

PSALMS

Chapter 70

Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O LORD, make haste to help me! ²Let them be put to shame and confusion who seek my life! Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt! ³Let them turn back because of their shame who say, “Aha, Aha!” ⁴May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, “God is great!” ⁵But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay!

Ps 70 An urgent prayer for God’s help when threatened by enemies—a somewhat revised duplicate of 40:13–17. This is the second in a series of three such prayers; its language has many links with that of Ps 71. The prayer is framed by pleas for God to “come quickly” with his help (vv. 1, 5). The rest of the prayer focuses on the effects of God’s saving help: (1) upon those “who seek my life” (vv. 2–3) and (2) for those “who seek you” (v. 4). (CSB)

The psalmist begins with an appeal to God to hasten to save him,. This is a cry of desperation from someone who knows there is no time to lose. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

memorial offering. Parts of certain offerings were burned as a “memorial portion” for a pleasing aroma to the Lord (Lv 2:2, 9, 16; 6:15). In this way, God would remember the worshiper (Ps 8:4) and would remember his sins no more (Jer 31:34). In this psalm, the worshiper asks God for such “remembrance.” (TLSB)

Format: Vv 1–3, turn back the wicked; vv 4–5, hasten to help. (TLSB)

70:1-5 Virtually identical with 40:13–17. David may have made this psalm more general so that it could be prayed by other worshipers. (TLSB)

70:1 Used by the Church at the beginning of Matins and Vespers to pray for God’s temporal and eternal deliverance.

Make haste – This prayer is marked by urgency and simplicity. It begins and ends with cries for speedy help. (PBC)

70:2 *them* – In contrast to the believers of v 4, these are people hostile to God and His servants; ultimately, they serve the purposes of Satan. (TLSB)

seek my life – Not just physical harm, but also spiritual and eternal harm (Eph 6:12; 1Pt 5:8). (TLSB)

70:3 *Aha, Aha!* – An expression of malicious joy. (TLSB)

The psalmist wants them to turn back, and the cause of their turning back is their shame, probably their defeat. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

70:4 God’s deliverance of his servant will give joy to all who trust in the Lord, because they see in it the assurance of their own salvation. (CSB)

seek. Translates two terms: Hbr *baqash*, “look for”; Hbr *darash*, “care about, examine, inquire.” The Lord is sought in three ways: (1) through calling on His name in prayer, (2) by consulting Him through Urim and Thummim administered by the high priest, and (3) through the study of His Word. A visit to the tabernacle or temple is frequently implied. Unbelievers do not seek God. Believers seek Him in an attitude of repentance, not selfishness. (TLSB p. 843)

say evermore, God is great. Because his saving help is sure and effective (contrast v. 3). (CSB)

70:5 *poor and needy* – Not necessarily economically; these words often refer to the humble and repentant attitude of God’s people (e.g., Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20). (TLSB)

He has no more resources of his own on which he can draw – but he has the Lord. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

help – Hbr *‘ezer*, “ally.” The same term describes Eve in Gn 2:18, 20. (TLSB)

you are my help and deliverer – Because it is lacking in details and specific circumstances, it is applicable to any time of oppression or danger. (PBC)

do not delay – The worshiper expresses the fervent longing of his faith; he is acutely aware of how helpless and hopeless he is without God’s salvation. (TLSB)

Ps 70 With the psalmist, we acknowledge our spiritual poverty before God. Part of that acknowledgment is being watchful, lest through pride or faithlessness we ourselves turn away from Him. We seek God in His Word and Sacraments; He remembers us by forgiving our sins (Mt 26:28; 1Co 11:25). In this way, He will provide deliverance—if not in this life, then certainly in the life to come. • “Make haste, O God, to deliver me!” (v 1). You are great in Your forgiveness. Amen. (TLSB)