

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
LXVI. Getting Much-Needed Answers To Prayer
(Psalm 66:1-20 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

If ever we needed to receive answers to prayer from God, it would be today:

(1) We need answers to prayer over our federal government’s uncontrollable bureaucracy: “The federal government has 2.2 million civilian employees, but only 4,000 of them are political appointees the president can remove at will. Career bureaucrats, who aren’t elected by the American people or appointed by the president, therefore make many major policy decisions. Civil-service protections make removing these employees incredibly difficult – and they know it.” (“Quotable,” Republican-American, May 12, 2023, p. 6A, citing David Bernhardt, May 9 Wall Street Journal op-ed, “The Deep State Is All Too Real”)

(2) We need answers to prayer over our seemingly unstoppable border crisis: Mark Krikorian’s May 11 Compact Magazine column, “There Is No Border Security Without E-Verify” claimed, “If you aren’t for E-Verify, you aren’t serious about controlling immigration . . . Unfortunately, for too many politicians on the right . . . the border is where their immigration hawkishness stops.” (“Quotable,” Ibid., May 13, 2023, p. 8A)

(3) We need answers to prayer over our seemingly unstoppable national increase in violent crime: “As street crime committed by adults has spiked throughout the country, it appears in-school crime committed by juveniles has followed the same trend . . . Last October, a Newsweek article under the headline “Why I Quit Teaching’: Teachers Tell Stories of Threats, Abuse, Depression’ showed the trend wasn’t slowing down . . .” (“Officials pay for keeping order,” Ibid., May 12, 2023, p. 6A) However, “voters do not view Democrats,” the party in power, “as prioritizing a country with low crime and high social trust,” for “Democratic prosecutors refuse to prosecute . . . Democratic politicians enact revolving-door bail policies for violent criminals” and “Democratic mouthpieces insist that violent and threatening lunatics on public transit should be accepted as a normal part of life,” so, in essence, “they are telling people they are on their own.” (“Quotable,” Ibid., May 15, 2023, p. 6A, citing Nathanael Blake, May 12 Federalist column, “How Democrats Are Shooting Themselves In The Foot On Gun Control”)

(4) We need answers to prayer over our irresponsible state government: “(T)he clamor for more spending implies that living conditions in Connecticut have not improved much if at all throughout the recent decades of government’s growth. The clamor suggests that there is more suffering and need in the state than ever. How could this have happened? It is probably because the steady increases in state government spending have erased most political pressure to evaluate government agencies and programs for results . . . (F)ew people . . . pay much attention to whether anything works well or at all. What major social problem in Connecticut has been solved or even much alleviated?” (Chris Powell, “More spending delays improvement in government,” Ibid., May 12, 2023, p. 6A)

(5) We need answers to prayer over inflation and runaway government spending: “Inflation has robbed Americans of their earnings and savings,” and “(t)he only way to end this impoverishment . . . is to stop . . . runaway government spending . . .” (E. J. Antoni, “You will be poorer and like it!” (Ibid., May 17, 2023, p. 7A) However, “the Democrats have no intention of cutting spending . . . Republicans want to, but also recognize that doing so in any meaningful way, would be an act of political suicide.” (“Senate needs to get to work,” Ibid., May 13, 2023, p. 8A)

Need: So, we ask, “How can we obtain answers to prayer for the great needs that we face today?!”

I. The psalmist called for God to be greatly praised for hearing Israel’s cry for help to where He delivered her from Egyptian bondage and gave her the Promised Land, Psalm 66:1-12:

- A. In Psalm 66:1-4, the psalmist called for the world greatly to praise the Lord.
- B. This praise was due to God’s delivering Israel from Egypt and giving her the Promised Land, Psalm 66:5-12:
 1. The Lord had parted the Red Sea for Israel to leave Egypt and then caused her to walk through the Jordan River’s bed to enter the Promised Land in demonstrations of His great power, Psalm 66:5-9.
 2. God had tested His people with many “burdens and oppressions, but finally brought them to the place of abundant blessing” in the Promised Land, Psalm 66:10-12; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 842.
- C. This national deliverance came as a result of Israel’s cry for help, Exodus 2:23-Joshua 24:28:
 1. During her long Egyptian bondage, Israel cried out, God heard her “cry for help” (*shawe’ah*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 1003) and He remembered His Covenant of Genesis 15:13-21 that He would deliver Abraham’s descendants from bondage and give them the Promised Land, Exodus 2:23-24.

