

THERE IS A REFUGE IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

The word refuge, among many other definitions, has a spiritual meaning in which we submerge in faith seeking God in our troubled days. It is also a physical place where we can hide from enemies in times of wars, coming our way. Psalm 46:1-3 says, God is our refuge and strength, a very present and well proved help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountain be shaken into the midst of the seas, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling and tumult. God, as our refuge, is impenetrable. Nothing is stronger and greater than He is. A lighthouse from a distance assures us of a refuge, well built, with a light that illuminates the areas of danger. As a matter of fact, YAHSHUA is our lighthouse. Praise and worship were the way that God instructed the Israelites to fight their battle against three countries, as in the Moabites, the Ammonites, and with them the Meunites while Jehoshaphat was king of Judah. Battling fear and uncertainty, he determined to seek God by proclaiming a fast in Judah. He prayed, "O Lord, God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven? And do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In Your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand You. Did not You, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before You people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham Your friend?" (II Chron. 20:1-7).

As the nation of Judah sought the Lord for deliverance, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel and he said, "Hearken, all Judah, you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you King Jehoshaphat. The Lord says this to you: Be not afraid or dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow go down to them, Behold, they will come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the ravine before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You shall not need to fight this battle; take you positions, stand still, and see the deliverance of the Lord, [Who is] with you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Fear not nor be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you..." After consulting with the people, Jehoshaphat appointed singers to sing to the Lord and praise Him in their holy garments as they went out before the army, saying, **GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD; HIS MERCY AND LOVING-KINDNESS ENDURE FOREVER.** As soon as they started singing, the Lord set ambushments against the men of Amon, Moab and Mount Seir (II Chro. 20:1-22). As King David, so Jehoshaphat, followed His steps and found refuge in the presence of the Lord; praise and worship offered to the Lord saved them from a multitude of enemies, who had come to destroy them. "God inhabits the praise of His saints." In no way will He forsake them in their distresses as they seed Him with worship and adoration. The army of the Lord is powerful when God goes before them. The weapons of praise and worship to Him will take over the enemy, be it anything that disturbs our peace and health.

King David was a musician, a poet and through the many psalms he wrote, he expressed beautiful words of praise, thanksgiving and adoration to God, prophecy and prayers with supplications. A man who suffered persecutions from King Saul and his own son, David learned to depend on God. His faith is a pillar of strength for all of us. His prayer to God teaches us

perseverance. In honesty, truthfulness and humbleness, he met God as his refuge and strength in his troubled times. He wrote, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, steadying my steps and establishing my goings. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his refuge and trust, and turns not to the proud or to followers of false gods" (Ps. 40). For reason of the soul not being in tune with God, in times of our troubles, praise and worship seem to be the last thing on our minds. Preoccupied with solutions to our many troubles, we forget to call on God as our refuge in our troubles. Another psalmist wrote, "God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present and well-proven help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). There is much to think about this Psalm. It Prophetically describes the destruction of the earth, but amidst all the chaos the earth will go through, a refuge is provided for those who trust in God. So, it ends, "Be still and know that I am God!" A verse directed to the nations; it is well used to apply to our own situations. But reading its context, we can understand that this is not just a simple storm. Verse six says, "The nations raged, the kingdoms tottered and were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted; come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has wrought desolations and wonders in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow into pieces and snaps the spear in two; He burns the chariots in the fire. Let be and be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations! I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our Refuge" (Ps. 46).

Moses, the most blessed man who lived on earth, for his experience with God, said, "Lord, You have been our dwelling place and our refuge in all generations" (Ps. 90:1) A pilgrim for almost forty years, depending solely on God, Moses well knew Him and had much to say concerning his experiences in the wilderness, being protected under God's wings, from all the danger around them. A place of sure refuge.

Psalm 91 is a jewel of the psalms. It is a complete guide for all us Christians to follow all through our entire lives of faith, never to suffer the arrows of the enemy provided we stay abiding under "His shadow of refuge," where we will be victorious in our earthly life. This psalm clearly shows who God will protect: "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall remain stable and fixed under the shadow of the Almighty." Clearly, it is for those who dwell in Him. YAHSHUA said, "If a person does not dwell in Me, he is thrown out like a [broken-off] branch, and withers; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6). To abide "in the secret place of the Most High" is to have a relationship with God and to be always protected under "His wings." Some say that Moses wrote this psalm, others, that David did. I am inclined to believe that it was David, for its language terms. Psalm 27:1 he says, "the Lord is my Light and my salvation- whom shall I fear or dread? The Lord is the Refuge and stronghold of my life- of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, in this will be confident" (Ps. 27:1,3; "But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; He is their Refuge and secure Stronghold in the time of trouble" (37:39); "Be merciful and gracious to me, O God, be merciful and gracious to me, for my soul takes refuge and finds shelter and confidence in You; yes, in the shadow of Your wings will I take refuge and be confident until calamities and destructive storms are passed; But I will sing of Your mighty strength and power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy and loving-kindness

in the morning; for You have been to me a defense and a refuge in the day of my distress” (Ps.59:17). King David fought many fights; he was persecuted by King Saul, and his son, Absalom. Saul, a disturbed man, guided by an evil spirit, used David to play his harp to calm him down.

We need refuge for our physical and mental stability. God is our impenetrable refuge. He is everywhere in this earth, as He asks Jeremiah, “Can anyone hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? Says the Lord, DO NOT I FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH? Says the Lord” (Jer.23:24). He is our present help in times of our troubles. If He is our Refuge, no one can come against us. No one can withstand His power. Do you believe this? Who and what is your refuge in your troubles? Power, money, position, your best friends? Know for sure that everyone, everything will fail, but YAHSHUA, never! Be still and know that He is the Rock of our refuge, in the shadow of His wing we are secured, He is the fortress; His truth and His faithfulness are a shield and a buckler; His angels are active in protecting in defending and preserving us; they will bear us up on their hands, so that we will be protected from dashing our foot against a stone; God gave us power to tread upon the lion and the young lion and the serpent to trample under foot; at the end, God will rapture us to Himself; In His presence, we will be forever, delivered and sanctified, and He will satisfy us with forever life; for ever and ever Amen! (Psalm 91).

On which side are you on, my friend?