

The Grayheaded Man

Jesus in the Psalms

Psalm 71

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I. Few and evil (Gen 47:9-10)

⁹And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

II. The Grayheaded Man

A. The Present: The Lord, my Rock and Fortress (1-3 cf. Ps 31:1-3)

¹In You, O LORD, I put my trust; Let me never be put to shame. ²Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; Incline Your ear to me, and save me. ³Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.

B. The Past: Deliver me as You have of old (4-13)

⁴Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. ⁵For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth. ⁶By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You. ⁷I have become as a wonder to many, But You are my strong refuge. ⁸Let my mouth be filled with Your praise And with Your glory all the day. ⁹Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails. ¹⁰For my enemies speak against me; And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, ¹¹Saying, "God has forsaken him; Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him." ¹²O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me! ¹³Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt.

C. The Future: Hoping in and Praising the Lord (14-24 cf. Job 19:25-27)

¹⁴But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more. ¹⁵My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits. ¹⁶I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only. ¹⁷O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works. ¹⁸Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come. ¹⁹Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You? ²⁰You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, Shall revive me again, And bring me up again from the depths of the earth. ²¹You shall increase my greatness, And comfort me on every side. ²²Also with the lute I will praise You— And Your faithfulness, O my God! To You I will sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel. ²³My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed. ²⁴My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; For they are confounded, For they are brought to shame Who seek my hurt.

III. Application

A. Crying for Justice (Ps 5:4-6; 94:1-2; Rom 12:17-21; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Rev 6:10)

On the one hand, *crying for* _____ is righteous. So we see in Psalm 71 that the psalmist prays for vengeance (vv. 4,13, 24). Similarly Psalm 94: “O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs – O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth! Rise up, O Judge of the earth; Render punishment to the proud” (94:1-2 cf. Rev 6:10). On the other hand, *taking vengeance* is wicked (cf. Rom 12:17-21).

So what are we to think of the common maxim, “God hates the _____ but loves the sinner”? Is that biblical? As with many maxims, this one contains a kernel of truth. Certainly, God loves all sinners in His *love of benevolence*. Even the most wicked man or woman is made in the image of God and God hates the way in which sin has marred His image in that man or woman. But note that this maxim has some serious deficiencies. How can it answer the Scriptural declaration, “Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated” (Mal 1:2-3 cf. Ps 5:4-6; 11:5)? Further, it ignores the very sober reality that God does not send _____ to hell but sinners.

⁹Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor 6:9-11

B. Aging Well (Ps 92:12-15)

¹²The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing, ¹⁵To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. (Ps 92:12-15)

1. Trust in God and Pray for Deliverance

First, our psalm reminds us that we must trust God and continue to pray for deliverance throughout our lives (1-3, 4, 9, 13, 18). Challenges change but God remains the same. Old age is no excuse for _____.

2. Recall God’s Faithfulness and Strength

Second, the psalmist reminds us to recount to ourselves the numerous times we have witnessed God’s faithfulness and strength at work in the past (5-6, 7, 15, 17, 19) so that we may _____ God’s faithfulness to the next generation (6c, 8, 14-18, 22-24).

3. Look forward in hope

Finally, our psalm reminds us that even in old age there is _____ for the future – God shall deliver us yet again and comfort us on every side (20-21). How do we know? Because Christ has risen from the dead, the firstfruits of all those who die (1 Cor 15:20,43,53). And God has given us the Holy Spirit as our guarantee. And “if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom 8:11 cf. Phil 3:20-21).

IV. Conclusion