale or the Leviathan's desire to swim and frolic in a boundless pool of water, and He made the sea. All these great sea creatures and their earthly counterparts depend on God to give them their food "in its time" (Heb). The lower creatures know the workings of God--He never does anything before the right time. Instead, He makes "everything beautiful in its time" (Eccl. 3:11).

Therefore, your blessing has not delayed; it's just that its time has not come for God to manifest it. Once you trust Him and meditate on His law, you shall surely bear fruit but at the right time. His word is that you shall be like "a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps 1:2-3).

The whole life of the creature is dependent on God, and they apparently acknowledge this as self-evident truth! God preserves the animal species from extinction. He renews the face of the earth by His Spirit. The animals' very breath is in His hands, and so is man's (Job 12:10). Do you realize your life is a breath away, a heartbeat away, and that the Almighty can literally snuff it out as effortlessly as a child presses a switch to switch off an electric bulb?

But GOD Almighty be praised! He delights in His creation; He delights in you, the work of His hands created for His own glory. He won't destroy you or allow the devil to do so.

No creature of His is an accident. He created each one of them with a purpose in mind and planned and prepared their well-being and happiness from the beginning. Simply put, He made the world in wisdom for His riches to satisfy all His creation!

So, how could God ever forsake or forget you? Nature is your incontrovertible testimony to His faithfulness. He can't and won't ever forsake you (Heb. 13:5). The Lord Jesus tells us in the *Sermon on the Mount*:

Matt 6:25-33

²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

God's obligations towards us are sure and guaranteed. He looks after His creation! But do we look to Him? Do we fulfill our obligations towards Him? Is He the King of our lives? Do we do His will which constitutes righteousness?

That's all He expects from us as His grateful creatures for His gift of life, providence and more. The birds fly in the air and chirp in the bushes singing His praises, and so the fishes in the sea and the beasts of the earth.

We cannot hold back from praising His holy name. We are an instrument of His praise, for we were "fearfully and wonderfully made" by Him (Ps 139:14) for His glory (Isa. 43:7). Yet not only because of us but for all the rest of His wonderful creation. He is deserving of praise and honour from all the works of His hands. And so let's join the Psalmist in his last chorus of praise, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (Ps 150:6). Halleluiah!