

Psalm 66

To the chief Musician, A Song [or] Psalm.

Psalm 66:

Though a psalm of national thanksgiving for some occasion of great deliverance, it also contains the king's personal note of thanksgiving at the end (verses 13-20), after the communal expression of thanksgiving (verses 1-12).

Verses 1-20:

This joyful psalm begins with group praise and then focuses on the individual worship.

The psalmist rehearses some of the major miracles in Israel's history and testifies that God has always been faithful in the midst of serious troubles.

- I. Communal Hymn of Praise to God (66:1-12).
 - A. For Future Glory (66:1-4);
 - B. For Previous Faithfulness (66:5-7);
 - C. For Continual Protection (66:8-12).
- II. An Individual Hymn of Praise to God (66:13-20).
 - A. Through Fulfilled Vows (66:13-15);
 - B. For Answered Prayer (66:16-20).

Verses 1-7:

The holy church throughout all the world lifts up her voice, to laud that Name which is above every name, to make the praise of Jesus glorious, both by word and deed.

That others may be led to glorify him also.

But nothing can bring men to do this properly, unless his effectual grace creates their hearts anew unto holiness.

And in the redemption by the death of Christ, and the glorious deliverances it effects, are more wondrous works than Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

This thanksgiving psalm summons the whole earth to "come and see" what God has done in an act of corporate praise (psalms 100:1; 117:1).

The psalmist both honors God for who He is and thanks Him for specific answers to prayer.

Psalm 66:1 "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:"

"Joyful noise":

A shout of loyalty and homage, as in (1 Sam. 10:24).

Every land throughout the world should praise the LORD.

One universal word of praise is “hallelujah”.

Notice it does not say, “make a noise to the LORD”. It says, “make a joyful noise”.

I have said it before, but it should be a sweet sound in the ear of the LORD.

Psalm 66:2 "Sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious."

Meaning not any particular names of the Messiah, such as in (Isa. 9:6).

Or his name "Jesus", a Savior; though they are all honorable and glorious, and furnish out sufficient matter for a song.

But rather that by which he was made known to the sons of men, his Gospel (see Acts 9:15).

Which is a glorious Gospel; the truths of which may be expressed in a song of praise, to the honor and glory of Christ, and to the instruction and profit of men (Col. 3:16).

Or rather Christ himself is meant; his name often designs himself (Matt. 12:21).

Praise that is due unto him, and ought to be given which is done when all divine perfections and works are ascribed to him, divine worship is paid him, and the glory of salvation given him.

Which may be done in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

"Make his praise glorious":

Let the high praises of him be in your mouths; give him, the most excellent praise; praise him in the best manner.

This is done when we sing his praise with grace in our hearts.

When we with one mind and mouth glorify him; and when we honor him, the Son, as we honor the Father.

The praise should be directed to the LORD of all the earth.

There is a name above the others. It is the name of Jesus.

Psalm 66:3 "Say unto God, How terrible [art thou in] thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee."

Or, "concerning God", as some, or, "before God".

As the Targum; say to him as follows, in psalms and hymns of praise.

"How terrible art thou in thy works!

Or "reverend"; to be feared and revered with a godly fear on account of them.

Such as the works of nature and providence, which are stupendous and marvelous, fearfully and wonderfully wrought.

And especially those of grace and redemption, in which the goodness of Christ is manifest, and for which he is to be feared.

Unless rather his judgments upon his enemies are here meant; who, though he is a Lamb to his own people, is the Lion of the tribe of Judah to them.

"Shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee":

In a lying, flattering, and deceitful manner, as the word here used signifies (see the notes on Psalm 18:44).

"They shall, through the greatness of fear, confess the lies and transgressions they have committed."

It will be a forced, and not a free, confession and submission.

Christ's enemies, whether they will or not, will be obliged to own that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10).

As we said in the verse before, this praise must be directed to God.

The enemy does not submit to the Lord willingly, but because of the power of the Lord.

They submit because they have to, not because they want to.

The works of the Lord are around us on every side.

His creation speaks for itself.

Psalm 66:4 "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing [to] thy name. Selah."

"All the earth shall worship thee":

This praise is not only an acknowledgment of God's universal Lordship, but also an intimation of the people's belief in a future worldwide kingdom where God will be worshiped (compare Isa. 66:23; Zech. 14:16; Phil. 2:10-11).

