



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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## **Psalms 66:1-20** **New Revised Standard Version** **February 17, 2019**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, February 17**, is from **Psalms 66:1-20** (Some will only study Psalms 66:1-9, 16-20). **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 66:1) To the leader. A Song. A Psalm.**  
**Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;**

Some of us may see some humor in this verse and use it to justify our singing, when we sing praises to God, for others may think our singing is sheer noise, but our “noise” or “shouting” can be our joyful praise to God. “Noise” may not be far wrong, when we think of some of the musical instruments and “noise makers” that did not sound as we

might think of a well-trained marching band when King David rejoiced with the Hebrews as the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Jerusalem with great fanfare. We should be willing to make as much “joyful noise” to God as we do when cheering a football team during a game or after a victory. God deserves a joyful noise from “all the earth.”

**(Psalms 66:2) sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise.**

Throughout more than 2,000 years of history, Jews and Christians have composed hymns that honor God, and various names try to describe His actions in history, His character, and His nature. The name God revealed to Moses (YHWH, Yahweh, Jehovah) indicates God is worthy to receive glory and praise for He is the self-existent One Who saves His people.

**(Psalms 66:3) Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you.**

When we praise God, we can tell God, others, and remind ourselves of God’s many deeds that have won our appreciation and respect. These can be deeds from the Bible, as the Hebrews remembered God freeing them from slavery and leading them into the Promised Land, and God enabling King David to build Jerusalem into a city/fortress, and God coming to indwell the temple King

Solomon built. We can also remember before God the things He has done in our own personal history. If we become concerned about our enemies, we can remember the power of God to help us, as He has helped us and His people in the past according to Scripture.

**(Psalms 66:4) All the earth worships you; they sing praises to you, sing praises to your name."**  
**[Selah]**

Certain individuals may be an exception to this general rule, for we know of atheists who reject God. But there may have been times or will be times in their lives when they let down their guard against God and have praised or thanked God before they have remembered that they reject belief in God. The New Testament declares that someday every knee will bow before the Lord Jesus. All that exists (except for some of the rebellious currently) praise the Lord.

**(Psalms 66:5) Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.**

If we think carefully, we can tell of some things that God has done in our lives—this may be easier to remember for some than for others. There are times in our lives when God does something that we want others to see or learn about immediately, particularly a new born baby or a grandchild's accomplishments with God's help. God does awesome deeds in our midst. Sometimes His awesome

deeds are in what some would call “the small things.” Saving people from a tornado or earthquake, a famine or a plague, and giving eternal life to believers in Jesus are also awesome deeds of God.

**(Psalms 66:6) He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There we rejoiced in him,**

The psalmist remembered Moses and the Hebrews crossing the Red Sea on dry land, and Joshua and the Israelites crossing the Jordan River on dry ground when they entered the Promised Land. These two landmark events led to rejoicing at that time and to the rejoicing of subsequent generations as they remembered the Lord’s love for and faithfulness to His people.

**(Psalms 66:7) who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—let the rebellious not exalt themselves. [Selah]**

God rules over all and has the power to achieve any of His plans and purposes. No person, being or thing can defeat God. God watches all the nations and not just a few favored nations. God defends His people and fights with them against their enemies; therefore, no matter what their enemies feel like in the temporary victories they achieve, they should not exalt themselves; for God will humble them according to His timetable.

**(Psalms 66:8) Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard,**

God is the God of all peoples. All people need to live in a way that will bring God a blessing and true happiness in His relationship with them. The fact that some choose not to praise God for the fact that He has given them life does not lessen their obligation or our obligation to praise Him in ways that others can hear and appreciate.

**(Psalms 66:9) who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip.**

Our very life depends ultimately on God. Our eternal life depends on what God has done for us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Moment-by-moment we depend on God for everything, whether or not we consciously recognize or want to acknowledge this fact. God also protects us from sin and when temptation comes, God will show us the way to escape if we will take that way. By leaning on God for spiritual and moral support, and by trusting in His word, the Bible, we need not slip into sin or poor choices.

**(Psalms 66:10) For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.**

God will test our faith and our obedience. God's testing will show us how we are growing or failing to grow in our loving relationship with God and how prepared we are to face the future with full trust in God as Lord and Savior.

