

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Psalms: Living By Faith In God
XLVIII. God's Haven From Harmful Leaders
(Psalm 48:1-14)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

As we begin the new year of 2023 today, we stand in need of a haven from a variety of harmful leaders:

(1) We need a haven from harmful elected officials: "Social Security's future is not secure." It "is running out of time and money, recent increases in government spending and debt have crowded out options for reform, and virtually all Americans stand to lose from policymakers' inaction . . . For years, politicians have turned a blind eye to Social Security's insolvency – even as its deficits have surged to \$20.4 trillion, or \$157,000 per household." (Rachel Greszler, "Five things to know about new Social Security protections," Republican-American, Dec. 24, 2022, p. 8A)

(2) We need a haven from harmful administrators: ". . . (E)ntire urban school systems are plagued by high rates of chronic absence, dismal test scores, and student violence. Pediatric hospitals are still seeing enormous surges in mental health emergencies and suicidal thoughts. Over a million students have left U. S. public schools and enrollment may continue to decline. The policy of school closures . . . broke the already fragile . . . public education system and initiated a tailspin of profound and worsening dysfunction among children and adolescents. Despite this, not a single official or politician responsible has resigned, apologized, or been held accountable . . . There is a . . . lack of self-reflection among the experts who pushed for this disaster and normalized remote learning." (Alex Gutentag, Dec. 6 Tablet Magazine article, "The Recess of Responsibility" as cited in "Quotable," Ibid., Dec. 15, 2022, p. 10A)

(3) We need a haven from harmful leaders in the social media platforms, the government and the Democratic Party who are bonded together to indoctrinate us ideologically: (a) The editorial, "Mr. Trump blazes an important trail" (Ibid., Dec. 26, 2022, p. 8A), reported, "Not only are major social-media platforms subject to the political biases of their 'content moderators' (often a euphemism for censors), but they have been used by unelected intelligence-agency bureaucrats as political vehicles for the purpose of circumventing the First Amendment, manufacturing ostensibly organic narratives, and engineering election outcomes." (b) Nolan Finley, editor of the editorial page at The Detroit News in "Twitter Files show bond between Democrats and Big Tech" (Ibid.) asserted, ". . . President Donald Trump came to be permanently banned from Twitter after the Jan. 6 Capitol riots. It was not a responsive decision, but one that had been in the works for months, at the urging of several prominent Democrats, including former first lady Michelle Obama . . . Social media companies are basically adjuncts of the Democratic Party."

(4) We need a haven from ideologically harmful religious ministers: (a) "Having gathered hundreds of people at Weaver High School . . . the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance called for a state law to limit housing rent increases to 3% annually" for the sake of "social justice . . . The presumption . . . is that landlords cause inflation" so "they . . . should bear its financial burdens – as if . . . a landlord's costs . . . don't rise with everyone else's. Landlords don't cause inflation" – the "government" does – when "it increases the money supply out of proportion to the economy's production of goods and services . . . But the clergy group favors more . . . government . . . So" they "will blame landlords" and "presume to teach . . . about the morality required by God. (b) The clergy . . . also called on state government to spend hundreds of millions more dollars on city school systems" for "improving education . . . as if increasing spending on city schools hasn't been Connecticut policy for almost 40 years without ever improving student performance. But calling for more . . . spending . . . is a lot easier . . . than telling . . . parishioners that the primary cause of educational failure is their own childbearing outside marriage and the resulting child neglect." (Chris Powell, "Clergy sinks to scapegoating; and mermaids are unnecessary," Ibid., December 21, 2022, p. 7A)

Need: *So, we ask, "How can we gain a haven from the harmful leaders that we face today?!"*

- I. Psalm 48:1-14 praises God for delivering Jerusalem from harmful kings who had tried to invade her:**
- A. The psalmist told how kings had assembled together to attack Jerusalem, but that the Lord's presence and work had astounded and panicked them so that these kings had fled, and God had destroyed them, Psa. 48:4-7.
 - B. Accordingly, the psalmist expressed great praise to the Lord for making Jerusalem exalted, Psalm 48:1-3.
 - C. God's praise extended to the ends of the earth (v. 10), causing the city's inhabitants to rejoice, Psalm 48:11.
 - D. The psalmist urged his listeners to walk around the city of Jerusalem, considering its ramparts and citadels so as to testify to the next generation of Jerusalem's great God Who had protected them, Psalm 48:12-14a ESV.
- II. Accordingly, God's ministry as Jerusalem's Haven is described in terms of His multi-faceted blessings:**
- A. God became Jerusalem's **Haven** from her enemies who had tried to attack and invade her, Psalm 48:3b:

