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THE BULWARK

YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN TROUBLE WHEN...

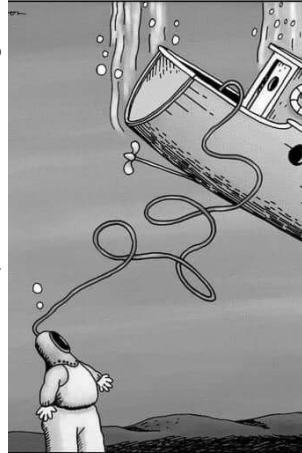
"Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him, for he knows not that which shall be ; for who can tell him when it shall be?"

(Ecclesiastes 8:6-7) The word "misery" in the just noted passage suggests the aspect of trouble. Trouble is defined as being, "distress, affliction; to stir up, agitate; to afflict with discomfort or pain." Solomon is quick to note, in life there will be times of trouble, regardless of how pristine one's life may seem to be. Time and chance will at some point pay a visit. We will face difficulty, however, when that time will come, we haven't a clue.

"For affliction does not come from the dust, neither does trouble sprout from the ground, for man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward." (Job 5:6-7) Eliphaz was extremely dour in his observations that he shared with Job in order to offer "comfort" in all his woes. How much comfort Job could extract from what was said is another issue, but what was said is true. We live in a broken world due to sin. What Eliphaz was trying to get Job to realize was that he, nor any other person is immune from trouble. Eliphaz then sets forth, *"But as for me, I would seek God, and I would place my cause before God."* (Job 5:8)

Job was not the only person in the Scriptures beset with problems. David was another who struggled with numerous trials, some of the trouble was inflicted by others, while some was brought on by himself. However, David found a source of strength as he noted in

Psalms 9:9. *"The Lord also will be a stronghold for the oppressed. A stronghold in times of trouble."*



In the 107th Psalm, the psalmist points in vivid detail that God delivers the redeemed from the sundry issues of life. The key verse in the psalm is verse six, which sets forth, *"Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He delivered them out of their distresses."* As the psalm concludes, the author asks a rather profound question, *"Who is wise?"* He then proceeds to answer by showing that the

wise are those who give heed to what was spelled out in the preceding verses. God who is infinite, is the essence of true loving kindness and a very present shelter in times of storm.

Not much has changed since the days of Job, David or Solomon. We will face trouble. But we can learn from the thoughts and actions of those who serve as examples (see Romans 15:4). They drew nearer, still nearer to God. Ideally one shouldn't have to wait until times of trouble are braying at the door before seeing the need to turn to God for refuge. James notes in his epistle, *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you"* (James 4:8) Paul on his part wrote to the Philippians, *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*(4:13) Whereas to the brethren in Rome Paul wrote, *"If God is for us, who is against us?"* (8:31) Indeed, if God is for us, we can weather any storm and emerge more than conqueror (Romans 8:37) (wbe)