

Psalms 81:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

Analysis

Sing aloud unto God our strength (רָנְנוּ לֵאלֹהִים עֲזָרָנוּ)—The imperative rannû ('sing aloud, shout for joy') opens this festal psalm with exuberant worship. **Our strength** (uzzênû) recalls Exodus 15:2 after the Red Sea deliverance, establishing God as Israel's military might and refuge. **Make a joyful noise** (harî'û) means to raise a battle cry or shout of triumph.

This summons to corporate worship begins Psalm 81, likely composed for the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah, v. 3). The dual address—**God** (Elohim) and **God of Jacob**—balances universal sovereignty with covenant particularity. Asaph's choir led this celebration, reminding Israel that true strength comes not from military might but from the covenant Lord who fought for them.

Historical Context

Asaph (or his guild) wrote this psalm for temple worship, specifically for the Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25). This fall festival marked the Jewish new year with trumpet blasts, calling Israel to repentance before the Day of Atonement. The historical memory of deliverance from Egypt (vv. 5-7) grounds festal joy in God's past faithfulness.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does remembering God's past deliverances strengthen your worship and trust during present challenges?
2. What does it mean for God to be 'our strength' rather than seeking strength in worldly power or self-reliance?
3. How can corporate worship (singing aloud together) differ from private devotion in expressing faith?

Interlinear Text

שִׁיר	לֵאלֹהֵי	עֹזֵנוּ	הַ רַּב יְעֹזֵר	לֵאלֹהֵי	יַעֲקֹב:
Sing aloud	unto God	our strength	make a joyful noise	unto God	of Jacob
H7442	H430	H5797	H7321	H430	H3290

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 66:1 (References God): Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

Psalms 46:11 (References God): The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Psalms 8:1 (Parallel theme): O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Jeremiah 31:7 (Sin): For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

Psalms 28:7 (Parallel theme): The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

Philippians 4:13 (Parallel theme): I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

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