

## Day 344 - SUNDAY: January 21st

### Psalm 67, 68 & 69

#### Psalms 67:1-7 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. On Stringed Instruments. A Psalm. A Song. God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us, Selah That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, And govern the nations on earth. Selah Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

#### Psalms 68:1-35 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song. Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those also who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, So drive them away; As wax melts before the fire, So let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; Let them rejoice before God; Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly. Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, By His name YAH, And rejoice before Him. A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; But the rebellious dwell in a dry land. O God, when You went out before Your people, When You marched through the wilderness, Selah The earth shook; The heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel. You, O God, sent a plentiful rain, Whereby You confirmed Your inheritance, When it was weary. Your congregation dwelt in it; You, O God, provided from Your goodness for the poor. The Lord gave the word; Great was the company of those who proclaimed it: "Kings of armies flee, they flee, And she who remains at home divides

the spoil. Though you lie down among the sheepfolds, You will be like the wings of a dove covered with silver, And her feathers with yellow gold." When the Almighty scattered kings in it, It was white as snow in Zalmon. A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; A mountain of many peaks is the mountain of Bashan. Why do you fume with envy, you mountains of many peaks? This is the mountain which God desires to dwell in; Yes, the LORD will dwell in it forever. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, Even thousands of thousands; The Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the Holy Place. You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the LORD God might dwell there. Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits, The God of our salvation! Selah Our God is the God of salvation; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death. But God will wound the head of His enemies, The hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in his trespasses. The Lord said, "I will bring back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea, That your foot may crush them in blood, And the tongues of your dogs may have their portion from your enemies." They have seen Your procession, O God, The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; Among them were the maidens playing timbrels. Bless God in the congregations, The Lord, from the fountain of Israel. There is little Benjamin, their leader, The princes of Judah and their company, The princes of Zebulun and the princes of Naphtali. Your God has commanded your strength; Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us. Because of Your temple at Jerusalem, Kings will bring presents to You. Rebuke the beasts of the reeds, The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples, Till everyone submits himself with pieces of silver. Scatter the peoples who delight in war. Envoys will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God. Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; Oh, sing praises to the Lord, Selah To Him who rides on the heaven of heavens, which were of old! Indeed, He sends out His voice, a mighty voice. Ascribe strength to God; His excellence is over Israel, And His strength is in the clouds. O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places. The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power

to His people. Blessed be God!

**Psalms 69:1-36** NKJV

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A Psalm of David. Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, Where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, Where the floods overflow me. I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God. Those who hate me without a cause Are more than the hairs of my head; They are mighty who would destroy me, Being my enemies wrongfully; Though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it. O God, You know my foolishness; And my sins are not hidden from You. Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me; Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel. Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children; Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, That became my reproach. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, And I am the song of the drunkards. But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation. Deliver me out of the mire, And let me not sink; Let me be delivered from those who hate me, And out of the deep waters. Let not the floodwater overflow me, Nor let the deep swallow me up; And let not the pit shut its mouth on me. Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender

mercies. And do not hide Your face from Your servant, For I am in trouble; Hear me speedily. Draw near to my soul, and redeem it; Deliver me because of my enemies. You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries are all before You. Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually. Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents. For they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous. But I am poor and sorrowful; Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull, Which has horns and hooves. The humble shall see this and be glad; And you who seek God, your hearts shall live. For the LORD hears the poor, And does not despise His prisoners. Let heaven and earth praise Him, The seas and everything that moves in them. For God will save Zion And build the cities of Judah, That they may dwell there and possess it. Also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it, And those who love His name shall dwell in it.

## Daily Deep Dive:

Psalm 67:

The UCG reading program states: “*Neginoth* in the superscription of Psalm 67 likely means, as the NKJV translates it here and in other places, “stringed instruments.”

