

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Salvation Among the Nations

God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us—Selah. That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. 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. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him. (Psalm 67:1-7 NASB)

Psalm 67 was written as a song that is to be accompanied with stringed instruments. It is divided into three parts as designated by the word *Selah*, which means a pause or suspension of the music, and we should approach this Psalm in the same manner—not ignoring the Selahs; but rather, meditating on what leads up to each Selah.

The first division begins with a heart cry from a people who know the heart of God; they do not just know of God, they know His heart, at least in some capacity. The phrase *cause His face to shine upon us* appears eight times in the Hebrew testament (Numbers 6:25; Psalm 31:16; 67:1; 80:3, 7, 19; 119:135; Daniel 9:17) and is alluded to once in the Greek testament by Paul, the apostle of the nations (2 Corinthians 4:6).

The first mention of this phrase is a blessing spoken by the Lord to Moses.

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." (Numbers 6:22-27 ESV [bold italic added])

The sons of Israel were commanded to invoke the name of the Lord in order to receive His blessing. But notice that the blessing involves the Lord shining His face and lifting up His countenance on them. When Moses went up on the mountain to receive the law of God, his face literally shone with glory from being in the presence of the Lord; however, the glory faded. But, according to Paul, those who are of the new covenant *in Christ* receive a glory that cannot fade. For if the ministry of condemnation (Moses) has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness (Christ) abound in glory. For if that which fades away was *with* glory, much more that which remains is *in* glory (2 Corinthians 3:7-11).

Those of us who believe on Jesus in this day are to behold the face of Jesus, for *God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ* (2 Corinthians 4:6). As we behold Him, it is as if we are looking in a mirror and His reflection is shining upon us and we are transformed into His image.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB)

As we behold our beloved Lord Jesus, we are being transformed from glory to glory. ***Christ in you, the hope of glory*** (Colossians 1:27). We have this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7) that one day will burst forth into glorified bodies in the image of the one from heaven. We will bear the image of the celestial one (1 Corinthians 15:42-49; Philippians 3:21). Selah!

The second division of this Psalm reveals that there is a purpose to the heart cry of the Lord's people that are being transformed from glory to glory. It is not for themselves that they desire blessing and the countenance of the Lord. Their hearts are for the nations, that they will know the salvation of the Lord and will be glad and sing for joy. There is no selfishness or self-centeredness in their cry. They desire all the peoples to praise the Lord. After all, they are the ones who will judge (set things right) the world and will teach the nations righteousness in the oncoming eon [age] when Christ takes the scepter of the kingdom of this earth. *Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?* (1 Corinthians 6:2).

It is a very sad commentary on our day when Christians talk as if the nations [called by most *the lost*] are going to be cast into an eternal oven they call *hell* to be roasted and toasted forever and ever and ever, as if God has no intention of saving or restoring them. It is almost with glee that some speak of the judgment of God upon the nations. But this misrepresents the heart of God. The hearts of the ones knowing the blessing and countenance of the Lord also know the Lord's heart for all the nations and that a glorious day is coming when He will judge them not for eternal destruction but in order to guide them unto righteousness (Isaiah 26:9), so that they too will know the joy of the Lord and sing with gladness. The judgment of God is a good thing, no matter how severe it might appear. Only good can come from the judging heart of God.

Do you have this heart for all the nations? Do you have a heart that desires the way of the Lord to be known on the earth and His salvation among the nations? Do you have a heart that desires to see all the nations guided by the righteousness of God? If your answer is yes, then you have a heart that is in tune with the heart of the Savior of all mankind who will have all mankind [people] to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 4:10).

Oh, let us long to see the nations be glad and sing for joy. It has been a long time since this earth has seen the nations rejoice, but the day will come at the appointed time, all to the glory of God. Selah!

Finally, the third division speaks of the desired result of salvation being made known among the nations and the peoples being guided in uprightness; it is so that they too will praise God and see the blessing that He has bestowed on them. How will they see the blessing of God? They will see it in the produce of the earth. In other words, the earth will be fruitful as it is brought into harmony when the sons of God, the sons of glory, are manifested. *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God* (Romans 8:19).

When the peoples of the nations see the earth flourishing, they will proclaim that God is blessing them as well. In other words, the nations will finally see and know that God's way is the right way and the only way to true blessing, gladness and joy. In that day, all the ends of the earth will finally fear God in fulfillment of the eonian gospel: *Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters* (Revelation 14:7).

Meditate on Psalms 96, 98 and 100, and may your heart burst with joy over the coming of the Lord's salvation among the nations. **King Jesus is coming!** Selah!