

A Stronghold in the Day of Trouble

Nah. 1:7

INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about the girls' saying as long as God was awake there was no reason for her to stay awake, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #4620.
- B. It is true that God watches over us, and we, therefore, have no reason to fear.
 - 1. Nahum puts it this way — "The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him" (1:7).
 - 2. A stronghold is a powerful image.
 - a. In antiquity, the only protection one had from an oncoming enemy was the city's stronghold.
 - 1) A city with large walls was built on a hill and several villages were built around the hill.
 - 2) When an enemy would attack, the villagers sought safety within the city's walls.
 - 3) Once the villagers were inside, the gates of the city would be closed, and those who sought refuge within the city were safe.
 - b. In the same way, God is our stronghold. Those who seek protection in him are safe.
 - 3. It was important for those who heard Nahum preach hear that God is a stronghold.
 - a. Nahum was prophesying against Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian people, one of the wickedest people in all history.
 - b. Nahum was prophesying their destruction — " Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is pured out like fire, And the rocks are thrown down by Him" (1 :6).
 - c. Nahum answers his rhetorical question — the one who can stand before God is the one who seeks refuge in him.
- C. Let's examine how God is our refuge and how he helps us.

WE NEED A STRONGHOLD IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE

- A. We need a stronghold in the day of trouble, for trouble comes to all men.
 - 1. "Man who is born of woman Is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1).
 - 2. "The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow" (Ps. 116:3).
 - 3. "All [man's] days are sorrowful" (Ecol. 2:23).
- B. We suffer much in this life.
 - 1. Our marriage isn't quite what it should be, and just when we think we're making progress, our spouse leaves; we injure ourselves, are unable to work, and the bank forecloses on our house; our house burns, and we loose all those priceless keepsakes which can't be replaced; we come down with a terminal illness; we loose the dearest person in all the world to us.
 - 2. It is times like these that we need God to be our stronghold.
- C. "In this vain world the days are not all fair; / To suffer is the work we have to do; / And every one has got a cross to bear, / And every one some secret heart-ache, too."
- D. Praise be to God that we have him to be that stronghold in the day of trouble!

GOD IS THE STRONGHOLD FOR HIS CHILDREN WHO SUFFER TROUBLE

- A. God will be the stronghold for all of his children who seek his help when trouble comes.
 - 1. "God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).
 - 2. "In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge" (Prov. 14:26).
 - 3. God is "a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat" (Is. 25:4).
- B. Illustration about Winston Churchill escaping the South African military prison in Pretoria, *Encyclopedia*

of 15,000 Illustrations, #4623.

1. God is the only place where we can find protection from the troubles we face in this life.
2. Are you turning to God for that protection?

GOD IS OUR STRONGHOLD IN A WIDE VARIETY OF TROUBLE

- A. God is our stronghold in times of national adversity.
1. He was a refuge for Israel when they faced national adversity.
 - a. Jud. 2:18.
 - b. King Hezekiah spoke to the Israelites when Sennacherib came close to Judah (2 Chr. 32:7-8).
 2. It is true that Israel was God's chosen nation and that the United States is not God's chosen nation.
 - a. However, the United States has hundreds of thousands of God's people in it, and God will be our stronghold in times of national adversity in this nation.
 - b. This stronghold will not be for the nation as a whole, but it will be for the children of God.
 3. The terrorist attacks and the war that has followed show that this nation can face great calamity. We, as the children of God, can face such calamity with confidence, for God is our stronghold.
- B. God is our stronghold in times of personal adversity.
1. He was a stronghold for people of old when they faced adversity.
 - a. When Job faced great calamity, he turned to God (Job 1:20-21).
 - b. When a ruler's daughter had died, he came to Jesus and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live" (Mt. 9: 18).
 - 1) This man knew where to go when he was facing calamity; he went to Jesus.
 - 2) Jesus went to this ruler's home and raised his daughter, v. 25.
 - c. When a nobleman had a son at the point of death, he came to Jesus and asked that his son be healed (Jn. 4:46-54).
 2. When we face personal adversity today, we can turn to Jesus and he will help us.
 - a. He can help us, for he is the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-4).
 - b. He can help us, for he controls all things — "The LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other" (Deut. 4:39).
 - 1) Just because God controls the universe does not mean that he causes or wants personal adversity to come upon us.
 - 2) The case of Job shows that God does not cause tragedy to come upon us; Satan caused tragedy to befall Job.
 - 3) However, since God controls the universe, we can place our confidence in him, for he understands why such things occur.
- C. Is God your stronghold? Are you his child? Does he help you when adversity comes?

GOD IS OUR SUFFICIENT STRONGHOLD

- A. God is a sufficient stronghold for all that can befall us.
- B. Let's examine some things that can befall us and see how God is sufficient for those adversities.
1. God give us pardon in place of our sins.
 - a. "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool" (Is. 1:18).
 - b. "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins" (Is. 43:25).
 - c. "Bring Christ your broken life, So marred by sin, He will create anew, Make whole again; Your empty, wasted years He will restore, And your iniquities Remember no more."
 2. God will give us peace in place of our anxiety.
 - a. "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You" (Is. 26:3).
 - b. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn. 14:27).
 - c. Illustration about the paintings in Pitti Palace in Florence, Italy, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #9140.
 3. God will give us life in place of our death.
 - a. "He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces" (Is.

25:8).

b. God "gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Rom. 4:17).

C. Is God your God? Do you have these benefits he offers?