

Psalms 66:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

Analysis

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands. This opening summons launches an exuberant psalm of praise calling all nations to worship. "Make a joyful noise" (hariu l'Elohim, הָרִיעוּ לְאֱלֹהִים uses the imperative form of rua (רֹיעַ), meaning to shout, raise a sound, cry out in joy or alarm, blow a trumpet. This isn't quiet, dignified ceremony but explosive, enthusiastic, uninhibited expression. The verb suggests volume and energy—shouting, acclamation, jubilant outcry that can't be contained.

The same verb describes shouting when the ark entered Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:15), the trumpet blast announcing Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9), and the shout accompanying Israel's battle victories (Joshua 6:5, 1 Samuel 17:52). It's celebratory noise, victorious acclamation, worship that engages voice and body fully. This challenges reserved, controlled worship that fears emotional expression. While worship shouldn't be chaotic or self-focused, neither should it be lifeless or inhibited. God's mighty acts deserve enthusiastic response.

"Unto God" (l'Elohim, לְאֱלֹהִים) directs the shout. Elohim, the plural form emphasizing majesty and power, is the Creator God of Genesis 1. The shouting isn't generic celebration or self-expression but directed worship—noise made TO God, FOR God, ABOUT God. This maintains worship's God-centeredness. Celebration that becomes primarily about human enjoyment misses worship's essence. The joyful noise must be offered to God as its audience and recipient.

"All ye lands" (kol-ha'aretz, כָּל-הָאָרֶץ makes this a universal summons. Kol (כָּל) means all, every, the whole. Eretz (אָרֶץ) means earth, land, nations. This isn't

worship limited to Israel but praise commanded from all peoples, all nations, all the earth. The psalm's opening anticipates Revelation 7:9-10—a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before God's throne crying with a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" What begins here as command will culminate in eschatological fulfillment when every tongue confesses Jesus as Lord.

Historical Context

Psalm 66 appears to be a communal thanksgiving psalm, possibly composed for one of Israel's pilgrimage festivals when worshipers gathered in Jerusalem. The psalm references both corporate national deliverance (the exodus and Red Sea crossing, v.5-6) and individual answered prayer (v.13-20), suggesting it served both corporate and personal thanksgiving purposes. The call for all lands to worship Israel's God reflects the missionary dimension of Israel's election—they were blessed to be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:3).

Joyful shouting was characteristic of Israel's worship. Psalms 95:1-2, 98:4, and 100:1 similarly command joyful noise. David's bringing the ark to Jerusalem involved shouting, musical instruments, and energetic dancing (2 Samuel 6:14-15), though Michal despised this uninhibited worship (2 Samuel 6:16). The Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah) was specifically a day of trumpet blasts and shouting (Leviticus 23:24, Numbers 29:1). Solomon's temple dedication involved such powerful worship that the glory cloud filled the temple (2 Chronicles 5:11-14). Israel's worship engaged the whole person—voice, body, instruments, emotions—not just intellectual assent.

The psalm's universal scope reflects God's eternal purposes. While the old covenant centered on Israel, prophetic literature consistently envisioned Gentile inclusion. Isaiah saw nations streaming to the LORD's house (Isaiah 2:2-3), foreigners joining themselves to the LORD (Isaiah 56:3-8), and the earth full of knowledge of the LORD (Isaiah 11:9). The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and Pentecost (Acts 2) began fulfilling this vision. Today, believers from every tribe and tongue worship together, demonstrating that God's salvation extends to all lands, fulfilling Psalm 66:1's summons. The early church's worship likely included

enthusiastic expression (1 Corinthians 14:26-33 suggests dynamic, participatory worship), though Paul also emphasized order and edification.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What might inhibit genuine joy and enthusiastic expression in worship, and how can these obstacles be addressed?
2. How do you distinguish between God-directed worship (joyful noise 'unto God') and self-focused celebration that happens to occur in church?
3. In what ways does the universal scope ('all ye lands') challenge nationalistic or culturally-limited views of worship?
4. What biblical basis exists for expressive, enthusiastic worship versus quiet, contemplative worship, and how do both honor God?
5. How does understanding worship as response to God's mighty acts (context of verses 3-7) shape the content and character of our joyful noise?

Interlinear Text

Make a joyful noise	unto God	all ye lands
H7321	H430	H776

בָּאָרֶץ: כָּל־לְאֱלֹהִים בָּרָעָה

Make a joyful noise

unto God

H3605

all ye lands

H7321

H430

H776

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 100:1 (Parallel theme): Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

Psalms 98:4 (Parallel theme): Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

Psalms 81:1 (References God): Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

Psalms 150:6 (Parallel theme): Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

1 Chronicles 15:28 (Parallel theme): Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

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