

# Exposition on Psalm 65

by St. Augustine

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of choosing between the city of confusion (Babylon) and the city of peace (Jerusalem), and highlights the hope of deliverance and forgiveness through God's propitiation.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 10:11

**Topics:** "Spiritual Captivity", "Heavenly Jerusalem"

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## Description

St. Augustine preaches about the significance of the Psalms, drawing parallels between the historical events of Babylon and Jerusalem with spiritual truths applicable to believers. He emphasizes the need for believers to understand their spiritual captivity and yearn for the heavenly Jerusalem, contrasting the earthly and heavenly cities. St. Augustine highlights the importance of surrendering to God, enduring trials, and trusting in His love and compassion, even in the face of persecution and challenges.

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## Transcript

1. The voice of holy prophecy must be confessed in the very title of this Psalm. It is inscribed, Unto the end, a Psalm of David, a song of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, on account of the people of transmigration when they were beginning to go forth. How it fared with our fathers in the time of the transmigration to Babylon, is not known to all, but only to those that diligently study the Holy Scriptures, either by hearing or by reading. For the captive people Israel from the city of Jerusalem was led into slavery unto Babylon. 2 Kings 24:14 But holy Jeremiah prophesied, that after seventy years the people would return out of captivity, and would rebuild the very city Jerusalem, which they had mourned as having been overthrown by enemies.

But at that time there were prophets in that captivity of the people dwelling in Babylon, among whom was also the prophet Ezekiel. But that people was waiting until there should be fulfilled the space of seventy years, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah. It came to pass, when the seventy years had been completed, the temple was restored which had been thrown down: and there returned from captivity a great part of that people. But whereas the Apostle says, these things in figure happened unto them, but they have been written for our sakes, upon whom the end of the world has come: 1 Corinthians 10:11 we also ought to know first our captivity, then our deliverance: we ought to know the Babylon wherein we are captives, and the Jerusalem for a return to which we are sighing.

For these two cities, according to the letter, in reality are two cities. And the former Jerusalem indeed by the Jews is not now inhabited. For after the crucifixion of the Lord vengeance was taken upon them with a

great scourge, and being rooted up from that place where, with impious licentiousness being infuriated, they had madly raged against their Physician, they have been dispersed throughout all nations, and that land has been given to Christians: and there is fulfilled what the Lord had said to them, Therefore the kingdom shall be taken away from you, and it shall be given to a nation doing justice.

Matthew 21:43 But when they saw great multitudes then following the Lord, preaching the kingdom of Heaven, and doing wonderful things, the rulers of that city said, If we shall have let Him go, all men will go after Him, and there shall come the Romans, and shall take from us both place and nation. John 11:48 That they might not lose their place, they killed the Lord; and they lost it, even because they killed. Therefore that city, being one earthly, did bear the figure of a certain city everlasting in the Heavens: but when that which was signified began more evidently to be preached, the shadow, whereby it was being signified, was thrown down: for this reason in that place now the temple is no more, which had been constructed for the image of the future Body of the Lord. We have the light, the shadow has passed away: nevertheless, still in a kind of captivity we are: So long as we are, he says, in the body, we are sojourning afar from the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:6

2. And see ye the names of those two cities, Babylon and Jerusalem. Babylon is interpreted confusion, Jerusalem vision of peace. Observe now the city of confusion, in order that you may perceive the vision of peace; that you may endure that, sigh for this. Whereby can those two cities be distinguished? Can we anywise now separate them from each other? They are mingled, and from the very beginning of mankind mingled they run on unto the end of the world. Jerusalem received beginning through Abel, Babylon through Cain: for the buildings of the cities were afterwards erected. That Jerusalem in the land of the Jebusites was built: for at first it used to be called Jebus, Joshua 18:28 from thence the nation of the Jebusites was expelled, when the people of God was delivered from Egypt, and led into the land of promise. But Babylon was built in the most interior regions of Persia, which for a long time raised its head above the rest of nations. These two cities then at particular times were built, so that there might be shown a figure of two cities begun of old, and to remain even unto the end in this world, but at the end to be severed. Whereby then can we now show them, that are mingled? At that time the Lord shall show, when some He shall set on the right hand, others on the left. Jerusalem on the right hand shall be, Babylon on the left....Two loves make up these two cities: love of God makes Jerusalem, love of the world makes Babylon. Therefore let each one question himself as to what he loves: and he shall find of which he is a citizen: and if he shall have found himself to be a citizen of Babylon, let him root out cupidity, implant charity: but if he shall have found himself a citizen of Jerusalem, let him endure captivity, hope for liberty....Now therefore let us hear of, brethren, hear of, and sing of, and long for, that city whereof we are citizens. And what are the joys which are sung of to us? In what manner in ourselves is formed again the love of our city, which by long sojourning we had forgotten? But our Father has sent from thence letters to us, God has supplied to us the Scriptures, by which letters there should be wrought in us a longing for return: because by loving our sojourning, to enemies we had turned our face, and our back to our fatherland. What then is here sung?