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commentary *Psalms* says: “Obviously this psalm was composed for public worship. Perhaps it belonged particularly to the autumn harvest festival [i.e., the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering] (see verse 6)” (comments on verses 1-7). This he takes from the RSV, which renders verse 6 as “The earth has yielded its increase,” whereas other translations understand the verb here as future tense—“shall yield.” Of course, the annual harvest does portray a future harvest, as was pointed out with respect to Psalm 65, which begins the current grouping of psalms—and that is certainly a major theme here as well.

The song opens with a prayer for God's mercy and blessing and that His face would shine—smile in favor—on His people (Psalm 67:1). As previously pointed out in regard to Psalm 31:16, the language here is taken from the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:25 (see also Psalm 4:6; Psalm 44:3; Psalm 80:3, Psalm 80:7, Psalm 80:19; Psalm 119:135). The *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* says that this song's “content, form and brevity suggest that it served as a liturgical [i.e., worship service] prayer of the people at the conclusion of worship, perhaps just prior to (or immediately after) the priestly benediction” (note on Psalm 67).

“God's blessing on his people (as well as his saving acts in their behalf) will catch the attention of the nations and move them to praise (Psalm 65:2)” (same note). Indeed, this is a rather exciting

thought within the psalm. Note the repetition in the refrain of Psalm 67:3 and verse 5. The excitement here is not just for the increased praise for God, but for the fact that all peoples will be able to rejoice when they experience the establishment of His righteous government over all nations. In their happiness over this certain hope, God's people are expressing love for all mankind. Given all this, the focus of verse 6 is clearly future. The earth yielding its increase speaks not only of God's great agricultural provision in the world to come, but of the great harvest of humanity that will then take place—to the "ends of the earth" (verse 7), as the nations learn to properly fear and respect Him and His people are vastly blessed as never before." [END]

Psalm 68:

The UCG reading program states: "In Psalm 68 David calls on God to deal with His enemies and for the righteous to rejoice in His triumph. The first half of the psalm (to verse 18) reviews God's historic acts on behalf of the Israelites, progressing from the wilderness of Sinai to the conquest of the Promised Land. Verse 18 carries the meaning forward to Christ's day, as we will see, and then the second half of the psalm "looks forward with expectations of God's continuing triumphs until the redemption of his people is complete and his kingly rule is universally acknowledged with songs of praise" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 68).

In Psalm 68:4 God's name is given as "Yah" (see also Isaiah 12:2), a shortened form of Yhwh, usually transliterated as *Yahweh*. This longer form, replaced in most Bible versions with the word "Lord," is the third-person form of the name that God gave in the first person in Exodus 3:14. In that verse God gave a long version of this name, "I AM WHO I AM," as well as a short

version "I AM." Just the same, the third-person form Yhwh means "He Is Who He Is," while the shorter form Yah means "He Is" or "He Who Is." This short form appears in the names of many people in the Bible, such as Elijah (i.e., Eli-Yah), Isaiah (i.e., Yitza-Yah) and Jeremiah (i.e., Yerem-Yah).

Psalm 68:5-6 expresses God's special concern for the orphan and widow and His care to make those who are lonely part of families. His desire is to help those in need, which brings us to the next clause in verse 6—delivering the oppressed. Actually, the specific wording here—of bringing those who are bound into prosperity but the rebellious to desert exile—probably relates, given the context of the verses that follow, to God's merciful deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and their subsequent rebellion and wilderness wanderings (see also Psalm 66:10-12).

God still continued to provide for His people. Psalm 68:8-9 appears to paraphrase a few lines from the Song of Deborah in Judges 5:4b-5 about God providing rain to the Israelites in the Sinai desert. The provision of rain also ties the psalm to Psalm 65:9-10. God's "inheritance" (Psalm 68:9) is a reference to Israel (see Deuteronomy 9:29)—synonymous in the next verse with His congregation and the poor for whom He provided (Psalm 68:10). Verses 11-14 speak of God granting victory to Israel in its battles against the armies of various kingdoms on the way to subduing the Promised Land. Zalmon in verse 14 is a mountain near Shechem in northern Israel (see Judges 9:46-48). Bashan (Psalm 68:15) is a high plateau northeast of the Sea of Galilee. It was part of the territory of King Og when the Israelites came to the land. "Mountain" in these verses seems to symbolize land and dominion. That is, the mountain of Bashan is the land or kingdom

of Bashan. God says it is now a mountain of *His* (verse 15)—that is, it is incorporated into His dominion as part of the Kingdom of Israel. The mountain's peaks (verse 16) would represent its various sub-kingdoms or city-states. These peaks are erupting, like volcanoes, with envy against the takeover by God and His people. God, however, says He desires to dwell in this mountain—the Promised Land—forever.

