

# The Glory of God In The Heavens



At Christmas time, God's glory is seen in the babe born in the manger, but in truth, the glory of God reflects in all creation. Psalm 104 describes this glory, and the first place to see God's great glory is in the heavens. Consider three ways that God's glory is seen in the canopy that covers the earth.

**The light of the heavens.** In verses 1-2, the Psalmist describes the splendor of God which is reflected in the skies everyday. Oh sure, entering December, we are about to embark on three or four gray months in Indiana. But remember that while we suffer the effects of the Fall and endure winter, there are others in the Southern Hemisphere who are enjoying spring showers and summer rainbows, orange sunsets and pink sunrises. The earth below has various forms of artistic splendor; some places are more beautiful than others. But above it all are the violet curtains of God's cosmic temple, bespeckled with jewels in the night, and a blazing ball of fire in the day.

**In the skies, God has put clouds, winds, and fires.** Verses 3b-4 describe this. God has created a world that tells of his glory, power, and presence (cf. Ps 19:1; Rom 1:20). In the original context, these atmospheric phenomenon function as messengers of this reality. However, Hebrews 1 the author interprets "messengers" as angels and winds of fire, more than simply creation itself. How can this be?

I think this is legitimate move because "messengers" and "angels" are the same word in Hebrew. In the context of the Psalter, Psalm 104 should be seen in loose connection with Psalm 103, which concludes with three verses commanding the angels, messengers, to bless the Lord. Still, in its most immediate context, it is most appropriate to see the creation itself as a messenger of God. As Psalm 19 Willem VanGemeren puts it,

*The Lord is surrounded by his servants, whether they be created like the angels or be powers inherent in his created order (winds, lightning). The Creator-King is, as it were, driving his chariot, symbolic of his governance of his creation. All his created works reveal the splendor and wisdom of the Creator, because he remains constantly involved with his handiwork* ("Psalms" in [The Expositors Biblical Commentary](#), vol. 5, 659).

Now in response, someone might ask: What do the clouds, winds, and flames of fire (lightning) say to us? Think about it: Have you ever been caught in a thunderstorm? Or brave (or stupid) enough to stand outside when the tornado sirens are going off? God's whirlwind teaches us of his awesome power and righteous judgment. He "makes the clouds his chariot; he rides the wings of the wind!" The power of the heavens remind us that the

power of God is nearby, and more than that, interpreted by God's word, we come to realize that all that takes place in creation is for God's express purpose. Just listen to Job 37:9-13

*From its chamber [i.e. the heavens] comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds. By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen fast. He loads the thick cloud w/ moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning. They turn around and around by his guidance, to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the habitable world. Whether for correction or for his land or for love, he causes it to happen.*

God's creation is never random, arbitrary, or out of God's control.

**Sun and Moon.** Finally, verse 19 tells of the sun and moon which are placed in the heavens. Developing Day 4 of Genesis 1, the Psalmist speaks of how God formed two satellites in our solar system to govern the day and the night. Together, these two great spheres power the world, move seas, mark time, and set the schedule of our daily lives. Even more, God's word tells us that the consistency with which we regard the sun and moon is a confirmatory sign that God's redemptive promises will stand. We close with Jeremiah 31:35-36, which forecasts the New Covenant, a covenant that has been established by the work of Christ, and a covenant whose certainty is as unfailing as the sun and the moon.

*Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD of hosts is his name: “If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever.”*

May we look into the heavens today and remember the love and mercy of our Creator and the work he has done to reconcile us to himself!

Soli Deo Gloria, dss