

Psalm

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Preacher: Knight, Ebenezer (1908 - 1990)

[0 : 00] Let us turn to Psalm number 66, which we read.

I wanted to notice the psalm in general, but particularly the last clause in verse 6.

The last clause in verse 6 of Psalm 66, where in speaking of, shall we say, special times and special places where the Lord had remembered his ancient people, it is recorded there did we rejoice in him.

Putting it very simply, there was a particular time and a particular place referred to here where, in an unmistakable way, the people of God rejoiced in the Lord their God.

And it is good when we can look back and remember the way in which the Lord has led us and put our fingers here and there upon a few other knees which we have erected in his name.

[1 : 29] And well, we have been able to face the adversarial souls who have tempted us and we have been able to say, there did I rejoice in the Lord my God.

Well, in the psalm generally we have a call to praise God for his wonderful works. And by inference, a call to trust him for the future.

Our mind goes to verse 5 in Psalm 40, where the psalmist says, How many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us warned.

They cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee. And if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. In Psalm 44, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days.

Now here, there's a particular reference to the passage of the Red Sea and the River Jordan. And these are standing wonders.

[2 : 49] And the psalmist says, come and see the works of God. For he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

And is it not true that for the defence of his church and the overthrow of her foes, God deals terrific blows.

And he strikes the mighty with fear. He's set forth in this psalm in very beautiful language. Let scoffers today then speak no more so exceeding proudly.

Nor let them remember God's plagues on Pharaoh. Let them remember the drowning of the Egyptians and the chariots in the Red Sea.

The overthrow of Og and Zion. And the scattering of the Canaanites before the tribes of Israel.

[4 : 00] We read about it in Scripture. Dear friends, we rejoice the same God lives today. Let them tremble before him.

We think of the question of Elisha. Elijah had gone up. But he'd given his mantle to Elisha.

And Elisha comes to the Jordan. A little while before he and Elijah had passed over Jordan on the dry land.

Now Elisha, with his late master's mantle, he stands on the riverside and he asks the question, Where is the God of Elijah?

And he smoked the river and he parted. You see, the God of Elijah is the same today.

[5 : 06] And faith in that God, as Elisha proved in using that mantle, all what miracles were wrought. This then is a thought I cannot bring out as I would desire to.

But this God, he lives today. There's no lessening of his power. He is eternally the same.

He ruleth by his power. And that power then is still where it always was.

He ruleth by his power forever. God is not dead. He has not abdicated.

God's power is undiminished. God has not suffered defeat. It does appear to us sometimes as if Almighty God permits Satan to triumph in certain respects.

[6 : 17] So maybe I could use this illustration and say, Well, if it pleases God to allow Satan to win a few little battles, let us bear in mind God going to win the war.

I know, and some of you do, the terrible power of Satan today. But my dear friends, whatever Satan does today, his power has been given him from on high.

Some people seem to think that Satan, in and of himself, can work miracles. He can't. If Satan can work miracles, I'm a lost man.

My God has no rival. There's only one being, on the earth or in the world today, who in and of himself can work a miracle.

What does Satan do today? He does God's bidding and nothing more. He's a prisoner on bail. True, God gives him that power to work what appears to be, and is, miraculous to us.

[7 : 27] But it does not belong to Satan as he is. Otherwise, our God would have a rival. And our God has no rival at all.

He is eternally the same. At this point, maybe, I might refer to a man's fall in the Garden of Eden.

I believe many of God's dear people refer to it in quite a wrong way. No one knows more than we do the terrible effects of that sin.

There's one verse in Gathbis, which seems to summarize it all, when we think of the fruit and effects of Adam's sin. Oh, thou hideous months of sin!

What a curse hast thou brought in! All creation groans through thee, pregnant cause of misery. Thou hast ruined wretched man ever since the world began.

[8 : 39] And that is true. But, my dear friends, let us view the fall rightly. God was not defeated then.

God permitted it. For a wise end. And his glory will yet shine forth in an unmistakable way.

One of the commentators, I don't know which it is, I made a note of a remark of his, which I entirely agree with. He said, God's purpose is unchangeable.

And it was not thrown out of order by the fall of man. The fall was not accidental.

God found himself in no predicament compelled to find an expedient. No. The very fall of man was in the divine purpose.

[9 : 53] Adam sinned freely. But it was contemplated in the divine plan. When God created the world, he anticipated his ultimate intention of dying for it.

the remedy was in advance of the disease. The fall was the occasion of redemption.

