

SAFE AND SECURE

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Psalm 9:9 (NIV)

Psalm 9 was written by King David after a successful victory over his enemies. In various translations, refuge is also called shelter, fortress, defense, and high tower. The Hebrew word means a high, safe place, inaccessible to the enemy.

When I visited the Luther lands years ago, I was able to tour the Wartburg Castle, where Luther fled for safety, took on the name "Junker Jorg" and translated the New Testament. It is a beautiful fortress on a precipice of 410 meters. The words of Luther's famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress" really resonated with me, as I pictured him in this sanctuary, safe from those who sought to kill him.

Times of trouble? They are well known to us in 2024, as we think about serious illnesses, death, job loss, financial worries, family confrontations, and so forth. Daily, on the news, we are bombarded with war and its effects, as well as natural disasters. This verse reminds us that God is our safe space, His presence is sure, He is worth trusting, and He will not abandon us. We can go to Him at all times, as well as times of calamity. When we are weary from the fight against the devil, the world, and our flesh, God offers us rest and safety.

Another "refuge" Luther fled to, about ten years later, was Coburg Castle. He was banned from the empire so was not able to go to Augsburg with the delegation from Saxony. This fortress was used in countless military conflicts. I visited the Luther room and there is a writing on the wall which he scratched in Latin. It is Psalm 118:17: **"I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord."** May we not only find hope and refuge in the Lord in times of trouble, but, as Luther, use the times of challenge to witness even more boldly of God's great love in Jesus.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, help us to come to You for comfort and guidance in times of trouble. Help us to trust Your will in all circumstances. Amen*

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