

Psalm 8

Last time we began looking at Psalm 8. David begins the Psalm by praising God for making his name excellent in all the earth.

Because God delivered David, David's kingdom was made even greater and God's name was glorified in the building of the temple by Solomon David's son.

David acknowledged that they were the LORD's servants, and that he is sitting on the throne as the LORD's anointed, the LORD's chosen one. It is only because God chose him and delivered him that he is king.

And that is going to be the focus of the rest of the Psalm as well.

Verse 2

ORDAIN

It says that God ordained strength. What does that mean?

We talked about ordination in chapter 7.

Psalms 7:13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

So ordaining something is setting it apart or designating it for a particular purpose.

What would it mean to ordain strength?

Well, he's not saying that he's ordained strength itself. In other words, he isn't saying that they needed deliverance from their enemies, so God's decided that what they need is strength.

That's obvious. Of course they need strength.

The question is, who or what is going to supply that strength. And that is what he is ordaining, the source of strength that will bring them salvation.

By whom are they going to be saved from their enemies? That's what God is ordaining. Who will be their strength.

And note that David is making it clear that this is something that is up to God. It is ultimately God's choice, who is going to be the strength of Israel.

It is God who is going to ordain his anointed, his chosen one, his king to sit upon the throne and be the strength of his people.

Ultimately, as he said in verse 1, the LORD is their Lord, and it is he who will ordain strength for them.

MOUTH

And it says that he is ordaining this out of the mouth of babes and sucklings.

Now that's a bit strange. Think about it. If you were being persecuted by your enemies, and it seemed like they were about to destroy you, and you were looking for someone who could deliver you, where would you look? If you wanted to choose someone to be your strength in the battle, who would you ask who you should choose?

You'd go to the captains of war, right? And ask them who would lead the battle. Or maybe you'd consult with your counsellors and seek their advice on where to get the strength needed to secure a victory.

But that's not what God does.

When God was deciding who was going to be their strength, he didn't ask the captains or the mighty men, he didn't ask the counsellors or the wise men, he asked little children, babes and sucklings.

He said, "Whoever they pick, he's the one."

Now why did he do that?

First, it demonstrates his greatness. It shows that it doesn't matter who they pick, God can bring deliverance through them. He can let these darned fool kids pick, who don't know a thing about war, who will lead the battle, and God can still deliver them through him.

So it shows that it is indeed God who is the one who is ordaining strength, and therefore he gets the glory. Just as David praised him in the previous verse.

But there is also another reason.

Psalms 5:8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

So David prayed against his enemies in Psalm 5, saying that there was no faithfulness in their mouth. He said that they were liars who would try to flatter him. They were deceivers, and so he couldn't know who was on his side and who wasn't.

That isn't the kind of person you want to ask counsel of. They'll try to trick you into picking a guy who's actually your enemy.

Think of it like this. If you were the President and you had to pick someone to fill a high office, and you wanted some advice on who to pick, who would you ask? Would you ask the establishment? What about the lobbyists? What about the representatives of big business and corporate interests? No. What about the children in the nursery? At least you know that they aren't corrupt.

David knew that he was surrounded by corrupt people. And so God decided, since none of the adults could be trusted, he'd just leave it to the kids. Because he knew they wouldn't have a lying mouth, he knew they wouldn't be corrupt.

So that's why it is out of the mouth of babes and sucklings that he ordained strength.

And there are several examples of God doing that in the Bible.

One example of that is the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 1:4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

So God gave Jeremiah, when he was just a child, the ministry of a prophet. And not just any prophetic ministry, he gave him a special ministry that no other prophet is given so specifically: out of his mouth, the words that God put in his mouth, God would ordain which kingdoms would be pulled down and destroyed, and which would be built and planted.

Out of his mouth God would ordain strength: which nations would be strong, and which ones wouldn't. And he started that ministry when he was just a child.

And if you'll recall, we've read some passages from Jeremiah that talked about how he was surrounded by people who were liars, who were trying to destroy him, and he didn't know it. Just like David, he was surrounded by people who had no faithfulness in their mouth. And so that is why God chose him to have the ministry of ordaining strength, while he was still a child, because no one but a child could be trusted.

BABES

But who were the babes, in David's life, that had that ministry?

At first it doesn't really seem to fit. There's never a time where some children are involved in David's deliverance, at least not that I could find.

