

Psalms 66-68 – Chapter Study

Psalm 66

To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm.

This psalm of thanksgiving celebrates God's protection & calls all nations to join in worshipping the Lord.

¹ Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!

This oft repeated call to praise God with a loud voice follows some marvelous victory or deliverance God has brought. It's the ***cheer*** that follows a ***major win***.

² Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious.

This is such a great call! "***Make God's praise glorious!***"

Lift it up. Shout it out. Raise it above all else! Broadcast it.

³ ***Say*** to God, "How awesome are Your works!

Let's say it now!

Think of the glory of creation.

By day, that big ball of fire called the sun!

At night, those stars, many of them magnitudes bigger than our sun.

Or go the other direction and look down; lie on you stomach on your lawn and part the blades of grass & watch the life teeming in the soil.

The marvelous intricacy of the cell, the molecules & atoms.

This is one of the reasons Christians have nothing to fear from true science.

Science is a handmaiden to theology.

It ***fuels our wonder*** & awe at the glory & power of God. Its ***sparks praise***.

³ ***Say*** to God, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.

While the battle between good & evil has raged throughout history & continues today, the Day will come when evil will be finally defeated – then, EVERY knee will bow & EVERY tongue will confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.

⁴ All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises *to* Your name."

Selah

⁵ Come and see the works of God; *He is awesome in His* doing toward the sons of men.

⁶ He turned the sea into dry *land*; They went through the river on foot. There we will rejoice in Him.

The crossing of the Red Sea during the Exodus.

⁷ He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves.

Selah

⁸ Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard,

⁹ Who keeps our soul among the living, And does not allow our feet to be moved.

¹⁰ For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

¹¹ You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs.

¹² You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich *fulfillment*.

God's people have been through a time of trial & testing.

But through it all, God was at work to refine & purify them.

Precious metals like gold & silver are refined by passing through the fire.

They must be broken down & melted so that the dross, impurities, are brought to the surface and removed.

Even so, there's stuff in us that's polluting us, hindering our preciousness to God & to one another.

Like the impurities in silver, it's stuck inside, a part of us.

So God brings the heat of trial to break it lose.

He brings the refining fire to bring it to the surface where His Holy Breath can blow it away.

The believer who's growing in Christ knows the toughest sins to quit are those that are attached to how we see & identify ourselves.

The sin is a symptom of a deeper brokenness God wants to heal.

The man who struggles with lust may discover the **real problem** is **insecurity**.

He thinks he's worthless & no one would ever want him.

So he finds solace in the fantasy of lust.

The woman with the bitter tongue & can't keep friends may discover her **real issue** is **unforgiveness**.

She was hurt by someone close years ago & now protects herself by letting no one get close.

God loves us & is committed to our **complete redemption**.

His Spirit will relentlessly pursue us & go after those places in us that are broken to make us wholly whole.

The only way some of our brokenness will be revealed is by trial.

But through it all, God is at work to deliver us.

Vs. 1-12 were in the first person plural. Now the author switch to the singular.

13 I will go into Your house with burnt offerings; I will pay You my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals, With the sweet aroma of rams; I will offer bulls with goats. Selah

When the Psalmist was in trouble he'd promised God if He helped him he'd bring a special offering. He promises to keep his vow.

This is a classic thing people do; they make promises to God of enduring service if He will help them. Sadly, few follow thru on their vow.

16 Come *and* hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul.

Testimonies are wonderful!

17 I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue.

First the Psalmist cried for help, then when help came, praise went up.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

19 *But* certainly God has heard *me*; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

This is a crucial insight regarding prayer.

God will not heed prayers contrary to His will.

The heart, the core of our prayer must be to **know & do God's will**, because THAT & that ALONE is what's best.

Prayers that are fleshly wish-projections on God aren't heard by God.

Selfish demands set to the Almighty aren't regarded by Him.

Such prayers are nothing but the petulant demands of foolish children a loving & wise Father won't reply to with anything other than a resounding, "No!"

