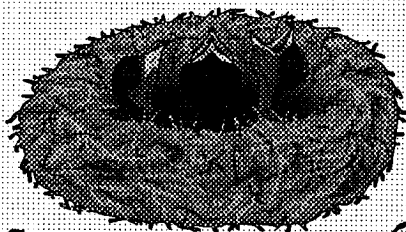
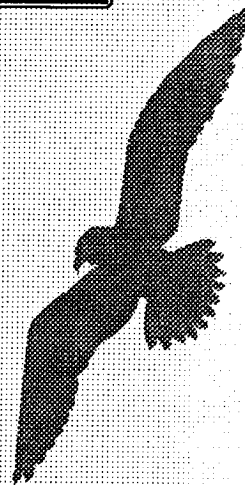


*"They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles."
Isaiah 40:31*



AERY NUGGETS

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our Helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing;
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great,
And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing--
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing;
Dost ask who that may be?
Lord Sabbaoth, His name
From age to age the same;
and He must win the battle.

Martin Luther

GOD IS OUR REFUGE

Psalm 46

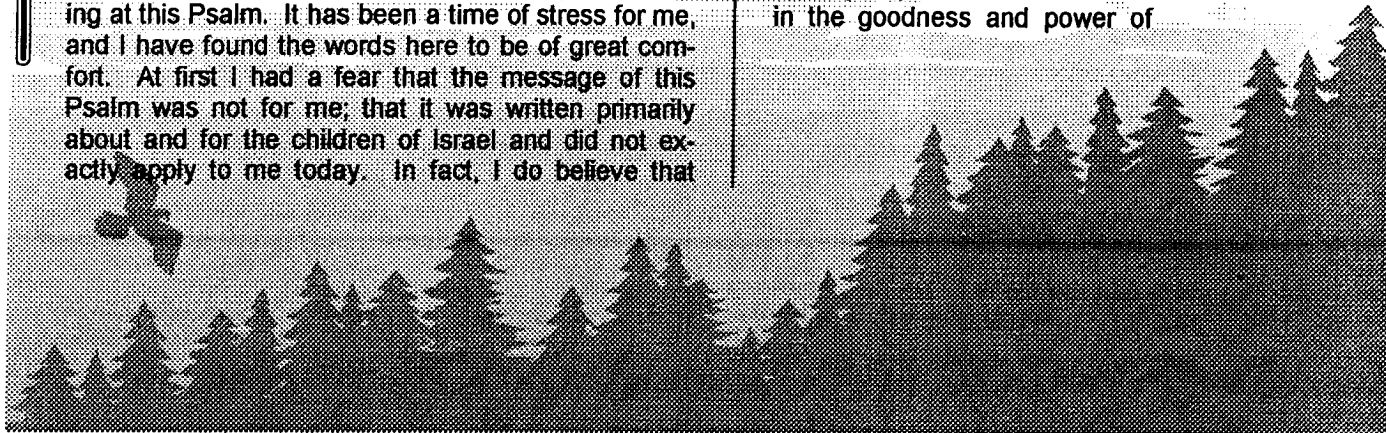
Steven J. Faulkner

(From February 17, 2001)

In the past several weeks, I have been looking at this Psalm. It has been a time of stress for me, and I have found the words here to be of great comfort. At first I had a fear that the message of this Psalm was not for me; that it was written primarily about and for the children of Israel and did not exactly apply to me today. In fact, I do believe that

what we read in this portion has a direct application to faithful of Israel who look to God in confidence for His purposes and promises to be fulfilled, despite even great calamities around them. They could trust in Him because they could look back on His great works and mighty acts of deliverance which He had accomplished in the days of Exodus, the days of their coming into the promised land, and the days of judges. He had been their refuge and strength in times of old, and they had confidence that His hand was yet leading them, despite the turbulent times they might be experiencing. In such confidence, they could envision in faith the Holy city with the Great King in the midst, and know that God's plans and promises for them were certain. A day would come when the Great King would reign in righteousness and power, and He would establish peace and justice on earth. But if the message of this Psalm was for Israel alone, why then were the words so comforting and delightful to me?