But redemption was always, and first of all, the ultimate intention of God to display his perfections.

let us bear that in mind. I suppose it is the terrible effects of the fall which leave that impression with us.

But our God did not suffer a defeat. No, it was permitted by our God. And my dear friends, I'm one of those who believe that quite how it will come about in the end time, I do not know.

[11 : 05] but through the glorious redemption of Christ, I'm certain there's going to be a most tremendous in gathering of precious souls to him.

I've got it in my bones. I don't want it to go. I don't want to be led in wrong paths. But this is being very much with me and that is that our God is in control.

And he is. Whatever your circumstances may be, our God, your God is in control. we read here how his eyes behold the nations.

All that is transpiring around us now, you know what confusion. Everywhere we look. But his eyes behold the nations.

he looked out of the cloud and discomfited the Egyptians. Egyptians. And so does God spy out his enemies today.

[12 : 31] His hand rules. His eye observes and sees all. His hand is not wept weak nor are his eyes dim.

He sees the mass of mankind as so many grasshoppers at one glance and takes in all their ways.

well like the psalmist say let not the rebellious exalt themselves. You know good men see themselves as God sees them they would shrivel to nothing.

Was it not Mary in her song said he had put down the mighty from their seats and exhorted them of low degree.

Come and see then the works of God. God's marvels are to be seen by all and seeing them may indeed be the first step to believing in their divine author.

[13 : 56] We note the present tense there come see the works of God. It suggests not only looking back in remembrance but to see these things as types and figures of similar wonders in the future.

In future ages. You see in a sense God's guidance of his people today is a constant drying up of the sea.

A constant parting of the waters of Jordan. A great wonder and miracle indeed that while so many perish today the children of God are preserved in this bitter sea of life and they pass over it and they are brought safely to the divine harbor.

as led by him they pass over the sea as if it were dry land and in God's good time would be brought to the heavenly Jerusalem there to see God face to face to see him as he is and to rejoice in him.

One more thought here before I continue is this that is not only is our God in control but one thing has been much upon my mind recently and that is bearing in mind what is recorded in scripture of that God who is in control and it's a very simple word which our young people the little ones will know it's a little text you learn in the Sunday school God is love he's the one who's on the throne that is not spoken of or said of any other attribute of our God it is not a matter of him being merely benevolent he is benevolent himself and that is the

[16 : 24] God who is on the throne and what a precious sword it is that in the darkness of this world of sin and in all the sorrows that come now upon the race and that will come upon the wicked hereafter we have the assurance that a God of infinite benevolence rules over all here indeed is the true source of all the grace displayed toward fallen man you remember a little while ago when the Sunday trading bill was rejected was there anybody living on the earth who would have prophesied what happened nobody believed it and especially shall I say the people of

God we were cast down then as we are today with all that is taking place around us we think of to mention the one thing abortion alone which is terrible in itself we take it for granted almost but many other things the wickedness which prevails worse than Solomon Gomorrah today and it does bring us to marvel at God's loving kindness and how can we expect God to hear our prayers and yet friends he does and friends he still will there's an underlying thought here of the nature of that God who's in control I know that he cannot continually look upon sin and not visit for it he most certainly will but God's loving kindness he has God's mercy even to the ungodly is a marvel to me and his loving kindness to his people

I come closer home his loving kindness to me is the greatest wonder I can speak of so then the one who is in control as I mentioned is a God of love you see the sea shall be dry land when God's presence is felt the sea could not hinder the Israelites and no obstacle will prevent the children of God from entering the heavenly Canaan oh you know it's not perhaps so much what God has done but what he is that produces the rejoicing which I want to speak about there did we rejoice in him in

Moses some of praise Moses said he is my God and I will prepare him an habitation my father's God and I will exalt him it is good for us to look back and remember all the way the Lord our God has led us and what for to know what was in our heart whether we would love him or not good when we can sing as we do sometimes thus far my God has led me on and made his truth and mercy known my hopes and fears all turn it rise and comforts mingle with my size it is said of his ancient people he led forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation well not only are the times of

God's appearing to his children appointed but the very place some of you maybe can look back to the time and the place where God met with you it could be that in the face of the temptation of Satan and he often does try to regard to our beginning some of you can look back and say well devil say what you will you know what happened to me on that particular day and in that particular place where the Lord showed me what a sinner I was and revealed his love and mercy to my soul it's good when we can look back on such places the psalmist does here I want to notice this word there did we rejoice in him let us look at a few of these there's which we find in scripture or where God appeared to or promised to appear to his people they were all appointed they they were all decreed

