

Psalm 46

The Lord of Hosts is with us

The Lord of Hosts - why that name ?

The huge size of the army of Sennacherib, with his 185000 men must have been daunting in size. How could Israel defeat such a large army and such an experienced and accomplished fighting force?

He's the Lord of Hosts, not just the Lord

The need for mutual encouragement during times of difficulty cannot be overemphasised and we see this in 2 Chronicles 32 7-8 where Hezekiak picks up the thrust of Psalm 46. People rested themselves in the truth of what they were taught, hence the need to speak truth and encouragement to each other.

Who is the Lord of Hosts who the psalmist is talking about ? He is Yahweh Sabaoth which the NIV now translates Lord Almighty. Who are the hosts over whom God is sovereign over ?

God is Lord over the heavens

The God who holds the stars in His hands, who set them in place, will have no problem holding onto you whatever the circumstances. God can hold them against the Assyrians. Maybe they had heard Isaiah

Isaiah 40 ; 12

'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales?'

- Struggling with issues of sin and guilt. Can God keep when I am so prone to falling ?
- struggling with issues of doubt. Will God continue to deal tenderly with me ?
- Feeling that you always let God down and can you keep going to the end ?
Phil 1 ; 6 ' being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'
- Rom 8 ; 38 'And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons'
neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.
- Isaiah 49 ; 16 "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.'

He will move heaven and earth to ensure that you are secure in Him.

God is Lord over the angelic host Read Heb 1 ; 14

Maybe the psalmist remembered the story of Elisha and the Aramean army and the role of angels there. They are there, under God's orders, to serve and minister to us. It was an angel that God eventually uses to defeat the army of Sennacherib in Isaiah 37 ; 36

- We may not be aware of their presence or activity

- They do work on our behalf, for our interests
- Corrie en Boom in her entrance in to Ravensbruck, pleaded with God that angels would surround her to blind the eyes of the guards from the Bible stuffed under her clothes. She walked past the 2 sets of guards, frisking the prisoners, as if they were not there !
- They do intervene and strengthen in times of stress
- They are there do protect us. – that near fatal car crash, that fierce temptation, that time of intercessory prayer
- Miss Monsen, a Chinese missionary, contracted malaria, and non Christians in her compound questioned her about her belief in the promises of God to protect her. Looters ravaged the area and her site was easy access for them. 3 families commented that looters had not struck her compound, but did other areas, because of the 4 men on her roof, 3 sitting and one standing. There were no men living in the Monsen compound !
- We may not be aware how often God has protected us from ourselves and from others, but His angels watch over us.

Those who are with us are more than those who are against us.

God is Lord over the human host

God is with us by bringing alongside of us, people who will meet our needs. How often might we have thought that Christians haven't helped us but non Christians have. Where was God in this ? He was the guiding hand behind it all.

- Just when I needed it so and so turned up
- Just when I needed it, someone came along with a word from God for me
- Just when I needed it, someone sent me some cash to meet my needs.

God is Lord over the demonic host

What is our image of God? Just a loving father figure who taps us on our head. No – He is almighty God who can do what He wishes and will establish His kingdom. No power on earth or in Heaven can thwart Him and His purposes.

Satan cannot do what he wills, he cannot control who he wills, because God is ultimately sovereign over him. On the cross, Jesus led captivity captive. Satan was disarmed of his authority. Because sin has lost its automatic control over us, so has Satan in terms of sin. We have the power under God to say no to his snares. He asks permission to touch your life as a child of God and God sets the limits on what he can do. God is confident that you will pull through. We may lose some battles but we will win the war.

God is with us in spiritual warfare against Satan. Note that spiritual warfare is our reaction to the devil, not us initiating some attack on him. When he seeks to come upon us as a roaring lion, 'to let go and let God' is only a half truth.

We 'let go and let God', by resting on God, by relying on His strength, and allowing God to fight for us.

God fights for us by His Holy Spirit within us.

But we must stand firm on what we believe and know to be true. 1 Peter 5 : 8-9 ; James 4 : 7. David called on the Lord of Hosts to defeat Goliath but if he just 'Let go and let God, not victory. He had to walk out and hurl the stone, using the equipment that God had given him. Sadly Saul, as a member of the tribe of Benjamin, may have been trained in the use of the slingshot ! What God has taught us in the past is just as true for us today

Note the devices of Satan. 2 Cor 9: 11 – don't be ignorant of Satan's devices

Refuse to believe his lies –

He attacks the character of God – God doesn't really care for you

- o - God will never deliver you
- o - God doesn't listen
- o - God isn't in control

- He attacks the people of God to weaken your support network
- They don't care
- They are all hypocrites – exaggeration of the particular
- You'll be better off without them
- They're only bothered about themselves
- They don't have time for you

He seeks to draw your focus from God onto yourself and your situation

He will highlight your faults. Admit them to God and then walk free from condemnation.

He seeks to make you criticise others

When others speak badly to you, love them. Repay evil with good.

When others don't live up to your expectations, love them. You're not fighting them. It's the Devil who is your enemy.

He drops thoughts into your mind at time when you are most vulnerable

Note that Eve was tempted when Adam was not there

Tries to make you compare with others

They're more popular, more gifted, much better than me. – leads to self-pity.

God loves you as you are. He gave you your gifts for you to use and glorify God. He always loves you unconditionally. Just be the best that you can be before God.

But God is with you and has given you power to walk blamelessly before Him and to refuse Satan's lies.

2Cor 10 ; 3-5 Power to take captive every thought

Go back to what Joss taught us a few weeks ago. Put on the full armour of God. Put on the shoes of the gospel of peace. Can't defeat Satan if you don't have the peace of God and you are not resting in His love. Shoes which are like hobnail boots for soles, with studs underneath. They give you grip so that you can stand firm.

I have a right standing – my conscience is clear – my relationship with God is right – I trust that my past is forgiven, my future is secure and my present is under His control. Be self-controlled. Don't react with anxiety or aggression, react with peace. With hobnail soles, they are strong to resist the enemy's traps

Romans 16 : 20 'The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet.

Finally

The Lord of Hosts is with us to fulfil His promises

Hezekiah knew that God had promised Israel a future. The sons of Korah knew that God had promised Israel a future. Sennacherib was there to rob them of God's promises. There are promises for the church at Shilbottle. There are promises over the Church of Northumberland. There are promises for your future and your families future

The Lord of Hosts is with us.

The issue is not the size of the problem. The issue is what is the size of your God.