

Psalms 73:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Analysis

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Asaph now acknowledges human frailty while affirming divine sufficiency. This verse contains both confession and confidence, both present weakness and eternal security.

"My flesh and my heart faileth" (kalah she'eri ulevavi, קָלָה שְׁאֵרִי וְלֶבֶבִי) uses kalah, meaning to be complete, finished, consumed, spent. Both physical strength (she'er, flesh, body) and inner vitality (levav, heart, the center of will and emotion) give out. This is not hypothetical but experiential—Asaph knows the reality of human limitation.

"But God is the strength of my heart" (tzur-levavi, צָרָעֵבֶבִי) employs tzur, meaning rock, cliff, or fortress. God is the immovable foundation when everything else collapses. The same heart that fails finds its strength in God. "My portion" (chelqi, חֶלְקִי) echoes Levitical inheritance language—God is what Asaph receives as his allotted share.

"For ever" (le'olam, לְעוֹלָם) extends this beyond temporal existence into eternity. While flesh fails definitively in death, God remains Asaph's portion beyond the grave. This anticipates the eternal perspective of verse 24 ("afterward receive me to glory") and answers the temporary prosperity of the wicked with permanent inheritance in God.

Historical Context

The language of God as "rock" permeates Scripture. Moses declared: "He is the Rock, his work is perfect" (Deuteronomy 32:4). David sang: "The LORD is my rock, and my fortress" (Psalm 18:2). Isaiah prophesied: "Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength [literally: rock of ages]" (Isaiah 26:4).

The concept of portion (cheleq) connected to Israel's land distribution. Each tribe received its designated territory—except Levi. This made Asaph's declaration personally meaningful: what other Israelites found in land, Asaph found in God. The New Testament applies this to all believers who "have obtained an inheritance" in Christ (Ephesians 1:11).

The acknowledgment of failing flesh resonates with human mortality consciousness throughout wisdom literature. Ecclesiastes 12 describes the failing body in old age. Yet against this backdrop of decay, the affirmation of God as eternal portion shines brighter.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does acknowledging human weakness ('my flesh and my heart faileth') prepare us to receive divine strength?
2. What does it mean practically for God to be the 'rock' or 'strength' of your heart?
3. How does the concept of God as your 'portion' differ from viewing Him primarily as the giver of portions?
4. What comfort does the phrase 'for ever' provide when facing mortality and physical decline?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא	לְבָבِ	שָׁאַר	כָּל	הַ	לְבָבِ	לְבָבِ	וְלֹא
fail	flesh	and	my	heart	is	the	strength
H3615	H7607	H3824		H6697		H3824	H2506
but	God	for	ever				
	H430		H5769				
לְעוֹלָם:	אֱלֹהִים						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 138:3 (Parallel theme): In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

Psalms 18:2 (References God): The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Psalms 84:2 (References God): My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Psalms 63:1 (References God): O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Psalms 142:5 (Parallel theme): I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

Lamentations 3:24 (Parallel theme): The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Psalms 27:14 (Parallel theme): Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Psalms 119:57 (Parallel theme): Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.

Psalms 40:12 (Parallel theme): For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

Job 13:15 (Parallel theme): Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

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