

“A GOD FOR A LIFETIME”

PSALM 71:1-24

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INTRODUCTION

In NASB this psalm has the title, “Prayer of an Old Man for Deliverance”—an apt title, since twice he speaks of “from my youth” (vv. 5, 17), he refers to the time of his birth and mother’s womb (v. 6), and refers to his old age in vv. 9 and 18, and also mentions his “gray” hair in v. 18. The psalmist speaks much about God’s righteousness: vv. 2, 15, 16, 19, and 24. In each case he thinks of God’s righteous acts of deliverance for those who are innocent and being abused and mistreated. Such just actions are based on God’s righteous character which is also the foundation of His Law and system of justice. The psalmist has always relied upon, taken refuge in, hoped in, and found safety and security in God (e.g. 1, 3, 5-7, 14). Notice his stress upon the word “continually” in vv. 3, 6, and 14. Leupold remarks that “Here is a man who clings to God with every fiber of his being; as he has done from his youth, so he does now” (p. 511).

But, recently some adversaries have been persecuting him—see e.g. vv. 4, 10-11, 13, 24, and compare reference to his “many troubles and distresses” in v. 20. The psalmist’s mouth “is filled with Thy praise” (v. 8), and he “still declares Thy wondrous deeds” (17). Moreover, he repeatedly proclaims his promise to render proper worship and praise to God when God manifests His just power on his behalf (see vv. 14-16, 18, 22-24a). Such deliverance is sure to him due to God’s faithfulness and righteousness (2-3, 4, 12, 19, 20-21, 23). Indeed, his enemies will be judged, cast down, made ashamed by God (13, 24), but he will be saved (2, 3, 4, 15, 16, 20-21, 23).

IN THIS PSALM WE SEE THAT GOD IS A GOD FOR A LIFETIME.

Verses 1-3 serve as an introduction, and the remainder is divided into 2 parts: 1) focus on the past including evidence of God’s goodness, his trust in God, and a conclusion with a call for the enemy’s overthrow (vv. 4-13); 2) focus on the future with an anticipation of deliverance, promises made, thanksgiving to be offered, and prayer for the overthrow of enemies answered (14-24). Verses 13 & 24 concerning the shame of the enemies serve as a sort of refrain.

I. INTRODUCTION (1-3)

- A. God’s Character that directs His Actions—“Righteousness” (2); Holy One of Israel (22c)
- B. God’s relations with His servant
 - 1. He listens to him (v. 2b)
 - 2. He has commanded to save him (3b).
 - 3. He Delivers him, rescues him, and saves him (2a).
 - 4. He won’t allow him to be ashamed (1b).
- C. The psalmist’s relationship with God
 - 1. He has always taken refuge in God (1).
 - 2. God is his “rock” and his “fortress.”
 - 3. God will continue to be a “rock of habitation”--(3a).

II. FOCUS ON THE PAST (4-13)

- A. God has always been there for me.
 - 1. God took me [cut me, severed me] from my mother’s womb (6b)
 - 2. From my birth he has sustained me (6a). From my youth the Lord GOD has been my confidence and my hope/trust (5).
 - 3. God has been my strong refuge so that my life is a “wonder/marvel” (7)
- B. My enemies are threatening me in the present.
 - 1. Their character: “wicked”; “wrongdoer”; “ruthless” (4)

2. Their actions: they *talk about* me (10): “God has forsaken him...there is no one to deliver him (11); they *watch for my life/soul*; they consult together (10); they plan to pursue and seize him (11); they seek to injure him and are adversaries of his life (13).

C. I am now old with failing strength (9).

1. Don't cast me off or forsake me (9)

Compare the divine promise in Is. 46:3-4—“**Listen to me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, you who have been borne by Me from birth, and have been carried from the womb; even to your old age, I shall be the same, and even to your graying years I shall bear you! I have done it, and I shall carry you; and I shall bear you, and I shall deliver you.**”

2. Don't be far from me (12).

3. Hasten to help me (12).

D. I continually Praise You (6c)—my mouth is filled with praise, and with God's glory all day long (8).

REFRAIN: “Let my adversaries be ashamed and consumed; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor” (13).

III. FOCUS ON THE FUTURE (14-24).

A. Review of the past.

1. God has taught me from my youth (17a); now I am old and gray (18).
2. God has showed me many troubles and distresses (20a).
3. I have approached the gates of death—the depths of the earth (20).

B. What he needs in the present.

1. God not to forsake him (18)
2. God to revive him (20b)
3. God to bring him up from the depths (20c)
4. God to turn to comfort him (21b)
5. God to increase his greatness (21a)

C. What he vows for the future

1. His continual hope in God (14a)
2. His ever increasing praise of God (14b), still declaring God's wondrous deeds (17b)
 - a. His mouth—**all day long** to tell of/count God's righteousness and salvation—for he does not really know the number of them (15). The acts of righteousness and salvation are so numerous that he must spend all day counting them. They are innumerable. knowledge”!
 - b. His lips shout for joy in singing praises (23)
 - c. His tongue utter God's righteousness **all day long** (24)
 - d. His harp will praise God and his faithfulness (22)
 - e. His lyre will accompany his praises (22b)
 - f. His entire being—soul (23b).
3. He comes to the house of God “with the mighty deeds of Adonai Yahweh (16a).
 - a. He causes to remember God's righteousness—His alone (16b). What others have done or not done is not his focus; **it is what God has done that matters!**
 - b. He declares God's arm/strength and His power to the coming generation—to all who are to come (18b)
4. He acknowledges that no one can compare with God (19)
 - a. His righteousness reaches to the heavens.
 - b. He has done great things
 - c. No one is like God.

Refrain: Those who seek my hurt are ashamed and humiliated (24)

CONCLUSION

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