

Harvest Home
Psalm 67

October 9, 2011

A. Introduction

1. Youthful Memories

2. Today Thanksgiving Sunday, 'Harvest Home'^A

3. The structure of this Psalm

B. Theme: God in Blessing Proclaims the Gospel 67:1-2, 6-7

1. Prayer and Blessing (v 1)^B

2. Basis of the Prayer for Blessing (v 2)^C

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C. Chorus: Praise as the Nations Perceive the Truth 67:3, 5

1. the chorus – let them praise

2. goes far beyond Israel's borders^E

D. Message: Nations Becoming Part of God's People 67:4

1. Bless God's people that the world hear the message

2. God's purpose is salvation

E. Conclusion: My greatest reason for thanksgiving is ...

^A Psalm 65:9-13

^B Numbers 6:23-27, Leviticus 26:3-4

^C John 14:6, 4:22

^D Matthew 5:45

^D Matthew 22:42

^E Genesis 12:2-3, Rev 7:9-10

A. Introduction

1. Youthful memories

- a. there are some things that stand out from my very early days when I lived with a Pennsylvania Dutch family just outside of Markham
- b. there were the dark curtains over the windows before the coal oil lamp was lit – because it was war time
- c. there was a barn raising with families attending from all around with the men working, the women preparing food
- d. there were the times I played with others in the loft of the church stables when we should have been in church
- e. and at thanksgiving there was the marvellous Harvest Home display by the farmers which was later given to the poor of the region

2. today is Thanksgiving Sunday, the time of Harvest Home

- a. here again comes the time when we look out upon the fields and they are being reaped of all the good things God has made to grow in them
- b. in the Jewish year there were a number of feasts that celebrated the harvest, as various crops yielded their abundance:
 - (A) the giving of the first fruits which took place at Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - (B) the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, when the early crops would be harvested, and the later crops are ripening in the fields– it is probably this that is commemorated in Psalm 65:9-13, 'You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth. You water its furrows abundantly, You settle its ridges, You soften it with showers, You bless its growth. You have crowned the year with Your bounty, And Your paths drip with fatness. The pastures of the wilderness drip, And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing. The meadows are clothed with flocks And the valleys are covered with grain; They shout for joy, yes, they sing.'

(1) these words not only celebrate what God has provided thus far, but are also an expression of

faith of His continuing provision

(2) they look forward to ...

- c. our Psalm for today, Psalm 67, which was written as a celebration of the bringing in of the final harvest
 - (A) this took place in the seventh month of the Jewish religious year,
 - (B) the first month of their civil year, which is celebrated by Rosh Hashana and begins in late September or early October
- d. before reading this Psalm, let me draw your attention to its structure, so that it may unfold in your mind during the reading
 - (A) it begins and ends with a statement of a theme, with two verses at the beginning and two at the end
 - (B) next to the statements of theme, are two choruses of praise, in verses 3 and 5
 - (C) and, right in the centre of the Psalm, in verse 4, comes the message arising out of the theme

3. Let us now read this Psalm 67

1 ¶ For the choir director; with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. God be gracious to us and bless us, [And] cause His face to shine upon us— Selah. 2 That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. 3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 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. 5 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 6 The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. 7 God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.

B. Theme: When God Blesses His People, It Proclaims His Gospel 67:1-2, 6-7

- 1. The Psalm starts with a prayer and a blessing (verse 1)
 - a. For the choir director; with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us— Selah.
 - b. possibly David wrote this Psalm, but another possibility is its being written three years after the deliverance from the Assyrian when the fields of Judah were again producing their harvest – in any case, the Jews from ancient times used it as a regular hymn in the temple services

- c. the word '[gracious](#)' can also be rendered as 'show pity, or compassion; be merciful' but usually in the OT it has this idea of showing favour
 - d. in any event, what is being asked for, that is that God would bless His people, is not being asked on the basis of having been earned, but rather that it be given as a mark of God's favour towards those people whom He has made His own
 - e. with the thought of blessing in mind, the psalm quotes from the great high-priestly blessing of Numbers 6:23-27 – '[Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, "Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: "The Lord bless you, and keep you; The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace." So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.](#)'
 - f. this was a blessing particularly for Israel, for the people of God, and as it was framed in three distinct parts, so in this Psalm 67, three times the plea is made, 'God bless us' – O God, bestow your blessing upon us who are Your people
 - g. such blessing of God to His people was promised conditionally in Leviticus 26:3-4, '[If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.](#)'
 - h. but neither the Jews nor us can claim we have kept that condition – we ask for blessing on the basis of God's grace and that He may be exalted
2. Here is the basis of requesting God's blessing on us (verse 2)
- a. [That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations.](#)
 - b. God's way and God's salvation are the same
 - c. Jesus did not speak haphazardly when He said, '[I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.](#)' (John 14:6)
 - d. when He told the woman of Samaria that 'salvation is from the Jews' (John 4:22), He was particularly speaking of Himself
 - e. so God's blessing of His people – be they of the OT or the NT – is a material demonstration, that He alone is the one, true God
 - f. there are 3 different words translated as '[peoples](#)' or '[nations](#)' in this Psalm

