

March 23, 2003 by Steve Brandon



# Stability in Unstable Times

## Psalms 46

1. God is Our Refuge (verses 1-3)
2. God is Our River (verses 4-7)
3. God is Our Rest (verses 8-11)

I trust that you are aware of the war that began this past week between Iraq and the coalition forces, led by the United States of America. Tension between Iraq and other nations of the world has been mounting for years. This tension has escalated in recent months. On Monday evening, president Bush gave Saddam Hussein and his two sons 48 hours to leave Iraq and prevent a war. They obviously refused. So, on Wednesday evening, Iraq was attacked by coalition forces. We are a nation at war. Perhaps this has not been much on your mind. I must admit that this is a war being fought halfway across the world! As such, it may seem somewhat surreal. The war does not seem to significantly affect our daily lives at this point. It may somewhat affect you if perhaps you know one of the 250,000 troops that are in Iraq now. That would give you a personal interest in the situation. This war may also affect your thoughts a little if you are aware of the implications on your pocket book. After all, the stock market is affected by this, and in some way, we the taxpayers need to fund this war. In these small ways, the war might begin to affect you. But it might not be so much on your mind.

Perhaps you are confident that the outcome in this war is all but assured. As I have read the news and heard the administration of the United States speak about the unprecedented military power that is waging war in Iraq, I have been quite impressed. It has been said that on the first day of all out bombing, the coalition forces dropped more fire-power on Baghdad, than was dropped in the entire 40-day Gulf War! Let me tell you, **this war ought to be on your mind.** I guarantee you, that if smart-bombs and tanks were coming into Rockford, the war would be on your mind, every waking moment of the day. We live in unstable times. September 11th, 2001, has changed the perspective of our nation in great ways. President Bush has continually linked our war effort in Iraq to the terrorist attacks of that day. Since that day, security in our nation has been increased.

There is an unrest in this world. Many have feared what effect this war will have in our world. We have not attacked Iraq with full consent of the United Nations. Such powerful nations as France, Russia, Germany, and China have opposed our actions. Furthermore we do not know what effects our actions will have upon future relations with these countries. There have been massive anti-war demonstrations here in the United States. There are organized protests in Philadelphia, San Francisco, New York, and Washington D. C. On Thursday, more than 100 people were arrested in Chicago, as they forced Lake Shore Drive to be closed. I heard that some 300 people were arrested in another city. Many college campuses across our land have had demonstrators. Yesterday in New York, there were more than 100,000 people marching in Manhattan. Massive protests took place in countries like Egypt, the Philippines, and others. Furthermore, it is unknown what sort of effect this war will have on terrorist activity. I have seen polls in our country that have asked the question, "Will an attack on Iraq increase or decrease the likelihood of another terrorist attack?" People are worried that terrorist activity will increase. It is unknown how the other Muslim nations surrounding Iraq will react to the war. Will any of these nations rise against the United States? Will any of these nations go to war with Iraq? We live in unstable times. But there is stability to be found in such unstable times. It is to be found in our God -- the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, this is the only place that our stability can be found.

Perhaps this morning, you are looking to be comforted in such unstable times. You see the fragility of the world's situation and are looking for a place in which to place your trust. If so, this message is for you this morning. Perhaps this morning, you have placed your confidence in the wrong place. Perhaps you have placed your confidence in the United States military. If so, this message is for you this morning, because our stability in difficult times is not to be found in our government, but in God alone.

This morning, I would like to give a perspective of the war we are fighting with Iraq. Open your Bibles to Psalm 46. My whole sermon could be easily summed up in Elroy's comments last week during our service. He said, "I do not know much about the war, but I do know that God is sovereign." Psalm 46 speaks about the sovereignty of God. It speaks about His power and His might and how He is in control. It describes God as our refuge (verse 1), our strength (verse 1), our help in trouble (verse 1), and our stronghold (verses 7, 11). God is the one who will not move in turbulent times (verse 5). He will help His chosen city (verse 5). He will raise His voice and melt the earth (verse 6). God is "with us" (verses 7, 11). It is God who will be exalted (verse 10). God works on the earth to make desolations (verse 8). God makes wars cease (verse 9). He is able to break the bow (verse 9), to cut the spear (verse 9), and to burn the chariot (verse 9). Therefore, we are told not to fear (verse 2). We are told to cease striving (verse 10), and to know that He is God (verse 10).

