

END OF PSALM 70

## You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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## PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST  
IN THE  
LORD *and do good;  
dwell in the land and  
enjoy safe pasture.*  
PSALM 36: 3

PSALM NUMBER: 70

### A PRAYER FOR PERSEVERANCE

1. In thee, O Lord, I have hoped, let me never be put to confusion.
2. Deliver me in thy justice, and rescue me. Incline thy ear unto me, and save me.
3. Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a place of strength: that thou mayest make me safe. For thou art my firmament and my refuge.
4. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the sinner, and out of the hand of the transgressor of the law and of the unjust.
5. For thou art my patience, O Lord: my hope, O Lord, from my youth.
6. By thee have I been confirmed from the womb: from my mother's womb thou art my protector. Of thee shall I continually sing.
7. I have become unto many as a wonder, but thou art a strong helper.
8. Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing thy glory, thy greatness all the day long.
9. Cast me not off in the time of old age: when my strength shall fail, do not thou forsake me.
10. For my enemies have spoken against me: and they that watched my soul have consulted together.

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11. **Saying: God hath forsaken him; pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him.**
12. **O God, be not thou far from me: O my God, make haste to help me.**
13. **Let them be confounded, and come to nothing that detract my soul; let them be covered with confusion and shame that seek my hurt.**
14. **But I will always hope; and will add to all thy praise.**
15. **My mouth shall show forth thy justice; thy salvation all the day long. Because I have not known learning.**
16. **I will enter into the powers of the Lord: O Lord, I will be mindful of thy justice alone.**
17. **Thou hast taught me, O God, from my youth: and till now I will declare thy wonderful works.**
18. **And unto old-age and gray hairs: O God, forsake me not, until I show forth thy arm to all the generations that is to come: thy power.**
19. **And thy justice, O God, even to the highest great things thou hast done. O God, who is like to thee?**
20. **How great troubles hast thou shown me, many and grievous: and turning thou hast brought me to life, and hast brought me back again from the depths of the earth.**
21. **Thou hast multiplied thy magnificence: and turning to me thou hast comforted me.**
22. **For I will also confess to thee thy truth with the instruments of psaltery: O God, I was sing to thee with the harp, thou Holy One of Israel.**
23. **My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I shall sing to thee: and my soul which thou hast redeemed.**
24. **Yea, and my tongue shall meditate on thy justice all the day: when they shall be confounded and put to shame that seek evils to me.**

*The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.*

### **PSALM NUMBER: 70**

#### **EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM**

1. "In thee, O Lord, I have hoped, let me never be put to confusion."
2. "Deliver me in thy justice, and rescue me. Inclined thy ear unto me, and saved me." The holy Prophet, mindful of God's promises to those who put their trust in

says, "God made man to his likeness;" and 1 John 3, "we know that when he shall appear we shall be like to him; because we shall see him as he is." For when David says here, "who is like to thee?" He means, is equal to thee, equally wise, powerful, depending on no one, while all depend on him.

20. "How great troubles hast thou shown me, many and grievous; and turning thou has brought me to life, and hast brought me back again from the depths of the earth."

21. "Thou hast multiplied thy magnificence: and turning to me thou hast comforted me." David consoles himself in this present calamity, by the fact of having escaped, through God's assistance, from other calamities. "How many troubles hast thou shown me, many and grievous;" great in their variety and bitterness, borne by me in Saul's persecution, "and turning, thou has brought me to life," when I was all but in the jaws of death, "and hast brought me back again from the depths of the earth;" deliver me from the height of misery, that nearly drove me to the other world. For "thou hast multiplied thy magnificence," in accordance with the extent of my troubles, "and turning to me," in mercy, while you chastised me, as a father you have wonderfully "comforted me," when from a wretched exile you made me a prosperous king.

22. "For I will also confess to thee thy truth with the instruments of psaltery: O God, I was sing to thee with the harp, thou Holy One of Israel."

23. "My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I shall sing to thee: and my soul which thou hast redeemed."

24. "Yea, and my tongue shall meditate on thy justice all the day: when they shall be confounded and put to shame that seek evils to me." The Prophet now predicts his delivery from the power of Absalom, and promises all manner of thanks in his heart, with his lips, and with all sorts of musical instruments. "For I will also," when I shall have obtained the victory, "confess thy truth to thee;" will praise your justice and your fidelity, "with the instruments of psaltery," with the musical instrument called the psaltery. And I will use the harp too, "the Holy One of Israel;" a name applied to God, whom the people of Israel were bound to sanctify by public worship and due honor, for which he in return sanctified them by the sanctity of his grace. And I will not only thank and praise you with the harp and psaltery, but "my lips shall greatly rejoice," my mouth shall send forth its notes, "when I shall sing to thee;" "and my soul," my life, "which thou hast redeemed," shall also praised thee. And it is not once or twice that "my tongue shall meditate on thy justice," but "all the day," at all times "it shall meditate," exercise itself in chanting the praises of thy justice, "when they shall be confounded and put to shame that seek evils to me."

that David means that human craft and cunning in which Achitophel, who had given counsel against him, abounded; and, by the words, "I have not known," that he does not simply mean knowledge, but approbation and use; as we commonly say, "I don't know you;" and, as St. Paul says, "that he knows nothing but Christ, and him crucified." The meaning, then, is: I have not known learning. I know not the wisdom of this world; I confide not in the counsels of man; I approve not of human craft and cunning; but,

16. "I will enter into the powers of the Lord: O Lord, I will be mindful of thy justice alone." I will cling entirely to God's omnipotence; in it will I confide, and will hide myself in it as I would in an impregnable fortress; and thus, "I will be mindful of thy justice alone;" I will lose sight completely of human counsel, of my own strength, or of my friends; but I will remember and bear in mind "thy justice alone," by virtue of which you keep your promises and through which you punish the wicked, and crown the pious.