Isaiah 45:23 "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

Romans 14:11 "For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

Not only do they bow to the Lord, but then they begin to sing praises to Him as well.

Selah means pause and think on this.

Psalm 66:5 "Come and see the works of God: [he is] terrible [in his] doing toward the children of men."

Of the Messiah, God manifest in the flesh.

Those divine works which he did when here on earth; his miraculous works, which were proofs of his deity and Messiahship.

His preaching the Gospel, in so divine a manner as never man did.

His works of obedience to the law, which were pure and perfect.

The everlasting righteousness he wrought out for the justification of his people.

And the great work of redemption and salvation finished by him, which none but God could ever have effected.

This is an invitation to the inhabitants of all lands, where the Gospel should come with power, to take notice of and consider these works of Christ.

And the glory of his might, wisdom, and grace in them, and also in order to engage them to sing his praise.

"He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men":

In his vengeance on the Jews, for disbelieving and rejecting him.

In His upcoming destroying of antichrist, and pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states.

And in the everlasting damnation of the wicked.

So that as his other works in the former clause design these of grace, this doing of his respects his work, his strange work of judgment on his enemies.

On account of which he is terrible to them, and revered by his people.

When I think of the greatness (terribleness), of God, I have to think of His creation of the world in 6 days preparing it to be habitable for man.

Everything has been done on this earth by God for man.

We look at the 10 plagues that came on Egypt, and we see God did it for the release of the children of Israel.

We have mentioned over and over, how God parted the Red sea and allowed the children of Israel to escape through the sea, and then He drowned the Egyptians that tried to follow them.

At the foot of the mountain, the voice of God speaking to the children was so awesome that they asked Moses to speak to God for them, they were so frightened.

We could go on and on, but you get the point I am sure.

Psalm 66:6 "He turned the sea into dry [land]: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him."

"Sea ... flood":

A reference to the crossing of the Red sea and possibly the Jordan River.

The Old Testament writers considered the Red Sea crossing the ultimate demonstration of God's power, as well as His care for Israel.

This of course, is speaking of the incident at the Red sea.

The amazing thing to me, about all of this is how God held the Egyptians off, until close to 3 million people could go through the sea.

I will give you two Scriptures from this account to show how God held Pharaoh off, until the Israelites were safely through the sea.

Exodus 14:19-20 "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:" "And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness [to them], but it gave light by night [to these]: so that the one came not near the other all the night."

Read the whole chapter to get the full account of what happened.

You can tell from this that God stood between Egypt and Israel.

God fought for His people.

Psalms 66:7 "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah."

The same power which God possessed and exerted for his people in ancient times, he still possesses in as great vigor as ever.

And is as able and ready to act for them as ever he was: which he hath shown in this late and glorious instance.

"His eyes behold the nations":

He sees all their secret and subtle devices, and can and will defeat them, when he sees fit.

"Let not the rebellious exalt themselves":

Lift up their hands against God or his people.

Or, the rebellious; that is, those that rebel against this Almighty God and his laws, shall not exalt themselves, as they vainly hope and design to do.

But shall be brought down and destroyed, as is here implied.

Pharaoh thought he was powerful, until he came up against God.

There is no less power now, than He demonstrated here.

The rulers of nations can boast and pretend to be great, but God is the One who lifts them up and brings them down.

Lucifer rebelled against God and got thrown out of heaven.

Lucifer thought he was strong, but he was and is no match for God.

Christians, Jesus has given you power of attorney to use the name of Jesus in battles against the devil here on the earth.

Jesus has defeated the devil.

He may rip, and snort, and run around, seeking whom he may devour, but if you resist the devil in the name of Jesus, he will flee from you.

Pause and think on this for a moment.

Verses 8-12:

The LORD not only preserves our temporal life, but maintains the spiritual life which he has given to believers.

By afflictions we are proved, as silver in the fire.

The troubles of the church will certainly end well.

Through various conflicts and troubles, the slave of Satan escapes from his yoke, and obtains joy and peace in believing.

Through much tribulation the believer must enter into the kingdom of God.

Psalm 66:8 "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:"

In all countries, that know the Lord and fear him; ascribe blessing, and honor and glory, to Christ our God.

On account of his works, actions, perfections, kingdom and power; and because of the destruction of those who are rebels to his government.

"And make the voice of his praise to be heard":

Far and near, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and by shoutings, and loud acclamations of joy (see Rev. 19:5).

