Psalm 70 — An Urgent SOS

1.0 Introducing Psalm 70

- Psalm 70 is almost identical to Psalm 40:13-17.
  - Psalm 70 is the third to the last psalm in Book 2, while Psalm 40 is the second to the last psalm in Book 1.
  - “David appears to have written the full-length Psalm [40], and also to have made this excerpt from it, and altered it to suit the occasion.”—Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 3 vols. (reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 2/1:203.
- Psalm 71 has no heading, so some commentators believe that Psalms 70 and 71 should be treated as one psalm.
  - “Hasten” (70:1, 5; 71:12) translates an unusual Hebrew word that occurs only once outside Psalms (1 Samuel 20:38). It occurs in Psalms 22:19; 38:22; 40:13 (= 70:1); and 141:1.
  - “Shame” occurs in 70:2, 3; 71:13, 24.
- The psalm heading (“for a memorial”) is also found on Psalm 38. Perhaps the psalm was sung in conjunction with a sacrifice that would help “remind” the Lord of the psalmist’s request (cf. Leviticus 2:2; 24:7; 1 Chronicles 16:4).
- Psalm 70 is a very short version of the message of Psalm 69.

2.0 Reading Psalm 70 (NAU)

70:1 A Psalm of David; for a memorial.

O God, hasten to deliver me;
O LORD, hasten to my help!

70:2 Let those be ashamed and humiliated
    Who seek my life;
    Let those be turned back and dishonored
Who delight in my hurt.

70:3 Let those be turned back because of their shame
Who say, “Aha, aha!”

70:4 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
And let those who love Your salvation say continually,
“Let God be magnified.”

70:5 But I am afflicted and needy;
Hasten to me, O God!
You are my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay.

3.0 Understanding Psalm 70

3.1 Outline

I. Call for Rescue (v. 1)
II. Call for Retribution (vv. 2-3)
III. Call for Rejoicing (v. 4)
IV. Call for Rescue (v. 5)

3.2 Notes

Psalm 70’s Ties to Other Psalms

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<tr>
<th>Psalm 70</th>
<th>Psalm 40</th>
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<tr>
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<td>v. 14 (“deliver”)</td>
<td>v. 10 (“my life”), 13, 23 (“my soul/life”), 24</td>
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<td>v. 2</td>
<td>v. 14</td>
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<td>vv. 1 (“my life”), 6 (“ashamed … dishonored”), 10 (“my soul/life”), 19 (“shame … dishonor”)</td>
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<td>v. 3</td>
<td>v. 15</td>
<td>vv. 21 (“Aha, aha”), 25 (“Aha”)</td>
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<td>v. 4</td>
<td>v. 16</td>
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<td>v. 5</td>
<td>v. 17</td>
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<td>vv. 29 (“I am afflicted”), 33 (“the needy”)</td>
<td>v. 12 (“make haste to help me”)</td>
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## Chart of Comparisons for Psalms 40 and 70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm 40</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13</strong> Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; Make haste, O LORD, to help me.</td>
<td><strong>1</strong> O God, hasten to deliver me; O LORD, hasten to my help!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong> Let those be ashamed and humiliated together Who seek my life to destroy it; Let those be turned back and dishonored Who delight in my hurt.</td>
<td><strong>2</strong> Let those be ashamed and humiliated Who seek my life; Let those be turned back and dishonored Who delight in my hurt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong> Let those be appalled because of their shame Who say to me, “Aha, aha!”</td>
<td><strong>3</strong> Let those be turned back because of their shame Who say, “Aha, aha!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16</strong> Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; Let those who love Your salvation say continually, “The LORD be magnified!”</td>
<td><strong>4</strong> Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, “Let God be magnified.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17</strong> Since I am afflicted and needy, Let the LORD be mindful of me. You are my help and my deliverer; Do not delay, O my God.</td>
<td><strong>5</strong> But I am afflicted and needy; Hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1** Focus on the LORD’s favor.
**2** Added word speaks of total or complete humiliation.
**3** Specifies the goal or purpose, which is understood in 70:2.
**4** Speaks of shuddering, being horrified, desolated.
**5** Specifies indirect object.
**6** Divine title emphasizes lordship.
**7** Personalization of the relationship.

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- **v. 1** “hasten”
  - The sense of urgency dominates this psalm (as also Psalms 69 and 71).
  - See, also, Psalms 22:19 and 38:22.
  - Prayer is the amplifier for the small voice of the saint in desperate need.

- **v. 2** “Who delight in my hurt”
  - It is a sad reality of fallen human nature, but you will at some time in life have an enemy who delights in your hurt and harm.
  - Such enemies will hate you in spite of or even for your virtues.
• **v. 3** “Aha, aha!”
  - The meaning is something like “Too bad, too bad.”

• **v. 4** “Let God be magnified.”
  - Spurgeon observed that this “doxology” is “infinitely more manly and ennobling than the dog’s bark of ‘Aha, aha’” (*The Treasury of David*, 2/1:204).

• **v. 5** “I am afflicted and needy”
  - “Afflicted” (or, “poor”) refers to one who is a victim in a situation or condition that is not of his or her own choosing.
  - “Needy” in this connection and context refers to the fact that David is completely dependent upon someone else for deliverance.
  - God alone is able to help David and deliver him from his enemies.

### 4.0 Singing Psalm 70

**Make Haste**

Tunes: “O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee”

Make haste, O God, my soul to bless! Make haste, O God! Make haste to save!
My help and my deliv’rer thou; For time is short, and death is nigh;
Make haste, for I’m in deep distress, Make haste ere yet I’m in my grave,
My case is urgent; help me now. And with the lost for ever lie.
Make haste, for I am poor and low; Make haste, O God, and hear my cries;
And Satan mocks my prayers and tears; Then with the souls who seek thy face,
O God, in mercy be not slow, And those who thy salvation prize,
But snatch me from my horrid fears. I’ll magnify thy matchless grace.

— Charles Haddon Spurgeon

### 5.0 Praying Psalm 70

- Father, help me now. [v. 1]
- Lord, take care of those who oppose Your people. [vv. 2-3]
- God, be magnified—You are great. [v. 4]
- Thank You for being my help and my deliverer. [v. 5]

### 6.0 Applying Psalm 70

- Prayer should be our first action, rather than our last resort.
- In desperate circumstances, depend on God.