

# “MAY ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE THEE!”

## PSALM 67

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### INTRODUCTION

Although this psalm begins at home [v. 1] and returns to pause there a moment before the end, [vv. 6-7a] its thought always flies to the distant peoples and to what awaits them when the blessing that has reached ‘us’ reaches all”. Only once does the psalmist use the past tense—v. 6a; this may possibly indicate his presence at some kind of “harvest home” festival. Yet, such an emphasis on nature and its produce becomes completely overshadowed by his focus on the surrounding peoples and their need, and the psalmist is stirred by hopes that have no material or self-regarding element; otherwise, he focuses almost entirely on the benefit accruing to the surrounding nations and not upon himself and Israel.

We may compare psalm 65 with this psalm; there David balanced his interest in material provisions (vv. 9-13) with the provision for spiritual hunger given to those whom God chooses to be brought near Him and to dwell in His courts (v. 4) and even for those who come to trust God “at the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea.” In this psalm the focus is on man’s need of God Himself. The psalmist here gives one of the clearest OT presentations of the fact that God had called Israel to be a nation that would represent Him to the world; Israel was a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:5-6). Israel did not do a very good job of fulfilling that divinely intended responsibility, but here we are reminded vividly of its importance. Although this psalm is not technically a prophecy, it is the fervent expression of a well-grounded hope.

The background of this psalm is twofold: the Covenant with Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3, and the Priestly blessing given to the people of Israel in Numbers 6:24-26.

- The point of this psalm is that God blesses His people so that they can be a blessing to the world.

### **GOD HAS BLESSED YOU. NOW BE A BLESSING TO THE WORLD AROUND YOU!**

#### I. MAKE KNOWN GOD’S WAY AND HIS SALVATION (1-2)

##### A. God’s blessing to His people (1)

1. God is been gracious.
2. God is blessing us.
3. God makes “His face to shine upon us.” Israel desires for itself the unveiled presence of the light-diffusing loving countenance of its God. For God’s “face”—manifestation of Himself in His attributes—to shine on His people is the indication of His presence of blessing and favor. If He were opposed His would turn His back.

##### B. God’s blessing through us to the world

Note all of the terms used in this psalm for the world outside God’s people:

- “On the earth”, (v. 2) and in the longer expression “ends of the earth” in v. 7, and again in the combination of “nations on the earth” in v. 4. “Earth” is used in its literal geographical sense in v. 6 for the land worked in agriculture.
- “Among all nations—a commonly used noun for “the nations” outside Israel .
- “The peoples”—a very common term used twice in v. 3, once in the middle of v. 4, twice again in v. 5 which is a repetition of verse 3.
- “The nations” and “the nations of the earth” in v. 4—a less commonly used noun generally used for peoples outside of Israel.

##### 1. Making known God’s “way.”

- God’s “way” is the progressive realization of His counsel. It is the path that He takes and shows others to take, and is the path of salvation that He brings not only to Israel but to all those who call upon and submit to Him.

2. Making known God's "salvation."

- God will "deliver such persons from spiritual bondage and corruption, but also will meet their physical and material needs.
- Such life-giving knowledge has been amazingly fulfilled in the writing of the Scriptures, whose twofold work of imparting truth and salvation is summed up not only here but in **II Timothy 3:15-16**.
- The activity of missionaries and believers in general in taking and using the Scriptures has helped fulfill the truth of this psalm.

II. THE JOY THAT RESULTS FROM SALVATION (3-5)

A. Those who find the true God and his salvation must be full of **praise and thanksgiving**—double emphasis in vv. 3 & 5.

- Not merely "The peoples, but all the peoples.
- There is only one way of salvation, for there is only one true God.

B. Those who find such salvation will be **glad** and will **sing for joy**, or make a joyful shout (v. 4)

1. God "judges" [here with a more positive emphasis] the peoples with **uprightness**.

- "Uprightness" is what is morally level or upright. God's judicial decisions about the moral lives of the nations is based on standards of rectitude consistent with His divine nature.
- He is perfectly fair in His decisions that He passes, and does what is best for His subjects.

2. God as a shepherd **guides** the nations on the earth.

- For the shepherd-like concern of the word "guide" see Ps. 23:3 and also 78:72.
- The divine guidance is **in harmony with His revealed truth and His moral righteousness and uprightness**. The nations are morally and ethically accountable to Israel's God. God's kindness is not of the "capricious" kind that "makes no moral judgments", for such is alien to biblical thought.

III. BLESSINGS UPON GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD LEAD TO THE SALVATION OF OTHERS (6-7).

A. Physical blessings preview spiritual blessings (6a)

- The idea is from Lev. 26:4
- God is no less generous in grace than in nature; in the world of men than in the harvest fields. Possibly the psalmist used the picture of a fruitful crop to promise still better things to come, maybe even as a picture of them.
- Cf. Isaiah 55:10f—the natural elements join with the word of God's to influence people.
- John 4:35—the fields white to harvest are related with the souls of men ripe for harvest
- 12:20-24—Jesus is the grain of wheat falling into the ground in order to "die" so as to "bear much fruit.

B. Such spiritual blessings are broader than for merely one special people—Israel, today the church (7)

1. May God—yes **our** God—bless us. We are called to Him to be His people.

2. The result is that "all the ends of the Earth may fear Him."

3. The **fear of God** is reverential awe, respect, and submission in obedience.

- We are not to monopolize our God; nor will He be any less 'our own God' when all His rightful subjects bow to Him.
- May He so bless His people so as to enable His people to bring blessing on the whole world as stressed in this psalm.

CONCLUSION

*God has been gracious to us and has blessed us, and He has caused His face to shine upon us.*

Thus, we must **make known His ways and his salvation** TO ALL PEOPLES.

**GOD HAS BLESSED YOU. NOW BE A BLESSING TO THE WORLD AROUND YOU!**