

Encouragement for Weary Spiritual Warriors

Imagine living within a walled city that's under siege from a foreign army. Soldiers milling and marching on all four sides, siege ramparts under construction and the terror of flying firebrands from outside. Add to that the lack of food, the prospect of death or slavery, ravaged families, and loss of communication with the outside world.

Your focus is impending doom. You have lost the offensive posture in life. All you can do is sit and wait. You are forced, by circumstances, to be on the defensive. Your fate really lies outside your control. Can you outlast the enemy?

The siege wears on and on. Depressive circumstances never quit coming. Forced to maintain a defensive, survivalist posture, you are not cheerful or optimistic. Dominant moods are despair, depression and fright. Safety within the city walls appears very tenuous and temporary.

Though the circumstances surrounding Psalm 46 are unknown, **the encouragement given applies to anyone under siege—in a war-torn part of this world, from disastrous personal circumstances, or an emotional nightmare that gives no hint of going away.**

God with us

Verse 1 knifes through our personal blackness as a great shaft of light: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble."

These same words inspired Martin Luther, after the lifting of the siege of Vienna in 1529, to write his immortal Reformation hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

We find ourselves in Him. **We may be “in” trouble—but we are not outside of God’s care, protection, and love.** Our resources won’t last—but His strength will.

In your hour of need, the enemy will tell you the Lord is never present, seldom present, or sometimes present; but, Jesus is *ever* present. (See Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5.)

The psalmist leaps to a prospect even more foreboding than the siege: a horrific earthquake in which the mountains collapse into the sea, tidal waves roar in, and mountains tremble. In such a time, he declares, “Therefore, we will not fear” (v. 2).

You have a choice: Trust God and do not fear, or mistrust Him and fail. You will get no emotional benefit or comfort from His presence unless you realize He is there: your refuge, strength and help.

God above us

The message in verses 4–7 parallels with John’s vision of heaven while exiled on the island of Patmos. Above the tumult of Earth’s desperate conflicts, a city pristine and pure hovers in the heavens. (See Rev. 21:2.) Our world may be chaotic, but not His. Likewise, this psalm lifts our hearts and minds out of the city of siege to the eternal city of God.

Our earthly night will end for “God will help her at break of day” (v. 5). God loves the breaking of day. Daybreak ended Israel’s bondage and slavery when the waters of the Red Sea engulfed the enemies of God’s people. (See Ex. 14:17.) Our Lord rose from the dead “early on the first day of the week” (Mark 16:9). When Jesus comes again, the long darkness will end in the golden daybreak of His eternal dawn—no night there. (See Rev. 22:5.)

All is well in the Jerusalem above. God is in residence. Nations below may be in uproar, but when God lifts His voice

kingdoms fall and the earth melts.

No wonder the Psalmist declares, “The Lord Almighty is with us” (v. 7). But why does he also say, “The God of Jacob is our fortress” (v. 7)? Why mention Jacob?

Jacob struggled and prevailed. He knew the insecurity of not being the favored child, of being a fugitive from his brother’s anger, of being cheated and tricked. He knew loss: his beloved wife and the presumed death of his adorable son.

Without those struggles, God would have remained to him as “the God of my father Isaac and grandfather Abraham.” But through his struggles the Lord became very real to him.

God over the Earth

From the vantage point of the eternal city, the psalmist now looks down on the besieged earthly city. From there he sees from God’s line of sight, not just the one spot where hell is breaking loose.

The larger perspective helps you understand that God has triumphed in many humanly desperate situations. The invitation to “come and see” results in a tour of His conquered battlefields. (See vv. 8,9.) Such a visit produces a great calm within. (See v. 10.) I must make the connection: If He won victories elsewhere, He can do it here and with me.