

Psalm Sundays

Text
Psalm 69

Topic
**The psalmist describes being thrown into a pit by fools
who refuse to receive the Word of God**

Title
"I'm Pitted by Fools"

1.82 seconds.

It is the current pit stop record time in Grand Prix Racing. The feat was accomplished by the Aston Martin Red Bull Racing Crew, in Brazil, in November 2019. It was the third time they had set a new record.

(In case you were wondering, the average pit stop takes 2.4 seconds).

Pit stops are essential. Just ask Lightning McQueen. His refusal to pit cost him the Piston Cup and forced another race.

There is a "pit" stop in Psalm 69. Listen as I read a selection from the verses: "I sink in deep mire, Where *there is* no standing; I have come into deep waters, Where the floods overflow me. Deliver me out of the mire, And let me not sink; Let me be delivered... out of the deep waters. Let not the floodwater overflow

1 of 12
Psalm 69
"I'm Pitted by Fools"



me, Nor let the deep swallow me up; **And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.**"

It sounds like he was thrown into a hollowed-out rock reservoir called a cistern. Run-off and rain water would collect in it, creating mud, muck, and mire on the bottom. The sides were too slimy to climb. If the water was deep enough, a person thrown in would drown.

I'm guessing none among us has been thrown into a cistern. Nevertheless, we often use these images to describe our troubles:

- 👤 We say, "I'm drowning in debt."
- 👤 We say, "I'm stuck in the mire."
- 👤 We say, "I feel like I'm sinking."
- 👤 We say, "I'm in deep waters."
- 👤 We say, "I'm being swallowed up."
- 👤 We say, "I'm up to my neck."

When you find yourself "in the pits," Psalm 69 will be a sustaining read. I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 You Can't Avoid Your Pit Stops**, but **#2 You Will Arise From Your Pit Starts**.

#1 - You Can't Avoid Your Pit Stops (v1-12)

There is a thread of research among scholars that this psalm was not written by David about an incident in his life. They say it was written much later, about an incident involving the prophet Jeremiah.

In the 6th century BC, Jeremiah delivered God's Word to rebellious Judah - "Surrender to Babylon."

2 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"



It wasn't received. Among his many persecutions, Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern. One of those scholars I alluded to points out,

This whole psalm could certainly be prayed in Jeremiah's voice. It seems to be a summary of Jeremiah's suffering. He was thrown into a cistern and sank in its muck. His own family plotted against him. He suffered shame and disgrace for God's sake. He plead for God's vengeance against his enemies.

The collected psalms span centuries. They were not compiled as we know them until after the Babylonian captivity, in the 3rd century BC. We can't say for certain, but I lean towards Psalm 69 being about Jeremiah. If not, his experience in the pit is exemplary of anyone's.

Psa 69:1 To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A Psalm of David. Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to *my* neck.

The designation, "A psalm of David," is traditional, and important; but it is not inspired. Someone else could have written this song to the popular tune of "The Lilies."

He was "neck deep," no exaggerating. He thought he was going to drown.

Whether it was Jeremiah, or David, or some other saint, our first lesson is that in the world we will have tribulation. Expect it. It isn't some strange thing.

Psa 69:2 I sink in deep mire, Where *there is* no standing; I have come into deep waters, Where the floods overflow me.

The "mire" was so deep that his feet could not touch anything solid. One translation uses the term "swamp water" instead of "floods." He was treading thick, murky water.

3 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"



Psa 69:3 I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God.

His crying was that whole-body sobbing you do in deep sorrow. Throat dry from loudly crying out. "My eyes fail" in that they'd be full of muck.

There was no escape from a cistern. Only God could "save" him; so he must "wait."

Psa 69:4 Those who hate me without a cause Are more than the hairs of my head; They are mighty who would destroy me, *Being* my enemies wrongfully; Though I have stolen nothing, I *still* must restore *it*.

A lot of powerful people opposed him. He was in the right, but was treated as a criminal.

It was as if he were being accused of robbery but, being innocent, he had nothing to restore.

Psa 69:5 O God, You know my foolishness; And my sins are not hidden from You.

Psa 69:6 Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me; Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.

Psa 69:7 Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face.

God was using him despite his own shortcomings. Your shortcomings - they are no excuse for tapping out of the spiritual battle.



