

The God of the Storm

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9/29/2013

Introduction

Sacred Scripture oft refers to storms, both literally and figuratively (Matt. 16:1-3; Psa. 55:4-8). Let us consider both, focusing first upon physical storms, and then upon the spiritual equivalent.

Matthew 16:1-3 (NASB95) — 1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 But He replied to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ 3 “And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?

Psalms 55:4-8 (NASB95) — 4 My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 5 Fear and trembling come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. 6 I said, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. 7 “Behold, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah. 8 “I would hasten to my place of refuge From the stormy wind and tempest.”

Storms can be destructive (Zech. 7:13-14), and also beneficial (Zech. 10:1).

Zechariah 7:13-14 (NASB95) — 13 “And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen,” says the Lord of hosts; 14 “but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.”

Zechariah 10:1 (NASB95) — 1 Ask rain from the Lord at the time of the spring rain— The Lord who makes the storm clouds; And He will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to each man.

God’s Role in Physical Storms

He Brings the Storm

Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, sits upon His throne, clothed with majesty and girded with strength. His praise is greater than the sounds of many waters, the pounding waves of the flood, and the mighty breakers of the sea (Psa. 93:1-5).

Psalms 93:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will

*not be moved. 2 Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. 3 **The floods have lifted up, O Lord, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. 4 More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, The Lord on high is mighty. 5 Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore.***

All creation offers its praise: the heaven and the earth, angelic hosts and human hoards, the sun, moon and stars, fire and hail, snow and clouds, and the stormy wind, fulfilling His word... (Psa. 148:1-14, esp. vs. 8).

*Psalm 148:1-14 (NASB95) — 1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light! 4 Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created. 6 He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away. 7 Praise the Lord from the earth, Sea monsters and all deeps; 8 **Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;** 9 Mountains and all hills; Fruit trees and all cedars; 10 Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and winged fowl; 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth; 12 Both young men and virgins; Old men and children. 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven. 14 And He has lifted up a horn for His people, Praise for all His godly ones; Even for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him. Praise the Lord!*

Devastating judgments fall upon the wicked, as the Lord punishes them with thunder and earthquake, whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a consuming fire (Isa. 29:5-8).

*Isaiah 29:5-8 (NASB95) — 5 But the multitude of your enemies will become like fine dust, And the multitude of the ruthless ones like the chaff which blows away; And it will happen instantly, suddenly. 6 **From the Lord of hosts you will be punished with thunder and earthquake and loud noise, With whirlwind and tempest and the flame of a consuming fire.** 7 And the multitude of all the nations who wage war against Ariel, Even all who wage war against her and her stronghold, and who distress her, Will be like a dream, a vision of the night. 8 It will be as when a hungry man dreams— And behold, he is eating; But when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied, Or as when a thirsty man dreams— And behold, he is drinking, But when he awakens, behold, he is faint And his thirst is not quenched. Thus the multitude of all the nations will be Who wage war against Mount Zion.*

Wayward Israel faced the calamitous storm of Jehovah, sent forth in His wrath, swirling down upon the head of the ungodly (Jer. 23:16-24).

Jeremiah 23:16-24 (NASB95) — 16 Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the Lord. 17 “They keep saying to those who despise Me, ‘The Lord has said, “You will have peace” ’; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, ‘Calamity will

not come upon you.’ 18 “But who has stood in the council of the Lord, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? 19 **“Behold, the storm of the Lord has gone forth in wrath, Even a whirling tempest; It will swirl down on the head of the wicked. 20 “The anger of the Lord will not turn back Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it. 21 “I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied. 22 “But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds. 23 “Am I a God who is near,” declares the Lord, “And not a God far off? 24 “Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?” declares the Lord. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the Lord.**

The wicked are pursued by His tempest and terrified by His storms, to the end that they repent and seek His name, or persist in their rebellion and perish (Psa. 83:13-18).

Psalm 83:13-18 (NASB95) — 13 O my God, make them like the whirling dust, Like chaff before the wind. 14 Like fire that burns the forest And like a flame that sets the mountains on fire, 15 So pursue them with Your tempest And terrify them with Your storm. 16 Fill their faces with dishonor, That they may seek Your name, O Lord. 17 Let them be ashamed and dismayed forever, And let them be humiliated and perish, 18 That they may know that You alone, whose name is the Lord, Are the Most High over all the earth.

When God brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, the fountains of the great deep burst open, the floodgates of the sky opened, and it rained upon the earth for forty days and forty nights (Gen. 6:1-8, 7:6-12).

Genesis 6:1-8 (NASB95) — 1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. 3 Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. 5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 The Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

*Genesis 7:6-12 (NASB95) — 6 Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth. 7 Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood. 8 Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, 9 there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. 10 It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth. 11 **In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of***

the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. 12 The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.

