

Psalms 66:0 ¶ To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm.

Though not identified as a psalm of David, it certainly sounds as if its author was influenced by David's psalms.

Psalms 66:1 ¶ Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

Psalms 66:2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

Psalms 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.

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

The psalmist opens with a call for people in all lands to praise God. He calls for them to honor God's name, His great authority and character (from the Hebrew), as demonstrated by the awesome way He had delivered His people (the Israelites) from their enemies. He knows that one day all the enemies of God will be made to submit to His authority. The day is coming when God will be worshipped throughout the earth, and the nations will sing His praise. Scripture affirms this truth.

Isaiah 45:22–23 “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 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.”

Philippians 2:10–11 “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Selah – a pause, an opportunity for reflection and meditation.

Psalms 66:5 Come and see the works of God: *he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.*

Psalms 66:6 He turned the sea into dry *land:* they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

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

The psalmist presents the parting of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to escape the armies of Pharaoh as a prime example of God's amazing power and authority. The people rejoiced and praised God for His deliverance and have continued to do so throughout their history. Despite evidence to the contrary, the psalmist knows that God is sovereign and in control as He watches over events on planet earth. Those that rebel against Him are warned to take heed of that truth.

God is clear in declaring that He will accomplish all that He has purposed even though we cannot understand His ways.

Isaiah 14:24 "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:"

Isaiah 46:9–10 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"

Isaiah 55:8–11 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Selah – another pause with time to think

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

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

The psalmist calls for people to praise God because He is the very source and sustainer of their lives.

Though his address has been to all people throughout the earth, I think the context shows that the psalmist is turning his address to the people of Israel. He makes reference to "our" God and goes on to talk about how God has brought them through the refining fires into a place of blessing.

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

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

Psalms 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.

As the psalmist reflects on the history of his people, he testifies that God has tested and refined them, drawing a comparison to the purification of silver by a refining fire. The fires He used were the fires of affliction and distress as well as oppression and cruelty at the hands of their enemies. From his perspective at the time of the writing of this psalm, they had passed through the refining fire and water and were now in a wealthy place, a place of satisfaction and prosperity.

Application from Spurgeon: "All the saints must go to the proving house; God had one Son without sin, but he never had a son without trial. Why ought we to complain if we are subjected to the rule which is common to all the family, and from which so much benefit has flowed to them? The Lord himself proves us, who then shall raise a question as to the wisdom and the love which are displayed in the operation?"

And another: "God's people and affliction are intimate companions. As in Egypt every Israelite was a burden bearer, so is every believer while he is in this foreign land. As

Israel cried to God by reason of their sore bondage, so also do the saints. We too often forget that God lays our afflictions upon us; if we remembered this fact, we should more patiently submit to the pressure which now pains us. The time will come when, for every ounce of present burden, we shall receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Psalms 66:13 ¶ I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, Psalms 66:14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

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

The psalmist now makes his address to God personal. He is committing to offer burnt offerings of thanksgiving and pay all the vows he had made to God in his time of trouble. He promises to present the best of his livestock for his offerings to God.

Sad, but true, it seems that it is in hard times that we tend to make vows to the LORD, hoping that will convince Him to answer our prayers. Why are we not more motivated in good times to make vows to the LORD in gratitude for his blessings?

The psalmist also reminds us that anything we offer to God in gratitude and thanksgiving should be of our very best. He is not honored when we offer Him any less than our best.

Selah – another pause and opportunity for reflection and meditation

Psalms 66:16 Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

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

The psalmist now calls for those that fear God to come and hear his testimony about what God had done for him. He had called out to God in prayer, giving Him praise in the process. I think he is saying that as he prayed, he thanked God in advance for hearing and answering him.

I can relate to the psalmist. I cry out to God, laying before Him the burdens on my heart, and thanking Him that I can confidently trust in Him to answer according to what He knows is best. I am confident that He loves those that I love far greater than I do—even though I may not be able to understand His ways.

Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*:

Psalms 66:19 *But* verily God hath heard *me*; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

Psalms 66:20 Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

The psalmist knows that the LORD will not honor his prayer if he is harboring sin in his heart. He can happily testify that God did hear him and answer his prayer and praises God for showing him favor and answering his prayer.

Jesus affirms the truth in principle of verse 18.

Matthew 5:23–24 “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”