

Psalm 66

Written by K B Napier
Friday, 16 March 2012 18:36

A Psalm of David.

As I observe, and experience, the quickly-growing hatred for believers in this world, made almost a legal requirement by governments, it would be very easy to fall into a mood of despondency or paranoia. Enemies are all around us, threatening our lives, freedoms and livelihoods, depending on which country we live in.

Yet, David, who himself experienced these things, shows us time and again that if we are righteous God protects us. We must not allow the wicked to bring us down, or make us 'victims', but must praise God and bless His name continually, even as the enemy bangs on our door. Not like rabbits caught in the glare of a headlight, but as an act of faith, calmly shown and followed. Yes, the initial fear must give us a jolt, but do not let it stay in the heart and mind. Instead, ask God to keep you safe and to guide your mind and heart in all things.

Verses 1-4

[1] Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

[2] Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

[3] Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

[4] All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.

It is often taught that we cannot demand the unsaved to listen to God. But, God Himself demands that **all** people everywhere obey Him. It is not relevant that they wish to disobey or even if they say they do not believe in Him. They **must** obey and they **must** praise God, whoever they are! All people must make a joyful noise to God,

"all ye lands"

. Not just Believers, but

everyone

"All ye lands"

means everybody in every land on earth (whole earth, 'erets). We have already seen that atheists are called 'fools' (which can be translated as 'stupid') by God. They also receive God's wrath for not praising Him. We must make a joyful noise to God. (This is interpreted [in the Hiphil form] as shouting in applause, or to shout impulsively and [in the Hithpolel form] in triumph or joy. Other interpretations do not apply in this text). We must proclaim the honour of God's name... that is, everything He stands for, is, and does.

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It must be made glorious, because God is glorious. Jesus once told us how to pray, and, here, David does the same thing: “*Say unto God...*” that his works are “*terrible*”. This means that what God says and does is always awe-inspiring, causing us to be fearful of not obeying Him, and yet obeying Him because we love Him! If any Christian cannot feel and see this, then they should question their stand before the Lord as well as their motives and desires.

God can also make enemies bow down to Him, because they have no choice. Why do they not do so today? I suggest it is because His people are not repentant and have strayed far from Him. Though the enemies of God cannot harm Him, they can certainly harm His people, and this is one reason why we must obey the Lord. Of course, the major reason is simply that He is God and demands our obedience.

“*All the earth shall worship thee*”. Not just believers! ‘Shall’ is an imperative... a ‘must do’. It is error to think that if someone does not accept God, that they are free from His demands.

everyone

is

always

under God’s law and demands, whether they want to be or not. God’s law is supreme. All the earth should sing God’s praises. In Old Testament times pagan kings and countries used to be silent before God, or were afraid to go against His people, because they feared His wrath. They did not worship Him, and yet they feared Him and did not act against His people.

That is how it ought to be today. We must not give an inch to enemies, because to do so is to reject God’s holiness, and it suggests God is nothing. But, before we call on God to destroy our enemies, we must firstly repent and obey Him. Without this personal holiness we dare not call upon Him for help.

Verses 5-7

[5] Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

[6] He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

[7] He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

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“Come and see the works of God”. What He does in this world is divine, great, and above anything man can do. Look and see!! Do not let atheists and evolutionists stop you from seeing God in every good thing, and even in judgments against mankind.

The works of God are manifest! They are before our very eyes! Begin to see what happens through the eyes of God and you will not be the same again! Things do not ‘just happen’... God commands everything in the known universe; man is merely a tool who must act according to God’s demands. If he does not, we see ruin and evil.

David here mentions an account well-known to Israel – the crossing of the Red Sea by the Hebrews. He verifies that the Sea was parted, making the ground that was once under water, dry. He confirms that the Hebrews walked through the parted Sea on foot, before God closed the path again to drown the Egyptians. At that time the Hebrews praised God with immense joy. It is how we in modern times should look upon God: He can deliver us from our wicked enemies; all we need do is obey what He says. We can ask that He repeat this ‘Red Sea’ experience, because *“He ruleth by his power forever”*.

God rules all the time; He intervenes still in this world... otherwise we are praying to a shadow, a cardboard cut-out, someone Who will not answer. Is this our God? I do not think so; He breaks into our lives time and again, whether in judgment or in help – it depends on our obedience. Yes, He can also help us in our sin, but that is rare.

God watches the nations. He sees what each nation does and says. He observes as wicked rulers deny us freedom of faith. He hears their profanity and refusal to obey Him as they get rid of His laws. He condemns such leaders and ruins their countries. But, He places a divine boundary around those who are His and who live righteously.

He encourages us to pray for the downfall of our enemies: *“Let not the rebellious exalt themselves”* ! This means our open enemies, who are many today, but it also means our secret enemies... those who call themselves ‘brethren’, but whose beliefs and lives say the opposite.

They lead in apostasy as they scorn those of us who are faithful; they gather in paganistic clusters, charismatically deceiving and bleating their subtle evils. We must not allow them to

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continue, but must oppose them with a mighty display of our holy intentions and lives. Not with arrogance, but with simple faith and truth.

Verses 8-12

[8] O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

[9] Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

[10] For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

[11] Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.

[12] 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.

David is calling upon the people to bless God publicly and to show the world that we praise Him. We are **not** called to 'come alongside' sinners in their sin, allowing them to continue in their ways! This is how many corrupt Christians act today, with all manner of enemies. They not only disobey God and dishonour His name in doing so, but they also make the enemies' path clear, allowing them to attack us without mercy, even though, to God, sinful enemies have no rights at all.