This is the burden of my message this morning: **In an unstable time, we have stable God, to whom we are to look.** Thus, I exhort you not to fear during this time. I exhort you to know that He is God and He is in control. I exhort you to find your refuge in Him, not in any other place.

Down through the ages, this psalm has been a comfort to many of God's saints. Perhaps the most famous of them is Martin Luther, who based his hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" on this psalm. When his enemies were rising against Luther, he was in the habit of saying, "Come, let us sing the 46th Psalm, and let them do their worst." I trust that you will find comfort in it this morning.

Before we begin to exposit this passage, I want you to notice the structure of the Psalm. It breaks up nicely into three sections. If your Bible has paragraph marks, you will probably be able to see this. Each section ends with the Hebrew word, "Selah," which is often untranslated, because we are not quite sure what the word means. It is probably some sort of notation for the reading or for the singing of this Psalm. You will notice at the beginning of the Psalm we have the superscription which describes the purpose of this psalm. It says, "For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah, set to Alamo. A Song." It was originally intended to be sung. The "Selah," probably signifies some particular point of emphasis to be given at this particular place in the Psalm. Musically, this might mean rising to a crescendo at this point. When reading this Psalm, it might signal a pause, so the rich truths can sink in. I want to read the Psalm for you this morning and pause at the appropriate sections of the Psalm.

#### Psalm 46

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. Selah.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. "Cease striving 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 stronghold. Selah.

My sermon consists of three points this morning. As usual, our points come right from the text.

### 1. God is Our Refuge (verses 1-3)

Look at the first few words of verse 1, "God is our refuge." This is the theme of the Psalm. This is the premise of the Psalmist: God is able to protect His people, especially in time of trouble (at the end of verse 1). God is willing to protect His people. A refuge is a place where you can go and find safety from the danger that surrounds you. The storm cellar is where people in Kansas head when the tornado comes. Inland is where you want to be when a hurricane is coming, which is why the residents of Florida head to Georgia during a hurricane! Doorways, desks, and tables become the place where Californians seek shelter when the earthquakes come, hoping to find an air pocket if the building collapses. In the days of Israel, the one who accidentally killed a man through some sort of accident was to flee to one of the six cities of refuge, where he would find safety. Saddam Hussein has sought his safety in one of his many bunkers which are scattered throughout Baghdad. The Psalmist here abruptly begins his Psalm with the bold declaration, "God is our refuge and strength."

When difficulties arise in your life, you need to seek your refuge in God! These troubles could be large-scale and distant from you such as we are currently experiencing with the war on Iraq. Or, these difficulties may be on a smaller-scale, within the context of your own personal situation: your job or your finances or your children or your aging parents. Wherever your difficulties lie, the message of the Bible is that you ought not try to do it on your own. The message of the Bible is that you ought always to seek help from God. Listen to just a few of more than a hundred similar passages in the Bible:

- "O LORD my God, in Thee I have taken refuge; Save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me" (Ps. 7:1).
- "Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in Thee" (Ps. 16:1).
- "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him" (Nahum 1:7).
- "I will say to the LORD, 'My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!' For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper, and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; He faithfulness is a shield and bulwark" (Ps. 91:2-4).

(I could go on and on and on and on. If you are interested, you could look up the following verses, which all say the same thing: Ps. 2:12; 5:12; 11:1; 25:20; 31:1, 19; 34:8, 22; 37:40; 57:1; 64:10; 118:8, 9; 141:8; 144:2; Is. 57:13; Prov. 30:5; Zeph. 3:12; 2 Sam. 22:31; Ps. 18:30).

