

Title: God protection in God's earth

Introduction

Wow, what can I say, how much has changed in the last two weeks?

Now we are in lock down.

I will be placing these devotions/sermons for you every week on YouTube. May I encourage you to go to the passages I share and to spend more time in Gods week in your family devotions discovering the rich encouraging truths from Gods word in these times of trouble.

I will also include the manuscripts with this for this devotion....

Our worlds and lives have suddenly been thrown upside down

Its so easy in times like these to lose sight of God

Its so easy to become fearful and to panic.

Its so easy to lose your peace and to become anxious and to be agitated and fight with one another.

Our passage this morning serves as an encouragement to find comfort from God being your refuge, your protector.

His presence makes all the difference.

Knowing He is sovereign brings great peace.

Join with me as we break open this psalm this morning and dig out some precious truths that should encourage you as it did form in in these times of trouble.

Historical background

The background to this psalm is unknown, but probably written after a military victory over a foreign power that attempted a siege against Jerusalem.

Possibilities may include:

When Sennacherib the king of Assyria came to destroy Judah and had surrounded Jerusalem to destroy it.

Hezekiah sought the Lords Face and prayed to Him.

God responds

³³ "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or

cast up a siege mound against it. ³⁴ By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁵ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.” ³⁶ And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. *Isaiah 37:33–36 (ESV)*

Or

2 Chron 20:1-30 we read about armies of the Ammonites, Moabites and the Meunites that came up against Jehoshaphat (The king of Judah) in battle.

Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek God and he proclaimed a fast in Judah(vs3)

He called a fast, assembled all Judah to seek help from God. ⁴This is what he prayed.

⁵ And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, ⁶ and said, “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. ⁷ Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? ⁸ And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, ⁹ ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.’

2 Chronicles 20:5–9 (ESV)

WE note that He affirmed:

- that God is in heaven.
- That He rules over all the kingdoms
- That He is powerful and that none can withstand Him
- That he had driven out the inhabitants in the land of Canaan that was given to Israel
- That they had built a sanctuary for God
- That if disasters came like: sword, judgments pestilence or famine that they would stand before This house (his temple) and cry out to God in their affliction and that God would hear them and save them.

Jehoshaphat continued asking God to execute Judgment upon His enemies, because they were powerless against the horde that was coming against them. vs10-12 (just you may feel powerless about what's happening in your lives)

God responded with these words.

2 Chronicles 20:15–17 (ESV)

¹⁵ And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.' ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley, east of the wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷ You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you."

The people responded in worship:

2 Chronicles 20:18–19 (ESV)

¹⁸ Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. ¹⁹ And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

And when the next day the people went out, Jehoshaphat instructed Israel to believe in the Lord and they would succeed.

He also appointed people to sing praises to God. (Preparing for battle, they arranged the choir) ...you would think the soldiers, no they prepared the worshippers.

²² And when they began to sing and praise, the LORD set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. ²³ For the men of Ammon and Moab rose against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction, and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they all helped to destroy one another. ²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped. 2 Chronicles 20:22–24 (ESV)

With this possible background lets read the psalm

Passage: Ps 46, possibly the psalm that the worshippers of Israel were singing as they face this possible national calamity.

Proposition

4 Comforting responses encourages Christ likeness in times of trouble

1. God's protection, power and help, combats fear in times of natural chaos1-3
2. God's presence causes stability in times when human powers are unstable4-6
3. Gods sovereignty brings peace and worship to human powers and natural powers 8-10
4. Trust that God is with you and God is your shelter7 &11

1. God's protection, power and help, combats fear in times of natural chaos1-3

To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamothe. A Song. ¹

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah Psalm 46:1-3 (ESV)

To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamothe. A Song

The Choir master implies that the musical direction was towards the conductor of the Temple choir.

The sons of Korah were the temple singers known as the Korahites.

Sons refers to the members or descendants of the clan of Korah. (Handbook)

The Alamothe means the voice of the young women, which implies that a female choir sung this psalm or that it was done at a high pitch.

In the New Testament we read the following

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

The believers are called to allow Gods word to richly dwell within you, and to teach one another and admonish one another in all wisdom with singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. And that's what we have here as the song sung would teach and encourage you and I to have confidence in the great and powerful God we serve especially in times of trouble and turmoil.

