BIBLICAL STUDIES JOURNAL (BSJ)

http://www.biblicalstudies.in/ KOLADE Samuel Oluwasegun BSJ.2026; 8(3):1-14

Research article ISSN 2582-0214

SINGING WITH CREATION: AN ECO-THEOLOGICAL AND LITURGICAL EXEGESIS OF PSALM 104

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.54513/BSJ.2026.8301

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 20-6-2026
Accepted: 20-7-2026
Available online 28-7-2026

Keywords:

Psalm 104; Eco-theology; Creation Care; Divine Praise; Ecological Stewardship.

ABSTRACT

This study explores Psalm 104 as a key biblical text for eco-theological reflection, highlighting creation's active participation in divine praise. Against the backdrop of escalating ecological crises, theology increasingly turns to Scripture for models of sustainable ethics and creation care. However, while considerable scholarly attention focuses on Genesis and the prophetic texts, the Psalms (particularly Psalm 104) remain comparatively underexplored as liturgical expressions of God's relationship with the natural world. The study exegetes Psalm 104 through literary-theological and ecological lenses to demonstrate how nature is portrayed as a worshipping subject rather than merely a passive object. Using a qualitative exegetical methodology, the research engages ecological hermeneutics and the works of Bauckham, Habel, and Deane-Drummond to interpret the psalm's poetic structure, imagery, and theological themes. The findings indicate that Psalm 104 envisions a theocentric cosmos in which all creatures, human and non-human alike, praise God through their existence and function. The psalm celebrates divine providence, ecological interdependence, and cosmic harmony, thereby challenging anthropocentric theological perspectives. Nature's response to God in praise has significant implications for Christian worship, liturgy, and public theology. The study concludes that Psalm 104 constitutes a valuable theological resource for Christian ecological ethics. It recommends incorporating creation-conscious practices into Christian worship, encouraging further research on other creation psalms and Wisdom literature, and promoting deeper engagement with ecological theology in both liturgical and academic contexts. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that Psalm 104 invites the Church to participate in a cosmic liturgy in which creation itself continually praises the Creator.

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Introduction

The contemporary ecological crisis has prompted renewed theological engagement with biblical texts that illuminate the relationship between God and the created order.[1] Within this discourse, Psalm 104 provides a distinctive theological vision by portraying creation as dynamically sustained by God and actively participating in divine praise. Unlike Genesis 1, which emphasises creation's origin, Psalm 104 celebrates God's continuing providence over an interdependent cosmos.[2]

Despite its ecological richness, Psalm 104 has received comparatively limited attention in eco-theological scholarship. Existing studies have largely concentrated on its literary beauty and doctrine of providence, while giving insufficient attention to its portrayal of non-human creation as an active worshipping community. [3] This anthropocentric tendency has constrained the Psalm's contribution to contemporary ecological ethics and Christian liturgy. Accordingly, this study examines Psalm 104 as a liturgical celebration of creation's participation in divine praise, analysing its literary structure, theological themes, and implications for Christian ecological ethics and worship.

The study adopts a qualitative exegetical methodology through close literary and theological analysis of the Hebrew text. It is interpreted through the lens of ecological hermeneutics, drawing principally on the eco-theological perspectives of Norman C. Habel, Richard Bauckham, and Celia Deane-Drummond.[4] The Psalm is further examined within the wider theological context of the Psalter, particularly in relation to Psalms 19 and 148. The study demonstrates that Psalm 104 presented creation as an active participant in the cosmic liturgy rather than a passive recipient of divine care. The study makes a significant contribution to eco-theological scholarship by advancing an earth-inclusive theological framework grounded in Scripture and by promoting the integration of creation-conscious perspectives into Christian worship, theological discourse, and environmental ethics. .[5]

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[1] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 1–18.
[2] J. Clinton McCann Jr., "The Book of Psalms," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 1037–39.
[3] Norman C. Habel, *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 95–108.
[4] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 83–102; Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*, 51–73.
[5] William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 143–55.

