

PSALM 66

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 66

To the chief Musician, A Song [or] Psalm.

This psalm does not bear the name of David in the title of it, yet is generally thought to be one of his; but because the plural number is used in it, which is not so common in David's psalms, Aben Ezra is of opinion it is not his, but written by the singers. This is not a sufficient objection: and besides, in (אֶבְרָת) Psalm 66:13-20), the singular number is used. The Arabic version ascribes it to David, and that version makes the subject matter of it to be "concerning the resurrection"; as do the Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions. The title of the Syriac version is,

"concerning sacrifices and burnt offerings, and the incense of rams; the spiritual sense intimates to us the calling of the Gentiles, and the preaching, that is, of the Gospel;"

which comes nearest the truth: for the psalm respects Gospel times, and the church of Christ under the New Testament, spread throughout the world, and especially as it will be in the latter day; (see אֶבְרָת) Psalm 66:1,4); and so in Yalkut Simeoni on the psalm, it is said to be a psalm for time to come, and agrees with (אֶבְרָת) Zephaniah 3:9); "I will turn to the people a pure language", etc. Kimchi says it is a psalm concerning the gathering of the captives of Israel; and so Jarchi and Obadiah expound it; and Theodoret says David wrote this psalm for the captives in Babylon.

Ver. 1. *Make a joyful noise unto God*, etc.] The Creator of the ends of the earth; the Provider for all his creatures; and the Dispenser of the blessings of grace, under the Gospel dispensation, to men in all countries. The Messiah may well be thought to be intended, since the psalm refers to Gospel times; who is God over all, blessed for ever; to whom a joyful noise, shouts, and acclamations, are to be made by all his subjects, true believers in him, in all lands, as to their King; (see אֶבְרָת) Numbers 23:21); who is ascended on high, has led captivity captive; received gifts for them, and gives them to them; is enthroned on his Father's right hand, is crowned with glory and honour, where he reigns, and must reign, till all enemies are

put under his feet; when his kingdom will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth: and upon the destruction of his enemies, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the latter day, voices will be heard in heaven, the church; and such joyful noises as are here exhorted and directed to, (^{<6600>}Revelation 19:1-7 11:15-17 15:3,4). Moreover, such acclamations are suitable to him, as a victorious conqueror; who, at his death, overcame sin, Satan, the world, and death itself; and, by the ministry of the Gospel, went forth conquering, and to conquer; and has subdued many people in all nations, and caused his ministers to triumph in him in every place; and who, by his Spirit and grace, still continues to bring souls to a subjection to him, to dispossess Satan from them, to set up his throne in their hearts, and reign there, and to make them more than conquerors through himself that has loved them: of which there will be more numerous instances in the latter day; and all such are under great obligations to make a joyful noise unto him, or to express their joy and thankfulness in loud singing of his praises;

all ye lands; that is, all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum; not Judea, to which some restrain it, but the whole earth: for Christ is the Saviour of some, in all countries, of the children of God, that are scattered abroad throughout the whole world, for whom he is a propitiation. The Gospel has been sent to all nations, and preached to every creature; some in all lands have been converted, and made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the Gospel, and therefore have reason to be glad and make a joyful noise; and the more so, inasmuch as they were in a state of great darkness and ignorance before, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world.

Ver. 2. *Sing forth the honour of his name*, etc.] Meaning not any particular names of the Messiah, such as in (^{<2306>}Isaiah 9:6 7:14); or his name “Jesus”, a Saviour; though they are all honourable and glorious, and furnish out sufficient matter for a song: but rather that by which he was made known to the sons of men, his Gospel; (see ^{<4195>}Acts 9:15). Which is a glorious Gospel; the truths of which may be expressed in a song of praise, to the honour and glory of Christ, and to the instruction and profit of men, (^{<5136>}Colossians 3:16). Or rather Christ himself is meant; his name often designs himself, (^{<4121>}Matthew 12:21 ^{<4990>}Psalms 9:10 ^{<1810>}Proverbs 18:10). There that is due unto him, and ought to be given which is done when all divine perfections and works are ascribed to him, divine worship is paid

him, and the glory of salvation given him; which may be done in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs;

make his praise glorious: let the high praises of him be in your mouths; give him, the most excellent praise; praise him in the best manner. This is done when we sing his praise with grace in our hearts in exercise; when we with one mind and mouth glorify him; and when we honour him, the Son, as we honour the Father.

