Our Mighty God
Psalms 66:1-9, 16-20
SS Lesson for 02/17/2019

Devotional Scripture: Ps 89:8-15

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: Psalms 66:1
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

COME AND PRAISE (Ps 66:1-4)

With joy (1)
- Joy expressed in praise and song (Ps 33:1-3)
- Joy expressed in the soul (Isa 61:10)
- Joy expressed in spite of circumstances (Hab 3:17-19)
- Joy expressed because the Bible tells us to do so (Phil 4:4)
- Joy expressed because we believe and love God (1 Peter 1:8)
- Joy because of God's refuge (Ps 5:11)
- Joy because of God's reign (Ps 97:1)
- Joy because of God's mighty deeds (Ps 118:15)

For glory (2)
- Give God the glory as part of thanksgiving (2 Cor 4:15)
- Give God the glory because in all things God should be praised (1 Peter 4:11)
- Give God the glory because we are owned by Him (1 Cor 6:20)
- Give God the glory because we are to give God the glory in all things that we do (1 Cor 10:31)
- Give God the glory because He should be revered (Ps 102:15)

For His great power (3)
- God's power is majestic (Ex 15:6-7)
- God's power is great and awesome (Deut 7:21)
- God's power should cause the fear of God (Josh 4:24)
- God's power is known (Ps 62:11-12)
- God's power causes His enemies to cringe (Ps 66:3)
- God's power is mighty (Ps 147:5)
- God's power cannot be turned back (Isa 14:27)

Through worship (4)
- Worship of God because He is due it (Ps 29:2)
- Worship of God because He is the creator (Ps 95:6-7)
- Worship of God joyfully and with thanksgiving (Ps 100:2-5)
- Worship of God through offering oneself as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1)
- Worship of God because of His eternal kingdom (Heb 12:28)
- Worship by rejoicing in God (Phil 4:4)

COME AND SEE HIS WORKS (Ps 66:5-9)

On behalf of man (5)
- God cares for mankind (Ps 8:4)
- God is concerned about mankind (Ex 4:29-31)
- God sustains and directs mankind (2 Sam 7:18)
- God is attentive to mankind (Job 7:17)
- God loves mankind (John 3:16)

They are well known (6)
- God's works are well known because they are great (Ps 111:2)
- God's works are well known because they are wonderful (Ps 145:5-6)
- God's works are well known because they are marvelously great (Ps 86:10)
- God's works are well known because they are mighty (Jer 32:18-19)
- God's works are well known because they are true and marvelous (Rev 15:3)

They are powerful (7)
- God's works are powerful because they perform miracles (Ps 77:14)
- God's works are powerful through His grace (2 Cor 12:9-10)
- God's works are powerful because they provide endurance and patience (Col 1:11)
God's works are powerful because they continually deliver (2 Cor 1:10)
God's works are powerful because they are immeasurable (Eph 3:20)
God's works are powerful because they are incomparable (Eph 1:19)
God's works are powerful because they are unsearchable (Rom 11:33-36)

With praise (8)
- Praise for God's richness of mercy (Eph 2:4-5)
- Praise for God's saving mercy (Titus 3:5)
- Praise God because He is full of compassion and mercy (James 5:11)
- Praise God because God's anger at His children's sin is only temporary (Ps 30:4-5)
- Praise God because God is rich in compassion and comfort (2 Cor 1:3-4)
- Praise God because God has blessings with every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3)

For great deliverance (9)
- Deliverance from the evil one (Matt 6:13)
- Deliverance from the dominion of darkness (Col 1:12-14)
- Deliverance from deadly peril (2 Cor 1:10)
- Deliverance through prayer (Phil 1:19)
- Deliverance from all troubles (Ps 34:19)
- Deliverance from trials (2 Peter 2:9)

COME AND HEAR (Ps 66:16-20)

About His salvation (16)
- Salvation among all nations (Ps 67:2)
- Salvation that comes from the sanctification through faith (Acts 26:16-18)
- Salvation for everyone who believes (Rom 1:16)
- Salvation for those baptized in Jesus (Gal 3:26-29)
- Salvation through the gospel (Eph 3:6)

