

Psalm 69

The Message

69 God, God, save me!

I'm in over my head,

² Quicksand under me, swamp water over me;

I'm going down for the third time.

³ I'm hoarse from calling for help,

Bleary-eyed from searching the sky for God.

⁴ I've got more enemies than hairs on my head;

Liars and cheats are out to knife me in the back.

What I never stole

Must I now give back?

⁵ God, you know every sin I've committed;

My life's a wide-open book before you.

⁶ Don't let those who look to you in hope

Be discouraged by what happens to me,

Dear Lord! GOD of the armies!

Don't let those out looking for you

Come to a dead end by following me—

Please, dear God of Israel!

⁷ Because of you I look like an idiot,

I walk around ashamed to show my face.

⁸ My brothers shun me like a bum off the street;

My family treats me like an unwanted guest.

⁹ I love you more than I can say.
Because I'm madly in love with you,
They blame me for everything they dislike about you.

¹⁰ When I poured myself out in prayer and fasting,
All it got me was more contempt.

¹¹ When I put on a sad face,
They treated me like a clown.

¹² Now drunks and gluttons
Make up drinking songs about me.

¹³ And me? I pray.
GOD, it's time for a break!

God, answer in love!
Answer with your sure salvation!

¹⁴ Rescue me from the swamp,
Don't let me go under for good,

Pull me out of the clutch of the enemy;
This whirlpool is sucking me down.

¹⁵ Don't let the swamp be my grave, the Black Hole
Swallow me, its jaws clenched around me.

¹⁶ Now answer me, GOD, because you love me;
Let me see your great mercy full-face.

¹⁷ Don't look the other way; your servant can't take it.
I'm in trouble. Answer right now!

¹⁸ Come close, God; get me out of here.
Rescue me from this deathtrap.

¹⁹ You know how they kick me around—
Pin on me the donkey's ears, the dunce's cap.

²⁰ I'm broken by their taunts,
Flat on my face, reduced to a nothing.

I looked in vain for one friendly face. Not one.
I couldn't find one shoulder to cry on.

²¹ They put poison in my soup,
Vinegar in my drink.

²² Let their supper be bait in a trap that snaps shut;
May their best friends be trappers who'll skin them alive.

²³ Make them become blind as bats,
Give them the shakes from morning to night.

²⁴ Let them know what you think of them,
Blast them with your red-hot anger.

²⁵ Burn down their houses,
Leave them desolate with nobody at home.

²⁶ They gossiped about the one you disciplined,
Made up stories about anyone wounded by God.

²⁷ Pile on the guilt,
Don't let them off the hook.

²⁸ Strike their names from the list of the living;
No rock-carved honor for them among the righteous.

²⁹ I'm hurt and in pain;
Give me space for healing, and mountain air.

³⁰ Let me shout God's name with a praising song,
Let me tell his greatness in a prayer of thanks.

³¹ For GOD, this is better than oxen on the altar,
Far better than blue-ribbon bulls.

³² The poor in spirit see and are glad—
Oh, you God-seekers, take heart!

³³ For GOD listens to the poor,
He doesn't walk out on the wretched.

³⁴ You heavens, praise him; praise him, earth;
Also ocean and all things that swim in it.

³⁵ For God is out to help Zion,
Rebuilding the wrecked towns of Judah.

Guess who will live there—
The proud owners of the land?

³⁶ No, the children of his servants will get it,
The lovers of his name will live in it.

Michael Perry wrote a hymn based on Psalm 69:

When the waters cover me,
save me, O God;
when I look and cannot see,
when I seek what cannot be,
when my friends abandon me,
save me, O God

You know all my guilty fears.
Thank you, O God,
You have heard me with open ears,
You have seen my contrite tears,
You will bless me all the years,
Thank you, O God.

This is labelled as Psalm of David, but it sounds much more like an Exile Psalm. It is very much like Psalm 39. It is quoted 17 times in the New Testament: up there with Psalm 22 and Psalm 110. This Psalm makes you think Jeremiah *and think Jesus*. Why should the righteous suffer? It has all we like

and dislike about the Psalms: absolute honesty, deep personal involvement, celebration in the midst of darkness, ultimate hopefulness; alongside bitter feelings against enemies and a touch of despair. A right relationship with God matters more than formal religion. Paul and Peter are content to invoke vengeance on the enemies of Christianity in line with this Psalm. Note that the vengeance is being left to God: it isn't a matter of "God, just let me get at them!" This is not milk and water faith: doing a bit of God stuff on Sundays if I'm not too busy.