

## Questions on Psalm 71

1. In Pss 69 and 70, David made requests concerning himself, other believers, and his adversaries. Where in this psalm does the author make request concerning his adversaries?
2. Pay close attention to the wording in this request. Can you find another verse in the psalm (perhaps not a request) that echoes it?
3. Notice the position of these two verses. Do they suggest a division of the Psalm into two parts?
4. To confirm this division, look for other themes or phrases that are repeated between the two parts, particularly in similar locations in their respective halves.
5. How do the two halves differ from each other? (Hint: generalize the change noted in question 2 above.)
  - (Methodological note: we used the same approach in analyzing Ps 70: symmetrical patterns of repetition show us the basic divisions of the Psalm, then the divisions reveal important shifts in topic.)
6. Note the phrases “all the day” and “continually.”
  - How often do these appear in the Psalm?
  - Is it unusual for a single Psalm to have this many instances of these phrases? (Use e-Sword or Online Bible to search for these expressions elsewhere in the Psalms, and see how many psalms have as many occurrences as this psalm does. If you're particularly patient, or if your Bible software is particularly agile, explore the number of occurrences per verse to correct for the length of each Psalm.)
  - How does this emphasis illumine the contrast between vv. 5 and 9, or between vv. 17 and 18?
  - What common lesson can we draw from these two phrases and this contrast?
7. The title “Holy One of Israel” used in v. 22 has an interesting distribution elsewhere in the Bible. What person uses it most? Is that person's usage marginally greater than others, or overwhelmingly greater?
8. Note the phrase “thy righteousness.”
  - How common is it in this Psalm, compared with other Psalms?
  - What books in the OT predominate in the use of the word “righteousness”?
9. Reflect on the implications of appealing to God's righteousness as the basis for asking for deliverance (v. 2). (The similar phrase in Ps 31:1 was one of the seeds that led to Martin Luther's salvation.)
10. From the answers to questions 7 and 8, who might be the author of this Psalm? How might that person's experiences explain other emphases in the Psalm?