About His response to prayer (17-19)
- Answered prayer through being righteous (James 5:16-18)
- Answered prayer through obedience (1 John 3:21-22)
- Answered prayer through asking according to God's will (1 John 5:13-15)
- Prayers are not answered because of rejecting God (Prov 1:24-28)
- Prayers are not answered because of iniquities (Isa 59:2)
- Prayers are not answered because of doing evil (Luke 13:23-27)

About His mercy (20)
- Mercy because He loves us (Rom 5:8)
- Mercy because God is faithful and righteous (Rom 3:3-5)
- Mercy because of grace (Eph 2:8-9)
- Mercy because it is mercy that prompted God's salvation (Rom 9:16)
- Mercy because God started it before the beginning of time (2 Tim 1:9)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

Commentary Thoughts from Expositor's Bible
Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

As I sat down to write the draft for this commentary, the radio informed me that the US military had just dropped a MOAB (Massive Ordnance Air Blast) bomb in a strike in Afghanistan. Nicknamed the “Mother of All Bombs,” MOAB is the largest nonnuclear bomb in the US arsenal. Due to its massive size—21,000 pounds and 30 feet long—it can’t be delivered like other conventional bombs. It is transported within range of its target by a specially modified cargo plane, released, and then remotely guided to its target. One MOAB yields an explosive force equivalent to 11 tons of TNT. The power of the bomb wasn’t limited to the battlefield. The MOAB also took over the news cycle. Whatever else the commentators planned on discussing that day fell by the wayside. Pundits debated whether such a show of force was justified and speculated on the political implications of the event. Others wondered if there was justification for such a weapon to exist at all.
Throughout the day, world governments weighed in with messages of support or condemnation regarding the use of the bomb. The entire world took notice when a weapon of that magnitude was unleashed. Psalm 66 explores a different type of might—God’s power. God’s mighty acts toward Israel were so great that every nation had to take notice and react.
Traditionally, the Psalms are seen as a collection of five books. These five are Psalms 1–41; 42–72; 73–89; 90–106, and 107–150. Our texts for today and last week fall in the second of these five books. As overall characteristics, the psalms of this second book feature relatively many songs of trust and/or complaint plus some praise hymns. The five books that compose the Psalms are seen to consist of subcollections that share similar themes. In that light, today’s text from Psalm 66 fits with the short collection Psalms 65–68. These four songs focus on the entire earth and all her nations. The nations are depicted as confessing (or needing to confess) God’s power and praising (or needing to praise) him for his just rule. This concern in Psalm 66 with other nations’ worship of God has led scholars to wonder if an international crisis was the background for its writing. Two possibilities are usually suggested. One is the Assyrian crisis of 701 BC (see 2 Kings 18:13–19:36); the other is after the release from Babylonian captivity. The date of the psalm’s writing under the latter proposal would be after the rebuilding of the temple in 515 BC, since Psalm 66:13 refers to that structure (compare Ezra 6:15). No one knows which theory (if either) is correct. Yet this uncertainty does not rob the psalm of its dynamic power. It can be applied to any deliverance the people of God experience. Remembering that psalms are ancient Israel’s worship songs, Psalm 66 presents itself as five stanzas. These five consist of verses 1–4, 5–7, 8–12, 13–15, and 16–20. Three of the stanza transitions are marked by the word Selah, occurring at the ends of verses 4, 7, and 15 (see footnote of 2011 NIV on verse 4). One stanza transition is marked by the psalmist’s shift to writing in the first person in verse 13. Today’s lesson explores the first two stanzas in full, part of the third stanza, and the entirety of the fifth.

Key Verse: Psalms 66:1

Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

This is another psalm of thanksgiving to the Lord. It too, like Psalm 65, may have been written to celebrate a festive occasion, but the precise occasion is unknown. In the first section (vv. 1-12) the psalmist (not specified as David) wrote in the first person plural (“us,” “our”), and in the second section (vv. 13-20) he wrote in the first person singular (“I,” “me,” “my”). In the psalm the nation acknowledged God’s deliverance and called on the nations to join her in praising the Lord.

