

"Praise Waiteth for thee, O God"

Psalm 65

The heading of this psalm reads, "*To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David.*" This gives us a glimpse into what follows. David not only composed this as a piece of music (*a psalm*), but also intended it to be sung out loud (*a song*) in the worship of the Temple. Unlike the psalms of lament that precede this psalm, Psalm 65 is a hymn of praise offered to the God who hears prayer, forgives sin, and blesses His creation abundantly.

Some have called this psalm a "harvest psalm," possibly sung during the Feast of Tabernacles, when Israel rejoiced in God's provision. Its message, however, reaches beyond just the bounty of Israel's harvest and praises the Lord whose goodness extends to all the earth.

As David begins, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God...", we are reminded that worship is a duty of God's people and should be a delight to them as well which is a fitting response of all creation to a gracious and generous God.

Praise and prayer go together, both in this psalm and throughout Scripture. It is a principle that, if followed, will help us better understand the God to whom we pray. Many people have the *praise* part down but not the *prayer* part, and some people have the *prayer* part but not the *praise* part. God wants us to have both in the right perspective.

I. PRAISE HIM FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER – VS. 1-4

A. Privilege found in access to God's presence (vs. 1)

1. The phrase "praise waiteth" (דְּמִיָּה) literally means "silence," implying *silent expectation* – the stillness of reverence before worship begins.

2. The mention of *Zion* (only spelled “Sion” this one time in the Old Testament for reasons unknown) identifies the *place of God’s dwelling* among His people, emphasizing the privilege of access to His presence in worship (Ps. 84.1-2; Heb. 10:19-22).
3. The vow “performed” suggests response – worship is not only access, but accountability: to fulfill what we have promise to the God who hears.

B. Privilege found in prayers being answered (vs. 2)

1. The word “hearest” (participle, שָׁמַע) describes God’s continual nature – *He is the Hearer of prayer*.
2. “All flesh” looks beyond just Israel, showing that the hearing ear of the Lord is not limited to one nation (Isa. 56:6-7; 1 John 5:14-15).

Isaiah 56:6-7

⁶ Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; ⁷ Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

1 John 5:14-15

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

3. The verse links universal access to God’s willingness to listen.

- The privilege of prayer is not only that we may come to Him, but that He listens and responds.

C. Privilege found in forgiveness (vs. 3)

1. "Iniquities prevail against me"
 - a) "Iniquities" (עוֹן) indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately.
 - b) "Prevail" (גָּבַר) means to "to overwhelm, to overcome." The psalmist is admitting that sin is stronger than he is, but not stronger than God's grace.
 2. "Purge" (כָּפַר) is the same root used for *atonement*, and means to cover, to forgive, to reconcile.
 3. This verse reveals the heart of the privilege of prayer: forgiven access.
- The greatest privilege of prayer is not simply being heard, but being *cleansed*. The barrier of sin that once stood between us and God has been removed (Ps. 32:1-5; 1 John 1:9)

D. Privilege found in nearness (vs. 4)

1. The verbs "choosest" (תִּבְחַר) and "causest to approach" (וּתְקַרֵּב) emphasize divine initiative – it is the Lord who draws His people near to Himself.
2. "Dwell in thy courts" brings to mind the imagery of the temple and of continual fellowship in His presence.
3. The second line of the verse ("...we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house") links

nearness with satisfaction – the fullness of joy found only in His presence.

Psalm 16:11

¹¹ Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

- The ultimate privilege of prayer is not what we *get from* God, but being brought *near to God Himself*. The goal of prayer is communion – not merely communication.

II. PRAISE HIM FOR THE POWER OF HIS ANSWER – vs. 5-8

When God answers prayer, He does so with both tremendous awe-inspiring power and a righteous purpose.

A. His power revealed in righteousness (vs. 5a)

“By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us...”

1. The idea behind the term “terrible things” (נוראות) is that of *awe-inspiring deeds*. These “things” are not terrifying in cruelty, but are meant inspire dread from His enemies, and reverent awe from His people.
 2. The phrase “in righteousness” (בצדק) shows that the power of God is never arbitrary but always serves His holiness.
- God’s answers may overwhelm us, but they are always right. Every display of His power bears the mark of His holiness (Ex. 15:11; Ps. 66:3-5).

Exodus 15:11

¹¹ Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who *is* like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful *in* praises, doing wonders?

B. His power revealed in salvation (vs. 5b)

"O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea."

1. God is called "the confidence" (מִבְטָח) – the refuge or hope of all peoples.
2. The reach of His salvation extends "to the ends of the earth" and even "upon the sea" – picturing those far from Israel yet under His care.
3. The psalm anticipates the day when all nations trust in the God of Israel (Ps. 67:2; Isa. 45:22).