The message of the Bible is that you need always to seek your refuge in God, whatever your difficulties may be. Have the situations of the world stirred your heart to fear? Seek refuge in God. Are you in danger? Seek your safety in God's protective care. Are you finding yourself to be weak? Seek strength from God. Are you trapped in your sin? Seek refuge in the cross of Jesus Christ. Are you fearful of the future? Run to God and find Him to be a help in your trouble. I have seen a great illustration of this in recent weeks. As you know, we have many activities at our home. Every other Wednesday evening, the women come to our home, either for Bible study, or a time of fellowship, over craft projects they are working on. In an effort to maximize my time, I have recently spent these Wednesday evenings over at the Scott's house. Two of our children are at AWANA, so I take Hanna. I spend some of that time, helping Dan learn to hear with his "bionic" ear. Anyway, if you have been at his home, you know that Dan and Christina have a dog. They have a big dog. They have a German Shepherd, named "Cadet." Almost every time Hanna and I go over there, she gets scared by Cadet. I would too if I ran into a dog that was taller than me. What does Hanna do when she sees Cadet coming? I do not even have to tell you. You know that she runs to her daddy, and puts her arms around my leg and hides behind me. She understands that she needs protection from the dog. She finds it in her daddy. This is a perfect picture of what it means to take refuge. My daughter seeks protection in me. In a similar way, when the troubles and difficulties in life come upon you, you ought to be seeking refuge in God, not anywhere else.

In this Psalm, the first source of trouble we see is from nature.

"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." (Psalm 46:2,3)

The trouble is coming from shifting, shaking mountains. The trouble comes from a raging, roaring sea. This is referring to natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. I have never been in a hurricane or on the sea in a storm, but I understand it to be one of the most frightening things you can experience. I have faced a few earthquakes in my time. They can be pretty unsettling. The largest one that I faced occurred on June 28, 1992. I remember the date well, because Yvonne and I were married the day before. We were married in Los Angeles. Our honeymoon plans took us to a hotel, probably an hour from the church in which we were married. We were going to spend the first night in a hotel near the ocean. As I recall, it was about 5:00 in the morning. We are in bed and the room begins to shake. Now, when you are in building, you expect it to stand still. In an earthquake, everything moves. I remember it continuing on for a long time. Yvonne said, "Wow! That was a long one!"

Think about my family. We were married in California, so my whole family, from Illinois, had traveled to California. They were staying on the 6th floor of a hotel in Los Angeles. They experienced the whole thing. My sister Sonya thought that my brother, Stu was shaking the bed. I believe that she even said, "Stu, stop shaking the bed." My niece, Emily, who was 5 years old at the time, was so scared by the occasion that she has pledged to this day, not to go back to California again! The water in the pool sloshed out of its sides and lost about a foot of water. We also found out that there were many people in the hotel, who had packed their bags and left the hotel early in the morning to leave the Los Angeles area out of terror. Earthquakes can be unsettling.

Anyway, the next day, Yvonne and I were going to travel to a cabin, which I had arranged for us to rent at Lake Arrowhead, just north-east of Los Angeles. In the morning, as we were preparing to leave, we wanted to watch the news to find out the details about the earthquake. In an earthquake, the news reporters will talk about how large the earthquake measured on the Richter scale and where the epicenter was (because you wanted to stay away from the epicenter, where the quakes and aftershocks are the greatest). Well, the earthquake had knocked out the power in our hotel. So, we checked out of the hotel and started our drive up to Lake Arrowhead. As we were driving, we turned on the radio to hear the details about the earthquake.

