

LESSON 5

PSALMS 65—67

PSALM 65: REJOICING OVER GOD'S GOODNESS

This psalm, a beautiful hymn of adoration and praise, focuses on faith in God and upon an appreciation for His goodness to us. Eleven times “You” is used as God is addressed and praised. No enemies are discussed; no complaints are presented to God.

The psalm must have been written for a harvest festival or for the giving of thanks for an especially bountiful year. However, nothing in the title or content suggests the particular time or the purpose of the writing. The general nature of its message makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make an exact determination concerning its original purpose.

Its content includes much more than praise for the blessings of a fruitful earth. Beyond its gratefulness for the harvest, it highlights the acts of God in history and His power over nature. Its spirit of rejoicing may reflect a recent time of protection or deliverance of the nation.

1. Where do you look to see the handiwork of God?
2. How does the psalmist say that the earth praises God?
3. Using this psalm as our guide, what attitude should we have before we approach God to praise Him?
4. What examples does the writer give of God's blessings?

PSALM 66: JOYFUL PRAISE

Possessing similar characteristics to Psalm 65, this hymn of praise is an extended call to praise God. In its exhortation, all people are urged to lift up their voices in thanksgiving to Him.

The pronouns “you,” “we,” “our,” and “us” appear in the first twelve verses;

and the remaining verses use only the first person pronouns “I,” “me,” and “my.” Verses 1 through 4 serve as a universal invitation to praise God, while verses 5 through 15 emphasize the great works that God has done for His people, Israel. In verses 16 through 20, the writer focuses on what God has done for him. The content goes from the earth at large, to a nation, to an individual.

The great workings of God provide the constraining rationale for all—Israel and the earth—to bow before Him in worship, praise, and thanksgiving. The reader is challenged to come and see, and after seeing, to meditate upon His goodness and wonders.

Perhaps some great national deliverance is in the background of the psalm. Sennacherib’s destruction or the return from exile would be possibilities. The conclusion given in its final verses may be picturing the king or a representative of the nation personalizing the redemption that God has given His people.

5. Who does the psalmist call to praise God?
6. What does the psalmist command to praise God?
7. What works does the speaker attribute to God’s hand?
8. How should we praise God today?
9. List some of the reasons why we give praise to God.

PSALM 67: A MISSIONARY SONG

With its bright outlook and joyous spirit, this wonderful hymn completes a triplet of hymns of praise (65—67). It is short and to the point, but it is also comprehensive, positive, and energetic with praise.

Although a reference is made to the harvest in verse 6, the content is far more than a praise song for the yield of the fields. It is a prayer of thanksgiving for how God has blessed Israel with His presence. In addition to its voice of thanksgiving, it contains a petition that His goodness toward Israel be a means by which He becomes known to all the nations.

The psalm’s remarkable characteristic is its global view. In the seven verses, the “nations” are mentioned seven times with three different words. (*Goyim* is used once in verse 2, *‘ammim* is used twice in verse 3, *l’ummim* and *‘ammim* are used once each in verse 4, and *‘ammim* is used twice in verse 5.) Its worldwide thrust is further reflected by its use of “earth” four times (vv. 2, 4, 6, 7). Every nation is included within its scope. God’s providence is the basis for the adoration that

is expressed, but all peoples have their place in the song. Its international flavor seems to anticipate in prophecy the going forth of the gospel into all the world after our Lord's resurrection. However, no part of the psalm is ever quoted in the New Testament as a prediction of the universal spread of the gospel.

10. What makes this psalm unique from others?
11. Who should praise God?
12. Who does the writer ask God to bless?
13. Why does the psalmist say that God blesses us so richly?