

## FINDING PEACE IN A CONFUSED WORLD

By David Tucker

Look around you. Whether you are driving down the road, walking through a store, or watching TV, it's hard to deny: people are crazy. Their priorities are backwards, chasing after carnal things, things that don't last. They either trust in the society and government; a type of moral nihilism (no right or wrong) or moral relativism (right or wrong is dependent on the culture). Society today pushes moral confusion—some believe there is no real right or wrong or that it depends upon the culture. All these ideas are deeply flawed. This leaves people feeling confused, anxious, and lost. That is exactly what we see around us.

### FALSE PROMISES OF PEACE

God warns us about the false promises of peace:

**JEREMIAH 6:14** They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' 'When there is no peace.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:3** For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

The government says we have peace and security but those with open eyes know the world is selling to us is an evil lie at the cost of liberty and freedom. It often leads to division and destruction. The individual is forced to give up his or her inalienable rights to the mobs and groups that are useful idiots for powerful activists. These activists claim to speak on behalf of minorities, LGBTQs, women, the poor but do so by proposing confiscation of rights from others while often lining their own pockets in the process.

The security of the Utopian state that demands no homelessness, no poverty, no illness, and no war will ensure that the nation is crushed under the financial burden of unachievable goals and those who preach the importance of individual rights will be stomped out by the powerful. Those who depend on the system are sure to have the rug pulled out from under them. For those that rely on themselves, those of us who consider ourselves to be independent, self-sufficient individuals, our downfall maybe similar. The more we rely on ourselves without God the more vulnerable we become. Ultimately NONE of us are safe. If you don't know God, there is a lot to be anxious about.

### THE STILLNESS OF GOD

God is our only protection but it may not come in the way we want. God has given us the tools to protect our spirit but not necessarily our body. We are all vulnerable. The only ones who are safe are those that have stillness; that have trained themselves to find refuge with God. We will never experience true stillness

until we understand that our physical safety and security are insignificant compared to our spiritual and mental safety. Do you think you are capable of “being still?” Do you know what it means? Turn to Psalm 46, the main passage for this message:

PSALMS 46:1-11 GOD *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; 3 *Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled, *Though* the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah 4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. 6 The nations 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, Who has made desolations in the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. 10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! 11 The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

## GOD IS OUR REFUGE

At first glance, this says God will protect us no matter what—God will protect you from nature and the violence of man. But what exactly is His protection? How will God protect us? Read through this passage again starting in verse 1:

PSALM 46:1 God is our **refuge** and strength, a very present help in trouble.

In Strong's Concordance, the definition of the word *refuge* (H2620) is to have hope, make refuge, put trust, have hope, and make refuge. “God is our refuge” but that doesn't mean safety from physical harm. He may protect us from physical harm (He is more than capable of that), but that is not the meaning of this verse. In times of trouble, in both the Old and New Testaments, God allowed the righteous to suffer and die. Consider the prophets of the Old Testament, Stephen being stoned and Paul's trials in the book of Acts, and all the martyrs that died in the name of Christ; they were righteous but God allowed their suffering and death at the hands of evil men. This verse does not mean that God will keep us from physical harm or death. It means that God will protect our spirit, our mind, and our sanity.

If we go to Him in our thoughts, prayers, and meditation, that is refuge! He will assure us a place in His Kingdom if we are right with Him. We can always have hope, confidence, and trust in God' promise of a Kingdom. This is our refuge and strength. It is mental strength; not so much a physical protection.

## GOD'S STILLNESS VS. THE WORLDS CHAOS

Psalm 46:2-3 describe natural disasters—earthquakes, roaring seas, and collapsing mountains. But God says not to fear. Why? Because He even controls nature:

MARK 4:37-41 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?” 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Verses 2-3 point to calamity on earth today and over time—mountains fall into the sea, the earth shakes during an earthquake, the ocean is always turbulent, and storms are everywhere. But GOD commands it and controls it and we should not fear it. Lack of faith and fear are enemies of calm, peace, and stillness.