As it turned out, the earthquake measured 7.0 on the Richter scale (which is large for an earthquake) and the epicenter was in Big Bear, which means that any aftershocks would center from there and be strongest to those close by. Big Bear is about 20 miles from Lake Arrowhead, where we were headed! And the cabin that we rented for that week and a half, was built on a steep hill, where half of the house was supported by the hill and half of the house was supported by some tall stilts, about 15 feet high. I remember the ground being so steep underneath that part of the cabin, that I did not even want to try to walk down the mountain to see them, for fear that I wouldn't be able to get back up. Needless to say, a house on stilts that are 15 feet tall is not the most stable place in the world during an earthquake. To make matters worse, the main bedroom was directly over these stilts. There were several occasions when the aftershocks hit, our whole cabin shook. I remember it shaking so bad that we got out of bed and ran to the other side of the cabin, near the hill for safety. It was an interesting honeymoon.

When the earth, which you suppose to be solid, begins to shake, it can rattle you pretty bad. I know of one friend who used to live in California. When he travels out there now, he sleeps with a first-aid kit right beside his bed, for fear of another earthquake. I have spoken with others who are unable to go to bed at night without thinking of earthquakes. When the terra firma, on which we stand, begins to give way, the Psalmist tells us to take refuge in God. When God is our refuge, we can pledge with the Psalmist "we will not fear" (verse 2) during those times. Why? Because God is our refuge and He is in total control. He has total command over all the earth. Let's turn our attention now to our second point this morning ...

## **2. God is Our River (verses 4-7)**

Not only is God our refuge, He is also our river. He is able to provide. Look there at verse 4,

"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." (Psalm 46:4)

Without question, "the city of God" refers to Jerusalem. Often in the Bible, we hear of God's special love for the city of Jerusalem. He chose it (1 Kings 11:36; 14:21). He chose for His name to dwell in Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:7; 2 Chron. 12:13). Listen to 2 Chronicles 6:6, "But I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name might be there." Jerusalem was a special city in God's heart. And in a special way, God dwelt among His people in Jerusalem, like in no other city. We see this alluded to in the second half of verse 4, when the Psalmist describes this city as "the holy dwelling places of the Most High."

Now, the curious thing about this verse is that there is no river in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a city that is set up on a hill, surrounded by other hills. Jerusalem is down-stream of nothing. So, what is the Psalmist talking about when he writes, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God"? I believe that this is a symbolic allusion to God's provision for His people. In the ancient world in Israel, water meant life. Cities existed where there were sources of water. When you would attack a city, you would seek to attack its water source, because that is what sustained life. There was a source of water in Jerusalem, the pool of Siloam, but this pool was hardly able to be called "a river", but it did provide life. So, when the psalm says, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God," he is saying that God provides life for His people. He is the source of life. He is the One able to provide and protect. God is a refuge for their protection, and a river for their provision. He will always be there for His people. The next few verses flush this out,

"God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted." (Psalm 46:5-6)

The Psalmist picks up on much of the imagery from the first section of this Psalm. In verse 5, we read, "God is in the midst of her, she will not be **moved**". That verse is picking up on the language already used in verse 2, "though the mountains **slip** into the heart of the sea." (The bold words are the same Hebrew word). In verse 5, we read, "God will **help** her when the morning dawns". This picks up on the language in verse 1, "A very present **help** in trouble." In verse 6, we read, "The nations made an **uproar**". This picks up on the language of verse 3, "though its waters roar and **foam**." (Again, the bold words are the same Hebrew word). In verse 6, we read, "The kingdoms **tottered**". This picks up again on verse 2, "though the mountains **slip** into the heart of the sea." (The same verbal link exists).

The picture that the psalmist gives to us of God is one of stability in unstable times. You have nations roaring (verse 6). You have kingdoms tottering (verse 6). You have attacks coming. You have wars waging (verse 9). But all of this does not matter. Through it all, God is our stronghold. Our trust needs to be in Him. God is stable. We are told in Psalm 125, "Those who trust in the LORD are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds His people from this time forth and forever" (Ps. 125:1-2).

