

# PSALMS

## Chapter 65

<sup>1</sup> Praise awaits <sup>a</sup> you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. <sup>2</sup> O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come. <sup>3</sup> When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave <sup>b</sup> our transgressions. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple. <sup>5</sup> You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, <sup>6</sup> who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, <sup>7</sup> who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations. <sup>8</sup> Those living far away fear your wonders; where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy. <sup>9</sup> You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. <sup>c</sup> <sup>10</sup> You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. <sup>11</sup> You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. <sup>12</sup> The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. <sup>13</sup> The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.

**Ps 65** A hymn in praise of God's great goodness to his people. In answer to their prayers (1) he pardons their sins so that they continue to enjoy the "good things" of fellowship with him at his temple (vv. 3–4); (2) he orders the affairs of the world so that international turbulence is put to rest and Israel is secure in her land (vv. 5–8); and (3) he turns the promised land into a veritable Garden of Eden (vv. 9–13). This hymn begins a series of four that are linked by many common themes. (CSB)

Psalms 65-68 are all classified as "songs." All of them seem appropriate for use at festivals and in processions. This psalm would be especially appropriate during pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the harvest festival of Pentecost and Tabernacles. It gives thanks for God's spiritual blessings to his people, for his governing of the nations, and for the harvest. This psalm is especially appropriate for our Thanksgiving Day. (PBC)

Given the beauty of the psalm and its close connection to Ps 66–68, it may well have been written for a festival or as a liturgical praise song. (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–4, God draws us to Himself; vv 5–8, He governs creation; vv 9–13, He makes creation flourish. (TLSB)

**65 title** See notes on Ps 4; 30 titles. (CSB)

**65:1–2** Introductory commitment to praise. (CSB)

**65:1** *awaits*. Or “is silent before” (see note on 62:1; see also NIV text note here). Perhaps the imagery is that of praise personified as a permanent resident of the temple, lying quietly at rest, whom the people will awaken when they come to make good their vows (see 57:8). (CSB)

*our vows*. Those made in conjunction with their prayers in time of need (see 66:14 and note on 7:17). (CSB)

Appropriate response to God’s faithfulness, offering vows can be in the form of a thank offering, a public act of worship and praise, or some other demonstration of joyful trust in God, who answers prayer. (TLSB)

**65:2** *all men*.† Lit. “all flesh,” perhaps referring to all God’s people. Most interpreters believe (in light of vv. 5, 8) that the reference is more universal, as in 64:9; 66:1, 4, 8; 67:3–5 and elsewhere. (CSB)

All humanity. (TLSB)

This prayer has an underlying mission theme. It speaks of the increase of the Lord’s worship as his circle of worshipers grows from those Jews who come to his festivals in Jerusalem to the larger number of people who come to him from all nations. (PBC)

*will come*. To praise God as the (only) God who hears and graciously answers prayers. (CSB)

**65:3–4** The first and primary blessing. (CSB)

**65:3** *forgave our transgressions*. Accepted the atonement sacrifices you appointed and so forgave our sins (see NIV text note; see also 32:1–2; 78:38; 79:9 and notes on Lev 16:20–22; 17:11; Heb 2:17; 9:5, 7). (CSB)

Penalty for sin is death (Ezk 18:4; Rm 6:23). God “atones” (pays for) our sin through the death of the messianic King (cf Rm 3:24–25). (TLSB)

Without forgiveness we would have nothing to celebrate and could not come into God’s presence. (PBC)

The writer proceeds to address himself to thanksgiving by the way of confession and absolution. Being thus prepared, he can approach God in the right spirit and be accepted in his gratitude. (Leupold)

**65:4** *Blessed*. See note on 1:1. (CSB)

*those you choose and bring near.* Everyone belonging to Israel as God's chosen people (see, e.g., 33:12; Dt 4:37) and whom God accepts at his temple. (CSB)

Faith is God's gift, not a human choice. God draws a person to Him by grace (cf Eph 2:8–9). (TLSB)

*live in your courts.* See note on 15:1 (Not as a priest but as God's guest in his holy, royal house, the temple.); see also 23:6. (CSB)

All believers continue to live in fellowship with God. See "courts of the Lord," (TLSB)

The richest fulfillment of these words will come when we gathered together as one congregation in the festival of eternal life. (PBC)

*good things of your house.* All the blessings that flow from God's presence (see 36:8 and note). (CSB)

The tabernacle; the temple of Solomon was not yet built. (TLSB)

**65:5–8** God stills the nations and makes Israel secure in answer to her prayers. (CSB)

**65:5** *awesome deeds.* Acts of God such as were associated with his deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the conquest of Canaan, acts of power that made Israel's enemies cringe (see 66:3; see also 106:22; 145:6; Dt 10:21; 2Sa 7:23; Isa 64:3). (CSB)

Deeds that create fear and terror in the hearts of God's enemies but inspire joy and celebration in His people (e.g., saving acts, such as the exodus, cf 66:5–6). (TLSB)

The works done for his people and in nature give assurance for the future. (Leupold)

*righteousness.* Saving acts by which God kept his covenanted promises to Israel (see note on 4:1). (CSB)

*hope of all.* Even though the nations of the world did not yet know it. (CSB)