3. For You a hymn is meet, O God, in Zion Psalm 64:1. That fatherland is Zion: Jerusalem is the very same as Zion; and of this name the interpretation ye ought to know. As Jerusalem is interpreted vision of peace, so Zion Beholding, that is, vision and contemplation. Some great inexplicable sight to us is promised: and this is God Himself that has built the city. Beauteous and graceful the city, how much more beauteous a Builder it has! For You a hymn is meet, O God, he says. But where? In Zion: in Babylon it is not meet. For when a man begins to be renewed, already with heart in Jerusalem he sings, with the

Apostle saying, Our conversation is in the Heavens. Philippians 3:20 For in the flesh though walking, he says, not after the flesh we war. 2 Corinthians 10:3 Already in longing we are there, already hope into that land, as it were an anchor, we have sent before, lest in this sea being tossed we suffer shipwreck. In like manner therefore as of a ship which is at anchor, we rightly say that already she has come to land, for still she rolls, but to land in a manner she has been brought safe in the teeth of winds and in the teeth of storms; so against the temptations of this sojourning, our hope being grounded in that city Jerusalem causes us not to be carried away upon rocks. He therefore that according to this hope sings, in that city sings: let him therefore say, For You a hymn is meet, O God, in Sion....

4. And to You shall there be paid a vow in Jerusalem. Here we vow, and a good thing it is that there we should pay. But who are they that here do vow and pay not? They that persevere not even unto the end Matthew 24:13 in that which they have vowed. Whence says another Psalm, Vow ye, and pay ye unto the Lord your God: and, to You shall it be paid in Jerusalem. For there shall we be whole, that is, entire in the resurrection of just men: there shall be paid our whole vow, not soul alone, but the very flesh also, no longer corruptible, because no longer in Babylon, but now a body heavenly and changed. What sort of change is promised? For we all shall rise again, says the Apostle, but we shall not all be changed....Where is, O death, your sting? For now while there begin in use the first-fruits of the mind, from whence is the longing for Jerusalem, many things of corruptible flesh do contend against us, which will not contend, when death shall have been swallowed up in victory. Peace shall conquer, and war shall be ended. But when peace shall conquer, that city shall conquer which is called the vision of peace. On the part of death therefore shall be no contention. Now with how great a death do we contend! For thence are carnal pleasures, which to us even unlawfully do suggest many things: to which we give no consent, but nevertheless in giving no consent we contend....

5. Hearken, he says, to my prayer, unto You every flesh shall come Psalm 64:2. And we have the Lord saying, that there was given to Him power over every flesh. John 17:2 That King therefore began even now to appear, when there was being said, Unto You every flesh shall come. To You, he says, every flesh shall come. Wherefore to Him shall every flesh come? Because flesh He has taken to Him. Whither shall there come every flesh? He took the first-fruits thereof out of the womb of the Virgin; and now that the first-fruits have been taken to Him, the rest shall follow, in order that the holocaust may be completed. Whence then every flesh? Every man. And whence every man? Have all been foretold, as going to believe in Christ? Have not many ungodly men been foretold, that shall be condemned also? Do not daily men not believing die in their own unbelief? After what manner therefore do we understand, Unto You every flesh shall come? By every flesh he has signified, flesh of every kind: out of every kind of flesh they shall come to You. What is, out of every kind of flesh? Have there come poor men, and have there not come rich men? Have there come humble men, and not come lofty men? Have there come unlearned men, and not come learned men? Have there come men, and not come women? Have there come masters, and not come servants? Have there come old men, and not come young men; or have there come young men, and not come youths; or have there come youths, and not come boys; or have there come boys, and have there not been brought infants? In a word, have there come Jews (for thence were the Apostles, thence many thousands of men at first betraying, afterwards believing Acts 2:41), and have there not come Greeks; or have there come Greeks, and not come Romans; or have there come Romans, and not come Barbarians? And who could number all nations coming to Him, to whom has been said, Unto You every flesh shall come?

