Ann Quintrell
Leaf from a 1497 Nuremberg Bible (obverse)
Commentary
Text box:

For the Lord in Psalms a song of songs.

LXVI  May God have mercy on us and bless us: he shines his countenance over us and may he have mercy on us. So that we may know your way on earth, your salvation in all peoples. May the people have faith in you, God: may all peoples profess faith in you. Let the people be glad and rejoice: since you judge the people in equality and direct the peoples on earth. May the people, oh God, confess to you: May all peoples profess faith in you the land gave its fruit. May god, our lord, bless us, may god bless us and all the ends of the earth fear him.

For the Lord David’s Psalm of song. Psalms 67  May god arise and his enemies be scattered and those who hate him flee from his face. Just as smoke dies out, just as wax flows from (Left Column 1)

May God have mercy on us. For this psalm (Psalms 66) such title is said before in Hebrew\(^1\) for the victory in the instruments of the song of Psalm. Also in Jerome’s translation it is called the canticle of canticles for the Lord in psalm. And the same thought is in each which is partly from the above mentioned Psalms 4\(^2\). From the title the author for these is not clearly the author of the Psalms nor the music.\(^3\) Some authors say about this that that psalm is an act of thanksgiving for the fertility of a certain year. For the Jews, after they had harvested fruits, convened in September in Israel, which month was almost entirely festive. Since in that month there was a festival of trumpets and a festival of atonement and of tabernacles and a festival of Seder\(^4\) or of the harvest. As it is said in Leviticus 23.\(^5\) And whenever a year was fertile: it was customary that one very high, holy and faithful man made a special song for the act of thanksgiving. And thus it was about this psalm they talk: but they do not explain who that actor was. After this then
that psalm is divided into two parts. Since first the imploring for fertility is placed. In the second part, because of its pretense the act of thanksgiving is placed there. They are confident about the first, it is said. a “May God have mercy on us” to release our sins b “and may he bless us” We would be blessed by increasing in the goodness of our spirits and bodies. c “May his countenance shine over us” The scripture says about God who in the manner of man, when he wishes to do a grace for someone, shows to him his cheerful and happy face. d “So that we may know…on earth” that is in the fertility of the land e “your way” that is the traces of your grace through the result of fertility which has been granted. f “your salvation in all peoples” that is so that it is common knowledge to all peoples that you have a special cure for our salvation, therefore it applies. viii g “May the people have faith in you, oh God” that is through the result granted to us may they believe in your goodness and divinity: and may they be turned to you as it is said that when the Jews were wonderfully freed from the persecution of Aman, many kinsmen throughout diverse parts were joined in celebrations of these, as it is said in Esther 8ix. h “Let the people be glad and rejoice” and the rest, as he made this easy with Aman, who by divine judgement was hung with his sons. i And “the people on earth you direct” since through such results you direct people to awareness of your truth. k “May the people believe in you, oh God” In response to this is placed the act of thanksgiving for the fertility they obtained, as it is said. k “May the people believe in you, oh God” with a holy profession of your praise and for this reason they ought thus to believe. Therefore it applies. l “land gave its fruit” in great abundance through the goodness of your grace. Therefore it applies. m “May God bless us, our Lord” concerning the future as he has now done concerning the past. n And “All the ends of the earth fear him” as the judgment of all for the purposing of punishing evil deeds is very powerful. Although the author agrees to say this statement in many points:
nevertheless see\textsuperscript{x} that some things are not irrelevant\textsuperscript{xi} – that because of the fertility in Judea which is a poor land, all kinsmen and all the people of the world would be invited to a confession of divine praise: and especially since such fertility was not in other lands. Wherefore with safe, better judgment it seems to me that that psalm was not an act of thanksgiving for past goodness but rather it is a prophecy about the future concerning the sacred incarnation of Christ and his close association among men. It seems to me that a certain goodness was highly desired by the holy fathers because see that some sacred prophet, whoever he was, made that psalm concerning this. It is said “May God have mercy on us” by sending salvation to us. And by bestowing on us his own good grace. “He shines his countenance over us” by glorifying his own son by means of miracles: who is said to be the countenance of his father. Since he is his image that is as it is said according to Luke. God sent into the kingdom an image of his love for his son\textsuperscript{xii}, who is the image of the invisible god. He was seeking this name – savior. John 17\textsuperscript{xiii} “Father glorify your son and he himself glorifies you in return\textsuperscript{xiv}. I have glorified and I will again.” Since he glorified him with miracles before his death and before his resurrection. And “may he have mercy on us” by freeing us from Gehena through the blood of his son. “So that we might know his\textsuperscript{xv} way on earth” the psalms converts the word to Christ, whose life was known to men by his conversations among men, his teachings and his healing\textsuperscript{xvi}. “your salvation in all peoples” since the salvation made through Christ is known to all peoples through the prediction of the apostles.
This leaf from a 1497 Nuremberg Bible includes the text for all of Psalm 66 and Psalm 67:1-2 and part of Psalm 67:3. Most of the page is devoted to a commentary of Psalm 66. In the left column, the author discusses the title and authorship of this Psalm and presents an argument about the purpose for this Psalm. The author explains that many think Psalm 66 was written to thank God for a good harvest. The author first explains this interpretation of Psalm 66 by explaining that part of it is an imploration for God show mercy by granting a good harvest, followed by praise for this harvest, but the author argues that this Psalm is not an act of thanksgiving but is a prediction for the future incarnation of Christ. The commentary is heavily abbreviated and seems to assume that the reader would know the Bible well, since the author refers to people and events in the Bible without much explanation (e.g. Aman and the story of Esther).