[21 : 59] Jacob at Bethel we read Jacob he built there an altar and called it El Bethel Jacob never forgot his Bethel he came back to it and there he rejoiced in his God there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother I've often marveled at the way and manner in which the Lord appeared to Jacob because Jacob was a deceiver Jacob was not being persecuted wrongly as we view things when he fled from Esau he was being persecuted or threatened by his life was threatened by Esau because of what Jacob had done and yet you see the Lord appeared to him there and he never forgot it then later

Peniel we read and God blessed him there Moses goes out to the tabernacle of the congregation with the seventy elders the Lord says I will come down and talk with thee there the prophet Ahijah prophesied to Jeroboam regarding Jerusalem these are the words the Lord spoke through him the city which I have chosen me to put my name there Elijah at the brook Cherith I commanded the raven to feed thee there it is said of Zion this man was born there and I do hope and pray that this thought may be true in regard to those who are born here in this corner of the north vineyard some of you can look back as I've already hinted maybe to the very place the very servant of God whom God used in your case and you can say there did I rejoice in the

Lord we read of brethren dwelling together in unity there the Lord commanded the blessing we read of Ezekiel's vision of the temple in the heavenly city and the name of the city shall be the Lord is there Jehovah Shammah and in our various places of worship in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee that is there and we have this precious promise although it's really a statement of fact a statement of truth where two or three are gathered together in my name it's not a promise that Jesus will be there where am I in the midst that is there in that place appointed by

God now I mentioned just two places here which are referred to in this song verse 6 the place or the time of trial at the Red Sea now Israel was there at the Lord's bidding and leading and it was a trial indeed and there they learned what sinners they were in fretting complaining and murmuring against God and his servant Moses but there they were blessed and there did they rejoice in the Lord their God Moses and the children of Israel we read sound this song of praise unto the Lord who hath triumphed gloriously and thrown the horse and his rider into the sea who is like unto thee

O Lord among the gods who is like thee glorious in holiness fearful in praises doing wonders then in verses 10 and 12 as a reference to a place of trial or a place of testing you know fire and water are pitiless and devouring but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place God gives the test and he will give the blessed issue you so would Abraham and Joseph from prison to the palace Mordecai escape the gallows to wear the king's robe sorrow endures for a night but joy cometh in the morning and you know these there or these various places there are places of blessing to true pilgrims and the time comes when it will be recorded of every true seeker as of

[28 : 22] Jacob at the kneel he blessed him there maybe there are times in our lives when unknown and perhaps unacknowledged by us the Lord has blessed us and we did not rejoice in him let us look at one or two of theirs in our own pathway and the importance of them I have no doubt but what we can all look back to a time when the Lord in an unmistakable way has heard and answered our prayers we like to speak of them some occasions seem to stand out we think of Hannah she brought her Samuel before Eli Eli you thought I was drunken she didn't tell himself that was in her mind doubtless but she said for this child

I pray and the Lord hath granted me the petition I asked of him David says I love the Lord because he hath heard the voice of my supplication and my voice maybe in your experience child of God it's only a small thing and at the time it was so small that you didn't feel disposed to say much about it to your fellow creatures but behind that tiny drop of God's providence was the whole ocean of his love and it brought you up and carried you along and caused you to rejoice in the Lord your God I often think of that question propounded by the poet what call we small things I'm going to test your faith dear friends you combed your hair this morning doubtless some hairs fell out do you believe God counts them the very hairs of our head are all numbered

I wish I could speak better of my God in every aspect what a wonderful God he is so then we may look back and we live to prove that our life's minutest circumstance has been subject to God's eye and on those occasions we have rejoiced in him we rejoiced not in the gift so much as the giver Hannah she loved her darling Samuel there's no doubt about that but she rejoiced in the Lord her God and not in her Samuel let us bear that thought in mind Hannah said my heart rejoices in the Lord yea I rejoice in thy salvation and may be that little drop of God's providence in your pathway has been a means of confirming your interest in God's love and blood and you have rejoiced like the woman finding the peace which she had lost and indeed you called others to come in and rejoice with you

I don't want to be too personal I can't help telling you once this when I was bathing on the south coast I lost my dentures and friends I lost my religion my religion depended on the waves and it was a very rough sea I had no business to be bathing really and the pebbles tons of them flowing in how can I get my dentures back God brought them right at my feet my religion returned that's my way of putting it know what that was to me never to forget there did I rejoice in him is it a common mundane thing to talk about it was blessed to me and one of those things I look back upon even to this day and I shout to my dying day there at that very place did I rejoice in the

