

# PSALMS

## Chapter 69

Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. <sup>2</sup> I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. <sup>3</sup> I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. <sup>4</sup> More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore? <sup>5</sup> O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you. <sup>6</sup> Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, O Lord GOD of hosts; let not those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, O God of Israel. <sup>7</sup> For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face. <sup>8</sup> I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's sons. <sup>9</sup> For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. <sup>10</sup> When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach. <sup>11</sup> When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them. <sup>12</sup> I am the talk of those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me. <sup>13</sup> But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness. <sup>14</sup> Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. <sup>15</sup> Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me. <sup>16</sup> Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. <sup>17</sup> Hide not your face from your servant, for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. <sup>18</sup> Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies! <sup>19</sup> You know my reproach, and my shame and my dishonor; my foes are all known to you. <sup>20</sup> Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. <sup>21</sup> They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink. <sup>22</sup> Let their own table before them become a snare; and when they are at peace, let it become a trap. <sup>23</sup> Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually. <sup>24</sup> Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them. <sup>25</sup> May their camp be a desolation; let no one dwell in their tents. <sup>26</sup> For they persecute him whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded. <sup>27</sup> Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you. <sup>28</sup> Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous. <sup>29</sup> But I am afflicted and in pain; let your salvation, O God, set me on high! <sup>30</sup> I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. <sup>31</sup> This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. <sup>32</sup> When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive. <sup>33</sup> For the LORD hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners. <sup>34</sup> Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them. <sup>35</sup> For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there and possess it; <sup>36</sup> the offspring of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

**Psalms 69** † A plea for God to have mercy and to save from a host of enemies: the prayer of a godly king when under vicious attack by a widespread conspiracy at a time when God had “wounded” him (see v. 26) for some sin in his life (see v. 5). If, as the superscription may indicate, David authored the original psalm, the occasion is unknown. In themes and language this psalm has many links with Ps 32; 35; 38; 40; 109 (all psalms “of David”; see also Ps 18). It begins a series of three prayers for deliverance when threatened by enemies. The authors of the NT viewed this

cry of a godly sufferer as foreshadowing the sufferings of Christ; no psalm, except Ps 22 and Ps 110, is quoted more frequently in the NT. (CSB)

This psalm is matched only by Psalm 22 as a graphic prophetic description of Christ's suffering. (PBC)

David offers this prayer for help in the midst of attacks and sufferings imposed on him by his enemies. As Jesus is the promised Son of David (2Sm 7:8–16), these afflictions of David foreshadow the even greater afflictions of Christ; hence, this psalm is quoted in the NT with reference to Christ.

Format: Vv 1–3, waiting for God; vv 4–5, my suffering and folly; vv 6–8, dishonor; vv 9–12, zeal for God's house; vv 13–15, prayer for deliverance; vv 16–18, plea for quick answer; vv 19–21, no comforters; vv 22–28, anger against the wicked; v 29, affliction; vv 30–33, honor God with praise; vv 34–36, God will save Zion. (TLSB)

**69:1–4** Initial plea for God to save. (CSB)

In the OT, raging flood waters and deep mud often symbolize troubles too difficult for the believer to overcome by himself. Here they symbolize the overwhelming burden of our sins and the depths of suffering Christ endured. (PBC)

**69:1–2** *waters ... miry depths ... deep waters ... floods*. Conventional imagery for great distress, but especially of the attacks of the enemies (see vv. 14–15, 29). (CSB)

David's afflictions are so severe, he feels as though he is drowning in them (cf vv 14–15).

**69:1** *neck*. Hbr *nepshesh*, "throat, life." A person's breath of life can be described as residing in the throat. Cf Gn 2:7. (TLSB)

**69:3** *throat is parched*. See 22:15. (CSB)

*eyes fail*. In the vivid language of the OT the eyes are dimmed by failing strength. (CSB)

Distress can cloud one's vision of God (cf vv 16–17). (TLSB)

This means the vitality of his life was disappearing.

His strength was fading, but his hope remained strong, for he was weakening while waiting (s.v. Ps. 31:24) for God. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**69:4** *without cause*. Those whom he has not wronged are pitted against him. (CSB)

Enemies impose these unjust sufferings; the psalmist is unjustly accused of stealing. (TLSB)

This verse is partially quoted in John 15:25 in Jesus warning to his disciples: if the world hated him, they would also hate them for no other cause than their faith. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

Jesus went around doing good – preaching the gospel of forgiveness, comforting the afflicted, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even raising the dead. In spite of this, yes, even because of this, the leaders of Israel hated him. (PBC)

*what did I steal?* An illustrative way of saying that his enemies are spreading false accusations about him. (CSB)

**69:5–12** Prayer that God’s discipline of his godly servant may not bring disgrace on all those who trustingly look to the Lord. The author acknowledges (v. 5) that God’s “wounding” of him (see v. 26) has been occasioned by some sin in his life (but he has not sinned against those who have become his enemies). Because of his present suffering, his enemies mock his deep commitment to the Lord (see 22:6–8; 42:3; 79:10; 115:2; Job 2:9). Implicitly he prays that God will restore him again and vindicate his trust in him. (CSB)

