

98 The Psalms

Scripture: Psalm 100

Memory Verse: Shout for Joy to the LORD, all the earth. Ps. 100:1

The book of Psalms was the songbook that Jesus sang from every Sabbath. In today's church we have many songbooks, but in Jesus' day there was one: the 150 songs contained in the Psalter (Psalms). How well do we know the Savior's songbook? Here are some facts:

1. The book of Psalms was written over a period of one thousand years.

Psalm 90, a psalm of Moses, was probably the earliest psalm, written around 1500 BC. It is difficult to know when the last psalm was composed, but Psalm 126, which begins, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream," probably refers to Israel's return from exile in 537 BC.

2. The book of Psalms contains many theological themes in worship:

The Psalms emphasize personal and communal relationships with God, focusing on:

- **God's sovereignty:** He is the LEADER of the universe and all of heaven; He has the ultimate power and authority over all creation (e.g., Psalm 47, Psalm 93).
- **God's justice and righteousness:** His fairness and moral perfection (e.g., Psalm 11, Psalm 89).
- **God as refuge:** A place of safety and protection (e.g., Psalm 46, Psalm 91).
- **God's steadfast love (chesed):** His covenantal love and faithfulness (e.g., Psalm 136).
- **Messianic hope:** Prophecies of the coming **Messiah (savior)** and His reign (e.g., Psalm 22, Psalm 110).

3. The book of Psalms contains all the emotions that people, living in a broken world, experience.

- **Joy and Praise:** Worship of God for His character and deeds (e.g., Psalm 150).
- **Sadness over brokenness:** Expressions of sorrow and seeking God's help (e.g., Psalm 13).
- **Confidence:** Trust in God's Power OVER brokenness, and His protection and provision (e.g., Psalm 23).
- **Thanksgiving:** Gratitude for God's deliverance or blessings (e.g., Psalm 30).
- **Wisdom:** Reflection on living a righteous life (e.g., Psalm 1).
- **Imprecatory:** Calling for divine justice against **oppression** (e.g., Psalm 137).
- **Royal/Messianic:** Celebrations of the king or pointing forward to the Messiah (e.g., Psalm 2, Psalm 110).

It is interesting that birds sing, and other animals make noises specific to their species to **identify** themselves as the creatures God created them to be. Their song or voice is a tool of worship.

Like the birds, when we sing Psalms, we are proclaiming our identities as God's **image-bearers**. God's desire is that all people would find their identity in Him; He is the one who put His image and likeness into humans (not any other organism). He did this so we could be intimately connected to him as his very own **children**.

The Bible calls close loving intimacy with God **worship**. Therefore those who are in a right relationship with God fundamentally find their identity as **worshippers**.

Those who are in a wrong relationship with God worship other things; they find their identity in what they do, or what people they hang out with, or experiences that make them feel happy or powerful.

The bad news is that because of sin, all people start out in a wrong relationship with God. Because Adam sinned, all his children (everyone on the planet) are born with sin in their hearts. But everyone who repents of their sin, and confesses Jesus as Savior and Lord of all are restored into a RIGHT relationship with God, and will worship and will sing praises to God forever!