

Growing Old in the Lord

(Psalm 71)

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Young people may consider an aged person's life free from problems. For example, they see an older person as one who does not have to face the difficulties of employment, child rearing, and sometimes even house payments. They may note that a person who has advanced in years may receive a monthly income without working, have the time to travel, and engage in numerous endeavors that others cannot. However, reaching the "Golden Years" does not mean the end of problems and suffering. Psalm 71 resoundingly teaches this idea.

The psalmist identifies himself as an aged person. In verse 9, he pleaded to God, "Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails." He continued in verse 18a, "Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me" We also learn he had been a servant of God from his youth (Note verses 5 and 17).

What is this Psalm about? In addition to the title listed above, various writers use other titles that can summarize what the psalm addresses. They are:

- God, the Rock of Salvation
- Forsake Me Not When My Strength Is Spent
- Prayer of an Old Man for Deliverance
- An Old Person's Prayer
- Godly Old Age

One writer, Charles Spurgeon, summed up the psalm in this way:

We have here THE PRAYER OF THE AGED BELIEVER, who, in holy confidence of faith, strengthened by a long and remarkable experience, pleads against his enemies, and asks further blessings for himself. Anticipating a gracious reply, he promises to magnify the Lord exceedingly.

Who Is the Author?

This psalm does not have one of the ancient superscriptions, which are above many of the other psalms. (These identify the author and sometimes the occasion of the writing.) Thus, it is impossible to determine the writer with certainty. However, there are reasons to conclude that David is the scribe. Consider some of the evidence.

1. Some feel that Psalm 70 is an introduction to Psalm 71, and originally, the two psalms were one. There is a strong continuity between the two. The title of Psalm 70 has David as its writer.
2. The Greek Septuagint translation adds a superscription to the beginning of Psalm 71, designating it as "A Psalm of David."

3. There are many similarities to other psalms David wrote (e.g., 22, 31, 35, 40, and 109.) Specifically, Psalm 71:1-3 and Psalm 31:1-3 (ascribed to David) are almost identical.
4. In verse 22, the author praises God with a lute and sings with the harp. There are Psalms where an unknown writer mentions stringed instruments and some known authors other than David cite them. However, stringed instruments are undoubtedly characteristic of David (1 Sam. 16:14-23; Ps. 6; 12; 57; 108; 144). These references can be a factor in concluding Davidic authorship.

Thus, a strong case is made that David is the author, and we will consider him as such in this study. Also, many conclude that he wrote it when he fled from Absalom.

The writer of this psalm trusted in God, whom he called his rock and strong refuge. He expresses confidence that God would not forsake him in his old age. This relationship existed from the start of his life and continued until its end. Enemies surrounded him, but, as we will see, his devotion to a righteous and merciful God pulled him through. This psalm should benefit everyone. Even if we are not aged now, there is a good chance that we will be down the road. Also, hardships can happen at any age, so the psalm has broad application.

A Plea for Deliverance (1-4)

Verses 1-4 contain a brief introduction, which includes various requests. It says, (1) **“In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be put to shame. (2) Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me, and save me. (3) Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress. (4) Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.”**

We see in the beginning that his trust was in the Lord where it should have been. It was not in an idol or a false deity.

The Hebrew word translated as “trust” (NKJV) is rendered by most translations as “take refuge.” Sometimes, it is used figuratively of God to take refuge under His wings. Consider Psalm 36:7, “How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.” In Ruth 2:12, Boaz told Ruth that the Lord would reward her “under whose wings you have come for refuge.” Finally, Proverbs 14:32 says, in contrast to the wicked, “the righteous has a refuge in death.” The psalmist trusted God and could go to Him for protection and refuge, as a baby chick would go to its mother.

Today, some people are hesitant to have confidence in God. Perhaps this is because they have not seen Him. Some people may have more difficulty trusting someone they have never seen. Also, many do not know much about God. It is harder

to trust someone we do not know. Finally, some may have trust issues due to past experiences. Thus, a person might ask, “Why should I trust anyone?”

