

## God Is Thy Refuge

*"God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea"—Psalm 46: 1-2*

IN Psalm 46 we can find words to assure us, and also to comfort us. If we can feel assured of these blessings, our life will be a greater comfort to us; even though we must recognize the fact that—

*"Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."*

Because of that fact, most people go through life with anxiety and fear; even though enjoying a measure of peace and prosperity. There are so many decisions to make each day, and one mistake could affect the rest of one's life. And there is always the hazard of ill health to cause worry.

Assurance and peace are absent in most people. Many are disturbed about facing the uncertainties of the future in providing for their homes and their families. Many are straining their resources in an effort to "keep up with the Joneses." They are ever complaining.

And they have no one to lean on for confidence: someone to give them a sense of security; someone they could trust, and whose counsel would carry assurance. We have the words of the Psalmist in 146:3—

*"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help."*

But how different it can be with those whose trust is in the Lord; who are confident that "God is a refuge and strength"!

To be careless of that fact can cause a once-believer to become a wreck sooner than an unbeliever, because the Truth many times can add to life's burden. Ours is a life of self-denial, even sacrifice; in many ways we cannot help ourselves as do the worldly. Our conscience will check us against sin, while the worldly are more or less indifferent. In Heb. 12 we read—

*"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth ... and no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous."*

But if accepted humbly it can yield "fruit of righteousness." And what a consolation it is to know that—

*"God is our refuge and strength!"*

You will notice the word "refuge" is used 3 times in this short Psalm. It is like a 3-fold cord, not easily broken. David who was under the inspiration of God, was moved to declare these words which are a promise. God, though so great, can, and will be a refuge to the oppressed who will place their trust in Him. In his first Epistle, Peter exhorts—

*"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time;*

*"Cast all your cares upon Him; for He careth for you."*

God and His Anointed Son have declared that truth many times in Scripture. All the prophets and apostles show us that God is a refuge. Also His promise is that —

*"He will never leave thee nor forsake thee!"*

Neither will he—

*"Suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear."*

No matter what our experiences may be, we know that —

*"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose."*

These promises can be a wonderful help to the children of God. But they only add to the restlessness of those who have no belief in the Word of God. To have confidence and express it, we must have faith, and faith can come only by the study of God's Word.

It is well-known that the people of the world are fearful of what is coming to pass, but they close their eyes to the Truth, and spend their lives in vain and foolish pleasures that are of no profit to them. They have an instinctive fear of the war that will surely come. The hatred of Arab nations against Israel will eventually incite the Gogian confederacy to attack the unwalled villages in Palestine. As Jesus foretold concerning these last days—

*"Men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26)*

How thankful we should be that having the Truth we can have confidence and calmness, believing that God IS our refuge!

*"Therefore we will not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."*

The great day of God almighty is coming nearer every hour. Then by the earthquakes such as never was, the Mount of Olives will be rent in twain; so literally "the earth will be removed". Rome will be cast down and scattered by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, of which we read in the Revelation; then will be the "time such as never was."

In that day, the armies of Gog and all his bands will be in the valley of Megiddo. Then will come the overwhelming slaughter as foretold by the prophets.

At the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus there were several million Jews gathered in the City. So could it be in Rome when the day of devastation shall come upon them. In the time of trouble, millions could flock to Rome as the central sanctuary of their superstition, but it will be of no avail, the day of their judgment will have come. It will be a calamity so great the kings of the earth will bewail and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning—

*"Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying,  
"Alas, Alas, that great City Babylon, that mighty City!  
"For in one hour is thy judgment come!"*

From the calamities we have read of in the years gone by, we can have a faint idea of this greatest final destruction poured out on man's wickedness and blasphemy. In Psalm 46:6-8 we read—

*"The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, He uttered His voice, the earth melted.  
"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth."*

Zechariah, writing of the cleaving of the Mt. of Olives, says—

*"And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Him."*

That would mean that the saints had been called previously for judgment and been accepted. Likewise shall be the invitation for the destruction of Rome—

*"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy prophets and apostles; for God hath avenged you on her" (Rev. 18:20).*

Thus we see the worthy have been resurrected and immortalized, and are of that "great multitude which no man could number." And we have Jesus' words—

*"Watch, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

Those who are delivered and immortalized will surely be highly privileged, and able to rejoice in the words of the Psalmist—

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

But what of the people of the world? It will indeed be for them "a time of trouble such as never was." But the saints will be immune from the power of fire and sword; they will be of the spirit, and equal with the angels.

