

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study guide is to facilitate the study of Psalm 67 as a supplement to the sermon. It is based on my (Michael's) study and meditation on the psalm. This handout can be used for personal study or community group conversation. (I hope you join a group!)

PSALM 67:1-7 ESV

1 To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah 2 that your way may be known on earth, your saving power 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 judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! 6 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

STRUCTURE (Adapted from Dorsey)

- A Prayer: that God blesses us for the sake of all nations (1-2)
- B Refrain: "let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!" (3)
- C **CENTER: Prayer for the nations to rejoice in God (4)**
- B' Refrain: "let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!" (5)
- A' Prayer (Answered): that God blesses us for the sake of all nations (6-7)

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

The chiastic structure of Psalm 67 (see comments on verse 4) emphasizes the prayer for all nations to joyfully worship the God of Israel. This theme dominates the entire song, which includes universal language such as "earth" (vv. 2, 6), "nations" (vv. 2, 4), and "peoples... all the peoples" (vv. 3, 4, 5). The Psalmist desires—with deep emotion ("O God!")—that every ethnic group on earth not only obey Israel's God but celebrate Him joyfully. Glad allegiance magnifies God far more than begrudged submission. Since the central concern is worship, the emphasis on joy thus makes sense. God is maximally glorious and therefore merits maximal gladness.

Not only is God maximally glorious, but He is the king over all nations. This simple reason explains why Israel—a relative hiccup on the radar of history—could claim predominance for what the nations assumed to be a local deity. The Psalmist insists through this prayer that Yahweh is not just local; He is everyone's God—they just don't know it yet. One day, Psalm 67 insists, they will.

The Psalm has both a historic and eschatological flavor to it. In history, God had already given sufficient reason for the nations to worship Him—judging and leading them with equity (v. 4) and granting them abundant harvests (v. 6; cf. Acts 14:17-18). "May the nations be glad"—the Psalmist prays—today!"

Unfortunately, most of them did not find God, which leads to the eschatological fulfillment. Unless you're a Jew, your act of reading these words bears witness that these prayers have been answered. God answered the Psalmist's longing through the work of Jesus, who "ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). The expansion of God's kingdom will continue until the end of the age when "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" surrounds the throne of Jesus—"standing" like Him in resurrection power (7:9).

The prayer of Psalm 67 finds its root in the famous Aaronic blessing (see comments, verse 1), which itself interprets and applies the Abrahamic blessing. The latter promised that "all the families of the earth" would worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Most of Israel's history revealed an ignorance of her responsibility before the nations. God blessed her to be a blessing, but Israel turned inward, and the blessing became a curse. It became exile and apostasy.

Fortunately, God's promise to Abraham did not depend on Israel's faithfulness. He took salvation into His own hands by sending Jesus. Jesus bore Israel's curse by hanging on a tree, but He rose again three days later so that

Jews and Gentiles might be blessed through Him, and so God might remain faithful to His promise to Abraham. All the nations would indeed be blessed through Israel, for through Israel, came Jesus. As we read in Romans 9:5: *"To them [Israel] belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."*

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

1 To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah

—This repeats the famous Aaronic blessing of Numbers 6:22-27: *"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, 'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.' So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."*

—The priests spoke this prayer over the children of Israel to "put my name" on them and "bless them." To put God's name on them meant they would be stamped with the divine appellation, Yahweh, repeated three times in this three-line prayer. The repetition emphasizes God—and our covenantal relationship with Him—as the source of blessing.

—I am reminded of the many times throughout Scripture that God saves "for my name's sake." For instance, Ezk. 20:44: *"And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD."* Because we bear God's name, God has our back. In defending us, God defends His own reputation. In blessing us, He magnifies His own glory.

—Psalm 44 helps us interpret the meaning of God's face shining upon us:

- 44:1-3: *"O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old: you with your own hand drove out the nations, but them you planted; you afflicted the peoples, but them you set free; for not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you delighted in them."*
- The Psalmist attributes the supplanting of godless nations in Canaan to "the light of your face, for you delighted in them [Israel]." God's face means His presence and favor.
- Later in Psalm 44, the Psalmist laments that God has hidden His face—removed His presence and favor—and subjected Israel to her enemies (44:24: "Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?").

