

Psalms 71:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Analysis

Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. This verse testifies to God's pattern of deliverance through difficulty. 'Great and sore troubles' (tsarot rabot vera'ot, צָרוֹת רַבּוֹת וְנָעוֹת, literally 'troubles many and evil') acknowledges severe, multiple afflictions. The psalmist doesn't deny suffering or sanitize experience—he honestly names that God 'showed me' these troubles, recognizing divine sovereignty even over difficult circumstances. God allowed (or ordained) these sufferings, yet remains the source of deliverance.

'Shalt quicken me again' (tashuv techayeni, תָּשׁוּב תַּחְיֵנִי, literally 'you will return, you will revive me') uses the verb 'to live'—God brings life from death-like circumstances. 'From the depths of the earth' (mitehomot ha'arets, מִתְּהוֹמוֹת הָאָרֶץ) employs metaphorical language for Sheol, the realm of the dead. The psalmist has descended so low that only resurrection-like power can restore him. Yet faith declares, 'shalt bring me up again'—confident that God who brought down will bring up.

For Christians, this verse anticipates resurrection theology. God 'showed Christ' great and sore troubles (Isaiah 53:10, 'it pleased the LORD to bruise him'), then raised Him from death's depths. Romans 6:4-5 describes believers' baptism as dying and rising with Christ, and our entire Christian experience follows this pattern: God brings us through death to life, through humiliation to exaltation,

through suffering to glory (Romans 8:17). Paul wrote, 'We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead' (2 Corinthians 1:9). Every deliverance previews final resurrection when God will raise us bodily from death's depths.

Historical Context

The language of descending to earth's depths and being raised appears throughout Scripture. Jonah prayed from the fish's belly, 'out of the belly of hell cried I' (Jonah 2:2), and God brought him up. Job suffered such loss that he declared, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him' (Job 13:15), and God restored him. Hannah sang, 'The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up' (1 Samuel 2:6).

Ancient Israelite understanding of resurrection developed gradually. Early texts view Sheol as permanent (2 Samuel 12:23, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me'). Later texts hint at resurrection possibility (Psalm 16:10, 'thou wilt not leave my soul in hell'). By Daniel's time, explicit resurrection theology appears (Daniel 12:2, 'many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake'). This psalm participates in that developing theology—speaking of God bringing up from earth's depths hints at restoration from death itself.

Intertestamental Judaism developed robust resurrection hope through martyrdom experiences. Maccabean martyrs died believing God would resurrect them (2 Maccabees 7). Jesus confirmed resurrection doctrine against the Sadducees (Matthew 22:31-32), and His own resurrection proved it definitively. The early church read Old Testament 'depth' language through the lens of Christ's resurrection, seeing in psalms like this prophetic anticipation of Easter. Every believer's story of deliverance from 'depths' points toward the ultimate deliverance—bodily resurrection when Christ returns.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How have you seen God's pattern of bringing life from death-like circumstances in your own experience?
2. What 'depths' have you descended to where only God's resurrection power could raise you?
3. How does recognizing that God 'shows' troubles (allows them sovereignly) affect your response to suffering?
4. In what ways do your present deliverances point toward and strengthen faith in final resurrection?
5. How can you testify to God's 'quickenings' power to others currently in 'the depths'?

Interlinear Text

אֵשׁ רַ	הִרְאִיתָנוּ	צָר וְ	כֵּב וְ	וְכָע וְ	תָשׁוּב
H834	H7200	H6869	H7227	H7451	H7725
	Thou which hast shewed	troubles	me great	and sore	again
תַּחֲיֵינוּ	מִמְתְּהֵמ וְ	הָאָרֶץ	תָּשׁוּב	תַּעֲלֵנִי:	
H2421	H8415	H776	H7725	H5927	
shalt quicken	from the depths	of the earth	again	and shalt bring me up	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 138:7 (Parallel theme): Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

Psalms 60:3 (Parallel theme): Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

Psalms 80:18 (Parallel theme): So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

Psalms 86:13 (Parallel theme): For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Psalms 119:25 (Parallel theme): My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

Jonah 2:6 (Parallel theme): I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

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