But there was someone who had that ministry at the time of David, and indeed was given it as a child.

Listen to what that person's mother said, in 1 Samuel 2.

1 Samuel 2:1 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.

2 There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

Hannah is praising God for his deliverance and his excellence (there is none like him).

And this is prophetic, because at the time they are having continuous war with their enemies.

3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

Here is a prophecy that though Israel is stumbling before their enemies at that time (the ark of God is about to be taken in a few years), they will one day be girded with strength.

5 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

And she is associating children with the coming of strength.

6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: **he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.**

Now that is a fascinating prophecy to consider when you think about the fact that this woman's son is one day going to die and be laid in the grave, and then be brought back up by Saul.

7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10 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.

So the wicked will one day be defeated. The strength of man will not prevail, but God will anoint a king to sit upon the throne, and will give him strength and exalt him.

Hannah was given this prophecy when she came before the LORD to give him her son.

And he, while he was yet a child, was given the ministry of ordaining strength.

The first thing he did was prophesy that the judgeship would depart from the house of Eli. And God slew Eli's sons.

Then Samuel anointed Saul king. He later plucked him up, and anointed David king.

And so Samuel was the one who held the keys to the kingdom. Out of his mouth, from the time he was a child, God ordained strength.

It was he who anointed the king of which his mother prophesied, the king which God would give strength, who would deliver them from their enemies.

And that king is David.

This prophecy of babes and sucklings ordaining strength has been fulfilled already.

We've been looking at some prophecies lately that have not been fulfilled yet, but this is one that has.

I actually believe that this prophecy has several different fulfillments, but let's start by looking at one that has already taken place.

Matthew 21:1 *And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,*

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

It is associating this with Jesus's role as King of Israel. (This is in Matthew, so its only natural.)

6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

The people are acknowledging Jesus as the Son of David, the heir to the throne of Israel. And notice that they said he was coming in the **name** of the Lord. Last time we talked about how Christ would come in his Father's name and how his kingdom would exalt his name in all the earth.

10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; [they cried out and said, Hosanna to the king of Israel. Blessed is he that...] they were sore displeased,

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

The children are praising Christ in the temple saying "Hosanna to the Son of David." They are saying that he is the heir to the throne of the kingdom of Israel.

And the Pharisees are angry and ask Christ why he doesn't silence them.

But Christ just quotes part of this verse from Psalm 8 to them.

So Christ was clearly implying that this was a fulfillment of this verse.

Now you'll notice that Jesus's quote is a little different than what it actually says in Psalm 8.

[sarcasm] That's a perfect demonstration of why you can't trust a translation. You see, Psalm 8 was in Hebrew, but Jesus was quoting it in Aramaic, and by the time it got translated in to Greek when it was written down, and then into English, it's practically like playing telephone. What we end up with is completely different than the original. And so that's why we find such disparity in quotes throughout the NT. [/sarcasm]

That's called hogwash.

The truth is that it is different here because what Jesus said was different than the original.

Jesus purposely modified the quote to make a point.

If Jesus had just quoted the verse, it would have brought their attention to the passage. But he knows that the chief priests are going to dismiss whatever he says.

So to make sure he gets their attention and forces them to think, he modifies the passage just a little bit. And by doing that he is playing a physiological trick on them. He knows that they've got this scripture memorized. So if he quotes it, but changes it just a little bit, they'll immediately realize that. And it will force them to think about what he said, and what the verse actually says. He's forcing them to think, he's grabbing their attention by doing this.

So let's look at what he said. In Psalm 8 it says "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength", but Jesus said, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

In Psalms it said that God was ordaining strength, choosing the savior of Israel.

But Jesus changes the focus, from who he is (the strength of Israel), to why he can make that claim (he's been ordained out of the mouth of babes and sucklings).

The chief priests and scribes already know he is claiming to be the Messiah. But he wants them to see that it isn't just him that is making that claim. He's got all of the proper endorsements. The people have hailed him as king, and given him praise, and now the babes and sucklings are, too. And since according to the scripture it is the babes that get the final say, that's a necessary endorsement, that's necessary praise.

So he's pointing out that he is not only getting praise, but that the children are praising him, and that makes it perfect praise. It's perfect, it's complete, that seals the deal.

Jesus is essentially touting this as a key endorsement. "The babes and sucklings are endorsing me, that's the final word according to scripture. Why aren't you?"