#### FUTURE PEACE: A RIVER FROM GOD

Psalms 46:4-6 speaks of a river in the city of God. That same imagery is used when Christ reigns on earth:

PSALM 46:4-6 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. 6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

Now go to Zechariah 14:

ZECHARIAH 14:8-9 And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. 9 And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“The Lord is one,” and His name one.

This passage in Zechariah sounds similar to Psalms 46:4-5. It may have been about Jerusalem during the time of David but it also strongly refers to a time in the future when the City of God—New Jerusalem—will be established. The City of God points to a millennial time. Read Revelation 22 that refers to the New heaven and New Earth to see the similarities to Psalms 46:4-5:

REVELATION 22:1-3 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

Again, a river and location of the throne is “the dwelling place of the Most High” as it says in Psalms 46:4-5. THIS IS WHERE OUR HOPE, OUR THOUGHTS, OUR MIND SHOULD BE—ON GOD AND HIS KINGDOM. THIS SHOULD ALWAYS BE IN THE BACK

OUR MIND. THIS IS THE REFUGE REFERRED TO BY PSALMS 1:1. TAKE REFUGE IN YOUR MIND AND IN YOUR THOUGHTS.

Go back and read Psalms 46:6-9:

PSALM 46:6-9 The nations 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, who has made desolations in the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

These verses on the surface show God's power over nature, over the earth and over man's violence. But these verses also point to a pre-millennial time when God will desolate the earth and then stop the wars of man; this happens immediately before the Millennium.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN "BE STILL?"

Psalm 46 verse 10 is the key verse as it points again to the Millenium when Christ WILL BE EXALTED on EARTH and AMONG THE NATIONS!

PSALM 46:10-11 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! 11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

If we encounter trouble, God may or may not physically protect us—He may allow us to perish. God is not so much protecting our life but is protecting His plan for us. His protection and refuge allows for our peace and stillness. What does it mean to be still? There are numerous ways to be still:

- Physical stillness—a command to stop moving.

EXODUS 14:12-13 “*Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.*” 13 And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. **Stand still**, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.

In verse 13, the Hebrew word for “stand still” is found in the Strong's Concordance H3320. The definition is to place, set, stand, station oneself, or present oneself.

- Silence—a command to stop speaking, possibly with awe involved

EXODUS 14:14-15 “The LORD will fight for you, and **you shall hold your peace.**” 15 And the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.

- Be silent

ZECHARIAH 2:13 **Be silent**, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!

"Be silent" is H2013 and Strong's Concordance it is synonymous with "be still." It is a physical stillness of the tongue, or 'You shall be quiet'! In Isaiah 42: 14:

ISAIAH 42:14 "I have held My peace for a long time; I have been **still** and refrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in pangs of labor, I will pant and gasp at once."

The word "still" is H2790 and it means to be silent, be dumb, be speechless, or deaf. Ask yourself: are you like David who found peace of the soul? Or are you like the Israelite that could barely keep their mouth shut long enough to realize the glory of God and the peace and security that He alone can provide?

Most of the problems in this world cannot be fixed. It is right for us to pray about them and then hand those problems over to God and ask Him for relief from the evil in the world. Beyond that, the world is God's concern not ours. Christ always went after 'his own house'; i.e. the children of Israel. He did not confront the problems of the Roman Government and society of His time.

- Spiritual surrender

Psalms 46: 10 says, "**Be still** and know that I am God." The word "be still" is the Hebrew word *raphah* (H7503). Strong's definition is to slacken, abate, cease, consume, draw, fail, (be) faint, be (wax) feeble, forsake, idle, leave, let alone (go, down), (be) slack, stay, be still, be slothful, (be) weak. Other definitions include: to sink, relax, sink down, let drop, or be disheartened. To understand the meaning of this word, look at a few other passages that use the word *raphah*:

2 SAMUEL 24:15-16 So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died.  
16 And when the angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now **restrain [raphah]** your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

This goes from the hand of the angel spreading death, destruction, and chaos to immediate calm—the calm after the storm.

