

Psalm 65

To the chief Musician, A Psalm [and] Song of David.

Psalm 65: The psalm has a simple purpose: to express thanksgiving for rain and harvest, an appropriate subject in a farming economy. It is addressed to God in its entirety and presents Him as The God who forgives (verses 1-4), the God who intervenes in history (verses 5-8), and the God who provides (verses 9-13).

Verses 1-13: This is a praise psalm, full of hopeful, confident, even enthusiastic feelings in response to God's goodness with no complaints or curses. The setting is a celebration at the tabernacle, perhaps at Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the spring, or the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles, in the fall.

- I. Praise for Spiritual Blessings (65:1-5).
- II. Praise for Natural Blessing (65:6-13).

Verses 1-5: All the praise the Lord receives from this earth is from Zion, being the fruit of the Spirit of Christ, and acceptable through him. Praise is silent unto thee, as wanting words to express the great goodness of God. He reveals himself upon a mercy-seat, ready to hear and answer the prayers of all who come unto him by faith in Jesus Christ. Our sins prevail against us; we cannot pretend to balance them with any righteousness of our own. Yet, as for our transgressions, of thine own free mercy, and for the sake of a righteousness of thine own providing, we shall not come into condemnation for them. Observe what it is to come into communion with God in order to blessedness. It is to converse with him as one we love and value. Observe how we come into communion with God; only by God's free choice. There is abundance of goodness in God's house, and what is satisfying to the soul; there is enough for all, enough for each. It is always ready; and all without money and without price. By faith and prayer, we may keep up communion with God, and bring in comfort from him, wherever we are. But it is only through that blessed One, who approaches the Father as our Advocate and Surety, that sinners may expect or can find this happiness.

Psalm 65:1 "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed."

"Zion": Specifically, the hill in Jerusalem where Israel worshiped Jehovah, but also synonymous with the Promised Land (compare Psalm 48:2; also Psalms 3:4; 9:12; 24:3; 68:5; 87).

"Vow ... performed": This is likely a reference to vows made by the farmers because of an abundant harvest (compare Psalms 56:12; 61:8).

We know throughout these studies, that Zion symbolizes the church. I wish this statement were true in all believing churches today. Are there really praises waiting for God in His church today? Some of our churches are far from the state of praise. The church must remain faithful to

God. Churches, as well as the people in the churches, must keep their vows they have made to God.

Psalm 65:2 "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

"All flesh come": Reference to the future millennial kingdom when all the world will worship the Lord (compare Zech. 14:16-19).

I saw a sign on a billboard a few days ago. It said, God still talks to His people, but we are not listening. God always listens to us. He never tires of hearing our prayers. Perhaps He has to wait a little longer for our prayers now in our affluent society. Most people spend more time in prayer, when they are in some difficulty. There is a time, when not just the believers, but all of mankind shall come and stand before the Lord.

Psalm 65:3 "Iniquities prevail against me: [as for] our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away."

"Purge them away (forgive)": The words, found 3 times in the Psalms (78:38; 79:9), means to cover sin and its effects. In the Old Testament, atonement was symbolized in sacrificial ritual (compare Exodus 30:10, Lev. 16-10-11), though actual forgiveness of sin was ultimately based on the death of Christ applied to the penitent sinner (compare Heb. Chapter 9).

David is saying here, that his enemies are constantly bringing up his past sins. In fact, they are blowing them all out of proportion. They want David's sins to sound so bad that he will not be forgiven for them. In the next part of the verse David says, "our transgressions". David is reminding us here, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of the Lord. The last part of the verse is very optimistic. David knows that God has washed his sins away as far as the east is from the west. I am glad that I am included in the purging of my sins. Praise God! Jesus is the propitiation for all our sins.

1 John 2:2 "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world."

This is one of the greatest shows of God's love for man in all the Bible.

1 John 4:10 "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins."

Psalm 65:4 "Blessed [is the man whom] thou choosest, and causest to approach [unto thee, that] he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, [even] of thy holy temple."

In eternity; both to grace and glory; for such have true faith in Christ given them, called the faith of God's elect, and shall never perish. They are effectually called by the grace of God, and are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and shall be glorified. Or in time, for there is a choice in time, as the fruit, effect, and evidence of the eternal choice, and is no other than effectual calling

(see John 15:19; 1 Cor. 1:26). And happy are those who are both chosen and called. Both election and the effectual calling are to grace and glory, and spring from the good will and pleasure of God.

