

Occasional Update #23

9 May 2024

EARTH IS IN AN UPROAR, but ...

God Is Our Fortress !

Psalm 46 (written about 3000 years ago)

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

2-3 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

4-5 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.

6-7 The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; He utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob [Israel] is our refuge.

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD; see what desolations He has brought on the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; He burns the shields with fire.

10-11 "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

FINDING PEACE IN THE STORM

God's Peace ... or the World's Chaos?

Like many people, I have been thinking about the state the world is in, with its wars and other major changes in behaviour, countries' relationships with one another, where things are heading in the next few years – change, more change, uncertainty about what these changes will be, *and* what repercussions those changes will have.

In the midst of uncertainty and confusion, rapid changes (many of which are not good), etc, how do Christians live in these days we are in?

Below are some concerns we may have, and some things we need to think about as we seek to live lives that please God, and help other people come into God's world – the Kingdom of God?

1. Wars: About 11 countries today are involved in wars. This does not include other countries which are supplying arms and giving other assistance but without being directly in the wars.
2. There is chaos in many countries, both of human origin, and due to natural events.
3. Fake news (gross lies and deception) cause confusion and chaos – not knowing what is true and what is false, and therefore what we should believe and do.
4. The ability to interfere with, and prevent, communication between people, countries, satellites, private and classified information, etc., on land, sea, in the air or space.

In our own country there are things of concern – for example:

- Our government making thousands of public service employees redundant, in order to save money, but which also increases unemployment with all its associated problems, of course.
- People's difficulties with paying rents, mortgages, inflation, cost of living, and how government policy changes will affect them.

- Great wisdom is needed by government and councils, for spending on infrastructures throughout the country, and other large expenses. For example, the government is planning to spend \$1.9 billion on increasing the size of prisons to accommodate about 800 more prisoners, and to employ more prison officers. Crime is very costly! – Money which could be much better spent on education, health, social welfare, etc., helping people who are struggling with financial and other needs.

PEACE IN THE STORM

Where is God's peace amidst the world's chaos?

Psalm 46, above, is one of the many verses in the Bible that encourage and help us through these and other confusing and "stormy" times. As Christians, our lives are in His hands – we may be in a storm but Jesus is with us; He can and will see us through the storms. Our faith is in Him, and as He brings us through these storms our faith will be increased. We may not know the reason for the trial – at least immediately – but God is there; God is good; His love will never fail !

Jesus said ...

"You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places; all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs." Matthew 24:6-8

But Jesus also said ...

A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but He was asleep. And they went and woke Him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" And He said to them, "*Why are you afraid, you of little faith?*" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. Matthew 8:24-26

"... teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." John 14:27

The Bible also says ...

"Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for He has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him, and He will act. Psalm 37:5

"Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I AM your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10

EASIER SAID THAN DONE? Yes, but God has given us these promises, and by faith we receive them, and trust Him. Christians are also called to help and support one another, encourage them to look positively, not negatively. Pray for God's help, strength, provision, wisdom and guidance – "Lord, what should I do?" We can also share this with 'not-yet' Christians!

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