Ver. 3. *Say unto God*, etc.] Or, “concerning God”^{f863}, as some; or, “before God”, as the Targum; say to him as follows, in psalms and hymns of praise:

how terrible art thou in thy works! or “reverend”^{f864}; to be feared and revered with a godly fear on account of them; such as the works of nature and providence, which are stupendous and marvellous, fearfully and wonderfully wrought; and especially those of grace and redemption, in which the goodness of Christ is manifest, and for which he is to be feared: unless rather his judgments upon his enemies are here meant; who, though he is a Lamb to his own people, is the Lion of the tribe of Judah to them, whom he will break in pieces as a potter’s vessel it may be read, “how terrible”, or “tremendous”, is everyone of “thy works”; so Aben Ezra, and also Jarchi, who interprets the next clause,

through the greatness of thy power, thus,

“when thou showest to the world thy power, by the pestilence, or sword, or famine, or lightnings:”

shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee? in a lying, flattering, and deceitful manner, as the word^{f865} here used signifies; (see Gill on “~~Psalm 18:44~~”); or, as the above interpreters,

“they shall, through the greatness of fear, confess the lies and transgressions they have committed.”

It will be a forced, and not a free, confession and submission; Christ’s enemies, whether they will or not, will be obliged to own that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, (^{Philippians 2:10,11}).

Ver. 4. *All the earth shall worship thee*, etc.] The Messiah, who is equal with God; the Creator of men; the Redeemer of his people; the Head of the church, and King of saints; their Lord, and therefore to be worshipped; with internal worship, in the exercise of faith, hope, and love; and with

external worship, in the word and ordinances, by prayer and praise, public and private. 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, one, (^{<384B>}Zechariah 14:9,16 ^{<665B>}Revelation 15:4);

and shall sing unto thee; the song of Moses and the Lamb, the Lamb's new song, the song of redeeming grace; which none but the redeemed ever can sing aright, (^{<64B>}Revelation 14:3 15:3);

they shall sing [to] thy name; or, "they shall", or "let them sing thy name"^{f866}; thou shalt be the subject of their song; thy person, offices, kingdom, grace, and glory: or they shall sing to the honour of thy name, as in (^{<384B>}Psalm 66:2).

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on "^{<384B>}Psalm 3:2").

Ver. 5. *Come and see the works of God*, etc.] Of the Messiah, God manifest in the flesh; those divine works which he did when here on earth; his miraculous works, which were proofs of his deity and Messiahship; his preaching the Gospel, in so divine a manner as never man did; his works of obedience to the law, which were pure and perfect; the everlasting righteousness he wrought out for the justification of his people; and the great work of redemption and salvation finished by him, which none but God could ever have effected. This is an invitation to the inhabitants of all lands, where the Gospel should come with power, to take notice of and consider these works of Christ, and the glory of his might, wisdom, and grace in them, in order to engage them to sing his praise;

[he is] terrible [in his] doing toward the children of men; in his vengeance on the Jews, for disbelieving and rejecting him; in destroying antichrist, and pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states; and in the everlasting damnation of the wicked. So that as his other works in the former clause design these of grace, this doing of his respects his work, his strange work of judgment on his enemies; on account of which he is terrible to them, and revered by his people.