1. The KJV word “refuge” is translated from the Hebrew noun *misgab*, which means a “secure height” (B. D. B., A Heb. & Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 960).
 2. In the context of war, God was thus Jerusalem’s high ground as a Haven of safety from her attackers.
- B. God became a **stable** Haven for Jerusalem from her enemies, Psalm 48:8b:
1. The psalmist in Psalm 48:8b claimed that God would establish Jerusalem forever.
 2. Actually, under the Mosaic Law, Israel’s disobedience to the Lord brought God’s punishment of loss in battle and captivity in foreign nations (Deuteronomy 28:15, 25), what eventually occurred to Jerusalem’s dwellers (Jeremiah 52:1-30), so this eternal establishment must consider God’s long-term plan to establish the city by His grace through Christ in eternity (cf. Revelation 21:1-27)
- C. God would thus lead Israel’s people **beyond death**, for He was their God **forever** and **ever**, Psalm 48:14a,b:
1. The v. 14b KJV phrase, “*even* unto death,” with the italicized word “*even*” not appearing in the Hebrew text, but being supplied by the KJV translators, renders the words ‘*al-mut*, what can mean “about-death,” “till-death,” “up-to-death,” or “beyond-death,” A. R. Hurst, O. T. Translation Problems, 1960, p. 101-102.
 2. The parallel idea in verse 14a that God was Jerusalem’s God forever and ever (*‘olam wa’ed*, Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 1016) makes the translation “beyond-death” fit best here (Ibid., Hurst), for the psalmist claims that God is the Hebrew people’s Guide in everlasting security, what includes security after this earthly life!

Lesson: *Jerusalem’s Haven from harmful foes, her stability and guidance was God. His security was available in this life if one heeded His Word, and He would unconditionally fully be Jerusalem’s haven throughout eternity!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we obey God's Word for Him to act as our Haven from foes, for stability and for His guidance in this life, assured that in eternity His protection will be fully applied.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

We apply the sermon to the issues mentioned in our sermon introduction for security in **this** life (as follows):

(1) On harmful elected officials who fail to address the failing security in the Social Security program, (a) God calls heads of households to earn their own families’ livelihoods (1 Timothy 5:8 with 2 Thessalonians 2:10) (b) by working independently to have a good testimony and not be in any need (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). (c) These actions reflect capitalism, but Social Security is socialism that “advocates the elimination of private property and seeks to redistribute wealth,” promoting the Marxist evils of covetousness and stealing! (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 484) We should not rely on Social Security for our financial security nor fret if the program fails!

(2) On harmful administrators in schools, medicine, and government whose unwise rulings in the pandemic harmed many children and adolescents, parents are responsible to rear their children in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord,” Ephesians 6:4. Thus, parents must assume the ultimate oversight of their children’s welfare, and thus use medical, educational and government officials only if the parents have evaluated and approved of such officials!

(3) On harmful leaders in social media platforms, the government, and the Democratic Party who together try to manipulate our viewpoint with errant ideologies, (a) Colossians 4:6 calls us to let our speech be gracious, seasoned with cleansing salt that we might know how to answer everyone who asks us about our faith. If a social media platform removes us from it for heeding this verse, then we need to avoid that platform, anyway! (b) 1 Corinthians 2:7-16 claims that believers have the Holy Spirit, giving them discernment, and 2 Timothy 3:13-17 claims that God’s Word equips us to handle deception. So, heeding Scripture and relying on the Holy Spirit gives deception protection!

(4) On harmful religious ministers who promote price controls and call for increasing government aid to schools to solve educational problems instead of informing parents to have children only in marriage and to rear them, (a) we should test to see if a minister confesses Christ’s incarnation and thus functions by the Holy Spirit, 1 John 4:1-3. (b) We should also heed only those ministers who teach the doctrines of Christ’s true apostles (1 John 4:6), what then includes the 66-book canon of the Christian Scriptures that apostolic authority sanctions. (c) Since the clergy members of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance push “social justice” (Ibid., Powell), a “masking term for the economic philosophies of communism and socialism” (Ibid., Powell; Ibid., Howse, p. 483-484), and since we noted in “(1)” above in this Conclusion section that socialism is unbiblical, we should not heed the recommendations or the ministries of the clergy members of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance!

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we then heed Scripture for God to act as our Haven from harmful leaders in this life, giving stability and guidance, with the assurance that in eternity He will be our full and endless Haven from all foes.