

# WHOLLY DEPENDABLE Sunday School- November 7, 2010

## Unifying Topic: GOD IS AWESOME

### Lesson Text

I. Sing Praises To God (Psalm 66:1-4)

II. God's Awesome Works (Psalm 66:5-7)

III. God's Preservation (Psalm 66:8-12)

**The Main Thought:** Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. (Psalm 66:5 KJV)

**Unifying Principle:** Many people carry burdens that are too heavy to bear. What can ease our loads? We can sing to the Lord because God's great power holds our lives in God's hand and keeps our feet from slipping.

**Lesson Aim:** To help students praise God for His awesome works and abundant blessings.

**Life aim:** To teach Christians to praise God for His awesome works, to remember how the Lord has brought them out of trouble, and to know that the Lord is a good God who blesses us abundantly.

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

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

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..

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

### HISTORY:

The inscription begins: To the chief musician. A song or psalm. This note is attached to fifty-five Psalms. It refers to the leaders of the temple singers and so is translated "*choirmaster*" by the RSV, meaning instructions to the choirmaster as to how the particular Psalm was to be sung. Praise is the topic, and the subjects for song are the Lord's great works, His gracious benefits, His faithful deliverances, and all His dealings with His people. <sup>1</sup>The name of the author of this psalm is unknown. There is no certain evidence that it was composed by David, yet there is nothing in the Psalm itself which is inconsistent with the supposition that he was the author.

### LESSON:

#### Psalm 66:1-4 Sing Praises To God

**66:1-2** The writer invites all men to unite in praise. This is a striking occasion; a special act of thanksgiving, and celebration for God's great mercy. All people, all lands, all the earth, all the inhabitants of the world, are called upon and are capable of praising God.

<sup>2</sup>The Israelites would "*shout*" about a king when exulting in victory. The Psalm will, in fact, extol the victorious and Divine King and demonstrate that He is worth shouting about. The psalmist wants shouting to be joined by singing so he envisions all this praise focusing on the "*glory*," or royal essence, of God to the extent that even such praise is "*glorious*"—meaning, it reveals His worth.

Even though you're not in the choir, you are still commanded to make a joyful noise unto God. The noise is to be modulated with tune and time, and fashioned into singing, for we adore the God of order and harmony. The words, "*make a joyful noise*", is used 7 times in the Bible and all 7 of them are in the book of Psalms. The praise is evident when the words say, "*sing...*" "*Say...*" and "*worship...*" There is honor due His name and we are to make that honor known in connection with songs. Recognize His glory in our praise of Him. Do not mere thank Him for His kindness

<sup>1</sup> <http://barnes.biblecommenter.com/psalms/66.htm>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/13973/22878\\_4930.pdf](http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/13973/22878_4930.pdf)

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sundayschool.html>

but magnify Him for His greatness and majesty. The meaning is, to set forth His praise with songs - with music - with shouts; - all which are appropriate expressions of the praise due Him. The honor of God should be our subject, and to honor Him our object when we sing. Make His praise glorious.

**663-4** There was more required than to think of God. You had to "say" to God Himself. That is, to say in your songs of praise, let your songs be directly addressed to God, setting forth the grounds of that praise, or the reasons why it is due Him. The word "terrible" has reference to the "greatness of His Power." He is fearful, terrible and therefore has to be reference. The Lord is not just mighty, but Almighty. Due to this "Power", all "enemies" on the earth will "submit" themselves unto Him. His enemies will be compelled to do so. <sup>3</sup>The meaning here is, that He has power to subdue them, and to compel them to acknowledge His right to reign. His power is just that great! The difference between the submission of the true people of God and that of all others is that the former are subdued by love, the latter by power; the submission of the former is genuine, that of the latter is forced.

The inhabitants of heaven will be submissive to God because they love Him; the dwellers in hell will be restrained by power, because they cannot deliver themselves. Power brings a man to his knee, but love alone wins his heart. All inhabitants of the world will bow down before God, or render homage. This speaks of the coming kingdom Age, which will be a time of universal praise and universal worship. This universal worship, that will be yielded him, will be in the latter day; which shows that this Psalm respects those times, when Christ shall be King over all the earth, and His name, worship, and religion, will be one, (Zechariah 14:9,16) (Revelation 15:4).

The nature and works of God will be the theme of earth's universal song, and He Himself shall be the object of the joyful adoration of our emancipated race.

"Selah." A little pause for holy expectation is well inserted after so great a prophecy, and the uplifting of the heart is also a seasonable direction. No meditation can be more joyous—the excited by the prospect of a world reconciled to its Creator.

## **Psalm 66:5-7 God's Awesome Works**

**665** The Psalmist now begins to recount how awesome God is when He defends His people. It says "Come and see the works of God" – referring to the famous story when God rescued the Israelites by parting the Red Sea. God saved the Israelites then, and He continues to save His people today. His acts are suited to inspire awe and veneration. <sup>4</sup>Remember the plagues which bowed the will of Pharaoh, the drowning of Egypt's chariots in the Red Sea, the overthrow of Og and Sihon, the scattering of the Canaanites before the tribes? This same God still liveth, and is to be worshipped with trembling reverence.

