

## **Psalm 65**

1. *Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion;  
to you that answer prayer shall vows be paid.*
2. *To you shall all flesh come to confess their sins;  
when our misdeeds prevail against us, you will purge them away.*
3. *Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there.  
We shall be satisfied with the blessings of your house, even of your holy temple.*
4. *With wonders you will answer us in your righteousness,  
O God of our salvation, O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the distant seas.*
5. *In your strength you set fast the mountains  
and are girded about with might.*
6. *You still the raging of the seas, the roaring of the waves  
and the clamour of the peoples.*
7. *Those who dwell at the ends of the earth tremble at your marvels;  
the gates of the morning and evening sing your praise.*
8. *You visit the earth and water it; you make it very plenteous.*
9. *The river of God is full of water; you prepare grain for your people,  
for so you provide for the earth.*
10. *You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;  
you soften the ground with showers and bless its increase.*
11. *You crown the year with your goodness,  
and your paths overflow with plenty.*
12. *May the pastures of the wilderness flow with goodness  
and the hills be girded with joy.*
13. *May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep and the valleys  
stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing.*

You visit the earth and water it  
**you make it very plenteous.**

Psalm 65 is a hymn of thanksgiving. In a time of drought, the congregation promised that, if God would send rain, they would offer a sacrifice of praise.

Drought was thought to be a punishment for sin, so the psalm begins with a prayer for forgiveness.

The temple in Jerusalem, the dwelling of God, as they believed, is the source of the prosperity of the land and blessing.

God is seen as the hope of all the hope of all the earth, as he is its creator. Dawn and sunset are the visible signs of God's authority over the whole world.

The last part (vv. 9-end) pictures the rejoicing of nature at the coming of the rain, which streams from the river of God, the ocean above the heavens, as in Psalm 33: 'He gathers up the waters of the sea as in a water-skin and lays the deep in his treasury.'

The bountiful harvest is a crown on the head of the year.

In the country and in many villages, harvest festival is seen as being very important. In Cublington and Aston Abbotts, they have not only a service, but a harvest meal and often an auction of produce.

In towns and cities, we may seek to widen the concept to thank God, not only for nature and food, but also for skills, such as engineering and science, which are all part of God's creation. It's also appropriate to support a cause at harvest time, as we do each year at St. Michael's. This reminds us that there are parts of the world, which are poor, where harvests fail, areas where there is conflict, which affects the lives of ordinary people. So, we are encouraged to share our resources and skills, to look after one another, recognising that wherever we live we are all part of God's creation.

So, we thank God for the abundance of nature, and perhaps stop for a moment to consider the picture painted by the psalmist at the end of Psalm 65:  
'May the pastures of the wilderness flow with goodness  
and the hills be girded with joy.  
May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep  
and the valleys stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing.'

## **Prayer**

Father of mercies and Lord of all creation,  
we gratefully acknowledge our dependence on your bounty  
for all the good things we enjoy.

We thank you at this time for the fruits of the earth, the harvest of the sea, the wealth of the mines, and for all the beauty of the world in which we live.

Accept our worship and fill our hearts with praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**