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*"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*

Psalm 46:10

**Main Idea:** Our Mighty God has our back! He gives us protection and the strength to endure any hardship or situation that comes our way. We have His presence in troubled times and in great times. We have no need to worry about or fear what lies ahead when we have God's Truth and presence. Even if the earth itself were to break apart, there is no need to worry. Why worry when I am in God's will and presence? Even though life is scary like a storm-tossed sea, we can dwell in Him; He is our mighty fortress. God is with us, and He will not fail us, even if we lose all else that seems important; no matter what, we have our relationship with Him as Lord. God is with us at all times and in all seasons. We live in a sin-entrenched world where there will always be troubles and setbacks, losses and tragedies, pain and suffering. Especially because of this, we are to trust and focus on God and see the wonders that He has done. Even through the darkness of distress, our problems will seem to melt around us or be of no concern. He can and will dissolve wars and problems. What we need to do is rest our hearts and minds in Him. Be still and focus on Him. We are not to obsess over the situation at hand. Seek His presence and know He is God Almighty!

### Contexts and Background:

This Psalm is one of the Zion Songs, which glorify Yahweh's presence in the city of Jerusalem, showcasing God's power and protection for His people. Examples of this include His deliverance of His people from the Assyrians (2 Kings 18-20; Psalm 48; 76; 87). This psalm was perhaps first composed by Moses after crossing the "Sea of Reeds" and being protected from Pharaoh's mighty army. Moses and the people of God received deliverance and protection from an overwhelming and unbeatable foe. This is a poem about how Mighty God is. The poem was collected and set to music for worship by the Sons of Korah. This psalm was used as a great celebration of thanksgiving when God delivered the Israelites from the Assyrians; the psalm showcases how we are in God's hands in times of trouble and has given great comfort to God's people for over 4000 years (2 Kings 18-20)! This psalm was used by the Reformer Martin Luther for a great lasting hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," that has been sung regularly for over 500 years.

### Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Refuge.* This means rest and asylum, and it refers to a fortress for a safe place to flee to in times of war--like the Masada outside of Jerusalem (Psalm 14:6; 61:3; 91:2; Isa. 33:16).
- *Strength.* This refers to God's omnipotence and omnipresence. This is to show a people who were afraid of their God that He is for them. They can have hope in Him, trust in His power, rely on His providence, and rest in His presence at all times. God is all sufficient for a person of faith. We are to be diligent and rely on God the strength of God by our faith (Deut. 4:7; Psalm 9:9; 29:11; 46:1; 73:26; 81:1; 138:3; 140:7; Hab. 3:19).
- *Ever-present.* The point is to remove all doubt of who and what God is. He IS our Creator, Lord, and Savior who is the eternally existing, ever-present, ever-powerful, sole-creator God. This is Our transcendent, all-knowing, ever-existing, most Holy, most powerful, eternal God who has always existed and will always continue to exist--and He is Jesus Christ (Psalm 60:1; Isa. 1:24)!
- *Trouble.* God does not look upon trouble as we do. Where we just see the stress, He sees opportunities. Where we see a crisis, He sees growth and betterment. God's purpose, in such times, may be to teach us precious lessons. This might be a time to examine us, discipline us, refine us, or

even protect us from something worse. The key is to pray, trust, ask the reason, learn, and of course, repent (Gen 50:20; Psalm 10:1; 46; John 16:33; Acts 27)

- *Will not fear.* We can have confidence in our Lord because of His care and His watching over us. We can trust and relax in our Lord, even in suffering and defeat (Psalm 3:7; 4:8).
- *Earth give way.* A confession of faith, total confidence in God is not moved! A real person of faith knows that God will answer their prayer (Gen. 20:11; Deut. 6:4-5; Psalm 27:1; Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13; Matt. 6:19-24, 33; John 10:22-42).
- *Waters roar.* Rough and deep water were representations of distress, chaos, and destruction--what is frightful and terrible and all things inexplicable and/or hostile. In contrast, water is needed for the growing and prospering of crops and for the sustenance of all life—and it all comes from God. Without, everything dies. God is our abundant supply of all we need now and forevermore (Gen. 2:10-14; Job 7:12; 41:1; Psalm 18; 46:4; 74; 77; 69:2; 74:13; 89:9-10; Is. 27:1; Ezek. 47:1-12; Nah. 1; Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8; John 4:10-14; 7:37-39; Rev. 13:1-4).
- *Mountains quake / move.* God is over all, stronger and greater beyond the earth's and the sea's strength and happenings.
- *City of God.* This means a symbol of power, strength and stability, and the protection of God. This refers to Mount Zion, Israel's place of power and the capital and home of the Temple. Ultimately, this refers to the heavenly city of God, where Jerusalem is figurative for God's dwelling on earth and the place of His giving us His Son in contrast to Mt. Sinai and the Law (Psalm 46:2; Isa. 2:1-4; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:9-10; 12:14-29; Rev. 23:3).
- *Holy place / Holy Habitation.* Perhaps this is the actual throne room of God, or it refers to the altar inside the inner sanctuary where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. Only once a year and only one person (the high priest) could enter the inner sanctuary has that priest had a close relationship to God; the high priest could only enter the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. This is when the high priest took the incense from the altar/table, along with the blood of the sin offering, into the Most Holy Place. This means we have access to God's Heavenly Temple when God calls us there, whereas before, in the earthly copy, only the high priest had access. This was a shadow of the Person and Word that Christ would do and now has done. Now for the Christian, Christ carries us to the Most Holy Place, the location of our worship of Him now and our eternal rest to come. This is a monumental opportunity and shows us the depth and magnitude of how much we have been saved (Ex. 40:5; Lev 16:12-14; 1 Kings 6:22; Psalm 27:3; Heb. 9:1-10; 10:19-22; 12: 14-29; 13:14).
- *God is within her / with us / midst of.* The consolation of God's protection, as the faithful people will rejoice because God is with them.
- *Will not fall / be moved.* If the people are faithful, Jerusalem will stand. They were not, and it fell in 586 B.C. to the Babylonians and in 70 A.D. to the Romans. When a faithful person comes to an obstacle, God guides, blesses, and will lift up, defending and protecting His faithful. God will not let evil people condemn His faithful. God protects the innocent.
- *Earth melts.* The Voice of God will cause all who oppose to fall.
- *LORD Almighty / LORD of Hosts.* This is a descriptive name for God, that He is "All-Sufficient." A version of this name referred to God as a powerful mother. You have probably seen pictures of the ancient statues of a god who had dozens of breasts, which were actually power nodules not breasts. Those idols of the heathens are called "*sheddin*." In Hebrew, it means a god who is "Over Power", "One who thunders" as a strong god such as the Viking's with Thor and his hammer. Nothing

