

## HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD

Friday, May 4

Reading: Psalm 65

**Psalm 65:8** *The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. 9 You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.*

The Feast of Tabernacles is the great harvest festival of the Jewish year (see Leviticus 23:33-43). It occurs in the fall during the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the Hebrew calendar (late Sept. to mid-Oct. by our calendar). This eight day feast celebrated God's current provision for His people (as the fall harvest was just completed) and a remembrance of His past provision for His people in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt under Moses. The people were to build booths from tree branches and live in them during the festival as a reminder of their ancestors wandering in the wilderness. It was a time of joy and high Messianic expectations. Psalm 65 appears to be written for the Feast of Tabernacles. It praises God for His grace, power, and provision.

**GOD OF GRACE (65:1-4):** Coming five days after the Day of Atonement, the people would be focused on God's gracious forgiveness of sins. They had just experienced that solemn day of fasting and sacrifice where the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people (Lev. 16). It is appropriate that this week of celebration would begin with praise for God hearing their prayers and forgiving their sins.

As God's people today, we cannot have joy without first receiving God's grace and forgiveness. There can be no happiness without holiness. We too must praise our gracious heavenly Father for His gifts of grace, forgiveness, and blessing.

**GOD OF POWER (65:5-8):** The psalmist now moves outside of the Temple courts, beyond the borders of Israel, and sings of God as "the hope of all the ends of the earth." God's power in the world is shown by His "awesome and righteous deeds." His power not only rules creation but stills "the turmoil of the nations."

Verse 8 tells us that "the whole earth is filled with awe at Your wonders... You call forth songs of joy." As God's people, this must be our response to God's work in the world and in our lives. While creation shouts aloud the power of God, we must shout out to the world of "God our Savior."

**GOD OF PROVISION (65:9-13):** A chief feature of the Feast of Tabernacles was the expression of thanksgiving for God's provision in the completed harvest. The whole last half of Psalm 65 describes how God provides. He waters the fields to produce crops, He provides the abundance that His people enjoy, and clothes the fields with both flocks and grain. The last line poetically reminds us that since fields and flocks cannot literally "shout for joy and sing", it is our duty and privilege to do the praising God deserves.

All of this reminds us of the importance of not taking God for granted. His forgiveness, His wonders in the world, and His provision for our needs should be a constant focus of our praise and thanksgiving. Perhaps we too need special days and events to remind us of the greatness of our God.