Literature Review

Liturgy of Creation in Eco-Theological Discourse

Psalm 104 has long been recognised as one of the most comprehensive poetic portrayals of creation in the Hebrew Bible.[6] Its vivid depiction of the natural world presents creation as an ordered and interconnected reality sustained by God's continuous providence. While the psalm reflects the cosmological framework of Genesis 1, it does so through poetic imagery that celebrates the harmony of the created order. Traditional commentators have primarily interpreted the psalm as an affirmation of divine sovereignty, providence, and the maintenance of cosmic order, with particular emphasis on God's provision for humanity.[7]

The emergence of ecological hermeneutics has, however, encouraged a reassessment of Psalm 104 by recognising creation as an active theological subject rather than merely the setting for human existence. Norman C. Habel's Earth Bible project argues that biblical interpretation should recover the voice of Earth within Scripture, identifying Psalm 104 as one of the clearest expressions of an earth-centred theology in which the natural world possesses intrinsic theological significance.[8]

Richard Bauckham similarly contends that Psalm 104 depicts a "community of creation" in which humans, animals, vegetation, and the wider cosmos exist together under God's sustaining care. Rather than supporting anthropocentric readings, the psalm presents a theocentric vision that celebrates God's delight in all creatures and affirms their value independent of human utility.[9] Complementing this perspective, Celia Deane-Drummond integrates ecological science with biblical theology, arguing that Psalm 104 provides a foundation for an eco-spirituality characterised by humility, relationality, and creaturely

[6] Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 21 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 31–45; Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 188–96.
[7] Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 548–56; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 706–15; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 667–74.
[8] Norman C. Habel, ed., *Readings from the Perspective of Earth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2000), 33–47; Norman C. Habel, *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 51–59.
[9] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 88–90.

solidarity, thereby envisioning worship as extending beyond humanity to embrace the whole created order.[10]

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognised Psalm 104 as an important resource for ecological theology and Christian worship. Ellen F. Davis interprets the psalm as an agrarian doxology that connects divine providence with ecological stewardship and sustainable living, while Douglas Harink likewise argues that Christian liturgy should reflect the praise offered by the whole creation rather than by humanity alone.[11] These perspectives have significantly expanded theological reflection on the relationship between worship and creation.

Nevertheless, a significant gap remains within contemporary scholarship. Although ecological interpreters acknowledge the environmental implications of Psalm 104, relatively few studies have examined the psalm as a liturgical-theological vision in which non-human creation functions as an active participant in divine praise. Consequently, the liturgical agency of creation within the cosmic worship of God remains insufficiently developed. As Horrell, Hunt, and Southgate observe, recovering creation's role in worship requires a more inclusive theology of liturgy that embraces the participation of the entire created order.[12] Accordingly, this study examines Psalm 104 as a liturgical celebration of creation's participation in divine praise, thereby contributing to eco-theological scholarship and providing a biblical framework for integrating ecological responsibility with Christian worship.

The Structure and Poetic Design of Psalm 104

Psalm 104 has been widely recognised as one of the most artistically crafted and theologically profound hymns in the Psalter. Scholars generally agree that the psalm is a creation hymn whose primary concern is to celebrate the majesty, providence, and sustaining activity of Yahweh within the created order.[13] The psalm opens and closes with the liturgical formula, "Bless the LORD, O my soul" (בָּרֲכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה, *bārăḵî napšî ʾet-YHWH*; vv. 1, 35), forming an *inclusio* that frames the entire composition as an act of worship rather than a mere

[10] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 93–98.
[11] Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 110–18; Douglas Harink, *Resurrecting Justice: Reading Romans for the Life of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 172–80.
[12] David G. Horrell, Cherryl Hunt, and Christopher Southgate, *Greening Paul: Rereading the Apostle in a Time of Ecological Crisis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 214–19.
[13] Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, Word Biblical Commentary 21 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 31–45; Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73–150* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 188–96.

description of nature.[14] While there is broad consensus regarding this literary framework, scholars differ over the psalm's compositional structure, theological emphasis, and relationship to other biblical creation traditions.

