



Volume 8, No. 7, July, 2020



***A Shelter in Time of Storm***

*The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide,  
A shelter in the time of storm;  
Secure whatever ill betide,  
A shelter in the time of storm.*

*A shade by day, defense by night,  
A shelter in the time of storm;  
No fears alarm, no foes affright,  
A shelter in the time of storm.*

*The raging storms may round us beat,  
A shelter in the time of storm;  
We'll never leave our safe retreat,  
A shelter in the time of storm.*

*O Rock divine, O Refuge dear,  
A shelter in the time of storm;  
Be Thou our helper ever near,  
A shelter in the time of storm.*

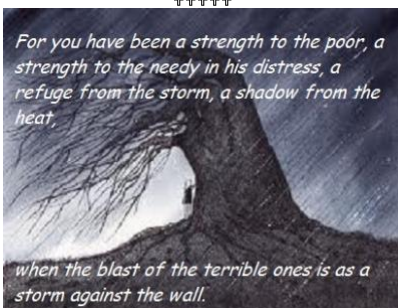
**Refrain:**

*O Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,  
A weary land, a weary land,  
O Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,  
A shelter in the time of storm.*

**WORDS:** *Vernon J. Charlesworth (w. 1880)*

**ARRANGED:** *Ira D. Sankey (w. 1885)*

**MUSIC:** *Ira D. Sankey (w. 1885)*



**“Hopeful Words in a Hopeless World”**

In 1977 at the height of the cold war, Anatoly Shcharansky, a brilliant young mathematician and chess player, was arrested by the KGB for his repeated attempts to immigrate to Israel. After spending nine years in Soviet prisons and work camps, he walks across the Glienicke Bridge from East Germany to West Germany. As he leaves oppression and walks into freedom, he carries with him his most valued possession – the Psalms.

Locked up for nearly a decade, he spent from morning to evening reading and studying the 150 Psalms. “What does this give me?” he asked in a letter. “Gradually, my feeling of great loss and sorrow changes to one of bright hopes.” Locked alone with the Psalms, Anatoly found expression for his innermost feelings.

Psalms is the prayer and song book of the early church.

Psalms is the book our Lord quoted from most often, even when hanging on the cross.

Psalms is written out of the experiences of life, much like personal letters to God.

Psalms express a full range of our life and emotions – doubt, praise, despair, betrayal, joy, failure, delight, hatred, love, vengeance, fear.

Think of three emotions you are currently experiencing or have experienced in the last few weeks. For many it is fear, uncertainty, and stress as we deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

Every morning since the beginning of the pandemic, I have opened my Bible to the Psalms. I have chosen Psalm 46 as my Psalm of focus as I read, meditate, and memorize. This is a Psalm written during turbulent and stressful times. The climax of the Psalm comes in verse 10.

“Be still!” Being still and silent is connected to and depends on the second phrase, “and know that I am God.” A way that we often deal with crisis in our lives is fear. We fear the future. We fear the unknown. We want to know what is going on. One of the most common questions during the pandemic is, when will it be over? When are we going to be able to get back to normal? When will we be able to go to work, shop, and travel again? We think we would be calmer and feel more secure, if only we knew when. Yet, Psalm 46:10 calls for gaining knowledge of a different sort.

“Know that I am God.”

To know God is more than merely being acquainted with God. Knowing is intimate. It takes time. Those without faith in God reach out to the things they can see and touch, manmade solutions, to reduce their fears. They are frightened by the thought that their world is out of control. Those who know God have learned to trust Him. They understand they are not in control of their lives.

Anatoly came to know God on a deeper level as he spent hours, days, months, and years in the Psalms. It was during his oppression, difficulties, and solitude in prison that he eventually moved from sorrow to hope as he came to know God.

During times of stress and uncertainty, we can be certain that God is present and cares. We can have hope because of God’s promises and His presence.

