

# GOD IS OUR SHELTER AND STRENGTH



*Words of comfort and hope from the Bible*



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and hope from the Bible*



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

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*God Is Our Shelter and Strength*

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

*“How could this happen?”*

*“Are my friends and family safe?”*

*“How could anyone commit such an evil act?”*

*“Is the situation hopeless?”*

**A**cts of political terrorism, like natural disasters, often strike without warning. The shock, fear and sense of outrage can be overwhelming, leaving you feeling completely helpless and abandoned.

In the midst of devastation and loss, be assured that God is with you—loving you and caring for you, “always ready to help in times of trouble” (Psalm 46.1).

This Scripture booklet contains passages from the Bible—words of comfort, hope and assurance—from which you can draw strength as you begin the process of rebuilding your life and community. Trust in the Lord for help and find your strength renewed. Find safety and shelter in the shadow of God’s wings.





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GOD

*understands*

*your*

FEARS

*and  
your*

ANGER

*Many psalms express the fear, anger, sense of helplessness and abandonment that you may be feeling now.*

## *Why Have You Rejected Me, Lord God?*

I pray to you, Lord God,  
    and I beg you to listen.  
In days filled with trouble,  
    I search for you.  
And at night I tirelessly  
lift my hands in prayer,  
    refusing comfort.  
When I think of you,  
    I feel restless and weak.

Because of you, Lord God,  
    I can't sleep.  
I am restless  
    and can't even talk.  
I think of times gone by,  
    of those years long ago.  
Each night my mind  
    is flooded with questions:  
"Have you rejected me forever?  
    Won't you be kind again?  
Is this the end of your love  
    and your promises?  
Have you forgotten  
how to have pity?

Do you refuse to show mercy  
Because of your anger?"  
Then I said, "God Most High,  
what hurts me most  
is that you no longer help us  
with your mighty arm."  
PSALM 77.1-10

### *Do Something, Lord!*

Wake up! Do something, Lord!  
Why are you sleeping?  
Don't desert us forever.  
Why do you keep looking away?  
Don't forget our sufferings  
and all of our troubles.  
We are flat on the ground,  
holding on to the dust.  
Do something! Help us!  
Show how kind you are  
and come to our rescue.  
PSALM 44.23-26

### *I Call Out to You, Lord, for Mercy*

Our LORD, you are the friend  
of your worshipers,  
and you make an agreement  
with all of us.  
I always look to you,  
Because you rescue me  
from every trap.

I am lonely and troubled.  
Show that you care  
    and have pity on me.  
My awful worries keep growing.  
    Rescue me from sadness.  
See my troubles and misery  
    and forgive my sins.  
Look at all my enemies!  
    See how much they hate me.  
I come to you for shelter.  
Protect me, keep me safe,  
    and don't disappoint me.  
I obey you with all my heart,  
and I trust you, knowing  
    that you will save me.

PSALM 25.14-21

## *I Call Out to You, Lord, for Guidance*

Please hurry, LORD,  
and answer my prayer.

I feel hopeless.

Don't turn away  
and leave me here to die.

Each morning let me learn  
more about your love  
because I trust you.

I come to you in prayer,  
asking for your guidance.

Please rescue me  
from my enemies, LORD!

I come to you for safety.

You are my God. Show me  
what you want me to do,  
and let your gentle Spirit  
lead me in the right path.

PSALM 143.7-10

## *The Lord Will Fill You with Hope*

*Like the people of Judah, whose homes and cities were destroyed, put your hope and trust in the Lord.*

I tell myself, "I am finished!  
I can't count on the LORD  
to do anything for me."  
Just thinking of my troubles  
And my lonely wandering  
makes me miserable.  
That's all I ever think about,  
and I am depressed.  
Then I remember something  
that fills me with hope.  
The LORD 's kindness never fails!  
If he had not been merciful,  
we would have been destroyed.  
The LORD can always be trusted  
to show mercy each morning.  
Deep in my heart I say,  
"The LORD is all I need;  
I can depend on him!"

LAMENTATIONS 3.18-24

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The LORD's kindness never fails!  
If he had not been merciful,  
we would have been destroyed.

LAMENTATIONS 3.22

*What are your fears? What are you praying for right now? Do you feel that God is protecting you? What do you and your family need most from God? Have you shared all your feelings with him in prayer?*





GOD

*will  
take*

CARE

*of*  
YOU

*In the midst of your worries, God understands your needs. Jesus assured His disciples with these words,*

I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds?

Can worry make you live longer? Why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow. They don't work hard to make their clothes. But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of them. God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown in a fire tomorrow. He will surely do even more for you! Why do you have such little faith?

Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.

Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today.

MATTHEW 6.25-34

## *The Lord Will Give You Strength*

You people of Israel, say,  
“God pays no attention to us!  
He doesn’t care if we are treated unjustly.”