Prayer doesn't aim at getting our will done in heaven, it aims at getting His will done on earth.

20 Blessed *be* God, Who has not turned away my prayer, Nor His mercy from me!

Because the prayer was according to God's will.

Psalm 67

To the Chief Musician. On ¹Stringed Instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

This psalm is a simple but eloquent prayer that God's glory would be revealed to all.

1 God be merciful to us and bless us, *And* cause His face to shine upon us, Selah

A shining face is a smiling face; one that takes delight in what it sees.

The psalmist is asking that God would do what was needed so He could take delight in His people.

The Psalmist knows God's blessing is not only an end in itself, it's a means to another end, so he adds -

2 That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.

When God's people are blessed by Him, it provides evidence of His love & greatness & leads others to faith in Him.

Christian, God wants to bless you, not just so that you would hoard it to yourself, but so that others might see how good He is and come to know Him too.

3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.

When do people praise the loudest? When they are blessed!

4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth. Selah

GOs wasn't just the deity of the Jews & Israel. He is the God of all peoples & nations.

5 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.

6 Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us.

7 God shall bless us, And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

The Psalmist looks forward to the day when Messiah comes & restores the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Psalm 68

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song.

This Psalm is a triumphant ascent of the central hill of Jerusalem.

We don't know exactly when David wrote this but it may have been when he first conquered Jerusalem or when he brought the ark there some years later.

The Psalm begins by looking back to the Exodus.

1 Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.

2 As smoke is driven away, So drive *them* away; As wax melts before the fire, So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

3 But let the righteous be glad; Let them rejoice before God; Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.

The picture here is of that pillar of fire & cloud that led Israel through the wilderness.

In fact, in Numbers 10, v. 1 is exactly what Moses said whenever the pillar began to move before the people.

Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.

4 Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, By His name Yah, And rejoice before Him.

In our recent study of Ephesians we've seen how being filled with the Spirit will result in a singing heart.

The Christian life is one of song, following the Lord in love.

5 A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation.

What a wonderful picture of tenderness & diligent care for the poor & powerless.

6 God sets the solitary [lonely] in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

7 O God, when You went out before Your people, When You marched through the wilderness, Selah

The camp of Israel was a mixed multitude.

Not all believed, even though the power & presence of God was evident to them.

Those who believed in God found the Exodus to be a marvelous, blessed time.

They had manna to eat every day! They drank miracle water.

It was a moveable feast & party that was a blast!

But those who rejected God, complained about everything!

It was desert; there was sand everywhere. It was dry. The food was bland.

There was nothing to see. Waaa!

Just like ancient Israel during the Exodus, the church is a mixed multitude; not everyone is saved.

The real people of God are on a spiritual journey to the Heavenly promised land and take delight in the miraculous provision & presence of God.

But the hangers on complain & whine.

8 The earth shook; The heavens also dropped *rain* at the presence of God; Sinai itself *was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

When God came down on the mount & met with Moses.

9 You, O God, sent a plentiful rain, Whereby You confirmed Your inheritance, When it was weary.

10 Your congregation dwelt in it; You, O God, provided from Your goodness for the poor.

Israel spent an entire year at the foot of Sinai.

God took care of their needs while they were there.

11 The Lord gave the word; Great *was* the company of those who proclaimed *it*:
This looks back to the time at Sinai when the entire nation heard the voice of God speak the 10 Commandments & invite them into covenant with Him.

12 “Kings of armies flee, they flee, And she who remains at home divides the spoil.
This looks now to the conquest of Canaan by Joshua & the armies of Israel.
God gives His people victory in battle and the spoils of war enrich everyone.

V. 13 is tough to sort out -

13 Though you lie down among the sheepfolds, *You will be* like the wings of a dove covered with silver,
And her feathers with yellow gold.”

This verse reveals to us just how thorough David’s knowledge of God’s Word was.

He’s lifting a quote from Judges 5 where it says some of the tribes of Israel didn’t send their men to battle in the conquest of Canaan; they stayed home among their flocks instead.