—Ross: "The expression of a shining face is a human description (an anthropomorphism) of God's pleasure and delight: the face represents his presence, and the shining his grace—the beaming expression of a pleased father giving favors to his children."

2 that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.

—"that" provides the purpose for the prayer of verse 1. The prayer for blessing is not about living the high life; it's about spreading the good news to the ends of the earth.

—The Aaronic blessing was really just a prayerful expression of the Abrahamic blessing. Like prosperity preachers today, Israel turned her blessing inward. She became insular. But God blessed Abraham to be a blessing. God always and only blesses us to be a blessing. Whether we receive spiritual or material blessings, we must not be a storehouse but a distribution center. The nations are blessed not by our hoarding but by our generosity—spiritually and materially.

—Here is the Abrahamic blessing in Gen. 12:1-3: *"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"*

- Broken down into seven parts, God promises Abraham: (1) a great nation, (2) to bless you, (3) a great name, (4) be a blessing, (5) bless those who bless, (6) curse those who curse, (7) all families of earth blessed.
- The number seven reveals both the divine source and the fullness of blessing promised.
- The Aaronic blessing was always intended to interpret and apply the Abrahamic blessing, which included "all the families of the earth" being "blessed." O, how easily we turn the blessing of God inward!

—“that your way may be known”:

- The Hebrew word for “known” suggests not intellectual but intimate knowledge. The parallel phrasing in the second half of the verse—“your saving power”—means that the Psalmist wants the nations to know God and His ways intimately.

—“your saving power”:

- Through our new covenant lens, God’s “saving power” most naturally refers to salvation from sin, Satan, and hell. However, under the Old Covenant, they more naturally imagined salvation from earthly enemies.
- Nevertheless, the entire priestly structure—with blood sacrifices, a mercy seat, and a Day of Atonement—suggests a high awareness of salvation from sin and death. It also implies awareness of what we are saved for: a covenant relationship with Yahweh.
- The Psalmist seems to emphasize God’s saving power primarily in terms of salvation FROM sin and death and FOR an intimate relationship with God (“that your way may be *known*”).
- Despite the spiritual emphasis, we should not ignore the material dimensions. Later the Psalmist talks about the “harvest,” which is both spiritual and material. In its consummate expression—when Christ returns and heaven/earth become one—God’s saving power will manifest in full spiritual and material blessing. This will include God’s “saving power” from human enemies who wish to annihilate the church.

—“among all nations”:

- Israel’s mission was more centripetal (inward) than centrifugal (outward). If you picture a fast-spinning merry-go-round, the person holding on feels *centrifugal* force pushing him/her out. Shifting the frame of reference from the person to the merry-go-round, the latter undergoes *centripetal* force, directed inward, maintaining circular motion. Picture the earth revolving around the sun. Centripetal motion maintains the orbit.
- In special cases (Jonah), Israel went out like missionaries to the nations. However, more commonly, God intended to bless them in the land for the sake of other nations, whose populations would one day stream in and worship the God of Israel.
- At Pentecost, the mission shifted *centrifugally*. Instead of the people streaming into Israel, the Spirit fell on 120 Jews and fanned out from there. Psalm 67 foreshadows this.
- Spurgeon: “As showers which first fall upon the hills afterwards run down in streams into the valleys, so the blessing of the Most High comes upon the world through the church. We are blessed for the sake of others as well as ourselves.”
- Spurgeon: “Despite the gloomy notions of some, we cling to the belief that the kingdom of Christ will embrace the whole habitable globe, and that all flesh shall see the salvation of God: for this glorious consummation we agonize in prayer.”

3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!

—This line seems to burst from the Psalmist’s heart. He repeats it twice for emphasis (see refrain, verse 5). There’s even a refrain inside of this refrain! He prays twice for “the peoples” to praise God.

—We feel the emotion of the Psalmist with “O God”. We should feel a fiery passion to see God passionately worshiped by all peoples. True worshipers long for more worshipers to join them.