2. God thus delivered Israel from Egypt and gave her the Promised Land, Exodus 2:25-Joshua 24:28.

II. The psalmist also praised the Lord for hearing his PERSONAL cry for help, Psalm 66:13-17.

III. However, there was a CONDITION for God's answering the psalmist's cry – his NOT “cherishing” or “enjoying” (*ra'ah*, Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 1031; *Analyt. Heb. and Chald. Lex.*, 1972, p. 671; H. A. W., *Theo. Wrdbk. of the O. T.*, 1980, vol. II, p. 823) “evil, iniquity” (*awen*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., H. A. W., vol. I, p. 23-24) in his heart, Psalm 66:18-20. In other words, the psalmist was experientially righteous in his spiritual walk, so God answered his prayer.

IV. We know from other Scriptures that TWO OTHER conditions are required for answers to prayer:

- A. One must pray in alignment with God's will to be answered by God, 1 John 5:14-15. [God answered Israel's cry for help regarding her Egyptian bondage to fulfill His Genesis 15:13-21 covenant! (See “I,C,1-2” above)]
- B. One must also pray in faith in the Lord to receive what he petitioned from God, Matthew 21:21-22.

Lesson: *God is to be greatly praised for hearing Israel's cry for help from Egyptian bondage and for delivering her from it and giving her the Promised Land. However, God was also to be greatly praised for delivering the psalmist when he cried unto the Lord for deliverance, and God heard him since he was upright before the Lord. Two other conditions for answers to prayer are praying in alignment with God's Biblical will and praying with faith in God.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) As believers, may we then get answers to prayer by (a) living righteously or confessing our sins to be forgiven as needed and thus be experientially upright before God (1 John 1:9), (b) by praying in alignment with God's Biblically revealed will and (c) believing God will answer our prayers.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

If we are experientially right with God, and if we trust that He will answer us, we view Scripture on the issues of concern in our introduction to be sure that we pray in line with His will to get His answers to prayer (as follows):

(1) The issues of concern in our introduction – an uncontrollable bureaucracy, the border crisis, increasing violent crime nationwide, irresponsible state government, and inflation and runaway government spending – are each (a) issues typical of what Revelation 3:21 with 7:17 predicted for our era of Church History, what we often note. God there implied that our era would be marked by leaders in the world's institutions who are full of intrigue and oppress their subjects in what we term a “mini-Great Tribulation” that **God is allowing** to occur in our era of Church History to drive oppressed people to Bible-teaching churches for discipling and inner balm. (b) Thus, God's will is **not** that we pray that these evils to be immediately removed, **but** that rulers in the world institutions might function in ways that let us believers in Christ live quiet and peaceable lives that we might disciple oppressed people, 1 Timothy 2:1-5!

(2) As for the issues of concern **themselves**, (a) on the uncontrollable bureaucracy, (+) Romans 13:1 calls us to submit to the ruling power, in this case, the bureaucracy, for God has ordained that it exist for His purposes. The sole exception is that we must obey God over the bureaucracy if the demands of the bureaucracy for us and God differ, Acts 5:29. (+) In cases of evil harm by the bureaucracy, we should function as independent of its reach as we possibly and legally can (Acts 25:7-12). (b) On the border crisis, Acts 17:26-27 NIV reveals God sovereignly decides where people on earth will live, and that so they can have a maximum opportunity to hear His Biblical truth to be disciplined. So, regardless of the huge violations of immigration laws at our border, God wants us to be ready to disciple all people. (c) On increasing violent crime nationally, (+) in Psalm 127:1-2, God directs that we trust Him for our safety (+) while 2 Timothy 4:14 calls us to take precautions to avoid obvious dangers. (d) On our irresponsible state government, we should work for a living independent of the government for our material good and personal testimonies (2 Thessalonians 4:11-12) while governing ourselves as law-abiding people (Philippians 2:12-16). (e) On inflation and runaway government spending, and its impoverishing crush on the buying power of many people, we can mimic the good habits that God has programmed into various animals to handling our finances: (-) Like the ant that stores up food in summer for winter needs in Proverbs 30:25, we can act now to minimize future financial crises by getting adequate job training and diversifying our skill sets. (-) Like the badger who lives in rock caves for its protection in Proverbs 30:26, we can hedge against future financial crises by creating emergency savings. (-) Like the organized locusts in Proverbs 30:27, we can budget our income to plan for financially hard times. (-) Like the lowly lizard who opportunistically enters king's palaces in Proverbs 30:28 NIV, we can always ask, seek, and knock on doors of income and cost-cutting opportunities to enhance our income stability. (cf. Matthew 7:7-8)

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we live righteously and pray in alignment with God's will and in faith for answers to prayer.