Ver. 6. *He turned the sea into dry [land]*, etc.] The Red sea, or sea of Zuph, as the Targum; by causing a strong east wind to blow, which made it dry, so that the children of Israel passed through it on dry ground, (^{<124B>}Exodus 14:21,22). Or, "he turneth"^{f867}; for though the allusion is to the making the Red sea dry land, when the Israelites passed through it; yet

it refers to something to be done in the times of Christ and the Gospel dispensation. So Christ might be said to do this literally, when he walked upon the sea of Galilee as on dry land, and enabled Peter to do so likewise, (⁴¹⁴⁵Matthew 14:25,29); and figuratively, when he makes his people walk through the sea of this world, and the waters of afflictions in it, without overflowing them. He with them, bears them up, and upholds them with his right hand; so that they pass on, as on dry land, till they come safe to the shores of bliss and happiness;

they went through the flood on foot; or “river”^{f868}; the river Jordan, as the Targum: for this alludes not to the passage of the Israelites through the sea, but through Jordan, when they entered into the land, of Canaan, (⁴¹⁸⁷Joshua 3:17). The words may be rendered, according to Kimchi,

“they shall pass through the river on foot;”

the Targum adds,

“the children of Israel;”

so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions. Such things are said in prophecy concerning the people of God in future times; (see ²³¹¹⁵Isaiah 11:15,16 51:10,11). So the river Euphrates shall be dried up, to make way for the kings of the east, (⁶¹⁶²Revelation 16:12);

there did we rejoice in him; still alluding to the above cases, when Israel passed through the Red sea, and sung praise to God; and went through Jordan, and set up stones of memorial, (⁴¹⁵¹Exodus 15:1 ⁴¹⁴⁶Joshua 4:6,7). Or “there shall we rejoice in him”: so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions; only the latter reads in the singular, “he shall rejoice.” The Targum is,

“I will lead them to the mountain of his holiness, there shall we rejoice in his word:”

in the essential Word, the Messiah, as the saints do rejoice in him in his house, under his word and ordinances; when they see the salvation wrought out by him, and their interest in it; the righteousness he has brought in, and themselves clothed with it; pardon procured by him, and that applied to them; and when they are favoured with a sight of him, and communion with him; so will they rejoice in him when the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the bride is ready; when antichrist shall be destroyed,

and they shall have got the victory over him; then they shall stand on the sea of glass, and there shall they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, (~~6807~~ Revelation 19:7,8 18:20 15:2,3); and when they shall have come through all their difficulties safely to heaven; there shall they rejoice in Christ, and with him to all eternity.

Ver. 7. *He ruleth by his power forever*, etc.] 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; nor can any stay his hand. 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. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, it shall never be subverted nor usurped; nor will he in it be succeeded by another; he will reign to the end of the world, throughout the thousand years, with his saints on earth, and then with them in heaven for evermore. The Targum renders it,

“over the world;”

over the whole world; for Christ will be King over all the earth in the latter day, (~~3840~~ Zechariah 14:9);

his eyes behold the nations; the antichristian states. 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 allusion is to God’s looking through the pillar of fire and cloud upon the Egyptians in the Red sea, and troubling them, (~~1224~~ Exodus 14:24);

let not the rebellious exalt themselves. That are rebels against Christ, would not have him to reign over them; antichrist, who exalts himself above all that is called God, and all his followers. Or, “they shall not exalt themselves”^{f869}: or, as the Targum,

“they shall not be exalted in themselves for ever;”

(see ~~6817~~ Revelation 18:7,8).

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on “~~4980~~ Psalm 3:2”).

Ver. 8. *O bless our God, ye people*, etc.] In all countries, that know the Lord and fear him; ascribe blessing, and honour and glory, to Christ our

God, on account of his works, actions, perfections, kingdom and power; and because of the destruction of those who are rebels to his government;

and make the voice of his praise to be heard; far and near, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; by shoutings, and loud acclamations of joy; (see ~~6895~~ Revelation 19:5,6); where Christ is called our God, and a like exhortation is made as here.

