

**International Sunday School Lesson
Study Notes
January 15, 2017**

Lesson Text: Psalm 65:1-2, 9-13

Lesson Title: Praise God the Provider

Introduction

Psalm 65 is a harvest hymn of praise, designed to be sung to God in response to His bountiful provisions. It is a psalm of David written to the chief musician, or committed to him to be set to the appropriate music for the public worship of the Lord. Because the words “*court, house, and temple*” appear in verse 4, some suggest the psalm was composed after the temple was built which would mean someone other than David wrote it. This is not a problem since these words were used about the tabernacle prior to the building of the temple.

Israel’s agricultural economy depended upon rain at strategic times of the year. This psalm may have been written after God had given rain, resulting in a fruitful season of plenty. The providence and provision of God is manifested each time He sends rain upon the earth, which should result in our praise and worship to the Lord.

God the Provider is a Praise-Receiving God (Psalm 65:1)

Verse 1

“Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.”

The word “waiteth” means “stillness, silence, or trust.” The psalmist is saying, “To You, Lord, being silent in your presence is praise.” “Praise” is waiting like a silent servant, ready at the call of his master. The most fitting “praise” to God is those who wait in silence, anticipating God’s goodness (Psalm 62:1). Perhaps the psalmist was speaking about God’s people standing in silence waiting on Him to send a much-needed rain for harvest. If that were the case, they recognize the seriousness of the moment and how crucial the intervention of God is.

“Waiting” or “silence” was not uncommon in the Old Testament. There was, for the most part, a “waiting” or silence in the tabernacle and temple, “in Sion,” referring to Mount Zion. Silent prayer and praise was offered to God by the priests and Levites, and others such as Hannah (1 Samuel 1:13). Sometimes God’s people were so stunned by His mercy and provision they could not find words to say.

Note: Somehow worship has become associated with noise and movement. Silence is often louder than shouting or clapping your hands (Psalm 46:10).

Somewhere during their “waiting” in silence before the Lord, they would pay their “vow” unto the Lord. That means they recognized their sinfulness and dependence upon the Lord to provide their needs. The “vow” does not secure God’s blessings but rather says, “Lord, You are our only hope. Without You there will be no rain and no harvest. We cannot cause the rain. We cannot feed our family. When you send the rain and the harvest we will bring an offering from that harvest to You.”

It is the privilege and duty of every believer to praise God and the psalmist is happy to do so. It is our duty to wait silently before the Lord and when He provides, pay our vows by bringing and offering unto Him.

God the Provider is a Prayer-Hearing God (Psalm 65:2)

Verse 2

“O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.”

“O thou that hearest prayer” is the name the psalmist gives to the Lord. That is what he calls Him, the one “that hearest prayer.” What a delightful name for the God David served! Hearing “prayer” is an attribute of God. No other god “hears prayer” (Proverbs 15:8; Jeremiah 29:12; 1 Peter 3:12). God can no more stop hearing prayer than He could stop being God. God should be praised because He “hearest prayer.”

“Unto thee shall all flesh come” is a prophetic reference to the future millennial kingdom when all the world will come to the Lord and worship Him (Zechariah 14:16-19). The words also mean all humanity can and should “come” to the Lord in prayer. It is from God alone that man receives everything he needs both physically and spiritually. God alone is able to give every individual the attention and grace he desperately needs.

God the Provider is a Gift-Giving God (Psalm 65:9-13)

Verse 9

“Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.”

The psalmist was convinced Israel would have an abundant harvest when God “visitest the earth.” The word “visiteth” means “to oversee, care for, deposit.” If

the author is David, he was raised in the fields of Bethlehem where he witnessed first-hand the blessing of the Lord upon the land. David conveys the thought that God seems to come down and survey the condition of the land then respond accordingly. God always takes care of His children by providing exactly what they need when they need it.

The earth is “greatly enriched” when God opens the clouds above. The word “enriched” means “to accumulate, grow, make rich.” When God poured out His water upon the earth, it is “enriched” through productivity and fruitfulness.