Jerusalem will not move. Those who trust in the LORD will not move either. Why? It is not because they are so strong. Rather, it is because they are leaning upon a God who will not move and will not totter. Several weeks ago, when it was bitter, bitter cold, some of the families in this church took a trip to Baumann Park in Cherry Valley. We brought our sleds so that we could slide down the hill. Some of the children who came along were having difficulty climbing up the hill, especially on the steep and icy parts because they were wearing hard, plastic boots. Do you know what they wanted when they were slipping? They wanted a firm hand to hold, which would be able to help them up the mountain. Trusting in our own strength is like attempting to walk up an icy mountain without a helping hand. As Jeremiah said, "cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD" (Jer. 17:5). Why? There is no stability in mankind.

Imagine observing an ant colony, which is waging war with another ant colony. One army of ants is worried of the invading ants. They have all of the ant technology that is available to them. There is ant anxiety. Those ants with the great technology are trusting in their own might. But, as you watch on, you could easily, with one stomp of your foot, wipe out an entire division of ants. Now, what would be better for the ants to do? Would it be better for them to trust in their own military power or to trust in the one who is obviously much more powerful than even their greatest weapons? As you watch the war, you are stable and not worried and in control. Likewise, in anxious times, God stable in our instability.

Do not trust in the mighty United States. All that I have heard on television during the coverage of the war is how there has never, ever been a military as strong and as mighty as the one assembled against Iraq in an effort to disarm them from weapons of mass destruction. This is pounded into our minds. We can easily seek refuge in the United States military. But God can lift up His voice and melt the mighty military of the United States of America (verse 6). To God, our mighty military is but a drop from a bucket and is regarded as a speck of dust on the scales (Is. 40:15). We read in Isaiah 40:17, "All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless." It is vain to trust in our military. Oh, it may help during this life, but remember that "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes" (Psalm 118:8, 9). We read in Psalm 20:7, "Some boast in chariots, and some in horses; But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God." You might say, some boast in stealth bombers and cruise missiles, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God. Boasting in our own might is a great danger for us. How easy is it to trust in ourselves. Do you think of God as being our river? Is your trust in God to provide for you?

God can **protect** you. God can **provide** for you. God can also give you **peace**. We see this in our third section of our Psalm this morning.

### 3. God is Our Rest (verses 8-11)

Are you fearful? Are you anxious about the future? Are you anxious about the unstable times in which we live? Are you trusting something else, other than the LORD of hosts? Let me tell you something, "Come, behold the works of the LORD" (verse 8). This is often the technique used in the Bible to calm our fears. Biblical writers often tell us to reflect upon the great works of God. These are to give us great trust in Him for the future. "Tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. ... that the generation to come might know. ... that they should put their confidence in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Ps. 78:4, 6, 7). "One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts. ... They shall eagerly utter the memory of Thine abundant goodness, and shall shout joyfully of Thy righteousness" (Psalm 145:4, 7). Listen to the works of the LORD that this Psalmist brings to remembrance,

The LORD ... "has wrought desolation in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire" (Psalm 46:8b-9).

God is a peacemaking God. But notice how He does it. Here, God is not described as gently persuading peace through diplomatic means, but rather in forcefully disarming nations. God is making peace by crushing all resistances of man's rebellion. The Psalm says God breaks the bow, cuts the spear, and burns the chariot. What the United States is doing to Iraq is a picture of how God makes peace in this world. God brings desolations upon the earth. God forces an end to the wars. God disarms governments. (Now, I am not saying that the United States is doing God's business. I am simply saying that when God establishes peace, His technique is often similar to what the United States is doing.)

I want you to catch this. God is like the police, who are called to the scene of violence. The police take those who are causing the disturbance and handcuff them and makes them defenseless. They no longer have the ability to fight. There is peace. But force was needed to create the peace. God is like the parent, who forcefully steps into an argument between children and restrains them. Peace is established through an external power which forces the submission. Psalm 110 says, "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine

enemies a footstool for Thy feet' ... The Lord is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country" (Psalm 110:1, 5-6). God establishes peace by using force to disarm those in rebellion. When Jesus comes back to establish ultimate peace, he will do it as a warrior, riding on a horse, made ready for battle (Rev. 19:11).