"And causest to approach unto thee": The persons whom God has chosen for himself are, in their state of nature, at a distance from him by reason of sin. And through the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which atonement is made, they are brought nigh to him. And in the faith of Christ the Mediator, their hearts are engaged to approach unto God, and come with boldness to his throne, and ask grace and mercy of him. And through the grace of Christ they have nearness to him, and communion with him (Eph. 2:18).

"That he may dwell in thy courts": Or "he shall dwell"; the man that is chosen of God, and brought nigh by Christ. He shall not only come into the house of God, and tread in his courts, but he shall dwell there, ever abide, and never go out.

"We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house": Even all that are like this man, chosen by the grace of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ. Brought into the house of God, and have a place and a name there, better than that of sons and daughters of men. By "the house" of God we are to understand the church of God. And by "the goodness" of it the provisions of grace in it, the word and ordinances, and the blessings of grace held forth in them. And especially Christ the bread of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. Of which true believers may eat, and do to full satisfaction; and blessed are they that have such food, and appetites for it, and are filled with it.

"Even of thy holy temple": Which means the same as the house of God; namely, the church (see Eph. 2:21). Some, as Aben Ezra observes, interpret it, "thou Holy One in thy temple"; as if it was an address to God, and a description of him as in his temple.

We did not choose God, He chose us.

John 15:16 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

One of the best examples of this in all the Bible, is when God called Moses from the burning bush. We have to answer that call. We are not a puppet that we have no choice, but salvation is offered to each of us. Some accept it, and some do not. This one verse takes us from our calling to total access to the throne of God. We are of the household of God, if we accept the call. The holy temple in heaven will be our new home. We are adopted into the family of God, and are able to call our Father by the name that only His children can call Him Abba.

Psalm 65:5 "[By] terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; [who art] the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off [upon] the sea:"

“Confidence ... earth ... sea”: Unlike local heathen gods, Jehovah God is not just the God of a single locality. The universal worship of the Lord is required of all men (compare Rom. 1:18-32), and will be a reality in the messianic era when the kingdom of God will cover the earth (compare Isa. 2:1-4; Zech. 14:9).

Salvation was not offered exclusively to the natural Hebrew, but to those afar off as well. Salvation is for whosoever will. Salvation is for all nationalities who believe. Sometimes the answers to our prayers frighten us. I have said over and over, do not pray for me to have patience, because patience comes through tribulation. It is really special to see a prayer that we have prayed answered. Our confidence should not be in our own ability, but in His ability. It is amazing to me every time I see someone come to the Lord. One by one, God is building Him a family. The Bible itself, says by the foolishness of preaching men are saved.

1 Corinthians 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Verses 6-13: That Almighty strength which sets fast the mountains and upholds the believer. That word which stills the stormy ocean, and speaks it into a calm, and can silence our enemies. How contrary whatsoever light and darkness are to each other, it is hard to say which is most welcome. Does the watchman wait for the morning? So does the laborer earnestly desire the shades of evening. Some understand it of the morning and evening sacrifices. We are to look upon daily worship, both alone and with our families, to be the most needful of our daily occupations, the most delightful of our daily comforts. How much the fruitfulness of this lower part of the creation depends upon the influence of the upper, is easy to observe. Every good and perfect gift is from above. He who enriches the earth, which is filled with man's sins, by his abundant and varied bounty, can neither want power nor will to feed the souls of his people. Temporal mercies to us unworthy creatures, shadow forth more important blessings. The rising of the Sun of righteousness, and the pouring forth of the influences of the Holy Spirit. That river of God, full of the waters of life and salvation, render the hard, barren, worthless hearts of sinners fruitful in every good work, and change the face of nations more than the sun and rain change the face of nature. Wherever the Lord passes, by his preached gospel, attended by his Holy Spirit, his paths drop fatness, and numbers are taught to rejoice in and praise him. They will descend upon the pastures of the wilderness, all the earth shall hear and embrace the gospel, and bring forth abundantly the fruits of righteousness which are, through Jesus Christ, to the glory of the Father. Manifold and marvelous, O Lord, are thy works, whether of nature or of grace; surely in loving-kindness hast thou made them all.