Silver is tried with fire to remove impurities. Similarly, we go through fiery trials to help us live holy before the Lord.

**(Psalms 66:11) You brought us into the net; you laid burdens on our backs;**

Sometimes we find ourselves in troublesome situations that might test whether or not we will worry or trust in God. We might discover that we are in a situation that we cannot get out of by ourselves. Will we turn to God and ask Him to help us? Sometimes we will find ourselves under burdens too heavy to bear, perhaps even the burden of unforgiven sin. Will we take His yoke upon us so Jesus can share the load?

**(Psalms 66:12) you let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.**

The Hebrews knew slavery in the land of Egypt and they also suffered persecution there at the hands of ruthless taskmasters. Yet, at the right time, God led them to freedom and into the Promised Land. We may be in a situation, or feel that we are, similar to what God's people have suffered in the past, but God will save us in His perfect timing. We also think of heaven as a "spacious place" prepared by God for His people.

**(Psalms 66:13) I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows,**

God prescribed the ways for His people to come to Him. Burnt offerings could be offered throughout the year in appreciation to God for Who God is and what God does. Burnt offerings cost the giver something, but he could eat a portion of the offering with family and friends in ways similar to a thanksgiving dinner to God. Likewise, we want to keep our promises to God and worship God as He deserves.

**(Psalms 66:14) those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.**

Sometimes we have prayed in ways similar to some in the Bible, who made a vow or promise to God that they would do something special if He saved them. It is important for us to keep our vows and promises to God, for God has never failed to keep any of His good promises to us. If we have failed to keep one or more of our promises to God, we can ask His forgiveness and seek to make amends to Him by doing something as a substitute for a broken promise that can no longer be kept.

**(Psalms 66:15) I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatlings, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. [Selah]**

The priests were required to offer all of these sacrifices according to God's instructions in behalf of the people who brought them; people could not offer these sacrifices themselves in their own way. We all have our own

responsibilities to fulfill before God, and just as King Saul learned not to do what only Samuel (as God's prophet and judge) could do, we need to learn what God forbids and requires of us. Similar to the special work of God's priests, Jesus is the only One who could offer the perfect sacrifice (himself) as His Father required for us to be saved by grace through faith in Jesus.

**(Psalms 66:16) Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me.**

Jesus told us not to throw our pearls before swine or give what is holy to dogs. Likewise, we want those who fear God (respect and reverence God) to hear what He has done for us so they will praise, honor, and thank God with us, and also come to love and trust God even more.

**(Psalms 66:17) I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue.**

These last 4 verses deal with prayer. Since the psalmist has dealt with God's rescue from trouble, he begins by identifying prayer as crying aloud to God. Sometimes we are so distressed we just automatically call out, and without thinking, we cry aloud to God, knowing He hears even the silent prayers of our hearts. We do not fail to praise God aloud in words at His marvelous and gracious dealings with us.

**(Psalms 66:18) If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.**

To “cherish iniquity” means to relish, enjoy, pursue, embrace, possess that which is evil. We might cherish a precious moment with a loved one or someone we have not seen in a long time. We might cherish an antique heirloom or a special piece of jewelry. We should not cherish similar feelings toward any sin or evil practice. If we do, God will not hear our prayers until we turn back to Him in faith and sorrowful repentance, even asking Him to help us live godly in Christ Jesus instead of cherishing evil.

**(Psalms 66:19) But truly God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer.**

When we look back, we can see where God has truly listened to our prayers! He has listened to our heart cry and bestowed on us what is best for us. God has listened to the very words of our prayers and has respected our communication with Him, both rational and sometimes irrational requests, and has met all our real needs.

**(Psalms 66:20) Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.**

We know from experience that God has not rejected our prayers, so we keep on praying and making our offerings to God. More important than the “things” God has given us in answer to prayer, God has given us His steadfast, unfailing love, which moved Him to send Jesus Christ into our world and the Holy Spirit into our hearts when we

receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. How can making a joyful noise to God bring happiness to God and to you, even when you do not feel joyful? How can you become joyful when you do not feel joyful?
2. Think of some of the reasons and ways you praise others. How might you improve the ways you praise God?
3. What does the psalmist say we should say to God?
4. What are some of the awesome deeds that God has done that makes God worthy to receive our praise and the praise of all the earth?
5. Why is it important for God to test His people?

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

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