

Psalms 89:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.

Analysis

For thou art the glory of their strength (כִּי־תִפְאֶרֶת עֲזָמוֹ אַתָּה)—God Himself is the tiferet (glory, beauty, splendor) of their oz (strength, might). Any power Israel possesses is merely reflection of God's glory. **And in thy favour our horn shall be exalted** (וּבִרְצוֹנְךָ קֶרֶן יִשָּׁלֵחַ)—The qeren (horn) symbolizes power and dignity; through God's ratzon (favor, good pleasure, will) alone is it rum (lifted high).

The horn imagery connects to 1 Samuel 2:10 (Hannah's prayer) and Luke 1:69 ('raised up a horn of salvation... in the house of David'). Christ is the ultimate 'horn of salvation'—all authority given to Him by the Father's favor (Matthew 28:18). Believers have no strength or glory apart from union with Christ; our only boast is in the cross (Galatians 6:14). God's favor (grace) elevates what deserves nothing.

Historical Context

Horns were symbols of strength and royal power (Daniel 7-8 uses horns for kingdoms). For Israel, the horn represented military and political might, but the psalm insists these derive entirely from God's favor, not human prowess. This theology prevented national pride and pointed to the Messiah as the true source of strength.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What 'strength' in your life (talents, resources, influence) do you wrongly treat as personal achievement rather than reflection of God's glory?
2. How does understanding that your 'horn is exalted' only by God's favor change your ambitions and goals?
3. In what practical ways can you make God—not your abilities—the glory of your strength?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תִּפְאֶרֶת	עַזְמוֹ	אֶתְּהָ	וּבְרָצוֹנְךָ
H3588	For thou art the glory	of their strength	H859	and in thy favour
	H8597	H5797		H7522
תִּרְיָם	קַרְנֵינוּ:			
shall be exalted	our horn			
H7311	H7161			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 75:10 (Parallel theme): All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Psalms 92:10 (Parallel theme): But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

Psalms 148:14 (Parallel theme): He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalms 112:9 (Parallel theme): He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

Psalms 132:17 (Parallel theme): There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

Psalms 89:24 (Parallel theme): But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

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.

1 Samuel 2:1 (Parallel theme): And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

1 Samuel 2:10 (Parallel theme): The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.