

# PSALM 66

## DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Invitation to All the Earth to Join in Israel's Song of Praise.

## ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1-4, Invitation based on Display of Divine Power. Stanza II., vers. 5-7, Examples of God's Ancient Doings, leading up to his Abiding Rule. Stanza III., vers. 8-12, Renewed Invitation based on Recent Deliverance. Stanza IV., vers. 13-15, Individual Resolve to Fulfil Personal Vows. Stanza V., vers. 16-20, a Record of Personal Experience.

### (Lm.)—Song—Psalm

- 1 Shout unto God all the earth,
- 2 celebrate in psalm<sup>1</sup> the glory of his name,  
establish ye the glory of<sup>2</sup> his praise.
- 3 Say unto God—"How fear-inspiring are thy works!<sup>3</sup>  
through the abounding of thy power will thy foes come  
cringing unto thee<sup>4</sup>;
- 4 All the earth will bow down to thee and make melody unto  
thee,  
will celebrate in psalm thy name.
- 5 Come and see the doings of God,<sup>5</sup>  
Fear-inspiring is he in act towards the sons of men:—
- 6 He turned the sea into dry land,  
through a stream passed they on foot,—  
there let us be glad in him!
- 7 Ruling in his might to the ages  
his eyes over the nations keep watch:  
as for the rebellious let them not show exultation against him!
- 8 Bless O ye peoples our God,<sup>6</sup>  
and cause to be heard the sound of his praise:

1. Or: "make melody unto."

2. So it shd. be (w. Aram., Syr.)—Gn.

3. Or: "doings."

4. Or: "feign obedience unto thee." Cp. for same significant word, 18:44 (2 S. 22:45), 81:1.

5. Cp. 46:8.

6. Some cod. (w. Aram., Syr.) simply: "God"—Gn.

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- 9 Who hath set our soul<sup>1</sup> among the living,  
and not suffered to slip our foot.<sup>2</sup>
- 10 Surely thou hast tried us O God,  
hast refined us like the refining of silver:
- 11 Thou didst bring us into the net;  
didst lay a heavy load<sup>3</sup> on our loins,  
12 didst let mere men ride over our head,—<sup>4</sup>  
we came into fire and into water;  
and then thou didst bring us forth into a spacious place.<sup>5</sup>
- 13 I will enter thy house with ascending-sacrifices,  
I will render unto thee my vows,—  
14 What my lips uttered,  
and my mouth spake in the strait I was in:
- 15 Ascending sacrifices of fatlings will I cause to ascend unto  
thee,  
with the perfume of rams:  
I will offer cattle with he-goats.
- 16 Come hearken and let me tell all ye that fear God  
what he hath done for me:—<sup>6</sup>
- 17 Unto him with my mouth did I cry,  
with high praise under my tongue,—<sup>7</sup>
- 18 Iniquity<sup>8</sup> had I cared for in my heart  
my sovereign Lord had not heard,—
- 19 In truth God hath heard,  
hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
- 20 Blessed be God—  
who hath not turned away my prayer (from before him<sup>9</sup>),  
nor his kindness from being with me.

(Lm.) To the Chief Musician. (CMm.) With stringed instruments.

1. Some cod. (w. 7 ear. pr. edns.): "souls" (pl.)—Gn.
2. Some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns.): "feet"—Gn.
3. Or: "constraint"—Br. and others.
4. Some cod. (w. 3 ear. pr. edns., Sep., Vul.): "heads" (pl.)—Gn. Cp. Isa. 51:23.
5. So it may be (w. Aram., Sep., Syr., Vul.). Cp. 18:19—Gn.
6. Ml.: "my soul," but undoubtedly Br. is right: "The *naphshi* is as usual a poetic expression for the person, and does not refer to the soul as distinguished from the body." Notwithstanding, the definition of Dr. is apt; a pathetic circumlocution for the personal pronoun"—Dr. PP. Glos. I.
7. "Ready to burst forth in speech"—Br.
8. "Naughtiness"—Dr.
9. Cp. 88:2, 13, 102:1, 119:170. This personification of prayer, as coming in before God, helps to explain the one application of the verb rendered *turned away* to both *man's prayer* and *God's kindness*.

