

HOW GREAT IS YOUR GOD?

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Psalm 66.

Many commentators think that this Psalm, like so many others, was written by David. But we cannot be absolutely sure. Whoever is the writer, the high praises of God were in his mouth. This Psalm speaks much about the greatness of God and invites people to come and worship Him (v5, v16). He is a Being worthy of such worship, known by His awesome works (v3) and awesome doings (v5). He has great power (v3, v7) and this is particularly seen in His deliverance of His people through the Red Sea.

Though He is so great, yet He also cares for His people in a most personal and real way. The writer is able to say what the Lord has done for his own soul (v9, v16) and expresses how the Lord in His mercy brought him out of difficulties into a place of rich fulfillment (v12). Great things the Lord does and some of those things He does for us very personally.

1. We speak of a great God.

The works of God point to His great power. We can see those works, for example, in creation. There is always a demonstration of power that is greater than anything in nature (Psalm 93:3-4). His power was seen at the Red Sea, saving His people from the army of Pharaoh (v6). He defeats His enemies (v3, v5) sending plague and confusion upon them at different times. He destroys all their weaponry and renders His enemies powerless (Psalm 46:8-10).

His greatness will be seen at the end of time when the Lord returns to judge the earth and to bring to nothing all His foes (Revelation 19:11-16). We will be invited then to come and see His victory over His enemies (Revelation 19:17-18).

2. Is that your God?

We read often of the greatness of God in the Psalms. We sing about this in our hymns. But do we actually believe these things are true? Do we believe that this is what God is like? We can often feel small and afraid in a world that seems impersonal and out of control. When we pray, is the God of Psalm 66 the God we have in mind when we do pray? Evolutionary understanding of the world's origins and how it functions is everywhere to be found. Does it affect us and diminish the glory of God?

The kinds of thoughts and expressions of Psalm 66 should be part of our prayer life. We should speak to God in our prayers as the Psalmist does here. We might feel self-conscious and unable to do this, as though we are 'fake' for speaking to God in this way. Yet that is the God we do believe in and therefore it is highly appropriate that we should speak to Him in this fashion. In fact, when we come to church to worship, we come so that our understanding of Him can be deepened and expanded.

Remember too that He will be doing awesome works in the future. All the ungodly will be removed from the earth. They already have eviction orders hanging over them and will be taken away so that they will not be able to inherit the earth. They will be punished because they abused God's hospitality for so long and especially turned their backs upon the cross, where God's displeasure against sin and His mercy towards sinners is so clearly to be beheld.

3. He is so good to us.

Amongst these great themes of the Lord's power and might, there are also frequent references to His care for the soul of the Psalmist. He recounts in v6 what the Lord has done for his soul. He reflects upon the way in which the Lord has brought him out of difficulties and into a place of rich fulfillment, or well-watered place. It reminds us of what we read in Psalm 34:1-3; 4-7.

Yet we do not reach this good place unless the Lord has taken us through some hardships. The Psalmist refers to times when he has been tested and refined (v10). People have set snares for him (v11). He has known afflictions (v11) and been oppressed by people (v12). When he talks about coming through fire and water (v12), we can understand that he has faced a number of existential threats. It was, in the end, the Lord's doing and the same Lord was the one who brought him out of each of those troubles. He tells us that he voiced his prayer to God (v17) and that the Lord came to His aid because of His great mercy (v20). We can perhaps reflect upon the way the Lord has delivered us from our fears and doubts.

It is one of the best methods of evangelism when we are able to show to people the difference that knowing the Lord has made to us personally. We demonstrate to the world what it means to be at peace, to be content and with a testimony of how it is the Lord who has done this for us. The man who had the legion of demons cast out of him was told to tell his friends how the Lord had had mercy on him (Mark 5:18-19). We have God's forgiveness and pardon which have made all the difference to our soul. But we have to ask ourselves whether there is a problem with us that we do not have much to say about what the Lord has done for us. There is not enough happening in our soul and therefore there is nothing that we have to say by way of witness.

When things are working properly in the heart of our being, then praises follow (v1, v2, v8). We are able to make declarations (v16). In fact, we are to hold these great truths about God before our eyes even in the midst of trials (v17). That is an act of faith. We

should seek the Lord in these times of difficulty that He might then lead us to a place of rich fulfillment.