

Day 343 - SATURDAY: January 20th

Psalms 64, 65 & 66

Psalms 64:1-10 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation; Preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity, Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, And bend their bows to shoot their arrows—bitter words, That they may shoot in secret at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear. They encourage themselves in an evil matter; They talk of laying snares secretly; They say, "Who will see them?" They devise iniquities: "We have perfected a shrewd scheme." Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep. But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; Suddenly they shall be wounded. So He will make them stumble over their own tongue; All who see them shall flee away. All men shall fear, And shall declare the work of God; For they shall wisely consider His doing. The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and trust in Him. And all the upright in heart shall glory.

Psalms 65:1-13 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song. Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion; And to You the vow shall be performed. O You who hear prayer, To You all flesh will come. Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You will provide atonement for them. Blessed is the man You choose, And cause to approach You, That he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Of Your holy temple. By awesome deeds in righteousness You will answer us,

O God of our salvation, You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth, And of the far-off seas; Who established the mountains by His strength, Being clothed with power; You who still the noise of the seas, The noise of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples. They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your signs; You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice. You visit the earth and water it, You greatly enrich it; The river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, For so You have prepared it. You water its ridges abundantly, You settle its furrows; You make it soft with showers, You bless its growth. You crown the year with Your goodness, And Your paths drip with abundance. They drop on the pastures of the wilderness, And the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; The valleys also are covered with grain; They shout for joy, they also sing.

Psalms 66:1-20 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm. Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious. Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises to Your name." Selah Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men. He turned the sea into dry land; They went through the river on foot. There we will rejoice in Him. He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, Who keeps our soul among the living, And does not allow our feet to be moved. For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment. I will go into Your house with burnt offerings; I will

pay You my vows, Which my lips have uttered And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble. I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals, With the sweet aroma of rams; I will offer bulls with goats. Selah Come and hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul. I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, Nor His mercy from me!

Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 64:

The UCG reading program states: "In Psalm 64, last in the group of four psalms here, David prays for protection from those plotting against him and meditates on the sudden judgment that awaits the wicked.

The rebels "encourage themselves" by scheming and coming up with the "perfect plan" (compare verses 5-6). By saying that the inward thought and heart of man are "deep" (verse 6), David seems to be saying that they are hidden deep down where no one would see, following the question in verse 5. But Someone does see. *The Nelson Study Bible* states: "The arrogance of the wicked in their plots against the righteous is a continuing theme in the Psalms (Psalm 9; 10; 12). *Who will see* [they think to themselves]: The wicked do not know, or do not care, that there is One who sees (Psalm 73:11), and who will repay (Psalm 75:7)" (note on Psalm 64:5-6). Jeremiah quoted God as saying: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? *I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings*" (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

Indeed, David believes that God will punish the wicked based on the principle of just retribution. Their "arrows" or "bitter words" (verses 3-4) God will shoot back at them (verse 7). "He will make them stumble over their own tongue" (verse 8) is not a reference to stuttering but that their own words will ultimately trip them up and bring them down. In essence, what they plan to do to others will "come back to bite them" and bring about their own downfall (compare Galatians 6:7).

This will be a lesson to all (Psalm 64:9). In addition to *fearing* God, they will "declare the work of God," passing on to others what they have witnessed, and "wisely consider" what He has done (same verse). In light of God's faithfulness, David in verse 10 encourages the godly to trust and rely on Him." [END]

Psalm 65:

The UCG reading program states: "The *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* says in its introductory note to Psalms 65-68 that these are "four psalms dominated by the theme of praise and linked by the shared recognition that God's 'awesome' deeds evoke the wonder of 'all the earth' to join Israel in singing the praise of her God.... In these four psalms, the occasions--and reasons--for this universal praise include (1) God's mighty acts in maintaining the creation order and making it fruitful so that humans are richly blessed, and (2) God's saving acts in behalf of his people. These are significantly brought together here by alternating the focus; Psalm 65 and Psalm 67 speak of the former, and Psalm 66 and Psalm 68 speak of the latter. Thus, in this short series all of God's benevolent acts are brought into purview, and the whole human race is encompassed in the community of praise."

The framing psalms of this section, Psalm 65 and Psalm 68, are attributed to David. The interior psalms, Psalm 66 and Psalm 67

are anonymous. These are two of only four anonymous psalms in Book II. Yet since the first, Psalm 43 (attributed to David in the Septuagint), was most likely part of Psalm 42, there are probably only three anonymous psalms in Book II--66, 67 and 71.

However, given their placement and the fact that Book II ends a few chapters later by referring to previous psalms as "prayers of David" (Psalm 72:20), it seems likely that these are all Davidic psalms--or at least ones he collected and used. The Septuagint attributes Psalm 71 to David.

Psalm 65, as *The Nelson Study Bible* says, "is a wisdom psalm and more particularly a creation psalm (as Psalm 19). It celebrates rainfall, sharing the mood of Psalm 104 in this regard. But this is also a prophetic psalm, although it is not always regarded as such. The prophetic element is signaled in the first verse, the vow of praise yet to be paid--that is, all creation is waiting to praise the Lord when He finally appears in glory (see Romans 14:10-11; Revelation 19:5). [See also the next psalm, 66:1-4.]....

"In the background of this psalm [65] is an idea not far from that of Paul in Romans 8:22, the groaning of creation for its release from the curse brought on it by humanity's [sin in the Garden of Eden] (Genesis 3:17). The point of the psalm is twofold: (1) Every good rain and every full harvest is a blessing from God, showing His delight in His creation. (2) A day of God's goodness is coming in which good rains and harvests will be greater than ever before" (introductory note on Psalm 65 and note on verse 1).