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PARAPHRASE  
PSALM 66

Sing to the Lord, all the earth!

2 Sing of His glorious name! Tell the world how wonderful He is.

3 How awe-inspiring are Your deeds, O God! How great Your power! No wonder Your enemies surrender!

4 All the earth shall worship You and sing of Your glories.

5 Come, see the glorious things God has done. What marvelous miracles happen to His people!

6 He made a dry road through the sea for them. They went across on foot. What excitement and joy there was that day!

7 Because of His great power He rules forever. He watches every movement of the nations. O rebel lands, He will deflate your pride.

8 Let everyone bless God and sing His praises,

9 For He holds our lives in His hands! And He holds our feet to the path!

10 You have purified us with fire,<sup>1</sup> O Lord, like silver in a crucible.

11 You captured us in Your net and laid great burdens on our backs.

12 You sent troops to ride across our broken bodies.<sup>2</sup> We went through fire and flood. But in the end, You brought us into wealth and great abundance.

13 Now I have come to Your Temple with burnt-offerings to pay my vows.

14 For when I was in trouble I promised You many offerings.

15 That is why I am bringing You these fat he-goats, rams and calves. The smoke of their sacrifice shall rise before You.

16 Come and hear, all of you who reverence the Lord, and I will tell you what He did for me:

17 For I cried to Him for help, with praises ready on my tongue.

18 He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins.

19 But He listened! He heard my prayer! He paid attention to it!

20 Blessed be God who didn't turn away when I was praying, and didn't refuse me His kindness and love.

1. Implied.

2. Literally, "You caused men to ride over our heads."

## PSALM SIXTY-SIX EXPOSITION

Instead of speaking of this psalm as "composite" (w. Br.), it would probably be more accurate to term it *various*, passing from scene to scene, from the remote past to the recent past, and from the nation to the individual; but threaded through with a clear and strong principal of unity; namely, the inspiring occasion that gave it birth. The overthrow of the Assyrians, and simultaneously therewith the recovery of King Hezekiah from sickness, form a cluster of events worthy of being the occasion to inspire this beautiful and significant psalm. It is indeed Israel's song of praise; but all nations are invited to join in singing it, and to make Israel's joys their own. The spirit of prophecy which inspired the predictions of Isaiah, Micah, and others, pulsates strongly throughout this song, imparting to it an outlook and an onlook adapted to justify it more effectively than a mere foreglance at immediately following events in Israel could have done. Its companion psalms are notably the 46th and 47th; and its ultimate sphere of fulfilment is nothing less than that manifest dominion of Jehovah, under the person of the Returned Messiah, which is the burden of prophecy, and which alone, from among all known or foretold combinations of events, supplies the conditions needed for the complete realisation of this psalm. Never during the Monarchy prior to the Exile, never during the stand made by the Maccabees after the Exile, and—needless to say—never since, has there been such a conjunction of events as could induce Israel's foes, or Jehovah's foes, to come cringing unto Him, while Earth as a whole was singing and harping to his name. Least of all, with any show of New Testament sanction, can cringing foes, feigning an obedience they dare not withhold, be regarded as possessing the essential qualifications for membership in the Christian Church. No: in its ultimate outlook, this is a song for the Coming Kingdom; while nevertheless the inspiration to compose it, and begin singing it, sprang, under God, from the significant deliverance in Hezekiah's days, a deliverance adumbrative of a larger deliverance from Antichrist's dread domination.

But, clear as is the general outlook of the psalm, there meet us in the study of it a few minor difficulties which it were to be wished could be removed; though possibly, since they may be due to accidents of transmission, they may for the present have to remain unresolved. In any case it will repay us to endeavour to

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trace the changeful current of thought as it passes from stanza to stanza: before attempting which however, it may frankly be admitted that the stanzical division itself cannot probably be placed beyond question, without resorting to drastic changes and excisions for which we are by no means prepared; though happily the Selahs (☞ ☞), and the evident changes of person in the speaker, go some way to supply the defect. Submitting our division of the psalm as tentative and practical only, we proceed.