From a reading of Psalm 46 we can discern how the sublime facts are suggested to us with practical effect; for they are the works of Truth. And to those who fear the Lord, He has made His promises. In Ps. 91, we have words much like Ps. 46—

*"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress.*

*"He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler.*

*"He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings thou shalt trust."*

That great company of the redeemed shall see the gathering of the nations to Armageddon. THEY SHALL WITNESS THE OVERTHROW of Gog and all his bands. In Psa. 91:9 we read—

*"Because thou hast made the Lord which is thy refuge, even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee.*

*"For He shall give His angels charge over thee, that they bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."*

Psa. 91 applies to the Lord Jesus; and he made the Father his trust. And when he hung upon the cross his enemies reviled him saying—

*"He trusted that God would deliver him; let Him deliver him now!"*

The trials and sufferings of Jesus were great, but he was "not tried above that he was able to bear." We read in Ps. 91:15—

*"He shall call upon Me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; and I will deliver him and honor him."*

He is the prototype of all who make God their refuge, and set their love upon Him. Jesus said the first commandment is —

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength."*

How earnest are we in giving heed to that command? It is a necessity, in order that —

*"We might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18).*

The Hebrews would be well aware of the significance of the Law and the reference to the Cities of Refuge. And we can see the meaning of our relationship to it in Christ. There were 6 Cities of Refuge in different parts, so they would not be too far from any one where an unintentional transgressor would be protected from the avenger.

But anyone who was guilty of intentional crime was delivered to the law. Here we again see the relationship to Christ. A not wilfully-guilty refugee would have assured safety just so long as he remained in the City. Paul says:

*"And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*

So to speak figuratively, if we fail to get into that City of Refuge, the avenger will get us. So like Paul we say—

*"O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*

But Paul was confident he would find the City of Refuge, and says—

*"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, He shall deliver me."*

All may flee for refuge and lay hold upon the hope set before us as Isa. 55 proclaims—

*"Ho, everyone that thirsteth! Come ye to the water.*

*"And he that hath no money, come ye, and buy and eat!*

*"Yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."*

And on the feast day Jesus stood and cried—

*"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink of the living waters!"*

If we are safe in Christ, the avenger cannot harm us. And if death come before the Messiah does, it will only be a sleep; and we shall have a glorious awakening. Speaking of his sheep, Jesus says (John 10:28)—

*"And I will give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish;*

*"Neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hand."*

They will be safe in the eternal City of Refuge. We also have the blessed assurance—

*"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20)*

To attain the City of refuge, there are certain conditions. One must live a new life; he must separate—and keep separate—from old associations. Being a refugee may not be overly pleasant many times; but there are compensations. The habitants of the City will not be intentional transgressors; and it can be comforting to know that the wicked will be cast out.

There is another compensation. In the City of Refuge shall dwell the Levites and Priests, who delight to keep the law of the Lord; so we need have no regrets in leaving "a world that lieth in wickedness." Jesus is the—

*"High Priest after the order of Melchizedek."*

And he—

*"Ever liveth to make intercession for us."*

So that once in him, we remain in him, unless we choose to depart. Of such Peter says—

*"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."*

But the inducements to remain in the City are great, though in this dark day they must be spiritually discerned by the eye of faith. As in Ps. 46:4—

*"There is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the City of God."*

We still have the picture of the City of Refuge before us. Then (Ps.48:2):

*"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mt. Zion, on the sides of the north, the City of the great King;*

*"God is known in her palaces for a refuge."*

In the vision of John (Rev. 22), he saw the "pure river of water of life." These visions were prophetic; the New Jerusalem symbolic of the immortalized and glorified saints. These saints, once mortal, are sharing divine nature in the eternal Refuge. Moses, speaking to Israel, says—

*"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."*

There the righteous will be safe in God's care; they shall be secure for ever. When John saw the vision of the Holy City descending, he heard a voice saying—

*"Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them. And they shall be His people, and God shall be with them and be their God.*

*"And He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; For the former things are passed away."*

So, with these sublime promises before us; let us partake of these emblems in gratitude and thankfulness to God for all His goodness, remembering that God is a Refuge and Strength, and we shall be in the City if we have the MARK OF THE CITIZENS OF ZION which is —

*"Blessed are they that DO HIS COMMANDMENTS; that they may have right to the Tree of Life; and may enter in through the gates into the City" (Rev. 22:14).* —CHT

Taken from August 1971 Berean

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