—Not only that, but we long for God to be worshiped by all “peoples”. The Psalmist emphasizes this by not only repeating the whole line in verses 3 and 5... not only by repeating “peoples” twice within each line... but by adding “all the” in the last half. Let “ALL THE peoples praise you”, he sings. He emphatically wants us to know how passionate he is about every single people group on earth coming to the saving knowledge of the God of Israel.

—So many of the Psalms aim for this same eschatological vision, that one day every people group on earth will worship God. Here is a sampling:

- 2:8: “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.”
- 22:27: “All the ends of the **earth** shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.”
- 33:8: “Let all the **earth** fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!”

- 46:10: "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"
- 65:5, 8: "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the **earth**... so that those who dwell at the ends of the **earth** are in awe at your signs..."
- 68:32: "O kingdoms of the **earth**, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, Selah."
- 72:8: "May he [the king] have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River[fn] to the ends of the earth!"
- 82:8: "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!"
- 83:18: "that they may know that you alone, whose name is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth."
- 96:1, 9, 11, 13: "Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the **earth**... Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the **earth**... Let the heavens be glad, and let the **earth** rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it... before the LORD, for he comes, for he comes to judge the **earth**. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness."
- 97:1: "The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!"
- 98:4: "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!"
- 100:1: "A Psalm for giving thanks. Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the **earth**!"

—The above smattering of verses leaves out many dozens of verses. Countless others invite the nations, kings of nations, the families, the peoples, and even the distant coastlands to praise the God of Israel. Not only did they pray for this, but they expected it would one day happen.

—Their reasoning was simple: God is "the Most High [king] over all the earth." Therefore, He will bring the entire earth under glad submission to His reign.

—A grand vision of God leads to an expansive vision of worship. If He is king over all, then He deserves to be praised by all. Piper says it like this in the opening chapter to his book, Let the Nations Be Glad: *"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. 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. "The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!" (Ps. 97:1). "Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy" (Ps. 67:3–4). But worship is also the fuel of missions. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out, "Let the nations be glad!" if they cannot say from the heart, "I rejoice in the Lord"; "I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High" (Pss. 104:34; 9:2). Missions begins and ends in worship. If the pursuit of God's glory is not ordered above the pursuit of man's good in the affections of the heart and the priorities of the church, man will not be well served, and God will not be duly honored. I am not pleading for a diminishing of missions but for a magnifying of God. When the flame of worship burns with the heat of God's true worth, the light of missions will shine to the peoples on earth in the greatest darkness. And I long for that day to come! Where passion for God is weak, zeal for missions will be weak. Churches that are not centered on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to "declare his glory among the nations" (Ps. 96:3). Even outsiders feel the disparity between the boldness of our claim upon the nations and the blandness of our engagement with God."*

—The bigger our God, the greater our vision for the nations to worship Him with joy. This is our greatest motivation. Even before the desire to see lost people saved, we crave God's honor. Passion to see the lost saved springs from passion for God's glory. The second greatest commandment (love others) flows out of the first (love God). To reverse these commandments throws the universe topsy-turvy and contaminates our mission. This explains why we err when our appeal for missionaries springs primarily from compassion and only secondarily from passion for God's glory. If we prioritize the glory of God, our fire for Him AND for the lost to be saved will burn perpetually like the dancing flame on Israel's altar. But if we prioritize missions over God's glory, the compassion we feel will fizzle, and our mission will flounder.

—We cannot help but marvel at the grandness of the Psalmists' vision. Even at its strongest, Israel never rivaled history's most storied empires. More often, they were a punching bag. How could this small and despised people actually claim that the nations would abandon their gods in exchange for the God of

Israel? Yahweh would have been viewed as a local deity. Yet here I am writing this—and you reading this—thousands of miles and years from the origin of these Psalms. God has done it! The nations have come to faith in Israel's God! He's not a local a cultural deity; He's the King of all! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!

4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah

—"glad... sing for joy": the refrain asked God that the "peoples" might "praise" Him. Lest we imagine some kind of begrudged praise by a defeated foe, the Psalmist clarifies. He calls on God not only to win begrudged acknowledgment but glad hearts.