In his pit, he was genuinely concerned that believers not be stumbled, but that they would understand it was for the Lord that he was afflicted. Testimony is important.

Psa 69:8 I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children;

Many of you, upon being born-again of the Spirit, were rejected by those you are related to by your first, physical birth. It's a deep-pit experience.

Psa 69:9 Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.

Jeremiah often preached just outside the Temple. It was his spot, so to speak.

When Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the Temple courts at the beginning of His ministry, His disciples remembered this very passage (John 2:17).

Jesus had Jeremiah-like sorrows. His family rejected Him, at one point thinking Him insane.

Psa 69:10 When I wept *and chastened* my soul with fasting, That became my reproach.

Psa 69:11 I also made sackcloth my garment...

👤 "Fasting" was prompted not by *discipline* but by *distress*. He didn't feel like eating.

👤 "Sackcloth" was a goats-hair outer garment signifying mourning.

Psa 69:11 ... I became a byword to them.

5 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"



Psa 69:12 Those who sit in the gate speak against me, And I *am* the song of the drunkards.

Think of “byword” as an ancient meme. The Jews would apply this man’s name or his words to things to have a good laugh. Men sat “in the gate” for a time each day to hear quarrels or to conduct business. The singer of this song was derided there. At night, the “drunkards” sung crude lyrics about him.

Three pit-points emerge:

- 👤 Only God can “save” you.
- 👤 You’re asked to “wait” for God to “save” you.
- 👤 You “bear [His] reproach” by maintaining your testimony while you “wait” for God to “save” you.

#2 - You Can Arise From Your Pit Starts (v13-36)

Lightning McQueen had an odd pit crew in the Piston Cup showdown. The other crews made fun of them. After a bump by Chick Hicks caused two flats, McQueen had to pit under a yellow flag. He limped in.

Guido was up for the task, completing the 4-tire change in what announcer Bob Cutlass called “the fastest pit stop I’ve ever seen.”

McQueen then made the most of his pit start... And so will we if we rely upon the Lord.

Psa 69:13 But as for me, my prayer *is* to You, O LORD, *in* the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.

6 of 12

Psalm 69

“I’m Pitted by Fools”



- 👤 There is a time for prayer to be answered by God. However long, or short, it should be “acceptable” to the saint praying.
- 👤 Because we are saved, God will answer out of the “multitude of [His] mercy.”

Have you discovered that God has different mercies? Or we could say, mercy is revealed to us in many different ways:

- 👤 Jeremiah wrote, in Lamentations, “*Through* the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. *They are* new every morning; Great *is* Your faithfulness” (3:22-23). We’ll call these “new-every-morning mercies.”
- 👤 There are tender mercies: Psalm 25:6, “Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, For they *are* from of old.” Tender mercies occurs twenty-four times in the Bible.
- 👤 Nehemiah 9:19 says, “Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, To lead them on the road; Nor the pillar of fire by night, To show them light, And the way they should go.”
- 👤 There are great mercies - Isaiah 54:7, “For a mere moment I have forsaken you, But with great mercies I will gather you.”
- 👤 Isaiah 55:3 mentions “sure mercies.”

God’s various mercies cannot be understood apart from experiencing them. How many have you experienced?

Some mercies may not be listed in the Bible. C.S. Lewis spoke of “severe mercies.” He coined the term in reference to the Lord allowing a believing wife to die in order that her nonbelieving husband might see beyond earthly love to God’s *agape*.

7 of 12
 Psalm 69
 “I’m Pitted by Fools”



Psa 69:14 Deliver me out of the mire, And let me not sink; Let me be delivered from those who hate me, And out of the deep waters.

Psa 69:15 Let not the floodwater overflow me, Nor let the deep swallow me up; And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.

Good pit prayer. One thing that struck me: The lyricist had become intimately acquainted with life in a cistern. He could describe it to the proverbial "T." Get to know your troubles. Experience them fully. As some would say, *own* them. Lewis also said, "Where we find difficulty we may always expect that a discovery awaits us."

I was going to title this message, Pit Boss. Learn to live in your pits like a boss.

Psa 69:16 Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness *is* good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.

Psa 69:17 And do not hide Your face from Your servant, For I am in trouble; Hear me speedily.