David takes that line out of Judges & says that even when God’s people lag in their diligence, God will still bless them because His grace is amazing.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it (Canaan), It was *white* as snow in Zalmon.
Zalmon was a hill near Shechem in the heart of the land.

When there’s snow on Zalmon, it means there’s no chance of drought.

It’s another picture of God’s blessing.

15 A mountain of God *is* the mountain of Bashan; A mountain *of many peaks is* the mountain of Bashan.

16 Why do you fume with envy, you mountains of *many peaks*? *This is* the mountain *which* God desires to dwell in; Yes, the Lord will dwell *in it* forever.

Bashan is the range that stretches north of Israel & includes the majestic Mt. Hermon.

The peaks of Bashan are much taller & more pretty than the runty little hill of Zion Jerusalem sits on, but Zion is where God chose to put His name, not Bashan.

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *Even* thousands of thousands; The Lord is among them *as in* Sinai, in the Holy *Place*.

A chariot force of 20,000 was an armed body beyond imagining.

That’s the idea here – God’s might is unstoppable.

Now we get a verse Paul quotes in Ephesians as prophetic of Jesus.

18 You have ascended on high,

On Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

You have led captivity captive;

Israel out of bondage in Egypt.

You have received gifts among men, *Even from* the rebellious, That the Lord God might dwell *there*.

Vanquished foes pay tribute to the conqueror.

When Paul quoted this in Ephesians 4, he seems to do so as speaking of how Christ went to those OT saints who’d been looking for the Messiah & Redeemer to come & open salvation to them.

Jesus then preached to them the work He’d done by the cross and led them to heaven in His resurrection.

19 Blessed *be* the Lord, *Who* daily loads us *with benefits*, The God of our salvation! Selah

20 Our God is the God of salvation; And to God the Lord *belong* escapes from death.

He daily **loads** us with benefits! And most of them we never know about! Narrow misses & such.

Now David turns to idioms of battle to show God’s victory.

21 But God will wound the head of His enemies, The hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in his trespasses.

22 The Lord said, “I will bring back from Bashan, I will bring *them* back from the depths of the sea,

23 That your foot may crush *them* in blood, And the tongues of your dogs *may have* their portion from *your* enemies.”

24 They have seen Your procession, O God, The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after; Among *them were* the maidens playing timbrels.

Reading this I get the image of the closing ceremonies of the Olympics.

Competition has been waged, Battle has been fought. God has won and now it's time to celebrate.

26 Bless God in the congregations, The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

27 There *is* little Benjamin, their leader, The princes of Judah *and* their company, The princes of Zebulun *and* the princes of Naphtali.

All the leaders of the people gather to honor God.

28 Your God has commanded your strength; Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us.

29 Because of Your temple at Jerusalem, Kings will bring presents to You.

Which they did during the reigns of David & Solomon, and will do again when Christ comes to reestablish the throne of David in the **Millennium**.

30 Rebuke the beasts of the reeds, The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples,

The enemies who've escaped & hold out hopes of rebellion.

Till everyone submits himself with pieces of silver. Scatter the peoples *who* delight in war.

Silver was way kings paid tribute to their conqueror.

Those who won't submit will be scattered in defeat.

31 Envoys will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God.

Throughout history, Egypt has sought to control Israel because it was Egypt connection to the rich trade centers of Asia & Europe.

But this looks to the time when Israel will be so strong under God's blessing both upper & lower Egypt will seek peace with Israel and come to faith in Israel's God.

The ultimate fulfillment of this will be during the **Millennium**.

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; Oh, sing praises to the Lord, Selah

33 To Him who rides on the heaven of heavens, *which were* of old! Indeed, He sends out His voice, a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe strength to God; His excellence *is* over Israel, And His strength *is* in the clouds.

35 O God, *You are* more awesome than Your holy places.

David acknowledges that while God has chosen to set His name on Mt. Zion & Jerusalem, He is not limited to them.

The God of Israel *is* He who gives strength and power to *His* people. Blessed *be* God!