

PSALMS

Chapter 66

Shout for joy to God, all the earth; ² sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! ³ Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you. ⁴ All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.” *Selah* ⁵ Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man. ⁶ He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There did we rejoice in him, ⁷ who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—let not the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah* ⁸ Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard, ⁹ who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip. ¹⁰ For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. ¹¹ You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs; ¹² you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance. ¹³ I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you, ¹⁴ that which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. ¹⁵ I will offer to you burnt offerings of fattened animals, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. *Selah* ¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. ¹⁷ I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. ¹⁸ If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. ¹⁹ But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. ²⁰ Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

Ps 66 A psalm of praise for God’s answer to prayer. It seems that God has saved the author, probably a king, from an enemy threat, and his deliverance has involved also that of the whole nation. It has often been suggested that the psalm speaks of Judah’s remarkable deliverance from the Assyrians (see 2 Ki 19). The praise is offered at the temple in fulfillment of a vow (vv. 13-14; Such praise was often climaxed by a call for others to take up the praise (see note on 9:1). Here the psalmist exuberantly begins with that call and, as often elsewhere (e.g., 67:3–5; 68:32; 98:4; 99:3; 100:1; 117:1), addresses it even to the far corners of the earth. This psalm is the second in a series of four (see introduction to Ps 65). The psalm is framed by a call to praise (vv. 1–2) and a declaration of the present occasion for praise (vv. 19–20, in Hebrew involving a play on words—the Hebrew for “praise” and “prayer” sound very much alike). The opening stanza is followed by two thematic sequences having the same structure: a three-verse stanza followed by a five-verse stanza. The first line of the first stanza of the first sequence (v. 5) begins with “Come and see”; the first line of the second stanza of the second sequence (v. 16) begins with “Come and listen.” (CSB)

This psalm expands on the theme of part two of the preceding psalm. It focuses on God’s awesome deeds by which he delivered his people Israel from Egypt. However, it is general enough to apply to all the awesome deeds by which God delivers his people. (PBC)

Psalm that can be offered by any believer in any time of hardship. The Lord’s deliverance at the time of Hezekiah (2Ki 19:8–37; Is 37:8–38) may have been the original occasion that gave rise to this psalm. (TLSB).

Format: Vv 1–4, all the earth worships; vv 5–7, God’s awesome deeds; vv 8–12, God tests His people; vv 13–15, offerings; vv 16–19, God hears me; v 20, closing blessing. (TLSB)

66:1–4 Calling all the earth to joyful praise. (CSB)

66:1 *all the earth*. God is so great, all humanity and all creation are invited to praise Him (148:1–4, 7–12). All creation will acknowledge Him in eternity, though the unbelieving will do so only by compulsion (Is 45:23; Rm 14:11–12; Php 2:10–11; Col 2:15). Cf v 4. (TLSB)

The Egyptians and all surrounding nations were filled with awe for the Lord over the great deeds by which he delivered Israel. But now he will be the gracious God of all people who turn to him. (PBC)

The point at issue is that the deliverance that God’s people experienced is so great that they would be unable to offer praise in a volume such as the occasion requires. Therefore let all the earth do her part. (Leupold)

66:2 *name*. God’s name is not to be taken in vain (Ex 20:7) but is to be used to bless (Nu 6:22–27). “That is the true honor of His name, to look to it and call upon it for all consolation [Psalm 66:2; 105:1]” (LC I 70). (TLSB)

The psalmist is not satisfied with our declaring them moderately, and insists that we should celebrate his goodness in some measure proportionally to its excellence. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

66:3 *cringe*. See Jos 5:1; 2Ch 20:29. (CSB)

It often appears that God’s enemies triumph, but He has won the victory, and in eternity that will be clear to all. (TLSB)

66:4 *all the earth worship*. God’s mighty acts in behalf of his people will bring him universal recognition.). (CSB)

The word “all” may be taken to refer to all kinds of people from all over the earth, rather than that every individual worships the Lord. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

The word “worship” means “bow down”; it could be in worship or forced submission. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

selah – Hebrew; untranslatable. Mainly in the first two books of Psalms. Probably refers to the accompaniment of the harps during the psalm. (TLSB p. 993)

This often occurs in the middle of a psalm and which apparently signals an interlude. “The Sela indicates that one must be still and quickly think through the words of the psalm; for they demand a quiet and restful soul, which can grasp and hold to that which the Holy Spirit there presents and offers” (Luther). (Psalms – The Prayer Book of the Bible – Dietrich Bonhoeffer p. 23)

Selah may be a musical notation. It could also be a point where a pause is desirable for the singer or reader of the psalm in order that the statement last made or the thought as a whole just developed may be reflected upon before the next turn of the thought appears. (Leupold)

66:5–7 Recollection of God’s deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea as a sign of his power to rule over the nations. The psalmist portrays his deliverance (see introduction above) both as similar to

this Red Sea rescue in its manifestation of God's saving power (see 65:5–7 for a comparison of God's mighty saving acts with his mighty acts of creation) and as a continuation of God's same saving purposes. – It may be applied to all trials of God's people, since the Exodus is a type and pattern of all of God's acts of deliverance. (PBC)

66:5 *Come and see.* God's saving acts of old can still be "seen" at his temple, where they are continually celebrated. (CSB)

One must take time to consider what God has done otherwise he will not be impressed by the Lord's works. (Leupold)