Verses 1-9 are addressed to the nations, and verses 10-12 are addressed to God. The psalmist called on nations everywhere to praise the Lord for His great deliverance of Israel.

66:1-4. All the earth, that is, everyone on it, was urged to praise the Lord by shouting (v. 1), singing (vv. 2, 4), and speaking (vv. 3-4). They were encouraged to be jubilant because of His awesome works (cf. v. 5), which resulted in His enemies cringing before His great... power.

66:5-7. The psalmist then called on the nations to see that God’s awesome... works (cf. v. 3) on behalf of man demonstrate His sovereignty. Israel’s crossing the Red Sea and the Jordan River were notable acts of God’s power of deliverance. Therefore people should realize that He rules forever by His power, putting down rebels and delivering His people.

66:8-9. Israel then called on the peoples of the earth to bless God because by these and other awesome deeds He had preserved them.

66:10-12. Here the nation acknowledged that God had tested them with all kinds of burdens and oppressions, but finally brought them to the place of abundant blessing. This acknowledged that it was God who led them all the way and delivered them. The psalmist, the leader of the congregation, offered animal sacrifices and declarative praise to God.

66:13-15. In these verses he addressed God and in verses 16-20 he addressed the congregation. The psalmist said he would go to God’s temple and offer burnt offerings. This would fulfill a vow he made when he cried out of distress (trouble).

66:16-20. Here he addressed the congregation in praise to God (a declarative praise). He told them that God responded to his prayer (I cried out to Him) and God delivered him. However, it would not have happened that way if he had clung to sin (cf. Prov. 28:9; Isa. 59:2). But God did listen and answer his prayer. The point is clear: God’s people, when in need, should purify their hearts and pray to Him. Then He will answer and not withhold His loyal love, and other believers may praise and exalt Him.
Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Come and Praise (Ps 66:1-4)

1 Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!
2 Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious.
3 Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.
4 All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises to Your name." Selah

With joy (1)

Joy expressed in praise and song (Ps 33:1-3)

33 Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. 2 Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. 3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

Joy expressed in the soul (Isa 61:10)

10 I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Joy expressed in spite of circumstances (Hab 3:17-19)

17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. 19 The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments.

Joy expressed because the Bible tells us to do so (Phil 4:4)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Joy expressed because we believe and love God (1 Peter 1:8)

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

Joy because of God’s refuge (Ps 5:11)

11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Joy because of God’s reign (Ps 97:1)

97 The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice.

Joy because of God’s mighty deeds (Ps 118:15)

15 Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The Lord's right hand has done mighty things!

For glory (2)

Give God the glory as part of thanksgiving (2 Cor 4:15)

15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.
Give God the glory because in all things God should be praised (1 Peter 4:11)

11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Give God the glory because we are owned by Him (1 Cor 6:20)

20 You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Give God the glory because we are to give God the glory in all things that we do (1 Cor 10:31)

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Give God the glory because He should be revered (Ps 102:15)

15 The nations will fear the name of the Lord, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.

For His great power (3)

God's power is majestic (Ex 15:6-7)

6 "Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy. 7 In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble.

God's power is great and awesome (Deut 7:21)

21 Do not be terrified by them, for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.

God's power should cause the fear of God (Josh 4:24)

24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."

God's power is known (Ps 62:11-12)

11 One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, 12 and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

God's power causes His enemies to cringe (Ps 66:3)

3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

God's power is mighty (Ps 147:5)

5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

God's power cannot be turned back (Isa 14:27)

27 For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Through worship (4)

Worship of God because He is due it (Ps 29:2)

2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.

Worship of God because He is the creator (Ps 95:6-7)

6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice,
Worship of God joyfully and with thanksgiving (Ps 100:2-5)

2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Worship of God through offering oneself as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1)

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.

Worship of God because of His eternal kingdom (Heb 12:28)

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.

Worship by rejoicing in God (Phil 4:4)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

Come and See His Works (Ps 66:5-9)

5 Come and see the works of God: He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.
6 He turned the sea into dry land; They went through the river on foot. There we will rejoice in Him.
7 He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah
8 Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard,
9 Who keeps our soul among the living, And does not allow our feet to be moved.

