**Psalm Seventy**

***“Make Haste, O God”***

**Introduction**

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he recurrent use of Ps. 40:13-17 is almost identical with the wording of Ps. 70:1-5. The title is the same except for the addition:*“To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.”* The *Hiphil* infinitive (*lehazciyr*)[[1]](#footnote-1) gives the purpose of remembrance for this messianic Psalm: to make haste in deliverance! Jesus of Nazareth implored the Father to remember to *“make haste”* in deliverance regarding the agony the Saviour faced. The Apostle Paul confirmed that Ps. 40:1-17 referred to the redemptive life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ by applying Ps. 40:6-8 to the sacrificial death of Christ (Heb. 10:5-7).[[2]](#footnote-2) David wrote Ps. 40 as a prophecy to express the Lord’s joy in suffering for the sins of the world (cf. Heb. 12:2). He did not suffer as did the Lord obviously (cf. Ps. 22:1; Mt. 27:46), because the suffering of the psalmist was a mere shadow of the substance of the divinely unique suffering of the precious Lord Jesus Christ. The psalmist David did express the Lord’s Praise for His Deliverance (vv. 1-5) and Opportunities (vv. 6-10), and the Lord’s Petitions for His Deliverance (vv. 11-13) and Vindication (vv. 14-17).[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Structure**

The structure for the messianic Ps. 70:1-5 focused on the remembrance of the proleptic plea of the coming Saviour for hasty deliverance. The repetition of the wording of Ps. 40:13-17 was the inspired effort to remind the present audience that One greater than David was coming to experience the ultimate suffering for the redemption of man (Isa. 52:13-53:12). This short psalm finds organization around the following chiasm.

**A. Remembrance for Hasty Deliverance (v. 1)**

**B. Remembrance for Retribution on Sinners (vv.2-3)**

**B.’ Remembrance for Rejoicing of Saints (v. 4)**

**A.’ Remembrance for Hasty Deliverance (v. 5)**

Although both passages (Ps. 40:13-17 and Ps. 70:1-5) are essentially the same in words, content, and interpretation, there are several places of divergence. For instance, Ps. 40:13-17 has five more Hebrew words than Ps. 70:1-5. Second, the former psalm referred to *“LORD”* (*Jehovah*) three times, *“Lord”* (*‘Adonay*) one time, and *“God”* (*‘Elohiym*) once. The latter used *“God”* (*‘Elohiym*) three times and *“LORD”* (*Jehovah*) twice. Third, the *Qal* imperative *“make haste”* (*chushah*) occurred twice in the second passage (Ps. 70:1, 5) and only once in the first (Ps. 40:13).

**Exegesis (vv. 1-5)**

***To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance. Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha. Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified. But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.***

The focus of both portions of Scripture ultimately referred to Jesus of Nazareth. The Apostle Paul utilized the passage (Ps. 40:6-8) for his argument concerning the crucifixion of the Saviour (Heb. 10:5-7). His point was that the obedient Son of God gave His body as the final sacrifice for the sins of the world (cf. Heb. 10:10; I Pet. 3:18; I Jn. 2:2). The Apostle had access to Ps. 40:6-8 as he declared, *“it is written”* (*gegraptai*), indicating that the written document by David had continuing results down to his day; the words were perfectly preserved! Paul also gave his inspired running commentary or *Targum* on this portion of the Psalter. He expanded the meaning of Ps. 40:6-8 to demonstrate that the Messiah was obedient even to offering His body as the final sacrifice. The Apostle changed several words in the Hebrew psalm to reflect his inspired *Targum*. The most notable change was the employment of the Greek word *“body”* (*soma*) for Hebrew *“ears”* (*‘azenayim*). Paul recognized that the Hebrew idiom *“opened* (*cariyth*) *ears”* represented not only the Servant’s willingness to hear but also to obey (cf. Isa. 50:5-6).[[4]](#footnote-4)

