

Psalms 35:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

Analysis

And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

After an extended plea for divine intervention (verses 1-8), David pivots to anticipated praise. This shift from lament to confidence is characteristic of the psalms and reflects mature faith. The verse doesn't describe present circumstances but future certainty—David declares what will be true when God acts.

'My soul' (nafshi, נַפְשִׁי) represents David's entire inner being—emotions, will, thoughts, and life itself. The Hebrew nefesh encompasses more than the Greek concept of soul; it's the whole person, the life-force, the essential self. When David says his soul will be joyful, he means his entire being will overflow with gladness, not merely mental assent or superficial happiness.

'Shall be joyful' (tagel, תִּגַּל) uses the imperfect tense indicating future certainty—'will rejoice,' 'will exult.' This is prophetic confidence, speaking of things not yet seen as though they exist (Romans 4:17, Hebrews 11:1). David faces present danger but speaks future deliverance. This isn't denial or wishful thinking but covenant faith—trusting God's character and promises despite contrary circumstances.

'In the LORD' and 'in his salvation'—both prepositional phrases emphasize the source and object of joy. David's gladness isn't circumstantial but theological. His joy isn't in relief from trouble but in the LORD Himself and His saving acts. This

reflects the distinction between happiness (circumstantial) and joy (spiritual)—happiness depends on happenings, but joy is rooted in God's unchanging character. Paul and Silas sang in prison (Acts 16:25); Habakkuk rejoiced though circumstances were disastrous (Habakkuk 3:17-18). True joy transcends circumstances because it's grounded in God.

Historical Context

The structure of lament psalms typically follows a pattern: complaint, petition, expression of confidence, and vow of praise. Psalm 35 follows this pattern—verses 1-8 present the complaint and petition, verses 9-10 express confidence, and the remainder alternates between continued complaint and anticipated praise. This structure reflects Israel's worship theology: honest prayer includes both lament and praise, both present pain and future hope.

This psalm's language echoes Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2:1): 'My heart rejoiceth in the LORD... I rejoice in thy salvation.' Hannah moved from barrenness and mockery to miraculous motherhood, her circumstances transforming from sorrow to joy. Similarly, David anticipates transformation from persecution to deliverance. Both prayers reflect the biblical pattern: God hears the afflicted, responds with salvation, and receives praise from those He delivers.

Jewish tradition understood these verses as messianic prophecy. The Messiah would face opposition from enemies who 'hate him without a cause' (v.19, quoted in John 15:25), yet would triumph and lead God's people in praise. Early Christians saw Christ's persecution, death, and resurrection fulfilling this pattern—Jesus endured false accusation, conspiracy, and death, yet rose victorious and brought salvation. Believers now share His joy, rejoicing not in ease but in redemption accomplished.

The phrase 'his salvation' (yeshu'ato, ישועתו) uses the Hebrew root from which 'Jesus' (Yeshua) derives. Every Old Testament reference to God's salvation points forward to Jesus, who is salvation incarnate. When David rejoices in 'his salvation,' he anticipates the ultimate salvation Christ would achieve. Christians read this verse recognizing that our joy is 'in the LORD' specifically because of Christ's

saving work—His incarnation, perfect life, atoning death, and victorious resurrection.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How can you cultivate joy 'in the LORD' that isn't dependent on your circumstances?
2. What does it mean for your entire 'soul'—your whole being—to rejoice in God's salvation?
3. How does speaking future certainty in present trials ('shall be joyful') strengthen faith?
4. In what ways does your joy reflect Hannah's transformation from sorrow to praise?
5. How does understanding Jesus as God's ultimate 'salvation' deepen your joy in present difficulties?

Interlinear Text

וְנַפְשִׁי	תִּגְיַל	בַּיהוָה	תִּשְׂשֹׁעַ	בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ:
And my soul	shall be joyful	in the LORD	it shall rejoice	in his salvation
H5315	H1523	H3068	H7797	H3444

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 61:10 (Salvation): I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

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