On behalf of man (5)

God cares for mankind (Ps 8:4)

4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

God is concerned about mankind (Ex 4:29-31)

29 Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, 30 and Aaron told them everything the Lord had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, 31 and they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

God sustains and directs mankind (2 Sam 7:18)

18 Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: "Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?

God is attentive to mankind (Job 7:17)

17 "What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention,

God loves mankind (John 3:16)

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

They are well known (6)

God's works are well known because they are great (Ps 111:2)

2 Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them.
God's works are well known because they are wonderful (Ps 145:5-6)
5 They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. 6 They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.

God's works are well known because they are marvelously great (Ps 86:10)
10 For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.

God's works are well known because they are mighty (Jer 32:18-19)
18 You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, 19 great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve.

God's works are well known because they are true and marvelous (Rev 15:3)
3 and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages.

They are powerful (7)

God's works are powerful because they perform miracles (Ps 77:14)
14 You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.

God's works are powerful through His grace (2 Cor 12:9-10)
9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

God's works are powerful because they provide endurance and patience (Col 1:11)
11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

God's works are powerful because they continually deliver (2 Cor 1:10)
10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

God's works are powerful because they are immeasurable (Eph 3:20)
20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

God's works are powerful because they are incomparable (Eph 1:19)
19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

God's works are powerful because they are unsearchable (Rom 11:33-36)
33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

With praise (8)

Praise for God's richness of mercy (Eph 2:4-5)
4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.
Praise for God's saving mercy (Titus 3:5)

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Praise God because He is full of compassion and mercy (James 5:11)

11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Praise God because God's anger at His children's sin is only temporary (Ps 30:4-5)

4 Sing to the Lord, you saints of his; praise his holy name. 5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Praise God because God is rich in compassion and comfort (2 Cor 1:3-4)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Praise because God's anger at His children's sin is only temporary (Ps 30:4-5)

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Praise God because God is rich in compassion and comfort (2 Cor 1:3-4)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

For great deliverance (9)

Deliverance from the evil one (Matt 6:13)

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Deliverance from the dominion of darkness (Col 1:12-14)

12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Deliverance from deadly peril (2 Cor 1:10)

10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

Deliverance through prayer (Phil 1:19)

19 for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

Deliverance from all troubles (Ps 34:19)

19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;

Deliverance from trials (2 Peter 2:9)

9 if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

Come and Hear (Ps 66:16-20)

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, And I will declare what He has done for my soul.
17 I cried to Him with my mouth, And He was extolled with my tongue.
18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.
19 But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.
20 Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, Nor His mercy from me!
About His salvation (16)

*Salvation among all nations (Ps 67:2)*

2 that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

*Salvation that comes from the sanctification through faith (Acts 26:16-18)*

16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

*Salvation for everyone who believes (Rom 1:16)*

16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

*Salvation for those baptized in Jesus (Gal 3:26-29)*

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

*Salvation through the gospel (Eph 3:6)*

6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

About His response to prayer (17-19)

*Answered prayer through being righteous (James 5:16-18)*

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

*Answered prayer through obedience (1 John 3:21-22)*

21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

*Answered prayer through asking according to God's will (1 John 5:13-15)*

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

*Prayers are not answered because of rejecting God (Prov 1:24-28)*

24 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, 25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — 27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. 28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me.

*Prayers are not answered because of iniquities (Isa 59:2)*

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.
Prayers are not answered because of doing evil (Luke 13:23-27)

23 Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, 24 "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. 25 Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' " But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' 26 "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' 27 "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!"