And why aren't they?

Because they were duplicitous and corrupt. Over and over Christ called them hypocrites.

John 5:41 *I receive not honour from men.*

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

So the Jewish leaders were liars and corrupt. All they wanted was honor, and would do anything to get it. They were hypocrites. They'd say one thing, and do another.

And that is the same reason why God used children to ordain strength at other times as well: the adults were liars and couldn't be trusted.

So like Samuel, like Jeremiah, God spoke through these children to ordain the strength of salvation for Israel.

That is one fulfillment of this prophecy: when the children praised Christ as that son of David.

But I said that I thought there were actually several different fulfillments. So let's look at another one. This one is also during Christ's life on this earth, but it is a spiritual/allegorical fulfillment.

Matthew 11:20 *Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:*

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Jesus was thanking God for hiding his message from the wise and prudent, but revealing it to babes.

Now the babes he is referring to could be literal. He could be referring to different children who understood who he was as the messiah coming to be the strength of Israel. After all, those children later praised him in the temple as we just read.

But when I read this I've always assumed that it was a reference to his disciples. They were babes relative to the religious leaders. They were just babes spiritually, new wineskins. They weren't wise or powerful in this world, so relatively speaking they were babes.

And Christians are referred to as babes 3 times in the NT. Most notably in 1 Peter 2:

1 Peter 2:1 *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,*

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

In calling them babes Peter says that they should desire the sincere milk of the word, and contrasts that with guile and hypocrisy and evil speaking.

That's the same contrast that was being implied in Psalms between the mouth of the babes and the mouth of many of the adults around David.

So we could say that this is a second fulfillment of the prophecy in that it was the spiritual babes who recognized Jesus for who he was, amidst a bunch of hypocrites who refused to. Instead of accepting Jesus as the strength of Israel, like Absalom, they tried to take the throne away from its rightful heir and keep it for themselves.

Those are two ways that this verse has already been fulfilled. I think that there are also two ways in that it will be fulfilled in the future.

Revelation 14:1 *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Let's look at what this passage said about the 144,000:

- They have the name of the Father of the Lamb written in their foreheads. So they recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior, the Strength of Israel, and God as his Father.*
- They sang a song before the throne that nobody but them could learn. So they had special praise to offer.*
- They were praising God while harps were being played, just as this Psalm is supposed to be played in Gittite harps. Note that it didn't say they were playing the harps—I think that we, the Gentiles might be the harpers there.*

- They were virgins, which probably means that most of them were young.
- In their mouth was found no guile. So they were honest and sincere, not corrupt, lying hypocrites.

It seems very much to me that these are some “babes and sucklings” that are ordaining Jesus as the strength of Israel.

So I think that the 144,000 are a future fulfillment of this.

But I also think that there is another one, a fulfillment which will only come later during the millennium.

Isaiah 11:1 *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:*

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

He is going to come in judgement slay the wicked with fire from his mouth.

But it is clear that he’s also going to have a continuing ministry of judging the earth.

He’s not just going to bring judgement and then that’s it, he’s going to have a continuing kingdom.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

There will be no more carnivory or venomous bites.

And the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, just as it said in Psalm 8 that his name would be excellent in all the earth.

And notice the way he says that. It’s as if he’s saying that the animals themselves are going to have a knowledge of the LORD, and that is why they won’t hurt or destroy.

But notice particularly what it says in verse 8.

So it is associating children specifically with the millennial reign of Christ.

It also did that in verse 6 when it said that a little child would lead the calf and the young lion.

And Hannah did the same thing in 1 Samuel 2:

1 Samuel 2:5 *They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.*

*So even the barren mother would bear many children.
And there are other passages that associate children with the millennium as well.
What is the significance of that? Well, it means that there are going to be many children around during the millennium that will be hailing Jesus as king, ordaining the strength of Israel.
And that will be, I think, another fulfillment of this passage. They will be giving him that perfect praise.*

Now, as to where these children come from, these passages that we have looked at don't really tell us anything about that, other than that some are apparently going to come from barren women.

STRENGTH

And so who is it that God ordained to be strength? It's David. David is the strength in this verse. Now I know it didn't seem like it. It didn't seem that David was the strength for a while. How was he going to deliver them from their enemies when he was running for his life trying to escape his own people?

