

## FRUITS OF PRAISE

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### Psalm 67

#### An Invocation and a Doxology

To the Chief Musician. On stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, Selah. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.

Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah

Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

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This Psalm is considered to be one of David's 73 Psalms although there is no subtitle that says that. Nevertheless, it is not who wrote it that we are focusing on, but of whom the psalmist is addressing, and then what they are praying. They addressed God as their Lord, as they say, "For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth". They address God as their God saying, "God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him". Then they also address God as their Savior, "That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations". So then, the psalmist is acknowledging God Almighty as their Lord, God, and Savior. They were acknowledging God as being Sovereign over all of His creation. They were also expressing their knowing God, trusting God, and then worshipping and honoring God, for who He is. In the end they speak of bearing, what I call, "Fruits of Praise".

We have been looking at, in recent messages from the Psalms, that there are those three primary components to our faith that is in Christ Jesus. 1. God wants us to know Him and His ways. In faith, that is, the faith that God has instilled in us to believe in Him and His Word, we are to diligently seek Him. **Hebrews 11:6** tells us, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that **He is**, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." What is the reward that we are seeking after when we are seeking God? The answer may surprise many "Christians" as they have been possibly taught that we are just building up our rewards in heaven as we go about our living by faith. Do you recall what God said to Abram (Abraham) as being his ultimate reward? The

promise was that God told Abram, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Yes, all the nations of the earth are blessed through the seed of Abraham, who was/is the Christ, the Son of God! But God told Abram, his reward was this, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (**Genesis 15:1**) Was that a word only spoken to Abraham, who is called, by the way, "the father of our faith"? Listen to what Isaiah, the prophet, said to Israel of which we as Christians, believer's on Christ, have been grafted onto that same vine as Israel, "Indeed the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion (which is Israel), 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.'" His work (being us), is before Him, and His reward will be with Him. Consider again then what God spoke to Abram (Abraham), "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

I have heard it argued that God isn't literally our reward, but the giver of the reward. In fact, I looked it up on [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org), and to my dismay, that is also what they said. "In the New King James Version, the promise is, "I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." The wording of the English Standard Version ("I am your shield; your reward shall be very great") and in the New Living Translation ("I will protect you, and your reward will be great") shows that God is not the reward per se; rather, He gives the reward. The Lord called Abram to trust entirely in God for protection and to place his hope in God's promise of a very great reward."

Yet, as we have been studying through the Psalms as well as in how the Psalms ties in with the whole of God's redemptive plan in His Word, we find Christ to be all things for us, as He works in us. As David professed to God in **Psalm 18**, He is our Strength, our Rock, our Fortress and our Deliverer. He is our Shield and the horn of our Salvation and our Stronghold. As Jesus tells us, through the gospel of John, He is our "Bread of Life", He is the "Light of the World", He is the "Door of the Sheep", He is the "Good Shepherd", He is the "Resurrection and the Life", He is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life", and He is the "Vine" and we are the branches connected to that vine. Also in John, Jesus proclaimed, "before Abraham was, I AM". (**John 8:58**) But wait, there's more. In **1 Corinthians 1:30**, the Apostle Paul tells us that that Christ, as He works in us through the Holy Spirit, is our, "Wisdom", and "Righteousness", and "Sanctification", and "Redemption". In Christ also, through the Holy Spirit, He is also the fruit of the Spirit for us. He is working in us His "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control. Against such there is no law." (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

If Christ Jesus isn't our reward, then I question what one could be hoping for that is greater than all that we have in Christ Jesus. I

am not meaning to disparage [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org) and their answer. They were certainly meaning to make it a point that we will be specifically rewarded for our trusting in God and in letting God use us in His building of His eternal kingdom. Yet that should really not be our focus or our perspective in how we are living in the faith of Christ Jesus. As the author(s) tell us in Hebrews, we are to be **"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,** who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (**Hebrews 12:2**) Isn't it interesting how KNOWING GOD leads to His great reward(s)? One last thing to mention about that is, God spoke in **Jeremiah 29:13** saying "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Listen to this, Jesus told His disciples, as we are being told too, **"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.** No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you." (**John 15:13-15**) Can you think of a greater reward than to be a friend of God?