Picture the Iraqi army. They are overwhelmed! In many ways, they have no hope of success. Yet some continue to fight. This is what it is like for someone not to submit to Jesus Christ! It is a losing battle, because His power and authority far exceed your fighting capabilities. When He wants, you will be disarmed! Better to willingly submit now, while salvation can be found, than to resist and rebel, and find yourself eternally destroyed.

The Psalmist tells us here to look at these things. We are supposed to understand these things. We are told to come and behold the works of the LORD. We are to look at how Gideon's army was reduced from 32,000 to 300. Yet, he won the battle against Midian by blowing trumpets and smashing pitchers (Judges 7:1-25). We are to look at how the Arameans fled from Israel before the battle (2 Kings 7). We are to look at how the angel of God destroyed 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35). We are to look at how 24,000 fell by the plague at the hand of the LORD (Num. 25:9). And then what? **We are supposed to be quiet.** This is the message of verse 10.

"Cease striving and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10a).

Most translations at this point say, "Be still and know that I am God" (KJV, NKJV, NIV). The idea in this verse is that we ought to stop our strivings. We should refrain from our resistances, abandon our anxieties, and relax.

It is interesting that we, in America, have more timesaving devices than anybody in the world. We have microwaves, dishwashers, washing machines, Palm Pilots, email, computers, and telephone answering machines. We have it all to help save us time. Yet, we have less time than any other people in the world. Before the LORD, we need to relax and be calm, and realize that God has the world under control. Isaiah 46:10 tells us that God declares "the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'" There is nothing that escapes His notice. The world is in rebellion right now, that is for sure! But, the world is not out of His control!

You like vacations? When the world is shifting under our feet, and political unrest is at hand. God tells us to take a vacation. He tells us to take a vacation in Him. Relax and trust God. Are you ever quiet before the LORD? Or, is your life all hustle and bustle and no being still before the LORD? Perhaps you need to find a time when you can be still before the LORD. Turn the television off. Turn the radio off. Send the kids to their rooms. Refuse to answer the telephone. Take your Bible and be still before God. Let your anxieties be known to the Lord, "casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). We are to "be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6,7). How can we let it go? Because God is sovereign and supreme! Look at how verse 10 ends,

"I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10)

This is where the entire Psalm has been headed. This is the main point! It is God alone who will be exalted. Our world and our history and our destiny is not about us. It is all about God, who will be exalted over all of creation! But the Psalm is even about more than that. It speaks about how the people of God can trust in His sovereignty. Saddam Hussein has been a sovereign ruler over Iraq. Yet, this does not mean that as a citizen, you can trust in his sovereignty. For, indeed, he has abused his power and his authority. As the American forces have entered Iraq, you see many of Iraqi people rejoicing as they anticipate Saddam being overthrown. But, God is different than a sovereign dictator. We can trust God to be faithful to those who are faithful to Him. This is the point of verse 11 (and verse 7), "The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold." We can rest in God, because God is with us. God is for us, not against us.

God was with us like no other time when He came and walked upon the earth. The apostle John said that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus was God with us, Immanuel. He came and lived among us and died for us to redeem us, so that we might be with Him forever. Those who trust in Jesus will be with Him forever. As we close, I would like to look at one New Testament passage. It is found in 1 Peter. 1:3-5, which says,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5)

Those who have been born again will be protected by His power to bring us to the final resurrection, when we will obtain our imperishable, undefiled and unfading inheritance! Does this describe you? Things in this world will never be stable. Jesus promised that in the world, you will have tribulation (John 16:33). But those who have been born from above will be "protected by the power of God" **through faith**. This has been the burden of my message this morning. Believe on Him. Trust Him. He alone is our stability in unstable times!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on March 23, 2003 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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