

GOD'S PROVIDENCE TOWARD HIS PEOPLE

BIBLE TEXT : Psalm 46:1-11; 90:1-17.

LESSON 291 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it" (Psalm 90:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Psalm 46:1-11

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

² Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

³ *Though* the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, *though* the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

⁴ *There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacles of the most High.

⁵ God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

⁶ The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

⁷ The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

¹¹ The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

Psalm 90:1-17

¹ Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

² Before the mountains were

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Confidence of Believers

1. The true child of God is not tormented with fear, because God is a sure refuge, Psalm 46:1-3;

1 John 4:18

¹⁸ **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**

2. The Gospel affords an abundant life, Psalm 46:4, 5;

John 10:10

¹⁰ **The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

3. The enemies of God's people are numerous, but God causes His people to triumph, Psalm 46:6-9.

4. Those who wait upon God shall surely know Him, Psalm 46:10, 11;

Exodus 14:13

¹³ **And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.**

Isaiah 40:31

³¹ **But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.**

II The God of Time and Eternity

1. The existence of God is not limited by time, Psalm 90:1, 2.
2. The life span of man upon earth is cut short because of his sins, Psalm 90:3, 5-9.
3. A thousand years are accounted as practically nothing by God's time clock, Psalm 90:4.
4. Man is taught to number his days, Psalm 90:10-12.
5. God reveals the real beauty of life to all who desire it, Psalm 90:13-17.

NOTES:

Sure Refuge

God is a very present help to all who will put their trust in Him. There are times when it might seem that the whole world is arrayed against the man who loves and serves God; but a review of God's power, His might, and His interest in the welfare of a human soul will renew a faith that will surmount the seemingly overwhelming difficulties. The author and people of Psalm 46 seem to have faced victoriously a very grave threat to their national prosperity. Perhaps it was the invasion of some foreign army, for the scene of the Psalm was the City of God – Jerusalem; but the city was not taken at this time, because God was their refuge and strength, and His mighty arm moved in their behalf in due time to deliver them from their distress.

It was a living faith that these people had; and the same quality of faith will still move the arm of God in the world today, to perform mighty miracles in behalf of those who will call upon

brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

³ Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

⁴ For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

⁵ Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are *as* a sleep: in the morning *they are* like grass *which* groweth up.

⁶ In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

⁷ For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

⁸ Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.

⁹ For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*.

¹⁰ The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

¹¹ Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath.

¹² So teach *us* to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.

¹³ Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

¹⁴ O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

¹⁵ Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted us, *and* the years *wherein* we have seen evil.

¹⁶ Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their

Him out of the depths of a sincere heart. A picture of great disorder among the elements is presented in this Psalm, yet the poet declares that the people did not fear. Their faith and trust in the everlasting God held them steady. Perhaps it was the seemingly insurmountable danger that faced them that caused their faith to reach out and hold on to God. When man comes to an extremity and calls upon God, then God is able to show His power. God's power is more plainly manifest when it is revealed over and above what man is able to do.

The Psalmist wrote: "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Possibly their troubles seemed to bring them that near to calamity. There is a day coming, however, and that very soon, when such a condition will be a reality. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:10). Those people only who have a living faith in a living God will be able to survive that day. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (II Peter 3:11).

Water of Life

Within the city walls of Jerusalem was a large perennial spring. The waters of this spring flowed softly through the city in a comparatively wide and shallow stream bed. There was no importance connected with this body of water in the sense of navigation. It was a singular fact that, while Jerusalem was a chief city of the world at that time, yet it was not built upon a navigable stream or waterway. During a siege in time of war, however, the importance of such a water supply is apparent. The supply of life-giving water must not be disturbed, stopped, or impaired by the enemy outside the city walls.

The river of Shiloah might never carry a galley with oars, but it served an even greater purpose. Its water were distributed throughout the city by means of channels and aqueducts and were accessible to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. There the thirst of the people could be quenched, and the water could be carried to every home in the city. Shiloah is an emblem of the unfailing grace of Israel's God to His people.