The foolish man attempts to recognize and give thanks to Mother Nature when rains come and productivity increases. The wise man knows it is God Almighty, not Mother Nature, who “visitest the earth, and waterest it” (Psalm 147:18; Job 36:27-28; Jeremiah 5:24). God’s store of water in the clouds, here referred to as “the river of God,” is given by a loving God to prepare the “corn,” the fruit of harvest time, for his people. In a day of frozen vegetables and canned goods, man has all but forgotten our food and water comes from the hand of a gracious God.

Verse 10

“Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.”

The psalmist is praising the Lord for drenching the fields with waters and soaking the “furrows” or dirt clods with rain. During planting season, God sent a measure of rain to prepare the earth for the plough. That is the meaning of “waterest the ridges.” “Ridges” is a reference to “a bank, furrow, or terrace.” When the “ridges” are watered, God makes them soft with “showers” to prepare them for the growth of the planted seed.

“Thou blessest the springing thereof” refers to God sending the latter rains in the early spring to insure the vegetables will be ripe and ready for harvest. The word “springing” means “a sprout or bud.” By making the ground soft and seed friendly, the result is the sprouts and buds develop into a full productive crop.

Verse 11

“Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.”

God always brings what He begins to fruition. The psalmist recognizes this and expresses his praise with the words, “Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.” The meaning is “the year” is “crowned” or “marked as good” when the “goodness” of God is manifested in the harvest. In other words, it has been a good year when God’s provisions are recognized and He is praised. Every

provision God gives to His people is like a “crown” to be placed upon His head in recognition of His goodness to us.

“Thy paths drop fatness” speaks of fertility and abundance abounding everywhere. The “paths” or footsteps of God “drop fatness.” “Drop” means “to fall gently,” like the dew comes upon the earth. “Fatness” means “abundance.” God can rain manna on the earth to feed His children, send ravens to feed His prophet, or gently and quietly send rain to water the seed man has planted.

Verse 12

“They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.”

God’s showers of blessing not only fall gently on the ground that has been cultivated and seeded, but they “drop upon the pastures of the wilderness” as well. The “wilderness” refers to uncultivated places such as deserts or places where animals feed. When God’s showers of blessings “drop,” the “little hills rejoice on every side.” The metaphor suggests “the little hills” skip like little lambs as the gentle rains fall to the earth.

God’s provision of water from above causes the earth to be happy and spring forth with new life. His provisions to His children, physically and spiritually, should result in our “rejoicing” and fresh praise.

Verse 13

“The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.”

“The pastures are clothed with flocks” is a scene well-known to the psalmist, and any shepherd of the Judaeen hill country. Sometimes a flock of sheep would stand so close together, that they seemed to be a clothing for the field. In other words, the pasture or field was entirely covered with them. God had so provided and blessed Israel with abundant “flocks” that they looked like a coat covering the pasture.

“The valleys also are covered over with corn” speaks of areas of Judaea not covered with flocks. Where there was no animals covering the land, God covered the rest with grain. The psalmist was painting a beautiful picture of God’s provision. Envision the green grass, covered with white sheep like a coat, and what was not covered with sheep was trimmed out in golden stalks of “corn” and grain.

God is so good; what can nature do but join the voice of man and “shout for joy” and “sing.” How beautifully the psalmist expresses the loveliness of nature;

how appropriately he describes the goodness of God! Everything seems to be happy; to be full of song; and all this is to be traced to the goodness of God, and His marvelous provision.

Conclusion

If it were possible, the pastures, hills, meadows, furrows of the field, flocks, mountains and valleys would join the people of God in glorious praise. For a man to refuse to praise the God of heaven is so strange and contrary to even nature itself. There should never be an atheist or ungrateful individual in this world. Around every corner, on every hillside, in every sunrise and sunset, there is abundant evidence of the goodness of God.

May each of us like the flocks of the field and the waving stalks of corn, break forth in praise to Jehovah God our great Provider!

Amen.