

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The prophet, in confidence, prays for God's favor, Psalm 71:1-5; recounts God's kindness to him from youth to old age, Psalm 71:6-9; shows what his adversaries plot against him, and prays for their confusion, Psalm 71:10-13; promises fidelity, and determines to be a diligent preacher of righteousness even in old age, Psalm 71:14-19; takes encouragement in God's mercy, and foresees the confusion of all his adversaries, Psalm 71:20-24.

There is no title to this Psalm either in the Hebrew or Chaldee; and the reason is, it was written as a part of the preceding Psalm, as appears by about twenty-seven of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. The Vulgate, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic, have, "A Psalm of David for the sons of Jonadab, and the first of those who were led captives." For the first, second, and third verses, see the notes on their parallels, Psalm 31:1-3 (note).

Verse 3

Be thou my strong habitation - Instead of *maon* (maon), habitation, many of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. read *maoz* (maoz), munition or defense. Be thou my rock of defense.

Thou hast given commandment to save me - Thou hast determined my escape, and hast ordered thy angels to guard me. See Psalm 91:11, Psalm 91:12.

Verse 4

Out of the hand of the wicked - Probably his unnatural son Absalom, called here *rasha* (rasha), the Wicked, because he had violated all laws, human and Divine.

The unrighteous and cruel man - Probably Ahithophel who was the iniquitous counsellor of a wicked and rebellious son.

Verse 5

My trust from my youth - When I was born into the world, thou didst receive me, and thou tookest me under thy especial care. "My praise shall be continually of thee." Rather, I have always made thee my boast.

Verse 7

I am as a wonder unto many - I am *kemopheth* (kemopheth) "as a portent," or "a type." I am a typical person; and many of the things that happen to me are to be considered in reference to him of whom I am a type. But he may mean I am a continual prodigy. My low estate, my slaying the lion and the bear, conquering the Philistine, escaping the fury of Saul, and being raised to the throne of Israel, are all so many wonders of thy providence, and effects of thy power and grace.

Verse 9

Cast me not off in the time of old age - The original might be translated and paraphrased thus: "Thou wilt not cast me off till the time of old age; and according to the failure of my flesh, thou wilt not forsake me." My expectation of rest and happiness will not be deferred till the time that I shall be an aged man, Thou wilt not withdraw thy presence from me as my flesh decays, and as my natural strength abates; but, on the contrary, as my outward man decays, my inward man shall be renewed day by day. It was in David's old age that the rebellion of Absalom took place.

Verse 10

Lay wait for my soul - They seek to destroy my life.

Verse 11

God hath forsaken him - "God, who has been his special help all through life, and who has guarded him so that no hand could be raised successfully against him, has now cast him off; therefore we shall easily prevail against him. His present adversity shows that God is no longer his friend." Thus men judge. "Secular prosperity is a proof of God's favor: adversity is a proof of his displeasure." But this is not God's way, except in especial judgments, etc. He never manifests his pleasure or displeasure by secular good or ill.

Verse 13

Let them be confounded - They shall be confounded: these are prophetic denunciations.

Verse 14

I will hope continually - I shall expect deliverance after deliverance, and blessing after blessing; and, in consequence, I will praise thee more and more. As thy blessings abound, so shall my praises.

Verse 15

I know not the numbers - I must be continually in the spirit of gratitude, praise, and obedience, for thy blessings to me are innumerable.

Verse 16

I will go - אָבֹהֶם (abo), I will enter, i.e., into the tabernacle, in the strength or mightinesses of Adonai Jehovah, the supreme God, who is my Prop, Stay, and Support.

I will make mention of thy righteousness - I will continually record and celebrate the acts of thy mercy and goodness. They are without number, (Psalm 71:15), and of these alone will I speak.

Verse 17

Thou hast taught me from my youth - I have had thee for my continual instructor: and thou didst begin to teach me thy fear and love from my tenderest infancy. Those are well taught whom God instructs; and when he teaches, there is no delay in learning.

Verse 18

Old and grey-headed - In the ninth verse he mentioned the circumstance of old age; here he repeats it, with the addition of hoary-headedness, which, humanly speaking, was calculated to make a deeper impression in his favor. Though all these things are well known to God, and he needs not our information, yet he is pleased to say, "Come now, and let us reason together." And when his children plead and reason with him, they are acting precisely as he has commanded.

Verse 19

Thy righteousness - is very high - אֲדָמָר (ad marom) - is up to the exalted place, reaches up to heaven. The mercy of God fills all space and place. It crowns in the heavens what it governed upon earth.

Who hast done great things - אֲדָמָר (gedoloth). Thou hast worked miracles, and displayed the greatest acts of power.

Who is like unto thee! - אֲדָמָר (mi camocha). God is alone, - who can resemble him? He is eternal. He can have none before, and there can be none after; for in the infinite unity of his trinity he is that eternal, unlimited, impartible, incomprehensible, and uncompounded ineffable Being, whose essence is hidden from all created intelligences, and whose counsels cannot be fathomed by any creature that even his own hand can form. Who is Like Unto Thee! will excite the wonder, amazement, praise, and adoration of angels and men to all eternity.

Verse 20

Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles - Multiplied straits and difficulties. And thou hast only showed them.

Hadst thou permitted them to have fallen upon me with all their own energy and natural consequences, they would have destroyed me. As it was, I was nearly buried under them.

Shalt quicken me again - Shalt revive me - put new life in me. This has been applied to the passion of our Lord, and his resurrection; for it is added, Thou: -

Shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth - Death shall not prey upon my body; thy Holy One can see no corruption. As applicable to David, it might mean his being almost overwhelmed with afflictions; and his deliverance was like a life from the dead.

Verse 21

Thou shalt increase my greatness - Thou wilt restore me to my throne and kingdom; and it shall be done in such a way that all shall see it was the hand of God; and I shall have the more honor on the account.

Comfort me on every side - I shall have friends in all quarters; and the tribes on all sides will support me.

Verse 22

I will also praise thee with the psaltery - $\text{x'x'xæx}^{\text{TM}}$ x x'xæ (bichli nebel), with the instrument nebel. Unto thee will I sing with the harp; x'x'x x•x'' (bechinnor), with the kinnor. Both were stringed instruments, and the principal used in the Jewish worship; and with which, or any thing like them, in Divine worship, we, as Christians, have nothing to do.

Verse 23

My lips shall greatly rejoice and my soul - My lips shall use words expressive of my soul's happiness and gratitude. Thou hast redeemed me; and thou shalt have the eternal praise.

Verse 24

Talk of thy righteousness - The righteousness of God is frequently used in this Psalm, and in other places, to signify his justice, judgments, faithfulness, truth, mercy, etc. There are few words of more general import in the Bible.

They are confounded - The counsel of Ahithophel is confounded, and turned to foolishness, and he was so ashamed that he went and hanged himself. As to the vain and wicked Absalom, he met with the fate that he had meditated against his father. Though not yet done, David sees all these things as actually accomplished; for he had got a Divine assurance that God would bring them to pass.