

Psalm 65

15th Sunday Year A
Morning Prayer Tuesday Week 2

From David's city, the psalmist praises the Lord of the universe and the Lord of history for God's providence in forgiving sin and in making the earth fertile to meet our needs. The title reads: 'To the leader. A Psalm* of David. A Song.'

Part One. The attraction of Zion

**¹Praise is due to you,
O God, in Zion.
To you vows are made,
²to you who answer prayer.**

All of us weak human beings are welcome to approach God. Our sin is no reason to stay away. We are overwhelmed by our transgressions, but if we approach God in sincere sorrow, God will welcome us.

All flesh shall come to worship before me, says
YHWH.

—Isaiah 66:23

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.
For I am God and there is no other.

— Isaiah 45:22

'Pardon' translates the Hebrew kpr [כפר]. This is used for 'pardon' in only four psalms: 49:7, here, 78:38 and 79:9. It means 'to cover' and a special instance is on the Day of Atonement when the high priest enters the Holy of Holies and approaches the 'mercy-seat', the golden 'cover'[Hebrew kapōret, כַּפֹּרֶת] of the ark, the throne of God's invisible presence. Sin cannot be in the presence of God. Brought to the 'cover' it is consumed in the fire of God's merciful forgiveness. As noted in the article 'Sin' in the Introduction, this word for 'pardon' implies 'atonement'.

The psalmist is filled with gratitude that he has been chosen to be in the temple where he is showered with God's gifts. We reflect on Jesus' words:

You did not choose me but I chose you.

— John 15:16

**All flesh* comes to you
³with its burden of guilt.***

Our transgressions* overwhelm us, but still you pardon them.

**⁴Happy* is the person
whom you choose to bring
near to live in your courts.
We are filled with the goodness of your house, with the
holy gifts of your temple.**

Part Two. The Lord of history, the Lord of the universe

⁵By awesome deeds you answer us with justice*, O God our Saviour*. You are the hope* of the ends of the earth and of the remote ocean,

⁶By your power you establish the mountains, for you are girded with might.

⁷You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.

⁸Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are overawed by your signs; and you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

God is Lord of the universe and of history, the '*mysterium fascinans et tremendum*' (mysterious presence evoking fascination and awe). Note the universal perspective:

YHWH has made known his salvation; he has revealed his justice in the sight of the nations ... All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

– Psalm 98:2-3

Part Three. God prepares the grain harvest

⁹You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it.

The river of God is swollen.

You prepare the grain harvest

¹⁰by watering the furrows abundantly, settling their ridges, softening them with showers, and blessing their growth.

¹¹You crown the year with your bounty, and your furrows overflow with abundance.

¹²The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills are girded with joy,

¹³the meadows are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are decked with grain. Together, they shout and sing for joy.

This is one of the most beautifully descriptive pieces of biblical poetry.

The land that you are crossing over to occupy is a land of hills and valleys, watered by rain from the sky, a land that YHWH your God looks after. The eyes of YHWH your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

– Deuteronomy 11:11-12

We might reflect on the gift of the Eucharist, and other sacraments that we receive 'in God's house' (verse 4).