Now, David prophesied additional words of the Lord Jesus’ intimate conversation with the Father. The Son praised the Father for the opportunity to offer His body as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of man. The Lord Jesus delighted in doing the will of God, in spite of great personal cost and suffering. He implored the Father *“to bring to remembrance”* (*zacar* [233x])[[5]](#footnote-5) Him in the excruciating suffering, and *“make haste”* (*chushah*)[[6]](#footnote-6) by ending the crucifixion! The psalmist presently repeated the plea for hasty deliverance in chiastic form, and converged back on deliverance and retribution. So intense was the suffering of Jesus of Nazareth for Adam’s race that He was overwhelmed with grief, pleading for the Father to *“make haste”* *“to deliver”* (*natzal*) and *“to help”* (*`ezrah*).[[7]](#footnote-7)

The Greater David petitioned the Father that He would vindicate the greatest injustice in human history*—“the just for the unjust”* (I Pet. 3:18). In a series of riveting requests of the imprecatory nature, the Lord Jesus prayed for His Father to vindicate His suffering and death. He used five imperfect or *jussive* verbs (*“let…”*) requesting vengeance on the enemies of the Cross (cf. commentary on Ps. 69). He asked the Father to deal with these enemies so that they would be ashamed (*bosh*), be confounded (*chapher*), driven backward (*sug*), put to shame (*calam*), and be tuned back (*shuv*). Man has always mocked the work of Christ with the *“Aha, aha”* (*he’ah he’ah*)[[8]](#footnote-8) jeering (cf. Acts 17:32).

Although God loves the world (I Jn. 3:16), divine justice requires that the enemies of the cross suffer the vengeance of the Lord in this life and the life to come (Ps. 69:21-28; also Ps. 5:5; 7:11). The psalmist David prophesied about Judas in one of the clearest imprecatory prayers towards an enemy of Christ, saying, *“Let his days be few; and let another take his office”* (Ps. 109:8; Acts 1:20). Of course, the Lord’s five imprecations for vindication were fulfilled on Judas, on national Israel (AD 70), and eventually on all of the lost at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

In an interesting reversal, the Lord used the same kind of verb, the *jussive*, to petition the Father for blessing upon His children. Those that seek the LORD and love His salvation need the spiritual empowerment to *“rejoice”* (*sos*) and to *“be glad”* (*samach*). Let them *“say”* (*‘amar*), *“let God be magnified* (*gadal*).” The Saviour concluded His petitions to the Father by claiming His humble status of being *“poor*” (*`aniy*) and *“needy”* (*‘ebyon*) while recognizing His complete dependence on God. His Help and Deliverer, Who thought upon Him, was His God. The Lord Jesus asked Jehovah to *“make no tarrying*” (*‘al te’achar*). Jesus of Nazareth spoke these words to the Father as He rejoiced in the privilege to provide so great salvation for man, with the help of the Father. When the divine “forsakenness” had ended, Jesus declared, *“It is finished”* (Jn. 19:30).[[9]](#footnote-9)

Although David was constantly in need of help and deliverance, he prophesied the Saviour’s call to the Father while on the Cross. Just as the Lord reminded the Father about hasty deliverance, the psalmist wanted to remind his generation of the coming suffering Saviour by repeating and reminding of the essence of the messianic Psalm 40. Jesus reminded the Father and David reminded his present generation*—“make haste*”!

1. The *Hiphil* infinitive form comes from the verb *zacar* (233x) which means “to remember.” The *Hiphil* stem is causative and the infinitive gives purpose. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Thomas M. Strouse, *The Word of Exhortation: A Commentary on The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews* (Cromwell, CT: Bible Baptist Theological Press, 2018), pp. 453-456. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Strouse, *An Exegesis of Psalms 1-41*, pp. 349-360. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Paul emphasized the one and final sacrifice for the Jews and the fulfillment of fifteen hundred years of sacrifices, saying, *“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”* (Heb. 10:10). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The *KJV* precisely translated the Hebrew infinitive *“to bring to remembrance”*! The modern versions failed miserably in translation and interpretation. For instance, the Hebrew infinitive received malapropos renderings such as “for the memorial offering” (*RSV* and *ESV*), “A petition” (*NIV*), “for a memorial” (*NASV*), omitted (*ASV*), and “written to get God’s attention” (*NET*). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The *Qal* imperative masculine singular form from *chush* (20x) was directed to God the Father while the Son was suffering. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. *“The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD”* (Isa. 38:20). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See also Pss. 35:21 and 40:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?”* (Ps. 22:1; cf. also Mt. 27:46 and Mk. 15:34). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)