But that's the point. It isn't who man chose to be strength. It isn't who Israel chose to be strength — they followed Absalom. It isn't who the wise men and counsellors, like Ahithophel chose. It isn't who the princes and the mighty men, like Absalom and his captains, chose. It is who God chose to be strength.

He put it in the mouth of Samuel when he was yet a child. God ordained David to be their strength and deliverer, and he would bring it to pass.

God delivered David from Israel, so that David could deliver Israel.

David is the one who delivered them from their enemies, who stilled the enemy and the avenger.

*Just as David was persecuted after he was ordained to be Israel's strength, so was Christ.
But in the end David received the kingdom, and he who was delivered from death by the hand of people of Israel (they tried to kill him), his son would be heir to the kingdom.
And so Christ, who was delivered from death and rose again when he was killed by the people of Israel, he would be the heir, as the son of David, to the kingdom.
Just as God delivered David that he might bring deliverance to Israel, so God delivered Christ, even from the grave, that he also might be the savior and the strength of his people.
So both of them were ordained as the strength of Israel, persecuted by the people of Israel, delivered by God, and then after that God used them to deliver Israel and gave them the kingdom.*

I mentioned last time how Solomon's name was peace, and how he had peace during his reign. And the reason for that was that God had strengthened the kingdom under David, and he had subdued all of their enemies that would rise up against them. David strengthened the kingdom, and so his son had peace. And that's what we call peace through strength.

So David was the strength through which God would establish his people.

And that ties in with many of the passages that we looked at last time. For example, Exodus 15, which was a song the Israelites sang when they were delivered from the Egyptians when they came through the Red sea:

Exodus 15:2 The LORD is my **strength** and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

So God was their strength. He had brought them salvation.

And it said also that he was their song. So they were praising him for it, just as David is doing in this psalm.

And then it says that they will prepare him an habitation. And last time we pointed out that that's exactly what David did.

So David was the fulfillment of this prophecy, a man for whom God would be his strength and song, who would prepare God a habitation.

And it is interesting that it says, "he is **my** God, and I will prepare him an habitation; **my father's** God, and I will exalt him."

So this prophecy wouldn't be fulfilled just by one man, but by a father-son team. And of course that is David and Solomon.

Exodus 15:13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy **strength** unto thy holy habitation.

So again God was guiding them in his strength, and he associates that with his redemption and his habitation.

And note how both of these verses reference God's strength, not man's strength. "The LORD is my strength" and "thou has guided them in thy strength."

So ultimately it is God who gives strength to the man he ordains to be strength.

The strength ultimately comes from God. God doesn't just choose someone who is already strong, he chooses whoever the babes and sucklings nominate, and then gives them the strength that they need.

And that is on display in 1 Samuel 15, when God takes the kingdom away from Saul.

1 Samuel 15:24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28 And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

Samuel refers to the LORD as the Strength of Israel here. He tells Saul that God has taken the kingdom from him, and that he will not repent.

So it is God who is the Strength of Israel, and he chooses who he will strengthen to be his anointed ruler over the kingdom.

And it says that he ordains strength that he might still the enemy and the avenger.

So one day Christ will be manifested as the strength of Israel. He will subdue their enemies. We've already looked at some passages that talked about that, as we went through Psalm 7. But I want to show you a few that specifically mention the word strength, how he will be Israel's strength, as it says here in Psalm 8.

We talked last week about how Christ would come as the heir to take up his inheritance. And interestingly the Bible intertwines the concept of inheritance with strength.

Deuteronomy 21:17 *But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.*

So the firstborn represents the beginning of his father's strength. And so as the first born Christ is the heir but he is also the manifestation of God's strength.

One passage that we looked at last time was Micah 5.

Micah 5:4 *And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.*

Christ would come in the name of the LORD, and in the strength of the LORD, and be great in all the earth.

Isaiah 12:1 *And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.*

*2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my **strength** and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

There will come a day when God will be their strength and will bring them salvation. And then they will praise him with songs of joy.

*4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his **name**, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.*

And they will praise the name of the LORD, as in Psalm 8:1 David said "how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

They will sing because God has done excellent things, and this will be known in all the earth. So again, exactly like in Psalm 8, his name will be excellent in all the earth.

