

Psalms 33:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

Analysis

There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. David declares that military power doesn't secure salvation—neither king's armies nor warrior's strength provide true deliverance. This begins series (vv. 16-17) dismantling false securities, establishing that only God saves.

There is no king saved by the multitude of an host (Hebrew *melek*—king; *yasha'*—save, deliver; *rob chayil*—multitude of army, many soldiers) addresses political-military confidence. Kings typically trust in large armies for security. Ancient Near Eastern power correlated with troop numbers. Yet David insists military superiority doesn't guarantee deliverance. History confirms this—Pharaoh's vast army drowned in Red Sea; Sennacherib's 185,000 troops fell to angel (2 Kings 19:35); Babylon's might didn't prevent Persian conquest. No army is sufficient without God's blessing; God's favor makes small force victorious (Gideon's 300, Jonathan and armor-bearer).

A mighty man is not delivered by much strength (Hebrew *gibbor*—mighty warrior, strong man; *natsal*—deliver, rescue; *rob koach*—great strength, much power) shifts from corporate to individual. Even personally powerful warriors cannot secure their own deliverance through strength. Goliath's size and armor didn't prevent David's stone. Samson's supernatural strength failed when God departed. Human strength, regardless of magnitude, is insufficient for salvation.

Reformed theology applies this spiritually. Just as military and physical strength cannot save temporally, human works and righteousness cannot save eternally. Salvation is of the LORD (Jonah 2:9)—not of human will, effort, or strength. This dismantles all self-salvation schemes. We cannot save ourselves through moral effort (strength), religious activity (hosts), or personal goodness (might). Only God's grace through Christ's work saves. All human securities prove false; only divine deliverance endures.

Historical Context

Israel's history repeatedly demonstrated this truth. Exodus deliverance occurred not by Israelite strength but by God's power. Gideon's victory required reducing army from 32,000 to 300 so Israel wouldn't boast in own strength (Judges 7:2). Jonathan's faith declared: there is no restraint to LORD to save by many or by few (1 Samuel 14:6). Later kings who trusted military alliances rather than God faced disaster—Asa, Ahaz, Hezekiah initially.

Prophets consistently condemned trust in military might. Isaiah 31:1 pronounces woe on those trusting Egyptian horses and chariots rather than God. Jeremiah 17:5 curses those trusting in man and making flesh their arm. Hosea 14:3 promises restoration when Israel renounces Asshur (military alliance) and idols. God's people must trust Him alone for deliverance, not human securities.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What modern equivalents to king's hosts and mighty man's strength do people trust for security instead of God?
2. How does this verse's truth (military power doesn't save) apply to spiritual salvation—why can't human effort save?

3. In what areas are you tempted to trust your own strength or resources rather than depending on God's deliverance?
4. How does history confirm that God's blessing matters more than military superiority or personal power?
5. Why is it important to dismantle false securities before embracing true confidence in God alone?

Interlinear Text

אֵין	הַ מֶלֶךְ	נוֹשָׁ עַ	בְּרַב	הַ יָּל	גַּב וֹר	לֹא
H369	There is no king	saved	by much	of an host	a mighty man	H3808
	H4428	H3467	H7230	H2428	H1368	
יִנָּצַ ל	בְּרַב	כֹּחַ:				
is not delivered	by much	strength				
H5337	H7230	H3581				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 44:3 (Salvation): For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

Jeremiah 9:23 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

Exodus 14:28 (Parallel theme): And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

2 Chronicles 20:23 (Parallel theme): For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

