

GOD IS OUR REFUGE
Or
A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD
Psa.46:1-11
Ed Dye

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is a psalm of consolation. Israel, in great peril as indicated by the Psalm, consoles herself with the thought of God's might, his protecting care, and his ability to shatter all the combinations that her enemies may form against her as long as she maintains her faith in and loyalty to God.
 - a. And during the O.T. period, under the law of Moses, he would fight their battles for them – both physical and spiritual.
2. Therefore, happen what may, the Lord's people are happy and secure as long as they are faithful and loyal. This is the doctrine of this Psalm, and to help our memories, it might be called, The Song of Holy Confidence.
3. We, as God's people in this the N.T. age, still have God as our refuge, our mighty fortress in time of trouble, on the same conditions of faith and loyalty.
4. Therefore, making application of the thought of this Psalm of "God is our refuge and strength" in the N.T. sense of that truth, our emphasis is on the spiritual, not the material or physical; it is on our soul and its welfare, not our body and its material welfare.
5. The Psalm is divided by inspired authority into three parts, each of which ends with "Selah" (i.e., a suspension or short pause) and, in fact, inspires confidence on the basis of the unchangeableness and ever present help of God in trouble.
 - a. In our case, of course, it is in spiritual matters pertaining to our soul where we are placing the emphasis, rather than on the material or physical!
6. On this basis, note with me the two contrasted thoughts of this psalm.

II. DISCUSSION

A. A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE PSALM.

1. In Vv.1-3, the Psalmist declares the first reason why the people of God are inspired with such great confidence.

- a. That God is our refuge, strength, and help. I.e., he is our place of shelter, safety, security, trust, and hope for our soul.
 - b. Therefore, we will not fear, though:
 - (1) The earth should be moved;
 - (2) The mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
 - (3) The waters thereof roar and be troubled;
 - (4) The mountains shake (tremble) with the swelling (or its tumult) thereof.
 - c. The Psalmist in Vv.1-3 proclaims three specific things about the refuge of the people of God which inspire such great confidence:
 - (1) How personal it is, V.1a: “***God is*** our refuge and strength”
 - (2) How powerful and/or sufficient it is, V.1b: “a very present help in trouble.”
 - (3) How permanent it is, Vv.2,3. National, political and earthly disasters do not and will not disrupt the permanence of our place of shelter in God.
2. In Vv.4-7, the Psalmist further explains why there can be such confidence even throughout the enemies’ siege.
- a. Because of the marvelous river, “the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God...,”V.4.
 - (1) How impassive is its flow, or how incapable of being affected by, or devoid of, suffering.
 - b. Because of the marvelous Resident, Vv.5-7.
 - (1) “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her...,” V.5.
 - (2) How impotent (feeble, weak, powerless) is the foe of God who is with us as our refuge and strength, Vv.6,7.
 - c. There can be such confidence because:
 - (1) Of God inspired gladness and divine safety in the city of God.
 - (2) Kingdoms fall; the earth melts; but the Lord of Hosts, the God of Jacob, who is our refuge, or very present help in trouble, is with us yet.
3. Vv.8-11 contain the concluding exhortation and proclamation of the Psalm.
- a. Vv.8,9, exhortations from the Psalmists, “behold the specific works of the Lord.”
 - b. V.10, exhortations from God himself:
 - (1) “Be still, and know that I am God;
 - (2) “I will be (am) exalted among the heathen (the nations);

- (3) "I will be (am) exalted in the earth."
- c. The Psalmist's final two-fold proclamation in V.11:
 - (1) "The Lord of hosts is with us;
 - (2) "The God of Jacob is our refuge."

B. BASED ON THE THOUGHTS OF THIS PSALM, COMPARE THE INSECURITY OF EVERY EARTHLY REFUGE, REFLECTING THE INSTABILITY AND LIMITATIONS OF ALL HUMAN STRENGTH AND WILDOM.

1. This may be reflected and realized in public calamity, local, state, and national disasters, etc.
 - a. Depression of trade may carry discomfort, even ruin, into hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses.
 - (1) Our commercial and/or economic system is so complicated and nicely or delicately balanced that one gigantic failure may give a shock to the whole fabric.
 - (2) The 1929 Stock market crash is an example. All who lived through the Depression of the 30's know, whether or not they lost a fortune in the stock market.
 - (3) Or take note of what happened to Wall Street after 9/11.
 - (4) Or even the devastating effects of the failure of even one large company such as Enron in Texas.
 - (5) All of which shows the folly of seeking refuge in wealth and/or material possessions. See
 - (a) Prov.11:4, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death."
 - (b) Prov.11:28, "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch."
 - (c) Mt.6:19, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal"
 - (d) Mt.16:26, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - (e) Jno.6:27, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you..."