<sup>5</sup>When Nathaniel heard that Jesus hailed from Nazareth, he asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and Philip answered, "Come and see." Nathaniel came and saw, and told Jesus, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel" (John 1:46-49). After Jesus was crucified, Mary Magdalene "came" to the tomb on the first day of the week and "saw" that the stone had been rolled away. She then beheld the resurrected Jesus, whereupon she "came," announcing to the disciples that she had "seen" the Lord (John 20). Mary becomes the first evangelist. Just as the psalmist speaks to all the earth, just as Philip answered Nathaniel, we tell our world, "Come and see. See if you don't find evidence of the forgiveness and life that the very-much-alive Jesus gives to His people!"

**66:5b-6** The terror or that which was "terrible," was the overthrow of Israel's enemies, the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea - thus showing that God had power to destroy all the enemies of His people. "He turned the sea into dry land." This was an illustration of His power, and of His ability to defend and deliver His people. The background of **verse 6a**, "He turned the sea into dry land," is found in Exodus 14:21. However, the background of **verse 6b**, "They passed through the [Jordan] river on foot," is found in Joshua 3:16.

A much greater miracle is that men should pass over the bitter sea of this life, and cross the river of mortality, that

<sup>3</sup> <http://barnes.biblecommenter.com/psalms/66.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/tod/view.cgi?book=ps&chapter=066&verse=005>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/13973/22878\\_4930.pdf](http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/13973/22878_4930.pdf)

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never ceases to run dry, and which swallows up and drowns so many, and we still come safe and alive to the land of eternal promise, and there rejoice in God himself, beholding Him face to face; and yet this greater miracle is so accomplished by God, that many pass through this sea as if it were dry land, and cross this river with dry feet; that is to say, having no difficulty in despising all things temporal, be they good or be they bad; that is to say, being neither attached to the good things, nor fearing the evil things, of this world, that they may arrive in security at the heavenly Jerusalem, where we will rejoice in Him, not in hope, but in complete possession for eternity. *Robert Bellarmine.*

**66:6c** We, as a nation - our fathers - thus rejoiced in God (See Exodus 15).

**66:7** He has not deceased, nor abdicated, nor suffered defeat. The powers; the abilities displayed at the Red Sea is undiminished: the divine dominion endures throughout eternity. Christ is the Ruler in Israel, King over His holy hill of Zion; who must reign till all enemies are put under His feet. He rules in the kingdom of nature and providence by His power, and does whatsoever He pleases. He rules in the kingdom of grace, in the hearts of His people, by His efficacious grace; which makes them willing, in the day of His power, to be subject to Him; and in the latter day He will take to Himself His great power and reign, when He will be King for ever.

**66:7b** The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the "*evil and the good.*" Here it is taken in an adverse sense, and means, to watch from a watch tower, to threaten from a lofty place. Even as God looked out of the cloud upon the Egyptians and humiliated them, so does He spy out His enemies, and mark their conspiracies. His hand rules and His eyes observe; His hand has not waxed weak, nor His eye dim. God keeps perpetual watch upon the heathen nations, whose general attitude is that of hostility to His "*peculiar people*", lest His people should suffer at their hands. He sees all people and nations conduct. They can conceal nothing from Him.

**66:7c** He sees all the idolatry and wickedness committed in them; and his eyes will be as flames of fire to destroy them, when the time is come. The proudest have no cause to be proud. At any time rebellion may break out, His people be attacked, and "*the nations*" endeavor to "*exalt themselves.*" They shall not be exalted in themselves for ever. All such attempts, however, will be in vain, since "*by His power, God ruleth for ever.*"

"*Selah.*" Pause again, and take time to bow low before the throne of the Eternal.

## **Psalm 66:8-12 God's Preservation**

**66:8** Bless our God; bless Him as ours. He is a God in covenant with His own. God should be foremost in our praise. As His people, we should recognize that the very fact that we are alive and that we have not fallen away from Him is due completely to His grace. Then we are to compel unwilling ears to hear the praises of our covenant God. The people of God must lead the way. Our voices must be heard long and loud making rocks, and hills, and earth, and sea, and heaven itself to echo with joyful shouts of acclamation that God preserves His own. All countries that know the Lord and fear Him are to ascribe blessing, and honour and glory for God is wholly, and totally dependable.

**66:9** The Lord not only preserves our temporal life, but maintains the spiritual life which He has given to believers. <sup>6</sup>It is true, that all we have is in the hand of God; God keeps our lives in His hands. Though the soul continues, life as we know it may not continue; life is that union of soul, and spirit.

