

Acknowledging the Awesomeness of God

(From Psalm 66)

We have entered a new year. 2011 has drawn to a close and 2012 is here! The prophets of gloom have already declared that this year is going to be much worse than last year. So what should we be focusing our attention on now? I sincerely believe that we should be acknowledging the “awesomeness of God” in every situation throughout 2012. But how do we do that? I have found two essential ways of acknowledging the awesomeness of God, and they are both found in Psalm 66. The first involves what we do because of who we are (it is something we “give”), and the second involves what we do because of who He is (it is something we “receive”). The first thing we must do is **“give praise.”**

1. **PRAISE:** We are instruments of praise - God created us that way! For this reason, we must constantly acknowledge the “awesomeness of God” through our praises. Every time we **praise** our God we recognise the fact He is truly awesome! Praise is the legitimate response to God's self-revelation. To praise God is to call attention to His awe-inspiring, magnificent and formidable “Greatness.” Words that are often used as synonyms, or in parallel with “praise”, and so help point to its meaning, are; “*bless,*” “*exalt,*” “*extol,*” “*glorify,*” “*magnify,*” “*thank,*” and “*confess.*” Praise is validated in **Psalm 66:1-4**, “*Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! Sing out the honour of His name. Make His praise glorious. Say to God, ‘How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power, Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. All the earth shall worship You; and sing praises to You. They shall sing praises to Your name’.*”

How do we describe praise? According to these verses:

- (a) **Praise** is described as a “joyful shout” (verse 1). This is the same type of “shout” that Israel was commanded to do when they marched on the seventh day around Jericho. “*Shout, for the Lord has given you the city*” (Joshua 6:15-16). Praise is a means whereby we establish the victory. It's a weapon we use in spiritual warfare to gain ascendancy. Every time you “praise God” you let the devil know that God alone reigns in your life. When you praise God, you are telling the enemy that no matter what surrounds you, what your circumstances are; whether in abundance or in scarcity, in sickness or in health, in good times and through the storms, God's still on His throne and “*worthy to be praised.*”
- (a) **Praise** is described as a “group activity” (verses 1 & 8). There are no solo parts in heaven. All praise, all glory and all honour to God is a group activity. Too many people get pious (self-righteous) about their praise. It's as if they alone have access to God's throne. So remind yourself when you are praising God in 2012 that you are not doing this alone. You are in fact joining in with the Heavenly Host, who never cease to worship the Most High God. And this should be very comforting to you.
- (a) **Praise** is also defined as a “song” (verses 2 and 4). Praise is best communicated with singing; and singing is best communicated with enthusiasm. There are many different things that get us enthusiastic (excited) - that cause us to rejoice. So let me ask you, are you excited about God? Do you love Him? Do you know all about Him? Do you enjoy entering His courts with praise? Do you praise His name with joyful songs? A “song of praise” is a song that comes

from the heart. It expresses praise to God with great enthusiasm. All of us are able to enthusiastically express ourselves in song (whether we are musical or not). The word *enthusiastic* comes from the ancient Greek word 'entheos' which literally means "possessed by God." Are you possessed by God enough to sing praises to Him? If not, you should be!

Throughout 2012, I encourage you to acknowledge the awesomeness of God by **praising** Him in every situation. Don't praise Him for what you are wanting to obtain from Him, but rather, for who He is. To be "awesome" is to be; awe-inspiring, magnificent and all-powerful. It is a quality that God alone possesses. None of us can afford to ignore God's awesomeness! Let's move on.... The second thing we must do is "**receive power**."

2. **POWER**. We acknowledge the "awesomeness of God" when we accept (give credence to) His **power** toward us (His dealings with men). We see this clearly in verses 5-12, "*Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men. He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the river on foot. There we will rejoice in Him. He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations. Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Oh, bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, Who keeps our soul among the living, and does not allow our feet to be moved. For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.... We went through fire and through water; but You brought us out to rich fulfilment*"

God's power toward us brings "rich fulfilment!" In 2011 you may have been tested, and refined as silver. You may have gone through the fire and the storm. Yet God's power is directed toward you in 2012 so that you may be rescued. And His deliverance will bring about rich fulfilment! Jesus said, "*I have come that you might have an extraordinary life.*" But this is only possible if we 'accept' and 'receive' the mighty power that is directed toward us.

Ephesians 1:18-20 confirms this, "*That the eyes of your understanding be enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.*"

Have the eyes of your understanding been enlightened to the '*exceeding greatness of His power*' toward us who believe? If so, have you applied this truth? For God's power is 'accepted' and 'received' only by faith. Note, you cannot acknowledge the awesomeness of God without accepting His **power** toward you - day by day, moment by moment. This has to do with the glorious riches of our inheritance! Made possible when Christ was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God.

So what is the power of God?

The mighty power of God is not especially physical (though it can be and has been displayed in this way). The most amazing and awe inspiring display of this **power** takes place in the spiritual realm. This is the realm where no nuclear explosion can have any effect. It is in this realm that the "power of God" has been unleashed for our eternal benefit. **1 Corinthians 1:18** declares, "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are 'being saved' it is the power of God.*" **1 Corinthians 15:57** says, "*Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our*

Lord Jesus Christ."

This is a "mighty power" that was released which no man (no invention of mankind) could ever begin to match.

- a. It is the power that raised Jesus from the dead.
- b. It is the power that overcomes evil forces.
- c. It is a power that can make the impossible possible
- d. It is a power that can create something from nothing.
- e. It is a power that is able to change anything and anybody.
- f. It is a power which can override or suspend all of the physical laws of nature (or of man).
- g. It is a power that no other power can resist.

We learned earlier that praise is a response: *"Praise is our response to God for who He is and what He has done, expressed in our thoughts, attitudes, words and actions"* However, this expression must be founded on the knowledge that God is all-powerful - that He is the Almighty! We cannot acknowledge God's awesomeness through **praise** without having first accepted and received His **power** toward us.

Throughout this year, I encourage you to do these two simple things:

1. Acknowledge the awesomeness of God by continually giving Him praise.
2. Acknowledge the awesomeness of God by receiving His mighty power toward you, in every circumstance.

Notice, the act of **praise** is what you are to give, and the mighty **power** of God is what you are to receive! If you practice these two actions regularly, I assure you that 2012 will be a year of "rich fulfillment!"