Where Christ is called our God, and a like exhortation is made as here.

I love the little chorus from the Bible that says, "Bless the Lord; O my soul and all that is within me bless His holy name".

When I sing that chorus, I feel as if I am seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

This is not just silently praising in your heart, but is in fact, praising aloud.

Psalm 66:9 "Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."

"Feet to be moved":

God had prevented them from prematurely slipping into the realm of the dead.

The devil cannot take you away from God.

We will see in Jesus' own words that the devil, or any man, cannot take us away from God.

John 10:28-29 "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand." "My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand."

Psalm 66:10 "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried."

"As silver is tried":

God had brought the nation through purifying trials.

Just as Job had so many problems, we have problems too, to see how we hold up under pressure.

Job came out of the fiery trial pure.

I wonder if we will be able to say the same?

Silver is heated to over 2000 degrees to burn out the impurities.

The impurities float to the top on the melted silver, and the trash can be skimmed off.

God must purge us too, until He gets us refined the way He would have us.

It is very important for us to be willing to be molded into the form God would have us.

Psalm 66:11 "Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins."

"Broughtest us into the net":

The psalmist speaks of a hunter's net or snare as a metaphor for some extremely difficult situations into which God had brought Israel.

The one thing that I would like to point out here, is who did it.

Thou means God did it.

Psalm 66:12 "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy [place]."

"Ride over our heads":

A picture of a hostile army riding in victory over Israel's defeated troops.

We cannot appreciate the sunshine, until it has rained a few days.

I mentioned Job in this lesson earlier, but there is no better example of this message here, than what happened to Job.

He lost everything when he was going through his trial, but praised God!

Read the last page and see what happened in the end.

Job 42:12 "So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses."

To learn the entire lesson about this, read the Bible study on Job.

The trials come, but if we survive the trials by giving God the glory, then we are blessed more than we could ever imagine.

Verses 13-20:

We should declare unto those that fear God, what he has done for our souls, and how he has heard and answered our prayers, inviting them to join us in prayer and praise.

This will turn to our mutual comfort, and to the glory of God.

We cannot share these spiritual privileges, if we retain the love of sin in our hearts.

Though we refrain from the gross practice of sin regarded in the heart, will spoil the comfort and success of prayer.

For the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination of the LORD.

But if the feeling of sin in the heart causes desires to be rid of it.

If it be the presence of one urging a demand we know we must not, cannot comply with, this is an argument of sincerity.

And when we pray in simplicity and godly sincerity, our prayers will be answered.

This will excite gratitude to Him who hath not turned away our prayer nor his mercy from us.

It was not prayer that brought the deliverance, but his mercy that sent it.

That is the foundation of our hopes, the fountain of our comforts; and ought to be the matter of our praises.

Psalm 66:13 "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,"

"Pay thee my vows":

Paying the vows is spelled out in the following verses as offering sacrifices of dedication which had been previously promised God (compare Leviticus Chapter 1; 22:18, 21; and Psalms 56:12; 61:8; 65:1).

Psalm 66:14 "Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble."

Or "opened"; publicly and distinctly declared.

And from which there is no going back (see Judges 11:33).

"And my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble":

This refers to the time when the people of God were under antichristian tyranny and bondage.

And when they vowed and promised, that, if the LORD would deliver them, they would give him all praise and glory.

David is saying, now that these terrible troubles are behind me, I will not forget the promises I made to you O LORD.

I will keep every promise I made.

So many times, as soon as the trial is over, we are so relieved that it is easy to forget the promises we made to God, if He would only get us out of the mess.

Psalm 66:15 "I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah."

Of the fattest of the flock.

That is, of the best; such as Abel offered (Gen. 4:4).

"With the incense of rams": Or "rams with incense".

The Targum is, "with sweet incense, the sacrifice of rams".

Kimchi interprets it of incense of the fat of rams.

"I will offer bullocks with goats":

He proposed to offer all kind of offerings, and also to show gratitude and thankfulness for the favors received.

By all which are meant the calves, or fruit of the lips, the sacrifices of praise.

Thanksgiving to God, in the name of the whole church and people of God (see Rev. 19:1).

"Selah":

On this word (see notes on Psalm 3:2).

David is saying that, he will give the best of his flock to the LORD in sacrifice.

We must think on this.

Are we giving the best that we have to God?

Psalm 66:16 "Come [and] hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."