i The Hebrew title for Psalms is TEHILLIM which means Hymns of Praise. (The Holy Bible, 1941, p. 512)
ii Psalm 4 appears to be the first time that a Psalms begins with a phrase about it being a song of songs. Psalm 4 appears to begin with a slightly different phrase about it being a Psalm for David, which matches the beginning of Psalm 67 more closely than Psalm 66, but the thought is similar to the thought at the beginning of Psalm 66.
iii Most of Psalms was written by David, but prefixed in the titles of some chapters are other names, such as Asaph, who may have authored those particular chapters (The Holy Bible, 1941, p. 512). This possibility explains why the authorship and purpose of Psalms 66 is being questioned in this text.
iv This word used here is “cet⁹.” Technically, “cet⁹” should stand for “cetus,” which means “sea monster” or “fish,” but this meaning of “cetus” as “fish” does not fit the context. Since this section of text refers to the festivals in Leviticus 23, “cet⁹” has been treated here as “Seder” in order to refer to the Passover, which is one of the festivals mentioned in Leviticus 23.
v In Leviticus 23, God tells Moses the Holy Days that the Jews need to honor. He lists the Sabbath (Lev. 23:3), Passover (Lev. 23:4-5), the Festival of Matzah or Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6), the Festival of the First Fruits of the harvest (Lev. 23:10), the Harvest Festival (Lev. 23:15), the Festival of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24), the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34). The Festival of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles (which is also call the Festival of Shelters) occur in the seventh month. The other festivals occur at other times in the year, so some of them appear to be listed in this text mainly because they appear in Leviticus 23 and not because they actually occur in the same “festive month.”
vi The symbol used here appears multiple times in the text as “quia,” meaning “since” or “because,” but the meaning of this symbol may not be consistent throughout the text. This symbol could mean “quarum,” which would change the translation to “The first of these parts.” Reading the symbol as “quarum” may make more sense in this context, but in an effort to use a consistent meaning for the symbol it has been treated as “quia.”
vii This word is missing a nasalization, so in the text this word (“remittendo,” or “releasing”) appears as “remittedo.”
viii In the text, the phrase “therefore it applies” is abbreviated as “ƀ,” meaning “ideo subditur.” This phrase seems to be used as a way to say that the author’s explanation applies to a
certain section of Psalms. This abbreviation for “subditur” is not consistently used in the text and more frequently appears as “mō eẍnea.”

ix In Esther 4-7, Aman has ordered that all the Jews be killed and has prepared a special gibbet for Mardochai, who was Esther’s uncle. In Esther 7, after Esther told King Assuerus, her husband, that her life was endangered by this decree, the King became very angry with Aman and had him hung from the gibbet prepared for Mardochai. In Esther 8, the King honored Esther’s uncle by putting him over the house of Aman and giving him the authority to make it known that the Jews were allowed a day of revenge to destroy their enemies. Esther 8: 17 says that “there was wonderful rejoicing, feasts and banquets, and keeping holy day: insomuch that many of other nations and religion joined themselves to their worship and ceremonies. For a great dread of the name of the Jews had fallen upon all.” The author of this text refers to this episode in Esther as an example of divine retribution and argues that all people should have faith in God and rejoice because God justly punishes people like Aman and rewards people like Mardochai.

x In the text, the symbol used here is “v” and appears to stand for “vide,” meaning “see.” The author appears to use “vide” to emphasize a point important to his argument.

xi The phrase translated as “not irrelevant” appears in the text as “mō eẍnea.” “eẍnea” is an abbreviation for “extranea,” but “mō” appears to be a misspelled abbreviation for “non.” This reading of “mō eẍnea” translated literally would be “not foreign,” but it has been translated loosely as “not irrelevant.”

xii The phrase “an image of his love for his son” is loose translation of the text. This phrase appears in the text as “filii di-lecτōis sue,” which presents some difficulties. First “dilectōis” is missing the “i” that makes it “dilectionis,” and these three words are in the Genitive case, when it seems that “filii” should be Dative. Also, it appears that the main verb of the sentence (“Trāstulit”) lacks an object. In the translation, “imago” (meaning “image”) has been inferred, since “imago” also appears later in the sentence and creates a nice connection between God’s image for his Son and his Son being an image of God.

xiii John 17 is Jesus’ prayer for his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. John 17:1 states, “These things Jesus spoke: and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said: Father the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee.” The author of this text then appears to move to the end of John 17. John 17: 26 states, “And I have made known thy name to them and will make it known: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

xiv This verb appears in the text as “dit.” While the meaning of the verb is clear from John 17:1, the exact word that “dit” refers to is unclear.

xv This phrase is abbreviated in the text and appears to be a quotation from Psalms 66; however, in the Psalms it reads “So that we may know your way on earth.” Here “tuam” (which means “your”) has been replaced with “su.,” which may be an abbreviation for “suam.” Either “tu.” was mistyped as “su.” or the author of the text abbreviated the general meaning of the phrase, instead of the exact words.

xvi Technically, in the text Christ is “giving good health” (“sanitates donando”), which is subtly different from only curing ailments.

References for commentary