Psalm 65:6 "Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; [being] girded with power:"

In the first creation and formation of them, when they were settled on their basis so firmly that they are rarely removed, and when they are it is something extraordinary. Some understand this of the Lord's preparing the mountains with the rain of his strength, for the bringing forth of herbs and grass for the service of man and beast, and of his adorning them with trees. Rather the church of God is meant (see Isa. 2:2). Where the same phrase is used as here; and "mountains"

may signify particular churches, or indeed particular believers. For all that trust in the Lord are like to mountains (Psalm 125:1). And these are set fast in the everlasting love of God, by which their mountain is made to stand strong; in eternal election. Which is the foundation of God that stands sure; in the covenant of grace, which is more immovable than hills and mountains. And on Christ the Rock, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail. And who are so established, settled, and kept by the power of God, that they cannot be removed by the most boisterous storms and winds of the world's persecutions, Satan's temptations, or their own sins and corruptions.

"Being girded with power": Not the mountains, but God himself; whose power, like himself, is infinite, and appears in the works of his hands, of nature, providence, and grace. The allusion is to a mighty man girded for battle; or for the performance of great undertakings.

Have you really ever looked at a mountain and suddenly realized that God made this beautiful thing?

Genesis 1:9 "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry [land] appear: and it was so."

You see, a mountain is a mountain because God called it into being. This is the power of God's spoken Word, not man's spoken word.

Psalm 65:7 "Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people."

By a word speaking; as our Lord did when here on earth, and which was a proof and evidence of his eternal power and Godhead. These figurative expressions are interpreted by the next clause.

"And the tumult of the people": Of wicked men, who foam and rage against the people of God, and are like a troubled sea that cannot rest. But God can say to these proud waters, which threaten to go over their souls, Peace, be still. He can stop their opposition, quell their insurrections, restrain their wrath, and make them peaceable and quiet; wherefore the saints have no reason to be afraid of them (Psalm 46:2).

I never see this verse, that I do not recall the Lord Jesus speaking to the angry waves and telling them to be still, and they were. There will never be peace in this world among the nations until the King of peace comes and sets up His kingdom of peace.

Psalm 65:8 "They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice."

"Morning ... evening": The nations who live in the east where the sun first makes its morning appearance, and those who live in the west where the sun disappears into darkness rejoice in the Lord.

Unless these tokens are natural phenomena, I do not know what this means. Most people in the church believe that storms and earthquakes are from the devil, but I believe they are from God. The earth quakes, and they repented not. The storm comes, and they repented not. It seems to me that these things come to get our attention turned to God. I believe even depressions come for the same reason. It seems the church grows strongest under the greatest tribulation. God controls the sunshine, and the rain, and the night and day as well. One Scripture that leaves no doubt about this is the following.

Matthew 5:45 "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

The devil has a little power on earth, but he has to get God's permission to do his evil deeds just as he had to get God's permission before he could attack Job.

Psalm 65:9 "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, [which] is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it."

So the Lord looked upon the earth, quickly after its formation, before rain came upon it, and he watered the whole face of the ground (Gen. 2:5). So he cared for the land of Judea in particular, and watered it with the rain of heaven (Deut. 11:11; see 2 Sam. 21:1). This may be applied to the church and people of God in Gospel times, who are his husbandry, and the good ground on which the seed falls and is received, and brings forth fruit. And are comparable to the earth that drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs that satisfies a need for those that dress it, and receives a blessing from God (Heb. 6:7). Thus, the Lord visited his people, by the mission of his Son to redeem them, whose coming was as the rain, the former and latter, to the earth (Luke 1:68). So, he visited the Gentile world, by the preaching of the Gospel by his apostles, whose doctrines dropped as the rain, and distilled as the dew and small rain on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass. And so, made a wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water (Acts 15:14). And in like manner he visits particular persons in conversion, and waters them with the graces of his Spirit, by which he regenerates, quickens, and sanctifies them, and makes them fruitful (Isa. 44:3). Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water. Not Shiloah nor Jordan; but the clouds which are full of rain, which falling upon the earth, impregnate it with rich particles, which make it very fertile and fruitful. So the Targum, "with a multitude of fruits thou enrichest it out of the river of God, which is in heaven, which is full of rain." This may mystically denote the river of God's everlasting love, which is full of the blessings of grace, and which flowing upon his people, makes them fruitful, and enriches them with the riches of grace and glory (see Psalm 46:4).

"Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it": Or because thou hast so prepared it; that is, the earth being disposed and prepared by the Lord, watered and enriched with the rain of heaven, produces corn in great plenty for the inhabitants of the earth. Which may spiritually design either the fruitfulness of the saints, whose hearts are disposed and prepared by the grace of God to receive the seed of the word, which brings forth fruit in them. Or the bread corn, that wheat of the Gospel, and Christ the sum and substance of it, which is of God's preparing for his people, and by which they are nourished and made comfortable (see Zech. 9:17).