6. The discourses of unjust men have prevailed over us, and our iniquities You shall propitiate Psalm 64:3...Every man, in whatsoever place he is born, of that same land or region or city learns the language, is habituated to the manners and life of that place. What should a boy do, born among Heathens, to avoid worshipping a stone, inasmuch as his parents have suggested that worship? From them the first words he has heard, that error with his milk he has sucked in; and because they that used to speak were elders, and the boy that was learning to speak was an infant, what could the little one do but follow the authority of elders, and deem that to be good which they recommended? Therefore nations that are converted to Christ afterwards, and taking to heart the impieties of their parents, and saying now what the prophet Jeremias himself said, Truly a lie our fathers have worshipped, vanity which has not profited them Jeremiah 16:19 -- when, I say, they now say this, they renounce the opinions and blasphemies of their unjust parents....There have led us away men teaching evil things, citizens of Babylon they have made us, we have left the Creator, have adored the creature: have left Him by whom we were made, have adored that which we ourselves have made. For the discourses of unjust men have prevailed over us: but nevertheless they have not crushed us. Wherefore? Our impieties You shall propitiate, is not said except to some priest offering somewhat, whereby impiety may be expiated and propitiated. For impiety is then said to be propitiated, when God is made propitious to the impiety. What is it for God to be made propitious to impiety? It is, His becoming forgiving, and giving pardon. But in order that God's pardon may be obtained, propitiation is made through some sacrifice. There has come forth therefore, sent from God the Lord, One our Priest; He took upon Him from us that which He might offer to the Lord; we are speaking of those same first-fruits of the flesh from the womb of the Virgin. This holocaust He offered to God. He stretched out His hands on the Cross, in order that He might say, Let My prayer be directed as incense in Your sight, and the lifting up of My hands an evening sacrifice. As ye know, the Lord about eventide hung on the Cross: Matthew 27:46 and our impieties were propitiated; otherwise they had swallowed up: the discourses of unjust men had prevailed over us; there had led us astray preachers of Jupiter, and of Saturn, and of Mercury: the discourses of ungodly men had prevailed over us. But what will You do? Our impieties You will propitiate. You are the priest, You the victim; You the offerer, You the offering. Hebrews 9:7 ...

7. Blessed is he whom You have chosen, and hast taken to You Psalm 64:4. Who is he that is chosen by Him and taken to Him? Was any one chosen by our Saviour Jesus Christ, or was Himself after the flesh, because He is man, chosen and taken to Him?...Or has not rather Christ Himself taken to Him some blessed one, and the same whom He has taken to Him is not spoken of in the plural number but in the singular? For one man He has taken to Him, because unity He has taken to Him. Schisms He has not taken to Him, heresies He has not taken to Him: a multitude they have made of themselves, there is not one to be taken to Him. But they that abide in the bond of Christ and are the members of Him, make in a manner one man, of whom says the Apostle, Until we all arrive at the acknowledging of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:13 Therefore one man is taken to Him, to which the Head is Christ; because the Head of the man is Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:3 The same is that blessed man that has not departed in the counsel of ungodly men, and the like things which there are spoken of: the same is He that is taken to Him. He is not without us, in His own members we are, under one Head we are governed, by one Spirit we all live, one fatherland we all long for....And to us He will give what? He shall inhabit, he says, in Your courts. Jerusalem, that is, to which they sing that begin to go forth from Babylon: He shall inhabit in Your courts: we shall be filled with the good things of Your House. What are the good things of the House of God? Brethren, let us set before ourselves some rich house, with what numerous good things it is crowded, how abundantly it is furnished, how many vessels there are there of gold and also of silver; how great an establishment of servants, how

many horses and animals, in a word, how much the house itself delights us with pictures, marble, ceilings, pillars, recesses, chambers:-- all such things are indeed objects of desire, but still they are of the confusion of Babylon. Cut off all such longings, O citizen of Jerusalem, cut them off; if you will return, let not captivity delight you. But have you already begun to go forth? Do not look back, do not loiter on the road. Still there are not wanting foes to recommend you captivity and sojourning: no longer let there prevail against you the discourses of ungodly men. For the House of God long thou, and for the good things of that House long thou: but do not long for such things as you are wont to long for either in your house, or in the house of your neighbour, or in the house of your patron....

