

Psalms 104:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Analysis

O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. This verse provides the psalm's theological climax, marveling at creation's diversity, design, and abundance. "O LORD, how manifold are thy works" (mah-rabu ma'aseka Yahweh, מַה־רַּבּוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה) expresses wonder at creation's staggering variety. Rabu (רַבּוּ) means numerous, abundant, or great—covering both quantity and quality. Ma'aseka (מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, "thy works") includes everything God has made—from galaxies to subatomic particles, from massive whales to microscopic bacteria.

Modern science confirms this assessment spectacularly. Biologists estimate 8.7 million eukaryotic species exist (with many still undiscovered), the observable universe contains ~2 trillion galaxies, each with hundreds of billions of stars. Creation's diversity exceeds human capacity to catalog or comprehend—yet the psalmist attributes this not to random chance but to purposeful design.

"In wisdom hast thou made them all" (kulam b'chokmah asita, כָּלֵם בְּחִכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ) identifies divine wisdom as creation's organizing principle. Chokmah (חִכְמָה) means skill, expertise, or intelligent design. Creation isn't arbitrary or haphazard but reflects careful planning, elegant solutions, and integrated systems. This anticipates Proverbs 8:22-31, where personified Wisdom assists in creation.

"The earth is full of thy riches" (mal'ah ha'aretz qinyaneka, מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ קִינְיָנְךָ) uses qinyan (קִינְיָן), meaning possessions, property, or acquisitions. Everything belongs to

God—humans are stewards, not owners (Psalm 24:1, 50:10-12). Mal'ah (מל'א, "full") suggests abundance—God hasn't created a cosmos of scarcity but of generous provision.

Historical Context

Psalm 104:24 echoes the wisdom tradition's emphasis on creation's orderliness (Proverbs 3:19-20, 8:22-31). Wisdom literature celebrated the observable patterns, regularities, and design features of the natural world as evidence of the Creator's intelligence. This informed Israel's positive attitude toward studying nature—unlike cultures where nature was chaotic, unpredictable, or controlled by capricious deities.

Ancient Near Eastern creation myths typically portrayed the cosmos as resulting from divine conflict, sexual reproduction of gods, or random chance. Israel's creation theology was revolutionary: the cosmos results from intelligent design by a single, supremely wise Creator. This worldview laid foundations for scientific inquiry—if nature reflects divine wisdom, studying it reveals truth about the Creator.

For exilic Israel, creation's abundance reminded them that despite apparent national disaster, God's purposes and provision continued. Babylon might dominate politically, but Yahweh remained Creator and owner of all. The earth's fullness belonged to Him, not to temporary empires.

The New Testament reveals Christ as the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30) and the agent through whom all things were created (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 1:2). The Logos (Word) by whom God created all things (John 1:1-3) is identified with divine Wisdom personified in Proverbs 8. In Him 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Colossians 2:3).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing creation's diversity as reflecting divine wisdom challenge materialistic explanations that attribute complexity to undirected processes?
2. What practical implications follow from recognizing that 'the earth is full of God's riches' (His property) rather than humanity's resources to exploit?
3. How can believers cultivate wonder at creation's 'manifold works' in a culture that often views nature merely as scenery or resources?

Interlinear Text

מָה	רַב וְ	מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה	יְהוָה	בְּחָכְמָה	עָשָׂה יְיָ	
H4100	how manifold	are thy works	O LORD	H3605	in wisdom	hast thou made
	H7231	H4639	H3068		H2451	H6213
הַ	מְלֵאָה	הָאֵרֶץ כָּלָהּ	לְגִבּוֹרָתָהּ			
is full	them all the earth	of thy riches				
H4390	H776	H7075				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 10:12 (Creation): He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

Psalms 40:5 (References Lord): Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Psalms 24:1 (References Lord): The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Ephesians 3:10 (Parallel theme): To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Romans 11:33 (Parallel theme): O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Psalms 107:31 (References Lord): Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Psalms 136:5 (Creation): To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalms 8:3 (Parallel theme): When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

Nehemiah 9:6 (Creation): Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Ephesians 1:8 (Parallel theme): Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;