- (f) 1Tim.6:17, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God...”
 - b. The tremendous possibilities and realities of war have to be reckoned with in any thought of earthly refuge.
 - (1) Clear though the sky may be, war-clouds may at anytime gather and burst with destructive fury.
 - (2) Even if our own shores still escape the destructive forces of the enemy, war may drain our resources, bring greater and greater tax burdens upon us, and, worse than all, place the lives of our young men and women in peril, in danger of physical and psychological harm, as well as death.
 - (3) The pride of the nations may be broken, their wealth wasted, their citizens divided and warring among themselves over the rightness or wrongness of the conflict.
- 2. Also, the insecurity of every earthly refuge may be reflected in personal and family trouble.
 - a. For instance, even when public prosperity is untroubled, when the economy is healthy, and the nations are at peace with one another;
 - b. The private foundations of your health, fortune, happiness, earthly hopes, may fail, and with brief or no warning, all your earthly welfare be laid in ruins. See Pss.30:6-10:
 - (1) Vv.6,7, The Psalmist’s presumption
 - (a) His spiritual pride remembered, Vv.6,7a.
 - (1) What he had felt, V.6: “And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.”
 - (2) What he had forgotten, V.7a, that he strength lay in God, not in himself.
 - (b) His spiritual pride rebuked, V.7b, “thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled” (expresses “confusion, helplessness and terror”)
 - (2) Vv.8-10, the Psalmist’s result prayer.
- 3. Earthly wisdom cannot give refuge for the soul, Jer.10:23; Isa.55:8,9; 1Cor.1:18-21; Pro.14:12.

C. BUT, BY CONTRAST, GOD IS THE NEVER-FAILING REFUGE FOR HIS SPIRITUAL CHILDREN, A VERY PRESENT HELP IN TROUBLE.

1. This is true because his power to save is all-sufficient; for he is Almighty, Rev.4:8; 11:17; 16:7; 19:6; Mt.19:26; Lk.1:37; 18:27.
2. Because his wisdom is infinite; he is omniscient, Heb.4:13.
3. Because his promises meet every spiritual emergency, Heb.13:5,6.
4. Because his faithfulness is the immovable foundations on which we may build our spiritual house and trust, Heb.6:13-19; Mt.7:24-26.
5. Because his Son, Jesus Christ, is “the true and faithful witness” (Rev.1:5; 3:14) by means of his gospel, his power to save the obedient believer, both Jew and Gentile (Rom.1:16,17; 2Th.1:6-10; Heb.5:8,9; Mt.7:21-23; Mk.16:15,16).

III. CONCLUSION

1. We can take great comfort in the fact that God’s relation to his people:
 - a. Is a relation of spiritual strength for us.
 - b. Is a relation of intimate spiritual nearness for us.
 - b. Is a relation of spiritual parental tenderness for us as our Father.
2. What, then, should we be in consequence of such a relation:
 - a. Fearless amid the greatest changes, Vv.2,3; Cf. Mt.10:28; Heb.13:5,6.
 - b. Glad or joyful, V.4. Cf. Phil.4:4.
 - c. Obedient to the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God, V.10; Cf. 1Cor.10:31.
3. We need a secure refuge from the curse of sin of whom God is the only source through his Son, Jesus Christ, by means of the gospel of Christ, which we must believe and obey, and by which we must by faith continue to serve God, Jno.3:16; Lk.19:10; Ac.4:12; 2Tim.2:10; Eph.1:3; 1Pet.1:3-5; Heb.7:25; Rom.1:16,17; Mk.16:15,16.
4. Only the obedient will find this refuge in Christ, Mt.7:21; Heb.5:8,9; Rom.6:16-18; 2Th.1:6-10; 2Tim.4:6-8; Jas.1:12; Heb.12:25; Jno.5:28,29.
5. Rest assured that”
 - a. Faith in God assures help in trouble for the faithful, Psa.46:1; 94:22.
 - b. Faith in God assures comfort in trouble for the faithful, Psa.46:2; 2Chr.15:4.
 - c. Faith in God assures deliverance from trouble for the faithful, Psa.46:10; 18:1,2.