When God delivered Israel from Canaanite oppression in the time of Deborah, the torrent of Kishon swept them away, suggesting a downpour flooded the Jezreel valley, neutralizing the advantage of Sisera's chariots, leading to the defeat of his army (Judges 4-5, esp. 4:4-7, 12-16 and 5:19-21).

Judges 4:4-7 (NASB95) — 4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 She used to sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the sons of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 Now she sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, “Behold, the Lord, the God of Israel, has commanded, ‘Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun. 7 ‘I will draw out to you Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his many troops to the river Kishon, and I will give him into your hand.’ ”

Judges 4:12-16 (NASB95) — 12 Then they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. 13 Sisera called together all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the people who were with him, from Harosheth-hagoyim to the river Kishon. 14 Deborah said to Barak, “Arise! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the Lord has gone out before you.” So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. 15 The Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot and fled away on foot. 16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth-hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not even one was left.

Judges 5:19-21 (NASB95) — 19 “The kings came and fought; Then fought the kings of Canaan At Taanach near the waters of Megiddo; They took no plunder in silver. 20 “The stars fought from heaven, From their courses they fought against Sisera. 21 “The torrent of Kishon swept them away, The ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. O my soul, march on with strength.

After demonstrating God's might at Mt. Carmel, Elijah slew the prophets of Baal beside the Brook Kishon. The drought, which had lasted for three years, ended as a small cloud, originally the size of a man's hand, quickly covered the entire sky and brought a raging torrent (1 Kings 18:36-46).

1 Kings 18:36-46 (NASB95) — 36 At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. 37 “Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again.” 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the

stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God." 40 Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape." So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. 41 Now Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower." 42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees. 43 He said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back" seven times. 44 It came about at the seventh time, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.' " 45 In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. 46 Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

He Protects in the Storm

Noah and his family were preserved in the ark. Being warned by God about things not yet seen, in faithful reverence he prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Gen. 7:17-24; Heb. 11:7).

Genesis 7:17-24 (NASB95) — 17 Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. 18 The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. 19 The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. 20 The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. 21 All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; 22 of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. 23 Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. 24 The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

Hebrews 11:7 (NASB95) — 7 Hebrews 11:7 (NASB95) — 7 By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Ascending Sinai, surrounded by the thick storm cloud enveloping the mountain, Moses communed with God, and was sheltered in the cleft of the rock as He revealed His glory (Exod. 20:18–21; 33:17-23).

Exodus 20:18–21 (NASB95) — 18 All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. 19 Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.” 20 Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.” 21 So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.

Exodus 33:17-23 (NASB95) — 17 The Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.” 18 Then Moses said, “I pray You, show me Your glory!” 19 And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.” 20 But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” 21 Then the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 “Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.”

God protected Paul and his companions as his ship was caught in a violent storm. After they had been driven along by the winds, and neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, all hope of their being saved was gradually abandoned. Yet, an angel appeared, saying, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.” Exhorting the crew, the apostle said, “Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on a certain island.” Indeed, this is exactly what occurred (Acts 27:1-44, esp. vs. 22-25).

Acts 27:1-44 (NASB95) — 1 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius. 2 And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica. 3 The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care. 4 From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary. 5 When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it. 7 When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone; 8 and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea. 9 When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them, 10 and said to them, “Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.” 11 But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul. 12 Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if

somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. 13 When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore. 14 But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo; 15 and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along. 16 Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control. 17 After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along. 18 The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo; 19 and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20 Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned. 21 When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. 22 "Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 "For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, 24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.' 25 "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. 26 "But we must run aground on a certain island." 27 But when the fourteenth night came, as we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors began to surmise that they were approaching some land. 28 They took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and a little farther on they took another sounding and found it to be fifteen fathoms. 29 Fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak. 30 But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it fall away. 33 Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing. 34 "Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation, for not a hair from the head of any of you will perish." 35 Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat. 36 All of them were encouraged and they themselves also took food. 37 All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons. 38 When they had eaten enough, they began to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea. 39 When day came, they could not recognize the land; but they did observe a bay with a beach, and they resolved to drive the ship onto it if they could. 40 And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders; and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach. 41 But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern began to be broken up by the force of the waves. 42 The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away

and escape; 43 but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, 44 and the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And so it happened that they all were brought safely to land.

He Calms the Storm

Ethan the Ezrahite sang of God's commitment to His covenant and His concern for Israel's afflictions, saying, "Who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the swelling of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them..." (Psa. 89:5-18, esp. vs. 8-10).