2 SAMUEL 4:1 And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were **feeble [raphah]**, and all the Israelites were troubled.

Saul's son is told that his ally in the fight against David, Abner, is dead. This took the wind out of his sails and now David loses his confidence—his grit. He either gave up or was contemplating giving up. This took away his motivation to fight and, thus, his hand became feeble (this could be figurative or literal).

ISAIAH 13:6-7 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD *is* at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore shall all hands be **faint [raphah]**, and every man's heart shall melt:

In the three passages, *raphah* is used negatively. It reflects weakness, restraint of power, or giving up under the stress of the moment. However, the definition includes: to slacken, abate, cease, consume, draw, fail, (be) faint, (wax) feeble, forsake, idle, leave, let alone, (be) slack, stay, be still, be slothful, or (be) weak. The stillness in Psalm 46 is a harmonious peace of mind, body, and spirit. This stillness involves letting go of carnal pursuits, humbling ourselves, **surrendering fully to GOD**, and making oneself vulnerable by letting down all defenses. Stillness is being calm, and spiritually quiet.

When one is still, as mentioned in Psalm 46, the person is at peace and content with whatever God's plan is for them. Stillness is found ONLY in the refuge of GOD's shelter, in our mind and thoughts. It is not simply calm and peace and spiritual quiet time. It is surrendering to GOD.

PSALM 51:17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.

Once we allow ourselves to be broken, we can find stillness in GOD. As GOD builds us up, peace and stillness grow stronger and louder. It is truly the armor of GOD.

#### THE ENEMIES OF STILLNESS

We need to be aware of the enemies of stillness: fear, insecurity, anxiety, lack of faith, lack of trust, and living unrighteously. For every Christian, living an unrighteous life SHOULD make us anxious. We KNOW what is right and, if we allow ourselves to drift away from the truth, we should be very, very, anxious. Ask yourself if you are comfortable with your life choices? Or have you made bad choices put off repenting of them?

It does not come easily or instantly to "be still." Some of us are predisposed to take on worry and anxiety. It takes focus and hard work to overcome anxiety and obtain stillness. We must hand over our fear, anxiety, and cares to God.

#### HOW TO "BE STILL?"

To go to God in times of trouble requires self-discipline. The "stillness" of Psalms 46 is elusive to the world; it is much easier for them to panic than turn to God.

- **Cast your Cares on God**

1 PETER 5:6-10 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that

the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

- Fight with God's Help

We are to let God build us up. Appreciate that God will not allow his plan for us to fail. To "be still" does not mean just giving up and handing your problems over to God. That will not bring you peace. We must develop character and overcome our weakness by asking God to help us through trials. If your cause is righteous, you need to fight with God's help and from His place of refuge. If you are afraid of something, it is better to face it until the fear loses its power.

- Surrender Your Will to God

This means you must keep His commands. You must speak to God and then listen to God through prayer and meditation. Make time for stillness for meditation for quiet. Humble yourself to God, because we are nothing without Him and all that we are is from God.

**JAMES 4:7-8** Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

- Keep Your Focus on the Kingdom

Our focus needs to be on the KINGDOM, not on our physical life. Remember Lot's wife—she was focused on the physical and did not let go of the carnal. God's promise of protection does not guarantee a life free from suffering or physical harm—that is a misunderstanding of His true refuge. We must appreciate that God will not allow His plan for us to fail.

**LUKE 17:32-33** Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Our focus must be on life in the Kingdom, not merely on preserving our physical life. When we prioritize our earthly safety and comfort above eternal Truth, our perspective is not aligned with God. Instead of resting on God's promises, we will become consumed by fear and focus on the physical and the carnal. In times of trouble, we want to have the stillness described in Psalm 46. True spiritual peace comes only when we focus on God—BE STILL and KNOW GOD.