

Psalm 11
Yahweh our Refuge

We live in a world where things are seldom as firm and clear as we might normally think.

Today, it is hard to tell a real news headlines from something you see on the Onion or Babylon Bee.

An old parody cartoon in CT makes a similar point.

Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms makes his “here I stand” speech by saying, “**Here I stand, at present, but then again, I could be wrong.**”

How many politicians are for something before they are against it, or vice versa?

Ecclesiastes tells us that “there is nothing new under the sun.”

The issue of finding a firm stable foundation is as old as the human experience, and Psalm 11 gives us an example.

Use of Yahweh...Davis (location 61 Kindle)

Most translations us “LORD” when referring to the Hebrew name YAHWEH. That was the personal memorial name that God revealed to Moses at the burning bush. It means something along the lines of “I Am that I AM”. So, we sing the song, “The Great I AM.”

In seminary I had some OT professors who intentionally use Yahweh rather than Lord in order to convey the personal and exclusive understanding of the God of Israel. In this Psalm series I will often use the term Yahweh because to me it DOES convey a deeper relationship and understanding of who God is for His people.

And ‘Yahweh’ captures and summarizes that thought—he is the God who will be present to be all that his people need him to be. ‘Yahweh’ means the God who is present to help. Yahweh is a personal name. LORD is a title. “Wife” is a title, but my wife has a name, Linda. I could just refer to her as ‘the wife’, but Linda is much more personal. So too with God and His name, Yahweh. The personal name conveys devotional warmth when reading the OT.

Davis, Dale Ralph . Way of the Righteous in the Muck of Life . Christian Focus Publications

EX: man at church after OT prof preached – “Who is this Yahweh” fellow anyway?

PSALM 11

Yahweh a Refuge and Defense.

For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

1 In Yahweh I take refuge;

How can you say to my soul, “Flee as a bird to your mountain;

2 For, behold, the wicked bend the bow,

They make ready their arrow upon the string

To shoot in darkness at the upright in heart.

3 If the foundations are destroyed,

What can the righteous do?”

4 Yahweh is in His holy temple; Yahweh’s throne is in heaven;

His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

5 Yahweh tests the righteous and the wicked,

And the one who loves violence His soul hates.

6 Upon the wicked He will rain snares;

Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.

7 For Yahweh is righteous, He loves righteousness;

The upright will behold His face.

DAVID'S CHALLENGE

He sees the need for a refuge

David follows the advice of faith in the time of challenge – “In Yahweh I take refuge.”

This is where David plants the flag of his soul – in Yahweh.

This is why it is helpful to use the personal Name of God, not just the generic terms “God”.

In our culture, as in David's, you can hear a good bit of ‘God’ talk. Much of it is a non-specific form of spiritual or religious talk.

When someone invokes the word or reference to ‘God’, it is important to know what this ‘God’ is like.

David brings clarity as he takes refuge in YAHWEH. That name narrows the field to the ONE God of Israel.

**Caveat – not at all times. David is a notorious sinner like the rest of us.

v.1b – 3 Depending on your translation, the quote may just be v 1 or it may go through v 3. That is what the NASB and ESV do.

Someone or some group close to David are advising him to “get out of Dodge” and find a safe haven somewhere. This is friendly advice, not advice from an enemy. **It takes discernment from God to know when friendly advice may not be the best advice. It's not always clear that friendly advice is the best advice. So, Proverbs tells us that there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors – 15:22.**

Sadly, those near us may tell us what they think we want to hear rather than telling us what we need to hear.

Prov 27:5-6 Open rebuke is better than secret love.

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

v. 2 He see the wicked intent on doing random evil – shooting in the dark

DAVID'S QUESTION v. 3 (question posed to David)

**3 If the foundations are destroyed,
What can the righteous do?"**

And it is our question as well.

What does it mean? In this context it would indicate that the normal protections and securities for God's people has disappeared. – Ralph Davis

In other words, it is a time when it seems as if everything is falling apart and society is coming apart at the seams.

HAVE YOU EVER FELT THAT WAY??? (Romans 1)

Honestly, that could refer to any period of human history. Perhaps the most over used word today is “unprecedented”. Friends, crime, chaos, injustice, war, moral confusion and disillusionment are NOT unprecedented. They have always been around.

What is unprecedented is peace, shalom, justice, love for God, and righteousness.

