

Psalm 28:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

Analysis

The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

David shifts from personal testimony ("my strength," v.7) to corporate declaration ("their strength," v.8), expanding his experience to God's people generally and specifically to God's anointed king. This verse bridges personal experience and national identity, individual faith and communal blessing.

"The LORD is their strength" (יְהָוָה עַزְלָמוֹ/Yahweh oz-lamo) universalizes the personal confession from verse 7. What David experienced personally—God as strength—applies to all God's people. The plural "their" includes the believing community. God's faithful relationship with individuals extends to corporate body. This reflects covenant theology: God commits Himself not only to individuals but to His people collectively.

"And he is the saving strength" (יְמִלְאָךְ רִימָנָה/uma'oz yeshu'ot) intensifies the concept. Ma'oz means stronghold, fortress, place of safety—stronger than simple strength (oz). Yeshu'ot (salvation, deliverance) is plural—multiple salvations, repeated deliverances, comprehensive salvation. Together the phrase means "fortress of salvations" or "stronghold bringing multiple deliverances." God doesn't provide one-time help but ongoing, repeated deliverance.

"Of his anointed" (מֵשִׁיחָו/meshicho) introduces messianic language. Mashiach means anointed one—specifically referring to Israel's king anointed with oil symbolizing Spirit's empowerment. Initially this meant David or his dynasty. But

the term gained eschatological significance pointing to the ultimate Anointed One—the Messiah, Christ (Greek Christos translates Hebrew Mashiach). Thus the verse applies to David, to Davidic kings, and ultimately to Jesus Christ, David's greater son.

The verse establishes crucial principle: God's strength extends from individual believer to entire community to the king who represents them. In ancient Near Eastern thinking, the king embodied the nation—his strength was their strength, his victories their victories, his welfare their welfare. Thus God being "saving strength of his anointed" meant security for entire nation.

Christologically, this points to Christ as the Anointed One who mediates God's strength to His people. Jesus declared: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Believers' strength derives from union with Christ, the Anointed One who is God's saving strength.

Historical Context

Anointing with oil marked kings, priests, and prophets for special service. When Samuel anointed David, "the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13). This anointing signified divine selection, empowerment, and commissioning. The king wasn't merely political leader but God's representative, ruling on behalf of divine King.

Ancient Near Eastern kings were often deified or claimed divine descent. Israel's theology radically differed: the king was human, accountable to God, subject to prophetic critique. Yet the king held special relationship with God as adopted son (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7). God's commitment to David's dynasty included promise of eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:16), fulfilled ultimately in Christ.

The concept of corporate solidarity pervaded ancient thought. The king represented the people so completely that his actions affected entire nation. This explains why David's sin with Bathsheba brought judgment on Israel (2 Samuel 24), and why righteous kings brought national blessing. Modern individualism struggles with this concept, but it's crucial for understanding both Old Testament

kingship and New Testament teaching about union with Christ.

For Israel under David and Solomon, the king's strength meant national security. For exilic Israel without king, messianic hope sustained faith—God would raise up anointed deliverer. For early church, Jesus fulfilled these promises as ultimate Anointed One, bringing salvation not merely from political enemies but from sin, death, and Satan.

Paul develops this theology extensively: believers are "in Christ," united to Him, sharing His death and resurrection, recipients of His Spirit, joint heirs of His kingdom. Christ as God's Anointed One mediates all divine blessing to His people. Our strength is His strength; His victory is our victory; His anointing makes us "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's strength for individual believers relate to His strength for the corporate church, and why is both personal and communal faith important?
2. What does it mean that God is 'saving strength' (plural salvations) rather than providing one-time deliverance, and how does this shape expectations about Christian life?
3. How do Old Testament references to 'his anointed' (the king) point forward to Christ, and in what ways does Jesus fulfill this role perfectly?
4. What is the relationship between Christ's anointing and believers' empowerment, given that Christians are called 'anointed' through union with Christ?
5. How does understanding ancient corporate solidarity—the king representing the people—help grasp New Testament teaching about union with Christ?

Interlinear Text

יְהֹוָה יְהֹוָה
The LORD is their strength
H3068 H5797

וְעַزְלֵת מִזְרָחָה
strength and he is the saving of his anointed
H4581 H3444 H4899

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H1931

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 20:6 (References Lord): Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.

Psalms 140:7 (References Lord): O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

Isaiah 61:1 (References Lord): The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

1 Samuel 16:13 (References Lord): Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

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