

A Missionary's Psalm

Psalm 67

Introduction:

Arm of the Lord, awake! Awake!
Put on Thy strength; the nations shake;
And let the world, adoring, see
Triumphs of mercy wrought by Thee!

Say to the heathen, from Thy throne,
"I am Jehovah, God alone!"
Thy voice their idols shall confound,
And cast their altars to the ground.

Let Zion's time of favour come;
O bring the tribes of Israel home;
And let our wondering eyes behold
Gentiles and Jews in Jesus' fold!

Almighty God, Thy grace proclaim
In every clime, of every name,
Till adverse powers before Thee fall,
And crown the Saviour Lord of all!
(*In Faithful Witness*, 46).

- Psalm 67 is anonymous
- It is part of a collection (Ps 65-68) that emphasize God's providence.
- The psalm is one of "blessing" that draws attention to the sovereign lordship of God.
- Some see it as a thanksgiving psalm for harvest time (v.6) that provides the basis for a worldwide witness to the mercy, blessing and goodness of the one true and sovereign God.
- The psalm is rooted in both the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12 and the Aaronic blessing of Numbers 6:24-26.
- Its missionary impulse is made clear by the fact that:
 - 1) Jew and Gentile come together to praise and fear God.

- 2) “The nations” are mentioned 3 times.
- 3) “The earth” is mentioned 4 times.
- 4) “The peoples” are mentioned 5 times.

– With an identical double refrain occurring in vs. 3 and 5, it is easy to divide our psalm into 3 main movements: 1-3, 4-5, and 6-7.

I. God’s salvation must be known among the nations. 67:1-3

The psalmist prays that God’s salvation will be known among all nations (the last part of v.2). What do the nations need to know? What do we need to say?

1) We must tell of His mercy. 67:1

The Psalmist emphasizes that God will do 3 things: 1) Be merciful, 2) Bless 3) Cause your face to shine upon us. This verse draws from Aaron’s blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26. Verses 2-3 make clear that this blessing, originally given to Israel, is now to be expanded to encompass the whole earth and all nations (cf. Proverbs 16:15).

2) We must instruct in His ways. 67:2

- Verse 2 is a beautiful example of semantic parallelism. Though stated in different words, the 2 lines affirm the same truth.
- God blesses us so that the nations will know (*yada*) His way and experience His salvation. Seeing God bless us, the nations will be drawn to come and enjoy His salvation (*yesuah*). “God bless me, but not for me, but for the nations!

3) We must lead in His praise. 67:3

- Verse 3 is repeated in v. 5. The phrases “the peoples” and “all the peoples” dominate the refrain.

- All the peoples praise You as their God. The phrase is repeated for emphasis and poetic effect.
- One Hebrew aid literally renders v. 3 like this, “Thank you, the peoples, O God. Thank you, the peoples, all of them.”

II. God’s righteousness must be known among the nations. 67:4-5

Our God is a great, awesome and transcendent God. He is also a God who gets involved in the world He has made. By entering into our world He reveals His character and puts on display His glory for our enjoyment.

1) Tell them He is a God of justice. 67:4

- The nations are encouraged 1) to be glad and 2) sing for joy.
- Why should we be glad in heart and sing with joy? Two reasons are given:
 - 1) You judge (*NIV*, “rule”) the people righteously (*NIV*, “justly”).
 - 2) [You] govern (*NIV, ESV, NASV*, “guide”) the nations on earth.

Here are allusions to the imagery of the Shepherd King of Psalm 23:3.

2) Tell them He is a God of joy. 67:5

- For the 2nd time we hear the refrain of praise that all the peoples are called to shout to the one true God. The word “all” anticipates that glorious gathering in heaven around the throne of God in Rev. 7:9-10.

III. God’s goodness must be known among the nations. 67:6-7

- This final stanza contains the only mention in the psalm of a bountiful and fruitful harvest. However, in a land where people live from day to day, where starvation is an ever present danger, an abundant harvest would be the occasion for great rejoicing and celebration.

1) **God desires to bless us.** 67:6

- The psalmist can say with confidence “the earth shall yield her increase” (“give her produce”); God our God (equivalent virtually to “Jehovah”), our covenant-keeping, promise-keeping God, He will bless us.
 - What He said to Abraham in Genesis 12 He will do.
 - What He said to the nation in Deuteronomy He will do.
 - What He said to David in 2 Samuel 7 He will do.

2) **God expects that we honor Him.** 67:7

- Verse 7 begins like verse 6 ends; on the theme of God blessing His people. Once again we must not miss the crucial point: He blesses us for the salvation of the nations.
- So a question for all of us to consider: “How do I, at this particular time and place, play my part in the great redemptive drama to see that God, my God, is known, praised, enjoyed and feared among the nations? Ho do I pray? How do I give? Should I be one who goes where no man or woman has gone before?!

Conclusion:

I love the promise of Psalm 86:8-10, “There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations You have made shall come and worship before You O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. For You are great and do wondrous things; You alone are God.”