

Psalms 52:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

Analysis

Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness. This verse pronounces judgment on the wicked man described throughout the psalm, identifying the root of his evil: misplaced trust. The structure contrasts false security (riches and wickedness) with true security (God as strength).

"Lo" (hinneh, הִנֵּה) is an attention-getting particle: "Look!" "Behold!" "See!" It calls observers to witness and learn from the wicked man's fate. This is exemplary judgment—meant to instruct, not merely punish. The righteous should observe and understand what happens to those who reject God.

"Made not God his strength" (lo yasim Elohim ma'uzo, לא יִשְׂם אֱלֹהִים מְעֹז) uses ma'oz (מעוז), meaning strength, stronghold, fortress, refuge. The verb sim (ישם) means to set, place, establish. The wicked man didn't establish God as his fortress—the secure place he retreated to in danger, the strength he relied on in crisis. Instead, he looked elsewhere for security.

"But trusted in the abundance of his riches" (vayivtach berov 'ashro, וַיַּטְחַ בְּרַב עַשֶּׂר) uses batach (בטח), meaning to trust, be confident, feel secure. Rov (רַב) means abundance, multitude—not just having wealth but having much wealth. Osher (עַשֶּׂר) means riches, wealth. The wicked man's security was financial—he believed money would protect him, provide for him, secure his future. This is the ancient

equivalent of modern materialism: trusting in accumulated wealth rather than God.

"And strengthened himself in his wickedness" (ya'oz behawwato, יָזַע בְּהַבְּתוֹן) is striking. Azaz (זָז) means to be strong, prevail, harden. Havvah (הַבְּתוֹן) means craving, desire, destruction—it can mean both lustful desire and the destructive calamity that results. Some translations render this "strengthened himself in his destructiveness" or "took refuge in his greed." The wicked man found strength not in righteousness but in his evil desires and destructive actions. His wickedness itself became his fortress—he hardened himself in sin rather than repenting.

Historical Context

Doeg's trust in riches and power rather than God is implicit in his actions. As Saul's chief herdsman (1 Samuel 21:7), Doeg held significant position and wealth in the royal court. His willingness to massacre priests suggests he calculated that loyalty to Saul was more valuable than loyalty to God—political and economic security mattered more than righteousness. He strengthened his position by doing what Saul's own servants refused, demonstrating ruthless willingness to commit atrocities.

The contrast between trusting God and trusting riches runs throughout Scripture. Proverbs 11:28: "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch." Psalm 49:6-7: "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Ecclesiastes demonstrates wealth's inability to satisfy or secure.

Jesus taught extensively on this theme. Matthew 6:24: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Luke 12:15-21 tells the parable of the rich fool who trusted in abundant crops but died that night—"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." The rich young ruler couldn't follow Jesus because wealth was his security (Mark 10:17-25). Paul warned: "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare" (1 Timothy 6:9).

The phrase "strengthened himself in his wickedness" describes the hardening process. Hebrews 3:13 warns against being "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Each evil choice makes the next easier; each moral compromise deadens conscience further. Doeg didn't stumble accidentally into massacre—he progressively hardened himself through choices that prioritized self-interest over righteousness until slaughtering priests seemed acceptable. This illustrates sanctification's opposite: progressive desensitization to evil through repeated sin.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'make God your strength' rather than trusting in riches or other securities, and how is this practiced daily?
2. Why does trusting in wealth inevitably compete with trusting God, and what does Jesus mean by 'you cannot serve God and mammon'?
3. How does someone 'strengthen himself in his wickedness'—what is the progressive hardening process that makes evil easier over time?
4. What false securities (wealth, position, power, reputation, relationships) are you tempted to trust instead of making God your strength?
5. How can you recognize and resist the 'hardening through sin' that makes wickedness progressively more acceptable to your conscience?

Interlinear Text

הִנֵּה	הַמֶּלֶךְ	לֹא	יְמִשְׁׁרֵת	אֱלֹהִים	מִעַזְזֵל	בְּבִזְבָּחָה
H2009	Lo this is the man	H3808	that made	H430	not God	H4581
H1397		H7760		H430		H982
בְּעָשָׂר	וְזָקֵן	בְּעָשָׂר	בְּבִזְבָּחָה			
in the abundance	of his riches	and strengthened	himself in his wickedness			
H7230	H6239	H5810	H1942			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 17:5 (Faith): Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Ecclesiastes 8:8 (Evil): There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

John 19:5 (Parallel theme): Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

1 Timothy 6:17 (Faith): Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;