James Boice circa 1990

"More than fifty years ago the great Bible teacher Arno C. Gaebelin called this 'the burning question of our day.' But if that was so in 1939, when his study was copyrighted, it is a thousand times more true today. What shall we do when the laws are not upheld, when morality is undermined and evil sweeps unchecked? What shall we do when the Bible is undermined and its teachings disregarded- when even churchmen seem to support the rising tide of secularism?"

"Ours is a generation adrift on the high seas of technological innovation but bereft of rudder or compass. The religious norms, the moral beliefs, the cultural expectations that once provided some sense of order and propriety in society have all but disappeared." David Wells

EX: martyrmade podcast – Human Forever pt 3 Today we see a new religion under the pretext of secular liberalism – a Gnostic cyborg theocracy

<https://www.reasonablefaithhonolulu.org/2022/01/transhumanism-is-satanism-with-a-brain-chip-by-joe-allen/>

I could spend hours on just low-hanging fruit of this category but I won't. You can read the news for daily evidence of the crumbling foundations. The seeds of the crumbling were sown in the Garden of Eden and new seeds are planted and cultivated with each generation.

It may take a while for the foundations to be weakened but once they are the collapse comes fast.

EX: Wooden deck infested with termites. It may not seem obvious at first; it may be overlooked. But at a certain point, the deck will crumble. The speed and danger of the collapse depends on how much weight is put on the foundations.

We can go back 60 years to the 1960's and see how seeds were being sown.

EX: Stewart Brand – In 1968, as the opening of his Whole Earth Catalog, he wrote "We are as gods and might as well get good at it."

That begs the question, "Since 1968, have we gotten good at being gods?"

The choice before us is which path will we choose when it comes to belief about God:

#1 No God at all. In that case we don't have to worry about being "good" at anything because in a cosmic accident there is neither good or bad.

#2 We are as gods and we might as well get good at it. Nothing personal, but no one in this room is capable of being God. Nor is anyone alive or has ever lived...EXCEPT ONE MAN

#3 There is a God who is outside of us. The different world's religions offer various choices, but the one that stands the test of history and ASKS to be investigated is historic orthodox biblical faith.

The Biblical account flips Stewart Brands remark around as the Triune God said, "We shall become as man, and we will be perfect at it."

The solid unshakeable foundation we need is in the God who revealed Himself through Jesus Christ.

FRIENDS, We need a foundation that is firm.....YAHWEH

Psalm 146

1 Praise Yahweh!

Praise Yahweh, O my soul!

2 While I live, I will praise Yahweh;

I will sing praises unto my God while I have my life.

3 Do not put your trust in princes,
nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.

4 His breath leaves him, and he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.

5 Blessed is he who has the God of Jacob for his help,
whose hope is in Yahweh his God,

6 who made heaven, and earth,

It is all too easy to build a foundation on our own agenda and skill set. Or we build on the approval that we get from others. Some build on the detachment they maintain from others. Our love for or from friends may create

subtle temptations in our lives. If our foundation is built on anything or ANYONE but God, we risk seeing the foundations crumble.

Davis – One subtle assumption in the “friends advice” is that safety is the top priority. Security has its proper place, but it can become an idol when we avoid the risk involved in doing what is right in order to be “safe.”
“The first line of this psalm says that in Yahweh I am as safe as I ought to be” – Ralph Davis

DAVID'S CONFIDENCE v. 4-

Our confidence comes when we get our eyes on Yahweh rather than focusing on the perceived threat v 2-3. Compare that with v. 4.

The response of faith begins with a vision of God on the throne in His temple.

We've been given a glimpse of this in several passages of Revelation, and when we go back to that book in the fall, we'll get a closer look at the new heavens and new earth.

For now, we like David are called to live in confident faith in Yahweh who is on the throne.

Yahweh may be distant, but he's not aloof. His eyes gaze and He tests the sons of men. God is not passive or indifferent; He is engaged. He reigns from the throne. Remember Rev 4 where John refers to the throne of God 12 times. He wants us to root our hearts in our heavenly refuge so that we'll stand firm in the chaos to come.

This Psalm shows us that we need discernment to filter out the voices of fear and doubt so that we can see Yahweh on His throne. While this heavenly vision won't automatically change our circumstances, it can give us the spiritual strength to hold fast when the foundations seem to be falling apart.