About His mercy (20)

Mercy because He loves us (Rom 5:8)

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Mercy because God is faithful and righteous (Rom 3:3-5)

3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." 5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)

Mercy because of grace (Eph 2:8-9)

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Mercy because it is mercy that prompted God's salvation (Rom 9:16)

16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Mercy because God started it before the beginning of time (2 Tim 1:9)

9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Expositor's Bible

THE most striking feature of this psalm is the transition from the plural "we" and "our," in Psalms 66:1-12, to the singular "I" and "my," in Psalms 66:13-20. Ewald supposes that two independent psalms have been united, but Psalms 66:12 is as abrupt for an ending as Psalms 66:13 is for a beginning; and the "Come, hear," of Psalms 66:16 echoes the "Come, and see," of Psalms 66:5. It is possible that "the 'I' of the second part is identical with the 'we' of the first; in other words, that the personified community speaks here" (Baethgen); but the supposition that the psalm was meant for public worship, and is composed of a choral and a solo part, accounts for the change of number. Such expressions as "my soul" and "my heart" favour the individual reference. Of course, the deliverance magnified by the single voice is the same as that celebrated by the loud acclaim of many tongues; but there is a different note in the praise of the former—there is a tone of inwardness in it, befitting individual appropriation of general blessings. To this highest point, that of the action of the single soul in taking the deliverances of the community for its very own, and pouring out its own praise, the psalm steadily climbs. It begins with the widest outlook over "all the earth," summoned to ring forth joyous praise. It ends focused to one burning point, in a heart fired by the thought that God "has not turned away his lovingkindness from me." So we learn how each single soul has to claim its several part in world wide blessings, as each flower calyx absorbs the sunshine that floods the pastures.

The psalm has no superscription of date or author, and no clue in its language to the particular deliverance that called it forth. The usual variety of conjectures have been hazarded. The defeat of Sennacherib occurs to some; the return from Babylon to others; the Maccabean period to yet another school of critics. It belongs to a period when Israel's world significance and mission were recognized (which Cheyne considers a post-exilic feature, "Orig. of Psalt." 176), and when the sacrificial worship was in full force; but beyond these there are no clear data for period of composition.
It is divided into five strophes, three of which are marked by Selah. That musical indication is wanting at the close of the third strophe (Psalms 66:12), which is also the close of the first or choral part, and its absence may be connected with the transition to a single voice. A certain progress in thought is noticeable, as will appear as we proceed. The first strophe calls upon all the earth to praise God for His works. The special deeds which fire the psalmist are not yet mentioned, though they are present to his mind. The summons of the world to praise passes over into the prophecy that it shall praise. The manifestation of God’s character by act will win homage. The great thought that God has but to be truly known in order to be reverenced is an axiom with this psalmist; and no less certain is he that such knowledge and such praise will one day fill the world. True, he discerns that submission will not always be genuine; for he uses the same word to express it as occurs in Psalms 18:44, which represents “feigned homage.” Every great religious awakening has a fringe of adherents, imperfectly affected by it, whose professions outrun reality, though they themselves are but half-conscious that they feign. But though this sobering estimate of the shallowness of a widely diffused recognition of God tones down the psalmist’s expectations, and has been abundantly confirmed by later experience, his great hope remains as an early utterance of the conviction, which has gathered assurance and definiteness by subsequent Revelation, and is now familiar to all. The world is God’s. His Self-revelation will win hearts. There shall be true submission and joyous praise girdling the earth as it rolls. The psalmist dwells mainly on the majestic and awe-inspiring aspect of God’s acts. His greatness of power bears down opposition. But the later strophes introduce other elements of the Divine nature and syllables of the Name, though the inmost secret of the “power of God” in the weakness of manhood and the all-conquering might of Love is not yet ripe for utterance.

The second strophe advances to a closer contemplation of the deeds of God, which the nations are summoned to behold. He is not only "dread" in His doings towards mankind at large, but Israel’s history is radiant with the manifestation of His name, and that past lives on so that ancient experiences give the measure and manner of today’s working. The retrospect embraces the two standing instances of God’s delivering help—the passage of the Red Sea and of Jordan—and these are not dead deeds in a far-off century. For the singer calls on his own generation to rejoice “there” in Him. Psalms 66:6 c is by some translated as "There did we rejoice,” and more accurately by others, "Let us rejoice.” In the former case the essential solidarity of all generations of the nation is most vividly set forth. But the same idea is involved in the correct rendering, according to which the men of the psalmist’s period are entitled and invoked to associate themselves in thought with that long-past generation, and to share in their joy, since they do possess the same power which wrought then. God’s work is never antiquated. It is all a revelation of eternal activities. What He has been, He is. What He did, He does. Therefore faith may feed on all the records of old time, and expect the repetition of all that they contain. Such an application of history to the present makes the nerve of this strophe. For Psalms 66:7, following on the retrospect, declares the perpetuity of God’s rule, and that His eyes still keep an outlook, as a watchman on a tower might do, to mark the enemies’ designs, in order that He may intervene, as of old, for His people’s deliverance. He "looked forth upon the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud". [Exodus 14:24] Thus He still marks the actions and plans of Israel’s foes. Therefore it were wise for the "rebellious" not to rear their heads so high in opposition.