But how can you say that?  
Don’t you know?  
Haven’t you heard?  
The LORD is the eternal God,  
Creator of the earth.  
He never gets weary or tired;  
His wisdom cannot be measured.

The LORD gives strength  
to those who are weary.  
Even young people get tired,  
then stumble and fall.  
But those who trust the LORD  
will find new strength.  
They will be strong like eagles  
soaring upward on wings;  
They will walk and run,  
and never get tired.

ISAIAH 40.27-31

## *The Holy Spirit Is Here To Help You*

*The apostle Paul writes,*

I am sure that what we are suffering now cannot compare with the glory that will be shown to us. In fact, all creation is eagerly waiting for God to show who his children are. Meanwhile, creation is confused, but not because it wants to be confused. God made it this way in the hope that creation would be set free from decay and would share in the glorious freedom of his children. We know that all creation is still groaning and is in pain, like a woman about to give birth.

The Spirit makes us sure about what we will be in the future. But now we groan silently, while we wait for God to show that we are his children. This means that our bodies will also be free. And this hope is what saves us. But if we already have what we hope for, there is no need to keep on hoping. However, we hope for something we have not yet seen, and we patiently wait for it.

In certain ways we are weak, but the Spirit is here to help us. For example, when we don't know

what to pray for, the Spirit prays for us in ways that cannot be put into words. All of our thoughts are known to God. He can understand what is in the mind of the Spirit, as the Spirit prays for God's people. We know that God is always at work for the good of everyone who loves him. They are the ones God has chosen for his purpose, and he has always known who his chosen ones would be. He had decided to let them become like his own Son, so that his Son would be the first of many children. God then accepted the people he had already decided to choose, and he has shared his glory with them.

ROMANS 8.18-30

## *The Lord Will Teach You To Pray*

*Jesus taught about prayer and trusting in God for daily needs.*

When you pray, don't talk on and on as people do who don't know God. They think God likes to hear long prayers. Don't be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask. You should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,  
help us to honor  
your name.  
Come and set up  
your kingdom,  
so that everyone on earth  
will obey you,  
as you are obeyed  
in heaven.  
Give us our food for today.  
Forgive our sins,  
as we forgive others.

Keep us from being tempted  
and protect us from evil.

MATTHEW 6.7-13

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

We hope for something we have not yet seen,  
and we patiently wait for it.

ROMANS 8.25

*What do you need to help you get through today? Do you truly believe that God cares for you more than for the birds in the sky? In what do you place your hope? Is this an easy time for you to pray to God?*







GOD'S  
*love*  
*is*  
SURE

*Many psalms are songs of praise and thanksgiving  
for the assurance of God's steadfast love.*

## *God Is with You*

God is our mighty fortress,  
always ready to help  
    in times of trouble.  
And so, we won't be afraid!  
    Let the earth tremble  
and the mountains tumble  
    into the deepest sea.  
Let the ocean roar and foam,  
and its raging waves  
    shake the mountains.

A river and its streams  
    bring joy to the city,  
which is the sacred home  
    of God Most High.  
God is in that city,  
and it won't be shaken.  
    He will help it at dawn.

Nations rage! Kingdoms fall!  
But at the voice of God  
    the earth itself melts.  
The LORD All-Powerful  
    is with us.  
The God of Jacob  
    is our fortress.

Come! See the fearsome things  
the LORD has done on earth.  
God brings wars to an end  
all over the world.  
He breaks the arrows,  
shatters the spears,  
and burns the shields.  
Our God says, "Calm down,  
and learn that I am God!  
All nations on earth  
will honor me."

The LORD All-Powerful  
is with us.  
The God of Jacob  
is our fortress.

PSALM 46

## *God Keeps You Safe*

Only God gives inward peace,  
and I depend on him.

God alone is the mighty rock  
that keeps me safe,  
and he is the fortress  
where I feel secure.

God saves me and honors me.  
He is that mighty rock  
where I find safety.

Trust God, my friends,  
and always tell him  
each one of your concerns.  
God is our place of safety.

PSALM 62.5-8

## *God Is Your Provider*

Our LORD you keep your word  
and do everything you say.  
When someone stumbles or falls,  
you give a helping hand.

Everyone depends on you,  
and when the time is right,  
you provide them with food.

By your own hand you satisfy  
the desires of all who live.

PSALM 145.13B-16

## *God's Love Is Faithful*

Your love is faithful, LORD  
and even the clouds in the sky  
can depend on you.

Your decisions are always fair.  
They are firm like mountains,  
deep like the sea,  
and all people and animals  
are under your care.

Your love is a treasure,  
and everyone finds shelter  
in the shadow of your wings.

You give your guests a feast  
in your house,  
and you serve a tasty drink  
that flows like a river.

The life-giving fountain  
belongs to you,  
and your light gives light  
to each of us.