Psalm 89:5-18 (NASB95) — 5 The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Lord; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. 6 For who in the skies is comparable to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty is like the Lord, 7 A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, And awesome above all those who are around Him? 8 O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. 9 You rule the swelling of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them. 10 You Yourself crushed Rahab [i.e., Egypt] like one who is slain; You scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm. 11 The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all it contains, You have founded them. 12 The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at Your name. 13 You have a strong arm; Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted. 14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You. 15 How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O Lord, they walk in the light of Your countenance. 16 In Your name they rejoice all the day, And by Your righteousness they are exalted. 17 For You are the glory of their strength, And by Your favor our horn is exalted. 18 For our shield belongs to the Lord, And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Psalm 89:8-9 (NASB95) — 8 O Lord God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. 9 You rule the swelling of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them.

Consider how Jesus manifested His divine power over nature, calming the raging storm on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25).

Matthew 8:23-27 ... 23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. 24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. 25 And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" 26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. 27 The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (NASB95)

Mark 4:35-41 ... 35 On that day, when evening came, He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as

*He was; and other boats were with Him. 37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. 38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 **And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. 40 And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"*** (NASB95)

*Luke 8:22-25 ... 22 Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out. 23 But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. 24 **They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. 25 And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"*** (NASB95)

God's Role in Spiritual Storms

He Brings the Storm

As mentioned earlier, God causes disaster to fall upon the wicked and the wayward.

Sometimes we bring calamity upon ourselves (Prov. 1:20-33; 2 Pet. 2:17).

*Proverbs 1:20-33 (NASB95) — 20 Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square; 21 At the head of the noisy streets she cries out; At the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: 22 "How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing And fools hate knowledge? 23 "Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. 24 **"Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; 25 And you neglected all my counsel And did not want my reproof; 26 I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes, 27 When your dread comes like a storm And your calamity comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. 28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me, 29 Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord. 30 "They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof. 31 "So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices. 32 "For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them. 33 "But he who listens to me shall live securely And will be at ease from the dread of evil."***

2 Peter 2:17 (NASB95) — 17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

On other occasions, God allows us to face unprovoked and undeserved adversity, allowing us to be tested and tried, that we might grow thereby (Deut. 8:3; 2 Cor. 11:24-29; 12:7-10).

Deuteronomy 8:3 (NASB95) — 3 “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 11:24-29 (NASB95) — 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NASB95) — 7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

He Protects in the Storm

On the day the Lord delivered David from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul, the Sweet Psalmist of Israel said, “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer... For the waves of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me; the cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me.” In his distress, David cried unto the Lord; God answered from on high, descending in the menacing storm, rescuing him from all these perils (2 Sam. 22:1-51; cf. also Psa. 18, esp. vs. 4-6).

*2 Samuel 22:1-51 (NASB95) — 1 And David spoke the words of this song to the Lord in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2 He said, “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; 3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence. 4 “I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies. 5 **“For the waves of death encompassed me; The torrents of destruction overwhelmed me; 6 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.** 7 “In my distress I called upon the Lord, Yes, I cried to my God; And from His temple He heard my voice, And my cry for help came into His ears. 8 “Then the earth shook and quaked, The foundations of heaven were trembling*

And were shaken, because He was angry. 9 "Smoke went up out of His nostrils, Fire from His mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by it. 10 "He bowed the heavens also, and came down With thick darkness under His feet. 11 "And He rode on a cherub and flew; And He appeared on the wings of the wind. 12 "And He made darkness canopies around Him, A mass of waters, thick clouds of the sky. 13 "From the brightness before Him Coals of fire were kindled. 14 "The Lord thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice. 15 "And He sent out arrows, and scattered them, Lightning, and routed them. 16 "Then the channels of the sea appeared, The foundations of the world were laid bare By the rebuke of the Lord, At the blast of the breath of His nostrils. 17 "He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. 18 "He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. 19 "They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the Lord was my support. 20 "He also brought me forth into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me. 21 "The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. 22 "For I have kept the ways of the Lord, And have not acted wickedly against my God. 23 "For all His ordinances were before me, And as for His statutes, I did not depart from them. 24 "I was also blameless toward Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. 25 "Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness before His eyes. 26 "With the kind You show Yourself kind, With the blameless You show Yourself blameless; 27 With the pure You show Yourself pure, And with the perverted You show Yourself astute. 28 "And You save an afflicted people; But Your eyes are on the haughty whom You abase. 29 "For You are my lamp, O Lord; And the Lord illumines my darkness. 30 "For by You I can run upon a troop; By my God I can leap over a wall. 31 "As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. 32 "For who is God, besides the Lord? And who is a rock, besides our God? 33 "God is my strong fortress; And He sets the blameless in His way. 34 "He makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me on my high places. 35 "He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 36 "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your help makes me great. 37 "You enlarge my steps under me, And my feet have not slipped. 38 "I pursued my enemies and destroyed them, And I did not turn back until they were consumed. 39 "And I have devoured them and shattered them, so that they did not rise; And they fell under my feet. 40 "For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. 41 "You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, And I destroyed those who hated me. 42 "They looked, but there was none to save; Even to the Lord, but He did not answer them. 43 "Then I pulverized them as the dust of the earth; I crushed and stamped them as the mire of the streets. 44 "You have also delivered me from the contentions of my people; You have kept me as head of the nations; A people whom I have not known serve me. 45 "Foreigners pretend obedience to me; As soon as they hear, they obey me. 46 "Foreigners lose heart, And come trembling out of their fortresses. 47 "The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; And exalted be God, the rock of my salvation, 48 The God who executes vengeance for me, And brings down peoples under me, 49 Who also brings me out from my enemies; You even lift me above those who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent man. 50 "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the nations, And I will sing praises to Your name. 51 "He is a tower of

