

**Psalm 46: 7-11; “What about September 11th, 2001?”, The 2nd Sermon delivered on the 10th Anniversary of the Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by Muslim Terrorists; preached by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 11th, 2011, In the Afternoon Worship Service.**

This morning when I preached to you the first sermon on this subject, I did not explicitly give to you the proposition of these sermons. Let me give it to you now. God’s great strength and His presence with His people; these are the basis of our courage and our confidence; our gladness and our peace, as regards our labors for His glory. I did, however, ask the question of our text: In what ways is God a very present help in time of trouble? We went on to examine the truths that He is very present as our Refuge and our Strength; as our joy and our gladness in troublesome times. Now, this afternoon, we want to look at the further truths mentioned in verses 8 to 11. The 3<sup>rd</sup> truth is this: God is a very present help in time of trouble in that He makes desolations on the Church’s enemies and brings peace to His people. And 4<sup>th</sup> – He is a very present help in that He gives us the assurance that His name and His glory will be exalted in all the earth.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Truth to be remembered is this – God is a very present help in time of trouble in that He makes desolations on the Church’s enemies and brings peace to His people.**

Verse 8 says, “Come behold the works of the Lord, who has made desolations in the earth.” Let us remember this afternoon, that everything that the Lord does, is done in righteousness and wisdom; it is done in perfection in accordance with His eternal plans and purposes for His Church. Even the desolations in the earth that God brings, are reasons for praise to His people. To “make desolations in the earth” means that God brings His righteous judgments against nations and kingdoms that wage war with His chosen people; the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. He makes desolations to those nations and kingdoms that oppose His own purposes related to the advancement of the gospel and Christ’s kingdom. Let’s begin by looking at some of the Biblical usages of this word “desolation” so that we might better understand what is being described. Let’s start with what God did to warn Old Testament Israel of her coming desolation, unless she repented of her sins and turned back to Him. Turn over to Jeremiah 6: 6-8 with me. “For thus has the Lord of hosts said: ‘Cut down trees, and build a mound against Jerusalem.’ “This is the city to be punished.” ‘She is full of oppression in her midst.’ “As a fountain wells up with water, so she wells up with her wickedness.” “Violence and plundering are heard in her.” “Before me continually are griefs and wounds.” “Be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from you; lest I make you desolate, a land not inhabited.

Now this is what God did to us on 9/11/2001. He permitted, for our good, the desolation of the symbols of our strength in the destruction of the World Trade Center, and the damage done at the Pentagon. The United States of America was intended by God to be a City on a Hill; a light to promote the gospel and the truth of

the Word of God to all the nations. And this truly has been the case at some points in our history. But we have declined greatly from what we once were as a nation; in righteousness and truth. Most people do not know much of anything about God; nor do they care to come to church and hear the Word of the Lord to them. They have forgotten God days without number. Look at verse 10 here – “To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear?” “Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot give heed.” “Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; they have no delight in it.” “Therefore (Jeremiah the prophet says) I am full of the fury of the Lord.” “I am weary of holding it in.” “I will pour it out on the children outside, and on the assembly of young men together; for even the husband shall be taken with the wife, the aged with him who is full of days.” “And their house shall be turned over to others, fields and wives together; for I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord.” You can see here that desolations will come to any nation when God’s soul departs from them. It is God’s protective presence with us that makes us strong and invincible as a country. “Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.” (Proverbs 14: 34) God gives warnings through His ministers preaching in His Bible-believing churches, for people to repent. He will strive with them to come to church to hear. He will strive with them through evangelistic efforts, both in the church, and in the community. If they will not hear and heed, then desolations will come. The words of coming judgment will replace the comforting words of promise and blessing. The judgments of God will most certainly come when those who are ministers do not declare sin to be sin, and instead try to heal the wounds of sin slightly. Verse 13 – “Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely.” “They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying ‘Peace, peace!’ when there is no peace.” “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?” “No!” “They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush.” “Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish them, they shall be cast down, says the Lord.”

What a terrible thing it is for any country, then or now, when God’s presence and blessing are removed from them; when His soul departs from them. Thomas Brooks says in his treatise called, ‘The signal presence of God with His people in their greatest troubles’, “The Divine Presence is the greatest good in the world.” “It is life eternal, it is the bosom of God, the gate of glory, the beginning of heaven, the suburbs of happiness, and therefore be much in blessing of God, in admiring of God for His presence with you in a dark and trying day.” And further on Brooks says, “When God departs from a people, that people lies open to all storms, tempests, and dangers.” “Now if it be the greatest evil in the world to be shut out from the gracious presence of Christ, then it must be the greatest mercy in the world to enjoy the gracious presence of God in our great troubles and desperate dangers.” We have already seen in our study that when God brings a judgment upon a nation, sometimes Christians get caught up in it. But God will be a very present help to them in, and through it. Many people who believed in God’s promises, saw the destruction of the temple in

Jerusalem, and were taken to Babylon. But trusting in God, God was still with them. It will be the same with us if greater calamities than 9/11 occur in the United States.