Psalm 67:2

² That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Isaiah 45:22

²² Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and *there is* none else.

- The power of God in salvation is not confined to a particular place or people; it is the ground of hope for the whole world.

C. His power revealed in creation (vs. 6)

1. "Setteth fast" (כִּוֵּן) means to establish or make firm.
2. "The mountains," as immovable and ancient parts of creation, stand as symbols of God's stability and strength.
3. "Girded with power" pictures a warrior ready for action, yet in complete control.

- The same God who fixed the mountains in their

place can establish our hearts in peace and firmness (Ps. 46:1-3; Isa. 26:4).

Isaiah 26:4

⁴ Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

D. His power revealed in control (vs. 7-8)

1. The parallel between “seas” and “peoples” shows God’s authority over both natural and human turmoil.
2. “Stilleth” (שָׁוֶה) describes calming the uproar – a picture later seen when Christ rebuked the storm (Mark 4:39).

Mark 4:39

³⁹ And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, **Peace, be still.** And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Just as the Lord called the storm, He also stills the “tumult of the people.”

3. “Tokens” (אֲתֹת) - vs. 8 - “Thunder and lightning, storms and tempests, eclipses and meteors, tornadoes and earthquakes, are proofs to all who dwell even in the remotest parts of the earth, that there is a Supreme Being who is wonderful and terrible in his acts. By these things an eternal power and Godhead become manifest even to the most barbarous” (Clarke)

Romans 1:20

²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

- The God who stills the seas can calm the storms of nations and of hearts. His daily “tokens” of

sunrise and sunset remind us that His power and goodness reach the whole earth.

III. PRAISE HIM FOR THE PERSON WHO ANSWERS PRAYER – vs. 9-13

Having seen His awe-inspiring power in answering prayer, the psalm now turns to the *overflow of His goodness*. In these verses, we find David praising the *Person* behind the provision in answered prayer.

A. His personal care for the earth (vs. 9)

1. “Visitest” (״בִּקְרַב״) means to attend, to care for, or to look after. The emphasis is on personal attention – God is not distant from His creation; He *visits* it.
 2. “The river of God” – considering the context of this verse and the topic of this psalm, this seems to be used figuratively for the Lord being the source of blessing, as though heaven itself supplies the needs of the earth.
 3. “Thou preparest them corn” shows forethought and providence – God provides before man ever asks.
- Every blessing of nature testifies to the personal care of the God who tends His creation with loving oversight (Acts 14:17; Matt. 6:26).

Acts 14:17

¹⁷ Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Matthew 6:26

²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet

your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

B. His providential enrichment of the land (vs. 10)

1. The four verbs used in this verse – *waterest, settlest, makest soft, blessest* – emphasize tender cultivation.
 2. God not only supplies water but shapes the soil, illustrating His active providence.
 3. Each verb describes the *continuity* that the Lord provides in not just giving the rain once but continually sustaining growth.
- Applying this to our life: God not only provides the means of blessing; He prepares the heart to receive it. Just as He softens the earth with rain, He softens the soul by His Spirit.

Psalm 72:6

⁶ He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers *that* water the earth.

Hosea 10:12

¹² Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

C. His prosperous blessing upon the year (vs. 11)

1. “Crownest” (עָטַר), as used here, carries the idea of surrounding or encircling. In this case, the year is “encircled” with the bounty of the Lord.
 2. “Thy paths drop fatness” pictures abundant fertility wherever God’s footsteps go. The word “fatness” (דִּשְׁוֹן) points to richness and plenty.
- God’s goodness surrounds every season. Even

when we cannot trace His hand, His paths are full of blessing. His providence “crowns” the year from beginning to end (Lam. 3:22-23; Ps. 23:6).

Lamentations 3:22-23

²² *It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

Psalms 23:6

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

D. His praise echoed throughout creation (vs. 12-13)

1. The imagery moves from barren places (“wilderness”) to cultivated land (“valleys”), showing that God’s blessing reaches even the most remote regions.
2. Creation itself becomes the choir of praise – pastures and hills “rejoice,” valleys “sing.”
3. The personification of nature reflects the universal praise due to its Creator (Ps. 96:11-13; Isa. 55:12).

Isaiah 55:12

¹² For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.

- When God blesses, all creation rejoices. The abundance of the earth mirrors the joy of a heart satisfied in Him. The believer’s life, too, should overflow in visible praise.

Conclusion:

This psalm begins where true prayer should begin – in quiet reverence before a holy God. It ends where every true praise should end – in an overabundance of joy at His abundant goodness.

The psalmist leads us from the *privilege* of access ("O Thou that hearest prayer") to the *power* of God's answer, and finally to the *Person* whose presence fills the earth with blessing. This is an illustration to us that the child of God that draws near to Him will find perfect satisfaction in His presence.