

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Sixty-Six - Responding Productively To The Trials God Permits To Mature Us (Psalm 66:1-20)

I. Introduction

- A. Romans 8:28 tells us that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord and are called according to His eternal purpose. That **good** purpose is the believer's maturity, Rom. 8:29-30.
- B. Now, when we read that it is "**all** things," that includes not only what is pleasant, but that which is **hard!**
- C. Psalm 66:1-20 is a lesson in responding productively to the **trials** God permits to mature us (as follows):

II. Responding Productively To The Trials God Permits To Mature Us, Psalm 66:1-20.

- A. Psalm 66 is composed of two main parts: verses 1-12 address the Lord's **group** rescue of Israel from the trial of the Egyptian bondage and the pursuit of Pharaoh to destroy them at the Red Sea where verses 13-20 apply the lesson to God's deliverance of an **individual** in distress.
- B. In the first section dealing with God's deliverance of Israel as a **group**, the psalmist notes that Israel's Egyptian bondage and trial of Pharaoh's pursuit was a divinely permitted test to **refine** the nation, 66:10-12. This **maturing-through-refining-in-trials** process is further clarified in Exodus 13:17-18:
 - 1. When the Lord delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, the nation was really an overgrown, extended family that had known only corporate bondage, not nationhood.
 - 2. Accordingly, God knew that if this unseasoned people of Israel had left Egyptian bondage, crossed the easily navigable Nile and traveled up the highway along the Mediterranean Sea into Palestine, she would have come to an abrupt halt once she faced war in Palestine, Ex. 13:17. **Israel was too immature, too weak to face war right out of Egyptian bondage!**
 - 3. For this reason, God backed Israel up against the Red Sea to force her into a "no-win" situation to have to witness **God's** deliverance to build up **faith** for war later on in the taking of Canaan, Ex. 13:18 with 14:1-3, 16-18, 30-31:
 - a. God intentionally backed Israel up against the Red Sea, enticing Pharaoh to pursue so that Israel had **no** choice **BUT** to see God's deliverance, Ex. 14:1-3, 16-18.
 - b. When God actually delivered the nation, the people really believed God and His servant, Moses, 16ff.
 - 4. With this historical background, the psalmist called upon all people to praise God for His deliverance that used **trials** to **refine** Israel, Ps. 66:1-5, 6-9, 10-12:
 - a. The psalmist called upon all men to praise God for His deliverance of Israel from Egypt, 66:1-9.
 - b. This deliverance was done through the **trials** of **faith** to **mature** the nation, Ps. 66:10-12.
- C. Applying God's maturing ministry to the **group** as represented in Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the psalmist reported in verses 13-20 on his **personal** maturation through similar **trial by faith**:
 - 1. The psalm's author vowed to worship the Lord at the temple because he **also**, like Israel, had seen the Lord deliver him out of distress when he called on the Lord's name, Ps. 66:13-15.
 - 2. The personal incident in particular is described in theological terms:
 - a. The author had not violated God's Word or the God would not have heard his cry for help, 66:18.
 - b. With this adherence to the Lord's will, the author's cry for help was heard, and God delivered him from his distress, Ps. 66:16-17, 19-20.

Lesson: *When hardships occur in the Christian's life, (1) he becomes spiritually DEFEATED and stays immature (by way of implication) if he (a) harbors rebellion against God's Word so that (b) his prayer for divine help in distress goes unanswered. (c) If that occurs, he distrusts God or gets angry at Him, fails to grow in faith and doesn't mature. However, (2) he turns TRIALS into TRIUMPHS when he (a) heeds Scripture as a way of life so that his (b) prayers for help in life's trials produce divine answers (c) so that, in deliverance, he looks back at how he has grown in his understanding of God and God's working in his distress to become more MATURE. (Heb. 5:8-9)*

Application: *The KEY behind MATURING over our immature spiritual blind spots is to OBEY what we KNOW God's Word says so that WHEN trials of faith that God allows come along, we get answers to our prayers for help in trials, and these answers deepen our insight and we mature!*