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

When you are facing trouble, or troubling situations, where should your focus be on?

The psalmist directs your and my attention towards God.

Contemplating who God is critical to calm you, in troubling times.

God is our refuge.

God= Elohim root meaning of being strong.

Its the same term used for God who created the heavens and the earth Gen 1:1

It means God is a powerful God,

And its this God that

is our refuge.

Our referring to His people.

The direct context would refer to God's chosen nation Israel that God saved from various calamities they faced.

It can be broadened to apply to His people, those who have Christ as their refuge.

And Jesus is your refuge, if you repented and trusted in His death and resurrection.

The psalmist in Ps 2 the blessed ones, (The righteous ones, the believers) as those who have taken refuge in the Jesus.

¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Psalm 2:12 (ESV)

Those who have been saved by repentance and faith in Christ death and resurrection are saved and protected from the wrath of God.

Jesus is truly yours and my shelter.

Back to the Psalm

God is our refuge.

By refuge it means God is our:

- shelter from danger.
- hiding place
- salvation from danger

and strength

Not only is he your shelter, but He is also your strength.

He is the one you and I depend upon, and find great inner strength when facing stressful times.

He is the one that empowers the weak for action.

He is the one that upholds you and enables you to endure through trials.

When you are weak and feel over whelmed, trust upon His power and His enablement.

He is your very present help in trouble.

Very present means He is always ready to help.

He is immediately present and instantaneously available to His people.

Help = God is the provider of divine assistance; He contributes to what you need.

⁵ Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." ⁶ So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:5-6 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:3 (ESV)

In trouble

Refers to the many contexts or events in which His people need divine assistance or Help from God.

It's a term which refers:

- to an event that may cause distress or anxiety.
- to being in a tight place,
- to be restricted, to be narrow or cramped place.

Examples of this is happening to all of us at the moment:

- Economic crashes
- Governments panicking

- Lack of income
- Dangers of being contaminated by the global pandemic

It's any event, crisis, calamity, trial towards which your soul responds in anxiousness, worry, panic, cold sweats and fear

In these events, draw comfort from these truths

1. Jesus is all powerful
2. Jesus is your hiding place, your salvation from danger
3. Jesus is with you
4. Jesus is your ever-present help in trouble

2 Therefore we will not fear

The psalmist draws comfort from these truths about God and that that's why he says, therefore we will not fear.

though the earth gives way,

though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

Selah Psalm 46:1-3 (ESV)

The psalmist describes times of trouble in which God offers his protection mentioned in vs1 He shares a picture of a massive earthquake and raging seas and mountains that shake and rise and fall: a picture of cataclysmic disastrous natural events.

Your senses are engaged as you see the earth giving way.

Mountains that normally are pictures stability and longevity suddenly moving into the very heart of the sea.

The roar of rushing water, foam, tidal waves tsunamis draw a picture of chaos.

Mountains shaking and rising up and falling give events that any normal person would respond in horror and fear.

Application

When your facing chaos, natural calamities, do not fear.

Since Jesus is your refuge, your strength, He is always present to help you even in in natural disasters.

2. God's presence causes stability in times when human powers are unstable⁴⁻⁶

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. 6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. Psalm 46:4–6 (ESV)

In vs 1-3 God is presented as a refuge in the context of natural calamities

In vs 4-6 the city of God is presented as the refuge when nations are raging and kingdoms are shaking.

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

The city of God refers to Jerusalem.

The river whose streams make glad the city of God refers to water that flowed from the threshold of the temple. Ezek 47 during Christ Millennial kingdom in the future.

- The streams become deeper and form a river.
- The Rivers are full of every living creature and many fish.
- On both sides of the river will be fruit trees that bear fresh fruit every month and the fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing. Ezek 47:9, 12
- The millennial temple will be built in the future after the 7 years of tribulation predicted in Revelation.
- The temple illuminated by the glory of God (Ezek 43:2-5) will be from where Jesus will have His throne and where He will dwell in the midst of His people (Ezek 43:7) and reign for 1000 years (Rev 20:4).

After the 1000 years, God will create a new Heavens and a new earth, and the heavenly Jerusalem will come to the new earth and God will dwell with His people. (Rev 21:1-3)

This will be Gods eternal kingdom.