In Stanza I., an invitation is boldly given to *all the earth*, to join in the public worship of God, by the employment of the *teru'ah*, or sacred shout, the *lute* or *lyre* as leading in song, and therefore in accompanying words; and so, by shouting and harping and singing (implied) *to the glory* of God's name, to *establish the glory of his praise* on a basis of worldwide faith and unison. Words are then suggested for use in such worship by the formula: *Say unto God*; and the tenor of the words which follow shows two things: *first* that some fearful manifestation of *Divine Power* has recently been witnessed in the earth; and *second*, that, while *foes* will come crestfallen in submission, the *earth* as a whole will, to all appearance, join heartily in the praise.

In Stanza II., the *mighty deeds of God* are still the theme; but now, by examples from history, the past is called on for its testimony; which it renders by (probably *two*) conspicuous specimens, the one at the *Red Sea*, and the other at the *Jordan*. It cannot, indeed, be dogmatically affirmed that there are *two events*, rather than a duplicated narration of the one great event when Pharaoh was overthrown; but, in favour of including both passages through water, may be urged: that thereby the entire transfer of the nation into the promised land is comprehended; and more especially that thereby a point of connection is provided for the following line, which has given critics some trouble: *There let us be glad in him*. If the one journey out of Egypt into Canaan has been covered by the two lines preceding, then this line may be taken to apply to the Holy Land itself. *There*—namely in the land so reached, equivalent to “**HERE**, in our own land, into which we were so miraculously brought; **HERE**, in our own land in which we again realise that we are a free people now that the invading Assyrians have disappeared, *let us be glad in him*: with the old joy renewed.” Otherwise, if both the preceding lines refer to the transit through the Red Sea, then the line

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following ought to have read, as in most English versions: *There were we made glad in him*; which would indeed have brightly suggested the song of Miriam, but is strongly represented by Perowne as an ungrammatical rendering of the Hebrew word. It is barely possible that, in the ancient risks of copying, the whole line has been accidentally brought back from (say) the end of ver. 12, where slightly modified into "Here let us be glad in thee"—"Here," in this *spacious place*, it might well have stood; but, meantime, the previous suggestion is submitted to thoughtful readers: *There*—in the land so miraculously given to us (and now afresh made our own)—*let us be glad in him*.

However this small difficulty may be disposed of—and small relatively it certainly is—it is evident that the transit through *sea and stream* (or through the *sea* regarded as the same as the *stream*) is but a stepping-stone to the larger thought of the *age-abiding rule* of God. His work for Israel was not then ended, when he so brought Israel into this delightful land: he continues to care for Israel, and therefore *His eyes over the nations still keep watch*; first, for Israel's sake; but second, also to their own good; for only the *rebellious* among them have need to beware of *exalting themselves against* Israel's God.

In Stanza III., we perceive the inspiring spirit going forth to the non-Israelitish nations with new and stronger impulse, in order to impress upon them this lesson: that Israel's history is theirs, Israel's deliverances are ultimately fraught with blessing for them. Hence, now, this recent Divine interposition is brought forward and elaborated in seven lines of graphic life and power, which need no detailed comment. They are Hezekiah's reading of the event of the Assyrian invasion—the reading also of all the godly in Israel—in respect of the disciplinary improvement it was hoped would follow from that invasion and that deliverance. It was hoped that the nation was *refined as silver is refined through the fire*; and so undoubtedly, in a measure, it was. Nor did Israel only profit: even Gentile nations are still being instructed by those thrilling and exemplary events.