If one person says to another, “Trust me.” He may respond by saying, “Why should I?” It can be helpful to have some reasons to trust another. Consider four reasons to trust God.

1. **God never lies or fails to keep His promises.** People often do not do what they say they will. A person may make a promise and fail to keep it, which is never the case with God. Consider Numbers 23:19, which says, “God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” In Deuteronomy 7:9, we are told, “Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.” We can count on God.
2. **God cares for His creation.** In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus tells His followers not to worry. He speaks of His care for the birds of the air, the beauty of the lilies, and the grass of the field. He points out that if God takes care of these, even more so, He will take care of his people (33). Also, in Matthew 7:7-12, the Lord points out that an earthly father gives good gifts to his children. Then He says (11), “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” Romans 8:28 tells us, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Then verse 35 says, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” The fact that God cares for us is another reason to trust Him!
3. **God has proven Himself to be trustworthy.** Throughout the Scriptures, we can read of the trustworthiness of God as he fulfilled His promises. To Abraham, in Genesis 12:1-3, we read of the land, nation, and seed promise. God would give Abraham’s descendants a land, and they would become a great nation. He also promised that all nations of the earth would be blessed, related to Christ’s eventual coming. God fulfilled these promises. In 1 Kings 8:56, Solomon said, “Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.” The Lord has proven Himself in our own lives, the lives of others, and the lives of the people we can read about in the Bible.
4. **God is sovereign.** Holman Bible Dictionary defines God’s sovereignty as “The biblical teaching that God is the source of all creation and that all things come from and depend upon Him.”

God is in control. He is the creator of the universe, and He rules over all. God is omniscient (has all knowledge) and omnipotent (has all power). Psalm 24:1 explains, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who

dwell therein.” Psalm 103:19 says, “The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.” In Jeremiah’s prayer to God, he said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You” (Jer. 32:19).

In daily life, we may be unable to trust certain people to do a particular task because they lack the knowledge and ability. For example, we would not trust our plumbers to perform brain surgery on us. Likewise, we may be unable to trust our physicians to wire our house. However, we can completely trust God in everything because God is sovereign!

Further, because he trusts in God, the writer can make five requests of Him. Consider them.

1. **“Let me never be put to shame”** (1b) — The concept of being “put to shame” is often found in Psalms. Sometimes, the writer asks that his enemies, or the wicked, be put to shame. Here, the psalmist asks God not to put him to shame. In this verse, the writer does not seem to speak in the sense of being ashamed of confessing God (Rom. 1:16), but in the sense of not only being ashamed but confounded or perplexed in something or someone (Job. 6:20; Is. 30:5; Jer. 2:26; 14:3-4). The idea is this: if God answered his prayers, he would not be ashamed (confounded) when his enemies were triumphant, glorying in their idols and bringing reproach against God. He would be in this state of shame due to God not acting on his behalf, i.e., if He did not deliver him (2). However, as we will see, David had complete confidence in God and knew he would not be ashamed.
2. **“Deliver me in your righteousness”** (2a) — God’s righteousness is often mentioned in this Psalm (e.g., 2, 15, 16, 19, 24). What is meant by the righteousness of God? Consider the following explanation, which appears to fit the use in this verse. “The righteousness of God is the essential perfection of his nature, and is frequently used to designate his holiness, justice, and faithfulness.” (McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia). Knowing that God keeps his promises and because God is righteous, the psalmist is asking the Lord to deliver him. Delivering him would be in keeping with God’s righteousness.

What kind of deliverance is he speaking of? Most likely, he is talking about a physical deliverance from his enemies, i.e., snatch me from my enemies. (Note also verse 10.) Compare Psalm 17:13, which says, “Arise, O Lord, confront him, cast him down; deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword.” Also, the “escape” of 2b is parallel to “deliver” (2a).

