

Psalm 104:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

God makes darkness and it becomes night, when 'all the beasts of the forest creep forth.' Even darkness serves God's purposes, providing time for nocturnal creatures to emerge. Darkness isn't evil here but part of creation's rhythm. Night has its proper function in God's design. This contrasts with darkness as metaphor for evil elsewhere. Christ is the light (John 8:12) who overcomes evil darkness, yet He also ordained physical darkness for rest and certain creatures' activity. The Reformed understanding distinguishes between creation's good darkness and sin's moral darkness.

Historical Context

Night's dangers were real in the ancient world—wild animals hunted, and travel was hazardous. Yet this verse celebrates night as part of God's good design, serving His purposes for creation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between accepting God's ordained limits (like night/ rest) and evil darkness that must be resisted?
2. What does God's design of both day and night teach about the rhythm of work and rest in your life?

Interlinear Text

תְּמַשֵּׁת	שָׁמֶן	חַשְׁבָּן	אֵלֶּה	בָּוּ	שְׁמַרְתָּ	כָּל
Thou makest	darkness	H1961	and it is night	H0	do creep	H3605
H7896	H2822		H3915		H7430	
מִתְחַדֵּה	וְעַרְבָּה					
wherein all the beasts	of the forest					
H2416	H3293					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 45:7 (Darkness): I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.

Psalms 74:16 (Parallel theme): The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.