

Psalm 66

The psalm repeatedly emphasizes the "terrible" works of God toward his enemies. This resonates well with the Levites slaughtering the idolators and the plague on the people after the Golden Calf incident in **Exodus 32-33**. Also note the warning in verse 18 - "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Psalm 66:1-2 - "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious."

Targum: "All the inhabitants of the earth."

See **Revelation 19:1** - "After this I heard a sound like the roar of a great multitude in heaven, shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God!"

Terrible Works

Psalm 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."

i.e. to be feared and revered with a godly fear on account of them.

"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" - *Gill's Exposition*

"when thou showest to the world thy power, by the pestilence, or sword, or famine, or lightnings:" - add the rabbis.

This can be seen in the aftermath of the Golden Calf incident in Exodus 32-33.

"shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee" - the Hebrew for "submit" means submit under force, in a lying, flattering, and deceitful manner. Christ's enemies, whether they want to or not, will be obliged to admit that He is Lord -

- **Philippians 2:10** - "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,"

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

- **Zechariah 14:9** - "And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one."

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

Terrible in that in His presence there is no cloak for our sin:

- **John 15:22** - "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin."

But He also is the Redeemer and dispenser of grace:

- **1 John 2:1-2** - "'And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.'"

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

At the Red Sea but also to enter the Promised Land by crossing the Jordan.

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

Psalm 66:7 - "He ruleth by his power forever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah."

"his eyes behold the nation" - The allusion is to God's looking through the pillar of fire and cloud upon the Egyptians in the Red sea, and troubling them, **Exodus 14:24**

Again **Zechariah 14:9** - "And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one."

Targum: "they shall not be exalted in themselves for ever;"

Psalm 66:8-9 - "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."

Targum: Who appointeth our soul to eternal life

As in **Psalm 55:22** - "Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken."

Testing

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

The testing or proving of the Levites happened at the retribution God demanded of the tribe of Levi against the idolators. But this was just a foretaste of a prophetic purification in the furnace of affliction, which applies to all believers:

- **Malachi 3:3** - "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. 3" He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.

- **Zechariah 13:8-9** - "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Psalm 66:11-12 - "Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 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."

- **1 Peter 4:12-13** - "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

"men to ride over our heads" - The word in the original text is singular, "a man" - the man of sin and son of perdition, or really our own fallen humanity, as the antichrist tries to persecute Christ within us through deceit and false voices working through the thoughts to spread unbelief.

Targum: "lords of usury" - Interesting! Pointing to the desire to look into the future, to wager the present on a future happiness instead of claiming joy, peace and rest in the present.

"into a wealthy place" - a large place, a place abounding with all good things. The Septuagint version renders it, "into refreshment"

See **Acts 3:19-20** - "Repent, then, and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped away, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus, the Christ, who has been appointed for you"

Our Proper Response is Praise

Psalm 66:13-15 - "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows, Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah."

Targum: "with sweet incense, the sacrifice of rams;"

- **Mark 12:33** - "And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

A Warning

Psalm 66:18 - "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:"

Literally if I "see iniquity with pleasure."

"iniquity" = *aven* - From an unused root perhaps meaning "to pant" (hence, to exert oneself, usually in vain - self-exertion; emptiness or vanity.

Used especially of idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23) and even to the idols themselves (Isaiah 66:3). Secondly, it means falsehood, and then wickedness.

- **Jeremiah 17:9** - "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

- **Isaiah 59:2-3** - "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken falsehood, Your tongue mutters wickedness."

- **Psalm 44:20** - "If we had forgotten the name of our God, Or extended our hands [in prayer] to a strange god, Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart"

- **John 9:31** - "We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does listen to the one who worships Him and does His will."

- **James 4:3** - "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

To regard iniquity is to look upon it with delight and satisfaction, rather than to guard against it, to loath it, abhor it, and be humbled by it and turn from it.

This is the way of the hypocrite.

Psalm 66:19 - "But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer."

David - as the type of Christ - is heard by God. And so will we if we are in Him.

Psalm 66:20 - "Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."