

# LESSON 6

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## PSALMS 68—70

### PSALM 68: THE GOD WHO GOES BEFORE

Since it discusses several themes and utilizes different genres of literature in its discussions (including praise, thanksgiving, historical allusions, complaint, imprecation, and prayer), it is extremely challenging to know how to refer to this psalm. The overriding spirit of the psalm is jubilation and joy; and on this basis, it is usually identified as a thanksgiving psalm.

No specific indications are found within the psalm regarding the date or the purpose of its composition. The subject matter may suggest that it was written as a marching song, as a song that would be sung in celebration of one of God's victories for His people. Perhaps it was sung when the ark was brought to Jerusalem by David or at some other time of thanksgiving.

God is pictured in the psalm as leading His people through conflict to triumph to praise. The end result of the battle and the triumph is His people's praising Him and wishing that every nation knew Yahweh as their God.

One characteristic of the psalm is that it presents one of the most vivid pictures of God as the Captain of His people, the One who goes before them. The terms used to describe God will obviously overlap, but each one is needed to convey the total picture that is given by the psalmist.

1. What events does the writer attribute to God?
2. What does the speaker call the listeners to do?
3. Which positive attributes of God does the writer present to His followers?
4. Which negative attributes of God's actions toward the wicked does the psalmist present here?
5. Can the praises in this psalm apply to our worship today?

**PSALM 69:  
DOES PRAYER AVAIL?**

With the exception of Psalms 22 and 110, no psalm is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than this psalm. Verse 4 is quoted by Christ in John 15:25; verse 9 in John 2:17 and Romans 15:3; verse 22 in Romans 11:9; verse 23 in Romans 11:10 and applied to the hardening of Israel; and verse 25 in Acts 1:20 and applied to Judas Iscariot.

As to classification, we see in this composition both an individual lament and an imprecatory psalm. The writer brings his distress to God and asks Him to immediately judge his enemies.

The writer was suffering from some of his own mistakes, but he was also suffering for the sake of God. He explained his predicament to God and then arrived at a solution. Springing from his communion with God and his reliance upon God comes a confident, praising heart.

6. What problems is this psalmist facing?
7. How does he ask God to help him?
8. What does he say God will do?
9. How should we react if we do not get our desired response from God?
10. Why is prayer important?

**PSALM 70:  
“O LORD, HASTEN TO MY HELP!”**

One cannot read this psalm without asking, “Who lifted this portion from Psalm 40 and made this new psalm, and why did he do it?” Perhaps sometime after writing Psalm 40, David chose to take this part of it, give it a new slant, and make it into a new psalm. Another possibility is that a later inspired writer lifted this part from Psalm 40 and made a prayer out of it because the thoughts were especially applicable to his situation. Although the reason for its creation is unknown, we can trust God’s wisdom for arranging it through His Spirit so that we would hear and meditate upon the words that make up the psalm in two different settings.

We would classify this psalm as a lament prayer because of its desperate call for help. In an *inclusio* fashion the psalm begins and ends with “hasten.” It pictures a man at the end of his rope. The writer sees his circumstance as being beyond his control. Realizing that God is his only hope, he brings his plight before Him

with urgency and fervency. His enemies are bringing unrelenting persecution upon him, and he is crying out to God to remove its heavy hand from him. He sees his case as an emergency. His psalm serves as a model of praying in a critical situation in Old Testament times.

11. Compare this psalm to the last five verses of Psalm 40. Does this psalm seem more urgent or more eloquent?
12. What can we assume about the similarities and differences?
13. How does the psalmist signal his urgent need for God's help?
14. Why should we praise God in the middle of our problems?