

SONGS FOR ALL SEASONS FROM THE PSALMS

The Significance of Songs *Selected Scriptures*



LET'S BEGIN HERE

The Bible is chock full of songs. Songs of celebration and sorrow. Songs of magnificent victory and quiet reflection. Songs of thanksgiving, of praise, of dedication, as well as songs of disappointment and grief. Down through the centuries of the illustrious history of the Hebrews, songs were used to unify and rally those whose hearts overflowed with joy. The songs didn't cease when Messiah came—in fact, they intensified! From His birth until His final hours, songs rang out. Just before Jesus and His disciples left the Upper Room, they sang a hymn (Matthew 26:30). We Christians continue the tradition and have done so for almost twenty centuries. This message will take a quick safari through Scripture, discovering just how significant songs have been throughout time.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. The Constant Presence of Songs

In the beginning, God created the foundations of the earth and “the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). At the voice of God in creation, the stars and angels sang to Him. And it was very good!

Long before Adam drew his first breath, the angelic hosts assembled to sing praises to the Creator of heaven and earth. And long after earth passes away and God ushers in His new creation, all heaven will still be singing—singing a new song to the Savior of the world (Revelation 5:9–12).

From beginning to end, creation to re-creation, music fills God's story. The Bible is replete with salvation's songs, showing us that the Lord's people are a singing people. The instinct of faith is to sing, and God's people have long shared their faith, privately and corporately, through song.



Quotable

*Are you waiting
for a great
voice before
you sing?
God hears
your heart.*

So sing!

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. A Brief Biblical Survey

With the introduction of Jubal (Genesis 4:21), the ancient father of musicians, a line of musical tradition commenced that runs throughout Scripture. The first to play string and wind instruments, Jubal passed along his talent to all music makers to come. In Exodus 15, we hear echoes of an ancient song of gratitude for the Lord's deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh's army.

But the glory days of Hebrew song didn't begin until David picked up his harp. From his days as a shepherd tending his father's flock to his reign as king over Israel, David composed a body of hymns that make up the bulk of Israel's hymnbook, the Psalms. In Israel, King David assigned the temple musicians with their duties as they led God's people in worship (1 Chronicles 25). David's son Solomon assumed the role as king and chief songwriter for temple worship. Solomon alone composed more than one thousand songs (1 Kings 4:32)!

Though creation began with a joyful chorus, the Old Testament ends with a warning of judgment (Malachi 1–4) and a deafening silence from heaven. As the curtain closed on the Old Testament, the mood was dark and the strains of faith, hope, and joy were replaced with silence and shadows.

As God lifted the curtain in the New Testament, music again filled creation. After Gabriel's announcement that Mary would give birth to the Christ, the young girl sang a song of praise to the Lord (Luke 1:46–55). As God ushered Messiah onto center stage, the angels again sang a joyous song (2:14). All the way through Messiah's ministry, even to His last meal with His disciples, Jesus sang (Matthew 26:30). And the New Testament closes with a finale of eternal praise to the Lord (Revelation 5:13).



A CLOSER LOOK

No Joy, No Song

When the people of Judah were exiled to Babylon in 586 BC, they lost more than their access to the Promised Land. They also lost their joy. Under the torments of their captors, God's people mourned the lack of God's blessing in their lives. They wondered how they could sing songs of praise for the land God had given them—the memory of that place was just too painful for a people in a foreign land and under God's judgment (Psalm 137:4). The question remains a potent one today. The Bible refers to people of faith as strangers in search of a better, heavenly country (Hebrews 11:13–16). We, like those exiles of old, sometimes mourn what could have been if our sin had not tainted God's creation. We must remember, however, that our hope is in God and in the redeemed world to come—a truth that remains vibrant even when the songs stick in our throats.



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LET'S LIVE IT

God's revelation begins and ends with a song. And we are encouraged to sing of Him and His marvelous grace, not only to each other but to the people of the world. You cannot read the Bible without developing a profound appreciation for the gift of song to the experience of faith.

Three principles emerge for us to consider as we embark on our study of six favorite psalms.

1. **Since the beginning, songs has been present and blessed of God.**

Challenge: We're to be sensitive to them! As we sing, we must also think, worship, celebrate, learn, and listen to the Lord.

2. **The purpose of songs have always been wide and varied.**

Challenge: Broaden your taste! Christianity is not just a verbal faith!

3. **God loves songs—He reserved the longest book in His Word for songs.**

Challenge: We must become students of His songbook of hymns!

What is your song today—a song of joy, a song of sadness, a song of praise, a song of gratitude? Will you turn your song into a prayer to our gracious God?



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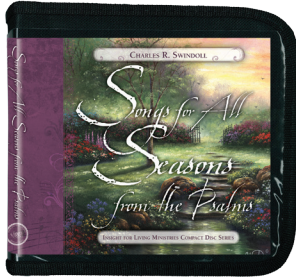
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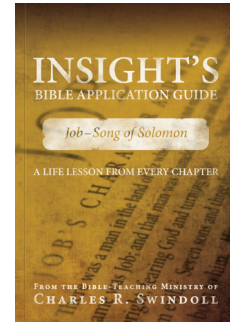
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