

(How to Understand the KJV Bible) 36 Psalm 67

by Keith Simons

Psalm 67 is a prayer for God's mercy, blessing, and salvation to be known on earth, and for God's way to be followed by all nations.

Duration: 24:02

Scripture: Genesis 12:3, Numbers 6:24-26, Psalm 23:1, Psalm 67, Matthew 6:10

Topics: "KJV Bible", "God's Blessing", "The Kingdom of God"

Description

Keith Simons explores Psalm 67, drawing parallels between this psalm and the Lord's Prayer, emphasizing the themes of God's mercy, blessing, and the desire for His ways to be known across the earth. He highlights the repetitive structure of the psalm, which reflects a deep yearning for God's salvation and governance to extend beyond Israel to all nations. Simons connects the psalm's call for praise and joy among the nations to the future reign of the Messiah, where righteousness will prevail and the earth will yield its increase. He encourages listeners to see the broader implications of the Lord's Prayer as a communal plea for God's kingdom to manifest on earth. Ultimately, the sermon underscores the hope that all nations will come to know and fear God, fulfilling His promise to bless the world through Israel.

Transcript

Welcome. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The Lord's Prayer, of course, from Matthew 6.10. But is the Lord's Prayer in the Old Testament and in particular in the Book of Psalms? Well, it does seem to be based heavily on Psalm 67 and that's the psalm we'll be looking to do to study today.

My name is Keith Symons. I'm a Bible teacher from England and each week I look at a different psalm, verse by verse and word by word, explaining the meanings. So Psalm 67, which some people have called the Lord's Prayer in the Old Testament.

Well, it's not quite the Lord's Prayer but it may well be that Jesus based at least part of his prayer on what's on in this psalm. And that makes this psalm particularly interesting. It's also similar in its structure to the Lord's Prayer.

And another curious fact is that it's repetitive. It repeats a lot of what's in it. But we'll begin, as we usually do, by looking at the title of it, the ancient title, which says, to the chief musician or neginot, a psalm or

song.

The chief musician, as we've often seen, was the leader of the worship in God's house, the temple in Jerusalem. Neginot seems to mean musical instruments, in particular stringed instruments like harps and lutes, the precursor of the guitar. A psalm or song.

These are similar sorts of words. It's like as if we're saying, this is for music, it's for instruments, it's for song. It's repeating the same idea over and over.

This psalm often does that. It repeats the same thoughts over and over in different sorts of ways. Now that we've looked at the title, let's look at verse one.

And that will cause us to realize that just as the Lord's Prayer seems at least in part to be based on this psalm, so this psalm seems to be based on something much earlier in the Bible. Verse one. God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us.

Selah. Okay, and let me turn back to the book of Numbers, to Numbers 6 and verse 24, and we'll find the blessing that God gave to Moses, for Aaron, for Israel's priests, how they were to bless Israel's people. And it reads, the Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. And that very special blessing from Israel's people is the basis of this first verse.

It asks God to be merciful, to be favorable, to show his favor, favor, to show his kindness, and to bless Israel's people, to work in their lives and bring about what he wants in their lives. To cause his face to shine, well, that means, I suppose, to smile towards us. So we've got this same idea three times, God being merciful, God blessing, God causing his face to shine, God smiling.

It's saying, God, we want you to be pleased with us. We want you to do good things in our lives. We're not depending on ourselves.

We're not trying to achieve things by our own ambition. We're depending on you and we're looking to you because you are a good God who rewards those who put their trust in you. And we, Israel's people, desire your blessing, your approval in our lives.

And then it concludes with the word sela. We're never quite sure what that means, but one explanation that's been given is a musical pause. It's a good point often in a psalm just to pause and think about the words we've just read.

On to verse two. So, in verse one, we were accepting this blessing. The priests have spoken the blessing that we've read from the book of Numbers and we, Israel's people, receive that blessing.

We're saying, yes, we want God to be merciful to us and bless us and his face to shine upon us. We want this, but it's for a purpose. And we change from speaking about God and about what we want God to do to speaking to God, that thy way, that God's way may be known upon earth.

