



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Psalms 65:1-13

New Revised Standard Version

January 15, 2017

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 15, 2017**, is from **Psalms 65:1-13**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

**(Psalms 65:1) To the leader. A Psalm of David. A Song. Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; and to you shall vows be performed,**

David wrote not only a call to praise God; he also wrote what believers can say or pray to God before an actual worship service begins. As the Israelites gathered before the tabernacle or in the courts of the Temple, they prayed and waited for the priests and other worship leaders to call them to united praise to God in Zion (Jerusalem). They had vowed to praise God that day, and they wanted God to know that they had come to fulfill that vow. They also promised to fulfill any other vows that they had made to God. In this Psalm, David put into words the truths that should have been in their hearts before their worship began and during worship. Later, these and similar truths may have been spoken and sung in praise to God.

**(Psalms 65:2) O you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come.**

David addressed God as, "You who answer prayer." The worship leaders and believers knew and reminded themselves that God answers prayer, unlike the pagan gods that the Old Testament prophets mocked because they could not hear. God would hear their praises and their prayers and answer them. As they drew close to God in worship, God would draw close to them. As they promised they would fulfill their vows with mindfulness toward God, God would fulfill His promises to them. Because God answers prayer, all people have an incentive to come to God, but many still refuse to seek Him.

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**(Psalms 65:3) When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions.**

One important fact stood out above many as they prepared their hearts and minds to worship God. They could come before God with the assurance that God had and would forgive their sins and transgressions. Their prayer expressed the truth that they had experienced great grief and even fear of God because of their sins, and when God had answered their prayers, their vows, and their sacrifices with the assurance of forgiveness according to His Law, they rejoiced and approached God with confidence knowing that He had and would forgive all their sins (which was made possible because God would send Jesus the Redeemer in the future, a future that their sacrifices pointed toward).

**(Psalms 65:4) Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.**

Anna “never left the Temple but worshiped night and day fasting and praying,” where she met Jesus as a baby (Luke 2:37). David proclaims the fact that those who worship God often will be blessed or made happy spiritually and in other ways by God. Those God choose want to live near God spiritually wherever they live physically. The “good things” are all the benefits that believers receive from being with God and His people as they praise God.

**(Psalms 65:5) By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.**

Having already described God as “You who answer prayer,” David declared that God not only answered prayers by giving assurance and comfort to believers but God also answered prayers with awesome and righteous deeds. God will only do awesome deeds that are also righteous deeds, so believers know that God will only answer their prayers when they are righteous according to God’s revealed law of love in the Bible. David also declared that God is Savior. When Paul wrote to Titus, he said he preached the gospel at “the command of God our Savior,” and Paul wrote of “Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 1:3-4). As Paul concluded his letter to Titus, he told about the “love of God our Savior” and that God had poured out the Holy Spirit generously “through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:4-6). The love of God our Savior and His just mercy made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Savior are the only hope for us and the whole world.

**(Psalms 65:6) By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might.**

After David declared the awesome and righteous deeds of God in the forgiveness of the sins of His people, David declared why God could do awesome deeds. God is so almighty that by God's power (the power of God's spoken word), God formed the mountains and the seas. Having created the earth, God maintains the earth and seas by His strength, which can and will overcome all opposition. No matter how mountainous the opposition might seem, God's Word will be done and God will continue victorious.

**(Psalms 65:7) You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.**

The disciples in the boat who witnessed Jesus still the wind and the waves as they felt themselves sinking in a boat perhaps knew, or could have known, this verse in this Psalm: no wonder they wondered about Jesus. David declared that God could do these things, and Jesus did these things with a word (see Mark 4:37-41). In history, God has brought peace to many warring nations, and when Jesus comes again He will end all turmoil in and among all nations.

**(Psalms 65:8) Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.**

David gave the worshipers of God continued reasons to worship God. Every reasonable person on earth is filled with awe as they see the beauties, the intricacies, and the magnificence of creation – even though some do not acknowledge the existence of God. Those who know the true God look at nature and rejoice as it reveals more of the truth about and the wonders of their Creator and Savior. They rise in the morning with joyful hearts knowing their Creator and Savior will go with them throughout the day whatever that day brings. When evening fades, they have good reasons to sing songs of joy to God for His loving and righteous care of them throughout that day and into the night.

**(Psalms 65:9) You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.**

God created the world and sustains all life in the world moment-by-moment. God cares for us by caring for our world and our daily needs. God provides soil and rain so people can grow and harvest grain to feed themselves and others. God has ordained (or established) natural laws that farmers and others can depend on and use to meet their needs of food, clothing, and shelter. David encourages all believers to praise God for all

of His provisions and the laws of nature that they can follow to sow and reap according to God's timing, according to the seasons God designed and determined for our benefit.

**(Psalms 65:10) You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.**

In practical words of praise, David tells of the wondrous deeds of God that many thousands in an agricultural society would easily understand. Though the farmer knew the laws of nature and the importance of plowing and planting, he also knew that the rain he needed to grow his crops depended on the blessing of God for which he gave thanks to God in humble worship.

**(Psalms 65:11) You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness.**

David also thanked God for the harvest season as well as the planting season. God gave the laborers their success and provided them with a bounty they could share with others. In picturesque words, David described the gifts of God's blessings as God's cart full of produce that overflowed with abundance for His people; therefore, they shared in the abundance God provided them as the result of their work.

**(Psalms 65:12) The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy,**

As one who was once a shepherd boy, David knew the hardship and joy that came from watching over sheep and other animals. Whereas the farmer had to prepare the land, sow his seed, trust in God for rain, and harvest his crops, the shepherd knew that God provided green pasture land of rich grass for his flocks. When the shepherd looked over the green hills and valleys as rich pasture lands for his flocks, he rejoiced that God had prepared the way for him to care for his flocks. Whether they want to believe it or not, everyone depends on God for life moment-by-moment, and the psalmist calls believers to rejoice in their dependence on God and the work He has given them to do.

**(Psalms 65:13) the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.**

The farmer as he plows and reaps, the shepherd as he watches over his flocks, and those called and prepared to worship the Lord in His holy temple, praise the Lord. Their worship of God includes shouts and songs of joy. All creatures praise the Lord, and the flocks that cover the meadows praise the Lord for the life that God has given them, the care God shows for them, the green grass they eat, and the shepherd to watch over and

protect them (see Psalm 148). No wonder David wrote Psalm 23, and proclaimed that the Lord was his Shepherd. When Jesus came, He called himself the Good Shepherd (see John 10), and all his followers shout and sing for joy as they follow Him.

### Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. From reading Psalm 65, how might the worshipers have waited for worship to begin?
2. Today, how do worshipers wait for worship to begin?
3. How does the description of God in Psalm 65:2 differ from the experiences of those who worship false gods or idols?
4. When we are overwhelmed by our sins, what does God do for believers? Why can God do this for believers and be both just and merciful?
5. Why is it important for God our Savior to answer our prayers with both awesome and righteous deeds?

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Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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