A significant area of agreement concerns the literary organisation of the psalm. Allen, Clifford, Tate, and Terrien maintain that Psalm 104 intentionally follows the broad sequence of the Genesis creation account, progressing from light (אוֹר, *ʾôr*), heavens (שָׁמַיִם, *šāmayim*), waters (מַיִם, *mayim*), earth (אֶרֶץ, *ʾereṣ*), vegetation (עֵשֶׂב, *ʿēśeb*), celestial bodies, animals, and finally humanity.[15] They argue that the psalm should not be understood as a second creation narrative but as a poetic meditation upon the continuing governance of creation. Weiser similarly observes that the psalm shifts attention from the historical event of creation to God's perpetual preservation of the world through divine providence.[16]

Other scholars, however, question whether the Psalm intentionally mirrors Genesis 1. Kraus argues that although thematic parallels exist, the poet was more concerned with expressing Israel's worship than with reproducing a chronological creation sequence.[17] Likewise, Mays contends that the psalm should primarily be interpreted as a hymn celebrating God's kingship rather than as a poetic commentary on Genesis.[18] This divergence reflects two complementary interpretive trajectories: one viewing Psalm 104 as an expansion of biblical creation theology, and the other reading it principally within Israel's liturgical tradition.

The theological centre of the Psalm also attracts scholarly debate. Traditional commentators such as Weiser and Terrien emphasise divine sovereignty, interpreting the repeated descriptions of God's actions as evidence of Yahweh's absolute rule over the cosmos.[19] The verbs יָסַד (*yāsad*, "to establish"; v. 5), כָּסָה (*kissâ*, "to cover"; v. 6), and שָׁלַח (*šālaḥ*, "to send"; vv. 10, 30) consistently portray God as the active governor of creation. For these scholars, the psalm primarily communicates theological truths concerning divine omnipotence and providence.

[14] Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 706–8.
[15] Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 33–40; Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, 189–93; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, Word Biblical Commentary 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 548–56.
[16] Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 667–74.
[17] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 299–305.
[18] James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 332–36.
[19] Weiser, *The Psalms*, 670–72; Terrien, *The Psalms*, 710–13.

Eco-theological scholars, however, propose a broader interpretation. Bauckham argues that Psalm 104 depicts a "community of creation" in which every creature possesses intrinsic worth apart from human usefulness.[20] Habel similarly contends that the psalm gives voice to Earth itself, presenting creation as an active theological participant rather than a passive object of divine care.[21] Deane-Drummond further suggests that the repeated emphasis upon divine sustenance reflects ecological interdependence rather than hierarchical domination.[22] These readings challenge traditional anthropocentric interpretations by locating humanity within, rather than above, the wider community of creation.

Particular attention has also been given to the psalm's poetic imagery. Most scholars agree that metaphors such as God clothing Himself with light (עֹטֶה אוֹר, *ʿōṭeh ʾôr*; v. 2), stretching out the heavens (נוֹטֶה שָׁמַיִם, *nōṭeh šāmayim*), and making the clouds His chariot (הַשָּׂם עָבִים רְכוּבוֹ, *haśśām ʿāḇîm rekûḇô*; v. 3) illustrate the richness of Hebrew poetic imagination.[23] Clifford interprets these metaphors primarily as expressions of divine kingship, whereas Alter argues that they intentionally evoke wonder through highly imaginative poetic parallelism rather than systematic theology.[24] By contrast, ecological interpreters regard these same images as theological affirmations of God's intimate relationship with every aspect of creation.

The description of creaturely dependence in verses 27–30 remains another point of scholarly discussion. The declaration that all creatures "wait" for God (יְשַׂבֵּרוּן, *yeśabberûn*; v. 27) and that God sends forth His רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*, "Spirit" or "breath"; v. 30) has traditionally been interpreted as evidence of divine providence sustaining life.[25] While Brueggemann emphasises covenantal dependence upon God, Bauckham and Deane-Drummond understand רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*) as symbolising God's continuing life-giving presence that renews the entire ecological community rather than humanity alone.[26] The ambiguity of רוּחַ, denoting both

[20] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 88–97.
[21] Norman C. Habel, *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 51–60.
[22] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 93–99.
[23] Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 551–53.
[24] Clifford, *Psalms 73–150*, 190–94; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 113–24.
[25] Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 445–48.
[26] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*, 93–97; Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, 95–98.

"breath" and "Spirit," enriches the theological depth of the passage and reinforces the inseparable relationship between Creator and creation.

