

“THIS BOUNTEOUS GOD”

PSALM 65

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INTRODUCTION

It is true that this psalm is quite different when compared with the other psalms of David, but this fact gives no reason for questioning Davidic authorship. The same “brilliance and freshness of style” is found here as in David’s other psalms, and nothing in the psalm can disprove the claim in the title (L. 472). The universalistic tone of this psalm (vv. 2, 5, 7b-8) may be compared with the similar emphasis in Psalms 66 (esp. vv. 1-4) and 67; these 3 deserve to be together in the Psalter.

In this psalm David finds joy in the God of grace, in the God of Creation/might, and in the God of Plenty/prosperity. There are *plenty* of **preachers** and **Christians** today who are all about a God of prosperity and plenty. TO them, that is the heart of Christianity; if a Christian is not prospering materially it is because he lacks faith, and because he may be under the displeasure of God. Now, there are *plenty* of psalms evidencing that David was suffering and in need—not because of any misdeeds on his part, and not because he lacked faith in God. In fact, the very expression of His soul in the Psalms shows how earnestly he seeks and trusts in God. But even in this psalm where David does celebrate the prosperity provided by God, David does not make that his priority—he makes the celebration of God’s **grace** his number one priority.

YOU MUST CELEBRATE THE GOD OF GRACE—AS WELL AS THE GOD OF CREATION AND OF BOUNTY.

I. WORSHIPING THE GOD OF GRACE (1-4)

These opening words seem to suggest a throng of worshippers at the local place of worship in David’s time in Jerusalem, celebrating a renewal of God’s mercy and the answer to their prayers. The last section might suggest that they had recently been delivered from a time of divine displeasure evidenced in nature and possible famine. However, the greatest joy is found not in crops and rain, but in reconciliation due to sins forgiven and fellowship with God at His “house”.

A. The Circumstances of Worship (1-2)

1. Its Direction—“To/before You”—“O Elohim.” “To you” twice in the verse.
2. Its location—Zion, God’s chosen place
3. Its characteristics—Silence and Praise (see 62:1)

The expression of reverential awe toward a holy God, and exuberant praise. Both are essential in balanced worship. Silence is praise” to you. **The idea is that praise is given to God in silence.** Perowne says, “The deep stillness of the heart’s devotion, as opposed to the loud, noisy service of heathen worshipers” is the best explanation. We may compare Ps. 62:1—“My soul *waits* [or “is”] in silence for God only.” Kidner remarks, “It may sometimes be the height of worship, in other words, to fall silent before God in awe at His presence and in submission to His will” (230). Delitzsch states that the idea here is “that submission or resignation to God...[which] gives up its cause to God and allows Him to act on its behalf, renouncing all impatient meddling and interference (Ex. Xiv. 14)” (1333).

4. Its accompaniment—vows fulfilled
5. Its assurance—the God **characterized by** “hearing prayer” (2)
6. Its adherents—“all flesh”—“Flesh” seems to have its general notion of persons in their weakness and need, from all nations, nationalities, social ranks, sexes, age groups.

B. The Hindrances to Worship (3)

But praise to the Lord must not be given superficially; a man must reckon with his sins or sin will hinder his communication with God. First David addresses the issue of his own prevailing iniquities (“me”), and then he includes the need of others also to have their transgressions forgiven (“our”).

1. Iniquities are “too strong for me.” [“Words” is “enumerative, denoting the variety of circumstances.]
2. God atones for/forgives transgressions. **YOU--God and God alone could do this.**
Kidner notes that here we find “a striking statement of grace, which abounds all the more where sin abounded. The acknowledgment of transgressions that are too great to deal with, has the same outcome as the phrase in the parable, ‘When they had nothing to pay.’”

As noted by Kidner, “forgiveness brings man over the threshold” and into God’s presence for renewed fellowship with God. However, verse 4 reminds the believer that God has set restrictions for his courts and His rituals to show the limitations of men to approach him and yet also the privileges granted to men to come before Him. On the privilege of being in God’s presence at His holy place, see at 15:1 and 27:4.

C. Those Privileged to Worship (4)

1. Election—of the priests, Levites, believers among His people.
The mention of God’s “choice” emphasizes the “pure grace of such a welcome.
2. Calling—“Bring near” to Thee.
3. Fellowship—dwell in His courts
Of course the tabernacle had an outer court where ordinary Israelites could gather, and an inner court for the priests only. Believers become God’s “house guests.”
4. Satisfaction—“we are sated/fully satisfied with the goodness of Your House.”
The mention of being “satisfied, sated” likely alludes to the abundant “goodness”/provision provided by the very offerings and sacrifices brought to the house of God; not only did such sacrifices bring “atonement” and forgiveness as seen in v. 3, they also supplied abundantly the daily and annual provisions of the priests and Levites—and even to some degree of the worshippers themselves. Such was also true for the tithes, first-fruit, and free will offerings. Yet, the worshippers were able to partake of part of the tithes and peace offerings in a feasting at the house of the Lord when they came with the families and friends, and even their poorer neighbors—see Dt. 14:22-29. Kidner comments, “The expression ‘poor as a church mouse’ would never have arisen in those precincts!” (p. 231). But, as Leupold notes, we must not lose sight of the spiritual satiety that is experienced in God’s presence by the forgiven child of God who lives in fellowship with Him (474). Del. remarks “for all that God’s grace offers us we can give Him no better thanks than to hunger and thirst after it, and satisfy our poor soul therewith” (1334).
5. Sacred premises—God’s “house”, His “holy Temple.”