**69:5** *folly*. This word in the psalms is rendered to denote one who is morally deficient. (CSB)

David confesses that he is a sinner. (TLSB)

Folly may be a synonym for sin in this passage. Paul says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The gospel Christ died to establish is foolishness to the unbelieving world (1 Corinthians 1:21). (PBC)

**69:6** *put to shame through me* – Christ’s humble appearance and wretched death turned off many in Israel. Jews even today refuse to have a Savior who had to die. We pray that we may never be ashamed of Jesus or his message, for only he can enable us to stand before God’s judgment without shame. (PBC)

Psalmist prays that his sin may not cause any to stumble in their faith. (TLSB)

**69:7** *for Your sake*. Although he has sinned (v 5), David’s sufferings are not punishment or discipline from God but persecution imposed by unbelievers. (TLSB)

**69:8** *stranger to my brothers*. Suffering for the faith can even include alienation from one’s own family (Mt 10:34–39). (TLSB)

Even those nearest him dissociate themselves from him. (CSB)

To be alienated from family or close friends in the ancient world was a serious matter; it would add greatly to his pain and to self-doubting he had. (A Commentary on the Psalms - Ross)

**69:9** *zeal for your house*. What was true of the author was even more true of Jesus (see Jn 2:17). (CSB)

Psalmist is suffering on account of his zealous faith in the Lord, who reveals Himself at the tabernacle. Ambr: “Faith ... must not be a mere matter of performance” (NPNF 2 10:203). Because Jesus displayed perfect zeal for the Lord of the temple, His enemies persecuted Him to death. (TLSB)

*reproaches of those who reproach you*. Those who mock God also mock his servant who trusts in him (see 74:18, 22–23; 2Ki 18:31–35)—as Christ also experienced (see Ro 15:3). (CSB)

During his suffering Jesus was scorned both by the “cream” of Jewish society, the religious and political leaders, and by the “bottom of the barrel” like the criminals with whom he was crucified. (PBC)

**69:10–11** *weep and fast ... put on sackcloth.* As tokens of humbling himself before the Lord in repentance as he prays for God to have mercy and restore him. (CSB)

His enemies mock him for his faith and piety. (TLSB)

**69:12** *I am the talk thode who sit in the gate... drunkards.* Everyone, from the elders of the city to the town drunks. (CSB)

Place for legal matters (Ru 4:1; Ps 127:5) as well as malicious gossip (2Sm 15:2–3). (TLSB)

*songs about me.* Songs of contempt and ridicule. (TLSB)

**69:13–18** Though they mock, I pray to you. (CSB)

The prayer emphasizes three points: the greatness of his affliction, the bitter hatred of his enemies, and the goodness and mercy of God, which is the basis for his prayer. (PBC)

**69:13** *acceptable time.* When God is near to save. (CSB)

A way of praying according to God’s will (Lk 22:42; 1Jn 5:14–15). (TLSB)

*steadfast love.* Appeal to God’s love, kindness, mercy” is frequent in the OT since it summarizes all that the Lord covenanted to show to Israel as well as to David and his dynasty. (CSB)

**69:15** *swallow me.* For the imagery of death (or the grave) as an insatiable monster feeding on its victims. (CSB)

*pit.* The vivid imagery that associates distress with “the depths”—so expressive of universal human experience—is common in OT poetry. (CSB)

**69:17** *hide not your face.* David prays for what God has promised in the priestly benediction (Nu 6:24–26). (TLSB)

**69:19–21** In my trouble they heaped on scorn instead of bringing comfort (see 35:11–16; see also 142:4; Job 13:4; 16:2; 21:34). (CSB)

**69:19–20** *reproach ... shame ... dishonor ... despair.* In some form or another, these come into the life of every believer: Mk 8:34–35; Rm 8:17; 2Tm 3:12; 1Pt 4:12–14. (TLSB)

**69:21** *poison for food ... sour wine to drink.* Vivid metaphors for the bitter scorn they made him eat and drink when his whole being craved for the nourishment and refreshment of comfort. The authors of the Gospels, especially Matthew, suggest that the suffering expressed in this verse foreshadowed Christ’s suffering on the cross (see Mt 27:34, 48; Mk 15:23, 36; Lk 23:36; Jn 19:29). (CSB)

Hostility led to actual physical harm. (TLSB)

**69:22–28** Prayer for God to redress the wrongs committed. (CSB)

Psalmist is here inspired to speak God’s words of judgment against the evildoers. (TLSB)