- There will be no temple
- The city will be illuminated by the glory of God. (Rev 21:22-24)
- There will be a river that flows from the throne of God and there will be the tree of life that bears 12 kinds of fruit and its leaves will bring healing to the nations. (Rev 22:1-2)

So, the river here whose streams make the people glad draws the readers attention to the future Millennial kingdom, when Christ had returned to set up His kingdom on earth and looks even further towards the eternal kingdom in the new heaven and new earth that Revelation describes. **Its a picture of future hope**, The future expectation of good based upon the promises of God in His word.

There is a contrast made between raging waters in vs 3, and the river and streams in the future city of God bring joy to the people.

You see a vivid contrast between the catastrophic natural disasters vs 2-3 in this presents world with the serenity and peace that will exist when Christ has returned in vs 4

- Roar and foaming waters vs rivers and streams
- Chaos in this life vs order in the life to come
- From living in fear in this life to joy when Christ is present

What makes the difference

The difference is expressed in vs 5

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

What makes the difference is God is in the midst of that city.

Therefore, the city shall not be moved or be shaken.

God is her protection.

God's physical presence brings peace, order and joy to the city of God in the future Millennial city.

Application

God's spiritual presence within the heart of believers, can bring you peace, order and deep sense of joy even in the midst of a chaotic world until Christ returns to set up His millennial kingdom.

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16–17 (ESV)

When you are anxious, bring this to Gods attention in prayer, and He will give you divine supernatural peace.

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6–7 (ESV)

The Psalmist takes the reader from the Millennial future kingdom of Christ to the nations and the kingdoms of this world.

6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. Psalm 46:4–6 (ESV)

Once again, we see a contrast.

The city of God is unmoved.

Gods city depicts a state of order

Those in the city are in a state of joy.

In contrast

The nations rage.

The term rage means to make a noise, to be tumultuous, to be in a state of commotion or confusion,

The kingdoms totter, means being without stability, swaying or threatening to fall. Its a figure of speech referring to great insecurity.

The foot is slipping or sliding and is indicative of times of calamity. Times of disorder on the earth.

It's is in times of calamity that chaos attempts to be supreme over order.

This is a reality both in the natural world vs 2-3 and in the world of nations and human affairs.

In great calamities, nations respond in confusion, make a lot of noise, may express anger and kingdoms, areas of reign and rule become unstable.

And when God utters his voice, the very ground that the nations stand upon and upon which kingdoms rely, melts, turns to liquid.

There we see a picture of God's power in relation to the nations that threaten the people of God.

¹ Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." Psalm 2:1-6 (ESV)

So, we see the protective element of God, the stability order and peace that God's presence brings and also the supreme display of His omnipotence.

He simply speaks and the earth melts.

He speaks in his wrath and terrifies them in his fury (Ps 2)

Application

Its what we see in our current countries of the world as some governmental leaders respond in confusion, make lots of noise, but seem totally unsettled.

And countries become disorderly.

What should you and I do in such circumstance?

1. Don't fear
2. Find your hope in God and in His future kingdom, which gives you the wonderful expectation that what you experience now will not be to continue reality for His people.
3. There awaits the city of God where because of God's presence, everything is orderly, stable and joyfulness.
4. Know that presence in your life gives you a continuous source of comfort.
5. God's infinite power is available to His children.

¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹

and what is the **immeasurable greatness of his power** toward us who believe, according to **the working of his great might** ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.
Ephesians 1:16–21 (ESV)

6. And since Christ dwells in the hearts of believers, you too can be at peace as you bring the things that trouble your heart, that cause anxiousness to God.
7. You and I can go to God in prayer, and presents our concerns to God and He promises supernatural peace despite a world in chaos.

3. Gods sovereignty brings peace and worship to human powers and natural powers 8-10

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. 10 “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth!”

After having established that God is your refuge both in times of natural calamity and unstable national powers.

The psalmist then invites you to come and observe the works of God.

8 Come, behold the works of the Lord,

He invites you to look and see

Come and see what God has done in the earth.

Come for the finale.

Come and see the climatic ending of history.

The works are defined in vs 8b and 9.

how he has brought desolations on the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

What this indicates is the sovereign control of God over the earth and over nations.

Its a picture of a warrior God, the all-powerful warrior

God controls the world of nature.

He has brought desolations on the earth.

This term means horrific events, atrocious events, creating uninhabited wildernesses.