God's saving health among all nations. So, it's now taking the form of a prayer. A prayer for what? Well, let's remember what we prayed in the Lord's Prayer.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven, that thy way may be known upon earth. Thy way in the psalm means the same as thy will in the Lord's Prayer. A way literally means a path, a path that you walk on.

So, it's the way in which we conduct ourselves and the way we conduct ourselves should be God's way. In other words, in accordance with God's will and what God wants. But Israel's people here are praying more than that they should do what God wants.

They're praying that the whole world should do what God wants, that thy way may be known upon earth. They want the whole world to turn from its sin and to turn to God's way. They want the foreign nations, which at that time all of them, their official gods, were false gods and idols and evil gods, they want them to turn to the true and living God.

And they are praying that the result of God blessing Israel should be the blessing of the whole earth. Now, where have you heard that before? Well, we turn to the book of Genesis, when God called Abraham and he declared to Abraham in Genesis 12 and verse 3, God said, and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thou and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. In other words, the blessing for Abraham and therefore his descendants, who were Israel's people, was a blessing that should be for the whole world.

The whole world should receive God's blessing, because God hasn't given up on the nations of the world. When God chose Abraham and Abraham's family and the nation of Israel that came from Abraham's family, he chose to bless them so that they could be the means of blessing the whole world. The psalm continues, second half, verse 2, thy saving health among all nations.

Now, this phrase, saving health, it's exactly the same word that is translated salvation elsewhere in the psalms. So the King James Bible translators could have translated it, thy salvation among all nations, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations. It's praying for the salvation of people in all the nations.

But why does it say saving health? Well, this is part of the tradition of Bible comment, Bible translations. There were translations into English before the King James version, and they chose to use the phrase, some of them, saving health. And the King James translators continued that tradition.

They thought it was a good translation. Why is it a good translation? Because salvation means rescue and safety. But often we think of it as just the rescue part, when God rescues us from sin and from hell and from the judgment to come and from death.

And so that rescue idea comes into our mind first, maybe when we think of salvation. But here, it's not talking about a single event, but something continuous. Illness might be a single event, but health has to be continuous.

And so when they pray for thy saving, sorry, thy saving health among all nations, they're praying that all the nations will live in the salvation that God gives, the salvation that comes only from God, that they should live in the way that pleases God because God has saved them. Now, there's a curious thing here. If this had been written in New Testament times, another translation would have been possible here because that word for saving health, salvation, is Yeshua, which is the name of Jesus.

So if this had been written in New Testament times, then this prayer would have read that thy way may be known upon earth, thy Jesus among all nations. And it may be a curiosity, but when we look at it in the light and in the revelation of the New Testament, we see that God's way, God's will, the way God's people, God wants his people to live is shown by Jesus, by what he did, by how he lived. And the way God's salvation is brought to the nations is by Jesus and his death upon the cross, so that people can be forgiven for their sins and come into a right relationship with him.

And so Israel's people then pray in verse three, let the people praise thee, O God. Maybe they're thinking there of the people in their own nation, Israel's people, they're saying, let Israel's people praise thee, O God. But they don't want to finish there, do they? Let all the people praise thee.

Your wonderful news, your good news, your salvation, your way is for the whole world. And when you, God, when you rule fully over earth, you already rule over heaven and earth, but so many wrong things happen on earth. When you rule fully, then the nations will know your ways, they will know your salvation, they will know your Jesus.

Let all the people praise thee, because the whole world will know you in the day that God's Messiah rules. And so they continue in verse four, O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy. When can the nations truly be glad and sing for joy? When Messiah's reign is complete and covers the whole earth. Then the nations will not suffer in the pain of sin and the trouble that their evil deeds have caused, or be under the control of the devil.

No, they will be free at last, free to rejoice before God, free to join Israel's people in, in the words of the heading, then again not. They're sung with their stringed instruments and they're rejoicing their psalm or song. And why will they rejoice? Why will they be glad? Why will they sing for joy? For thou shalt judge the people righteously.

You will be an equitable judge, a fair judge, a right judge. You will no longer have poor people suffering under the bondage of powerful, evil, wealthy people. You'll set people free, Israel's people pray.