Yet, depending on when David wrote this psalm, the mountain of God could perhaps be more specifically identified as Mount Zion—of which the whole land of Israel is an extension (just as Zion, the Mountain of the Lord's House, will, after Christ's return, represent both Jerusalem and the whole Kingdom of God). For it is in Jerusalem that God has chosen to dwell: "For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: 'This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it'" (Psalm 132:13-14).

With this in mind, consider Psalm 68:17. It mentions God's vast chariot army, and then notice how the NRSV translates the second half of the verse: "The Lord came from Sinai into the holy place." The Hebrew wording here is difficult, but this meaning fits well in context. That is, what has gone before in the account has shown the progress from the wandering in the wilderness to the permanent establishment of God within His sanctuary in Israel—probably on Mount Zion.

The first phrase in the next verse, "You have ascended on high" (verse 18), would fit with the idea of God's entourage moving from lower surrounding lands to the heights of Israel (especially in the sense of ascending to the place that was to represent the spiritual peak among the nations of the earth). The mountain of God, we



have seen in other psalms, represents the heavenly Zion as well—just as it does here. Indeed, there is much more to this verse. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul notes something remarkable about this passage. He quotes from it in Ephesians 4:8. Then, in verse 9, he asks: "Now this, 'He *ascended*,'—what does it mean but that He also first *descended*...?" Paul realizes that this verse refers to *God*, who dwells in the highest heaven. So how can He be portrayed as ascending to a higher place or station? Only if He first descended—and this Paul explains as prophetic of God coming down from heaven as a human being, Jesus Christ, to then later ascend back up to heaven to reassume His divine majesty.

The next phrase in Psalm 68:18, also referred to by Paul, "You have led captivity captive," finds an earlier parallel in the Song of Deborah: "Arise, Barak [the leader of Israel's army], and lead thy captivity captive" (Judges 5:12, KJV). In that passage, the NKJV translates the phrase simply as, "Lead your captives away." Indeed, the idea here seems merely to be: "Take those you have captured and lead them away as captive." Many see in this a sort of victory procession (compare Psalm 68:24-25). The NIV, similar to the NRSV, renders the phrase in Psalm 68:18 as "You led captives in your train." However, it is not clear if the captives here are humiliated and paraded enemies (compare also Colossians 2:15) or those whom God has converted to His truth—themselves victorious with God in the procession (compare Psalm 69:33; Romans 6:16-22; Ephesians 3:1).

The next clause in Psalm 68:18 says, "You have received gifts among men." Paul in quoting this seems to reverse it, saying that God "gave gifts to men" (Ephesians 4:8)—referring to the apportioning of spiritual gifts to Christ's followers (verses 7, 11-

16). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* states: "Paul does not cite either MT [the Masoretic Text] or LXX [the Septuagint].... Some have claimed that, under the inspiration of the Spirit, Paul felt free to amplify the meaning of the Psalm, since the giving is implicit in the receiving for. But it seems more probable that the apostle was drawing on an ancient oral tradition reflected in the Aramaic Targum on the Psalter and the Syriac Peshitta version, both of which read, 'Thou hast given gifts to men.' Early rabbinical comments applied the verse to Moses when he *received* the Law on Sinai so as to bring it *to the people*" (note on Ephesians 4:8, emphasis added). *Zondervan* notes on this verse: "Paul apparently takes his cue from certain Rabbinic interpretations current in his day that read the Hebrew preposition for 'from' in the sense of 'to' (a meaning it often has) and the verb for 'received' in the sense of 'take and give' (a meaning it sometimes has—but with a different preposition...)." Of course, God receives from people only what He has already given them or produced in them—so Paul's understanding was certainly correct in any case. Verse 19 of Psalm 68 continues in the theme of God providing for His people: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits." However, it is possible that the latter clause should be rendered, as in the NRSV, "who daily bears us up" (i.e., carries us), or, as in the NIV, "who daily bears our burdens." But those who oppose God will not fare so well in the end (verses 21-23). Crushing enemies in blood under foot (verse 23) recalls Psalm 58:10. As there, this is not to relish the destruction of others but to portray a meting out of justice on those who refuse to repent.