PSALM 36.5-9

## *Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love*

*The apostle Paul tells those facing hardships,*

If God is on our side, can anyone be against us? God did not keep back his own Son, but he gave him for us. If God did this, won't he freely give us everything else? If God says his chosen ones are acceptable to him, can anyone bring charges against them? Or can anyone condemn them? No indeed! Christ died and was raised to life, and now he is at God's right side, speaking to him for us. Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, suffering, and hard times, or hunger and nakedness, or danger and death? It is exactly as the Scriptures say,

“For you we face death  
all day long.

We are like sheep  
on their way  
to be butchered.”

In everything we have won more than a victory because of Christ who loves us. I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love—not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord!

ROMANS 8.31B-39

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Our LORD, you keep your word  
and do everything you say.

When someone stumbles or falls,  
you give a helping hand.

PSALM 145.13B,14

*Reflect on all the images of God and God's love you can find in these passages (such as mighty fortress, a treasure) as well as words that describe God (such as faithful, loving). How do these images and descriptions make you feel toward God? Do you feel God is helping you now? How and in what ways? At what times do you feel most separated from God? Can you claim God's promise that nothing can separate you from his love?*





GOD  
*makes*  
*all*  
*things*  
NEW

*Like the people of Judah who had lost their homes,  
you can draw hope and comfort from the words of the  
prophet Isaiah.*

## *Watch for Something New*

Forget what happened long ago!  
Don't think about the past.  
I am creating something new.  
There it is! Do you see it?  
I have put roads in deserts,  
streams in thirsty lands.  
Every wild animal honors me,  
even jackals and owls.  
I provide water in deserts—  
streams in thirsty lands  
for my chosen people.  
I made them my own nation,  
so they would praise me.

ISAIAH 43.18-21

## *God's New Creation Awaits You*

I am creating new heavens  
and a new earth;  
everything of the past  
will be forgotten.  
Celebrate and be glad forever!  
I am creating a Jerusalem,  
full of happy people.  
I will celebrate with Jerusalem  
and all of its people;

there will be no more crying  
or sorrow in that city.

No child will die in infancy;  
everyone will live  
to a ripe old age.

Anyone a hundred years old  
will be considered young;  
and to die younger than that  
will be considered a curse.

My people will live  
in the houses they build;  
they will enjoy the grapes  
from their own vineyards.

No one will take away  
their homes or vineyards.

My chosen people will live  
to be as old as trees,  
and they will enjoy  
what they have earned.

Their work won't be wasted,  
and their children won't die  
of dreadful diseases.

I will bless their children  
and their grandchildren.

I will answer their prayers  
before they finish praying.

Wolves and lambs  
will graze together;  
Lion and oxen

will feed on straw.  
Snakes will eat only dirt!  
They won't bite or harm anyone  
on my holy mountain.  
I, the LORD, have spoken!

ISAIAH 65.17-25

## *God Will Comfort and Heal You*

*Lean on God for comfort, healing and strength. In the same way God comforts you, you can give comfort and help to those who are experiencing similar hardships. You can share what you are feeling with others. Giving and receiving comfort can ease your burden and provide you and others in your community with hope, encouragement and the strength to endure.*

Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us comfort. He comforts us when we are in trouble, so that we can share that same comfort with others in trouble. We share in the terrible sufferings of Christ, but also in the wonderful comfort he gives. We suffer in the hope that you will be comforted and saved. And because we are comforted, you will also be comforted, as you patiently endure suffering like ours. You never disappoint us. You suffered as much as we did, and we know that you will be comforted as we were.

2 CORINTHIANS 1.3-7

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

I am creating new heavens  
and a new earth;  
everything of the past  
will be forgotten.

ISAIAH 65.17

*What new things do you see happening around you?  
What gives you hope? Can you sense God's presence  
in what is taking place?*





TRUST

*in*

GOD

## *The Lord Is Our Fortress*

The LORD is my fortress!  
Don't say to me,  
"Escape like a bird  
to the mountains!"  
You tell me, "Watch out!  
Those evil people have put  
their arrows on their bows,  
and they are standing  
in the shadows,  
aiming at good people.  
What can an honest person do  
when everything crumbles?"

The LORD is sitting  
in his sacred temple  
on his throne in heaven.  
He knows everything we do  
because he sees us all.  
The LORD tests honest people,  
but despises those  
who are cruel  
and love violence.  
He will send fiery coals  
and flaming sulfur  
down on the wicked,  
and they will drink nothing  
but a scorching wind.



The LORD always does right  
and wants justice done.  
Everyone who does right  
will see his face.

PSALM 11

Live under the protection  
of God Most High  
and stay in the shadow  
of God All-Powerful.  
Then you will say to the LORD,  
“You are my fortress,  
my place of safety;  
you are my God,  
and I trust you.”

PSALM 91.1,2



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Where do you turn when faced  
with overwhelming loss?  
Is there hope?

Be assured that God hears  
your cries. As you begin the  
process of rebuilding your life,  
lean on God who is your  
shelter and strength.



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