He then demonstrates the point with two great events, the crossing of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan. But his descriptions are not simply history lessons; it is as if they were there, participating in these events. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

toward the children of man.† Specifically in behalf of his people. Lutherans often rightly apply these words to the sacraments. (CSB)

66:6 *sea...river.* Possibly the Jordan, but more likely a parallel reference to the Red Sea. (CSB)

Refers to both Israel's crossing of the Red Sea at the exodus and the people's crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land. (TLSB)

66:7 *rules* – God's rule may be hidden at present; it will be clearly seen in eternity. (TLSB)

whose eyes keep watch – His eyes keep watch on the nations. The verb means to "to spy out"; the Lord spies on the nations, meaning in practical terms, any attempt to destroy Israel or overthrow God's plan is fully observed by God. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

let not the rebellious. Nations that are in revolt against God's rule (see 68:6). (CSB)

It means that they should not even think about rising up against the people of God, let alone boast against God (see Ps. 2:1-4). (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

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66:8–12 Proclamation in praise of God's new deliverance of his people. (CSB)

66:8 *peoples.* Here probably the grateful throng of worshipers (see 2Ch 20:27–28). (CSB)

66:9 *kept our soul among the living.* God delivers us from death. (TLSB)

let not our feet slip. When he experiences a personal blow to health or circumstance. (CSB)

Whenever Israel was at the brink of destruction, God rescued them and put them in the realm of life. In fact, he did not let their foot slip, indicating they were in peril or danger, but as the figure indicates, they found firm footing. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

66:10 *tested ... tried.* From one point of view, times of distress constitute a testing of God's people as to their trust in and loyalty to God. The metaphor is borrowed from the technology of refining precious metals, which included heating the metals in a crucible to see if all impurities had been removed (see 12:6; 17:3). (CSB)

The Lord uses hardship to test the faith of His people, just as He tested the faith of Abraham (Gn 22:1–14). Believers should look upon all their hardships in this light. (TLSB)

They were cast into the hot furnace of affliction that they might be refined as silver is refined and that always implies extreme pain. (Leupold)

66:11–12 *You ... You.* God's rule is all-pervasive; even when enemies for malicious purposes attack his people, God is not a mere passive observer but has his own holy purposes in it (see Isa 45:7; Am 3:6). (CSB)

66:11 *prison ... burdens ... ride over.* Three metaphors describe their suffering: captives thrown into prison, prisoners of war turned into slaves, defeated troops overrun by a chariot force. (CSB)

Their testing of faith is compared to the capture and domestication of an animal. (TLSB)

66:12 *fire and through water.* Conventional metaphors for severe trials (see Isa 43:2). (CSB)

brought us out. The exodus, and also a more general application to any hardship from which God delivers His people. (TLSB)

to a place of abundance. Lit. "to an overflowing" (see 23:5). They were brought out of a situation of distress into a situation of overflowing well-being. (CSB)

The word translated "abundance" is literally "to saturation" or "overflow." (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

66:13–15 Announcement of fulfillment of vows: addressed to God. (CSB)

The surprising thing about this section is the personal, individual character of the prayer and praise, since the preceding section was national or congregational. It appears that the psalmist was applying to his own personal experience the lesson he had learned from the deliverance of the nation. (PBC)

66:13 *I.* The king. (CSB)

house. The Lord's temple or tabernacle. (TLSB)

burnt offerings. Kings usually offered whole burnt offerings (Lv 1), a sign of total devotion to the Lord. (TLSB)

vows. The whole burnt offering would have been a visible expression of a vow of loyalty. (TLSB)

66:15 *I will offer burnt offerings* – Burnt offerings symbolized complete self-consecration to the will of the Lord and were most appropriate after life had been restored to an individual at a time when its very existence had been threatened. (Leupold)

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66:16–20 Proclamation of what God has done: in praise of God, addressed to the worshipping congregation. (CSB)

Although we direct people’s attention primarily to God’s great acts which won salvation for all people, it is also appropriate that we testify to the significance these acts have had in our own lives. Our examples and our experiences can be an encouragement to others. (PBC)

66:16 *Come and hear*. Possibly a public proclamation by the Israelite king, perhaps Hezekiah, in his official role as one who was to promote right faith and worship within Israel (cf 1Ki 8:12–21). (TLSB)

fear God. Fear” in this phrase has the sense of reverential trust in God that includes commitment to his revealed will (word). (CSB)

what he has done – What he would like especially to tell them is what the Lord has done for his soul. (Leupold)

66:17 *high praise*. Prayer and praise belonged together in the OT (see also Php 4:6; 1Ti 2:1). (CSB)

66:18 *the Lord would not have listened*. Cf Pr 15:29; Is 1:15; 59:2–3. The Lord listened to the psalmist’s prayer not because of the psalmist’s worthiness but out of God’s own “steadfast love” (vv 19–20). (TLSB)

66:20 *blessed be God*. See v. 8. (CSB)

love. Appeal to God’s “(unfailing) love, kindness, mercy” is frequent in the OT since it summarizes all that the Lord covenanted to show to Israel (see Dt 7:9, 12) as well as to David and his dynasty. (CSB)

Ps 66 The Lord's deeds of salvation, culminating in the ministry of Christ, assure His people that He will make all things, even hardships, work out for their ultimate good (Rm 8:28–29). Hardships may tempt us to abandon the faith, yet knowing that the Lord uses hardship to test our faith will strengthen us to hold on to our faith. • Bless You Lord, for Your saving deeds and promises. Amen. (TLSB)