

The Great Works of God

Key Verse: “*Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands.*”
—*Psalm 66:1*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 66:1-9, 16-20

BIBLE COMMENTATORS

have expressed differing thoughts as to the application of Psalm 66. There can be no doubt that, on one level, it applies to the many great works of God on behalf of his people Israel. Verse 6 clearly

refers to God’s deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea, and later when they crossed the Jordan River and entered into the land of Canaan. “He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There did we rejoice in him.” (*English Standard Version*) While the psalm definitely makes mention of Israel’s experiences, it also seems to have a general application, that all people are called to praise the works of God.

The phrase “joyful noise” in today’s Key Verse comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to shout for joy.” To make a joyful noise unto God does not require a large choir nor the sounds of musical instruments, though these provide much in the way of beautiful melody to the ear. The thought, rather, is that all should praise the Lord in their hearts, and by their life of devotion to him. This suggests the inclusion of all people, and is in harmony with God’s promised plan to bless all the families of earth, by which all mankind will “shout for joy” in praise to their Heavenly Father.

Turning again to Israel as an example of those who were exhorted to praise the works of God, we recall the words of David following the defeat of the Philistines and the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth."—I Chron. 16:8-12

In the closing verses of today's lesson the psalmist's thoughts turn inward. He thanks God for his own personal experiences and for the answer to his prayers. This personal application is of special importance to those at the present time who are striving to be followers of the Master. The Apostle Paul spoke to this point in his encouraging words to Timothy: "Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, 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."—II Tim. 1:8,9, *New International Version*

We are to expect suffering for the Gospel now so we might share in the glorious future work of bringing mankind back into harmony with God. Peter said, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial that you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." (I Pet. 4:12,13, *NIV*) Let us take full advantage of our privilege to praise the great works of God which will ultimately bless all the families of the earth in his promised kingdom. ■