17. "Thou hast taught me, O God, from my youth: and till now I will declare thy wonderful works." You taught me to despise human literature, and to trust in your power; and it was in consequence, that I, an unarmed youth, fought with a bear and a lion, and conquered both them and the giant Goliath. "And till now I will declare thy wonderful works;" to the last day of my life, I will record "the wonderful works" you enabled me to do in my youth.

18. "And unto old-age and gray hairs: O God, forsake me not, until I show forth thy arm to all the generation that is to come: thy power." And I ask, at the same time, that "unto old-age you forsake me not," but that you always may come to my aid, "until I show forth," until I shall have finished the book of Psalms, through which I will show forth "thy arm," thy strength, to all posterity. How David could say that he would announce God's power to all posterity we have already explained, for he foresaw that the Psalms composed by him would be chanted all over the world to the end of time. "Thy power." He explains what arm he is to announce, when he says, "thy power."

19. "And thy justice, O God, even to the highest great things thou has done: O God, who is like to thee?" He explains the meaning of the showing forth thy arm to the generation that is to come, and says, "thy power and thy justice;" that is to say, I will announce thy arm, which signifies your power united with your justice. God is all-powerful, but he is still most just; he can do what he wills, but he wills nothing unjust. Now, such power and justice reaches even "to the highest great things" among God's creatures, for God created by his power, not only the earth, and the sea, and all their inhabitants, but he also created the heavens, and the heavens of heavens, and the countless millions of angels that dwell therein. Thus the arm of God's power reaches even those highest great things. God's justice also has not only punished sinful man, who is but dust and ashes, but he has also punished the most exalted among the angels, who, for their pride, he hurled from heaven into the abyss. The arm of divine justice, then, has reached "the highest things," so that one may well exclaim, "O God, who is like to thee?" Nor does this contradict the Scripture that

him, and not presuming on his own strength, exclaims, "in thee, O Lord," and not in myself nor in any other creature, "I have hoped," certain, therefore, that I will "never be put to confusion." I fly to you in my present trouble, and ask of you "to deliver and rescue me" from the hands of my persecutors; "in thy justice," with that justice that prompts you to punish the wicked, and free the innocent. And, for effect, he repeats the prayer, saying, "incline thy ear unto me, and save me;" hear my humble voice, save me in the present danger.

3. "Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a place of strength: that thou mayest make me safe. For thou art my firmament and my refuge." He now explains more clearly what he wants from God and that is, that God should protect him like a city strongly fortified, and incapable of being penetrated by the enemy. The Hebrew implies that this fortified place was on a lofty rock and, in truth, there is no easier way of overcoming all troubles than the knowing how to ascend in spirit to God, and there to contemplate the everlasting happiness; and there one will at once despise everything human; thus, the tribulations, which otherwise would be counted severe and heavy, St. Paul calls "momentary and light." "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4. "For thou art my firmament and my refuge." Be my protector, for you alone "are my firmament;" my firm and well-built house, built of stone, as the Hebrew implies, to which I can fly; and "my refuge." Everything else, the favors of man, my own industry and exertions, are houses of mud or of straw, built on the sand; for what are all the goods of this world but frail, perishable things, in which fools alone confide? Happy they who understand so much; happier they who put them into practice.

4. "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the sinner, and out of the hand of the transgressor of the law and of the unjust." He now descends to particulars, and asks to be delivered out of "the hand," that is, from the power of the sinner, "the transgressor of the law, and of the unjust;" all of which literally apply to Absalom, Achitophel, and their servants, for this Psalm altogether corresponds with Psalm 30, which, by general consent, treats of Absalom's persecution. "The hand of the sinner," then, seems to be intended for Absalom, a perverse, wicked man; "the transgressors of the law" are the people who rise up in arms against their lawful king, and the "unjust" alludes to Achitophel, who in private, had fraudulently sought to injure David. Looking at the passage in a spiritual sense, the sinner may mean the devil, the unjust may mean heretics, and the transgressors of the law, tyrants and persecutors. The just man, however, desires to be freed not only from corporal trouble, but much more so from any danger to his soul, for fear he may, through fear of persecution, consent to sin, and run the risk of eternal death.

5. "For thou art my patience, O Lord: my hope. O Lord, from my youth."