Open the Psalms, spend time reading and meditating in quietness. Be still! Get to know God!

Sally Shank  
Oklahoma City



### **Jesus is Coming Soon!**

In 1942, R.E. Winsett wrote these words which are so appropriate for today:

*“Troublesome times are here, filling men’s hearts with fear,*

*Freedom we all hold dear, now is at stake.*

*Humbling your heart to God, saves from the chastening rod,*

*Seek the way pilgrims trod, Christians, awake.”*

He went on in the song to remind us that Jesus is coming soon!

That is what we need to be focusing on! There have always been troubles on this earth below. Esau’s

descendants hated Jacob’s descendants, the Babylonians captured the Israelites, Jews hated Gentiles, and early Christians were persecuted and martyred. Man, of himself, has proven again and again that it is easier to live as we please as opposed to putting ourselves aside and striving to live the way God wants us to live.

For those who have heard or read about the life of Jesus, believe that He is the Son of God, and that He rose from the dead, have admitted that we are sinful creatures who need guidance and forgiveness, have been buried in baptism as Jesus was buried in that tomb, and have risen to live a new life with our eyes on Jesus, the good news is—Jesus is coming soon!

We must live our lives loving our enemies, doing good for others, and letting our lights shine in the darkness of this world. We must teach our families about God and Jesus and dedicate ourselves to living the very best we can, secure in the grace which completes us in the eyes of God. Daniel rose to power in Babylon because he lived his life completely for God, even as those in power tried to have him killed for not obeying the king.

We are not promised that life will be easy or carefree. In fact, Jesus warned the apostles of all the things that would happen to them by following Him and going forth to preach to the world. They were beaten, stoned, crucified, imprisoned, and killed.

Let us stand firm in our love for God and live our lives to the fullest for Him. Yes, we live in troubled times, but the only hope of making things better is sharing our love for the Lord and telling others the good news of Jesus Christ. Jesus is coming soon!

Lorna Smith  
Lubbock, Texas



### **Shelter in Troubled Times**

These are troubled times. On January 1, 2020, who knew that a virus was going to sweep the world and change life for all of us? My parents were small children when the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic swept through the world, but they told of the tragedies and hardships they remembered from that time. Naively, I thought nothing like that would ever occur again. Wrong.

My manicurist was the first to break the news to me, and it seemed way too far-fetched to be believable. It soon became not only believable but a reality of everyday life. Politicians, medical experts, and various other experts began to appear somberly on television with dire forecasts of 1-2 million Americans succumbing to COVID-

19. Businesses were forced to shut down, at least as far as business as usual was concerned. Restaurants tried to stay in business by offering curbside pickup and/or delivery to one's home. Churches were forced to cancel regularly scheduled worship services, and members figured out how to worship at home. Life was NOT the same as usual. Most of us learned new vocabulary, including "social distancing," "N-95 masks," and so on.



We are not the first people to live in troubled times. Think back to the earliest days of the Lord's church when fierce persecution arose against Christians. They were forced to flee from their homes and businesses. They fled to other parts of the then-known world, and they carried the gospel they had learned with them and taught the good news of the gospel to those they encountered.



As the first century closed, persecution became even more severe. The church was forced to "go underground," in some cases literally underground, when they lived and worshipped in caves. Persecution became so severe that many died rather than renounce their Savior. Thousands were put to the sword. Others were burned at the stake or thrown to the lions in Roman coliseums. In some places, these and other tortures continued for several centuries.

A week or two into our COVID-19 isolation, my dear friend put it all in perspective when she said, "Well, it's not like we are having to wander in the wilderness for 40 years!" She is right! We all found ways of coping in isolation. We prayed for those who lost their jobs; and we prayed for those who were still working, especially doctors, nurses, paramedics, law enforcement

personnel, and truck drivers. In New York City, a number of police officers and fire fighters died after contracting COVID-19. Even some doctors and nurses succumbed to it. In addition to praying for others, we made phone calls, wrote notes and cards, or texted or emailed loved ones and friends.

