

To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

¹ *And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. ² Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'"* ³ *Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ⁴ And in that day you will say: "Praise the LORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted. ⁵ Sing to the LORD, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. ⁶ Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"*

Text: Isaiah 12 A 7/9/17 Acts 7:54 - 8:3 Luke 17:1-10 Psalm 28 Responsive Psalm 40
Hymns: 1, 30, 742, 15

THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG!

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Our text is from the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Isaiah and the rest of God's faithful people had it rough. Along with their own problems they had to face the unbelief and rebelliousness toward God on the part of most of their fellow Jews, and God's repeated judgments on their whole nation as a result. Along with our own problems, you and I have to live in the midst of this unbelieving world and all the problems that come with it. In our text God gave His people then, and He gives you and me now, a beautiful message of hope.

The chapter before our text is all about "*the Root of Jesse,*" that is, Jesus, who was coming to bring salvation to the Jews and to all people. Looking ahead to the coming of the Messiah our text begins, "*In that day*" – when Jesus comes! – "*you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me."*" God is angry over sin, and punishes sin. God was angry over the sin and unrepentance of His people. But if they would turn to Him in repentance the Lord would forgive them and comfort them for His Son's sake.

God sometimes punished the nation of Israel because of the unbelief of so many of the people. Unlike them, by the grace of God, we believe in God. When something bad happens to us we shouldn't think, "God is punishing me." So that God wouldn't have to punish us in hell for our sins as we deserve, He punished Jesus in our place on the cross. It is because He loves us that God does sometimes send us trials to purge away the sin that we would otherwise hold onto, to make our faith stronger, and to bring us closer to Him and keep us as His children. If we're going to fight God and resist His Word and His will and refuse to humble ourselves before Him, He's not going to bless that attitude, and we'll bring ourselves more grief. But when we humbly come before God in repentance, He forgives us and comforts us.

"*Behold, God is my salvation.*" "God" in the original is literally, "*Almighty God.*" In Ephesians 1:19 the Apostle Paul prays for all believers "*that you may know... the exceeding greatness of*

[God's] power toward us who believe." Because of sin – because this world isn't perfect – bad things sometimes happen to us. When they do, as we turn to our Lord, He always sees us safely through them: *"Behold, God is my salvation."* The idea from the original is that God delivers us from every evil, keeps us safe, and ultimately gives us the victory.

"I will trust, and not be afraid." *"Afraid"* in the original pictures someone shaking in fear and dread that something bad is going to happen. Sometimes our whole world can be shaken to its foundation. Sometimes we're in dread of something we have to face, or of what's happening in our lives, or of what might happen in the future. When you're going through such times, bring your fears to God in prayer, and cling to His promises in His Word. *"I will trust, and not be afraid."* The idea from the original is that God takes away our fear and dread, and makes us feel safe and secure and confident in Him. Peter assures us, *"The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast"* (1 Pet. 5:10).

"The LORD ... is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation." *"The LORD"* in the original is Jehovah, the only, living, saving God. *"The LORD ... is my strength"* – from the original, God gives me strength, protects me, and makes me stand firmly. We don't have to be afraid because the almighty, eternal, unchanging God makes us strong. *"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"* – Ephesians 6:10. *"The LORD ... is my ... song."* For God's believing people back then facing their problems, and for you and me facing our own problems, thank God that our happiness doesn't depend on our outward circumstances. *"The LORD ... is my ... song."* The Lord is always with us to put a song of thanks and praise into our hearts and on our lips. We say with the psalmist, *"I waited patiently for the LORD; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God"* (Ps. 40:1-3).

As they continued in their rejection of God, the nation of Israel would find only earthly and eternal judgment. The Lord sought to draw them back to Him and save them. He directed them to Himself and His salvation by telling them, *"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."* With those words the Lord was pointing them ahead to the coming Savior. *"The wells of salvation"* flow from Jesus who says, *"Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life"* (Jn. 4:14). *"The wells of salvation"* refers to everything Jesus did to save us, as revealed to us in the Gospel. The perfect life Jesus lived in our place to earn heaven for us, Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross for the sins of the whole world, and Jesus' resurrection from the dead – **this** is our peace and our joy and our salvation!

"In that day you will say: 'Praise the LORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples, make mention that His name is exalted.'" For the Messiah's sake, God would forgive and save and help all of His people who returned to Him. For seeing **us** safely through our earthly trials, and especially for our eternal salvation in Jesus, as our text says, we *"praise the Lord."* The idea from the original is that we show our thankfulness to God by openly, joyfully professing our faith in Him to others. We witness Christ and His Word before the world. We tell

people that by faith in Jesus we know the living God as the great, loving, merciful God that He is!

“Sing to the LORD, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth.” We sing praises to God who does *“excellent things”* – whose grace and mercy are infinitely greater than anything we deserve to hope for. God was so longsuffering and merciful toward His rebellious Old Testament people. He is the same toward you and me. Scripture says, *“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbor His anger forever”* (Ps. 103:8-9). *“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness”* (Lam. 3:22-23). *“If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O LORD, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You; therefore You are feared”* (“held in awe”) (Ps. 130:3-4). We stand in awe of God’s unfailing grace, mercy, and forgiveness for us in Jesus. As our text says, *“The Lord ... has done excellent things.”*

“Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!” The *“people of Zion”* referred first of all to the Jewish people, whose temple was built on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The majority of the Jewish people in the Old Testament gloried in their magnificent temple, and in themselves and their Jewish heritage. But it was **God** and **His** presence in His temple, and **God** and **His** presence among His people who was their glory. The word *“Zion”* is found many places in the Bible as a reference to Christ’s Church. So the expression, the *“inhabitant of Zion”* in our text refers especially to everyone who believes in Jesus. We don’t glory in church buildings, or church bodies, or in ourselves. We glory in Christ alone.

Although most of God’s Old Testament people were unfaithful to Him, God remained faithful to His promise to send His Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Savior not only of the Jews, but of the whole world. God patiently reached out to the Jews again and again, trying to humble them and bring them back to Him and save them. You and I are prone to foolishly stray from God. Yet God remains faithful to us for Jesus’ sake. In love, He sends us trials to bring us closer to Him. He sent us Jesus to save us. God sees us through all our earthly troubles. One day, He will deliver us from all our troubles, once and for all, when He takes us to our eternal home in heaven! Each of us can truly say, **THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG!** Amen.