The reference to לִוְיָתָן (*liwyāṯān*; Leviathan, v. 26) has likewise generated differing interpretations. Earlier scholarship frequently viewed Leviathan as a subdued symbol of chaos over which God exercises sovereign authority.[27] More recent interpreters, such as William Brown argues that the creature is portrayed positively as one whom God created "to play" (לְשַׂחֶק, *leśaḥēq*) in the sea, demonstrating divine delight in biodiversity and challenging readings that reduce creation to human utility.[28]

A synthesis of these scholarly perspectives suggests that Psalm 104 should neither be reduced to a poetic paraphrase of Genesis nor interpreted exclusively as a hymn of divine kingship. Rather, its literary design integrates creation theology, liturgical praise, and ecological vision into a unified theological composition. The *inclusio* (בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי, *bārăḵî napšî*) establishes worship as the governing framework, while the repeated use of participial verbs describing God's ongoing activity portrays creation as continuously dependent upon divine providence. Simultaneously, the depiction of creatures responding to God through their existence, flourishing, and ordered relationships presents the cosmos as a worshipping community. Consequently, Psalm 104 advances a profoundly theocentric theology in which כָּל־הַבְּרִיאָה (*kol-habberîʾâ*, "all creation") exists not merely because of God but also for the praise of God. This integrated literary and theological vision provides a compelling biblical foundation for contemporary eco-theology, affirming that creation itself participates in the cosmic liturgy through the faithful fulfilment of its divinely ordained vocation.

Divine Providence and the Interconnectedness of Creation

Divine providence constitutes one of the central theological themes of Psalm 104, where God's relationship with creation is portrayed not merely as an act of origination but as a continuous work of preservation, sustenance, and renewal.[29] Scholars generally agree that the Psalm presents creation as wholly dependent upon Yahweh's ongoing activity, thereby distinguishing biblical creation theology from deistic conceptions in which the Creator

[27] Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 304–5.
[28] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*, 95–96; William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 150–54.
[29] Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, Word Biblical Commentary 21 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 40–45.

withdraws from the created order after its formation.[30] The repeated participial descriptions of God's actions emphasise continual divine involvement, portraying providence as an enduring reality rather than a completed historical event.

A broad scholarly consensus recognises that Psalm 104 depicts an ordered cosmos sustained through divine governance. The psalm repeatedly employs verbs of divine action such as יְשַׁלַּח (*yešallaḥ*, "He sends"; v. 10), יַצְמִיחַ (*yaṣmîaḥ*, "He causes to grow"; v. 14), יִשְׂבְּעוּ (*yiśbeʿû*, "they are satisfied"; v. 28), and תְּחַדֵּשׁ (*teḥaddēš*, "You renew"; v. 30), all of which portray God as the continual source of ecological stability and life.[31] Allen and Weiser argue that these verbs reveal a theology of providence in which every sphere of creation remains dependent upon God's sustaining power, while Brueggemann regards the psalm as one of Scripture's clearest affirmations that creation exists through God's perpetual generosity rather than autonomous natural processes.[32]

Despite this agreement, scholars differ regarding the theological implications of this dependence. Classical commentators, including Weiser, Kraus, and Terrien, interpret divine providence primarily as an expression of God's sovereignty and kingship over creation.[33] They emphasise Yahweh's absolute authority, viewing creation as the object of divine governance. In this reading, providence principally demonstrates God's omnipotence and faithfulness in maintaining cosmic order.

Eco-theological scholarship offers a different emphasis. Richard Bauckham argues that Psalm 104 portrays providence within a "community of creation" in which humans and non-human creatures equally depend upon God's sustaining care.[34] Rather than placing humanity at the centre of creation, the psalm presents all living beings as recipients of divine generosity. Norman C. Habel similarly contends that providence should be understood relationally rather than hierarchically, arguing that Earth itself possesses theological agency and actively

[30] James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 332–36; Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger Jr., *Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 445–49.
[31] Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, Word Biblical Commentary 20 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 552–57.
[32] Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 670–74; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 41–44; Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 446–48.
[33] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 302–5; Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 711–15.
[34] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 88–97.

responds to God's life-giving activity.[35] Deane-Drummond further maintains that the ecological interconnectedness reflected in the psalm anticipates contemporary understandings of biodiversity and ecological systems, thereby providing theological resources for environmental ethics.[36]

The description of creaturely dependence in verses 27–30 illustrates these differing perspectives. The declaration that all creatures "wait" (יְשַׂבֵּרוּן, *yeśabberûn*) upon God for food (v. 27) has traditionally been interpreted as evidence of divine providence supplying material needs.[37] However, Bauckham argues that the verb expresses not merely dependence but expectant participation within God's ordered creation, where every creature occupies its own vocation under divine care.[38] Similarly, when God gives (תִּתֵּן, *tittēn*) they gather; when God opens His hand (תִּפְתַּח אֶת־יָדֶךָ, *tiphtaḥ ʾet-yādeḵā*), they are filled with good (יִשְׂבְּעוּן טוֹב, *yiśbeʿûn ṭôḇ*; v. 28). The imagery portrays provision as universal rather than exclusively human.