Lord my God we read it we read in Psalm 65 blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causes to approach unto thee and dear friend blessed is that sin burdened soul who creeps to the feet of Jesus there to long to beg to desire seek and wait such will soon be rejoicing in God his savior could be some of you can look back upon a time when some portion of scripture was impressed upon your heart and it left a sweet savor upon your spirit some gospel promise or invitation which encourage you to believe that there was hope for even a sinner like you ah you know these far off ones are said to be made nigh by the blood of Christ and you look back to that time when you pleaded that precious blood as never before and even now do we not daily plead with David

[34 : 52] I do Lord remember me with that favour thou ever bearest unto thy people and visit me with thy salvation or maybe you look back to a time an unmistakable occasion when you were brought conformable to the will of God after living in rebellion against him you were brought to lay passive in his hands and to bow to his perfect will what a wonderful place that is to be brought to you then you found all things in your pathway they were in their right place in their appointed place and come what would you could save the will of the

Lord be done because you know that it was his good will concerning you you know there is a place a peace rather unknown to the world we read in Isaiah 32 18 my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting places good it is when we can sing we cannot Lord thy purpose see but all is well since ruled by thee we live to prove that ill that God blesses is our good and unblessed good is ill and all is right that seems most wrong if it be his sweet will there did we rejoice in him as clay in the hands of the heavenly potter

I look back maybe I could mention this I look back to the first intimation sure intimation I had that the Lord intended me to go to the USA in 1960 leave my family and I rebelled like a bullock unaccustomed to the young I ought to be ashamed of it because there are many missionaries they give up everything to go on the mission field but it was my heart and home and family that the Lord says leave it all and go oh how I rebelled for then the Lord granted that sweet submission to his will oh what a difference and there did I rejoice in the Lord so much so that when I was given a word in God going coming back and the

Lord said to Jacob how he would bless him and bring him back again I did not think for one single moment about coming back it was a joy to go I was bound up in the will of God I tell a little story illustration I've said it doubtless told you before but it didn't matter it's often with me in the city of Bath back in the early 1950s a swan flew up from the river held up the traffic we couldn't catch it the police could do nothing and after about ten minutes the park keeper came along pulled a small net out of his pocket dropped the net over the swan put the swan under his arm and walked away and I said to the park keeper he's quiet enough now ah he said he's been in it before the net of God's sweet will I think it was Mary McChain would speak so oftenly of the sweet will of

God and Francis Ridley Habergog on her deathbed spoke of the sweet will of God in his dealings with her is that where you are today friends or are you in that complaining murmuring rebellious state and condition the sweet will of God there did we rejoice in him and when we're in such places as that we can sing have thine own way Lord have thine own way hold all have thine own way hold all my being absolute sway filled with thy spirit till all shall see

[40 : 23] Christ only always living in me there did we rejoice in him maybe it was in your home or out in the backyard might have been in the office or at the factory might have been at school it might have been out driving in the car or in the store there did we rejoice in him ah you know such places could testify of the Lord's wonderful work in condescending to commune with shall I say poor specks of sinful dust on this earth yea the stone shall cry out of the wall and the beam out of the timber shall answer it maybe you can look back to a time when perhaps because of affliction trial or sorrow you were brought to see the emptiness of the things of time

I wonder whether any of our young people have been brought here I look back to my days when I was brought first of all to see the emptiness of all the things of time and to see after the things of Jesus maybe you look back to that time when you were brought to see the true value of spiritual things perhaps you could join then with the hymn writer in these two beautiful verses William Cowper I thirst but not as once I did the vain delights of earth to share thy wounds Emmanuel all forbid that I should seek my pleasure there it was the sight of thy dear cross first weaned my soul from earthly things and taught me to esteem as trust the mirth of fools and the pomp of kings there did we rejoice in him

I do hope and pray friends that here as a church and people you will have such occasions as we were singing the verse of one of the hymns the last one was it or the one before I record many years ago when I was worshipping at Croydon in my early days the days of my first love and they were precious and during evening service I didn't want to go home I was in the house of God among my brethren and sisters in the Lord the word had been blessed to my soul and that verse came so sweetly to me my soul would stay in such a frame as this and sit and sing herself away to everlasting bliss because my language had formerly been again quoting the hymn writer here would I find a settled rest whilst others go and come no more a stranger or a guest but like a child at home it's been said you know there's some birds fly over the sanctuary some lodge in it for a little while and others make their nest there how good it is when you can make a nest among the people of

God and rejoice in the Lord your God may that be your blessed portion and may it all redound to the praise and the honor of our God Amen my God God glory