6. "By thee have I been confirmed from the womb: from my mother's womb thou art my protector. Of thee shall I continually sing." The Hebrew for patience

here implies patience in hope, rather than in endurance, as we have it in Romans 8, “we wait for it with patience;” and in James 5, “behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently bearing till he receive the early and the later rain. Be you, therefore, also patient, and strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near.” “For thou art my patience;” then, means, for it is from thee I am patiently expecting help. “My hope, O Lord, from my youth;” because I began to hope in you from the time that I first knew you, nay more, long before I was capable of knowing you, in your mercy you were my protector; because, “by thee have I been confirmed from the womb;” scarce had I come into the world, when I was in a most infirm state, incapable of invoking you, you extended your protection to me. Such favors God is wont to confer on all men, especially when they are of an age when they cannot help themselves, while very few are they who acknowledge such favors, or thank God sufficiently for them: and the Prophet, therefore, who, by the light of the Holy Ghost, knew such to be the case, with great devotion exclaims, “by thee I have been confirmed from the womb; from my mother’s womb thou art my protector;” as much as to say: I know and confess, O Lord, that you cared for me from my very infancy; which makes me now confidently hope that you will be my protector when I shall call upon you. “Of thee shall I continuously sing.” For such reasons, for such favors, I will always chant thy praises, in prosperity and adversity, in this world, and in the next.

7. “I am become unto many as a wonder, but thou art a strong helper.” Banished from my kingdom by my own son, a wretched fugitive instead of a glorious conqueror, I am the wonder of everyone, especially when I seem to be so deserted by you whom I always worshiped, in whom I always trusted; but, however you are a “strong helper,” and a steady one; and though, for a time, in your wisdom, you may appear to have deserted me, and allowed my enemies to get the better of me, still, when the proper time comes, you will be a “strong helper.” St. Augustine, taking a spiritual view of this passage, says, that he who despises the things of this world, patiently submits to injury, and thus goes in a contrary direction to that of mankind, may be called a wonder and a prodigy. Such was John the Baptist, Christ himself, Peter, Paul, and the other apostles; such were all the martyrs and confessors, and others, who were looked upon by the wise ones of the world as fools, yet could truly say, I am become as a wonder to many, yet you are a strong helper, to carry me through the narrow gate, and to offer violence to the kingdom of heaven, when it will appear whether I was a fool or a wise man.

8. “Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing thy glory; thy greatness all the day long.” Whatever men may think or say of me, I therefore, wish that “my mouth may be filled with praise,” then nothing else may please me, may delight me, but to love thee and praise thy glory; and “the whole day,” that is, at all times, “to sing thy greatness and thy glory.” All they, and they alone, are like this holy king and prophet, who think, and feel, and deeply consider that there is nothing great, nothing worthy of our admiration but God alone.

9. “Cast me not off in the time of old age: when my strength shall fail, do not thou forsake me.” David was an old man when he was persecuted by Absalom; and,

therefore, calling to mind the victories of his youth, nay, even of his boyhood, he says, “cast me not off in the time of old age;” do not desert him you always stood by, now at the last moment. “When my strength shall fail;” when I am become weak and feeble, “do not thou forsake me;” when I want your help more than ever I did before.

10. “For my enemies have spoken against me; and they that watched my soul have consulted together.”

11. “Saying: God hath forsaken him; pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him.” Such was literally true of David, against whom his people, with Absalom at their head, and Achitophel as his counselor, rebelled; a thing they did under the impression that he was now grown old and weak, and abandoned by God. “And they that watched my soul,” my former counselors and guards, “have consulted together;” took counsel how they may destroy me, saying, as “God hath forsaken him, pursue and take him;” the very advice that Achitophel gave, which, however, had no effect, as God did not suffer it to be carried out. See 2 Kings 17.

12. “O God, be not thou far from me: O my God, make haste to help me.”

13. “Let them be confounded, and come to nothing that detract my soul; let them be covered with confusion and shame that seek my hurt.” While they were taking measure against David, he had recourse to God, who, without any trouble, could mar them all, as he really did. “O God, be not thou far for me,” as they boast you are, but rather “make haste to help me,” to save me from them. “Let them be confounded and come to nothing that detract my soul,” by your hastening to help me, let Absalom’s counselors be confounded, their plots fail, disappear, and vanish; and let those “that detract my soul,” that calumniate me, be rendered senseless. “Let them be covered with confusion and shame that seek my hurt;” a repetition of the foregoing.

14. “But I will always hope; and will add to all thy praise.”

15. “My mouth shall show forth thy justice; thy salvation all the day long. Because I have not known learning.” Let them be confounded and come to nothing; “but I will always hope;” will confide more and more in you, having learned by experience the efficacy of your assistance, and will always “add to all thy praise;” singing new hymns to you for your new and repeated favors. “My mouth shall show forth thy justice,” with which you punish the wicked; and “thy salvation,” through which you free and save the innocent, “all day long;” that is, constantly. “Because I have not known learning.” How could David say this of himself, when he says, in Psalm 118, “I have understood more than all my teachers;” and the Psalms prove him to have been well up in both human and divine knowledge; for, though he was a shepherd and a soldier, he may not have been so entirely devoted to caring his flocks, or waging war, as not to be able to devote some time to literature and study? By the word “learning,” then, I take it