You will deliver people from the burden that is upon them, the burden of sin, the burden of cruelty, the burden of wrongdoing, because you're establishing your rule, your government, government upon earth. You will judge the people righteously. You will govern the nations upon earth.

That word for govern, it really means to lead and to guide. It's a word that appears in the 23rd Psalm. It's not describing the government of a powerful king who oppresses his enemies.

It's describing the government of a shepherd who gently leads his sheep from place to place, looking after them, caring for them, because God and the Messiah, when Messiah's rule is complete, will lead the nations. He will look after them as a shepherd looks after a flock of sheep. He will set them free.

He will provide for them. He will look after them. And at that, the psalmist pauses with well-deserved selah.

On to verse 5, and verse 5 is an echo of verse 3. Let the people praise thee, O God. Let all the people praise thee. Yes, when Messiah rules, that will be a time for all the people on earth to praise God, to rejoice before him, to give him honor, to give him worship.

And the whole earth will rejoice at this. Verse 6, then shall the earth yield her increase. Now that in the Hebrew is a perfect tense.

It's usually used to indicate a past thing. And so the usual way to translate it will be the earth has yielded her increase. Her increase means her harvest.

The harvest of the earth has come forth. But sometimes in prophecy, that perfect tense is used to indicate a future event. And that is how the King James translators have understood it here.

And I believe they're correct. Yes, we have harvests on the earth now, and we rejoice, of course, in the harvests. But when Messiah rules, when Messiah's rule is complete, then shall the earth yield her increase.

Then there will be a proper reward from the ground. Oh, in the day that Adam sinned, the ground was cursed. This is what God said in Genesis 3, verse 17, the second half of the verse.

Cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.

And thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground. For out of it was thou taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

So the earth was cursed and thorns and thistles it brought forth. But then when Messiah reigns, we think the harvest is abundant for now, but then shall the earth yield her increase. Then the harvest will be the harvest that God intended, not spoiled by all that's wrong in the world, but abundant and plentiful.

And of course, the increase of the earth will not just be in the grain that grows on the earth, but in the people that serve God in the earth, as the whole world turns to God and trusts God. And if that is wonderful, then the people of the world will know God's blessing. But first Israel, of course.

And God, even our own God, shall bless us. Verse 7, God shall bless us. So they repeat the name of God three times.

And what an emphasis that places are on those lines. God really is blessing us. Yes, now, before Messiah's rule is complete and perfect.

Yes, we know God's blessing. Yes, we live in God's blessing. But God, even our God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us. That's how wonderful it will be when Messiah comes. The blessing will be multiplied over and over and over.

And the blessing will not just be for Israel's people, not limited to one nation, because verse 7, all the ends of the earth shall fear him. Then will be truly known the promise that God gave to Abraham. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

They will all know God. They will all fear or respect him. The ends of the earth is a way of describing the whole world.

And fear is a way to describe the respect and the honour that is due to God by the people who are obediently serving him. Yes, they all shall fear him. They all shall bless him.

They all shall know his goodness. And so we turn back to the Lord's Prayer. And, you know, we've got give us this day our daily bread.

Yes, God is providing the bread. Then shall the earth yield her increase. We've got thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven, that thy way may be known upon earth and thy saving health among all nations.

Perhaps we thought of the Lord's Prayer as a personal prayer. Perhaps we thought we could pray it, my Father, with heart in heaven. Perhaps we thought, give me this day my daily bread.

Perhaps we thought, forgive me my debts, my sins. But no, it's another prayer, isn't it? It's a prayer like in Psalm 67, for God to complete and to carry out his work on earth till the kingdoms of this world are transformed to the kingdom of his dear Son, our Father, which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. In a moment's time I'm going to read you the whole Psalm, but first my email address 333kjb at gmail.com. Please do write, tell me that you've heard this talk, listen to some more of the talks.

That email address again, 333kjb at gmail.com. Now, here's the whole Psalm, Psalm 67. To the chief musician on Neginot, a psalm or song. God, be merciful unto us and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us, Selah, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth, Selah. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee.

Then shall the earth yield her increase and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

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