

Psalm 67. Purpose of Blessing

Introduction

1. This psalm as well as the next two psalms extol the glories of God manifested through what he would do for his people through Messiah. This psalm focus on His universal reign, while the next on the victory over enemies and the third on the sufferings.
2. Though the author is anonymous, the shared use of **blessing** at the end of Psalm 66 and the start of Psalm 67 suggests a common author.
3. The psalm blends the Abrahamic hope with Aaronic blessing: psalm consists of their immediate material blessing but the scope then enlarges to the whole world.
4. This psalm highlights Israel's global mission to reflect God's heart by being a blessing to all nations. Major themes coming out of this Psalm are:
 - (a) God's people seek blessings so that God may be known and praised (1-2),
 - (b) The nations should appreciate blessings, respect God, and praise God (3-5), and
 - (c) God's people receive blessings so that God may be known and respected (6-7).

Outline

1-2	Prayer to God for Blessing
3-5	Ultimate Blessing is to Rejoice in the Rule of God
6-7	Praising God for His Blessing

Exposition

Prayer to God for Blessing (67:1-2)

67: To the Chief Musician. On Stringed Instruments.
A Psalm. A Song.

**67:1 God be merciful to us and bless us,
And cause His face to shine upon us, Selah**

The psalmist is appealing to the **mercy** of God. We must remember that we as sinners and thereby as enemies of God have no standing before God except we plead for his mercy. The psalmist is also praying for **blessing** from God. God is glorified when we pray to him, since our prayer is an acknowledgment of God's ability to bless us and our dependence on God for all our needs. The term **causing His face to shine upon us** conveys the idea of abiding favor of God with his people. When God shows his favor, no other forces can snatch His blessings from us.

**67:2 That Your way may be known on earth,
Your salvation among all nations.**

The **way** of God is how he deals with his people resulting blessings including the salvation. Psalmist experience his God and now his desire is that the whole world should know his God. If God saved them, then the whole **earth** should **know** this.

The reason why God should bless Israel is that the name of God may be known to all the people. There is no inherent reason why God should bless Israel. Lord's blessing to Israel is a means for the world to know the ways of God. Remember that God's ways are higher than our ways. For instance, holiness is more important to God than the physical blessing.

God desires that the world should know that He **saves** people. This is the reason why He chose Israel so that they would receive the salvation and live a life proclaiming this truth by their words as well as by their lifestyle.

Today the **way** of the Lord is **known** through his Word which imparts truth and leads to **salvation**. Hence, one must turn to the Scripture to understand what are the moral and spiritual principles by which God governs this universe.

Ultimate Blessing is to Rejoice in the Rule of God (67:3-5)

**67:3 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.**

Praising God is the result of knowing His ways and the psalmist wishes that all the people should experience the ways of God and praise Him. The plural word **peoples** and the word **all** points the expectation that every tongue shall confess and every knee shall bend.

**67:4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!
For You shall judge the people righteously,
And govern the nations on earth. Selah**

This verse is the middle verse and carries the central idea of this Psalm. This verse has three lines while all other verses have two lines. This verse is prefixed and post fixed with refrain or the chorus (3,5). There is a reason for all the people to **rejoice** for God is going to **judge** and **govern** (or guide) all the people of the world with **righteousness**. Obviously, Messianic millennial rule is anticipated here.

**67:5 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.**

Like the refrain in verse 3, the psalmist affirms his desire that **praising** God should come from **all the people**. Though, Israel has a special relation with God, one should not forget the fact that He is the creator of all.

Praising God for His Blessing (67:6-7)

**67:6 Then the earth shall yield her increase;
God, our own God, shall bless us.**

God's desire is that the whole **earth** receive His blessing. Though this blessing is marred in a sin-infested world, it is evident in the harvest. Beyond any doubt, God's blessing can be seen even in material prosperity.

**67:7 God shall bless us,
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.**

Culmination of God's **blessing** will be the knowledge of Him that results in a reverential **fear** of Him.

Application

1. We should experience the salvation of the Lord to the point that it creates a desire on others to follow the Lord.
2. We should praise God for all the blessing including all the material blessing.
3. We should reflect the missional heart of God by beginning to pray for those around.
4. We can pray boldly since He is our God, however, He is not ours to monopolize.
5. We are truly blessed when we become a blessing to others; or in other words, our blessings are a means to bless others.
6. The motive behind praying for our personal needs is that through that people may be saved and they may worship God.

Additional Resources

1. This small psalm has a chiasm structure:

Reason to Praise God

- (1) A. Request for blessing
- (2) B. Result in universal blessing - spiritual
- (3) C. Refrain - All to Praise God
- (4) D Rejoice in God's rule
- (5) C' Refrain - All to Praise God
- (6) B' Result in universal blessing - physical
- (7) A' Remain in the blessing

2. This Psalm has several connection with other portions of the Scripture. This includes:
- (a) The Psalmist's desire is that the whole nation will be blessed is a prayer based on the promise God gave to Abraham Gen. 12:3. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed
 - (b) The blessing in this Psalm (1) is a reminder of the high priestly blessing of Aaron Num. 6:23-27. "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: 24 "The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; 26 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." ' 27 "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them" Psa. 31:16 Make Your face shine upon Your servant . . .).
 - (c) The blessing is a reality on behalf of God's people (6-7), even when the gentile king like Cyrus who do not know that it is God who blesses them Isa. 45:1-5. "Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held— To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: 2 'I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel. 4 For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me. 5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me
 - (d) The ways of God is entirely different from what a natural man thinks Isa. 55:8-9. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And

My thoughts than your thoughts

(e) When all the people praise God, then it will be in different languages. Partial fulfillment of this is seen in the NT Acts 2:1-13. When the Day of Pentecost had fully come . . . 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. . . . 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” . . .

3. The address to congregation, then God, and then again the congregation, the refrain (3,5), and the pause (Selah after 1 and 4) reveal musical aspect of this psalm. This can be a thanksgiving song after a bountiful harvest, the theme goes even to a greater blessing. The leader recites verse 1. After a pause filled with music, the choir responds (2). All the congregation unite in verse 3. The leader recite verse 4 on the rule of God in all the earth, followed by another pause and repeated response by the congregation (5). The choir acknowledges the harvest (6) and the leader concludes by the hope of the fear of God on all the earth.
4. This Psalm, like Psalm 65 and 66, has a universal element (2, 3, 4, 5, 7). The goal of YHWH is that the world may know Him (2a) and be saved (2b). God makes Himself known through His acts of creation, election, and redemption. These are recorded in Scripture and all the promises will be fulfilled through the Messiah.
5. God is gracious, one who blesses, one who cause His face shine on His people. The people respond by praising, by rejoicing, and by singing for joy.