

ISAIAH

Chapter 12

The LORD Is My Strength and My Song

You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. 2 “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 “Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. 6 Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

12:1–6 Two short psalms of praise for deliverance (vv. 1–3, 4–6) climax chs. 7–11. (CSB)

12:1-3 *you* – The movement of the chapter is from an individual (v. 1) to a group (v. 3). An individual may have sung or recited these first verses. (TLSB)

12:1 *you will say* – Namely the church. (Luther)

I will give thanks to you. The “I” is probably the nation, praising the Lord for the deliverance he is sure to bring. (CSB)

Isaiah’s first song of praise, a liturgical response to what is being proclaimed. (TLSB)

This is what will take place in preaching. Nor shall anything else be heard in the church but the voice of praise and proclamation of God’s blessings which we have received. This song is in conflict with all human wisdom and righteousness, which are our works and in which we seek our own glory rather than give thanks to God. Hence, to be pleasing to God is simply to acknowledge that we are the recipients of His blessings, not the donors. A Christian confesses that he was condemned and lost and that he has received from Christ everything that belongs to salvation and righteousness; all his own merits he considers worth nothing. This is the fullest and most perfect sacrifice, and it embraces everything in the Old Testament. There animals and cattle were slaughtered; here our own wisdom and righteousness, our endeavors and works. (Luther)

your anger has turned away.† The church gives thanks not for wrath that is present, but for wrath that has been taken away; for when the yoke of sin and death has been removed, then it will help to remember the evils. Paul says in Rom. 1:18 and 4:15 that “the Law brings wrath,” and from this wrath the Gospel frees when it is believed. (Luther)

Though God’s people have deserved His wrath, He is no longer angry. This is not attributable to Israel, but is the Lord’s doing. (TLSB)

you might comfort me – That is, Thou didst restore to me the voice of rejoicing. Luke 7:48: “Your sins are forgiven.” John 1:29: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” Rom. 5:1 ff.: For without the forgiveness of sins there is no peace, but the opposite. He is therefore speaking of public, not private, consolation through the Gospel. (Luther)

The comfort announced here anticipates the double “Comfort, comfort” in 40:1. In the fullness of time, the Father sent His Son (Gal. 4:4), who also sends the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:6), the Comforter (“Helper,” John 16:7). (TLSB)

12:2 *has become my salvation* – This is a description of the peace that comes after the forgiveness of sins has been received. Thus the heart stands firm, and this is proclaimed. Now I have someone on whom I may rely and in whom I may trust, to whom I may look, namely, God, who no longer is angry and punishes but saves from every danger and evil. Christians are surrounded by countless evils and varieties of death; many are their enemies and detractors, but God provides wings so that they may fly away. Christ is with them and preserves them and does not destroy them. (Luther)

Deliverance from all enemies: physical and spiritual. Luther: “This is a description of the peace that comes after the forgiveness of sins has been received” (AE 16:129). (TLSB)

I will trust – This is the peace and safety of the conscience when it knows God as reconciled and Christ as Savior and Protector. But if it is still afraid of something, this is a temptation of the devil or a residue of the old man. (Luther)

The LORD GOD. Two forms for the personal name of God are given: The first is “Yah”; the second was probably pronounced “Yahweh.” (TLSB)

The LORD... salvation. These lines quote Ex 15:2, a verse commemorating the defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. See also Ps 118:14. (CSB)

my strength and my song – God is our only strength. He has won the victory, and He alone is worthy of praise. (TLSB)

This verse is repeated from Moses, Ex. 15:2, who gives thanks for the deliverance from Pharaoh, where the Jews make no boast of their own merits. So now there shall be proclaimed only the blessings of God that make us safe from our enemies. Therefore the *Strength is my strength*, that is, my kingdom, my house, the victorious power through which I have my enemies under my feet and shall trample the serpent underfoot, etc. (cf. Ps. 91:13). *My Song*, my psalm, and the subject matter of my psalm and song. I have no one to sing and chant about but Christ, in whom alone I have everything. Him alone I proclaim, in Him alone I glory, for *He has become my Salvation*, that is, my victory. For thus the word “salvation” is often used in the Scriptures for “victory,” as in 1 Sam. 14:45. Our Victory is Christ, and when we boast of Christ, we shall win. Satan and the ungodly hear the Word of God not willingly but unwillingly, yet this Word consoles and lifts up the godly who are alarmed either in the hour of death or in want and misfortune. So Elisha, for example, summoned a minstrel in 2 Kings 3:15; see also 9:13. Gideon struck down the enemies with the sound of a trumpet in Judg. 7:22. The evil of the eyes cannot stand the good light but is forced to give in to it. Satan is not thrown out by means of plans made by the flesh, but by means of studying the Word of God. (Luther)

