

EARTHQUAKE DEVOTION

Psalm 46

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

Background

The event in the history of Israel that best fits the powerful deliverance described in this psalm occurred during the reign of Hezekiah, when the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army of Sennacherib. (2 Kings 19:35–37)

Luther based his famous hymn *A Mighty Fortress is Our God* on this psalm. Luther said that the words of this psalm gave him the strength he needed for the Reformation.

Verse 7 “*The LORD of hosts*”—The Hebrew word translated “host” means “an army.” It may be interpreted to mean that our God is the Lord of the “army of the heavenly angels,” or that he is the Lord of “all armies,” both earthly and heavenly.

“*The God of Jacob is our fortress.*” The word for *fortress* literally means “a lofty place,” “a rock affording shelter,” or “a stronghold” (Jeremiah 48:1). It can also be translated as “refuge.”

Reflections

1. From what kind of calamities does the Lord protect His own? (verses 2–3) Does this mean that believers will never be hurt by any of these calamities? In what sense does God protect us?

The calamities are described as natural disasters. They are symbolic of everything that threatens to harm the Church, whether natural disasters or spiritual attacks.

2. What is “the city of God”? Why can God’s people find perfect safety there? (verses 4–7)

The refuge is God’s Church. The Church has life-giving water. God is within her. God will help her at the break of day, that is, He is always awake and ready to defend her whenever the enemy attacks. When God lifts His voice, the earth melts.

3. Verses 8 and 9 call us to remember that the Lord of hosts also has power over another kind of calamity. What is that calamity? Cite some examples of this in modern history.

Here we have a reference to warfare of all kinds. There is no army or nation that our Lord cannot defeat. He may forcefully stop wars by His power. He may lead people to put down their hatred and weapons by the power of His gospel.

Use

4. The admonition of the Lord in verse 10 is very often ignored by Christians. Why?

Too often we lose ourselves in nervous, incessant chatter when faced with a calamity. We need to stop, be quiet, and listen carefully to God’s Word, waiting for His help.

5. Remember a time in your life when you should have waited patiently for God’s help but didn’t.

Remember a time when you did wait on Him. How did He help you?

Answers will vary.

The psalmist admonishes believers to trust in the Lord when faced with dangers of any kind.