Particular attention has been devoted to the theological significance of רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*, "Spirit," "wind," or "breath") in verses 29–30. Traditional scholarship often interprets רוּחַ as God's life-giving breath that sustains biological existence and renews creation following death.[39] Others argue that the polyvalent meaning of רוּחַ intentionally links creation, providence, and divine presence. Deane-Drummond suggests that the renewal of the face of the ground (פְּנֵי אֲדָמָה, *penê ʾăḏāmâ*) signifies ecological restoration rather than merely individual regeneration, thereby extending providence to the renewal of entire ecosystems.[40] Habel similarly interprets רוּחַ as symbolising the intimate relationship between Creator and Earth, where divine life continually animates creation.[41]

Another significant area of discussion concerns the ecological relationships described throughout the Psalm. Scholars generally agree that the references to springs nourishing valleys (vv. 10–12), vegetation sustaining livestock (v. 14), trees sheltering birds (vv. 16–17), mountains protecting wild goats (v. 18), and celestial bodies regulating seasons (מוֹעֲדִים,

[35] Norman C. Habel, *An Inconvenient Text: Is a Green Reading of the Bible Possible?* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 51–63.
[36] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 93–101.
[37] Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, 447.
[38] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*, 92–96.
[39] Weiser, *The Psalms*, 672–73.
[40] Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, 97–101.
[41] Habel, *An Inconvenient Text*, 58–63.

môʿăḏîm; v. 19) depict an ordered network of interdependence.[42] Brown argues that these images present creation as an integrated ecological community whose flourishing depends upon harmonious relationships established by God.[43] Bauckham similarly contends that every creature possesses intrinsic value because each contributes to the integrity of the divine economy rather than existing solely for human benefit.[44]

The figure of לִוְיָתָן (*liwyāṯān*, Leviathan; v. 26) further illustrates scholarly disagreement. Earlier interpreters commonly regarded Leviathan as a mythological symbol of chaos subdued by divine sovereignty.[45] Contemporary eco-theological scholarship, however, emphasises the phrase לְשַׂחֶק בּוֹ (*leśaḥēq bô*, "to play in it"), arguing that Leviathan represents God's delight in the diversity of creation rather than a defeated cosmic enemy.[46] This interpretation significantly broadens the doctrine of providence by demonstrating that God sustains creatures independently of their usefulness to humanity.

On the whole, Psalm 104 integrates divine sovereignty with ecological relationality. Classical commentators rightly emphasise God's absolute governance over creation, while eco-theological interpreters appropriately highlight the intrinsic worth and interconnectedness of all creatures. These perspectives need not be viewed as mutually exclusive. Rather, the Psalm portrays providence as God's sovereign yet relational governance of an interconnected creation in which every creature depends upon divine generosity and contributes to the flourishing of the whole. The repeated references to God's provision, the sustaining רוּחַ (*rûaḥ*), and the harmonious interaction between habitats and living creatures collectively present a profoundly theocentric ecology.

Consequently, Psalm 104 challenges anthropocentric interpretations that reduce nature to a mere resource for human consumption. If creation responds to God through ordered existence and continual praise, then ecosystems become sacred spaces that require protection, restoration, and responsible stewardship. Human participation in worship cannot therefore be separated from the preservation of the ecological community through which God's glory is continually revealed. The Psalm thus provides a compelling theological foundation for

[42] Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73–150* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 191–95.
[43] William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 145–54.
[44] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*, 89–96.
[45] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 304–5.
[46] Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology*, 95–96; Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation*, 150–54.

ecological ethics by affirming that nurturing the integrity, resilience, and survival of ecosystems is itself a faithful response to the Creator's providential governance.