The third strophe comes still closer to the particular deliverance underlying the psalm. Why should all "peoples" be called upon to praise God for it? The psalmist has learned that Israel’s history is meant to teach the world what God is, and how blessed it is to dwell under His wing. No exclusiveness taints his enjoyment of special national privileges. He has reached a height far above the conceptions of the rest of the world in his day, and even in this day, except where the Christian conception of "humanity” has been heartily accepted. Whence came this width of view, this purifying from particularism, this anticipation by so many centuries of a thought imperfectly realized even now? Surely a man who in those days and with that environment could soar so high must have been lifted by something mightier than his own spirit. The details of the Divine dealings described in the strophe are of small consequence in comparison with its fixed expectation of the world’s participation in Israel’s blessings. The familiar figures for affliction reappear—namely, proving and refining in a furnace. A less common metaphor is that of being imprisoned in a dungeon, as the word rendered "net” in the A.V. and R.V. probably means. Another peculiar image is that of Psalms 66:12: “Thou hast caused men to ride over our head.” The word for "men” here connects feebleness and frailty, characteristics which make tyranny more intolerable; and the somewhat harsh metaphor is best explained as setting forth insolent and crushing domination, whether the picture intended is that of ruthless conquerors driving their chariots over their prone victims, or that of their sitting as an incubus on their shoulders and making them like beasts of burden. Fire and water are standing figures for affliction. With great force these accumulated symbols of oppression are confronted by one abrupt clause ending the strophe, and describing in a breath the perfect deliverance which sweeps them all away: “Thou broughtest us out into abundance.” There is no need for the textual alteration of the last word into “a wide place” (Hupfeld), a place of liberty (Cheyne), or freedom (Baethgen). The word in the received text is that
employed in Psalms 23:5. "My cup is overfulness" and "abundance" yields a satisfactory meaning here, though not closely corresponding to any of the preceding metaphors for affliction.

The fourth strophe (Psalms 66:13-15) begins the solo part. It clothes in a garb appropriate to a sacrificial system the thought expressed in more spiritual dress in the next strophe, that God’s deliverance should evoke men’s praise. The abundance and variety of sacrifices named, and the fact that "rams" were not used for the offerings of individuals, seem to suggest that the speaker is, in some sense, representing the nation, and it has been supposed that he may be the high priest. But this is merely conjecture, and the explanation may be that there is a certain ideal and poetical tone over the representation, which does not confine itself to scrupulous accuracy.

The last strophe (Psalms 66:16-20) passes beyond sacrificial symbols, and gives the purest utterance to the emotions and resolves which ought to well up in a devout soul on occasion of God’s goodness. Not only does the psalmist teach us how each individual must take the general blessing for his very own—of which act the faith which takes the world’s Christ for my Christ is the supreme example—but he teaches us that the obligation laid on all recipients of God’s mercy is to tell it forth, and that the impulse is as certain to follow real reception as the command is imperative. Just as Israel received deliverances that the whole earth might learn how strong and gracious was Israel’s God, we receive His blessings, and chiefly His highest gift of life in Christ, not only that we may live, but that, living, we may "declare the works of the Lord." He has little possession of God’s grace who has not felt the necessity of speech, and the impossibility of the lips being locked when the heart is full.

The psalmist tells his experience of God’s answers to his prayer in a very striking fashion. Psalms 66:17 says that he cried to God; and while his uttered voice was supplication, the song extolling God for the deliverance asked as, was it were, lying under his tongue, ready to break forth, -so sure was he that his cry would be heard. That is a strong faith which prepares banners and music for the triumph before the battle is fought. It would be presumptuous folly, not faith, if it rested on anything less certain than God’s power and will.