In these verses, we are moving beyond ancient Israel's subjugation of the Promised Land to the future subjugation of the

earth to God's Kingdom at Christ's coming. As we saw, Psalm 68:18, besides representing the establishment of the ancient sanctuary in Jerusalem, also represented the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ to the heavenly sanctuary. Yet it also represents the ascension of Christ to the throne of the earth in His Kingdom (as in Psalm 47), when the future temple is established at Jerusalem (see Psalm 68:29).

Verse 30 is probably to be interpreted by verses 31-32, so that "beasts of the reeds" (verse 30)—likely descriptive of the crocodile and hippopotamus of the Nile—represents Egypt and Ethiopia (verse 31) and "the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples" (verse 30) represents the various "kingdoms of the earth" (verse 32), both great and small. Though initially rebuked, most will soon become part of a great chorus of nations praising God (see verses 32-35), as was called for in the previous psalm." [END]

Verse 14 – Zalmon (NKJV) was a mountain near Shechem.

Verse 15 – The JFB commentary states: "Mountains are often symbols of nations ([Psa\\_46:2](#); [Psa\\_65:6](#)). That of Bashan, northeast of Palestine, denotes a heathen nation, which is described as a "hill of God," or a great hill. Such are represented as envious of the hill (Zion) on which God resides;"

Psalm 69:

The UCG reading program states: "With Psalm 69 we come to the final group of psalms in Book II (Psalms 69-72). The *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* comments on these four psalms: "Book II of the Psalter closes with a cluster of three prayers and an attached

royal psalm--in perfect balance with its beginning (...Psalms 42-45). These three prayers [69-71] were originally all pleas of a king in Israel [stated to be David in the superscriptions of 69 and 70] for deliverance from enemies (apparently internal) determined to do away with him. They all contain certain key words that are found elsewhere in Book II only in Psalms 42-44 and in the seven psalms (54-60) placed at the center of the Book. Another link between Psalms 69-71 and 42-44 is the placement of a short psalm at the center of each triad. These placements have the appearance of deliberate editorial design. In the former cluster Ps 43 has been artificially separated from 42...while in the latter cluster Psalm 70 repeats (with some revision) Psalm 40:13-17 and was probably intended to serve as an introduction to Psalm 71. The attached prayer for the king [also referred to as the king's *son*] (Psalm 72) stands in similar relationship to Psalms 69-71 as Psalm 45 stands to Psalm 42-44 and brings Book II to its conclusion. Thus, as with Psalm 45, its placement here hints at a Messianic reading of the psalm already by the editors of the Psalter.... It should be further noted that in Psalms 65-68 all peoples on earth are drawn into the community of those praising God.... Here in Psalm 69 all creation is called to join that chorus (v. 34), and Psalm 72 envisions that all peoples and kings will submit to the son of David (vv. 8-11) and be blessed through his reign (v. 17)" (note on Psalms 69-72).