2. So God 1<sup>st</sup> of all wants us to know Him, to know His ways, His character, and in how He is "perfect in all of His ways". God then also wants us to trust Him-for He IS perfect in all of His ways, just as David said in **Psalms 18:30**, "As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him." If we can't put our trust in God, the Creator and Sustainer of all things then who can we trust? That trust comes from understanding that God loves us. As Jesus tells us in **John 3:16-17**, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."** We learn to love God because He first loved us. We also learn to also delight ourselves in God, as we know that He delights in us. After all, we were created specifically for God's pleasure and purpose. God also delights in working in us, through His Holy Spirit. As Paul says in **Philippians 2:13**, that it is God that works in us "both to will and to do **for His good pleasure.**" As it is God who works in all of His children who have believed on Christ and received Him, we are intended to honor, fear, and respect God for who He is. In context Paul said this, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."

3. God expects us to honor, praise and worship Him for who He is. After all, He IS our Lord, God, and Savior. It is clearly up to us to live our lives unto God as our Lord, God, and Savior. God has made it

so that He IS our ALL. The faith that we have in Christ Jesus is that we have been made aware of our sins against God and then we look to God for His forgiveness of our sins against Him. As the Apostle John stated, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (**1 John 1:9**) "For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (**Romans 10:13**) The perfect Scripture that speaks to the fact that we've ALL sinned against God is in what Jesus said was the great commandment of God. In context we can read from the book of Mark, "Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He [Jesus] had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (**Mark 12:28-31**) I think we've all missed the "mark", pun possibly intended, on those two commandments.

One may ask, "hey wait, I thought we were no longer under the law in Christ but under grace?" That is true. The Apostle Paul clearly explains that concept in his epistle to the Romans, most directly in **Romans 8**. Paul says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." (**Romans 8:1-6**)

The law alone cannot save anyone. All the law did was show us our weakness for being able to live according to the law. That is why we are to believe on Jesus and then to receive Him and become born-again (as Jesus said) for the Holy Spirit to do the work in us that we couldn't do on our own. The Apostle John tells us that in **John 1:12-13**, "But as many as **received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Therefore, if we are being led by the Holy Spirit, will we not be compelled by the Spirit of Christ then to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind and to also love our neighbors as ourselves?

Now for our Psalm today, **Psalm 67**. [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com) calls this Psalm "An invocation and a doxolgy". I agree with that, as we are "invoking" (calling for help) God for our needs. A doxology is,

according to American Heritage Dictionary, "An expression of praise to God, especially a short hymn sung as part of a Christian worship service." Yet, what I slightly shutter at, is the idea that we are in any way trying to manipulate God. Yet, as the saying goes, "God inhabits the praises of His people", which comes from **Psalm 22:3** that says, "But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel." As a child of God you do not have to try and "manipulate" God into acknowledging you, hearing you, and answering your prayers. After all we are already, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, **that you may proclaim the praises of Him** who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (**1 Peter 2:9-10**)

Just as it was with the Levites, which included God's priests, God said, "Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance, just as the Lord your God promised him." (**Deuteronomy 10:9**) Christ Jesus, our Lord, God, and Savior, is our exceedingly great reward and His reward is with Him, as Jesus has inherited all things and we are joint-heirs with Jesus! Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

There is but one God, we are not getting God on our plan, we are to be getting on God's plan, getting to know Him and His ways, learning to trust Him for He is perfect in all His ways, and then what naturally follows is that we will worship, honor, obey, and give reverence to our Lord, God, and Savior. As the Psalmist says in **Psalm 67**, "God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, Selah. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

That first part is part of the priestly blessing that God had Aaron pray over His people. That IS God's will for US. "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." (**Numbers 6:24-26**) God wants us to know Him and His ways, to trust Him for His ways are perfect, and to honor and praise Him for who He is, and that it will become us to want to say, "Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." That is what I call "Fruits of Praise" to where we are bearing fruit for God's glory and His reward is most certainly with Him! Amen.