- (A) the word used in this verse is the one also translated 'heathen' and means those who are outside of the people of God
 - (B) the second word, used in the next verse has the meaning of 'races or nations' and so includes all people, near and far
 - (C) the last word, used in verse 4, conveys the idea of a tribe, a related community or social group; man as created by God to have relationships
- g. using these words as well as the word 'earth', the Psalm is declaring that through God giving His blessing to His people, there is a universal proclamation of Who God is and of His work of salvation
- h. this, then, gives rise to a chorus of praise which we will look at in a moment, after considering the second statement of the theme

3. The Harvest Home demonstrates God's goodness to all (verse 6)

- a. **The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us.**, or 'God, our God, O bless us' – either a statement or a prayer
- b. there is here an application which goes beyond the people of God
- c. there will be many spending this holiday weekend rejoicing in the plenteous goodness of the year and glorying in the fall colours, who, however, give little or no thought to God in their thanksgiving celebrations – yet it is God who has been good to them
- d. for as Jesus taught us to be gracious to all, '**so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**' (Matthew 5:45)
- e. but it is in a particular way that as God blesses His people, His OT or His NT church, then he provides a specific instance of the fact that He is God
- f. and this morning we look on the harvest as resulting not from man's hard work, but as the gracious gift of a good God to us who are His people
- g. it is not something that we have earned, even though people have worked hard to produce it
- h. so that we confess and pray that God's blessing be upon us for a spiritual reason

4. That people may know our God in personal way (verse 7)

- a. [God blesses us](#), (or, 'God bless us') [That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.](#)
- b. in verse 2 it was so that people might know: that they may perceive the facts of the case and recognize that there is but one true God and but one true way; that there is a great question which must be settled for spiritual peace: '[What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?](#)' (Matthew 22:42)
- c. but here, the word is 'fear' – not terror, nor horror – but reverential fear, the awe that falls upon the person who has met God in Christ Jesus, and sees him or herself as a sinner worthy only of punishment and, calling upon His grace and mercy for salvation, has a life relationship with his God
- d. this, then is a theme that is worthy of a chorus of praise

C. Chorus: Praise As the Nations Perceive the Truth 67:3, 5

- 1. and here is the chorus
 - a. verse 3: [Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.](#)
 - b. verse 5: [Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You.](#)
 - c. God's purpose from the beginning of time was that from the seed of the woman, that is that Christ who was born of the flesh of the virgin, Mary, the descendant of Eve the mother of all living; that, I say, from Christ all mankind should be given the opportunity to find salvation

- 2. while this Psalm is rejoicing in the special blessings, and asking for special blessings, to Israel as the people of God
 - a. the purpose goes beyond Israel, recognizing that Israel's privilege as God's chosen people under the old Covenant, was not merely for their own benefit but to fulfil the promise to Abraham: '[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; 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.](#)' (Genesis 12:2-3)
 - b. and that ultimately this purpose will be fulfilled is found in the spiritual summation book of the Bible, Revelation 7:9-10, '[After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."](#)' – God's free offer of salvation

will have its harvest of fruit from every nation and tribe and people and tongue.

3. and so, there is a side truth here, that as we have been blessed individually, so we should give so that this message may go out to all nations

D. Message: The Nations Will Become Part of God's People 67:4

1. the Psalmist asks for blessing for God's people that it may send a message to the world

a. **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. God had a plan even from before the moment that Eve took and ate of the forbidden fruit in the tree in the middle of the garden, and offered it to Adam, and he also took and ate and thus they both separately and in concert disobeyed God and brought sin into their lives and into the world

c. God's plan was to redeem for Himself a people, delivered from the guilt of sin, being delivered from the power of sin through the Holy Spirit

d. and, as this verse tells us, one day delivered from even the presence of sin

e. so that they will join together in praise of God, as we have already read from the book of Revelation

f. the word '**judge**' here is not speaking of a judgement of condemnation, for they are able to sing with joy – but it is the meting out of justice for all the wrongs that have been suffered by God's people in their earthly life; the word '**govern**' or '**guide**' is used of the direction given by a shepherd to his flock

2. God purpose is salvation

a. to the people of the OT who looked forward through faith to the fulfilment of His promise

b. to the people under the NT who look back on the fulfilment of that promise in Christ on the cross, risen from the dead, ascended into heaven

c. for its consummation and completion when He will dwell with His people and wipe the tear from every eye. and there will be no more sickness or pain

d. this is God's message for the world to all who will believe.

E. Conclusion – the Greatest Reason for Thanksgiving Is Knowing God's Salvation

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| ASV | American Standard Version of 1901 |
| AV | Authorized (King James) Version |
| ERV | The Revised Version of 1885 |
| NAS | New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition) |
| NIV | New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society |
| NKJV | New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers |
| NLT | 1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. |
| PHIL | New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips |
| RSV | Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. |
| WEY | The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth |

Some of my favourite commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
- EGT – The Expositor’s Greek Testament, Philippians by H. A. A. Kennedy, Hodder & Stoughton, 1903
- K&D – Commentary on the Old Testament, by Keil & Delitzsch
- Kerux – The sermon and illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick to be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com.