Ver. 9. *Which holdeth our soul in life*, etc.] Or, “putteth our soul in life” ^{f870}, or “among the living”, which is not to be understood of infusing a living soul in man, nor of the preservation of natural life, which is common to all men; but of appointing and ordaining them unto eternal life, as the Targum; and of procuring it for them by Christ; and of implanting a principle of spiritual life in them, by his Spirit and grace; and of the preservation of the principle of life, that it be not lost; and of giving them a right and title to eternal life, and that itself: all which are a sufficient reason, and powerful argument, to bless our God, and praise his name. It follows:

and suffereth not our feet to be moved; that is, not to be greatly moved; or if moved so as to slip and fall, yet not so as to fall finally and totally; (see ~~4852~~ Psalm 55:22 56:12,13).

Ver. 10. *For thou, O God, hast proved us*, etc.] And by the experiment found them to be true and faithful; to have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter in them; not reprobate silver, or their grace counterfeit grace; but of the right kind, solid and substantial;

thou hast tried us as silver is tried; in a furnace, where it is put and melted by the refiner, and purified from the dross that attends it. So the Targum,

“thou hast purified us as the silversmith purifieth the silver;”

or tries it by melting and purifying it. Thus the Lord puts his people into the furnace of afflictions, and sits as a refiner and purifier of them; hereby he tries their graces, faith, patience, hope, and love, their principles and their professions; refines their graces, and makes them more bright and illustrious; removes their dross and tin, and reforms their manners; and proves them to be good silver, and approves of them, and esteems them as such, even as his peculiar treasure. From whence it appears, as well as from the following verses, that afflictions are of God; that they are for the good of his people, and not their hurt; like silver they are put into the fire of

affliction, not to be destroyed and lost, but to be purged and refined; and that they are not in wrath, but in love: and this, with what follows, may respect the sufferings of the saints under Rome, Pagan and Papal; when Christ's feet, the members of his mystical body, were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; when their graces were tried, their works were known, and their persons proved and approved, (^{<6015>} Revelation 1:15 2:9-13,18,19); (see ^{<833>} Zechariah 13:9).

Ver. 11. *Thou broughtest us into the net*, etc.] That is, suffered them to be taken in the net of wicked men, which they laid and spread for them; whereby they were drawn either into bad principles or bad practices, or into ruinous circumstances; though the Lord does not leave his own people there, but breaks the net or snare, sooner or later, and they escape; (see ^{<495>} Psalm 9:15 10:9 124:6,7). Jarchi interprets it of a strait place, as in a prison; and which has often been literally true of the people of God, into which, though they have been cast by Satan, or by men instigated by him, yet, because permitted by the Lord, it is ascribed to him, (^{<620>} Revelation 2:10);

thou laidst affliction upon our loins: the Targum renders it “a chain”: the word signifies anything that is binding and pressing; it seems to be a metaphor taken from the binding of burdens upon the backs of any creatures. Afflictions often lie heavy upon the saints, are very close upon them, and press them sore, even, as they sometimes think, beyond measure; though the Lord supports them, and will not suffer them to sink under them.

Ver. 12. *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads*, etc.] Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the kings and nations of the world ruling over Israel; and may very well design the Heathen powers and antichristian states tyrannizing over Christian people. The word in the original text is singular, “a man”^{<871>}, a frail mortal man; and may be understood of the man of sin and son of perdition; who rides upon the heads of men, exalts himself above all that is called God, and has exercised dominion over the saints in a most lawless and tyrannical manner. Vitringa, on (^{<288>} Isaiah 43:2) interprets it of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a type of antichrist, and supposes the following clause to refer to the persecution of the church in his time. The Targum renders it, “a lord of rebuke”; that is, either one worthy of rebuke, as antichrist is; or one that gives rebukes, delivers out anathemas and excommunications, as he does: though some translate the

words of the Targum, “lords of usury”, or “usurers”; a title not unfit for the creatures of antichrist;

