

**SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS**  
**Commentary by Michael Sigler**  
**November 7, 2010**

**God Is Awesome**

**Psalm 66:1-12**

**Key verse: “Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals” (Psalm 66:5).**

**Awesome** – “inspiring an overwhelming feeling of reverence and admiration which is produced by that which is grand, sublime, extremely powerful, or the like.”

For the psalmist, nothing is more awesome than our God! Our response ought to be the *passionate praise* and worship of this awe-inspiring God: “Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise. Say to God, ‘How awesome are your deeds!’” (vv. 1-3a).

One cannot read the psalms without seeing the clear Biblical mandate for God’s people to be passionate in praise and worship. In these three verses alone, we are charged to “make a joyful noise,” to “sing the glory of his name,” to give God “glorious praise,” and to say to God “How awesome are your deeds!” Whether you prefer to worship God with contemporary songs and loud guitar accompaniment or by singing the traditional hymns, God wants you to praise and worship him *passionately!*

In verses 5-9, the psalmist tells *why* God is so awesome and so worthy of praise. The psalmist recounts God’s miraculous deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea (v. 6). Then the psalmist recalls other times that God had “kept us among the living, and...not let our feet slip” (vv. 8-9).

Why is God awesome to you? Why is God worthy of your passionate praise? If you know Jesus as your Savior, then you too have been delivered—from the slavery of sin into a new life, abundant and eternal. If you are walking with the Lord, you too can recall those times when He kept you among the living and did not let your feet slip.

Finally, in verses 10-12, the psalmist exhorts the people to praise God passionately because of the times when God brought them through trials and testing: “For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried” (v. 10). “...we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a spacious place” (v. 12b).

Life is not easy, not even for people of faith. But when we are tried and tested, if we will trust the Lord, we will be able to praise Him for the good things that the hard times produce.

Warren Wiersbe says that realism is idealism that has been through the fire and got purified; cynicism is idealism that has been through the fire and got burned. Now whether you get burned or purified, says Wiersbe, is not determined by the intensity of the heat but by the malleability of your spirit.

During times of trial and testing, it is sometimes hard to remember how awesome God is. In such times, a spirit of praise and thankfulness can be difficult to come by. But those are the times when we need most to be passionate in our praise, our worship, and our thankfulness....

Gregory Jantz, in his book *Becoming Strong Again*, tells about a group of pioneers on the Oregon Trail. They have suffered for weeks from lack of water and grass for their animals. Most of their wagons had broken down, causing endless delays in the oppressive heat. The group was discouraged, fretful, almost broken. Praise and thanksgiving were in short supply.

One night the leaders called a meeting to air complaints. When they gathered around the campfire one man said, "Before we commence our gripe session, don't you think we should at least first thank God that He has brought us this far with no loss of life, with no serious trouble from the Indians, and that we have enough strength left to finish our journey?"

The other settlers agreed. After they prayed, all that could be heard were the cries of a pack of wolves in the distance. Otherwise, there was complete silence around the campfire, because no one had any complaints they felt were important enough to voice.

They suddenly realized if they couldn't be satisfied with what they had received, they could at least be thankful for what they had escaped. Thanks and praise helped them see the mercies of God that they had been overlooking.

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