And now at length, in Stanza IV., there steps into view an INDIVIDUAL, whom we instantly recognize as Hezekiah himself. We know that Hezekiah's heart was set on going up to the house of Jehovah, when his sickness should be ended (Isa. 38:22); we know also the liberality of the provision of sacrifices which he made on other occasions (2 Ch. 29:20-35); and therefore we

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instinctively feel that the resolution which is amplified in this stanza is like him and worthy of him. The most liberal offerings which he could now make would not be more than commensurate with his abounding gratitude.

And, finally, in the last stanza of the psalm, we are invited to hear him tell the story of his prayer in his sickness. He does not indeed tell us all. He makes no mention of the nature of his sickness. That it was nothing less than leprosy, we have already learned incidentally from various sources: *that*, however, he does not here divulge. Nevertheless, his language betokens that his complaint was of grave import, moving him to earnest supplication; and two additional touches enhance the interest of this his personal reminiscence: there was faith in his outcry, *and* no allowance of *iniquity* marred his prayer. There was faith; for this, cherished in a warmth of rising gratitude, is what is implied by the highly poetic representation: *With high praise under my tongue*—prayer *on* the tongue, praise *under* it! And there was a sincere renunciation of evil (2 K. 20:3, 2 Ch. 32:26, Isa. 38:3). Had he cloaked iniquity, or still tolerated in his heart an inclination towards it, his prayer would not have been heard. But his prayer *has* been heard—the leprosy has been removed; and so the happy event confirms the clear consciousness of renunciation of sin.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Read Isa. 36:1—38:22. In these chapters of Isaiah we probably have the historical setting for this psalm. Particularly notice Isa. 37:20, as compared with the first four verses of this psalm. Verses 16-20 compare well with Hezekiah's sickness and recovery as related in Isa. 38:1-22.
2. There are two distinct parts—one choral, vs. 1-12; the other solo, vs. 13-20 (both to be sung in the Temple). Notice the change of pronouns "we" and "our" in 1-12. "I" and "my" in 13-20. What is the purpose of the five "Selahs" used in this psalm?
3. We could well outline the first half of the psalm: (1) The God of all, 1-4; (2) The God of Israel, 5-7; (3) The God of Israel is the God of all, 8-12; (After Graham Scroggie). Answer the following questions on this section: (a) All the earth *should* praise God—will there ever be a time when it will be a reality? When? How? (b) Why mention the

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crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan? (c) The God for all is revealed in these verses (8-12) as one who: (1) disciplines (2) delivers. Show where these two thoughts are developed.

## PSALM 67

### DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Prayer for Blessing on Israel as a Means of  
Blessing to All Nations.

### ANALYSIS

Stanza I., vers. 1, 2, The Priestly Prayer urged with a view to the Enlightenment of All Nations. Stanza II., vers. 3, 4, The Peoples will Give Thanks for Governance and Guidance. Stanza III., The Fruitfulness of the Earth, and Divine Blessing on Israel, securing the Universal Reverence of the Divine Benefactor.

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(Lm.) Psalm—(By David)<sup>1</sup>—Song.

- 1 May God be gracious unto us and bless us,  
may he light up his face among<sup>2</sup> us.
- 2 That men may know throughout the earth thy way,  
among all nations thy victory.<sup>3</sup>
- 3 Peoples will thank<sup>4</sup> thee O God!  
peoples all of them will thank thee,
- 4 Populations will rejoice and ring out their joy:  
when<sup>5</sup> thou shalt judge peoples in equity,  
and populations throughout the earth thou shalt lead.<sup>6</sup>
- 5 Peoples will thank thee O God!  
peoples all of them will thank thee:
- 6 Earth hath given<sup>7</sup> her increase:

1. So in some cod. (w. Sep., Vul.)—Gn.

2. So Per.; ml. "with."

3. Or: "salvation"; but cp. Pss. 96-98.

4. Cp. 6:5n.

5. Or: "because."

6. As in Exo. 15:13, Pss. 5:8, 23:3, 27:11, 73:24. So Kp. and Br. "Guidest"—Per.

7. As if on some recent occasion (65); but may be prophetic perfect of certainty: "shall have given."