Among the Messianic prophecies are found these words: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10). It is not just a coincidence that one of the names of the Son of God should correspond to the name of this never-failing fountain in the City of God, because Jesus is the Fountain of God's mercy that is open to the inhabitants of the whole world. Jesus stood and cried on the last great day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). The river of God's grace is not shallow as was Shiloah, but is infinite. Ezekiel described this river that issues out from the House of the Lord: "It was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over" (Ezekiel 47:5). There is no scarcity of the grace of God to those who have a heart to seek and receive it.

A Fortress

Jerusalem, the City of God, was renowned throughout the world as a mighty fortress. It was a very hard city to be taken, from a military standpoint, because of its natural fortifications. It

children.

¹⁷ And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

became a place of even greater safety when the Children of Israel were serving their God in sincerity and truth. At such times God would often destroy the enemy or drive him back before he could come close enough to the city to shoot his arrows or make a successful attack against it (Isaiah 37:33). Even if a siege was laid, the enemy could not force his way into the city so long as God's children kept their faith and trust in Him.

The physical scene that the Psalmist portrayed has a beautiful spiritual application also. Each Christian stands in this world as a fortress of right against the evil influences and wicked men that are raging abroad in the world. God has provided a spiritual armour for His children in this present world, and those who have put it on are enabled to stand victoriously over sin and the devil. God has hedged His people about, much as He did Job (Job 1:10). No trouble, adversity, temptation, or anything else can come to the child of God, unless God allows it. If God permits these things to break through the hedge and come near His children, as He allowed the affliction to come upon Job, still the child of God can be certain of victory if his faith and trust remain steadfast in the Heavenly Father. So long as faith and trust remain in a heart, so long as the Christian standard of living is maintained in a life, the citadel of God will not be overthrown. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (**Romans 8:35-39** ³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**).

The Everlasting God

Everything that pertains to the earth has a beginning and an ending; but the mighty God, who created the earth and all things that are therein, is from "everlasting to everlasting." He is without beginning of days or end of years. It is hard for mortal man to grasp this truth, especially if his heart has not been redeemed and brought into fellowship with the God of Heaven.

Man in his original state was made in the image and likeness of God, and no doubt eternal life was part of his heritage. Was not the Tree of Life planted in the Garden of Eden? God gave the sinless man the privilege to eat of that Tree of Life. However, sin entered into the heart of man, driving him from the Garden and causing him to forfeit the promises and blessings that God had provided for him in his sinless condition. Sin in the heart of man changed his eternal physical status, for God had warned that disobedience to His command would bring death; but the eternal status of the never-dying soul of man was not changed. It lives on and on throughout the ages of eternity. The death of the body does not mean death to the soul. The man Adam lived 930 years but died as the result of the original sin. Through the years the life span of man has become smaller and smaller. The Psalmist said that men could not expect to live much more than 80 years, and this is still true in our day.

These thoughts seemed to be the central theme in the heart of

the writer of the Ninetieth Psalm. God is eternal, and so is the soul of every man. The manner in which a man lives while on earth, the attitude of a man's heart toward God, and his actions according to God's commandments, determine his soul's eternal destiny. The Psalmist stressed the truth that man's life is very brief, that he should take advantage of his opportunities and seek the face and favour of God early in life. There, and there only, can the supreme good of life be found. Men are prone to seek in other channels first, but if ever true satisfaction is found, it will be found in God through Jesus Christ and the Atonement that was made on the Cross. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Even the wisdom of the world should teach men that it is useless to seek further temporal pleasures, when the greatest joy that mortal man can know is the redemption of his soul from sin – to be brought into favour and fellowship with his Creator. Not only does that experience bring happiness and contentment, but it brings eternal life as its greatest promise to the faithful heart.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the child of God so courageous?
2. How old is God?
3. How many of our years does it take to make one day in God's sight?
4. Describe how the Psalmist pictured the life span of man.
5. What is the life span of the average man as stated by the Psalmist?
6. How does that life span compare with the average life span today?
7. What time of life is the proper time to start seeking God's favour upon your life?