deliverance to His king, And shows lovingkindness to His anointed, To David and his descendants forever.”

Psalm 18:4-6 (NASB95) — 4 The cords of death encompassed me, And the torrents of ungodliness terrified me. 5 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB95) — 13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

The prophets employed similar language, often with Messianic overtones, in describing the divine protection offered to the faithful remnant: Over Mount Zion and Jerusalem, there will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain (Isa. 4:2-6; cf. also 25:1-5; 32:1-2).

*Isaiah 4:2-6 (NASB95) — 2 In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel. 3 It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem. 4 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, 5 then the Lord will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. **6 There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.***

*Isaiah 25:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, Plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness. 2 For You have made a city into a heap, A fortified city into a ruin; A palace of strangers is a city no more, It will never be rebuilt. 3 Therefore a strong people will glorify You; Cities of ruthless nations will revere You. **4 For You have been a defense for the helpless, A defense for the needy in his distress, A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; For the breath of the ruthless Is like a rain storm against a wall.** 5 Like heat in drought, You subdue the uproar of aliens; Like heat by the shadow of a cloud, the song of the ruthless is silenced.*

*Isaiah 32:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Behold, a king will reign righteously And princes will rule justly. **2 Each will be like a refuge from the wind And a shelter from the storm, Like streams of water in a dry country, Like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land.***

He Calms the Storm

The God of our salvation stills the roaring of the seas, the crashing of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples (Psa. 65:5-8).

*Psalm 65:5-8 (NASB95) — 5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; 6 Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might; 7 **Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples.** 8 They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy.*

He aids those who cry out to Him in their trouble, stilling the storm, quieting their hearts, guiding them to their desired haven (Psa. 107:23-30).

*Psalm 107:23-30 (NASB95) — 23 Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters; 24 They have seen the works of the Lord, And His wonders in the deep. 25 For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, Which lifted up the waves of the sea. 26 They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in their misery. 27 They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, And were at their wits' end. 28 **Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses.** 29 He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed. 30 Then they were glad because they were quiet, So He guided them to their desired haven.*

Conclusion

In times of anxiety, we should trust in God, casting all our cares upon Him, knowing that He cares (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Philippians 4:6-7 (NASB95) — 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:6-7 (NASB95) — 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

In times of doubt and distress, we should focus our minds and still our hearts, offering the sacrifice of the righteous, and trusting in the Lord (Psa. 4:1-5).

*Psalm 4:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer. 2 O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah. 3 But know that the Lord has set apart the godly man for Himself; The Lord hears when I call to Him. 4 **Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.** 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the Lord.*

Instead of yielding to despair, let us wait upon the Lord (Psa. 27:13-14).

Psalm 27:13-14 (NASB95) — 13 I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living. 14 Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord.

When the waters roar and foam, and the mountains quake, as if they are about to slip into the heart of the sea, may we trust Jehovah's providential plan and purpose, and heed the ancient admonition: "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psa. 46:1-11, esp. vs. 10).

Psalm 46:1-11 (NASB95) — 1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; 3 Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.Selah. 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. 6 The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted. 7 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold.Selah. 8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. 9 He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. 10 "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." 11 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

In times of transition, we should also trust in the Lord, and "Be still" (2 Kings 2:1–14, esp. vs. 3 & 5).

2 Kings 2:1–14 (NASB95) — 1 And it came about when the Lord was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. 3 Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; be still." 4 Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. 5 The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be still." 6 Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." And he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. 7 Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. 9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." 10 He said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." 11 As they were going along and talking, behold, there

appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. 12 Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. 13 He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.