

# Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: The Master Musician's Melodies

Bereans Sunday School  
Placerita Baptist Church  
2006

by  
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## Psalm 67 — A Missionary Psalm

### 1.0 Introducing Psalm 67

- See “Introducing Psalm 66” for the previous psalm.
- “A Song” in the headings of Psalms 62–68 links them together in a group.
- Psalms 65–68 involve harvest as a sub-theme (65:9-13; 66:12; 67:6; 68:8).
- Synagogues sometimes display Psalm 67 on the front of the reader's stand. They arrange the psalm's words in the form of a seven-branched menorah.

### 2.0 Reading Psalm 67 (NAU)

67:1 A Psalm. A Song.

**A** God be gracious to us and bless us,  
And cause His face to shine upon us— **Selah.**

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

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

**C** 67:4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy;  
For You will judge the peoples with uprightness  
And guide the nations on the earth. **Selah.**

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

**A'** 67:6 The earth has yielded its produce; **a**  
God, our God, blesses us. **b**

67:7 God blesses us, **b'**  
That all the ends of the earth may fear Him. **a'**

For the choir director.

### 3.0 Understanding Psalm 67

#### 3.1 Outline

- I. Blessing for Redemption of the Nations (vv. 1-3)
- II. Blessing for Rejoicing by the Nations (vv. 4-5)
- III. Blessing for Reverence from the Nations (vv. 6-7)



#### 3.2 Notes

- **v. 1 Aaronic Blessing**
  - Psalm 67 opens with an adaptation of the high priestly blessing from Numbers 6:22-27—
    - <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup> “Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, ‘Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them:
    - <sup>24</sup> The LORD bless you, and keep you;
    - <sup>25</sup> The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you;
    - <sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.’
    - <sup>27</sup> “So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.”
  - Note the absence of “LORD” (Yahweh) in Psalm 67 as compared to the Aaronic blessing. The psalm’s focus is primarily on the nations, not Israel. (See notes on Psalm 64, “Introducing Psalm 64.”)
  - Compare Psalms 4:6; 29:11; 31:16; 80:3, 7, 19.
- **v. 1 “God . . . bless us”**
  - See Psalm 66:20—“Blessed be God.” The repetition of “blessed” could be one of the reasons for placing Psalm 67 after Psalm 66.
  - The concept of blessing brackets the entirety of Psalm 67 (note the repetitions at the end of the psalm (vv. 6, 7)).
  - The references to blessing together with the universal theme of the psalm (see the discussion of vv. 1, 4 below) remind the reader of Genesis 12:1-3—
    - <sup>1</sup> Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you;
    - <sup>2</sup> And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so **you shall be a blessing;**
    - <sup>3</sup> And **I will bless those who bless you,** And the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**”
  - The first blessing looks back to the time of Moses; the second looks back further to the time of Abraham.

- ✓ “Standing further back, we can see further ahead, and that is the vision of Psalm 67.”—Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms 1–72: Songs for the People of God*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 233.
- **v. 1** “cause His face to shine upon us”
  - God’s face shining upon His people is a metaphor expressing His favor.
  - See Psalms 31:16; 80:3, 7, 19; 119:135; Daniel 9:17.
- **vv. 1, 4** “Selah”
  - “Selah” marks statements worthy of meditation.
  - In most cases “Selah” also signals section divisions within a psalm.
  - The first occurrence (v. 1) highlights the adaptation of the Aaronic blessing pronounced upon Israel.
  - The second occurrence (v. 4) highlights God’s blessing of the nations.
    - ✓ This same verse is bracketed by the two refrains.
    - ✓ Such a confluence of focusing elements marks the centrality of verse 4 to the entire psalm. This is its theme.
    - ✓ The frequency of references to the nations (15 out of 53 words = 28%) confirms this theme (“earth,” “all nations,” “peoples”).
- **v. 2** Purpose of Praise
  - As priests of God (note use of the high priestly benediction in v. 1 and see Exodus 19:5-6), God’s people testify of His saving work.
  - See 1 Peter 2:9-10 regarding our own priesthood so that we might “proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
- **vv. 3, 5** Refrain
  - The same verse appears twice in this 7-verse psalm.
  - In this 53-word psalm (in Hebrew), the refrain makes up 12 words or nearly 23% of the psalm.
  - “Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It’s the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God’s glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. . . . (Ps. 67:3-4).”—John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.
- **v. 3** “praise”
  - “Praise” in all of its occurrences in the NAU translation of this psalm is the imperative most often translated as “give thanks.”
    - ✓ See 1 Chronicles 16:4; Psalms 54:6; 57:9; 100:4; 118:21.