It is not enough to "come and see" (see note on 66:1-5); the psalmist invites all to "come and hear" so that God's redemption might be proclaimed publicly.

The setting is possibly at Passover or at a victory celebration, where corporate praise gives way to the voice of this single worshiper, who speaks personally of God: "I will declare what He has done for my soul".

David is saying, I will not only praise Him in private, but I will testify of his goodness wherever I go.

I have seen people who have had a miracle from God, who will not stand and tell others about it.

It is as if they are ashamed of the fact that God helped them in their greatest need.

Psalm 66:17 "I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue."

Crying designs prayer, and supposes distress; and crying with the mouth denotes vocal, ardent, and fervent prayer.

"And he was extolled with my tongue":

At the same time the psalmist prayed for deliverance out of his distresses, he praised God for the mercies he had received.

And did, as the Apostle Paul directs, make known his requests with thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6).

Or "he was exalted under my tongue"; that is, in his heart, as some interpret it.

His heart and his mouth went together; and out of the abundance of his heart his tongue spoke of the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God to him.

The Targum is, "and his promise was under my tongue".

And so he was very different from a wicked man, who keeps iniquity under his tongue, as a sweet morsel (Job 20:12).

Extolled means praise, in this particular Scripture.

This just means that in the midst of David's prayer for help from God, he praised God.

Psalm 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear [me]:"

There was iniquity in his heart, as there is in every good man's heart, and a great deal too.

It is full of it; and it should be regarded in some sense, so as to guard against it, and pray to be kept from it, that it may not break forth into action.

And so as to loath it, abhor it, and be humbled for it; but not so as to nourish and cherish it, to take delight and pleasure in it.

"The Lord will not hear me":

For the Lord hears not sinners that delight in sin, and live in it.

Neither profane sinners nor hypocrites (see John 9:31).

God listens the best to the righteous.

The regarding of iniquity in his heart, means that he has the desire in his heart to continue in sin.

We cannot choose the world over God, and expect God to answer our prayers.

God listens to a repentant heart, but not to a heart that wants to continue to sin.

Psalm 66:19 "[But] verily God hath heard [me]; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer."

So that it was a plain case that he had not regarded iniquity in his heart; or had not lived a vicious course of life, nor was a hypocrite.

Otherwise God would not have heard his prayer; whereas he had, and which is confirmed in the following clause.

"He hath attended to the voice of my prayer":

Which is an instance of the grace and condescension of God, and showed in what high favor the psalmist was with the LORD, and what regard he had unto him.

And therefore, could not be the man his enemies represented him to be.

The reason God heard is he had a repentant heart.

David did not desire in his heart to sin.

David had a pure heart stayed upon God.

David, like many of us, was guilty of sin but it was not the desire of his heart to sin.

God listened to David and answered his prayer.

Psalm 66:20 "Blessed [be] God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."

Has not been angry against it, or shut it out, or covered himself with a cloud that it might not pass through.

Which sometimes saints have complained of (Psalm 80:4).

But graciously heard and received it.

"Nor his mercy from me":

For that endures for ever, and is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear the LORD (see Psalm 103:17).

All which require thankfulness and praise, which is here given.

Look at another Psalm with me and see just how long God's mercy lasts.

Psalms 106:1

"Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for [he is] good: for his mercy [endureth] for ever."

God's love for His people is so enduring that He is not willing that any should perish.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Psalm 66 Questions

1. Make a joyful noise unto God, _____.
2. What is one universal word of praise?
3. What should be this joyful noise that we make be in God's ear?
4. What is the name above all others in the earth?
5. What causes the enemies to submit to God?
6. What is the first thing the author thinks of when reading about His terribleness?
7. Name at least 2 other terrible acts of God that helped his children?
8. Why did the Egyptians not over-run the children of Israel, before they could get through the Red sea?
9. He ruleth by His power _____.
10. Who lifts up and brings down rulers of nations?
11. If you resist the devil, what will he do?
12. How hot is silver heated to take out the trash?
13. It is very important for us to be willing to be molded into _____ that God wants us in.
14. What is the one point the author says needs to be pointed out in verse 11?
15. When can we appreciate the sunshine?
16. What is David saying in verses 13 and 14 of this lesson?
17. Are we giving the best we have to God?
18. In verse 16, David is saying that God will declare what?
19. What does extolled mean?
20. What does regarding iniquity in his heart mean?
21. Why had God heard David's prayer?
22. How long does God's mercy endure?