If the children of Israel could look back on the great and mighty works of the LORD and know by their experience that they could have confidence in His will for them, surely Christians can look back on the marvelous love of God in Christ and His mighty work of redemption on Calvary's cross, and all His marvelous works as recorded in His word. This Psalm can equally express our confidence in the goodness and power of



God in every circumstance. The message of this Psalm is, I believe, for the children of God of all generations.

Surely we Christians can look at verse 1 and rejoice in the truth that is just as real for us today as for those who heard the words first! "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Christians live in a fallen world, beset with trials and turbulence of all kinds, and where they are opposed at every turn by the forces of a cruel, powerful adversary. Yet despite all, we can surely know that "God is our refuge and strength..."

That phrase is at once a glad proclamation of faith, and it is also a most important principle of our Christian walk in this world. We know by faith that we, His children, can confidently trust that despite the apparent circumstances we face, which may seem gloomy indeed, God is in control (Rom. 8:28,31; James 1:2-4). Not only trust Him in *that*, but He must be our refuge and strength, as we cannot stand without Him (John 14:5—"without Me ye can do nothing."; Eph. 6:10—"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.") I believe that this is one of the great lessons we have to learn in our lives on this earth: in the spiritual warfare of this scene, we can stand only in His strength, not our own. Our service too must be in His strength and not our own (John 14:5) and He is a very present help in trouble. He is always with us, and His ears are ever inclined toward His own (Heb. 13:5,6—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee..."; and, Matt. 28:20—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.") He is our great high priest who knows what it is to walk in this world (Heb. 4:14-16) and who can give us grace to help in time of need. Come what may, we should have no real cause for alarm knowing that He is in control.

"Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." In verses 2 and 3 we read that the children of God will not fear despite even great calamities around them. Why? Because, we have God for our refuge and strength. According to Hamilton Smith, the earth being removed speaks of the earth being changed, and mountains being carried into the midst of the sea speak of stable governments being overthrown in some type of popular uprising. Clearly, these verses suggest some great, cataclysmic events that might cause the hearts of men to quake, and we certainly don't have to look far in this world to find examples of such situations. Do we not see abundant examples today where countries, moral institutions, or long cherished ideals are cast aside by the masses of people who demand their own ways? But despite all these things, God is our refuge and strength, and we can confidently anticipate that His plans and purposes will be completely and perfectly fulfilled.

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early." (vs. 4,5) Isn't that beautiful?! Such is the confidence of the children of God that they can look on to the fulfillment of God's promises and to glory despite their circumstances,

tough as these may be. When I think of that "river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God," I think of the river of love and grace which flows from God, which makes glad the hearts of the saints. In hymn #400 in Grace and Truth, we sing,

O Christ! He is the fountain—
The deep, sweet well of love!
The streams of earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above!
There, to an ocean fullness,
His mercy doth expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land!"

In verses 6 and 7, "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." What can all the power of all the earth amount to before God? With just the word of His mouth, the greatest powers of earth shrink into nothing. In Heb. 1:3, we read that "He upholdeth all things by the power of His word..." "What have we to fear when the God of Jacob is our refuge? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31)

In verses 8 and 9, we read, "Come behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire." It has always amazed me how that the events of history unfold, including the great wars and momentous events, sometimes prompted by the actions of even wicked men, yet somehow all unfolds within the context of God's sovereign will, ultimately accomplishing His purposes. This is the confidence we have: despite the terrible events that continue to take place in this world, these all will somehow contribute to His will being accomplished. And the One who makes desolate is certainly able to end wars and establish peace in His time.

Therefore, in the face of trial and turbulence all around, and circumstances that try the souls of men, the proper response of the child of God is to "be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth." We need not worry about or fear the unfolding of events however disagreeable they may seem, but to be still in our souls and be at peace knowing that God is in full control. "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." (vs. 10,11).

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"I will trust, and not be afraid."

Isaiah 12:2

For address correction or free new name addition,
write to:

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