- v. 4 “judge . . . And guide”
  - In this context the judging and guiding (or leading) refer to the actions of a ruler.
    - ✓ See Psalms 77:20; 80:1.
  - “Uprightness” or “equity” is a characteristic of the Messiah’s reign.
    - ✓ See Psalms 45:6; 96:10; 98:9; 99:4.
- v. 6 “The earth has yielded its produce”
  - Compare the translation with the future tense in NKJV: “*Then the earth shall yield her increase.*”
    - ✓ The overall content and tone of the psalm argues for a future tense or a wish.
    - ✓ The parallel line in this verse (as well as the first of v. 7) also should be taken as a promise or a prayer (cp. v. 1).
  - See Leviticus 26:4, to which Psalm 67:6 might be referring.
  - Compare Psalm 85:12 and Ezekiel 34:27.

#### 4.0 Singing Psalm 67

**O God, to Us Show Mercy**  
Tune: “The Church’s One Foundation”



O God, to us show mercy and bless us in Thy grace;  
Cause Thou to shine upon us the brightness of Thy face;  
That so Thy way most holy on earth may soon be known,  
And unto every people Thy saving grace be shown.

O God, let all men praise Thee, let all the nations sing;  
In every land let praises and songs of gladness ring;  
For Thou shalt judge the people in truth and righteousness,  
And through the earth the nations shall Thy just rule confess.

O God, let people praise Thee, let all the nations sing,  
For earth in rich abundance to us her fruit shall bring.  
The Lord our God shall bless us, our God shall blessing send,  
And all the earth shall fear him to its remotest end.

— *The Psalter* (1912)

#### **The Lord Bless You and Keep You**

The Lord bless you and keep you  
The Lord make His face to shine upon you  
And be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you  
And give you peace  
And give you peace.

For the Music: <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/mlehr/reflec/blessing/blessing.htm>

### 5.0 Praying Psalm 67



- Lord, bless Your people and show them Your favor. [v. 1]
- Lead me in taking the proclamation of salvation to others. [v. 2]
- Father, cause all peoples to give You praise and rejoice in Your salvation. [vv. 3, 5]
- Thank You for the abundance of Your blessings to us. [vv. 6, 7]

### 6.0 Applying Psalm 67

- God’s blessings are opportunities to witness to unbelievers.

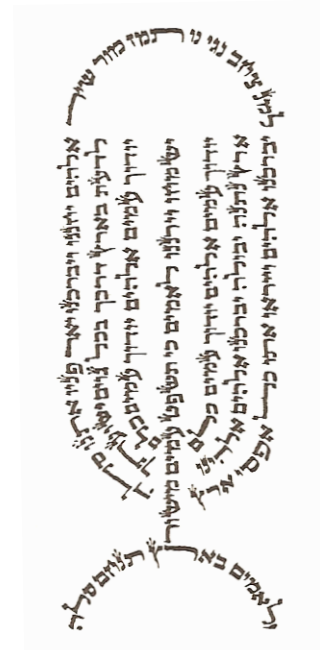
When God blesses his people, it is with the goal of provoking the nations to jealousy so that they too might come to know him, share in his blessings, and have reason to praise him. . . .  
 Since the coming of Christ, the roles of the Jews and Gentiles have been reversed.  
 — Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 12 vols., ed. by Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:442

See Romans 11:14.

**Note:** Some rabbis have pointed out that Psalm 67 (minus its heading) consists of 49 Hebrew words:

- v. 1 [2]: 7 words
- v. 2 [3]: 6 words
- v. 3 [4]: 6 words
- v. 4 [5]: 11 words
- v. 5 [6]: 6 words
- v. 6 [7]: 6 words
- v. 7 [8]: 7 words

They also associated these 49 words with the 49 days between Passover (*Pesach*) and Pentecost (*Shavuot*). Some even practiced reciting this psalm on each of those 49 nights. Cf. Amos Hakham, *Psalms with The Jerusalem Commentary*, 3 vols., The Bible: The Koschitzky Edition (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 2003), 2:69 [also the source for the illustration at the right showing Psalm 67 in the form of a menorah].



It is not without significance that this psalm was sung at the Feast of Pentecost. When one remembers that it was at the Feast of Pentecost that God was to pour out his Spirit on all flesh, . . . the connection of this psalm with the Feast of Pentecost and its missionary message is all the more remarkable.

— Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 31