

God: Our Pillar of help and strength

Text: Psalm 46

– A psalm that was song by the children of Israel to celebrate deliverance from some great foe. They sang about the security of Jerusalem, the city of God.

In this Psalm, God is identified with as a protector, provider, powerhouse and peacemaker.

God is a protector (v1-3) – a triumphant confession of fearless trust in God whatever the upheaval around, within and without!

A present help means help that has been proven, found reliable and would remain so at all times so there is no need to fear now or the future.

- A place of protection – refuge - 1
A source of power – strength – 1
An available rescue – present help in trouble – 1
A rock of courage in a dangerous world – 2-3

All too often we put our trust, hope and confidence in temporary things and we come off the worst for it.

God is a provider (v4-5) – Although Jerusalem had no river, the presence of God in it was her sufficiency. He who seeks the Lord lacks no good thing (Ps 34:10)

God is a powerhouse (6-7) – No nation can stand against God. All empires (e.g. Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Roman) that existed and disregarded God have since gone into oblivion. God's power is complete and his ultimate victory is certain!

God is a peacemaker (8-11) – he makes wars to cease. As he can wreak havoc (desolations) in wrath so can he give peace in mercy. Afterall, Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6).

Our key verse for 2010: The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge (v7; 11)

The 'Lord of hosts' (Heb Yahweh Sabaoth) is a title first used for God in 1 Sam 1v3. It describes God as 'the God of the universe and ruler of the armies of heaven.' It expresses the infinite resources and power with which God acts for His people. It gives the staggering impression of a mighty warrior; a General of all generals.

The Hebrew word for 'host(s)', sabaoth, can mean:

- Human armies (see Ex 7:4, Ps 44:9)
- The celestial bodies such as the sun, moon and stars (Gen 2:1; Deut 4:19; Isa 40:26)

- The heavenly creatures such as angels (Josh 5:13-15; 1 Kings 22:19; Ps. 148:2)

If the hosts of heaven encamp around you, you become an impregnable fortress to the enemy (see Psalm 125:1-2).

The Lord of hosts is with us...(v7,11);

- Even when you don't know it;
- Even when it does not seem obvious;

2 Kings 6:8-17

However, if the Lord of hosts will be with you, you have to remain within the parameters that match his character and nature of holiness; Gal 6:7 says 'God is not mocked.'

The Lord of hosts will not be with you:

- If you get involved in an illicit, immoral or unholy relationship. For instance, He will not follow you into a brothel even though He sees you, after all no one can hide from God (Ps 139). The Lord of hosts will not be with you if you cheat on your spouse!
- If you get involved in illegal activities, e.g. drugs, fraud, crime
- If you get involved in occult practices. He will not follow you into a coven
- Proverbs 6:16-19 tells us of six things the Lord hates and seven things that are detestable (an abomination) to him:
 - There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
 - haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
 - a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
 - a false witness who pours out lies
and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

But when you walk in ways that are pleasing to Him, even when you are beset by problems, troubles, trials, travails, or besieged by enemies, you can rest assured that He will be with you as the Lord of hosts; the Commander of a mighty army. See Jer. 20:11

Be still and know that I am God (v. 10);

- The King has spoken, let all be silent.
- In earthly courts, when the judge knocks the gavel, there must be silence!
- The dog does not bark when the lion roars, however ferocious the dog may be, it must lay low.

All raging enemies of your life, health, hope, finances, joy must be still because the King has spoken and said 'be still and know that I am God.' And they will remain stilled for He remains with you always (lo I am with you always even to the end of the age; Matt 28:20).

Everything that is making negative noises to you and denying you comfort and peace must hear the voice of God and be quiet permanently!

The thief comes to kill, to steal and to destroy (John 10:10) but the Lord who said I have come that you may have life and have it in all its fullness is with you this year.