3. **“Incline Your ear to me and save me”** (2c) — After telling God he trusts Him, the writer asks the Lord to listen to his prayers. The writers of Psalms often speak of the “ear” of God (usually saying “give ear”) and use this

wording when they speak of making requests of God through prayer. (c.f., Ps. 17:1, 6) Here, David says, "Please, Lord, I trust you; please listen to my prayers and deliver me from my enemies." In "The Treasury of David," Charles Spurgeon expressed it:

"Stoop to my feebleness, and hear my faint whispers; be gracious to my infirmities, and smile upon me: I ask salvation; listen thou to my petitions, and save me. Like one wounded and left for dead by mine enemies, I need that thou bend over me and bind up my wounds."

4. **"Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually . . . for You are my rock and my fortress"** (3) — He wants God to be his dependable, constantly accessible, strong refuge . . . his rock and his fortress. God is the "rock of salvation" and a "rock of refuge." The word "rock" is used figuratively in various places in the Scriptures to describe God. The writers refer to Him as the "rock of my salvation," "a rock or refuge," or simply a "rock." As might be expected, the term is primarily used in the book of Psalms, a book of poetry that uses figurative language. In another Psalm, for instance, David wrote, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Ps. 18:2). Also, Psalm 46:1-3 encourages God's people as it says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling."

The use of this metaphor, however, goes beyond Psalms. Moses, for example, referred to God as a "rock" several times in Deuteronomy 32 in what is known as "The Song of Moses." In verses 3-4, he exclaims, "For I proclaim the name of the Lord: ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He" Also, Hannah spoke of God, saying, "No one is holy like the Lord, For there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God" (1 Sam. 2:2). Elsewhere, in 2 Samuel 22:2-3, again, David composed a song on the day when he was delivered from all his enemies and from Saul, in which he said God was his "rock" and "fortress." Also, with some of his final words, he referred to God as "the Rock of Israel" (2 Sam. 21:3).

What does this figure of speech (metaphor) mean? The idea is that God is like a rock—He is like a fortress. A rock is durable and stable; strong forts were built of stones, providing protection. Thus, God was his protector, his strength, and his refuge. Today, people can have the same relationship with God. Is God your rock and your fortress?

5. **“Deliver me, O my God” out of the hand of the wicked** (4a) — Again, he asks for deliverance (c.f., v. 2); now we learn from whom he wanted to be delivered. It was from the “wicked,” also referred in this verse as “cruel” and the “unrighteous” (4b). Thus, the danger was from another person, his enemy. Why does this happen? Jesus explains in John 15:18-19. “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

His Lifelong Trust in the Lord (5-8)

(5) “For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth. (6) By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother’s womb. My praise shall be continually of You. (7) (I have become as a wonder to many, but You are my strong refuge. (8) Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.

Previously, David had cried for deliverance. Verses 5-6 show the basis for his plea and his confidence in God, who was his “hope” and “trust.” God had always been there for him, even from his earliest days. Think about his defeat of Goliath, which happened when he was very young. Because of God’s deliverance at this early stage of his life and throughout his life, the psalmist knew he could count on Him even during his old age. In verse 6, he says God had upheld him from youth.

Parents are responsible for training their children from the time they are young (Pb. 22:6), which is very important. However, many people grow up without God in their homes. The ideal situation is learning about God from the very early stages of life through parental training. Yet, many do not have this in their lives. In this case, young people must seek God, even if they have no assistance from home, recognizing God’s love and care for them. No time is too late to seek God.

David faced hardships (e.g., 4, 10, 12-13). However, appreciating God’s loving care, even from his youth, his praises to God would be “continually” (6c). Some might find this difficult, especially when times are bad, but as with the psalmist, we can do this if God is our “hope” and “trust.” Throughout this psalm, the writer also mentions praising God no matter what may come (e.g., 8, 14, 22-24). What a valuable lesson for us today.

In verse 7, we learn that the psalmist had become “a wonder to many.” (This is translated as “marvel” by the NASB and “portent” by several other translations.) In what way had the writer become a “wonder to many?”