God brings desolations on the Church's enemies. He has allowed the United States to search out, find, and kill Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind behind the 9/11 terrorist actions that day. We all think that this was good; that he was found and can no longer perpetrate his evil schemes. But some in our country, even Christians among us, have sought revenge rather than true justice. But the Book of Proverbs says, "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest the Lord see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him." Sometimes we can see the perversity and sins of others clearly, but we cannot see our own. This is particularly bad if we are Christians who know that God is sovereign in all that He permits and all that He does. We do see that abortion and homosexuality; fornication and adultery, are great sins against God. But other, more subtle sins of anger leading us to have the attitude of revenge towards our enemies; that we do not see. Romans 13: 19 – 'Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" "Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of burning fire on his head." (That is; that God will avenge whatever has been done against you." This is not to say that we cannot undertake military actions to bring either sinful criminal individuals, or sinful criminal nations to justice. This, I believe, we must do. But we must go about it in a righteous Biblical way, and not from either motives of personal or national revenge.

In some ways, in our country and in the Church; taken in a general sense, we have been a desolation to ourselves in our day. When churches embrace false doctrine, or when individual people in those churches will not repent of their sins of covetousness and greed, sensuality and pride; then God appoints chastening to bring them back to Himself. There are many other sins which could be mentioned. This is why our country was hit so hard by the judgments of 9/11. It was because we did not believe that we deserved this chastening judgment. And so we have been more interested in destroying those who, by evil deeds, would destroy us; than we are in asking, "Why did God permit this to take place? Why did He remove our protection from us? We as a nation have not repented of our sins. Many among us have not turned to do righteousness. We as a nation are not trusting in God and His Word in order that we might bring glory to Him. We are too busy bringing glory and pleasure to ourselves. Let us fall on our knees in secret and confess these sins before our great God and Father. "If my people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7: 14) That wonderful promise was given to King Solomon, and to Israel, at the time when the Old Testament first temple was built, and when it was dedicated. But Israel departed from God and His Word to them, and so He brought them to desolation.

But let us see, as well, that God the Righteous Judge will also deal with those who come against those countries who promote the destruction of His people, or the good

institutions which He has built up for them. He did this Babylon in days of old; and He is doing it now with those countries which foster terrorism or shelter terrorists, in the world today. Turn with me to Jeremiah 51, verse 24. “And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight, says the Lord.” “Behold I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth, says the Lord.” “And I will stretch out My hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain.” “They shall not take from you a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever, says the Lord.” And verse 29 – “And all the land will tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant.” Now, you can see here that “to make Babylon desolate” meant that all its beautiful and strong dwelling places would be torn down and taken apart. No one would live there any more. It would be empty of life, empty of inhabitants; it would be ruined. This is what happened to them there in that day. The Lord brought the Medes and the Persians against them and brought them to desolation. Even so, I believe, that the Lord has given victory to the United States and her allies; to bring desolation to those in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Pakistan wherever terrorists have been trying to promote their anti-Christian and anti-United States government propaganda. Where we have erred morally or Biblically in our actions, the Lord has, and He will deal with us. But He will make desolations in the earth upon all the kingdoms and nations that oppose His Word and the Gospel of Christ.

**4<sup>th</sup> – He is a very present help in that He gives us the assurance that His name and His glory will be exalted in all the earth.**

Verse 9 says, “He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth.” “Be still and know that I am God’ I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” “The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” The reason that God’s people are to be still and know that He will be exalted among the nations is that God has given Christ (the Lord of Hosts) all power in heaven and earth. God the Father is the only One who can perfectly exalt the cause of Christ to the height that He wants it to be. The Father has given to the Son, the Nations. But the nations do not want Christ to rule over them. That truth is not mentioned directly here; but the effects of the reign of Messiah are. But if we look over at Psalm 2 it says, “Why do the heathen nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?” “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cord from us.’” “He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.” “Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.” “I will declare the decree; the Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’” “Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.” “You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Someday there will be peace among the nations, because Christ will be ruling through the saints in a greater sense than He presently

is. This is why we pray, “Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Christ died so that He would see the greater results of submission to His reign, and many coming to know Him among the Nations.