6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

And at that time the Holy One of Israel will be in the midst of Zion, the city of the king. The term Holy One is a reference to Christ. For example, in Psalms 16:10 it says that God will not suffer his Holy One to see corruption. Clearly a reference to Christ. So when you see the term Holy One in the OT think of Christ, because that's who it's talking about.

So the LORD will be their strength when he comes with salvation, and his name will be exalted in all the earth. And at that time the Holy One will come into Zion, the seat of the kingdom.

Isaiah 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his **strength**? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

So he is going to come into Israel from Edom with salvation. And we've talked about that. And it says that he will be "travelling in the greatness of his strength." So he's coming in strength, and it's going to explain what that means.

2 Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

He will come with anger and tread down the wicked. And that demonstrates that he is traveling in his strength—he's just walking right ovetop of the wicked and their blood is splattering on his garments.

And as we talked about before, he will do that alone.

4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.

6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

So he will come in his own strength, and tread down the strength of the wicked to the earth.

7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

Now that's a wonderful mouthful there.

What he's saying is this. "I'm telling you about the terrible things that he's going to do for the wicked, but I can't forget to mention something else to. Let me tell you about all of the goodness and mercy that he has shown to his people Israel."

"He isn't just gonna do bad things to the bad people, he's also done some wonderful good things for Israel."

8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

Now, if you were going to describe Israel, that's probably about the last thing in the world that you'd say about them. That they were children who would not lie. About all they ever did was turn on God, and complain, and refuse to keep his covenant.

They were the most lyingest people on the face of earth. None of the other people made a covenant with God that they would obey his commands. But Israel did, and broke it more times than you can count.

They aren't children that would not lie, they are the worst hypocrites, the most corrupt people, the most self-righteous two-faced double-crossers you can imagine.

But that's not what God calls them. He calls them his people, his children who will not lie. And so that's why he's come to save them.

When he comes to save them from their enemies they aren't going to be liars, they are going to surely be his people, children who will not lie.

Now do you see how that just fits perfectly with this verse in Psalm 8. This builds right on top of that contrast between the mouth of the children, they babes in sucklings, and the mouth of the lying wicked.

When Christ comes in his strength, when he comes to bring salvation, Israel will be as children, who are too young to lie.

That fits perfectly with the other things we've looked at like the 144,000, etc.

9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

This is prophetic of what Christ would do when he came to earth as a man.

But Isaiah is actually referring back to that Angel (as we talked about last time) who led them through the wilderness.

How he went through all that they went through, wandering around with them in the wilderness.

10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

So now he is describing Israel as they were, Israel as you and I know them.

But that's not how they will be when he comes in strength, bringing salvation.

11 Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?

12 That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

13 That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?

*When they forsook God, he fought against them, **but**, after he had scattered them, God thought back and said, "Where is he that brought them up out of Egypt?"*

Now we know that he doesn't mean Moses, because it says that this person led them by Moses. So God is talking about, not Moses, but that Angel that appeared unto him, that Rock that went before them. And that Rock was Christ.

And it says that he made him an everlasting name. And that appears to be God's focus here. God is saying, "OK, they've rebelled against me, and I've cast them off. But that isn't what I want to do, that isn't going to get me a glorious name. I want to do like I did when they came through the wilderness and I made a man for myself. Where is that One that led them? He's the one I need, he's the one who will exalt my name."

So God has decided to bring salvation, and he's going to use the same one to do it that he used before. His Son Christ Jesus.

14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

That's how God led his people to make him a name, his Angel led them and caused them to rest.

And by implication, that's what he's going to do again, send his Angel to lead them and bring them into rest. (Which is what Hebrews is all about by the way.)

*15 Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy **strength**, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?*

Israel asks God to look down on them, and asks him where is his strength and his mercy? So they are looking for God's strength, and somehow it is through that strength that God will bring them mercy.

And that is the mystery of Christ, how the deliverer would be persecuted, and through that bring them deliverance.

16 Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

17 O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

The hearts of the people of Israel would be hardened. And that is the case right now. But before God brings them salvation that will change.

18 The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

And of course that will happen during the tribulation, the antichrist will take over the temple.

19 We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.

They are called by the name of the LORD, and so to exalt his name God will save them.

So God would prepare Israel to accept his mercy, as children that will not lie, and then he will send his strength and deliver them, exalt his name, and establish his kingdom.

There are more passages we could look at, but that should give you a glimpse of how Christ is depicted as coming with strength to take up his kingdom and exalt the name of the LORD.