Psa 69:18 Draw near to my soul, *and* redeem it; Deliver me because of my enemies.

🧠 God's "lovingkindness" is not simply "good." It is better than life, we are told elsewhere.

🧠 Again with His "tender mercies."

Psa 69:19 You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries *are* all before You.

Psa 69:20 Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked *for someone* to take pity, but *there was* none; And for comforters, but I found none.

8 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"



Can you stand alone in your troubles? Can I? *Avengers: Endgame* builds to that terrific epic scene when a battered Captain America snaps on his shattered shield to stand alone against the forces of evil.

Can you stand alone? With only the Lord as your shield? You can't know until your after-pit restart.

Psa 69:21 They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

As a prisoner prior to the pit, this saint was treated poorly.

This is another line in Psalm 69 that is referred to in the New Testament. On the cross they gave Jesus vinegar to drink. This is described in Matthew 27:34; John 19:28-29 is even more clear with John adding that this was done *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*.

Psa 69:22 Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap.

Psa 69:23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually.

Psa 69:24 Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.

Psa 69:25 Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents.

Psa 69:26 For they persecute the *ones* You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded.

Psa 69:27 Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness.

Once again we find ourselves dealing with an imprecatory - the calling down of curses on enemies. Our approach is to see these statements as confirming the final destiny of nonbelievers. They won't "come into [God's] righteousness"

9 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"



in the after life. In this life, they are like Pharaoh in the Exodus - hardening their hearts despite God's mercies.

Psa 69:28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.

In Revelation chapter twenty we're told that, at the resurrection of the wicked dead, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book* of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." (v11&12&15).

There are various ways to understand "The Book of the Living," or "The Book of Life." It seems to be the census of every human life. All names of all people are in it. If you die in unrighteousness, having not believed God, your name is removed. You are then judged according to your works. Your works cannot save you; you must be cast into Hell.

Psa 69:29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful; Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high.

In contrast to the nonbeliever, the believer knows their wretchedness before God. They trust in His "salvation," in God declaring us righteous thanks to Jesus. We are "set up on high" - now and forever.

Psa 69:30 I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

10 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"



Psa 69:31 *This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull, Which has horns and hooves.

You emerge from pits a better living sacrifice.

Your relationship with the Lord is more intimate after the pit. You realize that what God wants is not your works, but to walk with you.

Psa 69:32 The humble shall see *this and* be glad; And you who seek God, your hearts shall live.

Psa 69:33 For the LORD hears the poor, And does not despise His prisoners.

The apostle Paul, when in prison, called himself the prisoner of the Lord. If God was willing to let him stay incarcerated, so be it.

If God is willing to leave you in the pit, you are the pitted of the Lord.

Psa 69:34 Let heaven and earth praise Him, The seas and everything that moves in them.

One day this will be our reality. The real "new normal."

The plan God announced in Genesis to save mankind and to restore creation comes to completion in the Revelation. By His providence, God keeps the plan progressing.

Psa 69:35 For God will save Zion And build the cities of Judah, That they may dwell there and possess it.

Psa 69:36 Also, the descendants of His servants shall inherit it, And those who love His name shall dwell in it.

11 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"



- 👤 Verse thirty-five: Sounds like the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus ruling the earth from David's throne in Jerusalem.
- 👤 Verse thirty-six: Sounds like Eternity. "Descendants" of believers, both Jew and Gentile, dwelling forever in the restored earth, with New Jerusalem as the brilliant gem of a city.

Maybe you're having a hard time relating your troubles to a cistern. You've got lots of other such figurative spots:

- 👤 Noah had the Ark.
- 👤 Moses floated in a basket with crocs.
- 👤 Daniel had the lions den.
- 👤 Daniel's three companions had the fiery furnace.
- 👤 Belly of a great fish more to your liking?
- 👤 In the Book of Hebrews we read of believers hiding in dens and in caves

No pit; no pit start:

- 👤 There would be no intimate experience of God's lovingkindness and of His mercies.
- 👤 There would be no opportunity for the unrighteous to see themselves as God does.
- 👤 You would never be sure that God is your sufficiency.
- 👤 There would be no song to sing.

12 of 12

Psalm 69

"I'm Pitted by Fools"