Yet there is more to it still. For in juxtaposing atonement for sin (verse 3), entry into God's temple courts (verse 4) and the abundance of rain and harvest to crown the year (verses 9-13), David seems to picture here the observance of the fall festival

season in thanksgiving for the late summer and fall harvest as figurative of the future coming of God's Kingdom and the great spiritual harvest of humanity at that time. In Jewish interpretation, the crowning of the year (verse 11) refers to the civil new year, Rosh Hashanah or the Feast of Trumpets. As ancient Israelite coronations were accompanied by the blowing of the shofar or ram's horn, the blowing of the ram's horn at the Feast of Trumpets was seen as the crowning the year--and indeed this festival begins the sacred year's seventh month, which celebrates the fall harvest and pictures the culmination of God's plan for humanity's redemption and salvation.

Verses 2-3 refer to God providing atonement for all flesh--all people. *The Nelson Study Bible* notes on these verses: "David speaks of a coming day when sin will be dealt with fully, when redemption will be completely paid. This took place in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 1:7)." However, Christ's sacrifice will not be generally applied to all mankind until the world at large repents, commencing after Jesus' return as symbolized in the Day of Atonement, which comes just nine days after the Feast of Trumpets. And Atonement itself serves as a prelude to the Feast of Tabernacles beginning five days later--also known as the Feast of Ingathering to emphasize its harvest theme (and to prefigure the ingathering of all humanity into a relationship with God, into His temple courts to dwell with Him forever).

When Jesus Christ returns, God will truly be "the confidence of all the ends of the earth" (verse 5). All mankind will understand His plan and His awesome and righteous deeds to save all people. Even now God's power as displayed through nature elicits awe: "Those living far away fear your wonders" (verse 8, NIV). Yet this

may also foretell the humbling of mankind at Christ's return through a series of global natural catastrophes He will bring. But even these will be to produce a harvest—a harvest of repentant people.

In verses 9-13 David cites God's comprehensive care for the earth—the rain (verses 9-10), the blessings on the pastures, hills, meadows and valleys. "Your paths drip with abundance" (verse 11b). The NIV translation replaces "paths" here with "carts." Green's Literal Translation says "tracks." *The Nelson Study Bible* says, "The picture is of wagon tracks across the heavens, where the 'cart' of God's mercies sloshes abundance on the earth below" (note on verses 11-13).

God's marvelous outpouring of material and spiritual blessings through the year were celebrated with great rejoicing during His annual festivals—particularly during the fall festivals. But those blessings and celebration are only a small foretaste of what awaits in the wonderful Kingdom of God to come." [END]

Psalm 66:

The UCG reading program states: "As already mentioned, the author of Psalm 66 is not given in the title, though David seems rather likely. The perspective in the first part of the song (verses 1-12) is from the plurality of God's people (using the pronouns "us" and "we"), while the latter part (verses 13-20) is from a singular perspective (using "I" and "me").

In the spirit of the previous psalm, the psalmist calls on the whole earth to praise God and acknowledge His awesome works (verses 1-3a) and then, to God, prophetically says that in the future "all the earth shall worship You" and "submit themselves to You" (verses 3b-4).

The psalm calls on all to come and see the great things God has done and is doing for people (verse 5)--to witness and experience it firsthand or to look into what is recorded in Scripture. God delivered Israel from Egypt by parting the Red Sea and making a dry-land passage to freedom (verse 6). God also dried up the Jordan River so that "all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan" (Joshua 3:17). Yet in declaring this message to the world at the time of Christ's return, the wording here could also refer to the parallel crossings over water on dry land that will occur at that time--when "the Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt...[and] shake His fist over the River [Euphrates]...and make men cross over dryshod" (Isaiah 11:15).

God's people are able to declare that He "has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping" (verse 9, NIV) even though He has tested them (verse 10). The tests are likened to the refining of silver, to being captured (perhaps imprisoned), to being afflicted on the back (perhaps through the lash or in bearing burdens) and to suffering oppression--in summary, "We went through fire and water, but You brought us out to a place [or state] of abundance" (verse 12, NIV). As God says through Isaiah of His intention to preserve His people: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior" (Isaiah 43:2-3).

On the occasions of personal deliverance, the psalmist promises to bring thank offerings (verses 13-15). And he will talk about the wonderful things God "has done for me" (verse 16, NIV). Whereas verse 5 called on all to "come and see" God's works toward

humanity, the psalmist now directs those who have been stirred to fear and honor God to "come and *hear*" his individual witness (verse 16)--what God has done for one, for him, and will also do, it is implied, for each of them.

Then notice the realization of verse 18, which is an implicit warning to others hearing this witness: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." This is in a present or continuing sense. The NIV renders this verse in the past tense, as expressive of what had occurred in this episode: "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." Either way, we are told here that the harboring of sin, failing to confess it and forsake it, and the nurturing of sinful thoughts will thwart effective prayer. We find this important message in other passages of Scripture as well (see Proverbs 15:29; Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 1:15; Isaiah 59:1-2).

Conversely, the apostle John tells us: "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:21-22). Psalm 66 expresses this very confidence, the psalmist stating in verses 19-20 that God on this occasion has *certainly* listened to his prayer and has not rejected it nor withheld His *hesed*--His steadfast love and mercy." [END]