

Psalms 102:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

Analysis

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. This verse begins a section (vv. 25-27) contrasting the created order's transience with the Creator's eternality. "Of old" (l'fanim, לִפְנִים) means long ago, in ancient times, from the beginning—pointing back to Genesis 1. God's creative work predates all human history, establishing His priority and authority over creation.

"Hast thou laid the foundation of the earth" (ha'aretz yasadta, הָאָרֶץ יָסַדְתָּ) uses yasad (יָסַד), meaning to found, establish, or lay a foundation. The verb suggests careful, purposeful construction—not random formation but designed architecture. God established earth's foundations with intention, wisdom, and power (Proverbs 3:19, 8:29; Isaiah 48:13).

"The heavens are the work of thy hands" (v'shamayim ma'aseh yadeka, וְשָׁמַיִם מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ) personalizes creation through the metaphor of God's hands. While transcendent, God is portrayed as master craftsman who shaped the cosmos. Ma'aseh (מַעֲשֵׂה) means work, deed, or handiwork—emphasizing that creation bears its Maker's imprint, reflecting His character and purposes.

This verse establishes that everything in creation—earth and heavens, matter and space—originates from God's creative will. Creation isn't eternal or self-existent but contingent, dependent on God for origin and continued existence. This

foundation sets up verses 26-27's stunning claim: even creation will perish, but the Creator endures eternally.

Historical Context

Psalm 102:25-27 is quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12 and applied directly to Jesus Christ, identifying Him as the Creator through whom God made the worlds. This stunning New Testament interpretation reveals that the Son was the agent of creation, existing before all created things (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16-17).

The concept of God laying earth's foundations contrasts with ancient Near Eastern creation myths. Babylonian Enuma Elish portrayed creation resulting from violent conflict between deities, with earth formed from a slain goddess's corpse. Egyptian myths described creation emerging from primordial waters. Against these violent, chaotic narratives, Israel's creation theology presents purposeful divine design executed through sovereign word and wisdom.

For exilic Israel, this affirmation was crucial. Babylonians claimed Marduk created and controlled the cosmos, justifying Babylonian supremacy. But Israel's God was the true Creator—Marduk was merely an idol, Babylon merely a temporary empire. The eternal Creator who made earth and heaven would surely restore His people.

Modern cosmology's discovery of the universe's finite age (beginning with the Big Bang ~13.8 billion years ago) and eventual heat death aligns remarkably with this psalm's claim that creation had a beginning and will have an end. Only the Creator transcends the created order's temporal boundaries.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing creation as 'the work of God's hands' affect our attitude toward environmental stewardship, scientific inquiry, and technological development?
2. What implications does creation's contingency (dependence on God) have for understanding natural laws, miracles, and providence?
3. How should the knowledge that even the cosmos is temporary (vv. 26-27) shape priorities regarding material possessions, achievements, and legacy?

Interlinear Text

לְ פָנִים	הָאָרֶץ	יָסַדְתָּ	וַיַּעַשׂ ה'	יְדֵי יְיָ
Of old	of the earth	hast thou laid the foundation	are the work	of thy hands
H6440	H776	H3245	H4639	H3027

וַיִּשְׂמְרוּ שָׁמַיִם:

and the heavens

H8064

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 1:1 (Parallel theme): In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Exodus 20:11 (Parallel theme): For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Jeremiah 32:17 (Parallel theme): Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

Genesis 2:1 (Parallel theme): Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

Psalms 96:5 (Parallel theme): For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

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