we went through fire and through water; through afflictions, compared to fire and water; through fiery trials and overwhelming providences, though not destroyed by them, because the Lord was with them; (see ^{<381>}Isaiah 43:2); therefore they are said to go through them, not to abide in them; nor to sink under them, and perish by them: they went cheerfully through them for Christ’s sake, even the greatest hardships and difficulties, which this phrase may be expressive of. It may have a particular reference to the sufferings of the saints in Gospel times; to the burning of the martyrs with fire and faggot, who, like Elijah, went up to heaven in a fiery chariot; and to the flood of waters cast out after the woman, the church, by the dragon; (see ^{<615>}Revelation 1:15 12:15,16);

but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy [place]; the Targum is, into largeness; or into a large place; (see ^{<989>}Psalms 18:19 118:5). This may intend either the state of the church upon the Reformation, or rather as it will be in the latter day glory; when there will be a large spread of the Gospel, and of the interest of Christ, everywhere; when the church will be enlarged with converts, and the members of it with the gifts and graces of the Spirit; and which will be a state of great liberty and freedom in the worship of God, both inward and outward. The Septuagint version renders it, “into refreshment”: so the Tigurine version, and Piscator; as those times will be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which will be everywhere among his people, in his word and ordinances, and to a great degree; (see ^{<489>}Acts 3:19). The Arabic version, “unto rest”; from adversity, from persecution; for, after this state takes place, there will be no more persecution; no more fines, imprisonment, racks, and torturing deaths, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. The word used signifies a well watered place ^{f872} or land; such as was the land of Canaan, (^{<887>}Deuteronomy 8:7-9); and such will be the state of the church in the latter day: the Spirit will be poured down like floods of water upon the dry ground; the doctrines of the Gospel will drop as the rain, and as showers upon the grass: the ordinances of it will be as green pastures beside the still waters; and every believer will be as a watered garden, whose springs fail not; it will be a time of great plenty and prosperity in spiritual things. Ainsworth renders it, “to an abundant place”; so Gejerus: a place abounding with all good things: a “wealthy” one, as we translate it. And even in a literal sense this will be the wealthy time of the church; when

kings shall come into it, and bring their riches and honour there, and use them for the good of it, (^{<23423>}Isaiah 49:23 60:3,11,16,17); and then also will the saints be enriched with every gift, and be rich in grace and in all good works.

Ver. 13. *I will go into thy house with burnt offerings*, etc.] The psalmist here represents the saints and faithful in those times, who being delivered out of all their troubles, and brought into a large, free, plentiful, and comfortable condition, will come together into the place of public worship, and there unite in their sacrifices of praise to God; will come and present themselves as a whole burnt offering to the Lord; will come with hearts inflamed with love to God and one another, which is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices, (^{<41233>}Mark 12:33);

I will pay thee my vows; thanksgivings promised in time of distress, as follows; (see ^{<13104>}Psalm 50:14).

Ver. 14. *Which my lips have uttered*, etc.] Or “opened” ^{f873}; publicly and distinctly declared, and from which there is no going back; (see ^{<07133>}Judges 11:33);

and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble; this refers to the time when the people of God were under antichristian tyranny and bondage; and when they vowed and promised, that, if the Lord would deliver them, they would give him all praise and glory.

Ver. 15. *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings*, etc.] Of the fattest of the flock; that is, of the best; such as Abel offered, (^{<0004>}Genesis 4:4);

with the incense of rams; or “rams with incense” ^{f874}; the Targum is,

“with sweet incense, the sacrifice of rams;”

Kimchi interprets it of incense of the fat of rams.

I will offer bullocks with goats; he proposed to offer all kind of offerings, to show gratitude and thankfulness for the favours received; by all which are meant the calves, or fruit of the lips, the sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving to God, in the name of the whole church and people of God; (see ^{<6801>}Revelation 19:1-7).

Selah; on this word, (see Gill on “^{<4980>}Psalm 3:2”).