We can parallel v. 3 with Rom. 5:1—“Justified by faith we have peace with God”, and verse 4 can be compared with Rom. 5:2—“By whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”—and also with II Cor. 9:8—“God is able to make all grace abound toward you...all sufficiency in all things, may abound....”

II. WORSHIPING THE GOD OF MIGHT (5-8)

A. God’s Answer for the prayers of His people (5)

1. With awesome deeds.
2. In Righteousness: **its motive is moral, and its ends and means are just.**
3. Bringing salvation/deliverance—He is “the God of our salvation.”
4. His mercy extends to all the world

This verse does not teach that God hears and responds to even the perverted and misguided prayers of the heathen. Luther states: “One may run over the wide world, even to its upmost extremity, yet Thou art the only foundation on which the trust of a man’s heart can rest.” The psalmist may well anticipate a time in the future when such universal recognition will become reality.

- To the ends of the earth.
- To the farthest sea.

- “There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the Sea.” [Hymn 149]

B. The Sufficiency of the Creator God, and the God of Providence (6-7)

1. Establishing the mountains by His strength—being girded with might. (6)

The confidence of believers is further founded upon the reality that God as Creator of it all has the “strength” and “might” also to help them in their struggles. The mountains (v. 6) “are to all appearance massively secure,” and the seas (v. 7) “menacingly wild, the psalmists know better than to think of them apart from their Creator, as objects of **either trust or terror** in their own right.”

2. Stilling the roaring of the seas and their waves (7)

An Israelite would naturally think of God’s action at the Red Sea when Israel came out of Egypt— God restraining the waters on behalf of the Israelites but overwhelming the tumultuous armies of the Egyptians—thus stilling them—by the same waters of the Red Sea.

3. Stopping the tumult of the nations (7b); **How we need to understand and claim this today!**

Kidner compares Jesus’ stilling of the waves of the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 4:35ff) as “an acted parable” of this truth concerning God’s divine power which He as God shared (232).

C. The Awe—Fear of God—of people living even in the ends of the earth—They see His **SIGNS** (8a)

God’s signs are His mighty deeds in the world that also have teaching value, showing men truth about the God who performs such deeds and pointing them toward salvation and righteousness.

D. Even the outgoings of the morning (dawn) and the evening (dusk/sunset) rejoice [& people living there].

III. WORSHIPING THE GOD OF PLENTY (9-13)

On this last section, Kidner comments: “The climax of this psalm, a stanza as fresh and irrepressible as the fertility it describes, puts every harvest hymn to shame as plodding and contrived. Here we almost feel the splash of showers, and sense the springing growth about us” (229). He further states, “It would be hard to surpass this evocative description of the fertile earth...culminating in the fantasy of **hills and fields putting on their finest clothes and making merry together.**”

A. God’s Visit to the Earth (9)

God is almighty and fills heaven and earth, and yet He condescends to even such “mundane” tasks as watering the earth and preparing it for growth and fertility. In Israel and the surrounding region water was fairly scarce and was valued greatly and much appreciated when given by the Lord.

1. Causing it to overflow, enriching it.

2. His stream is full of water: God has a never ceasing supply of blessing, for His stream “is full.”

We might compare the stream coming out from Jerusalem in Zechariah during the Millennial reign (Zech. 14:8), or the stream flowing in the New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 22).

3. He “prepares”—used twice—the grain and its earth.

B. God’s watering of the earth and blessing its growth (10)

1. Abundant watering
2. Settling the ridges
3. Softening it with showers
4. Blessing the growth

C. Crowning the entire “year” with God’s *Bounty/Goodness* (11)—Literally “the year of thy goodness.”

1. The yearly cycle of planting, tending, growing, reaping
2. The wagon-tracks “drip” with fatness—so much it falls on the ruts.

D. Even less fertile areas thrive (12).

1. Pastures of the wilderness—“drip”, same verb as b. 11.

2. Hills gird around themselves **rejoicing**. All nature will ‘rejoice’ at the blessing of the people of God; see Rom. 8:18-23 for another portrayal of nature participating with redeemed men in the joyful deliverance of divine salvation.
- E. Meadows and Valleys are beautifully clothed (13)
- Meadows and valleys have even richer clothes. So the whole landscape has turned out in its best, as if to sing and keep festival.
1. Meadows with flocks—beautiful white garment
 2. Valleys with waving grain
 3. They “shout for joy; they sing! The reflexive indicates that these meadows and valleys “shout together, striving, as it were, vying with one another in their gladness. Nothing can be more beautiful, or more truly poetical, than the figure by which the valleys waving with corn are said themselves to shout and sing.
Let all creation sing His praise!

CONCLUSION

Leupold ventures “the claim that **this is the most eloquent and beautiful description of the blessings that God bestows on field and meadow to be found anywhere in such brief compass**” (477).

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