These corrupt people do not think of themselves as corrupt, because their hearts are not in line with the heart of God; they think humanly and have no spiritual insight; they quote scripture without having the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and claiming to be saved, they think that all their ways are holy.

We must act properly with God's blessing, or we fail to realise that God keeps our very life (and thoughts) in His hands: "*(He) holdeth our soul in life*". It is He Who keeps us from straying into sin and ruin: "(He) suffereth not our feet to be moved." Those who do not live righteously can expect to suffer mentally as well as spiritually. It is why some resort to depression and anxiety.

These are the results of failing to hand our lives over to God and to live as we ought. Instead, we look only at the problems in life and do not seek God first. This kind of earthly path only spirals downwards, and the more we free-fall, the worse becomes the problem, until all we see and feel is deadness and failure. We effectively shut-out the Lord in favour of being depressed or anxious. Beware, friends – any one of us can fall into this trap. It happens when we allow sinful thoughts and fears to grip our minds and hearts. Encourage and admonish each other!

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Those who follow God and do not fall into the trap will doggedly carry on regardless of troubles and woes, until God removes them. These are trials of our faith, our trust in God. We must carry on regardless, knowing that God is approving us when we do not stray from Him. He watches as we sometimes struggle with doubts about self, but keep on trusting anyway, just as David did at times. And, when we come through the trial He commends us and heaps blessings upon us.

Some have no church to attend, and no Christian friends, either because fellow believers are far from God and do not care, or because no-one is saved where they live. This, too, is a trial of faith, when lonely or isolated Christians are upheld by God alone; such believers must stand firm and, if necessary, be alone, until and if God provides fellow believers. When these lonely believers obey God and live righteously, they will be rewarded! Fellow believers will come their way, even if it is by internet, or letter, or email!

We can expect fewer and fewer believers to be with us, as the prophesied apostasy gathers momentum, and those who should be alongside us allow sin to take hold of their lives. If we must be alone in our faith, then count it to be a privilege! God watches us and approves of our desire to be holy even when there are no others to be our friends.

Though in my city we are about 16 believers meeting every Sunday, and we support each other, all the pastors (over 400) in the city reject us, either speaking against us, or shunning us. So, we are lonely even in such a huge crowd. Now, we see it as a burden we must bear gladly... and after over 25 years the burden is now light! We passed through the trial, and came out of it as pure silver.

God sometimes allows, or causes, enemies to "ride over our heads". We have to endure the fiery trial without alleviation of the pain, but at the end God will take us to a "wealthy" place filled with everything good. I can vouch for this taking place in my own life, many times.

Like all other believers, I have made mistakes, and have also sinned. After repentance, things went back to what they should be – but I still had to endure trails. They are what make me stronger and purer. And they show me that God is watching and helping me to keep going. Don't look at the strength of the enemy or situation – look to the strength and power of the Lord. Remember, no matter how low we fall, we are gold and silver in God's eyes, and both must be purified by trials. We are never just dirt to be trampled on by the wicked, but are worth much to the Lord!

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Verses 13-15

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

Because David sees God as He is, as His ruler and friend, he will enter the Temple with burnt offerings and will keep his promises to God. Today, we must do the same. Even if we have no local church to attend, we have a church already in our homes, even if we are just one. And if there are at least two, then we can worship God together, for where two or three are gathered together, there will be God.

David made promises of holiness to God, if God delivered him from his enemies. How many Christians make promises to God when they are in trouble? Sadly, too many. I say 'sadly', because when their troubles go away, they go back to what they once were, and forget the part played by the Lord. They do not keep their promises and so break a vow. If you make a promise to God, then you must keep it, or reap the dire consequences to your soul.

For his part, David made sacrifices of the best animals, with incense. It was the least he could do. Do we offer the least to God, or the very best we have? Our very souls? Or, do we forget God when things go right, and only call upon Him when things go wrong? If we continually walk with God, then we are alongside Him all the time; we will know His every move and nuance, His every word, and can act well. Most Christians do not live close to God and then wonder why they cannot hear His voice or know His presence! Give Him the very best – your whole life – and He will honour you. That is a promise.

Verses 16-20

[16] Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
[17] I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.
[18] If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:
[19] But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
[20] Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

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Note what this section is telling us: God will not hear our prayers if we sin! David said that God heard him, so this means David was without sin when he called upon God to help.

All who know God must listen: *"Come and hear, all ye that fear God"*. Hear what God does in the souls and lives of fellow believers! I know from my own life how incredible God is, in dire circumstances, and when wolves bay around me wanting to tear the flesh off my bones. I speak with experience and can tell others with gladness what God has done for me. It is not an illusion, but reality.

He has done much and will continue to do so, and that is why *"I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue."*

If someone gives us something nice, do we not say 'thankyou'? Then why do we not praise God for our very breath and for delivering us from harm?

Importantly: *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear [me]:"* This is a solid lesson for every Christian in the world! If we sin, God will not heed us or hear our prayers! However, if, like David, you are clean and holy, living righteously, you can repeat what he says: *"[But] verily God hath heard [me]; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer."*

I hope you can see how vital this information is. If you want answers and help, then live righteously! David repeats it time and again, because it worked for him and it is true; it is what God demands. And, when we live righteously, do we not feel as if we are on a mountain top breathing clean air, enjoying the sun, and being healthy?

We must thank God when He answers our prayers, for when He does it means we are in His favour and are commended by our faith. When we obey God He gives us everything in abundance: *"Blessed [be] God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."* Well, the lesson is there... can you take it in, and, more importantly, do what it says?

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