Desolation means the results of devastation and of things being laid waste.

In the context of Israel, you read about the after effects of Gods work at destroying their enemies.

²⁴ When Judah came to the watchtower of the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and behold, there were dead bodies lying on the ground; none had escaped. 2 Chronicles 20:24 (ESV)

³⁶ And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Isaiah 37:36 (ESV)

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." Revelation 19:17–18 (ESV)

Peace comes after God has acted.

There is peace because God has the biggest gun.

He is the most powerful being in the universe.

You don't come to a nuclear war with a peashooter.

You make peace with those holding the greatest weapon Zech 14:12-13, Rev 20:9 you read about the destructive ability of God to conquer earthly armies.

WE see an example of this in Zech 14

*¹² And this shall be the **plague** with which the LORD will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³ And on that day a great panic from the LORD shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. Zechariah 14:12–13 (ESV)*

When God acts His people's enemies not only panic, but are destroyed.

And then there is peace.

He is the peace bringer.

In the end of the Day God is victorious and delivers His people.

Seeing Gods sovereign control, His supreme power over that natural earth and nations and empires, how should you respond. The psalmist tells you how

10 “Be still, and know that I am God.”

This is not a be still, like a quiet reflection.

It’s a command to stop striving, stop fighting.

Be still in Hebrew = to put an end to activity, to release, to stop striving or fighting.

In times of great stress, people tend to fight with one another.

Gods answer, contemplate the great works of God and stop fighting.

Stop that inner turmoil

Stop fighting with your family member

And the second command you should apply

Know that He is God.

One thing that stands out in the Book of Ezekiel is God’s signature to His divine acts.

Its mentioned more than 60 times, usually after God judgment of a nation or in some places after He restored a nation.

These events are often signed of with this statement: “so that all may know that I am God”

A few examples

*⁹ I will make you a perpetual desolation, and your cities shall not be inhabited.
Then you will know that I am the LORD. Ezekiel 35:9 (ESV)*

²³ And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. Ezekiel 36:23 (ESV)

³⁶ Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it. Ezekiel 36:36 (ESV)

These great cataclysmic events, of nations being judged and destroyed have a purpose, which is the acknowledgement that He is God.

The God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is God who did it and you and I should bow before Him in worship.

This is exactly what will happen in the future.

I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” Psalm 46:8–10 (ESV) Psalm 46:8–10 (ESV)

Here we see the end.

Where both the nations that were raging and the earth that was in chaos with great calamities will exalt God.

God will destroy this world and create a new one.

Paul writes that after Christ die, Christ rose again and was exalted.

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9–11 (ESV)

In the end every human being will bow before God and will spend an eternity either in with Him in worship or in Hell acknowledging He is God; He is Holy and Just.

They will be harnessed to serve and worship and elevate God.

God is Lord over nature and nations

Over the earth and history, He will be glorified.

So, in the end of the day, what should you and I take away from this.

4. Trust that God is with you and God is your shelter⁷ &11

⁷ The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah Psalm 46:7,11 (ESV)

You should sing the Chorus of this song.

1. The lord of Hosts, the lord of the armies is with me.
2. The God of Jacob is my fortress (strongly fortified, high point, refuge)

Because God is in control sovereignly over the earth and all nations

Because God controls both history and nature

The chaotic reality that bring fear is removed.

The all-powerful creator of this universe, Jesus Christ is with me, He dwells in my heart.

He is your protector.

Nothing will happen to you except what He allows.

And even if your and my little world turns upside down

Even if He allows you or I to face sicknesses or even death, you can be at peace.

Because Jesus is your fortress.

But ...

If He is not your fortress.

May I encourage you as you listened to this passage, to bow your knee before God.

I encourage you as a family to come before God and say to Him, you are God, you are all powerful.

Jesus I am not.

I am a sinner needing salvation.

Will you give me the gift of repentance and faith?

Will you be my refuge, my strength, my continues help in adversity?

For you believers out there.

IN your time of anxiety, pray

In the times of chaos, dwell upon who God is

In times of hopelessness, contemplate Gods kingdom in the future

And ultimately, stop being anxious or fearful, stop fighting and know, in these events, know that He is God, He is Good, He is Just, He is in control.

Find comfort from these truths.

He is with you and is your helper.

In conclusion

4 Comforting responses encourages Christ likeness in times of trouble

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