

In My Hour of Darkness

Words & Music by Emmylou Harris & Gram Parsons, © 1973 all rights reserved

CHORUS

E

In my hour of darkness, in my time of need,

B⁷ A E

Oh, Lord, grant me vision, oh, Lord, grant me speed.

E

Once I knew a young man went driving through the night;

B⁷ A E

Miles and miles without a word with just his high-beam lights.

A E A E

Who'd have ever thought they'd build such a deadly Denver bend?

B⁷ A E

To be so strong, to take as long as it would till the end.

CHORUS

E

Another young man safely strummed his silver string guitar;

B⁷ A E

And he played to people everywhere, some say he was a star.

A E A E

But he was just a country boy, his simple songs confess;

B⁷ A E

And the music he had in him, so very few possess.

CHORUS

E

Then there was an old man, kind and wise with age;

B⁷ A E

And he read me just like a book and he never missed a page.

A E A E

And I loved him like my father, and I loved him like my friend;

B⁷ A E

And I knew his time would shortly come, but I did not know just when.

CHORUS

TAG after the last CHORUS

B⁷ A E

Oh, Lord, grant me vision, oh, Lord, grant me speed . . .

Songs as you go

Scripture

What did Emmylou and Gram have in their imagination when they wrote the line, “Oh, Lord, grant me vision, oh, Lord, grant me speed.”

I don’t know as I have never discussed this with either, but here are two possibilities.

Vision, a synonym for sight, the ability to clearly understand what what God says.

Matthew 13:15-16 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (ESV)

God Speed

2nd John 1:9-11 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (KJV)

God speed (Greek) *chairō*: to rejoice, be glad, to be well in salutation - Hail!" Thus the idea is that to say God speed or greeting is to wish someone well on his journey or in whatever endeavor the person might be engaged.

The Denver Bend

And, what were they thinking about when they wrote the line, “Who'd have ever thought they'd build such a deadly Denver bend? To be so strong, to take as long as it would till the end.”

I-70 follows Clear Creek through a narrow, curving gorge down the eastern side of the Rockies then descends into Mount Vernon Canyon to exit the Rocky Mountains. This portion features grade-warning signs with unusual messages, such as "Trucks: Don't be fooled," "Truckers, you are not down yet," and "Are your brakes adjusted and cool?" Runaway truck ramps are prominent along this portion of I-70, with a total of seven used along the descent.

At the end of 56 miles of constant, high speed, down hill driving since leaving the Continental Divide, there is a sharp left turn on a steep grade. One can see Denver and the flat, broad expanse of the Great Plains from that point, but cannot see the bend. It’s easy to feel that one can finally relax after an hour and a quarter of often white-knuckle motoring. Many, many of our fellow citizens have taken this final curve too fast, gone through the guard rail and plunged down a long, steep slope to their deaths.

