

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes Book of Psalms

4-6-11

Psalm 65

The Story Behind the Psalm

The author was praising God for a bountiful harvest, and as the harvest was being gathered, he wrote the Psalm.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

Psalm 65 was sung at the three great feasts. It was sung at the feast of the passover during the barley harvest and during the offering of the thank offering for the harvest. It was then sung at the feast of pentecost 50 days later. At that time the wheat was ripe and the people sang the 65th Psalm as they thanked God for the ripened wheat. It was then sung at the final harvest at the feast of the tabernacles.

Theme: God provides abundantly. We can be thankful to God for his many blessings.

Author: David

For the choir director: A psalm of David. A song

PSALM 65:1, 2

In Old Testament times, vows were taken seriously and fulfilled completely. No one had to make a vow, but once made, it was binding (Deuteronomy 23:21-23). The vow that is being fulfilled here is the promise to praise God for his answers to prayer.

PSALM 65:3

Although we may feel overwhelmed by the multitude of our sins, God will forgive them all if we ask sincerely. Do you feel as though God could never forgive you, that your sins are too many, or that some of them are too great? The good news is that God can and will forgive them all. Nobody is beyond redemption, and nobody is so full of sin that he or she cannot be forgiven.

PSALM 65:4

Access to God, the joy of living in the Temple courts, was a great honor. God had chosen a special group of Israelites from the tribe of Levi to serve as priests in the Tabernacle (Numbers 3:5-51). They were the only ones who could enter the sacred rooms where God's presence resided. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, believers today have access to God's presence in every place and at any time.

PSALM 65:6-13

This harvest psalm glorifies God the Creator as reflected in the beauty of nature. Nature helps us understand something of God's character. The Jews believed that God's care of nature was a sign of his love and provision for them. Nature shows God's generosity—giving us more than we need or deserve. God's abundant generosity should make us grateful to him and generous to others.

Psalm 66

The Story of Psalm 66

Every year the Jews have a Passover. They have done it now for nearly 3 500 years. In it, they remember that God took them from Egypt to the Promised Land. They called the Promised Land "Israel". This Psalm is about a special Passover. Many Bible students think that it is the one after God saved them from the Assyrians. This was about 2700 years ago. Their king at that time was Hezekiah.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

It was a very popular Psalm for those who were sick unto death. Bear in mind that the Jews knew many of the stories behind the Psalms, and when a certain Psalm was written for a certain purpose, they would use it for the same purpose in their lives as the need would arise.

Theme: God answers prayer. Individually and as a body of believers, we should praise and worship God.

Author: Anonymous, written after a great victory in battle

For the choir director: A psalm. A song

PSALM 66:5-7

The writer was remembering the famous story about God's rescue of the Israelites by parting the Red Sea. God saved the Israelites then, and he continues to save his people today.

PSALM 66:10-12

Just as fire purifies silver in the smelting process, trials refine our character. They bring us a new and deeper wisdom, helping us discern truth from falsehood and giving us the discipline to do what we know is right. Above all, these trials help us realize that life is a gift from God to be cherished, not a right to be taken for granted.

PSALM 66:13-15

People sometimes make bargains with God, saying, "If you heal me [or get me out of this mess], I'll obey you for the rest of my life." However, soon after they recover, the vow is forgotten and the old life-style is resumed. This writer made a promise to God, but he remembered the promise and was prepared to carry it out. God always keeps his promises and wants us to follow his example. Be careful to follow through on whatever you promise to do.

PSALM 66:18

Our confession of sin must be continual because we continue to do wrong. But true confession requires us to listen to God and to want to stop doing what is wrong. David confessed his sin and prayed, "Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep me from deliberate sins" (19:12, 13). When we *refuse* to repent or when we harbor and cherish certain sins, we place a wall between us and God. We may not be able to remember *every* sin we have ever committed, but our attitude should be one of confession and obedience.