It would have been clear to most that God was with David. Again, people would have been amazed when David, a young shepherd, went up against the well-armed giant, Goliath, and defeated him. In addition, wonder would have existed as David escaped the wrath of Saul and rose to become the king of Israel. Although dire situations often existed, David overcame them because of God’s care. Although this view seems to fit the context, some view this verse negatively with the idea that the

people were amazed that someone like David, a man of God, could be so afflicted. Consider the following quote contrasting the two positions.

As this first section concludes, the psalmist describes himself as “a wonder to many.” The word for “wonder” means a supernatural direct display of divine power such as in the plagues of Exodus (Exod. 11:9). It may inspire terror or worship, and is often linked to signs that reveal God’s purposes. The psalmist could be a “wonder” because of God’s gracious work in him, but it is also possible that he is a wonder because of an illness and thus a sign of judgment. (Williams 480)

Regardless, the secret to overcoming is in 7b, where he says of God, “You are my strong refuge.”

In verse 6, he says he will praise God continually, and in verse 8, the writer continues to speak to himself, saying what he will do, which would be to let his mouth be filled with God’s praise and glory all day. Why would he do this? The answer is in verses 5 through 7. God had proven Himself in the past — He is his hope and trust — thus, he would fill his mouth with God’s praise throughout the day.

Do Not Forsake Me (9-13)

(9) Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails. (10) For my enemies speak against me; and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, (11) saying, “God has forsaken him; pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him.” (12) O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me! (13) Let them be confounded and consumed who are adversaries of my life; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor who seek my hurt.

Note the parallelism in verse 9. Do not “cast me off” (9a) or “forsake me” (9b) during “the time of old age” (9a) or “when my strength fails” (9b). God had been with David from the time of his youth. Yet, in his old age, he feels more vulnerable. He could fight back or flee to the mountains when he was young. However, what about during his old age? To make matters worse, the writer has enemies trying to kill him (10) who are like vultures waiting to devour prey. Yet, his opponents made two false assumptions. They felt God had forsaken him, and there was none to deliver him (11). The psalmist sought God’s help, urgently cried out to Him (12), and then denounced his enemies (13).

Today, we should understand that old age, as with David, does not mark the end of life’s problems. In fact, older people are more vulnerable than when they were young. As their “strength fails,” they are not physically able to do what they did in the past, which may even include carrying out the routine things in life. The elderly are more prone to disease, and their bodies are worn. Old age can become a time of fear and anxiety. As we will continue to see, however, the writer trusted the Lord and felt God would be available to him in old age just as he had been during his youth.

Hope and Praise (14-18)

(14) **But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more.** (15) **My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits.** (16) **I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.** (17) **O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works.** (18) **Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.**

Despite the psalmist's trouble, his old age, and the dangers he faced, he continued to have hope, and his praise for God would increase (14). The writers of Psalms — especially David — fill its pages with praise to Jehovah. Today, we must continue to have hope and praise God, not just when times are good but also when life has challenges. We must not ever stop praising God!

In verse 14, David said he would “hope continually” and praise God “more and more.” (Note also 6c, 8.) He trusted God, and his hope would continue; he would have every reason to continue praising God in the future.

In verses 15-18, David states in various ways that he would teach about God and specifies what he would teach about Him.

Verse	He would:	God's:
15	tell of	righteousness and salvation
16b	make mention of	righteousness (His only)
17b	declare	wondrous works
18b	declare	strength and power.

In verse 18, the writer gives a reason for asking God not to forsake him in his old age. He wanted to live long enough to tell the younger generation about God. Some people become old and decide that, as they retire from their jobs, they can “retire” from the responsibilities of being a Christian. However, the psalmist's reason for continuing to live was to have the opportunity to teach younger people.

Elsewhere, Psalm 92:12-13 speaks of the righteous flourishing like a palm tree, growing like a cedar in Lebanon, and flourishing in the courts of God. Verses 14-15 continue, “They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.” Those advanced in years must continue to declare God's uprightness and bear fruit for Him.

Examples of God using aged people in his services exist throughout the Scriptures. Consider some cases.