8. Your holy Temple is marvellous in righteousness Psalm 64:5. These are the good things of that House. He has not said, Your holy Temple is marvellous in pillars, marvellous in marbles, marvellous in gilded ceilings; but is marvellous in righteousness. Without you have eyes wherewith you may see marbles, and gold: within is an eye wherewith may be seen the beauty of righteousness. If there is no beauty in righteousness, why is a righteous old man loved? What brings he in body that may please the eyes? Crooked limbs, brow wrinkled, head blanched with gray hairs, dotage everywhere full of plaints. But perchance because your eyes this decrepit old man pleases not, your ears he pleases: with what words? With what song? Even if perchance when a young man he sang well, all with age has been lost. Does perchance the sound of his words please your ears, that can hardly articulate whole words for loss of teeth? Nevertheless, if righteous he is, if another man's goods he covets not, if of his own that he possesses he distributes to the needy, if he gives good advice, and soundly judges, if he believes the entire faith, if for his belief in the faith he is ready to expend even those very shattered limbs, for many Martyrs are even old men; why do we love him? What good thing in him do we see with the eyes of the flesh? Not any. There is therefore a kind of beauty in righteousness, which we see with the eye of the heart, and we love, and we kindle with affection: how much men found to love in those same Martyrs, though beasts tare their limbs! Is it possible but that when blood was staining all parts, when with the teeth of monsters their bowels gushed out, the eyes had nothing but objects to shudder at? What was there to be loved, except that in that hideous spectacle of mangled limbs, entire was the beauty of righteousness? These are the good things of the House of God, with these prepare yourself to be satisfied....Blessed they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6 Your holy Temple is marvellous in righteousness. And that same temple, brethren, do not imagine to be anything but yourselves. Love ye righteousness, and you are the Temple of God.

9. Hearken to us, O God, our Saviour Psalm 64:5. He has disclosed now Whom he names as God. The Saviour specially is the Lord Jesus Christ. It has appeared now more openly of Whom he had said, Unto You every flesh shall come. That One Man that is taken unto Him into the Temple of God, is both many and is One. In the person of One he has said, Hearken, O God, i.e., to my hunger: and because the same One of many is composed, now he says, Hearken to us, O God, our Saviour. Hear Him now more openly preached: Hearken to us, O God, our Saviour, the Hope of all the ends of the earth and in the sea afar. Behold wherefore has been said Unto You every flesh shall come. From every quarter they come. Hope of all the ends of the earth, not hope of one corner, not hope of Judæa alone, not hope of Africa alone, not hope of Pannonia, not hope of East or of West: but Hope of all the ends of the earth, and in the sea afar: of the very ends of the earth. And in the sea afar: and because in the sea, therefore afar. For the sea by a figure is spoken of this world, with saltness bitter, with storms troubled; where men of perverse and depraved appetites have become like fishes devouring one another. Observe the evil sea, bitter sea, with waves violent, observe with what sort of men it is filled. Who desires an inheritance except through the death of another? Who desires gain except by the loss of another? By the fall of others how many men

wish to be exalted? How many, in order that they may buy, desire for other men to sell their goods? How they mutually oppress, and how they that are able do devour! And when one fish has devoured, the greater the less, itself also is devoured by some greater....Because evil fishes that were taken within the nets they said they would not endure; they themselves have become more evil than they whom they said they could not endure. For those nets did take fishes both good and evil. The Lord says, The kingdom of Heaven is like to a sein cast into the sea, which gathers of every kind, which, when it had been filled, drawing out, and sitting on the shore, they gathered the good into vessels, but the evil they cast out: so it shall be, He says, in the consummation of the world. Matthew 13:47-49 He shows what is the shore, He shows what is the end of the sea. The angels shall go forth, and shall sever the evil from the midst of the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Ha! You citizens of Jerusalem that are within the nets, and are good fishes; endure the evil, the nets break ye not: together with them you are in a sea, not together with them will you be in the vessels. For Hope He is of the ends of the earth, Himself is Hope also in the sea afar. Afar, because also in the sea.

10. Preparing mountains in His strength Psalm 64:6. Not in their strength. For He has prepared great preachers, and those same He has called mountains; humble in themselves, exalted in Him. Preparing mountains in His strength. What says one of those same mountains? We ourselves in our own selves have had the answer of death, in order that in ourselves we should not trust, but in God that raises the dead. 2 Corinthians 1:9 He that in himself does trust, and in Christ trusts not, is not of those mountains which He has prepared in His strength. Preparing mountains in His strength: girded about in power. Power, I understand: girded about, is what? They that put Christ in the midst, girded about they make Him, that is on all sides begirt. We all have Him in common, therefore in the midst He is: all we gird Him about that believe in Him: and because our faith is not of our strength, but of His power; therefore girded about He is in His power; not in our own strength.

