*Singing in the Dark*

# Psalm 104

## *Creation*

Session 2 · October 9, 2025

*Epiphany Seattle*

# Psalm 104 — Read Together

*"Bless the LORD, O my soul.*
*O LORD my God, you are very great.*
*You are clothed with honor and majesty,*
*wrapped in light as with a garment."*

Psalm 104:1–2 (NRSV)

## Read Psalm 104 in full

*Notice what catches you. Notice what surprises you. Notice what you want to push back on.*

CONTEXT

# When, Where, and Who

## BOOK

## DATE

## AUTHOR

## TYPE

CONTEXT

# When, Where, and Who

## BOOK

Book IV  (Psalms 90–106) — the Psalter's theological response to exile. God still reigns when kingdoms fall.

## DATE

Likely pre-exilic, before 587 BCE. Some scholars place it in the early monarchy period, 950–700 BCE.

## AUTHOR

Anonymous. No superscription. The voice is communal and cosmic rather than personal.

## TYPE

Creation Hymn. Pure adoration of who God is, expressed through what God has made.

# How the Psalm Is Built

## Form of Poetry

## Movement

## Sounds Like

## Notice

# How the Psalm Is Built

## Form of Poetry

Synonymous and synthetic parallelism throughout. Line 2 deepens or extends line 1. The effect is cumulative, expansive, generous.

## Movement

The psalm moves outward: God, sky, earth, sea, creatures, humanity, night, day, and back to God. A circle. Creation breathed out and breathed back in.

## Sounds Like

Psalm 104 echoes Genesis 1 deliberately — the same sequence of creation days. But where Genesis is spare and architectural, Psalm 104 is lavish and delighted.

## Notice

The leviathan (v.26) — the ancient chaos monster — is here just playing. God made it for sport. The terror is domesticated by delight.

WORD STUDY

# Four Words Worth Sitting With

## Nephesh

v.1, 29, 30

## Ruach

v.30

## Kabod

v.31

## Samach

v.31

WORD STUDY

# Four Words Worth Sitting With

## Nephesh

v.1, 29, 30

*Soul / living being / throat. "Bless the LORD, O my nephesh." Not a disembodied soul — the whole animated creature. You praise God with the very breath God gave you.*

## Ruach

v.30

*Spirit / breath / wind. "When you send forth your ruach, they are created." The same word as Genesis 1:2. Creation is not a past event. It is a present breathing.*

## Kabod

v.31

*Glory / weight / honor. "May the glory of the LORD endure forever." Kabod carries physical weight — the heaviness of God's presence. The world is dense with God.*

## Samach

v.31

*Rejoice / delight / be glad. "May the LORD rejoice in his works." God delights in creation. This is the theological center of the psalm.*

INTO THE TEXT

# The Shape of the Psalm

| | |
|---|---|
| vv.1–4 | **God Robed in Creation** |
| vv.5–18 | **Earth and Its Creatures** |
| vv.19–23 | **Night and Day** |
| vv.24–30 | **The Sea and the Ruach** |
| vv.31–35 | **Doxology and Return** |

INTO THE TEXT

# The Shape of the Psalm

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| vv.1–4 | **God Robed in Creation** | *God is clothed in creation — light, wind, fire, clouds are his garments and messengers.* |
| vv.5–18 | **Earth and Its Creatures** | *Mountains, springs, wild donkeys, birds, storks, goats, badgers. Specific. Named. Loved.* |
| vv.19–23 | **Night and Day** | *God orders time as well as space. Lions hunt by night; people work by day. Both are held.* |
| vv.24–30 | **The Sea and the Ruach** | *The vast sea, teeming with life. The leviathan at play. When God sends ruach, creation is renewed.* |
| vv.31–35 | **Doxology and Return** | *"I will sing to the LORD as long as I live." The circle closes. Bless the LORD, O my nephesh.* |

# What in this psalm *provokes you?*

# Psalm 104 — Coverdale Translation

*"Bless the Lord, O my soul; *
O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness!*

*You are clothed with majesty and splendor.*

*You wrap yourself with light as with a cloak *
and spread out the heavens like a curtain."*

Psalm 104:1–2 (BCP, Coverdale)

*Read the BCP version.*

*Where does the translation feel different — richer, flatter, stranger, more familiar?*

*The asterisk (*) marks where cantor and choir exchange verses in choral recitation.*

**How does this psalm speak to the world in which *we live right now?***

**Where do we see Jesus and / or the Holy Spirit *in this psalm?***