1. **Moses & Aaron** — Moses was 40 years old when he smote the Egyptians (Acts 7:23); he was 80, and Aaron was 83 when God called them to deliver His people (Ex. 7:7). Moses died at 120 (Deut. 34:7). They accomplished so much for the Lord in the last segment of their lives.
2. **Joshua & Caleb** — Joshua, who was in charge of leading the conquest of the land of Canaan, took over this role in his 80's. He lived to be 110 (Josh. 24:29), so this important leadership role in God's service was in the late stage of his life. On the other hand, Caleb, a leader during the conquest, was in his 40s when he was sent to spy out the land and was in his 80s when he took over the leadership role (Josh. 14:6-11). Caleb remained a faithful servant of God throughout his life.
3. **Zacharias & Elizabeth** — These became the parents of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. Luke 1 describes them as being "well advanced in years" (7, 18, 36) and also says Elizabeth was "barren." The angel, Gabriel, appeared to Zecharias and told him they would have a child, who they would call "John," and he would prepare the way for Christ. Also, Zecharias was still serving in the temple despite his age.
4. **Simeon & Anna** — These are two older people who were present when the Christ child was brought to the temple for circumcision (Lk. 2:22-38). The Scriptures describe Simon as a just and devout man "waiting for the Consolation of Israel." It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would live long enough to see Jesus Christ (25-26). He prophesied about Christ in verses 29-31 and said that since he had seen Him, he was ready to "depart in peace" (20). We do not know precisely how old Simeon was, but it is clear that he continued to serve God even though he was advanced in years. Also, Anna is described as ". . . a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (37). Like the psalmist, she then spread the message about the Lord (38). It is clear that, although aged, she was devoted to God, and serving Him was the center of her life.
5. **Paul** — We do not know exactly how old Paul was when he consented to the death of Stephen and "made havoc of the church" (Acts 8:1-3), but from his conversion (Acts 9) until he was an old man near death, we learn of his faithfulness to the Lord. Despite persecutions (2 Cor. 11:22-28), he faithfully served God until the end. In Philemon 9, while in prison for the cause of Christ, he referred to himself as "Paul the aged." During what was probably a later imprisonment, apparently near the very end, he wrote to Timothy, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Like the psalmist, for as long as Paul lived, he declared the "strength" and "power" of God to everyone he could.

Old age is supposed to be a productive time when the righteous continue to honor God and spread the message about Him. For qualified men, it is a time for some to become elders or overseers (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7). Older women are to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5). Many become slack in serving God when they have reached the age where they can do the most! But David declared the strength and power of God until the end, and the aged should do all they can as long as they live.

Confidence in God (19-21)

(19) Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You? (20) You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, shall revive me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth. (21) You shall increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

In verse 19, he praises God in two ways and then asks a question. (Compare Psalm 36:5; 57:5; 10; 89:6-8.) First, notice the praises. He says:

1. **God's righteousness is "very high."** (The ESV says, "reaches the high heavens.") The righteousness of God here seems to refer to His right dealings, i.e., God cannot be faulted for what He does — everything He does is just. Throughout this psalm, he readily exalts God's righteousness and is not hesitant to tell others about it. Four other times, the writer mentions the righteousness of God (2, 15, 16, 24), and three of those times, he speaks of conveying the concept to others.
2. **God has done "great things."** This description is parallel to the "wonderous works" of verse 17. Merely reading the story of David in the Old Testament reveals many great things that God did for him. Later, God brought the children of Israel out of captivity. In connection to this event, the people said in Psalm 126:3, "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad." All of the things God does for us today should cause us joy. We should all rejoice with the ultimate gift from God — salvation. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

After speaking about God's mercy, power, strength, might, and love, the psalmist asks a rhetorical question. He asks, "**Oh God, who is like you?**" In 2 Samuel 7:22, David conveys a similar thought after expressing thanksgiving to God. "Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears." Earlier, in the Song of Moses, the people sang, "Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

Consider a case in New Testament times when Paul preached at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17). He had entered the city and was disturbed by it being full of idols. They even had an altar with the inscription "To the Unknown God." He points out that

the true God was the creator of the world and had made everything in it (24). In contrast with idols, he said of Jehovah (24-25), “Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.” As Paul contrasts God with the idols of Athens, he answers the question of verse 19, “Oh God, who is like You?”