This is imprecatory psalm which is a term to describe those psalms that contain curses or prayers for the punishment of the psalmist’s enemies. Scripture delivers strong warnings against taking personal vengeance on our enemies, but it also promises us that the just God will repay the wicked. The words of this prayer are horrifying; they are nothing less than a prayer for the damnation of one’s enemies. To many people this prayer seems incompatible with Jesus’ prayer on the cross, “Father, forgive them.” Even many evangelical commentators have been distressed by this prayer and have tried to separate it from Christ by classifying it as an OT prayer which is outdated in the NT era. However, when the NT applies these words to Judas in Acts 1:20, it shows that this is the prayer of the Messiah against his enemies. Our prayers must be in harmony with the revealed will of God that he wants all people to be saved. Jesus’ will certainly was in harmony with that of his Father. He prayed for the repentance of his enemies. Jesus had repeatedly warned Judas and appealed to him to turn back from his sin. But when Judas closed his heart to God’s love, he placed himself under the curse of God’s law. (PBC)

**69:22–23** For Paul’s application of these verses to the Jews who rejected the Christ see Ro 11:9–10. (CSB)

Cited by the apostle Paul about his fellow Israelites who do not put their faith in Christ for salvation (Rm 11:9–10). (TLSB)

**69:22** They had set his table with “gall” and “vinegar” (v. 21). (CSB)

*table before them.* Reference may be to the meal accompanying the sealing of a covenant. In that case, this verse alludes to a pact uniting the enemies and calls on God to turn it against them. (CSB)

**69:23** They mocked him for his “wound” (v. 26); now may they experience the same failing of the eyes and bending of the back (from weakness and pain; see 38:5–8). (CSB)

*Make their loins tremble continually.* Lit. “May ... their loins give way.” “Loins” refers to the belly and lower part of the back; they were viewed as the back’s center of strength (see 66:11; see also Job 40:16). (CSB)

**69:24** *overtake them.* Like a flash flood. (CSB)

**69:25** They sought to remove him from his place; may they be removed. Cf. Peter’s application of this judgment to Judas (Ac 1:20). (CSB)

Referred to by Peter when he speaks of what befell Judas for having betrayed Jesus (Ac 1:20). (TLSB)

**69:26** The great wrong committed by his enemies against him and to which reference has repeatedly been made. (CSB)

**69:27** They have falsely charged him with crimes (v. 4); may their real crimes all be charged against them. (CSB)

**69:28** They had plotted his death; may death be their destiny. (CSB)

God's judgment; may refer to eternal damnation (Rv 21:27) and/or to death as the end of this life. (TLSB)

*book of life.* God's royal list of the righteous, whom God blesses with life (see 1:3; 7:9; 11:7; 34:12; 37:17, 29; 55:22; 75:10; 92:12–14; 140:13). For other references to God's books. In the NT the "book of life" refers to God's list of those destined for eternal life (see Php 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). (CSB)

**69:29** Renewal of the prayer just prior to the vow to praise. (CSB)

This psalm ends as it began, with a prayer for deliverance. But the closing prayer differs from the opening prayer in that it passes beyond the suffering to the deliverance and the final victory. (PBC)

*salvation.* As before, David appeals to God's work for deliverance. (TLSB)

*set me on high.* Lit. "raise me to a high, secure place." (CSB)

**69:30–33** A vow to praise out of assurance that the prayer will be heard. (CSB)

**69:30-31** Sacrifice was a divinely ordained part of Israel's worship, yet some people were simply going through the motions when they brought an offering. The psalmist's songs of praise and thanksgiving will be sincere. Clement of Rome (1<sup>st</sup> Epistle): "The Lord, brethren, stands in need of nothing; and He desires nothing of anyone, except that confession be made to Him" (ANF 1:19). (TLSB)

**69:31** *horns and hoofs* – Animals acceptable for sacrifice had to be mature (horns) and be classified as clean (cloven hoofed; Lv 11:3). (TLSB)

**69:32** *humble.* Those who trust in the Lord. (TLSB)

*let your hearts revive.* Bubble over with the joy of life, because the Lord does hear the prayers of his people in need—contrary to the mocking of scoffers. (CSB)

**69:34–36†** A call to praise in the assurance that God will restore Judah and assure his people's inheritance in the promised land. This stanza appears to indicate that in its final form this royal prayer was used at a time when not only the king was in trouble but the kingdom of Judah had also suffered devastating defeat. The ultimate fulfillment of these verses is to be found in the NT church and finally in the church triumphant. (CSB)

**69:34** Let all creation praise him (see 148:1–13; Isa 49:13). (CSB)

**69:35–36** *people ...offspring.* God's people and their children through the generations, specifically those who love his name. (CSB)

The Messiah's victory is not just for him alone. It is for his people who will share the joy of his victory in the eternal Zion. (PBC)

**69:35** This phrase, alongside v 33, makes it plain that David's prayer is one that all God's people may make their own. (TLSB)

**Ps 69** Though afflicted, we still confess our sins before God. We also turn to Him in faith for deliverance from those who persecute us, asking for His strength and deliverance, lest we fail to remain faithful to Him. • Save me, O God! I will praise the name of God with a song. Amen. (TLSB)