After their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites sang, “The Lord is my strength and my son; He has become my salvation” (Exodus 15:2). Isaiah doubles the name of God here. Clearly, this is the Lord, the name of the God of covenant, Jehovah. Whether the deliverance occurred in the past or will occur in the future, it comes from the same source. Isaiah notes the deliverance at the Red Sea but looks forward to this new deliverance. By emphasizing the Lord’s name, he points

believers to the source. No salvation or strength is possible without Jehovah. Without Him there is no song. (PBC)

12:3 *you* – Plural instead of the singular, perhaps signaling the singing of a choir. (TLSB)

wells.† Perhaps an allusion to God’s abundant provision of water for Israel during the desert wanderings (cf. Ex 15:25, 27). But here God’s future saving act is itself the “well” from which the redeemed will draw life-giving water (see Ps 36:9; Jer 2:13; Jn 4:10). (CSB)

Reminiscent of God’s rescue of Israel out of Egypt (cf Ex 14:21-31). Immediately after this water deliverance, the Lord turned bitter water into sweet water (Ex 15:23-25). When Isaiah envisions a new exodus, it also includes the Lord’s miraculous provision of water (Is. 43:19). Jesus Christ offers living water (Jn 4:6-14) that comes from His pierced side (Jn 19:34) because He thirsted (Jn 19:28), suffered and died. (TLSB)

After the word of the Gospel has been preached and the voice of rejoicing has sounded forth, there follows the discernment of spirits and the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit of which 1 Cor. 12:4 speaks. Christ says in John 7:38: “He who believes in Me, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” Waters denote the Holy Spirit, as in John 4:10. In the noonday heat spring water and running water are the most refreshing. So it is in the scorching heat of sin. The comfort of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God is then most sweet. The wells of salvation are the Gospel, sermons about Christ in various places, or even the preachers of the Gospel. In that day, when the waters will have flowed out to many because the Gospel has already been preached, there will follow also in others the praise, that is, the sacrifice which you have. (Luther)

12:4 *call upon his name* – In Hebrew: Proclaim His name, not this or that person’s. All good things must be credited to Christ. For a while the name of Christ is not seen, that is, His work is not preached and heard, but then there will of course be His suffering and resurrection for our redemption and salvation. (Luther)

Worship and prayer to God alone. (TLSB)

They praise Him, but they are also to call on His name, which means to proclaim God’s name publicly so others may hear. The other verbs here direct believers to be good witnesses. This is OT evangelism. All the world needs to know what every believer treasures. God’s goal in saving Israel, Judah, and each sinner is to bring that salvation to others through their witness. (PBC)

make known his deeds among the peoples – That is, His works and accomplishments. Recall them, that is, in public proclamation and confession. So also Christ asks for remembrance of Himself in Luke 22:19: “Do this in remembrance of Me.” Acts 4:12: There is no other name than the name of Christ. (Luther)

Praise God by telling others about Him. (TLSB)

They will proclaim those things that God has done! The mighty deeds of Jehovah are the content of every proclamation. The church teaches doctrine, specific formulations of what God has done. Such doctrine come from what He has revealed in His Word. The one task of the church is to point souls to Jehovah and all He has done for sinners. The Lord’s name is exalted. The Church is not to be exalted at His expense. The focus is always to be on the Glorious and gracious acts of God. (PBC)

12:5 *sing* – Sing songs, preach, give thanks. (Luther)

has done gloriously – That is, He has overcome death, Satan, and sin. He has risen from the dead, etc. And all this for us; this shall be proclaimed not only in Judea but in all the earth. (Luther)

be made known in all the earth – Israel is a missionary people (cf Gn 12:1–3), commissioned to be God’s priests or representatives to the nations (Ex 19:5–6). (TLSB)

12:6 *Shout and sing for joy.*† These two imperatives occur again in 54:1, where Zion rejoices over her restoration. (CSB)

Sing with jubilation and exultation. (Luther)

O inhabitant of Zion – That is, church, rejoice, because you already have the forgiveness of sins, peace, the Holy Spirit, salvation, life, God, and all good things. You have been set free from all enemies, you are safe and will not be forsaken. Therefore you have enough reason for rejoicing. This would be true even if you saw damnation and despair in yourself. (Luther)

great in your midst – God has demonstrated His power and character among His people by saving them. (TLSB)

Holy One of Israel. Have confidence in the Holy One of Israel, that is, Christ, who is great, unconquered, yes, all things for you. Although we are earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7), we tread Satan underfoot in Christ; and He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world, as 1 John 4:4 says. (Luther)

Ch 12 The Lord’s people break out in song because of their salvation, proclaiming God’s deeds to all people. Those who know the Word are obligated and blessed to proclaim the Lord’s saving work. The Lord gives us strength to bear this song before the nations, to testify what He accomplishes in Jesus Christ. • “I will give thanks to You, O LORD, for though You were angry with me, Your anger turned away, that You might comfort me” (v 1). Amen. (TLSB)