Thou holdest our soul in life; that is, thou holdest soul and body together. The breath of princes is in the hand of God, and the same hand holds the breath of the meanest subject. This may be a matter of comfort to us in times of danger, and times of death: when the hand of man is lifted up to take thy life, remember thy life is held in the hand of God; and as God said to Satan (Job 2:6): Afflict the body of Job, but save his life. *Joseph Caryl.*

**66:9b** It is a great mercy to be kept from desperate courses in the time of sad calamities, to be supported under burdens, that we sink not; and to be prevented from denying God, or His truth, in time of persecution. *David Dickson.* He preserves us from threatened captivity; also preserves our salvation and suffereth not our feet to be moved but stay on the right path.; not moved from their firm position of safety.

**66:10** God had proved or tried the Israelites by bringing calamity upon them to test the reality of their allegiance to Him. The nature of the proof: "*tried as silver is tried.*" This is a metaphor taken from melting and refining metals; afflictions and trials of various kinds are represented as a furnace where ore is melted, and a crucible where it is

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/tod/view.cgi?book=ps&chapter=066&verse=009>

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refined. The calamity had been sent as a trial to prove and purify. Silver, according to ancient methods, required a prolonged process of refining before it could be pronounced pure. The calamity in which Israel had suffered had been of long duration. All the saints must go to the proving house; God had One Son without sin, but He never had a son without trial. Faith must be tested, and great faith must be tested greatly. It is absolutely necessary for our consecration. They bring a new and deeper wisdom to our lives, helping us to discern truth from falsehood and equipping us with the discipline to carry out what we know is right.

**66:11** The people of God in the olden times were often enclosed by the power of their enemies, like fish or birds entangled in a net; there seemed no way of escape for them. As we look at the Israelites, when, in their departure from Egypt, pursued by the Egyptians, having the Red Sea before them, and no method of escape, Pharaoh said, "*The wilderness hath shut them in, - they are entangled;*" comparing their state to that of a wild beast in a net. Israel in Egypt was much like a bird in the fowler's net. They were pressed even to anguish by their burdens and pains. Not on their backs alone was the load, but their loins were pressed and squeezed with the straits and weights of adversity. The loins are mentioned as the seat of strength. God's people and afflictions are intimate companions. The idea is: that He had called the Israelites to endure as much as they were able to endure. As in Egypt every Israelite was a burden bearer, so is every believer while he is in this foreign land.

**66:12** In times past the king in his chariot gallops over the bodies of his dead and wounded enemies. The most probable meaning is that Israel had been subdued, as if on a field of battle, and as if their conquerors had ridden over them when prostrate on the ground.

**66:12b** Through afflictions, compared to fire and water; through fiery trials and overwhelming providences, though not destroyed by them, because the Lord was with them; (Isaiah 43:2). Therefore the Israelites are said to go through them, not to abide in them; nor to sink under them, and perish by them. "*Fire*" = the pillar of fire in the wilderness. "*Water*" = the Red Sea and the Jordan River. This verse is also like that sea (Mt 8:24) so tempestuous at first, that the vessel was covered with waves; but Christ's rebuked, quieted all, and there followed a great calm. There is safety in the calm, as well as the fire and water of life, when in God's plan of preservation.

**66:12c** There is desolation (despair) and consolation (comfort) in **one** verse –

- A deep dejection, as laid under the feet of beasts; and a happy deliverance, bringing them out into a wealthy place.
- In the one He is a causing worker; in the other a sole working cause ("*The Lord caused it.*" *Thou caused men to ride*).
- In the one He is joined with company (*men*): in the other He works alone (*thou*).
- He hath a finger in the former; His whole hand is in the latter.

We must begin with misery before we come to mercy. If there were no trouble, we should not know the worth of deliverance. God did not forsake His people in Egypt. He brought them into a place of refreshment, the land that flows with milk and honey. The hand of God should be acknowledged.

1. In our temptations: Thou broughtest us.
2. In our bodily afflictions: Thou laidest, etc.
3. In our persecutions: Thou hast caused, etc.
4. In our deliverances: Thou broughtest us out, etc. G. R.

## SUMMARY:

This Psalm reflects upon a time of deliverance for God's people and to summon people to worship and thank God. All the lands lift up their voice joyfully in song with a shout unto God, to make the praise of Jesus glorious. Sing joyfully!, both by word and deed, in saying to God how awesome are His deeds and great is His power – His wondrous works in Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage; He made a path through the Red Sea. He has proved His love for Israel; He has proved His presence with them. He causes both good and bad to worship Him.

The Lord not only preserves our temporal life, but maintains the spiritual life which He has given to believers. By afflictions we are proved, as silver in the fire. Through various conflicts and troubles, the slave of Satan escapes from his yoke, and obtains joy and peace in believing, and after which, through much tribulation the believer must enter into the kingdom of God. God has showed His preeminence, His power, His protection, and His purging. None can be compared to the awesome God that He is. The troubles of the church will certainly end well to bring us into our wealthy place.

**APPLICATION:** We can solely depend on God when going through trials of fire or water. He has proved Himself in our lives time and time again as he did for the Israelites. We can give joyful praise because of His awesome dependability!