Ver. 16. *Come [and] hear, all ye that fear God*, etc.] Who have a reverential affection for him, and by whom he is worshipped and served with reverence and godly fear; these have good things done for themselves, and will glorify God for what he does for others: these know the nature, worth, and value of the good things the Lord does for the souls of men, and hear them with pleasure and profit; when to tell them to others is casting pearl before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs; and therefore only such as fear the Lord are called upon to come and hear what follows. Jarchi interprets this character of proselytes; (see ~~4158~~ Acts 13:26);

and I will declare what he hath done for my soul: not what he had done for God, or offered unto him, or suffered for his sake; nor what God had done for his body in the make and preservation of it; but what he had done for his soul, and the salvation of that: what God the Father had done in setting him apart for himself; in making a sure, well ordered, and everlasting covenant with him in Christ; in blessing him with all spiritual blessings in him; in providing for the redemption of his soul by him; in pardoning his sins, justifying his person, adopting him into his family, and regenerating, quickening, and sanctifying him: also what God the Son had done for him; in engaging to assume a true body and a reasonable soul on his account; and to make that soul an offering for his sin, and thereby obtain for him eternal redemption, even the salvation of his immortal soul: likewise what God the Spirit had done for him; in quickening and enlightening his soul; in implanting principles of grace and holiness in it; in showing Christ unto him, and bringing near his righteousness, and leading him to him for salvation and eternal life; in applying exceeding great and precious promises to him, and remembering to him such on which he had caused him to hope; in delivering him out of temptation and troubles, and in carrying on the work of his grace in him hitherto: these are things that are not to be concealed in a man's breast, but to be told to the church and people of God, to their joy and comfort, and to the glory of divine grace; (see ~~4159~~ Mark 5:19).

Ver. 17. *I cried unto him with my mouth*, etc.] Crying designs prayer, and supposes distress; and crying with the mouth denotes vocal, ardent, and fervent prayer;

and he was extolled with my tongue: at the same time the psalmist prayed for deliverance out of his distresses, he praised God for the mercies he had received: and did, as the Apostle Paul directs, make known his requests

with thanksgiving, (^{<3006>}Philippians 4:6); or “he was exalted under my tongue” ^{f875}; that is, in his heart, as some interpret it; his heart and his mouth went together; and out of the abundance of his heart his tongue spoke of the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God to him. The Targum is,

“and his promise was under my tongue;”

and so he was very different from a wicked man, who keeps iniquity under his tongue, as a sweet morsel, (^{<3012>}Job 20:12).

Ver. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, etc.] There was iniquity in his heart, as there is in every good man’s heart, and a great deal too; it is full of it; and it should be regarded in some sense, so as to guard against it, and pray to be kept from it, that it may not break forth into action; and so as to loath it, abhor it, and be humbled for it; but not so as to nourish and cherish it, to take delight and pleasure in it: or “if I look upon it” ^{f876}, as it may be rendered; that is, with approbation of it, and satisfaction in it, and ordered his conversation according to it; or acted the deceitful and hypocritical part in prayer; or had any evil intention in his petitions, to consume on his lusts what he asked for;

the Lord will not hear [me]; for the Lord hears not sinners that delight in sin, and live in it; neither profane sinners nor hypocrites; (see ^{<3031>}John 9:31 ^{<3028>}Job 27:8,9).

Ver. 19. *[But] verily God hath heard [me]*, etc.] So that it was a plain case that he had not regarded iniquity in his heart; had not lived a vicious course of life, nor was an hypocrite; otherwise God would not have heard his prayer; whereas he had, and which is confirmed in the following clause;

he hath attended to the voice of my prayer; which is an instance of the grace and condescension of God, and showed in what high favour the psalmist was with the Lord, and what regard he had unto him; and therefore could not be the man his enemies represented him to be.

Ver. 20. *Blessed [be] God, which hath not turned away my prayer*, etc.] Has not been angry against it, shut it out, or covered himself with a cloud that it might not pass through, which sometimes saints have complained of, (^{<3004>}Psalm 80:4 ^{<3018>}Lamentations 3:8,44); but graciously heard and received it;

nor his mercy from me; for that endures for ever, and is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear the Lord, (~~19A317~~ Psalm 103:17); all which require thankfulness and praise, which is here given.