11. That troublest the bottom of the sea Psalm 64:7. He has done this: it is seen what He has done. For He has prepared mountains in His strength, has sent them to preach: girded about He is by believers in power: and moved is the sea, moved is the world, and it begins to persecute His saints. Girded about in power: that troublest the bottom of the sea. He has not said, that troublest the sea; but the bottom of the sea. The bottom of the sea is the heart of ungodly men. For just as from the bottom more thoroughly all things are stirred, and the bottom holds firm all things: so whatsoever has gone forth: by tongue, by hands, by various powers for the persecution of the Church, from the bottom has gone forth. For if there were not the root of iniquity in the heart, all those things would not have gone forth against Christ. The bottom He troubled, perchance in order that the bottom He might also empty: for in the case of certain evil men He emptied the sea from the bottom, and made the sea a desert place. Another Psalm says this, That turns sea into dry land. All ungodly and heathen men that have believed were sea, have been made land; with salt waves at first barren, afterwards with the fruit of righteousness productive. That troublest the bottom of the sea: the sound of its waves who shall endure? Who shall endure, is what? What man shall endure the sound of the waves of the sea, the behests of the high powers of the world? But whence are they endured? Because He prepares mountains in His strength. In that therefore which he has said who shall endure he says thus: We ourselves of our own selves should not be able to endure those persecutions, unless He gave strength.

12. The nations shall be troubled Psalm 64:8. At first they shall be troubled: but those mountains prepared in the strength of Christ, are they troubled? Troubled is the sea, against the mountains it dashes: the sea breaks, unshaken the mountains have remained. The nations shall be troubled, and all men shall fear.

Behold now all men fear: they that before have been troubled do now all fear. The Christians feared not, and now the Christians are feared. All that did persecute do now fear. For He has overcome that is girded about with power, to Him has come every flesh in such sort, that the rest by their very minority do now fear. And all men shall fear, that inhabit the ends of the earth, because of Your signs. For miracles the Apostles wrought, and thence all the ends of the earth have feared and have believed. Outgoings in morning and in evening You shall delight: that is, You make delightful. Already in this life what is there being promised to us? There are outgoings in morning, there are outgoings in the evening. By the morning he signifies the prosperity of the world, by the evening he signifies the trouble of the world....At first when he was promising gain, it was morning to you: but now evening draws on, sad you have become. But He that has given you an outgoing in the morning, will give one also in the evening. In the same manner as you have contemned the morning of the world by the light of the Lord, so contemn the evening also by the sufferings of the Lord, in saying to your soul, What more will this man do to me, than my Lord has suffered for me? May I hold fast justice, not consent to iniquity. Let him vent his rage on the flesh, the trap will be broken, and I will fly to my Lord, that says to me, Do not fear them that kill the body, but the soul are not able to kill. Matthew 10:28 And for the body itself He has given security, saying, A hair of your head shall not perish. Luke 21:18 Nobly here he has set down, You will delight outgoings in morning and in evening. For if you take not delight in the very outgoing, you will not labour to go out thence. You run your head into the promised gain, if you are not delighted with the promise of the Saviour. And again you yield to one tempting and terrifying, if you find no delight in Him that suffered before you, in order that He might make an outgoing for you.

13. You have visited the earth, and hast inebriated it Psalm 64:9. Whence hast inebriated the earth? Your cup inebriating how glorious it is! You have visited the earth, and hast inebriated it. You have sent Your clouds, they have rained down the preaching of the truth, inebriated is the earth. You have multiplied to enrich it. Whence? The river of God is filled with water. What is the river of God? The people of God. The first people was filled with water, wherewith the rest of the earth might be watered. Hear Him promising water: If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink: he that believes in Me, rivers of living water from his belly shall flow: John 7:37-38 if rivers, one river also; for in respect of unity many are one. Many Churches and one Church, many faithful and one Bride of Christ: so many rivers and one river. Many Israelites believed, and were fulfilled with the Holy Spirit; from thence they were scattered abroad through the nations, they began to preach the truth, and from the river of God that was filled with water, was the whole earth watered. You have prepared food for them: because thus is Your preparing. Not because they have deserved of You, whom You have forgiven sins: the merits of them were evil, but You for Your mercy's sake, because thus is Your preparing, thus You have prepared food for them.