Yet the resounding praise in Psalm 69 does not come until the end. Most of the psalm constitutes an urgent prayer by David for deliverance while lamenting over life-threatening circumstances and enemy persecution. While he meant himself as the sufferer, this was also prophetic. "The authors of the N[ew] T[estament] viewed this cry of a godly sufferer as foreshadowing the sufferings

of Christ; no psalm, except Psalm 22, is quoted more frequently in the N[ew] T[estament]" (note on Psalm 69). As *The Nelson Study Bible* states: "This highly messianic psalm presents a remarkable description of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Whereas Psalm 22 describes Jesus' physical sufferings, Psalm 69 focuses more on His emotional and spiritual suffering. Yet like Psalm 22, this psalm was written by David approximately a thousand years before the events it describes. Both psalms begin with the sufferings of David but have their full meaning in the sufferings of Jesus. For these reasons, the apostles in the New Testament acknowledge that David was a prophet of God (Acts 2:30)" (note on Psalm 69). David likens his anguish to sinking in mud and deep water, being swallowed by the ocean deep or the pit—that is, the grave (verses 1-2, 14-15). This imagery was also used in Psalm 40 (see verse 2), another messianic psalm quoted in the New Testament. Psalm 40 is part of the cluster of psalms closing Book I of the Psalter, just as Psalm 69 is part of the cluster of psalms closing Book II. A further link here can be found in the fact that the very next psalm, Psalm 70, is, as was noted above, a reprise of Psalm 40:13-17-- and it seems like a quick summary of Psalm 69.

David has sought God so earnestly, through crying and constant prayer, that he says, "My throat is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for my God" (verse 3). While the latter expression may denote in part his eyes being swollen from crying, it probably also has to do with diminished joy and hope. (For more on the metaphor of eyes failing, see the *Beyond Today Bible Commentary* on Psalm 38.) David is wearied by his host of enemies who, he says, "hate me without a cause" (Psalm 69:4). We saw this same description earlier in Psalm 35:19 and will see a similar one in Psalm 109:3-5. As pointed out in the *Beyond Today Bible Commentary* on Psalm

35, this baseless antagonism was prophetic of Jesus Christ's experience--as He specifically declared it to be (John 15:25). David does confess sins to God, but his point here is to say that God knows his enemies aren't opposing him for this reason (Psalm 69:5). As in other messianic passages, Jesus does not share the fault of sin--yet He did suffer for sins (the sins of others, including David's).

In verse 6, the implication is that others on David's side are praying for him. David prays that none of these will suffer shame and discouragement as a result of what happens to him. Indeed, Jesus no doubt prayed for His disciples this way in the time before His trial, crucifixion and death. In David's case, he was asking for God to rescue Him and thereby demonstrate that those who were praying for Him were in the right. In Jesus' case, He would have been asking for His disciples to be helped through what was happening until they were completely vindicated when God truly rescued Jesus from death by resurrecting Him. We should learn a lesson from the fact that Christ was not preserved from death but was ultimately saved out of it. If God does not deliver us from some circumstance in the here and now, we should not let that discourage us. Indeed, God is always alongside the believer, whether He rescues him now or not. David further states: "For Your sake I have borne reproach...and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me" (verses 7, 9). He is speaking here of the life of the righteous in general terms--of which his present circumstance is only an example. The godly suffer when they turn away from the world to obey God. They often go through difficulties not of their own doing: "Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered" (Psalm 44:22, NIV). As

Jesus told His followers: "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12)--David having been one of these prophets. Jesus Himself was, of course, the premier example of being hated for following God.

In describing his devotion to God for which he is persecuted, David says, "Zeal for Your house has eaten me up" (verse 9). David was consumed with wanting to honor God--filled with desire to serve God's tabernacle and God's nation and to build God's temple. Christ's disciples recognized this passage as applying to *Him* after He ran the moneychangers out of the temple of His day--evidently already having understood Psalm 69 to be a messianic psalm (see John 2:17). God's people today should have this same zeal for His house, which at this time is His Church (see 1 Timothy 3:15).

David was in sore grief, which in itself became something for others to ridicule (verses 10-11). He was scorned by many at all levels of society--from "those who sit in the gate" (city elders) to drunk commoners singing mocking bar songs about him in the taverns (verse 12). Jesus also faced such contempt.