“I find David making a syllogism in mood and figure ‘If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: but verily God hath heard me; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.’ Now, I expected that David would have concluded thus ‘Therefore I regard not wickedness in my heart.’ But far otherwise he concludes: ‘Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me.’ Thus David hath deceived but not wronged me. I looked that he should have clapped the crown on his own, and he puts it on God’s head. I will learn this excellent logic.” So says Fuller (“Good Thoughts in Bad Times,” p. 34, Pickering’s ed., 1841).

No doubt, however, the psalmist means to suggest, though he does not state, that his prayer was sincere. There is no self-complacent attribution of merit to his supplication, in the profession that it was untainted by any secret, sidelong looking towards evil; and Fuller is right in emphasising the suppression of the statement. But even the appearance of such is avoided by the jet of praise which closes the psalm. Its condensed brevity has induced some critics to mend it by expansion, as they regard it as incongruous to speak of turning away a man’s prayer from himself. Some would therefore insert "from Him" after "my prayer," and others would expand still further by inserting an appropriate negative before "His lovingkindness." But the slight incongruity does not obscure the sense, and brings out strongly the flow of thought. So fully does the psalmist feel the connection between God’s lovingkindness and his own prayer, that these are, as it were, smelted into one in his mind, and the latter is so far predominant in his thoughts that he is unconscious of the anomaly of his expression. To expand only weakens the swing of the words and the power of the thought. It is possible to tame lyric outbursts into accuracy at the cost of energy. Psalmists are not bound to be correct in style. Rivers wind; canals are straight.

(Adapted from URL:https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/teb/psalms-66.html)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Despite the circumstances in the psalmist’s day, God was still sovereign and all-powerful. He was still worthy of praise. He was still the judge who ruled all nations and knew the true condition of every individual human heart. All the above remains true today. Although we are surrounded by those who do not fear God, we can do so nonetheless. Although we are surrounded by those who do not praise God, we can do so nonetheless. We can make a commitment to remind ourselves continually of his history with us. We can also encourage each other by sharing our personal testimonies of how he has demonstrated his strength in our lives. As we do (or, perhaps, because we do), we will find ourselves submitting to his ways, regardless of whether those around us do so as well.
**Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

**Praise God Almighty** - History verifies repeatedly that Yahweh, God Almighty, is definitely the nation of Israel's God. But this psalm extends His reach—He is also God over the Gentiles and the entire world. It's appropriate for all to give thanksgiving for all He has and will bring to pass.

**Praise Him Out Loud** - God certainly accepts quiet, contemplative type worship, but this particular hymn called for the worshiper to offer his or her praise out loud, with exuberance. This expression goes beyond a mere, "Thank You, Lord, for Your goodness to me." It goes beyond that, to hold up His greatness and majesty. The author also feared God out of reverence. It's a recognition of His ability to bring all things to pass, acknowledging His power over numerous enemies. His greatness should cause us to bow our hearts to God in humble submission.

**Praise Him for the Past and Present** - The psalmist is so anxious for others to see the magnificence of God, he takes us to the Exodus to observe in our mind's eye the supernatural events of that time such as parting the Red Sea so the children of Israel could walk through on dry ground, and then leading them across the dry bed of the Jordan River. With these acts, even unbelieving nations ought to see and acknowledge God's greatness. It's foolish to rebel against such a strong God. The psalm then transcends time, saying each and every person who has ever walked this earth, no matter how long or short, was overshadowed by God's hand of care.

**Praise Him for His Mercy and Grace** - The hymn writer called God's people to hear what God had done for him as he invoked the name of the Lord with high praise and told of His great mercy.

**Praise for Help in Difficult Times** - Singing praise songs has remained central in most African-American worship services. All the way back to slavery, plantation songs could be heard coming from the cotton fields. Many testify that keeping their mind on an awesome, great God who watched over them, and would one day set things right, helped them make it through grave difficulties. God's balm of praise is still available today.