—"for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth":

- Alternate translations:
 - NKJV: Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth. *Selah*
 - NIV: May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth.
 - CSB: Let the nations rejoice and shout for joy, for you judge the peoples with fairness and lead the nations on earth. *Selah*
 - NASB: May the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with fairness. And guide the nations on the earth. *Selah*
- Translations vary between past and present tense fulfillment. Does the text intend to emphasize God's future judgment and government over the nations? Or a judgment and government that occurs right now?
 - If present-tense, here would be a paraphrase: "God, let the nations worship You joyfully because You have clearly judged and shepherded them in such a way as to earn their praise."
 - If future tense, here would be a paraphrase: "God, let the nations worship You joyfully, for there's coming a time—at the end of the age—when all nations will enjoy Your righteous rule. May they prepare to worship you eternally by worshiping you today!"
- Throughout the Psalter, we have evidence of both kinds of exhortation. An example of the past-tense approach would be Psalm 76:9, which speaks of God's past-tense judgments of the wicked and salvation of the humble, both across the whole earth. An example of the future-tense approach would be Psalm 46:10, which warns us to cease striving against God and acknowledge His glory, for He will one day be exalted in all the earth. In short, we cannot decide which translation matches the author's intent—past or future tense—by comparing it to other Psalms.
- I think the ambiguity could be intentional. Sometimes songs have double meanings. In this case, the Psalmist could on one hand be calling the nations to worship God on account of His works throughout history (past-tense); on the other hand, he could be prophetically envisioning a day when all nations will worship God—a catalyst for nations to begin their glad surrender now, before it's too late. In short, there could be a near-term and long-term fulfillment. This is common throughout the Psalms.
- Here is a paraphrase that includes both near and long-term fulfillments: "God, let the nations worship You joyfully, first, because You have earned their praise by Your works in history (near-term), and second, because You will one day earn the praise of all nations; they are wise to join that future company of worshipers by starting today (long-term)."
- I like the ESV rendering of the verse because the verb tense leaves the timing open. By saying that "you judge... and guide", the language could flexibly apply in the past, present, or future, for God characteristically does these things.
- Ross: "The idea that God judges and lead the nations may be general descriptions for the sovereignty of God, but they may also represent an eschatological theme of what is yet to be. There is a reality to these ideas in the present, but the full realization of them lies in the future."
- Ross: "The Bible makes it clear that he establishes the boundaries of the nations (Deut. 32:8), sets up kings and removes kings (Dan. 2:20-23), raises up nations and gives them success (Isa. 45:1-7)

and destroys them just as easily (Isa: 40:15-17)." Ross makes this point to show that God indeed does shepherd and judge the nations.

- God's judgment of the nations—"you judge the peoples with equity"—does not focus exclusively on judgment against them for wickedness. Rather, it includes all righteous oversight. This is fulfilled partially right now, as Christ reigns from heaven and judges the peoples—His church—with equity. It will be realized consummately when Christ returns. Isa. 11:1-4 includes both the partial and consummate fulfillment of Christ's righteous reign: *"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or **decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.**"*
 - Right now, Christ reigns from heaven. Through His church, He "decides disputes... with righteousness" and "the poor... with equity."
 - At the end of the age, Christ will return and judge the earth. Paul quotes 11:4 to depict the destruction of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:8: "the lawless one... whom the Lord Jesus will **kill with the breath of His mouth**").

—Ancient authors often employed a "chiastic" structure, which looks like a pyramid with parallel steps on either side and emphasizes a central verse or section, while simultaneously inviting comparison between parallel parts. As my outline of the structure displays, Psalm 67 follows a chiastic structure. The structure thus highlights verse 4 as the central message and appeal of the song. God's righteous judgment and shepherding of the nations earns Him the right to be celebrated by those nations, now and forever.

—The centrality of the verse also drives us more emphatically to pray for the consummation of God's righteous reign on the earth. As Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come!" Or as the Apostle Paul said, "Maranatha!"—which means, "Our Lord, come."

5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!

—See comments above for a commentary on this exact same line.

—What do we learn from *the placement* of this prayer in Psalm 67? It comes immediately after the central verse, where the Psalmist has prayed that all the nations rejoice in God for His righteous rule. By framing the central verse, it highlights the Psalmist's central desire—that God be joyfully worshiped by all—and the reason for it: He judges and guides righteously.

