

# Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School  
Placerita Baptist Church  
2006

by  
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## Psalm 66 — Universal Praise

### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 66

- “Within the context of the group of Psalms 56–68, Psalm 66 (along with its companion piece, Ps. 67) offers a fitting litany of universal praise of God for his ‘awesome deeds’ (66:3a) and power.”—Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 915.
- Psalms 66 and 67 are not attributed to any specific author.
  - ✓ Psalms 66 and 67 are the only anonymous psalms in Book 2 (Psalms 42–72).
  - ✓ The first non-Davidic psalms since Psalm 50.
  - ✓ The only anonymous psalms prior to this are Psalms 1, 2, and 33.
- “A Song” in the headings of Psalms 62–68 links them together in a group. (See additional similarities among these psalms in the notes on Psalm 65.)
- Several commentators (e.g., Perowne, Wilcock) believe that the setting for this psalm might be in the time of Hezekiah.
  - ✓ God miraculously delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrians (Isaiah 37).
  - ✓ God miraculously healed Hezekiah (Isaiah 38).
  - ✓ Hezekiah wrote a psalm then (Isaiah 38:9-20), perhaps he also wrote Psalm 66.

### 2.0 Reading Psalm 66 (NAU)

**66:1** A Song. A Psalm.

**Shout joyfully to God, all the earth;**

**66:2** Sing the glory of His name;  
Make His praise glorious.

**66:3** Say to God, “How awesome are Your works!  
Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned  
obedience to You.

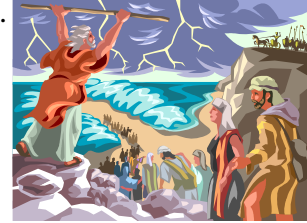
**66:4** “All the earth will worship You,  
And will sing praises to You;  
They will sing praises to Your name.”

**Selah.**

**66:5** **Come and see the works of God,**  
*Who is awesome in His deeds toward the sons of men.*

**66:6** He turned the sea into dry land;  
They passed through the river on foot;  
There let us rejoice in Him!

**66:7** He rules by His might forever;  
His eyes keep watch on the nations;  
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.



**Selah.**

**66:8** **Bless our God, O peoples,**  
And sound His praise abroad,

**66:9** Who keeps us in life  
And does not allow our feet to slip.

**66:10** For You have tried us, O God;  
You have refined us as silver is refined.

**66:11** You brought us into the net;  
You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins.

**66:12** You made men ride over our heads;  
We went through fire and through water,  
Yet You brought us out into *a place of abundance.*

**66:13** I shall come into Your house with burnt offerings;  
I shall pay You my vows,

**66:14** Which my lips uttered  
And my mouth spoke when I was in distress.

**66:15** I shall offer to You burnt offerings of fat beasts,  
With the smoke of rams;  
I shall make *an offering* of bulls with male goats.

**Selah.**

**66:16** **Come and hear, all who fear God,**  
And I will tell of what He has done for my soul.

**66:17** I cried to Him with my mouth,  
And He was extolled with my tongue.

**66:18** If I regard wickedness in my heart,  
The Lord will not hear;

**66:19** But certainly God has heard;  
He has given heed to the voice of my prayer.

**66:20** **Blessed** be God,  
Who has not turned away my prayer  
Nor His lovingkindness from me.

For the choir director; with stringed instruments.

### 3.0 Understanding Psalm 66

#### 3.1 Outline

- I. The World and the Works of God (vv. 1-7)
  - A. Shouting and Singing (vv. 1-4)
  - B. An Urgent Call to See (vv. 5-7)
- II. The Worship and the Words of God's People (vv. 8-20)
  - A. Praise and Sacrifice (vv. 8-15)
  - B. An Urgent Call to Hear (vv. 16-20)



#### 3.2 Notes

- v. 1 “Shout joyfully”
  - This Hebrew verb is related to the noun for a loud shout or for a trumpet blast. There is a connotation of victory to it.
  - Psalm 100 begins with the same call.
- v. 2 Hebrew Poetry Note
  - The psalmist employs synonymous parallelism to express the same basic concept two ways.
  - There is also a partial chiasm:
    - A Sing [*zammeru*]
    - B the glory of [*kebod*]
    - C His name; [*shemo*]
    - C' Make [*simu*]
    - B' glorious [*kabod*]
    - A' His praise [*tehillato*]
  - The central elements of the chiasm are similar in sound, though the first is a noun with a pronominal suffix and the second is an imperative verb.
  - The verse's theme is God's greatness.
  - “Sing . . . name” in verses 2 and 4 frame this first section of the psalm.
- v. 3 “feigned obedience”
  - Pretended submission (though their hearts rebel; cp. Psalm 18:44-45) in verse 3 contrasts with sincere submission and worship in verse 4.
  - Verse 3 is one biblical argument against universalism (the ultimate salvation of every individual in the world in all times).
    - ✓ Every knee will bow to Christ (Isaiah 45:23 and Philippians 2:10), but some do so only because they will be forced to do so.
- v. 5 “Come and see”
  - “Come” is a Hebrew idiom employed to stress urgency.
  - Compare: “Hurry up and get down here!”
  - See “Come *and* hear” in verse 16.