At times in the history of the Church this has involved wars between nations. Someday, there will be no war between nations any longer during the time of the Millennium. Christ will make these wars to cease to the end of the earth. He will not do these great things by His Second Coming. He will do these things by His providential ordering of events in relation to His people in many countries, having to try to deal with the heathen nations of the world who want to destroy Christians and the Christian religion. It was the false religion of Islam that brought the men who performed these actions of terrorism, to do the terrible things that they did, on 9/11. This was Satanically inspired warfare as well. But what happened on 9/11 led to the United States having to initiate the “War on Terror”. This war led to our invasion of Iraq and the deposing of Saddam Hussein. It has led to our involvements in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and now Libya as well. Already the Muslim religion’s tenants of violence have been exposed to the world. Now through our responding to these wars and our propagation of the gospel among the Muslim nations, the foundations of their false religion are beginning to crumble. When God brings a providence like 9/11, He has plans for both judgment and mercy. Judgment upon what is false. Mercy upon those who do not deserve it; whether they are Jew, or Muslim, or the Gentile nations of the World. When God acts we should be still. We should not fight His purpose. We should pray to learn from it. We should fight against evil in a righteous way. When God opens a door for the gospel, we should walk through it. Let us not fret about the outcome of the gospel among the Nations. Christ will be exalted among the Nations. He will be exalted in the earth! And Christ will be with His people during the worst and darkest of situations that are yet to come before the Millennium. He will be with us until the end of the age. Christ will be exalted among all the nations in a coming day. He will be exalted in all the earth through many people coming to know Him in a coming day when Satan shall be bound. When Satan shall be bound, it will all be God’s doing. Christ will see to it that Satan will not have the power to stir up the nations to war against the saints for the Thousand Years. This great incarceration of Satan is spoken of in Daniel 7 in this way. “But the court shall be seated , and they shall take away his (Antichrist’s) dominion (of which the Islamic nations are a part), to consume and destroy it forever.” “Then the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.” “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.” Christ reigns now during all the Church Age, but He shall reign upon the earth spiritually with the saints during the Millennial time period that is coming. Let us remember September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 as one of the turning points in the life of our nation. It was the day that the Lord woke us up to realize the greatness of our sins as a nation. But it was also the day when we, as a nation realized that we have a great role to play in the history of the defeat of the Antichristian power of Islam. Even

more important; we learned how good a thing it is to have men and women of true moral courage in our midst. People who went in to help those who were hurt and wounded by the collapse of the towers of the World Trade Center. Not all of them were Christians, but everyone who participated in trying to help; the police and fire-fighters and the medical personnel; all of these dear people knew that day how important it was to try to rescue those who were perishing physically. And those who were Christians knew how important it was, also, to communicate the gospel. Let us remember September 11, 2001, in this righteous way. Let us rise to the occasion and fight righteously against all that is false; whether it is in righteous wars with earthly weapons, or fighting the good fight of faith in believing that the gospel will conquer the nations in a coming day. “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Jesus Christ is the Lord of Hosts. Jesus Christ is the God of Jacob.

Footnote:

These verses that we are studying in Psalm 46: 9 are speaking to us, about the wars that Satan instigates against the Church. These wars are initiated by leaders of nations whom Satan influences; men who want to conquer and enslave other people for their own selfish ends. People like Mussolini and Hitler and Hirohito in World War II. The wars between nations are often begun by nations which hold to false views of man and false views of God. Hitler’s attempt to take over the world, and to exterminate the Jews was a failure because He was fighting against God’s truth with his false view of the superiority of the Arian race. But the Jews that He despised, and was trying to extinguish, were God’s ancient people. They are beloved for the sake of the Fathers it says in Romans 11: 28. “For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.” That means that there is a future purpose of God for the Jewish people and nation. That purpose is very great. According to Romans 11, God will bring about their national conversion to Christ in a coming day. And they will be brought into the Church. Hitler’s attempts to extinguish them during WW II only led to their eventually being able to come back into the land; which was given to them by God so many thousands of years ago. They are not converted to Christ yet. And they are surrounded by the Islamic enemies in the nations all around them. But God will stretch forth His hand someday and breathe the breath of life into His ancient people so that they will become a great army of witnesses to the truth of the gospel and the Word of God. (Ezekiel 37) But if I am reading Ezekiel 39 correctly, this will not come until after the battle of Armageddon which will take place before the conversion of the Jews. That battle will be the last great war which will be fought by men against each other in the history of the world. It is after that battle that “He will cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth. Men will beat their swords into plowshares and learn war no more. (Isaiah Chapter 2) It is after the description of that battle that these words are found in verse 21 – “I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them.” “So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that

day forward. In verse 39 it says, “And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” says the Lord God.”