can overcome God's omnipotence (Gen. 17:1-2; 31:29, 49:24, 25; Psalm 24:10; Proverbs 3:27; Micah 2:1; Isaiah 6:3; 60:15, 16, 66:10-13; Ruth 1:20, 21; 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8; 16:7)!

- *God of Jacob*. A title for God, the "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob" (Gen. 49:24; Deut. 10:17; Exodus 3:15; Psalm 24; 132:2, 5; Isa. 49:26).
- *Fortress*. A poetic symbol for God. This is a symbol of security and defense as well as a place of refuge. Think of a well-built fort in the side of a mountain that the people of a village could flee to in an attack. Think of the ancient Canaanite cities carved into cliffs. Also, this is an image of a safe place to flee to, an image of great comfort and our gratitude to be faithful of who God is and what He can do. God is our security. This also denotes David hiding in a cave from Saul as God protected him (Duet. 32: 4,5-18, 31, 37; Judges 6:2; 2 Sam. 23:25-38; Psalm 18:2; 27:5; 61:2; Isa. 33:16; 44:8).
- *Come and see*. A summons to come and check it out. This is real.
- *LORD has done*. God is in control. Do not panic. Recognize His sovereignty. God's nature and Will is to save what is lost: to deliver us (Psalm 18:47, 25:5).
- *Wars cease*. Yahweh is the Divine Warrior who protects His people and He is the source of peace and prosperity. He is the One who settles disputes between nations, so all know He is Lord (Josh. 3:17; Isa. 2:4; Ezek. 39:7-9).
- *Burns the shields*. This gives us the image of God who protects us (Duet. 33:29; Psalm 5:8-12; Prov. 30:5).
- *Be still*. This means to be silent, wait patiently, and actively listen to bring us closer to our center of attention upon God as LORD. This is pure focus on God and surrender to His timing and trust in His work in you. This is not to empty ourselves, a set of breathing exercises, or a skewed meditative practice that takes us away from Christ. The intended application is that we center ourselves, as in relax in Him and not focus on or trust in anything else. Thus, we can center on praying with the Scriptures to receive His inspired Word, and get to know and apply it. In so doing, we know His will and call (Ex. 14:14; Psalm 37:7; 46:10; 62:5).
- *Know that I am God*. It is both a call to worship and trust in our almighty Sovereign Lord and a word of comfort through life's troubles and ills, why fear and fret. "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13)?
- *Exalted*. God is majestic and glorious and excellent throughout the universe. He alone deserves the right to be honored!

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

To be content Christians, we need to see life as a series of problem-solving and learning opportunities. We must shift our focus from what we want (consumer-fixated) to focusing on our Lord, Who He is, and What He had done and is doing in our lives. The problems we face can do one of the two things--overwhelm and overpower us or grow and develop us. We often miss what we do not have and forsake what we do have. Thus, the path of joy is determined by how we respond to troubles, loss and what we want. It is predicated on how we are to *be still* and relax in Christ. Unfortunately, most people, including Christians, will fail to see God's hand in their life. Too often, we seem to focus on our problems and allow them to take over our lives much like a terrorist holding them at gunpoint and refusing to allow the help to rescue them.

God wants to use our problems for good, to make us better and stronger for our personal development and, in turn, for us to be able to help others in their lives. So, the unhappy, confused, and

disillusioned Christian will react irrationally with their problems rather than taking the time through spiritual discipline to see the advantage they bring them. Remember that God is bigger than our storms, His shelter stronger than our fears and anxiety. Deep problems require a deep faith (Psalm 107:25).

**Christian Life Principle:** When life is upside down and not going as we had wanted, now is the time to step up your faith. In so doing, seek God's presence, embrace His protection, and be grateful for His power. The entire point of our experiences through setbacks and success is being faithful. This is what we give to God and what helps grow our faith, fruit, and maturity. This is what echoes into eternity. It is not the world's success that pleases and even helps others; rather, it is our faithfulness that builds and inspires and lasts into eternity.

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

***Additional Questions:***

1. Have you ever felt that God does not help you in times of trouble? Why?
2. Are you being faithful to what God has called you? What about in difficult situations?
3. How do you measure faithfulness? What does it look like?
4. What does it mean to be a content Christian with a happy with life?
5. What does this name for God, *the LORD Almighty*, mean to your life and faith?
6. When God tests you, or bad stuff happens, how can this be a time for you to learn and to trust Him?
7. What can you do to grow your faithfulness?
8. How does focusing on God's presence, protection and power help you?
9. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" How can this Psalm help through life's troubles?
10. What can you do to make sure that when problems come, they will not overwhelm and overpower you? Rather, grow and develop you?
11. Remember, He always helps in times of trouble. If you do not see it, you are not looking. How can you better "look?"
12. What can you do to refocus yourself onto God's right path?