In verses 13-18 David returns to pleading with God to rescue him--"speedily," he asks (verse 17), trusting that he is praying "in the acceptable time" (verse 13)--also translated "in the time of your favor" (NIV). Considering the messianic nature of this psalm, it is interesting that God will later declare that He has heard His Servant (representative of both the Messiah and Israel) "in an acceptable time" (Isaiah 49:8; see also 2 Corinthians 6:2).

David can't find anyone to comfort him (Psalm 69:20). Consider that Jesus' disciples abandoned Him during His trial and suffering so that the only ones to turn to for pity were His adversaries and other onlookers, and they gave him none. David further states that those from whom he sought comfort instead gave him "gall" (denoting a bitter substance) to eat and, for his thirst (compare verse 3), vinegar to drink (verse 21). David was here employing "vivid metaphors for the bitter scorn they made him eat and drink when his whole being craved the nourishment of refreshment and comfort" (*Zondervan*, note on verse 21). Yet this was prophetic of what Christ experienced, both figuratively *and literally* (see Matthew 27:34, Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:23, Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36; John 19:28-29).

For their mistreatment of him, amounting to defiance of God, David calls on God to curse his enemies with punishment (Psalm 69:22-28). Verse 25, combined with Psalm 109:8, is understood in the New Testament as prophetic of Judas Iscariot no longer having a place among the apostles following his treachery and suicide (see Acts 1:20). Indeed, we should understand David's words here more as a prophecy of judgment on God's enemies than as a model to follow in our own prayers. Jesus gave us the pattern of what to say during persecution when He was being executed: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). We are to pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44)--the best thing we can pray for being that they will repent. Of course, there are circumstances where it is proper to seek God's intervention and justice against those who refuse to repent. This, however, does not mean wishing people out of God's Kingdom forever. David's prayer about blotting his enemies out of the book of life and that they not be written with the righteous



(Psalm 69:28) might seem to imply this--leaving them utterly hopeless. Yet we should consider that what David was really saying here is that God would not accept these enemies as they were at that time--giving them eternal life in spite of the evil they had done. And in fact God does not do this. None of the enemies David speaks of here may ever receive eternal life in God's family--until, that is, their repentance, acceptance of Christ's atonement for their sin and their transformation into wholly new people. The people they *were* will never be in the Kingdom of God. (Even David's old self--which, frankly, was his greatest enemy--will not be in God's Kingdom. And so it is with all of us today.) Indeed, knowing David's character as a man after God's own heart, we can be confident that if one of those of whom he spoke here sincerely repented and begged him for mercy, he would have shown it--making it clear that he did not mean that they should never be able to repent.

David's statement in verse 29, "But I am poor and sorrowful," again calls to mind Psalm 40: "But I am poor and needy" (verse 17), which is repeated in Psalm 70:5. As before, "poor" in this context does not mean financially indigent but, rather, broken in spirit (humbled) and in great need of help--as Jesus Christ also was in His fatal circumstances.

Yet David is confident of God's intervention, declaring that he will praise and thank God (Psalm 69:30)--stating that the proper attitude is what God desires more than the ritualism of the sacrificial system (verse 31), as David also stated in Psalm 40 (verse 6) and in other psalms.

The humble seeking God on his behalf will then rejoice (Psalm 69:32-33)--just as Christ's followers would later rejoice after His

resurrection (and just as all His followers today will rejoice after His return in power and glory to rule all nations).

Verse 34, as pointed out earlier, calls on all creation to join in praising God. And verses 35-36 speak of the salvation and restoration of Zion and Judah. David may have been referring to present circumstances-perhaps to Jerusalem and outlying towns taken over by enemies during Absalom's or Sheba's rebellion afterward reverting to David and those loyal to him. Yet some contend that David did not write these words--seeing the specific reference to Judah and the need to rebuild its cities (in a literal sense) as an indication that verses 34-36 were added to David's psalm by a later king in Jerusalem, such as Hezekiah at the time of Assyria's invasion. That could be. In any case, the words here likely refer not just to ancient Zion, but prophetically to spiritual Zion today (God's Church) and to Jerusalem at the time Christ returns to establish God's Kingdom." [END]