

Psalms 70:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

Analysis

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 psalm concludes by returning to urgent petition, bracketing the prayer with cries for God's quick intervention. 'Poor and needy' (ani ve'evyon, אֲנִי וְעֵייוֹן) describes both material poverty and spiritual dependence—the psalmist has no resources of his own and depends entirely on God. This self-description echoes Jesus' beatitude: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5:3).

The repeated 'make haste' returns to verse 1's urgency. Between these bookend petitions, the psalm celebrated God's character (verses 2-4), but now returns to raw need. This pattern models healthy prayer—praising God's worthiness while honestly presenting our desperation. The titles 'my help and my deliverer' acknowledge God's past faithfulness while appealing for present intervention. The Hebrew ezri (עֲזָרִי, my help) and mefalti (מַפְלִי, my deliverer) are personal possessives—this isn't abstract theology but relationship: 'You are MY help, MY deliverer.'

The final plea—'make no tarrying' (al te'achar, אַל-תְּאַחַר, don't delay)—expresses the sufferer's perspective that God's timing feels slow. Yet from God's perspective, He is never late (2 Peter 3:9, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise'). For Christians, this tension between urgent need and divine timing requires faith. Jesus promised, 'Ask, and it shall be given you' (Matthew 7:7), yet also taught persistence in prayer (Luke 18:1-8). We pray with urgency while trusting God's

perfect timing, knowing He answers at the right moment to maximize His glory and our good.

Historical Context

The language of 'poor and needy' had specific connotations in ancient Israel. The *ani* (poor) were economically disadvantaged, while *evyon* (needy) referred to those begging for help. Together, they described the most vulnerable members of society—those dependent on others' charity and God's protection. The Law commanded special care for these groups (Deuteronomy 15:11, Psalm 82:3-4), and the prophets condemned societies that oppressed them (Amos 2:6-7, Isaiah 3:14-15).

However, 'poor and needy' also became spiritual language—describing the humble who depend on God rather than self-sufficiency. The **anawim** (humble ones) in Second Temple Judaism were a movement of the pious poor who awaited God's Messiah (like Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:25-38). They recognized that spiritual poverty—acknowledging need for God—was prerequisite for receiving His kingdom. Jesus' ministry prioritized these: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor' (Luke 4:18).

The psalmist's self-identification as 'poor and needy' was therefore both literal and spiritual. Materially, he lacked resources to escape his enemies. Spiritually, he recognized that salvation comes only from God, not human strength. This dual meaning continues in Christian theology—we are spiritually bankrupt without Christ (Romans 3:23, 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'), yet enriched in Him (2 Corinthians 8:9, 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich'). Acknowledging our spiritual poverty opens us to receive God's riches in Christ.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How comfortable are you acknowledging yourself as 'poor and needy' before God versus presenting self-sufficiency?
2. What material or spiritual poverty do you experience that requires God to be your help and deliverer?
3. How do you handle the tension between urgent prayer and God's timing that feels slow?
4. In what ways has acknowledging spiritual poverty opened you to receive God's riches?
5. How can you pray with both honesty about need and confidence in God's faithful timing?

Interlinear Text

וְאֲנִי יָ	עָנִי י	וְאֲבִיּוֹן	אֵלֶּה יָם	ח וְשָׂה	לִי י
H589	But I am poor	and needy	unto me O God	make haste	H0
	H6041	H34	H430	H2363	
עֲזָרָי	וּמַפְלִיטִי	אַתָּה	יְהוָה	אֵל	תִּתְאַחָר:
thou art my help	and my deliverer	H859	O LORD	H408	make no tarrying
H5828	H6403		H3068		H309

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 141:1 (References Lord): LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

Psalms 40:17 (References God): But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

Psalms 69:29 (References God): But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

Hebrews 10:37 (Parallel theme): For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Revelation 22:20 (References Lord): He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Psalms 109:22 (Parallel theme): For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

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