

Today's Quick Word Psalm 66:1-4

By Bruce Christian

PSALM 66:1-4 Shout with joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name." Selah

I can imagine Assyria, Syria, Babylon and Philistia hearing little, weak Israel singing this song from their Song Book and going into fits of laughter, much as the world around us would if they tuned into our live-streamed services today (hopefully they would hear us expressing similar sentiments with enthusiasm in our praise time!).

The God-denying world is offended by our confident expression of praise to OUR God in such terms (cf Philippians 1:27-28). Nevertheless, the Creator of the Universe who has made himself clearly known in the Scriptures, and in the 'indescribable gift' of his Son (2 Corinthians 9:15), COMMANDS 'all the earth' to acknowledge him as the one true God, and to 'bow down' to him, to 'sing the glory of his name', and to 'make his praise glorious!' In the light of this, let us never shrink back in our vocal public praise of him, and let us never be ashamed of the truth that he alone is God and 'there is no other' (Isaiah 45:5-6).

Let us be encouraged by what he says elsewhere in Israel's Song Book: "The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, 'I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.' I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.'" (Psalm 2:4-8), and by the words of another 'song' we have in the NT: "[Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:6-11).

All these Scriptures express the REALITY of what is ACTUALLY the case, regardless of what the world in its 'wisdom' might think.

Today's Quick Word Isaiah 17:7

By Bruce Christian

ISAIAH 17:7 In that day men will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel.

In the NIV, the phrase 'in that day' occurs 71 times; all but 4 of these are in the OT Prophets, and nearly two-thirds of the 67 in the Prophets are in the prophecy of Isaiah!

In spite of all the different historical contexts in which the phrase is used, it stands as a constant reminder to all mankind in EVERY age that there WILL BE a day of reckoning. Isaiah is proclaiming God's judgement on Damascus, the capital of Syria (Aram), but we cannot escape its far wider implications.

The Gospels disclose the true identity of 'the Holy One [of

Israel]' - he is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, as even the 'demons' recognised (Luke 4:34), and the disciples' spokesman, Peter, presumably learnt from their testimony (John 6:69)!

The reference to 'men look[ing] to their Maker' points to a general rather than just a local application. It seems to me that we are presently heading to 'THAT DAY' at a rate of knots, and we therefore have an urgent responsibility to 'make disciples of all nations' so that when people 'look to their Maker' and 'turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel' [Christ, when he Returns in power 'in the clouds of heaven' (Matthew 24:30; Mark 14:62)] they will know and welcome him as their SAVIOUR and Lord, and not have to face him only as their JUDGE.

Today's Quick Word Isaiah 10:13

By Bruce Christian

2 PETER 1:1-3 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

It is difficult to fully plumb the depths of the comforting truths embedded in the introduction of this second letter the Apostle Peter wrote to Christians who were suffering such great discouragement and persecution. In the face of all their difficulties and struggles, Peter wanted them to be absolutely certain of some very important truths.

Firstly, the faith they had expressed in Jesus as Saviour was NOT their OWN doing! None of them was the initiator of his/her faith; their 'expression of faith' was NOT their 'offering' to God, it was HIS PRECIOUS GIFT to them, and all they could DO was RECEIVE it with grateful hearts! There was no place for pride or boasting, even just in their inner thoughts, about their being Christians. It was ALL of grace - a FREE GIFT - and not something they could ever earn or take credit for. Have we been humbled by this amazing truth? "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling; naked, come to thee for dress;

helpless, look to thee for grace; foul, I to the fountain fly - wash me, Saviour, or I die." (Toplady).

Secondly, my eternal salvation has EVERYTHING to do with HIS righteousness, and NOTHING to do with mine (thankfully!).

Thirdly, I can experience an abundance (the Greek word expresses multiplication and fulness) of GRACE and PEACE because I am in an intimate relationship with the God who is the source of 'divine power' (and I have undeniable PROOF of this power in the Resurrection of Jesus - cf Colossians 2:12 - "having been ... raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."). In the Bible, the verb to 'know' relates to personal intimacy in relationship, and 'the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord' covers both MY knowledge of HIM, AND HIS knowledge of ME.

Fourthly, by his 'knowing' me, I can trust him to be willing and able to 'give me everything I need for life and godliness' because this is essential to 'his own glory and goodness'. I have to ask myself, "Why do I ever doubt, or fret, or become anxious? Can there be anything more comforting, meaningful and fulfilling than knowing Christ, and especially knowing that HE KNOWS ME?".