14. The furrows thereof inebriate You Psalm 64:10. Let there be made therefore at first furrows to be inebriated: let the hardness of our breast be opened with the share of the word of God, The furrows thereof inebriate You: multiply the generations thereof. We see, they believe, and by them believing other men believe, and because of those others believe; and it is not sufficient for one man, that having become himself a believer, he should gain one. So is multiplied seed too: a few grains are scattered, and fields spring up. In the drops thereof it shall rejoice, when it shall rise up. That is, before it be perchance enlarged to the bulk of a river, when it shall rise up, in its drops, that is, in those meet for it, it shall rejoice. For upon those that are yet babes, and upon the weak, are dropped some portions of the sacraments, because they cannot receive the fullness of the truth. Hear in what manner he drops upon babes, while they are rising up, that is, in their recent rising having small capacities: the Apostle says, To you I could not speak as if to spiritual, but as if to carnal, as if to babes in Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:1 When he says, to

babes in Christ, he speaks of them as already risen up, but not yet meet to receive that plenteous wisdom, whereof he says, Wisdom we speak among perfect men. 1 Corinthians 2:6 Let it rejoice in its drops, while it is rising up and is growing, when strengthened it shall receive wisdom also: in the same manner as an infant is fed with milk, and becomes fit for meat, and nevertheless at first out of that very meat for which it was not fit, for it milk is made.

15. You shall bless the crown of the year of Your goodness Psalm 64:11. Seed is now sowing, that which is sown is growing, there will be the harvest too. And now over the seed the enemy has sown tares; and there have risen up evil ones among the good, false Christians, having like leaf, but not like fruit. For those are properly called tares, which spring up in the manner of wheat, for instance darnel, for instance wild oats, and all such as have the first leaf the same. Therefore of the sowing of the tares thus says the Lord: There has come an enemy, and has sown over them tares; Matthew 13:25 but what has he done to the grain? The wheat is not choked by the tares, nay, through endurance of the tares the fruit of the wheat is increased. For the Lord Himself said to certain workmen desiring to root up the tares, Suffer ye both to grow unto the harvest. Matthew 13:30 ...Conquer the devil, and you will have a crown. You shall bless the crown of the year of Your goodness. Again he makes reference to the goodness of God, lest any one boast of his own merits. Your plains shall be filled with abundance.

16. The ends of the desert shall grow fat, and the hills shall be encircled with exultation Psalm 64:12. Plains, hills, ends of the desert, the same are also men. Plains, because of the equality: because of equality, I say, from thence just peoples have been called plains. Hills, because of lifting up: because God does lift up in Himself those that humble themselves. Ends of the desert are all nations. Wherefore ends of the desert? Deserted they were, to them no Prophet had been sent: they were in like case as is a desert where no man passes by. No word of God was sent to the nations: to the people Israel alone the Prophets preached. We came to the Lord; the wheat believed among that same people of the Jews. For He said at that time to the disciples, You say, far off is the harvest: look back, and see how white are the lands to harvest. There has been therefore a first harvest, there will be a second in the last age. The first harvest was of Jews, because there were sent to them Prophets proclaiming a coming Saviour. Therefore the Lord said to His disciples, See how white are the lands to harvest: John 4:35 the lands, to wit, of Judæa. Other men, He says, have laboured, and into their labours you have entered. John 4:38 The Prophets laboured to sow, and you with the sickle have entered into their labours. There has been finished therefore the first harvest, and thence, with that very wheat which then was purged, has been sown the round world; so that there arises an other harvest, which at the end is to be reaped. In the second harvest have been sown tares, now here there is labour. Just as in that first harvest the Prophets laboured until the Lord came: so in that second harvest the Apostles laboured, and all preachers of the truth labour, even until at the end the Lord send unto the harvest His Angels. Aforetime, I say, a desert there was, but the ends of the desert shall grow fat. Behold where the Prophets had given no sound, the Lord of the Prophets has been received, The ends of the desert shall grow fat, and with exultation the hills shall be encircled.

17. Clothed have been the rams of the sheep Psalm 64:13: with exultation must be understood. For with what exultation the hills are encircled, with the same are clothed the rams of the sheep. Rams are the very same as hills. For hills they are because of more eminent grace; rams, because they are leaders of the flocks...They shall shout: thence they shall abound with wheat, because they shall shout. What shall they shout? For a hymn they shall say. For one thing it is to shout against God, another thing to say a hymn; one thing to shout iniquities, another thing to shout the praises of God. If you shout in blasphemy, thorns you have brought forth: if you shout in a hymn, you abound in wheat.

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