EX: Eph 1:17 I pray...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Paul, who knew his share of trials and suffering, is NOT praying for a quick easy fix. He is praying for an inner spirit of the knowledge of God, eyes that see, a hope our calling and inheritance, and the surpassing greatness of God's power toward those who believe.

Those may be hard to quantify, but they are real when we experience them. What we really need when our foundations are shaken is a clear view of God and a sense of His face being upon us.

DAVID'S PROCLAMATION – v. 5-6

From His heavenly throne Yahweh examines mankind and tests the righteous. He also knows and see the violent men and those who love violence. This is a sobering verse. It is also a comforting verse. It resonates with our own souls.

EX: we think of those who engage in senseless oppressive violence and we can actually take comfort in knowing that God also hates it. What is even more sobering and shocking is that God's soul hates those who love violence.

How do we square this with what is a common refrain in church circles – “God hates the sin but loves the sinner?”

That is a sort of theological idea that runs into trouble when examined in light of all of scripture. The God of the Bible is not a neutered cosmic force. He has a personal nature and character. As we see, he loves righteousness, and he hates violence and wickedness and those who love them.

Scripture as a whole is not apologetic for divine actions against the wicked. Don Carson offers this response to our concerns...

“How, then, should the love of God and the wrath of God be understood to relate to each other? One evangelical cliché has it that God hates the sin but loves the sinner. There is a small element of truth in these words: God has nothing but hate for sin, but it would be wrong to conclude that God has nothing but hate for the sinner. A difference must be maintained between God’s view of sin and his view of the sinner. Nevertheless, the cliché (God hates the sin but loves the sinner) is false on the face of it and should be abandoned. Fourteen times in the first fifty psalms alone, we are told that God hates the sinner, his wrath is on the liar, and so forth. In the Bible, the wrath of God rests both on the sin (Rom. 1:18) and on the sinner (John 3:36)...

Normally we do not think that a wrathful person is loving. But this is not the way it is with God. God’s wrath is not an implacable, blind rage...: God in his perfections must be wrathful against his rebel image-bearers, for they have offended him; God in his perfections must be loving toward his rebel image-bearers, for He is that kind of God.” D.A. Carson

<https://kayhoe.wordpress.com/category/d-a-carson/>

DAVID’S HOPE V. 7

God’s righteous character explains, and is the basis for, His just judgements.

His character is our only basis for hope, both now and for eternity. God’s justice is our only solid comfort and hope if we want to be delivered from wickedness and death.

It was God’s justice that was satisfied by the perfect obedience of Christ.

Yes, God hates sin and loves righteousness. For those in Christ His wrath on sin was poured out on Christ so that we might see the smile of God.

This is the fulfillment of the height of OT BLESSEDNESS – Numbers

24The LORD bless you, and keep you;

25The LORD make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

26The LORD lift up His countenance on you,

And give you peace.’

This is the Beatific Vision

Derek Kidner on Ps 11

“If the first line of the psalm showed where the believer’s safety lies, the last line shows where his heart should be. God as ‘refuge’ may be sought from motives that are too self-regarding; but to behold his face is a goal in which only love has any interest.

This is our position as believers – We wait to see Him face to face, but for now we love Him though we have not seen Him – 1 Pet 1:8

Years ago, there was a story in the Presbyterian Journal about William Dyke, a Britisher, who was blinded in the earlier years of his life by an accident. Though handicapped, he threw himself into things, studied hard, and made an enviable academic record. He also courted a lovely girl, who, in spite of his disability, consented to unite her life with his.

Sometime before the wedding date, Dyke's case came to the attention of a skillful surgeon who suggested that there might be something that could be done for Dyke to recover his sight. He put himself into the hands of the surgeon, the surgery was performed, and on the very day of the wedding the bandages were removed. The surgery had been successful—he could see once more! Hence it happened that he saw his bride for the first time when they met at the front of the church sanctuary—what a moment of joy!

In one sense, it was simply the proper fulfillment of all that had gone before.

He had already held her hand, heard her voice, prized her love—now he saw her face.
But he loved her before he ever saw her. The same is true of the Christian—but the sight is coming (Rev. 22:4).

Rev 22:4 is the final fulfillment of the longing of our hearts

3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

It is this hope that carries us through the trials, tribulations, and the valley of the shadow of death.

AMEN

--	--