God makes atonement for the sin of the whole world, vividly pictured as the "ends of the earth." God is the only hope for humanity. (TLSB)

**65:6–7** The God of creation who by his power brought order to the world out of the earlier chaos (see Ge 1) similarly in the redemption of his people establishes a peaceful order among nations (see Isa 2:4; 11:6–9; Mic 4:3–4) so that Israel may be at rest in the promised land (see also Ps 33; 46). God's mighty acts in

redemption are often compared by OT poets with his mighty acts in creation (see 74:12–17; 89:9–18; Isa 27:1; 40:6–14, 21–31; 51:9–11), since his power as Creator guaranteed his power as Redeemer. (CSB)

*formed the mountains ... stilled ... the seas.* Gave order to the whole creation (see 95:4–5). (CSB)

**65:6** *girded.* As a person puts on a belt or other article of clothing for work or war, so God is portrayed as putting on almighty power to do the awesome deed of salvation. (TLSB)

**65:7** *turmoil of the nations.* God's stilling the turbulence of the nations—which often threatened Israel—is compared to his taming the turbulence of the primeval waters of chaos (see notes on 32:6; 33:7). (CSB)

God puts the unruly in their place. He confines nations and empires to the boundaries he sets for them. When they become too proud, he breaks their power. He demonstrated this again and again during Israel's history, especially during the Exodus from Egypt. (PBC)

**65:8** All peoples will (ultimately) see God's saving acts in behalf of his people and will be moved to fear (see note on 46:10). And all creation will rejoice (see v. 13). (CSB)

Wherever the sun rises and sets, God works wonders. God blesses believers and unbelievers alike with peace and prosperity (Mt 5:45). (TLSB)

*wonders.* Or “signs,” referring to God's great saving acts, such as those he performed when he delivered Israel out of Egypt (Dt 4:34; see Ps 78:43; 105:27; 135:9). As “signs” they indicated that God was at work (see Jn 2:11 and note). (CSB)

**65:9–13** God blesses the promised land with all good things in answer to Israel's prayers. (CSB)

**65:9** *visit the earth.* To take care of it (Jas 1:27). (TLSB)

*streams of God.* See note on 36:8 (God's whole estate or realm—i.e., the earth, from which springs the abundance of food for all living things.). (CSB)

Vivid way of referring to rain, which falls over all the earth and brings forth crops (cf Ps 36:8). Luther: “Is it a small thing just because it happens every day? If the sun did not shine for ten days, then it would be a great thing. If there were no fire on earth except at one place, then, I think, it would be more precious than all the gold and silver in the world. If there were only one well in all the world, then I imagine that a drop of water would be worth more than a hundred thousand gulden, and in comparison beer and wine

would be so much garbage.... God showers upon them such great and rich miracles, and they do not consider even one of them or thank Him for it! But if some clown shows up who can walk a tightrope or who has monkeys to display, him they admire, praise, and exalt. Therefore the psalmist says here that the works of God are great, but only in the eyes of the upright” (AE 13:367). (TLSB)

Sometimes God works by spectacular miracles. More often he works in a gentle rain. Without the cycle of the rains God has ordained, life would vanish from the earth. (PBC)

**65:10** DRENCH..LEVEL..SOFTEN..BLESS – The poet obviously attempts to ascribe each successive step in the process to direct divine action. (Leupold)

The Lord orchestrates the rains and other natural phenomena that produce food for people. The planting and rains of v 10 are followed by the bountiful harvest of v 11. (TLSB)

**65:11** *crown*. Metaphorical for “bless,” “bestow. (TLSB)

*bounty*. Lit. “goodness” (see 68:10; see also 31:19 and note). (CSB)

Abundant rain fills the tracks (cf vv 9–10). Wherever the Lord passes by (pictured as riding in a wagon or chariot), abundance follows (cf 104:3). (TLSB)

**65:12–13** *pastures ... hills ... meadows*. Emphasis on herding. The psalmist paints a wonderful picture of lush vegetation sprouting up everywhere, almost like the Garden of Eden. (TLSB)

**65:13** The beauty of a hillside covered with sheep or a field waving in the wind inspires those who see it to praise God. (TLSB)

*grain*. One reference to crops. (TLSB)

*they shout for joy and sing*. In the exuberant language of the psalmists, all creation—even its inanimate elements—joins the human chorus to celebrate the goodness of God in creation, blessing and redemption (see 89:12; 96:11–13; 98:8–9; 103:22; 145:10; 148:3–4, 7–10; see also Job 38:7; Isa 44:23; 49:13; 55:12). (CSB)

Perhaps the psalm was composed for a harvest festival, similar to a Thanksgiving service. (TLSB)

A few touches may yet be added that lend color and life to the picture, stressing features of the daily common life of Israel that were important to all. (Leupold)

**Ps 65** David praises God for the forgiveness of sins, peace in the world, and prosperity in the land—a straightforward song of praise to God for His awesome grace. We have nothing except what God gives us, and the appropriate response to such amazing generosity, both spiritual and physical, is praise. David begins the list of gifts with the most important, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of faith. • “Blessed is the one You choose and bring near,” O Lord! (v 4) Amen. (TLSB)