Several of us participated in a window visit for a dear member of our congregation who lives in an assisted living center. The staff there brought her to the lobby windows, and we took turns calling her on her phone, then stepping to the window where we could "converse" with her face to face via phone. She loved it, and we were all encouraged as well. Even though the 6 or 7 of us who participated kept our social distance from each other, it was so good to see faces we hadn't seen and hear voices we hadn't heard in 2 to 3 weeks.

As restrictions were eased, we still had to keep our social distance of six feet from others. It was a while before we could frequent restaurants. We can now shop at the grocery stores, but that brings a certain amount of anxiety as we wonder if each person we encounter has THE VIRUS. Some of us washed our hands so much that if we ran out of lotions and creams, our hands would be raw!

The very first week of our forced separation from one another, our preacher gave us all a memory verse, Psalm 56:3, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You." Where is our shelter from the silent, unseen enemy stalking us? It is in our Creator God!

Just as the restrictions of the pandemic were beginning to ease, chaos emerged when a young black man died in police custody in Minneapolis. The news footage showed him belly down on the street with his hands cuffed behind him. A police officer had his knee on the man's neck. Even though the prisoner was protesting that he couldn't breathe, the officer remained in place. At least one other officer stood nearby and did nothing to intervene. It was the most horrifying news video I had seen since September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center towers fell.

Several nights of rioting, looting, and arson soon followed in major cities. Monuments were damaged or defaced; police precincts were looted and burned. Officers were subjected to bricks being thrown at them or to being run down by speeding vehicles. Businesses were looted and burned. At the time of this writing, it is definitely a time of uneasiness as we have no idea how long this will last.



Prayer has become our true solace as we pour out our concerns and fears to our God. With David, we can say, “Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings.” Psalm 61:4, and, “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalm 91:1.



We know that God is in control and that in due time, we will emerge from these troubled times and rejoice with fellow Christians.

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri



### In the Shelter of His Wings

*“Hear my cry, O Lord, listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you. I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever, and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. For you have heard my vows, O God; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.”* Psalm 61:1-5.

Whether Jesus was in Jerusalem or outside the city, we don’t know, but these words uttered by Him were filled with love, compassion, disappointment, and sadness: *“O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”* Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34.

If you live on a farm or were raised on one, you are probably familiar with the sight of a hen gathering her baby chicks under her wings to shelter them. Whenever she thought her babies might be in danger that is what she would do. It’s a wonderful sight of motherly protection!

Jesus is like the hen that gathers her chicks. He will gather us under His wings to protect us if we put our total faith and trust in Him. What a wonderful mental picture!

In the storms of life, how comforting it is for the Christian to know that our Lord hears our voices in our distress (Psalm 55:17). *“You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat,”* Isaiah 25:4. He is also our anchor. *“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure,”* Hebrews 6:19.

We are in some very different, and for some, very difficult times right now with the coronavirus pandemic. My prayer is for all of us that we will come through this time with more love for the Father and our precious Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We will come through with more love for each other; more dedication to Him and each other; our faith and trust in Him will be complete so that anxiety about material or worldly things will no longer be a part of our lives. In other words, that our priorities will be in the right order.

On April 26, I listened to a song that I had never heard before on the Sunset congregation worship services online. Its title is, “A Shield About Me.” Its words are these:

“Thou, O, Lord, art a shield about me,  
You’re my glory.  
You’re the lifter of my head”

I love the words of this song.

I pray that all of us will keep our heads lifted high because Psalm 42:5 says, *“Why are you downcast, O, my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.”* The sons of Korah penned these words while they were in exile and no longer able to worship in the temple or be a leader of the worship within the temple. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:6, *“But God, who comforts the downcast...”*



Let us never forget that God is still in control and that His children are in the “shelter of His wings.”

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, MO



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