We see again here, that the crop produces because God tells it to. We may plant a seed and pray that it grows, but it will not grow unless it is the will of God for it to grow.

Psalm 65:10 "Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof."

Or rather, its furrows, for so the Hebrew word properly means (Job 31:38; 39:10). The allusion is to the furrows made by the plow, which are filled with water by the rains.

"Thou settlest the furrows thereof": Or rather, thou beats down the ridges thereof. Literally, thou makest them to descend. That is, the rain falling on them beats them down, so that the ground becomes level.

"Thou makest it soft with showers": Margin, thou dissolves it. The idea is, to soften, to loosen, to make the soil light and open. All farmers know that this is necessary, and that it cannot be done without water.

"Thou blessest the springing thereof": Or, what springs from it; the vegetation. Thou dost bless it by causing it to grow luxuriantly, thus producing an abundant harvest.

This is just saying that the rain in the spring, along with the warmer weather, makes the vegetation to grow. Spring is very much like new life. After it appears that all vegetation is dead, it springs to new life with every new spring.

Psalm 65:11 "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness."

"Paths drop fatness": Like a farm wagon dropping its overflow along the cart path.

God set the universe in order, and it has stayed there since creation. We look at one of the promises of God in the next verse which has to do with the blessings of God.

Genesis 8:22 "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

God blesses each day of the year in its own way. The years roll by, and another year comes fast on its heel.

Psalm 65:12 "They drop [upon] the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side."

As well as upon the ploughed land, and turn them into a fruitful field. Which may denote the Gentile world, whither the Gospel was sent by Christ, and preached by his apostles. And whose doctrines dropped as the rain, and prospered to the thing whereunto they were sent, and made this wilderness as the garden of God.

"And the little hills rejoice on every side": Or "joy girds the hills". Or "they are girded with joy"; or "gird themselves with joy", as the Targum. Being covered on all sides with grass, herbs, and trees. These may denote the churches of Christ, and little hills of Zion, who rejoice when the interest of Christ flourishes (Psalm 68:14).

This is saying, that even in lands which have not been cultivated by man, the grass grows. Possibly, some of the most beautiful growth in all the world is the voluntary growth in the wilderness where no man's hand has touched. The greatest beauties in the earth are the natural beauties, such as the mountains and streams, the waterfall and the sunset. Man has a tendency to mess up the beauty of nature.

Psalm 65:13 "The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

Of sheep, which are so thick, that there is scarce anything to be seen upon the pastures but them. Which look as if they were clothed with them. These may intend the multitude of converts, signified by the flocks of Kedar, and rams of Nebaioth. Which gathering about the church, and joining to her, she clothes herself with them as with an ornament (Isa. 60:7).

"The valleys also are covered over with corn": Being made very fruitful with the rain, and bringing forth in great abundance; so humble souls are the most fruitful ones.

"They shout for joy, they also sing": That is, the pastures, hills, and valleys, being laden with all kind of fruit for the use of man and beast. For necessity and pleasure, which occasion joy to the inhabitants of the earth. This may be expressive of the joy that will be among men, when the interest of Christ will be in a more flourishing condition in the latter day (see Isa. 49:13).

There is nothing happier than animals feeding on the clover of the spring. Every time we see a new season of spring roll around and all the beautiful flowers and vegetation that come with it, we know afresh that God has not given up on man.

Psalm 65 Questions

1. What is the symbolic meaning of Zion?
2. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all _____ come.
3. When do most people spend more time in prayer?
4. David is saying, in verse 3, that his enemies are doing what?
5. When David says our sins, what is he trying to say?
6. How far away is David's sin from him?

7. Jesus is the propitiation for _____ .
8. We did not _____ God, He _____ us.
9. Who is possibly the best example of God choosing someone?
10. Who is salvation offered to?
11. Verse 4 takes us from our calling to where?
12. What is the name that only the children of God can call Him?
13. Salvation is for all _____ who believe?
14. Why is a mountain a mountain?
15. What does verse 7 remind us about Jesus?
16. When will there be peace among the nations?
17. What are the tokens in verse 8 probably?
18. When does the church grow the strongest?
19. What makes a seed grow into a plant?
20. Spring is very much like _____ .
21. How long will there be seedtime and harvest on the earth?
22. What is verse 12 saying about the vegetation?
23. What does the author believe to be the real beauties of the earth?
24. What is happy when the clover comes up in the spring?