

A Very Present Help
Psalm 46:1-3
Charlie Brackett

The 46th Psalm was sung by God's people almost three thousand years ago. The first stanza's lyrics carry a wonderful thought about God's help. Let the feeling and imagery of this poem stir your emotions as you read.

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;
Though its waters roar and foam,
Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.

When in need of refuge, when trouble lies at our door and our own strength is just not sufficient, the Lord is there. We may think of Him as off in heaven somewhere, sitting on His throne, too busy with lofty matters of great nations or engrossed in the government of the universe; but He is near. He has time for us. He is a very present help in trouble.

Though the earth change we need not fear. It makes no difference how dramatic the change. Though mountains slip and slide into the middle of the sea, we need not fear. Mountains represent strength and stability. Wind and water may erode and change mountains over time, but normally they stand unaltered. Earthquakes, volcanoes, and great slides of mud, rock or snow can change the face of a mountain quickly and dramatically, but imagine a mountain range being tossed into the middle of the Atlantic ocean! Should that happen, we have no reason to fear. God is near and He is our refuge and strength. Seas represent great power. Just water picked up from the sea by hurricane winds is capable of enormous damage. A tidal wave wipes out everything in its path. Mountains quake, the song says, at the swelling pride of the sea, but we need not fear.

The threat of these disasters may not seem too real to you or me. I don't live near the sea and even though mountains are close at hand, they have never been known to jump a couple of dozen miles and fall on someone. I don't feel threatened. But, the fact is, life is filled with falling mountains and roaring seas. Economic disaster is not far from many of us, important relationships can crumble, marriages can fail, loved ones will die and poor health can cripple, even incapacitate.

Think for a moment of the things in this life that you count most dear: family, job, bank accounts, health. All the things from which you gain strength and stability. Imagine for just a moment that all of those dear things were suddenly destroyed. What would you do? If your life is fully grounded in God, not to worry. He is our strength. Even though a mountain ran after me to fall on me, it makes no difference. God is right there, a present help.