AVENGER

Now we know what the enemies are. The Gentiles that opposed Israel: the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, Midianites, Syrians, etc.

But what about the avengers? Who are they?

Well I looked up all the verses that use the term avenger. There are 44. And I expected to find a lot of verses where avengers were grouped with God's enemies. Like they seem to be here.

But I didn't.

There were a bunch of verses that talked about how the avenger of blood would kill a murderer. And there were a lot of verses which talked about God or a man of God avenging Israel of their enemies.

But in both of those cases, avenging is actually a good thing. It isn't a bad thing.

We wouldn't lump those avengers in with God's enemies.

Moses was an avenger, Joshua was an avenger, Samson was an avenger, the people of Israel were avengers, and God was an avenger. We wouldn't lump all them in with God's enemies, would we?

This leads us to question whether the enemies and avengers are really intended here as just two different names for the same group of people, or whether they are actually meant to refer to two different groups of people.

It could be meaning that the enemies will be stilled, and so will those that fought against the enemies, the avengers that avenged Israel of their enemies.

So instead of one group of people, it could actually mean two different groups of people that were fighting against each other.

The bad guys would stop fighting, and the good guys would stop fighting, and there would be peace.

However, there are a few verses that make me doubt whether that is the case.

Leviticus 26:25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

God would send the enemies upon Israel to avenge them when they broke his covenant. So in that case the enemies would be avengers.

They would still be God's avengers, sent by God to take vengeance on the wicked, but they would be Israel's Gentile enemies nonetheless.

Psalms 44:15 My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,

16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

There it sounds much more like the enemy and avenger are both against them. And the broader context of that passage seems to agree with that, that God is letting his people fall into the hand of their enemies, and their enemies are taking vengeance on them.

So it seems that in these few verses when it uses the phrase "enemy and avenger" it is talking about their enemies who are coming to take vengeance on Israel.

So who were the avengers in David's life?

Absalom was one. Every other time the term avenger is used in the OT it is talking about the avenger of blood, who would slay a murderer.

And that is very similar to what Absalom did, when he slew Amnon for raping his sister. That's what started this whole thing off.

Now that was what the law demanded, that a fornicator be put to death. But Absalom didn't do it through the legal process, he just let it go and let it go, but kept a grudge against Amnon, until he finally just couldn't hold it back any longer and killed him.

Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

So Absalom was an avenger and a grudge bearer, against the law of God.

Shimei was also an avenger. He said that David was a bloody man because he was reigning in the place of Saul's family, and that God was going to destroy him because of it.

So Shimei was cursing David and taking vengeance on him.

Both of those men were avengers, but unlike the other avengers in the Bible, they weren't carrying out God's vengeance. They were taking their own vengeance. And God destroyed them for it.

So when it says that the enemy and avenger will be stilled, that means that Israel's enemies will be stilled, and any that are seeking vengeance will be stilled.

The avengers, those seeking vengeance, would include: their enemies; those within Israel who are at strife with each other, and; those in Israel who want to take vengeance on their enemies. In short, there would be perfect peace, without any fighting, whether originating from without or from within.

And that is what happened under David.

Their enemies were stilled, all external avengers were stilled, and so were the internal strifes. The avengers of the house of Saul were ultimately stilled, and the house of Saul was made friends with the house of David through his kindness. And of course Absalom and those that followed him were destroyed. So in the end David's avengers were stilled.

And also, the avengers in Israel who wanted to take vengeance on their enemies were stilled.

By the time Solomon took the throne, they were at peace with their enemies and were no longer going out against them.

That is significant because Saul didn't still the avengers in his time. In fact, Saul tried to destroy some of the people that Israel had sworn to that they wouldn't destroy them. And Saul didn't still the avengers, and Israel was punished for it.

2 Samuel 21:1 Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

Saul had tried to destroy the Gibeonites, to avenge Israel on them, and Israel was punished for it.

God did not want him to do that, so he wanted to raise up another king, who he would give strength, and peace through strength, who would still both the enemy and the avenger.

So the enemies wouldn't be coming against Israel, and Israel wouldn't be pursuing their enemies. They would have peace.

And that is exactly what happened during the latter part of the reign of David and the beginning of the reign of Solomon.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God ordained strength to still the enemy and avenger, and bring peace to the kingdom Israel.