- **v. 6** “sea . . . river”
  - “Sea” is a reference to Israel crossing the Red Sea when they left Egypt (Exodus 14–15).
  - “River” is a reference to Israel crossing the Jordan River when they entered Canaan (Joshua 3).
    - ✓ The Hebrew word can be used for ocean currents (Jonah 2:3).
    - ✓ However, see Psalm 114:3 and Job 40:23.
- **v. 7** “His eyes keep watch on the nations”
  - All peoples benefit from God’s sovereign control over all nations.
  - Compare Psalm 65:5-7.
- **v. 10** “You have refined us as silver”
  - “[S]terling silver melts at a temperature of 1,640 degrees Fahrenheit. An additional 338 degrees is necessary to allow the metal to be poured without freezing and not so hot that a destructive crystalline structure forms or alloys are dissipated before the metal cools. . . . The refining process requires expertise and an intimate knowledge of the tools and metals involved.”—John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 566.
  - See notes on Psalms 12:6; 17:3; and 26:2.
  - In God’s hands the trials of life during tough times can remove impurities from our faith (cp. 1 Peter 1:7).
- **v. 12** “made men ride over our heads”
  - Victorious warriors in the ancient Near East sometimes drove their horses and chariots over defeated but living enemy soldiers.
  - “Men” is a word that possibly connotes weakness or baseness. In other words, men lesser than Israel persecuted them.
- **v. 12** “through fire and through water”
  - See Isaiah 43:2. This is expressive of all dangers—a merism (like “day and night” for all the time or “heavens and earth” for the universe).
    - ✓ God has preserved His people through the crossing of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan. He also will preserve His people through the fire (e.g., Daniel’s three friends in the fiery furnace in Babylon, Daniel 3).
    - ✓ Could there be a hint of the fire that will destroy this earth (2 Peter 3:7) as the Flood destroyed it in Noah’s day (cp. Genesis 9:11, 15)?
- **vv. 12, 13** Hebrew Poetry Note
  - “We went through fire and through water” (v. 12) and “I shall come into Your house with burnt offerings” (v. 13) both consist of just three Hebrew words each.
  - Both 3-word statements are prominent for an alliteration involving the “**b**” sound.
    - ✓ v. 12b: *ba’nu-ba’esh ubammayim*



✓ v. 13a: *abo' beteka be'olot*

- The alliteration binds the two verses together, causing the reader to see that the action of the psalmist in going to the Temple (or Tabernacle) is related to the fact that God delivers His people.
- v. 15 “burnt offerings of fat beasts”
  - The psalmist vows to present an excess of burnt offerings—rams, bulls, and male goats included.
  - Either the psalmist is wealthy or he is revealing that his thanks is beyond expression—divine protection, preservation, and blessing are priceless.

#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 66

##### **Earth, With All Thy Thousand Voices** Tune: “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken”



Earth, with all thy thousand voices,  
Praise in songs th’eternal King;  
Praise His Name, Whose praise rejoices  
Ears that hear, and tongues that sing.  
Lord, from each far-peopled dwelling,  
Earth shall raise the glad acclaim;  
All shall kneel, Thy greatness telling,  
Sing Thy praise and bless Thy Name.

Bless the Lord, Who ever liveth;  
Sound His praise through every land,  
Who our dying souls reviveth,  
By Whose arm upheld we stand.  
Now upon this cheerful morrow  
We Thine altars will adorn,  
And the gifts we vowed in sorrow  
Pay on joy’s returning morn.

Come and hear the wondrous story,  
How our mighty God of old,  
In the terrors of His glory,  
Back the flowing billows rolled;  
Walked within the threatening waters,  
Free we passed the upright wave,  
Then was joy to Israel’s daughters,  
Loud they sang His power to save.

Come, each faithful soul, who fearest,  
Him Who fills th’eternal throne:  
Hear, rejoicing while thou hearest,  
What our God for us hath done;  
When we made our supplication,  
When our voice in prayer was strong,  
Then we found His glad salvation;  
And His mercy fills our tongue.

— Words: Edward Churton (1854)  
Music: Franz J. Haydn (1797)

#### 5.0 Praying Psalm 66

- Oh, God, teach me how to praise You. [vv. 1-3]
- May all the earth worship You, Lord. [v. 4]
- Thank You for being in control of the world and my life. [v. 7]
- Thank You for saving us and giving us blessing. [v. 12]
- Father, remove wickedness from my thoughts and actions. [v. 18]

#### 6.0 Applying Psalm 66

- When singing God’s praises, the right words are the right tune.
- God’s people ought to be the first to praise Him.
- Too often we learn to praise God only when He brings us to our knees with troubles and afflictions.