—Besides highlighting the central verse, the surrounding parallels in verses 3 and 5 press home the proper application of the Aaronic blessing, which is the extension of Abraham's blessing to the ends of the earth. Had verses 3 and 5 been missing, we would not have felt the same measure of emotion and urgency for God's global mission.

—One difference between verses 3 and 5 is that the Psalmist places the latter next to a verse about the harvest (verse 6). This placement suggests that God grants bountiful harvests to the nations (verse 6) to testify of His worthiness to be praised by all peoples (verse 5). Paul says something similar in Lystra, in Acts 14:16-17: *"In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. **Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.**"* God intended that the nations would observe God's bountiful provision and praise Him for it.

6 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

—Many scholars believe Psalm 67 was sung at a harvest festival because of verse 6. Some have suggested the Feast of Tabernacles, which would have included prayers for future harvests.

—Most of the song has emphasized the spiritual blessings of God's "saving power" (v. 2), but verse 6 apparently returns our focus to material bounty. Again, we cannot perfectly divide the spiritual and material benefits of Abraham's blessing. Genesis repeatedly emphasizes that material blessing landed in the laps of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, even though the covenant was first spiritual. The Mosaic covenant also emphasized material blessings in conjunction with spiritual ones. Prosperity preachers take this to extremes, but it remains true—even in a new covenant era—that God gives to givers. See 2 Cor. 8:10-11: *"He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and*

increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God."

—In the above verses (2 Corinthians), the principle of "blessed to be a blessing" continues. Paul assures the Corinthians that God will "supply" and "multiply" their resources—not to spend on faster private jets—but to expand their "seed for sowing" into the kingdom. They will be "enriched in every way"—spiritually and materially—but only so they can be "generous in every way." God gives to givers. He blesses that we might be a blessing. Hell hoards, but heaven gives.

—Ross: "In this psalm one tangible evidence of God's blessing on the nation is the harvest. But the material blessing cannot be separated from the spiritual enrichment that informs it, for the acknowledgment that the harvest came from God is one of the main reasons for the provision of the harvest."

—God designed Israel to be a "light to the nations" (Isa. 49:6) by so richly blessing them that they would become a blessing to the nations. Gentiles like the Queen of Sheba would stream into Jerusalem, hearing rumors of Yahweh's faithfulness, and they would return home as worshipers. Unfortunately, Israel failed to live up to her side of the covenant. Rather than receiving the covenant blessings of Deuteronomy 28:1-14, she instead received the covenant curses 28:15-68. The question arose, "How will God keep His promise to Abraham—that all the families of the earth would be blessed—when the nation He intended to bless the nations through had become accursed?" The climax of Israel's "cursed" status came at the crucifixion, when the Jews cried out, "His blood be on us and our children" (Matt. 27:25)! Ironically, this climactic moment not only highlighted Israel's covenant failure but Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. Jesus was Yahweh in the flesh—Jewish flesh. Jesus was the "blessed" descendant of Abraham through whom all the nations would be blessed. But how? By bearing our curse for us. Paul puts it like this: "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith*" (Gal. 3:13-14). Having borne the curse on the Cross, God could freely bless all peoples—Jewish and Gentile—through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We observe this playing out in Acts, when God reverses the curse that Jews had formerly pronounced over themselves and their children: "*And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.'*" By turning to Jesus, these three thousand Jews were restored to the God of Abraham. Their children were granted that same access by faith, as were those "far off"—the nations.

—In light of this fulfillment, and in light of the spiritual emphasis throughout the Psalm, we should view the material harvest of verse 6 as spiritual also. It foreshadows the global harvest that would one day fill God's heavenly storehouses through the work of Christ.

—"Let all the ends of the earth fear him": fearing God does not contradict rejoicing in God (v. 4). As we read in Psalm 2:11—a warning and invitation to godless nations—"Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

—"bless... bless": Spurgeon remarks, "The prayer of the first verse is the song of the last. We have the same phrase twice, and truly the Lord's blessing is manifold; he blesses and blesses and blesses again. How many are his beatitudes! How choice his benedictions! They are the peculiar heritage of his chosen."