

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Psalms: God's Nurture Of The Inner Man In The Life Of Faith LXXI: Prayer Of Confident Hope For The Vulnerable, Oppressed Elderly (Psalm 71:1-24)

I. Introduction

- A. Elderly believers facing decline in power, influence and strength can find life to be troubling and fearful.
- B. Psalm 71:1-24 provides a prayer for the vulnerable elderly believer, and we view it for our insight as follows:

II. Prayer Of Confident Hope For The Vulnerable, Oppressed Elderly, Psalm 71:1-24.

- A. There are no introductory remarks in the text, so we stay with the numbering system in the English Bible.
- B. We thus translate Psalm 71:1-24: (1) "In You, O Jahweh, have I sought refuge; let me never be put to shame." (2) "Snatch me away (from trouble) and bring me into security in Your righteousness; incline Your ear unto me and save me." (3) "Be to me (my) Rock Cliff of Refuge to which I can always go; give the command to save me for You (emph. pron.) are my Cliff and my Stronghold." (4) "O my Elohim, cause me to escape from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of those lacking integrity and the ruthless." (5) "Because it is You Who have been my Ground of Hope, O Adonai Jahweh; my Object of Trust since my youth." (6) "Upon You have I leaned from the womb; from the inward parts of my mother it was You Who severed me (cut the umbilical cord)! My praise will continually be with You!" (7) I have become as a symbol of a divine curse to many, but You are my Strong Refuge Shelter." (8) "My mouth is filled with Your praise, declaring Your splendor all day long." (9) "Do not cast me away in the time of old age; do not abandon me when my strength is gone." (10) "Because my enemies speak against me; those who keep watch against my life principle conspire together." (11) "They say, 'Elohim has abandoned him; (so) pursue him and seize him, for there is no one to snatch him away (from trouble).'" (12) "O my Elohim, do not be far from me; O my Elohim, come quickly to save me." (13) "May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm my life principle be covered with scorn and disgrace." (14) "But as for me (emph. pron.), I will always have hope; I will praise You more and more!" (15) "My mouth will tell of Your righteousness, of Your salvation all day long, although I do not know its measure." (16) "I will come and proclaim Your mighty acts, O Adonai Jahweh; I will proclaim Your righteousness, Yours alone." (17) "O Elohim, since my youth You have taught me, and until now I declare Your marvelous deeds." (18) "And even when I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O Elohim, until I declare Your power unto the next generation, Your might unto all who are to come." (19) "Your righteousness, O Elohim, reaches unto the skies, You Who have done great things. Who, O Elohim, is like You?" (20) "Though You have made me see troubles, many and bitter, You will restore my life; from the depths of the earth You will again bring me up." (21) "You will increase my honor and comfort me once again." (22) "Also I myself (emph. pron.) will praise You with the harp for Your faithfulness, O my Elohim; I will sing praise to You with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel." (23) "My lips will shout for joy because I sing praise to You, even my life principle which You have redeemed." (24) "Also my tongue will tell of Your righteous acts all day long, because those who want to harm me have been put to shame and confusion."
- C. We note significant observations and applications of this psalm (as follows):
 1. The psalmist's confidence that God will help him handle his enemies when he is old and vulnerable is built on the precedent of God's provisions for him since his infancy and youth, cf. v. 5-6. If God had reason to help the psalmist so he could reach old age, it follows that God still has a purpose for him in his old age.
 2. The great value of elderly saints in the earthly program of God is presented in verse 18 -- testifying to the next generation of God's faithfulness and power that the upcoming generation might relate well to Him. Thus, elderly believers must not consider themselves to be useless, but valuable for the next generation!
 3. This psalm is set in a culture where the elderly were normally esteemed, so for the elderly saint here to suffer oppression from enemies is the height of evil oppression, cf. v. 10-11. Thus, believers must ever be vigilant to relate well to God, for very evil oppression can occur to anyone, even to the elderly.

Lesson: *The psalmist drew encouragement and direction for handling difficult trials at the hands of evil oppressors even in his old age by recalling God's help in his life since infancy and childhood, believing that if God had helped him reach old age, there must be a purpose for him in his elderly years. The psalmist also realized his divine calling to testify to the next generation for their benefit about the faithfulness and power of the Lord.*

Application: *May we rely on the precedents of God's help for us in our past for faith in His help for us today.*