Consider the first verse of the following song.”

Saints Lift Your Voices.

There is none like Him, none can compare;
No god his equal, no prince His heir!

Chorus

Lift up our eyes and see His great might!
Soar like an eagle, on wings of flight!
Saints, lift your voices tho’ dark your days!
Lift up your spirits, sing out His praise!
Upward the calling, brighter the light!
Soaring like eagles, on wings of flight!

(R. J. Stevens Music)

In verse 20a, David says God had shown him “**great and severe troubles.**” He understood that everything is under God’s control. He was facing “wicked” (4a), “unrighteous” (4b), and cruel people (4c). His “enemies” (10a) and “adversaries” (13b) were trying to take his life (10b). He was confident, however, that God would deliver him “again.” The psalmist did not doubt that God would deliver him as He had from past struggles. (Note also Ps. 88:6; 130:1.) He would overcome and prevail with God by his side.

In verse 20b, he says God would “**revive me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth.**” Some think David is speaking here of his resurrection as is taught in the New Testament. This viewpoint could be correct, but he is probably speaking metaphorically. Verse 21 lends credence to this second position.

Consider the following breakdown of verses 20-21.

1. **The Situation** — He is in “great and severe troubles” and “in the depths of the earth.
2. **The Solution** — He would be “revived” and brought “up again from the depths of the earth.”
3. **The Outcome** — He would see his greatness increase and be comforted on every side.

Praise & Worship of God (22-24)

(22) Also with the lute I will praise You — and Your faithfulness, O my God! To You I will sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel. (23) My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, and my soul, which You have redeemed. (24) My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; for they are confounded, for they are brought to shame who seek my hurt.

The psalmist would praise God and His faithfulness with the lute and sing with the harp to Him, the “Holy One of Israel.” (Most translations say “harp” and “lyre,” which are two different types of stringed instruments.) In two other Psalms (78:41; 89:18), God is addressed as the Holy One of Israel.” (Interestingly, He is addressed in Isaiah in this way 25 times!) David earlier made it clear that no one can be compared to God — He is “the holy One of Israel.”

In verse 23, he says he would joyfully sing to Jehovah. However, he did not stop there; he tells us that his joyful singing to Jehovah would come from his soul, which God had redeemed. Thus, his praise was not merely outward. Today, do we joyfully praise God by song, and does it come from our souls?

After praising God’s faithfulness (22), in verse 24, David says that because his enemies were “confounded” and “brought to shame,” he would talk of God’s righteousness. He would undoubtedly proclaim God’s righteousness in every “direction.” He would speak to God about His righteousness in prayer (19). He would also talk about the righteousness of God to his fellow man, including those who were followers of the Lord and those who were not; he would speak of it to his friends and enemies. It is also interesting to note that he would talk about God’s righteousness “all the day long.” In his relationship with God, the psalmist always had continuity and persistence. (Note verses 3, 6, 8, 14a, 14b, 15.)

In conclusion, the psalmist had been a servant of God his whole life, and now he is an old man. Life was not always easy. He looked to the past, present, and future and knew that no matter what happened, he could continually count on God and live praising Him and His righteousness. As one writer explains, “David wants us to see that even old age is given to us by God, is one of his good gifts and should be used for his glory and the blessing and well-being of others. (Boice 595)

Consider the following quote.

With confidence the psalmist voices his prayer to God for deliverance. He has contemplated the years that he has spent in God’s fellowship and care — he has “leaned on God” from childhood. The result has been the assurance that God’s faithfulness may be depended upon. And this realization has so stirred his emotions that he must praise God. The joy in his soul must be, and is, openly expressed. And this is the culmination of what began as a lament! Praise be to God! (Tesch & Zorn 474)

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