Creation as Liturgical Participant

Psalm 104 presents creation not merely as the setting for human worship but as an active participant in the praise of God. The Psalm opens and closes with the refrain, "Bless the LORD, O my soul" (vv. 1, 35), framing the entire composition as an act of worship while situating the human voice within a broader cosmic liturgy that includes wind, fire, water, animals, trees, and celestial bodies.[47] In verses 1–4, natural forces function as God's attendants, portraying the cosmos as a divine sanctuary where creation continually serves its Creator rather than existing independently.[48]

The theological climax occurs in verse 24: "O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all." Here, biodiversity is celebrated as evidence of divine wisdom, while the closing verses (31–35) depict both God rejoicing in creation and the psalmist joining an already existing chorus of praise. Nevertheless, the poetic personification of nature should not be interpreted literally. Rather than attributing conscious worship to non-human creatures, the psalm affirms that creation glorifies God by faithfully fulfilling the purposes for which it was created.[49] Human beings remain distinct through their conscious and ethical response to God, yet they worship as participants within a wider community of creation rather than as its sole representatives.

This vision is reinforced by Psalms 19 and 148, where the heavens declare God's glory and all creation is summoned to praise the Lord. Together, these texts portray worship as fundamentally theocentric rather than anthropocentric. Richard Bauckham argues that creation praises God independently through its continual dependence upon the Creator, challenging the assumption that worship belongs exclusively to humanity.[50] Likewise, Norman Habel maintains that these texts invite Christians to view worship as participation in

[47] Claus Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 86–89.
[48] Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 703–708.
[49] John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 3: Psalms 90–150* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 165–170.
[50] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 167–181.

Earth's ongoing liturgy, although such an interpretation must avoid reducing biblical theology to ecological ideology.[51]

Celia Deane-Drummond further argues that recognizing creation as a liturgical participant grounds ecological responsibility in worship itself, describing this relationship as an "ecological doxology."[52] Thus, Psalm 104 expands the understanding of Christian worship beyond church buildings to the whole created order. Nature is neither divine nor passive; it reflects God's wisdom and glory through its existence, while humanity joins this cosmic chorus through faithful stewardship and conscious praise of the Creator.

Contemporary Ecological Relevance of Psalm 104

Psalm 104 provides a compelling theological framework for addressing contemporary ecological challenges. In the context of climate change and environmental degradation, the Psalm portrays creation as ordered, sustained, and valued by God, affirming that the natural world possesses intrinsic worth beyond its usefulness to humanity.[53] This theocentric vision challenges anthropocentric attitudes and calls for a renewed understanding of human responsibility toward creation.

The Psalm celebrates every creature as fulfilling a divinely appointed purpose, with springs flowing, vegetation flourishing, animals thriving, and heavenly bodies marking time (vv. 10–23). Richard Bauckham argues that this reflects a theology in which creation glorifies God simply by existing according to the Creator's design.[54] While humanity retains its unique role as God's steward, dominion is redefined as responsible care rather than exploitation.

Psalm 104 also enriches Christian worship by presenting creation as a participant in God's praise. Celia Deane-Drummond observes that this vision encourages an eco-liturgical spirituality in which worship fosters ecological awareness and faithful stewardship.[55] Likewise, the Psalm informs public theology by reminding the Church that environmental degradation is not merely an ecological problem but also a theological concern. As Larry Rasmussen argues, authentic worship must be accompanied by responsible care for God's

[51] Norman C. Habel, *Readings from the Perspective of Earth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 36–45.
[52] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), 93–109.
[53] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, 109-110.
[54] Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation,* 167-181
[55] Celia Deane-Drummond, *Eco-Theology*, 109-110.

creation.[56] Thus, Psalm 104 remains a significant biblical foundation for ecological ethics, calling believers to honour the Creator through responsible stewardship of the Earth.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Psalm 104 presents a profoundly theocentric vision of creation in which the natural world is not merely the setting for human existence but an active participant in God's praise. Through literary-theological and eco-hermeneutical analysis, the psalm affirms the intrinsic value of all creation, portrays humanity as a responsible steward rather than an exploitative ruler, and integrates worship with ecological responsibility. Read alongside Psalms 19 and 148, Psalm 104 provides a strong biblical foundation for eco-theology, demonstrating that faithful worship of the Creator includes responsible care for the created order. Accordingly, further research should examine other biblical creation texts, particularly Psalms 8, 19, 29, and 148, together with Wisdom literature, to strengthen biblical eco-theological scholarship. Churches and theological institutions should also incorporate creation theology into biblical interpretation, worship, and theological education, promoting ecological stewardship as an essential expression of Christian discipleship and public witness.

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