

# Preparing for a Disaster

By Paul Anderson

Our country was not prepared for 9-11. Airport security proved ineffective, as did the policies for passengers in the air. The day stings in our memory. And yet a recent prophecy by an established prophetic leader in Europe speaks of a disaster worse than the Asian tsunami. Scientists have talked for decades about parts of the coast of California falling into the sea—and some small portions have. Seismologists are still waiting for “the big one” on the west coast, the quake predicted to do horrendous damage.

At our May 6, 2006 “**Coming Home**” seminar, Erich Reber, our guest speaker from Switzerland, gave a prophetic word that told of coming disaster to the USA.

To read this word, please go to our website:  
[www.LutheranRenewal.org](http://www.LutheranRenewal.org).

I experienced several earthquakes while living in Southern California. Having the ground beneath you shake like Jell-O unsettles the nerves. When what you expect to be stable—like mountains and streets—suddenly becomes unstable, fear overtakes calm. Victims of the tsunami had seen the ocean break tamely on the shore for years. But on that eventful day, a tourist site turned into a graveyard. When water, the basic need for living things, rages out of control, it becomes a force of death instead of life. No defense could have resisted the power surge of the waves. And yet greater forces are predicted in the future, including those

near the curtain call of time announced in the book of Revelation. How should we get ready?

Colossal upheavals are not new, and the psalmist speaks of disasters of worldwide proportions. But first he writes, “*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble*” (Psalm 46:1).

**God is...**

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A refuge is a safe place. In times of disaster we need that. The World Trade Center stood as a safe place on 9-10, not on 9-11. The coast of Sri Lanka proved unsafe for the bathers. Our greatest safety in time of trouble, according to Psalm 46, is to discover the presence of God. When we need help in trouble, we look for a refuge. That might be a friend or a drug—or it might be God!

Trouble comes in degrees. Every day offers some trouble—a broken dishwasher, an upset stomach, an ailing automobile. The psalmist, however, speaks about trouble of cosmic proportions, where not to know the presence of God leaves us frozen in fear. Imagine this: “*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*”

Trouble brings fear. Perhaps nothing elicits greater fear than water out of control, especially for the Israelites, not a sea-faring people. By contrast, nothing evokes a greater sense of peace than quiet waters, a lovely mountain lake or a slow-moving brook. The latter picture is captured by the psalmist to describe God’s city: “*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells*” (v. 4). God’s presence transforms a horrendous storm into a quiet brook. Though waters are foaming on earth, a peaceful river flows in heaven.



The psalmist refers to the two worst kinds of disasters—the natural disaster, the eruptions of nature, and the man-made disasters, such as 9-11. The unstoppable forces of nature and of human nature can only be stopped by a great God: “Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire” (v. 8,9). God can make war an impossibility by taking away the weapons. No one else can. When He brings an end to the war, the landscape shows the slaughtered, like the aftermath of a tornado. Then the voice of God is heard above the shrill cries of the wounded and the dying: “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (v. 10). Nothing approaches the voice of God for power—no storm, no earthquake, no cataclysmic eruption.

The psalmist seems to say in effect, “We’ve seen what people can do. Now we must see what God can do.” He is the Lord of hosts, literally “the Lord of the heavenly army.” And it is His voice that puts an end to all war. There is no greater power in the universe.

Little boys are beaten up daily on the way home from school by big boys. They live in fear of it happening again. And yet they don’t feel equipped to prepare for what could occur again. What if that little boy who can’t sleep at night meets a friend who is bigger and stronger than any of the big boys—and that friend just happens to like him. The one thing he needs to overcome the bullies is his friend’s presence. And because that friend lives down the block, he decides to walk to and from school with him. His presence becomes the refuge he needs. He carries his fortress with him. He doesn’t go to a place; the person is the place. And God is that person! And He is WITH us. The best way to prepare for a future disaster is to practice God’s presence today. Know Him as your daily safe place, the refuge that you run to first—before a spouse or a meeting or medication. If He is your present help in trouble, He will be your future help as well.

The refrain that occurred once before is repeated to close the psalm: “The

*Lord Almighty is with*

*us; the God of Jacob is our fortress” (v.11). We have the presence and the protection of God. So the best way to prepare for future trouble, whether a broken down car or a broken down universe, is the presence of the One Person who can make a difference “when the earth shakes and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.”*

St. John in the last book of the Bible praises the God “*who is, and who was, and who is to come*” (Revelation 1:8). The most basic statement of faith is this: God is. He is not stuck in history or in a hope for the future. He is our present tense God. And the present is when we need Him most. And yet He is also the God of the past. He not only is; He was. He was Jacob’s God. Furthermore, history impacts destiny, and He is also the God of future—of our future. He not only is with us; He will be with us! So if you are looking for a plan to put into place in preparing for a future disaster, the best plan is in the Presence!

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